



**PARI**  
PATHS FOR RURAL  
INNOVATION

Project ID: 101169803

# **MANDATORY TRANSNATIONAL WORKSHOP REPORT 1**

**Deliverable #3.1**



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Authors: E. Mancinelli (REVES), D. Daniele (DIESIS)

Reviewers: L. Martignetti and E. Klaer-Morselli (REVES), M. Wandel (Region Östergötland), P. Tingvall (Coompanion Östergötland), P. Lansac and I. Ugalde (ANEL), N. Santos and S. Silva (Câmara Municipal de Torres Vedras), S. Van Lent (SAW-B)

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## Introduction

The concept of *clusters* revolves around the convergence of diverse resources to achieve collective goals that individual actors would struggle to reach alone. While clusters can take various forms (industrial, territorial, economic, or sectoral), **Clusters for Social and Ecological Innovation (CSEIs)** stand out as a unique category. Unlike traditional clusters, they transcend silo approaches by integrating resources from different domains to strengthen systemic responses to social and environmental challenges. Their adaptability makes them difficult to model, yet this same flexibility allows them to be shaped according to local needs, provided that the communities forming these clusters have access to the right knowledge, tools, and policy frameworks to support their development.

Against this background, the **PARI project** seeks to accelerate the creation of social and environmental innovation clusters in rural areas by enhancing the capacities of social economy actors, local authorities, and entrepreneurial stakeholders.



A key focus is the development of methodologies to map and mobilise **social, environmental, and economic resources** within local ecosystems. These resources may take the form of organisations, citizen groups, policies, programmes, projects, infrastructure, or other assets from both public and private actors. Social resources contribute to inclusion and cohesion, environmental resources support sustainability and climate resilience, and economic resources foster local development. Effective engagement of these resources requires **specific governance models**, which will be explored through collaborative discussions and practical case studies.

A defining feature of PARI is its **mission-based approach**, which prioritises learning from real-life experiences, practices, and expertise already present in partner territories. Field missions serve as crucial tools for gathering first-hand data, observing local conditions, and understanding the unique challenges and opportunities of each rural context. These missions, designed as in-depth study visits, enable project partners to **collect evidence and develop a shared understanding** of key issues. The process is driven by **mutual learning**, where stakeholders exchange knowledge based on concrete data and real-world insights. By fostering a collaborative, evidence-based approach, these missions act as launchpads for further territorial development, ensuring that strategies are not only innovative but also deeply rooted in local realities.

In this context, the **Capacity Building Workshop** that was organised in Brussels on January 30<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup>, 2025, served as a key step in bringing together expertise, practical experiences, and collective problem-solving. It began with a **comprehensive analysis** of the current landscape of CSEIs across the EU, featuring insights also from the **Rural Pact initiative** and discussions on good practices, challenges, and strategic approaches. In the afternoon, participants took part in a field mission to **Charleroi**, where they explored the work of **Ceinture Alimentaire Charleroi Métropole (CACM)**. This initiative exemplified a **territorial approach to sustainable food systems**, operating within a social and solidarity economy framework.

The second day of the workshop shifted towards a more interactive and participatory format, engaging stakeholders in a **co-design session** focused on refining the key features of CSEIs, with a particular emphasis on environmental resources and governance. By combining expert knowledge with hands-on collaboration, this session provided participants with **practical tools and methodologies** for cluster development. The workshop concluded with a synthesis of key takeaways and next steps, reinforcing the commitment to advancing social and ecological innovation in rural areas.

This initiative, supported by the European Union, represented a crucial opportunity to **bridge knowledge, practice, and policy**. Through exchange, observation, and shared learning, the workshop and its missions contributed to building more integrated, resilient, and sustainable rural innovation ecosystems across Europe.

# 1. The Capacity Building Workshop

Empowering project partners as agents of local development requires more than traditional training; it demands an integrated, participatory, and mission-driven approach. By combining knowledge transfer, experiential learning, collaborative co-design, and adaptive implementation, this methodology equips stakeholders with the tools to build resilient, inclusive, and sustainable territorial innovation clusters. The success of this approach lies in its emphasis on real-world engagement, shared governance, and continuous learning. By fostering networks of empowered actors, capacity building becomes a catalyst for long-term transformation, ensuring that rural communities across Europe can effectively harness their social, environmental, and economic potential for sustainable development.

The **PARI Capacity Building Workshop** represented a significant step in fostering collaboration, knowledge exchange, and collective problem-solving among key stakeholders. The event brought together the project experts and policymakers, managers and practitioners, to deepen their understanding of **Clusters for Social and Ecological Innovation (CSEIs)** and explore strategies for their effective implementation in rural areas.

## The Workshop's data

|                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Places:</b>                          | Brussels and Charleroi/Monceau-sur-Sambre                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Dates:</b>                           | January 30–31, 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Participants (project partners):</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Elisa Mancinelli, REVES Aisbl</li> <li>2. Erdmuthe Klaer-Morselli, REVES Aisbl</li> <li>3. Dorotea Daniele, DIESIS Network</li> <li>4. Virginia Vasario, DIESIS Network</li> <li>5. Margareta Wandel, Region Östergötland</li> <li>6. Pia Tingvall, Coompanion Östergötland</li> <li>7. Pablo Lansac, ANEL</li> <li>8. Iñaki Ugalde, ANEL</li> <li>9. Javier Zubicoa Leon, Gobierno de Navarra</li> <li>10. Nicolle Santos, Câmara Municipal de Torres Vedras</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Invited experts:</b>                 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pascale Van Doren, EU Rural Pact Support Office</li> <li>2. Stéphane Lejoly, SAW-B (Bruxelles) et CACM (Charleroi, Monceau-sur-Sambre)</li> <li>3. Ségolène Van Lent, SAW-B (Charleroi)</li> <li>4. Jean-François Herz, SAW-B (Bruxelles)</li> <li>5. Vitor Simões, Valor Partilhado (Lisbon)</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Approach:</b>                        | <p>Capacity building in the context of local development is a multi-dimensional process that enhances the capabilities of individuals, organisations, and communities. The methodology adopted in the PARI project aligns with the following key principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participatory engagement, ensuring that all stakeholders (e.g. social economy actors, local authorities, communities and local groups, entrepreneurs, etc.) actively contribute to the design and implementation of development strategies.</li> <li>• System thinking, which allows to address social and ecological innovation holistically by considering the interconnections between environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and economic resilience.</li> </ul> |

|                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptability and context-specific learning, recognising that each rural area has distinct needs, resources, and challenges, necessitating flexible and locally tailored capacity-building approaches.</li> <li>• Mission-driven methodology that focuses on real-world applications through field visits, case studies, and evidence-based learning, ensuring that theoretical knowledge translates into practical action.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Narrative:</b> | <p>The workshop commenced with a <b>comprehensive analysis</b> of the current landscape of CSEIs across the European Union, incorporating insights from the <b>Rural Pact initiative</b>. Discussions centered on <b>best practices, challenges, and strategic approaches</b>, providing participants with a broader perspective on existing policies, successful initiatives, and the role of multi-sectoral cooperation in fostering innovation. This initial session laid the groundwork for more targeted exchanges on the conditions necessary to strengthen and expand CSEIs across diverse territorial contexts.</p> <p>In the afternoon, participants took part in a <b>field mission to Charleroi</b>, where they explored the activities of <b>Ceinture Alimentaire Charleroi Métropole (CACM)</b>. This initiative serves as a <b>territorial facilitator</b>, dedicated to building <b>sustainable, locally rooted food systems</b> within the framework of a <b>social and solidarity economy</b>. The visit provided participants with a first-hand opportunity to observe how local actors collaborate to promote environmentally responsible food production, strengthen short supply chains, and enhance community resilience.</p> <p>The second day of the workshop adopted an <b>interactive and participatory</b> format, focusing on the <b>co-design of CSEI models</b>. Attendees engaged in structured discussions and collaborative exercises aimed at refining the fundamental features of CSEIs, with particular attention to the <b>mobilisation of environmental resources and governance structures</b>. By integrating expert knowledge with practical insights, this session equipped participants with concrete tools and methodologies to <b>design, implement, and sustain innovation clusters</b> tailored to their specific territorial realities.</p> <p>The workshop concluded with a <b>synthesis of key findings and strategic takeaways</b>, reinforcing participants' commitment to advancing <b>social and ecological innovation</b> in rural areas. By combining theoretical analysis with hands-on learning and participatory design, the event contributed to strengthening <b>the knowledge base, operational frameworks, and cross-sectoral partnerships</b> necessary for fostering resilient and sustainable territorial ecosystems.</p> |

## The Workshop programme



**PARI**  
PATHS FOR RURAL  
INNOVATION

*Implementing Clusters for Social and Ecological innovation  
to improve quality of life in rural areas*

**Capacity building workshop**

Date: **January 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025**  
 REVES, Square Ambiorix 32 – B-1000 Brussels

**Programme**

| DAY 1: Thursday, January 30 <sup>th</sup> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9:30                                      | Opening. Welcome and introduction                                                                                                                                                                                         | REVES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 10:00                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keynote presentation: the current status of CSEIs in the EU: A review of practices and analysis of key features</li> <li>Insights into the Rural Pact initiative</li> </ul>        | Leads: DIESIS<br><br>Participates:<br>Ms Pascale Van Doren (Team Leader of the Rural Pact Support Office)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 11:00                                     | Coffee break                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 11:20                                     | Open floor for questions and discussion                                                                                                                                                                                   | All partners and stakeholders                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 14:30<br>-<br>18:30                       | Visit to <i>Ceinture Alimentaire Charleroi Métropole</i><br><a href="https://www.ceinturealimentaire.be/">https://www.ceinturealimentaire.be/</a><br><br>@ SAW-B<br>Rue Monceau-Fontaine, 42/6<br>6031 Monceau-sur-Sambre | <i>The Ceinture Alimentaire Charleroi Métropole (CACM, or Charleroi Métropole Food Belt) is a territorial facilitator. Its objective is to contribute to the transition towards a resilient territory by developing a local, sustainable and environmentally friendly food system, by involving all stakeholders in the sector, within the framework of a social and solidarity economy, local and inclusive.</i> |
|                                           | End of day 1                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

| DAY 2: Friday, January 31 <sup>st</sup> |                                                                                                   |                               |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 9:00                                    | Co-design of CSEI features<br>Collaborative co-design session focussed on environmental resources | REVES                         |
| 11:00                                   | Coffee break                                                                                      |                               |
| 11:20                                   | Co-design of CSEI features                                                                        | All partners and stakeholders |
| 13:00                                   | Concluding remarks                                                                                |                               |



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Figure 1 The programme of the Capacity Building Workshop

## 2. Understanding CSEIs. Definitions and key features

Based on previous research, DIESIS provided an overview of CSEIs definitions and key features.

### Some definitions

#### EU Definition

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Clusters are defined as groups of firms, related economic actors, and institutions that are located near each other and have reached a sufficient scale to develop specialised expertise, services, resources, suppliers and skills.

#### Social economy clusters

---

REVES (2018), sees social economy clusters as “open, flexible and community-rooted, consisting of a concentration of entities representing non-governmental organisations, traditional and socially-oriented enterprises and other institutions. Its benefits correspond to the benefits of traditional forms of networks and clusters, such as exchange of experience, mix of skills and innovation.

#### CSEI

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According to the GECES report<sup>1</sup>, **Clusters of Social and Ecological Innovation (CSEI)** group mainly of social economy entities with mainstream enterprises, civil society organisations, public authorities, education and research institutions that cooperate in a particular location to improve local economic, ecological and societal prosperity and regeneration by facilitating cooperation, pooling of resources and enhancing innovation capacity.

### CSEI main distinctive features

The main features of CSEIs, as emerging from practices, can be synthesised as follows:

- Social aspect
- Ecological aspect
- Innovation (social, economic, ...)
- Stakeholder model
- Governance innovation
- Economic sustainability

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<sup>1</sup> Clusters of Social and Ecological Innovation in the European Union, perspectives and experiences. Report of the GECES Subgroup “Role of clusters and similar forms of business cooperation in fostering the development of social economy”, Brussels, 2021

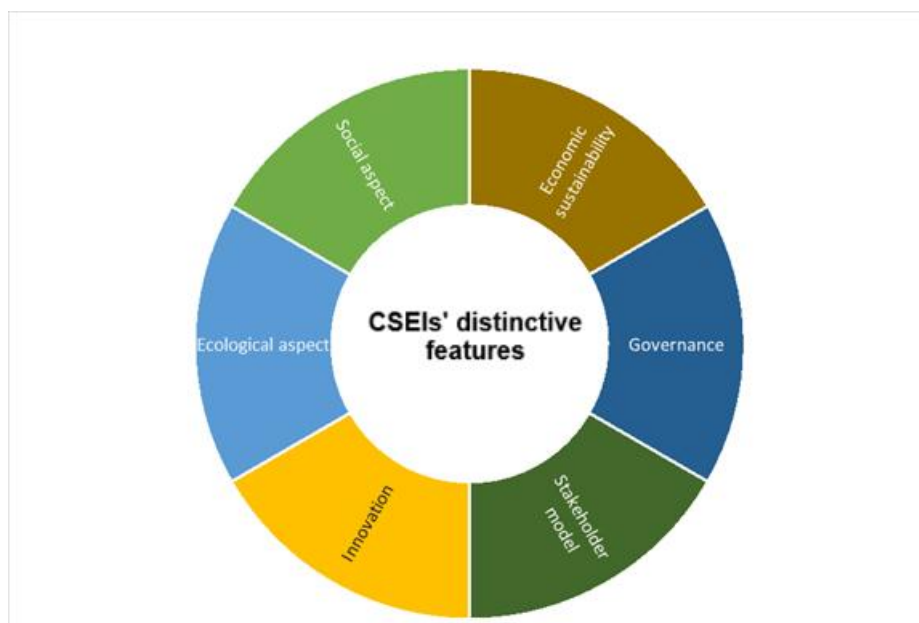


Figure 2 The main features of CSEIs, as emerging from practices

### Social aspect

Job creation and social inclusion are the most pursued priorities. Another priority recognised in some cases is purely the development of the local or regional “social economy ecosystem” in itself by creating a favourable conditions and support.

