

DA NATUREZA PARA A SUA MESA

Coimbra Region Food
Strategy 2022-2030



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A Message from our Representatives

Emílio Torrão | president of Intermunicipal
Community of Coimbra Region

Local products and sustainable food have a prominent place in Coimbra Region. In fact, gastronomy is one of the most important and distinctive sectors of this Region, a rich intangible cultural heritage, one of the most important in terms of the authenticity of this territory. This is why we have been awarded with the title of "European Gastronomy Region 2021-2022", by IGCAT - International Institute of Gastronomy, Culture, Arts and Tourism, with a Bidbook that contains reference to the wealth of local products that distinguish this region stands out.

Coimbra Region has food strategy at the top of its priorities and defends sustainable food production systems as key to ensuring that future generations consume safe food and follow healthy diets. It believes, therefore, that an exception at the level of the public contracting code is the solution to acquire food products in the Region in a sustainable way, as well as to foster the agricultural economy.

Our vision is to transform the Coimbra Region in a fully connected regional hub for sustainable food production, consumption, research and innovation and for that we have defined as priority actions for the Coimbra Region Food Strategy 2022-2030:

1. Coimbra Circular Region – to decrease the use of raw materials, encourage creativity and innovation, stimulate job creation and contribute to the dissemination of knowledge about bio economy and circular economy, as well as empower various agents (companies, entrepreneurs), promoting innovation and competitiveness of these sectors.

2. Coimbra Network of Local Producers – to create an effective, sustainable and long-lasting urban-rural connection, effectively activate and engage a network of producers around sustainable food approaches, generate notoriety for local food products and attract people and investment.

3. Raising Awareness on Food Consumption – to characterize and disseminate the characteristics of a healthy and sustainable ("climate-friendly") diet, raise awareness among the general population of the need to change food consumption patterns, to achieve environmental sustainability goals and public health, promote the Mediterranean diet and reduce inequalities in nutrition.

4. Framework Agreements for School Canteens with Sustainability Criteria – to give value endogenous resources, increase the quality of food provided at the level of school meals and encourage the use of environmental and social sustainability criteria in public purchases.

5. Food Corridors School Labs – to promote a set of educational actions with local schools focused on the Food Corridors main sub-themes (School Labs).

6. Regional Products Pop-up Shop – Coimbra Region flavors pop-up shop is an innovative approach to short distribution food channels, in the form of a regional pop-up shop and promote a more sustainable approach to local food production systems. This store allows our producers to showcase the genuine and quality products that promote the identity of this territory.

As a signatory of the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration, Coimbra Region wants to make the transition to net-zero a just transition with people and communities at its heart. Therefore we recognize the role of local food systems and agriculture in fighting climate change, and the role of cities in achieving this goal.

In addition, we support the food exception in the European public procurement code from the French movement “Un Plus Bio” which could open the door to reducing the inequalities that are widening between territories, while providing unprecedented flexibility and give a new opportunity to agricultural actors who produce, process and develop food that is desired by inhabitants and decision-makers, allowing to propose the notion of a 'public food service' based on food producers with a mission of general interest, taking into account the environmental services provided to the territory.

We are equally committed to Sustainable Development Goals and Farm to Fork Strategy to accelerate our transition to a sustainable food system with a neutral or positive environmental impact that ensure food security, nutrition and public health.

These are all actions prove that in the Intermunicipal Community of Coimbra Region we are focus on food issues in its various aspects, from food policies, short food supply chains, food and circular economy, environmental resources, healthy food systems, among others.

We recognize the importance of sustainable practices in the perpetuation of resources, and we want to improve planning and prevention mechanisms, protecting endogenous products and local gastronomy. A sustainable production system, from the environmental, economic, and social point of view, contributes to the enhancement of products and consumer awareness about good practices in the production, processing, and consumption of food.

Food Corridors project promotes all this, and I say without hesitation that it is a winning bet, very important for our strategy, exploring strengths and opportunities of urban-rural relations and creating a structure around the themes that can sustain food strategies, enhancing the territorial base through the articulation of horizontal and vertical policies. This European project gave more visibility to local stakeholders in sharing new ideas and strengthening existing synergies.

Our bet is to continue to build opportunities to support the agri-food and gastronomy sectors, with a particular focus on innovation and sustainability, promoting consumption and sustainable production of regional products, which thus enhance the economy of our territory.

This is the only way we can help protect people against the impacts of future economic shocks by safeguarding our food security. Let's do it now!



Emílio Torrão | president of Intermunicipal
Community of Coimbra Region

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1.1. Region Context and definition of the Problem/ Policy Challenge

FOOD CORRIDORS is a network of European cities committed to designing food plans that extend from the urban and peri-urban areas through a corridor that facilitates an urban-rural re-connection. This approach enhances production and consumption environments based on a base of economic, social, and environmental sustainability integrated into development policies.

The network seeks solutions to unemployment, the adverse impact on the environment of economic activity, adequate health and education for their inhabitants, the loss of identity, the need to offer the quality of life to citizens, and the decline of nearby rural areas. Food appears to be a common link related to every one of these sectoral policies.

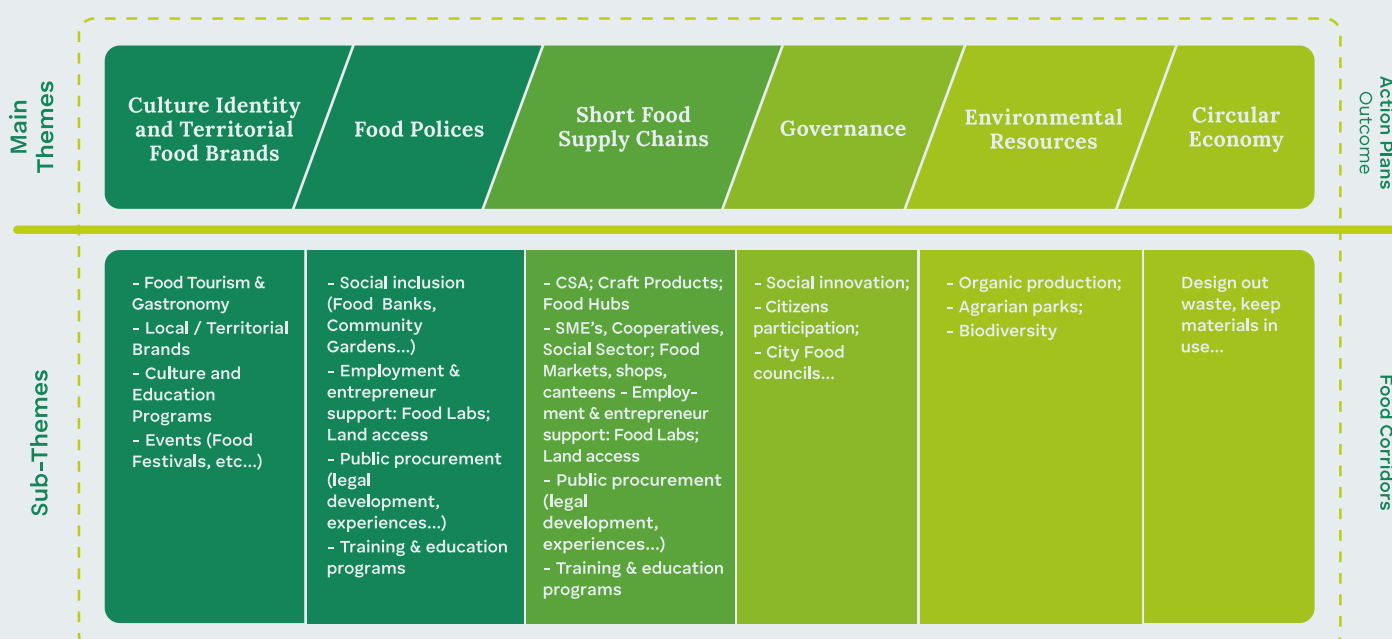
This Integrated Action Plan designated “Coimbra Region Food Strategy 2022-2030” developed within

the framework of the **FOOD CORRIDORS** network comes at a critical moment of change for the EU, launching a new Common Agricultural Policy and an ambitious proposal such as the European Farm to Fork Strategy all within the scope of the European Green Deal.

The themes and sub-themes presented below connect with the problems and challenges faced by partners along with the FOOD CORRIDORS network.

A total of six priority themes, developed in fifteen specific sub-themes, form the backbone around which each partner of the network has structured a set of actions in the context of an Integrated Action Plan that seeks to respond to a problem linked to the territorial/local food system:

FOOD CORRIDORS (Priority Themes)



In the following chapters, these connections will be made visible and their relation to the actions to be locally implemented and how these could be facilitated.

ABOUT THE POLICY CONTEXT

In the context where the planet's population will reach 8 billion, and urbanization is overgrowing, cities face the challenge of providing their citizens with clean air, access to healthy and sufficient food, employment, housing, etc. These are among the basic priorities outlined in the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which help frame the New Urban Agenda.

Taking into account the **FOOD CORRIDORS** themes and sub-themes, we present below a list of documents, policies, strategies and projects that proved useful to establish and define the CIM RC IAP Policy Context:

1) EU LEGISLATION

- European Green Deal
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Farm Fork Strategy
- EU Organic Action Plan
- EU Partnership on Circular Economy
- EU Circular Economy Action Plan
- EU Biodiversity Strategy
- White Paper on Food Safety
- General Food Law Regulation

- Food 2030 Pathways for Action

2) NATIONAL POLICIES

- National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition
- National Strategy to Combat Food Waste
- Integrated Strategy for the Promotion of Healthy Eating
- Innovation Agenda for Agriculture 2020-2030
- Action Plan for Circular Economy in Portugal: 2017-2020
- Common Agricultural Policy 2023-2027
- Rural Development Program 2014-2020
- National Strategy for Intelligent Specialization

3) REGIONAL & LOCAL POLICIES

- Regional Strategy for Intelligent Specialization of the Center Region (RIS3)
- Integrated Territorial Development Strategy 2021-2027
- Circular+ - Circular Economy in the Inter-municipal Community of Coimbra Region
- European Region of Gastronomy 2021 - A Million Food Stories
- Coimbra Tourism Region 2020
- Realiza.te Project
- Intermunicipal Plan for Climate Change Adaptation on the Coimbra Region
- Framework Agreement for the Supply of School Meals.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CHALLENGE IN THE CITY

The Region of Coimbra comprises a geographic area characterized by landscape, climatic and cultural diversity (from the coast to the interior, from the urban to the rural), which has contributed to a gastronomic tradition rich in products, forms of conservation and food processing.

