

COOPERATION PROJECT «FOR BETTER ACCESS TO LOCAL FOOD»

Between Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region (France) and Lviv oblast (Ukraine)

- > **Project start year:** December 2024
- > **Estimated end year of the project:** December 2026
- > **Location of the project:** Lviv Oblast

Background of the project

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine since February 2022 has severely undermined the country's food security. In some areas, agricultural production, and therefore access to land and food, are in great difficulty.

Various processes are underway in Ukraine to ensure food stability while promoting sustainable development. As part of the European integration process, efforts continue to improve legislation on public procurement. While the current legal framework includes green criteria, cost remains the dominant factor in procurement decisions - especially during wartime, when financial constraints shape state and local budget expenditures.

At the same time, the promotion of organic products in public procurement is becoming increasingly important. Expanding the use of organic products in the public kitchens - such as schools, hospitals, and social services - can significantly contribute to improving public health, supporting local farmers, and fostering environmental sustainability.

The school nutrition reform initiated by the First Lady of Ukraine serves as a strong foundation for further changes and the gradual introduction of organic products as part of a healthy diet. This reform creates opportunities to integrate organic food into school menus, fostering better eating habits among children while supporting local organic producers.

Against this backdrop, the concept of bio-regions presents a promising model for sustainable local development. By integrating organic agricultural production with regional consumption, bio-regions can enhance food security, create new economic opportunities - particularly for small-scale farmers and internally displaced persons - and strengthen the resilience of local food systems.

Project stakeholders

The Lviv oblast is currently the only region that provides a support program for organic producers. Despite the security context, politicians wish to support the development of this sustainable agriculture to ensure that their population has access to sufficient and quality food. **Lviv Regional Military Administration** supports efforts to maintain agricultural production in the territory and secure access to local food, through the introduction of organic and local products in collective catering which is planned to be implemented by Organic Initiative Public Association in partnership with Lviv organization Ecoterra.

The **Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region** has been committed for many years to the development of the organic sector and local food production system in partnership with professional organizations like **INTERBIO Nouvelle-Aquitaine**. The **Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region** and its partners have decided to engage in this cooperation in order to strengthen local food security through the development of organic farming.

In order to achieve this cooperation, the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region will rely in France on the skills of **INTERBIO Nouvelle-Aquitaine** and the **Regional Agency for Technical Cooperation INTERCO**.

Organic Initiative and Ecoterra will mobilize local stakeholders and project beneficiaries. **Organic Initiative's** mission will also be to disseminate good practices and to communicate about the project at regional and national level.

- > **The overall objective of the project is to support the Lviv oblast in maintaining agricultural production and access to food, by increasing the introduction of organic and local products in collective catering.**

Aims of the project

- Maintain agricultural production and access to food;
- Increase the number of organic farmers in Lviv oblast;
- Link the supply of local organic producers with the demand of public canteens;
- Advise organic producers on how to respond to public calls for tenders for collective catering;
- Improve collective catering practices: green public procurement, reduction of waste etc;
- Build strong connections between Ukrainian and French collective catering managers;
- Make the Lviv oblast the pilot of the "Bio-Engaged Territory"/bio-region project, in order to transfer it to other regions of Ukraine,
- Advice on the adaptation of Ukrainian organic and public procurement legislation to EU legislation.

Project activities

- **Action 1:** Partner study trips, in France and in Poland (in case of termination of martial law in Ukraine), for knowledge exchange (March 2025 – September 2026)
- **Action 2:** Investigation on how public procurement works for collective catering in Ukraine, diagnosis of canteens in Ukrainian piloting schools according to the INTERBIO Nouvelle-Aquitaine audit grid and investigation of the readiness of organic producers to participate in public procurement in the field of collective public catering in Ukraine (January 2025 – November 2025)
- **Action 3:** Trainings for Ukrainian organic stakeholders, local authorities, collective catering operators and organic producers about public procurement and participation in it (December 2025- July 2026)
- **Action 4:** Evaluation, reporting and dissemination of the results (July 2026- November 2026)

> *Project is financed by the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region and implemented by the consortium of INTERBIO Nouvelle-Aquitaine (France), INTERCO Nouvelle-Aquitaine (France), Organic Initiative Public Association (Ukraine) and Ecoterra Lviv City Public Organization (Ukraine).*

Technical Partners involved

France



INTERBIO Nouvelle-Aquitaine is an association that represents three hundred stakeholders of the organic sector: associations of organic farmers, cooperatives, food processors, retailers, along with associated organisms. Its objective is to support the projects of regional organic operators, to ensure the structuring and promotion of the organic sector and its producers and to support its development.

INTERBIO Nouvelle-Aquitaine also participates in the structuring of the organic movement in Europe, being a member of IFOAM Organics Europe and taking part in European projects (INTERREG, EuroRegion, etc.).

In France, INTERBIO Nouvelle-Aquitaine is the project leader of the program. <https://interbionouvelleaquitaine.com>.



INTERCO Nouvelle-Aquitaine works as the International Economic Cooperation Agency of the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region by strengthening the internationalization of the agricultural sectors to facilitate their expansion abroad. With 30 years of experience, it benefits from a large network around the world and builds long-term partnerships based on the region's ecosystems. This highlighting of the expertise of the Nouvelle-Aquitaine region extends from the identification of problems to the operational implementation project in the targeted country.

<https://interco-international.com/fr/>

Ukraine

ORGANIC INITIATIVE

Organic Initiative Public Association is a platform of key Ukrainian organic stakeholders established with the aim of cooperation, idea exchange, developing a joint action plan to achieve the goals, addressing various issues as well as contributing to raising awareness and higher added-value trade in the organic sector of Ukraine.

The Organic Initiative's mission is to contribute to development of organic agriculture and production of certified organic products in Ukraine; to facilitate trade with and increase demand for certified organic products produced in Ukraine on the domestic and international markets; to contribute to implementation of sustainable agricultural practices and development of the green economy in Ukraine.

In Ukraine, Organic Initiative is the project coordinator <https://organicinitiative.org.ua/>



Lviv City Public Organization (LCPO) "Ecoterra" was created with the aim of involving the general public in the problem of pesticide use both in farms and large farms, and on small plots of land owned by individual citizens. The association is constantly looking for harmony and interaction between society and the protection of nature. This association publishes and distributes specialized literature, leads seminars, field days, and organizes fairs for organic and natural products. The activities ensure the link between the authorities, organic producers, processors and consumers.

<https://ecoterra.lviv.ua>.

Contacts

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