



Cities on the Grow

Supporting sustainable growth
of community-food enterprises



74%

Buys local food to
reduce food kms



**Average
shopping
habits**



Cities on the Grow seeks to support a commercially viable urban, local food transition that secures its potential contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and to health and well-being.

Newsletter 1 – November 2014

- Featuring the Cities on the Grow Project
- Interest for Cities on the Grow at the Harvest Festival in Almere, The Netherlands
- Feeding the City Event
- Consumers and enterprises give their opinion on local food production
- Workshop 'Accelerating Urban Farming, searching for business incubators', Almere, The Netherlands

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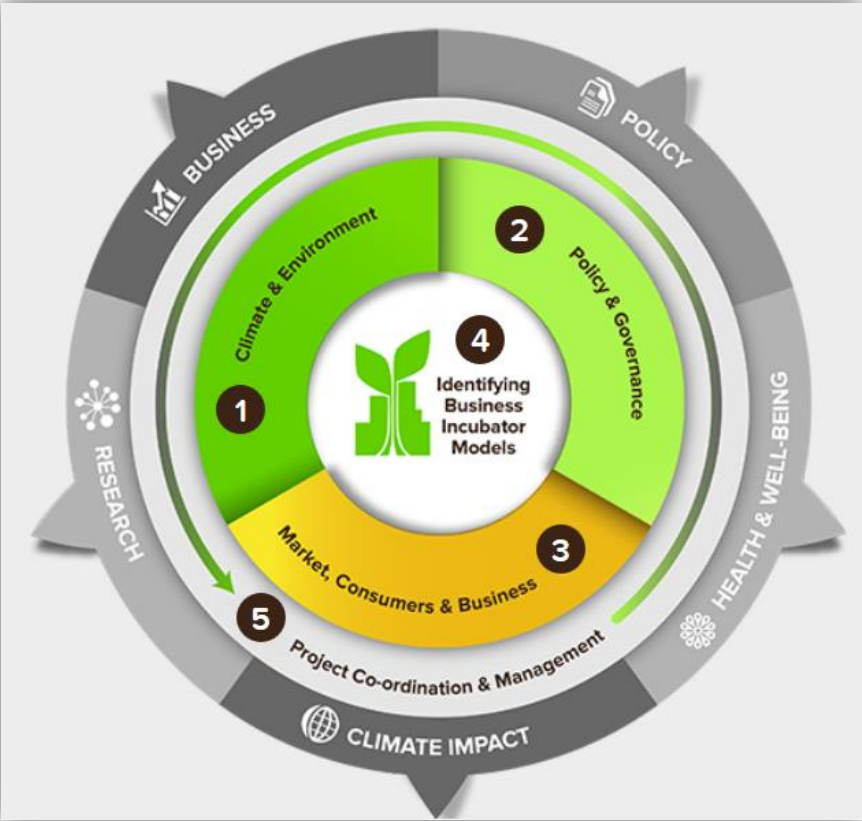
www.citiesonthegrow.org

Featuring the Cities on the Grow Project

Fostering the climate benefits of urban agriculture



Although urban agriculture is widespread in cities and towns all over Europe, many Community Food Enterprises (CFE) search for opportunities to develop and to increase their commercial and professional outreach. They struggle with technical issues, such as the closing of municipal/regional cycles of compost and organic waste, the production of on-site energy, technicalities related to land use change, food packaging and food safety standards. They also may require clarity on the ambitions of city councils regarding the use of land within their cities.



On the other hand urban societies in Europe face challenges to mitigate and adapt to climate change, that will have large impacts on human well-being in the coming decades. A well-known examples the Urban Heat Island Effect. Urban agriculture may help cities and towns to respond to climate change.

Cities on the Grow seeks to support CFEs to become commercially viable businesses, that build climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies into their business models and practices.

Featuring the Cities on the Grow Project: objectives



Supporting a
commercially
viable urban
food transition

The project's **objectives** are to:

- Identify policy drivers and barriers to the development of CFEs at each stage of the food cycle
- Identify commercially viable business models that enable CFEs to secure their motives
- Co-produce business incubator models that can support both established and start-up CFEs in contributing to the positive climate impact of local food systems and its wider benefits to health & well-being.

Cities on the Grow at the Harvest Festival at Urban Farm Almere



"I filled the consumer survey because I want Local Food Communities to know that they have clients!"

Cities on the Grow was part of the Harvest Festival at the Urban Farm of the city of Almere, The Netherlands, on 21 September 2014. In this annual festival, Almere presents its activities in urban agriculture to the general public, authorities and business partners, by providing an exhibition platform for community food enterprises and NGOs and CSOs engaged in urban agriculture.

Cities on the Grow hosted an information booth, where visitors were asked to respond to the project's surveys for Community Food Enterprises and Consumers. Around 50 visitors completed the on-line survey on the spot; the interest was so large that additional tables and devices had to be placed. Some first results of the surveys can be found in this newsletter.

Do you buy, produce or sell local food? You can still fill the survey at www.citiesonthegrow.org/get-involved/take-our-survey.



