

agro BRIDGES

**“Building bridges between consumers and producers
by supporting short food supply chains through a
systemic, holistic, multi-actor approach-based Toolbox”**

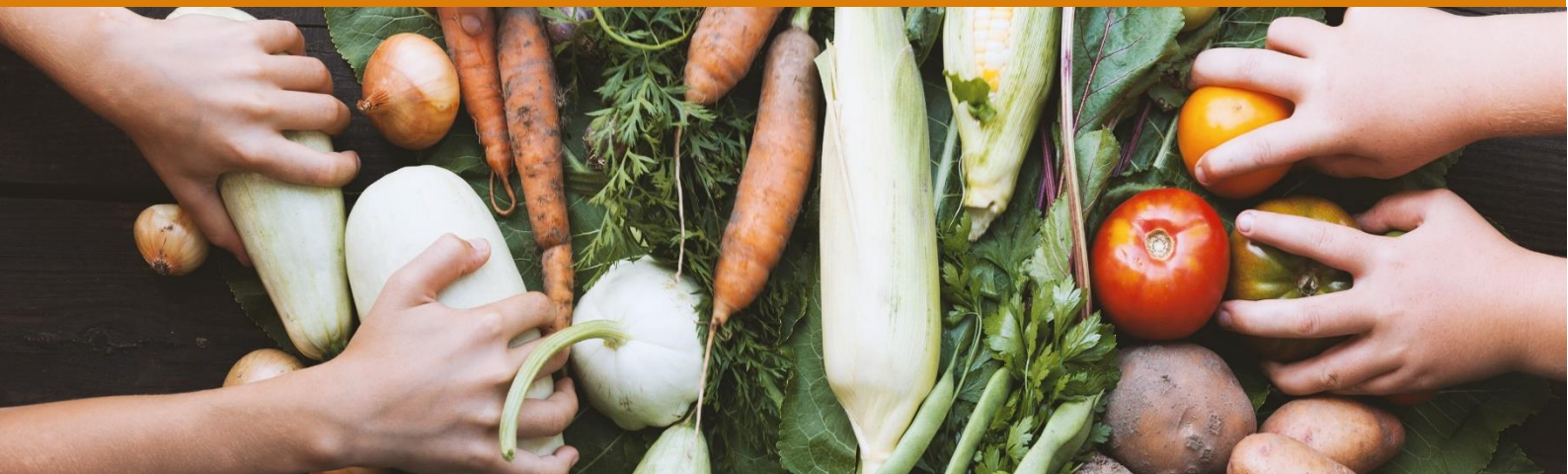
(Grant Agreement 101000788)

Coordination and Support Action

**D6.4: Report on coordination actions with SCAR AKIS SWG and
Clustering Plan implementation**

Work Package 6

Responsible Partners: CREA & Q-PLAN



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D6.4: Report on coordination actions with SCAR AKIS SWG and Clustering Plan implementation

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Executive Summary

The main objective of the agroBRIDGES project, funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme, is to empower farmers with practical knowledge and tools to set up new business and marketing models based on Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) with a focus on building bridges between producers and consumers.

This report, titled "**D6.4: Report on coordination actions with SCAR AKIS SWG and Clustering Plan implementation**", presents the strategy, plan and actions implemented under agroBRIDGES, aiming to align with and benefit from other relevant EU projects and initiatives, exchange knowledge and experience, create synergies and achieve implementation of joint actions to be shared with SCAR AKIS SWG experts.

Following a process of identifying, screening, and selecting the most relevant **EU projects and initiatives** to approach, communication pathways were established with the following project groups and initiatives:

- the two "sister" projects, funded under Horizon 2020 RUR-05-2020 topic (COCOREADO, COACH).
- the clustering group, already formed by the five projects funded under Horizon 2020 RUR-06-2020 and RUR-07-2020 topics (FAIRCHAIN, CO-FRESH, PLOUTOS, FOODRUS, LOWINFOOD).
- other relevant projects (ClieNFarms, PestNu, COOPID, SISTERS, BEATLES, PREMIERE)
- 2 agri-food networks (FOODRUS Cooperation and Collaboration Network, Food2030 Project Collaboration Network).

agroBRIDGES and its results were also promoted to the European Business Network (EBN) Special Interest Group: Sustainability, Agrifood and Health, and PREMIERE MEDITERRANEAN macro-regional panel.

As a result of the above approach, the main clustering group with the "sister" projects was established, followed by exchanging information about the project activities and workplans that permitted to identify synergy areas. Information was exchanged about good practices, case studies of SFSCs, policy aspects, experiences sharing and cross-validation. An effort was also done in the connection and mutual validation of IT tools, training programmes and public procurement toolkits. As provided for by joint actions three (3) specific webinars, one clustering event and other communication, dissemination, and collaboration activities have been organised in collaboration with the sister projects. Moreover, the three (3) project teams organised several coordination meetings, during which the sister projects had the chance to catch-up on the recent and upcoming activities, follow-up on mutual commitments and conceptualise/plan joint actions.

The **Strategic Working Group SCAR AKIS** (Standing Committee on Agricultural Research – Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems) and the Operational Groups established, at national level, within the European Innovation Partnership on Agricultural productivity and sustainability (EIP AGRI), are the two most relevant groups of actors in the promotion of the type of innovation targeted at agroBRIDGES. Cooperation with the Strategic Working Group (SWG) SCAR-AKIS was mainly based on sharing documents with the group members and on delivering a joint policy recommendation document, developed in collaboration with the sister projects. Moreover, 38 practice abstracts have been produced using different outputs from the project (agroBRIDGES toolbox, SFSC business models, co-creation exercises delivered in the Beacon regions), so others could leverage on them.



1. Introduction

The agroBRIDGES project aims at empowering farmers with practical knowledge and tools to set up new business and marketing models based on Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) with a focus on building bridges between producers and consumers. The project follows an integrated methodology to establish regional multi-actor structures for demand-driven innovation in the twelve (12) focal regions participating in agroBRIDGES, and deliver a combination of communication materials, training programmes, events, decision support and other digital tools included in the agroBRIDGES Toolbox.

Apart from agroBRIDGES, there are several **successful EU-funded initiatives, networks and projects** engaging similar target groups to promote a sustainable and resilient food system and the promotion of Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) in particular. Therefore, there is vast space for synergies, collaborations, and knowledge exchange among these initiatives to support each other's mission, design complementary approaches and maximise collective impact on the European food system and its stakeholders. To this end, the agroBRIDGES project has identified such projects, networks and initiatives and established communication to develop a collaborative environment for the implementation of joint activities, exchange knowledge and experience, while achieving a more efficient use of resources.

The **agroBRIDGES Joint Clustering Plan (D6.1)** outlines in detail the objectives, strategy, and foreseen activities of agroBRIDGES project to forge impactful synergies with similar initiatives. The Joint Clustering Plan foresees two axes in synergic activities: (i) **activities with EU-funded projects** (Task 6.1 – Leader: CREA) and (ii) **collaboration with the SCAR-AKIS SWG and EIP-AGRI Operational / Working Groups** (Task 6.2 – Leader: Q-PLAN). These activities were also actively supported by other agroBRIDGES consortium members, based on their project responsibilities and expertise.

The **present report (D6.4)** elaborates on the outcomes of joint activities carried out with EU-funded projects and EU-wide agrifood networks, compiling the work done within the Joint Clustering Plan until the end of the agroBRIDGES project. Moreover, the impact of these collaborations is discussed.

The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2 - Aim and Objectives:** it highlights the main goal and objectives of the Joint Clustering Plan.
- **Chapter 3 - Strategy and Process:** It describes the strategy and process of identifying and selecting relevant EU projects and initiatives, establishing communication pathways, and identifying synergies.
- **Chapter 4 – Implementation of Joint Actions:** It describes the plan for the development and implementation of joint actions.
- **Chapter 5 – Impact and Conclusions:** It provides the time frame for the development of the joint clustering plan and the implementation of joint actions.

In **Annex I** of the report, the collective knowledge, and contributions of the “sister” projects to the development of SFSCs and sustainable local food systems have been mapped. In **Annex II** of the report, the “Joint Policy Recommendations” document, agreed among agroBRIDGES, COCOREADO, COACH and BEATLES is provided, also shared with the members of the SCAR AKIS SWG meeting, held in Brussels on 22nd and 23rd of November 2023. **Annex III** contains the information packages shared with SCAR AKIS SWG during the project.



2. Aim and Objectives

The main aim of the Joint Clustering Plan was enhancing the impact of agroBRIDGES by clustering with other relevant EU-funded projects and initiatives that address similar groups of stakeholders and other relevant actors in the agri-food value chain, including:

- Farmers and producers
- Agri-food industries, retailers and other distributors
- Relevant research, academic and technology experts
- Relevant policy makers
- Civil society
- Educators: trainers and teachers

The objective of the Joint Clustering Plan started with the establishment of mutual communication pathways and joint communication, dissemination and other collaboration activities with selected EU-funded projects and initiatives, to:

- Align with, benefit from, and provide input to other relevant projects and initiatives.
- Foster information and knowledge exchange between projects and initiatives.
- Achieve more efficient use of resources in activities with similar needs and goals.
- Coordinate efforts, avoid overlapping and optimise impact.
- Promote each other's activities and events, fostering participation.
- Validate conclusions and recommendations based on different case studies and contexts.
- Share results of the agroBRIDGES project, as well as results of the clustering activities with the sister projects, with agri-food experts (SCAR AKIS SWG and EIP-AGRI).

The Joint Clustering Plan continuously promoted coordination of the various projects, networks, initiatives and actions, to exploit high value-added synergies, boost the efficient use of EU funding and maximise its impact by delivering value to European society.

It should be noted that a **detailed analysis of the impact of synergic activities on the end-users lies beyond the scope of this report**, as its quantification would be extremely complex to describe in a meaningful way. Each project and initiative **maintained their own engagement framework with stakeholders** and transferred knowledge using their established methodologies at their own discretion.

For instance, agroBRIDGES, throughout its life cycle, **has established continuous communication and engagement channels with the end-users of the knowledge and tools** produced by the project, through a **Multi-Actor Framework** being set up and operational in 12 European countries and at EU-level¹. Wherever possible, direct communication with end-users was actively sought.

¹ More information about these activities may be found in agroBRIDGES D1.1 "Report on multi-actor approach framework development" and the updates of the agroBRIDGES Dissemination, Communication and Exploitation Plan updates (D7.4, and D7.5).



3. Strategy and Process

In line with the core objectives of the Joint Clustering Plan, the strategy and process for establishing communication and implementation of synergic activities with relevant initiatives are structured in two pillars:

- Identification of EU-funded projects (agroBRIDGES Task 6.2)
 - Mapping and screening of relevant EU funded projects and initiatives.
 - Establishment of mutual communication pathways with selected projects and initiatives.
 - Identification of potential synergies.
 - Development and implementation of joint actions.
- Contribution to the objectives of the SCAR-AKIS SWG and EIP-AGRI Operational Groups through collaboration (agroBRIDGES Task 6.1).

Following the initial development of the Joint Clustering Plan, **the aforementioned process was iteratively applied**, in parallel with the optimisation / implementation of the activities described in the Clustering Plan.

3.1 Mapping and engagement of EU funded-projects.

3.1.1 Identification of EU-funded projects for Clustering activities

A multi-layered approach has been devised towards the identification, engagement, and continuous collaboration with other EU-funded projects, as illustrated in Figure 1, below. The intensity and frequency of collaboration is higher among the projects of the inner cluster (“sister projects”) and is more relaxed with the projects of the wider cluster. The rationale for this strategic decision is based on factors such as the compatibility (overlap) of the topic, mission, and objectives of the projects, as well as their starting/ending dates. Since the initial development of the Clustering Plan, **effort has been exerted towards deepening the scope of collaboration with the inner cluster projects and to expand our reach to a larger network of relevant projects** in order to present agroBRIDGES to a wider audience of professionals, offer insights and exchange knowledge.

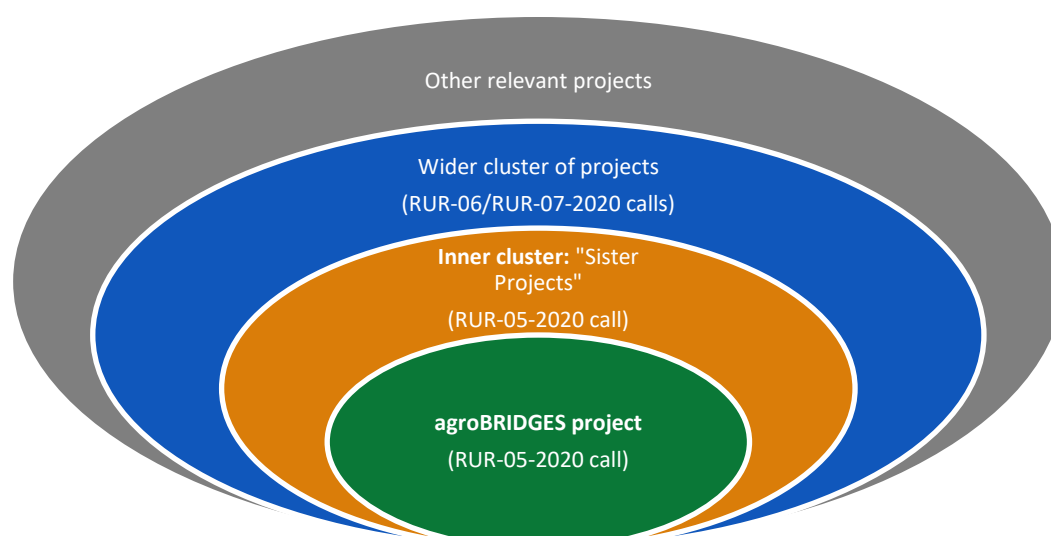






Figure 1: The clustering approach of agroBRIDGES with EU-funded projects

During the initial stages of the project, connection was established with the sister projects of agroBRIDGES (i.e., funded under the same Horizon 2020 call), namely COCOREADO and COACH. The connection with the agroBRIDGES objectives and foreseen activities is very close, as all projects focus on creating better consumer-producer connections through Short Food Supply Chains. Throughout the course of the project, collaboration with the two sister projects has remained consistent and frequent, through coordination meetings and joint activities, foreseen in the Clustering Plan. The COCOREADO and COACH were also engaged in the design of the clustering plan and the conceptualisation of activities, with their commitment to contribute to its implementation pledged via signed Letters of Acceptance from the project coordinators. Table 1 below summarises information about the “sister projects”, COCOREADO and COACH.


