
MANAGING THE FOOD SUPPLY DURING THE PANDEMIC

Initiatives in French cities



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION P. 5

2 A SHOCK TO A LONG-ESTABLISHED AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD SUPPLY SYSTEM P. 7

A highly successful system P. 7

An increasing number of challenges from all sides P. 7

A health crisis that has brought the global economy to a standstill P. 9

At the heart of the crisis, cities play a crucial role P. 9

Pre-existing concerns P. 11

3 CITIES AND THE CONTINUITY OF THE FOOD SUPPLY IN URBAN ENVIRONMENTS P. 13

Agricultural production:
identification of requirements, ensuring distribution outlets and reinforcing short supply chains P. 13

Distribution: adapting logistics supply channels P. 18

Consumption: initiatives taken in a spirit of solidarity and the fight against food insecurity P. 20

Collaboration, communication, and awareness P. 23

4 WHAT LESSONS CAN BE LEARNED? P. 27

Cities' response to emergencies in times of crisis P. 27

Cities and the need to strengthen long-term food transition and resilience in times of crisis P. 29

5 CONCLUSION P. 33

Presentations of associations P. 35

List of participants in the survey P. 38



1

INTRODUCTION

Management of the food sector has been a crucial issue during Covid-19 crisis. A basic need for everybody, obtaining food is an essential activity that cannot be interrupted or endangered. But how can the safety and quality of the food supply be guaranteed for everyone during a health crisis? What mechanisms have been put in place in French cities in response to this unprecedented emergency? What lessons can be learned from the pandemic? Should we expect more long-term changes in the way that we produce, consume and recycle? To what extent can local French initiatives be useful in terms of a transition of the food system on a more global scale?

In the space of a few weeks, Covid-19 has created an unprecedented situation. The closure of educational establishments and non-essential shops, lockdown measures, the closure of markets and the shortage of labour in agricultural production are all factors that have obliged actors in the food system to adapt to a rapidly changing environment in order to ensure food security throughout the country.

Everybody in the supply chain has had to come up with solutions to cope with the emergency: farmers, consumers and all those involved in the various intermediary stages of the chain have all been affected by the safety measures. In this context, large cities and inter-municipalities, who need to ensure access to food for very large numbers of people, have urgently had to propose supply solutions to replace segments in the supply chains affected by health decisions, while strengthening solidarity with vulnerable sections of the population.

In close contact with these vulnerable, isolated, low-income populations for whom solidarity solutions have been created, cities and their inter-municipalities have remained attentive to all consumers and local producers experiencing problems, with the aim of maintaining a food economy that enables everyone to have access to the food supply. The commitment and creativity of actors in the food system during this crisis has been crucial. Cities in collaboration with all actors in inter-municipal territories have played coordinating, supervisory roles, and have also been directly involved when necessary. Thanks to this capacity to take urgent action in a coordinated and voluntary manner, we have avoided the major risk of shortages, which would have led to panic among consumers, as was demonstrated by early reactions to the crisis.

France Urbaine, in partnership with the RESOLIS and *Terres en Villes* associations, presents an analysis in this publication of the multiple roles played by cities during these first weeks of lockdown. This analysis is based entirely on

cities and their inter-municipalities have remained attentive to all consumers and local producers experiencing problems.

the feedback that has been provided by 35 of our members. A total of 30 towns and large urban areas and five chambers of agriculture responded to the survey¹. We will focus on the two-month lockdown period that was imposed during this unprecedented crisis. We will have an opportunity, again by interpreting actual on-the-ground information, of reporting on the next stages, of the emergence from lockdown,

and, in the longer term, of a recovery integrating both the burdens of the past and the lessons we have learned. However, before plunging into the analysis of the crisis, we thought it necessary and perhaps valuable to situate the pandemic within the context of the food system's long history and the numerous questions that have arisen regarding its effectiveness in recent years.



Photographs taken as part of the “#VitrinesEnConfinement” (“#WindowsInLockdown”) challenge carried out by a CNRS research team and Paris Nanterre University supervised by Sarah Gensburger (ISP/CNRS) and Marta Severa (Dicen-IDF/Paris Nanterre University).

vitrinesenconfinement@protonmail.com

(1) See the appendix for the list of respondents page 38

2

A SHOCK TO A LONG-ESTABLISHED AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD SUPPLY SYSTEM

➔ A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL SYSTEM

The coronavirus crisis has impacted a food system that has evolved over centuries, a system driven by powerful economic entities, which have given it its two main modern characteristics: globalization and agro-industrialization. A system that is popular with consumers, who have benefited from low-cost, easy access to food, and, at least in the short term, a guarantee of safety in terms of health. It was thought that the performance of this system could not be improved, since it could mobilize the best and least expensive resources from all over the world – low-cost labour, vast production areas, advantageous taxation – enabling the performance of traditional organic farming to be surpassed by the use of chemical or mechanical inputs on farms – chemical and synthetic fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, mechanization and motorization, and ultimately having a significant impact on the environment, and on human health. Agriculture has been revolutionized: having previously sought to adapt livestock and plants to a given natural environment, it now does the opposite and adapts the environment to plants and animals selected by geneticists for optimal productivity. The results: in France, over the course of the post-war boom (1945 - 1975), average grain yields increased by 100 kg per hectare per year, and cows produced

100 litres more milk every year. An agricultural and also a food supply revolution: the processing industries and retail sector took control of the downstream stages of the food chains, stages that drive the entire food system.

➔ AN INCREASING NUMBER OF CHALLENGES FROM ALL SIDES

The system may be a success, yet for the past two decades, warnings and questions have multiplied to the extent that the food system has become a central issue in public, scientific, and political debate. These questions concern various aspects of this system and concern the impacts it has on:

- **human health** – junk food and chronic obesity, cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, traces of herbicides and pesticides (endocrine disruptors), highly processed food.
- **society** – farmers suffering from high levels of debt, falling prices and volatility in agricultural markets, repeated crises in different sectors, migration of young people, ageing populations.
- **culture** – loss of the diversity of food cultures and regional identities.
- **the environment** – impacts on climate (agriculture and the food system accounts for

the food system has become a central issue in public, scientific, and political debate.

30% of greenhouse gas emissions), on biodiversity (including the soil, the loss of insect populations, causing the disappearance of 30% of birds in the last 15 years), the artificialization of soil, and water pollution.

- **land development** – loss of local economic activities and jobs, reduction in local development.
- **local democratic life** – loss of capacity to control/influence the food supply.

Scientists documenting these various problems, measuring their dynamics and timelines, have also issued warnings.

These “rumblings” gradually became louder, ultimately coalescing. The long list of poor “externalities,” tells us where solutions should be offered, but historical analysis of how the food system has evolved enables us to understand that all of these problems have two common roots: excessive globalization and excessive agro-industrialization. It also gives us a better understanding of how, alongside a

strong globalized component, a small regional component has persisted, a vestige of the past, giving expression to regional, post-agro-industrial food systems. Outside of the debates, which have contributed to popularizing and socializing these farming and food issues, actors in production and consumption chains have taken action. Initiatives for more responsible, sustainable food, on the one hand, and public policy measures to encourage a responsible, sustainable supply on the other, have given shape to an agricultural and food transition movement which, while still modest, almost certainly represents our future direction. For their part, territorial authorities have embraced the *Projets Alimentaires Territoriaux* (PAT) (Territorial Food Project) scheme, introduced by the *Loi d’avenir pour l’agriculture, l’alimentation et la forêt* (French law for sustainability in agriculture, food and forestry) of 13 October 2014, in order to bring together local actors in the food system and create collective projects. Some authorities have set up committees or boards to oversee food strategy at a territorial scale.



➔ A HEALTH CRISIS THAT HAS BROUGHT THE GLOBAL ECONOMY TO A STANDSTILL

So this was the historical context for the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic, which triggered a sudden, unprecedented, unpredictable, global health crisis, which rapidly also became an economic and social crisis, highlighting the vulnerability of this giant food system, and requiring actors in the system to cope with the emergency in order to ensure the continuity of supply chains and to shorten the generally very indirect links between agricultural producers and food consumers. The closure of borders, strict limitations on internal transport, the closure of most markets, private restaurants and collective catering operations, and the introduction of lockdown and social distancing, all caused major disruptions to the food system. Those involved in the system had to urgently come up with local solutions and avoid shortages, which would have resulted in consumer panic, as demonstrated by the overreactions during the early days of lockdown. Local sources were able to compensate for disrupted global supply chains. Migrant workers have been replaced by local labour on farms, items usually sourced abroad have been replaced by equivalent local fresh produce, drive-thrus and home-deliveries have created direct links between consumers and producers, established structures like the AMAPs (associations for the maintenance of local farming) have been expanded and replicated, strategic institutions, such as wholesale markets or MINs (markets of national interest), *Centres Communaux d'Action Sociale* (CCASs) (Municipal Social Action Centres), large food aid associations, chambers of agriculture, not forgetting farming associations, who have always advocated for local food supply chains in parallel to the larger agricultural and food economy, have interacted and adapted. Everywhere, digital platforms and interactive maps have enabled all those involved in the food system to communicate supply and demand, to find storage and exchange locations, to identify services and

place orders, to locate donations or unsold goods offered to vulnerable populations... Despite the disruptions, the food supply chains have been maintained during these first few weeks of lockdown, thanks to the commitment and creativity of actors in the food system.

