



MADRE Memorandum Of Understanding



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TOWARDS A MEDITERRANEAN NETWORK ON METROPOLITAN AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

MEMORANDUM of UNDERSTANDING

The purpose of the Memorandum of Understanding for a Mediterranean Network on Metropolitan Agriculture and Food System

The objective of this document is to ensure the continuity of the transnational and multi-stakeholder dynamic of cooperation initiated by the MADRE project, financed by the European programme Interreg Mediterranean. Signatories must adhere to its overall philosophy and commit to its provisions.

1. The importance of metropolitan agriculture and food systems in the Mediterranean

6.3 billion people will live in urban areas by 2050. Although recognised as a major lever for the sustainability and competitiveness of metropolises, urban and peri-urban agriculture still suffers from a lack of consideration in public policies, preventing it from reaching a wider audience. Recent years saw the emergence of some initiatives, both at a local and international level.

The best known of these initiatives is the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, signed by 113 cities in October 2015. Today, it has been signed by 165 cities, including Barcelona, Montpellier, Marseille, Bologna, Tirana and Thessaloniki. By signing this pact, they committed to develop sustainable, inclusive, resilient, safe and diverse food systems, which provide healthy food accessible to all and keep waste to a minimum, while preserving biodiversity and mitigating the effects of climate change.

The MADRE project was launched along the same lines and shares a number of actors with the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact. MADRE – Metropolitan Agriculture for Developing an innovative, sustainable and Responsible Economy – is a European territorial cooperation project (Interreg Med) co-financed by the Interreg Mediterranean programme, through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Instrument of Pre-Accession (IPA). MADRE aims at fostering a change process in the metropolitan food supply model by capitalising on existing good practices, by empowering the different stakeholders in metropolitan and peri-urban agriculture and by initiating a dynamic of transnational cooperation in the Med region.

Considered as an emerging phenomenon, metropolitan agriculture makes it possible to meet several urban challenges by contributing to food security, job creation, environmental quality or strengthening social ties and territorial solidarity between urban and rural areas. According to FAO, a paradigm shift in both agricultural policies and urban planning is nevertheless required to ensure the optimal development and the sustainability of this activity.

2. The MADRE project

The MADRE project capitalises on a set of knowledge, policies and pilot actions carried out on the topic and activates existing networks to enable effective transnational cooperation in the Mediterranean. Its objectives are :

- To improve the innovation capacity of metropolitan agriculture stakeholders;
- To identify and evaluate the economic, environmental and social performance factors of metropolitan agriculture;
- To identify and network metropolitan agriculture stakeholders;
- To assess the feasibility, conditions and means of creating a transnational network of actors in metropolitan agriculture.

The partners of this project are :

- Marseille (France): AVITEM (Agency for Sustainable Mediterranean Cities and Territories), ANIMA Investment Network (cooperation platform for economic development in the Mediterranean);
- Montpellier (France): CIHEAM-IAMM (Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Montpellier);
- Bologna (Italy): Metropolitan City of Bologna;
- Barcelona (Spain): Medcities and Barcelona Metropolitan Area;
- Thessaloniki (Greece): Aristotle University of Thessaloniki;
- Tirana (Albania): Agricultural University of Tirana.

After setting up metropolitan working groups in the six MADRE metropolises (Barcelona, Montpellier, Marseille, Bologna, Tirana and Thessaloniki) and producing an Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture Best Practice Catalogue, the project partners organised a series of transnational working groups on the six previously identified areas of innovation in urban and peri-urban agriculture: farmers' innovation, social innovation, consumer innovation, academic research, territorial innovation and transnational innovation.

The conclusions of these working groups form the basis for 6 White Papers and a Policy Paper, which will be disseminated to the different territorial levels. The working groups also identified key actors involved in the development of urban and peri-urban agriculture and interested in creating links with other Mediterranean actors, both from the North and the South, to exchange and collaborate.

Further investigations revealed the opportunity to continue fostering cooperation and networking efforts (North and South) on metropolitan agriculture and food systems and engage in this effort not only metropolises and other local authorities, but also universities, research and training centres, farmers' organisations, consumer associations and other civil society organisations.

The main tool of this network will be a web platform Agri-Madre that promotes actors, projects, resources and events on metropolitan agriculture and food systems in the Mediterranean. It will be interactive and allow users to register their projects/activities and propose resources and events.

3. Recommendations from the Policy Paper

There are six main areas where progress can be made to encourage and accompany the extension of metropolitan agriculture and food systems.

First, it is important to incorporate metropolitan agriculture into legal frameworks and strategic planning. Thus, specific legal instruments should be designed that can fit and foster innovative projects. Long-term legislation should be developed to ensure the sustainability of projects.