Table 1. Horizon 2020 RUR-05-2020 “Sister” Projects

Project		Brief Description
	COCOREADO	It aims to encourage young people in rural areas to co-create innovative solutions that overcome obstacles for farmers, address consumer needs and improve the conditions for the sustainable public procurement of local and seasonal food.
	COACH	It aims to facilitate collaboration among farmers, consumers, local governments and other actors to scale up short agri-food chains to rebalance farmer's market position, create mutual benefits for consumers and producers and drive innovation in territorial food systems.





Communication pathways have also been established with the existing clustering group of Horizon 2020 RUR-06-2020 and 2020 RUR-07-2020 projects (FAIRCHAIN, CO-FRESH, PLOUTOS, FOODRUS, LOWINFOOD). As explained in the Joint Clustering Plan, the five projects have had already established their own collaboration framework and procedures, thus an inter-cluster collaboration was chosen for with these projects. The project teams have expressed interest in synergising with agroBRIDGES, COCOREADO and COACH, which has materialised in several ways over the course of two years.

Table 2 below summarises information about the projects of the RUR-06-2020 and RUR-07-2020 calls.

Table 2. Existing clustering group of Horizon 2020 RUR-06-2020 and 2020 RUR-07-2020 projects


Project		Brief Description
	FAIRCHAIN	It aims to test-pilot and demonstrate recently developed technological, organisational and social innovations that enable small and mid-sized actors to scale-up and expand the production of affordable nutritious food in competitive intermediate food value chains.








Project		Brief Description
	CO-FRESH	It aims to (re)design and pilot innovative systemic approaches to agri-food value chains to scale up collective innovation action at European level.
	PLOUTOS	It aims to rebalance the value chain of the agri-food system, so that it serves both society and the environment through a Sustainable Innovation Framework.
	FOODRUS	It will develop an innovative, collaborative and circular food system to reduce food waste and losses in the agri-food chain.
	LOWINFOOD	The main goal of the project is to co-design low-waste value chains in the fruit and vegetable, baked goods and fish sectors, including at-home and out-of-home consumption. The project will validate and demonstrate a set of technological, social and organisational solutions, and evaluate the impact of these innovations in reducing food waste and improving the socioeconomic and environmental performance of value chains.

The establishment of connections with the projects of the inner and wider clusters, gradually generated traction, and visibility for the agroBRIDGES project, leading to requests for meetings and participation in activities of other projects, new and in-progress alike. As a result, agroBRIDGES has tapped into a valuable network of professionals and initiatives promoting sustainable agri-food innovation from diverse points of view and focal points (e.g., prevention of food waste, climate-smart farming, behavioural change, etc.).

Table 3: Other relevant EU-funded projects

Project		Brief Description
	ClieNFarms	Supporting the Farm to Fork (F2F) strategy, contributing to the achievement of its objectives, the ClieNFarms project aims to demonstrate, evaluate and improve technical, organisational and financial solutions at the farm level that will contribute to achieving climate-neutrality of European agriculture by 2050. This will be done by a multi-actor approach, interactively integrating and improving existing solutions to achieve economically viable business models in farming systems by involving farmers, extension services, agri-food business, policymakers, finance and citizens. These solutions will be disseminated, and young farmers will be targeted through capacity building.



Project	Brief Description
	<p>PestNu</p> <p>PestNu targets the field -testing and demonstration of digital and space based technologies (DST) and agro-ecological and organic practices (AOP) under a systemic approach to reduce the pesticides and fertilisers use, and loss of nutrients.</p>
	<p>COOPID</p> <p>COOPID believes in a sustainable primary sector: A sector where farmers across countries benefit and use the best and latest techniques to grow a profitable business in the bioeconomy. To do so, COOPID has identified real-life bioeconomy success stories in the EU, and organised visits and experiences for primary producers and other stakeholders to learn from them. It was born with the goal of raising awareness about the bioeconomy in the primary sector, and it concluded by leaving behind a legacy of success stories, COOPID project ambassadors and digital materials already downloaded and seen by more than 50,000 people.</p>
	<p>SISTERS</p> <p>The SISTERS project aims to reduce food loss and waste in the main stages of the Food Value Chain in Europe through innovations targeted to each stage of the chain including: (i) New tools for primary producers for promoting direct and Short Chain sales (farmers); (ii) new technological innovations in packaging for processors and retailers; and (iii) awareness campaigns for retailers and consumers on food loss and waste.</p>
	<p>BEATLES</p> <p>BEATLES aspires to identify the individual, systemic and policy lock-ins and levers that influence entire food systems behavioural change and to develop transformation pathways of change to accelerate the systemic and systematic transition to climate-smart agriculture and smart farming technologies, fully aligned with the ambitions of the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies, and the new CAP at regional and EU levels.</p>
	<p>PREMIERE</p> <p>PREMIERE aims to strengthen the multi-actor approach by supporting the development of more relevant, coherent, and well-prepared project proposals. It has begun consulting and exchanging with four so-called 'macro-regional multi-actor advisory panels' within the framework of their innovative PREMIERE 100+ Club, bringing together newcomers and more experienced stakeholders from regions of Europe with similar conditions – all with a significant interest in Horizon Europe multi-actor projects.</p>



In addition, agroBRIDGES has become a member project in two (2) agri-food networks:

- The [FOODRUS Cooperation and Collaboration Network](#) that brings together more than 30 projects focusing on the field of food loss and waste.
- The [Food2030 Project Collaboration Network](#) established by the CLEVERFOOD project. The network currently counts more than 25 members and offers a platform for cross-promotion and joint dissemination of activities and results that contribute to the FOOD2030 strategy, the Farm to Fork strategy and the EU's missions.

The agroBRIDGES project and its results were also promoted to the **European Business Network (EBN) Special Interest Group on Sustainability, Agrifood and Health**, by Q-PLAN among the associated members.

Finally, Q-PLAN is involved in the **PREMIERE MEDITERRANEAN macro-regional panel**, where experiences and lessons learned from the multi-actor approach in the food value chain of agroBRIDGES and other relevant projects, has been shared with the other members of the panel.

3.1.2 Definition of synergy topics and joint actions

The “sister projects”, during the initial steps, exchanged information about the project activities and workplans to identify synergy areas and to define the expected inputs and outputs of each project, stemming from collaborative action in each topic. The most promising synergy areas are outlined below¹:

- Exchange information about good practices / case studies of SFSCs.
- Cross-validation, connection and mutual validation of IT tools, training programmes and public procurement toolkits.
- Experiences sharing from the implementation of co-creation methodologies.
- Exchange information on policy aspects.
- Participation of teams' members as experts in other project activities (e.g. the agroBRIDGES Expert Advisory Board, Focus Groups, Co-creation workshops, etc.)
- Mutual promotion and dissemination of sister projects' activities and channels.
- Sharing of other results and information.

To maximise efficiency and impact, the following joint actions with the collaborating projects and initiatives have been planned:

- Organisation of three (3) specific webinars
- Organisation of one clustering event
- Other communication, dissemination, and collaboration activities.

Provisional themes for the online events have been defined in the Joint Clustering Plan; the selection of which was carried out by the “sister projects” accounting for the maturity of results, need for information, expressed needs of the projects' stakeholders, confidentiality of results among other factors.

¹ For a detailed mapping of synergy topics, see D6.1 “Joint Clustering Plan” Section 3.3 (Table 4) and Annex II of the plan.



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Figure 2: Timeline of joint activities with the sister projects

Clustering Activity	2021												2022												2023											
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Development of joint clustering plan</i>	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■																								
<i>Organisation of three webinars</i>														■																						
<i>Organisation of one clustering event</i>																											■									
<i>Other communication, dissemination and collaboration activities</i>									■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■



3.1.3 Coordination of activities with EU-funded projects

To follow up with and enhance synergic activities agreed among projects of the inner cluster (agroBRIDGES – COCOREADO – COACH), the 3 teams organised several **coordination meetings**. During these meetings, the sister projects had the chance to catch-up on the recent and upcoming activities, follow-up on mutual commitments and conceptualise/plan joint actions.

The need for coordination meetings was more intense during the first year of collaboration to support the drafting process of the Joint Clustering Plan (D6.1) and reaching a common understanding. For the remainder of the project, such meetings were focused on brainstorming and planning of the joint activities (i.e., webinars and the Joint Clustering Events).

- **February 2021 & April 2021:** Introduction with the sister projects' teams, identification of synergies and workplan exchanges. Presentation of the joint clustering framework.
- **July 2021:** Introduction among the sister projects' dissemination leads and discussion of communication-related synergies.
- **January 2022:** Discussion on the agenda and plans for the 1st Joint Webinar.
- **October 2022:** Catch up on the projects' progress and the discussion on the agenda and plan for the 2nd Joint Webinar.
- **February 2023:** Catch up on the projects' progress, discussion on the agenda and plan for the 3rd Joint Webinar.
- **July 2023:** Definition of the Joint Clustering Event programme and arrangement of the event logistics.

The teams also engaged in ad hoc communications to exchange support in various activities (e.g., events, dissemination, communication of interesting opportunities).

The **engagement of projects of the wider cluster** was mostly based on *ad hoc* communications, initiated by the project teams through invitation to activities that might be interesting or beneficial, or activities where the project teams might contribute to meaningfully. The activities organised with the projects is illustrative of the variety of collaboration topics and methods carried out with other initiatives. More detailed information may be found in [Section 4.2](#).



3.2 Engagement with the SCAR-AKIS SWG & EIP AGRI Operational Groups

3.2.1 Identification of contact points with the SCAR-AKIS SWG & EIP AGRI Operational Groups

As briefly summarized in Table 4, AgroBRIDGES focused on two actor groups that were especially important in the framework of fostering innovation within the food systems: the Operational Groups established at the national level within the European Innovation Partnership on Agricultural productivity and sustainability (EIP AGRI) and the Strategic Working Group SCAR AKIS (Standing Committee on Agricultural Research – Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems).

Establishing links with these groups of actors is part of specific project tasks that are complementary to the joint clustering plan, the main goals of which are to:

- Share conclusions of the project with the competent policy makers and national or regional authorities, also considering relevant conclusions of other projects involved in the joint clustering plan.
- Analyse the contribution of the project's outcomes to the EIP AGRI strategic objectives and the impact on the agri-food community.

Table 4. Specific relevant initiatives

Type	Initiative	Brief Description
Strategic Working Group (SWG)	 SCAR-AKIS (Standing Committee on Agricultural Research – Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems)	<p>The SWG SCAR-AKIS was launched early 2010 based on 3 SCAR Foresight studies, indicating the deficiencies of AKIS. The SCAR-WG fully supported the view that adequate and continued investment in AKIS was absolutely necessary to make research and innovation actions deliver.</p>
Operational Groups	 EIP AGRI Operational Groups	<p>The EIP AGRI Operational Groups are intended to bring together multiple actors such as farmers, researchers, advisers, businesses, environmental groups, consumer interest groups or other NGOs to advance innovation in the agricultural and forestry sectors.</p>



3.2.2 Cooperation topics with the SCAR AKIS and EIP AGRI Operational Groups

The relevance of establishing contacts with the SCAR AKIS SWG lies on the approach used to implement agroBRIDGES, that is, the multi-actor approach. The SCAR AKIS SWG work highlighted the importance of building multi-actor project consortia as a relevant instrument to boost interactive innovation (SCAR AKIS SWG 4th Report “Preparing for future AKIS in Europe” <https://scar-europe.org/akis-documents>). The SCAR AKIS SWG had a specific interest to liaise with EU2020 research projects based on the multi-actor approach to better understand how the multi-actor principles can improve the implementation of projects in a range of topics considered relevant for increasing knowledge in the food systems. On the project side, the interest to interact with the SCAR AKIS SWG was based on the opportunity to increase the dissemination of results and to receive possible inputs to improve the project implementation.

Contacts with the SCAR AKIS SWG were mainly established through participation in some of the SCAR AKIS SWG meetings and by sharing materials illustrating the project’s intermediate progress and final results. The first information package (M3) was shared during the 5th meeting of the fifth mandate of the SCAR AKIS SWG, held online on 24-26 March 2021. This first contact was followed by an invitation from the SCAR AKIS SWG to the agroBRIDGES coordinator to present the project at the 6th meeting of fifth mandate of the SCAR AKIS SWG, which was held online on the 1st and 2nd of June 2021. An additional information package, presenting intermediate results of the project, was shared with the SCAR AKIS SWG members at the 12th meeting of the fifth mandate of the SCAR AKIS SWG, held in Lugo on 20th and 21st of June 2022. The results of the project, together with the Joint Policy Recommendations for improving Food Systems and Value Chains, were shared with the group members at the fourth meeting of the sixth mandate of the SCAR AKIS SWG, held in Brussels on 22nd and 23rd of November 2023.

The relationship with the SCAR AKIS SWG, as illustrated above, was mainly based on sharing documents with the group members and on the delivery of one presentation. The fact that the project started during the COVID-19 pandemic did not facilitate the exchanges with the group members, which might have been more efficient if held in person. Furthermore, the conjunction of the implementation of agroBRIDGES with the preparation for the new CAP programming period reduced the opportunities of interaction with the SCAR AKIS SWG.



4. Implementation of joint actions

4.1 Activities with the cluster of “sister” projects

In this section, information about the organisation of joint activities is provided, including the outcomes achieved. The topics and agenda of the webinars and the Joint Clustering Event were mutually designed and agreed upon with the “sister projects”.

The 3 webinars were mostly targeted to project teams, as the discussion revolved around topics that were in progress for at least one project at the time of organisation, therefore, external audience was not invited to avoid potential breach of confidentiality. On the contrary, the Joint Clustering Event was an open activity, as the focus of the projects was to generate insights related to food policy and the contribution of relevant experts and policy makers was deemed essential for the event’s success. The Joint Clustering Event was organised in hybrid format to maximise participation of stakeholders located in diverse areas.

Following the organisation of each event, a report was prepared by Q-PLAN and shared along with the photos, presentations, and recording (if any) with the sister projects. The reports offer references and resources related to the work of the other projects, to facilitate cross-fertilisation of outcomes by the other projects, along with contact information of the responsible partners (Task Leaders / Work Package Leaders) to spark further discussion and collaborations.

In general, the time plan of the joint clustering activities (Figure 2) outlines the original timeline of joint clustering activities with the “sister projects” as defined in D6.1. The actual design, implementation, and outcomes of the joint activities with other EU-funded projects are detailed in Chapter 4 of the present report (Figure 2). The following changes took place:

- The order of organisation between the Joint Clustering Event and the 3rd Joint Webinar was reversed.
- The Joint Clustering Event was foreseen to take place in M27 (March 2023) according to the agroBRIDGES GA. Instead, it took place in M33 (September 2023). The projects would have by then reached a higher level of maturity and present meaningful insights about their work and impact so far. Moreover, producing joint policy recommendations was decided to be amongst the event objectives to increase visibility and chances of adoption by policymakers, an activity best timed near the end of the projects.



