**Metropolitan Lab 3: Reconnecting Territories**

**Food Systems, Climate Resilience and the Right to Food through Integrated Metropolitan Governance**

**Thursday 12 November 2026, 14:30-16:30 · Palazzo Valentini, Rome · METREX Autumn Conference · Language: English**

## Concept note

Food systems link land, water, energy, markets, public services and people, across areas much larger than a single municipality. Climate change makes these links visible: extreme weather, pressure on land and water, and disruptions in transport and logistics can quickly affect what food is available and at what price.

These shocks do not hit everyone in the same way. A food system can keep working and still leave some people, or some territories, without adequate, healthy and affordable food. Resilience therefore asks two questions: can the system withstand shocks, and who is protected when it is under pressure?

This is where the right to food comes in. It means that access to adequate food is not only a matter of markets or charity: public institutions, at every level, have a responsibility to make it possible. For governance, this becomes a set of practical questions. Who is responsible for what? Who is at the table, including the people most affected? How are decisions coordinated across sectors and municipalities? Who is accountable for the results?

This perspective is increasingly part of the international debate on urban food policy. The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (2015), signed by more than 100 cities, grounds food systems in a human-rights framework and sees public procurement as a way to realise the right to food. More recently, FAO has called for integrating the right to food and the right to the city in urban and peri-urban areas through multilevel governance (FAO, 2024; FAO and CURSA, 2025; HLPE-FSN, 2024). At European level, the issue is framed mainly as multilevel food governance: the Urban Agenda for the EU Partnership on Food describes it as a necessary condition for resilient and fair food systems, with cities, including metropolitan authorities, as partners (Urban Agenda for the EU, 2026).

The metropolitan scale is the right place to ask these questions, because food flows cross administrative boundaries, while the policies that shape them are split between sectors and levels of government. Anchored in the project FOODGaP, the Lab uses food as a practical field to test how metropolitan governance can reconnect territories, actors and policies. In the Rome metropolitan area, this approach is being pursued through the Metropolitan Strategic Plan for Agri-Food Systems (PSMSA), developed with the Metropolitan Food Committee across 121 municipalities.

## Who is who

The Metropolitan City of Rome Capital hosts the Lab and is a partner of the Interreg NEXT MED project FOODGaP, led by CIHEAM Bari. With CURSA-OIPA as scientific partner, it uses FOODGaP to consult on and test its Metropolitan Strategic Plan for Agri-Food Systems (PSMSA).

- **Andrea Calori, CIHEAM Bari:** Facilitator
- **Daniela Bernaschi, CURSA:** Scientific Coordinator and Thematic Note-taker
- **Francesca Volpe, CIHEAM Bari:** Rapporteur

## Themes and questions

### Opening question

What is one challenge in your metropolitan food system that cannot be solved through food policy alone?

### Theme 1: Reconnecting territories

How can we overcome the critical disconnections between urban, peri-urban and rural territories to drive transformative change towards more integrated, equitable and sustainable metropolitan food systems?

*Points for reflection:*

- Where they appear: production, distribution, logistics, proximity services, access to food
- The role of climate change and pressure on land and water

- Inequalities in access to adequate, healthy and affordable food
- Which people or territories are most exposed or left out
- Problems that cannot be solved at municipal scale

**Theme 2: Reconnecting actors and governance**

Who needs to be connected differently to address the challenges we have identified?

*Points for reflection:*

- Who is responsible today, and who is missing
- Cooperation between municipalities, metropolitan authorities and regions
- Producers, businesses, civil society, research and communities
- How the people most affected take part, and who is accountable for the results
- Stable spaces for coordination and shared action

**Theme 3: Reconnecting policies**

Which policies need to work together differently to address these challenges?

*Points for reflection:*

- Food with climate, environment, land use, mobility and logistics, public procurement, health, welfare and local economic development
- What metropolitan authorities can do to overcome sectoral approaches

**Propositions**

Which arrangements should the metropolitan level put in place, and with whom, to make integrated action work?

*Points for reflection:*

- What needs to change, who needs to be involved, and what the metropolitan level can do
- How to check over time that everyone has access to adequate food (monitoring)
- How to move from emergency food aid to more structural food welfare

**Closing question**

What capacity does your metropolitan area most need to strengthen to put these ideas into practice?

**Expected output**

The discussion will lead to a limited number of **Metropolitan Food and Resilience Propositions**: priority connections to strengthen, governance capacities to develop, and areas where metropolitan action can bring environmental, social and territorial benefits. The propositions will feed into the Rome Declaration, the political statement of the conference.

**What we ask you to think about**

Please come with **one example from your own territory**: an initiative, a collaboration, a policy that works, or a problem that is hard to solve. You do not need slides or a presentation. Three questions may help:

1. **Context.** What is the situation? Where? Who is involved?
2. **What happens.** What works, or what does not work, in connecting territories, actors or policies?
3. **What would help.** What could the metropolitan level do about it?

You are also welcome to **propose themes or issues** from your territory that you would like us to discuss.

If you prefer, you can send us your example in writing (5-6 lines) by Monday 9 November to daniela.bernaschi@unifi.it. You can read it during the Lab, or we can bring it into the discussion for you.

**References**


- FAO (2024). *The right to adequate food in urban and peri-urban areas: achievements, challenges and the way forward.* Hybrid event, FAO headquarters, Rome, 29 October 2024. fao.org/right-to-food
- FAO and CURSA (2025). *The Right to Food in Rome.* Event report, hybrid event, FAO headquarters, Rome, 17 April 2025. cursa.it

- HLPE-FSN (2024). *Strengthening urban and peri-urban food systems to achieve food security and nutrition, in the context of urbanization and rural transformation.* Report 19, Committee on World Food Security, Rome. fao.org/cfs/cfs-hlpe
- Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (2015). Milan, 15 October 2015. milanurbanfoodpolicypact.org
- Urban Agenda for the EU, Partnership on Food (2026). *From EU Policy to Local Action: Building Commitment for Sustainable Urban Food Systems.* Food Policy Statement, February 2026. urbanagenda.urban-initiative.eu