

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

**“Let’s Build our SFSC”
Event Validation Report
Responsible Partner: UNIMOS**



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“Let’s Build our SFSC!” Event Validation Report – Poland

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1. Introduction

The present report summarises the **activities of UNIMOS for the organisation and validation of the “Let’s build our SFSC” event in Poland organised on 31st of March 2023**. This event is an online brokerage and networking event, to bring stakeholders of the local agri-food sector to present their products, meet others and negotiate partnerships based on the concept of Short Food Supply Chains. The event was organised using the Brella matchmaking platform that was selected as the most appropriate for the needs of the agroBRIDGES consortium, based on market research and negotiations with the sales departments of various candidate providers, in the frame of task 3.4.

The present report outlines all steps taken for the design, planning and implementation of the regional event, as well as the outcomes and evaluation of the event by the participants and the organising agroBRIDGES partner, to produce suggestions for the improvement of the “Let’s build our SFSC!” tool and measure its impact to the agrifood sector at local level. The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 1** – Introducing the event report
- **Chapter 2** – Describing the concept selection, design, organisation and implementation of the the “Let’s build our SFSC” event in Poland.
- **Chapter 3** – Outlining the validation results for the events by participants and the value found in the “Let’s meet!” guidelines by the organising partners when creating and launching their event.
- **Chapter 4** – Concluding remarks for the event and suggestions for improvement of the “Let’s meet!” tool.



2. “Let’s build our SFSC” event organisation details

2.1 Event programme / agenda

The event was organised using the Brella online matchmaking platform, that was selected for the “Let’s Build our SFSC” events. The following table summarises the activities that took place during the event.

Table 1: Event programme

Title of activity	Topic / Short description	Date & Time (local)	Speakers	Location
Session #1	Opening session	09:30 - 09:40	UNIMOS	Central stage
Session #2	Tour de table – participants’ presentations	09:40 - 09:50	All	Central stage
Session #3	Presentation of agroBRIDGES project	09:50 - 10:05	UNIMOS	Central stage
Session #4	Presentation of development, financing opportunities and international exchanges for 2023-2024 to boost SFSC	10:05 - 10:20	UNIMOS RARR	Central stage
Session #5	Networking and synergy building	10:20 - 10:50	All	Breakout rooms
Session #6	Closing session and evaluation	10:50 - 11:15	UNIMOS	Central stage

The design of the agenda was based on low access to internet of Polish stakeholders (especially farmers located in rural zones) connected with insufficient digital skills to get to know and learn new matchmaking platform in short period of time. Taking into account the implementation of the previous tasks of agroBRIDGES and the fact that UNIMOS has facilitated the creation of two SFSCs in Poland (e-grocery and direct deliveries on weekends), the focus was put on more strategic cooperation between clusters and innovation agencies that directly work with agri-food businesses via their services and projects. It was motivated by the will to establish and deepen collaboration links at suprarational level with two identified Polish good practices (Podkarpackie Smaki and E-bazarek) and share development, financing opportunities and international exchanges for 2023-2024 to boost SFSC and align them with upcoming agroBRIDGES activities.



2.2 Personnel involved in the organisation of the event

In order to implement the event, both in-house and external personnel were involved to ensure technical and logistical smooth organization of the event.

Table 2: Estimated effort and expertise needed for the event

Specialisation	Number of employees	Expected role	In-house / External	Estimated effort (person days)
Graphic designers	1	Development of promo material	In-house	1 person day
Speaker	2	Person introducing guests to the concept, products, producers and collecting feedback	In-house	1 person day
Technical facilitator	3	Coordination of technical preparation of the platform	In-house	4 person days
Session moderator	1	Coordination of the online session	In-house	1.5 person days

2.3 Event material

The event material was based on electronic promotional materials. A dedicated graphics for LinkedIn post were prepared and posted on LinkedIn and Facebook. A registration form in Polish was used to gather participants consent and invite them to register on the Brella platform.