4.1.1 1st Joint Webinar “Enhancing the social and economic impact of SFSCs”.

Date: Wednesday March 9th, 2022; 10.00 – 12.30 CET
Platform: Microsoft Teams
Projects: agroBRIDGES, COCOREADO, COACH
Attendees: 65 – 70 individuals from the project consortia

The 1st Joint Webinar focused on “Enhancing the social and economic impact of SFSCs”, during which the sister projects presented their methodologies for the identification of SFSC good practices and the assessment of the environmental, societal and economic impact.

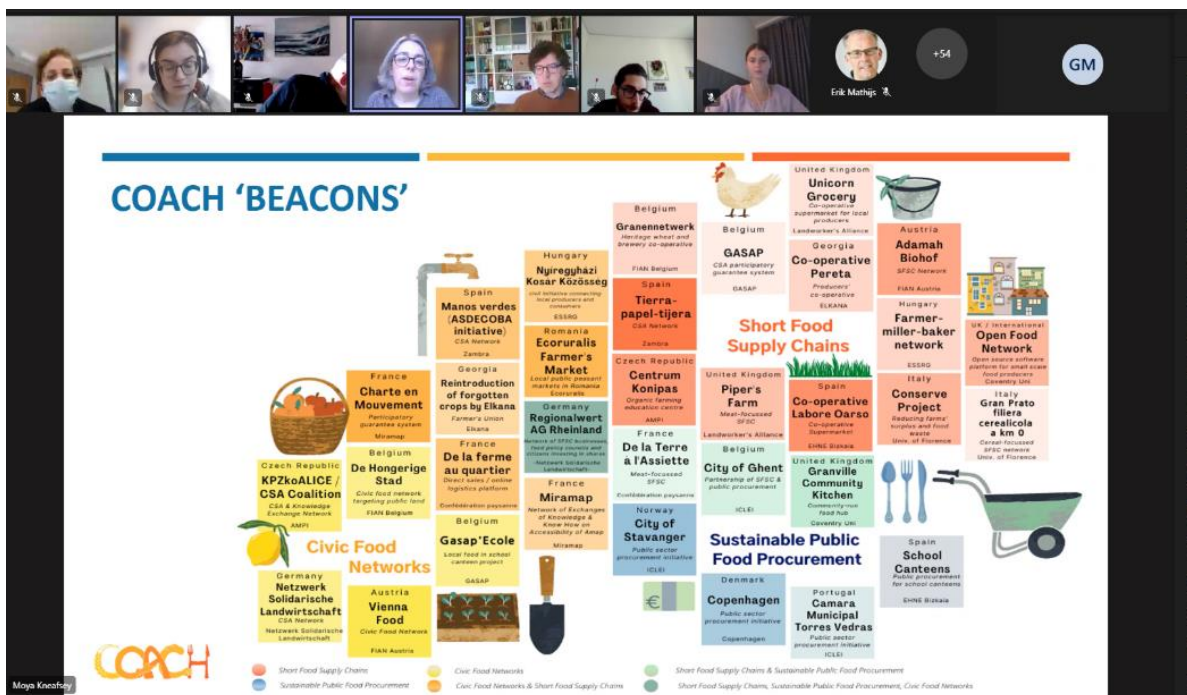


Figure 3: 1st Joint Webinar – COACH Session

A brief overview of each project was presented by the respective project coordinator (agroBRIDGES: Q-PLAN INTERNATIONAL, COCOREADO: KU Leuven, COACH: Coventry University), followed by the presentation of relevant approaches and methodologies on the following topics:

agroBRIDGES [Presented by CREA and WU]: The session focused on the methodology, process of selection of social, economic & environmental indicators related to the assessment of Short Food Supply Chain business models and sales channels. Moreover, the indicators were integrated in a sustainability assessment model that aims to guide farmers’ and producers’ decisions related to the selection of the optimal SFSC business models in terms of sustainability and based on the characteristics of their product, farm, location and preferences. The sustainability assessment model later evolved into the Decision Support Tool, offered in 12 languages via the agroBRIDGES Toolbox.



COCOREADO [Presented by ILVO]: In this session, the COCOREADO team presented the applied methodology for the selection, evaluation and assessment of the replicability of Novel and Fair Systems (NOFAs). Three (3) types of selection criteria have been used: geographic diversity, relationship of consumers and producers, sector of activity. Out of 97 initiatives discovered (long-list), 67 were identified as NOFAs. The stakeholder groups - that were involved in the final selection of the final good practices - were also presented, as well as the factors that signify the highest potential for replicability of NOFAs. The session included an interactive poll to engage participants.

COACH [Presented by ESSRG and UNIFI]: The COACH Capacity Building Program was presented and along with the taxonomy for definition of cross-cutting themes (Spotlights) in SFSC good practices; emphasizing the project's contribution beyond the mere identification of good practices, to provide support and empowerment through capacity building and participation. The project at the time had identified 9 Spotlights and set up Spotlight Resource Groups. Specific focus was placed on the "Innovative Governance of Territorial Food Systems" Spotlight. Finally, the COACH's methodology for measuring costs and benefits of participation of producers in Collaborative Agri-food chains, was presented. Social and environmental issues for each link in the value chain are accounted for in this approach. **The COACH methodology was noted to be strongly linked with the agroBRIDGES work on sustainability assessment indicators.**

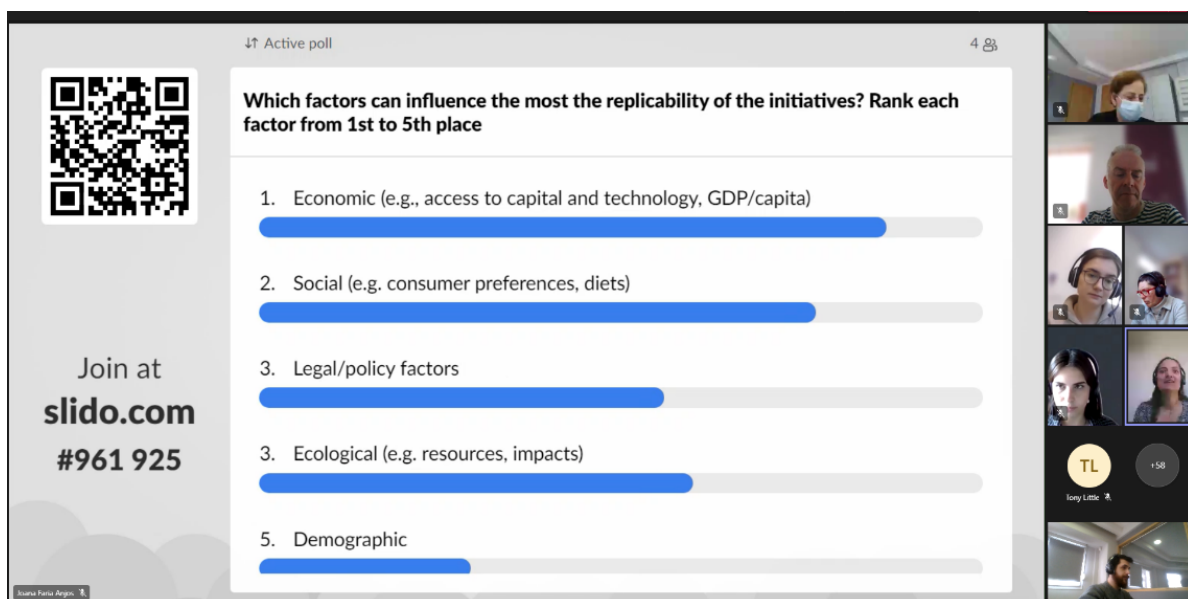


Figure 4: 1st Joint Webinar – COCOREADO Session

Discussion: A Q&A session took place including some afterthoughts on the presented issues. Some questions were related to details of the presented methodologies. Other questions targeted SFSCs in a broader sense, including remarks on the price volatility of SFSC products, support of low-income consumers to access healthy nutritious food through SFSCs, the potential practical measures that could be designed to upgrade farmers' and producers' negotiation power. The webinar concluded with the proposition and consensus to devote one joint webinar to the topic of **public food procurement in the context of SFSCs.**

4.1.2 2nd Joint Webinar “Practical tools, concepts and methodologies for the development of new or improved food systems and supply chains”

Date: Thursday, November 24th, 2022; 10.00 – 12.30 CET

Platform: Microsoft Teams

Projects: agroBRIDGES, COCOREADO, COACH, SISTERS

Attendees: 60 individuals from the project consortia & COCOREADO Ambassadors

The 2nd Joint Webinar focused on the **practical tools, approaches and methodologies used by the projects to develop new and improved agri-food systems**. During this webinar, the SISTERS project was introduced. The projects presented their approaches that directly target the end-users (i.e., farmers and practitioners) in order to improve their skills and support them in the adoption of SFSCs.



Figure 5: 2nd Joint Webinar – COCOREADO Session

COCOREADO [Presented by ILVO]: COCOREADO presented their interactive training programme to support the design and development of “seed initiatives” in the agri-food sector, in line with the SFSC definition. The program comprises interlinked sessions for COCOREADO Ambassadors and makes creative use of business modeling tools and design/system thinking approaches to pave the road to the market. The project provides initial funding to the six most promising seed initiatives following selection. This funding is intended to support the organization of co-creation sessions and to facilitate a better understanding of the needs of the market and end-users while developing their concepts. As the training progresses, the defining elements of the initiatives are refined, and the product-market fit is assessed through “reality-check” exercises. The final training session aims to help seed initiators to define and pursue their goals in reaching different target audiences and to develop their pitching skills.

COACH [Presented by Coventry University]: The core principles of the COACH Mentoring Programme were presented in detail. The programme supports the cultivation of mutually beneficial and trust-based mentor-



mentee relationships, a framework to gain holistic understanding of the mentees' current status, inspire transformative change, among other elements. The innerworkings and rules of the mentoring programme were explained, stressing the effectiveness of implementation in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the lack of direct human interaction. A Knowledge Exchange Event organised in September 2022 - the first face-to-face meeting that enabled direct interactions and “humanised” the mentor-mentee relationship after a long period of online meetings being the norm. Important dimensions of a mentoring programme include peer-to-peer mentoring and the ability of mentors to remain objective when advising mentees about crises they face, as stressed by one mentor. Finally, testimonials of the programme beneficiaries were shown.

agroBRIDGES [Presented by VTT]: The initial design of the agroBRIDGES Toolbox was presented, which is a collection of 12 tools and functionalities developed to support agri-food actors. All tools and the platform are available in 12 European languages, aiming to support agri-food actors in an equal number of countries (Beacon Regions) – Ireland, Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, France, Spain, Italy, Greece and Turkey. The toolbox offers four types of tools: (i) digital tools, (ii) communication material, (iii) event organisation guidelines and (iv) a training programme for public food procurement. A series of interactive polls was launched to capture the participants' initial impressions of the toolbox.



Figure 6: 2nd Joint Webinar – agroBRIDGES Session

SISTERS [Presented by Safe Food Advocacy – SAFE]: The objectives, value propositions and activities of the SISTERS project were introduced. The project aims to contribute to the reduction of food loss and waste by piloting 5 innovative solutions to support more efficient food management in production, logistics, processing, marketing, and consumption stages of the value chain. These include a **Short Chain Platform** for primary producers to sell directly to consumers products that do not meet commercialisation standards, **2 types of Smart Containers** for food transportation (Bulkbox & Storebox), **home-compostable bio-based food packaging**, a **standard** (“Seal of Excellence”) for **retail practices** that contribute to the reduction of food loss and waste and finally, a **dynamic label for food products** that also responds to the need of consumers for easily comprehensible food labelling systems.



4.1.3 3rd Joint Webinar “Public procurement of food”

Date: Wednesday June 16th, 2023; 14:00 – 16:00 CEST

Platform: Google Meet

Projects: agroBRIDGES, COCOREADO, COACH

Attendees: 25 individuals from the project consortia

The theme of the 3rd Joint Webinar was focused on **Public Food Procurement**. During past interactions with the teams of the sister projects, as well as in the previous webinars, the role of public food procurement in the advancement of SFSCs was highlighted several times. Although all 3 sister projects integrate this aspect as a core activity in their workplans, public food procurement was found to be a **highly complex** issue to address in practice, but also **change in this area was recognised as one of the most promising and impactful objectives for the sustainable transformation of food systems in Europe**.

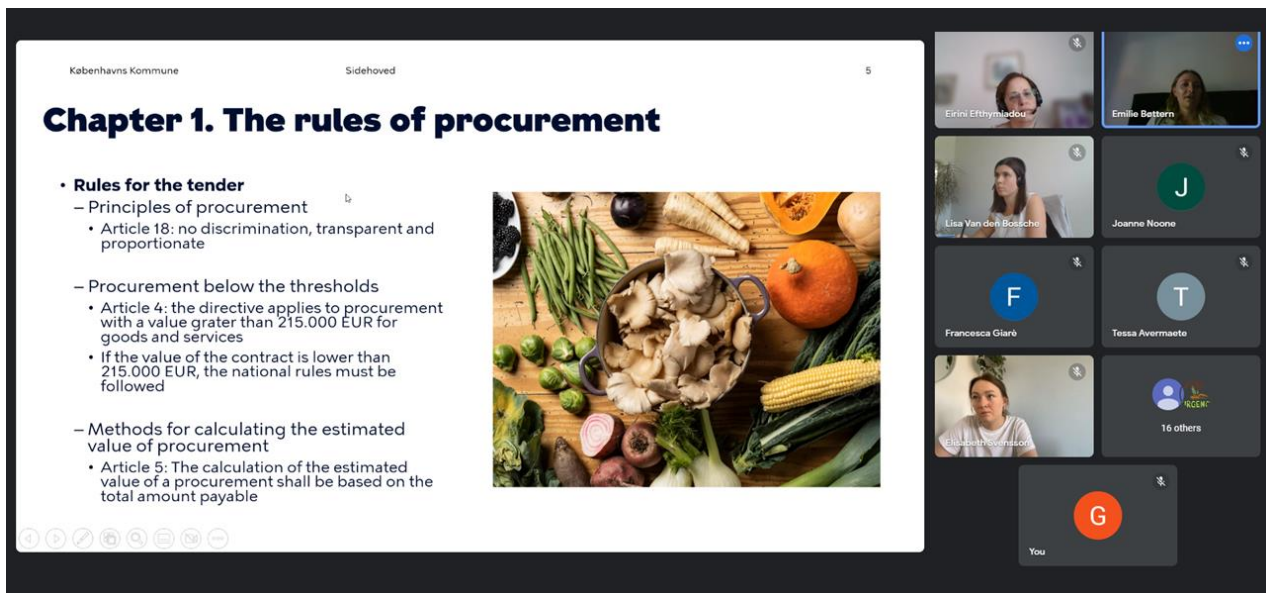


Figure 7: 3rd Joint Webinar – COACH Session

COCOREADO [Presented by University of Copenhagen]: In this session, the COCOREADO team presented the main insights of the project study related to barriers of small-scale farmers to participate in public food procurement processes. The research of COCOREADO was focused **on the food systems of 5 EU countries** namely Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Latvia and Portugal. These countries exhibit great diversity in food system dynamics (e.g., prevalence of organic production methods), food habits and priorities as well as procurement practices. The COCOREADO team used a **mix of data collection methods** including semi-structured interviews, surveys, focus groups and desk research, involving farmers, experts, NGOs, procurement officers and other stakeholders.

agroBRIDGES [Presented by Q-PLAN]: During the initial stages of the project, a study on public food procurement frameworks and their relation to SFSCs was held, the main results of which were summarised in this session. The legal framework related to SFSCs including public food procurement strategies, tools and processes in 12 European countries (Denmark, France, Finland, Italy, Spain, Denmark, Netherlands, Poland,



Latvia, Lithuania, Greece, Turkey) was studied in tandem with EU-wide strategies and policies. Important barriers, good practices and recommendations were extracted from the regional analyses to derive patterns and trends. Based on this study and further research, the **“Support for Food Procurement” tool** was developed by **CTA (Technological Corporation of Andalusia)** and was integrated in the **agroBRIDGES Toolbox, available in 12 European languages**. The training programme offers videos, guides and infographics for farmers /producers and public food procurement professionals.

