

SUPURBFOOD is a research project funded by the European Commission's 7th Framework Program. It aims to contribute to the development of sustainable modes of urban and peri-urban food provisioning.

About the project

Until recent, short food supply chains and multifunctional agriculture were considered to be part of the rural development realm. However, this project looks at these topics from the perspective of urban rather than rural development. Short food supply chains have been advocated as a means to reduce the environmental impact of the agro-food system. However, to improve the ecological performance of the agro-food system other flows (e.g. nutrient, water, and urban waste) need to be considered as well. In the current context these aspects are usually treated separately. This project will treat them in an integrated manner.

Approach

Research will be carried out in seven European city-regions (Rotterdam (NL), Rome (IT), Ghent (BE), Vigo (ES), Bristol (UK), Zürich (CH) and Riga (LV)) in collaboration with a diverse group of SMEs to further innovate in urban and peri-urban food provisioning, nutrient, water and waste management, and multifunctional use of urban and peri-urban space. Finally the project will also establish links with researchers, policymakers and SMEs in these domains in developing countries. This will be organised through a process of dialogue, sharing of experiences, exchanging of best practices and joint learning.

More information

www.supurbfood.eu



Introducing The Site

The Site is a (temporary) hangout where inhabitants with different cultural backgrounds, nationalities and ages can meet. Furthermore, the Site allows people to get involved in food production and local food consumption.

The development of allotment gardens and a field of 3000 m² created such a place. Here organic vegetables are grown with the help of the homeless and local residents. The Site contributes to the principles of the short food chain: Producing *and* eating in the same neighbourhood without wasting energy used for transport or fridges. Furthermore the project succeeded in developing a brownfield into a (temporal) place of identification for local residents.

Who is involved?

The Site is a project run by a community development organization. They had the task to stimulate the participation of local residents in the new development plans of their neighbourhood. In order to do so the organization agreed with the project developer and the landowner (the city) to use an old factory site. VELT, an organization that supports initiatives in the field of ecological gardening throughout Flanders, gives knowledge input for the production of food. Furthermore, the project receives funding by the City of Ghent.

Which activities are carried out?

Firstly allotment gardens are available for local residents. The neighbourhood typically lacks a green infrastructure, therefore the allotment gardens functions as green space for the inhabitants. Furthermore, people often lack the knowledge to engage in food production; therefore people can participate in a course about food production practices.

At the field food is produced for the social restaurant and social grocery store. In these places vulnerable resident groups can buy food for cheap (subsidized) prices. The trade of the produced vegetables is currently organized informally. The Site is now looking into the official food safety regulations to allow legal trade to restaurants and grocery stores.

While working on the field people earn 'Torrekes' a local exchange currency. With the 'Torrekes' one can buy a meal in the social restaurant or food in the social grocery store. As a result the homeless have access to fresh organic vegetables.



Where is The Site located?

The Site is located in the neighbourhood called 'Rabot' north of the city centre. Rabot is a multicultural neighbourhood with 60 different nationalities. The soil for and materials used for the constructions could not be sourced locally unfortunately.



Lessons from the Site for SUPURBFOOD

- ✓ The project successfully integrates food production with social goals such as enhancement of social cohesion in the neighbourhood and it gives access to fresh products by the vulnerable. Furthermore the project is an example of temporary use of a brownfield. The project is therefore multifunctional.

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