➔ AT THE HEART OF THE CRISIS, CITIES PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE

In this context, both in terms of the response to the emergency and the transition towards a more responsible, sustainable food supply, territorial authorities have played and will be called upon to play a major role, consisting of aiding a gradual reterritorialization of the food system and, very likely, the emergence of multiple, diverse food systems. This movement for a transition of the food system is now coupled with a desire to increase its resilience in the event of crises. Food is too strategic an issue to be entrusted to third parties who have their own agendas. Moreover, this role was set out by France Urbaine in the declaration by mayors of major towns and presidents of inter-municipalities, "For a solidarity-based, responsible, sustainable food transition", published in December 2018. As to the nature of their involvement, cities have said they are ready to take on responsibilities in the transformation of downstream food chain operations, mainly those concerning food distribution, catering, food consumption, and also the reduction and treatment of food waste, the first stage in a new circular economy. This is an important responsibility, since these operations play a major role in the management of the entire food system and its necessary transition. For the other links in the food chain and other components of the food system, cities have called for a territorial alliance.

Food is too strategic an issue to be entrusted to third parties.



Excerpts from the France Urbaine Declaration “For a solidarity-based, responsible, sustainable food transition”

“The substantial civic mobilization in recent weeks in our territories has served as a reminder that our fellow citizens have high expectations of us as their representatives. The desire for a sustainable, responsible, accessible food supply is expressed by a broad majority of French people. This concern is all the more relevant because we are, together, aware of the challenges and factors (urbanization, population growth, use of resources, air, water and soil quality,) that should lead us to consider more health-focused and environmentally-friendly production and consumption models. Numerous initiatives organized by citizens, associations, and NGOs have already opened up paths to transition. We, as mayors of France’s major towns and presidents of inter-municipalities, are already committed to transforming the food system, alongside and for the benefit of our fellow citizens. This is why, through our actions, we are helping to structure local supply chains, fighting food waste, helping young farmers to get established, and improving everyone’s access to healthy food. These projects are being organized at a territorial level, usually with community associations, citizens and businesses, because it is on this scale that we can act most effectively. However, in a globalized environment, that is no longer enough. Building on our country’s strengths in agriculture and food, we believe

that we have a significant role to play on the international stage by contributing to a broad movement for a sustainable, solidarity-based food supply. To enable French regions to be heard, we also need to interact with national, European and international processes concerning the evolution of the food system. Negotiation of Common Agricultural Policy, trade within the WTO, and determining FAO projects are all opportunities that we must seize in order to convince other member states to work towards the reterritorialization of food systems. The mobilization of all stakeholders and resources is essential to successfully drive the transition to a sustainable, ethical, and solidarity-based food system. Our commitments are part of this process. Contributing to the structuring of territorialized food systems and the promotion of the necessary paradigm shift, which follows, is within our reach. In this way, the commitment and actions of citizens and community associations, coupled with our proactive approach, should position France as a pioneer in the development of a model for the transition to a more sustainable, solidarity-based food and agricultural system.”

➔ PRE-EXISTING CONCERNS

The current interest of large urban areas in a food strategy is the result of previously raised concerns regarding agriculture, its relationship with cities and its place in territorial projects. For example, the protection of agricultural land has been considered a major issue for many cities concerned by its gradual erosion through urban sprawl. Its main consequence is to disrupt agriculture by dividing up agricultural land, making it difficult to move livestock and machinery, and making land more expensive. Aid for the establishment and renovation of farms, often necessary when farmers retire, is still an important aspect of agricultural life in agglomerations today. Support for short supply chains has also received special attention from cities, with a desire to compensate for the extra costs of peri-urban constraints by promoting agricultural production on the local market so as to contribute to such farms' viability. This dynamic now goes beyond short supply chains to include local supply chains and arrive at a relocation of agriculture, local channels, the supply of collective catering operations, and food logistics. In the most advanced situations, it is now the whole range of areas of action of a territorial food policy that public authorities seek to take into account: food economy, culture and gastronomy, health and nutrition, social accessibility, the environment and urban planning.

The *Projet Alimentaire Territorial* (PAT (Territorial Food Project) and the National PAT Network (RnPAT)

The Territorial Food Project (PAT) is a feature of the *Loi d'Avenir* of 13 October 2014 (French law for sustainability in agriculture, food and forestry). This is the mechanism that cities and urban areas now favour for defining and implementing a territorial partnership food strategy.

PATs "are developed on a joint basis with all the actors in a territory and meet the objective of structuring the agricultural economy and implementing a territorial food system. They participate in the consolidation of territorial channels and in the development of the consumption of products from short supply chains, in particular from organic farming. On the initiative of the government and its public institutions, territorial authorities, associations, economic and environmental interest groups [...], farmers and other actors in the territory, PATs meet the objectives set out in the regional plan for sustainable agriculture and are formalized in the form of a contract between the committed partners. [...]" Art. L. 111-2-2.

The National PAT Network (RnPAT - www.rnpat.fr) connects all the various stakeholders with a view to encouraging the co-construction and shared implementation of PATs. Supported by the *Réseau Rural Français* (French Rural Network), it is managed by *Terres en Villes* (lead partner) and the APCA (French Chamber of Agriculture). Through observation and characterization, methodological support, raising of awareness and recommendations, the RnPAT contributes to the improvement of public policies relating to the food supply. It now has 118 members from the public authority and administrative spheres, to economic, research and civil society sectors.



3

CITIES AND THE CONTINUITY OF THE FOOD SUPPLY IN URBAN ENVIRONMENTS

In the space of a few weeks, Covid-19 has created an unprecedented situation. The application of public health emergency protocols has had numerous implications for cities' food supplies. Restrictions on individual travel, the closure of food markets, restaurants and collective catering establishments, a decline in economic activity, logistics issues, labour shortages... the consequences of the Covid-19 crisis on the food system are wide-ranging. These impacts have required, in cities and inter-municipalities, the setting up of initiatives and alternative solutions to ensure the safety and quality of the food supply for everyone, while showing solidarity with producers located in peri-urban areas and nearby rural areas, and ensuring support for vulnerable sections of the population and people who have become vulnerable as a result of the crisis.

In dialogue with all the actors in their municipal territories, cities and their inter-municipalities have had to deal with ruptures in food supply chains which have affected certain people, who were often already vulnerable. We asked them how they coped, focusing on four issues that have proved to be highly sensitive during the lockdown period:

- 1. Agricultural production:** identification of requirements, ensuring distribution outlets and reinforcing short supply chains
- 2. Distribution:** adaptation of logistics supply channels

- 3. Consumption:** initiatives taken in a spirit of solidarity and the fight against food insecurity
- 4. Collaboration, communication, and education**

➔ AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION: IDENTIFICATION OF REQUIREMENTS, ENSURING DISTRIBUTION OUTLETS AND REINFORCING SHORT SUPPLY CHAINS

The nature of the impact

- On Thursday 12 March, the entire collective catering industry suddenly had to deal with the news that it would have close on Monday, 16 March. Central kitchens, whose orders had already been placed, needed to reorganize. Commercial catering operations were faced with a similar situation, with orders to close immediately.
- Open-air markets remained open a little longer, but were ordered to close on 23 March, with the provision, on a case-by-case basis, for mayors to requests dispensations from prefectures, subject to strict observation of health and safety measures. Producers, without the

outlets of markets, quickly had to find new distribution channels.

- Short supply chains, AMAPs (associations for the maintenance of local farming) and direct sales at farms, whose activity remains authorized provided they too comply with safety measures, have experienced a substantial increase in demand.
- Finally, with borders closed, farm managers can no longer rely, as they have to a large extent in the past, on seasonal foreign labour usually available during harvest periods. The harvest period is beginning and there is a shortage of workers.

Closure of markets: a significant territorial impact

Here we look at the subject of fresh and perishable foods, which were hit harder by the issuing of a decree on 23 March leading to the closure of markets and requiring a very rapid response and specific treatment. Following numerous inquiries, including from France Urbaine and actors in the food system, 2,500 markets were finally able to reopen in France after a review of the requests for exemptions by the prefectures. It is useful to recall that initially, the closure of food markets decreed by the government gave rise to concerns, and also to differences in interpretation and application of the decree, as we established in the survey of 28 cities carried out by France Urbaine. Regardless of the number of exemptions granted in cities, the closure of food markets led to a reconfiguration of local food systems and an adaptation of solidarity-based food supply chains.

Answers

• Identifying farmers' needs and supporting local production

The identification of farmers in difficulty because they were deprived of some or all of their distribution outlets was part of the initial response in territories. This work was generally the result of a collaboration between the local authority and the Chamber of Agriculture, as in Nancy, Brest and the Pays de la Loire.

The matching of supply with demand was achieved largely through digital applications. Interactive maps were quickly developed and identified local producers and open food outlets, as illustrated by the initiatives in the Urban Community of Porte de l'Isère, Greater Poitiers, the city of Bordeaux, Paris and many others.

The tool for the identification of the offer is generally combined with a platform to facilitate exchanges, mutual aid and direct contact between consumers and producers, as in the city of Saint-Etienne or the initiative in the Greater Besançon Metropolis which provides an interactive platform (Teekers). The possibility of creating an online store in 24 hours provided by the Nord-Pas-de-Calais Chamber of Agriculture reflects a similar approach.

In several cases, this type of platform was already operational as in the Marseille Metropolis where, as part of the PAT, a map of organic local stores is updated and distributed, or in Grenoble where a census tool developed within the framework of the Isère Agri-Food Centre has been finalized, or finally in Montpellier where the *Bocal* ("Jar") platform, set up as part of the city's agri-ecological and food policy (P2A), lists local producers and distribution outlets.