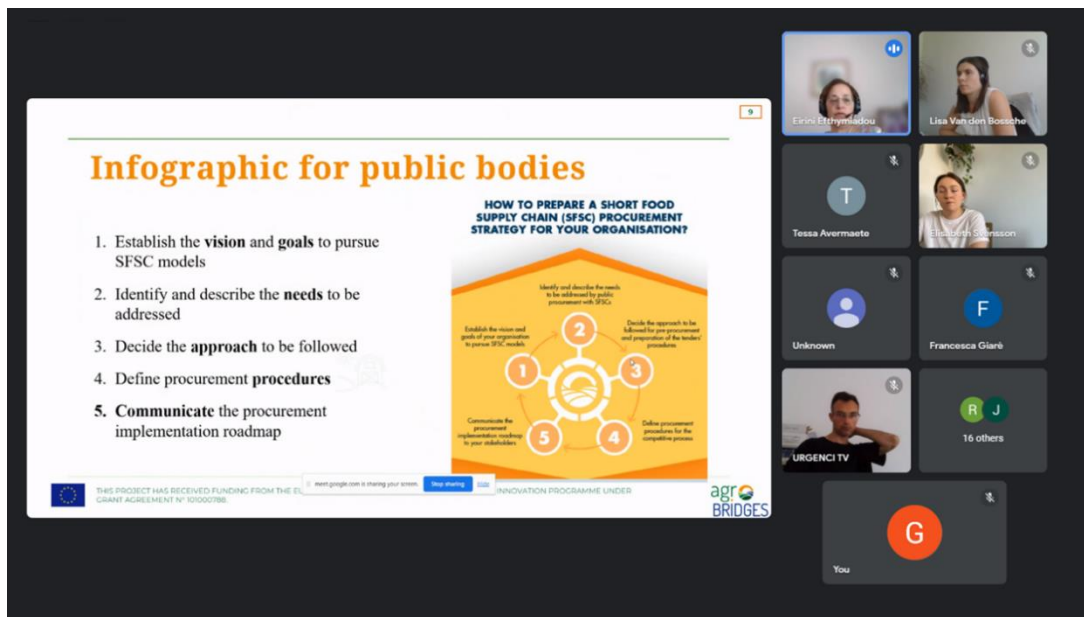


Figure 8: 3rd Joint Webinar – agroBRIDGES Session

COACH [Presented by City of Copenhagen]: In this session the **COACH toolkit “Legal Guide on Farm to Fork Procurement”** was introduced. This toolkit aims to support small-scale farmers and companies to participate in public food tendering more easily and facilitate access to legal advice on developing inclusive food procurement procedures for public organizations. The guide also focuses on how to develop procurement mechanisms and criteria that advance the Farm to Fork Strategy, i.e. fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food systems.



4.1.4 Joint Clustering Event “Improving Food Systems and Value Chains”

Date: Thursday, 21st September 2023; 09:00 – 14:00 CEST

Venue: “NH Collection Brussels Grand Sablon” Hotel, Brussels, Belgium

Platform: MS Teams

Projects: agroBRIDGES, COCOREADO, COACH, BEATLES

Attendees: 113 (77 online & 36 in-person)

The Joint Clustering Event was the first physical meeting of the sister projects’ teams, following and building upon fruitful online collaboration that was established over the past 3 years. Among other former actions, the sister projects in collaboration with other EU-funded projects, organized 3 thematically focused webinars on issues related to the development of sustainable food systems and Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) in particular. In this event, the BEATLES project team was invited to contribute to the discussion.

The Joint Clustering Event was a great opportunity to see things from a **high-level perspective** as that all sister projects have reached a **maturity level that allows sharing of insights and experiences with a broader audience and policy makers**. The BEATLES project, on the other hand, is the newest project in the group, with its activities having a promising potential to carry on the legacy of the sister projects. To this end, the core outcomes of this event were to:

- Present to a **wider audience** the projects’ novel approaches, methodologies, results and tools that support the transformation of territorial food systems into sustainable, mutually beneficial and socially constructing ecosystems.
- Agree on a set of **policy recommendations complemented by a practical toolkit for public institutions and public food procurers** at local, regional, national and international levels to revisit their practices in line with the goals and vision of the EU (e.g., Farm2Fork strategy, New CAP, etc.).

Venue selection and set-up:

The Joint Clustering Event was organised in Brussels, to ensure maximum in-person participation and convenience for the project teams and the audience. The event and venue logistics were coordinated by Q-PLAN INTERNATIONAL and the agroBRIDGES project. The Joint Clustering Event was hosted in **NH Collection Hotel Grand Sablon**, close to the city center. The meeting room was equipped with the necessary audiovisual equipment, complemented with adequate technical support services, to facilitate online attendance.



Figure 9: Overview of the hotel and main event space

Speaker engagement and invitations:

The project teams of COCOREADO, COACH and BEATLES projects supported the agroBRIDGES project team in the development of the agenda and session topics, engagement of the most relevant speakers, invitations, and dissemination of the event to their consortia and their networks. The extended cluster of relevant projects were invited to participate, including FOODRUS, Ploutos, SISTERS, ClieNFarms, as well as related networks and initiatives, such as the CCN, Food2030 Project Collaboration Network, EBN.



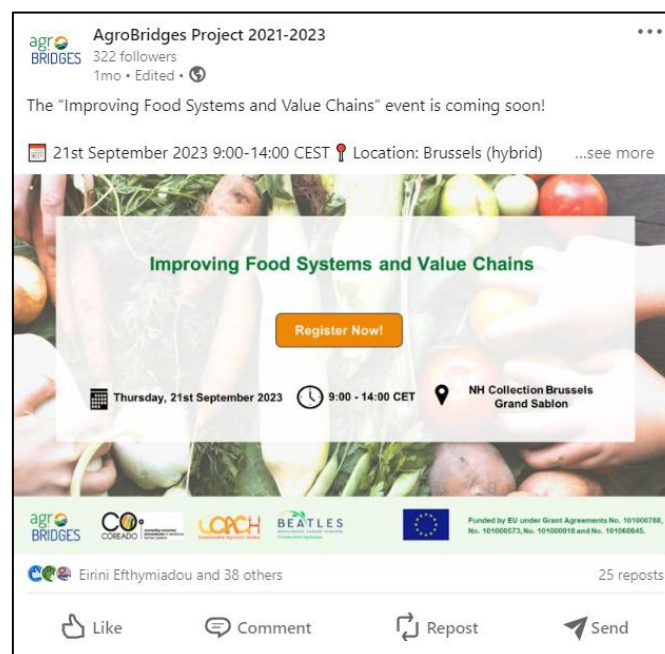
Social media campaign:

The event was also promoted in a series of social media announcements approximately 2 weeks in advance. The social media posts were promoted intensely by individuals, companies / partners and project accounts.

Figure 10: Event announcement on Twitter



Figure 11: Event announcement on LinkedIn



Registrations and participation:

More than **150 individuals expressed interest in the event**, via the online registration form of the event. Approximately 73% of registrants registered for the online session and the rest (27%) for in-person attendance. The most represented audience groups included: (i) Trainers, educators and educational institutions (23.7%), (ii) policy makers, policy organisations and public bodies (19.9%), clusters, hubs and other agri-food business support organisations (10.9%) and farmers / producers (9%). The overall distribution

of the event registrants was in line with the concept and objectives of the event, i.e. to target enabling organisations and multipliers, while the participation of policy makers was found to be satisfactory.

The event was attended by **113 individuals**, both online (77) and in-person (36), effectively reaching the respective target set for this activity. All individuals involved in the activity provided valid consent for the processing of their personal data in line with the GDPR and the agroBRIDGES Ethics provisions, either via the online registration form and/or in-person.

Clustering Event Sessions:



Figure 12: Joint Clustering Event – COCOREADO Session

COCOREADO [Presented by KU Leuven]: This session was a follow-up on the COCOREADO session of the 1st Joint Webinar. More specifically, the approach followed for the selection, evaluation and replication of Novel and Fair Systems – NOFAs was presented end-to-end. To provide a solid conceptual basis for the support of NOFAs, COCOREADO put forth:

- Three (3) **novel SFSC typologies** based on the distribution of agrifood marketing functions and the role farmers, intermediaries and consumers assume in SFSC systems.
- A **systemic evaluation assessment framework** to link characteristics of NOFAs with their socioeconomic and environmental impact.
- A **replicability framework** to make better sense of the **complexity of the knowledge transfer process** as well as the **importance of contextual factors** that lead to the success of a good practice but might also influence the success of replication in a different environment.

To support replication in practice, COCOREADO developed 14 **replication roadmaps** for successful SFSC cases in Europe, offering a **simple and visually appealing, yet comprehensive tool** presenting the innerworkings of innovative SFSC initiatives, offering contextual information about the reasons of success to enable meaningful knowledge transfer and replication in other countries / regions.



Figure 13: Joint Clustering Event – agroBRIDGES Session

agroBRIDGES [Presented by Q-PLAN INTERNATIONAL]: This session focused on the approach and objectives of the agroBRIDGES project to “build bridges between producers and consumers” and improve the market position of farmers through SFSCs. A set of challenges was presented along with the proposed agroBRIDGES solution in terms of insights, activities, useful material and digital functionalities. Some highlights include:

- **A differential approach is needed to raise awareness of consumers and producers** on the socio-economic and environmental benefits of SFSCs for local development and sustainability. Farmers’ awareness is based on **inspiration** (good practices) and better understanding of **SFSC business models**. **Health, nutrition and education** are the focal points for consumers’ awareness.
- **Skills building and digital tools for small-scale farmers** through guides and practical tools are essential for (i) **communication, branding and storytelling**, (ii) transparent and understandable **labelling** of local products, (iii) **online platforms** for resource sharing, direct sales facilitation and formation of business ideas with consumer validation.
- **Business collaboration** through matchmaking events **and community engagement** through events that promote the local food culture and local products as well as the creation of stronger bonds between consumers and producers.

The session closed with a presentation of the project’s **impact** to date and the realisation that the full potential of the agroBRIDGES tools and support, **is dependent on the farmers’ and producers’ adoption of the agroBRIDGES toolbox**. For this to happen, advisors, networks, clusters and other facilitators are being approached first, through the agroBRIDGES “**train-the-trainers**” activities, to act as multipliers, having the capacity to build trust-based relationships with local farmers and businesses.



Figure 14: Joint Clustering Event – COACH Session

COACH [Presented by Coventry University & City of Copenhagen]: The COACH project activities are founded in the concept of **Territorial Food Systems**, as a localised and comprehensive sets of actors, infrastructure and values operating under (localised) participatory governance models. The project has performed a wide range of activities to facilitate collaboration among food system actors and support scaling up of SFSCs, such as **coaching and mentoring, multi-actor dialogues** and **international knowledge exchange**. COACH has also generated significant amounts of knowledge and practical material, embedded in the **Communications, Learning and Innovation Platform (CLIP)**.

The session focused on the **COACH Legal Guide for Food Procurement**. This toolkit introduces the concept of multi-actor dialogues in the public food tendering processes and provides practical examples of the successful integration of SFSCs and local food in the public plate. Such an example is the **City of Copenhagen**, which aims to promote healthy, nutritious and sustainable food in the city's public facilities through its Food Strategy, driven by a target for **organic food comprising 90% of public meals³** for local citizens. To achieve this target better inclusion of SMEs in public tenders need to be ensured, promoting for instance farm visits and other activities or the implementation of the **Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS)** for seasonal fruits and vegetables and tendering through online platforms. The guide also offers **practical legal advice, tips and tricks** for procurers and also **templates** for the design of tendering processes in line with successful cases. The legal toolkit is easily accessible via the Communications, Learning and Innovation Platform – CLIP of the COACH project.

³The City of Copenhagen Food Strategy 2019 (URL: <https://maaltider.kk.dk/sites/default/files/2022-06/The%20City%20of%20Copenhagen%20Food%20Strategy%202019.pdf>)



Figure 15: Joint Clustering Event – BEATLES Session

BEATLES [Presented by AEIDL]: In this session, the BEATLES project was presented for the first time to the “sister” projects. The focus of BEATLES is on behavioural change towards the adoption of sustainable practices in agri-food systems. Although having a slightly different focal point, implications and results of BEATLES have useful applications and relevance for SFSCs.

The BEATLES team presented insights from the **extensive policy literature review of BEATLES⁴** and the related outcomes of the co-creation exercises performed with local ecosystems in 5 countries⁵. The study focuses on the *status quo* and evolution of EU policies related to sustainable agriculture and food systems, such as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the Farm to Fork Strategy. The **importance of the CAP as a driver for a wider adoption of climate-smart farming (CSA)⁶**, was stressed despite the several limitations and drawbacks in its design that may hamper progress in this front.

The co-creation exercise also revealed perceived barriers for the adoption of CSA practices that stem from the current policy and legal framework. These are including, *inter alia*, the high **complexity** of the CAP and **limited capacity of local policy makers** to advise farmers, **fast-paced changes in policy** that reduce the ability of farmers to conform with legislation and adopt new practices, **bureaucracy**, lack of knowledge on CSA practices, insufficient subsidies for farmers.

