



Local Governments  
for Sustainability  
EUROPE

# INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT OF HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS: A PRACTICAL HANDBOOK



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### 3.1. Glossary of terms and abbreviations

**WSFA:** The "Whole School Food Approach" (WSFA) is a method for developing a healthy and sustainable food culture in and around schools. It is an evidence-based intervention that contributes to community-wide systemic change and positively affects education, sustainability, inequalities, communities and health. The WSFA sees schools from preschools to secondary schools as catalysts for sustainable food system change. The method integrates food and education: it addresses the composition of school meals and the functioning of school canteens, includes practical teaching, learning activities and the active participation of pupils and teachers, and involves the wider school community (including caregivers, farmers, businesses and civil society).

**Sustainable school food systems (SSFS)** include the full range of activities, components, and actors related to the production, processing, distribution, cooking, serving, consumption, and waste management of food in schools, as well as the spaces and contexts where these processes occur, and all the related educational practices, that promote child and adolescent health in a way that is profitable for each actor of the food value chain, respects the social and cultural context, and safeguards, restores, and regenerates natural resources and ecological processes while respecting planetary boundaries. SSFS should be governed democratically in a participatory way by all its actors, including farmers, procurers, chefs, teachers, pupils, parents, administrative municipal and school staff, researchers, other professionals, and policymakers, among others.

**Healthy, sustainable school diets (HSSD)** are safe, meet nutritional requirements according to students' age and individual needs, prevent non-communicable diseases and malnutrition in all its forms, aim to level social inequalities in dietary habits and health, are economically affordable, accepted and likeable, and

SD are largely plant-based,  
for people, economy and

**Planetary health diets:** The planetary health diet is flexible by providing guidelines to ranges of different food groups that together constitute an optimal diet for human health and environmental sustainability. It emphasises a plant-forward diet where whole grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts and legumes comprise a greater proportion of foods consumed. Meat and dairy constitute important parts of the diet but in significantly smaller proportions than whole grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts and legumes. *Source: EAT-Lancet Commission:*

[» eatforum.org](http://eatforum.org)

## Source with clickable Link

**Protected designation of origin (PDO)** is a type of geographical indication of the European Union and the United Kingdom aimed at preserving the designations of origin of food-related products. The designation was created in 1992 and its main purpose is to designate products that have been produced, processed and developed in a specific geographical area, using the recognised know-how of local producers and ingredients from the region concerned.

**Protected geographical indication (PGI)** is a type of geographical indication of the European Union and the United Kingdom aimed at preserving the designations of origin of food-related products. It emphasises the relationship between the specific geographic region and the name of the product, where a particular quality, reputation or other characteristic is essentially attributable to its geographical origin.



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# 1. Executive summary

This handbook for **innovative and sustainable public procurement of healthy school meals** responds to the intensifying EU policy debate on the role of public procurement as a driver of systemic change. In recent years, the European Commission has stressed sustainable food procurement as a key lever for delivering healthier diets, climate action, and social equity. The handbook is closely aligned with the EU Public Procurement Directive (2014/24/EU), the EU Green Public Procurement (GPP) criteria for food and catering, and the JRC Criteria for Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) for Food, Food services, and Vending machines (2025). It also reflects broader policy commitments under the European Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy, which aim to make sustainable food “the norm” across Europe. At the same time, it complements the EU School Fruit, Vegetables and Milk Scheme and the European Child Guarantee, which directly target better child nutrition and reduced poverty.



**The handbook is designed primarily for public procurers and contracting authorities at local, regional, and national levels who are responsible for food and catering tenders.**

The aim is to support these authorities in integrating health, sustainability, and social justice and equity objectives into school and public meal contracts, while remaining fully compliant with EU procurement law. By introducing innovative criteria and models, **the handbook provides pathways for contracting authorities to raise their level of ambition step by step**, from minimum (core) to advanced criteria, and illustrates, through good practice cases, how these can be applied in real contexts. The criteria are structured across the full procurement cycle (selection, technical specifications, award, contract performance) and offer two levels of ambition: a core level for minimum sustainability and health outcomes, and an advanced level for frontrunner authorities seeking to go further.

In addition, the handbook reflects the Vision for Food and Agriculture (European Commission, DG AGRI), which calls for resilient farming systems, fair jobs across the food economy, and strengthened rural–urban linkages. Public procurement is highlighted as a lever for competitiveness and resilience, ensuring that transitions to sustainable diets also support farmers, SMEs, and food workers. By embedding these objectives, the handbook shows how procurement can simultaneously contribute to climate neutrality, biodiversity protection, decent work, and strong local farming systems through tenders that allow for participation of small-scale farmers.

**In addition, the handbook showcases innovative procurement approaches tested in European contexts, including:**

- ➤ **Organic Districts (Italy), linking procurement to territorial agroecology;**
- ➤ **Business-to-Business platforms (Belgium), connecting schools directly with small producers;**
- ➤ **Dynamic Purchasing Systems (UK), enabling flexible participation by SMEs; and**
- ➤ **Food procurement catalogues (Slovenia), enhancing transparency and traceability.**



## 2. Background and acknowledgements

This Handbook has been produced as part of the Horizon 2020 funded project SchoolFood4Change (grant agreement No. 101036763), within Work Package 5 “Innovative, sustainable and healthy food procurement” led by ICLEI Europe.

### About the project SchoolFood4Change

SchoolFood4Change is an EU-funded project running from January 2022 to June 2027, aiming to make school meals tasty, enjoyable, educational and healthy for both people and the planet. It involves children, young people, parents, school staff, canteen managers, cities, policy makers, researchers and experts to turn schools and canteens into places where nutritious, sustainable food is served. Working with partner cities, the project promotes knowledge sharing, participation and educational activities in schools to strengthen young people’s understanding of healthy eating and empower them to advocate for sustainable food habits in their communities. In this way, the project has already impacted more than one million children. More than 1,400 cooks and kitchen heroes have been trained to help children learn better and grow every day. And more than 3,000 schools are already serving healthier meals across Europe. [» Watch this video to find out more!](#)

### About ICLEI and ICLEI’s global CityFood Programme

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability is a global network working with more than 2500+ local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. Active in 125+ countries, we influence sustainability policy and drive local action for low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development.

Since 2013, ICLEI’s global [» CityFood Programme](#) supports local and regional action for sustainable food systems to leverage the transformative power of food to build resilience.

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## Disclaimer

The sole responsibility for the content lies with the SchoolFood4Change project partners. The content does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the European Commission. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained herein.

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### 3. Introduction to innovative, sustainable and healthy food procurement criteria and approaches

In recent years, the question of how food and catering services are purchased for kindergartens, schools, universities, hospitals, retirement homes, and other venues at which public meals are made accessible became an issue of public concern. Local and regional governments are becoming more aware of the high costs associated with unhealthy diets and climate change and are therefore more inclined to implement innovative food procurement criteria and approaches to achieve change at all levels of the food systems, from farm to fork.

**Public food procurement, as a decision-making tool for purchasing goods and services, represents a dynamic area of policy making with a potential of tackling multiple issues simultaneously including social justice, planetary health, and biodiversity conservation**, to mention just a few. For the purpose of this handbook, we define innovative, sustainable and healthy public food procurement as a cross-cutting policy field that can successfully contribute to planetary health diets. In fact, procuring food for healthy meals at affordable costs is key for nutrition security and an important means by which to end hunger. At the same time, changes in eating patterns have a strong impact on GHG emissions, since demand for public meals also drives food production and associated emissions.

Thus, innovative, sustainable and healthy public food procurement not only strengthens environmental requirements for planetary health diets, included in EU Green Public Procurement (GPP) criteria but further expands the environmental baseline significantly. This is achieved by placing the focus on the social dimension of sustainable development including nutritional health, socio-economic innovations, food quality, regional resilience and sovereignty, and food education which are important to achieve systemic transformative change at the wider societal scale.

Still, public food procurement does not happen in isolation, and it is important to notice the enabling factors for implementing innovative, sustainable and healthy public food procurement.

- First, there is a **need for inclusive governance**, namely, the cooperation between different governance levels from local and regional to national, European and global as well as across different policy departments, with a view to promoting sustainability and health co-benefits linked to the public food procurement process.
- Second, **market needs and challenges need to be understood better**, so that procuring authorities and suppliers can communicate their expectations, challenges and new ideas in a way that leads to more sustainable, accessible and measurable contracting procedures.
- Finally, there is a **need for knowledge infrastructures** to be accessible to wider audiences to facilitate best practice exchange and drive operational excellence in public food procurement through peer-to-peer learning and capacity building.

### 3.1. Glossary of terms and abbreviations

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**Protected designation of origin (PDO)** is a type of geographical indication of the European Union and the United Kingdom aimed at preserving the designations of origin of food-related products. The designation was created in 1992 and its main purpose is to designate products that have been produced, processed and developed in a specific geographical area, using the recognised know-how of local producers and ingredients from the region concerned.

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**» eatforum.org**

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**Menu planning:** menu planning is the process of deciding what to eat for each meal, including the main and the side dishes and dessert. **Source:** [» study.com](http://www.study.com)

**Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP):** a process by which public authorities seek to achieve an appropriate balance between the three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – when procuring goods, services or works at all stages of the project.<sup>1</sup> The three pillars of sustainability are also displayed as an entity by the United Nations Environment Programme, 2017, and Sustainability Goals, 2015. A view of sustainable development is also mentioned as a basis for the imposition of measures in the public procurement directive (Directive 2014/24/EU, etc.). **Source:**

[» stratkit.eu](http://stratkit.eu)

**Food procurement** is an important component of SPP. Indeed, in many countries, food and catering services are among the main categories prioritised by the government to include sustainability criteria in public procurement activities **Source:** (UNEP, 2017).

**Vegetarian diets:** A vegetarian diet is defined as one that does not include meat (including fowl) or seafood, or products containing those foods. **Source:** [» pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)

**Disadvantaged/vulnerable groups:** Disadvantaged people could include any person who falls into one or more of the following categories: (a) long-term unemployed (the period may vary, e.g. people who have not been in regular paid employment for the previous 6 to 24 months); (b) youth (e.g. between 15 and 24 years of age); (c) not having attained an upper secondary educational or vocational qualification (International Standard Classification of Education 3), or has completed full-time education within the last two years and has not previously obtained his or her first regular paid employment; (d) over the age of 50 years; (e) living as a single adult with one or more dependents; (f) working in a sector or profession in a Member State where the gender imbalance is higher than the average gender imbalance across all economic sectors in that Member State (e.g. 25 %), and belongs to that underrepresented gender group; (g) members of an ethnic minority within a Member State and/or requiring development of his or her linguistic, vocational training or work experience profile to enhance prospects of gaining access to stable employment; (h) who may be considered at risk of poverty or severely deprived (e.g. people in a condition of material deprivation, persons living in households with very low work intensity, homeless, etc.); (i) experiencing other conditions causing a situation of vulnerability (e.g. domestic violence, persons suffering from addictions, etc.) - **Source:** *Buying Social* (p., 59): [» ec.europa.eu](http://ec.europa.eu)

**Plant-rich diets:** A diet in which plant-based produce makes up the majority of all foods consumed but that permits small amounts of animal products, including ruminant meat, to be eaten. The terms plant forward diet and sustainable diet are also commonly used to refer to the same pattern of eating. **Source:** *World Resource Institute, PLAYBOOK FOR GUIDING DINERS TOWARD PLANT-RICH DISHES IN FOOD SERVICE:* [» wri.org](http://wri.org)

**Short supply chain:** According to the European rural development regulation (1305/2013), a short food supply chain is a supply chain involving a limited number of economic operators, committed to co-operation, local economic development, and maintaining close geographical and social relations between food producers, processors and consumers. **Sources:** [» eufic.org](http://eufic.org) [» ec.europa.eu](http://ec.europa.eu) [» eur-lex.europa.eu](http://eur-lex.europa.eu)

**Ethical Trade:** Ethical trade is about having confidence that the products and services we buy have not been made at the expense of workers in global supply chains enjoying their rights. It encompasses a breadth of international labour rights such as working hours, health and safety, freedom of association and wages. Ethical trade involves companies taking a series of recognised steps to identify problems and improve working conditions, with a focus on continuous improvement over time. The ethical trade movement began in the 1990s when campaigns and media exposés brought attention to the harsh conditions of workers producing clothes, shoes, toys, food and other consumables for multinational companies. (ETI) **Source:** [» ethicaltrade.org](http://ethicaltrade.org)

**Socially responsible public procurement (SRPP)** aims to address the impact on society of the goods, services and works purchased by the public sector. It recognises that public buyers are not just interested in purchasing at the lowest price or best value for money, but also in ensuring that procurement achieves social benefits and prevents or mitigates adverse social impacts during the performance of the contract. **Source:** *Buying Social* (p., 59): [» ec.europa.eu](http://ec.europa.eu)

**Fair Trade:** Fair Trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalised producers and workers – especially in the South. (FTAO) **Source:** [» fairtrade-advocacy.org](http://fairtrade-advocacy.org)

**Seasonalfood:** Seasonal food is produced and purchased and consumed around the time that it is harvested. **Source:** [» seasonalfoodguide.org](http://seasonalfoodguide.org)

**Small lots:** The Public Procurement Directive (2014/24/EU) (art 46) highlights the possibility to divide contracts into lots and requires public buyers to explain where the decision is taken not to do this. Use of lots as part of socially responsible public procurement (SRPP) can ensure that smaller operators or social enterprises can compete – as they may not be able to deliver all aspects of a large contract.

**Social farming:** Social Farming adopts a multifunctional view of agriculture that combines farming with social services/health care at local level. It can help to improve social and environmental awareness, in accordance with social and solidarity principles. **Source:** [» sofaredu.eu](http://sofaredu.eu)

**Sustainable food systems (SFS):** A sustainable food system is a food system that delivers food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised. **Source:** [» fao.org](http://fao.org)

## 3.2 Setting the scene for sustainable and healthy food procurement

SF4C aims at reducing the environmental footprint of the food system in Europe and improving school and public meals in terms of health and food quality. Considering the freedom which contracting authorities have in determining the subject matter of contracts (which product or service you want to purchase), and the legal obligation for any requirements to be linked to the subject matter of the contract, it is recommended to clearly refer to health and sustainability objectives in this phase of the process. This not only explicitly links the health and sustainability intentions or goals of the purchase, but also clearly communicates the contracting authority's ambition to the market. It is also recommended that the definition of the subject matter is accompanied by an introduction to the policy goals that the contracting authority intends to achieve. Information on the applicable local, regional or national food strategy can help provide a better picture. An example of how this has been done successfully is provided below.

### **"Ghent en Garde": Sustainable Food Strategy in Ghent**

As a local government, the City of Ghent wants to play a pioneering role in the development of a sustainable society. Integrating social and ecological considerations into business operations can make a major contribution to the sustainable development of our city (see III.2 and III.3).

The City of Ghent wants to be a sustainable city and integrates the three sustainability pillars in its day-to-day operations. In other words, the City of Ghent wants to be ecologically, socially and economically sustainable.

The City of Ghent has developed a food strategy that focuses on the entire food chain from production, through processing and distribution, to consumption and waste processing. The City of Ghent seeks to reduce the environmental impact of the food system and wishes to reach both producers and consumers.

