

# A healthy, local and circular food supply chain in region River delta

A short supply chain to reduce the distance between producers and consumers.

## EAFRD-funded projects

**Location:** Geldermalsen, The Netherlands

**Programming period:** 2014-2020

**Priority:** P3 - Food chain & risk management

**Focus Area:** Agri-food chain integration & quality

**Measures:** M16 - Cooperation

**Funding:** Total budget 138 500 (EUR)

EAFRD 60 500 (EUR)

National/Regional 60 500 (EUR)

Private/Own funds 17 300 (EUR)

**Timeframe:** 2019 to 2021

**Project promoter:** Werkzaam Riverenland

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- Public support is needed to set up and test new start-up ventures. The project provided insights on key challenges for the long-term sustainability of short food supply chains.

## Context

Retail and catering companies in Southwest-Gelderland (the Netherlands) prefer to use locally produced foods. To enable this, a short supply chain needed to be organised and become profitable for both suppliers and buyers. In earlier days, producers were selling their products to major national and international markets, so an efficient and competing local supply chain was needed to allow for the direct sale (from producers to consumers) of local food, at low prices.

## Objectives

This project aimed to reconnect suppliers and buyers in the region, provide sustainable logistics systems, increase the number of inclusive jobs and establish a circular market.

**This objective was divided into the following objectives:**

- Create a strong and motivated cooperation between stakeholders in the region to facilitate and organise local trade.
- Train and coach producers and businesses in writing a marketing and positioning plan, developing the organisation (e.g. checks and balances, decision-making, legal form and other rules), set up a website and a web shop and organise their logistics.
- Deliver food to customers in accordance with laws and regulations (this work was done in collaboration with local people who could not access the labour market) and encourage direct interaction between food producers and customers, raising awareness of seasonal foods and local products.

## Activities

**The objectives were achieved by carrying out the following activities:**

- Establishing a cooperation-based organisation where suppliers and buyers become members and participate actively in their local supply chain. Local citizens were invited to become members too, to encourage customer loyalty and a shared sense of responsibility for the success of the initiative.
- Gaining insight into local suppliers and producers and inviting them to become members of the organisation and to make use of the local

## Summary

This CAP-funded project aimed to connect food supply and demand on a local scale, providing sustainable logistics, inclusive jobs and creating a circular market. Setting up the short supply chain required cooperation between local suppliers and consumers, and the set-up of a web shop and a platform. Local people who had difficulties accessing the labour market were hired as distributors.

## Project results

- A new local supply chain was established and demand grew.
- 50 companies participated and supplied local products.
- 40 consumers and five major companies used the platform.
- Seven people were hired to distribute food.

## Key lessons and recommendations

- The COVID-19 crisis, combined with the difficulty of competing with supermarkets, made the cost of sustaining this project too high. The project's initiators were unfortunately forced to end the project after just a few years.



supply chain.

- Setting up a platform with a web shop and software to support distribution.
- Promoting and marketing local products.
- Setting up a distribution system with pick-up and drop off points.
- Leasing electrical vehicles and recruiting and training a distribution team made up of people who had difficulty joining the labour market.
- Organising educational activities for consumers - such as breakfast at a farm - to work towards a local supply chain and the transition to a new food system.
- Created a table game named "Atrask.eu" for children and families to learn about the history and legends of the region.
- Installed information boards and wayfinding markers at key tourism sites to provide visitors with information about the area's history, culture, and natural attractions.

## Main results

- A new local supply chain was established.
- 50 companies participated and supplied local products.
- 40 consumers and five major companies used the platform.
- Seven people distributed food.

## Key lessons and recommendations

The project has been successful in terms of starting a movement and learning some lessons, but it was not sustainable in the long term. The lessons learned are:

- It is difficult for a short supply chain to compete with the efficiency of supermarkets.
- COVID-19 presented too many complex challenges that this project was unable to overcome. Markets were difficult to enter and long-term business-to-business and customer loyalty commitments were difficult to maintain.
- Local authorities were very keen in the project and championed it for a long time, but they were unable to commit to long-term support.
- Public support is needed to set up and test new start-up ventures. Unfortunately, not all projects are sustainable beyond this support phase.

### Additional information:

[atrask.eu](http://atrask.eu)



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