Most of CSEIs are created through a bottom-up approach to provide a response to the social needs of the territory in partnership with local authorities and other local stakeholders.

### Ecological aspect

From the examples analysed in the GECES report, it appears that the ecological dimension of CSEIs is often linked to circular economy and energy efficiency.

Local food clusters aiming at organising local short supply chains are also present as one of the best examples of ‘sustainable clusterisation phenomena’. Such agro-food consortia, often rooted in the cooperative movement (new or with a long tradition) are emerging more and more into complex forms of cooperation adding more traditional competitive cluster characteristics to sell their goods (e.g. under a local and organic (bio) label) to local consumers.

Clusters focusing on rural development, have usually a focus on organic production of food, textiles or sustainable services such as tourism.

Through clusterisation, social economic initiatives may find a more sustainable, solid and coherent structure to affirm and advocate for environmental principles and strategies and develop business models that can combine ecological and social objectives.

### Innovation

CSEIs play an important role in fostering innovation. “Clusterisation” dynamic plays a strategic role in creating and promoting different types of innovation. Clusters represent themselves as creators of innovative trends and models, as well as beneficiaries of other social innovations.

Innovation means mainly social innovations, namely new social models of intervention, organisational development equity, innovative ways to empower communities, pooling of resources and knowledge (e.g. joint innovation strategy).

Technological innovation is limited and present in a few cases, where the cluster is mainly used as an experimental cradle for new technology development and experimentation.

Clusters create potential for technology transfer and social economy clusters have an impact on the innovation capacities of their members.

### Stakeholders model

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The social economy cluster concept incorporates or strives majorly for a quadruple-helix model, rather than the triple helix model that is pursued by traditional competitive clusters. This means that SE clusters provide for synergies between social economy and mainstream enterprises, research & education, public authorities and civil society. Adding civil society modifies fundamentally the balance into the direction of the general or collective interest and could amplify the social impact ambition.

### Governance

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Social economy clusters can adopt a variety of governance models. While many operate similarly to traditional competitive clusters, managed through a formal legal entity or structure led by a cluster organisation, typically a Social Economy entity, others follow a more informal approach. In some cases, these clusters function without a designated legal entity or an officially appointed representative.

Different forms of governance may be put in practice, according to the cluster objectives and strategies. CSEIs use forms of cooperative governance that imply ownership, members' participation and other forms of representativeness in general.

The dimension of governance also appears as an important area of innovation. The existence of a collective initiative and the need to effectively manage the coexistence of individual and collective interests may explain this particular result.

### Economic sustainability

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Economic sustainability is also an important innovative feature. The ability to diversify the financial sources is also pointed out as a positive strategy to achieve economic sustainability.

Clusterisation adds a new economic value to pre-existing resources, once they can be used, transformed or re-created in many different ways. In doing so, each member not only diversifies its economic/financial sources, but also largely diminishes its individual investment plan and its correspondent costs.

### 3. The *Rural Pact*. Collaborative framework to boost rural areas from EU to national, regional and local levels

Rural areas are integral to Europe's identity, economy, and cultural diversity. However, they also face unique challenges, including depopulation, limited infrastructure, and economic disparities. The European Commission has recognized the need for comprehensive and coordinated actions to support these communities, ensuring their prosperity and sustainability.

The **Rural Pact** is a European initiative designed to strengthen rural areas by fostering collaboration among multiple stakeholders, including national, regional, and local governments, civil society organizations, businesses, academics, and citizens. As a formal framework for cooperation, the Rural Pact aims to amplify rural voices, enable networking, and encourage concrete commitments that support the long-term vision for EU rural areas by 2040, ensuring that **rural areas are stronger, connected, resilient, and prosperous**.

To achieve these objectives, the EU has developed two complementary components:

- **The EU Rural Action Plan**, led by the European Commission, which outlines policy measures and funding mechanisms.
- **The Rural Pact**, a collaborative effort involving multiple stakeholders, aimed at implementing initiatives on the ground through cooperation and voluntary commitments.

The vision recognizes that rural areas require targeted policies and investments to harness their full potential, creating an environment where people and businesses can thrive while preserving environmental and cultural heritage.

The Rural Pact is built around three primary objectives:

1. **Amplifying Rural Voices:** Elevating rural issues on political agendas at national, regional, and EU levels to ensure they receive appropriate attention and resources.
2. **Structuring and Enabling Networking and Collaboration:** Providing platforms for stakeholders to exchange best practices, foster partnerships, and implement rural development strategies.
3. **Encouraging and Monitoring Commitments:** Facilitating voluntary commitments from various stakeholders to take concrete actions in support of rural development.

To meet these objectives, the Rural Pact focuses on three key areas: **policy development, capacity building, and implementation of tangible actions** that address economic, social, and environmental challenges in rural regions.

The governance structure of the Rural Pact ensures that it remains **inclusive, participatory, and results-driven**. The initiative is supported by several key components:

**The Rural Pact Support Office (RPSO):** Established in December 2022, it provides operational and administrative support to implement Rural Pact initiatives. Its responsibilities include:

- Organizing events and facilitating stakeholder engagement.
- Coordinating networking activities and capacity-building programs.
- Disseminating knowledge and best practices across rural communities.

- Monitoring commitments and evaluating progress towards the 2040 vision.

**The Rural Pact Coordination Group:** Since June 2023, it has served as the central decision-making body, bringing together representatives from various sectors to guide the implementation of the pact. This group plays a crucial role in shaping policies, aligning strategies with EU priorities, and ensuring accountability in commitments.

**The Rural Pact Community Platform:** Launched in June 2023, it serves as an online hub for knowledge exchange, collaboration, and project development. By January 2025, the platform had attracted approximately **3.000 active members**, contributing to an extensive network of stakeholders committed to rural revitalization.

Since its inception, the Rural Pact has implemented a series of **policy actions, good practice webinars, and field missions** aimed at strengthening rural resilience.

Some notable initiatives include:

- **Good practice webinars.** These online sessions provide a platform for stakeholders to share insights and successful experiences in rural development. Topics covered include: Resilient Rural Communities Tackling Climate Change (March 2024); Enhancing Rural Mobility Through Local Action (June 2024); Fostering Social Entrepreneurship in Rural Areas (May 2023); Strengthening Digital Skills in Rural Communities (June 2023). These webinars have served as a knowledge-sharing mechanism, offering innovative solutions that can be replicated in different rural contexts.
- **Policy Labs and High-Level Policy Forums.** The Rural Pact also organizes policy labs and forums to facilitate discussions on critical rural policy issues. Recent events include: Territorial Development for the Green Transition (September 2024); Enhancing Policy Coordination for Vibrant Rural Areas (November 2024); EU Funds and the Future of Rural Policy (December 2023). These forums help align the Rural Pact's initiatives with broader EU strategies, ensuring that rural policies remain relevant and effective.
- **The Rural Revitalization Platform.** An integral component of the Rural Pact is the Rural Revitalization Platform, an online resource that compiles case studies, best practices, and policy recommendations. The platform offers: a searchable database of over 57 good practices from EU Member States; a dedicated section for country-specific pages, providing localized insights; publications, newsletters, and policy briefings to inform stakeholders about the latest rural development trends.

## Future perspectives and challenges for the Rural Pact initiative

As the Rural Pact continues to evolve, several key areas require attention to ensure its long-term success:

### Strengthening multi-level governance

To effectively implement the Rural Pact, stronger coordination between **EU institutions, national governments, and local authorities** is necessary. This requires clearer guidelines on policy alignment, resource allocation, and regulatory support for rural development initiatives.

### Expanding financial mechanisms

While the EU provides funding for rural initiatives, ensuring **long-term financial sustainability** remains a challenge. The Rural Pact must explore additional funding mechanisms, including **public-private partnerships, social investment funds, and cooperative financing models**.

### Addressing rural depopulation

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One of the most pressing challenges facing rural areas is **population decline**. The Rural Pact must develop strategies that attract and retain young people, including improved digital connectivity, economic incentives, and enhanced public services.

### Enhancing data and monitoring systems

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A key component of evidence-based policymaking is **accurate and up-to-date data**. The Rural Pact should strengthen its monitoring frameworks through the **Rural Observatory**, which collects and analyzes rural statistics to track progress and impact.

## 4. Inspiring CSEI practices in the PARI territories

### SAW-B and the Ceinture Alimentaire Charleroi Métropole (CACM)

Founded in 1981, **SAW-B - Solidarité des Alternatives Wallonnes et Bruxelloises**, is an association whose mission is to defend and deploy the social economy as a credible and concrete alternative to globalized neoliberal capitalism.

SAW-B plays a key role in supporting social enterprises and associations within the social economy by offering a comprehensive range of services tailored to their needs. Through customized support, training, facilitation, and advocacy, SAW-B helps organizations develop sustainable, socially responsible business models while fostering economic alternatives.

**Tailored support for Social Economy projects.** SAW-B provides personalized guidance for individuals and organizations looking to establish or expand their social economy initiatives. Whether in the early stages of developing a cooperative, collective, or association or seeking to strengthen an existing enterprise, SAW-B's team offers expertise in business model development, financial planning, governance structures, and participatory management practices. Their post-creation follow-up ensures long-term sustainability, equipping organizations with the necessary tools to navigate challenges and grow successfully.

**Specialized training programmes.** Education and capacity-building are at the heart of SAW-B's mission. The organization delivers thematic training sessions on key aspects of the social economy, economic alternatives, and innovative business models. These training programs emphasize interactive learning and participant engagement, incorporating real-life experiences and co-developed methodologies. Additionally, SAW-B designs customized training for specific audiences, addressing sector-specific challenges and providing actionable insights.

**Workshops, seminars, and events.** To foster collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and sectoral development, SAW-B organizes a variety of workshops, seminars, and colloquia. These events bring together social economy actors, policymakers, and stakeholders to explore emerging trends, share best practices, and develop strategic solutions for a more inclusive economy.

**Facilitation and Social Impact assessment.** SAW-B actively promotes socially responsible public procurement by acting as a facilitator for public contracts and social clauses. The organization works closely with public and private stakeholders to integrate social impact considerations into procurement processes, ensuring that economic development aligns with social and environmental values. Additionally, SAW-B serves as a social impact assessment coach, helping enterprises measure and enhance their contributions to societal well-being.

Through these diverse initiatives, SAW-B strengthens the social economy ecosystem, empowering enterprises to create fairer, more inclusive economic models that address today's pressing social and environmental challenges.

The **Ceinture Alimentaire Charleroi Métropole – CACM** (Charleroi Métropole Food Belt) serves as the first case study explored and discussed, engaging its promoters in a peer-to-peer learning path.



This visit aims to observe the mechanisms involved in establishing and managing such a bottom-up initiative and to engage with its promoters regarding its key features, strengths, and challenges. The insights gained from this visit are expected to contribute significantly to advancing the theoretical framework of CSEIs during the Capacity-Building event in Brussels.

## 1. Geographical scope

*[Primary area of operation] Specify the location of the CSEI, whether it is based in rural areas, peri-urban areas, or a broader regional context*

Peri-urban area

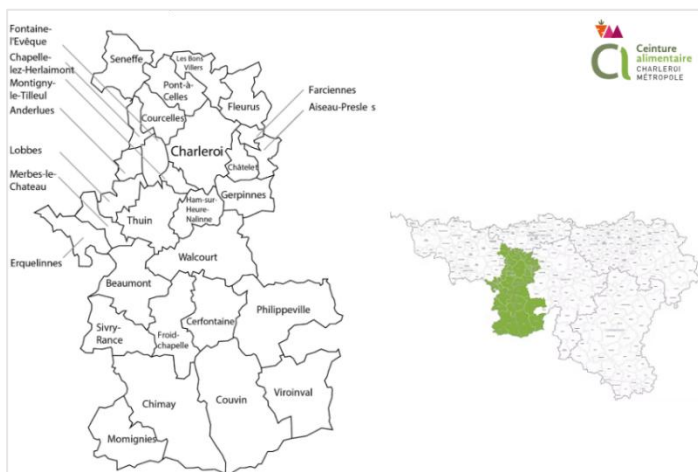
*[Spatial reach] Describe how far the CSEI's activities or impacts extend. Does it operate locally, regionally, or at multiple levels?*

The Charleroi Métropole Food Belt (Ceinture Alimentaire Charleroi Métropole - CACM) covers a territory which is made up of 30 municipalities located in a catchment area around the city of Charleroi, including the south of the Boot of Hainaut and the Entre Sambre et Meuse region. The territory is:

- A highly urbanised area to the north and rural to the south.
- Straddling two provinces.
- With significant and diversified agricultural potential.

