



Ghent (Belgium)

272,389 inhabitants



Organic production + biodiversity protection

Small farmers + social integration of disadvantaged groups

GHG emission reduction

Nutrition, quality, taste, freshness, seasonality

Procurement Working Group to Drive Systemic Change

What? To disseminate key learnings from SF4C; foster collaboration between organisations; create a cascade effect beyond schools and cities; build capacity and shared understanding; and facilitate exchange of good practices.

When? 2023 - ongoing

Who? Procurement officers working for public institutions

"In Ghent, we saw the opportunity to go beyond schools and use public procurement as a tool to spark broader change across the public sector."

The challenge?

We wanted to ensure that the strong principles introduced by SchoolFood4Change, like promoting healthy nutrition, supporting the protein shift, reducing climate impact, and increasing organic food, would also apply outside schools and city limits.

The solution!

Our solution was to organise a working group for procurement officers from across Flanders. We brought together professionals from various public institutions, such as cities, care facilities, and other public bodies, to share insights, align strategies, and explore how SF4C principles could be embedded in broader procurement practices.

The results:

Ghent's promising model builds participant confidence in applying sustainable criteria, discovering new suppliers, and aligning procurement policies.

This simple, cost-effective approach requires no major investments, just coordination and a shared commitment to using existing tools.

- **Economic impact:** The initiative is currently too new to measure specific financial impacts, but it utilises a highly scalable, low-cost approach to improve future value for money.
- **Social impact (SROI):** Delivers tangible benefits to vulnerable individuals in psychiatric centers, elderly care facilities, and residential care homes by improving their daily food services.
- **Environmental impact:** Direct methods to measure waste or emission drops are not yet active due to the short time frame, but the project builds crucial foundations for sustainable sourcing.



Photo by Gokulon Photography

Key Takeaways for Cities:

A few motivated individuals are enough to get started.

Use your existing contacts, i.e. people who are already working on sustainable food or procurement.



Keep it nerdy and practical:

Procurement officers want to talk about rules, laws, procedures, and real cases – not abstract visions.

Let the group shape itself: Set up the first meeting, but let participants decide the topics, frequency, and format. Shared ownership builds trust and long-term engagement. It's about co-creating the agenda together.

