



**The MAIA 4th Policy Roundtable and 2nd Workshop:
Sustainable Food Systems: Bringing the Farm to Fork into a Regional Perspective**

[EURegionsWeek close to you](#)

8th October

14:15 – 16:15 CET

Ambiorix Center, Square Ambiorix 7, 1000 Brussels, Belgium

INTRODUCTION:

The global food supply chain has emerged as a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. This phenomenon stems from the rapid expansion of activities such as food processing and logistics, among other factors. The EU's progress in cutting greenhouse gasses linked to agriculture has lagged behind its achievements in other sectors such as energy, industry and buildings. Therefore, given the emerging climate crisis and the ongoing efforts within European policies to combat climate change, it is imperative to prioritise the promotion of short food supply chains as a means of curbing the release of harmful gasses and promoting food security and well-being at the local level.

EVENT DESCRIPTION:

The MAIA 4th Policy Roundtable and 2nd Workshop on Sustainable Food Systems: 'Bringing the Farm to Fork into a Regional Perspective' was organised as part of the EURegionsWeek close to you.

The policy roundtable aimed to shed light on the strategic role of regions in fostering short food supply chains. The global food supply chain has emerged as a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. The EU's progress in reducing emissions from agriculture lags behind sectors like energy and industry, making it crucial to prioritise short food supply chains. These local systems not only reduce emissions but also support food security and community well-being. By fostering closer connections between producers and consumers, short supply chains help minimise waste, lower transportation impacts, and promote regional economies. This event highlighted the strategic role of regions in adopting such practices and overcoming related challenges. It showcased exemplary practices that can serve as models for other regions, while also highlighting the obstacles that need to be overcome. To achieve this goal, the session featured a panel debate, bringing together regional representatives from across Europe alongside experts in the field.

Following the debate, a workshop was conducted to engage the speakers and the online audience/regional representatives in a participatory session aimed at identifying proposals to promote local products through behavioural changes and new business models and streamlining current EU and national policies to cater to territorial intricacies. Additionally, the results of this event will also support the ongoing debate of the MAIA Working Group on the Food System topic.

ORGANISER

The [MAIA project](#) is part of the EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change and aims to make the current dispersed knowledge and research at the EU level more accessible and connected to policymakers and practitioners for accelerating climate action through the organisation of policy outreach events, among other activities.

OBJECTIVES:



- Promote understanding of the effects of agri-food transformation on climate and biodiversity indicators.
- Explore European Policies and Initiatives, such as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the EU Farm-to-Fork Strategy.
- Facilitate Knowledge Exchange and Best Practices on Sustainable Food Systems.
- Address Environmental and Social Impacts in Promoting Sustainable Food Systems.
- Develop Actionable Recommendations to support sustainable food systems at regional, national, and EU levels.
- Foster Collaboration Among Stakeholders.

FORMAT

A hybrid policy roundtable followed by a workshop (in-person and online).

AUDIENCE

The event brought together policymakers, food systems experts, academics, and EU project representatives, all committed to advancing food systems and empowering local communities.

THE SPEAKERS



Rosa Onofre
(CCDR Alentejo)



Clara Douzal
(UN SDSN)



Nelson Ekane
(SEI | Beatles)



Nikolai Pushkarev
(Agora Agriculture)



THE MODERATOR



Maria Jose Sanz
(Basque Centre for Climate
Change (BC3) | MAIA Lead
Partner)

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The meeting underscored the urgent need for integrated public policies that tackle the interconnected challenges of climate change and sustainability in food systems across Europe. The fragmentation of data and initiatives was identified as a significant obstacle to effective action. Maria José Sanz, coordinator of the MAIA project, emphasised that many regional and local initiatives operate in silos, making it difficult to share knowledge and best practices. Through its different tools, MAIA aims to facilitate communication among various stakeholders, ensuring that valuable information is accessible to all involved.

The policy roundtable delved into the EU's Farm to Fork Strategy as a comprehensive approach aimed at aligning food systems with the EU's climate goals. The discussion highlighted the practical challenges of implementing this strategy, such as the need for better coordination at regional levels and ensuring that both large and small farmers can transition to sustainable practices. Furthermore, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) was discussed in terms of its role in supporting these transitions, but also its limitations. Participants noted that while CAP provides financial support, the policy needs to better incentivise sustainable techniques across all EU member states.