Although it is essentially focused on the Charleroi Métropole area, the Food Belt also includes producers, processors, buyers, etc. from adjacent or nearby municipalities.

The CACM is a territorial facilitator. Its objective is to contribute to the transition towards a resilient territory by developing a local, sustainable and environmentally friendly food system, by involving all stakeholders in the sector, within the framework of a social and solidarity economy, local and inclusive.



## 2. Legal status

*[Formal legal standing] Does the CSEI have a legal status, such as being a registered organisation, cooperative, foundation, or NGO, or is it based on a memorandum of understanding or informal agreement?*

Food belts/*ceintures alimentaires* are **associations** whose project is to feed the population of an area with fresh, quality products, using the short circuit between producers and consumers.

As part of its "Alternativ'ES Wallonia" strategy (2019-2024), dedicated to the development of the social economy, the Walloon Region in 2020 decided to strengthen three food belts for a total of 1.3 million euros. With this in mind, the Walloon Government in 2023 agreed to refinance the most structuring Walloon food belts. In total, a refinancing of 1.3 million euros was distributed equally between three food belts: the Liège Food Belt, the **Charleroi Métropole Food Belt** and the Verviers district Food Network.

### 3. Membership

*[Key stakeholders involved] List the different types of actors involved, e.g., social enterprises, service providers, academic bodies, public bodies, private enterprises, community organisations, etc.*

The CACM takes into account all the stakeholders in the food system (farmers, distributors, traders, associations, politicians, citizens, etc.) and proposes projects and actions that aim to collectively transform the food system of Charleroi Métropole to feed all residents with healthy, fair and respectful food.

The key stakeholders are:

- SAW-B** (Solidarity of Walloon and Brussels Alternatives), coordinator of the CACM.  
 SAW-B is the initiator and coordinator of the Charleroi Métropole Food Belt. Both a federation of associations and social economy companies, a consulting agency and a continuing education organisation, SAW-B mobilises, challenges, supports and assists social economy stakeholders and companies. SAW-B also innovates by creating field projects. Several companies and supported projects are part of short circuits. SAW-B is the guarantor of the values of solidarity and drives the search for the “fair price”, human and economic balances and the development of logistics.
- Charleroi Métropole and its Food-C strategy.** As a public actor, Charleroi Métropole considers its role as a federator and coordinator of the galaxy of local, provincial and regional initiatives and actors around concrete and structuring projects for the territory. These initiatives must also integrate 4 key issues: (i) socio-economic development, (ii) health, (iii) climate and preservation of the environment and biodiversity as well as (iv) animal welfare. These projects are grouped into a strategy, called “FOOD.C”. Charleroi Métropole has 30 municipalities and nearly 600,000 inhabitants.
- Biowallonie.** Initially through the **CADI project** (Chaîne Alimentaire Durable Intégrée) until its closing in June 2024. The CADI project contributed to the Walloon challenge aimed at significantly increasing the share of Walloon food production in the overall regional consumption of the southern area of the rivers Sambre and Meuse (Entre Sambre et Meuse - ESEM). This was done based on an ecosystem approach that would act on supply, demand, material/immaterial tools and governance.
- The House of Sustainable Food** (Maison de l’Alimentation Durable - MAD) of Charleroi-Métropole is a project that benefits from funding for three years under the Walloon Region's call for projects "Supporting the relocation of Food in Wallonia". It is supported by 3 partners: Jumet.Bio, Espace Environnement and the Haute École Louvain en Hainaut (HelHa). The MAD positions itself as a place for activities and training, friendly, open to all, around healthy, local, seasonal, responsible, organic or sustainable food. The MAD also aims to be a place conducive to constructive meetings between different stakeholders (producers, teachers, researchers, people involved in food processing, sales, etc.) from the Charleroi Métropole area.
- The 5C Collective of Citizen Cooperatives for the Short Circuit** (Collectif des Coopératives Citoyennes pour le Circuit Court). The 5C Collective brings together, supports and defends around forty citizen cooperatives for short-circuit food distribution in Wallonia and Brussels. Created in 2017, it brings together its members around a vision and commitments to build food systems that are responsible for our health, our society and our environment.

#### Funding:

- Sowalfin** (Société Wallonne de Financement et de Garantie des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises) was the main funding authority. The company is now named **Wallonie Entreprendre** (<https://www.wallonie-entreprendre.be/en/>).

#### Furthermore:

The initiative has received the support - not financial - of the Conférence des Bourgmestres de Charleroi Métropole.

CACM collaborates with a diverse network of stakeholders, including:

- **Producers:** Local farmers and food producers committed to sustainable practices.
- **Distributors and Retailers:** Businesses involved in the distribution and sale of local, organic, and seasonal products.
- **Associations:** Organisations promoting sustainable food systems and supporting local initiatives.
- **Policy Makers:** Local government officials engaged in food policy and regional planning.
- **Citizens:** Community members participating in and benefiting from the local food system.

These actors share common values and cooperate to offer organic, local, and seasonal food to all inhabitants of the Charleroi Métropole region.

#### 4. Management

*[Governance structure] Describe the governance model, whether it is managed by a board, assembly, a purpose-created body, or a single member.*

CACM's governance is characterised by collaborative and participatory structures:

- **Conseil de Politique Alimentaire (CPA):** A governance body comprising representative actors of the local food system, including farmers, distributors, retailers, associations, and citizens. The CPA defines priorities and identifies the most pertinent levers for the Charleroi Métropole territory. The establishment of the CPA has provided a platform for participatory governance, enabling diverse actors to contribute to the region's food policy.
- **Inter-cooperation:** Actors choose to work together, sharing ideas and expertise, and providing mutual support. This collaborative approach enhances their activities and contributes to a vibrant local economy.

#### 5. Fields of operations

*[Primary purpose/orientation] Is the CSEI focused on serving the general interest or specific group interests? Is it aligned with social, ecological, or both types of goals?*

The main focus is on the general interest of the metropolitan area, related to making local food accessible to citizens, supporting the local producers in a virtuous circle.

*[Target beneficiaries/impact areas] Who benefits from the CSEI's activities, i.e. local communities, the environment, specific marginalised groups, etc.?*

All citizens, living in the Métropole area.

*[Scope of services/activities] Describe the core activities or services the CSEI provides, such as environmental management, social services, economic development, etc.*

Among its projects and actions, the CACM develops:

- The **Logistics Hub**. A huge 2000m<sup>2</sup> space for storing, processing and marketing local food products, scheduled to open in June 2025. It will include: a vegetable garden, a processing workshop, a marketing counter, a dispatching service. The Hub will supply local authorities and food professionals.
- The **Carolostore store**. The store is a concrete response to a need identified during the consultations led by the CACM: a marketing location that sells products from local producers and artisans at a fair price.
- The **Food Policy Council** (Conseil de Politique Alimentaire - CPA). A governance body, the CPA brings together the representative actors of the local food system (farmers, distributors, traders, associations, etc.), which defines the priorities and the most relevant levers for the Charleroi Métropole territory.

Furthermore, the CACM promotes **awareness and territorial animation**, mobilising local actors to collectively transform the food system, aiming to provide all inhabitants with healthy, equitable, and environmentally respectful food.

## References:

- <https://www.ceinturealimentaire.be/>
- Avognon, Thibault. *La redéfinition des systèmes alimentaires : cas d'étude de la Ceinture Alimentaire de Charleroi Métropole*. Faculté des sciences économiques, sociales, politiques et de communication, Université Catholique de Louvain, 2020. Prom. : Etienne Verhaegen.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/2078.1/thesis:27111>
- <https://territoire.charleroi-metropole.be/projets/un-conseil-de-politique-alimentaire-cpa-a-charleroi-metropole>
- <https://geoportail.wallonie.be/catalogue/d2cd7b25-5402-41a9-bfc4-e2d191998422.html>
- <https://www.ess-europe.eu/en/node/5358>

## 5. Building PARI partners' capacity and vision

The **PARI project** is committed to fostering ecological sustainability and social innovation by leveraging research findings, best practices, and direct stakeholder engagement. The discussions and reflections following the field visit to **Ceinture Alimentaire Charleroi Métropole** provided valuable insights into the practical implementation of sustainable food systems and the challenges inherent in cooperative models. This document synthesizes key takeaways from research and interactions, highlighting thematic priorities, stakeholder dynamics, and the systemic factors influencing ecological sustainability and innovation across different territories.

### Reflections on research and field visits

The **Ceinture Alimentaire model** demonstrated a complex interplay of governance, economic sustainability, and stakeholder engagement. Key observations included:

- **Governance structure.** The initiative employs a sophisticated governance model that balances power among diverse stakeholders while maintaining democratic decision-making.
- **Economic viability.** Competing on price remains a challenge; instead, the initiative builds strong relationships with consumers who value sustainable and local products.
- **Historical challenges.** Established in the 1980s, the initiative still struggles for recognition and financial support, even among social economy actors.
- **Adaptability and resilience.** A flexible governance model allows the initiative to evolve and respond to changing environmental and economic pressures.

These reflections prompted deeper discussions on **scalability, sustainability, and the socio-political conditions necessary for similar initiatives to thrive elsewhere.**

### Identified challenges and opportunities

The research and discussions revealed common challenges and opportunities across the PARI territories attempting to implement Clusters for Social and Ecological Innovation (CSEIs).

| CHALLENGES                                                 | OPPORTUNITIES                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Fragmentation of local initiatives                         | Building strong multi-stakeholder networks           |
| Limited financial resources for social economy actors      | Leveraging EU and national funding mechanisms        |
| Low public awareness of ecological sustainability benefits | Targeted education and communication strategies      |
| Political short-termism influencing resource allocation    | Advocacy for long-term policy commitments            |
| Lack of inclusion of vulnerable populations in projects    | Designing projects with a social inclusion framework |

A recurring theme was the necessity for proactive engagement with local governments, underpinned by thorough research and policy recommendations to sustain dialogue and secure institutional support.

## Key takeaways from the field visit and workshop discussions

### 1. Cooperative vs competitive models

The ability of producers to **cooperate rather than compete** emerged as a critical factor in ensuring the sustainability of CSEIs. The risk of conflict among small producers is high, but structured frameworks can facilitate cooperation while maintaining individual agency.

### 2. Governance and democratic participation

Effective governance structures must balance **stakeholder influence**, ensuring that no single entity dominates decision-making. Flexibility in organizational solutions is essential to adapt to **economic, regulatory, and social changes**.

### 3. Economic viability and market engagement

A significant challenge remains the **economic sustainability** of social and ecological innovation clusters. The inability to compete solely on price necessitates strategies that emphasize **consumer loyalty, education, and market differentiation**.

### 4. Public policy and institutional engagement

The level of institutional support varies by region, affecting the ability of initiatives to secure funding and policy backing. Effective **policy advocacy and evidence-based recommendations** are critical to influencing long-term policy frameworks.

## Regional Analysis: ecological sustainability and innovation priorities

Each region participating in the PARI project brought distinct challenges, resources, and strategic priorities to the table. Below is an overview of their identified needs and assets.