#### **To this end, various objectives are pursued:**

- A visible, as short as possible, food chain
- More sustainable food production and consumption
- Stronger, social added value around food initiatives
- Reducing food waste
- Maximum use of food waste as a raw material.

#### **In concrete terms, this is translated in the present requirements as:**

- Organic food
- Sustainable logistics
- Reducing food waste
- Sustainable packaging
- Fair trade
- Animal welfare and food culture.

More Information: City of Ghent (2013). Ghent en Garde: Ghent's Sustainable Food Strategy. Ghent: Stad Gent. Available at: [» stad.gent](http://www.stad.gent)

## Five Priorities of the Food Policy of Milan

In July 2014, the Municipality of Milan and the Cariplo Foundation signed an agreement for the definition and adoption of the Food Policy. After the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the Milanese food system, the objectives of the Food Policy were elaborated through a public consultation on the adoption of a City Council Resolution, containing the five priorities of the Milan Food Policy as listed below:

### 1. Ensure healthy food and water for all citizens

Ensure access to healthy food and water for all citizens to protect the dignity of the person and improve the quality of life.

### 2. Promote sustainability of the food system

Facilitate the consolidation of all the components and activities necessary for the articulation of a sustainable food system and promote the local production and consumption of fresh, seasonal and quality food.

### 3. Promote Food Education

Promote a culture oriented towards the conscious consumption of healthy, safe, culturally appropriate, sustainable food, produced and distributed in compliance with human rights and the environment.

### 4. Fighting against food waste

Reduce food surpluses and waste in the various stages of the food cycle as a form of fighting social and economic inequalities and as a tool for reducing environmental impacts.

### 5. Support the scientific research in agrifood sectors

Encourage the development of agri-food scientific research with connotations and repercussions relating to the urban system, aiming at the improvement of processes and the development of cutting-edge technologies.

More Information: Comune di Milano (2015). Milan Food Policy 2015–2020. Milan: Comune di Milano. Available at: [» comune.milano.it](http://comune.milano.it)

Take a look inside:



» "Ghent en Garde": Sustainable Food Strategy in Ghent



» Five Priorities of the Food Policy of Milan

### 3.3 Approaching and structuring sustainable food procurement

Taking the above into consideration, **this handbook presents a set of criteria that can be integrated into food and catering tenders to enable the uptake of innovative practices on the markets as well as stimulate innovation within the political landscape.** Each paragraph refers to a specific SF4C target and describes the desired outcome of a tender in terms of sustainability and health ambition. There are different criteria that could be used to achieve the SF4C objectives, and different ways of measuring and designing them. Such criteria are described in a rather open way. In fact, the implementation can vary depending on the local context: there is no one size that can fit all. Hence the integration of these criteria will require some degree of adaptation, depending on the individual contracting authority and on the possibilities of the market.

**The criteria include:**

- **Selection criteria (SC)**, to establish if tenderers have the capacity to deliver the sustainability requirements, such as previous experience and references, supply chain management systems, access to a dietitian specialist, etc.;
- **Technical specifications (TS)**, mandatory requirements which have a pass/fail nature;
- **Award criteria (AC)**, against which tenders compliant with the TS are evaluated. They reward better performance progressively and they can relate both to cost (including life-cycle cost) and quality. To define and verify performance under award criteria, the contracting authority may refer to labels or certifications. The points [X] assigned to each criterion should be determined by the contracting authority, taking account of the totality of the requirements and criteria included in the tender;
- **Contract performance clauses (CPC)**, conditions that relate to the contract management stage.

This handbook and the criteria have been developed taking account of the legal framework for public procurement in the EU, namely the 2014 Procurement Directives, Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and relevant case law of the European Court of Justice. Key legal considerations which affect the procurement of sustainable and healthy food include:

- The need to treat all bidders equally and to avoid creating barriers to free movement of goods and services (including food), for example by insisting on local production or discriminating against foods from other regions or countries;
- The requirement that where reference is made to particular standards, certifications or labels, equivalent standards, certifications, or labels are accepted;
- The rules regarding transparency, accessibility and objectivity which apply to labels, certifications etc. which are referred to in tender documents;
- The requirement for all procurement criteria and contract performance clauses to be linked to the subject matter of the contract. That is, they concern the specific goods or services being purchased and not the size, legal form or general corporate practices of the bidders.

For more detailed information on the public procurement process, please refer to:

[» Buying Green! A Handbook on Green Public Procurement](#)

[» Procura+ Manual, A Guide to Implementing Sustainable Procurement](#)

The SF4C targets can also be reached by following the procurement approaches described in chapter 5 of this handbook. They are innovative and legally operational food procurement approaches which are being used by contracting authorities across EU member states to diversify procurement procedures, increase market participation, improve transparency of food supply chains and instil inspiration to work collectively towards innovative, healthy and sustainable food procurement. In chapter 4 of this handbook, the innovative, sustainable and healthy public food procurement criteria will first be presented, before providing an overview of innovative procurement approaches in chapter 5.

**The criteria have been designed together with procurers, nutritionists, city representatives, schools, food scholars and lawyers, to deliver more systemic, sustainable food and catering contracts within the framework of EU procurement law.** The seven ambitious SF4C targets referred to in this handbook have been developed in light of the EU's flagship policy on food and sustainability - namely the Farm to Fork Strategy - and best practice examples from cities leading the field in providing innovative, sustainable and healthy school meals, such as Dordogne, Lyon, Ghent, Malmo, Copenhagen, and Milan. The SF4C targets address various facets of food systems including organic food production, circular and fair economy, waste reduction and better education and infrastructures for healthy and sustainable diets. They also clearly demonstrate the importance of inclusive, multilevel governance and market dialogues.

**Policy context for the handbook:** The criteria presented in this handbook are inspired and aligned with the key International and EU legal and policy framework on public procurement and sustainable and healthy food, while also drawing on pioneering city and national strategies tested by SF4C partners. An overview of these policy frameworks and strategies can be found in chapter 7 of this document.

## 4. Targets and criteria

Two levels of ambition have been defined for the criteria. **The first level (core criteria)** ensures a minimum level of health and sustainability. The second is an **advanced level (advanced criteria)**. This can be chosen by contracting authorities that intend to go beyond a basic health and sustainability standard and can be referred to to encourage tenderers to deliver improved services and products in relation to planetary health diets. The criteria must be adapted to the specifics of each tender, in particular by filling in the sections marked in ***italics and brackets***.



### Target 1: Organic Production and Biodiversity Protection



### Target 2: Nutrition, quality, taste, freshness and seasonality



### Target 3: GHG emissions reduction



### Target 4: Reduction of food poverty and inequality



### Target 5: Food education, food culture, culinary traditions



### Target 6: Small farmers and social integration of disadvantaged and vulnerable Groups



### Target 7: Fair trade and decent labour conditions



Criteria marked with an apple (🍎) are intended for the direct procurement of food; whereas criteria marked with a cutlery set (🍴) are intended for procurement of catering services.

**SC:** Selection criteria

**TS:** Technical specifications

**AC:** Award criteria

**CPC:** Contract performance clauses

**[X]:** To be specified information

**✓:** Verification



## Target 1: Organic Production and Biodiversity Protection



### Overall target:

At least 40% [by mass/volume, value or both] of the food and drink products provided should come from certified organic sources.



### Core criteria:

🍎 TS on organic share of food products (option 1): At least 40% of the total [mass/volume and/or value, to be specified by contracting authority] of food and drinks provided under the contract must be from certified organic sources, or from sources under conversion to organic standards.

🍎 TS designating food products from organic sources (option 2): The following food and drink items [list to be specified by the contracting authority and expected to account for at least 40% of mass/volume and/or value of food and drink provided under the contract] must come from certified organic sources, or from sources under conversion to organic standards. In the event that certified organic products are not available for any of these items, the contractor may nominate an alternative item of equivalent [mass/volume and/or value] which will be provided with organic certification, subject to the contracting authority's approval.

### ✓ Verification:

**Option 1:** The tenderer must declare that it will comply with this requirement as part of the tender and provide an indicative list of the food and drink items which will be provided with organic certification in accordance with Regulation (EC) No. 2018/848. The expected [mass/volume and/or value] of these products to be provided under the contract must be indicated. Products which bear the EU Organic (green leaf) label or equivalent will be deemed to comply. Products originating from farms/food production facilities in conversion to organic standards that demonstrate a plan of reaching organic food production within a specific time frame, which does not exceed the period of the contract, may also be deemed to comply, if evidence of this is provided.

**Option 2:** The tenderer must declare that it will comply with this requirement as part of the tender and provide a list of the food and drink items which will be provided with organic certification in accordance with Regulation (EC) No. 2018/848. Products which bear the EU Organic (green leaf) label or equivalent will be deemed to comply. Products originating from farms/food production facilities in conversion to organic standards that demonstrate a plan of reaching organic food production within a specific time frame, which does not exceed the period of the contract, may also be deemed to comply, if evidence of this is provided.

## Target 1: Organic Production and Biodiversity Protection

### CPC on organic share of food products (option 1):

The contractor must provide **[quarterly, six-monthly or annual - to be determined by contracting authority]** reports indicating the **[volume/mass and/or value]** of organic food products provided under the contract. In the event that this falls below 40%, the contractor must indicate how they will compensate for this by providing a higher percentage of organic food products during the next reporting period.

### CPC on designated organic food products (option 2):

The contractor must provide **[quarterly, six-monthly or annually - to be determined by the contracting authority]** reports listing the organic food and drink items provided under the contract. In the event that organic products have not been provided for any of the agreed categories, alternative products with organic certification, or evidence of farms/food production facilities conversion to organic standards, must be provided.

### Good Practice: Organic policies from Swedish Municipalities

Within the framework of the Swedish national food strategy, the Swedish Government has set a target of 60% of the food purchased for the public sector being organic by 2030. At present, the average (for all municipalities on a national level) is around 38% (numbers for 2021) even though there are municipalities already achieving the goal with, for example, as much as 71% organic.

The Swedish municipalities are supported in achieving this ambitious endeavour by the Swedish **» National Agency for Public Procurement**, which provides all procuring authorities with voluntary sustainability criteria to use when procuring food as well as other goods and services. For all food groups (like meat, dairy, fruits and vegetables etc.) core, advanced and sometimes 'spearhead' criteria for organic products exists and are free to use as the municipalities see fit and as it aligns with their own politically set goals, ambitions and budgets.

References: Basnet, S., Röös, E., Milestad, R., Eriksson, M. and Rydhmer, L., 2023. Organic agriculture in a low-emission world: exploring combined measures to deliver a sustainable food system in Sweden. *Sustainability Science*, 18(2), pp.665–679. Islamian, K., 2022. Green Public Procurement in Sweden: A study about barriers to municipalities' organic food purchases. Lund University Student Papers.

## Target 1: Organic Production and Biodiversity Protection

### Good Practice: Vienna's ÖkoKauf Wien programme

In 1998, the City of Vienna (Austria) established their Green Procurement Programme (ÖkoKauf Wien) to promote climate and environmental protection. The programme promotes ecological criteria when buying goods, products and services in all areas of the city administration. Experts work together to develop legally binding criteria catalogues for procurement procedures, and an advisory committee for legal affairs evaluates the legal validity. Some of the results achieved so far are:

- At least 30% organic food is served in hospitals and retirement homes, and at least 50% organic food in schools and kindergartens
- Only free-range or organic eggs are purchased
- Milk is 100% organic
- 20% of all poultry products are organic, with a step-by-step plan to reach 60% by 2030.

More Information: ÖkoKauf Wien – City of Vienna Green Procurement Programme (City of Vienna, 1998–ongoing). Available at: >> [www.wien.gv.at](http://www.wien.gv.at)

 **TS on sustainable seafood products:** Species and stocks classified as "critically endangered", "endangered", "vulnerable" and "near threatened" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature must not be provided under the contract. At least X% of the total [mass and/or value, to be determined by the contracting authority] of the marine and aquaculture products supplied under the contract shall be independently certified under relevant national, European and/or international sustainability standards. These standards must, as a minimum, ensure compliance with applicable local, national and EU/international laws, resource management, conservation and waste management for the specific species and production method.

#### **Verification:**

Tenderers must declare their compliance with this requirement and provide an indicative list of the marine and aquaculture products which will be provided with independent sustainability certification. Products bearing the labels MSC (Marine Stewardship Council) or ASC (Aquaculture Stewardship Council), or equivalent certifications by other independent organisations, will be deemed compliant with the requirement. In exceptional circumstances, in case tenderers cannot supply a certified products for reasons not attributable to them, non-certified fish products are also allowed, provided that the tenderer can prove compliance with sustainability standards.

## Target 1: Organic Production and Biodiversity Protection

 **CPC on sustainable seafood products:** The contractor must provide *[quarterly, six-monthly, or annually - to be determined by the contracting authority]* reports listing the species and origin of marine and aquaculture products provided under the contract and indicating the *[mass and/or value - as designated in the technical specifications]* of products which carry an independent sustainability certification under relevant national, European and or international standards.

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### Good Practice: The technical specifications for sustainable fish, shellfish and crustaceans in Ghent food and catering tenders

As mentioned, the City of Ghent places great importance on sustainable food. Not only suppliers of the City, but also the internal order takers must take this into account. A number of requirements and recommendations follow below. Good fish: The City of Ghent only wants to purchase 'good fish', which meets the following definition:

- Comes from a well-managed stock;
- Caught/farmed with minimal environmental damage;
- Traceability to the origin;
- Pure and healthy;
- Not caught illegally;
- Produced/caught under good/honest working conditions.

Fish guide: On the basis of the award criterion 'sustainable fish', the tenderer is encouraged to include in its tender as many sustainable fish, shellfish and crustaceans as possible, based on the blue and green categories in the Fish Guide. Fish, shellfish and crustaceans that belong to the yellow and red categories in the fish guide must be avoided as much as possible and can only be offered in exceptional circumstances. This may be the case, for example, if it appears necessary for the compulsory training courses at the Hotel School of the City of Ghent. If it appears that no account has been taken of this in an order, it is the supplier's responsibility to point this out to the buyer and to propose a sustainable alternative.

## Target 1: Organic Production and Biodiversity Protection

### Good Practice: The technical specifications for sustainable fish, shellfish and crustaceans in Ghent food and catering tenders

#### Fish and seafood guide

The fish and seafood guide for professional users is a tool for anyone buying and selling fish and seafood. The guide weighs up various sustainability aspects and covers those species that are consumed most frequently in Belgium, France and Switzerland. The supplier is expected to always take into account the (latest) recommendations from this fish and seafood guide. The purchasers within the City and the OCMW Ghent (Openbaar Centrum voor Maatschappelijk Welzijn which stands for social services in the City of Ghent) are also encouraged to take these into account as much as possible in their orders.

Forbidden fish species: The City of Ghent and OCMW Ghent have decided to stop buying a number of fish species for catering. The following fish species are not allowed:

- Tuna
- Pangasius,
- Victoria perch (Nile perch),
- Pure and healthy;
- Tilapia,
- Eel.

In exceptional circumstances, the above fish species can be offered, but only if, for example, this is necessary for the compulsory courses at the Hotel School of the City of Ghent.

Exception tuna: Bluefin tuna remains prohibited in all circumstances. Yellowfin tuna, whitefin tuna and skipjack tuna may be allowed in exceptional circumstances such as the example of the Hotel School above. However, this is only on the condition that they carry the MSC label or equivalent (in accordance with the blue category of the Fish guide) or originate from a certain FAO (in accordance with the green category of the Fish guide).