A mix of incentives and opportunities were proposed to increase the effectiveness of policies and regulations, such as the promotion of **tailored approaches** in national CAP strategies, **simplification** of farmers’ access to support measures, **better financing and investment**, farmers’ training and consumers awareness raising on smart farming practices, **improved digitalization** and **increased flexibility** of health and hygiene regulations.

⁴ BEATLES website “BEATLES reviews CAP policies and frameworks supporting Climate Smart Agriculture” (URL:

⁵ BEATLES Use Cases (URL: <https://beatles-project.eu/use-cases/>)

⁶ Not to be confused with Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), one of the SFSC business models.



Panel on joint policy recommendations



Figure 16: Joint Clustering Event – Panel Discussion Session

A panel discussion took place during the Joint Clustering Event in Brussels on **September 21st, 2023**, among representatives of the 4 EU projects to reach a set of commonly agreed points regarding actions and reforms in public policy to expand the projects' impact and outreach. The panel synthesis was:

- **Eirini Efthymiadou** (Q-PLAN: Coordinator of the agroBRIDGES project) - moderator
- **Erik Mathijs** (KU Leuven: Coordinator of the COCOREADO project)
- **Peter Defranceschi** (ICLEI: Partner of the COACH project consortium)
- **Serafin Pazos Vidal** (European Association for Innovation in Local Development - AEIDL: Partner of the BEATLES project consortium)

The outcomes of the panel discussions and the resulting policy recommendations were elaborated as a separate document, to disseminate to policy makers and EU institutions. The agreed joint policy recommendations of the “sister” projects are available in [Annex II](#) of the present report.

The event concluded with a buffet lunch for networking among the projects and the audience.



4.1.5 *Ad hoc and communication activities*

Beyond scheduled joint actions described on the Joint Clustering Plan (D6.1), the “sister” projects identified further collaboration opportunities, whenever possible, with a view to supporting each other’s work and tap in the team members’ expertise. Such instances are provided below. However, there were also several other communications among the projects to exchange support.

- Participation of the COCOREADO coordinator in the **agroBRIDGES Experts Advisory Board** and relevant meetings that involve this group of experts, for instance, the **online pan-European co-creation workshop** that took place on October 14th, 2021, in the frame of agroBRIDGES Task 1.6. This workshop focused on the evaluation of business models for SFSCs that were designed in local workshops, design of unique selling points and marketing messages for farmers and producers.
- Participation of the “sister” project team members as experts in the **DELPHI rounds** that were organised in agroBRIDGES Task 2.2 by CREA with an objective to support the selection and rationalization of economic, social and environmental indicators to be used for the sustainability assessment of SFSC business models and sales channels.
- agroBRIDGES participated in the COCOREADO welcoming event for the selected Ambassadors that took place on February 8th, 2022.
- **A dedicated session about the agroBRIDGES Toolbox** was held with the partners of COCOREADO and COACH, on 22nd February 2023, as a follow up activity of the 2nd Joint Webinar. The training focused on the presentation of the tools and functionalities encapsulated in the agroBRIDGES toolbox, gather feedback and exchange resources to expand the outreach of the toolbox to a wider audience in tandem roll-out activities of WP5 (e.g. COCOREADO Ambassadors).
- Following the agroBRIDGES Toolbox presentation, **the “sister” project teams were granted access prior to its official release to identify potential uses in the frame of COCOREADO and COASH while also validating the developed content.**

Ad hoc cross-promotion of activities of the projects were carried out either internally (to the consortia members) **or externally** (on social media and project websites). Figure 17 **illustrates just a small sample of joint promotion and communication carried out by the projects of the inner and wider cluster of projects.**



AgroBridges Project 2021-2023 reposted
COCOREADO,H2020 @cocoreado · Aug 3, 2021
 "Attract innovative businesses, provide access to quality jobs, promote new and improved skills, ensure better infrastructure and services, and leverage the role of sustainable agriculture and diversified economic activities."
cocoreado.eu/mijarc-europe-...
[@MIJARC_Europe](https://twitter.com/MIJARC_Europe)



1 6 10

AgroBridges Project 2021-2023 @agorbridges_EU · Mar 23
 Today! @AgriFoodDIH_LTU is organizing the 1st Co-Creation workshop together with use case stakeholders to discuss the use-case (wheat) & start the co-creation process!
 📅 March 23rd, 2023
 🕒 15:15 – 17:30 (local time)
 🔗 For more Information: lnkd.in/d/wXP2qj



1 4 118

Reposts from "sister" project Twitter (X) accounts

SISTERS
 519 followers
 2w · 🌱
Fruit Attraction 2023 wrap up! 🍌🍌

The journey from #FarmToTable involves multiple stages, each with its ...see more

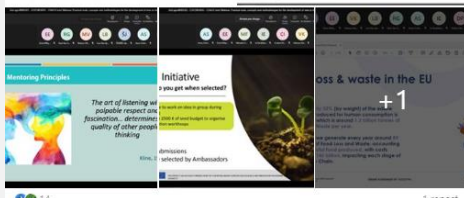
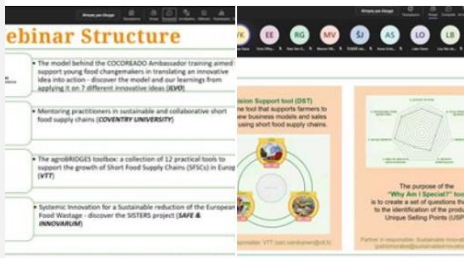


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Celebrate Comment Repost Send

SISTERS project participation in pan-European roll-out event in Madrid (Fruit Attraction Exhibition)

AgroBridges Project 2021-2023
 241 followers
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 agroBRIDGES co-organized the 2nd Joint Webinar with the **COCOREADO**, **#COACH_EUProject** and **SISTERS** Projects on November 24th.
 ...see more



14 1 repost

agroBRIDGES post on the outcomes of the 2nd Joint Webinar with COCOREADO, COACH and SISTERS.



September 21, 2023

Join EU|BIC Associate Q-plan for the "Improving Food Systems and Value Chains" Event in Brussels

Join Q-plan in Brussels on 21st September 2023, or attend online, for the "Improving Food Systems and Value Chains" event. Four EU projects - agroBRIDGES, COCOREADO, COACH, and BEATLES - unite to present innovative concepts and recommendations for enhancing food systems in Europe. Open to all stakeholders in the food value chain. Register now to be part of this transformative event.

Sofia Katechi

Promotion of the Joint Clustering Event by the European Business Network (EBN).

Figure 17: Media collaborations with the "sister" projects & EU networks



4.2 Activities with the wider cluster of EU projects

In the context of connections with the wider cluster of projects as listed in Section 3.1.1, agroBRIDGES was presented to several workshops and knowledge exchange events, and also project partners offered insights to more specific discussions on issues such as policy, public food procurement, stakeholder engagement and others.

4.2.1 Activities that took place in 2021

- **agroBRIDGES participated in the September 2021 bi-monthly digital meeting of the projects funded under Horizon 2020 RUR-06-2020 (CO-FRESH, FAIRCHAIN, PLOUTOS) and RUR-07-2020 (FOODRUS, LOWINFOOD)** with the aim of formulating a wider cluster with those projects, also including all RUR-05-2020 projects, and creating a common clustering plan. During this meeting, collaboration opportunities with the projects were discussed and led to the definition of the Joint Clustering Plan strategy with respect to the “wider” cluster of projects.
- **[Webinar](#): “Collaborative Sustainable Business Model Archetypes in Practice”**, organised by PLOUTOS on 3rd November 2021.

4.2.2 Activities that took place in 2022

- **[Webinar](#): Cooperation and collaboration network (CCN) on “food losses and waste”**, organised by FOODRUS on 16th February 2022. – [Event report](#)
- **[Research and Innovation Workshop](#): ‘NUÁIL!’ between the agroBRIDGES and PLOUTOS projects** on 30th June 2022, organised by MTU and TGC. The event was a knowledge sharing and policy discussion workshop for producers, researchers, public agencies, policy makers and other agri-food stakeholders in Ireland. Partners and participants from the agroBRIDGES and PLOUTOS projects attended the event.
- **[Digital workshop](#): “Systemic innovations & sustainable practices across the agri-food value chain”**, organised by the SISTERS project on 3rd June 2022, during the EU Green Week. SISTERS, together with COOPID, MANDALA and agroBRIDGES projects took a closer look at the different linkages of the agri-food value chain while addressing the importance of food security and a sustainable food system. – [Event video](#)
- **[Digital workshop](#): “Policy Recommendations for a Sustainable Agri-Food Sector Agenda”** organised by the PLOUTOS project on September 23rd, 2022.
- **“Climate neutrality from Farm to Fork: What synergies between projects in the EU and beyond?”** organised online by the ClieNFarms project on October 12th, 2022.
- **[Webinar](#): “Combating food losses and waste at the primary production level”** webinar organised by the SISTERS project on October 20th, 2022. – [Event video](#)
- **[Webinar](#): 1st Bioeconomy Winter Webinar “Food waste prevention & utilization across the value chain”** on organized by COOPID project in collaboration with the agroBRIDGES Irish Agropreneur series on 1st December 2022. Partners in MTU and TGC led the organization. During the event, TGC presented the agroBRIDGES project and some of the tools from the agroBRIDGES toolbox as an example of food waste reduction through the promotion of direct relationships between producers



and consumers and leveraging on technology to provide precise supplies that meet consumers' demands. – [Event video](#)

4.2.3 Activities that took place in 2023

- **Online event: 3rd Working Group meeting of the SISTERS project** on 31st January 2023. In this event, agroBRIDGES participated with COCOREADO to present recent developments and joint actions. The 2nd Joint Webinar report is featured on the SISTERS website.
- **Online event: Cooperation session** organised by CCN – FOODRUS project on 7th February 2023 to present agroBRIDGES' experience with Stakeholder engagement activities with emphasis on the multi-actor framework. – [Event report](#)
- **Webinar: 3rd Webinar of the FOODRUS “Sustainable Food Systems” series**, related to Food Waste Prevention through Reuse and Upcycling on February 27th, 2023. – [Event report](#)
- **Meeting of EBN Sustainability, Agrifood and Health Special Interest Group** held online on 26th April 2023, during which agroBRIDGES was pitched among other projects.
- **First meeting of the PREMIERE MEDITERRANEAN MACRO-REGIONAL ADVISORY PANEL** held online on 6th November 2023, during which experience and lessons learnt from the multi-actor approach in agroBRIDGES, among other projects, was shared.

4.3 Activities with the SCAR AKIS SWG

Activities implemented with the **SCAR AKIS SWG** consisted of the participation in the meetings of the **fifth mandate of the group** to present the project objectives and initial activities in their first meeting, and then present updated activities in their next meeting. During the meetings **information packages** were shared with the SCAR AKIS SWG members so that they better understand the project.

The SCAR AKIS SWG in its fifth mandate included as a topic of discussion the achievement of greater impact of the multi-actor approach in the European Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS), with specific reference to food systems. In light of this, a joint meeting between the SCAR FOOD SYSTEMS SWG and the coordinators of several Horizon 2020 projects dealing with value chains, including agroBRIDGES, were organized. However, a real synergy in terms of topics discussed was not created. The reason for this lies in the fact that the analysis of the organisation and functioning of value chains was not included in the topics of the fifth mandate of the group. Furthermore, as already mentioned above, discussions about preparing the new CAP National Strategic Plans, with specific reference to the new requirements related to the organisation of AKIS, took up most of the agenda time of the group.

Following the project's objective of rolling-out the agroBRIDGES Toolbox at European level, replicating it for other sectors and coordinating with other initiatives to boost SFSCs consolidation in Europe, **38 practice abstracts (PAs)** in the EIP AGRI format have been produced using different outputs from the project, so others could leverage on them:

- Twenty-four (24) practice abstracts are dedicated to describing the methodology and format of different co-creation exercises delivered in the Beacon regions (practices are available both in English and national language).



- Thirteen (13) practice abstracts concern the agroBRIDGES Toolbox, each one dedicated to a single tool plus one for the entire toolbox.
- One (1) practice abstract is dedicated to the setup of SFSC business models demonstrated by the project.

The PAs have been published on the EIP Agri website and on Zenodo repository.

Moreover **20 video PAs** have been produced and upload on the project's YouTube channel ([agroBRIDGES - YouTube](#)).

4.3.1 Activities that took place in the SCAR AKIS SWG

The objectives and activities of the agroBRIDGES project were presented during the sixth meeting of the **fifth mandate of the group** (1-2 June 2021) in the slot "MA projects with the objective 'Connecting consumers with producers', including food systems under public procurement (RUR 5 – Horizon 2020)".

Additionally, **three information packages** were shared with the SCAR AKIS SWG (Annex III). The first information package was shared at the beginning of the project (24-26 March 2021) and in this occasion was shared ppt presentation, the brochure, and the info sheets. The second information package was shared in the 18th month of the project and showed the intermediate results of the project (20-21 June 2022); the third one was shared in the 35th month of the project (22-23 November 2023), including the results of the project and the document with the **joint policy recommendations** to improve food systems and the value chains.



5. Impact & Conclusions

The impact of agroBRIDGES clustering activities and synergies with EU networks and projects has already started to materialise in diverse forms. The knowledge exchange and synergies that took place among the project teams contributed to the enrichment of their respective methodological frameworks, activities and key messages / value propositions.

All the sister projects and other several related projects employ multi-actor approaches / frameworks (e.g., agroBRIDGES, COCOREADO, COACH, PLOUTOS, LOWINFOOD, etc.) involving the end users in their activities since the beginning and on a continuous basis. Multi-actor frameworks facilitate the knowledge transfer, stemming from synergic and clustering activities to the end users, adjusted to the particular focus and objectives of each project.

The projects of the inner and wider cluster offer services, tools, knowledge and support to farmers, consumers, intermediaries, policy makers and other multipliers focusing on sustainable agri-food, SFSC development, food waste reduction, public food procurement, consumer awareness. As the number of projects is quite large and for simplicity, our focus will remain on the collective impact of the “sister” projects – agroBRIDGES, COCOREADO and COACH. **The collective impact of agrifood-related EU-funded projects is worth researching further in the frame of an impact study.**

Annex I of the report summarises the collective contribution to SFSC knowledge, with studies, good practices, training material, community engagement and policy frameworks.

The Joint Clustering Plan has also contributed with novelties to improve synergy building and collective impact of EU-funded projects. Clustering frameworks have been integrated in the workplan of several new agri-food related projects, promising to continue the legacy of the “sister projects”.

The participation in the SCAR -AKIS SWG supports spreading the knowledge generated by the project and the project results and accelerates the uptake of end-user materials produced by the agroBRIDGES project.

