



From Farm to Fork Strategy

Position paper

March 2020

The Farm to Fork (F2F) Strategy sets many ambitious and necessary targets.

In order to achieve them, the European Commission proposes a series of measures and a detailed action plan. The European Green Deal and its F2F Strategy cover many important issues that are, beyond any discussion, relevant for the future of Europe and in line with the global Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, many initiatives in these areas are already on the agenda of Member States, Regions, RTOs and Companies. The implementation of the Green Deal and its 47 actions should rely on strong connection to existing Regional, National and private initiatives, projects and other forms of cooperation.

In the frame of the F2F strategy, **ERIAFF Regions¹** strongly support the action on “Knowledge sharing, research, innovation and financial investments to provide solutions for sustainable food systems and market opportunities”. More specifically:

- Concerning **governance** instruments, actions to **support the uptake of new technologies** and **stimulating joint investments**, the F2F Strategy should connect as much as possible to the activities carried out by European Regions under the **Smart Specialization Agrifood Platform**. Within this platform, indeed, partnerships among European regions have been established (High Tech Farming, Consumer Involvement in Agrifood Innovation, Big Data and Traceability, Smart Sensors 4 Agrifood, Nutritional Ingredients) and could then be a precious –as legitimate- partner in the implementation of the technological-innovative aspects of F2F strategy. These Regional partnerships emphasize the knowledge exchange, but also encourage and support inter-regional cooperation in the design of projects and setting up of pilot inter-regional investments. We, partner of the ERIAFF Network, are convinced that the Smart Specialization Platform on Agrifood and the members of its partnerships are more than prepared to cooperate and to take responsibility in the execution of the Farm to Fork Strategy.
- Regions should constitute essential elements of the future **Public Private Partnership “Safe and Sustainable Food Systems for People, Planet and Climate”**. The partnership should make use of the innovations and knowledge generated in the regions and should put the regions in the condition to be able to transfer best practices suitable for pursuing the strategy's targets.
- The **cooperation** among local and regional **innovation ecosystems** has to be facilitated, encouraging connections at inter-sectoral level and across value chains.
- Support through EU funding should be provided to innovative approaches in **sustainable public food procurement policies** at national and regional level.
- We welcome every action that enable the sharing and communication of R&I activities, such as the creation of a Commission’s **Knowledge management tool on sustainable food systems**, encouraging a connection with Regions and Regional Innovation Ecosystems.
- We welcome a reinforcement of the role of **public and private innovation brokers** in AKI Systems.
- We strongly encourage the continuation of the **EIP AGRI** initiative, the promotion of better connections among existing and future **EIP AGRI Operational Groups** and their effective integration under Horizon Europe calls for projects.
- More broadly, we invoke the inclusion of **Regions** and the **regional dimension** in every European R&I strategic approach applied to agriculture, forestry and fishery, defining specific priorities and increasing funding to dedicated project calls for strengthening their contribution to SDGs and F2F Strategy targets.
- The **synergic** use of different funding tools should be encouraged through both specific provisions to programme managers and clear incentives to applicants of new projects and investments.
- **Digitalization** of agriculture, forestry and food systems must keep a central role to enhance sustainability by improving processes at all levels: decision making, resource efficiency, traceability, competitiveness, quality and social.

¹ www.eriaff.com