### Navarra

| NEEDS AND CHALLENGES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | EXISTING RESOURCES AND ASSETS                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Depopulation and lack of opportunities in rural areas                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Navarra's Industrialisation Plan                         |
| Competitiveness of agri-food exploitations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | FORAL LAW 4/2022 on Climate Change and Energy Transition |
| Integration of migrant populations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Dinabide (Technological co-working)                      |
| Gender gaps, particularly in Sakana region                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Navarra Zirkular (Circular economy network)              |
| Housing market and financial constraints                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Social Economy Comprehensive Plan                        |
| KEY STAKEHOLDERS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sakana Development Agency (Sakanako Garapen Agentzia - SGA)</li> <li>CEDERNA Garalur (existing network supporting rural development)</li> <li>Local and regional governments</li> <li>Cooperatives and social economy actors</li> </ul> |                                                          |

## Östergötland

| NEEDS AND CHALLENGES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | EXISTING RESOURCES AND ASSETS                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Urge to extend and widen the regional traditional mapping of innovative cluster with a social economy perspective                                                                                                                                                                                             | A regional project report SKISS to be extended with PARI findings and previous experience in local and regional development relevant for identifying and supporting clusters                        |
| Urge to explore local collaborative incentives in Östergötland that addresses social and ecological challenges with <i>penta helix</i> approaches                                                                                                                                                             | LEADER initiatives together with a variety of regional funds, programs and networks that support local development                                                                                  |
| Need for tools and expertise in cooperative and social economy cluster models                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | This knowledge is lacking, but we believe it could be transferred experience from Science parks and researchers on local- and regional development in Sweden and hopefully in our partner countries |
| Need for strategic knowledge-sharing on cluster and its potential                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Different governing documents such as regional development plan, business and innovation strategy, competence strategy as well food strategy                                                        |
| KEY STAKEHOLDERS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coompanion Östergötland (cooperative development organization)</li> <li>• Local and regional authorities</li> <li>• SME and networks of green- and agricultural industry representatives</li> <li>• Social economy actors</li> <li>• Civil society actors</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

## Torres Vedras

| NEEDS AND CHALLENGES                                                                                                                                          | EXISTING RESOURCES AND ASSETS             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Improving regional ecological sustainability frameworks                                                                                                       | Regional innovation hubs                  |
| Overcoming fragmentation among stakeholders                                                                                                                   | Existing social economy projects          |
| Enhancing public-private cooperation                                                                                                                          | EU-funded initiatives on rural innovation |
| KEY STAKEHOLDERS                                                                                                                                              |                                           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal governments</li> <li>• Local businesses and cooperatives</li> <li>• Civil society organizations</li> </ul> |                                           |

## 6. Concluding remarks and steps ahead

The discussions, research, and field visits under the PARI project underscored the complexity and potential of Clusters for Social and Ecological Innovation. Key challenges such as governance, economic sustainability, stakeholder engagement, and policy alignment require holistic and context-sensitive solutions.

Moving forward, a multi-dimensional approach combining collaborative governance, strategic investment, knowledge exchange, and public engagement is essential. Through sustained dialogue and structured interventions, these initiatives can contribute meaningfully to ecological sustainability, rural resilience, and social innovation

Based on the findings, the following strategic actions are proposed to strengthen **CSEI development and ecological sustainability** in participating regions:

### 1. Strengthen Multi-Stakeholder Engagement

- Establish structured dialogue mechanisms between **local governments, businesses, and civil society organizations** to align interests and secure long-term commitments.

### 2. Develop Targeted Financial Mechanisms

- Advocate for **specialized funding programs** within EU and national frameworks to support ecological and social innovation clusters.

### 3. Enhance Capacity-Building Initiatives

- Implement **training programs** to build expertise in cooperative governance, social entrepreneurship, and sustainable agriculture.

### 4. Implement Territorial Mapping and Data Collection

- Utilize **GIS mapping and community diagnostics** to identify local needs, resources, and demographic trends for better planning.

### 5. Foster Public Awareness and Consumer Engagement

- Develop communication campaigns that highlight the benefits of **sustainable and local food production**, addressing misconceptions about affordability and accessibility.

## References

- European Commission: Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (2021). Clusters of social and ecological innovation in the European Union, perspectives and experiences – The role of clusters and similar forms of business cooperation in fostering the development of social economy, Publications Office of the European Union. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2873/07591>
- Gerli, F., Calderini, M., & Chiodo, V. (2021). An ecosystemic model for the technological development of social entrepreneurship: exploring clusters of social innovation. *European Planning Studies*, 30(10), 1962–1984. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2021.1999396>
- Le labo de l'économie sociale et solidaire (2020). Relancer les PTCE Diagnostic et propositions - pôles territoriaux de coopération économique. <https://www.lelabo-ess.org/relancer-les-ptce>
- REVES (2022) Survey on Clusters of Social & Ecological Innovation: REPORT

## Annexes

### Understanding CSEIs: definitions and key features



**Implementing Clusters for Social and Ecological innovation to improve quality of life in rural areas**

## Understanding CSEIs: definitions and key features

**Dorotea Daniele – Diesis Network**

Brussels, January 30<sup>th</sup> 2025

Co-funded by the European Union

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## CLUSTERS and CSEI

**General Definition: a group of similar things that are close together, sometimes surrounding something.**



**Alfred Marshall 1842 – 1924**

Clusters: industrial districts  
"concentration of specialised industries in particular localities"

"concentration of specialized industries in particular localities"



**Michael E. Porter 1947**

Clusters:  
"Geographic concentrations of interconnected companies and institutions in a particular field"

"Clusters are defined as groups of firms, related economic actors, and institutions that are located near each other and have reached a sufficient scale to develop specialised expertise, services, resources, suppliers and skills"



Co-funded by the European Union



## EU general definition

Clusters are defined as groups of firms, related economic actors, and institutions that are located near each other and have reached a sufficient scale to develop specialised expertise, services, resources, suppliers and skills



## SE clusters

REVES (2018), sees social economy clusters as “open, flexible and community-rooted, consisting of a concentration of entities representing non-governmental organisations, traditional and socially-oriented enterprises and other institutions. Its benefits correspond to the benefits of traditional forms of networks and clusters, such as exchange of experience, mix of skills and innovation.



## CSEI

CSEI provide prosperity in territories in numerous sectors, help build resilient local value chains and serve a broad range of stakeholders.

**Clusters of Social and Ecological Innovation (CSEI)** group mainly of social economy entities with mainstream enterprises, civil society organisations, public authorities, education and research institutions that cooperate in a particular location to improve local economic, ecological and societal prosperity and regeneration by facilitating cooperation, pooling of resources and enhancing innovation capacity.

Their main strength is their know-how and their capacity to cooperate, stemming from the values of the social economy and their capacity to experiment and innovate boosting different types of innovations:

- Economic
- Social
- Ecological
- Governance

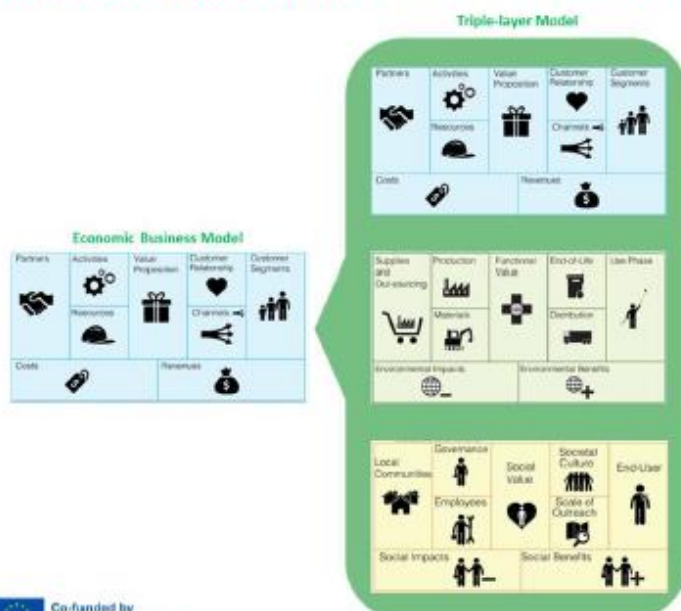


They are ideal vehicles to align local SMEs, SEOs, citizens' initiatives, LRAs and research to help the digital and sustainable transition of a local and proximity economy.



## CLUSTER and CSEI: Evolution of Business Model

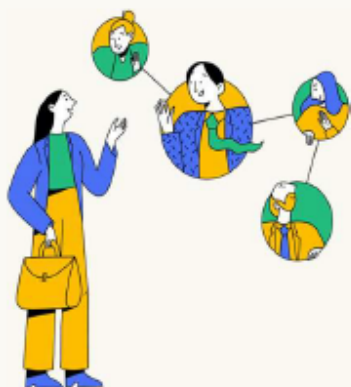
### Triple bottom approach 3P



**ESG**  
 Environmental, Social,  
 Governance.  
 SUSTAINABILITY in a  
 business context.



## Main features of CSEI


**1**

Point 1  
S as SOCIAL

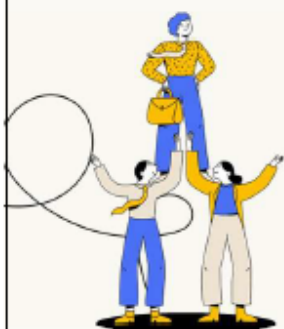
**2**

Point 2  
E as ECOLOGICAL

**3**

Point 3  
I as INNOVATION

## S as Social



- Promote job creation, social inclusion, job-inclusion and education, with a specific focus on disadvantaged groups
- Establish enabling conditions for the development of the local or regional "social economy ecosystem"
- provide a response to the social needs of the territory in partnerships with local authorities and other local stakeholders.

## E as Ecological



- Focus mainly on circular economy and energy efficiency.
- The cases focusing on rural development, have usually a focus on organic production of food, textiles or sustainable services such as tourism.
- local food cluster aiming at organisation local short chain supply could be considered as one of the most present or known 'sustainable clusterisation phenomena'

## I as Innovation



- Innovation means mainly social innovations, namely new social models of intervention; organisational development equity, innovative ways to empower communities, pooling of resources and knowledge (e.g. joint innovation strategy)
- Technological innovation is limited and present in a few cases, where the cluster is mainly used as an experimental cradle for new technology development and experimentation
- Cluster create potential for technology transfer
- social economy clusters have an impact on the innovation capacities of their members

# Operational features



## Point 1

Stakeholders model



## Point 2

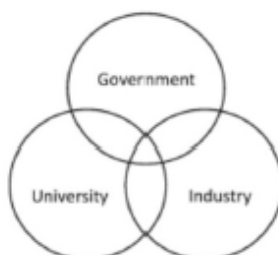
Governance



## Point 3

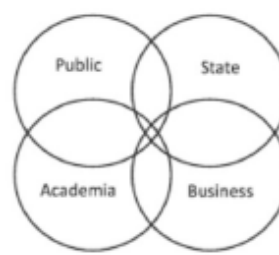
Economic sustainability

# Stakeholder model



### Triple helix

Aimed at emphasising the role of universities and governments in knowledge production and innovation processes, alongside businesses and industry.



### Quadruple helix

In advanced knowledge-based societies the inclusion of citizens and civil society is necessary for innovation power and economic considerations, on the one hand, and democratic legitimisation and an ecosystem of trust on the other hand.

# Governance



- Cluster as formalized legal entity
- Private leadership, performed by a social economy entity, is the most common form of leadership
- The decision making process in a CSEI is always participatory and in most cases democratic (cooperative forms of governance and ownership, new forms of accountability)
- The dimension of governance as an important area of innovation.
- Governance model defines and advocates for ethical values and principles;
- CSEI tend to transfer standards and governance models to other players in the territory not belonging to the social economy, e.g. public authorities, mainstream business, etc.

# Economic Sustainability



- Cross-sectoral in terms of sector of activity (NACE)
- Financial model characterized by multiple sources of income.
- Cluster facilitate access of social enterprises to new markets, both public and private
- Promotion of economic sustainability as well as economic regenerative opportunities and new jobs, mainly in areas with little economic assets or where there has been a serious decline in economic activity.

## Rural Pact: Collaborative framework to boost rural areas from EU to national, regional and local levels

RURAL  
PACT



# Rural Pact: Collaborative framework to boost rural areas from EU to national, regional and local levels

**Pascale Van Doren**  
 Team Leader, Rural Pact Support Office  
 PARI-Capacity building workshop  
 Brussels, 30 January 2025





Funded by  
the European Union

## The long-term vision for EU's rural areas

**“** Rural areas are a formative part of the European economy and cultural diversity.

They are home to hundreds of millions of Europeans who enjoy living and working there. We stand by their side and want Europe's rural areas to flourish.