Figure 1: LinkedIn Event – main page

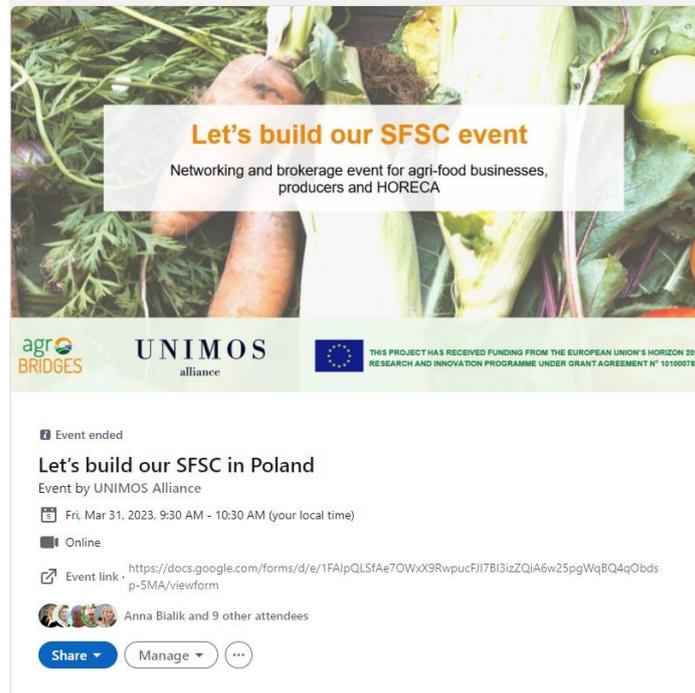


Figure 2: LinkedIn promotional post

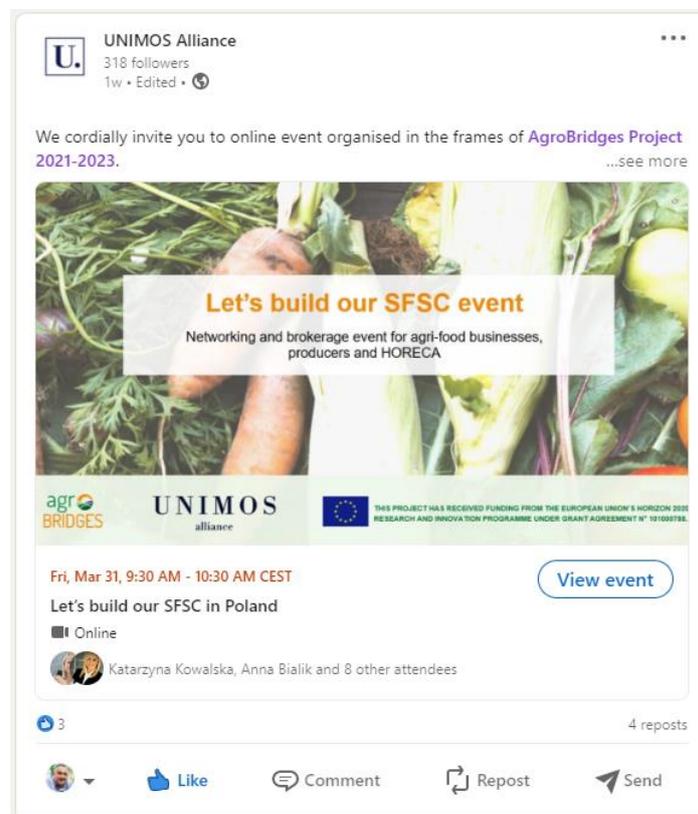




Figure 3: Facebook promotional post



2.4 Invitation of attendees and promotional activities implementation

The invitation of the attendees and implementation of promotional activities was based on digital media and direct contacts. To promote the event, a dedicated event on social media was created using two separate channels on LinkedIn: UNIMOS and AgroBioCluster. Apart from that, some reminding posts were published. Additionally, UNIMOS' profile on Facebook was also used. Moreover, emails to potential stakeholders were sent, to invite them to the event, followed by direct phone calls. Special attention was put on organizations and Polish stakeholders that are engaged in cluster activities (such as recycling and waste), regional development and are working in topics closely related to SFSC, like bioeconomy, agri-food innovations, digital transformation and innovation support. Additionally, organizations operating in the Podkarpackie (Subcarpathian) region where two of three identified agroBRIDGES good practices comes from. Additionally, the invited organizations have a wide network of partners, are members or coordinators of clusters and collaborate with other business initiatives that gathers all actors from agri-food value chain relevant for the development of SFSC in Poland. Direct contacts and promotional activities started after the physical Let's meet event was organized (3 weeks before the event).



3. Event implementation and outcomes

3.1 Event implementation

The first session included official opening, welcome and that was followed by tour de table session that included presentations of participants. Next, the general information about the agroBRIDGES project, its objectives and activities took place and the showcase the agroBRIDGES resources developed so far. The presentation was divided into two parts:

- 1) “Ready to use” tools, such as:
 - Polish SFSC good practices with European examples from agroBRIDGES interactive catalogue
 - Resource catalogue