More Information: Ghent University, 2012. Sustainable Seafood Project: Sustainable seafood procurement in Ghent institutions. VLIZ Special Publication 57. Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ). Available at: >> [www.vliz.be](http://www.vliz.be)

Fish calendar: The City of Ghent and OCMW will take the seasonal aspects of fish, crustaceans and shellfish into account as much as possible when ordering, based on the fish calendar. In this way, the products are seasonal and thus purchased at the right time. Here too, it is the supplier's task to point this out to the buyer and, on the basis of the fish calendar, to propose a sustainable alternative if it appears that this has not been taken into account.

## Target 1: Organic Production and Biodiversity Protection



### Advanced criteria

1

TS on organic share of food products: 100% of the following fruits, vegetables and cereals *[products to be specified]*, and 50% of meat and fish products *[by mass and/or value, to be specified by contracting authority]* products to be specified] and fish [products to be specified] supplied must be from certified organic sources.

TS on organic share of food products: 100% of the following fruits, vegetables and cereals *[products to be specified]*, and 50% of meat and fish products *[by mass and/or value, to be specified by contracting authority]* products to be specified] and fish [products to be specified] supplied must be from certified organic sources.

#### Verification:

The *[mass/volume and/or value]* of food products to be provided, and the specific practices implemented to address sustainability/agroecology in the production process, must be set out in the tender. To verify this, tenders may provide an organic certification and/or organic certification issued by an independent third organisation, the Demeter certification or equivalent, or evidence of membership of a Participatory Guarantee System or equivalent.

AC on increased organic share of food products: Up to *[X]* points will be proportionally awarded to tenderers that offer to supply certified organic products beyond the minimum product list/percentages required in the technical specifications.

AC on increased organic share of food products: Up to *[X]* points will be proportionally awarded to tenderers that offer to supply certified organic products beyond the minimum product list/percentages required in the technical specifications.

## Target 1: Organic Production and Biodiversity Protection

### Good Practice: Organic ingredients in Fano

The Municipality of Fano is a small town located in the Marche Region, in the central part of Italy. In 2020 the Municipality organised a public procurement procedure for school catering services for the following three years (2021-2023). Ambitious organic requirements were included, such as the following:

- Jam, cereals, flour, fresh fruit, milk, legumes, extra virgin olive oil, pasta, tomato sauce, eggs, fresh vegetables, frozen foods (chard, minestrone, peas, spinach), fruit juices, yogurt must be 100% organic;
- At least 50%, by weight, of beef must come from organic production in accordance with Regulations EC No. 2007/834 and related implementing regulations;
- At least 50%, by weight, of poultry meat must come from organic production in accordance with Regulations EC No. 2007/834 and related implementing regulations;
- At least 30% by weight of dairy products must come from organic production in accordance with Regulations EC No. 2007/834 and related implementing regulations;
- At least 30% (expressed as a percentage of weight on the total) of fish products (fish, cephalopod molluscs, crustaceans) to be provided, both fresh and frozen or preserved, must come from organic aquaculture, or sustainable fishing.

More Information: FAO, 2015. Italy – The city of Fano promotes short supply chains in school canteens. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

## Target 1: Organic Production and Biodiversity Protection

1  **TS on sustainable eggs:** Eggs in the shell supplied under the contract must not be labelled code 3 ('eggs from caged hens') according to Regulation (EC) No 589/2008.

 **AC on sustainable eggs:** Up to **[X]** points will be awarded to tenders if 100% of the eggs supplied bear the label 0 (i.e. organic) or 1 (i.e. free range production), in compliance with the EC Regulation No. 589/2008.

 **TS on sustainable eggs:** Eggs in the shell used to fulfil the catering contract must not be labelled code 3 ('eggs from caged hens') according to Regulation (EC) No 589/2008.

 **AC on sustainable eggs:** AC on sustainable eggs: Up to **[X]** points will be awarded to tenders if 100% of the eggs used to fulfil the catering contract bear the label 0 (i.e. organic) or 1 (i.e. free range production), in compliance with the EC Regulation No. 589/2008.

### **Verification:**

Tenderers must declare that the eggs they will supply are compliant with all applicable animal welfare standards in the place(s) of production. The supplier shall provide details of their suppliers of eggs, indicate the production methods applied, and the relevant coding as per Regulation (EC) No 589/2008.

### Good Practice: 100% organic eggs served in the school canteens in Scandicci

Since September 2022, the City of Scandicci has been serving 100% organic eggs as part of its school menu. The new contract for school catering in Scandicci sets the obligation for suppliers to comply with the new Minimum Environmental Criteria of the Italian Ministry of the Environment, which increases the share of organic produce to a minimum of 50% instead of the previous 40%, in addition to objectives to decrease food waste and generate a greater symbiosis between the school meals services and regional food systems.

Reference: Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Tutela del Territorio e del Mare, 2020. Decreto 10 marzo 2020 – Adozione dei criteri ambientali minimi per il servizio di ristorazione collettiva e fornitura di derrate alimentari. Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana, Serie Generale n. 90, 4 April 2020.

Areas of impact: #AnimalWelfare #HealthyDiets #SoilProtection #ReducedPollution #BiodiversityProtection #GHGEmissionsReduction



## Target 2: Nutrition, quality, taste, freshness and seasonality

This target is connected with Food Education. Please refer to Target #5 for more criteria.



### Overall target:

100% of the food provided under contracts will be traceable to its origin, and will be tested for quality and taste prior to being served. Fresh and seasonal products will be provided wherever possible, taking account of cost, sustainability, nutritional value and food waste.



### Core criteria:

|| **TS on nutritional content of meals:** Menus must be composed of or accompanied by one or more portions of fruit and/or vegetables and must be nutritionally balanced according to *[specify relevant national health guidelines]*.

🍎 || **AC on enhanced nutritional value:** Up to *[X]* points will be awarded to tenders that provide wholemeal cereal-based foods in addition to the minimum recommended proportion specified in *[specify relevant national health guidelines]*.

|| **TS on food awareness:** Information about the nutritional qualities and composition of the offered meals must be prominently displayed in the school canteens.

|| **TS on nutritional balance:** Bidders are required to abide by nutritional composition targets for sugars, salts, and saturated fat for all meals offered in canteens, in accordance with national dietary guidelines.

|| **TS on food accessibility:** Adapted menus for people with food allergies or on specific diets, defined and accepted by the contracting authority, shall be available.

|| **AC on food awareness:** Up to *[X]* points will be awarded to tenders that commit to providing information that is easily readable about the social and environmental impact of the meals served in the canteens. With the aim of continuous improvement, tenderers will offer opportunities for students to express their opinions and provide feedback on the menus by means of periodic questionnaires.

### ✓ Verification:

Tenderers must submit X examples of nutritionally balanced menus, which take into consideration potential dietary constraints and information on the nutritional composition of menus must be provided. Tenderers must submit a plan for how to present information in the canteens on the nutritional qualities and composition of the food as well as social and environmental impacts of the food served. Questionnaire templates on menu satisfaction must also be submitted.

## Target 2: Nutrition, quality, taste, freshness and seasonality

 **AC on food quality and taste:** Bidders should describe their approach to sourcing and providing high quality and tasty food under the contract, including the procedures for testing food. Up to **[X]** points will be awarded based on the quality and taste of food to be provided, and procedures for ensuring these standards.

 **Verification:**

Bidders should describe their internal procedures to guarantee quality and taste as well as any relevant certifications or awards. Samples of **[food products or meals, depending on contract type]** may be requested by the contracting authority for evaluation by a tasting panel.

 **AC on seasonal and fresh products:** Bidders should outline their proposals for providing food products which are a) in season in the place of consumption and/or b) fresh, as opposed to frozen or otherwise conserved. The approach taken to select these items and to ensure their overall quality and sustainability should be described, along with the estimated volume and value of these products to be provided. Up to **[X]** points will be awarded based on the volume and value of seasonal and fresh products to be provided under the contract.

 **Verification:**

A list of the seasonal and fresh products to be provided under the contract must be provided, together with an indication of the possible supplier(s) for these products.

**Note:** 

The contracting authority may wish to provide a link to a calendar indicating which foods are in season throughout the year in the place of consumption.

 **CPC on seasonal and fresh products:** The contractor must provide information on the volume and value of fresh and seasonal food products provided, which must at least meet the levels set out in the contractor's tender. In the event of any non-compliance with the above conditions, the contractor will be required to remedy the defect within a period of **[specify days or weeks]**. If the contractor fails to remedy the defect within this period, the contracting authority may avail of the following remedies **[specify payment reduction or other penalties applicable under the contract]**.

 **CPC on food quality and taste:** The contracting authority may carry out unannounced audits of food quality and taste at any point during the contract, to confirm that the standards promised in the tender are being met. In the event that the quality or taste of food is found to be below the required standards, the contractor will be notified and required to remedy the defect within a period of **[specify days or weeks]**. If the contractor fails to remedy the defect within this period, the contracting authority may avail of the following remedies **[specify payment reduction or other penalties applicable under the contract]**.

## Target 2: Nutrition, quality, taste, freshness and seasonality

### Good Practice: Increasing the share of local products in Lyon

While preparing its public tender for school catering (a central kitchen cooking and delivering 26,500 meals per day), the City of Lyon contacted the agricultural branch representatives, with the objective of increasing the share of local products.

In order to do so and to reinforce the links between the agricultural branch and the central kitchen, the idea came to organise an "agricultural commission" as part of the delivery of the contract. This commission meets twice a year (started in June 2022) and aims to strengthen the links between farmers and canteens. Representatives of the agricultural branch, of the food caterer and of the municipality will discuss four main topics:

- a fair price for all;
- the yearly planning of production;
- the structure and creation of local supply chains; and
- the agro ecological transition of producers.

During the four years of the tender, the share of local products should reach 20% in a 50 km radius and 50% in a 200 km radius. The common ambition of the three parties is to strengthen food resilience while using local products, and the role of the commission is to reach these objectives.

More Information: Lyon, 2021. Build Back Better Plan: Food & Agriculture section. Lyon: City of Lyon / Sustainable Food Places. Available at: [» sustainablefoodplaces.org](http://sustainablefoodplaces.org)

### #FoodPills on the importance of seasonality

"Seasonal produce has different environmental, health, economic and societal impacts depending on the regions where the products are from and where they are consumed. Seasonal produce grown outdoors and transported over short distances might have lower environmental impacts than products grown in greenhouses or transported over long distances.

Seasonal vegetables may be characterised by better taste, quality and prices, which can promote the shift of the menu provided towards more vegetarian or plant-based options. Contracting authorities might decide to include a seasonal produce criterion in their tenders on an individual basis by indicating at what time of the year which food and drink products are to be delivered/offered".

More Information: [» EU GPP criteria for food, catering services and vending machines.](http://europa.eu)

## Target 2: Nutrition, quality, taste, freshness and seasonality



### Advanced criteria

**TS on food traceability:** All food and drink products to be provided under the contract must be fully traceable to their point(s) of origin, and any intermediaries between the producer and purchaser must be identified.

**Verification:**

Information about the origin of all food and drink products provided under the contract, and the intermediaries involved (where relevant) must be included in **[quarterly, six-monthly or annual - to be determined by contracting authority]** contract reports.

**Note:**

Contracting authorities are encouraged to work together with food suppliers during the tendering phase in order to encourage greater use of food products from regional sources.

**CPC on food traceability:** The contractor must provide information about the origin of all food and drink products provided under the contract, and the intermediaries involved (where relevant) in **[quarterly, six-monthly or annual - as set out in the technical specifications]** reports.

**TS on unnecessary additives:** Tenderers must limit as much as possible the use of unnecessary additives. Added Trans fatty acids and saturated fatty acids have little or no place in a meal. The following additives should not be used: The Southampton dyes: E102, E104, E110, E122, E124, E129, others (E171, E150c, E150d).

**Verification:**

The tenderer must attach to the tender a list of the additives (E numbers), trans fatty acids and saturated fatty acids used. The tenderer is required to provide the list of ingredients of the meals during implementation, before a menu cycle comes into effect, so that the contracting authority can check the composition of the meals and, if necessary, request an adjustment.

### Good Practice: Focus on seasonality in school canteens in Italy

The Italian legislation on sustainable school food procurement (Ministerial Decree n.65 of 10 March 2020) requires suppliers to provide seasonal vegetables and fruits, according to the seasonality calendar adopted by the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies (art. 2 of the Ministerial Decree of 18 December 2017 on "Criteria and requirements of organic school canteens) or according to the calendar of seasonal food attached to the law itself, or according to regional calendars of seasonality.

More Information: Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Tutela del Territorio e del Mare, 2020. Decreto 10 marzo 2020, n. 65 – Adozione dei criteri ambientali minimi per il servizio di ristorazione collettiva e fornitura di derrate alimentari. Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana, Serie Generale n. 90, 4 April 2020. Available at: [» mite.gov.it](http://mite.gov.it)

**Areas of impact:** #HealthyDiets #BiodiversityProtection #GHGEmissionsReduction



## Target 3: GHG emissions reduction



### Overall target:

**The greenhouse gas emissions associated with the production, transportation, consumption and disposal of food will be measured and progressively reduced.**



### Core criteria:

**TS on increased vegetarian and plant-based food:** Menus offered must include choices which promote the consumption of pulses, vegetables, fruits, wholegrains and nuts while having a balanced nutrient intake for the consumer. Vegetarian and plant-based options shall be available every day. At least once a week, the menu should consist of only vegetarian options, with at least one meal being plant-based only.

#### **Verification:**

Tenderers must provide at least two examples of a weekly menu cycle offering nutritionally balanced meals which meet the above requirements.

### Good Practice: 'Veggie Thursday' in Ghent

Since 2009, the City of Ghent has secured the services of catering providers which implement 'Veggie Thursday' in all of the city's schools. On that day, school canteens do not serve meat or fish products, and occasionally deliver educational workshops to schoolchildren on the topics of vegetarianism, environmental sustainability and animal welfare.

The soup served is always vegetarian unless, for example, there is chicken soup on the menu. The protein in the main course must be either hybrid and thus consist of 50% plant-based protein and 50% animal-based protein or 100% plant based protein. If a dish contains 100% animal-based protein, a dish with 100% plant-based protein must be served in the same week. At the end of the week, we always want to reach a 50/50 balance between plant based and animal protein.

More Information: City of Ghent, 2009. Veggie Thursday – Detailed information. Bonn: ICLEI carbonn® Climate Registry. Available at: [» carbonn.org](http://carbonn.org)

## Target 3: GHG emissions reduction

|| **AC on energy efficient kitchen appliances:** Up to [X] points will be awarded based on the energy efficiency of the kitchen appliances to be used to deliver the services under the contract.

**Verification:**

A list of all kitchen appliances to be used in delivering the contracted services, together with their energy rating under the EU energy label, must be provided

**Note:** 

This criterion is only applicable where the catering services provider is responsible for provision of kitchen appliances. The contracting authority must compare tenders on the basis of the efficiency of appliances detailed by bidders.