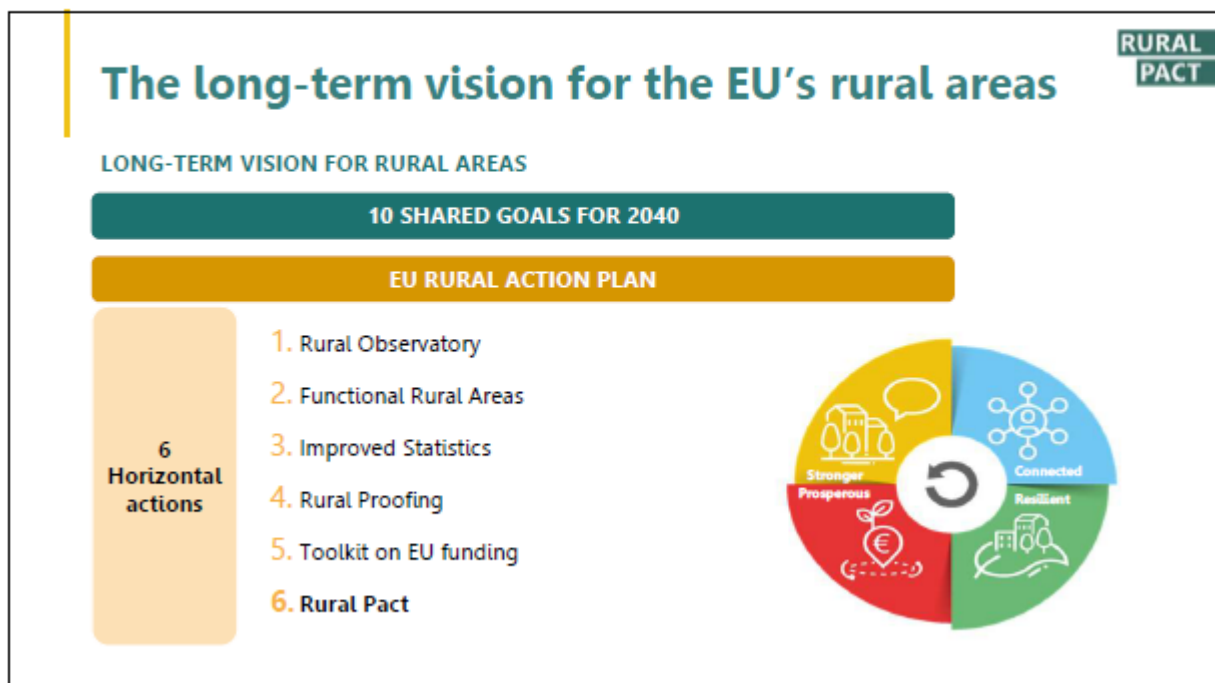
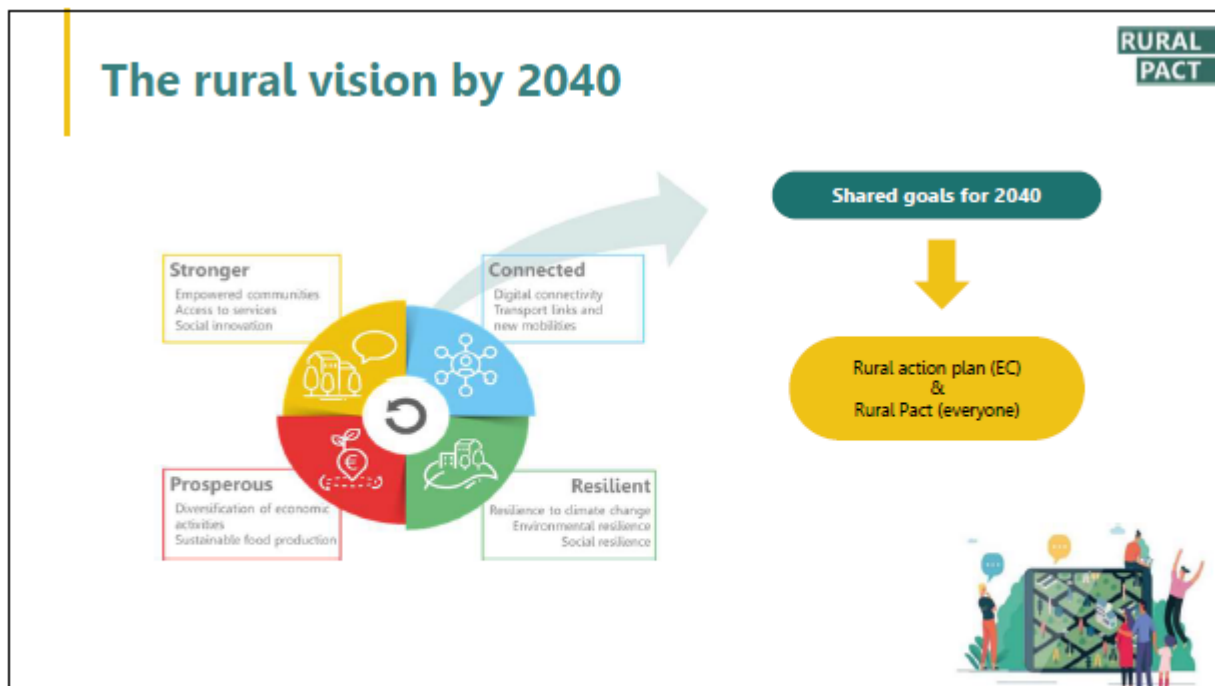
Europe is investing in rural areas because their prospects are Europe's future.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen  
27 March 2024





RURAL  
PACT



## The Rural Pact – a space to work together

**RURAL  
PACT**


### Objectives



Amplifying rural voices and bringing them higher on the political agenda

**Policies**


Structuring and enabling networking, collaboration & mutual learning

**Capacities**


Encouraging and monitoring voluntary commitments to act for the vision

**Action**

### What is the Rural Pact ?

The Rural Pact is a formal space and framework to boost cooperation between national, regional and local governments, civil society organisations, businesses, academics and citizens to act towards the shared goals of the rural vision.

## The Rural Pact building blocks

**RURAL  
PACT**

ca. **3000**  
Rural Pact  
Community  
Members by  
Jan. 2025

**+130**  
Commitments to  
act



Rural pact  
support office  
(since Dec 2022)



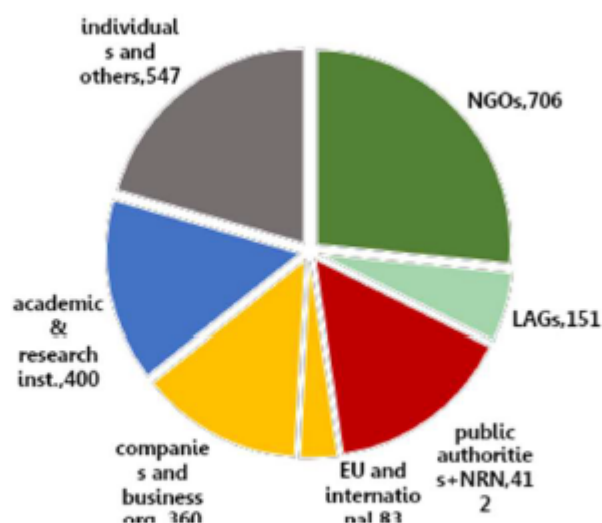
Rural pact  
Coordination  
group  
(since June 2023)

Welcome to the Rural  
Pact community platform!



Rural pact  
community  
platform  
(since June 2023)

## RP Community Members in January 2025 (n=2909)

**RURAL  
PACT**


## Previous Good practice webinars

**RURAL  
PACT**


### Year 1 Good Practice Webinars

- ▶ **PROSPEROUS:** Fostering social entrepreneurship in rural areas through local action (11 May 2023)
- ▶ **CONNECTED:** Strengthening digital skills of rural people to benefit from the digital era (8 June 2023)
- ▶ **RESILIENT:** Rural areas in the energy transition (24 October 2023)
- ▶ **RESILIENT:** Enhancing access to health services in rural areas (30 November 2023)



### Year 2 Good Practice Webinars

- ▶ **RESILIENT:** Rural communities tackling climate change (20 March 2024)
- ▶ **STRONGER:** Rural youth participation in policy making (24 April 2024)
- ▶ **CONNECTED:** Enhancing rural mobility through local action (20 June 2024)
- ▶ **ALL BUILDING BLOCKS:** In-person: Advancing the Rural Pact: Fostering local action for the future of rural areas (8 October 2024 at EWRC)

## Previous Policy labs and High-level Policy Forum

**RURAL  
PACT**


### 2023 Policy Labs

- ▶ **STRONGER:** In person: Taking action to tackle rural depopulation (29 June 2023)
- ▶ **PROSPEROUS:** Online: EU funds paving the way to the rural vision (14 December 2023)



### 2023 High-level Policy Forum

- ▶ **ALL BUILDING BLOCKS:** Shaping the future of rural areas (27-29 September 2023)



### 2024 Policy Labs

- ▶ **ALL BUILDING BLOCKS:** In person: Bringing the Rural Pact closer to rural citizens (22 May 2024)
- ▶ **STRONGER:** Online: Territorial development for the green transition: Harnessing the potential of rural communities (19 Sept 2024)
- ▶ **ALL BUILDING BLOCKS:** In person: Brussels: Enhancing policy coordination for vibrant rural areas (28 November 2024)

## RPSO annual work programme Year 3

**RURAL  
PACT**


### Objective 1: Amplifying rural voices

- ▶ Newly elected European Parliament and Commission representatives
- ▶ EU policies and funds post-2027
- ▶ RP implementation at national level, regional, and local levels; country pages



### Objective 2: Structuring and enabling networking

- ▶ Good Practice Webinars and Good practices on priority LTVRA topics
- ▶ Awareness raising and engagement of RP Community
- ▶ Collaboration with European networks and platforms, EU bodies and institutions



### Objective 3: Encourage and monitor voluntary commitments to act

- ▶ Promote Rural Pact commitments via new online tool
- ▶ Consolidate existing commitments and encourage new ones

## RP at all governance levels: from EU to national/regional/ local level

**RURAL  
PACT**

### Europe

- ▶ 10 shared goals for 2040
- ▶ Action Plan (EC)
- ▶ Rural Pact (everyone)



### National / regional

#### Making the Rural Pact happen in Member States

- ▶ National & regional policymakers
- ▶ Seven key ingredients



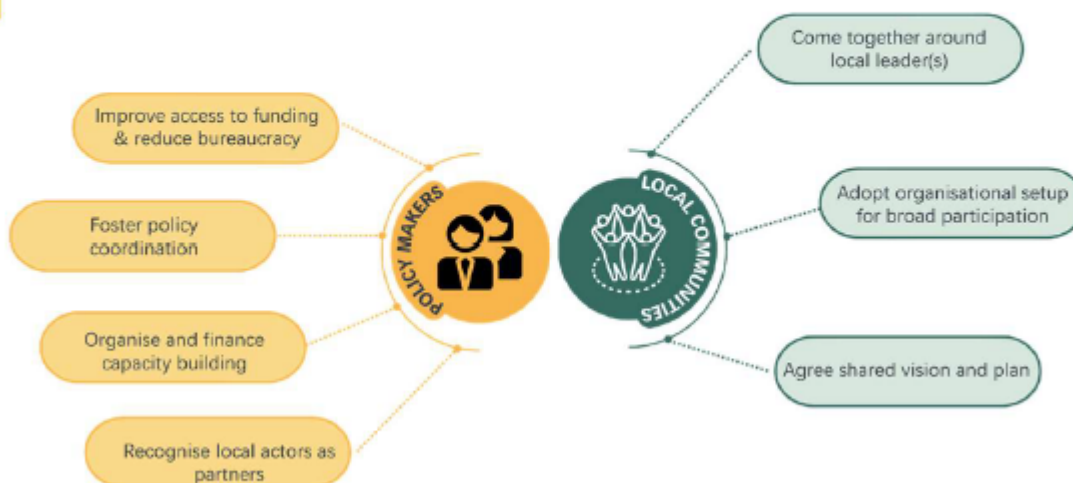
### Local

#### Empowering communities to take action for the rural vision

- ▶ Local level: community organisations and initiatives



## Who should do what?

**RURAL  
PACT**



**European Union**


 Log in

Search

**Rural Pact Community Platform**

Rural Pact ▾ Rural revitalisation ▾ The platform ▾ Resources ▾ News and events ▾



## Welcome to the Rural Pact community platform!

Join us


[Join the Rural Revitalisation Platform -  
https://ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu/become-member\\_en](https://ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu/become-member_en)



# Publications

**RURAL PACT**



**RURAL PACT**  
Declaration on the future of rural areas and rural development policy in the European Union


**Newsletters (11 editions per year)**  
 More than 2 800 recipients


**Magazine**  
 Translated in French and German


**Policy Briefings**  
 Translated in all EU languages
 

- ▶ How to make the Rural Pact happen in Member States
- ▶ Rural Pact: Empowering communities to take action for the Rural Vision
- ▶ RPCG Declaration on the future of Rural Policy



**Contents**  
 1. Introduction  
 2. The Rural Pact  
 3. The Rural Pact's vision  
 4. The Rural Pact's mission  
 5. The Rural Pact's values  
 6. The Rural Pact's principles  
 7. The Rural Pact's objectives  
 8. The Rural Pact's actions  
 9. The Rural Pact's results  
 10. The Rural Pact's impact

**Preamble**  
 The Rural Pact is an initiative created by the European Union and its Member States to support rural areas and rural development. It is a commitment to the future of rural areas and rural development in the European Union.


[https://ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu/publications/rural-pact-coordination-group-rpcg-declaration-future-rural-areas-and-rural\\_en#section-resources](https://ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu/publications/rural-pact-coordination-group-rpcg-declaration-future-rural-areas-and-rural_en#section-resources)

# Inspiring examples



## Good practices and Country pages



Searchable database of inspiring examples from all over Europe  
Insights gathered, showcasing relevant examples, inspirational initiatives, and actions implemented in MS, which contribute to advancing the Rural Pact.



**57 Good Practices**  
and more to come!

**6 Country Pages**  
under development

Countries prepared in 2024



More in to be prepared in 2025



### This is your space

Find the latest information about the Rural Pact and rural revitalisation, connect with your peers and get inspired!

Go and check the existing "Community Groups" to discuss the topics of your interest. Or create one to gather all the actors around one place or one topic.

We wish you an inspiring discovery of all the good things happening in rural Europe.