 - Multi-actor platforms (MAPs)
- 2) Tools in validation – agroBRIDGES Toolbox with examples of SFSC tools translated into Polish language.

The fourth session was focused on presenting the pool of opportunities to build and finance SFSC in Poland. Several EU-funded projects from different financing programmes, such as COSME, Single Market Programme (SMP), Horizon 2020, among other were presented, including:

- AURORA – related to food safety, quality and authenticity (Cluster Partnership 2020 with ClusterXchange mobility scheme) that offers co-financing for international short-terms exchanges;
- SUAVE – linked to boosting urban farming (Euroclusters - SMP) with lump-sums for prototyping innovations, business diagnosis, international matchmakings and prizes;
- BIO-BOOST – focused on boosting bioeconomy innovation agencies and interconnecting European innovation ecosystems (Horizon Europe) with interactive activities to be organized in Lithuania (like hackathons) or new cross-border key account management (KAM) service for SMEs based on time banking approach.

Following, the current projects of Rzeszow Regional Development Agency (RARR) financed INTERREG Central Europe and Erasmus+ connected to SFSC were presented and included on the basis of live analysis:

- PPI2Innovate - project related to public procurement of innovative solutions (PPI) to boost innovations
- Cirevalc – project aimed at preventing food waste through circularity and making regional value chains in the food, catering and packaging sectors more circular through a community approach
- HoCare 2.0 – project related to co-creation in the field of health
- ESA BIC Poland – project related to boosting space-related entrepreneurial and business initiatives
- SEgoesGreen – linked to social economy and Integrating Nature-Based Solutions into Higher Education

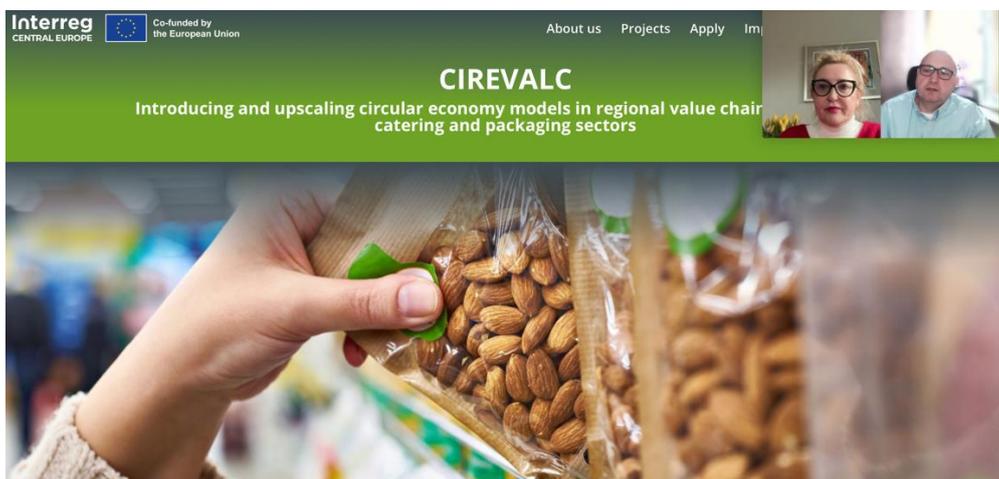
The presentation of those projects served as a basis for discussion and synergy building during the networking session. Participants discussed potential cooperation areas and agreed to meet in person to explore more concrete project-related and innovation collaboration opportunities.