### Good Practice: Energy Containment interventions at the school kitchens in Fano

The contracting authorities requested that the contractor shall be committed to replace the existing lamps in all kitchens with the latest generation of LED lamps and the installation of infrared motion detection sensors in the rooms where there is no continuous presence of staff, such as the pantry, changing rooms and staff toilets. All new luminaires must be CE-certified and comply with current regulations and are certified in the Photobiological Risk Free Class.

|| **SC on waste reduction:** Tenderers must prove relevant expertise and experience in the area of prevention of food waste and other waste generated as part of catering service contracts, according to waste prevention plans and targets.

|| **TS on waste management plan:** a waste management plan must be implemented. The plan should aim at preventing food waste, ensure that appropriate food portions are served and should entail separate collection of waste. Meals shall be served and consumed in reusable dishware and tableware. Separately marked waste bins for food waste in the canteen and/or in the kitchen must be installed and should follow the local regulations on waste separation.

|| **AC on food leftovers:** Up to [X] points will be awarded to tenderers that plan for redistribution of surplus food to charities and food banks as well as animal shelters.

**Verification:**

Evidence such as descriptions of actions taken under previous contracts, references, CVs and staff training records in relation to waste prevention.

**Verification:**

Tenderers shall submit a waste management plan, including information on the waste bins to be installed. Tenderers shall provide details of the type of dishware and tableware that will be used.

**Verification:**

Tenderers must provide evidence of their partnerships/collaborations with surplus food redistribution organisations and the procedures to be followed to ensure the safe and efficient redistribution of food.

## Target 3: GHG emissions reduction

 **CPC on waste management:** The contractor is required to provide regular *[specify weekly, monthly etc]* reports on the volume and nature of waste generated under the contract and the volume of leftover food redistributed. The specific steps taken to reduce food waste, and the impact of these measures, must be documented.

### A common method of reducing and measuring food waste from the Swedish Food Agency

The Swedish Food Agency has produced a handbook to support kitchens and other food service providers in their work with reducing food waste. The handbook includes methods of procuring and planning to minimise food waste, handling food waste incurred and measuring and monitoring food waste to learn and develop. It also contains easy to check action lists for reduced food waste. The handbook also gives guidance on different types of food waste that can occur in the public meals sector, like kitchen waste, serving waste and plate waste.

More Information: Swedish Food Agency (2021). Handbook for reducing food waste. Uppsala: Swedish Food Agency. Available at: >> [livesmedelsverket.se](http://livesmedelsverket.se)

### Good Practice: Reducing food waste in Gothenburg and Umeå

Procuring food that is approaching the best before date can help reduce food waste. The City of Gothenburg and nine adjacent municipalities were early with such an agreement but the same method, with different variations and suppliers, is used in many municipalities in Sweden.

Through an agreement with a supplier specialised in food with short shelf life or by signing an agreement with their regular wholesaler, kitchens can order food that would otherwise have risked being thrown away due to a short date. Some of the suppliers only sell these goods in large volumes, full or half pallets, which sometimes limits the use of the service to only kitchens with at least 800 servings.

Municipalities using this method testify that the profit is not in saved crowns but rather lies in the benefit for the environment and the ability to add that “golden edge” to your meals sometimes. Schools do not change the menu completely according to the range of goods with a short shelf life, but rather modify the menu a little. For example, schools can replace the intended fish and instead serve cod loin, something that is usually too expensive for public kitchens. Raw materials that schools otherwise cannot afford can also create luxury on the salad table, for example, olives of good quality.

The City of Umeå has solutions in place for food with a short shelf life. The municipality has one major contract in place with a food wholesaler. Through market dialogue, the municipality and the wholesaler developed a working method regarding products with a short shelf life. When the wholesaler has goods with a short shelf life, the department responsible for meal service is contacted and offered to purchase the goods. Meal service then determines whether food has to be purchased or not to avoid food waste.

More information: Umeå University (2023). *Mycket mer ätbar mat kan räddas* [Much more edible food can be saved]. Umeå: Umeå Universitet. Available at: >> [www.umu.se](http://www.umu.se)

## Target 3: GHG emissions reduction

 **AC on sustainable low-carbon transport:** Up to **[X]** points will be awarded based on the proportion of low or zero-emission vehicles to be used to fulfil the contract, as well as planning and logistics which reduce the emissions associated with transport.

 **Verification:**

A list of all kitchen appliances to be used in delivering the contracted services, together with their energy rating under the EU energy label, must be provided

 **Related CPC:** The transport plan submitted as part of the tender will become a binding part of the contract. Where any changes are made to the vehicles or delivery schedules under the contract, the contractor must provide a statement regarding the environmental impact of these changes, which must not increase overall emissions per unit of food delivered.

3

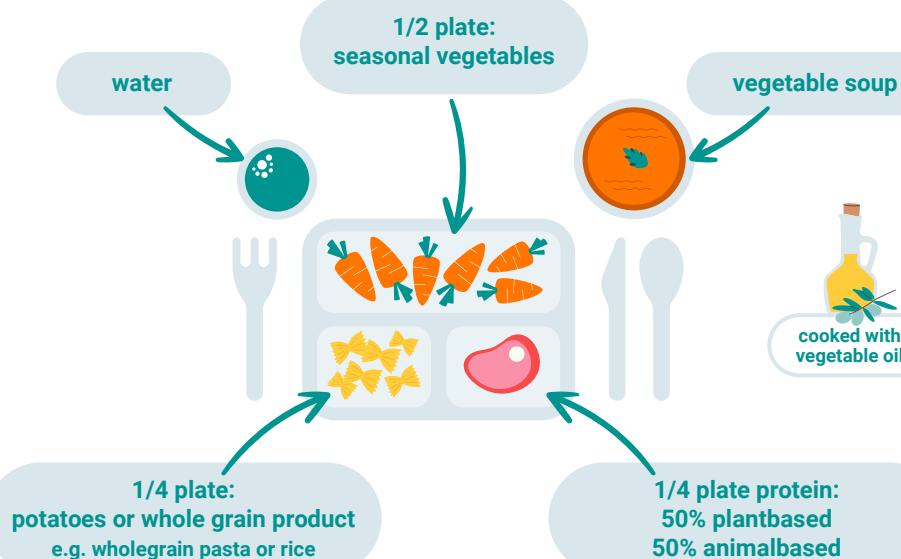
### Good Practice Example: Measuring greenhouse gas emissions in Ghent

The City of Ghent wants to make food more climate friendly and lower the food related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of the school meals. Calculating GHG-emissions is considered to be a challenging task for Municipalities. Therefore, the City of Ghent has joined the Cool Food Pledge of the World Resource Institute, to receive support, advice and inspiration on how to lower emissions and gain access to a scientific calculation method for assessing CO2 emissions.

Inspired by an approach of offering more plant based dishes, City of Ghent decided to have the menus re-designed in the new school meals tender. Potential caterers were challenged to offer tasty, childfriendly meals with a positive impact on the environment and with a CO2 footprint reduction which was also important to avoid the common feeling of 'giving up meat'. Based on the health guidelines of the Flanders region, the City of Ghent decided the ideal lunch should contain:

- ½ plate: seasonal vegetables
- Vegetable soup
- ¼ plate protein made of 50% plant based and 50% animal based
- ¼ plate: potatoes or whole grain product

## Target 3: GHG emissions reduction



### Good Practice Example: Measuring greenhouse gas emissions in Ghent

From 2021 where possible, the menu provides a possibility to consume 50% plant based and 50% animal based protein. The menu has in its offer sausages, balls, burgers or as a stew or curry e.g. a fish curry with oyster mushrooms. Some dishes were not adapted because the best recipe was the traditional one, but these are compensated with a full veggie dish. In this way, the 50/50 balance of plant and animal based menus is reached on a weekly basis.

More Information: Gezond Leven (n.d.). Gezonde warme maaltijd [Healthy warm meal]. Vlaams Instituut Gezond Leven. Available at: [gezondleven.be](http://gezondleven.be)

Since 2019, the amount of several purchased food products of the previous year have been sent to the Water Research Institute for assessment. In 2018, the baseline assessment for City of Ghent was made which shown 9 777 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> e\* (total of food related GHG-emissions (carbon costs)). As a result of introducing the new menus in 2021, the City of Ghent reached 5 378 tonnes. The 4399 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> e saved is equivalent to 2 932 cars being taken off the road.

More information: World Resources Institute (n.d.). Cool Food Pledge. Washington, DC: World Resources Institute. Available at: [coolfood.org](http://coolfood.org)  
\* CO<sub>2</sub>e = CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent

## Target 3: GHG emissions reduction

### Good Practice: monitoring and control of the commitment to the social and environmental contractual criteria in nursery schools in Barcelona

In the city of Barcelona, the **>> network of nursery schools** (children aged from 0 to 3 years old) consists of a total of 103 (approximately 8,500 pupils) is managed either by the Barcelona Education Consortium or the Municipal Institute of Education. These nursery schools serve around 8,000 menus per day (to both children and adults), including breakfast, lunch and afternoon snacks prepared in the schools' own kitchens. In order to facilitate the monitoring and control of the commitment to the social and environmental contractual criteria, menus based on the Mediterranean diet are established by age groups (with a table of adaptations for intolerances or specific needs) for each day of the week. This makes it easier for the City Council to keep a weekly follow-up, which is carried out through various tools. One of the tools that are used for monitoring, are the monthly reports sent by the school management, which evaluate the following aspects from points 1 to 5:

- Preparation / presentation of the food
- The quality of the products
- The portions/pupil ratio
- Pure and healthy;
- Communication between the coordinator/supervisor, company and school
- The resolution of incidents and the replacement of kitchenware and machinery

Likewise, the compulsory fulfilment (yes or no) of the service has been monitored, including:

- Fresh vegetables
- Fish (hake, monkfish and/or cod)
- Daily bread
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Half a salad
- The established timetable is respected

## Target 3: GHG emissions reduction

### Good Practice: monitoring and control of the commitment to the social and environmental contractual criteria in nursery schools in Barcelona

In addition, the delivery notes of all the products that arrive at different schools, are chosen randomly, and are checked on a monthly basis in order to have control of all the batches and companies. This tool makes it possible to comply with the supply of fresh products, organic products and local products (200 km).

The advantages of this monitoring system are that the schools themselves assess the service. Therefore, any non-compliance is quickly detected and the company is urged to remedy it. The control of delivery notes also allow to check if any products are received that do not comply with the offer. Non-compliance can lead to penalties for companies.

More information: Ajuntament de Barcelona. (n.d.). Healthier and more sustainable school canteens. Barcelona: Ajuntament de Barcelona. Available at: [»barcelona.cat](http://>>barcelona.cat)

|| **TS on access to free tap water:** Tenderers must ensure free access to tap water for drinking (if it is possible to supply or get access to safe tap drinking water) and make drinking water available for consumption during meal times to encourage healthy drinking habits and prevent the use of plastic bottles and sugar-sweetened beverages.

#### ✓ Verification:

Tenders must provide a plan for making tap water accessible and available in school premises on a daily basis including in sport facilities and common areas. The proposed location and installation plan for water drinking points should be detailed.

### Good Practice: "Drinking Water in Schools" in Vienna

A three quarters of Vienna's elementary schools and half of Vienna's secondary schools are already „water schools“. Fresh tap water is consumed at different school premises including the school classes and field sports. Teachers encourage students to drink water and schools interested in supporting "Drinking Water in Schools" are also able to receive free support for the City including: individual counselling, training for teachers, and a comprehensive „water package“ with materials for the classroom which are tailored to different age groups.

The project "Drinking Water in Schools" has been made possible thanks to support of Wiener Gesundheitsförderung, Fonds Gesundes Österreich, Wiener Wasser (MA 31) and the Education Directorate for the City of Vienna. The project is implemented through Gutessen consulting. "Drinking Water in Schools" was awarded as an outstanding educational initiative for Austria by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research as part of the UNESCO World Programme of Action „Education for Sustainable Development“ in December 2019.

More Information: Stadt Wien (n.d.). Trinkwasser in Schulen [Drinking water in schools]. Vienna: Stadt Wien – Wiener Wasser. Available at: [»wien.gv.at](http://>>wien.gv.at)

## Target 3: GHG emissions reduction



### Advanced criteria

 **TS on GHG emission monitoring:** Bidders must outline their approach to monitoring the greenhouse gas emissions associated with the contract, including production, transportation, consumption and disposal of food. During the initial [six to twelve months - period to be determined by the contracting authority] of the contract, the contractor will be required to measure the actual GHG emissions under the contract, which will form a baseline for future reductions.

 **Verification:**

Information about the origin of all food and drink products provided under the contract, and the intermediaries involved (where relevant) must be included in *[quarterly, six-monthly or annual - to be determined by contracting authority]* contract reports.

### Good Practice: The CO2 Performance Ladder

The CO2 Performance Ladder is a certification scheme for the organisations that are committed to reduce their GHG emissions. The certificate has different levels, according to the performance obtained in regards to CO2 reduction, that can be used to award a proportionate advantage when participating in tenders. Bidders declare their ambition in terms of CO2 reduction (that translates into one of the levels of the Ladder).

The use of the CO2 Performance Ladder as a procurement tool is quite common in the Netherlands and in Belgium. An interesting case of the implementation of this tool in the food sector is presented by Rijkswaterstaat, the executive agency of the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water. Since 2019 Rijkswaterstaat has used the CO2 Performance Ladder in tendering for Vending Machines for several governmental bodies, encouraging bidders to set higher ambitions in order to get more points for their bids.

In 2020 the agency introduced criteria for a shorter supply chain and the payment of a fair price to farmers for the coffee service. In addition, it increased the levels of award in relation to CO2 performance. Since it was an eight-year contract, bidders felt they had enough time to implement the highest performance level.

More Information: SKAO – Stichting Klimaatvriendelijk Aanbesteden & Ondernemen (2020). CO<sub>2</sub> Performance Ladder: A certification scheme for sustainable procurement. Utrecht: SKAO. Available at: [» co2-prestatieladder.nl](http://co2-prestatieladder.nl)

Rijkswaterstaat (2019). Sustainable Procurement: CO<sub>2</sub> Performance Ladder in catering and vending machine tenders. The Hague: Rijkswaterstaat, Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management. Available at: [» rijkswaterstaat.nl](http://rijkswaterstaat.nl)

## Target 3: GHG emissions reduction

**AC on innovative approaches to reducing GHG emissions in meals served:** Menus offered must include choices to increase the consumption of pulses, vegetables, fruits, wholegrains and nuts while having a balanced nutrient intake for the consumer. Three times a week the main menu offer should be vegetarian and/or plant-rich. Vegetarian and plant-rich options shall be available every weekday. Menus offered must include choices that have been created, specifically, to reduce carbon footprint as much as possible. For example, offering recipes that use imperfect produce, cooking from root to stem and applying circularity methods including drying, canning, graining, preserving, and marinating to avoid food waste and increase recyclability of leftovers. Up to [X] points will be awarded to bidders that offer menus prepared with seasonal ingredients to create dishes that appeal to the flavour profile of the time of the year. Furthermore, up to [X] points will be awarded to bidders that propose menu design combining animal and plant-rich ingredients that stimulates sensory experiences, including new textures and flavours.

### Verification:

Tenders must provide a plan for making tap water accessible and available in school premises on a daily basis including in sport facilities and common areas. The proposed location and installation plan for water drinking points should be detailed.