### Community Groups



GROUP

**Rural depopulation and repopulation**

European Union | Demography, Housing | 12 | English



GROUP

**Innovating rural public policy**

European Union | Stronger Rural Areas, Connected and people | 12 | English



GROUP

**Rural mobility**

European Union | Rural culture, Heritage, Tourism and mobility | 15 | English

**RURAL  
PACT**

## RPSO events 2025

2<sup>nd</sup> Rural Pact Conference

▶ 8-9 April 2025



**Policy Labs**

- ▶ **ALL BUILDING BLOCKS:** Rural proofing (June 2025 - tbc)
- ▶ **ALL BUILDING BLOCKS:** Next funding tools for rural communities (October 2025 - tbc)



**Good Practice Webinars**

- ▶ **STRONGER:** Housing (20 February 2025)
- ▶ **PROSPEROUS:** Tourism, cultural heritage and rural regeneration (May 2025 - tbc)
- ▶ **STRONGER:** Innovation opportunities and challenges for rural areas in the EU, national and regional policy contexts (September 2025 - tbc)

**RURAL  
PACT**



## Thank you!



Join the Rural Pact Community and online platform  
[www.ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu/become-member\\_en](http://www.ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu/become-member_en)






[www.ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu](http://www.ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu)




Funded by  
the European Union

## SAW-B: An Overview



# SAW-B



### Who are we?

*SAW-B is a federation, an association, a consulting agency and a continuing education structure in Wallonia and Brussels,*

*Whose mission is to defend a society of solidarity that combines social and environmental justice, and to contribute to social transformation by supporting economic alternatives that*

*1/ meet real social or collective needs,*

*2/ are ferments of democracy,*

*3/ give priority to social ties over commercial relations by considering money as a means, not an end*

The SAW-B logo, consisting of the text 'SAW-B' followed by three yellow leaf-like shapes.



# Three missions.



Be a force of criticism and proposal



Strengthening the impact and sustainability of social enterprises



To be a research and experimentation laboratory for the social economy



# 4 services.



Undertake



Train



Facilitate -  
Gather



Evaluate





## Undertake.



Tailor-made support for collectives, project leaders and existing companies, adapted to internal skills, the stage of development of the project and the challenges encountered:

- Definition of vision, missions and values
  - Project structuring
  - Development of the economic model and financial plan
  - Development of the marketing and communication strategy
  - Support in finding sources of funding
  - Challenge and verification of the feasibility of your project (business plan)
  - Co-construction of governance and participatory management bodies
  - Drafting of legal articles of association
  - Networking with other companies or partners in the social economy
  - Follow-up in your first years of launch

### Team of advisors

- Senior & Experienced
  - Generalist & complementary expertise
  - With proven field experience




## Train.



Events that aim to mobilise and facilitate the co-construction of knowledge

- Better Understanding the Social Economy: The Basics of the Social Economy, Participatory Management, Cooperation and Cooperatives
  - Deepen a theme: Social economy & transition, Social economy and other economic models, Ethical dilemmas in business, Social impact, Shared farms
  - Tailor-made animation: training, workshops, debates or round tables in companies, to look at society and its own governance in a different way, and to mobilize

Animations supported by publications, with a critical and educated eye

Events and publications for everyone

- Novices & Specialists
  - Individuals & Organizations



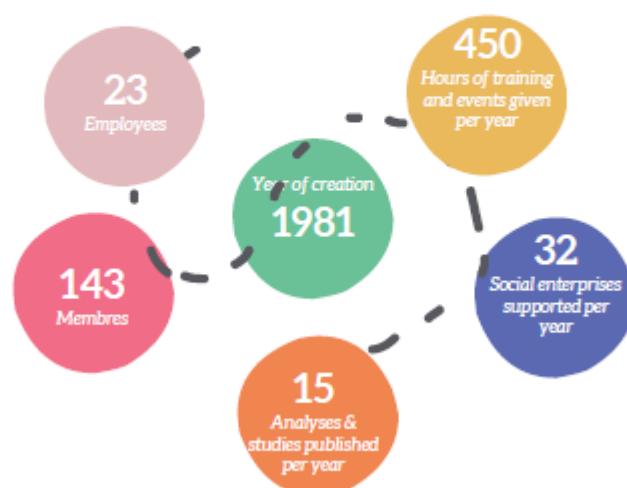


## 3 satellites.





## En chiffres.




## La Ceinture Alimentaire Charleroi-Métropole



### Meeting Outline

- ✓ Welcome - "Round Table – Presentations" - Introducing SAW-B
- ✓ Highlighting in particular the legal bases, governance, membership, areas of activity...
- ✓ **Presentation of Charleroi Métropole "food belt" (inter-cooperation between local businesses) (2017-2024) + creation of a wholesaler**
- ✓ Other possible themes:
  - ✓ The first steps of the **creation of a logistics hub desired by the government (top-down approach) (2022-2025)**
  - ✓ The **creation of a local supermarket with local products (2023-2025)**
- ✓ Discussions... clarifications.

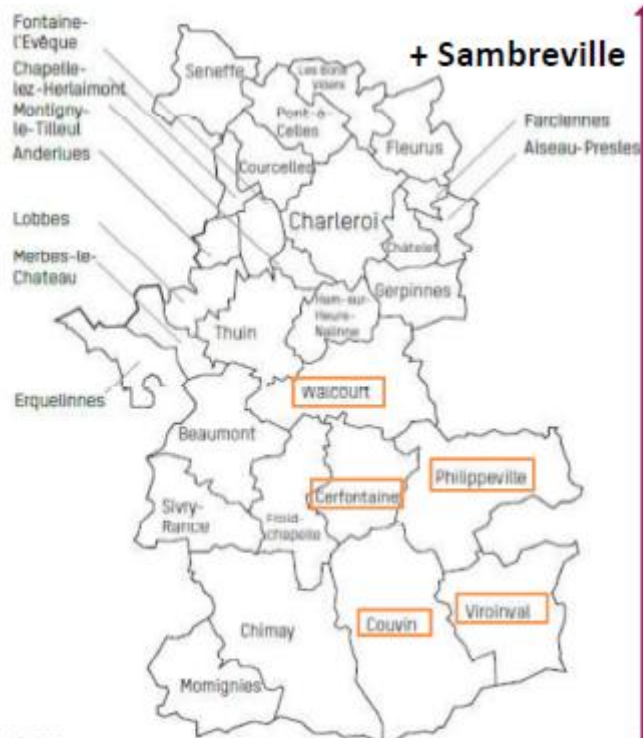


[www.ceinturealimentaire.be](http://www.ceinturealimentaire.be)

## The AMBITION of the Charleroi Métropole “FOOD BELT”?

To allow all the inhabitants of the Charleroi Métropole territory (30 municipalities) to have access to **organic food in short circuits**, at an **affordable price...**

and to ensure a fair **distribution of income among** all the links in the chain!



## The TERRITORY ~~29~~ 30 municipalities

### Economic living area:

- 85 km N-S
- 600,000 inhabitants
- **Highly urbanized in the north**
- **Very rural in the south**
- Straddling 2 provinces
- No strictly delimited "borders"
- Significant and *diversified* agricultural potential in this area
- Dynamics much less advanced than in BW, Liège, etc.

## The project - Origins and leaders



Experience in the field of short food supply chains

+ Referent of the  
Reference Centre  
Short circuits in Wallonia

🌱 Project support:



## The study and analysis of short circuits and sustainable food {There are many more recent publications!}

### Studies:



### Publications:

- Shared Farms (2021)
- Sustainable food. Why consume "social economy"? (2020)
- Organic, short circuits, local... How to find your way around? (2020)
- The Right Price (2018-2019)
- Beyond short circuits, what do food belts offer? (2018)
- GASAP, GAC, The hive that says yes: from the same to the same? (2015)
- Consuming locally: from organic baskets to alternative supermarkets (2015)



## Micro-diagnostic

### Preliminary work basis

1. To **physically bring together** potentially affected companies and individuals and to **present them collectively a concept of cooperation and joint work with certain goals.**
2. On this sufficiently clear general basis, **identify those people** who **recognized** this concept as also "theirs" and **who want to actively associate** themselves with it.
3. **Human encounters are at the heart of the process:** dialogue, getting to know each other and creating a climate of trust.
4. Individual interviews with farmers.

## Micro-diagnostic

Individual interviews

**More than 65 needs identified among farmers alone**  
 (reduced to 17 categories)

- |                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. How can access to the means of production be facilitated?                                      | 10. Marketing to communities;                                                                                                   |
| 2. Need to develop more technical skills (production, processing, sales, etc.).                   | 11. Access to products in short organic circuits for more vulnerable populations;                                               |
| 3. In particular, to develop more technical skills relating to organic production;                | 12. How can we better understand and respond to consumer needs?                                                                 |
| 4. Labour needs;                                                                                  | 13. How can we "organise" the commitment and cooperation between the actors in the sector (for example, the "producer groups")? |
| 5. Specific issues related to installation;                                                       | 14. Need to develop the sharing of common values and rules, via a Charter, an rules of procedure;                               |
| 6. The problems specific to certain sectors (cattle, pigs, sheep, cereals, market gardening,...); | 15. How to know the "true price" of goods?                                                                                      |
| 7. Processing *;                                                                                  | 16. Need to develop communication;                                                                                              |
| 8. Logistics (transport, storage, information flows, etc.) *                                      | 17. Need to involve the public authorities more.                                                                                |
| 9. Marketing in general (and in particular in Charleroi) *;                                       |                                                                                                                                 |

## Micro-diagnostic

**More than 65 needs identified among farmers alone**  
 (reduced to 17 categories)

**Where to start, and WHO decides?**

**All the farmers interviewed, the CACM team, its coordinator, SAW-B?**

A "classic" and very **threatening danger** in any project of this type is that of **dispersion and torn between innumerable requests or voluntary impulses** (= desire to concretize an idea, an ideal - especially, for these voluntary impulses, on the part of the project promoters), when the resources are far too low.

## Informal governance of intercooperation:

**Participatory or non-participatory?**

**Top-down or bottom-up?**

**A subtle balance to be sought and found between  
top-down and bottom-up governance**

There is no ready-made recipe

"Neither too much nor too little, of one or the other"

Possibility of paradoxical communications (double bind)

## Informal governance of intercooperation:

Participatory or non-participatory?

Top-down or bottom-up?

**There are rules specific to the market gardening  
sector**

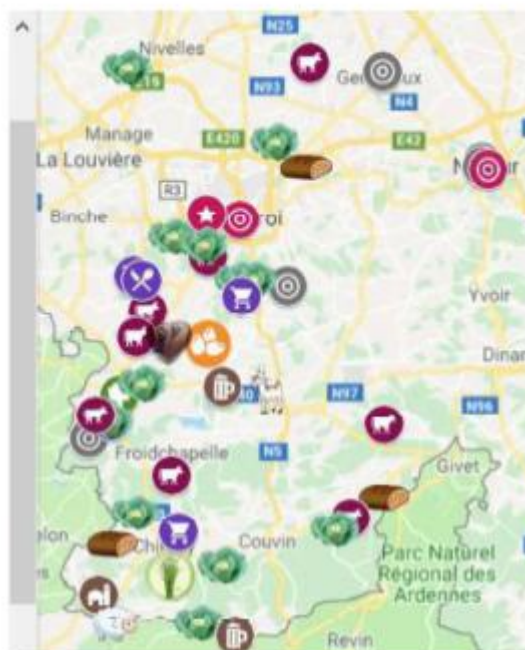
**Authorities tend to operate according  
to "top-down" schemes**

**Near 30 producers**  
 transformers – Also outside the 30 municipalities!

**The economic players in the sector** (2017-2019)

[www.ceinturealimentaire.be](http://www.ceinturealimentaire.be) > Menu **Les acteurs**

-  Maraîchage (12)
-  Elevage (8)
-  Ensemblier / Facilitateur (5)
-  Vente au détail (4)
-  Boulangerie (3)
-  Brasserie (2)
-  Partenaire de la Ceinture (2)
-  Arboriculture (1)
-  Chocolaterie (1)
-  Coordinateur de la Ceinture (1)
-  Elevage caprin (1)
-  Elevage ovin (1)
-  Polyculture-élevage (1)
-  Producteurs d'œufs (1)
-  Production plantes aromatiques (1)
-  Restaurant / traiteur (1)



## How many producers have been certified organic?

May 2018 – Deepening the diagnosis



### Distribution on the territory 30 municipalities

The municipalities of Chimay, Froidchapelle, Momignies, Philippeville, Sivy-Rance, Walcourt et Viroinval count almost exclusively livestock farms, cereal crops or mixed livestock farming.

**Not all of them (148) can produce for local populations**  
 Examples: cereal farmers → 87% animal feed; land that is not productive is labelled;  
 Dairy production in conventional circuits!



