



**Towards FOOD 2030**  
future-proofing  
the European food systems  
through Research & Innovation

# **FIT4FOOD2030**

## **Mid-Term Report Summary**

**November 2017 – April 2019**

[www.fit4food2030.eu](http://www.fit4food2030.eu)

**#FOOD2030EU**



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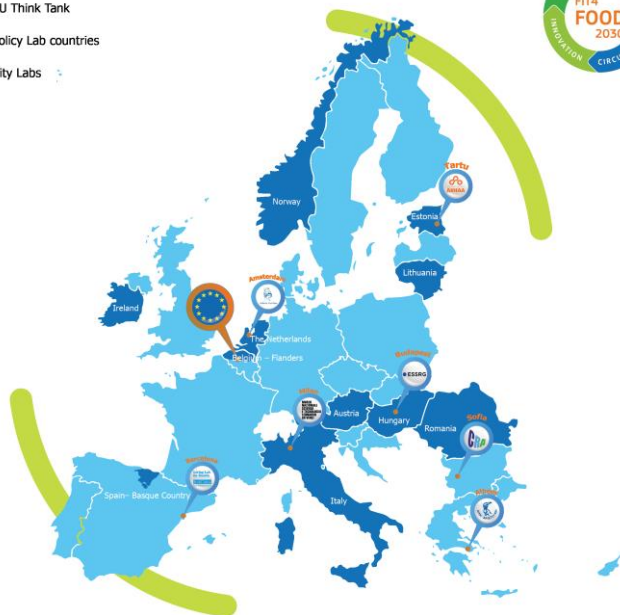
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The research and innovation (R&I) system has an important role to play in providing solutions to the societal challenge of food and nutrition security (FNS) in a changing world. R&I can deliver the transformational force needed to change existing pathways of the food system into more sustainable pathways. To date though, European R&I investments and outcomes to make the European food system ‘future proof’ have not fulfilled the promise to pave the path towards a sustainable future. This is mainly due to (1) continuation on a business-as-usual path leading to further environmental degradation and an economic structure that is prone to instability, and (2) huge health burdens from unbalanced food consumption patterns. In view of the global FNS challenges and the goals set in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the EC has established the FOOD 2030 policy framework. The objective of FOOD 2030 is to contribute to the transformation of European food systems so as to make them sustainable, resilient, responsible, diverse, competitive and inclusive. To achieve that, R&I investments

should be focused on the FNS priorities (nutrition for sustainable and healthy diets, climate smart and environmentally sustainable food systems, circularity and resources efficiency of food systems, and innovation and empowerment of communities).

**FOOD 2030 Platform**

-  EU Think Tank
-  Policy Lab countries
-  City Labs



FIT4FOOD2030 supports the European Commission FOOD 2030 policy framework. The main objective of the project is to build a sustainable, multi-stakeholder FOOD2030 Platform, mobilising a wide variety of stakeholders from different sectors at the level of cities, regions, countries, and Europe. To reach this main goal, FIT4FOOD2030 aims to (1) strengthen R&I

policy coherence and alignment (2) build competences for food systems R&I, and (3) raise awareness. The platform comprises of three interlinked structures: EU Think Tank, Policy Labs and City Labs, which interact regularly to exchange information, learn from one another, and plan actions. To support the emerging platform current trends, policies, showcases and breakthroughs in food systems R&I are analysed.

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FIT4FOOD2030's activities comprise four phases: (1) actor identification/mobilisation and visioning/system understanding; (2) developing roadmaps; (3) action planning and training; and (4) scaling up and continuity. Cross-cutting components are: methodology development and transformative learning. During its first 18 months, the project has focused on laying the foundation for the FOOD 2030 Platform, and have successfully completed the first two phases. The Policy and City Lab coordinators were trained to increase their knowledge and boost their skills on network building, stakeholder engagement, visioning, identification of competences, and system understanding. In addition, the current trends, showcases and breakthroughs in food systems R&I were analysed.

### FOOD 2030 Platform

The FOOD2030 Platform is a key part of the project. Here we will summarise the aims and activities of the City Labs, Policy Labs and the EU Think Tank.

### City Labs

The City Labs bring together policy makers, researchers, educators and citizens from all walks of life, working on their visions of FOOD 2030 and considering concrete actions on how to get there. An important objective is to develop and pilot hands-on (in)formal training of students, research and professionals. Seven City Labs have been recruited from among Science Centres and Science Shops across Europe. The selected City Labs are located in Amsterdam (The Netherlands), Milan (Italy), Budapest (Hungary), Barcelona (Spain), Athens (Greece), Sofia (Bulgaria) and Tartu (Estonia). The City Lab coordinators have so far been trained during three 2-day workshops. They have gathered a group of committed researchers, policy makers, educators, businesses and citizens and organised various workshops to create a vision of their aspired food system; the results of these exercises reflect well the diversity of each of these new communities. Following that vision, City Labs have started collecting and analysing local best practices and identified needs for competence building. Based on these insights, they have developed educational modules, which will be piloted during the second half of the project. New City Labs will be joining the project in the autumn of 2019.