Cities on the Grow booth in the Harvest Festival at Almere. Picture: Gerben Mol.



“Almere meets Toronto, Milan and Lima”

COTG team members Dr Gerben Mol, Dr Richard Nunes, Suzanne van der Meulen and Alastair Clewer were all in attendance at RUAF Foundation’s ‘Feeding the City’ event at the Stadstheater in Almere earlier this year. The event was part of RUAF’s Grow the City project and provided an opportunity for North-South knowledge exchange regarding the scaling up of urban agriculture within the city-region.

The day began with delegates invited to tour some of Almere’s most promising urban agricultural initiatives, ranging from hi-tech commercial ventures, to community allotments. This was followed by a 2 hour evening session entitled “Almere meets Toronto, Milan and Lima”. In attendance to offer their different perspectives and experiences from their respective cities were Lauren Baker (Toronto Food Policy Council), Andrea Calori (President of the International Urban-Rural Network URGENCI, Milan) and Henk Mulder (Alderman of the municipality of Almere). Cecilia Castro (Head Planning and Environmental Projects, Lima) had also been scheduled to attend the event, only to be prevented from doing so by Visa complications. Henk Mulder did his best to share the experiences of Lima on behalf of Cecilia and so the Southern perspective was still brought.

In the final 30 minutes of the evening delegates were invited to share their experiences of the day and to comment upon the different perspectives brought by the various speakers. This resulted in a short but fruitful debate, with several particularly interesting perspectives brought by farmers operating within the Almere city-region itself. For more information regarding RUAF’s Grow the City project, visit: www.growthecity.eu and www.facebook.com/GROWtheCity



It has been a busy few months for the whole of the COTG team with a big push to get the word out about the project. September saw the successful launch of the surveys, with Ben Burfoot (Sustainability manager, Reading Borough Council) and Alok Sharma (MP for Reading West) joining COTG's own Dr Richard Nunes on the roof Garden of the Reading International Solidarity Centre to pledge their support for the project.



In October the whole of the UK side of the team was in attendance at both the Reading Farmers Market and Reading Town Harvest to encourage participation in the project. This was a great opportunity for the team to meet with consumers, growers, retailers and activists, and in spite of the rain, a thoroughly good time was had by all.



In addition, Dr Richard Nunes and Alastair Clewer have also presented preliminary concepts and findings from the projects surveys and interviews at a number of international conferences focused upon food systems planning and food justice.

You can find out more about these presentations and listen to COTG knowledge broker, Helen Wright speak to BBC Radio Berkshire about the project at:

www.citiesonthegrow.org/outreach



Consumers and enterprises give their opinion on local food production



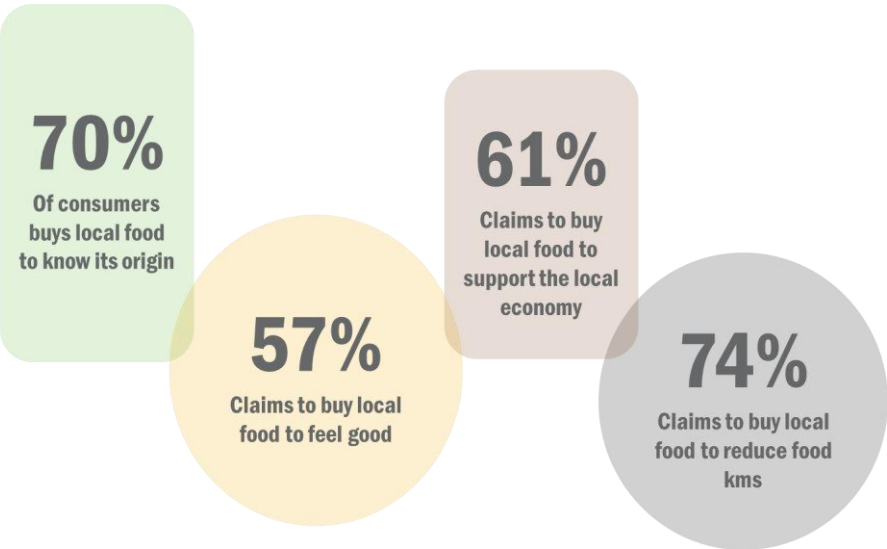
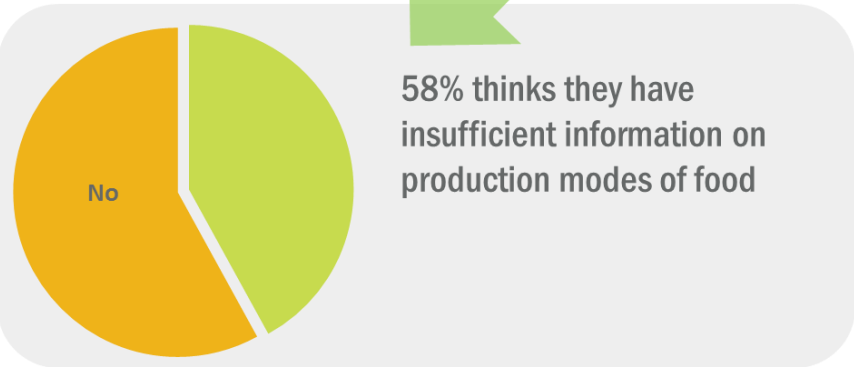
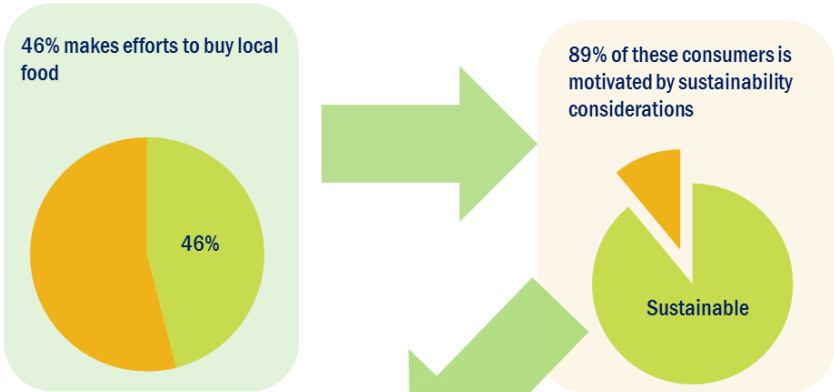
The Cities on the Grow project issued a survey among consumers and producers of local food. 50 consumers and 8 producers responded to the survey so far. Some first results are illustrated below.