## Among inter-jurisdictional and intra-territorial partners



## HOW TO DO IT?

# Consultation-Dialogue-Agreement & Inter-cooperation



## INTERCOOPERATION... Why?

### Division of labour



**More goods and  
services for lower  
prices**

(+ objective altruism)



**Loss of the big  
picture,  
fragmentation,  
chaos**



## INTERCOOPERATION between the actors of the territory

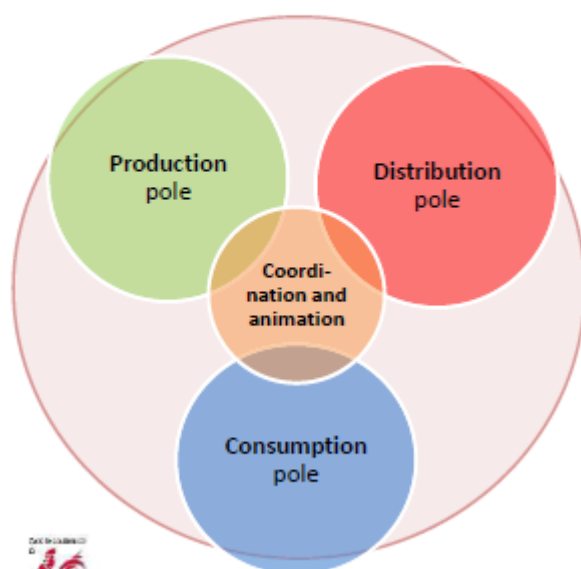
A very simple concept, but...



## CONSULTATION

A very simple concept...

Even the competitors!

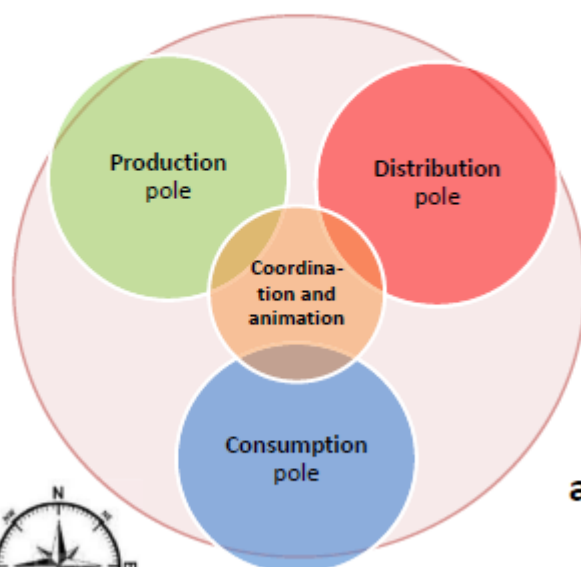


**Round tables where  
needs are freely  
expressed**

=> formation of Economic  
Intercooperation Circles



## COLLECTIVE consultation in a circle of *economic intercooperation*



= as “organs of perception  
and orientation”

(1) **Vision** and overall  
direction = compass

(2) **Then practical decisions  
and long-term commitments**  
= safety + development

## Do not confuse "INTERCOOPERATION" in the sense mentioned here and...

- « Coopetition » = Competitor alliance
  - > Common products, services or brand (complementary expertise)
  - > Cost reduction (pooling of resources)
- "Simple" producer groups, distributors' groups, federations, professional unions...  
 Certainly a very relevant starting point (e.g. GP organic pigs (remarkable!)...  
 but does not already concern an entire sector!



## The commitment



"Contractualization" rather than the ballot... (vote)



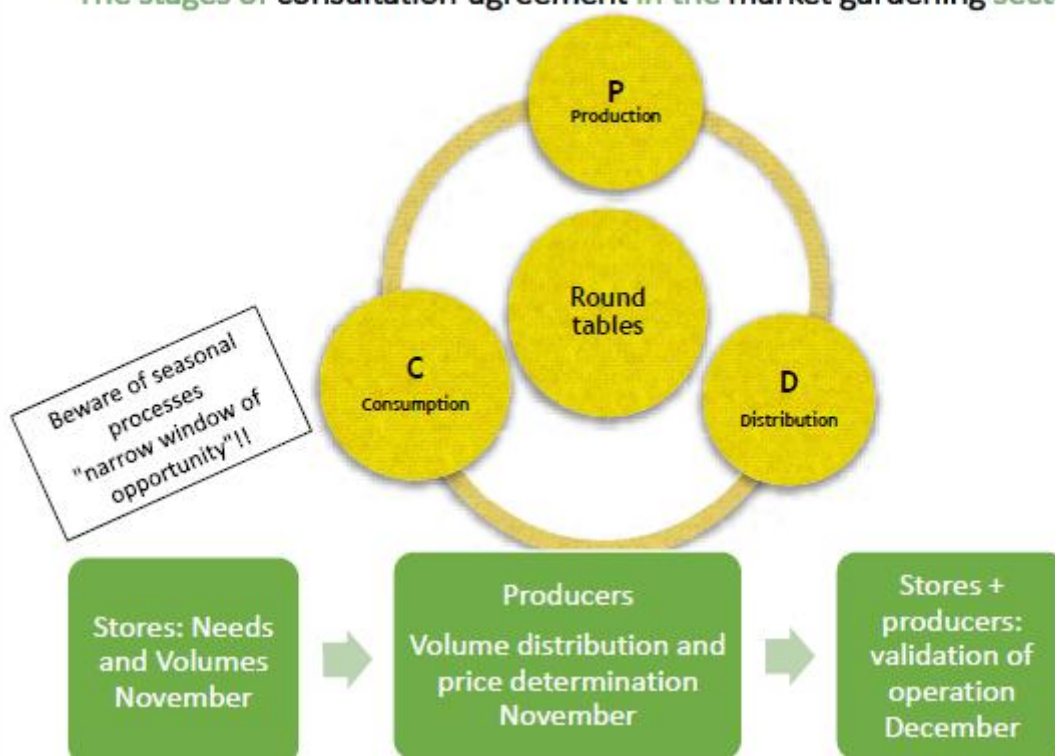
## A very significant bias at the time of launch and diagnosis

**There were only producers and no buyers**  
 (retailers, community canteens, consumers, etc.).

Vision was truncated  
 No true economic opportunity!



A concrete example:  
 The stages of consultation-agreement in the market gardening sector



## Among the major issues

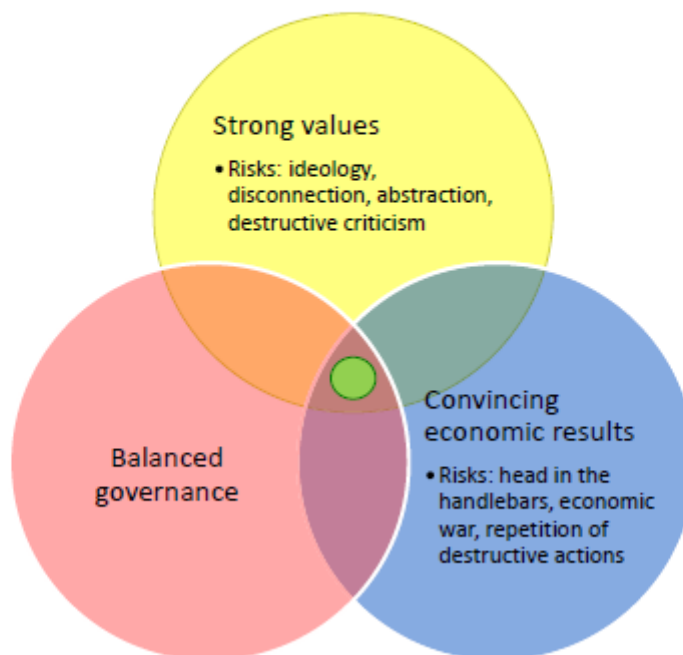
**Constantly know the PRICES  
and get an idea of the "CORRECT PRICES"  
of goods**

- accessible to consumers
- and sufficiently remunerative

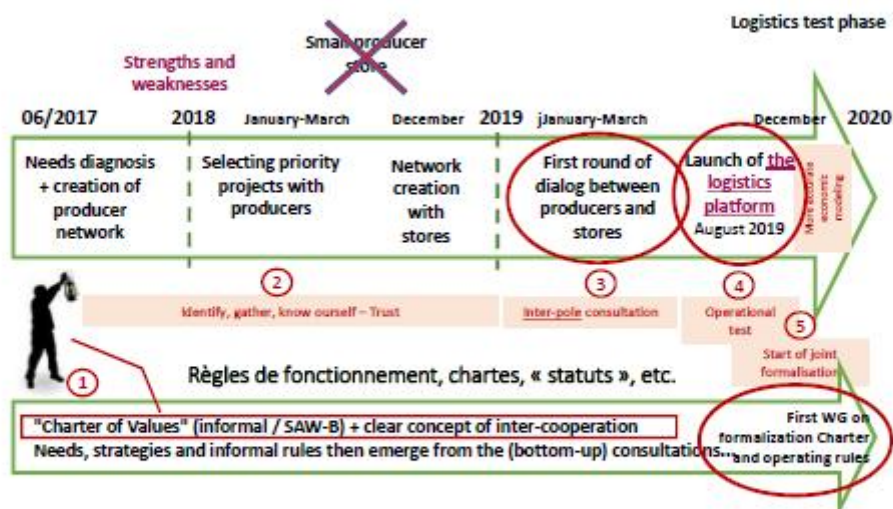


## Reconciling three complementary issues/needs

Be able to **sufficiently and simultaneously** pursue these 3 objectives



## Proceedings of the launch of the collective dynamic of the CMAC in 2017-2019 – In summary



# Logistics - Test phase



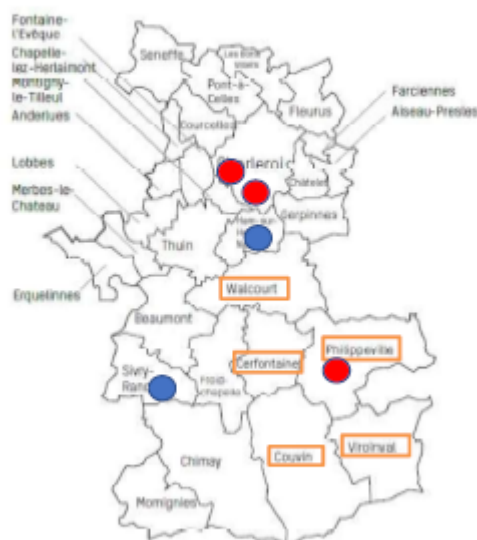
## (2) Actions carried out during the first grant period (2017-2019)

### The launch of the test phase (since August 2019)

#### Situation at the end of 2019:

- 2 working hubs ("warehouse")
- 4 market gardeners + 1 farmer-butcher
- 3 stores delivered with vegetables
- August-Sept: Vegetable delivery
- Transport carried out by a producer
- "Legal vehicle" = another producer
- Tune-ups + Computing: SAW-B
- Assessment of the test -> desire to continue -> Cooperative creation in 2020

#### Local hubs and stores



Preferred model: purchase-resale, but not only...

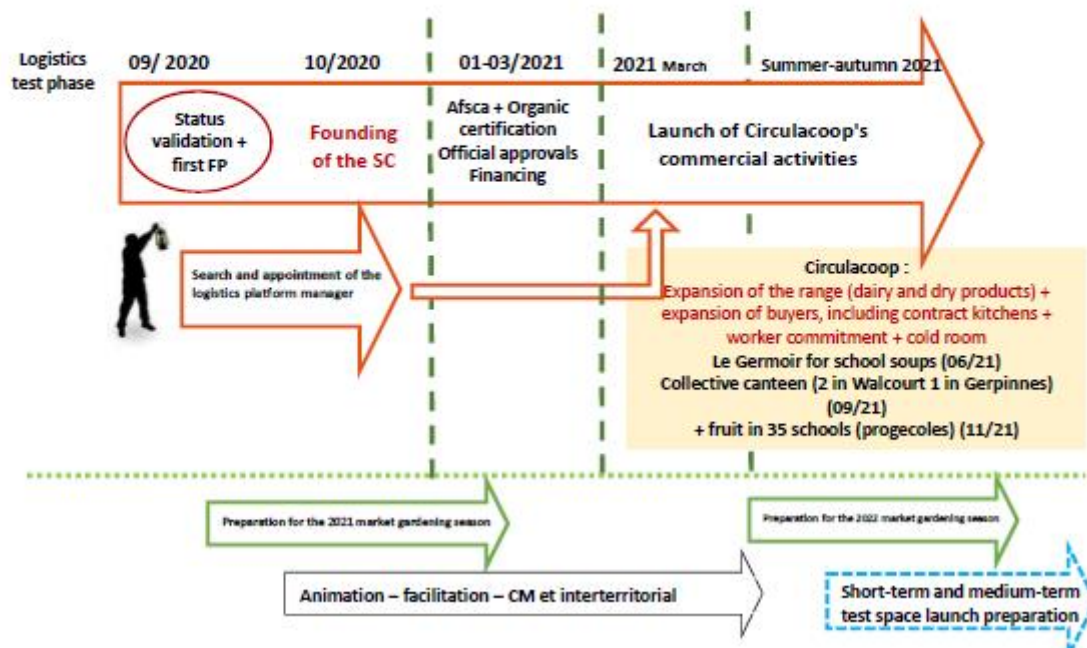
#### Lessons, best practices and key success factors

- Test phase whenever possible = reduce costs and risks. Rely on existing companies whenever possible.
- Reduce the risk of dispersion in terms of the actions to be taken. Relying on the needs of the actors
- Avoid spreading yourself too thin about the actors to be brought together
  - Identify those who share the same values, who want to work together
- Implementation of precise procedures for the construction of fair prices, the collective planning of production, its distribution and the prioritization of orders

