

From Policy to Table: Building Local Capacity for Sustainable Food Systems

Welcome pack

Welcome to the training!

We are delighted to welcome you to *From Policy to Table: Building Local Capacity for Sustainable Food Systems*, organised by Eurocities Academy in partnership with the City of Parma.

This welcome pack is designed to guide you through the programme and help you prepare for the different stages of the training. Inside, you will find:

- An overview of the learning goals and training structure;
- Key dates and agendas for the online and in-person sessions;
- Practical information on logistics and travel to Parma;
- Guidance on how to access the Eurocities Academy e-learning space;
- Details on the Action Plan, your main learning tool throughout the course.

We encourage you to read this document carefully and use it as a reference throughout the programme. It will support you in connecting the sessions, making the most of the peer exchange, and progressively developing your city's draft Action Plan.

Contact information

Throughout the duration of the programme, the contact person for this training will be Guillem Ramírez Chico, Coordinator – Eurocities Academy: guillem.ramirez-chico@eurocities.eu.

1. Programme overview

Cities play an important role in shaping sustainable, inclusive, and resilient food systems, with urban food policy increasingly recognised as a strategic tool to address climate action, public health, social equity, and economic development. Initiatives such as the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP), and policies like the *EU Farm to Fork Strategy*, highlight the need for integrated, cross-sectoral approaches at the local level. However, many cities lack the capacity to design and implement effective food policies that align with broader urban agendas, including sustainability, social inclusion, and cultural and economic development. Challenges such as ensuring access to healthy diets, reducing food waste, strengthening urban-rural linkages, improving public food procurement, and integrating food as part of the cultural heritage and touristic positioning require both technical knowledge and political commitment.

This Eurocities Academy training, a partnership with the City of Parma, responds to these gaps by providing city officials and politicians with practical tools to design and implement holistic food policies. It builds on best practices from the CLEVERFOOD project and other experiences from European cities, ensuring that participants gain insights into evidence-based solutions adaptable to their local contexts. The programme is also embedded in a broader effort by the City of Parma—recognized as a *UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy*—to strengthen food policy as a pillar of sustainable urban development.

1.1 Learning goals

By participating in this training, city officials will:

- Gain a comprehensive understanding of the **urban food systems** and the critical role cities play in advancing sustainable, inclusive, and resilient food policies.
- Acquire practical **tools to design and implement integrated food strategies** that align with broader urban goals such as climate action, social inclusion, health, and economic development.
- Learn to extract **actionable policy recommendations** to address urban food issues and navigate challenges in translating these into concrete actions.
- Work on a **real policy challenge** from their own city, and co-develop a draft food action plan with expert guidance and group feedback.

1.2 Programme structure and timeline

This programme provides a structured approach to equip participants with the knowledge and tools needed to address urban challenges related to food systems and cross-cutting food policy. It combines online and in-person sessions, balancing theoretical insights with practical, hands-on applications tailored to real-world city contexts.

Key milestones include:

- **Onboarding Session** (online): Thursday, 9 October 2025, 11:00-12:30h
- **Thematic Introduction & Practical Information** (online): Thursday, 30 October 2025, 11:00-12:30h
- **In-person training**: 13-14 November 2025, in Parma (Italy)

The pre-training phase will focus on introducing participants to the programme and fostering peer exchange rather than delivering technical content. It will consist of:

- **Session 1 – Onboarding**, Thursday, 9 October 2025, 11:00-12:30h: A welcome session where participants introduce themselves, share their cities' challenges related to food policy, and clarify expectations for the training.
- **Session 2 – Thematic Introduction & Practical Information**, Thursday, 30 October 2025, 11:00-12:30h: A high-level overview of urban food policy trends, along with guidance on how to prepare for the in-person training.

The core of the programme will be an intensive 2-days workshop featuring expert insights, interactive discussions, and peer learning. Key components will include:

- Expert presentations on urban food policy frameworks and best practices.
- Case-based learning, allowing participants to analyse real-world challenges.
- Hands-on sessions to co-develop policy approaches and strategies.
- Development of individual or city-specific action plans, based on a structured template that mirrors the training content.

