In 2015, Bruges joined the EUROPEAN FOOD SMART CITIES project and began co-creating a sustainable food strategy with its citizens. Approved in 2015, Brugge's sustainable food strategy, Bruggerseamait, cuts across several themes, from curtailing food waste to promoting Fairtrade and a shift to less and better meat consumption. The Brugse Smaakt strategy is integral to the city’s aim to be carbon neutral by 2050 and part of the local "Zorgenvormorgen Brugge" narrative ('caring for tomorrow starts today'). This was also the start of the Bruges Food Lab, a policy and project innovation space that brings together people from across the city to tackle food issues. In Bruges, co-creation with citizens has been critical for the successful integration of food and climate targets.

**ENABLING**

**CO-CREATION: KEY TO INTEGRATED FOOD POLICIES AND CITIZEN BUY-IN**

The Bruges Food Lab was initially led by a steering group of representatives from the City Council, civil society, research institutions, and farmers. From March 2021, the City hired a full-time coordinator for the Food Lab to expand its capacity. The Food Lab coordinator works closely with the City’s Food Policy Coordinator and oversees the participatory work of the organization, while the City coordinator ensures that the relevant departments are involved across FOOD AND CLIMATE ACTIONS. This inclusive and dual city-civil society model ensures greater ownership, buy-in, and effective implementation of the Brugse Smaakt. Within the Food Lab, staff, members work on different themes through action groups, and its overall MEMBERSHIP is purposely diverse. It includes farmers from around the city, representatives from high schools, universities and knowledge institutions, the restaurant and foodsectoral NGOs, community organizations, and interested residents and sustainable food advocates. This diversity allows the Food Lab to design policies with buy-in from local residents. For example, having both farmers and urban advocates around the table led to a compromise on the Strategy’s aim for ‘60% plant-based and only 40% animal-sourced’.

**CO-OPERATION TO SHIFT MEAT CONSUMPTION**

**LEADING BEYOND EXAMPLE**

The City of Bruges does not have many farmers or vacant land for cultivation in its jurisdiction. To develop a Food Strategy with its citizens, Bruges took a new, more sustainable cuisine approach by serving sustainable food at city events and public meetings. In 2017, the City launched a new, more sustainable cuisine approach by serving sustainable food at city events and public meetings. Since signing the Green Deal, the City has been committed to leading by example by serving 60% plant-based foods. Going forward, Bruges hopes to use this leadership by serving climate-friendly meals to children across its 120 schools – tackling food access, education, and sustainability at the same time.

**BARRIERS**

**GETTING EVERYONE AROUND THE TABLE**

According to Karine De Batselier who coordinates the City of Bruges involvement in the Food Lab, their greatest success has been bringing people together and focusing the tone for actions on sustainable food across the city. However, getting the right people on board is not always easy nor without its disagreements, such as agreeing on what constitutes ‘sustainable food’ or how to balance economic and sustainability imperatives. To overcome these barriers, Karine and other members of the Food Lab invested significantly in effective communication between different sectors and policy departments to listen to all points of view and reach compromises.

**MEASURING IMPACT: LOCATING THE RIGHT METRICS AND DATA FOR MONITORING FOOD STRATEGIES**

Finding the right metrics and data for monitoring the impact of the Brugse Smaakt initiatives remains a challenge for the City. However, one area where it is possible to measure GHG emissions reductions is food waste. Bruges measures food waste from the City’s supermarkets and estimates emissions based on an EU FUSION STUDY (1kg of food waste equals 3.4 kg of CO2). The City has also used a stew declaration survey for citizens to measure the impact of recipes and tips shared. By doing so, the City is able to track progress towards sustainable food strategies.

**MULTILEVEL AND MULTI-ACTOR FOOD AND CLIMATE POLICY**

**BRUGES BELGIUM**

**THE POWER OF CO-CREATION IN DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING INTEGRATED FOOD POLICIES**

This food policy snapshot is based on an interview with Karine De Batselier, coordinator of the City of Bruges Food Lab.

For Bruges to be a leader by serving climate-friendly meals to children across its schools, it needs dietary diversity and sustainability at the same time. We started the Bruges Food Lab to co-create a sustainable food strategy for Bruges with all of its citizens and organizations, so that it wasn’t something that the City of Bruges would make in a top-down manner, but something we made all together **共建**.