Consumers

“Buying local food gives me the feeling to support my local community”

“Less money in the pocket, more enjoy for life.”

Anonymous survey respondent, about the feeling generated by buying local food



Consumers and enterprises give their opinion on local food production



Producers

“Businesses are vulnerable when left in isolation”

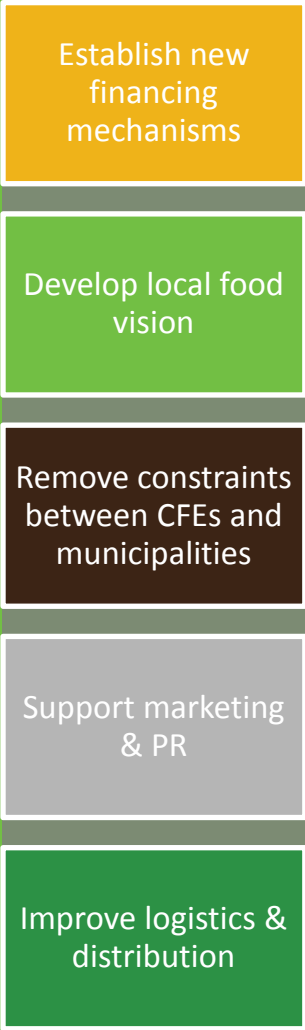
Keith Heron, prof. Business Development, Henley Business School

- Producers experience barriers in the availability of production space, market access, complex regulations, high costs and low margins.
- Success factors mentioned by producers include the selling of a story/experience, the quality of their products, and the contacts with their client circle.
- Waste management focusses on waste separation & composting.
- Initial networks include local producers, municipalities, knowledge institutes and local food shops. Networks could be strengthened by business incubators.



Workshop ‘Accelerating Urban Farming, searching for business incubators’

Business incubators could...



On October 9th, the Cities on the Grow project organised a workshop in Almere, The Netherlands, to inventory successes and constraints to the development of urban agriculture, to identify potential contributions to climate adaptation, and to outline the potential role of business incubators.

Participants identified that, in order to grow, local food enterprises should:

- Develop into sustainable (as in persistent) organisations that are economically independent;
- Increase their societal impact (including economic benefits, health, social cohesion, climate, good urban environment) of local food systems;
- Enlarge the market for local sales.

Opportunities	Constraints
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local products are more than just food, “we sell a story”• Existing initiatives and knowledge• Franchise-structure• Growing crops that contribute to climate adaptation• Other retailers welcoming local food enterprises• Economic recession leads to a need for change• Unused buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited availability of land• Many small, vulnerable and costly initiatives• “municipalities kill enthusiasm”• Large supermarket chains advantaged through permits in residential areas• Lack of strong urban food vision• Pioneers do not cooperate• Inertia of the existing food system (transport, waste handling, shops, food prices)• Produce from urban farming considered to small to feed urban populations• Public fear for health risks from urban farming products.


Potential business incubators for Almere will be identified in a second workshop on in December 2014 using CANVAS business modelling, supervised by experts from IDFuse, through Climate-KIC.

Visit the [Cities on the Grow website](#) for more information on the workshops.


Events



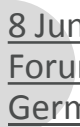
18 Nov 2014 Urban Future Global Conference,
Graz, Austria



28 Nov 2014 'Landscape Metropolis' symposium,
Delft Netherlands



26 Mar 2015 Which way to the future? 4th
Informed Cities Forum, Rotterdam, Netherlands



8 Jun 2015 Resilient Cities 2015 - 6th Global
Forum on Urban Resilience & Adaptation, Bonn,
Germany

Our partners

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY



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