• Coping with labour shortages

In the event that a seasonal workforce is needed, most territories use the *Des Bras pour Ton Assiette* tool, a site for connecting citizens and farmers seeking labour, set up by the Ministry of Agriculture and the FNSEA (National Federation of Agricultural Unions); or the ANEFA (National Association for Employment and Training in Agriculture) site, *L'agriculture*

Chambers of agriculture: important representatives for the agricultural world

The Chambers of agriculture are advisory organizations. Having public status, they are overseen by elected professionals from the agricultural, rural and forestry sector (farmers, employees, owners, professional groups, etc.). Organized at the departmental, regional and national levels, their missions are to support and improve the performance of farms and the agricultural sector while ensuring a representation function within the public authorities.

The Chambers of agriculture have played an important role in the Covid-19 crisis, as the main source of information for the agricultural world. They have informed farmers about regulations, provided guidance, and frequently assisted them with the adaptation of practices. Many of them have also made it possible to identify precisely the most affected farmers in order to help them find new distribution outlets (listings, assistance with direct sales, order-taking systems, etc.), often in collaboration with other actors in the territory such as other advisory chambers, communes and inter-municipalities.

15

recrute, which has been used by several cities (Grenoble, Montpellier) and Chambers of Agriculture (in Brittany and Normandy, among others).

Administrative departments in cities and metropolises have been mobilized as in Grenoble, where the city's employment-training department worked with the Isère Chamber of Agriculture to connect farmers and job seekers, or in Lyon, where the city's employment integration centres focused on agricultural jobs. In some cases, the crisis is accelerating initiatives that were still at the project stage, such as in Béthune, which is collaborating with the GEIQ² and workers in the vegetable sector.

In some cases, the agricultural profession has concerns that there are not sufficiently trained workers, resulting in lost time and efficiency. This sentiment is accentuated with the arrival of new crops, especially tree crops.

• Creating new outlets

Following the government's decision to close the markets, certain cities and metropolises requested exemptions and provided support for communes in implementing alternative solutions (Le Havre Seine Metropolis, Grenoble-Alpes Metropolis), or authorized the creation of collection points in accordance with the conditions specified by the prefecture for markets which were not granted exemption.

Conversely, some agglomerations have chosen not to request any exemptions, but have taken measures to support local production, as in the Lyon and Clermont-Ferrand.

Several agglomerations contacted supermarkets in order to increase collaboration and encourage the sourcing of local products (Lyon and Grenoble Metropolises, La Rochelle, Le Havre Seine Metropolis, Aix-Marseille-Provence Metropolis, Strasbourg).

In Nancy, the advisory chambers have been working together: the Chamber of Agriculture identifies agricultural stocks linked to the closing of collective catering operations, while the Chamber of Commerce and Industry identifies decision-makers in retail outlets, who are able to order these stocks.

The Chambers of agriculture have played an important role in the Covid-19 crisis, as the main source of information for the agricultural world.

(2) A GEIQ is a collective of companies, managed by its members. It brings together companies who count on the potential of people having difficulty accessing employment to solve structural recruitment problems, through the organization of integration and qualification initiatives.

Finally, in general, many cities have reported on initiatives emanating from within civil society: collective organization between market gardeners in Le Havre, direct sale collaboration between producers and AMAPs (associations for the maintenance of local farming) in Brittany, private initiatives for the development of produce box sales in Grenoble, a solidarity ordering system set up by a bistro in Clermont-Ferrand... And many more solidarity initiatives that cities support and promote, such as in La Rochelle, where the Urban Area Community has created publicity material highlighting the role of the AMAPs, whose distribution networks to homes are expanding.

GREATER NANCY AND THE ADVISORY CHAMBERS

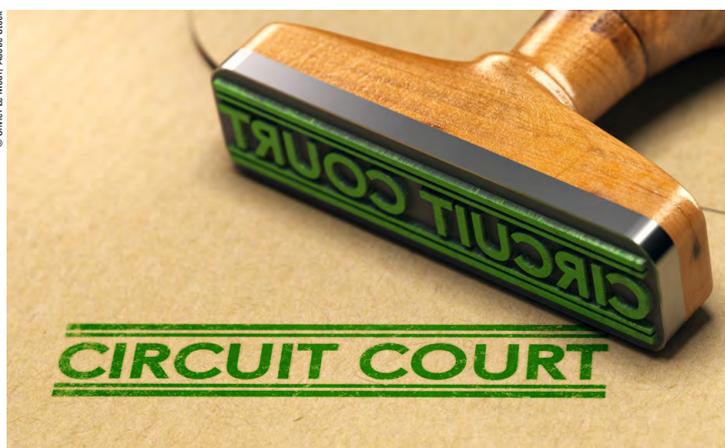
The advisory chambers of Meurthe-et-Moselle are special partners with Greater Nancy, notably through the Association of Chambers of Agriculture, Commerce and Industry, Trades and Professions (ACACIAM), which also brings together economic actors (Commercial Court, the French Banking Federation, MEDEF 54, CPME 54, U2P, CAPEB, and the FDSEA).

Upstream in the food chain, the Meurthe-et-Moselle Chamber of Agriculture, in coordination with the Greater Nancy Metropolis, with whom it has been working for more than 10 years, has identified the needs of farmers in terms of labour and produce outlets, including in the horticultural sector. This identification goes further since local producers and small businesses open during the lockdown period were geolocated with a two-fold purpose: to avoid consumers going into cities and to supermarkets (thereby making it easier to comply with public health guidelines), while at the same time enabling producers to maintain their activity through short supply chains. Nearly 350 businesses have been contacted and listed on the website www.jesuisouvert.fr/54.

The Chamber of Agriculture and CCI collaborate directly, with the former identifying stocks of basic foodstuffs accumulated following the closure of collective catering operations, and the latter contacting supermarkets.

The Sud 24 Territorial Food Project, coordinated by the Departmental Council and jointly constructed with 14 partners in the Southern Meurthe-et-Mosellan Basin, constitutes an overall strategic framework with, among its objectives, the desire to create a link between local actors and understanding the food system through socio-economic data.

Many cities
have reported
on initiatives
emanating from
within civil
society.





TOULOUSE AND THE LOCAL AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

With the goal of giving everyone access to good quality, local food, Toulouse Metropolis's PAT, winner of the PNA (National Food programme) call for projects in 2018, developed partnerships with actors in the local food system and collaborations with neighbouring territories. Mobilizing a wide variety of actors, the project supports existing initiatives and connects them to develop new projects, building on short supply chains and local organizations, and continues its actions to maintain and develop sustainable agriculture on its territory (land protection, funding of pilot agricultural projects).

In the face of the crisis, the ecosystem of Toulouse's local agricultural sector has mobilized to support those impacted. CIVAMs (Centres for Agricultural and Rural Development Initiatives), the ERABLES 31 organic farmers group, and the Chamber of Agriculture contacted producers, identified their needs, and put them in contact with distributors seeking supplies. These organizations have also communicated jointly with the authorities to request the maintenance of open-air markets.

AMAPs are experiencing substantial demand from consumers, and group orders represent a new market for producers in difficulty. The *Jardins de Cocagne* organic network has developed new solidarity links with actors in the food aid system and with VRAC (joint buying network). Local companies specialised in delivering boxes of produce based in the Toulouse Occitanie MIN (wholesale market), whose activity has grown steadily during lockdown, have been able to benefit from additional space to prepare the boxes in accordance with health and safety guidelines. The *Carrément Gers* group of producers, formed as part of the reciprocity contract with the Portes de Gascogne PETER (*Pôle d'équilibre territorial et rural* - Territorial and Rural Balance Centre), has used its base at the MIN to benefit from services concentrated at the MIN and offer a new box delivery service to the inhabitants of Toulouse.



© jpodiez / Adobe Stock

AMAPs

Association pour le maintien d'une agriculture paysanne
- Association for the maintenance of local farming

It was in the 1960s that the first "Teikei" appeared in Japan at the initiative of mothers who were worried about the excessive use of chemicals in agricultural production. Similar approaches were developed in Switzerland, the United States and Canada in the 1990s. The first French AMAPs appeared in the early 2000s in the department of the Var and have since spread across all French regions. In 2010, the *Mouvement inter-régional des AMAP* (MIRAMAP) (Inter-Regional AMAP Movement) was formed. By 2015, there were more than 2,000 AMAPs in France.

Each AMAP is built around a relationship between a group of consumers and one or more farms and takes the form of regular, often weekly, deliveries of boxes of fresh produce. Most often, an AMAP is structured as an association, with a committee. Contracts are negotiated between consumers and the producer, which stipulate farming methods and certifications and determines seasonal products, their characteristics, the composition and price of the boxes, the delivery frequency and distribution location.

The AMAPs encourage direct relationships between consumers and producers, thereby enabling local agriculture to be sustained, the guarantee of a reasonable income for the producer, and the quality of the food. These same values are shared with various associations, which support local agriculture and are members of the *Initiatives Pour une Agriculture Citoyenne et Territoriale* (INPACT) group, which include the *Associations pour le développement de l'emploi agricole et rural*, (ADREAs) (Associations for the development of agricultural and rural employment), the CIVAM network, *Terre de Liens* and more indirectly the *Fédération Nationale d'Agriculture Biologique* (FNAB) (National Organic Agriculture Federation) and the *Réseau National des Espaces-Test Agricoles* (RENETA) (National Network of Agricultural Test Areas).