### Good Practice: Hybrid meals in Umeå

At Umeå's schools, all students are served two dishes daily. Each day, one of the dishes is vegetarian and one day a week, both dishes are vegetarian. Furthermore, one day a week, one of the options available for the students is always fish. When serving meat dishes, many recipes have been developed to include more vegetables in the menu design. For example, minced meat sauce includes both lentils and carrots to replace beef. The measures to replace meat with more vegetable options ensure that the school menus are varied in terms of choice of ingredients, as well as more greener and nutritious.

Each meal offered in the schools is also climate calculated in their central dietary data system using climate calculations. The meals are followed up and measured over time so that the municipality can follow their climate footprint, with a special focus on the lunches.

More Information: Umeå kommun (2015). Climate and food: Strategies, tips and recipes for more sustainable food. Umeå: Umeå Municipality. Available at: [» umea.se](http://www.umea.se)

Nordström, K. (2014). Vegetariska dagar i skolor och förskolor i Umeå kommun – möjligheter och hinder [Vegetarian days in schools and preschools in Umeå Municipality – opportunities and obstacles]. Umeå: Umeå universitet. Available at: [» divaportal.org](http://divaportal.org)

## Target 3: GHG emissions reduction

 **Proposed advanced criterion on measuring GHG emissions:** Up to [X] points will be given to tenders that commit to measuring the greenhouse gas emissions generated under the contract ( Scope 1, 2 and possibly 3) and to reducing these within the contract period. The contractor should provide information on the carbon footprint of different menu options for public view in the canteens in an educational and creative way, to encourage lower-carbon choices.

 **Verification:**

Bidders must identify the methodology, software or web-based tools which will be used to calculate greenhouse gas emissions under the contract and how the input data required will be sourced. An example should be provided for a [\[food product or meal - to be specified by contracting authority based on contract type\]](#). Examples of flyers, posters and other educational materials to promote climate friendly recipes should be provided.

 **AC on waste reduction:** Up to [X] points will be awarded based on the concrete actions proposed by bidders to reduce waste as part of the contract activities. For example, this may include:

- Installation of on-site organic waste composting facilities;
- Waste minimisation of resources used for preparing, cooking, storing and serving food and meals;
- Training plan for staff regarding waste minimisation and management.

 **Verification:**

Tenderers must provide evidence of their procedures for purchasing, storage, cooking, menu planning, serving and waste management. The evidence must include a description of channels through which the food waste prevention plan will be communicated to the guests. The details of the staff training must be specified by tenderers with a timeline.

 **AC on sustainable packaging:** Up to [X] points will be awarded based on the sustainability of packaging to be used for delivery of the contract. In selecting appropriate sustainable packaging, tenderers should apply the principles of the waste hierarchy, with prevention being the first priority - this includes the prevention of food waste through appropriate packaging. Overpackaging, which does not provide any added value in preserving the food products, must be avoided. Single-use plastics must be avoided and biodegradable alternatives should be offered where possible.

 **Verification:**

Tenderers must indicate the types of packaging to be used and whether it will be biodegraded, recycled, reused or otherwise disposed of under the contract. It is not sufficient to state that packaging is biodegradable or reusable if there is no plan for how this will be done under the contract. The tenderer must ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations on packaging and waste, including the EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive (PPWD).

## Target 3: GHG emissions reduction

**CPC on waste reduction and sustainable packaging:** The contractor is required to provide regular *[specify weekly, monthly etc]* reports on the volume and nature of waste generated under the contract and the treatment of different waste streams, including food waste and packaging. The specific steps taken to reduce waste and packaging, and the impact of these measures, must be documented. Where the commitments made in the tender have not been achieved, the contracting authority may take action including *[specify remedies - KPIs, financial penalties etc]*.

### Good Practice: Micro-filtered water dispensers in Fano

In order to eliminate plastic and packaging associated with the consumption of bottled water, the city of Fano has introduced refectories equipped with water dispensers with a certified filter. Furthermore, in nurseries, the supply of mineral water has been provided only in glass bottles and no plastic bottles are allowed.

Areas of impact: #GHGEmissionsReduction #HealthyDiets #FoodWasteReduction #LowCarbonTransport



## Target 4: Reduction of food poverty and inequality



### Overall target:

Ensure that all school children are given access to healthy food and that surplus food is redistributed to disadvantaged communities in socially acceptable ways.



### Core criteria:

|| **TS on access to nutritious meals:** Tenders must ensure that the nutritional composition of meals offered at schools corresponds with the recommended daily energy intake as proposed in the national healthy eating dietary guidelines and includes a large share of vegetables, fruits, nuts, whole grains and legumes. Tenders must ensure that they develop an engagement and communication plan to increase student participation in consumption of school meals, with a particular emphasis on the needs of students who may be experiencing food insecurity.

**Verification:**

Tenderers must demonstrate how they will meet the requirements for energy intake by providing a plan for nutritionally balanced meals. This must include proof of a wide variety of food choices, including vegetarian meals, that include energy dense healthy snacks such as nuts (to be identified) which have little or no risk of allergic reactions, and seeds.

|| **CPC on access to nutritious meals:** The contractor is required to provide regular *[specify weekly, monthly etc]* reports on the nutritional content of meals served and consumed (taking account of food waste), and the impact of the measures taken to increase student participation and address food insecurity. Where the commitments made in the tender have not been achieved, the contracting authority may take action including *[specify remedies - KPIs, financial penalties etc]*.

|| **TS on food redistribution:** Tenderers must provide an action plan for food redistribution. According to this plan, surplus food (not consumed in the canteens) shall be redistributed for free to non-profit organisations of social utility that fight food poverty, such as Food Banks. The free redistribution must be managed in a safe way in accordance with food safety regulations and guidelines. Food waste may be redistributed to animal shelters, or collected for composting or processing for biofuels.

**Verification:**

The tenderer must provide a food redistribution action plan as part of the tender. At the contract execution stage, the supplier shall continuously provide details about the implementation of the redistribution plan including volumes of vegetables, fruits and other food products redistributed.

## Target 4: Reduction of food poverty and inequality

**CPC on food redistribution:** The contractor is required to provide regular *[specify weekly, monthly etc]* reports on the redistribution of food under the contract. Where the commitments made in the tender have not been achieved, the contracting authority may take action including *[specify remedies - KPIs, financial penalties etc]*.

### Good Practice: Food redistribution practices in Ireland

The Irish national GPP criteria for catering services include the following contract performance clause on Food and beverage redistribution:

The contractor will redistribute excess food by:

- contacting local charities or other organisations that collect excess food products and distribute them locally;
- implementing the procedures for the collection of food products that the organisation establishes;
- monitoring and maintaining the cold chain of cooked products set by the organisation. This must be carried out in accordance with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland's **» Food Donation Guidance**.

The contractor must keep records of the redistribution of food.

**EXPLANATORY NOTE:** Contracting authorities and tenderers may also wish to refer to the **» EU guidelines on food donation**. A number of charities and social enterprises, such as **» FoodCloud**, are active in redistributing food in Ireland.

### Good Practice: Left-over school meals as “climate food boxes” redistributed in Halmstad

In the municipality of Halmstad (in the south-west of Sweden) food that is left over at lunchtime, and that cannot be saved sold. The price for such a meal is 35 Swedish crowns (approx. 3,5 EUR) and can be paid via Swish (a digital paying method/ boxes were sold in 2021. There are different ways in which climate food boxes are sold. Some schools offer staff and food in the serving line. There are also some schools and preschools that package, cool and sell the food the next day. climate box lunches include the municipality of Bollnäs and the municipality of Sandviken.

More Information: Landsbygdsnätverket (2022). Att sälja klimatlådor – ett sätt att minska serveringssvinnet i Halmstad [waste in Halmstad]. Landsbygdsnätverket, MatTanken. Available at: **» landsbygdsnätverket.se**

## Target 4: Reduction of food poverty and inequality



### Advanced criteria

|| **AC on reducing food inequalities (food assistance programs):** Up to [X] points will be awarded to tenderers who commit to implementation of food assistance programs in schools such as breakfast clubs or establishment of food sharing programmes to help students access healthy food in a confidential and socially acceptable way

**Verification:**

Tenderers must describe the food assistance programs which they will put in place as part of the contract and the expected impact in terms of reducing food inequality/food poverty. Implementation of the proposed programs, where accepted by the contracting authority, will form part of the contract terms.

|| **AC on reducing food inequalities (training):** Up to [X] points will be awarded to tenderers that offer to provide training programs for staff and school members that address the issue of food poverty in schools. Such training must aim at providing concrete information about the number of students in need of food and actionable steps aimed at helping with planning and budgeting for the food assistance programs including marketing and communication.

**Verification:**

Tenderers must provide a detailed action plan for designing and delivering the training and the resources to be assigned to this. Implementation of the proposed programs, where accepted by the contracting authority, will form part of the contract terms.

|| **AC on reducing food inequalities (Whole School Food Approach):** Up to [X] points will be awarded for proposals to implement the whole-school food approach (WSFA), or an equivalent method to promote healthy eating amongst the most vulnerable communities. For example, this may include teaching children about cooking, food budgeting, and developing school food production gardens.

**Verification:**

Tenderers should outline their proposals to deliver the above, together with timelines and the resources to be assigned to this. Implementation of the proposed activities, where accepted by the contracting authority, will form part of the contract terms.

|| **AC criteria on reducing food inequalities (technology to access food):** points will be assigned to tenderers that commit to putting a mechanism in place such as an online platform or a mobile application that allows vulnerable students to request surplus food in full confidentiality.

**Verification:**

Tenderers must describe the proposed mechanism, the timeline for its implementation and resources which will be committed to this. Implementation of the proposed mechanism, where accepted by the contracting authority, will form part of the contract terms

## Target 4: Reduction of food poverty and inequality

### Good Practice: Fighting against food waste and food insecurity in Sant Esteve Sesrovires

Mentali is a programme that was born in 2017 because the Sant Esteve Sesrovires City Council launched a proposal to find a method to reduce food waste and food insecurity, as they detected that there were groups in the city living in a state of vulnerability.

The programme fights against food waste through school canteens, seeking to supply prepared meals to people in vulnerable situations. As they have reported, since they started the project they have distributed a total of 17,725 rations, which have benefited 111 people. This is an advanced solidarity initiative in the region of Baix Llobregat i L'Hospitalet (In Catalonia) that is carried out thanks to the involvement of schools, families, canteen companies, volunteers and the City Council.

The school canteen company is in charge of the conservation infrastructure and another organisation collaborates by providing the necessary material to guarantee that the food reaches the recipient family in the best nutritional and food safety conditions, always following the recommendations and hygiene requirements of the Health Department of the Generalitat de Catalunya. Each container is identified with a label stating the origin of the food, the name of the dish, the expiry date and information on correct consumption. Volunteers are in charge of collecting the food, which is done once or twice every five days. The distribution of the food is actually carried out by the City Council. During the lockdown, the Mentali project continued operating and raised awareness about reducing food poverty and increasing social inclusion.

More Information: Ellobregat. (2022, June 8). Mentali logra reducir el desperdicio alimentario al repartir casi 18.000 comidas. Ellobregat. Available at: [» ellobregat.com](http://ellobregat.com)

El programa contra el desperdicio alimentario MENTALI cumple siete años, 25.000 comidas cocinadas Sant Esteve Sesrovires. VilaPress. Available at: [» vilapress.cat](http://vilapress.cat)

Areas of impact: #ZeroHunger, #FoodWaste #FoodJustice



## Target 5: Food education, food culture, culinary traditions



### Overall target:

To ensure that food education is firmly part of school meals, in particular through activities that are focused on healthy eating as a learning experience that involves active participation of pupils and teachers, and the wider school community.



### Core criteria:

**AC on the Whole School Food Approach or equivalent certification:** The Whole School Food Approach is a method for developing a healthy and sustainable food culture in and around schools. Up to **[X]** points will be awarded to tenders that commit to applying the Whole School Food Approach, or an equivalent approach which addresses:

- making the school eating environment attractive to the students and staff so that learning about sustainable food choices can be accessible to all;
- supporting schools in integrating the topic of healthy and sustainable food into different school subjects for different ages (e.g. pedagogical guidance, courses and tools exchange between schools, inspiration from other schools).

**Note:**

Points will be awarded to bidders who commit to supporting schools in achieving at least the bronze criteria as specified in the **WSFA approach**, or an equivalent third-party certification. The bronze criteria have to be met across four pillars as listed in the WSFA, specifically: PILLAR A: Policy & Leadership; PILLAR B: Food & Sustainability; PILLAR C: Education & Learning; PILLAR D: Community & Partnership

**Verification:**

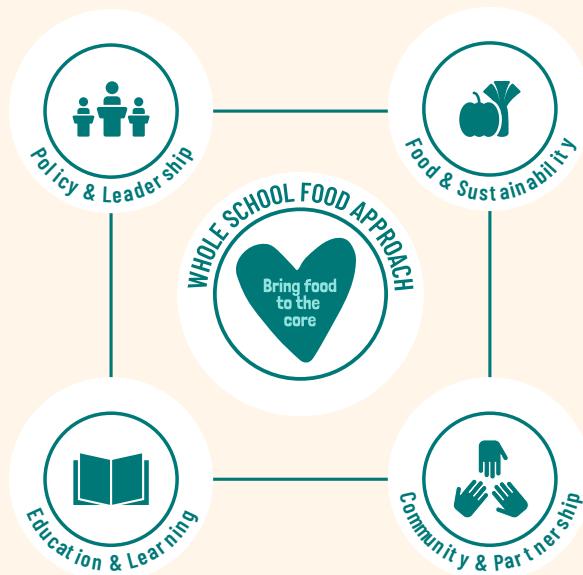
Tenderers must describe their approach to achieving at least the bronze criteria as specified in the WSFA, or an equivalent third-party certification, and present the timeline and plan of action for implementation as well as resources which will be committed to this.

## Whole School Food Approach

**Target 5 (“Food education, food culture, culinary traditions”)** is based on the **Whole School Food Approach** – an evidence-based method for developing a healthy and sustainable food culture in and around schools. The WSFA positions schools as catalysts for wider food-system transformation by integrating nutritious school meals, food education and active community involvement.

The approach brings together improvements to school meals and food environments with practical teaching, participation by pupils and teachers, and strong engagement of families, farmers, businesses and civil-society actors. By linking food provision with learning, it aims both to nourish children physically and to empower them with the knowledge, skills and experiences that foster healthier eating habits and support community-wide sustainability.

This comprehensive strategy is reflected in four mutually reinforcing pillars.



- **(1) Policy and Leadership** ensures that healthy and sustainable food becomes an intrinsic part of school values, routines and planning, supported by all relevant stakeholders.
- **(2) Food and Sustainability** focuses on safe, welcoming dining spaces and on providing meals and drinks that are tasty, balanced and—where possible—guided by sustainability criteria.
- **(3) Education and Learning** combines theoretical and practical experiences such as cooking, gardening, farm visits, taste sessions and food-waste audits, helping children form lasting, responsible food habits.
- **(4) Community and Partnership** extends the approach beyond school walls by working with families, local food actors and neighbourhood organisations to promote healthier, more sustainable food practices across the wider community.



## Target 5: Food education, food culture, culinary traditions

### Good Practice: Milan's approach on increasing food awareness in schools

The Milan service provider, Milano Ristorazione, offers the list of ingredients and menus through its website, additionally this menu is delivered to all students at school twice per year due to the seasonal change of the menu. This menu is composed of the weekly recipes and contains also suggestions for dinner and useful information for families on healthy diets, sustainable practices to avoid food waste, information on the quality of ingredients and on the services provided. More information is available [» here](#) (in Italian).

