



LJUBLJANA SLOVENIA

Title of Practice

LJUBLJANA: PLANNING FOR SHORT FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS

Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Category

FOOD SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION

Main impacts on other MUFPP categories



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Context

Two-thirds of the total surface area of the Municipality of Ljubljana (MOL) is constituted by rural areas and in these areas there are around 1 000 active small farms. In its **Rural Development Strategy** for the years 2014–2020, the Municipality of Ljubljana set as its first and fundamental objective the premise to “ensure quality agriculture and forestry goods from a preserved environment, with the aim of self-sufficiency of the MOL”. By doing so, the Municipality ensures food sovereignty and unburdens the environment with short food supply chains, while enhancing the food security of the urban population. Therefore, the MOL invested in increasing the recognisability of rural areas and created a comprehensive approach in **marketing the rural goods**. The main objective of all the activities was to shorten sales channels so that the citizens of Ljubljana could access locally grown food and consume mainly seasonal products.

Overview of the food practice

In 2015, the MOL implemented an action plan to support primary agricultural activities in its rural areas in order to help farmers enter the market and connect with consumers. To reach different target groups, different approaches were developed:

- **Events:** an organic market takes place every Saturday in Ljubljana central market. Additionally, Ljubljana’s rural area festival takes place every year in October and presents different local food suppliers to the citizens.
- **Doorstep sales:** the MOL encourages and supports, also financially, cultivators who arrange sale areas in their farms and offers buyers completely fresh locally-grown food.
- **Market areas:** the Municipality is preparing eight new marketplaces in the city, to be added to the four, which are already operating.
- **“Basket of Ljubljana”:** this initiative provides a standard defining how food must be grown in the City of Ljubljana, according to the principles of organic or integrated production. There are currently 70 food suppliers included in the initiative.
- **Short food supply chains:** the Municipality supports cooperation among caterers, hoteliers, other providers of catering services and local farmers in order to create an efficient network. Special attention has been dedicated to children in kindergartens, where 20 percent of the public procurement has been used to purchase locally-grown products.
- **Network of allotment gardens:** the Municipality established five allotment garden areas for urban agriculture. All together, the city counts 705 allotment gardens on an area of 65 292 m², with an average dimension of each allotment of 60 m², to be rented for 3 to 5 years. In 2017, one of the areas was dedicated to educational training in the field of agroecology, involving a wide range of social groups.

Results and lessons learned

The success of the Rural Development Strategy is the result of a combination of different actions that have been implemented together. The promotion and organization of short supply chains involved several steps: support to primary production, training for the suppliers, financial help and promotion activities. This approach was also oriented to improve **job opportunities** along the food chain: Ljubljana belongs to the most densely populated area in Slovenia, but with the below average share of employment in agriculture (0.6 percent). Recent research shows that urban gardening can now ensure a self-employment condition with an average income of EUR 200 to 400 per month for each occupied person, that is around 20 to 30 percent of the total monthly income. Considering an average gross margin for food production of about EUR 2.42/m², the expected economic impact of urban gardening on the vegetable supply chain in the urban areas currently dedicated for allotments is about EUR 1.1 million per year.

The main output has been an **increase in the consumption of locally-produced food**. The establishment of markets is of key importance for the distribution of local food. Additionally, the involvement of numerous formal and informal associations play an important role in interconnecting producers having diverse production – from asparagus, strawberries, fruits, pumpkins, milk and grains – which helps them to be better connected to the markets. It is interesting to note that more than 50 percent of the gardeners cover with their activity over 50 percent of their vegetable needs. More than 80 percent of gardens reported using the production for their own needs and 70 percent of them also donate surpluses.

The MOL also focused on the involvement and **training of cooks and nutrition planners in primary schools** and kindergartens, who have the biggest possibilities on shaping eating habits among children, enhancing healthy diets and reducing food waste. The creation of short supply chains further benefits the population: the **resilience** of the city is increased considering the augmented availability of food in case of extreme weather conditions and unforeseen events. Moreover, a focus on local growing and selling allows for a **better match with consumers’ needs**, so that extra surplus production and thus food waste decrease while new employment opportunities are developed.



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