➔ DISTRIBUTION: ADAPTING LOGISTICS SUPPLY CHANNELS

The nature of the impact

While safety measures to deal with the health crisis strongly impacted aspects of production, they brought a part of the food distribution logistics chain to a halt, which had to quickly reorganize and develop a range of solutions to maintain the supply: drive-thrus, collection points, setting of pick-up times to avoid crowding, door-to-door selling, etc. Companies already operating in this way are having to cope with an explosion in demand. They are stretched to capacity.

Setting up drive-thrus and collection points

To create new distribution outlets that meet health requirements, cities are implementing alternative solutions. Initiatives for the sale of food via "drive-thrus" are flourishing all over France, as demonstrated by such operations in Metz, Lille, Saint-Etienne, Paris, Toulouse, Pays Basque, La Rochelle, Mulhouse and many others.

Some cities and metropolises have shown ingenuity, not hesitating to authorize and coordinate drive-thrus with municipal facilities, thereby making it easier to comply with distance-related measures, such as the use of car parks in Metz and Lyon, or in other spaces proposed by the Chamber of Agriculture as in Le Havre and Le Doubs. Secondary schools, which have remained open for the children of hospital staff, the areas around markets, gymnasiums, MJCs (Youth and Cultural Centres) and even theatres have also been made available as in Lyon, Saint-Etienne, Rouen, Clermont-Ferrand and the Nord Department.

Once again, alliances between local actors are the key, as in Montpellier where an ecosystem of actors shares the management of six new farm drive-thrus in the metropolis between the

Hérault Chamber of Agriculture, the INPACT Occitanie producers collective, and the Regional Federation of CIVAMs and Farmers Markets. Pre-existing tools have been mobilized in a similar fashion in the Aix-Marseille-Provence Metropolis, which uses the mapping of multi-modal centres to identify pick-up points.

Territories have also been providing logistical support to existing sales sites such as local markets and shops to help them reorganize their distribution channels. In Greater Nancy, the organic market in Vandoeuvre-lès-Nancy has set up a drive-thru type distribution, thanks to the city making available the Exhibition Centre car park, and staff to monitor and regulate traffic flows. A similar initiative has been organized on the site of the Association du Marché de Genes farmers market in Besançon. In Brest, the organic market in the Kérinou district has set up an online pre-order system for boxes distributed at the market site using a drive-thru format, aided by the City of Brest which has provided logistical resources.



METZ METROPOLIS AND THE MOSELLE CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE

The Chamber of Agriculture and Metz Metropolis have been collaborating since 2010 in the context of the Metz Metropolis Economic Development Scheme, which structures a network of partnerships to develop urban and peri-urban agriculture. Through this partnership, the city aims to stimulate the development of local food production, particularly in organic agriculture. In 2019, the Metz Food Project won the National Food Programme's call for projects.

Metz Metropolis and the Moselle Chamber of Agriculture collaborated in setting up a farm produce drive-thru initially in the Chamber's car park, to facilitate the distribution of produce from farmers who previously sold it in the open-air markets. This drive-thru mobilized 25 producers in Moselle and a total of 150 customers collected boxes of produce. The Metropolis has evoked the idea of organizing a similar system in municipal car parks, in collaboration with the Chamber.

Logistical support from the wholesale markets

To address both the lack of distribution outlets and the difficulty of marketing products, cities are collaborating with wholesale markets, as a logistics platform for distributing food in the city. Wholesale markets enable the sale of agricultural produce and have a centralization role, enabling the sharing of space, infrastructures and services.

These facilities have played an important role in the management of the crisis by opening them up to producers and allowing contact with wholesalers such as in Lille and Toulouse, where the MIN (wholesale market of national interest) is open free of charge to all producers wishing to market their products.

Additional space has been made available and the logistics chains adapted, as in Rouen, where producers deliver to the MIN, which then redistributes the produce either to homes or to drive-thrus. In Grenoble, a semi-wholesale farm store in the MIN has temporarily redirected its deliveries from professionals to private individuals. In Strasbourg, the MIN has been mobilized to temporarily host a company organizing the packaging and delivery of produce boxes to homes whose business has dramatically increased.



MONTPELLIER AND ITS WHOLESALE MARKET OF NATIONAL INTEREST (MIN)

The MIN in Montpellier is a key tool in the metropolis' agri-ecological and food policy (P2A) initiated in 2014. It consists of 220 companies and 550 employees. In 2017, a central food processing hub was introduced, which brings together six local processing companies and adds value to local agricultural production, as well as a section for local organic farmers, thereby enabling them to access a diverse clientele and reduce the delivery time of products to the city. The MIN is also a valuable resource for the department's supermarkets looking for local suppliers, and for collective catering companies.

During the crisis, the Montpellier MIN made its logistics facilities available to enable businesses who do not have appropriate storage or transport systems to prepare produce boxes and benefit from a delivery service.

The Metropolis has intensified its efforts to invite shops and retailers to come and use the market thereby ensuring distribution for local produce. A specific location has also been requisitioned for the preparation of orders for the Producteurs d'Occitanie association, financially supported by the Metropolis.

Finally, the MIN has continued its role of supplying hospitals' collective catering facilities.

Wholesale markets

The French Wholesale Market Federation (FMGF) comprises 24 members, including 17 markets of national interest (MINs), which have had special status since in 1960. These markets are the largest French platform for local products, accounting for 40% of the distribution of fresh local produce and contributing to the food supply of 45 million consumers.

Wholesale markets are places where produce is assembled with intermediaries between producers on the one hand and urban markets, retailers and restaurants on the other. Often located on the outskirts of large cities, they serve as a reserve for food operations in city centres.

Alternatives to supermarket purchasing groups, wholesale markets have confirmed their role as the main actors in the distribution of food products from the food and agricultural basins of large urban areas. They host services and actors who support this role, for example food aid organizations, logistics providers, and even units for the processing or storage of local products.

The role played by supermarkets

Supermarkets have also played a role in the response to the crisis. Partnerships that were already in place have been developed, and others have been created. Chambers of agriculture have not hesitated to contact the major supermarkets with a view to introducing local products to their aisles, as in Loire Atlantique, Normandy or Nord-Pas-de-Calais. Cities have done the same, as in Le Havre or the Lyon metropolis.

The big supermarkets have frequently set up an accelerated referencing of producers in short supply chains, as in Montpellier, Le Havre or Poitiers. Their interest in local producers is partly due to the difficulty of obtaining supplies from foreign countries such as Spain or Italy.

In Clermont-Ferrand, a hypermarket collaborated with the urban logistics platform and local producers to offer a produce box delivery service including a "support local farmers" box and a locally sourced "seasonal fruit and vegetables" box. The boxes can be collected from the drive-thru set up at the logistics platform warehouse or delivered to customers' homes.



© yunolatabahet / Adobe Stock

➔ CONSUMPTION: INITIATIVES TAKEN IN A SPIRIT OF SOLIDARITY AND THE FIGHT AGAINST FOOD INSECURITY

The nature of the impact

While the health crisis has had an impact on the entire population, people living in challenging socio-economic conditions are even more affected. The closure of schools means that school meals are no longer available, which for vulnerable families are a valuable resource, providing very low cost or even free meals on a daily basis. This has created an extra expense for households who are already struggling financially.

According to the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE), 5 million people depend on food aid. With the Covid-19 crisis, growing numbers are turning to charitable associations for the first time, such as people who do not have stable jobs, and undeclared or temporary employees. Charitable associations have found themselves unable to cope: many have been forced to close, due to a lack of food (in particular a decrease in donations of unsold supermarket produce) and a lack of volunteers.

According to a study carried out by the French National Students Union (UNEF) in 2019, 20% of students live below the poverty threshold. A significant proportion of the student population is therefore in difficulty, no longer having access to the university canteens (CROUS) and finding themselves isolated and without sufficient resources (especially foreign students).

Finally, from the point of view of the retail food trade, many small convenience stores, and all restaurants, have been obliged to close. Even if the government implements aid measures, many convenience stores and restaurants fear for their future.

Solidarity action to help the most vulnerable

Cities work closely with their CCASs (Municipal Social Action Centres) to identify people at risk, distribute meals and food parcels and strengthen links with people who are isolated and/or vulnerable.

These joint actions by cities and CCASs are being developed with the operational support of local charity networks: *Secours Populaire*, SAMU social (mobile emergency medical service for homeless people) and the Red Cross in Montpellier and Lyon, and the *Restos du Cœur* (charity providing food for the homeless in Greater Nancy).

Some cities are taking the initiative to re-open their central kitchens to provide meals for vulnerable households and isolated people, as in Grenoble and Nice, while the central kitchens that have had to close are redistributing the perishable foods they had ordered to charitable associations.

Many actions are linking vulnerable populations with local producers through the distribution of solidarity boxes, as in Poitiers, and Béthune via the MELOKO association, or in Toulouse via the *Jardins de Cocagne* organic network which has developed solidarity-based joint buying initiatives, as in Strasbourg via the Solaal agri-food platform, or lastly the Marseille Metropolis, which has set up free distribution of local fruit and vegetable boxes in the city's social priority districts. In Nantes, the city and the ACCORD socio-cultural association are co-funding boxes of affordable, seasonal, local food in priority districts. While in the Lille metropolis, the P.A.N.I.E.R.S ("B.O.X.E.S.") (*Pour une Agriculture Nourricière, Inclusive, Ecologique, Régionale et Solidaire* - For Nourishing, Inclusive, Ecological, Regional, Solidarity-based Agriculture) scheme has been created alongside other similar actions.