As of 2021, the City of Milan together with Milano Ristorazione are publishing an educational toolkit for kids that has been delivered in the final school week each year, to raise awareness of children and families on healthy diets and good practices against food waste. The toolkits are available (in Italian) here:

- [» 'Una mela al giorno'](#) ('an apple a day')
- 'A tavola senza sprechi' ('zero waste table'): [» edition for kindergartens](#) and [» edition for primary schools](#).

**II AC on meal planning:** Up to **[X]** points will be awarded for tenders that propose to plan meals through collaboration between food suppliers, chefs, dietitians and schools, demonstrate a variety of seasonal ingredients included in the menu, and use creative cooking techniques/service options that preserve and enhance the nutritional quality of food. This should include at least two portions of fresh vegetables/fruit per meal and **[X]%** seasonal food products, **[X]%** organic products, **[X]%** plant based meals, and **[X]%** fair trade certified products.

**Note:** 

**The applicable percentages, and how these will be calculated based on number, mass, volume or value of food products must be specified by the contracting authority.**

**✓ Verification:**

The bidder must demonstrate educational and pedagogical support for menu planning and preparation with a focus on seasonality, regionality, nutritional value, taste, thorough training of kitchen staff, tasting of recipes, workshops and programmes that build relations among different actors in the food system.

**II AC on healthy snacks:** Up to **[X]** points will be assigned to tenderers that offer access to healthy snacks between meals such as dried fruit, nuts (in line with allergy guidelines) and seeds, raw vegetables and fresh fruit.

**✓ Verification:**

The bidder must demonstrate the inclusion of healthy snacks between meals on the example of menu planning.

## Target 5: Food education, food culture, culinary traditions

### Good Practice: 'Mid-morning fruit' initiative in Milan's primary schools

Mid-morning fruit is an initiative developed by Milano Ristorazione, the public company managing school canteens, within the scope of the Milan Food Policy.

This initiative aims to improve school children's diets, by supporting the consumption of fruit as a snack in the morning. Frutta a metà mattina was developed to fight obesity among children, a growing issue over the last 20 years, promoting healthy habits and lifestyles. At the same time, the consumption of fruit in the morning allows to reduce food waste at lunchtime, further contributing to the sustainability of the whole food system.

Last but not least, the distribution of fruit as a snack allows to reduce financial pressure on vulnerable families, who might struggle to provide healthy food to their children. A first pilot project was launched in June 2016, involving approximately 30 primary schools and 4,000 children. The project has now become a standard practice in approximately 50 primary schools within the city, targeting specifically vulnerable neighbourhoods. The added value of the project is its integration within the school system, that allows to reach a constantly growing number of children.

More Information: City of Milan (2019). Milan Urban Food Policy Pact: Sustainable Development Narrative – Milan 2019. Milan: Comune di Milano. Available at:  
[» milanurbanfoodpolicypact.org](http://milanurbanfoodpolicypact.org)

**5** **AC on regional culinary traditions:** Up to **[X]** points will be awarded to tenders that aim to increase consumers' awareness of regional food heritage by offering at least once a week a menu that is designed in a way that includes one or more regional traditional recipes that are part of the food heritage of the area of delivery. This may include servings of traditional and locally adapted varieties, in particular for fruit and vegetables, animal breeds and/or dairy made through production methods and processing techniques common to the region.

**✓ Verification:**

Tenderers should provide a few examples of menus including regional and seasonal traditional recipes. They should describe the methods used to develop and source ingredients for these menus, and to ensure their high quality.

## Target 5: Food education, food culture, culinary traditions

### Good Practice Example: Promoting cultural heritage through food in Nuoro

Food is a communication tool loaded with social and cultural values. The consumption of certain dishes constitutes a practice to communicate who we are and what our culture is. For this reason it is important to promote food and recipes among the youngest, in order to preserve and value our traditions. In technical specifications of our school canteen service, the contractor proposes eight themed menus with PDO and PGI products (i.e. Protected Designation of Origin, Protected Geographical Indication), and recipes of our tradition, with special regard to the traditional festive menus. A series of educational workshops dedicated to the preparation of traditional dishes were also planned within this project but, due to pandemic, all those activities were stopped and they are going to be realised soon.

More Information: Comune di Nuoro (2024). Nuoro, presentate le attività del progetto "Ci.Buo. Il cibo buono per i bambini e per il pianeta". Ufficio Stampa Comune di Nuoro.  
Available at: [» comunisostenibili.eu](http://comunisostenibili.eu)

### Good Practice: Eggs and dairy food tender in Ghent

In the technical specifications of the public contract, the City of Ghent draws the attention of the suppliers to European food culture with regard to cheeses. This is to indicate that the users of the contract can have access to specific cheeses from all over Europe.

In several European countries, cheeses are part of the diet and therefore part of the food culture. As a result, there is an enormous diversity in types of cheese. In order for the students to gain knowledge of this diversity, formally recognised regional products (i.e. Protected Designation of Origin, Protected Geographical Indication, Guaranteed Traditional Speciality), and also regional products with national/regional recognition or equivalent, should be on offer.

In addition it is requested that the supplier provides the opportunity for company visits at no extra cost. If the curriculum and the practical organisation of the training allow it, students can experience the practice of processing dairy into dairy products by means of a company visit. This includes the conventional sector, organic sector, large-scale/small-scale, specialised companies, etc.

Ghent has several schools and educational programs offering training in gastronomy and cooking. For these institutions it's important that students get to know the rich offer of dairy products in Europe.

More Information: Bruning, T. (2024). Sustainable Public Food Procurement: Case Study City of Ghent, Belgium. Presentation at Eating City "Think Global Act Local", 7 September 2024, Ghent, Belgium. Available at: [» eatingcity.org](http://eatingcity.org)

» **Eating City** Bruning, T. (2018). Sustainable food procurement: from policy to tender. Eating City Summercampus, Paris. Available at: [» eatingcity.org](http://eatingcity.org)

## Target 5: Food education, food culture, culinary traditions



### Advanced criteria

**AC on food educational activities:** Up to **[X]** points will be awarded to tenderers that integrate food educational activities for school children into their procurement plans, such as cooking, food preparation, food growing, seasonality of products, importance of healthy and balanced diets, as well as connection to food traditions and taste.

**Verification:**

Tenderers must submit a detailed plan for an educational programme, which includes timelines, syllabus and the stakeholders involved. An indication of the resources (including staff time) to be dedicated to these activities must be provided. Implementation of the proposed activities, where accepted by the contracting authority, will form part of the contract terms.

### Good Practice: Educational canteens in Catalonia

The importance of considering the dining room and area as a central educational project is becoming more and more evident in Spain. The canteens of Catalonia are part of the „Temps de migdia” (Lunchtime), and all their activities, including food, must be in line with the centre's educational project. At the public educational centre Patronat Domènech in Barcelona, for example, Crea y Creix has managed all the educational activities for 20 years. All staff have educational backgrounds (Psychology, Pedagogy, Teaching, Social Education, etc.) and coherence is maintained between all the activities that take place from 8 in the morning until the end of extracurricular activities.

Girls and boys aged 3, 4 and 5 eat in their classroom in a relaxed atmosphere, developing their autonomy, since they are in charge of placing the tablecloths and using all the cutlery from the age of 3, with the help of mentoring. With the aim of promoting learning among equals, sixth grade primary school students accompany the first year students during the first week in which they eat in the dining room and are also responsible for waking them up after their nap. With the aim of promoting care for the environment, they are calculating the food that is left over in the dining room.

More Information: Consorci d'Educació de Barcelona (2023). Servei de menjador i monitoratge del temps del migdia a l'Escola Patronat Domènech – Crea i Creix, SL. Exp. 08007202-2023-001. Public Contract Notice, Barcelona. Available at: [» cida.diba.cat](http://cida.diba.cat)

## Target 5: Food education, food culture, culinary traditions

**AC on eating habits and behaviour change:** Up to [X] points will be awarded to tenderers that implement food related interventions designed specifically to target improvement of child and youth eating behaviours through 'nudge interventions' to promote healthy dietary practices within school settings. Examples include serving healthier food options to children in "grab-and-go" containers, providing pre-sliced fruit ready to consume, presenting healthier food options in attractive stands or on attractive plating such as salad and vegetable bars, presenting whole wheat bread rolls in fun shapes and providing water from chilled water dispensers, or launching healthy eating marketing and communication campaigns for fruit and vegetable consumption.

 **Verification:**

Tenderers must submit a detailed plan for an educational programme, which includes timelines, syllabus and the stakeholders involved. An indication of the resources (including staff time) to be dedicated to these activities must be provided. Implementation of the proposed activities, where accepted by the contracting authority, will form part of the contract terms.

**AC on education for sustainable food and nutrition:** Up to [X] points will be awarded to tenderers that commit to developing educational projects in collaboration with practitioners such as farmers, chefs, nutritionists, artisanal food producers, community gardeners, community supported agriculture organisations in order to increase awareness of sustainable food and nutrition through hands-on interactions and field trips.

 **Verification:**

Tenderers must submit a detailed plan for the educational programme, together with timelines and an indication of the stakeholders and resources involved. Implementation of the proposed activities, where accepted by the contracting authority, will form part of the contract terms.

## Target 5: Food education, food culture, culinary traditions

### Good Practice: Project Sato Po impari in Medio Campidano

The Province of Medio Campidano in collaboration with the Regional Agency Laore Sardegna, schools and educational farms in the area, on the basis of the positive experience gained during the school year 2009-2010 on food education, intended to promote for the school year 2010-2011 a new project called „Satu po imparai“. The project was aimed at recovering, preserving and enhancing the relevant heritage of knowledge and typical agri-food productions, which characterises a territory with a strong rural vocation such as the Medio Campidano, as well as promoting and experimenting with the introduction of products in school canteens from the breadbasket of the Medio Campidano as well as integrating and improving educational role of farms.. The following objectives were highlighted:

- To educate new generations and their families on proper nutrition from a short supply chain perspective as provided for in L.R.1/2010;
- To make known and promote the consumption of typical agri-food products from the Middle Campidano basket
- Evaluate and test the possibility of introducing in school canteens the consumption of agri-food products typical of the basket of the middle campidano;
- Make known, transfer and enhance the knowledge heritage of the rural area;
- Stimulate the growth of a network of educational farms and the creation of innovative educational activities about cultural and historical resources of the territory;
- Encourage in the construction of farm educational paths an integration of knowledge between schools and territory;
- Disseminate the contents, purposes and results of project implementation.

More Information: Provincia del Medio Campidano (n.d.). Fattorie didattiche. Medio Campidano: Provincia del Medio Campidano. Available at: [» provincia.mediocampidano.it](http://www.provincia.mediocampidano.it)

Area of impact actions: #FoodEducation #HealthyDiets #FoodAwareness #FoodEquity #SustainabilityImpactsOfFood #FoodHeritage



## Target 6: Small farmers and social integration of disadvantaged and vulnerable Groups

### Overall target:

**At least 10% of food provided under contracts originates from small farmers or organisations employing disabled or disadvantaged workers. To achieve the target contracting authorities shall organise pre-procurement market engagements as listed below.**

#### Pre-procurement market engagement:

At the pre-procurement stage, bidders should be asked about their ability to employ disabled or disadvantaged workers and to source food products from small farmers and which do not originate from factory farming. The importance to the contracting authority of including such workers, producers and products in food and catering contracts wherever possible should be emphasised, and bidders asked about any perceived barriers to their participation (e.g. cost, volume or specification of food products, delivery times etc) so that these can be avoided in the procurement criteria. The impact of dividing the contract into smaller lots should also be discussed, as this may encourage participation by smaller operators, social enterprises etc.

  **Option 1 - Reserving contracts or lots for producers who employ disabled or disadvantaged workers:** Contracting authorities can choose to reserve a contract, or one or more lots of a contract, for bidders who employ at least 30% disabled or disadvantaged workers (e.g. in food production, processing, distribution, catering services etc) as set out in Article 20 of Directive 2014/24/EU. This can help to encourage the participation of social enterprises and non-commercial organisations in public procurement. Further information on how to use this reservation, and an example of its application for school meals in France, is available in the Buying Social Guide (second edition, 2021).

  **Option 2 - AC on social integration of disadvantaged workers:** Up to [X] points will be awarded to tenderers that include in their workforce for the contract employees who fall into any of the following categories ("disadvantaged workers"):

- (a) persons with disabilities
- (b) long-term unemployed (the period may vary, e.g. people who have not been in regular paid employment for the previous 6 to 24 months);
- (c) youth (e.g. between 15 and 24 years of age);
- (d) not having attained an upper secondary educational or vocational qualification (International Standard Classification of Education 3), or has completed full-time education within the last two years and has not previously obtained his or her first regular paid employment;
- (e) over the age of 50 years;
- (f) living as a single adult with one or more dependents;
- (g) working in a sector or profession in a Member State where the gender imbalance is higher than the average gender imbalance across all economic sectors in that Member State (e.g. 25 %), and belongs to that underrepresented gender group;
- (h) members of an ethnic minority within a Member State and/or requiring development of his or her linguistic, vocational training or work experience profile to enhance prospects of gaining access to stable employment;
- (i) who may be considered at risk of poverty or severely deprived (e.g. people in a condition of material deprivation, persons living in households with very low work intensity, homeless, etc.); or
- (j) experiencing other conditions causing a situation of vulnerability (e.g. domestic violence, persons suffering from addictions, etc.).

## Target 6: Small farmers and social integration of disadvantaged and vulnerable Groups

### Verification:

Bidders must indicate the number of workers to be employed under the contract who fall into one or more of the indicated categories, and which category(ies) they fall into. The steps taken to recruit, train and offer long-term employment to these individuals must be set out. The bidder's commitments in response to this criterion will form part of the contract terms, with regular reports on the number of positions filled, training, recruitment, promotion and retention of disadvantaged workers.

 **Option 3 - Awarding direct contracts:** Dividing contracts into small lots is easier if the contracting authority is buying directly rather than awarding a contract to a wholesaler or intermediary. If the contracting authority is managing the kitchen rather than outsourcing catering service contracts, the best option might be to simply have different direct contracts for different primary agricultural products. Preferring seasonal primary food, at least partly corresponding to local culinary traditions and being attentive to biodiversity (e.g. different types/sorts of apples) can further support short supply chains. For an example please see the Business to Business (B2B) Platforms in Belgium described in the Innovative Approaches section.

### Good Practice: Integration of immigrants in the Municipality of Umeå

Umeå municipality's meal service organisation has created a local job track for newly arrived immigrants, as well as are far from the labour market today. The programme offers a chance to become a "Meal Assistant" and consists of a combination "Swedish for beginners", vocational training and internship. It prepares participants for a profession in the kitchens that require postsecondary studies. Thinking about diversity and targeting newly arrived immigrants by offering education and training to be successful. In this way, paths are opened to both integration and ensuring high competence in the kitchens.

More Information: Umeå kommun (n.d.). Måltidsservice. Umeå: Umeå kommun. Available >> [umea.se](http://umea.se)

Area of impact actions: #SocialIntegration #Smallfarmers #SocialInnovation #InnovativeFoodProcurement



## Target 7: Fair trade and decent labour conditions



### Overall target:

At least 50 % of coffee, tea, sugar and exotic fruits provided under contracts originates from suppliers certified as Fair Trade including labels such as FairTrade, Ecocert Fair Trade, Fair for Life, or equivalent.