The training will take place on the 13-14 November 2025 in Parma, Italy, in partnership with the City of Parma.

The programme will be delivered in English. For that, a working level of this language is required, so that participants can read materials and take an active part in the different sessions.

1.3 The Action Plan

The Action Plan is a central learning tool of the programme. Throughout the training, you will use it to capture your reflections, test ideas, and connect the content of each session to your city's reality. It is not meant to be a formal policy, but rather a draft document that will grow step by step: before the in-person training you will prepare some basic elements, in Parma you will work on objectives, stakeholders, challenges and actions, and finally you will enrich it with peer feedback. By the end, you will have a short draft that can serve as a foundation for further food policy development in your city.

2. Contents and tentative in-person agenda

The training targets both technical staff and elected representatives working in areas such as food, health, environment, social affairs, and urban planning. It aims to build their capacity to understand the role food can play in city policy—not only as a standalone field but also as a transversal enabler of other policy objectives.

Participants will be introduced to key governance models, successful city cases, and practical tools to support the development of holistic urban food policies. At the core of the methodology is an applied learning approach that combines expert input, peer exchange, and structured group work. Throughout the course, participants will identify a concrete food-related challenge from their own city and progressively develop a draft action plan with support from facilitators and peers.

The training is structured around four core thematic blocks:

Title	Learning Goal	Contents
1. Urban food policy: governance, systems and strategic framing	Understand the impact of food systems, how urban food systems function and how local food policy can be embedded in broader urban strategies and governance frameworks.	Overview of the food system: from production to consumption Multi-level food governance (local-national-EU), in particular the role of municipalities Integration with other city strategies (climate, health, tourism, economic development, and social affairs)
2. Food justice and food insecurity	Identify approaches and practices to reduce food insecurity and promote more equitable access to food, particularly for vulnerable communities.	Local food aid strategies (food banks, school food programmes, minimum mandatory food procurement programmes, etc.) Governance of food insecurity Policies for inclusive food access
3. Sustainability and resilience in urban food systems	Explore how cities can reduce environmental impacts and increase resilience in their food systems.	Food waste prevention and reuse (e.g. Zero Waste Hub Milan) Sustainable public procurement Circular food economy approaches Promotion of local gastronomy
4. Funding and implementing urban food policy	Gain practical knowledge on how to mobilise resources and implement effective food policies.	Overview of funding sources (EU, national, private) Strategic partnerships and implementation pathways Local stakeholder engagement strategies (e.g. Food councils, participatory processes, grassroots initiative empowerment)
Optional parallel sessions (participants choose one)		

5-A. Promoting healthy and sustainable diets	Explore strategies to foster healthier and more sustainable eating behaviours in cities	Food literacy and dietary education Behaviour change strategies and cultural factors School meals and community-based nutrition initiatives
5-B. Urban agriculture and local food production	Understand how urban agriculture can support local sustainability, resilience and citizen engagement, linkages between rural and urban agricultures, and local farmer engagement.	Urban farming models and zoning issues Short supply chains and food sovereignty Co-benefits for environment, health and community cohesion Promotion of agroecological models
5-C. Food as driver of local economic development	Understand how cities can leverage food policy to promote economic development, cultural identity and tourism	Food-related tourism, gastronomy and city branding Local food economies, food clusters and value chains UNESCO Creative Cities and territorial positioning through food

By the end of the training, participants will have developed a city-specific Action Plan and gained both the strategic perspective and practical tools to advance food policy in their local context.

2.1 Programme structure and training agenda

The training is structured over two days of in-person sessions in Parma, preceded by two short online meetings designed to introduce the participants to the programme and foster early peer exchange. The agenda combines expert presentations, interactive group work, and peer-to-peer learning moments. Each session is designed to progressively build participants' understanding of key aspects of urban food policy, while providing space to reflect on their local challenges. By the end of the training, participants will have developed the basis for a city-specific action plan, supported by shared methodologies and a structured template. The agenda below outlines the key learning moments and thematic focus areas of the training.