Initiatives to help students have been implemented in Greater Nancy, where the CROUS identifies students who have sought assistance from social workers in order to provide them with packages provided by the Food Bank. Or in Besançon, where a distribution of fresh produce boxes has been implemented for isolated

students through the Union des Commerçants (Shopkeepers Union). Senior citizens have also received support during the crisis: in Nice, a network of volunteers maintains links and responds to the needs of the elderly, who can benefit from food boxes organized by the city and distributed by the Nice taxi drivers.

Municipal or Inter-Municipal Social Action Centres (CCAS or CIAS)

CCASs were created in France in 1953. With the status of an EPA (Public Administrative Establishment) and an autonomous budget, each CCAS is presided over by the mayor of the municipality and administered by a committee made up of half municipal councillors and half representatives of associations. The Union of CCASs (UNCCAS) comprises the 4,100 active CCASs in France.

The CCASs take direct social action in the municipal or inter-municipal territory, and also have a monitoring, surveillance role regarding people benefiting from, or eligible for, social assistance. Because of their mandates and knowledge of the territory, the CCASs are actors, supervisors, and coordinators of social actions in the territory aimed at individuals, families, categories or groups of people in vulnerable or disadvantaged situations. It should be noted that CIASs also provide an opportunity for small communes without their own CCAS, to develop or improve their social action policy.

Food aid is the first of the so-called voluntary forms of aid. The CCASs are in contact with the major associations authorized to distribute national and European food aid, for example with the 79 food banks, and also with associations organizing local initiatives. They distribute financial aid, food vouchers or cheques, deliver meals in collaboration with central kitchens, support community solidarity grocery stores, enable the grocery stores and school canteens to organize social-pricing schemes... Beyond all these actions, CCASs overall goal is to maintain social links and social inclusion.



PARIS AND THE FIGHT AGAINST FOOD INSECURITY

According to the INSEE, in Paris, 16.1% of the population is below the poverty threshold, but there are enormous differences between *arrondissements* (districts). To help the most vulnerable, the city launched the *Pacte Parisien de lutte contre la grande exclusion* (Paris Plan to Combat Social Exclusion) in 2014, which gave the city's food aid a formal supervising authority. In 2018, the city laid the groundwork for a territorial-wide food policy with its Sustainable Food Strategy. This enabled solidarity and the fight against food insecurity to be included in a more general, systemic strategy.

In the face of the crisis, the city of Paris has deployed a wide range of actions to support the most vulnerable populations. To help with food distribution, Paris has delivered more than 17,000 meals a day since the beginning of lockdown, and has created three new emergency distribution centres, managed by the Aurore association, which enables the delivery of 5,000 meals.

In addition, ten of the city's community restaurants have been mobilized to produce 4,500 meal packs distributed by the CCAS and the Secours Populaire.

The city also assists families who usually benefit from subsidized canteen rates, in order to compensate for the suspension of school canteens. The CAF provided aid ranging from 50 euros to 150 euros per child at school (50, 100 or 150 EUR depending on the canteen rate for which the family was eligible) and an additional 50 EUR for two or more children. This aid amounts to a total of 3.5 million EUR.

For elderly and isolated people, the CCAS, through a partnership with the community services organization, Lulu dans ma rue, delivers shopping to people with mobility problems. Lastly, the city has taken action to help students, with the CROUS providing emergency financial assistance to vulnerable students. This aid can also take the form of food vouchers and essential products.

Actions to support health care staff

Urban areas have also come to the support of health care staff, with some making school kitchens available for hospital canteens, as in Aix-Marseille, while restaurants and caterers have also provided meals to hospitals as in Lyon and Le Havre. In Strasbourg, staff at the city's university hospitals have the possibility of receiving boxes of fruit and vegetables from producers usually present in the markets, which have been closed. In Lille, the *Collectif des Sublimeurs*, in partnership with the Lomme MIN and a dozen chefs, delivers meals to healthcare staff. In Clermont-Ferrand, produce boxes are delivered directly to the car parks of the city's university hospitals. Supermarkets have introduced special times and ordering procedures for healthcare staff, as in Lyon. Producers and stores have done the same in Poitiers.

Solidarity action to help convenience stores

Lastly, cities have been supporting convenience stores who have suffered an abrupt drop in trade. In particular, stimulus funds released by cities target: stores in the city centre, trades people, small businesses, actors in the community and solidarity economy, and associations that employ people. Cities such as Saint-Etienne and Brest have been identifying small businesses that are still open and, for many of them, provided cash flow assistance, as in Besançon or in the Nord (Hénin Carvin).

In the Lille Metropolis (MEL - *Métropole Européenne de Lille*), an economic emergency plan across all sectors is being adopted. The *Fonds Rebond MEL* (MEL Stimulus Fund) supplements aid from the government and the region to help the most affected small businesses, especially in the horticultural and agricultural sectors and the local economy (stores and trades people), as a priority.



BREST METROPOLIS AND THE FOOD AID ASSOCIATION NETWORK

The CCAS, in collaboration with the social services, coordinates food aid actions within the Brest Metropolis implemented by 13 associations, including the *Secours Populaire* and the *Restos du Cœur*. The objective is to enable greater complementarity and exchanges of knowledge between associations and to promote joint actions to combat food insecurity.

The City of Brest and the CCAS have thus set up joint actions to meet the needs of the most vulnerable: the creation of an additional distribution point maintained by municipal staff with the assistance of the Food Bank and the central kitchen for hot meals, additional mobile units, the opening of a lockdown facility for the homeless in coordination with the government and intensification of food distribution by the association network.

Usually, almost 25% of schoolchildren in Brest's state schools receive free canteen meals. To help families no longer benefiting from this resource, the City's crisis unit issued food cheques of 120 or 150 EUR for children eligible for free meals and meals at the lowest rate. 2,200 children have benefited from these cheques, representing a cost of 300,000 EUR for the city.

→ COLLABORATION, COMMUNICATION ET SENSIBILISATION

The nature of the impact

Crisis situations like the one generated by Covid-19 require new ways of collaborating between actors who are sometimes not used to working together, and effective means of communicating, including with populations who are worried and want information, and in some cases whose awareness needs to be raised.

23

Food governance in urban areas

Many cities and metropolises are in the process of developing or intend to develop a territorial agricultural and food strategy, the aim of which is to foster dialogue between urban areas, agriculture and the food supply.

Governance, which is responsible for driving and bringing the strategy to life, can take many forms. It needs to be tighter in urban areas giving preference to an agricultural influx into the food supply, i.e. an agri-food strategy: it involves inter-municipal elected officials, the chamber of agriculture and funding partners, and in several cases local agricultural organizations.

This governance is much broader when the urban area chooses to take into account several areas of action as part of a food policy, i.e. a systemic strategy that includes environmental, health, social, and town planning considerations. It is also this second group of considerations that most encourages a cross-functional approach.

In the face of the Covid-19 crisis, cities and metropolises with the most extensive governance and well-advanced territorial food project appear to have been the most able to quickly implement a wide range of actions, both in agricultural and non-agricultural areas.

Activating networks and creating synergy between actors

To deal with the various disruptions to farmers' activity, food retailers and food aid associations, territories have systematically deployed the strength of their networks by calling on partners whose expertise and presence in the field has enabled rapid operational capability in the actions targeted and with the tools proposed. Urban areas can activate levers by collaborating with local producers, supermarkets, chambers of agriculture, charitable associations, community grocery stores and economic actors, interacting with prefectures and communes. Having food governance already in place enables cities to quickly bring the relevant actors together to achieve an objective and to implement appropriate solutions.

The combination of inter-municipality organization and the Chamber of Agriculture is very often present, particularly in initiatives to find distribution outlets and to identify farmers' needs. Cities have also called on the other advisory chambers, as in Greater Nancy, where there is a special relationship with economic partners through the association of the three advisory chambers (the Chambers of Agriculture, of Commerce and Industry, and of Trades and Professions - ACACIAM), which enables a decompartmentalization of their interventions; and in Nantes where the gathering of information about the shops, companies and farmers impacted by the crisis was quickly organized through inter-chamber coordination and partnership with the Junior Economic Chamber of Western France.

Metropolis-MIN collaboration, when already in place, has contributed to the capacity to adapt and respond to the crisis. In cities such as Grenoble, Toulouse, Montpellier, Nantes, Lille or Rouen the partnership with the MIN is long-standing and their manner of working together originates from the food policies of these territories.

But the crisis is also an opportunity to consolidate relations with actors who are normally less responsive, such as supermarkets. In Marseille, the Metropolis, the MINs in Chateaufort and Marseille and supermarkets worked together to create a "task force" specifically to be able to deal effectively with the crisis. Such collaborations would not have been imaginable in nor-

mal times, and the new dynamic between actors that has resulted is encouraging for the future.

Lastly, to combat food insecurity during the crisis, cities have relied on the network of associations, and more particularly the CCASs (Municipal Social Action Centres), who have first-hand knowledge of people's needs through their daily contact with disadvantaged populations. For example, Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole relies on the CCASs and their partner associations and institutions for its management of the crisis and food aid. Greater Poitiers coordinates a network of a dozen charities and solidarity-based associations. Greater Lyon works hand in hand with the Red Cross association, food insecurity being an important aspect of the metropolis' territorial food project.

BORDEAUX'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SUSTAINABLE FOOD GOVERNANCE

After signing the Milan Pact in 2015, the City of Bordeaux laid the groundwork for a new governance mechanism for territorial action capable of linking the various administrative levels and public and private actors on food supply issues: the Advisory Council on Sustainable Food Governance (CCGAD) was officially created by Bordeaux Metropolis in 2017 for an experimental period of three years.