The presentations reinforced the idea that public policies must be informed by local realities and tailored to meet the specific needs of vulnerable communities. Maria Rosa Onofre from CCDR Alentejo highlighted the specific challenges faced by regions like Alentejo, which are particularly susceptible to desertification and climate change impacts. Her emphasis on the need for a regional climate strategy reflects the importance of local adaptations in the broader European context. This includes measures aimed at promoting biodiversity protection, food system resilience, and circular economy practices, demonstrating how localised policies can align with European Union climate goals.

Additionally, the discussion pointed to the necessity of addressing financing and partnerships for implementing sustainable practices. Maria Rosa Onofre noted that mobilising adequate funding remains a significant barrier, which reinforces the call for public-private partnerships and access to European funds to ensure that proposed measures can be effectively realised.

Furthermore, the meeting highlighted the importance of a collaborative dialogue among farmers, policymakers, and researchers. Nelson Ekane, representing the BEATLES project, discussed the "lock-ins" that keep the agricultural sector trapped in outdated production models, pointing out that without incentives and supportive policies, the transition to sustainable agriculture will be slow. He advocated for a co-creation approach, where stakeholders can work together to identify barriers and develop scalable solutions.

The significance of evidence-based policy recommendations was also stressed, particularly through the work presented by Clara Douzal from the FABLE consortium. The use of analytical tools, such as the FABLE Calculator, allows for simulating various scenarios and assessing the impact of different policies on food systems and emissions reduction. This kind of data-driven approach is vital for crafting effective and adaptive policies that can lead to a sustainable transition.

Finally, Nikolai Pushkarev's presentation on a climate-neutral European Union illustrated the need for a conducive environment that supports land users during the transition. He emphasised several priority policies, including a climate policy for land use and reforms to the common agricultural policy, to promote sustainable business models.



In summary, to achieve sustainability and resilience goals, it was emphasised as being essential that public policies be flexible, inclusive, and grounded in local realities. The collaborative efforts highlighted in this meeting can pave the way for a more sustainable future for agriculture in Europe, ensuring that all stakeholders—farmers, communities, policymakers, and researchers—are actively engaged in shaping effective solutions.

ROUNDTABLE OUTPUT SUMMARY

□ MARIA JOSÉ SANZ:

Maria José Sanz, coordinator of the MAIA project, opened the session by introducing the topic and the speakers, and highlighting the role of MAIA, which aims to unify knowledge from multiple European Union projects related to climate change, ensuring that this data is widely accessible and applicable for both local actions and broader climate adaptation policy formulation.

Key Points and Details Presented:

- **Integration of Projects and Community Action:** The MAIA project operates as a platform that integrates various existing initiatives across Europe. Maria José Sanz emphasised that one of the main issues in combating climate change is the fragmentation of data and initiatives. Often, different regions and projects work with information that is not easily shareable. MAIA seeks to break this barrier by providing a connectivity hub, where previously disconnected platforms can exchange data and ideas, facilitating communication among stakeholders from various areas and sectors.
- **Connectivity Hub:** This hub will serve as a central space for sharing information and tools among different climate projects. Maria José underscored that one of the significant challenges in implementing technological solutions to mitigate climate change is the difficulty that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) face in accessing already developed solutions. To address this, MAIA is also creating a "solutions marketplace" where these companies can find and access innovative services. One example she mentioned was the "Voctractor" ([SummarAlse](#)), a tool designed to extract relevant information from lengthy documents, such as technical reports and extensive PDFs, streamlining the research and decision-making process.
- **Technological Challenges in Agriculture:** Maria José contextualised the importance of discussing specific technological challenges affecting the agricultural sector, a primary focus of the meeting. Agriculture is under significant pressure due to increasing demands for more sustainable practices and the need to modernise processes without compromising productivity. One obstacle raised by Maria José was that many agricultural companies, particularly smaller ones, feel that the new demands to adopt green technologies are unfeasible in terms of scalability and cost-effectiveness.
- **MAIA's Role in Building Networks:** Maria José explained that MAIA acts as a facilitator to ensure that public policies are informed by on-the-ground realities. Therefore, the project includes a series of workshops and meetings among stakeholders from both the public and private sectors, creating a collaborative network. The goal is to make information more accessible, promote scalable solutions, and align the interests of various stakeholders, from farmers to policymakers.

