

GROUP 5 FOOD AND CATERING

This session will explore how organizations of different sizes and scopes can contribute to sustainable food policies at the national, regional and local level by introducing environmental criteria in their procurement procedures. Experiences of cities, regional procurement agencies and universities will be compared to identify tailor-made solutions for common goals.

Session 1 from 12,00 to 13,30

- the facilitators shall introduce themselves one after the other and describe the goals and expected outcomes

- the facilitators shall explain the working method and distribute the material

PHASES	WHAT	TIME SCHEDULE	Goals <i>Notes for the facilitators</i>
Individual work	Each participant is urged to write in their own language 1 difficulty and 1 achievement	12.10-12.20	<i>Break the ice. Allow everyone to focus their attention on the matter and freely express themselves</i>
Group work	Explain and discuss the points written by the participants	12.20-13.20	<i>Get down to business. Analyze individual aspects and give participants time to exchange</i>
	Integrate the various aspects	13.20-13.30	<i>Spot common aspects and macro-areas to promote future discussion</i>
Break		13.30-15.00	
Group work	Questions and answers. -The facilitators ask questions to the group -Questions from the group to the group	15.00-16.00	<i>Analyze critical aspects and the good practices that have emerged</i>
	Exchange gifts	16.00-16.15	<i>Give a good piece of advice and a warning</i>
	Summary	16.15-16.30	<i>Share the highlights to report to the plenary session</i>

Tentative questions

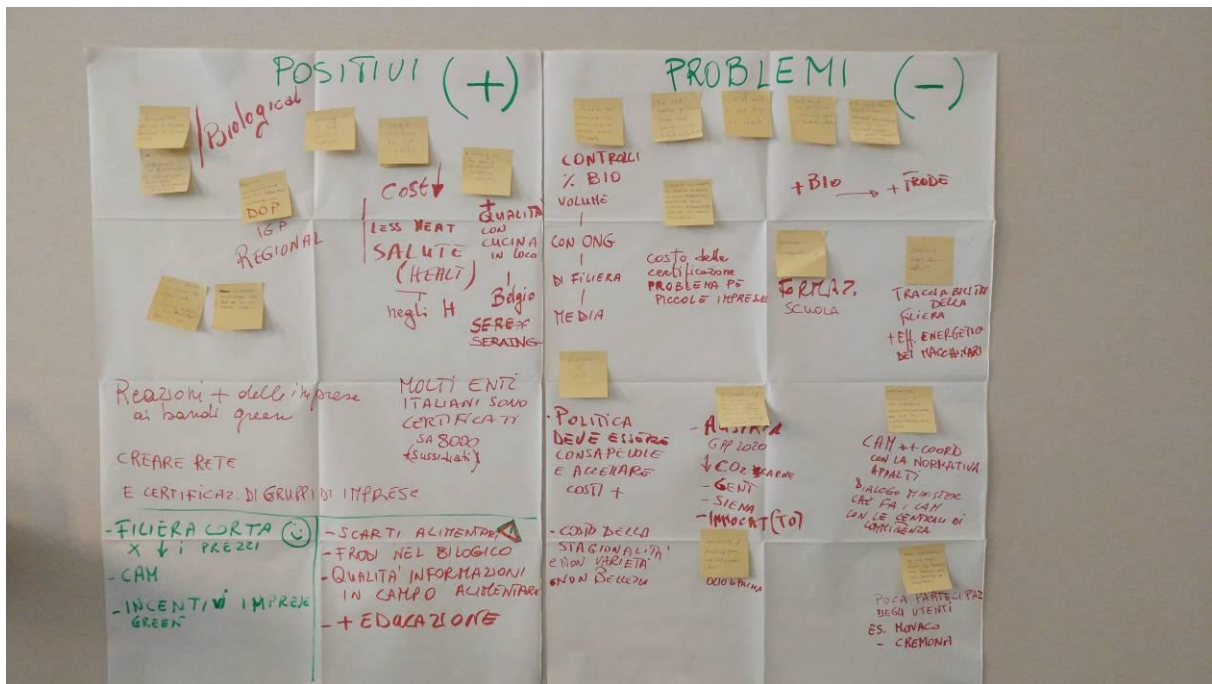
- Are there minimum environmental criteria or similar tools in your country?
- If so, how is the compliance with these criteria monitored, during their implementation?
- If not, are there generally approved rules?
- Is there a nation-wide monitoring system in place?
- What has been the market reaction to the demand for green tenders?
- Has there been any visible effect on the farming industry?
- Are there tools/incentives that have proved effective?
- Has there been an increase in the costs of products/final service?
- Has it been possible to quantify the reduction of the environmental impact?