The specificities of the landscape mosaic of the region allow us to foresee a list of challenges that are common to other FOOD CORRIDORS' Partners, namely:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) Persistent asymmetries between urban and rural systems, particularly in access to healthy and better quality food; | 4) Progressive environmental degradation as a result of current production, distribution and consumption processes; |
| 2) Reduced consumption of endogenous products in the region; | 5) Reduced importance of Circular Economy in food production systems; |
| 3) Reduced capacity of local producers to meet the growing food needs of the population; | 6) Low levels of professionalism and training in smaller food circuits. |

DEALING WITH THE UNEXPECTED

We would like to stress that the process followed to produce this Integrated Action Plan (IAP) has been shaped by the circumstances arising from the outbreak and subsequent development of the COVID-19 pandemic, with all the imbalances and changes that this has brought about.

Following the URBACT Programme proposal, the transnational learning and exchange activity was combined with a participatory process, giving shape to a Local Group that accompanies the process throughout the project, culminating in the

production of the CIM RC Integrated Action Plan. Once again, it is worth mentioning the significant impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the development of this participatory process. This has made frequent contact and interaction, as initially designed, problematic. However, the Local Group has been present throughout the project

All in all, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of ensuring access to healthy food for everyone and the risks underlying a globalized food system that is not exempt from various negative externalities.



1.2. Region Profile and Thematic Focus

REGION PROFILE

Coimbra Region comprises a geographic area characterized by landscape, climatic and cultural diversity, which has contributed to a gastronomic tradition rich in products, forms of conservation and food processing.

The CIM RC is a public association of 19 municipalities with the following purposes:

→ Promoting the planning and management of the strategy of economic, social and environmental development of the covered territory;

→ Linking municipal investments of inter-municipal interest.

CIM RC is committed with the diversity of identities and ways of life through the enhancement of the endogenous potential, mobility and ensuring equity in the access conditions to employment, health, education and social protection.

The Coimbra Region has different geographic and social characteristics, having within its territory municipalities of low population density.

QUICK FACTS

Surface within territory limits	4.335 km²	Type of land use within territory	Sea coast, agriculture, forest	
Climate Type /Ecoregion	Continental			
Income per capita	Average net annual income in Portugal is 11.063 EUR In Coimbra Region the average is 8.826 EUR (2017). Data from 2018 the monthly income per capita is 988 EUR			
Population	436.949 inhabitants (2021).		Economic Activity Enterprises (2020): 53.851 Companies per km² (2020): 12.4 GDP (2020): 7.921 M € GVA (2017): 6.762 M € Turnover (2017): 10.436 M € Turnover per enterprise (2020): 201.2 thousand euros Total employment (2017): 192 thousand persons Coimbra Region is located in Centro Region of Portugal with a young economic, diversified and dynamic business environment. The region has invested in research and innovation 2.14% of GDP.	
Demographic Profile	Gender Distribution (2021): Male: 205.833 Female: 231.116 Age Distribution (2021): 0 - 14 years: 49.654 15 - 24 years: 41.499 25 - 64 years: 224.654 65 years and over: 121.122 Ageing ratio (2021): 202.1			
Employment by Sectors	In 2011 it was 2,8% (Primary Sector), 24,9% (Secondary Sector) and 72,3% (Tertiary Sector). Employed residents by sector (2018): Primary sector - 7.497; Manufacturing industries - 23.312; Accommodation, catering and similar - 9.106; Information and communication activities - 2.518; Human health and social support activities - 8.526.			
			Unemployment rate	6,9% (2017) and in Portugal it is 8,8%. In 2011 it was 10% and 12,7%.



Figure 1. Map of Coimbra Region

THEMATIC FOCUS

Based on a first internal assessment of priorities and challenges that the Coimbra Region faces, four focus areas have been identified, based on the **FOOD CORRIDORS'** sub-themes, to build the long term vision for the Integrated Action Plan. These focus areas will also guide the region through the opportunities that will arise within the next few years.

A brief description of each focus area is presented below.

The identification of the key areas doesn't dictate, however, that all actions will only be addressing these themes, since CIM Coimbra considers every sub-theme as an important piece of the whole puzzle.

1) TOURISM AND TERRITORIAL FOOD BRANDS:

One of the basic objectives of the CIM RC is to optimize the sustainable development of tourism and the economic activities related to this sector by strengthening and integrating the existing resources and structures in a more organized and integrated way, encouraging and acting towards integrated planning, the creation and promotion of inter-municipal projects which unify the offer and image of the region as a quality destination to live or visit.

The tradition and preservation of our identity is common to the whole Region, reflecting a unique gastronomic diversity which complements and enriches the experience of those who visit us. The reality of the mountains contrasts with that of the coastal area and allows us to bring to the table the knowledge and flavor, whether from distant generations or from a people who developed a subsistence cuisine. The gastronomy of the Coimbra Region is vast, including river and sea fish dishes, meats and conventual sweets, which promise to please all palates.

Under the slogan "A Million Food Stories", the Coimbra Region, as the European Gastronomy Region, wants to show that, more than just the perspective of food, it is about heritage, tradition, culture and, above all, about people who tell stories and create memories that enrich the gastronomic experience.

Recognizing the richness of the region's biodiversity, the strategy of the European Gastronomy Region intersects with the objectives of Food Corridors, to encourage the consumption of seasonal products, respecting the production cycle, shortening the supply chain and boosting the local economy, while also contributing to healthier eating that is closer to the Mediterranean diet, offering unique experiences and memories.

This is also one of the objectives of the Food Corridors: to show young people the production cycles of endogenous products; to introduce them to local producers and put them in contact with this reality, which is sometimes not very accessible. In this way, we can contribute to "new ways of doing things", creating conditions for innovation and creativity and valuing professions and knowledge that are in danger of disappearing due to technological developments and emerging professions. The focus is on the ability to innovate, without distorting the traditional, bringing it closer to new patterns of consumption.

2) ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

The Coimbra Region characterized by a territorial heterogeneity that is embodied in a set of environmental values and heritage resources that range from the coastal area and the Gandaresa landscape, to the Mondego valley and the extensive forest area present.

Despite its environmental value, the natural heritage of Coimbra Region has been subject to a strong risk of degradation as a result of reduced collaboration between entities with responsibility in the management of natural resources and the lack of organization of some productive sectors (such as fisheries and forestry) in terms of management capacity, innovation and the introduction of new technologies, and the absence of sustainable management models. The effect of these factors is even more noticeable in the current scenario of increasingly frequent extreme weather events, particularly relevant in key areas for the **FOOD CORRIDORS** project.

The promotion of food systems, such as agro-ecology, the efficient use of resources and the reduction of polluting inputs and practices, together with the optimization of consumption systems or the promotion of sustainable diets are increasingly

evidenced as some of the most important keys to environmental conservation and it's something that CIM Coimbra wants to effectively tackle in the FOOD CORRIDORS Integrated Action Plan, in order to:

- Deepening knowledge, research, and implementation of agro-ecological and regenerative methods for the environment, protection of biodiversity, fresh water, forests and islands of vegetation and combating soil erosion;
- Take advantage of EU policies and incentives to locally expand organic production and consumption;
- Facilitate the use of agricultural land for food production (land & seed banks, generational replacement measures, social and family gardens for self-consumption...);
- Reduce the use of chemical inputs, as well as the distances travelled by food from origin to consumption, and the negative effects of pollution and over-exploitation of natural resources as effective measures to combat climate change.

3) CIRCULAR ECONOMY:

The Ellen Macarthur Foundation produced a report (2019) which highlights “the role urban food actors can play to drive food system transformation and to spark a global public-private effort to build a circular economy for food”. The report states that the linear food system is ripe for disruption and the circular economy is ready to offer a vision for a renovated future food system. In cities, less than 2% of the valuable biological nutrients in food by-products and food waste is composted or valorized.

According with the report, a circular economy policy for food in cities could be structured around three aims: 1) Source food grown regenerative and locally; 2) Make the most of food, designing out the concept of “waste” altogether and 3) design and market healthy food products considering both their nutritional profile and the way that they are produced.

Municipalities, as contracting authorities, have a major role to play in the promotion of circular economy on their territories. Among other things, they should actively promote, in their procurement procedures, rules that encourage bidders to respect and use circular economy principles and processes.

As far as food is concerned, several examples have been used as a way to incorporate circularity criteria of extending the useful life of products in public procurement procedures (the requirement for the use of organic food that complies with well-defined set of conditions is one of these examples).

In order to achieve this, CIM Coimbra created the project “Circular+ - Circular Economy in the Inter-municipal Community of Coimbra Region”, which aims to capacity building the municipalities and the region with critical mass and know how to improve practices in circular economy and Eco sustainability. Under the framework agreements developed some 150 procedures have already been developed, guaranteeing the best purchasing conditions, procedural efficiency and the standardization of goods and services at regional level. This transition to the circular economy is the natural and observable path for a central purchasing body that has kept in mind, in the most diverse public contracting procedures, concerns of a progressive reduction of the environmental impacts of public purchases.

It is important, however, to continue this work, in order to include more measures to combat food waste and to incorporate measures to extend the life of food products.

In this sense, and because the themes are recent, it is also important to take advantage of the potential of dissemination of the Central Procurement initiatives to provide training and advice, both in terms of framework agreements and in the internal municipal processes themselves, with regard to the inclusion of circular economy.

4) EDUCATION:

The correlation between issues associated with nutrition and education are not new. In Europe, issues related to over and undernutrition are major concerns of health systems. Overweight, including obesity, is today's biggest public health problem in the pediatric age group.