Inspired by the Anglo-Saxon food policy councils, the CCGAD's mission is to unite local food actors to co-construct strategies to support the transition of the Bordeaux Metropolis towards the emergence of a sustainable territorial food system.

It consists of a steering committee and its members are divided into five groups of actors representing different stakeholders in the food system.

This council has proved to be particularly valuable in the context of the health crisis, since two elected members of the CCGAD were called upon to participate in the citizens' health crisis committee set up by the city, so that issues relating to actors in the local food system could be taken into account in the organization of the transition out of lockdown.

Having food governance already in place enables cities to quickly bring the relevant actors together to achieve an objective and to implement appropriate solutions.

Communication and awareness

Communication has proved to be of vital strategic importance in the management of the crisis, in terms of relaying precautions to be taken, regulations, the call for solidarity, and the response to questions from residents and businesses.

At the national level, the strong communication calling for solidarity with farmers and producers by buying locally, and the “Des bras pour ton assiette” platform for farms needing labour, seems to have had an impact on consumer behaviour.

In cities, actions have been undertaken to communicate about the impact of the crisis on the food supply, such as the “food” section on the special Covid website created by Grenoble Metropolis or the setting up of a telephone hotline to answer (non-medical) questions for the inhabitants of Greater Poitiers.

Community solidarity-based grocery stores, community centres and the CCAS raise awareness, inform residents and provide support with food issues (how to manage your budget, recipes for seasonal products, etc.) as for example in Poitiers.

Finally, the Chambers of Agriculture provide comprehensive information about available aid: deadlines for tax payments, paid furlough schemes, solidarity funds, postponement of social security contributions, the region’s support plan, etc.



LYON METROPOLIS AND ITS “AIDE-COVID” DIGITAL PLATFORM

On 10 April, the Lyon Metropolis launched a platform that brings together all the initiatives and assistance available to deal with the crisis in the metropolis’ territory: aide-covid.grandlyon.com.

Covering numerous fields (food, social inclusion, culture, exercise, etc.), this dedicated site enables solutions to be found or help to be offered during lockdown with a double-entry search system. Among other things, the site provides residents with comprehensive information on the supply of fresh local products with listings of food markets that are still open and initiatives for putting consumers in contact with producers.

A page dedicated to producers lists resources and contact details of key actors to guide producers looking for assistance and solutions.



4

WHAT LESSONS CAN BE LEARNED?

From the multiplicity and diversity of initiatives taken by cities, we have tried to identify trends and establish broad conclusions that could provide a basis for recommendations. We can express these in a concise fashion as follows:

- Emergency action should not go against the food system's long-term requirements of transition and resilience.
- The success of urban action related to the food supply requires collective movement and organization, in the form of a "Territorial Alliance", and synergy between actors in the food system.
- Major changes are taking place in the agro-ecological modes of agricultural production, this evolution is linked to progress in digital technology and changes in food behaviour.
- Lastly, citizen mobilization is necessary for major transformations of the food system to be successful and democratic.

Cities and their urban areas play an important role in all these major developments. Let's look at these points one by one:

➔ CITIES' RESPONSE TO EMERGENCIES IN TIMES OF CRISIS

French cities have been confronted with an unpredictable crisis, with only a few weeks for manoeuvre between its emergence in China and its arrival at their doors, and without always being aware of the scale of the threat or the speed with which it could spread. They thus had to take urgent action, and deal with a human, social, economic, and institutional system that had been caught off guard and poorly prepared for a major health crisis. We have reviewed the numerous initiatives that cities and their urban areas have taken regarding food in response to the wide-range of impacts of the virus and the resulting health protection measures that have strained or segmented supply chains, with a double risk for fresh and perishable products: on the consumer side, a risk of scarcity, and on the producers' side, a risk of loss of all or part of their crops and their incomes.

We can distinguish three categories of initiatives:

- **Those that have contributed to the maintenance or setting up of new supply chains**, either by applying health protection measures to the sensitive links in these chains, or by creating alternative channels to bypass these links. These two approaches

Cities had to take urgent action, and deal with a human, social, economic, and institutional system that had been caught off guard.

appeared almost instantaneously as a result of the decision to close the markets: 25% of markets were able to reopen after the application of health protection measures, 75% remained closed and were replaced by more direct channels between producers and consumers, through the opening of new storage and/or exchange locations, home delivery or collection point systems, with electronic ordering and invoicing.

- **Those that have helped to ensure continuity** in a market economy and avoid paralysis, a paralysis that would have resulted in public intervention and enormous costs, further adding to the already huge debt inflicted by COVID-19. Digital platforms and interactive maps, created at various geographical scales, and new logistics solutions for home delivery, have helped to maintain the normal functioning of the market between producers and consumers.
- **Those that have ensured support for vulnerable, isolated, low-income and disadvantaged populations**, and for categories affected by the lockdown, such as students who have lost part-time jobs they depended on for income, resulting in a substantial increase in the number of people who need food aid. Dialogue and synergy between public and private food aid actors then developed, often with an openness to new forms of solidarity, thanks to the commitment sometimes of municipal staff and sometimes of volunteers participating in the emergency measures.

While food aid has so far kept pace with increasing demand, the large numbers of collapsing businesses risks generating a significant increase in vulnerable populations. There are already some areas where there is pressure on capacity, due to dramatic increases in demand for food aid, raising fears of saturation despite the growing solidarity network. The issue of food aid is likely to become crucial in the coming months and will need to be carefully monitored. Moreover, the emergence of a global food crisis cannot be ruled out, due to the health crisis' impact on global production, with the retention of export flows by agro-exporting countries, instability of input supplies and logistical and transport difficulties. If this were to happen, the consequences would be

serious. Let us not forget the riots triggered by the world food price crisis in 2008. At that time, 1.3 billion people living in extreme poverty, on the borderline of survival, feared they would be pushed into famine conditions.

In emergencies, cities, like all entities that can provide assistance, therefore need to take immediate, very short-term action. To be able to do this requires capacities at the territorial scale for listening, observing, adapting, mobilizing and organizing. However, they must also respect collective approaches, in this case health recommendations at national, and even European and global levels. The implementation of these measures requires ongoing dialogue and coordinated action by government departments and elected representatives to find the most appropriate solutions for each local situation. It is also important that a collective entity, promoting national coordination, acts as a mediator with the government, especially when it comes to preparing the implementation of measures that have a strong local impact. Here we find the two main tasks of a national association of elected representatives like France Urbaine: to ensure collective representation at the national level and to facilitate the exchange of information between its members, who, confronted with the same situation, must find answers and solutions. The scenario that followed the decision to close the markets perfectly illustrates the national and local interaction in which each person or entity participates depending on their field of expertise.

Cities have shown capacities at the territorial scale for listening, observing, adapting, mobilizing and organizing.

➔ CITIES AND THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN LONG-TERM FOOD TRANSITION AND RESILIENCE IN TIMES OF CRISIS

Outside and beyond the crisis, cities must maintain a long-term, forward-looking view of food supply issues. We made a point of situating the crisis within the long history of the food system. The crisis occurred at a time when a triple-debate, involving social, scientific, and political issues was unfolding. This was highlighted at the *Etats Généraux de l'alimentation* (National Food Symposium) in 2017. While in the short term, they have only led to modest decisions, the debates have continued, and will certainly lead to further steps towards a process of agricultural and food transition whose characteristics have been debated, i.e.:

1. The progressive reterritorialization of the food system.
2. An agro-ecological transformation of agricultural production for the entire food system.
3. Recognition of the diversity of foods and food cultures.
4. The awakening or revival of food democracy.
5. Finally, a respect for the principle of food equity, namely access to healthy, affordable food for all.

The crisis has arrived at a time when the food system is being challenged, and impacts each of **the five pillars of the transition** differently.

Resilient cities: The role of the crisis in this transition period is perhaps to heighten awareness of possible anti-crisis measures, with the construction of "resilient cities", i.e. cities that are better equipped to withstand such impacts and can recover more easily, without too much damage. We are experiencing a global health crisis: other health crises may occur, in particular as a result of global warming and loss

of biodiversity, which may also lead to social conflict, sudden natural catastrophes or slow, insidious, irreversible change, such as environmental disasters and the displacement of populations. Public authorities have a responsibility to prepare for this. Civil protection is at stake on a massive scale, but also in each territory. In recent decades it had been thought that globalization, in this case of the food system, was the best way to avoid crises, and that free trade was the key to security. The multitude of initiatives developed by local actors has demonstrated territories' capacity for adaptation and responsiveness in providing responses to the crisis and strengthening their territorial food system.

Towards food sovereignty? The current crisis challenges this view of things. The globalization of the food system has created vulnerabilities and a danger of losing any capacity to control or influence the food system. We have encountered difficulties in supplying medical equipment, including equipment that we should be able to produce, we could have equivalent problems in the food sector, which could then lead to shortages in production elements (energy and various inputs, including animal feed) or shortages of produce and sudden price rises, and hence to riots, as was observed in many southern cities in 2008. The question of European, national and local sovereignty has now returned strongly to the debate in the context of the coronavirus crisis. The President of the French Republic referred to this necessary debate by raising the possibility of giving sanctuary status to certain strategic sectors that would no longer be subject to the laws of the market. Food, as a basic need of every individual, could come within the scope of these strategic sectors in the future.