Annex

Annex I – Collective contribution of the “sister projects” to the development of SFSCs

Table 5: Map of “sister” projects’ collective contributions

Topic	agroBRIDGES	COCOREADO	COACH
Improved knowledge on SFSCs and sustainable food systems			
Needs and barriers of small-scale farmers	agroBRIDGES D1.2 “Report on European and regional analysis of producer and consumer needs and barriers towards SFSC implementation”.	Barriers for small-scale farmers in public food procurement – categorised in 6 criteria (priority, terms and criteria, resources, cooperation, trust, motivation) and 5 country examples.	
Business models for SFSCs	<p>5 Business model archetypes for SFSCs are examined in agroBRIDGES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Community Supported Agriculture</u> - <u>Face-to-face</u> - <u>Retail trade</u> - <u>Online trade</u> - <u>Improved logistics</u> <p>The business models and examples are available in 12 European languages in the <u>Decision Support Tool</u>.</p>	Business models of specific case studies are provided in <u>roadmaps for replication</u> of Novel and Fair Systems.	COACH D2.2 “Report on costs and margins from the Case Studies” including a methodological framework, analysis of performance of 13 Beacons (cases studies) and analysis.
Sustainability assessment for SFSCs	agroBRIDGES D2.2 “SFSC sustainability assessment model for the Short Food Supply Chain” including the indicators and design of the decision rules for selection of SFSC business models.	COCOREADO D2.3 “Three frameworks for selection, evaluation and replicability of innovative initiatives”	COACH D2.2 “Report on costs and margins from the Case Studies”

Topic	agroBRIDGES	COCOREADO	COACH
Mapping of SFSC and sustainable food initiatives	Identification of 51 good practices in SFSC from 12 European countries, presented using an EIP-AGRI Practice Abstract format.	Long list of 90+ initiatives were identified and evaluated to select the final list of Novel and Fair Systems.	Featured agrifood good practices and case studies (Beacons) from 16 European countries.
Good practices, cases studies and replicability	agroBRIDGES Interactive Catalogue featuring the 51 identified good practices. agroBRIDGES “Yes, you can!” guide and video offering deeper analysis in one case per country – available in 12 languages.	14 Novel and Fair Systems featured in 11 countries along with an evaluation of their features and <u>roadmaps for replication</u> .	Full narrative and filtering of Beacons is available on the Living Library of Collaborative Short Food Supply Chains on the Communications, Learning and Innovation Platform.
Policy aspects of SFSCs			
Policy studies	Review of SFSC policy aspects (labelling, public food procurement, SFSC incentives, regulations) in the EU and 12 European countries.	Barriers for small-scale farmers in public food procurement – categorised in 6 criteria (priority, terms and criteria, resources, cooperation, trust, motivation) and 5 country examples.	N/A
Good practices on public food procurement	N/A	Report on good practices for sustainable public food procurement (contract value, price-to-quality ratio, clarity of sustainability criteria, contract management), including 8 case studies.	Good practices of sustainable public food procurement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Bergamo, Italy</u> - <u>Copenhagen, Denmark</u> - <u>Dordogne, France</u> - <u>Torres Vedras, Portugal</u> - <u>Växjö, Sweden</u> - <u>Ghent, Belgium</u>
Policy briefs & recommendations	N/A	COCOREADO Policy Briefs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lowering barriers for producers to participate in sustainable public procurement. 	COACH Policy Briefs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public Food Procurement as and Territorial Food Systems.

Topic	agroBRIDGES	COCOREADO	COACH
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The role of local and regional governments in the transition to territorial food systems. - Free school meals sourced from small-scale farmers. - Human rights and EU food system transformation - Good public policies to increase farmers' benefits from SFSCs.
Engagement and empowerment methodologies			
Community engagement (networks & events)	<p>Multi-actor Framework set up in 12 countries and the EU, involving nearly 200 individuals such as farmers, intermediaries, consumers, policy makers, technology providers, educators, etc.</p> <p>12 Co-creation workshops in Beacon Regions and 1 pan-European workshop to analyse success cases, needs, business models of SFSCs.</p> <p>13 “Let’s meet!” events organized in Beacon Regions to introduce local SFSCs to consumers, in 4 supported event formats.</p> <p>11 “Let’s build our SFSC” events for online B2B matchmaking in the agri-food sector.</p> <p>24 regional and national + 1 pan-European roll-out events to disseminate and facilitate the uptake of the agroBRIDGES methodologies and toolbox. [Results not available yet]</p>	<p>Community of COCOREADO Ambassadors, involving 37 individuals from 20 countries with activity as farmers, consultants, entrepreneurs, activists, researchers and food enthusiasts.</p> <p>COCOREADO Ambassadors’ training sessions. Results and information in <u>COCOREADO D5.2</u> “Feedback on Replication”.</p>	<p>10 Spotlight Encounters to discuss critical aspects of territorial food systems (<u>spotlights</u>), in the context of the Beacons. The activities actively involved representatives and collaborators of these success cases. Results available in <u>COACH D2.4</u> “Spotlight Analysis”.</p> <p>11 Multi-Actor Dialogues organised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 city-region multi-actor dialogues on Farm-to-Fork public procurement - 1 European multi-actor dialogues on Farm-to-Fork public procurement - 8 multi-actor dialogues on collaborative, territorial food systems <p>Results available in <u>COACH D3.1</u> “Summary of outcomes of Multi-Actor Dialogues”.</p>

Topic	agroBRIDGES	COCOREADO	COACH
Skills and capacity building programmes	<u>Train-the-trainers programme</u> for the agroBRIDGES toolbox, including training videos and user guide on the agroBRIDGES tools.	Development and financial support for 6 <u>seed initiatives</u> by COCOREADO Ambassadors, to co-create approaches that will facilitate access to the market.	<u>Coaching and mentoring programme:</u> principles and supporting documentation.
Tools, guides and training material			
Farmers and other practitioners	agroBRIDGES Toolbox available in 12 languages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Digital tools</u> (Decision Support Tool, agroBRIDGES Net, Smart Delivery, Hear my voice) - <u>Communication tools</u> (Labelling, Unique Selling Point identification, SFSC good practices, social media guide) - <u>Event organization</u> (physical events, online B2B matchmaking events) 	<u>COCOREADO Ambassadors training toolkit</u> (not published yet).	<u>Learning module on Costs & Benefits (C&B)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 tools for qualitative and quantitative self-assessment - Training videos - Good practices - Documents and resources <u>Alternative grain networks</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online course - Beacon examples <u>Food accessibility:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender and feminist perspectives (video & podcasts) - Accessibility in Community-Supported Agriculture (guide) - Right to food and nutrition (guides – multilingual)
Consumers	<u>“Know your local food”</u> tool including guide, webinars, and educational material.
Public food procurement	<u>agroBRIDGES Support for Food Procurement training programme</u> for public procurers and farmers – available in 12 European languages.		<u>COACH Farm-to-fork procurement toolkit</u> for public procurers and small-scale farmers.

Topic	agroBRIDGES	COCOREADO	COACH
Knowledge collection, repositories and replication			
Knowledge repositories	agroBRIDGES Toolbox agroBRIDGES Catalogue of Resources agroBRIDGES Zenodo publications	COCOREADO website (Results section)	Communications, Learning & Innovation Platform (CLIP)
Knowledge replication (Practice Abstracts)	agroBRIDGES Practice Abstracts (38 published) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Zenodo: Regional PAs - Zenodo: Toolbox PAs - Zenodo: Profitability assessment for SFSCs - EIP-AGRI 	COCOREADO Practice Abstracts (20 published) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - COCOREADO website 	COACH Practice Abstracts (5 published) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CORDIS - EIP-AGRI



Annex II – Joint Policy Recommendations

Joint policy recommendations for improving food systems & value chains

The following policy recommendations have been drafted based on the agroBRIDGES, COCOREADO, COACH and BEATLES projects' results and related tools, addressing food sustainability policies and public food procurement strategies at various governance levels (regional, national, EU level), while making use of national /regional examples and case studies.

The aim of this document is to empower policy makers towards developing conducive policies and incentives to promote **local food consumption models** and maximise the benefits for human health, promote socioeconomic development and create economic benefits in a sustainable and equitable manner.

A panel discussion took place during the Joint Clustering Event in Brussels on **September 21st, 2023**, among representatives of the 4 EU projects to reach a set of commonly agreed points regarding actions and reforms in public policy to expand the projects' impact and outreach.

Panelists:

- **Eirini Efthymiadou** (Q-PLAN: Coordinator of the agroBRIDGES project) - moderator
- **Erik Mathijs** (KU Leuven: Coordinator of the COCOREADO project)
- **Peter Defranceschi** (ICLEI: Partner of the COACH project consortium)
- **Serafín Pazos Vidal** (European Association for Innovation in Local Development - AEIDL: Partner of the BEATLES project consortium)

Contributors:

- **George Malliopoulos** (Q-PLAN - agroBRIDGES project)
- **Moya Kneafsey** (University of Coventry - COACH project)
- **Csilla Kiss** (University of Coventry - COACH project)
- **Blanca Casares Guillén** (AEIDL – BEATLES project)

I – Context and basis for public policies on food and farming.

The following recommendations address conceptual and systemic issues that policy makers should incorporate in the design of effective, well-targeted and clear policies for sustainable agri-food systems:



- **Policy makers at EU level should define and integrate key terminology, in order to design meaningful and fair policies and strategies for sustainable food systems.**
 - Key terminology related to sustainable agrifood is not universally defined in the EU (e.g. Short Food Supply Chain, small-scale farmer, “healthy” food, agro-ecological practices, etc.), as these are subject to the diverse context of agrifood systems at a national and regional contexts. Policy makers at national and local level should use specific definitions, in line with the idiosyncratic features of territorial food systems in their jurisdiction, making use of working definitions in research. This way, policies are designed, monitored and assessed against concrete targets and criteria.
 - For instance, a working definition for SFSCs is proposed by EIP-AGRI Focus Group of experts⁷ i.e. “ Short food chains have as few links as possible between the food producer and the citizen who eats the food.[...]”
 - Policymakers should place particular focus on the adoption of such terminology in policy contexts, making sure that they promote correct targeting of agrifood actors and desired practices / outcomes, while avoiding involuntary bias and negative impact.
 - The EU can be of support by introducing guidelines on the adoption of location-specific definitions in local / national food policies⁸.
 - In the case of SFSCs, **focus should also be placed on the business model or value chain synthesis** (e.g. minimum involvement of intermediaries, direct marketing to the end-consumer), rather than the size of production.
- **Policy makers should check and validate assumptions that motivate the rationale of agri-food policies.** The policy study and workshops of BEATLES project identified instances in the new CAP where agricultural practices with climate-negative impacts are implicitly promoted, in misalignment with the overall vision of the policy⁹. Assumptions related to the needs and behaviour of agrifood actors should also be very carefully assessed, as they might not be realistic.
- **Policy makers should holistically assess local agri-food ecosystems to design policies,** in line with anticipated needs and behaviour of involved actors as well as their expected benefits and costs. Important pillars to understand agrifood ecosystem synthesis include:
 - Map the actors involved in the agrifood ecosystem/ SFSCs.
 - Identify local products and value chains and their link to the “public plate” (public food procurement) in support of regional food resilience.

⁷ The full working definition of SFSCs is provided in the EIP-AGRI Focus Group Final Report [“Innovative Short Food Supply Chain Management”](#), 2015, p. 6

⁸ The [Manifesto for Establishing Minimum Standards for Public Canteens Across the EU](#)” (p.10) of the “Buy Better Food” coalition proposes a definition of “small-scale farmers” at EU-scale that utilises universal elements, allowing context-specific adaptation.

⁹ BEATLES - [D1.1](#) “Integrated framework of decision-making factors” (pending official EC approval)



- Study system dynamics, e.g. distribution of agri-food marketing functions¹⁰ among producers, intermediaries and consumers.
- Assess reliance of policies and incentives on farmers' business decisions (change of agri-food practices, investments, etc.), as well as on consumers' invested time (e.g., volunteering activities) and implicit / explicit cost of taking action.
- **Simplified public procurement policies and frameworks.**
 - **Policies and public food procurement policies should be supported by easy-to-access and simple procedures, limiting complexity and bureaucracy to the best possible extent.** Simplicity is crucial for small-scale farmers' ability to participate among others to public food tenders (e.g. via the Dynamic Purchasing System), standardisation and certification of products, access to financing, with reduced costs and resources. On the other hand, local policy makers and facilitators can offer practical support and guidance to local stakeholders more easily¹¹.
 - **Policy makers should promote an integrated cross-sectoral approach**, designing food policies and public procurement processes that contribute to policies and strategies relevant to climate change, health, urban development, local economic development and social justice/poverty alleviation, to name a few.
 - **The cost-benefit ratio of policy reforms should be considered carefully and holistically, in both the long-term and short-term horizon**, as financing may become a barrier towards the implementation of improved strategies. There are examples of public food procurement practices that promote food sustainability without introducing additional costs or even leading to direct cost-reduction¹². In other cases, short-term costs of promoting healthy food may be offset by long-term benefits and cost-saving in healthcare and other policy areas.
- **Policies should embrace the diversity of national and regional food systems.** Food and agricultural policies should be simple but "one-size-fits-all" should be avoided.
 - A framework should be defined at EU-level, complemented by targeted regional / national strategies and policies. For instance, the potential of the new CAP has not been exploited at its fullest. Member States should invest greater effort to programme CAP interventions focusing on their regional and territorial needs. This focus on diverse approaches is essential for supporting food security and resilience, linking among others to biodiversity, diversity of (big and small) farmers, as well as food culture diversity.

¹⁰ Nine marketing functions are introduced in **Beierlein et al. (2014), "Principles of Agribusiness Management"**: selling, buying, storage, transportation, processing, grades & standards, financing, risk-taking, market information.

¹¹ BEATLES - [D1.1](#) "Integrated framework of decision-making factors"

¹² The [Torres Vedras municipality](#) is an indicative example, as organic food is promoted in school canteens with no additional cost, by introducing plant-based protein and food waste reduction.



II – Recommended policy approaches for better inclusion of SFSCs in public food procurement and promotion of sustainable food systems.