The combination of poor quality food intake with reduced levels of physical activity contributes to the high prevalence of obesity and associated diseases. Associated to this reality is another one that has been growing in recent years, namely the growing socioeconomic inequalities associated with obesity. Both in Portugal and in other European countries, obesity seems to be increasing in children from less educated and less well-off families.

These situations led the World Health Organization to emphasize in the Vienna Declaration on Nutrition and Noncommunicable Diseases in the Context of Health 2020 and the European Commission in the EU Action Plan on Childhood Obesity 2014-2020 the role and importance of health-promoting environments for changing eating behaviors:

→ The School envisaged as a place with an integrated strategy for the promotion of healthy eating, from the food supply inside the school premises to the curricular contents, extracurricular activities, and the positioning of all those involved.

→ The School cafeteria as an exceptional place for the promotion of healthy and balanced food consumption, which provides food of good nutritional quality, and also as a space for socialization for group consumption.

→ The School as a suitable space to promote discussion about access to food as a basic condition of human rights and food as a human activity that conditions health but is also conditioned by various social and cultural determinants.

→ The School as a space that connects to the family, where many of the food choices made throughout the day are determined.

→ The School as an appropriate place to discuss food as a cultural expression, a symbol of the millennial Mediterranean culture.

It is important now to take action to turn these objectives into a reality and use the FOOD CORRIDORS Integrated Action Plan as a vehicle to promote the creation of a learning framework for Food Education, with a focus on the production of content with endogenous products from the different territories of the Coimbra Region.

The goal is to raise awareness in these important school years to the value of the endogenous products, the importance of local and seasonal products consumption and the appreciation of traditional gastronomic heritage as a repository of healthy eating.



1.3. IAP Process and Local Support Group

An IAP, within the frame proposed by the URBACT Programme, is a concise document defining actions to be implemented, covering the planned timings, implementation responsibilities, costings, funding sources, monitoring indicators, and risk assessment of the actions.

Inspired by the URBACT methodology, based on the development of two consecutive Phases, the second one containing three differentiated stages, we have followed this route to build the IAP:

- 1) Activation (May-December 2020)
- 2) Planning Actions (January-December 2021)
- 3) Planning implementation & IAP Final (January-August 2022)

Under the guidance of an Ad Hoc Expert and the support of the Lead Expert of the network, an ongoing capacity-building process has taken place, according to the URBACT general outline for the co-production of the IAP

Throughout 2021, different training sessions organised within the various transnational meetings have developed the following content:

- Session 1 - TNM in March: Define Vision and Themes for the city;
- Session 2 - TNM in May: Step 1 of the Idea Generation Process (Brainstorming) for each of the themes;
- Session 3 - TNM in May: Step 2 of the Idea Generation Process (Impact vs. Challenges) for each of the themes;

→ Session 4 - TNM in June: Step 3 of the Idea Generation Process (Prioritization) for each of the themes -> from ideas to actions + presentation IAP Format & main components (URBACT GUIDANCE template);

→ Session 5 - TNM in September: Defining Objectives/ Intend Result/Resources & Assets/ Lead Organization/Key Partners/Timeframe;

→ Session 6 - TNM in November: Draft and review IAP.

Similarly, during the e-University organised by URBACT in January 2022, knowledge has been shared regarding essential aspects of the IAP production process, such as risk analysis, financing, monitoring and evaluation of results. In a complementary way, these and other contents have been expanded throughout the transnational meetings organised by the project in 2022 until the final version of the IAP.

In parallel, through different meetings, this learning and availability of resources have been put at the service of the Local Group that has collaborated in the definition of the IAP itself.

CIM RC URBACT Local Group is described, in detail, in the following pages. A summary of the work done for far is also highlighted.

THE URBACT LOCAL GROUP (ULG)

CIM RC ULG was built on an existing group, namely the existing Action Local Groups (ALG). The group aggregates a diverse set of local actors and stake-

holders that have and extensive knowledge on the vast majority of **FOOD CORRIDORS** key themes.

A comprehensive list and description of the involved entities is presented below.

ULG Member	Brief Description
  AD ELO - Associação de Desenvolvimento Local da Bairrada e Mondego	The Association is focused on the integrated local and regional development, through a socio-economic and cultural dynamization, by supporting productive activities and providing services in the areas of vocational training, human resources, dissemination of information, local animation, mediation between entities, technical support and evaluation of actions.
 ADIBER - Associação de Desenvolvimento de Góis e Beira Serra	ADIBER works on the implementation of a Local Development Strategy that aims to "Affirm the Beira Serra as a Territory I+", based on business and social innovation, intelligence and knowledge, the inclusion of people, and the institutional organization.
 ADICES - Associação de Desenvolvimento	ADICES aims to promote integrated local and regional development through socio-cultural and economic stimulation and the promotion of initiatives in the areas of human resources, training, environment, equal opportunities and gender, tourism and heritage, culture and support for productive activities.
 CCDR-C - Centro Regional Coordination and Development Commission	Integrated in the Ministry of Planning and Infrastructures and jointly managed by the Ministry of Environment, the Centro Regional Coordination and Development Commission (CCDR-C) is a decentralized agency of the national government endowed with financial and administrative autonomy. Its mission is to promote an integrated and sustainable development of Portugal's Centro region (NUT II).
 CMF - CoimbraMaisFuturo	CoimbraMaisFuturo (CMF) is a local development association, based in Coimbra, which aims to stimulate initiatives between rural and urban areas, in order to optimize sustainable economic, social and environmental development in the city and promote quality of life for the population.
 Dueceira - Associação de Desenvolvimento do Ceira e Dueça e Afropinhal	The Association's mission is to improve the quality of life of its people by building a positive image, renewed and attractive of the rural world, using the originalities of the territory as a factor for affirmation and strengthening of self-esteem of local communities, seeking their settlement and enhancement, and assumed as macro-objective of all intervention to strengthen the competitiveness of the territory.

ULG Member	Brief Description
 ESAC - Coimbra Agriculture School	The Escola Superior Agrária de Coimbra (Coimbra Agriculture School) (ESAC), integrated since 1985 in the Polytechnic of Coimbra, is a centenary school, offering higher education programmes in agricultural, food, environment and biotechnology sciences, strongly marked by a vocational component and an intimate connection with the entrepreneurial fabric, associations and cooperatives.
 ESTeSC - School of Health Technology of Coimbra	The School of Health Technology of Coimbra (Escola Superior de Tecnologia da Saúde de Coimbra - ESTeSC) is one of the three pioneer schools in the teaching of health technologies, founded in 1980. Today it has about 1000 students in undergraduate courses (with a duration of 4 academic years) distributed by the degrees of Audiology, Biomedical Laboratory Sciences, Clinical Physiology , Environmental Health, Medical Imaging and Radiotherapy, Nutrition and Dietetics, Pharmacy and Physiotherapy.
 FITOLAB - Laboratory for Phytopathology	FITOLAB works on the detection of and research into plant pests and diseases with the aim of improving plant health in agriculture and forestry. FITOLAB provides specialized services within the scope of official controls of plant health, seeking in parallel to respond to the increase of activities in the field of detection and investigation of pests and diseases of horticultural, fruit and forest species.
 Pinhais do Zêzere - Associação para o Desenvolvimento	Pinhais do Zêzere aims to promote the socio-economic and cultural development of the region, in an integrated way, through the use and profitability of its endogenous resources, promoting the participation and integration of the community.
Rede Colaborativa do Mondego	The Mondego Collaborative Network is the name given to a set of relationships between a group of small-scale producers located in the lower Mondego region. The members are mostly nano and micro producers. The Network provides key support in areas such as short supply marketing and commercialization circuits, valorization of regional identities, informal cooperation relations among producers.
 Terras de Sicó - Associação de Desenvolvimento	Terras de Sicó is a private law association, created in 1995, giving a clear answer to the enlargement of partnerships for the development of the territory, centered in the massif of Serra de Sicó. Terras de Sicó was created in favor of local development and its populations, concentrating efforts in global marketing, in the study and promotion of tourism products, in the organization of spaces and new market opportunities, in the generalization and diversification of small investments in the various sectors of economy, social and culture.

The main conclusions and contributions that resulted from the work done locally are reflected on the next chapters, particularly the ones directly related with the Action Plano and the IAP main objectives and goals.

2. Action Plan

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2.1. Strategic Goals, Objectives and Expected Results

VISION:

Transform the Coimbra Region in a fully connected regional hub for sustainable food production, consumption, research and innovation.

STRATEGIC GOALS:

With the design of this Integrated Action Plan, the CIM Coimbra seeks to achieve the Strategic Goals (SG) identified below, closely related with the priority subthemes identified before:

1. Tourism and Territorial Food Brands:

- **SG1.1.** Ensure the Rural - Urban connection through food production systems
- **SG1.2.** Remove barriers to food distribution within the Coimbra Region
- **SG1.3.** Value the identity, diversity and authenticity of territories and local communities

2) Circular Economy and Environmental Resources:

- **SG2.1.** Create Sustainable Food Systems
- **SG2.2.** Promote Circular Economy in the Food Sector
- **SG2.3.** Reduce food loss and waste

3) Education:

- **SG3.1.** Promote a diet based on good, fair and healthy food, particularly in the school system
- **SG3.2.** Raise awareness on the importance of local and seasonal products consumption and the appreciation of traditional gastronomic heritage

- **SG3.3.** Promote learning and taste experiences with local producers

OBJECTIVES:

- **O1.1.** Decrease the use of raw materials;
- **O1.2.** Encourage creativity and innovation;
- **O1.3.** Stimulate job creation;
- **O1.4.** Contribute to the dissemination of knowledge about bioeconomy and circular economy;
- **O2.1.** Create an effective, sustainable and long-lasting urban-rural connection;
- **O2.2.** Effectively activate and engage a network of producers around sustainable food approaches;
- **O2.3.** Generate notoriety for local food products;
- **O2.4.** Attract people and investment;
- **O3.1.** Characterize and disseminate the characteristics of a healthy and sustainable ("climate-friendly") diet;
- **O3.2.** Raise awareness among the general population of the need to change food consumption patterns, to achieve environmental sustainability goals and public health;
- **O3.3.** Promote the Mediterranean diet;
- **O3.4.** Reduce inequalities in nutrition;
- **O4.1.** Value endogenous resources;
- **O4.2.** Increase the quality of food provided at the level of school meals;

- **O4.3.** Encourage the use of environmental and social sustainability criteria in public purchases;
- **O5.1.** Promote a set of educational actions with local schools focused on the Food Corridors main sub-themes (School Labs);
- **O6.1.** Test the effectiveness of an innovative approach to short distribution food channels, in the form of a regional pop-up shop;
- **O6.2.** Promote a more sustainable approach to local food production systems.

EXPECTED RESULTS:

The aim was to co-create a local participatory strategy offering alternatives to the described problem and aimed at delivering results such as:

- **R1.** Promote a sustainable food production and distribution system based on an effective, permanent connection between the rural and the urban areas;
- **R2.** Ensure a greater visibility of local products and explore new opportunities for smaller producers;
- **R3.** Design a local framework to qualify the smaller supply chains, generating notoriety and attracting people and investment;
- **R4.** Promote short production and consumption channels;
- **R5.** Introduce policies of public purchase of local and ecologically sustainable foods;
- **R6.** Carry out educational and public health policies around healthy sustainable diets.



2.2. Actions and Activities

During **FOOD CORRIDORS** timeline, CIM Região de Coimbra, in a close cooperation effort between their internal team and the ULG members, identified a short list of actions that represent the desired changes we want to achieve as the result of the IAP implementation, namely:

1. Coimbra Circular Region;
2. Coimbra Network of Local Producers;
3. Raising Awareness on Food Consumption;
4. Framework Agreements for School Canteens with Sustainability Criteria;
5. Food Corridors School Labs;
6. Regional Products Pop-up Shop.

ACTION 1. COIMBRA CIRCULAR REGION

Main Objectives	O1.1. Decrease the use of raw materials; O1.2. Encourage creativity and innovation; O1.3. Stimulate job creation; O1.4. Contribute to the dissemination of knowledge about bioeconomy and circular economy, as well as empower various agents (companies, entrepreneurs), promoting innovation and competitiveness of these sectors.	Owner CIM RC; Municipalities (Legal Offices)			
		Stakeholders to involve Farmers; Businessmen; Entrepreneurs; Local Community; CCDR-C			
		Action Readiness Level	Low	Medium	High
Brief Description	The CIM RC territory presents high values of agricultural abandonment, since from 1989 to 2009 the CIM RC lost about 63% of its workforce in the sector, and 4 municipalities are at level 6 of vulnerability to agricultural abandonment and 3 municipalities at level 5. The networking between agroforestry actors and other sectors is urgent, since the agroforestry sector still has a weak competitiveness, requiring the creation of new economic models operating in closed circuits, catalyzed by innovation throughout the value chain and the creation of value for the most vulnerable rural areas through the valorization of endogenous resources. With this action CIM RC wants to assure the promotion of waste prevention measures, eco-design, reuse and other "circular" actions, and Bioeconomy (reduction, reuse and retention) in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and foster job creation (new business opportunities) and elevate the Coimbra Region to a "Circular Region".				
Link to other city Strategy	Regional Strategy for Intelligent Specialization of the Center Region (RIS3) Circular+ - Circular Economy in the Inter-municipal Community of Coimbra Region European Region of Gastronomy 2021 - A Million Food Stories Intermunicipal Plan for Climate Change Adaptation on the Coimbra Region	Risks Available of resources; Time availability; COVID restrictions.			
		Finance & Resources 150.000 €			
		Timeframe 2023-2030			

ACTION 1. COIMBRA CIRCULAR REGION

Activity	Outputs	Time Frame	Problems/Concerns
A1.1. Development of an Action Plan to Reduce Food Waste	Food Waste Action Plan	2023-2025	30.000€
A1.2. Promote regular Certified Training Actions for Municipal Technicians	Certified Training Actions - Municipal Technicians	Ongoing	20.000 € per year
A1.3. Promote regular Certified Training Actions for Small and Medium Enterprises	Certified Training Actions - SMEs	Ongoing	20.000 € per year
A1.4. Promote Communication Actions focused on the Local Community	Coimbra Circular Region Communication Actions	Ongoing	20.000 € per year
A1.5. Create an online platform to exchange by-products / waste	By-Products Exchange Platform	2025-2030	20.000€
A1.6. Develop a Guide containing the added value of by-products	By-Products Added Value Guide	2023-2025	15.000€
A1.7. Identify Circular Economy Criteria applied to Public Procurement	List of Public Procurement's Circular Criteria	2023-2025	- € (CIM-RC and Municipalities own Resources)
A1.8. Recruit the “Coimbra Circular Region” Project Manager	Coimbra Circular Region Project Manager	2025-2030	25.000€

ACTION 2. COIMBRA NETWORK OF LOCAL PRODUCERS

Main Objectives	02.1. Create an effective, sustainable and long-lasting urban-rural connection; 02.2. Effectively activate and engage a network of producers around sustainable food approaches; 02.3. Generate notoriety for local food products; 02.4. Attract people and investment.	Owner	CIM RC; Municipalities; ALG		
		Stakeholders to involve	ULG Members; Small producers interested on the Food Corridors project		
		Action Readiness Level	Low	Medium	High
Brief Description	The European food distribution market is highly concentrated, according to a report from the European Parliament released in 2016. At a European level direct sales between farmers and consumers only represented 2% of the fresh food market. Food is mainly distributed through supermarkets, hypermarkets and discounters. These account for 54% of total European edible grocery sales. Small farmers still sell a high percentage of their production directly to consumers in the Coimbra region. Despite this present reality, Short Food Chains are once again emerging across Europe. This development brings the possibility of restoring for consumers and small producers the hope of a more balanced distribution of power in food policies. It Is therefore necessary to design and develop strategies and actions to structure a regional network of local producers, in close relation with the local food markets. With this action, we want to implement a diverse set of actions in order to help local producers reach the final consumers and, therefore, create an effective, sustainable and long-lasting urban-rural connection within the Coimbra region. It should be noted, as well, that part of this work was already started by CIM-RC under the European Capital of Gastronomy. The main objective is to continue on this direction in order to assure an active role of the Local Producers on the Coimbra Region.				
Link to other city Strategy	Circular+ - Circular Economy in the Inter-municipal Community of Coimbra Region Coimbra Tourism Region 2020 European Region of Gastronomy 2021 - A Million Food Stories	Risks	Available of resources; Time availability; Lack of engagement from local producers		
		Finance & Resources	120.000 €		
		Timeframe	2022-2030		

ACTION 2. COIMBRA NETWORK OF LOCAL PRODUCERS

Activity	Outputs	Time Frame	Problems/Concerns
A2.1. Development of a Practical Guide to create and implement short circuit business models	Practical Guide for short-circuit commerce	2023 - 2025	20.000€
A2.2. Development of an adapted Methodology to calculate the ecological footprint of local producers	Ecological Footprint Calculator for local producers	2023 - 2025	30.000€
A2.3. Adaptation of Food Markets to connect Local Producers	Mapping of Local Food Markets	2022 - 2025	- € (CIM-RC and Municipalities own Resources)
A2.4. Organization of matchmaking activities between local producers and consumers	Annual Calendar of Matchmaking Activities	Ongoing	30.000 € per year
A2.5. Organization of inverse missions to capture foreign investment in the food sector	Annual Calendar of Inverse Missions	Ongoing	40.000 € per year

ACTION 3. RAISING AWARENESS ON FOOD CONSUMPTION

Main Objectives	O3.1. Characterize and disseminate the characteristics of a healthy and sustainable ("climate-friendly") diet; O3.2. Raise awareness among the general population of the need to change food consumption patterns, to achieve environmental sustainability goals and public health; O3.3. Promote the Mediterranean diet; O3.4. Reduce inequalities in nutrition.	Owner	CIM RC; Municipalities		
		Stakeholders to involve	CCDR-C; Scientific and Technological System of the Coimbra Region; Food and Veterinary Services of the Center Region		
		Action Readiness Level	Low	Medium	High
Brief Description	The promotion of sustainable and healthy diets through education, encouraging joint action between the health and agri-food sectors is one of the national and European recommendations. The characterization carried out showed a high deviation between estimated and recommended food consumption, with this deviation being significant in the food group of meat, fish and eggs. The health consequences of these deviations from recommended food consumption are now consensual, the most evident being the high prevalence of obesity in the Portuguese population. On the other hand, inadequate eating habits adopted are considered the main factor responsible for the years of life prematurely lost in Portugal. Also, the disclosure of the environmental costs of affluent and intensive diets in the use of natural resources is still deficient in Portugal. It is therefore necessary to design and develop awareness programs and actions on climate-responsible food consumption, considering GHG emissions associated with food production and food waste, particularly in the school environment, a privileged environment for the promotion of health and good practices.				
Link to other city Strategy	Circular+ - Circular Economy in the Inter-municipal Community of Coimbra Region Intermunicipal Plan for Climate Change Adaptation on the Coimbra Region Framework Agreement for the Supply of School Meals	Risks	Available of resources; Time availability; COVID restrictions.		
		Finance & Resources	80.000 €		
		Timeframe	2022-2030		

ACTION 3. RAISING AWARENESS ON FOOD CONSUMPTION

Activity	Outputs	Time Frame	Problems/Concerns
A3.1. Regular meetings with Stakeholders	Meeting Calendar	Ongoing	- € (CIM-RC and Municipalities own Resources)
A3.2. Production and dissemination of informative material on the Food Corridors key themes	Awareness-raising actions Calendar Food Corridors Informative Material	Ongoing	50.000 €
A3.3. Promotion of awareness-raising decentralized actions	Awareness-raising actions Calendar	Ongoing	30.000 € per year
A3.4. Development of an annual Sessions Plan	Annual Sessions Plan	Ongoing	- € (CIM-RC and Municipalities own Resources)