□ MARIA ROSA ONOFRE:

Maria Rosa Onofre from CCDR Alentejo discussed the realities of the Alentejo region in Portugal within a context of increasing vulnerability to climate change. Her presentation highlighted the actions the region is taking to mitigate



climate impacts and promote a sustainable long-term circular economy while shedding light on the difficulties and challenges faced at the regional level.

Key Points and Details Presented:

- **Specific Challenges of Alentejo:** Maria Rosa Onofre explained that Alentejo is the largest region in Portugal by geographical area but one of the least populated, with only 7% of the country's population. However, the region faces unique challenges related to climate change, being one of the most susceptible areas to desertification in Europe. She mentioned that biodiversity loss, soil acidification, and coastal changes have devastating impacts on agricultural activities, which are crucial for the local economy.
- **Impacts of Climate Change on Alentejo:** The increase in temperature and decrease in precipitation were some of the direct effects of climate change cited by Maria Rosa Onofre. These impacts exacerbate the aridity of the region, affecting not only agricultural productivity but also the living conditions of rural communities. Additionally, she highlighted the problem of soil salinisation caused by rising tides in coastal areas, further complicating traditional agricultural practices.
- **Regional Climate Strategy:** CCDR Alentejo was the first organisation in Portugal to develop a regional climate strategy. The document identifies priority action areas such as biodiversity protection, food system resilience, and ecosystem service preservation. She emphasised that these areas of intervention are essential for ensuring long-term sustainability and that the strategy aligns with the European Union's climate goals.
- **Climate Measures and Actions:** Maria Rosa Onofre presented a set of 15 key measures that the region is implementing to tackle climate challenges. Proposed actions include promoting regenerative agricultural practices, developing solutions for efficient water resource management, and creating a circular economy. These measures aim not only to mitigate the immediate impacts of climate change but also to ensure that Alentejo is prepared to handle future crises.
- **Social Impacts and Climate Risks:** Another important point addressed by Maria Rosa Onofre was the impact of climate change on local communities, especially vulnerable populations, such as the elderly living in isolated areas. Limited access to healthcare and basic infrastructure makes these populations particularly susceptible to the negative effects of climate change. CCDR Alentejo is working to develop policies that enhance the resilience of these communities, ensuring that climate solutions consider social impacts.
- **Financing and Sustainability:** One of the challenges mentioned by Maria Rosa Onofre was the lack of adequate funding to implement the regional climate strategy. Although ambitious policies exist, mobilising financial resources remains a significant barrier. She stressed the importance of seeking partnerships with the private sector and accessing European funds to ensure that proposed measures are feasible and can be applied on a large scale.

Maria Rosa Onofre concluded by emphasising that, although the challenges are immense, there is an opportunity to transform Alentejo into a region resilient to climate change through innovations, sustainable policies, and multisectoral cooperation.

□ NELSON EKANE:

Nelson Ekane introduced the BEATLES project, which aims to transition towards climate-smart agriculture (CSA) by addressing systemic challenges, stakeholder engagement, and the identification of opportunities across the European Union (EU).



Key Points from the Presentation:

- **Focus on Lock-ins and Transition Challenges:**
Nelson Ekane discussed the concept of "lock-ins"—barriers that prevent action despite the will to implement sustainable agricultural practices. These include institutional inertia and regional disparities in policy implementation. The BEATLES project seeks to identify these lock-ins and find ways to overcome them to facilitate a transition towards climate-smart agriculture. There are factors that hinder the adoption of more sustainable agricultural practices, despite political and social will. These obstacles include a lack of clarity and broad scope in the EU's agricultural policies, such as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP); Regional disparities, where Western and Southern European countries adhere more to recommended practices than Eastern European countries; The EU's regulatory framework for CSA is often too generic and applied unevenly.
- **Stakeholder Engagement and Co-creation:**
A significant aspect of the BEATLES project is its emphasis on stakeholder engagement, bringing together a consortium of 18 partners from 10 European countries. These partners come from academia, industry, and policy sectors, ensuring a comprehensive approach to addressing challenges in the food and agriculture sectors. This co-creation approach aims to ensure that different perspectives are considered in developing solutions.
- **Use Cases and Practical Applications:**
The project implements use cases in various EU countries, focusing on different agricultural sectors—such as wheat farming in Lithuania, pig farming in Denmark, organic dairy farming in Germany, and more. These use cases allow for the application of climate-smart agriculture (CSA) practices in real-world contexts and help assess the impact of different models on the transition to sustainable agriculture.
- **Life-Cycle Assessments and Business Models:**
BEATLES incorporates life-cycle assessments to analyse the environmental and economic impacts of agricultural practices. The project aims to explore innovative business models that can support large-scale transitions to climate-smart practices.
- **Disparities in Policy Implementation:**
Nelson Ekane highlighted disparities in the adoption of CSA practices across different regions of the EU. For example, there is greater adherence to sustainable practices in Western and Southern Europe compared to Eastern Europe. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) plays a crucial role in this, he noted that there are challenges in aligning CAP with climate goals and in achieving harmonisation across the EU.
- **Levers for Change:**
While challenges exist, Nelson Ekane identified key opportunities for fostering CSA adoption, particularly through CAP, which accounts for one-third of the EU budget. Participatory methods that place farmers at the centre of decision-making processes were also mentioned as critical levers for facilitating this transition. Additionally, there is a need for harmonisation of policies, particularly to align CAP's direct payments with the EU's food security and environmental goals.
- **Complexity of Transitioning to CSA:**
The presentation emphasised the complexity of transitioning to climate-smart agriculture, noting that it requires integrated approaches across value chains, feedback mechanisms, and continuous dialogue between stakeholders. Despite this complexity, the project's participatory approach, involving farmers, policymakers, and other key stakeholders, is seen as essential for success.

The BEATLES project illustrates a concerted effort to encourage long-term, large-scale adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices across Europe. Through its focus on stakeholder engagement, practical use cases, and policy alignment, the project aims to drive meaningful change in the agri-food systems of the EU, addressing both environmental and economic sustainability.



□ **CLARA DOUZAL:**

Clara Douzal addressed pathways to sustainable food systems, focusing on the work of the FABLE consortium (Food, Agriculture, Biodiversity, Land, and Energy). She presented tools and models that help countries formulate informed policies and assess their impacts.

Key Points from the Presentation:

- **Contextualisation of Challenges:** Clara began by highlighting the issues associated with food and land use systems, which include greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, water pollution, unhealthy diets, and biodiversity loss. FABLE seeks to address these challenges in an integrated manner, recognising the interconnection among these systems.
- **The FABLE Consortium:** Founded in 2017, the consortium involves independent research teams from about 24 countries, including five European Union (EU) countries (Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, and Sweden). FABLE utilises a model known as the FABLE Calculator, an open-source model that provides a framework for analysing the interactions between food production and consumption and related policies.
- **FABLE Calculator:** This model, developed in Excel, covers the period from 2000 to 2015, with projections every five years, and is primarily used at national and regional levels. The model includes 83 products, covering crops, animal products, and vegetables. Clara emphasised that the tool allows for simulating different scenarios based on demands, reflecting how changes in diet and productivity policies impact land use, food security, and GHG emissions.
- **Sustainable Pathways:** During a recent exercise, three distinct pathways were identified:
 1. **Current Path (Business as Usual):** Refers to the continuation of current practices.
 2. **National Commitment Pathways:** Considers the effective implementation of all existing policies.
 3. **Global Sustainability Pathway:** Explores additional actions that would allow for achieving global sustainability targets, such as keeping global warming below 1.5 °C.
- **Expected Outcomes and Projections:** Clara shared that, regardless of the pathway followed, all EU countries indicated a trend toward reducing the consumption of animal products and increasing the adoption of plant-based diets by 2050. This dietary shift could result in a decrease in pasture areas and an increase in areas cultivated with plant products, reflecting an overall transition to more sustainable diets.
- **Impact Analysis and Policies:** The FABLE Calculator also allows for decomposition analysis, assessing the impact of different policies on emission reductions. Clara highlighted that dietary changes and improvements in productivity are key factors that could lead to reduced GHG emissions. Additionally, afforestation policies and food waste management also play a crucial role.
- **Long-Term Vision and Sustainability:** Clara concluded by emphasising the need for long-term policies that align local and national objectives with global commitments. Collaboration among different stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, and local communities, is essential for the successful implementation of these policies. She highlighted that creating sustainable food systems not only improves food security but also provides economic and public health benefits.