The following instruments and approaches have been tested in various European cities to support the inclusion of SFSCs and small-scale farmers, promote sustainability and increase the share of healthy, nutritious, and high-quality food in the “public plate”. Experience shows that such practices reduce administrative burden, are more flexible and are not in violation with EU regulations on public procurement:

- **“Smart” use of the legal framework and EU regulations in public food procurement is required by public institutions** to create a favourable framework for the inclusion of SFSCs in tendering processes¹³. Sustainable public food procurement proved to address most of the Sustainable Development Goals in one plate, thus offering a low hanging fruit for policy makers.
- **Stakeholder and market dialogues should be introduced in various stages of the public food procurement process**, with such mechanisms being applicable in the ideation, needs assessment, tender draft hearing, information meetings phases of the procurement cycle:
 - *Notable examples: City of Copenhagen¹⁴, City of Ghent¹⁵.*
- **Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) and digital market platforms should be promoted and used for inclusive food procurement.** Mini-tenders should be published for flexibility and supply of small quantities.
 - *Notable example: City of Copenhagen.*
- **Minimum mandatory criteria should be introduced to promote sustainable and healthy food procurement**, as described in the [Manifesto for Establishing Minimum Standards for Public Canteens Across the EU](#)” of the “Buy Better Food” coalition¹⁶ that introduces 7 mandatory and optional criteria for public canteens to promote high quality, nutritiousness and sustainability of food over low price, including concrete tender criteria, verification and enablers.
 - *Notable example: City of Bergamo¹⁷*

¹³ For practical information, please see read Chapter 1 of the “**Legal Guide on Farm to Fork Procurement**” – available on the COACH Communications, Learning and Innovation Platform (URL: <https://hub.urgenci.net/resource/legal-guide-on-farm-to-fork-procurement/>).

¹⁴ **COACH Project – Urgenci Hub:** Copenhagen best practice (URL: <https://hub.urgenci.net/resource/best-practice-coach-copenhagen/>)

¹⁵ **COACH Project – Urgenci Hub:** (Sustainability vision and strategy of the City of Ghent (URL: <https://hub.urgenci.net/resource/sustainability-vision-and-strategy-of-the-city-of-ghent/>)

¹⁶ **Buy Better Food (2022):** “Manifesto for establishing minimum standards for public canteens across the EU”, URL: <https://buybetterfood.eu/documents/sustainable-food-procurement-manifesto>

¹⁷ **COACH Project – Urgenci Hub:** Bergamo best practice (URL: <https://hub.urgenci.net/resource/best-practice-coach-bergamo/>)



- **Traditional and community-based financial instruments should be used.** Such instruments should promote investing behaviour of consumers and other intermediaries towards supporting the food system and particularly small-scale farmers. Crowdfunding¹⁸ could be an effective instrument to stimulate community-driven financing.

III – Recommended approaches for community building, engagement & innovation.

The following recommendations provide tips for policy makers towards making use of bottom-up approaches to effectively implement public food policies, including ecosystem coordination, stakeholder participation and knowledge exchange activities to spark innovation:

- **Public food policies should capitalise on actions of value-chain clusters, business development organisations and producers’ networks,** as they possess the resources and capacity to coordinate actions within the agri-food ecosystems and stimulate change. Such coordination activities may include:
 - Organisation of B2B and networking activities.
 - Leading business skills development initiatives for farmers.
 - Raising awareness about financial instruments and opportunities for farmers/ SFSCs.
 - Supporting farmers to participate in public food tenders.
 - Engaging consumers through community-oriented events, needs expression, product validation, process innovation.
- **Participatory food governance should be promoted through increased engagement of consumers / citizens,** ensuring social and ecological justice, in line with human rights. Policy makers at all levels should properly incorporate citizens’ agency in food system transformation, as market-oriented approaches currently dominate EU policies¹⁹.
 - Food Policy Councils are proposed by COACH project as an essential mechanism to involve food system actors at different scales in the design, implementation and monitoring of policies. Food Policy Councils should aim at making diverse voices heard, especially those of marginalised and underprivileged citizens. The Vienna Food Policy Council is considered a good practice in this respect²⁰.

¹⁸ **agroBRIDGES Toolbox - “Hear my voice” tool:** Crowdfunding guide for farmers (URL: https://agrobridges-toolbox.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Crowdfunding-English_v1.pdf)

¹⁹ **COACH Project – Urgenci Hub:** Farm-to-fork procurement toolkit (URL: <https://hub.urgenci.net/resource/policy-brief-human-rights-must-be-placed-at-the-heart-of-eu-food-systems-transformation/>)

²⁰ Read the full case study about the [Vienna Food Policy Council](#) on the COACH Communications, Innovation and Learning Platform.



- Proper incentives should be designed for enhancing citizens' participation, considering that they invest their time on a volunteering basis, in contrast with actors whose participation in policymaking procedures is part of their main economic activity and therefore have resources to commit.
- **Roadmaps should be developed for inspiration and replication of SFSC good practices, using contextual information**, highlighting idiosyncratic (specific) factors that may have led to success of particular business models.

IV – Dissemination strategy for policy recommendations.

The following points outline the most effective approaches in informing and empowering policy makers across Europe to implement improved strategies regarding sustainable food systems, improved public food procurement mechanisms and promote the inclusion of SFSCs and small-scale farmers in the supply chain:

- **Dissemination of policy recommendations from a bottom-up perspective (e.g. local, regional national institutions)**, in addition to EU-level policy bodies and institutions. The latter may be harder to approach and instigate meaningful change.
- **Raising awareness about successful cases of SFSC / sustainable food integration in public food procurement processes**, to support policy makers in the implementation of successful procurement models and policies for food. Such good practices are hard to find, thus making the need for such examples highly relevant. The Sustainable Food Procurement Toolkit of COACH provides 6 best practices²¹:
 - **Best practices:** Bergamo, City of Copenhagen, City of Ghent, Dordogne, Växjö, Torres Vedras

V – Further reading:

- **Policy studies:**
 - BEATLES - [D1.1](#) “Integrated framework of decision-making factors” (pending EC approval)
 - COCOREADO – [Report](#) “Barriers for small-scale farmers in public food procurement”
 - agroBRIDGES – [D1.5](#) “Review of SFSC policy aspects”
- **Good practices and case studies:**
 - COCOREADO – [D4.1](#) “Report on good practices for sustainable public food procurement”
 - COACH - [Good practices of sustainable public food procurement](#) (6 case studies)

²¹ COACH Project – Urgenci Hub: Farm-to-fork procurement toolkit (URL: <https://hub.urgenci.net/public-procurement/>)

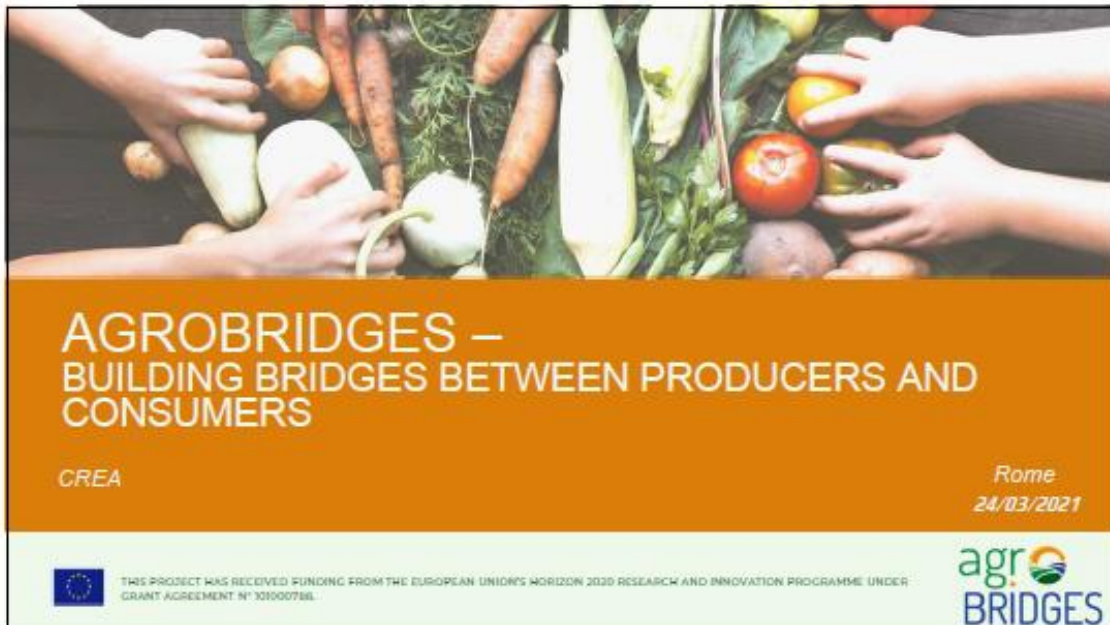


- **Policy briefs and policy recommendations:**
 - COCOREADO – [Policy briefs](#)
 - COACH – [Policy briefs](#)
 - “Buy Better Food” Coalition - [“Sustainable Food Manifesto”](#)
- **Tools and training for public food procurement:**
 - agroBRIDGES – [Training programme for public food procurement](#)
 - COACH – [Legal toolkit for food procurement](#)



Annex III – Material shared with SCAR – AKIS SWG

First information package shared at the beginning of the project (24-26 March 2021):



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3

agroBRIDGES AT A GLANCE

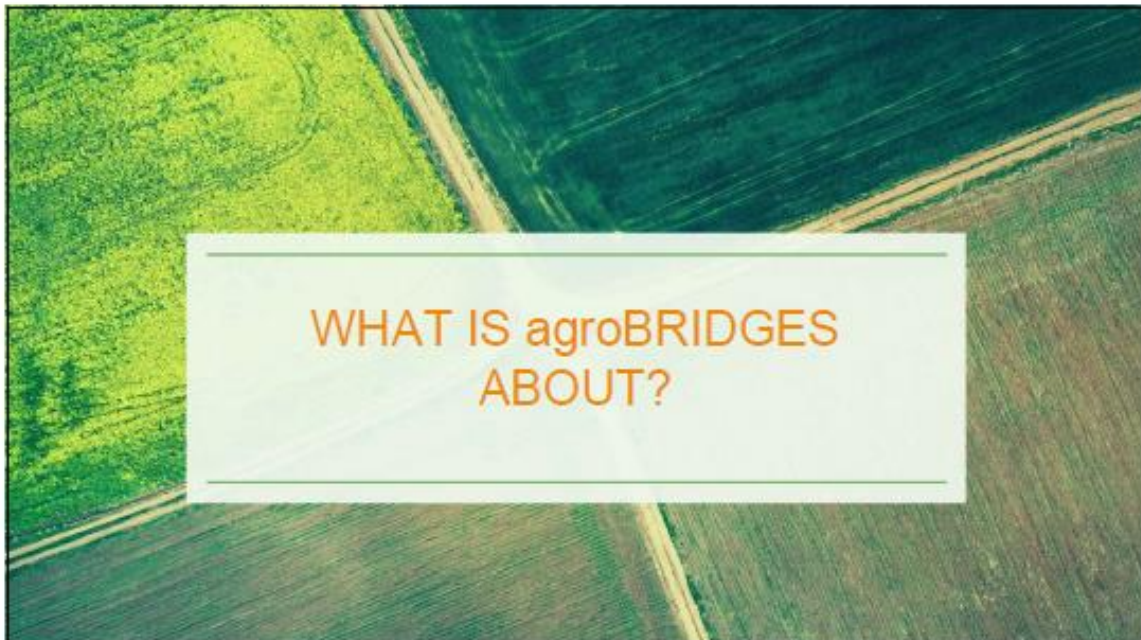
BUDGET Overall budget: € 2 998 926,25 EU contribution: € 2 998 926,25	DURATION Duration: 36 months Project start: January 2021	CONSORTIUM 15 partners in 11 European Countries
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CALL & TOPIC
H2020-RUR-2019-2020 (Rural Renaissance)
RUR-05-2020 – Connecting consumers and producers in innovative agri-food supply chains

GOAL
agroBRIDGES aims to build bridges between producers and consumers, empowering farmers with practical knowledge and support to rebalance their market position through new business models based on Short Food Supply Chains (SFSC). It will establish regional multi-actor structures for demand-driven innovation, and deliver a combination of practical tools, all packed in the agroBRIDGES toolbox

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CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs)
hold promising potential for sustainable development in agriculture

HOW? ✓ They introduce economic, social and environmental benefits

- Rebalancing the market position of farmers and increasing their income
- Better connecting them with consumers and reducing intermediaries
- Meeting the societal demand of providing safe and quality local food
- And all while also reducing the environmental impact of agriculture

YET, MANY FARMERS ARE STILL NOT TAPPING INTO THEIR POTENTIAL ...

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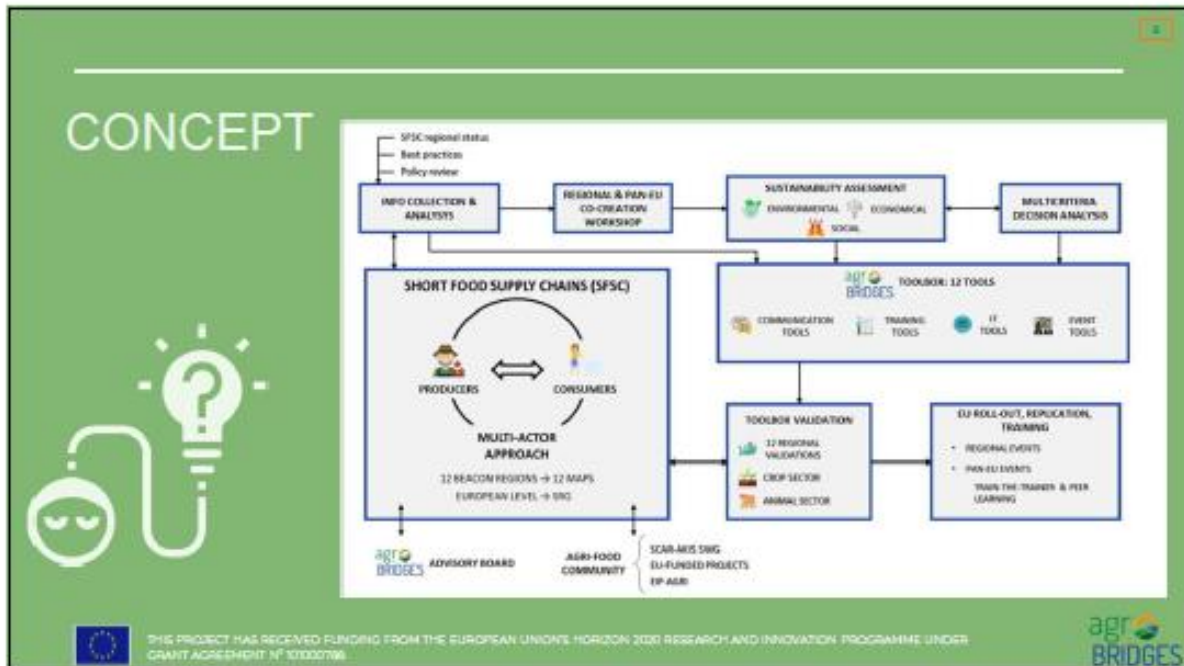
OBJECTIVES