ACTION 4. FRAMEWORK AGREEMENTS FOR SCHOOL CANTEENS WITH SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA

Main Objectives	04.1. Value endogenous resources; 04.2. Increase the quality of food provided at the level of school meals; 04.3. Encourage the use of environmental and social sustainability criteria in public purchases.	Owner	CIM RC; Municipalities (Nutritionists and Public Procurement Platforms)		
		Stakeholders to involve	CCDR-C; Ministry of Agriculture and Food; Ministry for Territorial Cohesion		
		Action Readiness Level	Low	Medium	High
Brief Description	The Framework for the transfer of competences to municipal and intermunicipal entities brings new competencies to local authorities, particularly in the field of education, where municipalities have now extended their scope of action to cover Pre-School, Primary and Secondary Education, putting school meals supply as a new responsibility for local authorities. CIM RC's Purchasing Center has several framework agreements in action, including the Framework Agreement for School Meals Supply. The most recent Framework Agreement signed in September 2021 contemplates 4 building blocks: 1 - Supply and distribution of school meals under local confection; 2 - Supply of hot transported school meals; 3 - Supply of food and non-food raw material; 4 - Aggregate supply and distribution of locally cooked and hot transported school meals. This Framework Agreement already has environmental criteria and quality criteria that favor short circuits following the reflection that has been carried out in the Food Corridors since 2019. However, it should seek to associate measures to combat food waste and extend the life cycle of products, something we want to tackle with this action. In order to kickstart this movement, CIM-RC unanimously approved the support to the French movement "Un Plus Bio" in advocating "a food exception in the code of public procurement in Europe". This campaign, at European level, aims to advance debates and advocate for the amendment of national and European rules on the issue of food relocation through the lever of public catering. The principles advocated by "Un Plus Bio" are in line with the priorities identified by the CIM Região de Coimbra Region, particularly in the context of the work that has been developed in the School Meals Framework Agreements that frames Action 4., which aims to increase the creation of production and consumption environments based on economic, social and environmental sustainability. These issues were previously communicated to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the Ministry for Territorial Cohesion, in an effort to start a movement towards defining the criteria for selection and purchase of products aimed at promoting sustainable consumption of local production in public canteens and cafeterias, which is exactly what CIM-RC wants to achieve with this Action.				
Link to other city Strategy	Circular+ - Circular Economy in the Inter-municipal Community of Coimbra Region Framework Agreement for the Supply of School Meals	Risks	Available of resources; Time availability; COVID restrictions.		
		Finance & Resources	80.000 €		
		Timeframe	2023-2030		

ACTION 4. FRAMEWORK AGREEMENTS FOR SCHOOL CANTEENS WITH SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA

Activity	Outputs	Time Frame	Problems/Concerns
A4.1. Creation of workgroup to promote dialogue with the central government on framework agreements	School Canteens Framework Agreements Workgroup	2023 - 2025	- € (CIM-RC and Municipalities own Resources)
A4.2. Review of legislation that makes it possible to hire local producers	Reviewed Legislation Package	Ongoing	- € (CIM-RC and Municipalities own Resources)
A4.3. Training actions for Municipal Technicians	Annual Training Plan	Ongoing	20.000 € per year
A4.4. Mapping and sharing of Best Practices	Best Practices Mapping	2023-2025	30.000 €
A4.5. Organization of an annual Public discussion Forum	Coimbra School Canteens Forum (partnership with the Public Procurement Centers of the Intermunicipal Communities)	Ongoing	30.000 € per year

ACTION 5. FOOD CORRIDORS SCHOOL LABS

Main Objectives	O5.1. Promote a set of educational actions with local schools focused on the Food Corridors main sub-themes (School Labs).	Owner	CIM RC;				
		Stakeholders to involve	Project Team; ULG members; Local schools; School Headteachers				
		Action Readiness Level	Low	Medium	High		
Brief Description		As highlighted by the European Commission, childhood obesity is on the rise in Europe. Schools are considered a protected environment where children should learn healthy diet and lifestyle habits early on. Lessons from the latest nutrition trends show the importance of encouraging students in taking ownership of their own health and reflect on how their food choices impact their physical and mental states. The Food Corridor School Labs aims at guiding interdisciplinary teams of students through an innovative gathering knowledge on the importance of nutrition, sustainable food production systems and other FOOD CORRIDORS’ main themes.					
Link to other city Strategy	Circular+ - Circular Economy in the Inter-municipal Community of Coimbra Region Intermunicipal Plan for Climate Change Adaptation on the Coimbra Region Framework Agreement for the Supply of School Meals	Risks	Available of resources; Time availability; COVID restrictions.				
		Finance & Resources	120.000 €				
		Timeframe	2023-2025				

ACTION 5. FOOD CORRIDORS

SCHOOL LABS

Activity	Outputs	Time Frame	Problems/Concerns
A5.1. Define the School Labs calendar	School Labs Calendar	2023 - 2025	- € (CIM-RC and Municipalities own Resources)
A5.2. Consultation Meetings with Local Schools	Consultation Meetings	2023-2025	- € (CIM-RC and Municipalities own Resources)
A5.3. Draft the detailed School Labs Implementation Plan	School Labs Implementation Plan (Final)	2023-2025	- € (CIM-RC and Municipalities own Resources)
A5.4. Results Review	Documented Results	2023-2025	- € (CIM-RC and Municipalities own Resources)
A5.5. Create Nutritional Counselling Offices in the Region's schools	Nutritional Counseling Offices	2025-2030	20.000 € per year
A5.6. Implement gamification concepts to reduce food waste	Food Waste Annual Competition	Ongoing	30.000 € per year
A5.7. Provide specific training for school staff	Schools Staff Training Program	Ongoing	30.000 € per year
A5.8. Organize Show cooking Workshops with the students' families	Show cooking Workshops for families	Ongoing	20.000 € per year
A5.9. Promote Family Training Forums on Food Corridors key themes	Family Training Forums	Ongoing	20.000 € per year

ACTION 6. FRAMEWORK AGREEMENTS FOR SCHOOL CANTEENS WITH SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA

Main Objectives	O6.1. Test the effectiveness of an innovative approach to short distribution food channels, in the form of a regional pop-up shop; O6.2. Promote a more sustainable approach to local food production systems.	Owner	CIM RC;		
		Stakeholders to involve	ULG Members; Small producers interested on the Food Corridors project		
		Action Readiness Level	Low	Medium	High
Brief Description	CIM RC “Regional Products Pop-up Shop” was born from the confluence of wills of various entities and is supported by two international projects of the Coimbra Region Intermunicipal Community: on the one hand, the Food Corridors project and on the other the European Region of Gastronomy 2021-2022, which have a common denominator that is materialized in this space of valorization of endogenous products, directly or indirectly connected with the theme of gastronomy, and the link between urban and rural. This action is aimed at testing how a short channel specialized in distributing qualified food (proximity, organic, traditional, small producers, quality certifications...) can work in one or more points of the territory as a link between the rural and urban dimensions.				
Link to other city Strategy	European Region of Gastronomy 2021 - A Million Food Stories	Risks	Lack of interest on the showcased products; Lack of engagement of ULG members involved; Delays related with bureaucracy and administrative issues.		
Finance & Resources	10.000 € (plus additional Staff to work on the Shop and costs for Communication and to rent the space)		Timeframe	2020-2022	

2.3. Small Scale Action (SSA)

The Coimbra Region Flavour's Shop consists in the implementation of a Pop-up shop in Coimbra's historic city centre, providing a window to showcase local food products to a diverse urban public.

This action was aimed at testing how a short channel specialized in distributing qualified food (proximity, organic, traditional, small producers, quality certifications...) can work in one or more points of the territory as a link between the rural and urban dimensions.

In other words, the objective was to test the effectiveness of an innovative approach to short distribution

food channels, in the form of a regional pop-up shop, as a link between rural and urban dimensions.

CIM Região de Coimbra carried out a protocol with the Municipality of Coimbra, in order to use a space owned by the municipality, which is located in the city historic centre, with an area of 47m².

The whole concept behind the SSA was a participatory co-design process with the ULG members from the definition of the concept, narrative, designation, and interior design for the space, selection of products and producers, communication tools, among others.

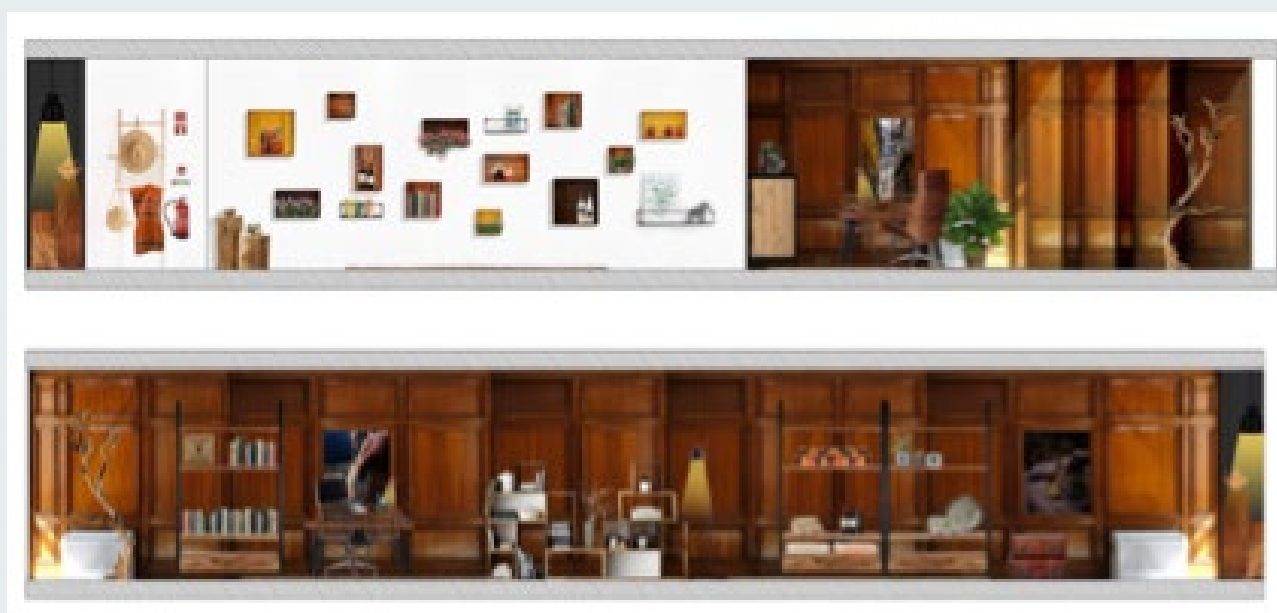


Figure 2. Mock up approved by the ULG

The ULG defined the key ideas behind the SSA:

1. Visibility – it should contribute to increase the visibility of the Territory and Region;

2. Narrative – it should be built a narrative around the message that the SSA is a space dedicated to the promotion of agro-food products and processes".