The presentation emphasised the importance of an integrated and evidence-based approach to addressing challenges related to agriculture and sustainability. The FABLE consortium represents a significant effort to support the transition to more sustainable food systems, demonstrating how collaboration and the use of analytical tools can contribute to effective and scalable solutions.



□ **NIKOLAI PUSHKAREV:**

Nikolai Pushkarev, a representative of a newly established think tank in Berlin with a presence in Brussels, presented a comprehensive scenario on agriculture, forestry, and food in the context of a climate-neutral European Union, published last month.

Key Points from the Presentation:

- **Scenario Objectives:** Nikolai emphasised that the scenario is integrated, addressing elements of agriculture, forestry, food consumption, and biomass demand for energy and material use within the context of the global market. The central objective is to demonstrate how the land-use sector, particularly agriculture and forestry, can contribute to multiple sustainability goals, which include: 1. Climate neutrality; 2. Biodiversity protection; 3. Animal welfare; 4. Human health; 5. Economic viability.
- **Model Used:** The model employed for this analysis was Capri, widely recognised for its application in agricultural modelling. Nikolai clarified that, while the model is quite useful, it does not adequately address forests, requiring additional calculations to integrate this data. It is important to note that the model should not be seen as a prediction but rather as a tool to initiate discussions on possible futures.
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions Projections:** One of the most impactful findings of the scenario was the forecast of a 60% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture and agricultural peatlands by 2045. Nikolai explained that this reduction is attributed to three main factors:
 - The production of livestock, which is the largest contributor to the emission reductions.
 - The implementation of mitigation technologies, such as feed additives and improvements in manure management.
 - A significant decrease in livestock production, with a projection of maintaining only half of the animal population in the EU.
- **Rehabilitation of Agricultural Peatlands:** Nikolai also emphasised the importance of rehabilitating agricultural peatlands, proposing the replanting of 80% of these areas, which currently represent only 2% of agricultural land but are responsible for 20% of the sector's emissions. He highlighted that integrating peatlands into agricultural management is essential for reducing emissions.
- **Efficiency and Land Use Demand:** The presentation addressed the need for an efficient approach to land use, considering all requirements and demands placed upon it. This includes not only increasing productivity but also smarter management that takes into account diversity and environmental needs.
- **Changes in Consumption Patterns:** Pushkarev also discussed the need to change consumption patterns, forecasting a 50% reduction in demand for arable land. This change includes a transition to a more plant-based diet, with the ratio of calories consumed shifting from 60% of animal products to 80% of plant-based foods.
- **Implications for Public Policy:** For this scenario to become a reality, Nikolai emphasised the need for a conducive environment that supports land users during the transition. He highlighted several priority policies, including a climate policy for land use that covers both emissions and incentives for carbon removals; a reform of the common agricultural policy focusing on supporting sustainable business models; a legislative framework for sustainable food systems that allows for changes in food policies and consumption environments; and initiatives aimed at rural development that ensure adequate funding to facilitate the transition and promote economic opportunities in rural areas.



Nikolai Pushkarev's presentation underscored the urgency and complexity of transitioning to sustainable agriculture in the European Union. The scenario presented highlights the interconnection between sustainability goals and the importance of integrated planning and robust policies to achieve climate and biodiversity targets while ensuring economic opportunities for farmers.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The roundtable and workshop highlighted the crucial role of short food supply chains in addressing both climate change and food security challenges in Europe. Participants agreed that regional policies must reflect local realities and support sustainable agricultural practices through better access to funding, stakeholder collaboration, and scalable solutions. Moving forward, the MAIA project will continue facilitating knowledge exchange and policy alignment across regions, while also working on actionable recommendations to enhance food systems.

The next steps will focus on advancing the MAIA tools and services to further support regional actors in adopting sustainable practices. This includes organising follow-up workshops, engaging more stakeholders in co-creation processes, and strengthening partnerships between public and private entities to drive forward the transformation of food systems in Europe.

2nd MAIA WORKSHOP SUMMARY

On October 8th, the workshop "Sustainable Food Systems: Bringing the Farm to Fork into a Regional Perspective" was held alongside the 4th MAIA Policy Roundtable. The event, held in a hybrid format both in Brussels and online, aimed to engage participants in a comprehensive discussion on the challenges and opportunities facing energy communities and food systems across Europe. By merging conversations on food systems and energy communities, the event provided a platform for exploring the interdependent nature of regional growth, sustainability, and community empowerment. The workshop centred on identifying ways to address these challenges while also fostering collaboration across sectors and regions.

The event brought together a diverse group of policymakers, agricultural experts, energy stakeholders, researchers, and civil society leaders, all of whom contributed to the dynamic discussions. The conversations focused on how European regions can lead the transformation of food production, distribution, and consumption by adopting sustainable practices and establishing short supply chains with minimal environmental impacts.

Through a series of presentations, discussions, and interactive workshops, participants delved into key EU initiatives such as the Farm to Fork Strategy and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), as well as the untapped potential of short supply chains to mitigate climate change. The event provided a platform for participants to exchange knowledge, share regional success stories, and collaborate on solutions to overcome barriers. The shared vision for sustainable food systems and the role of energy communities in regional development provided a framework for long-term planning, assisting in the identification of actionable steps toward a more sustainable and resilient future for Europe.

Both online and in-person participants were asked to contribute to three distinct exercises closely related to the presentations and discussion of the 4th Policy Roundtable.

- **Exercise 1: Barriers and Challenges to Sustainable Food Systems**

Participants noted the main barriers to achieving sustainability in regional food systems as well as proposed solutions, focusing on existing but untapped mechanisms both at the regional and EU level. Regional challenges include the low adoption of new and green technologies and the lack of skills necessary for the



green and digital transition. At the EU level, participants highlighted the inconsistency of agricultural policies across member states, the lack of awareness and information regarding potential solutions and technological and behavioural lock-ins.

Solutions included a growing body of EU Horizon projects on sustainable food systems, taking a value chain perspective in designing and implementing targeted policies, and creating an EU Fund for agri-tech-related innovation. From the regional perspective, contributions included tailored training programs for farmers, specialised financing schemes to tackle regional needs and capabilities and support for local initiatives like community gardens and local farmers' markets.

EXERCISE 1
Barriers & Challenges to Sustainable Food Systems

REGIONAL BARRIERS

- Access to Healthy Foods
- Culture
- Lack of Integration of EU Agricultural Policy
- Local Food Waste Management Issues
- Farmer Education and Skills Gap
- Diverse needs

EU BARRIERS

- Weakness Policies on Sustainable Agriculture across Member States
- Dependence on Imports with High Environmental Footprints
- Willingness to pay for innovative & expensive solutions
- Behavioral & Cultural Lock-ins
- Lack of Coordination on Agricultural Technology R&D
- Lack of Awareness and Information

REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Take a Value Chain perspective
- Local Farmers' Markets and Urban Agriculture Initiatives
- Training Programs for Farmers
- Community Composting Programs

EU OPPORTUNITIES

- Existing Policy Re-evaluation
- Incubating Local Sourcing and Reduced Imports
- EU Research Projects (HORIZON)
- Creating an EU Fund for Agri-Tech Innovation