Online sessions

- **Session 1 – Onboarding**, Thursday, 9 October 2025, 11:00-12:30h: A welcome session where participants introduce themselves, share their cities' challenges related to food policy, and clarify expectations for the training.
- **Session 2 – Thematic Introduction & Practical Information**, Thursday, 30 October 2025, 11:00-12:30h: A high-level overview of urban food policy trends, along with guidance on how to prepare for the in-person training.

In-person training – draft agenda

Time	Session Title	Description / Objective
Day 1 – Thursday, 13 November		
09:00–09:30	Registration and welcome coffee	Informal arrival and networking
09:30–10:00	Opening and introduction	Welcome by hosts and presentation of objectives, agenda and participants
10:00–11:15	Understanding food systems: governance, local policy and strategic framing	Understand the impact of food production and consumption on public health, environment and society, how urban food systems function and how local food policy can be embedded in broader urban strategies and governance frameworks.
11:15–11:45	Coffee break	
11:45–13:00	Food justice and food insecurity	Identify approaches to reduce food insecurity and promote more equitable access to food, particularly for vulnerable communities.
13:00–14:00	Lunch	Hosted by the City of Parma
14:00–15:30	Case study & city challenges: learning from Parma and participants	The City of Parma presents its integrated food policy approach, leveraging the power of local gastronomy, tracing the implementation of the policy from conception to impact. Participants share their city's challenge and explore potential strategies through a collaborative thinking exercise.
15:30–15:45	Coffee break	
15:45–17:00	Sustainability and resilience in urban food systems	Explore how cities can reduce environmental impacts and increase resilience in their food systems.
17:00–17:30	Wrap-up day 1	Participants come together to discuss their key learning takeaways from day 1 of the training.

Time	Session Title	Description / Objective
Day 2 – Friday, 14 November		
09:00–09:15	Welcome back	Overview of the day's agenda
09:15–10:30	Funding and implementing urban food policies	Gain practical knowledge on how to mobilise resources and implement effective food policies.
10:30–11:00	Coffee break	

11:00–12:15	Parallel sessions (choose one): Healthy and sustainable diets Urban agriculture and local food production Food and economic development	
12:15–13:15	Lunch	Hosted by the City of Parma
13:15–15:30	Peer feedback on action plans	Participants will first take time to assess what they have learned in the previous sessions and apply it to their city's challenge. They will then form small groups and present their action plans, strategies and solutions to groupmates. Within groups, participants will give feedback and share best practices in order to refine responses to local challenges.
15:30–16:00	Final wrap-up and evaluation	Final reflections, feedback collection, and closing remarks

3. Logistical information

Venue: the two-day in-person training will take place at:

Laboratorio Aperto – Complesso Monumentale di San Paolo

Vicolo delle Asse, 5 – 43123 Parma, Italy

www.laboratorioapertoparma.it

Meals: Lunch on both days will be hosted by the City of Parma. Coffee breaks will also be provided. A quick questionnaire to collect any dietary restrictions will be circulated among participants ahead of the training.

Accommodation: Participants are asked to arrange their own accommodation. The City of Parma has provided list of recommended hotels in the city, which can be found annexed to this document. Of course, participants may also stay at other places that are not listed here.

4. Access to the Eurocities Academy e-learning space

All training materials and resources will be available at the Eurocities Academy e-learning platform's course, accessible [here](#). This space will be updated regularly with documents such as:

- The Action Plan template, which you will work on progressively;
- Resources for the online sessions, as well as summaries and slides used;
- Background readings and reference materials

If you don't have access to the e-learning platform, please follow the instructions here: <https://odoo.eurocities.eu/access>.

Once you are in the course's page, you will need to request enrolment by clicking on **"Private course, contact responsible"** (see image on the right).