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### Policy Labs

The Policy Labs aim at systematic dialogue and co-creation with key stakeholders (science, industry, policy and civil society) to inform the R&I policy programmes of national government and private parties, such that R&I activities have a maximum impact on local, regional or national FNS goals. The Policy Labs focus on concrete activities such as the organisation of R&I events and the development of a R&I programme. The first seven Policy Labs – located in Flanders (Belgium), Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Norway and Romania – have been established in February 2018 and have so far received four 2-day training workshops. The Policy Labs have organised two national meetings in the period September 2018 - May 2019. The general themes for these meetings were ‘awareness and understanding of food systems and related R&I’ and ‘visioning future food systems’. Due to different local contexts, the focus of the Policy Labs varies; some focus on organising national meetings with stakeholders to discuss current challenges and align regional approaches, while others work towards an integrated Food Policy, supported by an R&I agenda. Four new Policy Labs – located in Ireland, Austria, Estonia and Basque Country (Spain) – have joined the project in April 2019 and have attended their first 2-day training workshop on strategies for setting-up their first national meetings.

### EU Think Tank

The EU Think Tank (EU-TT) serves as a strategic hub to work towards an integrated vision of food systems and needed transformation in R&I to deliver impact on the societal challenge of FNS. The EU-TT enables the EC to liaise with the merging network and the lessons that FIT4FOOD2030 generates. It also serves as a sounding board with global outreach. The EU-TT has been established, comprising 15 members in May 2018. So far it has had three meetings, contributing proactively to the project via the development of policy briefs. The first policy brief “A Systems Approach to Research and Innovation for Food System Transformation” was published in October 2018 (available through [www.fit4food2030.eu/reports-publications/](http://www.fit4food2030.eu/reports-publications/)). The second policy brief highlighting the need for a systems approach to consumption is nearing completion.



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## Trends, showcases and breakthroughs

Serving as an important building block for stakeholder engagement in the EU Think Tank, Policy Labs and City Labs, were the analyses of:

- current trends, drivers and barriers affecting the food system and its transformation;
- current EU and national food system-related policies;
- showcases where Research and Innovation practices have shown to adopt holistic food systems approach and/or Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) for food system transformation;
- future Research and Innovation breakthroughs that have the potential to significantly contribute to food systems transformation.

The analysis of trends in food systems Research and Innovation as well as an overview of related European food policies have been finalised, both as an extensive report and as engaging card games on trends and food policies that facilitate group discussion on the topic of food systems and related challenges. The collection of showcases, covering the four FOOD 2030 priorities (Climate, Innovation, Nutrition and Circularity), is well underway with currently 150+ cases identified as well as identification of a diverse set (social movements, technological innovation, new business models etc.) of 16 potential Research & Innovation showcases through a multi-stakeholder process. The selected cases will be used to develop a guideline for best practices, including success factors for the transitioning towards a more sustainable and future-proof food system. An inventory of possible future Research & Innovation breakthroughs is published, relating these to the trends and cases. Recently an analysis of success factors, enablers and drivers for breakthroughs has been completed.

## Outreach and impact

The project is on track in realising its formal impact criteria and is engaging many different stakeholders either directly through project activities or through communication and dissemination. The Policy and City Labs have organised workshops and meetings, where they have been working towards system understanding, developing visions, stakeholder engagement, as well as policy alignment (Policy Labs) and developing educational modules (City Labs).



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With regard to involving stakeholders, this entails the direct active engagement in about 50 workshops, FIT4FOOD2030 events and numerous other engagements of over 500 policy makers; 1200 researchers/teachers; almost 500 (representatives of) businesses including farmers, start-ups and retail; over 250 consumers; over 150 NGOs and almost 100 research funders; as well as indirect engagement of another 2,500 stakeholders and an online indirect engagement of over 288,000 on online platforms and social media. In the final 18 months of the project direct engagement of consumers, school children and students is a key priority and this will be secured through implementation of the modules as developed by the City Labs, as well as through Policy Lab workshops. In addition, many Consortium partners organise presentations and workshops for example within the context of their networks annual meeting.

It is, however, not just about ticking those boxes; FIT4FOOD2030 aims to fundamentally transform EU R&I in order to future-proof food systems through its activities. There are also already examples of the project's impact beyond the initial impact indicators: through the Romanian Policy Lab, FIT4FOOD2030 was involved in the Austria EU Presidency Event (workshops) and will be involved in the Romanian EU Presidency Event (workshop and a keynote presentation by the Coordinator). Furthermore, the project is more strongly linking up with the work and needs of the Commission, by for example organising a high-level event at the World Food Day in 2019 together with FAO.

The final 18 months of the project are about scaling-up and realising continuity as well as about widening and broadening stakeholder involvement. The Policy and City Labs will move towards action planning and will start experimenting for system transformation. This entails experimenting with and securing sustainability of the educational modules as developed by the seven incumbent City Labs as well as the recruitment of seven new City Labs, but also working towards transformed R&I systems on the national level through experiments for policy innovation in the 11 Policy Labs. The EU-TT will write at least another two policy briefs among which one on pathways to food system transformation. In order to realise impact through the FOOD 2030 platform, the project will closely work together with the EC in order to provide appropriate support for the implementation of FOOD 2030.