3. Endogenous Products – the reference and differentiating products of the region must be disclosed;

4. A model should be adopted that allows not only the dissemination, but also the sale of products.

The expected results were the following:

→ Promote a more sustainable approach to local food production systems;

→ Create an effective, sustainable and long-lasting urban-rural connection;

→ Effectively activate and engage a network of producers around sustainable food approaches;

→ Generate notoriety for local food products.

We can identify 3 stages from the SSA:

→ Co-design process in terms of concept and definition of governance model with the ULG and the Municipality of Coimbra;

→ Preparing the physical space for opening;

→ Maintaining the space.

In terms of Budget, it is important to refer that CIM Coimbra and its Partner the Municipality of Coimbra had different kind of tasks and costs that should be considered by for future replication, and that were previously defined in the established in Protocol of cooperation signed:



After the official inauguration of the Pop-up Shop in September 2021 we had 2076 visitors in total.

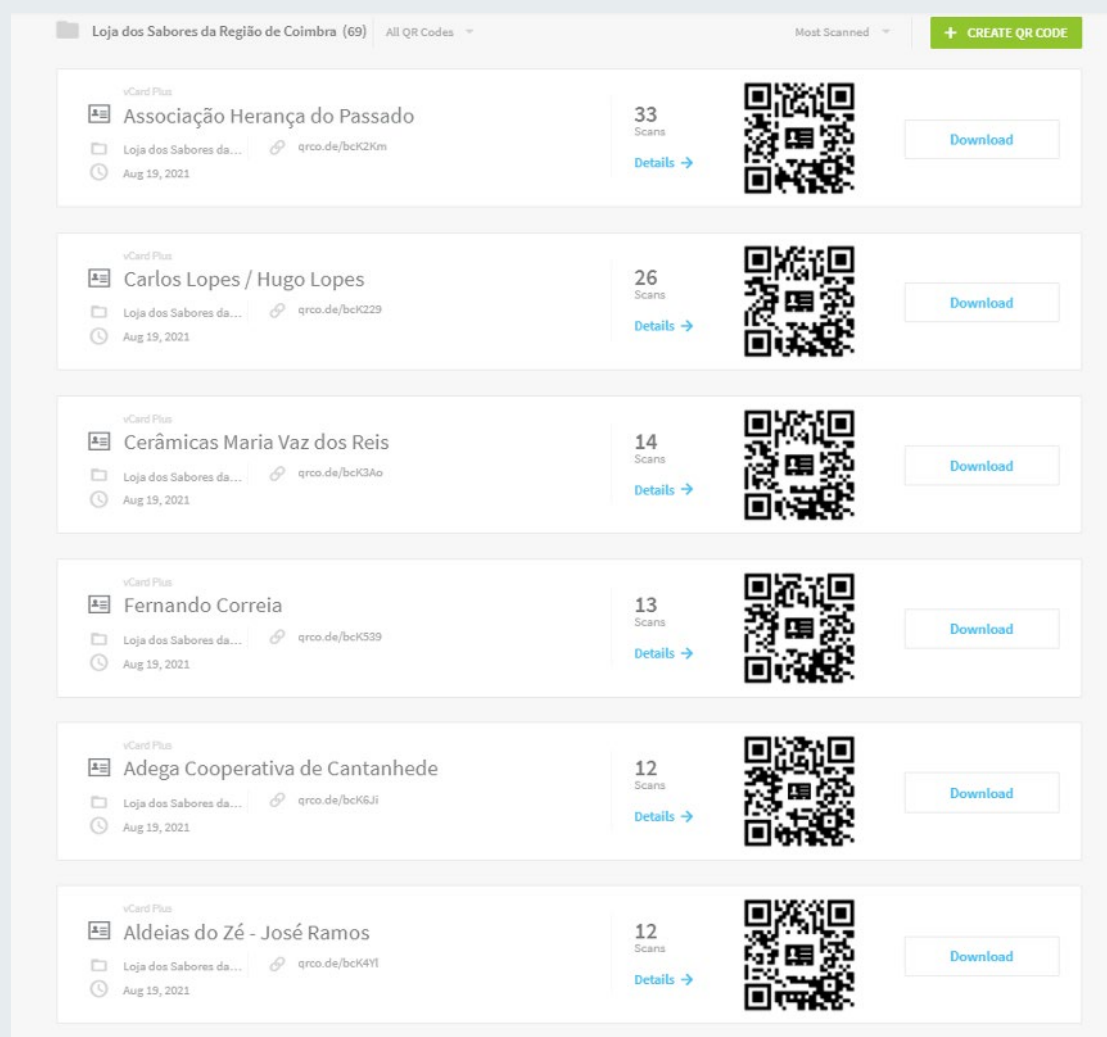
Most of the visitors are Portuguese and from Coimbra, some are also from the municipalities belonging to the CIM RC, and some come from Lisbon.

In terms of foreigners, we registered a great affluence of Spanish, Brazilian, French and German.

Regarding the question of visitors wanting to exhibit their products, as producers, the human resources in the shop have reported that they have felt that there are many visitors interested and even ask how they can acquire the products. New producers gave approached CIM Região de Coimbra in order to be able to display their products.

Despite the initially strategy of using QR CODES for facilitate the transition of information about the producers, most visitors don't use them, they prefer to take a picture with their cell phone of the catalogue where the contacts of the producer are, or they point on a piece of paper to contact them directly, without using the application, because they don't find it very practical. Some visitors even ask for the catalogue in paper format so they can take it with them or ask if it is available online. This could be related to the digital skills of the visitors of the shop.

Through the QR Code Generator we can see which product has had the most searches:



One of the predominant suggestions among visitors is to have the physical product in the store, available for sale, so that they can buy the product immediately.

This is a current barrier that we have, as has being public entities we can't sell the products.

The solution was to provide it through the online market place:

www.dott.pt/pt/campaign/saboresdaregiaodecoimbra



One of indicators we want to evaluate is if there are any significant changes in the online market-place purchases since the opening of the Pop-up Shop. This data has already been requested to the CTT - Correios de Portugal, S.A. partner of this initiative.

Above all the SSA is to us a success, considering the objective defined and it will continue to be functioning at the least by another 6 months, with the possibility to replication in other municipalities in the Coimbra Region.

2.4. Resourcing

The key to delivery and implementation of the IAP is finance. Without the necessary financial support and resources, the actions are unlikely to be implemented and therefore the plan will not have the impact envisaged in its vision, aims and objectives. There is however no one source that will deliver sufficient finance to fund all individual aspects of the IAP. Within the Action Tables, a number of funding schemes and instruments

have been identified that are considered key potential funding sources and these will be pursued throughout the implementation phase of the project.

This section describes the rationale for developing links between the different funding sources and explains how they can be combined, based on a suggested 5 step approach:

Step	Action	Commentary
1	Make the participation in EU funds a policy priority	Addressing lack of political motivation and reluctance and explains why it is important for local politicians to address funds at city level
2	Get informed	Addressing the lack of information on EU and structural funding opportunities (and to a certain extent complex administrative rules managing funds) and explain where to find such information.
3	Explore co-financing possibilities	Addressing the barrier of co-funding requirements and lack of resources and give tips on where to look for possible co-funding.
4	Get connected and learn from others	Addressing the lack of information on finding and limited technical capacity . It gives examples of different sources of funding and link to other cities in a similar process.
5	Establish partnerships and foster cooperation	Addressing difficulties in establishing adequate partnerships and proposes ways to foster cooperation with the different stakeholders .

A wide range of programmes and funding provide financial support to hundreds of thousands of people and organizations such as farmers, students, scientists, NGOs, businesses, towns, regions and many others. EU funding is available on local, regional, national, interregional and EU level. These schemes are grouped into different categories, many of which are directly linked to innovation in agriculture, food and forestry.

The most relevant for our IAP are presented below:



1) HORIZON EUROPE

Horizon Europe is the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation with a budget of €95.5 billion. It tackles climate change, helps to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and boosts the EU's competitiveness and growth.

The programme facilitates collaboration and strengthens the impact of research and innovation

in developing, supporting and implementing EU policies while tackling global challenges. It supports creating and better dispersing of excellent knowledge and technologies.

The main opportunities for Food Corridors' main themes can be found on **Pillar II - Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness**, particularly on **Cluster 6: Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment**.

This cluster aims at reducing environmental degradation, halting and reversing the decline of biodiversity on land, inland waters and sea and better managing natural resources through transformative changes of the economy and society in both urban and rural areas.

It will ensure food and nutrition security for all within planetary boundaries through knowledge, innovation and digitalization in agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and food systems. Research and innovation activities will contribute to the objectives of the European Green Deal, the Biodiversity Strategy to 2030, the Farm to Fork strategy and the European Climate Pact.