### Core criteria:

**TS** **TS on Fair Trade and Decent Labour Conditions for exotic products:** Food products that are mainly produced in developing countries (e.g. coffee, tea, sugar, bananas, etc., the list is to be clearly specified), must be of fair and ethical trade origin. These products must be certified under a Fairtrade International labelling scheme such as Fair Trade Label, Fair Trade Certified or other equivalent third-party certification, that follows the Fair Trade Standards recognised by World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO) and complies with the core conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

**AC** **AC on Fair Trade and Decent Labour Conditions for other products:** Up to [X] points will be awarded to tenderers that provide additional products [beyond those required in the specifications] of fair and ethical trade origin. These products must be certified under a Fairtrade International labelling scheme such as Fair Trade Label, Fair Trade Certified or other equivalent third-party certification, that follows the Fair Trade Standards recognised by World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO) and complies with the core conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

#### Verification:

Tenderers that submit proof that their food and drinks carry an ethical trade label which addresses the above requirements, or other equivalent certification issued by an independent third party, will be considered compliant with the criteria

**CPC** **CPC on food transparency along the supply chain:** The contractor shall trace all products used in food services, and provide evidence of due diligence on human rights and working conditions along the supply chain.

### Good Practice: Fair trade products in Milan

Since 2012, the school menu in Milan foresees twice a month the distribution of puddings with sugar and cocoa labelled as Fair Trade. This allows the City to both satisfy the desire of children for a healthy and tasty dessert and to further engage with the reality of Fair Trade operators and their values. Indeed, besides the main ingredient which is skimmed milk, sugar and cocoa are procured from different consortia of farmers in Central America, that work, produce and distribute abiding to the fair trade principles, with a special attention to workers rights and the environment in the territories of production. This good practice is in line with the Italian legislation on sustainable school food procurement (Ministerial Decree n.65 of 10th March 2020).

More Information: Fairtrade (n.d.). Fairtrade e i CAM: Criteri Ambientali Minimi. Available at: [» fairtrade.net](http://fairtrade.net)

## Target 7: Fair trade and decent labour conditions

 **TS on sustainable vegetable oils and fats and sustainable soy:** Vegetable oils, vegetable fats and soy supplied shall not have contributed to deforestation of primary forests and must comply with environmental criteria regarding soil, bio-diversity, land-use change and organic carbon stocks by meeting the requirements of a certification scheme covering these issues, of Article 93 of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013, or by other equivalent means. [the Innovative Approaches section](#).

### **Verification:**

Tenderers must submit proof that each of the products supplied/used in the above categories carries an independent label/certification addressing the stated requirements. In the event that a product does not have an independent label/certification, the tenderer must provide evidence of the way in which it meets the stated requirements.

### **Explanatory note:**

The import of oil crops by EU countries is heavily associated with deforestation in the countries of origin. Deforestation is mainly associated with two crops and their derived secondary crop products: soybean cake and soybean and palm oil. There are two comparable standards for environmentally responsible soy products: the Roundtable on Responsible Soy (RTRS) and ProTerra. The ProTerra Standard is applicable to any food or agricultural product, although it is currently used mainly for soy production and soy-derived consumer products. Certified palm oil is widely available on the international market. For palm oil the two largest schemes are the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) and the Palm Oil Innovation Group. In 2014 almost 12 million tonnes of palm oil, about a fifth of total world production, were produced according to the criteria of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO 2015), but only half of that amount was sold as Certified Sustainable Palm Oil (CSPO) – the rest didn't find a buyer on the certified market and was sold as conventional palm oil. Source: EU GPP criteria on food + catering services.

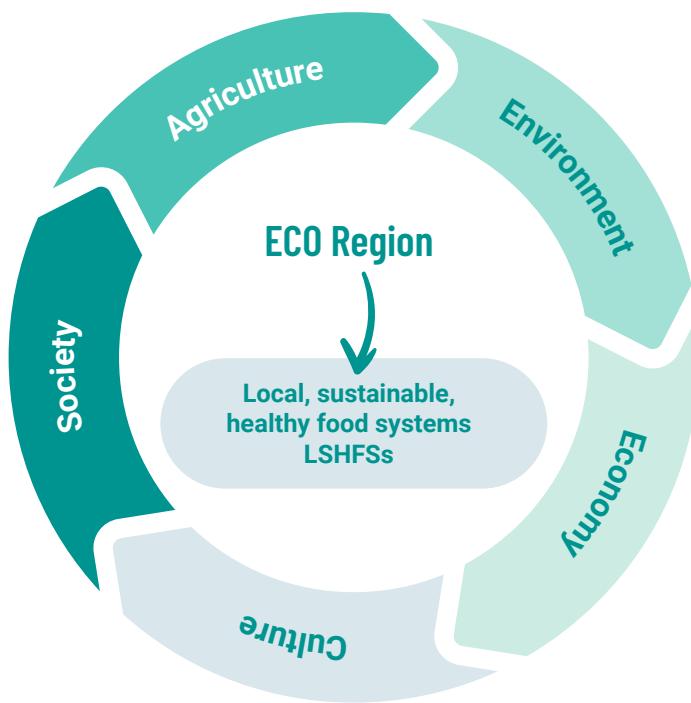
As a large number of processed foods contain palm and soy oil, it is highly recommended to bring this requirement to the attention of food suppliers in the pre-procurement phase through market engagement. This should ensure adequate time is available to source items which either do not contain these oils, or which have one of the referenced sustainability certifications.



## 5. Innovative food procurement approaches

### Organic districts (Italy)

Organic Districts, also known as Bio-Districts or Eco Regions, are an innovative model of rural development where environmental sustainability and local development are in the foreground. An Organic District can be defined as «an area where farmers, citizens, public authorities, and other local actors realise a formal agreement aimed at the sustainable management of local resources, based on the principles and model of organic farming and on the agro ecological best practices, in order to boost the economic and social and cultural development of their community» (IN.N.E.R, 2021). Since 2014, Organic Districts have been spreading all over the world and, at this stage, are in the development phase. This model aims to achieve the food system ecological transition through the implementation of an integrated territorial development which foresees the interaction with five main components, namely, agriculture, environment, economy, culture, society. The interconnection of these dimensions has the purpose to achieve a local, sustainable, and healthy food system. (Basile et al., 2021).



Sourcing food from Organic Districts can substantially contribute to increasing the consumption of organic food in the cities through the canteens and encourage the development of this sustainable territorial management model. Public authorities have a decisive role to play in the implementation of GPP from Organic Districts, especially when the purchasing of organic food and from smallholders is addressed. Therefore, to involve this model in the GPP process, the emphasis should be on the criteria aimed at increasing the share of organic, fresh and seasonal produce and at promoting public food purchases from smallholders (e.g. through market engagement). Besides, The Organic District Committee, by reason of its coordination function, can play a crucial role in facilitating the sharing of information about public food procurement processes among the local actors in the Organic Districts, making them aware of the opportunities coming from public purchasing. However, it will be up to the agricultural producers to decide if it is worth applying for tenders.

Furthermore, Organic Districts can become a favourable ground to promote educational activities in the schools. For instance, the Memorandum of Understanding signed by local governments and local entities for the establishment of the Organic District of Cilento in 2009, foresees the «implementation of an awareness campaign in schools about organic food and the Mediterranean diet» and the development of «a pilot for the adoption of a Mediterranean diet-based menu in public and private canteens of the Cilento area». In order to implement those kinds of activities, a twinning programme between Organic Districts and schools could be organised to foster food education in the schools.

In Bergamo, the **» 'Organic Districts of Social Agriculture'** actively cooperates with the Municipality on several activities related to the territorial food system sustainability, including collective school catering. Since 1996, **» SerCar**, the collective caterer, has won the tenders given its high-quality and sustainability food standards and, from September 2021 to August 2025, it will provide food to 59 public schools. Over the years, SerCar consolidated collaborations with food suppliers from the Organic Districts of Social Agriculture. This allowed Bergamo to reach more than 95% of organic food served in the school canteens, to increase the share of seasonal and fresh food supplied and to strengthen short food supply chains. Educational activities are foreseen as part of the project 'La Buona Mensa', under the H2020 project Food Trails, which will allow pupils to do farm visits within the Organic District.

#### **What are the advantages of purchasing food from Organic Districts ?**

- Win-win process for the urban food environments and for the Organic Districts rural development.
- Increase the consumption of organic food
- Encourage the production of organic food in the Organic Districts areas, supporting this territorial management model.
- Promote short food supply chains.
- Support small producers within the Organic Districts through the selling of produce and offfarm educational activities.

#### **What are the challenges of purchasing food from Organic Districts?**

- Organic Districts are located in certain areas only.
- Willingness of the farmers to adhere to the public procurement process and all the challenges related with the involvement of smallholders in the GPP.
- Capacity assessment in terms of food supply from the producers to the school canteens.
- Capacity of the Organic District producers to respond in the public procurement process in an organised manner.

More Information about Organic Districts:

- Organic Districts Consortium (2021). Organic Districts Guidelines: Charter to Support the Development of New Organic Districts. [PDF] Available at: [» ecoregion.info](http://www.ecoregion.info)
- Stefanovic, L., Passaro, A., Randelli, F. & others (2023). Biodistricts as a tool to revitalise rural territories and promote agroecological transition. *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems*. 7:1267985. [» Frontiers](http://www.frontiersin.org)
- Pugliese, P. & Antonelli, M. (2015). Bio-Distretto Cilento: Case Study Report. Orgprints. Available at: [» orgprints.org](http://www.orgprints.org)
- Dias, R. S., et al. (2021). Building Bio-Districts or Eco-Regions: Participative Governance for Organic Farming Transition. *Agriculture*, MDPI, 11(6), 511.

## Business to business (B2B) platforms (Belgium)

In 2019 the City of Ghent organised a procurement procedure to purchase dairy products through supplier platforms which brought together food producers and farmers in an online shop, where the food producers and farmers themselves determined the selling price, provided for ordering, delivery, and payment flow, and handled the logistics. The B2B platform, Vanier, that was awarded the contract is a cooperative that connects farmers and retailers, the hospitality industry and industrial kitchens. This approach gave the City access to more producers and allowed cooks to propose a creative menu. The contract value was initially €30,000 and allowed producers to sell their short-supply-chain products directly through the platform and deliver them to catering and centralised kitchens.

After consulting with the companies, the tender was adjusted so that the three lots respectively covered: vegetables and fruit (lot 1); dairy and eggs (lot 2) and vegetarian products (lot 3). Meat and poultry were removed because of the higher costs, that would have left few resources for the other lots. The use of Vanier was very helpful for the contracting authority to purchase 'delicacy' products such as goat cheese, local mustard, farm butter, asparagus, etc.) rather than produce bought in bulk (such as potatoes, onions, carrots and long-life milk), due to the limited value of the contract and because this was what the producers were able to offer.

### What are the advantages of using a B2B platform?

- Procuring food through a short supply chain opens up opportunities for small and medium scale producers: SMEs learn to cooperate with public authorities and vice versa.
- Public procurement is improved. Supply and demand are better matched.
- Smaller volumes can be delivered without problems. This avoids bulk buying that causes waste because of the surpluses. A B2B collaborative platform allows a combination of different farmers' offers, so as to meet the high demand of a contracting authority.
- It ensures that consumers in public canteens have access to high quality food.
- Customers and end-customers (staff, pupils and citizens) learn to know and appreciate products from the short-supply-chain.
- Disadvantaged groups can be integrated in the process, helping to reduce social inequalities.

## What are the challenges of using a Business-to-Business platform?

This approach entails several challenges that were identified through market research and the publication of tenders aimed at SMEs. These obstacles include (but are not limited to):

- small suppliers' focus is based on a business-to-consumer approach rather than on a business-to-business approach.
- The financial risk for SMEs in entering large tenders, and logistical issues is a challenge.
- Additionally, there are challenges in terms of knowledge and capacity as public procurement is complex and demanding with limited accessibility for small producers, and many SMEs lack experience and capacity.

### More Information:

- Vlaanderen Circulair. (n.d.). VANIER (Ghent) – a platform that brings products via a short chain from Ghent farmers to Ghent shops and restaurants. Available at:  
[» vlaanderencirculair.be](http://vlaanderencirculair.be)
- Sustainable Food Platform. (n.d.). Vanier. Description of an online marketplace for catering professionals/traders to purchase local food products directly from farmers and producers around Ghent. Available at: [» www.sustainablefoodplatform.eu](http://www.sustainablefoodplatform.eu)
- City of Ghent. (n.d.). Ghent Food Strategy "Ghent en Garde" – Short-supply-chain purchasing and local producer platforms (Vanier). Available via Urgenci Beacons:  
[» hub.urgenci.net](http://hub.urgenci.net)



### East Flemish farmers & local producers

- Fair prices and offer
- Logistical solution for Ghent center
- Open communication about the production methods
  - Sustainable cooperative platform
  - Packaging arm
  - Quality
  - No food waste
  - Short chain

### Ghent shops, horeca & large kitchens

- Fresh straight from the field
- Delivery on Tuesday and Thursday
- Simple web platform
- Cooperative approach
- Regular flavor markets
  - Seasonal
  - Limited food miles
  - No food waste
  - Short chain

## Dynamic purchasing systems for Bath & North East Somerset Council (United Kingdom)

### What is a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS)?

A DPS is a purchasing mechanism that operates as an electronic list of registered suppliers used by contracting authorities for standardised purchases including food products. DPSs are operated fully electronically. They are open to all suppliers, who can join at any time, subject to a qualification stage. The procurement process takes place digitally, via electronic platforms, through which food suppliers, such as small scale farmers and SMEs, can sell products directly to consumers and contracting authorities. Larger tenders are broken into smaller lots for which small scale food producers can bid electronically. The system dynamically adjusts to seasons and produce availability because it is managed directly by producers and it allows for a direct contact between producers and consumers.

The DPS was successfully piloted by Bath & North East Somerset Council in 2016, as a means to provide 7,000 meals to primary schools and some nursery schools on a daily basis. The procurement contract was broken down into two elements to allow for new suppliers to join at any time, provided they meet the established selection criteria. Firstly, a pilot partnership agreement was agreed with an organisation that undertook order consolidation and delivery and who had knowledge of suppliers and producers in the region as well as having necessary technology in place for smart logistics.

Secondly, a DPS with producers and suppliers was established. Please see the diagram below. This procurement strategy was aligned with the goals of the Local Food Strategy (2014-2017) to increase consumption of healthy, fresh and seasonal products by purchasing them from locally-based food suppliers and producers in the region. Implementation of the DPS led to multiple documented social, environmental and economic benefits. These included carbon emission reduction, as documented in the report, 6.01 tonnes of carbon were saved per annum, employment and upskilling opportunities.