Food sovereignty, often brought into the international debate by farmers' organizations in southern countries whose agricultural sectors have suffered under free trade, becomes a more central issue when agriculture and the food supply are viewed as strategic sectors and dependency as dangerous factors of vulnerability.

These debates may seem remote for local, urban, peri-urban or rural territories, and out of step with the current crisis. Yet they are very

The multitude of initiatives developed by local actors has demonstrated territories' capacity for adaptation and responsiveness.

The crisis has shown us the importance of building this long-term alliance with nearby territories.

present. The twin objective of transition and resilience is a strategic issue in cities' actions. Even in times of crisis, cities act within this framework, if only through the construction and proliferation of short, local supply chains, the promotion of local products and all their actions taken in favour of a reterritorialization of their food systems... After this crisis, the cities – metropolises, large cities and urban areas – with actors in their municipal territories and other territorial authorities, will need to consider reducing the vulnerability of their food supply systems, and almost certainly taking a further step in their commitments to strengthening resilience and accelerating the food and agricultural transition.

1 Territorial alliances: a logical structure, that must be built over time

Food and agricultural supply chains, or the food system, necessarily link agricultural production with food consumption. This duality makes an alliance between rural areas of agricultural production and urban areas of food consumption essential. Peri-urban areas have a special role to play, in that they can also have agricultural zones, even if they are the subject of debate and even conflict, regarding the recognition of their status as urban or agricultural land. Urban agriculture, which has real educational value as a creator of links between nature and the city, remains of minor value in terms of supply.

The crisis has shown us the importance of building this long-term alliance with nearby territories. The health crisis has obliged its adoption for logistical reasons and in doing so confirms other pre-existing reasoning with regard to the planning and development of urban and rural areas or with regard to the environment.

From this perspective, the crisis is a reminder of the wisdom of the green belts and surrounding countryside. The transport revolution and rapid urbanization have obviously changed the old approach, but, as we have seen during lockdown, it is worth remembering the need for a territorial alliance and of saying how, and according to what division of responsibilities, tasks and skills, the territories together will be able to win the twin battle of resilience and transition.

2 Synergy between territorial actors: a key factor for responsiveness and success

Local elected officials and executive bodies have played several roles during this first month of the crisis: that of organizing the municipal socio-economic system, meaning all the public and private actors in the municipal and inter-communal territory, mobilization roles to ensure the continuity of supplies to citizen-consumers, and direct action, particularly with regard to new ways of combating food insecurity.

Cities and urban areas have demonstrated creativity in the face of the unexpected, but we have seen that crisis management has even more operational capability when interaction and procedures for collaboration are already in place. On this basis, several major actors were able to make their skills and experiences available for the common good. Cities thus report collaborations with the wholesale markets or MINs, CCASs, advisory chambers, particularly the chambers of agriculture, food banks, major food aid associations and a whole range of other associations, who have organized, in parallel with the main food system, pioneering experiments in terms of production, processing, distribution, catering, etc. We find the same story with the AMAPs, CIVAMs, ADEARs... Not forgetting some of the major economic players in distribution, who have sometimes supported these municipal collectives.

All these actors, both public and private, are part of the food system and all have played a role in the first stage of the crisis. Cities who had already organized cooperation with these actors were able to react immediately. This is the case for cities engaged in territorial food projects (PATs), which, beyond the institutions involved, have brought together actors in the agricultural and food supply chains with which they already had relations. They have been able to benefit from the prior existence or construction of a food governance to orchestrate a collective anti-crisis effort.

3 Digital tools have become essential

The use of digital technology in relation to food issues has increased in recent years. It has proved to be essential during the crisis.

By facilitating and organizing relationships between actors in the food system, digital applications enable access to information and logistical products and services. They enhance the ease and transparency of transactions. Augmented labels enable more information to be accessed via a smartphone. Connected objects are already used to regulate the flow of goods and are compatible with the automation of logistics and even manufacturing. The use of digital technology has thus enabled new forms of more direct relationships between actors to be created in recent years, and the organization of communication between all the actors in a territory. The health crisis associated with the coronavirus pandemic could give new impetus to the use of digital technology in the food supply sector.

As we have already mentioned, the response to the crisis has relied heavily on opportunities provided by digital technology and has resulted in the proliferation of tools linking food supply and demand. In the food sector, as in all others, particularly due to the widespread adoption of teleworking and distance learning, it is likely that the increased use of digital technology will continue. Some researchers, like Daniel Cohen, are talking about the emergence of "digital capitalism" as the next stage in the global economy and a new factor of social differentiation that could emerge in the return to employment after a phase of great economic and social hardship.

In this area, the crisis has reinforced trends that were already strong and revealed two seemingly contradictory movements: a process of relocation, fostering more direct links between producers and consumers, between the supply and demand for goods and services, which we have discussed and, at the same time, a process of centralization through international platforms, embodied by Amazon, and the other big players who have led the "uberization" of the economy. The lockdown/lifting of lockdown phases, which could possibly be repeated until a vaccine is developed, offer a fertile environ-

ment for the progression of this dual process that only appears contradictory, and which could come to characterize a digital economy and society.

4 New and sustainable food behaviours

The crisis has highlighted new channels for fresh and perishable products and enabled pre-existing trends to emerge more strongly, notably the preference for local and organic products, diets that are more plant-based, more direct relationships with producers and, therefore, shorter, local supply chains.

That said, the question of prices and the underlying issue of an economic model remains latent. Consumers have seen prices of fresh produce rise during the crisis. The fact that French and European producers cannot use foreign labour, combined with disruptions to transport and irregular, dispersed volumes, has inevitably led to an increase in costs and price increases.

Supermarkets have been able to open their shelves to more local products, sometimes at the request of municipalities, and have adapted well to new health protection measures. They have benefited from the closure of 75% of local markets. Lockdown has sent more consumers to local supermarkets that offer a full range of food and other essential products, with minimal travel.

The crisis is not going to change the entire food system and the agricultural and food supply chains over the space of a few weeks, in particular the processing stage, which relies on substantial infrastructure and can therefore only change gradually. If progress is to be made in the territorialization of the food system, the focus will need to be on the emergence of local channels at the territorial level.

At this stage, the crisis has confirmed a change in the nature of the food demand, which can be seen in fresh and perishable fruit, vegetable and animal products. Cities have influence, through institutional purchasing (public procurement), collective catering, aid with market redevelopment, and support for the organization of local channels, to enable this new food demand to increase the proportion of local products in markets and diets.

The crisis has confirmed a change in the nature of the food demand, which can be seen in fresh and perishable fruit, vegetable and animal products.

5 Unprecedented citizen mobilization, a return of militant action and the emergence of new forms of solidarity

Citizens and associations have risen to the various challenges created by the crisis. The “*Manger au temps du coronavirus*” network, which has collected hundreds of reports of initiatives to build new supply chains and solidarity action, shows the many facets of community mobilisation, including the engagement of farmer and consumer groups. This engagement is often pre-existing, but has usually remained under the radar of institutions at the heart of the food system. Some actions, already present on a significant scale, such as the AMAPs, have been able to deploy from their bases. Other, less well-known initiatives, but that are very active locally, have also been able to serve as an intermediary for local executive bodies. These initiatives interact and organize themselves, collectively driving the agricultural and food transition movement. RESOLIS has formed a

sample of 800 local initiatives characterized as responsible and sustainable food supply or food transition initiatives, that reflects the creativity of actors in food production and consumption chains and the diversity of their initiatives.

With the crisis, these actors are becoming known through their actions. The more or less formal network that they constitute has gained in strength and will undoubtedly participate in future debates.

At this stage of the crisis, it is difficult to predict what the future will bring, other than that we will face considerable economic and social problems in a context of environmental crisis. History has taught us that recoveries from major crises – such as the Great Depression of 1929, to which the current crisis is frequently compared in terms of magnitude – are fraught with risk. From this perspective, community mobilization and its interaction with urban governance have been an important feature of the crisis.



5

CONCLUSION

Our objective in this publication has been, on the basis of cities' accounts of their lockdown experiences, to identify emergency initiatives taken to "plug the gaps" and devise solutions to ensure the continuity of food supplies for urban consumers, taking into account the interests of agricultural producers close to the city, and with extra care for sections of the population affected by food insecurity, those who were already vulnerable and those compromised by the crisis: children deprived of school canteens, isolated students who have lost part-time jobs, people in lockdown who are isolated and have mobility issues... The difficulties, sometimes the dramas, have been numerous, but the food system, with a little help and repair work, has held up. We have seen how actors were able to respond to emergencies and how local executive bodies were able to assist and orchestrate these multiple initiatives. Despite the risks, there was no shortages or panic. In the food sector and during the two-month lockdown period, the mobilization and adaptability of all actors has been laudable.

We are now at the turning point between lockdown and the lifting of lockdown, a period that is full of uncertainties and therefore risks. Some focus on the distant future of a "post-Covid world", others fear for the more immediate future, warning of impending economic and social disaster, while still others forecast cycles of

lockdown and release, as uncertainty regarding treatments continues and we wait for a vaccine...

In the area of interest to us, that of the evolution of the agricultural and food supply system, which we have documented, three main threats can be identified:

- In the short term, the weakening of substantial new sections of the population, who risk joining the five million people already receiving food aid. Such an increase will have significant consequences, especially if it becomes long term.
- In the medium term, the annual nature of agricultural cycles means that agriculture and the food supply are slightly out of synch. What we are eating now essentially corresponds to pre-crisis agriculture, whereas what we eat in the future will depend on sowing and work carried out during the crisis and post-crisis. It is therefore important to protect our agriculture from the impacts of the crisis.
- Also in the medium term, the possibility of a global food crisis cannot be ruled out, due to a combination of factors: more difficult access to inputs, blocked exports from food-producing countries, low stocks, perceived in terms of international trade as threats to market balance, and increased price volatility in international markets...