Main points of the discussion:

CHALLENGES

- During the implementation of the contract, the verification of compliance with the green criteria is still very complicated. That is particularly true for the control of the organic food certifications, considering that frauds are always numerous. Non-governmental organisations (at local and regional level), sectoral organisations working on chain of supply and mass media (public control) can support verification efforts.
- Biological products can be 'uglier' than conventional products, as well as more expensive. We need to be aware of this and create good information about these issues, both to local authorities (which have to allocate more budget for these expenses) and to consumers (parents and children).
- The respect of the calendar of seasonality reduces the variety of available foods: this must be taken into account in school menus and in nutritional education.
- Green tenders often have references to certifications, but obtaining them is very expensive for companies of the agricultural sector, especially if small and medium-sized. This aspect constitutes a potential accessibility barrier to many companies. The promotion of supply chain certification and affiliation to interest groups (multi-stakeholder initiatives) is desirable.
- The amount of waste in the catering sector (canteens) is still very substantial.
- The involvement of canteen beneficiaries in the decision-making processes is still very under-developed (positive experiences in Monaco and Cremona).
- The quantification of environmental savings deriving from greening procurement in catering is still an uncommon practice, also because of its complexity. The examples of Austria, INNOCAT projects (<http://www.sustainable-catering.eu/>), GPP2020 (<http://www.gpp2020.eu/>) and cities of Siena and Gent were quoted.





POSITIVE ASPECTS

- Sustainable canteens show that a reduction of the costs of meals is possible, for example thanks to the reduced use of meat dishes and the attention to waste reduction.
- Green canteens also show an increasing attention to the use of products with a short supply chain (km0) and linkage to territorial and agricultural identity (e.g. products certified as 'DOP', 'IGP').
- 'In-house kitchens' generally offer a higher quality of food in school catering (instead of far-away catering).
- With regards to catering in hospitals, several studies have shown that a higher quality of administered meals (also obtained through green tenders) leads to faster healing and therefore to a reduction of overall costs for the institution (the hospital of Seraing is good example)
- Italy undertakes considerable education efforts with regards to the choice of quality food products and to the reduction of waste. Europe does much less in this regard and much more has to be invested on this aspect.
- On overall, companies have reacted very positively to the green purchasing criteria in public tenders.

SOLUTIONS

- An economic policy directed at stimulating green companies' engagement in sustainable development practices.
- A bigger effort in assessing and quantifying the positive impacts generated by green public procurement for sustainable catering services is necessary.
- Simplifying the minimum environmental criteria to be included into tender specifications would facilitate the coherence with public procurement legislation and make them more easily applicable.
- In addition to legally favorable conditions, at EU level, and in Italy in particular, political as well as administrative (within the local and regional hierarchy) support would be further encouraging.
- Capacity building on sustainable food supply as well as sensibilisation measures on the added value of sustainable food would support the uptake of sustainable catering services. The promotion of a genuine food culture would go in the same direction. In particular, information on how to reduce costs and overcome legal procurement conflicts (good practices) would be very useful for stakeholders engaged in more sustainable food supply/catering services.