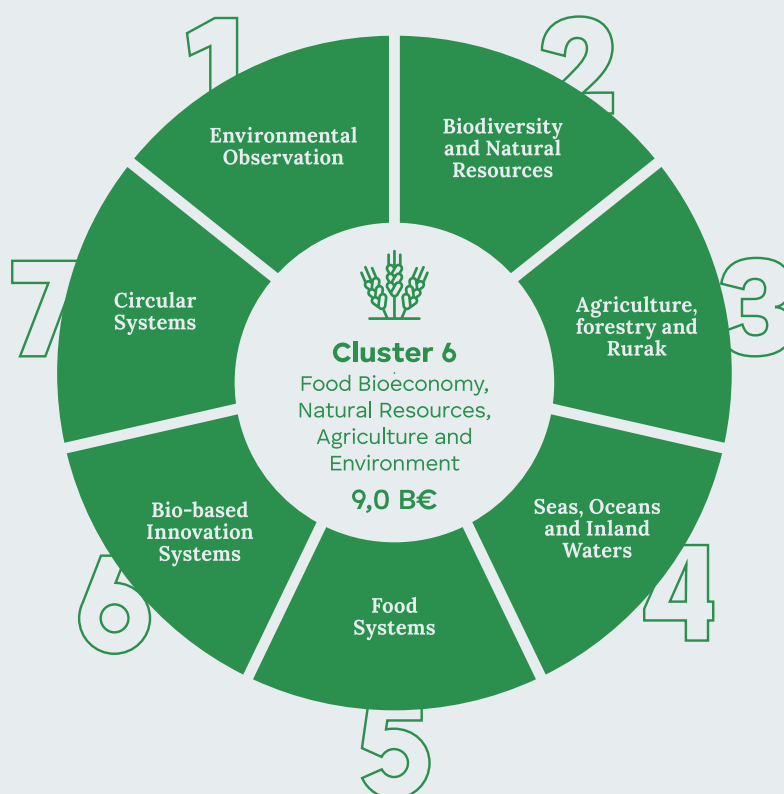


Figure 4. Horizon Europe' Cluster 6 - Areas of Intervention

Food 2030 is the EU's research and innovation policy to transform food systems and ensure everyone has enough affordable, nutritious food to lead a healthy life. The ambition is to achieve a resilient food system that is fit for the future. Funding will be made available under Horizon Europe to help find answers to Food 2030 priorities.

It will concentrate on 10 areas known as pathways for action:

1. Governance and systems change;
2. Urban food system transformation;
3. Food from the oceans and freshwater resources;
4. Alternative proteins and dietary shift;
5. Food waste and resource efficiency;
6. The microbiome world;
7. Healthy, sustainable and personalized nutrition;
8. Food safety systems of the future;
9. Food systems Africa;
10. Food systems and data.

2) INTERREG EUROPE

Interreg Europe is a cooperation programme, co-funded by the European Union to reduce disparities in the levels of development, growth and quality of life in and across Europe's regions.

The programme has a budget of 379 M EUR to help local, regional and national governments across Europe to develop and deliver better policy (334 M EUR dedicated to interregional cooperation).

Interreg creates an environment and opportunities for sharing solutions to regional development issues.

Interreg supports projects in five thematic EU priorities and one non-thematic issue on better governance. The sixth topic opens cooperation possibilities to non-thematic issues improving the governance.



Figure 5. main topics

The interregional cooperation programme for 2017-2021 is open to all regions and supports a wide variety of themes related with Food Corridors, mainly on the topic “A Greener Europe”: Energy efficiency; Renewable energy; Smart energy systems; Climate change; Water management; Circular economy; Nature & biodiversity and Zero-carbon urban mobility.

3) NEXTGENERATIONEU

NextGenerationEU is more than a recovery plan - it is a once in a lifetime chance to emerge stronger from the pandemic, transform economies and societies. The programme has a budget of 806.9 B EUR to help making Europe healthier, greener, and more digital.

With NextGenerationEU, the European Commission wants to invest in environmentally-friendly technologies, roll out greener vehicles and public

transport, make our buildings and public spaces more energy efficient and protect our natural environment, including make farming more environmentally-friendly so our food is healthier.

The money from NextGenerationEU will be invested across several programmes and will be distributed to EU countries and beneficiaries through grants (€407.5 billion) and loans (€385.8 billion), in current prices.

The majority of funds from NextGenerationEU (€723.8 billion in current prices) will be spent through the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) programme. The RRF consists of large-scale financial support to public investments and areas such as green and digital projects.

The support will be given out in the form of grants (€338.0 billion) and loans (€385.8 billion). The grant component of the RRF is divided among EU countries according to several allocation criteria.

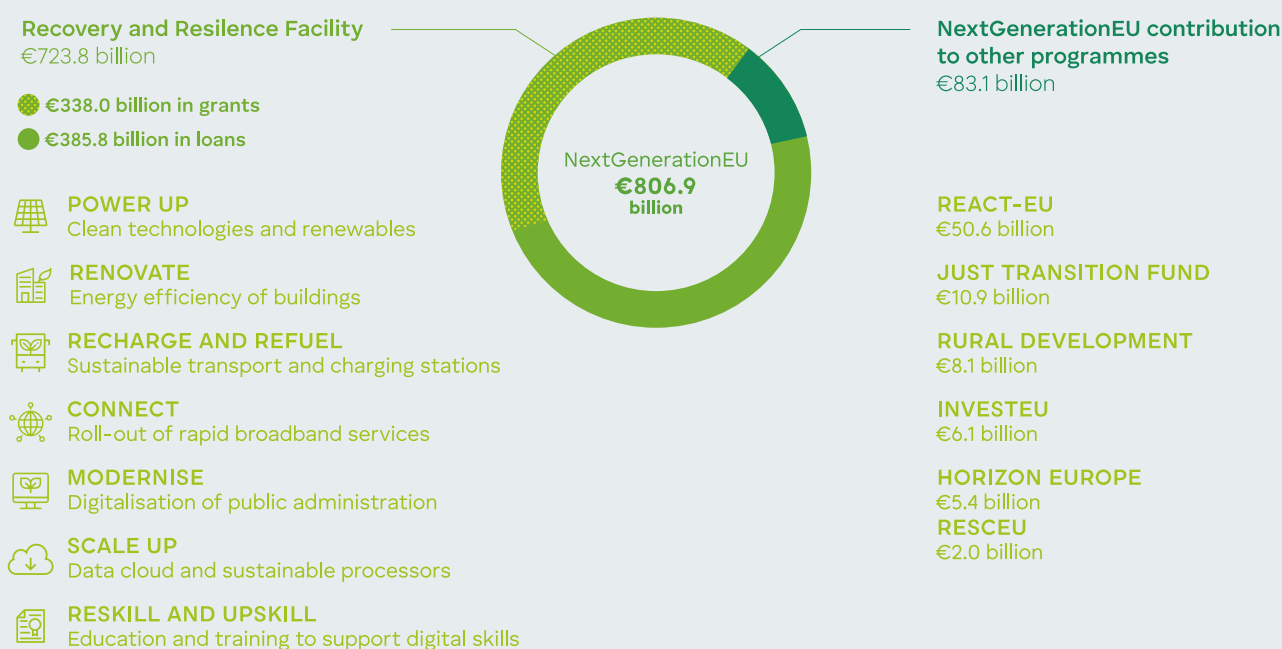
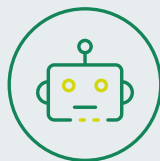


Figure 5. NextGenerationEU - Budget allocation

The Facility is structured around Six Pillars:



Green transition



Digital transformation



Smart, sustainable and inclusive growth



Social & territorial cohesion



Health, economic, social and institutional resilience



Policies for next generation

4) URBACT IV

For about 15 years, the URBACT programme has been the European Territorial Cooperation programme aiming to foster sustainable integrated urban development in cities across Europe.

URBACT's mission is to enable cities to work together and develop integrated solutions to common urban challenges by networking, learning from experience, and identifying good practice to improve urban policy.

The URBACT IV programme will provide both continued and new opportunities for even more towns and cities to become more just, more green and more productive – delivering on the vision of the New Leipzig Charter for sustainable urban development, particularly on the main themes and sub-themes identified addressed by Food Corridors.

Transnational networking remains the core focus of URBACT IV, and at the centre of such activity is the exchange of experiences, innovative approaches and capacity building in relation to the identification, transfer and capitalization of urban good practices on integrated and sustainable urban development. The programme will finance Action Planning Networks and Transfer Networks with dedicated expert support. It will also support the Transfer Mechanism that is a new tool building on the experience of URBACT Transfer and Implementation Networks.

CIM Coimbra will actively monitor and explore new opportunities that may arise from the URBACT IV Calls to continue the work done during Phase I and Phase II.

5) EUROPEAN URBAN INITIATIVE (EUI)

The Urban Innovative Actions was the initiative set up to provide direct support for cities to experiment and test new solutions addressing

pressing urban challenges, building on the work done by his predecessor, the Urban Innovation Actions (UIA):

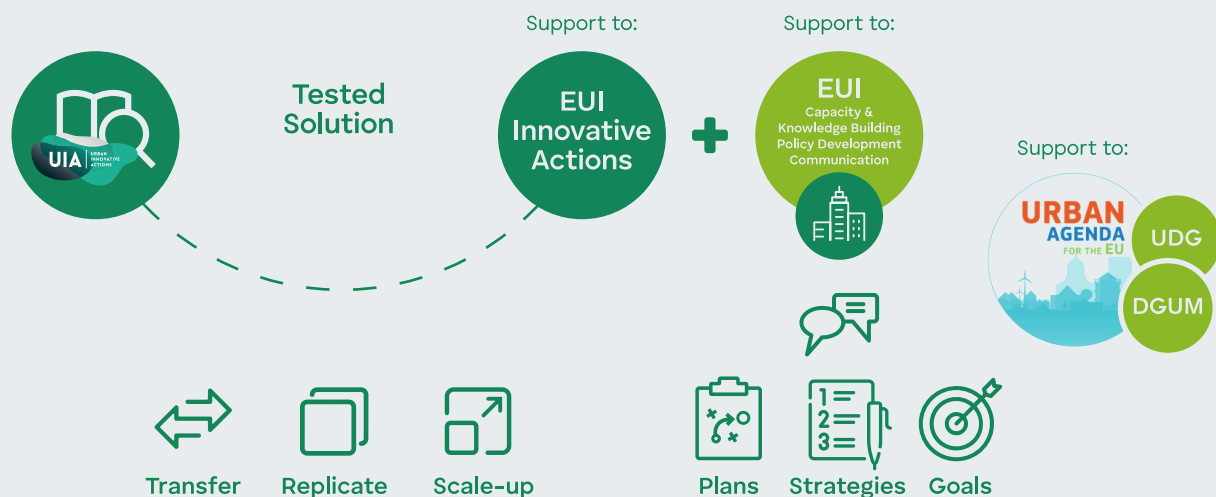


Figure 6. European Urban Initiative - Framework for delivery

The EUI includes two strands: (a) support of innovative actions, and (b1) support of capacity building and (b2) support of knowledge building, territorial impact assessments, policy development and communication:

→ **Innovative Actions** - The support of innovative actions builds on the UIA Initiative in identifying and testing transferable and scalable innovative solutions to address issues relating to sustainable urban development. A new feature however will be embedded to support the transfer of solutions to other urban areas across the EU including UIA tested solutions through Urbact Transfer Networks;

→ **Capacity building** - The capacity building component of the EUI is another critical building block of the initiative that seeks to improve the capacities of cities in the design of sustainable urban development policies, strategies and practices in an integrated and participative way. In complementarity, it will also contribute to the design and implementation of these policies and action plans in cities on a local, regional and national level;

→ **Knowledge building, territorial impact assessments, policy development and communication** - This strand is a key element to achieving the main objectives of the EUI in successfully sharing and capitalizing on knowledge on sustainable urban development and importantly, in providing accessible know-how and information on urban matters.

For the ongoing period 2021-2027, the five policy objectives of the Cohesion Policy focus on a smarter, greener, more connected and more social Europe, as well as Europe closer to citizens, the latter having been introduced as an enhanced commitment to integrated territorial development and includes a specific objective to foster sustainable urban development. Moreover, a minimum 8% of the ERDF resources in each Member State must be invested in priorities and projects selected by cities themselves and based on their own sustainable urban development strategies. Within this framework, the European Commission will launch in the Q3/2022 a new European Urban Initiative financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

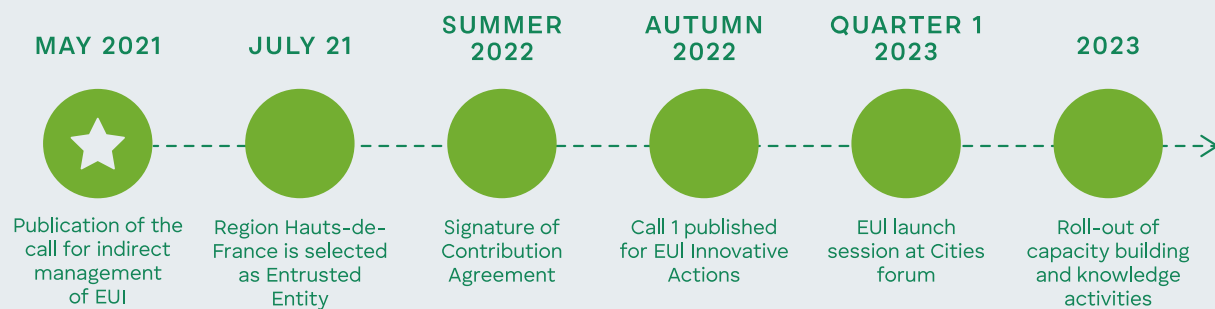


Figure 7. EUI - initiative timeline

6) COHESION POLICY 2021-2027 AND REGIONAL FUNDS

EU Cohesion Policy contributes to strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion in the European Union. It aims to correct imbalances between countries and regions. It delivers on the Union's political priorities, especially the green and digital transition.

The focus of the EU Cohesion policy in 2021-2027 remains the promotion of economic, social and territorial convergence, through sustainable competitiveness, research and innovation, digital transition, the European Green Deal objectives as well as the promotion of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

In 2021-2027 EU cohesion policy has set a shorter, modern menu of 5 policy objectives supporting growth for the period:

- 1. a more competitive and smarter Europe;**
- 2. a greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy;**
- 3. a more connected Europe by enhancing mobility;**
- 4. a more social and inclusive Europe;**
- 5. Europe closer to citizens by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of all types of territories.**

One of the key changes of the new Cohesion Policy is a greater empowerment of local, urban

& territorial authorities in the management of the funds with a dedicated policy objective implemented only through territorial and local development strategies.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), the Cohesion Fund will support five policy objectives. The ERDF is particularly relevant for the FOOD CORRIDORS network since it provides a special focus on sustainable urban development with at least 8% of the ERDF resources set aside for such crosscutting actions.

The ERDF allocation for each region will depend on the outcome of the programming process, i.e. an in-depth analysis of development needs, potentials, the country-specific recommendations issued by the European Union under the European Semester, and the socio-economic context. Portugal is currently drafting the Partnership Agreement that will settle the budget distribution to the several EU priorities.

Accordingly with the version of the document submitted on the last month, the Centro Region' Operational Program as vacated an overall budget of 2172 M€, with 637 M€ allocated to the Strategic Objective "Portugal + Green", which covers the majority of the themes addressed by FOOD CORRIDORS.

7) LOCAL FUNDS

Besides the European / International Funding Programmes identified before, it is important to keep an eye out for any relevant local / regional funding schemes to allow a more flexible approach to funding. Some of the actions and activities previously identified will be

implemented with the help of the CIM' budget for the next financial framework period (2021-2027), in line with other strategic priorities.

CIM Coimbra will also make use of the new “Metro Lines” tool to build a sound Funding Strategy to kick-start the IAP implementation.



2.5. Communication Strategy

The cooperation and articulation among all the entities that constitute the ULG Group formalized for the elaboration of this IAP is a fundamental condition for an effective and efficient communication plan.

Food Corridors intends to be a project characterized by an innovative character at the institutional level and induce an active participation of the Coimbra Region' 19 Municipalities and the community. This Communication Plan aims to implement a set of communication and dissemination actions in order to inform and, above all, involve the local community of Coimbra Region, creating a robust link between the project and the final beneficiaries throughout and beyond the implementation period (2022-2030).

In this context, the Communication Strategy will be structured based on a methodology oriented towards the full achievement of the project's objectives, ensuring its visibility and notoriety. The Communication Strategy will therefore have a dual logic of implementation:

- Disseminate the project and its results;
- Promote innovative and interactive ways of raising awareness, co-responsibility and community information on the project key themes, in order to improve understanding of the importance of food corridors in the linkage of the urban and rural dimensions.

This dual logic shapes the strategic objectives of this Communication Strategy, namely:

- 1) Promoting effective and efficient communication, both internally (among the entities from the ULG) and externally (directed towards the local community);

- 2) To give visibility to all the actions and activities implemented by the Food Corridors project;

- 3) To motivate the local community of Coimbra Region for an active participation in the multiple actions and activities of the URBACT project;

- 4) To disseminate the results achieved by the diverse range of actions and activities as a response to the identified challenges.

The target public of this Communication Strategy can be divided in two fundamental groups:

External Public and **Internal Public**.

The External Public are all entities and actors external to the ULG partnership, namely:

- Local Community;
- School community;
- Local Entities;
- Public authorities (local, regional, national);
- Universities/ Community of RD&I;
- Media;
- Civil Society.

The Internal Public are the entities that make up the strategic partnership of the project, namely the Partner Entities from the ULG and the AGL located in the Coimbra Region.

Based on these different target audiences, differentiated communication measures will be implemented and adapted to each audience, intended to attract their attention for the disruptive impact of the project, responding to their communication needs and encouraging their participation in all stages.

2.6. Risk Analysis

Risk	Risk Type	Probability	Intensity	Mitigation Plan
Lack of technical resources	Staff	Medium	Low	→ Enhance public administration capacity to support IAP' implementation → Enlarge the current working group by involving experts from other sectors
Lack of commitment from the municipalities	Political	Medium	Medium	→ Reports at regular intervals to keep political representatives informed
Lack of participation and interest from the Community	Behavioral	Medium	High	→ Increase the number and reach of communication activities → Organize public consultation and idea sharing forums
Lack of participation and interest from the ULG Members	Behavioral	Medium	High	→ Increase the number of strategic meeting relevant stakeholders → Enlarge the current working group by involving experts from other sectors
Unavailability of funding sources for the IAP Action	Financial	Medium	High	→ Promote alternative sources for funding → Monitoring in a constant and active way, possible opportunities for funding by a constant dialogue with managing authorities

2.7. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

The monitoring framework will be based on the following set of monitoring indicators (directly

linked with the intended objectives previously described), as follow:

Action	Monitoring Indicators
1. Coimbra Circular Region	→ Projects implemented focused on food waste reduction (Nº)
	→ Reduction of Food Waste generated annually in the Coimbra Region (%) (Nº)
2. Coimbra Network of Local Producers	→ Share of consumers regularly buying at local food markets (%)
	→ Matchmaking activities disseminated annually (Nº)
	→ New market stalls opened (Nº)
	→ New visitors at the local food markets (Nº)
3. Raising Awareness on Food Consumption	→ Awareness-raising actions disseminated annually (Nº)
	→ People reached by the implemented actions on food consumption (Nº)
4. Framework Agreements for School Canteens with Sustainability Criteria	→ Training actions disseminated annually (Nº)
	→ Legislation created / reviewed by the Workgroup (Nº)
	→ Best practices identified and disseminated (Nº)
5. Food Corridors School Labs	→ Nutritional Counselling Offices created (Nº)
	→ Food Waste Competitions organized annually (Nº)
	→ School Labs related activities implemented annually (Nº)
6. Regional Products Pop-up Shop	→ People that visit the Pop-up Shop annually (Portuguese and foreigner) (Nº)
	→ Increase in sales of local producers (%)

DA **NATUREZA** **PARA A SUA** **MESA**

Coimbra Region Food
Strategy 2022-2030

FOOD CORRIDORS

EMPOWERING RURAL & URBAN FOOD CONNECTIONS
WITHIN EUROPEAN REGIONS