Figure 4: Introduction and presentation of agroBRIDGES tools



Figure 5: Presentation of Interreg programmes by RARR





3.2 Event participation

Table 3: Event participation

Audience type	No. of participants
Agri-food business and innovation support	8
Organizers	3
Total	11

4. Event Validation

4.1.1 Validation of event by participants

Question	Yes	No	Not sure			
Question #1: Were you familiar with the concept of Short Food Supply Chains before this event	8	3	0			
Question	Absolutely agree	Agree	Do not agree or disagree	Disagree	Fully Disagree	No answer
Question #2: Did you find this event helpful to meet professionals and businesses you can collaborate with?	3	7	0	0	0	1
Question #3: Do you think that this event helped you see Short Food Supply Chains as a promising business alternative?	3	7	0	0	0	1
Question #4: Did you find the matching and booking of one-to-one meetings with other people useful to identify and negotiate collaborations?	3	6	0	0	1	1



Question #5: Was the event useful in supporting you to find interesting opportunities to collaborate with other businesses for the development of Short Food Supply Chains?	7	4	0	0	0	0
Question	Monthly or more often	3-4 times a year	Twice a year	Once a year	Never	I prefer not to answer
Question #6: Would you like another similar event to be organised in your region? How often?	0	8	2	1	0	0

4.1.2 Validation of the “Let’s build our SFSC” event by the organising partner

Question #1: Did you find the event relevant to your local agri-food ecosystem and organization?

Yes, the event was relevant to our local agri-food ecosystem and activities that are being implemented and to co-design the future ones.

Question #2: Would you organise the same event again in your region? If yes, would you make any adjustments? If not, please explain your thinking.

Yes, we are thinking about series similar events, but probably they will be organized without using a matchmaking platform – participants prefer using more popular social media platforms like LinkedIn or receive a direct link to Zoom or similar platforms.

4.1.3 Limitations and barriers of the organising partner

Learning about using a totally new platform like Brella required spending additional time and extra work – both for organizers and participants. During the pandemic, platforms for communication like Zoom or MS Teams became very popular, and many people get familiar with them, and they continued using during the post-pandemic period. This is why participants expressed they prefer to join online event by clicking on the link instead of creating an account in networking platform, which takes time. Nowadays, time is even more precious, so there is a need to simplify everything. Stakeholders appreciate taking part in online conferences held on Zoom or similar platforms, established contacts by LinkedIn and then get in contact directly with people of interest with whom they schedule individual one-to-one virtual calls or organize personal meetings.



5. Conclusions

The event was well received, and participants are willing to meet more often to keep working on topics already discussed and would like to have such events organized more often. The majority indicated that 3-4 times a year would be optimal frequency. **In terms of the tool, stakeholders prefer simpler platforms that would allow only communication, as a dedicated matchmaking platform is, in their opinion, time consuming.** From the point of view of organizers and coordinator of cluster, we appreciate both this kind of activities, as well as the Brella networking platform that offers advanced and novel ways to match potential partners. This type of tool would also support capacity building and facilitating virtual collaboration and networking among our members and partners.