-  Empower farmers with practical, knowledge and support to set up SFSCs, better linking producers with consumers and procurers.
-  Deliver decision support tools to facilitate the selection of the most sustainable business model to be adopted for animating SFSCs
-  Offer a combination of communication materials, training programmes, event guides, and digital tools packed in the agroBRIDGES Toolbox
-  Establish regional and international multi-actor structures for stakeholder-driven development, testing, validation and roll out

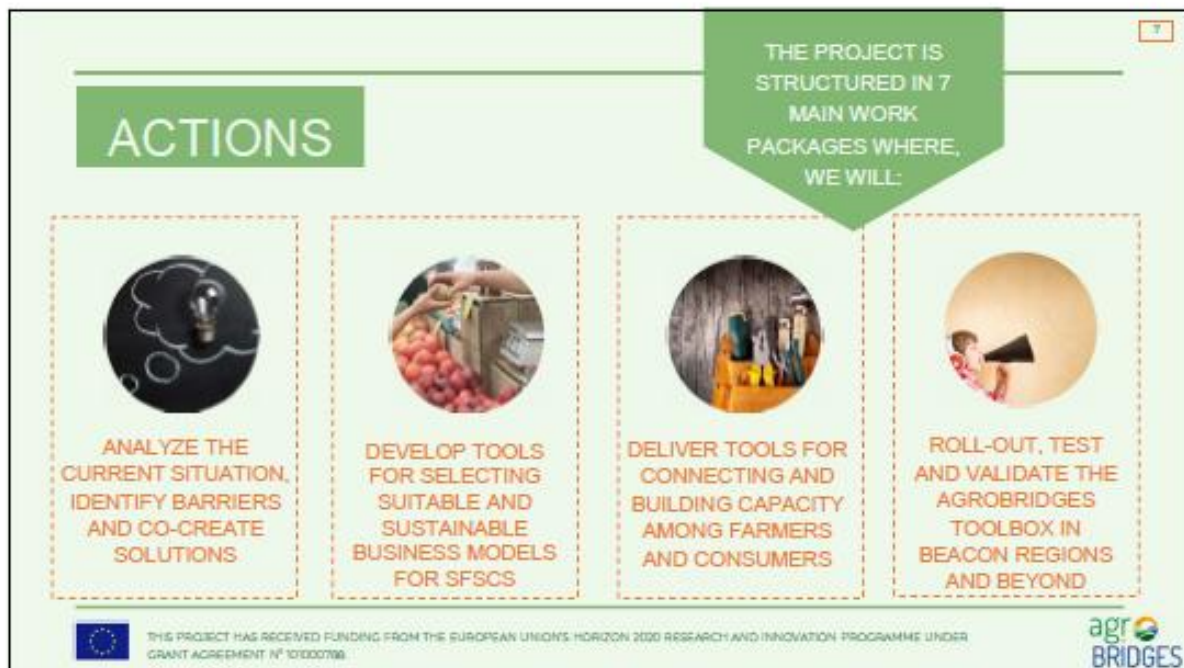
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Work packages

WP1. Multi-actor framework development and information collection and analysis **LEADER: Q-PLAN**

WP2. Sustainability assessment model and multicriteria decision framework **LEADER: WUR**

WP3. agroBRIDGES Toolbox development **LEADER: VTT**

WP4. agroBRIDGES Toolbox validation **LEADER: ITT**


WP5. European Roll-out, replication and training **LEADER: CTA**

WP6. Clustering **LEADER: CREA**

WP7. Dissemination, communication and exploitation **LEADER: ECF**

WP8. Project Management **LEADER: Q-PLAN**





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FACTS & FIGURES

 12 Beacon Regions Across Europe	 24 Regional events for building SFSCs	 36 EIP Practice Abstracts	 12 Digital tools in the agroBRIDGES Toolbox
OUTCOMES ?			
DIRECT SALES Increased number of farms involved in direct sales to consumers	COOPERATION More than 400 agri-food stakeholders involved in the project	TRAINING Nearly 150 farmers and stakeholders trained on topics related to SFSCs	FARMERS INCOME Enhanced farmers income by increasing their profit

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CONSORTIUM

The agroBRIDGES consortium, led by Q-PLAN INTERNATIONAL (Greece), includes a total of 15 partners:

- Teagasc - Agriculture and Food Development Authority (Ireland)
- FruitVegetablesEUROPE - EUCOFEL (Belgium)
- VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland (Finland)
- Wageningen University (Netherlands)
- Council for Agricultural Research and Economics (Italy)
- Institute of Technology Tralee (Ireland)
- Q-PLAN INTERNATIONAL (Greece)
- Food & Bio Cluster Denmark (Denmark)
- Technological Corporation of Andalusia (Spain)
- Unimos Foundation (Poland)
- VEGEPOLYS VALLEY (France)
- Sabri Ullier Foundation (Turkey)
- Rezos Brands Agrifood Company (Greece)
- Sustainable Innovations Europe (Spain)
- Hub Madrid SL (Spain)



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THANK YOU

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agroBRIDGES brochure

KEY FACTS

- 3 years duration (2021-2023)
- 15 partners from 11 European countries
- 2 998 926 € budget in total
- 12 Multi-actor Platforms in 12 European Regions
- 1 agroBRIDGES TOOLBOX with 12 digital tools

agroBRIDGES project aims to build bridges between producers and consumers, empowering farmers with practical knowledge and support to rebalance their market position through new business and marketing models based on Short Food Supply Chains (SFSC).

Contact Us

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#agrobridges_EU
 #agroBRIDGES

agroBRIDGES H2020 Project
 www.agrobridges.eu

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under Grant Agreement N°101000768.



agroBRIDGES



BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN PRODUCERS AND CONSUMERS



CONCEPT

Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) hold promising potential for sustainable development in agriculture, encouraging cooperation among farmers, creating better relations between farmers and consumers, while also reducing transport costs and CO2 emissions.

AgroBRIDGES will empower farmers with practical knowledge and tools to set up new business and marketing models based on SFSCs with a focus on reducing the number of intermediaries and better linking producers with consumers. The project continues the legacy of other H2020 projects such as SKIN and SMARTCHAINS.

OUR APPROACH

The project follows an integrated methodology to establish regional multi-actor structures for demand-driven innovation, and deliver a combination of communication materials, training programmes, events, decision support, and other digital tools, all packed in one place, the agroBRIDGES toolbox.

“ We connect producers and consumers in new business and marketing models for Short Food Supply Chains ”



CONSORTIUM

FACTS & FIGURES

- More than 400 farmers and agri-food stakeholders involved.
- New business and marketing models for sustainable SFSCs.
- Over 150 trained on how to set up and sustainably run SFSCs.
- More European farmers involved in direct sales to consumers.
- Enhanced farming income through sustainable business models.







agroBRIDGES info sheets

AGROBRIDGES
BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN CONSUMERS AND PRODUCERS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Introduction
- Our Concept
- Methodology
- Results

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CONSORTIUM

• Q-PLAN INTERNATIONAL (Greece)

• TEAGASC - Agriculture and Food Development Authority (Ireland)

• Fruitvegroepbied2180APC (Belgium)

• Teknologian tutkimuskeskus VTT Oy (Finland)

• Wageningen University (Netherlands)

• CREA - Council for Agricultural Research and Economics (Italy)

• Institute of Technology Tralee (Ireland)

• Food & Bio Cluster Denmark (Denmark)

• Fundación Corporación Tecnológica de Andalucía CTA (Spain)

• Unimas Foundation (Poland) VEGETOLYS VALLEY (France)

• Sabri Ulker Foundation (Turkey)

• Beza Brands Agrifood Company (Greece)

• Beza Brands Agrifood Company (Greece)

• Sustainable Innovations Europe (Spain)

• Thun Madrid SL (Spain)

CONTACT US!

TWITTER: @agrobriidges_eu, #agrobriidges

WWW.AGROBRIDGES.EU

LINKEDIN: agrobriidges H2020 Project

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OUR RESULTS

Multi-Actor Platforms

agroBRIDGES is based on a multi-actor framework that will create regional networks of producers, consumers, NGOs, academia, public bodies, distributors, and consultants. In total, 12 Multi-Actor Platforms will be developed in each of the Beacon regions involved in the project.

This means that around 400 people from the agri-food sector will be involved in project implementation, directly participating in knowledge exchange, co-creating project outputs together with project partners.

To reach impact beyond the regions, a pan-European Stakeholder Reference Group will be created. It will work on the identification of best practices for public procurement, review of labelling schemes and legislation.

The MAP and SRG will be key in the Toolbox development and validation.

agroBRIDGES Toolbox

It is a set of practical tools (IT Tools, training events and guidelines) to connect producers and consumers in new business models for SFSCs. All of these tools target different actor making it a Toolbox where every end-user can derive a benefit.

As a step-change from traditional tools, agroBRIDGES mostly relies on:

- a) a producer decision support tool to facilitate the selection of the most sustainable business model;
- b) tools concerning consumers and producers and distributors for smart delivery;
- c) capacity building around food procurement;

EIP-AGRI abstracts

agroBRIDGES is a research-based project contributing to academic debates on food supply chain sustainability. In total 30 practice abstracts in EIP-AGRI will be produced and disseminated.

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INTRODUCTION

agroBRIDGES is an innovation project funded by the European Union's programme Horizon2020. It aims to build bridges between producers and consumers, rebalancing farmers' market position by empowering them with knowledge about new business and marketing models for Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs). With a duration of 36 months and a budget of almost 3 Million Euros, the project brings together a strong consortium from 11 European countries.

OUR CONCEPT

agroBRIDGES was born from the need to stimulate the adoption of SFSCs in the European Union. SFSCs introduces key economic, social and environmental benefits for sustainable development, like:

- Rebalancing the market position of farmers and increasing their income.
- Better connecting farmers with consumers and reducing intermediaries.
- Meeting the societal demand of providing safe and quality local food.

The goal is to foster demand-driven innovation through a combination of decision support, and other digital tools. All will be accessible in one place, the agroBRIDGES Toolbox, available for all stakeholders.

METHODOLOGY

- STAGE 1: Collection of data, analysis & development of the multi-actor framework
- STAGE 2: Development of a sustainability assessment model and multi-criteria analysis framework for SFSCs
- STAGE 3: agroBRIDGES Toolbox development
- STAGE 4: agroBRIDGES Toolbox validation
- STAGE 5: Roll out, replication and training

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Second information package shared at the 18th month of the project (20-21 June 2022):

agroBRIDGES Information Package June 2022

agroBRIDGES Purpose and aims

- Increase the number of producers involved in direct sales initiatives in the 12 Beacon Regions of the project
- Promote cooperation between the stakeholders of the individual Beacon Regions through 24 local co-planning events
- Training of farmers and agri food sector actors on short supply chain models, with the help of 36 EIP practice abstracts
- Increase farmers' income by providing them with a set of 12 tools, called "agroBRIDGES Toolbox"

Information about the project

- 15 partners
- 11 European Countries
- 1 Stakeholder Reference Group
- 170 actors involved (out of 200)
- 12 regional Multi-actor Platforms (MAPs)
- Total duration: 36 months (2021-2023)
- Budget: 2.998.926 €

Where we are

- Events:** 12 out of 24 local workshops realized, 1 pan-European workshop, 3 webinars with sister projects
- Communication:** Website/Twitter/LinkedIn, Newsletter, MAP Forum
- Practices:** 51 good practices identified, presented in an interactive catalogue, 14 of 36 practice abstracts
- Documents:** 17 deliverables, 5 openly accessible
- 12 EIP practice abstracts on SFSCs**
- 5 SFSC model types:** (CSA, face-to-face, local food trade, online food trade, improved logistics)
- Set of attributes and indicators to evaluate SFSCs business models sustainability

agroBRIDGES toolbox

- 4 COMMUNICATION MATERIALS** (in progress): #WkfrceLocalFood, Know Your Local Food, Label me, You You can
- 5 IIT TYPE** (Mock upstage): Decision Support Tool (DST), Why are I Special?, I hear my voice, agroBRIDGES met, Smart delivery
- 1 TRAINING PROGRAMME TYPE** (in progress): agroBRIDGES support for food procurement
- 2 EVENT RELATED** (in progress): Let's build our SFSC chain, Let's meet

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Third information package shared at the 35th month of the project (22-23 November 2023):

agr BRIDGES Information Package November 2023

agroBRIDGES Purpose and aims

- Increase the number of producers involved in indirect sales initiatives in the 12 European Regions of the project
- Promote cooperation between the stakeholders of the individual European Regions through 24 local co-planning events
- Training of farmers and agri food sector actors on short supply chain models, with the help of 36 FP practice abstracts
- Increase farmers' income by providing them with a set of 12 tools, called 'agroBRIDGES Toolbox'

Information on project (partners, budget, times, etc.)

- 15 partners from 11 European Countries
- 1 Stakeholder Reference Group
- 170 actors involved (out of 200)
- 12 regional Multi-actor Platforms (MAPs) set up
- Total duration: 36 months (2021-2023)
- Budget: 2.998.926 €

The numbers

Events

- 13 co-creation workshops
- 11 online B2B matchmaking events (Let's build our SFSC)
- 13 physical community building events (Let's meet!)
- 24 regional and national roll-out events in progress
- 1 pan-European workshop
- 3 webinars with older projects:
 - Enhancing Social and Economic Aspects of Short Food Supply Chains (March 2022)
 - Practical tools, concepts and methodologies for the development of new or improved food systems and supply chains (November 2022)
 - Public procurement of food (June 2023)
- 1 Joint Clustering event Improving Food Systems and Value Chains (September 23rd, 2023)

Communication

- Webinars/Talks/Articles
- Newsletter
- MAP Forum
- Catalogue of resources
- Press release

Practices

- 51 good practices identified/presented in an interactive catalogue
- 38 of 36 practice abstracts
- 14 agroBRIDGES toolbox FP
- 24 regional FP
- 1st batch FP/FGP Practice Abstracts

Documents

- 27 deliverables, including the openly accessible reports and datasets that are currently available

12 regional food streets on SFSCs

5 SFSC model boxes (CSA, face-to-face, local food trade, online food trade, improved logistics)

Set of abstracts and brochures to co-create SFSCs business models and initiatives

Training Deliverables published: Training programme Train the Trainers

agroBRIDGES toolbox
(fully translated in 12 European languages)

- 4 COMMUNICATION MATERIALS: #WhoWeEat, Let's Know Your Local Food, Label me, Yes You can
- 8 EVENT RELATED: Let's build our SFSC chain, Let's meet!
- LEARNING PROGRAMME TOOL: agroBRIDGES support for food procurement
- 8 EVENT RELATED: Let's build our SFSC chain, Let's meet!

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