Second, there is a need to ensure the protection and access to agricultural land, which can be done through a series of measures and laws. Implementing land stewardship contracts and exploring models of public-private agreements are good examples. Public authorities should be able to reassign unexploited land, discourage speculation, and create protection perimeters and agricultural parks. The dimension of cultural barriers and poverty traps should not be forgotten.

Third, it is essential to encourage viable and sustainable economic models, by supporting community-led projects, providing them with economic and legal assessment, and helping them professionalize their logistics. Another way is to support collective organisation, create labels that provide information on products' added value, or to use environmental compensation mechanisms.

Fourth, measures should be taken to localize food systems, particularly by implementing alternative food production-distribution-consumption configurations for a better sharing of added value. Reducing the power of large groups and intermediaries is important to encourage economically and socially fair relations. To meet the growing demand, food flows need to be studied at the metropolitan level before defining the most suitable alternative networks and scaling them. Local public authorities should make easier administrative procedures and open spaces to help the new structures grow.

Fifth, the governance of food systems should be improved and participation integrated into policy making. It is most efficient to work with a 'meet in the middle' approach, which mixes top-down and bottom-up governance. This approach allows to take into account the huge diversity of actors and topics involved in food systems. Promoting forms of food democracy is a more concrete way to strengthen local governance.

Sixth, effective communication strategies should be adopted to promote local food systems. It can be achieved through the provision of sufficient funding and on the attention paid to communication and awareness activities right from the start of projects. Information should be presented in an understandable and attractive way. Traditional communication methods can be complemented with more innovative ideas and divulgation events organised in different spaces (such as farms or gardens).

The attached Policy Paper details and illustrates these recommendations aiming to foster a change process in metropolitan agriculture and food systems.

4. The interest of a Mediterranean network on metropolitan agriculture and food systems

Several organisations, networks and initiatives address agriculture and food issues at the international level. Some other organisations and networks focus on the Mediterranean area. But none of these initiatives addresses Mediterranean agriculture and food systems with a multi-country and multi-stakeholder approach. Yet, several factors support the case for a specifically Mediterranean approach (including Northern and Southern Mediterranean countries): the common climate and environmental challenges (biodiversity hotspot), the region's heritage as cradle of agriculture and related practices, the nutritional and culinary value of the Mediterranean diet and associated products, and the specific culture where family and human relations have a central place. Moreover, it is crucial to remove boundaries between stakeholders and facilitate collective work on strategic issues.

A survey carried out by the MADRE project, revealed the networking priorities of metropolitan agriculture stakeholders as:

- Connecting actors and territories either virtually using interactive web tools or physically during international events;
- Preserving and promoting Mediterranean agriculture and food systems through research, dissemination and awareness raising activities;
- Building collective capacities of action through the exchange of experience and practices ("pool of practices"), of existing and new know-how, technics and methodologies ("learning");
- Stimulating change towards local, resilient and sustainable food models with joint advocacy activities.

Stakeholders were convinced of the benefits of a multi-country and multi-stakeholder cooperation scheme across the Mediterranean. It would create a new model of governance of agricultural and food systems and act as a bridge between different countries and stakeholders facing common challenges.

MADRE Networking efforts aim to serve as a bridge between various Mediterranean countries and stakeholders facing common challenges.

The signatures of this MoU commit to continue and strengthen collaboration and networking, open this efforts to other Mediterranean territories, stakeholders and networks, and foster the representation of metropolitan stakeholders and clusters at the Mediterranean scale with the aim to enable the implementation of the MADRE Policy Recommendations.

5. Commitments by signatory parties

By signing this Memorandum of Understanding, we, representatives of local and metropolitan public authorities, research institutions, private sector bodies and civil society organisations :

- Approve the recommendations of the Policy Paper and intend to implement or disseminate them in our territory. In particular, we will facilitate policy dialogue by facilitating multi-stakeholder strategic councils and networking opportunities.
- Acknowledge that the climatic, geographic, environmental and cultural peculiarities of metropolitan agriculture and the high culinary and nutritional value of the Mediterranean diet justify a specific Mediterranean approach.
- Agree on placing efforts to continue and increase collaboration and networking making use of existing structures and tools as the Agri-MADRE Platform.
- Adhere to the integration of all Mediterranean territories, particularly those of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries.
- Recognise that local authorities should play a central role within this network. Such an effort should be coordinated as much as possible with already existing networks and projects, in particular the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, FAO Food for the Cities and Urban Food Action initiatives, UCLG – United Cities and Local Governments, UNESCO Chair in World Food Systems, Medcities, among others.

Salon-de-Provence, 1st of June 2018,

List of signatories

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Salon-de-Provence, 1st of June 2018,

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