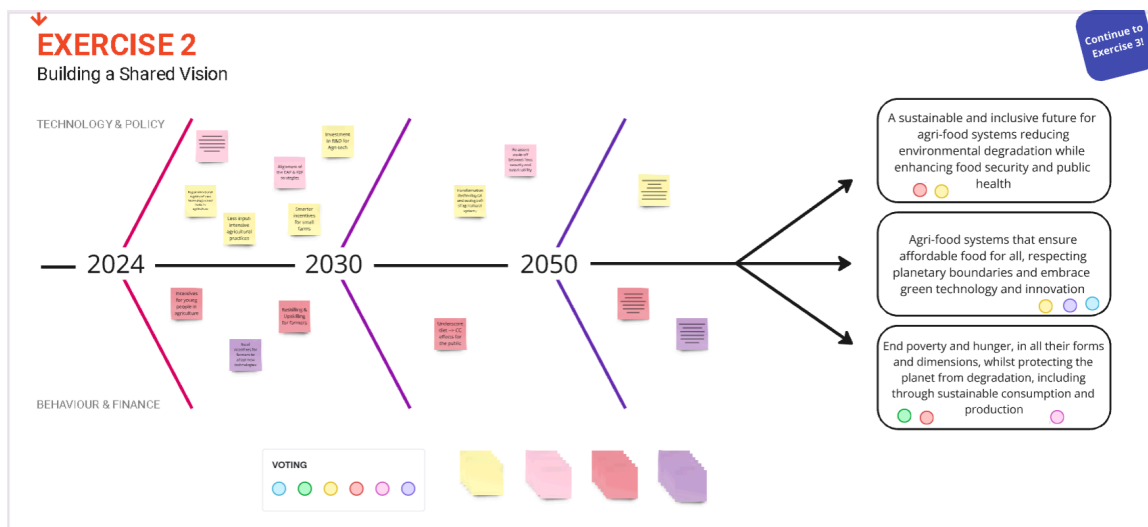
Continue to Exercise 2!



- **Exercise 2: Building a Shared Vision**

All Workshop participants validated the proposal for a shared vision for food systems ensuring affordable food for all, respecting planetary boundaries, and embracing green technology and innovations. Furthermore, they were asked to suggest initiatives in the short-, medium- and long-run to fulfil this vision. Short-term measures included raising awareness on the benign effects of dietary shifts to healthy consumption on mitigating GHG emissions and promoting food security, providing incentives for technology adoption in farming and re-skilling and up-skilling of farmers and workers in the related sectors.

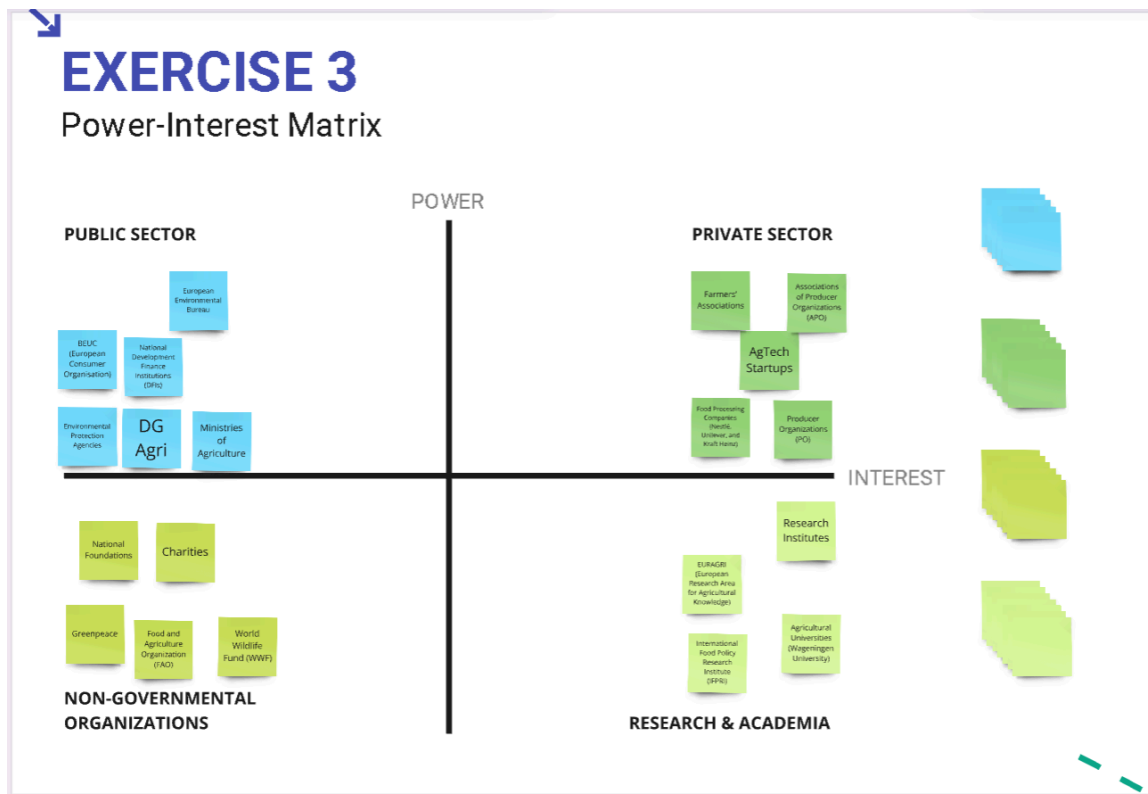
Medium and long-term measures included incentivising transformational change through advanced technologies, institutionalising dietary shifts at the national and regional levels, and reassessing the trade-offs between food security and sustainable production.