# Logistics – Cooperative – Wholesaler

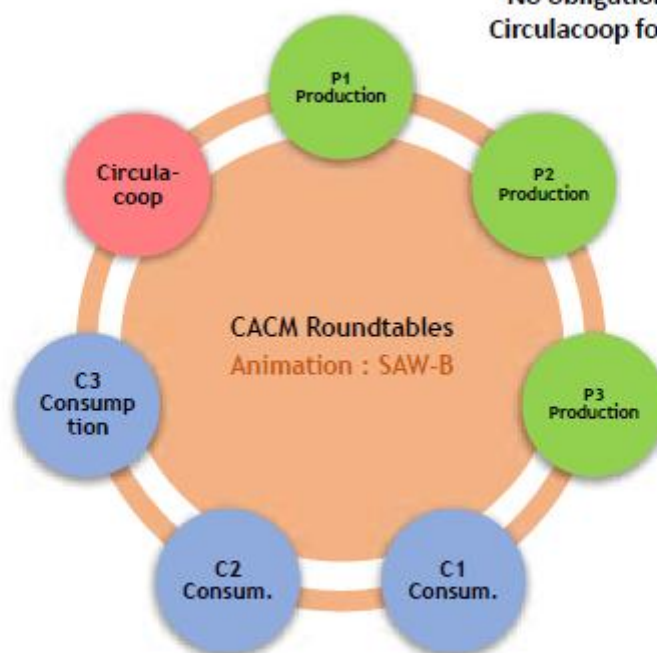


## Launch of "Circulacoop SC" Cooperative of the CACM logistics platform



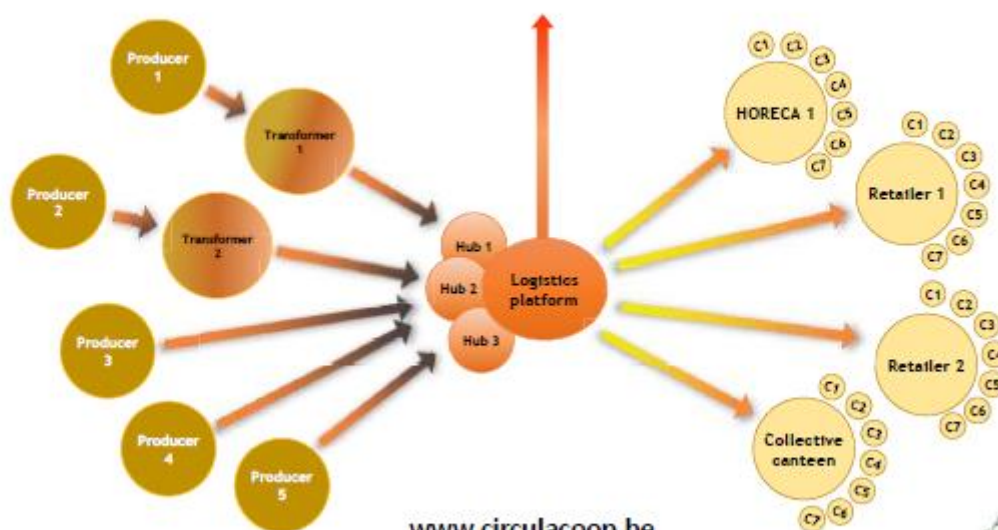
The cooperative company Circulacoop is one of the CACM players

No obligation to market via  
Circulacoop for CACM players!



However, a central issue for *all* players:

The logistics platform is located at a central crossroads that must be "controlled" to ensure a dynamic of cooperation at the service of all

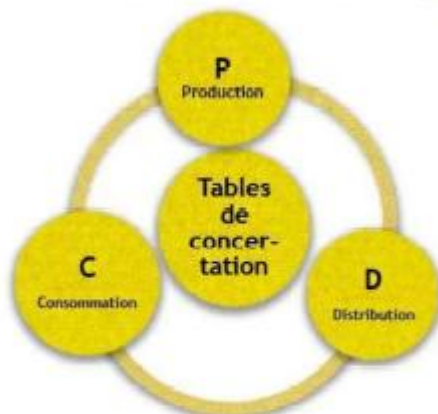


[www.circulacoop.be](http://www.circulacoop.be)



## Deux organismes complémentaires à bien distinguer...

### La dynamique de la Ceinture alimentaire CM



- Organe de perception des besoins (librement exprimés)
- Vision d'ensemble
- Orientations – Engagements – Accords – Contractualisation
- Emergence de projets et de solutions

### La plateforme logistique Circulacoop SC



- Organe de circulation et synchronisation des flux logistiques sur le territoire :
  - Informations portant sur les offres et la demande
  - Gestion des commandes et livraisons des marchandises, organisation des tournées, gestion des stocks
  - Flux financiers

## Qui est responsable de quoi?

### Dynamique de la Ceinture alimentaire CM


**SAW&B**

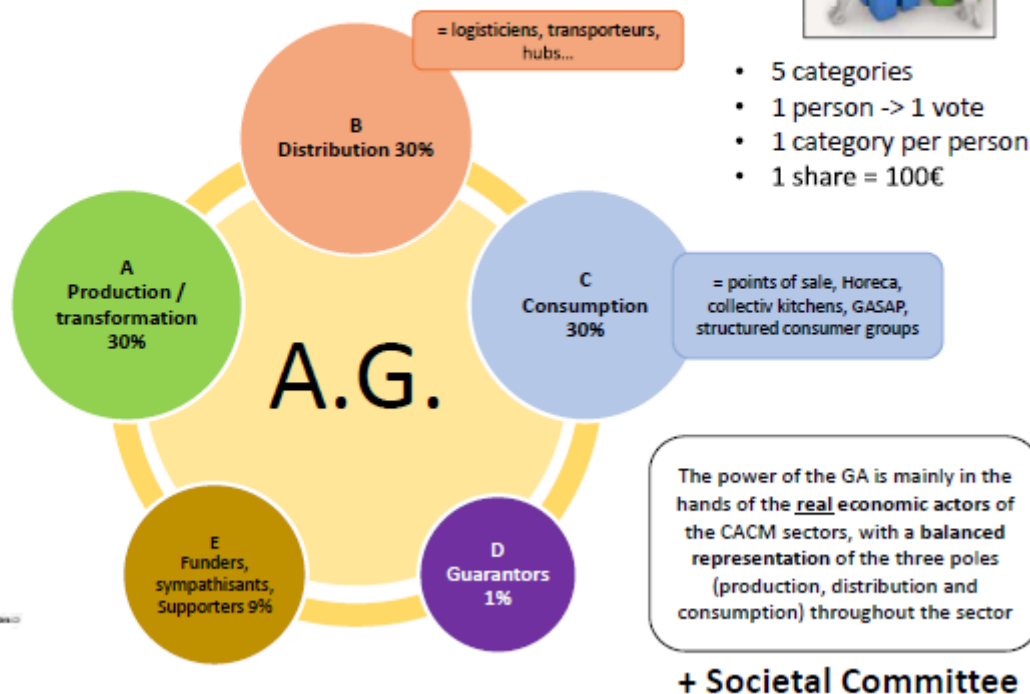
- Réalisation de diagnostics du territoire (vision d'ensemble – Référent)
- Animation économique du territoire (rassembler, faciliter, assurer le suivi, faire connaître et diffuser la dynamique collective, participative et coopérative, faciliter le développement de l'offre et de la demande en amont de l'opérationnalisation ; tests ; incubation)
- Coopération interterritoriale
- Activités de communication publique et de mobilisation citoyenne

### La plateforme logistique


**SC  
Circulacoop**

- Développement des activités commerciales de la plateforme logistique Informations portant sur les offres et la demande
- Activités de communication spécifiquement centrées sur le développement commercial

## Composition of the General Meeting, share classes and distribution of powers



## Failure of wholesaler activities

Many reasons

- **Demand for organic fruit and vegetables is too low** for different types of outlets (supermarkets, grocery stores, school canteens, purchasing groups, etc.)
- Insufficient start-up capital => impact on the shortage of staff with diverse skills and lack of material resources
- Predominance of short-term interests among farmers
- **The local B2B wholesaler is too expensive for small local businesses.** You need enough companies of at least a medium-sized size to make your activities profitable.
- The free of charge also poses major problems
- The human factor
- **The seasonality of local vegetable production**
- Inadequacies of economic thought
- Legal constraints too demanding for small start-ups
- **And above all: the unbridled competition between wholesalers of organic products**

# The creation of a "big" logistics hub



## The creation of a "large" logistics hub (2022-2025)

- **The Walloon Government wants** to create three hubs: one in Liège, one in Namur and one in Charleroi (in Charleroi: **create a very large vegetable factory** to provide a future central kitchen (25,000 meals per day)).
- **The aim** is to facilitate the processing and delivery of sustainable, local and balanced food products to local authorities (nurseries, schools, nursing homes, hospitals, etc.), professionals and citizens, and to improve access to healthy food for all.
- The hubs will be assigned to **wholesaler, storage, processing, distribution and marketing** of these products **by social economy enterprises** (1,600,000€ for Charleroi Métropole logistics hub)

### Top-down approach



## Creation of a "large" logistics hub: inconsistencies - 1

- **The vision and needs** of social economy cooperatives and small local producers were **quite different** from the creation of a single "vast hub" in the territory + **fear + mistrust**
- The review of the **Public Procurement Regulations (MAPU)** showed that there will be **no guarantee that food can be supplied** by operators installed in the hub **to the future central kitchen**.
- The project to create a hub and vegetable factory is certainly very well-intentioned. However, it was designed *in abstracto*, **without sufficient knowledge of the realities of the needs, without sufficiently in-depth prior consultation with actors in the field**, and this, within **far too short deadlines imposed by the EU authorities**, also counting, for its economic profitability, on the existence of a (pharaonic?) project for a **central kitchen, which will probably never take place**, due to a lack of financial means.



**Top-down approach outside of reality**



## Creation of a "large" logistics hub: inconsistencies - 2

- Calculations will show that **the cost of some vegetables will be up to 2 times higher than those offered by competitors**, and sometimes even up to 3 or four times more expensive. There is **no demand for organic vegetables in the collective canteens**.
- No one in Wallonia **has already mastered the profession of large vegetable making** in the service of community kitchens, which nevertheless requires a great deal of professionalism;
- Such a project also presupposes in principle the **prior identification and commitment of operators** who are sufficiently familiar with the needs downstream of the hub, and who can to a certain extent **"guarantee" the existence of demand and therefore outlets**.



**Top-down approach outside of reality**



## The creation of a supermarket for local producers



### The creation of the CaroloStore (2023-2024)

- **Abandonment of the wholesale (B2B) project** by the Circulacoop cooperative.
- Creation with this cooperative of a **supermarket (B2C) offering food from local producers** in a strategic location in Charleroi: the CaroloStore.
- **A completely different model – A completely different strategy.**
- The aim is **to guarantee large volumes and a real impact on diversified food chains**: if B2C sales in short circuits develop on a sufficient scale, all upstream sectors will also follow and develop step by step.
- In addition, this supermarket could also possibly become a first start of activities that would then develop within the future hub (for example, relaunch B2B wholesale activities).

## The creation of the CaroloStore (2023-2024)

To be able to compete with nearby large and medium-sized retail outlets, you need:

- **Of course a wide assortment of products** (food and non-food) (**with a majority of local products**), in a supermarket that is easily accessible spatially, geographically, and relationally; **with which a wide audience can identify.**
- **To create a strong local community, with one of the most fundamental values: cooperation.**

It is also necessary to have a **"very concrete" place**, with an image that does not stigmatize. A place that is visible and accessible to a **mixed public** ("**the organic image**" **has been erased from the start**, precisely to promote accessibility even though the store has many organic products).



## The creation of the CaroloStore (2023-2024)

### What are the first results?

- Very professional preparation for the launch of the store in 2023, with significant capital and excellent communication
- **Very good reputation** even before the opening of the store
- **Huge cooperative success:** more than 500 new cooperators in 3 months (125,000€)
- Opening on March 1, 2024 – **Considerable enthusiasm among consumers** during the first 3 months – Then (normal) slowdown of activities. Opening of a drive-in in November 2024.



## The creation of the CaroloStore (2023-2024)

### The CaroloStore's global strategy:

1. **The priority is to create an economic activity with large volumes** in a strategic and visible location (this is very complex and requires high skills)
2. **Secondly, to fully develop the participative and cooperative dimension of the CaroloStore.** What is planned at the governance level:
  - **Setting up groups of producers by sector that meet independently.**
  - It is each small group by sector that has the power to decide whether or not a company belonging to the same sector is newly admitted to the college.



## The creation of the CaroloStore (2023-2024)

### Governance and decision-making (continued):

- **Bring together all the small groups once or twice a year within a transversal group of producers.**
- It is within this committee that an **overall vision** will be developed and decided, which will be brought by the producers to the board of trustees or the general assembly.

### **Producers retain control of the marketing tool.**

The board of trustees must include between two or three producers participating in the transversal college.