### What are the benefits of using DPS?

- Purchase food and services directly from SMEs, small farmers and food producers
- Short, transparent and democratic supply chains
- Open and competitive marketplace.
- Digitalisation for better performance analysis and smart logistics
- Access and work opportunities with the public sector, including schools
- Opportunities for new suppliers to get involved even after the contract has been awarded - multiplying opportunities for participation

## What are the challenges of using DPS?

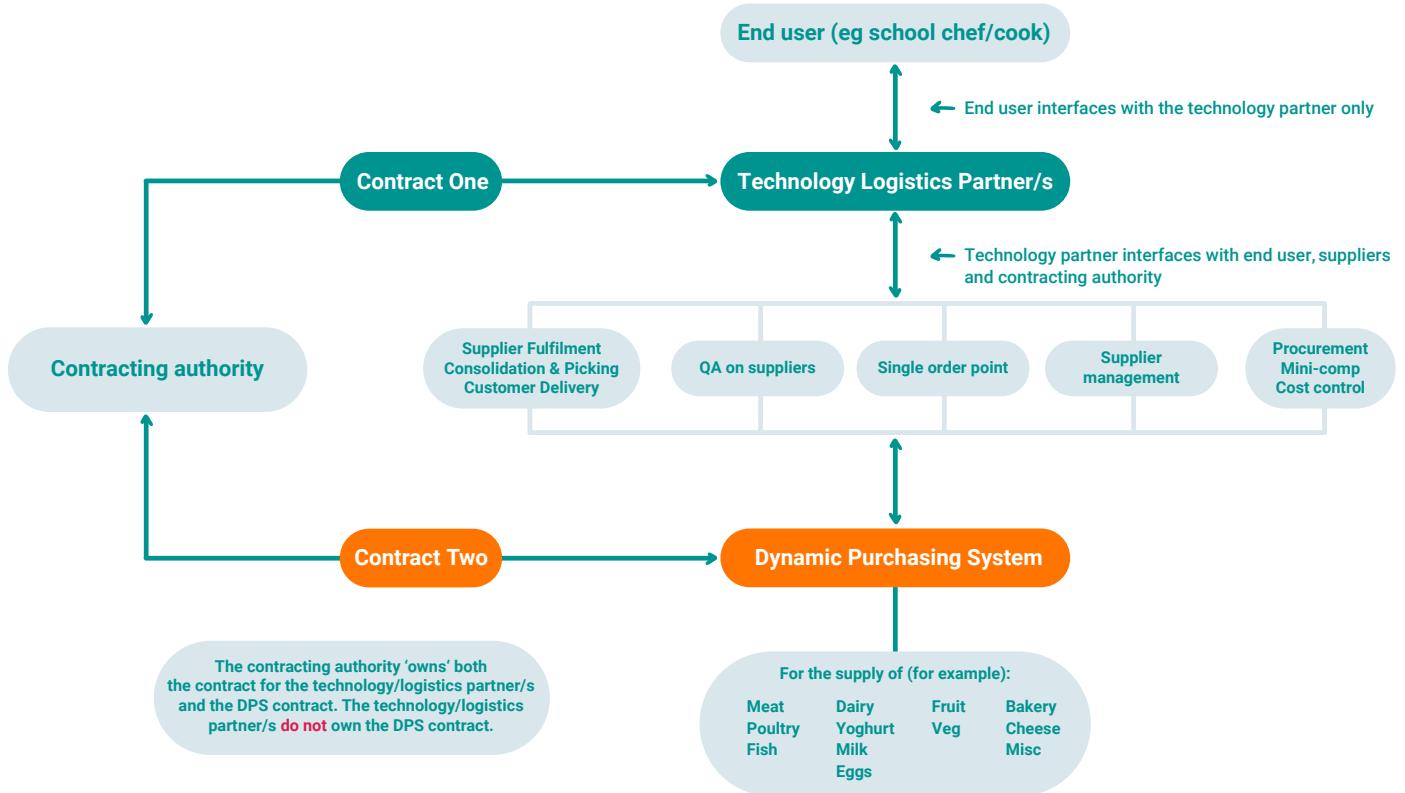
- SMEs have to comply with assurance schemes from the corporate landscape, which they're probably not familiar with
- SMEs might have to prove compliance with health and hygiene regulations to trade

### More Information:

• Bath & North East Somerset Council (2024). Groundbreaking School Food Procurement Pilot: Dynamic Purchasing System and Local Producers. B&NES / Equilibrium Markets. Available at: [» equilibrium-markets.com](http://equilibrium-markets.com)

• Bath & North East Somerset Council (2016-2017). Procurement Approach for Food Contracts including DPS with Fresh-Range Agent. B&NES documentation. Available at: [» assets.crowncommercial.gov.uk](http://assets.crowncommercial.gov.uk)

## Dynamic food procurement model:



## The food procurement catalogue (Slovenia)

The Catalogue of foods is an online database of domestic food providers as well as food products in Slovenia, established with a purpose of making public food procurement transparent. The database was developed by the Best-ReMaP project and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry – Chamber of Agricultural and Food Enterprises in Slovenia. The Catalogue of foods contains detailed information on a wide range of domestic foods available on the Slovenian market including their nutritional value, packaging specifications, allergens, certifications obtained, as well as the exact geographical location of the food provider on the map. The database has been designed to increase the transparency of the food value chain and to foster interaction between different stakeholders in public food procurement, including the health authorities, contracting authorities, certification bodies, and various governmental institutions. The Catalogue of foods has been developed for the purpose of public food procurement in Slovenia; however, the concept of the database can serve as an inspiration for other countries to make their procurement practises more transparent and strengthen short food supply chains.

### What are the benefits of using Catalogue of foods

- Contributes to shorter food supply chains and greater diversity of the procurement offer of local food in public institutions
- Offers a market analysis with information on the food products and suppliers
- Offers transparency of the product including a list of properly named food types and their characteristics
- Enables overview and control over valid certification of food companies

#### More Information:

- Best-ReMaP (2024). D7.3 Pilot Catalogue of Foods. Ljubljana: Joint Action Best-ReMaP. Available at: [» bestremap.eu](http://bestremap.eu)
- Interreg Europe (2020). Catalogue for food public procurement (Slovenia). Good Practice summary. Available at: [» interregeurope.eu](http://interregeurope.eu)

The screenshot shows the 'Katalog Živil' (Food Catalogue) website. The main content area displays a grid of food items with small icons and counts. The items include: MLEKO IN MLEČNI IZDELKI (22), MESO IN MESNI IZDELKI (240), KRUH, PEKOVSKI IN FINI IZDELKI (86), TESTENINE, ZAKUHE, TESTO (64), MOKE IN MLEVSKI IZDELKI (8), KONZERVIRANA SADJE IN ZELENJA... (146), ZAMRZNJENA SADJE IN ZELENJAVA (21), RIBE IN MORSKI SADEŽI (21), ZAMRZNJENI IZDELKI (15), MED (15), ČAJI (15), ZAČIMBE (1), SUHO SADJE IN OREŠČKI (0), JAJCA (2), BREZALKOHOLNE PIJACE V VODA (204), ČOKOLADA IN KAKAV (204), SVEŽE SADJE (20), OLA (1), STROČNICE (1), RIZ (1), KIS (1), SLADOLED (1), SPLOŠNO PREHRAMBENO BLAGO (1), BREZGLUTENSKI IZDELKI (1), and ALKOHOLNE PIJACE (1). Below the grid are filters for 'Košarica' (checkboxes for 'Javno naročilo', 'Izloženi sklopi', 'SHEMA', 'EKO', 'Sheme kakovosti', and 'Zaveza odgovornosti') and a search bar with 'Vnesi filter izdelkov ...' and 'ponudnik (vnesi del naziva)'. A sidebar on the left lists 'REGIJA PONUDNIKA' with checkboxes for: Pomurska, Podravska, Koroška, Savinjska, Zasavska, Posavska, Jugovzhodna Slovenija, Osrednjoslovenska, Gorenjska, Primorsko-notranjska, Gorilška, Obalno-kraška, and Tujina. Another sidebar for 'OŠ Ljubljana' includes 'Uredi kontaktne podatke' and 'Navodila za urejanje naročil'. The right sidebar shows a list of 'Oddana naročila (83)' with entries from 13.07.2020 to 30.06.2020, each with a timestamp, name, and status. The top right corner features the 'Gospodarska zbornica Slovenije' logo and a link to 'Zbornica kmetijstva in trgovine podjetij'.

## 6. Conclusion

Produced collaboratively with School food For Change partners, public procurers and legal experts, this handbook is the first comprehensive look at what healthy, innovative and sustainable public food procurement is and how it can be implemented. The handbook includes a baseline set of criteria and optional criteria sets which serve as “add-ons” for cities which are already progressing well and aiming to advance ambitions on a particular sustainability topic such as climate change, vulnerable groups, circularity, short food supply chains, regional food economy, sustainability reporting. Thus, it provides an inclusive, ambitious and legally sound set of criteria that can be integrated into food and catering tenders to foster innovation at different procurement stages, from market research, to design of the contract and its implementation. Furthermore, taking into consideration that public food procurement varies greatly depending on local contexts and political agendas, the set of criteria developed in the handbook offer a maximum of flexibility for cities in reaching a desired health and sustainability outcomes of a tender whether they are beginners or forerunners. Finally, the handbook also offers a breadth and depth of practical knowledge through a suite of evidence- based good practice examples and useful strategies with a goal of achieving a systemic change within public food procurement as a whole, from farm to fork.



# 7. Useful Links

## Policy context for the Handbook

The criteria presented in this handbook are inspired and aligned with the key International and EU legal and policy framework on public procurement and sustainable and healthy food, while also drawing on pioneering city and national strategies tested by SF4C partners. Including:

» **Directive 2014/24/EU on Public Procurement** – The handbook mirrors the Directive's structure of selection criteria (SC), technical specifications (TS), award criteria (AC), and contract performance clauses (CPC). Beyond compliance, it demonstrates through SF4C case studies how these instruments can be used in practice to drive sustainability, health, and social innovation in school food procurement.

» **EU Green Public Procurement (GPP) Criteria for Food, Catering Services and Vending Machines** – The handbook builds on the GPP framework, extending it by embedding dimensions of food equity, social inclusion, and food education, which go beyond environmental considerations and show how GPP can be implemented in a holistic food systems approach.

» **Development of criteria for sustainable public procurement of food, catering services and vending machines (JRC, 2023)** – The handbook presents real-life application of criteria from partner cities. It translates technical criteria into innovative tenders, monitoring tools, and performance clauses, showing concretely how JRC guidance can be applied at municipal level.

» **Buying Green! A Handbook on Green Public Procurement (3rd edition, 2016)** – The handbook reflects this guidance in its step-by-step presentation of criteria, while enriching it with examples from contemporary school catering contracts and highlighting progressive ambition levels tailored to diverse city contexts.

» **Procura+ Manual (3rd edition)** – The handbook builds on this by illustrating how early market engagement with producers has been used by SF4C partners to include SMEs, small scale farmers, and innovative suppliers in tenders, ensuring that procurement fosters both sustainability and local and fair economic development.

» **Buy Better Food: Manifesto for minimum standards in sustainable public food procurement** – The handbook complements the Buy Better Food Manifesto (ICLEI, 2022), which calls for minimum standards in sustainable public food procurement across Europe; by providing concrete criteria, models, and good practice cases, this handbook offers practical tools to implement the manifesto's ambitions at local level.

» **Buying Social – A Guide to Taking Account of Social Considerations in Public Procurement (2nd edition, 2021)** – The handbook expands on this by linking social criteria in procurement directly to the right to food, equity targets, and inclusive education. Concrete examples, such as integrating fair trade products and involving vulnerable groups in catering services, show how social criteria can be mainstreamed into food contracts as well as how to include small scale farmers in the procurement tenders.

» **European Green Deal (2019)** – The handbook demonstrates the concrete contribution of school food procurement to Green Deal goals by documenting practices such as reducing food waste, shifting protein sources, and scaling organic and seasonal products while reducing GHG emissions.

» **UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs)** – The handbook makes the link between procurement and SDG implementation tangible, particularly SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and SDG 13 (Climate Action), demonstrating measurable pathways from tenders to impact.

» **EU Farm to Fork Strategy (2020)** – The handbook translates this vision into practice by providing tested criteria and contractual models for cities. It illustrates how procurement can deliver healthy, sustainable diets to children, advancing Farm to Fork goals even in the absence of binding EU legislation.

» **Vision for Food and Agriculture (European Commission, DG AGRI)** - The handbook reinforces this vision by showing how procurement can strengthen local agri-food economies, create fair market access for farmers and SMEs, and prioritises food resilience into urban policies.

» **School Fruit, Vegetables and Milk Scheme** – The handbook provides complementary criteria and case studies showing how local procurement contracts reinforce the objectives of this scheme by ensuring consistent access to fresh, healthy food for children and young people while also ensuring food education is integral part of the procurement criteria.

» **European Child Guarantee** – Our handbook strengthens this initiative by showing how procurement can guarantee dignified access to nutritious food for vulnerable children as part of social inclusion policies for all children. Beyond access, it also demonstrates how procurement can be linked to food education in schools, empowering children with the knowledge, skills, and habits to make healthier and more sustainable food choices throughout their lives.

**This handbook highlights local, regional, and national policy examples drawn from SF4C partners and frontrunner cities, including:**

- **» Milan Urban Food Policy (2015):** one of the first comprehensive city-level food policies in Europe, prioritising access to healthy food, food education, reduced waste, and sustainable supply chains. Milan's school catering services integrate these priorities through ambitious procurement contracts.
- **» Ghent en Garde Food Strategy (2013)** a city strategy emphasising short supply chains, reduced food waste, sustainable packaging, and fair trade. Ghent has pioneered "Veggie Thursday" in schools and applies advanced procurement criteria for sustainable fish and seasonal produce.
- **» Copenhagen's Green Public Procurement policies:** long-term commitments to organic procurement in schools and kindergartens, supported by Denmark's national targets for organic public food (90% organic by 2030 in Copenhagen).
- **» Vienna's ÖkoKauf Wien programme (1998–ongoing):** one of Europe's longest-standing green procurement programmes, with binding criteria for organic shares in schools and hospitals, sustainable eggs, milk, and poultry.
- **» Sweden's National Organic Procurement Targets** – aiming for 60% organic in public procurement by 2030, with strong support from the Swedish National Agency for Public Procurement.
- **» Italy's National Minimum Environmental Criteria for School Catering (2020):** legally binding criteria requiring a significant share of organic produce, seasonal fruits and vegetables, and measures against food waste.
- **» Dordogne (France):** pioneering a model for 100% organic, local, and homemade school meals, supported by transparent procurement processes, ECOCERT certification, and close collaboration with local farmers and suppliers.

- Estonia and Sweden Universal Free School Meals: both countries guarantee free school lunches for all pupils, embedding meals as a public service. In Tallinn and Viimsi (Estonia), universal provision is delivered through multi-year catering contracts monitored by local working groups of parents, schools, and municipal officials. In Sweden, municipalities organise procurement under a decentralised system guided by national nutritional and sustainability standards.
- Czech Republic & Slovakia (2014- ongoing): **>> Skutečně zdravá škola / Skutočne zdravá škola ("Really Healthy School")** a nationally recognised programme engaging over 400 schools in both countries. It combines healthier, freshly prepared school meals with local and seasonal procurement, edible school gardens, farm visits, and food education. Schools commit to step-by-step criteria: forming action groups, working with accredited local suppliers, retraining kitchen staff, and integrating food literacy into the curriculum. The programme empowers municipalities, parents, and pupils, linking procurement directly with education and community wellbeing. The model of Really healthy school has inspired development of the **>> Whole City Food Approach**.

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## Guidance and Tools

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