- **Exercise 3: Power - Interest Matrix**

Regional and EU stakeholders were placed along the 2-dimensional space based on their relative power and interest in promoting a shift towards sustainable food systems. Public entities included the National Ministries of Agriculture, DG Agri, the European Environmental Bureau, and National Environment Protection Agencies. Research Institutes and Universities were ranked high regarding their interest, however, it was noted that their power is contingent on their synergies with the private and the public sector.

Regarding the private sector, Farmers and Producers associations exhibit high power as well as interest, whereas tech start-ups have great potential but lack power for the time being. Finally, the FAO and WWF are key players in the sustainable transition, while national foundations and charities show great interest combined with modest power.



Key Takeaways:

- The Importance of Short Food Supply Chains:** One of the workshop's key themes was the critical role of short food supply chains in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. By decreasing the distance between farms and consumers, these networks help to lower carbon footprints, enhance food security, and stimulate local economies. Participants emphasised that increasing local sourcing and reducing dependence on long, complex supply chains can significantly improve both environmental sustainability and the resilience of food systems.
- Insights into the EU Farm to Fork Strategy and Common Agricultural Policy (CAP):** The workshop provided valuable insights into two major European frameworks aimed at promoting sustainable agricultural practices. The EU Farm to Fork Strategy was highlighted as a comprehensive plan to make food systems fairer, healthier, and more environmentally friendly by aligning food production and consumption with the EU's climate goals. Likewise, the CAP was discussed in terms of supporting farmers in transitioning to more sustainable techniques, while ensuring food security and sustaining rural communities.
- Regional Success Stories and Challenges:** The experiences of various regions in supporting local food systems, including both achievements and challenges, were shared. Case studies demonstrated how regions have implemented innovative approaches to fostering local food production and consumption, such as forming cooperatives, creating regional food labels, and investing in sustainable farming practices. However, challenges such as scaling these initiatives, accessing new markets, and overcoming regulatory barriers were also highlighted.
- Collaborative Workshop Exercises:** The event included interactive sessions both on-site and on the Miro Board, where participants worked together to identify barriers and opportunities for improving sustainable food systems. These exercises encouraged cross-sector collaboration, allowing policymakers, farmers,



business leaders, and civil society organisations to jointly develop solutions. Participants collaborated to create a shared vision and to identify key barriers to sustainable food systems.

- **Untapped Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Abatement Potential of Healthier Dietary Patterns:** One of the workshop's key insights was the significant potential for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by shifting towards healthier dietary patterns.
- **EU Agriculture and Peatlands Can Cut GHG Emissions by 60% by Mid-Century:** Projections presented at the workshop suggested that agriculture and agricultural peatlands in the EU could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 60% by 2050. This could be achieved through a combination of sustainable farming practices, peatland restoration, and healthier dietary habits.