URBAN AND PERI-URBAN AGRICULTURE AND SHORT FOOD CHAINS: LESSONS FROM THE SOUTH

The SUPURBFOOD project (www.supurbfood.eu) is looking to identify experiences from the global South and North with recycling of nutrients, waste and water in urban and peri-urban agriculture, short chain delivery of food in urban and peri-urban areas, and multifunctional agriculture in urban and peri-urban areas in order to enrich South-North exchange and collaboration. We are specifically interested in innovative experiences - with a special focus on the type of business models that were applied, the role of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and their sustainability.

The RUAF Foundation (www.ruaf.org), one of the partners of the SUPURBFOOD project, is now inviting researchers, local authorities, urban planners, SMEs, producers, NGOs, staff from international organisations and other stakeholders to contribute on an electronic Forum discussion to this inventory and analysis by sharing relevant cases, interesting best practices (and failures) and new insights. This Forum discussion will focus on three main thematic areas:

1. Recycling of nutrients, waste and water in urban and peri-urban agriculture:

   In many cities, new (potential) solutions for closing nutrient, water, energy and solid waste loops –by recycling water, nutrients and waste in urban and peri-urban agriculture- are explored. Experiences include composting, waste water use, recycling of urban nutrients, re-using waste energy from urban industries or buildings. Technical characteristics, but also social, economic, legal, ecological, and behavioural aspects should be understood, as well as issues related to perception in using waste(water) in agriculture. Initiatives may be formal or informal and driven by private entrepreneurs, local governments, environmental associations, producers and others. We are specifically looking to hear from you on most successful business models, marketing potential, the role of different stakeholders and the use of techniques that can be up-scaled to other cities in the global South or North.

2. Short food chains:

   Many associations of local producers, consumer groups, small or middle sized entrepreneurs, local authorities or other actors are involved in shortening food chains (often skipping one or more of the usual intermediate actors in the chain) with some innovative outlets and marketing strategies (such as box schemes, farmers markets' or shops, home delivery, E-selling, preferential food procurement by local authorities for government offices and food programmes, etcetera). Such initiatives – apart from economic considerations - are often driven by some additional motives (obtaining fresh/healthy/ ecological products, lowering food related carbon foot print, solidarity of consumers with small farmers in the city region, stimulating local/green economy, enhancing urban food security and resilience of the urban food system). The logistical
organisation of such short food chains often plays a key role in their potential for success. Please share your experiences and information on how to make these short food chains more economically viable and sustainable (social and ecological performance; also reaching lower-income consumers). What innovative institutional arrangements, logistical operation, new forms of value addition, financial modalities and business models are applied in different cities and what can we learn from them?

3. Multifunctional agriculture in urban and peri-urban areas:
Urban and peri-urban agriculture performs different functions, amongst others providing food and income opportunities, creating social networks and identity, performing ecological services, enhancing agro-biodiversity, offering opportunities for leisure, recreation and education. Please share your experiences with multifunctional urban and peri-urban agriculture on the forum. You may specifically want to contribute to the following questions: What are the drivers for the multifunctional nature and performance of urban and peri-urban agriculture? How can it best be structurally recognised and financed? How can synergies be created with other functions such as short food chain delivery and recycling of urban nutrients, water and waste? What are legal restrictions encountered (for example public health concerns; heritage sites) and what is/should be the role played by various stakeholders (producers, government, small and medium enterprises (SMEs)?

If you are interested in participating in the Forum discussion please go to the SUPURBFOOD webpage on www.supurbfood.eu and create an account. You can then access the Forum page at: http://supurbfood.eu/forum.php. Here you can either share information on your own experience, share web-links to articles or reports on relevant initiatives or literature references, share the names and email addresses of persons or organisations involved in such initiatives, point out websites that contain good examples, etcetera. In the title of your contribution, please mention the thematic area that you are contributing to (recycling of waste and water; short food chains or multifunctional agriculture).

This specific discussion will run on the Forum from 4-30 March 2013.

Results of the study will be published on the RUAF and SUPURBFOOD websites and your cooperation will be acknowledged. The Forum will also help us identify key-experts and policy makers, some of whom will be invited to future project seminars that aim to facilitate North-South networking.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation and are looking forward to your contributions!

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