The difficulties have been numerous, but the food system, with a little help and repair work, has held up.

Faced with these threats and the need for a food transition, and given the experience gained during the extraordinary crisis and lockdown period that we have documented, cities must ensure that they:

→ **Maintain, or even increase, a collective approach** between themselves and their representative bodies to promote feedback on experiences, with other communities, possessing complementary skills, within the context of a territorial alliance, with the actors in their local food systems in an organized and synergistic framework, and lastly with the citizens and their associations, whose mobilization is essential to weather rough periods and stay on a long-term course.

→ **Organize this ecosystem of actors in large urban areas in the context of a territorial food project (PAT)** with a long-term vision of the transition, and also with a view to strengthening the resilience of the food system and the capacity of the collective response to unforeseen events. The future promises all manner of economic, social, and environmental challenges. The more solid our foundations, the better we will be prepared when these arise. Food is one of these foundations, which cannot be allowed to fail for more than a few days. Let us not forget either that the actors in the production and consumption of foods are private individuals who should be able to earn a decent living from their work. After this crisis, the PAT tool could help each community to project its transition and resilience path into the future, based on its natural, human and cultural resources.

→ **Keeping therefore, even in times of crisis, a compass guiding the evolution of the food system** and pointing, on the one hand, to the strengthening of its resilience and, on the other, to the acceleration of its transition:

- The need to strengthen the resilience of the food system has become clear in the last two months. This will require the coordination of two movements: at the national level, through the reaffirmation of food sovereignty; and, at the food-basin level, through progress towards food systems anchored in both urban and rural territories. Cities are at a crossroads, they must contribute to the development of these local systems, but also to their coordination with the national food supply system.
- The need for a food transition, which existed before the crisis, as demonstrated in the introductory section, remains imperative. The performance and impacts of the food system in health, environmental and social terms, not to mention territorial planning and development, remain an unresolved, problematic issue. Here, too, cities have a major role to play in transition paths, which are largely based on a change in the food demand. The crisis has shown that this demand was changing, and that more direct links between producers and consumers and the organization of logistics solutions can reveal and open up new transition paths.

Neither the crisis nor the exit strategy are the end of the story. The key is to adapt to the sometimes-unforeseen conditions of each stage and to learn lessons with a broader application, not forgetting the fundamental problems that need to be resolved. This exercise conducted in consultation with a large sample of metropolises and urban areas has been rich in lessons. We shall be following the next stage of initiatives that are sure to accompany the lifting of lockdown just as closely, and then, one hopes, after this forced, unplanned, destructive period of downtime, those that encourage a green economic recovery, while also pursuing the objective of increased resilience and transition.

PRESENTATIONS OF ASSOCIATIONS



The only national association bringing together the major cities and inter-municipalities consisting of metropolises, urban communities, the largest urban areas and the Parisian territorial public institutions, France Urbaine has 104 members headed by elected representatives of all political persuasions. It represents more than 2,000 communes in which nearly half of the French population resides. France Urbaine aims to promote the urban environment among public authorities and citizens everywhere. In an ongoing dialogue with government bodies, the association fully participates in the structuring of the urban environment in France and the general attractiveness of its entire territory. It advocates a "Territorial alliance" that can facilitate territorial cooperation and ensure the optimal effectiveness of public policies.

In 2017, France Urbaine launched its first work on the theme of agriculture and the food supply, in association with RESOLIS, on the occasion of the release of the publication «Cities, agriculture and food: initiatives in French cities». The creation of the «Territorial Food Strategies» group will enable France Urbaine to continue its work in this field. Aware of the issues relating to the food supply, the major French cities and inter-municipalities have mobilized by rethinking their food strategies and developing projects that directly participate in the emergence of

new models of food production and consumption, as evidenced by the declaration adopted in 2018, "For a solidarity-based, responsible, sustainable food transition", signed by 75 cities and urban areas, and the last France Urbaine study, in January 2020, on the theme of food insecurity in urban areas.

WHAT DOES FRANCE URBAINE PROVIDE?

- The sharing of information and experiences between members.
- The defence of public authorities' interests in the context of the development of national and European standards.
- The promotion of urban public authorities' actions internationally.
- The development of an advocacy message, in association with all the actors concerned, in favour of territories on the international stage.



Created in 2000, *Terres en villes* is a network of local actors in urban areas' agricultural and food policies. Building on collective intelligence, the network enables its members to meet the challenges of agricultural and food supply transition.

The numerous meetings organized between members encourage an exchange of experiences and practices and mutual learning, while the research-action projects in which the network is involved enable experiments to be carried out in the territories and the exploration of new areas for action. Finally, on the basis of its experience, *Terres en Villes* contributes to the national and international debate on cities and their agriculture and food supplies.

The network currently includes twenty-eight urban areas or metropolises, each represented jointly by the inter-municipality and the departmental chamber of agriculture or in the Paris region by an association comprising these two colleges.

Terres en Villes' charter promotes values relating to sustainable development and the hybridization of approaches between agronomy, urban planning and ecology. It was recently updated to broaden the network's values to territorial food systems.

Its intense activity has resulted in its being selected to be a member of the French Rural Network, being recognized by the French Ministry of Agriculture and Food as a national organization with an agricultural and rural vocation, and being lead partner of the National Network of Territorial Food Projects (Rn PAT).

EXTRACT FROM THE *TERRES EN VILLES* CHARTER:

[...]

Terres en Villes and its members advocate a sustainable territorial food system:

- That promotes a food supply connected to the territory.
- That promotes closer links between urban and rural, producers, processors, distributors, territorial authorities and consumers.
- That addresses the food supply in a systemic fashion, taking into account all its components (economic, cultural and gastronomic, nutrition/health, social, environmental and spatial) and the links between them.
- Based on co-construction between all categories of actors: civil society, private and public actors.

[...]



Founded in 2010, the RESOLIS association seeks to analyse, accumulate, and disseminate innovative field actions that promote social and/or environmental practices that open paths for transition.

Anchored in various territorial frameworks, it has a three-step approach: observation of transition initiatives, support of transition actors and the accumulation of transition data.

Building on a wealth of initiatives and data, its objective is to create, consolidate and implement a "Transition Methodology", based on examples, solutions, and discussion.

Its "Responsible, Sustainable Food" programme is based on its 800 agricultural and food transition initiatives and 150 pro-food transition, pro-territorial and pro-diversity public policy measures, and on collaborations with actors in the field, and academic and institutional actors, in the front ranks of which are the federations of territorial authorities.

THE AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD SUPPLY TRANSITION ACCORDING TO RESOLIS

For RESOLIS, the time for food supply transition has come, policies need to be launched, but a compass is required to ensure that we take the right transition paths. After examining the issues that need to be resolved in order to improve the food supply system, RESOLIS proposes to pursue four main directions of change:

- A gradual reterritorialization of the food supply system and a revival of local food economies and cultures.
- An ecological evolution of food supply chains and an agro-ecological evolution of agricultural production.
- The objective of ensuring a satisfactory food supply for all in terms of quantity, quality and diversity.
- The revitalization of food democracy, as a means and a condition for the successful transition from our agriculture and our food supply to responsible, sustainable, solidarity-based and diversified food supply systems.

In reference to the characteristics of these developments, RESOLIS recognizes certain local initiatives, public policy measures and territorial dynamics as being transition related. These help to confirm that the transition already exists and only needs to be expanded and accelerated by the creation of an environment that encourages such actions.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE SURVEY

- Amiens [City and Urban Community]
- Bordeaux [Town and Metropolis]
- Brest Metropolis
- Brittany Chamber of Agriculture
- Normandy Chamber of Agriculture
- Pays de la Loire Chamber of Agriculture
- Nord-Pas-de-Calais Chamber of Agriculture
- Bouches du Rhône Chambers of Agriculture
- Clermont-Ferrand [Town and Metropolis]
- Mulhouse Urban Community
- The Pays-Basque Urban Community
- Combined District Councils of ChateauBriand-Derval
- Grand Besançon Urban Community
- Grand Poitiers Urban Community
- Grenoble [Town and Metropolis]
- La Rochelle [City and Urban Community]
- Le Havre Seine Metropolis
- Lyon [Town and Metropolis]
- Aix-Marseille-Provence Metropolis
- City of Marseille
- Greater Nancy Metropolis
- European Metropolis of Lille
- Metz Metropolis
- Montpellier [Town and Metropolis]
- Nantes [Town and Metropolis]
- Nice [Town and Metropolis]
- Paris
- Metropolitan Pole [Metropolis of Lyon and Saint-Etienne, Urban Community of Porte de l'Isère (CAPI), Villefranche Urban Community (CAVBS), Vienne Condrieu Urban Area and East Lyon Combined District Councils (CCEL)]
- Rouen [Town and Metropolis]
- Saint-Etienne [Town and Metropolis]
- City and Eurometropolis of Strasbourg
- Toulouse [Town and Metropolis]

Contacts:

- Kader MAKHLOUF / k.makhlouf@franceurbaine.org
- Henri ROUILLÉ D'ORFEUIL / rouilledo@gmail.com
- Marc NIELSEN / accueil@terresenvilles.org

In partnership with:

