

# SWITCH



## ACTIONS that **Nourish Change**

The Future of  
Sustainable Diets

## Partners

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# SWITCH

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Nourishing



change



## Moving from idea to actions

For the last two years we have been united by the shared goal of transitioning Europe towards a healthier and more sustainable future. This edition highlights the dynamic bond between science and action - the dialogue between scientific partners and Food Hubs that turns research into real change. However, none of this - the workshops, events, data collected, and the continuous improvement of digital tools - would be possible without you. Whether you are a policymaker, a farmer, a chef, a researcher, a food provider, an educator, or a citizen, your contribution is essential in making the dietary shift happen. Actions matter to bring about any change.

# The SWITCH Manifesto

REVOLUTIONIZING EU REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS & DIETS - MAKING THEM FAIR, HEALTHY, AND SUSTAINABLE

Sustainable food production and a healthy, balanced diet are the pillars of SWITCH food choices

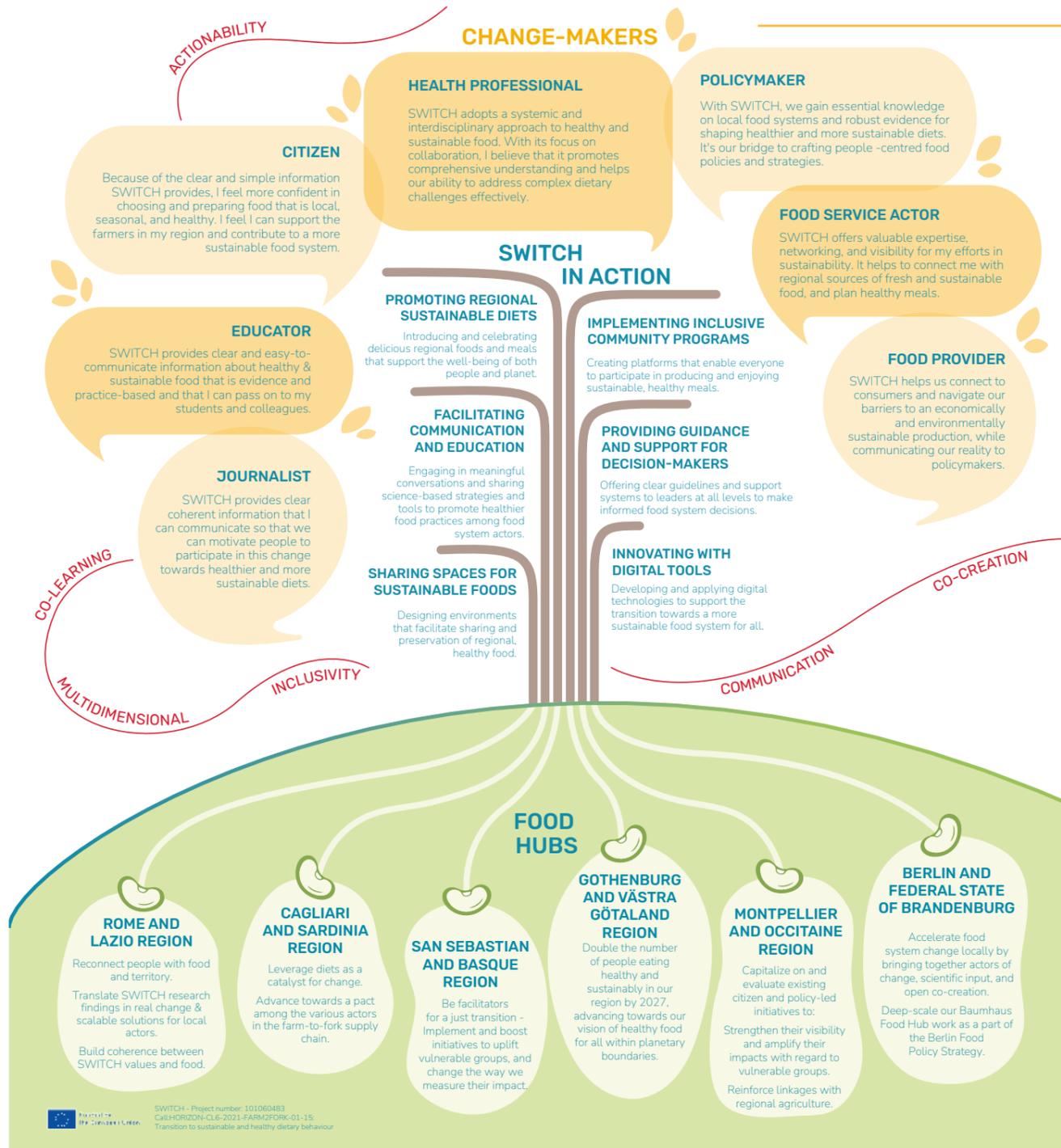
The food we produce and eat does not just impact our health and well-being, but also that of our planet. We advocate for:

- Lower water & land consumption
- Biodiversity
- Food culture, local tradition and knowledge
- Social fairness

Innovating through meaningful engagement  
Achieving human and planetary health and well-being through food

In our 6 vibrant Food Hubs, diverse people from all over the food system are gathering to collaborate on new sustainable eating solutions. It's where research meets everyday life.

- CONNECTION
- MOTIVATION
- SHARING
- INCLUSION
- IMPACT
- VISIBILITY



# Imagine the last meal you ate.

Where did it come from?  
Is this food nourishing you?  
How did it reach your plate?

It is the seven groups of SWITCH changemakers that come together to make this happen: citizens, educators, health professionals, policy makers, food service actors and food providers.

The food we eat is the result of a vast, interconnected system - one that shapes our health, our environment, and our communities. Yet, this system is at a crossroads. The nutritional inadequacy of European diets, the acceleration of climate change and the rising inequalities demand a transformation in the way we produce and consume food. But how?

This is the question at the heart of SWITCH - a European project dedicated to reimagining food systems through science, innovation, and community action. Across six regions, SWITCH connects diverse fields of knowledge, developing tools and scientific insights that are then applied in its regional Food Hubs. The Hubs play a crucial role in connecting research and reality, translating scientific insights into practical solutions for healthier, more sustainable, and more inclusive foodscapes through actions.

Food system transformation doesn't happen in isolation. It requires collaboration. That's why SWITCH brings together a network of farmers, policymakers, scientists, chefs, educators, and citizens, all committed to making sustainable

and healthy diets the norm rather than the exception. Whether through developing new dietary guidelines, testing smart food tracking technologies, or fostering short supply chains that connect local producers with consumers, SWITCH is working to create real impact at every level - on the ground, in communities, and at the tables where decisions are made.

This edition invites you to step inside this journey - to explore the actions, innovations, and people leading the charge for change. What will it take to make sustainable and healthy food accessible to all? How can we ensure food policies are informed by science? And most importantly, how do we move from ideas to action?

We hope these stories inspire, challenge, and empower one to be part of this transformation. Because the future of food isn't something we wait for - it's something we can act on.

**As you read these stories, ask yourself: What actions can I take to contribute to shaping a healthier, fairer, and more sustainable food system?**

**We strive for:**

**Connection**

Creating a network of committed actors for sustainable change

**Visibility**

Spotlighting regional, sustainable food producers and providers

**Motivation**

Creating a sense of purpose and motivation for sustainable food and nutrition, not only in consumers but in all actors

**Impact**

Shrinking our diet's environmental footprint.

**Inclusion**

Ensuring everyone, especially groups considered vulnerable, benefits from healthy food choices.

**Sharing**

Increasing the share of nutritious and sustainable regional produce.

SWITCH - Project number: 101060483  
Call: HORIZON-CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-15  
Transition to sustainable and healthy dietary behaviour

# On the Path to Change: Our Milestones

# 93

SWITCH events held since its inception



# 8328

People participated in the events so far



# 6

Food Hubs across 5 EU countries



# 29

Activities planned in the Hubs



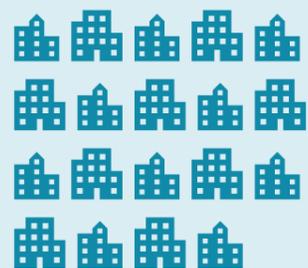
# 7

Categories of change makers involved



# 19

Cities across Europe hosted SWITCH events



# 20

Partners have collaborated



## Gather, Learn, Act

### The SWITCH Community Driving Food System Transformation across EU





**At the beginning of 2025, the SWITCH partners gathered in Montpellier for the third Consortium Meeting and General Assembly with the aim to reinforce the synergy between Food Hubs’s work, the scientific insights and future strategies. The agenda was rich with co-creative workshops and planning sessions, all aimed at better aligning our effort to accelerate sustainable practices across European food systems, starting in our Hubs.**

**At its core, SWITCH is built on the belief that meaningful innovation emerges through shared expertise and cooperation.**

The SWITCH Consortium Meeting put its vision into action by facilitating dialogue and interaction between different partners. During the meeting, the different SWITCH partners presented their scientific research and explored methodologies to involve more individuals in the transition toward fairer, more sustainable, and

inclusive food systems, emphasizing the role of technology and community-driven approaches in shaping the future of European foodscape.

What would SWITCH be without its commitment to continuous learning and knowledge-sharing? Each Food Hub had the opportunity to present their activities and future plans, fostering inspiration and cross-collaboration. Knowledge exchange was further strengthened through Speed Date format between the Food Hubs and the scientific partners, enabling quick yet impactful conversations that fostered new connections, generated ideas, and laid the groundwork for future collaborations.

The hosting hub, Montpellier, took center stage with an in-depth exploration of its initiatives, culminating in a foodscape tour through the city center, showcasing how food shapes the urban environment and community. Among the partners involved, which made the visit possible and inspiring, were the INRAE researchers, the Montpellier Méditerranée Metropolis, La Cagette, L’Esperluette, la Ville de

Montpellier, The Celleneuve Food Solidarity House, and La Cookiserie FLOUR.

The hosting hub, Montpellier, took center stage with an in-depth exploration of its initiatives, culminating in a foodscape tour through the city center, showcasing how food shapes the urban environment and community.

The Consortium Meeting ended with a consolidation of the lessons learned and takeaways, which highlighted once more the importance of gathering, learning and acting together as change-makers. As SWITCH moves forward, the connections built, the knowledge exchanged, and the strategies refined during these days in Montpellier will continue to shape the project’s impact. This gathering reinforced a fundamental truth - transforming food systems requires collective effort, where science, policy, and local action come together. With strengthened collaborations and a renewed sense of purpose, SWITCH partners leave this meeting ready to keep pushing for a more sustainable, inclusive, and healthy food future.

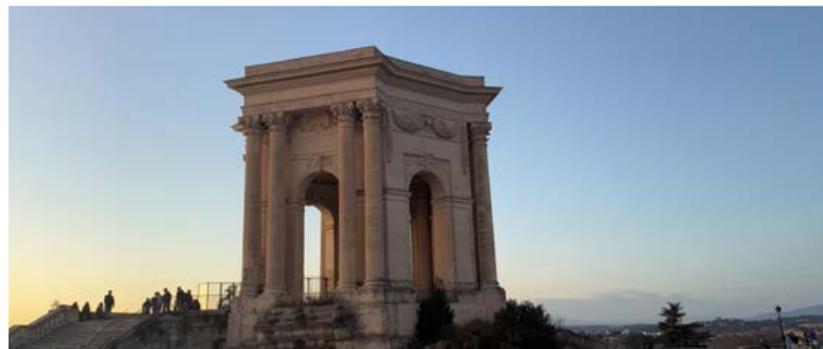


Photo credits: Camilla Carioli (FFI)

## The Marathon Launch

The energy and collaboration sparked during the Consortium Meeting in Montpellier served as the perfect foundation for what came next: the SWITCH Marathon. While the Consortium Meeting brought together the core SWITCH team, the Marathon is designed to extend that collaborative spirit beyond the internal network, reaching out to the diverse actors who make up the broader food system. The Marathon invites chefs, citizens, policymakers and other actors into conversations for turning ideas into action on the ground. It bridges the gap between scientific insights and community-driven practices, transforming discussions from meeting rooms into real-world impact.

At its heart, the marathon is about connection. Through a series of events it sparks collaboration among food system stakeholders, fostering a network dedicated to building a healthier and more sustainable future. These moments of conviviality become a melting pot of ideas, knowledge exchange, story telling, and powerful insights. Every conversation, interview, and lesson learned is captured, creating inspiration for others to draw from.

### What is the impact of weight-loss drugs on eating habits and the broader food system?

The SWITCH Marathon launch on March 17 in Sweden was focused on fostering interdisciplinary cooperation by bringing together researchers from diverse fields that do not always collaborate. It opened with a thought-provoking discussion on on food science and life science. One of the key takeaways was the need to pair these new weght management drugs with healthier eating habits, underscoring the importance of collaboration between pharmacological research and nutrition science. For instance, a particularly crucial research gap identified was the need to better understand which foods patients on weight loss medications lose appetite for, enabling more tailored dietary recommendations.

The event also featured a competition, Göteborgsmåltiden (the Gotheburg Meal), an initiative that invited citizens to submit dishes that best represented Gothenburg to them. “What is Gothenburg in one dish for you?” was the question the participants had to answer with their dish proposal. The semifinal of the competition took place during the Marathon, where a jury of 12 experts in food, health, and sustainability selected three finalists to advance to the final round. The chosen dishes reflected the connection between local ingredients, such as mussels, and the region’s culinary heritage.

Throughout the event local food producers and innovators showcased their products to an engaged and curious audience.



**When I think about Gothenburg and the West Coast of Sweden I think of fish and seafood. So I made a dish that is very old, at least from the 18th century, but nobody has really tried to change it so much. When this contest came out I asked myself “can I make it better for the environment with a different type of fish that is more sustainable?”**

- Maria Bodestig, Semifinalist food contest



Photo credits: Gothenburg Food hub



**The world of obesity treatments has changed radically with the introduction of new types of drugs. This has an impact on food systems, yet it is very rare for the food sector to interact with the pharmaceutical industry. So, we saw this as a golden opportunity to set up a seminar to discuss the potential role of pharma and the food industry together. There is great potential to develop healthier lifestyles and even new foods that can enhance these treatments and mitigate some of their side effects**

- Rikard Landberg, Professor of Food and Nutrition Science at Chalmers University of Technology & SWITCH Food Hub Leader.

The Marathon was a true celebration of creativity and collaboration, embodying the core values of the SWITCH project.

The “baton” for the SWITCH Marathon is now passed on to the other Hubs that will host new events. The series of events brought all the actors together from the 16th to the 18th of May for the Mid Marathon Event held during RegenerAction 2025. It took place in the Paideia Campus, one of the pilot living labs of the cities2030 project. RegenerAction is a yearly participant-driven gathering of Future Food Institute, one of the SWITCH partners that aims to foster collaboration and innovation among individuals who share common goals and values. It encourages spontaneous involvement, stimulating conversations, debates, and the creation of innovative solutions for a thriving planet. The focus of the event consisted in the exploration of the theme of Integral Ecology and Sustainable Development, inspired by the Pollica 2050 – Mediterranean Living Lab project, which focuses on promoting sustainable, participatory, and integral development in six areas of intervention: Political Action; Earth Regeneration; Human Regeneration; Social Regeneration; Cultural Regeneration; Economic Regeneration.

The Marathon will continue on in other Food Hubs across the year with the closing scheduled on the 16th of November 2025 in Berlin with the SWITCH Global Summit.

The impact doesn’t stop with the events. The SWITCH Marathon turns these vibrant discussions into tools for wider change, using media and social channels to spread the message to an extended audience. What starts as a local conversation within a hub has the potential to inspire communities across Europe, amplifying the call for more sustainable, just, and healthy food systems. Whether you’re a researcher, farmer, chef, policymaker, or engaged citizen, your voice matters: join the Food Hubs in this journey by getting involved attending the Marathon events!



## Insights from the SWITCH Research Partners

At the core of SWITCH lies a dynamic intersection of science and action. Research and innovation provide essential knowledge for making an impact in the real world. Delving into the key insights emerging from SWITCH research partners, offers a window into SWITCH diet, tools designed to make sustainable recipes easier to adopt, methods to improve access to food for vulnerable communities and ways to monitor the achievement of SWITCH goals.

Whether you're a policymaker, a food industry professional, or an engaged citizen, this is an insight into the knowledge needed to support informed decisions and drive change.

# A Regionally Adapted Approach to Sustainable and Healthy Eating for Europe

## The SWITCH Diet

by **Marilena Vitale**  
Dietitian and PhD in Nutrition Science, University of Naples Federico II

**Sustainable and healthy food choices and dietary habits are today at the centre of the societal and scientific discussion. They are increasingly considered a meaningful action that citizens can engage to proactively contribute to both theirs and planetary health.**

With growing concerns over health, sustainability, and food security, dietary patterns are evolving. Scientific evidence underscores that shifting to a diet rich in plant-based foods, whole grains, and sustainable proteins can significantly lower the risks of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), like diabetes and cancer, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

According to the available scientific evidence, the current diet of the Europeans is not fully nutritionally adequate and is not completely consistent with the food choices recommended by scientific societies for health promotion. Therefore, the shift toward a healthier dietary pattern can be pivotal to improving the nutritional status and minimizing the risk of cardio-vascular diseases (CVD) - responsible for about 45% of all deaths corresponding to 4 million deaths per year - and other NCD of the European populations<sup>1</sup>, while contributing to mitigating climate change. Thus, the importance of recognizing the necessity of a paradigm shift toward a holistic "One Health" approach. By "One Health" meaning a perspective that looks at the interlinkages between human health, animal health, and the health of the planet.

The SWITCH diet has been designed to create a structured dietary model to facilitate this paradigm shift, meeting both health and environmental sustainability goals. Rooted in the principles of the EAT-Lancet, Mediterranean, Nordic diets, and FAO and WHO Dietary Guidelines, SWITCH incorporates regional foodbased dietary guidelines (FBDGs) and aims to make sustainable eating both

accessible and practical for diverse populations. But, how does the SWITCH diet look concretely?

[See the image on the right](#) →

Even though the diet suggests a preference for plant-based foods, the SWITCH dietary pattern includes moderate intakes of foods of animal origin like dairy products (especially the fermented ones), eggs, white meat, and fish. This allows us to avoid too stringent limitations that are not feasible in the long term and the risk of developing nutritional deficiencies.

As for carbohydrates rich foods, the proposed dietary pattern preferentially includes those of higher nutritional quality (i.e., wholegrains, and with a low amount of added sugars), able to contribute substantially to the reduction of cardiometabolic risk.

Based on these general recommendations, weekly menus have been developed to provide practical examples for achieving the SWITCH portfolio diet targets in daily life.

[See the table on the next page](#) ↘

**The transition toward the proposed dietary pattern could also reduce by almost 50% the Carbon Footprint (CF) linked to food consumption in Europe.**

This is consistent with prior studies showing that dietary shifts are regarded as effective measures to contribute to global climate mitigation objectives. Importantly, foods with the highest CF in the current diet are also those to be consumed in limited

amounts (i.e., red and processed meat, or ultra-processed foods) or moderate amounts (i.e., dairy, poultry) for cardiovascular disease prevention. Therefore, to minimize the impact of diets on climate change, dietary choices should aim not only to change food distribution in the diet but also to choose, within each food group, the items with the lowest CF, with an emphasis on consumption of local and seasonal foods.

A well-balanced diet is vital for human health and for the wellbeing of our planet. Sustainable food choices help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserve water resources, and protect biodiversity. By adopting dietary habits that prioritize plantbased and minimally processed foods, you can contribute to a healthier ecosystem while enhancing their own longevity and quality of life. The SWITCH diet offers a realistic, adaptable, and impactful approach to healthy and sustainable eating. By integrating region-specific dietary recommendations with global sustainability efforts and supporting the choice of food items widely available at the local level, it provides a practical solution to modern nutritional challenges. Whether you're a nutrition expert or a health-conscious individual, the SWITCH diet presents an opportunity to enhance well-being while protecting our planet.

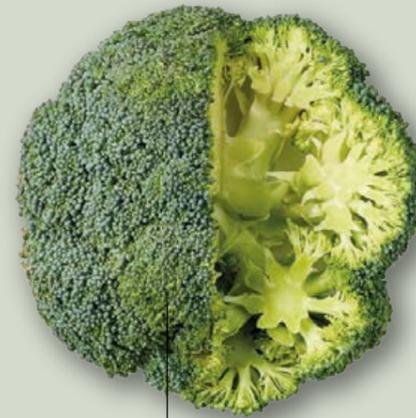
 [Read about the guide's implementation on page 44](#)

1. Wilkins E, Wilson L, Wickramasinghe K, Bhatnagar P, Leal J, Luengo-Fernandez R, et al. European cardiovascular disease statistics 2017, European heart Network, Brussels. Eur Cardiovasc Dis Stat 2017;34:3028e34

# SWITCH Diet

## Your Daily & Weekly Guide to Healthy and Sustainable Diet

### VEGETABLES AND FRUITS - DAILY



**Vegetables**  
300-400g



**Fruits**  
200-400g (including berries)

### PROTEINS - DAILY



**Nuts & Seeds**  
30g per day



**Milk & Dairy**  
2-3 servings per day

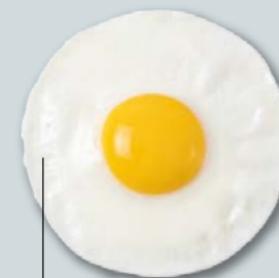
### PROTEINS - WEEKLY



**White meat**  
200-300g white meat



**Red meat**  
100-200g red meat



**Eggs**  
Up to 7 per week



**Fish & Seafood**  
> 450g (fatty fish should be consumed at least 300 g/week due to their omega-3 content). Attention to the environment! Seafood from sustainable stocks and with a low climate and environmental impact should be chosen.

### GRAINS AND FATS - DAILY



**Whole Grains**  
> 90g



**Fats**  
25-30g vegetable oils

### SUGAR - LIMIT



**Added sugar**  
< 50g per day



**Legumes**  
> 150g (dry weight)

# WEEKLY DIET

For achieving the Switch portfolio diet targets in daily life

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
<b>BREAKFAST</b>	<p>Low fat milk 150g</p> <p>Wholegrain cereals 25g / Bread / Rusks 30g / Plain biscuits 25g</p> <p>Fresh fruit 100g / <b>Jam</b> 10g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p> <p>Butter / Soft margarine 10g optional</p>	<p>Low fat milk 150g</p> <p>Wholegrain cereals 25g / Bread / Rusks 30g / Plain biscuits 25g</p> <p>Fresh fruit 100g / <b>Jam</b> 10g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p> <p>Low fat cheese 20 g</p>	<p>Low fat milk 150g</p> <p>Wholegrain cereals 25g / Bread / Rusks 30g / Plain biscuits 25g</p> <p>Fresh fruit 100g / <b>Jam</b> 10g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p> <p>Butter / Soft margarine 10g optional</p>	<p>Low fat milk 150g</p> <p>Wholegrain cereals 25g / Bread / Rusks 30g / Plain biscuits 25g</p> <p>Fresh fruit 100g / <b>Jam</b> 10g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p> <p>Low fat cheese 20 g</p>	<p>Low fat milk 150g</p> <p>Wholegrain cereals 25g / Bread / Rusks 30g / Plain biscuits 25g</p> <p>Fresh fruit 100g / <b>Jam</b> 10g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p> <p>Butter / Soft margarine 10g optional</p>	<p>Low fat milk 150g</p> <p>Wholegrain cereals 25g / Bread / Rusks 30g / Plain biscuits 25g</p> <p>Fresh fruit 100g / <b>Jam</b> 10g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p> <p>Low fat cheese 20 g</p>	<p>Low fat milk 150g</p> <p>Wholegrain cereals 25g / Bread / Rusks 30g / Plain biscuits 25g</p> <p>Fresh fruit 100g / <b>Jam</b> 10g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p> <p>Butter / Soft margarine 10g optional</p>	<p>Low fat milk 150g</p> <p>Wholegrain cereals 25g / Bread / Rusks 30g / Plain biscuits 25g</p> <p>Fresh fruit 100g / <b>Jam</b> 10g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p> <p>Butter / Soft margarine 10g optional</p>
<b>SNACK</b>	<p>Wholegrain crackers / Plain biscuits 25g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p>	<p>Wholegrain crackers / Plain biscuits 25g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p>	<p>Wholegrain crackers / Plain biscuits 25g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p>	<p>Wholegrain crackers / Plain biscuits 25g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p>	<p>Wholegrain crackers / Plain biscuits 25g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p>	<p>Wholegrain crackers / Plain biscuits 25g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p>	<p>Wholegrain crackers / Plain biscuits 25g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p>	<p>Wholegrain crackers / Plain biscuits 25g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p>
<b>LUNCH</b>	<p>Poultry 150g</p> <p>Vegetables 200g</p> <p>Wholegrain bread 70g</p> <p>Fresh fruit 150g</p>	<p>Vegetables 200g</p> <p>Wholegrain bread 70g</p> <p>Fresh fruit 150g</p>	<p>Dried legumes 50g</p> <p>Vegetables 200g</p> <p>Wholegrain bread 70g</p> <p>Fresh fruit 150g</p>	<p>Fatty fish 150g</p> <p>Vegetables 200g</p> <p>Wholegrain bread 70g</p> <p>Fresh fruit 150g</p>	<p>Fresh cheese 100 g</p> <p>Vegetables 200 g</p> <p>Wholegrain bread 70 g</p> <p>Fresh fruit 150 g</p>	<p>Dried legumes 50g</p> <p>Vegetables 200g</p> <p>Wholegrain bread 70g</p> <p>Fresh fruit 150g</p>	<p>Red meat 150g</p> <p>Vegetables 200g</p> <p>Wholegrain bread 70g</p> <p>Fresh fruit 150g</p>	<p>Red meat 150g</p> <p>Vegetables 200g</p> <p>Wholegrain bread 70g</p> <p>Fresh fruit 150g</p>
<b>SNACK/DESSERT</b>	<p>Yoghurt 150g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p>	<p>Yoghurt 150g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p>	<p>Yoghurt 150g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p>	<p>Yoghurt 150g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p>	<p>Yoghurt 150g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p>	<p>Yoghurt 150g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p>	<p>Yoghurt 150g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p>	<p>Yoghurt 150g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p>
<b>DINNER</b>	<p>Pasta 80g preferentially wholegrain</p> <p>Dried legumes 50g</p> <p>Vegetables 200 g</p> <p>Wholegrain bread 30g</p> <p>Fresh fruit 150g</p> <p>Coffee/tea 1 cup</p> <p>Nuts 30g</p>	<p>Parboiled or wholegrain rice 80g</p> <p>Fatty fish 150g</p> <p>Vegetables 200g</p> <p>Wholegrain bread 30g</p> <p>Fresh fruit 150g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p> <p>Nuts 30g</p>	<p>Potatoes 150g</p> <p>Poultry 150g</p> <p>Vegetables 200g</p> <p>Wholegrain bread 30g</p> <p>Fresh fruit 150g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p> <p>Nuts 30g</p>	<p>Pasta 80g preferentially wholegrain</p> <p>Eggs 2</p> <p>Vegetables 200g</p> <p>Wholegrain bread 30g</p> <p>Fresh fruit 150g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p> <p>Nuts 30g</p>	<p>Barley 80g preferentially wholegrain</p> <p>Dried legumes 50g</p> <p>Vegetables 200g</p> <p>Wholegrain bread 30g</p> <p>Fresh fruit 150g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p> <p>Nuts 30g</p>	<p>Parboiled or wholegrain rice 80g</p> <p>Fatty fish 150g</p> <p>Vegetables 200g</p> <p>Wholegrain bread 30g</p> <p>Fresh fruit 150g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p> <p>Nuts 30g</p>	<p>Pasta 80g preferentially wholegrain</p> <p>Eggs 2</p> <p>Vegetables 200g</p> <p>Wholegrain bread 30g</p> <p>Fresh fruit 150g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p> <p>Nuts 30g</p>	<p>Pasta 80g preferentially wholegrain</p> <p>Eggs 2</p> <p>Vegetables 200g</p> <p>Wholegrain bread 30g</p> <p>Fresh fruit 150g</p> <p>Coffee / Tea 1 cup</p> <p>Nuts 30g</p>
<b>THROUGHOUT THE DAY</b>	<p>Olive oil 25-30g</p> <p>Sugar below 50g</p>	<p>Olive oil 25-30g</p> <p>Sugar below 50g</p>	<p>Olive oil 25-30g</p> <p>Sugar below 50g</p>	<p>Olive oil 25-30g</p> <p>Sugar below 50g</p>	<p>Olive oil 25-30g</p> <p>Sugar below 50g</p>	<p>Olive oil 25-30g</p> <p>Sugar below 50g</p>	<p>Olive oil 25-30g</p> <p>Sugar below 50g</p>	<p>Olive oil 25-30g</p> <p>Sugar below 50g</p>



# Is My Meal Healthy and Sustainable?

## SWITCH Food Explorer

by **Simona Castaldi**  
Associate Professor of Ecology, DISTABIF, University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli

**Sustainable and healthy food choices and dietary habits are at the centre of the societal and scientific discussion today. They are increasingly considered a meaningful action that citizens can engage to proactively contribute to both theirs and planetary health.**

Chefs, caterers and restaurant managers are also increasing their awareness on the role they play in driving the change towards healthy and sustainable food systems. In addition, nutritionists, who typically only focus on the health aspect of their diet plans, are now also starting to introduce the concepts of sustainability.

This increased awareness raises many questions among citizens and food professionals. You might have asked yourself:

**WHAT SUSTAINABILITY CONCEPTS SHOULD I CONSIDER TO EVALUATE FOOD?**

**WHERE DO I FIND INFORMATION ON FOOD SUSTAINABILITY?**

**WHICH DATA CAN I TRUST?**

**HOW CAN I USE THIS DATA TO EVALUATE MY RECIPES AND MEALS?**

The lack of knowledge on such topics creates a barrier for people to choose sustainable diets. Thus, it is important to develop easy to use tools for responding to such questions.

The SWITCH Food Explorer has been created to respond to these needs. It is an open access web application that helps users to explore the environmental sustainability and nutrient values of more than 400 food items. It can be used to gather useful information to create a good meal plan. For instance, it provides the optimal frequency of consumption of food items and helps to create recipes, discovering their level of sustainability and nutritional characteristics.

It is a science-based tool that contains the most updated data of food impacts calculated by the University of Campania and nutritional data and recommendations provided by the University of Naples Federico II (Italy) and technical University of Chalmers (Sweden). It is implemented as a webtool by the Italian start-up pOsti as part of the set of tools to facilitate citizen actions in the FoodHubs and beyond.

### But, how does the SWITCH FOOD EXPLORER work?



Scan the QR Code

The Explorer home page allows users to navigate the food items and to create recipes that can be saved and downloaded, re-uploaded and modified, or printed with compelling graphics for communication.

For each food item, the Explorer provides 3 quantitative sustainability indicators to rank food and calculate recipes:

**The carbon footprint: climatic impact of the food;**

**The water footprint: impact of food on water resources;**

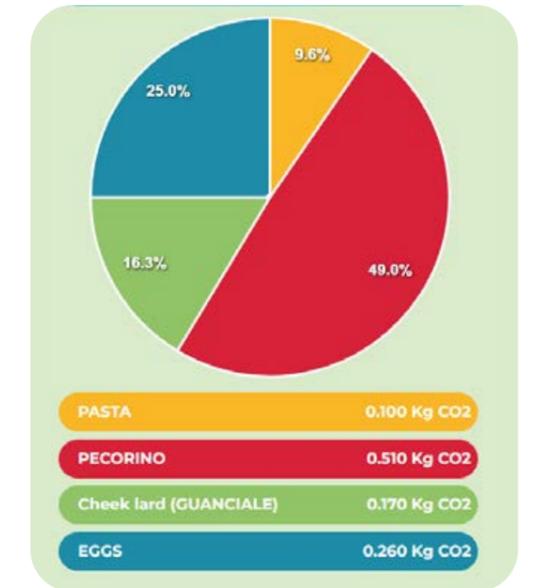
**Fish sustainability index: impact of fishery and aquaculture on the fish species and on ecosystems.**

The indicators are combined to provide for each food item an environmental index, ranked in 5 classes of quality from high to low sustainability (A to E, light green to red) and 9 nutritional indicators including, kcal, energy, content of proteins, total fats, saturated fats, monounsaturated fats, polyunsaturated fats, total carbohydrates, added sugars and fibre, as g per 100 g of food. The tool also provides a suggested weekly frequency of consumption for a sustainable and healthy diet, and additional dietary information and recommendations on the food item.

The tool also includes a Recipe Creator that allows people to create their own recipe and shows the level of sustainability of the recipe.

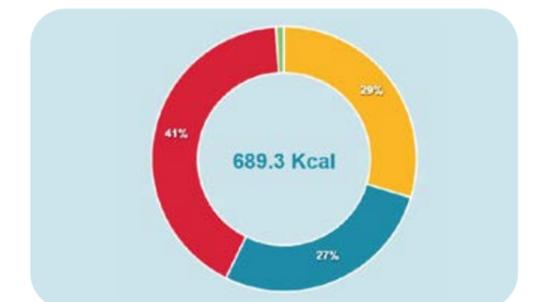


Recipe levels are expressed following the same logic of the food items - 5 colour bands and corresponding letters. The recipes show a pie chart with the ingredients that cause more environmental and health damage, so the user can decrease their quantities or substitute them with other ingredients.



It also shows the nutritional values of the recipe (per portion) and provides a recommendation message explaining the meaning of the impact class and what to do in terms of frequency of consumption and combination of dishes in a meal and in a week plan. A rule of thumbs is that orange and red dishes should be eaten with lower frequency, ideally once per week, while yellow and green band dishes can be freely used, within the respect of calories and nutrients they contain. The tool can help to combine meals that have only red and orange dishes with green dishes, to create a more sustainable eating experience.

The tools development doesn't end here! We are now working on creating customised weekly sustainable meal plans to be integrated in the Food Explorer tool.



Read about its application on page 56

# Exploring food through photos

## Photo diaries and photo walks

by **Meike Fienitz**

Researcher at Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research ZALF

### What we eat is shaped by more than just taste.

It is influenced by many factors such as budget and time, our culture, our education, local food availability, personal values, and even our mobility. These factors determine what options are within our reach, and which of them we will ultimately choose. While many of us juggle the challenge of maintaining a healthy and sustainable diet, the obstacles to doing so are not evenly shared across society. The SWITCH project seeks to better understand these challenges by exploring how diverse communities experience and navigate their food environments.

To do this, researchers from the SWITCH partners ZALF in Müncheberg, Germany, and Wageningen University and Research in the Netherlands are getting creative with a participatory, photo-based study in two of the SWITCH hubs: Berlin and Gothenburg. In collaboration with the food hub coordinators from Das Baumhaus in Berlin and RISE (Research Institutes of Sweden) in Gothenburg, we are handing the camera to local residents to capture real-life food experiences in ways that go beyond numbers and surveys.

### A Day on a Plate: Gothenburg's Food Diaries

In Gothenburg, the research focuses on the daily food habits of people living in Västra Frölunda, a neighbourhood with a high percentage of lower-income and migrant residents. Participants are invited to photograph everything they eat in a day and share their thoughts on their meals. What did they eat? Why did they choose it? How do they feel about it? What barriers do they face in accessing food that is both healthy and sustainable? And in how far are health and sustainability aspects that play a

role in their daily food choices?

The photo diary approach follows the logic of social science photo-elicitation methods - approaches that use photos as a starting point to elicit further information from participants. The photos not only provide information on what participants eat but they anchor our questions in participants' daily experiences and make an abstract topic very specific. The photo diaries thus provide a unique window into the realities of daily eating habits, shedding light on personal choices, limitations, and coping strategies. They are a first glance into the "why" behind what is on people's plates.

### Walking the Foodscape: Berlin's Photo Walks

Meanwhile, in Berlin's Wedding neighbourhood—another area with a high proportion of lower-income and migrant residents—the research project is hitting the streets. Here, the focus is on the local "foodscape," or the food environment that surrounds people in their daily lives, and how residents perceive it.

Residents are invited to go on photo walks, during which they snap pictures of the food or food-related places they encounter: where they shop, their go-to meals, favourite (or least favourite) foods, and even items they find unappealing or cannot afford to buy. These photos then become the basis for open discussions about the neighbourhood's food culture, accessibility, and affordability. What foods are easy to find? What's missing? What would make healthy and sustainable eating easier?

The photo walks are inspired by a second social science method, photovoice. Here, the photos are not merely a starting point to collect further information but instead participants can use the photos

Residents are invited to go on photo walks, during which they snap pictures of the food or food-related places they encounter: where they shop, their go-to meals, favourite (or least favourite) foods, and even items they find unappealing or cannot afford to buy.

to allow researchers to see their daily life experiences through their eyes. Through the photo walks, participants gain a platform to share their perspectives on the local food environment, highlighting both its strengths and its shortcomings. Their images and stories help researchers understand the everyday realities of food access—whether it's the affordability of fresh produce, the availability of culturally relevant ingredients, or the presence of unhealthy food options.

### Why It Matters

By taking a visual and participatory approach, the SWITCH project goes beyond statistics to capture the lived experiences of diverse communities. These insights will feed into the social science analyses of the SWITCH project, but the experiences with photo-based tools will also be transformed into simple, adaptable guidelines, making it easy for other SWITCH hubs to implement similar methods. This means more communities will have the opportunity to share their own food stories and contribute to a broader understanding of food accessibility and existing barriers to healthy and sustainable diets.

However, SWITCH is not just about gathering knowledge—it is about sharing it. The results will therefore not just live in research reports, but they are supposed to come to life in the neighbourhoods of Berlin and Gothenburg. One of the big advantages of photo-based research is its built-in storytelling power, turning real-life experiences into something visual, relatable, and easy to share. Imagine a photo exhibition, a zine, or an interactive map, all bringing the communities' food realities to the forefront. Through these creative formats, SWITCH makes food experiences something you can see, feel, and connect with. Stay tuned for insights from the project—because, after all, food is not just something we eat. It is a powerful lens through which we experience the world.



 [Read about its application on page 33](#)

# Creating context-specific impact for SWITCH Activities

## Psycho Social Survey



### How do we assess if people are embracing healthier and more sustainable lifestyles as a result of SWITCH activities?

The SWITCH Food Hubs carry out a range of activities designed to create a lasting impact on the diets of the people that participate. How do we figure out if our activities work and truly make a difference?

At SWITCH, we believe that every activity is an opportunity for learning and growing. When designing our activities, rather than striving for an unattainable notion of perfection, we are aware that their success is dynamic and influenced by context. Thus, the starting point of work package 4 is to why, for whom and under which circumstances SWITCH activities work.

To uncover how SWITCH activities work, interviews are conducted with the different people involved in the activities with a research method called realist evaluation. This qualitative approach is complemented by the psychosocial survey that help to understand personal (psycho) and collective (social) reasons behind people's relation with food. This survey helps to uncover behavioural change mechanisms by getting a bird's eye view of four core psychosocial concepts that all together give a sense of one's relationship with food. These concepts include: people's access to food, their dietary attitudes, coping capacities, and perception of their food network.

These concepts of the psychosocial survey are informed by the Salutogenic Model of Health (SMH) wherein the perspective of wellbeing focuses on the factors that promote health rather than just preventing illness. This approach views health as a dynamic process shaped by both personal and social strengths. In the context of food systems, the SMH emphasizes the importance of creating supportive environments and empowering individuals to make healthier and more sustainable food choices. Rather than seeing lifestyle behaviors as purely individual decisions, this model highlights how they are influenced by the broader food environment, access to resources, and opportunities for participation.

### Food access

Food access refers to the interaction people have with their direct food environment. It isn't just about whether a grocery store is nearby - it's about how easy, affordable, and comfortable it is for people to make healthy and sustainable food choices. Food access is an essential starting point to understand people's behaviour toward food.

### Dietary attitudes

In order to understand to what extent people are concerned with health and sustainability, we investigate what people's dietary choices are and why they are making them. To do so, we explore people's attitude toward healthy and sustainable eating and their food values. We ask how much vegetables they eat, if they try to reduce their meat consumption, whether the portion size is taken into account when preparing food and if food is regional and local is a consideration they make when buying. To explore food values participants are asked about health concerns, the importance of conviviality and the impact on people's mood, food's origin considerations, and affordability when making food choices.

### People's coping capacities

Changing eating patterns involves not only what people eat but also how people cope with challenges for healthy and sustainable dietary practices. The concept of coping capacities refer to an individual's motivation and ability to navigate the food environment in a healthy and sustainable way. A key part of this is how well someone understands their current life situation, whether they feel capable of managing it, and if they find meaning in making an effort to improve. When people can make sense of their circumstances, believe they have the tools to manage them, and feel that the process is worthwhile, they are more likely to adopt

healthier habits.

Equally important is how empowered and supported people feel in making these changes. People are more likely to embrace new food habits when they feel in control of their choices, confident in their ability to make positive changes, and connected to a community that shares similar values. This sense of autonomy, competence, and belonging plays a crucial role in shaping behaviors.

### Change-makers networks

Creating a healthier and more sustainable food system isn't only about individual action. Without the support of strong and efficient networks of change-makers, it would be hard for individuals alone to make a long-lasting impact. At SWITCH, we assess network effectiveness by looking at the overall quality of the network: how well different actors collaborate and how their relationships drive meaningful change.

Effective collaboration relies on several key elements. One is the ability of actors to engage in open discussions about their working processes, addressing disagreements and finding ways to improve their cooperation. It's also important that members feel a sense of collective ownership over their shared goals, while still respecting individual differences and embracing diverse perspectives.

Flexibility and innovation play a significant role too. Participants who are willing to understand different viewpoints and step beyond their usual roles help the network adapt and grow. Finally, expanding the network is crucial - when new voices and perspectives are brought in, they spark fresh ideas and create opportunities for innovative solutions, strengthening the network's overall impact. Measuring these aspects of network efficiency allows us to identify what makes collaboration work and ensure that local food networks are not just growing, but thriving!

The psychosocial assessment is now an integral part of selected Hub activities. With the tool fully developed, the next step is an ongoing collaboration between the scientific team and the Hubs to support its implementation. The collected data will identify individual, socio-cultural, institutional, and environmental factors as well as change mechanisms that lead towards more sustainable and healthy eating. The power of this tool does not end here, as it will also contribute to the development of future foodscape scenarios and shaping future policy recommendations.

 [Read about its policy applications on page 60](#)

# Structuring, Collecting and Analysing Large Data

## Smart Counter

by **Virgilio Maretto**  
CEO & Co-Funder, pOsti

**Smart Counter is a tool designed to automatically structure, collect and analyse data, facilitating the monitoring of activities in the Food Hubs. At the end of the process, the data can ultimately be sent to the DataLake - a centralized repository for large quantities of data.**

One of the key aspects of this system is the possibility to build a baseline of the data collected at different times, giving a bird-eye view on how the activities are going. In this way, Smart Counter gives meaningful insights that can be used by different change makers. For instance, food producers can contribute with critical data about agricultural production and the agri-food supply chain. From the beginning of cultivation, producers track vital information such as the origin, variety, and yield of crops. These data are crucial - producers can guarantee important information to the end consumer by making the entire production chain transparently accessible. Moreover, in the hotel, restaurant and catering sector, Smart Counter can support restaurants in monitoring ingredient sourcing, tracking the use of seasonal and local products, and optimizing menu planning based on sustainability criteria. Through the analysis of purchase data and customer preferences, restaurateurs can adjust their offerings to promote healthier and more sustainable food choices while reducing food waste. This allows them to align their business strategies with sustainability goals and respond more effectively to consumer demands. In addition, it can also be used by other relevant stakeholders like chefs, citizens and schools. For example, Smart Counter also collects data on specific products and their nutritional

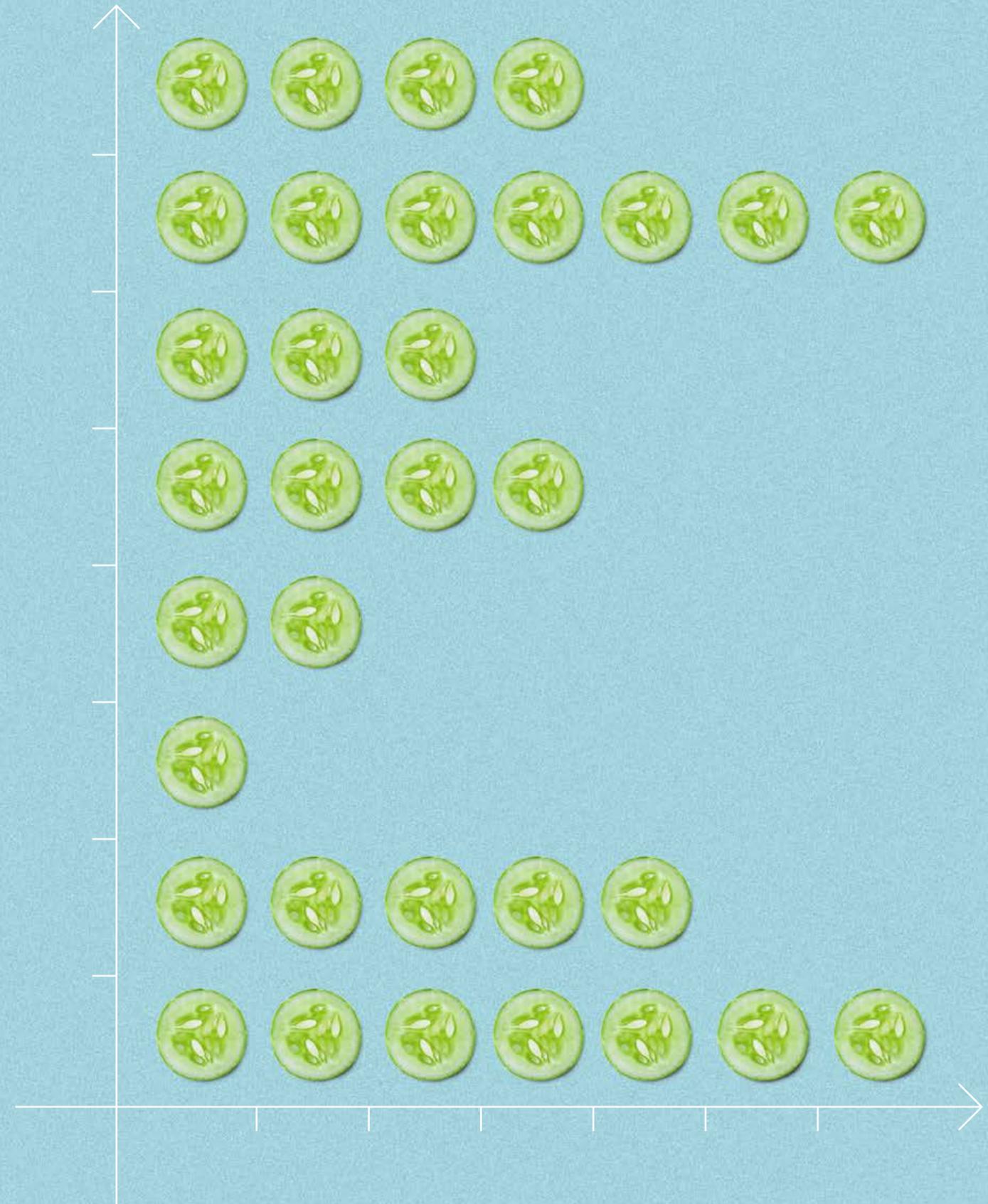
characteristics and sustainability indicators that can be made available in schools or hospitals.

**Through the software's ability to analyse data, it can help understand the dietary shifts in the different SWITCH regions, allowing to quantify the benefits of each activity in relation to the project goals.**

For example, the integration of psychosocial survey into Smart Counter allows for collecting a wide range of demographic information, including gender, age, housing situation, salary, employment status, and education level of all people involved, both of producers and restaurateurs involved in specific activities and of citizens. Smart Counter allows data collection through three main modes. The first consists of a manual input, carried out by providing QR codes to end users, allowing them to give information directly through digital devices. The second mode involves the massive upload of data via Excel or CSV format files, facilitating the import of large amounts of information quickly and efficiently. Finally, API integration enables automatic data import from other digital platforms, ensuring a continuous and up-to-date flow of information without manual intervention. These three modes ensure flexible data collection that can be adapted to the different needs of food

hubs. The tool thus helps capturing a comprehensive view of the behaviors, preferences, and challenges of the stakeholders, translatable into tangible results. The flexibility offered by adaptable configuration options allows customizing Smart Counter to work with different technological platforms and operating systems used by Food Hubs. The tool is a concrete example of how research and innovation can help Hubs not only in defining their missions, for instance with the SWITCH diet, but also to improve it by collecting data that can perfect the implementation of on the ground activities.

The next steps of this tool implementation involves the scientific team behind Smart Counter to collaborate with each Hub to customize the data collection process to the needs of each Food Hub. This tailored approach ensures that each unique action can be developed and implemented in a timely manner, aligning seamlessly with the predefined settings and objectives of each Hubs. Thus guaranteeing a coherent and efficient progression of activities across all Food Hubs, ultimately fostering a more structured and successful execution of the overall project goals.



# Driving local Action for change



## A look into SWITCH Food hubs

SWITCH Food Hubs represent City Region Food Systems - geographical areas that encompass one or more urban centers and their surrounding regions, where people, food, goods, and resources circulate. These systems include all food-related actors and activities within the planning and intervention scope of local and regional governments (FAO)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup><https://www.fao.org/in-action/food-for-cities-programme/overview/crfs/en/>

Food Hubs serve as dynamic and inclusive platforms that bring together diverse stakeholders to tackle systemic food challenges. Rooted in local contexts, they strengthen regional food systems, foster economic benefits, and promote social justice, particularly for vulnerable groups. Hub's activities are where scientific insights are applied to real-world settings. Whether through initiatives designed to align with SWITCH dietary parameters or by introducing tools to students and food practitioners, science plays a fundamental

role in shaping each project. However, the Hubs are not just spaces for top-down scientific implementation - they are also living laboratories that actively contribute to research. The daily work of the Hubs generates valuable data on food habits, community needs, and social values, offering insights that, in turn, help inform and refine our scientific approaches. Through continuous feedback and evaluation, both the scientific partners and the hub's activities evolve and adapt to maximize impact on European diets.

### SWITCH CHANGEMAKERS | Legend



Citizens



Educators



Food Providers



Food Service Actors



Journalists



Policymakers



Health Professionals



Germany

## Berlin - Brandenburg

The Berlin-Brandenburg Hub is led by Baumhaus, a collaborative project and event space dedicated to sustainability in Berlin. Baumhaus founded, supports and continues to expand a network of neighborhood food hubs called LebensMittelPunkte—community centers that host activities around food, sustainability, and social cohesion across the city. The Hub’s ambition is to unlock the potential of community cooking as a driver for the transition to sustainable and healthy dietary habits. Together with its network, Baumhaus works to create bottom-up solutions that engage food system actors while developing accessible, easy-to-use guidelines for citizens. These tools are integrated into community cooking events, helping to promote healthy, regional, and sustainable diets.

### Overview of Food hub Activities

#### How to make the SWITCH in our procurement?



Reshapes food procurement by co-creating solutions that prioritize regional, seasonal vegetables, legumes, and rescued food. Through foodscape mapping, stakeholder collaboration, and tailored procurement strategies, the initiative fosters accessible, sustainable food options for community events and home use while building a strong network of local food system actors.

Target



#### How to make the SWITCH in our cooking?



Develops customized cooking and buffet recipes, engaging diverse food cultures. By developing these recipes in collaboration with different food system actors, the initiative ensures that sustainable and inclusive cooking solutions are accessible for both community events and home use.

Target



#### How to make the SWITCH in our everyday life?



Reshapes dietary behaviors by integrating nutrition and sustainability through an interactive challenge-based approach. By co-creating tailored dietary challenges, fostering collaboration among food system actors, and developing an easy-to-use challenge tool, the initiative makes healthy and sustainable eating more accessible for both community events and individual home use.

Target



Photo credits: Baumhaus Berlin

# Community Cooking for System Change

In conversation with Karen Wohler



**Karen Wohler**  
Co-Founder, Das Baumhaus  
Berlin Food Hub Leader

**Key insights into how the food hub is fostering a lively neighborhood community through community kitchens and volunteer work. The conversation highlights the importance of community support to truly embrace healthier and sustainable lifestyles that can last a lifetime.**

#### SHARE A SUCCESS STORY OR PROJECT THAT HAD A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT?

The SWITCH project has really been a success story for our Hub so far. As we reach the end of the prototyping phase, we’re excited about all the positive feedback we’ve been getting. We’ve been testing prototypes of two tools at public community cooking events in our Hub space, and the response has been fantastic. Our neighbors have been really enthusiastic, and what’s been even more rewarding is that we’ve recruited volunteers to help with further development and data collection.

Another big highlight has been working with our scientific partners, especially in WP4, which focuses on social factors influencing healthy and sustainable diets. Their input has truly enriched our co-creation process. For instance, we’re currently exploring the photovoice and photo elicitation methods. Led by ZALF, we plan to apply them next month in collaboration with neighbors, including individuals from vulnerable groups in our community. We also see potential to connect this approach to one of our tools.

#### HOW DO YOU REACH OUT TO THE PEOPLE THAT PARTICIPATE IN YOUR ACTIVITIES? HOW ARE YOU PLANNING TO ENGAGE NEW PEOPLE?

Thankfully, reaching out has been easy for us. For the past five years, we’ve been connecting with food initiatives, small producers, and projects across the food chain.

Berlin-Brandenburg has a dynamic ecosystem of changemakers working toward food system transformation. As part of Berlin’s food policy strategy, we’ve organized the building of a neighborhood food hub network, collaborating with various stakeholders, including the administration. So, we know who to contact and can build on existing relationships.

In the next phase of our SWITCH action plan, we want to actively engage more citizens, particularly those from vulnerable groups, in testing and implementing the tools we’re developing. A key part of this will be our neighborhood food hub network—a network of community centers and initiatives across the city that organize community cooking and social support activities. What makes this network so valuable is that it already connects with diverse communities. We’ll be working directly with the organizers of the community cooking events and, through them, reaching the people

who attend their events.

#### HOW DOES YOUR HUB WORK BENEFIT THE CHANGE MAKERS?

With all the changemakers we work with, we prioritize building mutually supportive partnerships. Our approach begins with open conversations—understanding where we each stand, how we can support one another, and discussing their specific motivations, needs, and ideas. From there, we explore the best ways for them to engage and strive to integrate that into our process.

One example is our current collaboration with a community-supported agriculture farm: during discussions on how to better connect small farms with city residents, they shared their challenge in communicating their solidarity pricing system. Together, we created an explanatory video that they can use for outreach and we can incorporate into our activities.



Photo credits: Baumhaus Berlin

Another example is our collaboration with district administration staff. They expressed a need for more informal exchanges with counterparts in other districts, so we started hosting regular working meetings at our Hub. These meetings provide a space for peer exchange and also serve as a platform for us to gather feedback, ensuring our activities align with food, health, and sustainability strategies while helping us share results more effectively.

For neighbors of our hub looking to get involved, we offer a weekly action afternoon, where different working groups engage in practical activities. Anyone can join at their own pace, whether through regular or occasional participation, hands-on work or contributing to research and ideation. It's all about creating engaging and vibrant experiences of collaboration, co-creation and simply a fun afternoon of meaningful engagement — while practically improving the local food environment.

#### HOW HAS WORKING WITH SWITCH INFLUENCED YOUR HUB'S APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE DIETS?

SWITCH really gave us both the push and the opportunity to dive deeper into the question how we and our network can further accelerate the transition toward healthy and sustainable dietary behavior. We decided to use the project to unfold the potential of community cooking. On one level, we're looking at how it can be used as a tool to bring food system actors together across the city-region. On another level, we're focusing on how community cooking events can directly support people in eating healthier and more sustainably. Plus, being part of a bigger project adds another layer of motivation. Knowing that the results of our work will be shared widely gives us and our partners even more incentive to fully engage. After all, developing simple, scalable solutions often requires a lot of detailed and time-intensive groundwork.

#### CAN YOU PROVIDE MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE TWO LEVELS YOUR HUB IS WORKING ON, INCLUDING HOW THEY CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR OVERALL OBJECTIVES AND COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER?



**We believe community cooking is a powerful way to bridge gaps in knowledge, accessibility, and facilitation that often hinder the large-scale adoption of healthy and sustainable diets in a city-region.**

At community cooking events, people come together to help cook, share a meal, and provide food on a donation or at-cost basis, often reaching vulnerable groups. Our work focuses on enhancing the impact of these events by developing practical tools that can be applied



Photo credits: Baumhaus Berlin

directly, leading to better meals and empowering participants to improve their own diets. Beyond that, community cooking can be linked to the entire food chain, from food production and availability in the community to processing and consumption.

**Community cooking is something that resonates with people. Everyone enjoys it and wants to support it.**

That's why we see it as a promising process for engaging stakeholders across a city-region. And so far, our experience proves that this approach works. What makes it even more exciting is that community cooking events exist almost everywhere, making our Hub's action plan easily transferable to other city-regions.

#### CAN YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT THE OBJECTIVES BEHIND THE TOOLS YOU ARE TRYING TO CREATE AT YOUR HUB?

When co-creating our Hub's action plan for the SWITCH project, we asked ourselves two key questions: Can we radically align our procurement and cooking with the proportions of food groups needed for a healthy and sustainable diet? And what if our focus wasn't on individual behavior change, but rather on how we can collaboratively support each other?

The three tools we are developing directly respond to these questions, each addressing a different aspect of organizing healthy and sustainable meals—how to adapt procurement, how to adjust cooking practices, and how to approach dietary change collectively. Each tool is designed to provide practical support for driving change from both the supply and demand sides. One example is foodscape mapping, which we are exploring as a method to support collaborative changes in neighborhood procurement, with a focus on sourcing the 50% fruits and vegetables that should make up our daily diet. By building the foodscape map with food system actors, we can gather information on existing procurement options, identify synergies, and create new opportunities. Working closely with community cooking organizers, we tailor it to their specific location and needs—selecting the right information and methods that best fit their target groups, socioeconomic context, and cultural background.

Rather than creating fixed solutions, we are developing each tool as a platform for ongoing co-creation and adaptation. This way, even after the SWITCH project ends, the tools will continue to catalyze new opportunities for procurement, new recipes, and new ways to support healthier diets in local communities.



### On the Way to the Food Community



Builds a food practitioners network across 44 municipalities in southwestern Sardinia, promoting agrobiodiversity, cultural heritage, and food security. By connecting farmers, restaurants, schools, and local authorities, the project raises awareness of cultivating and eating a larger range of agricultural products through educational activities, reflective meetings, and digital platforms that engage citizens and increase support for local food systems.

Target



### Sustainable Menu for School Canteens – A Collaborative Approach



Promotes sustainability and locally sourced ingredients in school catering services across southwestern Sardinia. By engaging municipalities, schools, parents, producers, and canteen managers in cocreating menu guidelines, the project fosters awareness of healthy food choices through participatory discussions and cooperative governance structures.

Target



### Culinary Exploration of the Blue Zone



Explores the health, food, and cultural factors behind the exceptional longevity of Sardinia's Blue Zone communities. By combining scientific research and local knowledge, it aims to identify dietary habits and revive traditional foods through the creation of a cookbook that celebrates the region's culinary heritage.

Target



Italy

## Cagliari and Sardinia region

The Cagliari and Sardinia Hub, led by Laore, the Regional Agency for Agricultural Development, is at the forefront of transforming regional dietary habits to foster sustainable development in Sardinia. Its mission is to unite local producers, processors, educators, catering services, policymakers, and community organizations in a collective effort to strengthen farm-to-fork supply chains and their sustainability. By redesigning school canteen menus, advocating for small-scale farmers, and driving climate action and social economy initiatives, the Hub fosters multifunctional solutions that enhance the sustainability, resilience, and inclusivity of Sardinia's food systems.

### Overview of Food hub Activities

#### La Buona Tavola (The tasty table)



Reshapes food procurement by co-creating solutions that prioritize regional, seasonal vegetables, legumes, and rescued food. Through foodscape mapping, stakeholder collaboration, and tailored procurement strategies, the initiative fosters accessible, sustainable food options for community events and home use while building a strong network of local food system actors.

Target



#### More Legumes on the Plate



Aims at encouraging greater legume consumption among children and the general public by highlighting their nutritional and environmental benefits. Through workshops, farm visits, cooking sessions, and stakeholder meetings, the initiative engages schools, families, local producers, and canteen managers to promote legume-based dishes in school menus. By strengthening local supply chains the project fosters awareness, acceptance of legumes-rich diets, and long-term dietary changes.

Target



### A Deep Dive into



## Honoring local traditions through sustainable cooking

### Young Sardinian Students Will Drive Change

by Romina Gaspa

LAORE Sardegna - Regional Agency for Agricultural Development

The activity "On the Way to the Food Community" has been divided into a number of sub-activities designed to be implemented in the territory in co-creation in collaboration with key actors to increase knowledge and awareness of food choices.

In this context, hotel schools can be a fundamental channel for conveying this messages. It is essential that catering professionals have an increasingly broader and clearer vision of integrating respect for the environment, protection and enhancement of the territory's agrobiodiversity and nutrition principles to utilise the products of

the territory in which they work.

To this end, a part of the project consists of classes IV and V of the Pula Hotel School to create a Sustainable Menu that exploits the products and agro-biodiversity of the territory. The menu will have to promote the culture of healthy and sustainable food by linking it to respect for the environment and the protection of Sardinia's natural heritages, enhance and promote the territory's food chain, and traditional products. The young students involved in the project will be guided along the path with a series of training days aimed at learning about

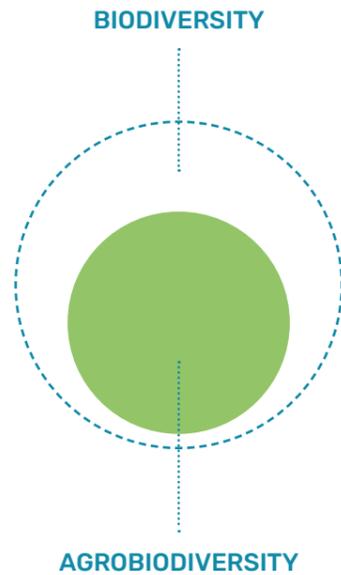
the territory's agro-biodiversity, typical and quality products of Sardinia and low-impact production systems, such as organic farming.

A collective thought behind the creation of the project has been environmental sustainability and how quality food is privileged over quantity. This goal is supported by a local community that has a strong connection to traditions and local productions, and wishes to distinguish itself in the world for the gastronomic and agricultural peculiarities of its territory.

# The hidden foundation of our food systems

## Agrobiodiversity

The Sardinian Hub is actively working to restore and preserve local agrobiodiversity, recognizing it as a key component of food security and cultural heritage in the region.



### What is agrobiodiversity?

It is the result of both natural selection processes and the careful selection and innovative practices of farmers, herders, and fishers over millennia. It is at the core of our food systems, as our food supply depends on its sustainable management and preservation. As the word suggests, it is a combination of agriculture and biodiversity. It is a subcategory of biodiversity, meaning its protection is crucial for overall biodiversity conservation. Agrobiodiversity includes crops, livestock, and other non-domesticated natural resources used for food. However, its protection extends beyond the species we consume—it also involves pollinators like bees and butterflies, as well as soil organisms that support food

production. Additionally, it includes wider ecosystems, such as aquatic environments, which play a role in sustaining agriculture and food systems.

### 3 legumes for planet health

In the Sardinian Hub, a particular emphasis is placed on the preservation of legumes. These crops have historically played a role in Sardinia's food culture, yet they are at high risk of being abandoned. Legumes are also a valuable plant-based protein source, making them an important part of a nutritionally balanced and sustainable diet. According to the SWITCH diet, individuals should consume at least 150g of legumes per week.



Photo credits: Cagliari Food hub



### The white bean of Terraseo

The white bean of Terraseo is known in the Sardinia dialect as "Fasou Biancu de Terraseo". It's cultivated in the Terraseo area due to its flat fields, good microclimate and water abundance. The cultural practices to cultivate it are the same since the first half of the 20th century. For instance, it is traditionally planted before June 24th as it is the Saint John the Baptist celebrations.



### Black lentil of Calasetta

In the past, this legume was planted in between vineyards. This practice had the double scope of fertilizing the sandy soil in which the vineyards were growing and feeding humans. Its cultivation was traditionally carried by humble families that couldn't afford meat and were using the lentil as an alternative protein source. Farmers were also exchanging it for fishing goods.



### Chickpea of Musei

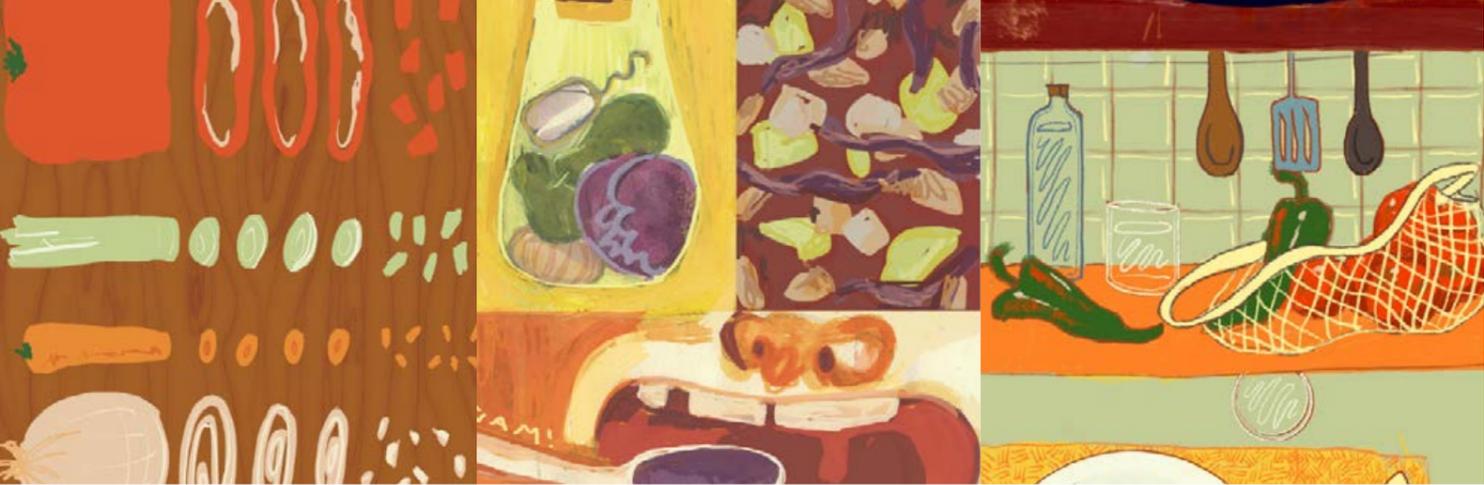
Since the early 20th century, the Cixeri Valley has been a hub for cultivating broad beans, chickpeas, and peas. According to a local farmer, these legumes were already being grown by his grandfather before 1930. He discovered this when, in the 1980s, he found small bags of seeds dated 1930, carefully hidden by his grandfather to protect them from years of adverse weather conditions.

In conclusion, agrobiodiversity forms the hidden yet essential foundation of our food systems, sustaining not only the crops and livestock we consume but also the ecosystems that make food production possible. The Sardinian Hub's work in preserving traditional legumes, not only safeguards these unique crops and local traditions, but also strengthens the resilience and sustainability of local food systems while contributing to global efforts to ensure food security and combat climate change.



To dive deeper into the region's agrobiodiversity scan the QR code

Photo credits: Serena Marras



# El Calendario del Mercado

by Alicia Bosch Loscertales, Elena Carnero Garcia, Andrea Albert Fonseca, Caterina Gilli

**Four friends and old classmates - a mathematician, a biologist, a restorer, a graphic designer. Three illustrators and a project manager. This is the unconventional team that got together to brainstorm an illustrated calendar for the Market of La Ribera, in Bilbao.**

Spain

## Donostia (San Sebastian) and Basque region

The Basque Hub, located in the Basque region of Spain, is composed of BC3 (Basque Centre for Climate Change), BCCInn (Basque Culinary Centre Innovation), and Kutxa Fundazioa. Food plays a significant cultural role in this region, reinforcing a strong sense of belonging and cultural identity. Despite its importance, over 90% of the food consumed in the Basque Country is imported. The Basque Hub's primary objective is to identify and strengthen existing successful initiatives within the territory, steering efforts toward more sustainable diets. Additionally, it aims to understand the needs of vulnerable groups and integrate the concept of a just transition into various activities. The goal is also to collaborate with territorial stakeholders, actively involving them in the activities to ensure their continuity beyond the project's intervention.

### Overview of Food hub Activities

#### Including Sustainable Criteria in Schools Canteen Menus



Develops new school canteen menus that include more fresh, local, and seasonal food, including plant-based protein-rich ones. The activity aims at enduring broader participation in the design and implementation process of the new menus.

Target



#### Urban community gardens for organic horticulture



Builds upon the Baratzte Parke Sarea Network (BPS), a network of urban community gardens that offer to the citizens an area of cultivable land to practise organic horticulture for their own consumption. The Hub works to promote community involvement through collaborative efforts.

Target



#### Green Jan



Aims at raising awareness about sustainable food practices through a series of panel debates, workshops and by developing open calls for citizens to develop their own projects.

Target



#### Basque Culinary Centre's Inn Canteen transformation



Fosters the inclusion of more sustainable and healthy food, such as vegetarian and/or vegan options, into the gastronomic offer at the BCC Inn cafeteria and evaluates the consumers satisfaction and acceptance of these alternative food options.

Target



Supported by the Green Jan project, and promoted by Bilbao Gazte (Bilbao City Council) and SWITCH (Basque Centre for Climate Change), the calendar features one recipe per month, selected from citizen submissions. The Calendar of the Market is a collective attempt to promote sustainable and healthy dietary habits among the neighbours of Bilbao, using illustration as a communication tool.

#### HOW DID THE IDEA COME UP AND HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT IT?

For the past three years, we've collaborated on an annual calendar for friends and family, with each edition becoming more intricate than the last. Last year we introduced monthly recipes, and this year we've been more intentional, involving external participants in order to add a meaningful social dimension. However, managing the scale of the project was a challenge, as it was new for us. Getting the neighbours motivated to participate, coordinating the collaborators, overseeing the largescale printing process and translating all materials into Basque added complexity. Nonetheless, the outcome has made it worth the effort!

#### DO YOU THINK "EL CALENDARIO DEL MERCADO" PROMOTES SUSTAINABLE AND HEALTHY DIETS? IF SO, IN WHAT WAY?

The calendar encourages sustainable, healthy eating through seasonal recipes that highlight ingredients available at the local market of La Ribera. The dishes are diverse, vibrant, and nutritious, making sustainability a natural part of daily life — even for those who might not have previously

considered it. This is where the magic of illustration comes in: turning an everyday object such as a calendar into something special and inviting, transforming the simple act of flipping the calendar page into a moment of discovery each month.

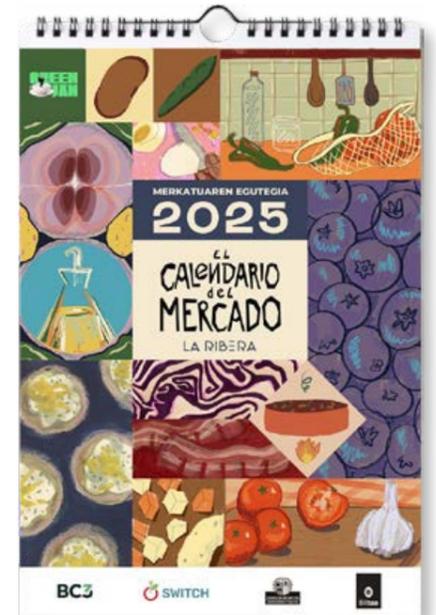
#### WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES OF THE PROJECT?

The project resulted in 12 illustrated seasonal recipes, compiled into a 2025 calendar that was distributed at the local market to all the residents who came to shop. In this way, the project gave back to the people of Bilbao—both those who contributed recipes and those who didn't—by providing a calendar that allowed them to follow the seasons and cook accordingly. It also fostered a sense of community among the recipe contributors, making them key players in the final product, as they were actively involved in creating the calendar.

**The project gave back to the people of Bilbao—both those who contributed recipes and those who didn't—by providing a calendar that allowed them to follow the seasons and cook accordingly.**

#### WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF THE CALENDAR?

We hope the Market Calendar keeps growing, fostering citizen engagement and promoting sustainability. Expanding it to other neighborhoods could attract new shoppers while reinforcing local, seasonal food choices. What began as a small Christmas gift now has the potential to become a broader collaborative initiative.



**To us, a sustainable diet is one that is rich, and holds balance between serving the consumer, the producers, and the Earth.**

- El Calendario del mercado creators

# Cultivating Sustainable Food Practices

## Green Jan

How do we inspire communities to adopt sustainable and healthy diets while supporting local producers and ecosystems?

The Basque Food Hub tackled this question head-on with Green Jan, an innovative activity program in Bilbao designed to raise awareness of young people about food practices that benefit human and planetary health. Supported by the Bilbao City Council, Green Jan brought together an eclectic mix of experts, producers, chefs, and citizens to engage in a variety of workshops, discussions, and activities. The program consisted of three phases. The first phase focused on initiating conversations about sustainable diets, while the second aimed to put these concepts into practice through various workshops. In the final phase, hub professionals handed over the reins to young citizens, offering the opportunity for two initiatives to be supported for implementation.

### The goal?

To educate and engage Bilbao's youth on food practices while promoting longterm social and economic well-being within the food system, optimizing natural resources, and supporting local producers.

Green Jan kicked off with an inspiring round table moderated by Inmaculada Batalla, the Hub's leader. The event brought together 40 participants and four special guests.

Markel Garaizabal from Belaze Farm shared his insights on ecological and sustainable farming while emphasizing the preservation of traditional land care practices. Gentzane Landa, founder of "Mangiare a Mesa Puesta" and a cheese entrepreneur, discussed her dedication to sustainable cooking and healthy diets, a passion she also expresses through her popular blog. Paula Toran from the Basque Culinary Centre highlighted the role of gastronomy in promoting biodiversity and circularity through innovative initiatives. Finally, María de Santiago from the CROPS4LIFE project presented her work in food systems and agricultural innovation in Vitoria-Gasteiz.

The session fostered discussions about field experiences and strategies for engaging young people in sustainable food practices.

The Second phase consisted of three hands-on workshops. Led by Iranzu Larrondo of the Basque Seed Network, the first workshop explored the history and importance of preserving local seed varieties. Participants cleaned, planted, and learned about traditional Basque seeds, leaving with seeds for their own gardens and balconies.



Another workshop aimed at showcasing a series of groundbreaking initiatives from the Basque region and beyond. During these workshops, participants could learn more about projects on entrepreneurship, circularity, short agri-food chain, responsible consumption and grassroots initiatives. Among these was Delikatetxe, a cooperative dedicated to repurposing the meat of older hens, transforming what was once considered waste into valuable food products. Hermeneus, a digital platform, showcased its work in bridging the gap between producers and consumers by enabling direct transactions. The Berlin based SWITCH partner Das Baumhaus shared its approach to fostering urban sustainability through community-driven projects. Lastly, CROPS4LIFE, an EU initiative, presented its efforts in promoting ecological food production in the municipality of Vitoria-Gasteiz, illustrating the impact of innovation on sustainable agriculture.

The last workshops of the series - "Yum session! Prepare your sustainable tupper!" - was about sustainable meal-prepping. It aimed at promoting the inclusion of sustainable and healthy criteria in daily dietary choices. The leader of the workshop, Gentzane Landa guided participants in preparing seven easy, sustainable, and healthy recipes for daily life. The workshop also emphasized practical tips for incorporating sustainability into everyday diets.

But, Green Jan didn't stop at workshops. The third phase consisted in an open call for projects from the local community, where two ideas stood out and are now being implemented. One is a seasonal food calendar, EL Calendario del Mercado (The Calendar of the Market) with recipes to encourage local and seasonal consumption in Bilbao's markets. The second one is a catalogue of traditional Basque seed varieties showcasing their uses and cultural significance.

All in all, Green Jan was a celebration of collaboration, education, and action. The workshops were a success - despite some initial hurdles in the dissemination - sparking meaningful debates and fostering valuable interactions.

By combining expert knowledge with community involvement, the program provided tools and inspiration for healthier and more sustainable diets. Its success is a testament to the power of collective effort in shaping food systems that benefit both people and the planet. As Green Jan continues to grow, its initiatives promise to leave a lasting impact on Bilbao's food culture.

### WHAT IS THE BASQUE SEED NETWORK?

It's a non profit organization that aims at the protection of the cultural, social and natural heritage of the Basque's agricultural biodiversity. Through ethnobotanical investigation they work to preserve traditional knowledge of agricultural practices and local seeds. Thanks to their work, 2000 endangered seeds and fruits have been recuperated. All their work is possible thanks to a network of volunteers that believe in biodiversity conservation.



Learn more on [haziensarea.org](https://haziensarea.org)



Sweden

# Gothenburg and Västra Götaland region

The hub in Gothenburg and Västra Götaland region is led by RISE, Research Institutes of Sweden, and Chalmers Institute of Technology, bringing together expertise in sustainability, food systems, and innovation. The Hub's foundational work involved a collaborative process with diverse stakeholders—including policymakers, food providers, healthcare professionals, educators, citizens, food services, and media—to define a shared vision.

At its core, the Hub is driven by the vision of ensuring "food for all within planetary boundaries," prioritizing equitable access to local and sustainable food. This vision is

translated into three specific missions: promoting sustainable seafood, increasing vegetable and legume consumption, and encouraging increased whole grain-consumption.

Adopting a mission-oriented approach, the hub in Gothenburg and Västra Götaland region ensures that each activity has a clear purpose and measurable targets, aligning with SWITCH diet recommendations for healthier and more sustainable eating habits. With this structured framework, the Hub has developed five key activities designed to make tangible progress toward its goals.

### Mission-oriented approach

Our vision is food for all within planetary boundaries, with the aim of doubling the number of people able to eat a sustainable and healthy diet by 2027.

### Target Objectives

#### Promoting sustainable sea food



Sea food  
450g per week

#### More vegetables and legumes on our plates



Vegetables, fruits and berries  
450g per week  
Legumes (dry)  
150g per week

#### Focus on whole grains



Wholegrains  
90 g/day

### Hub Activities



Photo credits: Gothenburg Food hub

### Overview of Food hub Activities

#### The Blue SWITCH: promoting sustainable seafood in public school meals

Trains catering staff through cooking courses and workshops on how to integrate sustainable seafood in public meals. While students participate in sensory training and hands-on cooking experiences. The program also integrates educational materials into home economics classes and hosts a "Seafood Week," where students serve seafood dishes to their peers, fostering long-term healthy eating habits.

#### Target



#### The green food SWITCH – how we reach a greener gastronomy too good to resist

Focuses on empowering chefs as key agents of change in both public and private sector kitchens. Through workshops, recipe development, and communication strategies, the initiative encourages chefs to create plant-based meals that are both nutritious and visually appealing. Captivating communication techniques engage consumers and food providers in making sustainable choices.

#### Target



#### Promoting Sustainable and Healthy Gastronomy Among Future Chefs and Bakers

Aims to equip the next generation of chefs with the knowledge and motivation to make sustainability a core part of their future careers. Through expert-led seminars and hands-on cooking labs, culinary students gain practical skills in preparing meals aligned with Hub's key pillars: wholegrains, plant-based proteins, and sustainable seafood.

#### Target



#### Weekly menu and recipes collection

Aims to provide cost-friendly alternatives and simple guidelines for balanced, healthy meals aiming at making sustainable eating more practical. All recipes are clearly SWITCH-labeled, making it easier for consumers and food service providers to recognize and adopt healthier choices.

#### Target



#### The SWITCH Diet Intervention – Enhancing Learning and Consumer Behavior

Aims at assessing the health benefits and climate impact of the SWITCH diet, by tracking 200 participants from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Participants receive personalized dietary guidance, healthy food provisions, and weekly menus, helping researchers understand barriers to adopting healthier diets. Feedback from participants inform future policy recommendations for sustainable and health-conscious food systems.

#### Target



[Read about the dietary guidelines on pag 18](#)

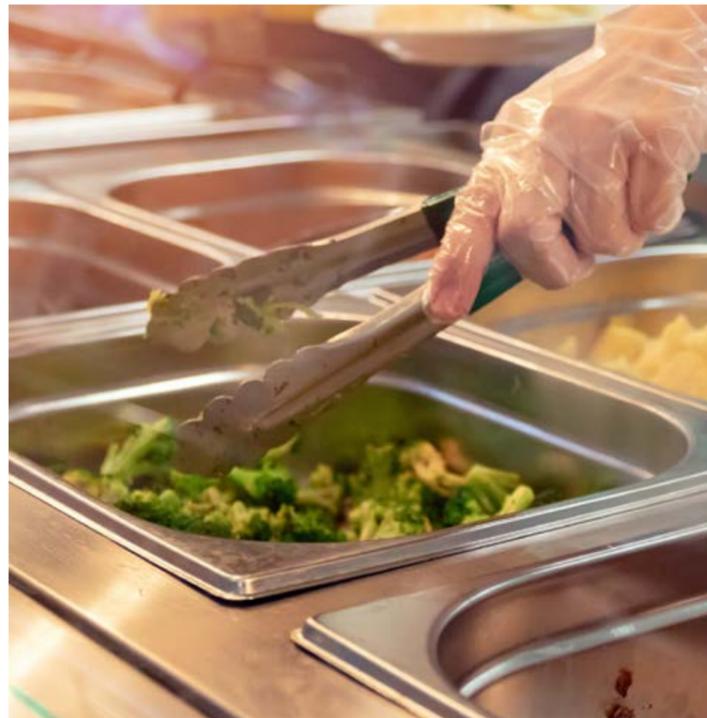


Photo credits: Maria Nehme O'Neill

## Bringing the Sea to the School's canteens

### Inspiring a New Wave of Sustainable Cooking

**School meals hold the power to shape eating habits, not just for children but for their families as well. In Gothenburg and the Västra Götaland region, an innovative project is using this opportunity to spark curiosity and appreciation for sustainable seafood among students and school staff. By equipping educators and catering teams with new skills and creative learning materials, the project aims to seamlessly integrate seafood into both the classroom and the school canteen, making it a natural part of everyday life. But how can this vision be brought to life in a practical, engaging way?**



#### How do we bring the sea to the schools?

A task force of 6-8 chefs from schools around Västra Götaland, together with local seafood producers is dedicated to the development of new recipes. They are the Blue Protein Development Group and they meet 3-4 times a year to create recipes, ideas and products based on specific seafood, such as mussels, seaweed or herring mince, to explore its full potential in school meals and other public settings. The group, through close collaboration and creative experimentation, creates innovative and sustainable meal solutions that can be implemented in public kitchens and contribute to a more nutritious and environmentally friendly diet.

After developing these recipes, they are shared through cooking courses designed to train chefs and teachers in preparing sustainable and nutritious seafood dishes for public kitchens. The workshops specifically target chefs and home economics teachers from two schools in northeast Gothenburg, a culturally diverse area, ensuring that sustainable seafood becomes an accessible and adaptable option for all.

These sessions bring together not only chefs and teachers but also seafood producers, a WWF influencer, and representatives from Skövde Municipality, a leader in sustainable seafood for public kitchens. By fostering collaboration among a diverse group of experts and practitioners, the courses create an educational and inspiring environment where new ideas and techniques are developed and shared. Following the same approach as the recipe development, each session focuses on a specific type of seafood, allowing participants to deeply engage with the ingredient and explore its potential in school and public institution meals.

The Nordic Seafood Summit has established itself as a key meeting point for stakeholders across the seafood industry, bringing together fishers, farmers, wholesalers, food processors, retailers, restaurants, researchers, policymakers, and authorities. This event has consistently provided a platform for discussions on the latest trends, challenges, and innovations shaping the seafood sector. This year's summit happened in Eriksbergshallen, Gothenburg on January 22-23, 2025. In this context, the Swedish Hub hosted the afternoon program on January 23 during which they offered a range of activities, including lectures, panel discussions, and workshops focusing on product development and innovation in the seafood sector. It was a unique opportunity to explore new ideas, discuss the future of the industry, and strengthen collaboration between public kitchens and seafood producers.



“

This year at the Nordic SeaFood Summit it became so clear how important working with public meals is - they are a big arena for sustainable seafood. On the one hand, the schools are obliged to serve a certain amount of sustainable seafood weekly. Which is why the public meal sector has a big interest in getting more knowledge and access to sustainable seafood. On the other side, the producers have a clear interest in reaching the market composed of the schools because it is large and offers the opportunity for long term partnerships. There is a clear symbiosis from both sides

- Anna Axelson, coordinator of the Sustainable Seafood Mission.

“

The SWITCH project is doing a great job in reaching everyone in the society. That is usually quite hard, but they are doing it right!

- Jill Axelsson Pabst, West Sweden Tourist board



France

# Montpellier Metropolis and Occitanie region

In France, the SWITCH project operates under INRAE (National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food, and Environment), located in the Occitanie-Montpellier Center. A dedicated team of eight researchers collaborates closely with civil organizations and city-level policymakers to design and implement a series of activities dedicated to improve access to sustainable food. The collaboration between researchers and policymakers aims at developing sustainable foodscapes and creating sustainable food strategies.

## Overview of Food hub Activities

**Improving citizen's access to food**

Supports the political strategy of Montpellier Metropolis to improve citizen's access to food by strengthening the network of food outlets through a renewed food offer with new food halls and facilitating people's mobility with the new tram line.

**Target**

**Improving Montpellier's food offer**

Supports, through the work of INRAE researchers, local institutions to create sustainable food offerings in supermarkets, contributing to the development of healthier foodscapes in the region.

**Target**

**Evaluation of Ici.C. Local in Open-Air Markets**

Implements the Ici.C.Local label on three markets of the Montpellier Metropolis area, and carries on an evaluation of its impact on consumers, farmers, food producers, and retailers involved in the scheme. The idea of the label is to provide visual guidance to consumers towards short food chains and sustainable products.

**Target**

Photo credits: Camilla Carioli (FFI)

## Overview of Food hub Activities

**Creation of a BOCAL Community**

Fosters a thriving community! The Food Hub expertise has been instrumental in nurturing BOCAL, Montpellier city's online platform mapping sustainable and healthy food places. A network of partners and voluntary citizens actively contribute to moderating and updating the platform, ensuring its relevance and accessibility. The collaboration between researchers and policymakers enables the long-term engagement of this voluntary community while also evaluating the platform's impact on the food practices of various actors.

Scan here  
[Bocal-languagedoc.fr](http://Bocal-languagedoc.fr)

**Target**

**Network for food challenges in priority neighborhoods of Montpellier**

Consists in a series of workshops designed as a space for participants, primarily identifying as being part of the Gypsy community of Montpellier, to describe their experiences with their food environment. The workshops take place in two priority neighbourhoods of the city (Cité Gély and Aiguelongue), and were co-designed with a social inclusion association (APAJ) and the participants to the workshops. The workshop series include: sharing of experiences regarding eating practices, exchange of knowledge on levers to access adequate foods, and hands-on activities to learn more about nutrition.

**Target**

**Support to the implementation and evaluation of the Caisse Alimentaire Commune**

Aims to promote access to healthy, sustainably produced foods. Through a fund, it provides participating residents with the equivalent of 100€ monthly to spend at selected food distribution points that meet sustainability criteria. A citizen committee manages store agreements and ensures inclusivity beyond vulnerable groups showcasing how food democracy is a core value of this project.

**Target**

**Development and Establishment of a Solidarity Food House (Maison de l'Alimentation Solidaire)**

Focuses on implementing Montpellier Metropolis policies on food democracy aiming at enhancing community access to sustainable food through a solidarity-based model. The project seeks to intertwine social diversity, shared governance, various stakeholders engagement, all for the co-creation of a multifunctional space.

**Target**



Photo credits: Cattiau Gilles (INRAE)

# Inclusive Food Systems

## In conversation with Laure Berling



**Laure Berling**  
Research Engineer, INRAE  
Montpellier Food hub Leader

**Key insights into how the food hub is addressing food accessibility, fostering citizen participation, and collaborating with marginalized communities to build a more inclusive food system. The conversation highlights the hub's initiatives and the role of the SWITCH project in enhancing co-creation and citizen engagement.**

### SHARE ONE ACTIVITY THAT REVOLVES AROUND MAKING ACCESS TO HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD EASIER?

One of our activities is the Caisse Alimentaire Commune (in English: Common Food Fund). It is an experiment of food social security that started in Montpellier in 2023, and that is now entering its second phase with 800 participants, from the initial 400. The idea is to give them a specific budget around 100-150 € per month to spend in food stores that respect certain sustainability and health criteria. This money comes from the participants themselves that contribute from €1 to over or close to €200 and are supplemented by public grants. The citizens choose the sum they want to contribute with and it depends on how they see themselves in the income scale.

The sustainability criteria for the supermarkets

are chosen in a democratic way through a citizens' committee.

### HOW DO YOU ENGAGE PEOPLE FOR THIS PROJECT AND FOR THE CITIZENS COMMITTEE?

We are lucky that Montpellier is a very active city regarding the topic of sustainable and healthy food. Many of the actors across the food system in Montpellier are highly engaged in organizing events, presentations, informational meetings, and other activities around this topic. This means we have many opportunities throughout the year to participate in these initiatives and promote our work.

That said, there is still a particular need to include people who represent the whole population of Montpellier, meaning individuals from different backgrounds as they hold different types of knowledge and experiences.

For instance, to form the Citizens Committee, at the beginning, there was a lot of effort needed to engage a diverse array of voluntary participants. Eventually, the partners managed to involve around 60 people. However, the challenge was to include people from diverse backgrounds, even those who, at first glance, didn't see themselves as a good fit for the citizens' committee. Indeed, with the committee we are trying to get out of the bubble of people who are already sensitive to the topic of healthy and sustainable food.

For instance, we are engaging with students and people of older age that have different opinions and experiences about these topics.

### WHAT IS THE CITIZENS' COMMITTEE?

The Citizens' Committee plays a critical role in the governance of the Caisse Alimentaire Commune. It is composed of around 60 voluntary participants from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. The committee meets monthly for full-day sessions where they discuss and make democratic decisions on issues such as identifying eligible food stores or markets for fund allocation. The committee also engages in field activities. Key issues include improving geographical and economic accessibility to food and strengthening networks and collaboration among different food system actors.



In the end, we were able to engage these individuals through conversations with researchers, hosting the informational events that I just mentioned, and—most importantly—working closely with civil organizations and social protection organizations. This collaboration was helpful to create a committee that reflects, as much as possible, the diversity of the socioeconomic backgrounds of Montpellier's population.

### HOW IS THE CITIZENS' COMMITTEE STRUCTURED, AND WHAT ACTIVITIES DO ITS MEMBERS TYPICALLY ENGAGE IN?

The committee meets once a month for a full day, usually on Saturdays, to discuss various issues related to the Common Food Fund. For instance, they may propose introducing a new space within the project - such as grocery stores, markets, and purchasing groups - where participants of the fund could go to purchase sustainable food items. Decisions are made democratically through voting.

In addition to these discussions, members occasionally visit local producers around Montpellier to address key challenges in the region's food system. Some of the typical issues they encounter include improving geographical and economic accessibility, as well as enhancing the network and sense of community among different food system actors.

### A KEY FOCUS OF THE HUB IS ITS WORK WITH DISADVANTAGED NEIGHBORHOODS. HOW DO YOU ENGAGE AND INCLUDE HISTORICALLY MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES LIKE THOSE IN CITÉ GÉLY IN YOUR PROJECTS?

Working with these communities has been a learning experience for us—there has been a learning curve, for sure. When we started, it was crucial to have some prior knowledge of how to work with these communities to ensure engagement and inclusivity. The partner with whom we co-designed our workshops has been running similar sessions with them for the past

five years. So, she knows the community very well and provided us with invaluable insights to help design the workshops in a way that everyone would feel taken into account. For instance, we learned that not all participants are comfortable with writing and reading French, which was an important consideration for us. This meant we had to adapt our approach, focusing on voice and conversation rather than written activities. By prioritizing dialogue, we were able to ensure that everyone could fully participate and share their perspectives.

To give you another example, it was also crucial to understand in advance that the participants bore a lot of wariness towards food items that they have not selected themselves. This mistrust comes from their cultural background, which has historically faced marginalization and violence, also through food. As a result, there was a lot of apprehension and distance regarding the food items we brought. One day, for instance, during a nutrition workshop, we had to ensure that all the food items we bought were fully packaged, sealed, and visibly new to assure the participants the food was safe to eat.

These examples highlight that we needed to meet specific requirements to ensure their participation in our activities. It has been a fascinating experience! Of course, this is still a learning process for us—and we hope these lessons-learned can contribute to a wider effort to engage these populations more in the city's initiative to build sustainable foodscapes.



**In the end, understanding and respecting these cultural requirements has been rewarding. It allowed us to build a genuine trust bond with the communities, and foster more open and honest conversations about their food choices, attitudes, and concerns around access to sustainable and healthy foods.**

### WHAT HAS BEEN THE IMPACT OF THE SWITCH PROJECT ON THE HUB'S INITIATIVES AND APPROACH?

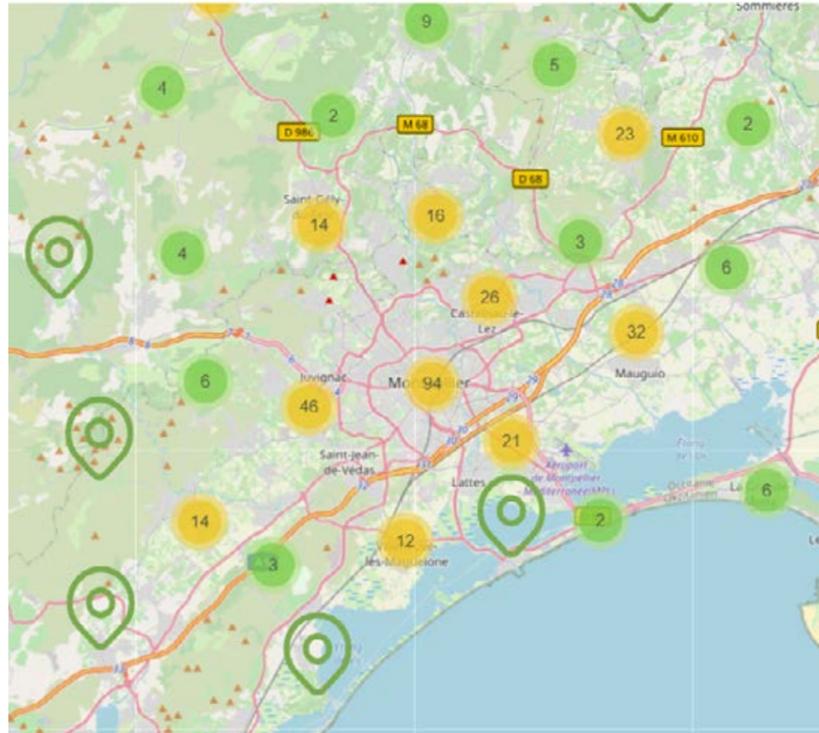
I think the SWITCH project has provided not only funding, but also valuable flexibility in how we approach the evaluation of the projects we work on. The project has a strong emphasis on co-creation and citizen engagement. This has allowed us to develop evaluation processes that are more inclusive and not solely research-driven. We've brought in civil organizations, citizen groups, and even the Metropolis to participate.

# Choosing Food That Matches Your Values

## A Guide to Sustainable Producers with BOCAL

BOCAL is a citizen's guide to finding the right food for each individual. It is a platform where residents of the Montpellier Metropolis area can discover food products that align with their personal definition of eating well. Since "eating well" means different things to different people, BOCAL offers a variety of choices tailored to diverse needs and preferences. BOCAL offers a range of possibilities to suit different needs - whether someone is interested in discovering local products, making environmentally conscious choices, or discovering initiatives that take part in sustainable food system transformation efforts.

BOCAL groups together sustainable producers and sales outlets on an interactive map. All the actors have in common the commitment to ethical and responsible practices. All the committed actors can be found in an online interactive map:



**In this case, the map is specific to the Montpellier Metropolis and neighbouring districts food scene, but such commitments from supermarkets should be implemented across Europe to support the transition toward a sustainable and just food system. The following criteria outline this vision:**

### 1 Transition approach

Every actor agrees that to shift toward a sustainable agroecological and food system change at all levels is needed.

### 2 Consumer Action

All stakeholders recognize the power of consumers as a driving force for change in the food system. Purchasing local and seasonal products from responsible agriculture plays a crucial role in ensuring fair remuneration for producers and promoting a more sustainable and equitable food system.

### 3 Responsible Production

In line with agroecology principles, producers commit to the efficient use of resources and energy, with a focus on respecting and fostering biodiversity and soil life. This entails engaging with caring farming methods that limit inputs as much as possible and favour local seeds.

### 4 Circular economy

Sourcing locally and establishing short supply chains is essential to have a better traceability of food products, encourages local economies and limits environmental impact.

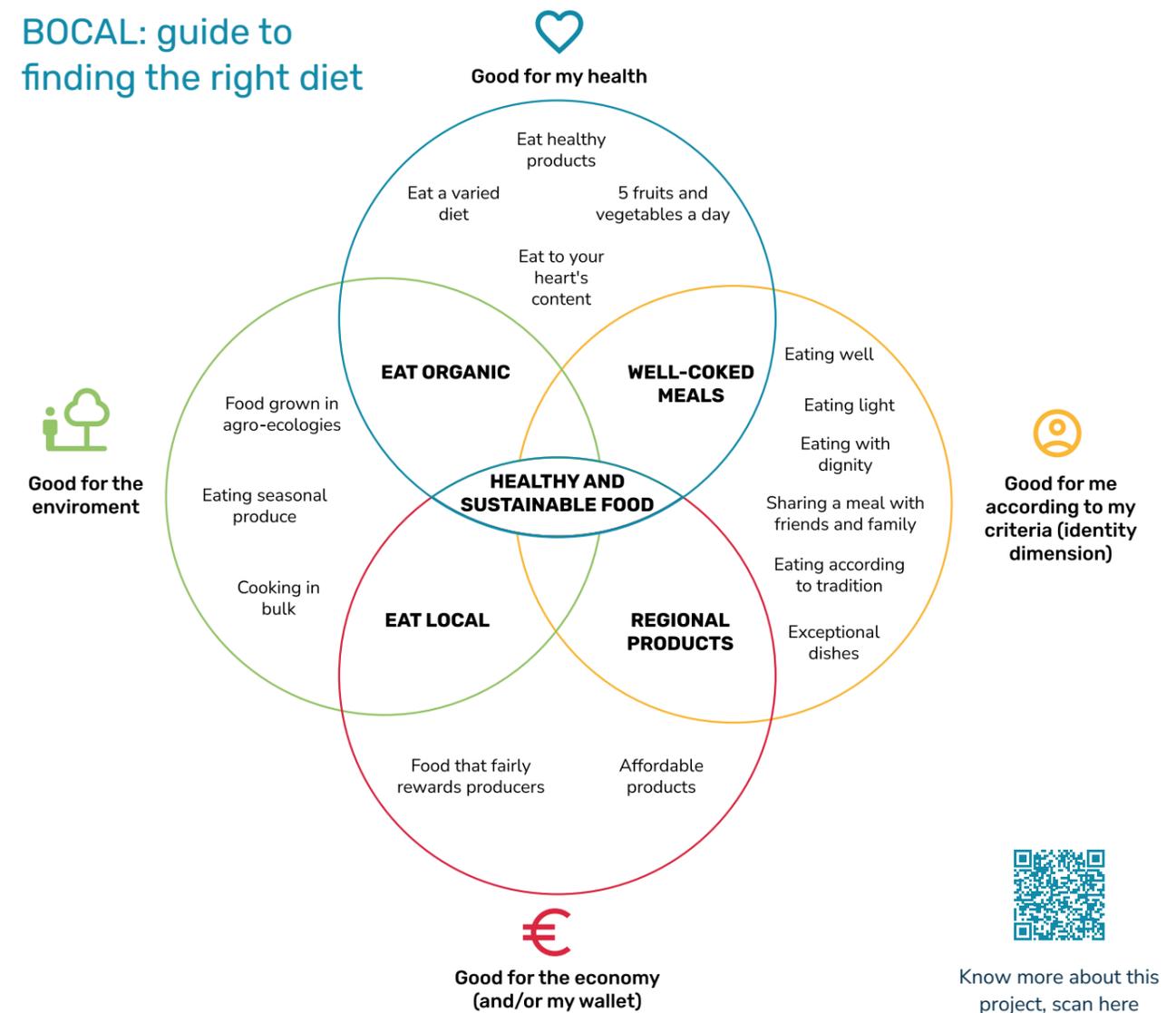
### 5 Circular economy

It entails a commitment toward agroecology. Indeed this responsible model is based on local production, the development of local supply circuits and the recycling of waste.

### 6 Knowledge transfer

All the actors commit to knowledge sharing and experimentation because they believe that everyone can be an innovator.

## BOCAL: guide to finding the right diet



“

Since 2015, food policy players have been working more and more to develop strong links with research - Montpellier is fortunate to have an internationally renowned research ecosystem. Indeed, it was the researchers who proposed an agroecology and food policy back in 2015. It was something new in France. As a local authority, we draw inspiration from their results and try to implement them in our public policies. The SWITCH project has allowed us to tighten this connection. It brought us stronger support and stimulation to go toward new projects, as well as an evaluation effort of existing public policy to set up new objectives.

- Isabelle Terrasson, Head of Agroecology and Food policy strategy at Montpellier Méditerranée Metropolis (Responsable du Service Stratégie Agroécologique et Alimentaire)

”

My involvement with SWITCH opened my eyes on problematics and reflections that I was not imagining. It allowed me to think in new ways on the impact my company has with the people I work with both close and far from me. For example, I had not thought about the impact of my store on the working conditions of children when I buy chocolate.

- Julien Zerbib, owner of bakery la cookiserie FLOUR



Italy

## Rome and Lazio region

The Hub in the Rome and Lazio region is led by Agro Camera, the Special Agency of the Rome Chamber of Commerce dedicated to developing and innovating the city's agri-food sector. However, its work extends beyond institutional efforts, engaging a diverse network of local actors committed to promoting sustainable food systems.

Food is deeply intertwined with cultural identity in this region, where the appreciation of local and seasonal products is not only an environmental and health-conscious choice but also a way to preserve culinary heritage. Agro Camera's initiatives reflect this vision by addressing multiple dimensions of the agri-food system, from agro-environmental sustainability to educational programs. By bridging these areas, the Hub works to strengthen the link between tradition and innovation, ensuring that sustainable food practices are both accessible and culturally relevant.

### Overview of Food hub Activities

#### SWITCH Boosters – Strengthening Short Food Supply Chains



Examines whether innovative short food supply chains can help transition to healthy and sustainable diets. By strengthening connections between small producers and consumers, it fosters local relationships and expands the Hub's multi-actor network. This activity aims at addressing the limited access to local foods that consumers in the region have.

Target



#### Healthy and Sustainable Kitchen Labs for Elderly People



Targets the elderly, a vulnerable group with specific health and economic challenges, by improving their access to healthy and sustainable food. It also promotes intergenerational synergies by engaging students from Agricultural and Hotel Institutes to share cooking tips with the elderly and empower elderly participants to pass on their traditional Roman recipes.

Target



#### SWITCH for Healthy and Sustainable Restaurants



A professional chef trained in the principles develops new healthy and sustainable recipes using local ingredients, which are tested in selected restaurants. The outcome is a recipe book that simplifies SWITCH knowledge, promotes sustainability among food providers, and strengthens the link between restaurants and local food production.

Target



## A note from Silvia Paolini Rome Food Hub Leader



At Agro Camera, our work has always centered on sustainability, agriculture, and the local food landscape. Through the SWITCH project, we have expanded our focus to include consumers, recognizing the crucial role they play in shifting dietary habits. However, in today's world, consumers are overwhelmed by information from the media and health sectors about what is "right" to eat. To create lasting change, we must go beyond simply telling people what to do - we need to help them understand "why" this transition is necessary and what practical steps they can take in their daily lives.

This lesson became clear during our first engagement with elderly participants. When we introduced the project, their immediate concern was to not be medicalised. They had

been part of other projects in which health experts measured their weight, their blood, and told them what to eat. It was a powerful realization: a direct health-centered approach would not work. Instead, we needed to understand their priorities and co-create a path that felt meaningful and realistic to them. Building a food transition in this way is a long and complex process, but it is also where real, lasting transformation happens.

Our goal is to engage local actors - consumers, food producers, educators, and nutritionists - through a bottomup approach. Moving forward, once we gather real, actionable insights from these communities, we will translate them into meaningful recommendations for policymakers.



Read about our policy dialogue on page 60



Photo credits: Rome Food hub

# How chefs can pioneer change?

## The Food Explorer tool in practice

by **Silvia Paolini**  
Agro Camera Rome  
Rome Food Hub Leader



On December 9th, 2024, the Rome and Lazio Region Hub of the SWITCH Project organized a seminar at the Institute "Tor Carbone – A. Narducci", the oldest and most prestigious Professional Institute for Food, Wine, and Hospitality in Rome. Here, the Roman Hub applied the Food Explorer tool in this educational activity. The event aimed to introduce students and teachers to some of the SWITCH Project work, with a focus on healthy and sustainable diets (H & S), and to test the Smart Counter-Food Explorer tool through a practical cooking demonstration. The seminar was met with enthusiasm by School Principal Cristina Tonelli, who facilitated engagement across the school, ensuring active participation from both students and the faculty. Around 50 students from 3 different classes and 8 teachers and school staff were involved.

**Thanks to the collaboration of Chef and teacher Francesco Staniscia, the event went beyond a presentation—it became a hands-on learning experience with a full cooking demonstration and recipe evaluation using the health and sustainability parameters of the Food Explorer tool.**

The session opened with Rome Hub Leaders, Carlo Hausmann and Silvia Paolini, who introduced the SWITCH Project and the hub's role in promoting nutritious and environmentally sustainable diets over the next two years. Then, Professor Simona Castaldi from the Università degli Studi della Campania Luigi Vanvitelli highlighted the connection between food and environmental impact, emphasizing the catering sector's growing responsibility in shaping healthy and sustainable

eating habits.

The Smart Counter Food Explorer tool was presented by Marco Pizzuto from P.Osti, who invited students and teachers to test its ability to assess the nutritional and environmental impact of ingredients and complete recipes. Following this, Professor Francesco Staniscia led a cooking demonstration featuring two variations of handmade pasta "Chitarrine," differing in flour type and toppings - one was completely vegan while the other featured animal products such as lamb and eggs. Students not only observed but actively participated in preparing and tasting the dishes. Around 10 students took part in the cooking demonstration.



The Smart Counter-Food Explorer Tool is a great addition to my teaching. It helps students truly understand what sustainability means in the food industry, making learning both practical and engaging.

- Francesco Staniscia, chef-teacher



The interactive session concluded with a demonstration of the Food Explorer tool in action, showcasing its ability to evaluate the dishes' nutritional and environmental profiles. The two dishes scored very differently in terms of their environmental and health impact, with the vegan dish resulting more sustainable. Afterwards, the students engaged in a lively discussion on the role of sustainable choices in professional kitchens.

**The experience sparked a strong interest among students and teachers, many of whom expressed enthusiasm for integrating the tool into future lessons as a way to make informed and sustainable ingredient choices.**

Each participant received a certificate of attendance, marking their involvement in this important initiative. For the

Rome and Lazio Region Hub, engaging future food professionals in the SWITCH Project is a significant step toward long-term impact. Incorporating sustainability into culinary education ensures that tomorrow's chefs will be equipped with the knowledge and tools to create a healthier, more sustainable food system.



Watch the conference, scan here

Photo credits: Rome Food hub

Looking



ahead

## Moving from idea to actions

We have explored the role of science in shaping better diets, the power of local engagement in driving change, and the necessity of policy to make those changes last. Now, let's look ahead at the next steps in the SWITCH journey.

SWITCH will continue to pursue its vision for a future where research, lived experiences, and governance work hand in hand to create food systems that are healthier, more sustainable, and more just. In the coming years, we continue to explore important questions:

HOW CAN RESEARCH CONTINUE TO SUPPORT DECISION-MAKING AT BOTH LOCAL AND EUROPEAN LEVELS?

WHAT ROLE DO FOOD HUBS PLAY IN ENSURING THAT INNOVATION REACHES THE PEOPLE WHO NEED IT MOST?

HOW CAN POLICYMAKERS BETTER INTEGRATE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE AND COMMUNITY INSIGHTS INTO FOOD STRATEGIES?

# Future of Science and Community Based Food Policies

## How can we engage with policy-makers?



The commitment to science - driven transformation remains at the core of SWITCH. We have seen that co-creating with and co-learning from the seven groups of changemakers - citizens, educators, journalists, health professionals, policy makers, food service actors and food providers - is essential to creating a lasting change in the European food systems.

A combination of science and hand-on application in the Hubs are delivering important results for systemic change. While the Hubs have played a crucial role in engaging regional policymakers, SWITCH as a whole also strives to contribute to policy development at the European level. We would like to see our findings translate into evidence-based policies that support sustainable and healthy diets. Tools like the Smart Counter, Food Explorer, and the psychosocial survey are being tested and refined in real-world settings, providing valuable insights into how people engage with food and what interventions work best. Meanwhile, photovoice research and hub activities are amplifying the voices of communities, particularly those most vulnerable to food insecurity and dietary inequalities.

All this work lays the foundation for future policies. Through continuous dialogue with the European Commission, EU agencies, and key national and international stakeholders, SWITCH is positioning itself as a key contributor to the global conversation on food system transformation.

This effort to establish a solid connection with policymakers is synthesized, for instance, by the networking event that took place on the 25th of November 2024. The discussion here centered on insights from various European-funded projects tackling health, sustainability, and food systems, with a focus on policy-making.

They discussed key challenges, for example engaging stakeholders such as retailers and barriers reaching vulnerable populations like migrants and low-income families. Projects varied in their approaches, with some emphasizing individual health factors and others addressing broader food environments, highlighting the need for integrated solutions. The event also included a brainstorming session on policy recommendations. Some of the elements that emerged include the necessity of the development of a holistic framework for Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs) at the European level, ensuring both alignment across member states and local adaptability. Another outcome is that experts also stressed the importance of tailored recommendations rather than broad, one-size-fits-all policies, with a particular emphasis on circular economy transitions and structural changes in food production systems.

With upcoming policy recommendations the project is working toward a reality where science, local communities and policy move hand in hand to create a just, sustainable, and health-focused food system for all.

## Next Steps

### Expanding SWITCH's impact on food systems

As SWITCH moves forward, the focus remains on refining and expanding the project's impact across research, policy, community engagement and action.

In the coming years, the different partners will work to deepen their understanding of City-Region Food Systems, clarifying their role in sustainable food policies. From a scientific perspective, SWITCH partners will complete a comprehensive assessment of European dietary deviations from health and sustainability guidelines, delivering region-specific recommendations for food hubs to implement. Understanding barriers to dietary change will be crucial in ensuring these recommendations are practical and actionable. To reach this goal, the dialogues and feedback loop between researchers and food hubs will be strengthened further.

#### SWITCH Food Hubs

Their role is impertinent in continuous monitoring and data gathering to inform research through their work with community and the development of the activities that inspire action and real change, engaging producers, citizens, chefs and schools.

#### Scientific Partners

They are developing future food scenarios to assess the longterm impact of continuing with business-as-usual food consumption patterns. This research will serve as a foundation for designing alternative scenarios that can inform targeted policy interventions, such as sustainable school meal programs or campaigns to reduce red meat consumption among younger generations. Additionally, a crucial step in SWITCH's scientific

agenda is the development of a health indicator, which links specific dietary risks to non-communicable diseases. By quantifying how food consumption patterns affect health outcomes, SWITCH aims to provide data-driven insights that support the development of evidence-based dietary policies.

#### Digital Partners

Another exciting project in development is the Digital Hub experience (DHE). As covered in our first edition, it is a platform designed to strengthen connections within regional food communities. Citizens can use the app to make informed food decisions by tracking their food choices and access insights on health and sustainability. Chefs can assess and enhance their recipes' impact while attracting clients through AI powered visual tools. Policymakers will have access to dynamic food data, enabling informed decisionmaking. Additionally, the DHE serves as a space for SWITCH Hubs to promote activities, share

stories, and drive local dietary transitions, empowering key food system actors to foster positive change. The App developers from EPFL (École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne) have visited some of the Hubs during summer 2024 to test the platform and gather feedback that reflects the real-world usage scenarios of all user types. The researchers are currently starting the feedback data analysis. First insights show high usability and user engagement, as well as specific improvements and adjustments to be implemented. They continue to collaborate closely with Food Hubs, collecting local recipes, stories, and data to enrich these digital tools and ensure they reflect real-world food systems.

During the coming two years of the project, all these partners, who have in common the ambitious goal of changing food systems, will continue to work together to shape European diets for a healthy and sustainable future.



# Join us to act **now**

At the beginning, we asked: how do we move from ideas to action? We hope this edition has sparked inspiration and offered insights into the collective efforts driving real change. SWITCH is more than a project - it's a growing community. Stay connected with us online to follow the latest research, hear inspiring stories from our Food Hubs, and discover what you can do to be part of change. Join the movement toward a fairer, more resilient food future - because change starts with all of us acting together.

Follow us and stay updated with SWITCH events



Discover more



switchdiet.eu

## Join our Multi Actor's Committee (MAC)

The MAC brings together representatives from seven key changemakers: policymakers, food providers, food services and hospitality, education, nutrition and healthcare, journalism, and citizens from all across EU.

This committee will act as an advisory body, offering insights to refine the project's communication and dissemination strategies and assess key deliverables. Meetings are organized on project needs and at most, the commitment may involve up to two online meetings per year.

Joining MAC is an opportunity to contribute to reshaping Europe's food systems, helping to amplify the adoption of sustainable dietary behaviors and fostering tangible, long-lasting change.

Be a changemaker!



Scan the QR code to join the project!



## SWITCH JOURNALISM AWARD 2025

The journalism award is open to scholars, journalists, writers, students, and anyone passionate about raising awareness and fostering dialogue around the shift toward sustainable and healthy diets.

Participants are invited to submit original contributions that address one or more of the following thematic areas:

Sustainable and healthy diets, Food education and awareness, Food equity and accessibility, Innovation and digitalization in agri-food systems, Policies for behavioural change in dietary habits.

The winner will be awarded a trip to Pollica (SA) in Cilento, an emblematic community of the Mediterranean Diet recognized by UNESCO.

Scan the QR Code to learn more about it and submit your article



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