SPRINT SUCCESS STORIES

FOOD VALUE CHAINS FOR LEVERAGING CLEAN DRINKING WATER IN RENNES, FRANCE

The Terres de Sources ('Land of Springs') initiative in Rennes, France, uses public procurement to leverage good agricultural practices, including bans or strict restrictions surrounding pesticide use. Efforts focus on catchments where agricultural production negatively affects drinking water quality. A food certification has been introduced to upscale the outreach of the initiative to more farms. This certification is used in local shops to market these products.

TERRES DE SOURCES
LES PRODUCTEURS D'ICI PROTÈGENT L'EAU

THE CHALLENGE

The water utility in Rennes faces increased purification costs to provide high quality drinking water to its residents. Intensively grown maize and cereals, used for livestock feed and, has been linked to high levels of pesticide pollution. There is a resulting need to diversify production.

Just 3% of surface water bodies were in good ecological status in Rennes during 2018.*

MAIN OBSTACLES

- For many years, a lack of interest from farmers meant that progress was slow. This was, in part, because market conditions were not amenable to encouraging the adoption of sustainable practices
- Legal barriers (EU competitive law) to using public procurement to leverage support
- Limited options to upscale and create economies of scale
- Orders from catering outlets were initially insufficient to cover all of the farms which had been targeted to become certified.

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE SOLUTIONS

- Awareness-raising activities with citizens and schools
- Promotion of the 'zero pesticide' label to municipalities
- Knowledge sharing through farmer groups, e.g., on more efficient pesticide use.

The Terres de Sources label displayed on a bag of grain.
Photo credit: Terres de Sources

KEY OBJECTIVES

- **Restore good quality water resources** to avoid purification costs and supply disruptions
- **Improve farming practices** through economic leverage to stimulate local demand for resource-friendly food products
- **Develop a form of governance** open to all stakeholders, e.g., farmers, associations, elected representatives, economic players, funding bodies
- **Scaling up the initiative,** with customers willing to pay a fair price thanks to trust in the food products.

POLICY SOLUTIONS

Several initiatives have been introduced to preserve and improve water quality.

CLOSE TO ABSTRACTION POINTS:

- Ban and strict regulation of pesticide use in drinking water protected areas
- Buying land and use of environmental lease to secure sustainable farm practices

WIDER CATCHMENT SOLUTIONS:

- A national ban against public entities and households using pesticides
- Catchment contracts to incentivise good agricultural practice
- Economic incentives from the value change through the Terres de Sources program, which uses service type public procurement contracts to supply canteen food supply with local, water positive food products
- Public procurement using public service contracts which state requirements, in this case, agricultural practices that preserve drinking water resources for Rennes
- Certification scheme 'Terre de Source', which enables farmers to reward uptake of sustainable practice in local shops and supermarkets
- Broader strategy for the future of food and farming in the region: AFTERRES2050.

**According to the EU's Water Framework Directive*

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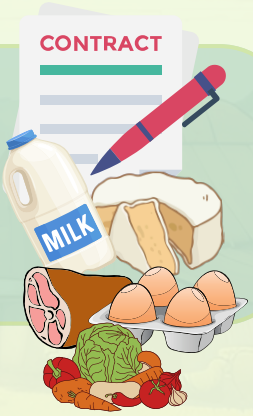
RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

By 2023, three sets of public service contracts for supplying public canteens with sustainable food had been issued in the Rennes area, involving 88 farms and 18 food processing companies, with **6452ha of land represented**. Food products included in these contracts include processed meat and dairy, cheese, eggs, drinks, vegetables, legumes, oils, vinegar, flours, fruits, ice cream and meat.



LESSONS LEARNED

1. Working at a territorial level is necessary to scale up farm practices through consumer demand
2. Public procurement alone was insufficient for delivering scale, whilst the certification scheme has the potential to transform local markets
3. Creating a label was successful as consumers like to buy products specific to their region
4. Substantial awareness-raising and communication is needed to make these initiatives a success
5. Lag times must be considered when monitoring success, with long-term monitoring needed to assess environmental benefits
6. Involving other policy actors is important, with key ingredients needed to drive policy engagement:

- Political will at both local and regional level
- A clear identified need to change (in this case, a need to address water pollution)
- An actor with a strong vested interest in driving change (in this case, Eau du Bassin Rennais).

EAU DU BASSIN RENNAIS COLLECTIVITÉ

TERRES DE SOURCES: STRUCTURE

Terres de Sources operates across 7 key axes:

WATER QUALITY

1. **Development of value chains that encourage farmers to become more involved**
2. **Labelling and transformation**

KNOWLEDGE

3. **Developing demand for products to support change**
4. **Raising awareness and mobilising consumers**
5. **Developing distribution networks**
6. **Farm-fork coherence through creating links across all aspects of the initiative**

SPV

7. **Special purpose vehicle:** 'Terre de Source' - facilitates the production and supply of food and material products, developed certification, raises awareness about the label

TRANSFERABILITY

The procurement process used in Rennes has been authorised by competition authorities at EU level, making this approach **replicable in other parts of Europe**.

The initiative is particularly relevant in France due to the Territorial Food Projects that are required by all municipalities under French law.

Interest has been expressed by other cities in France and draws on experiences elsewhere in Europe (e.g., Munich).

FURTHER INFORMATION

Read more about Terres de Sources here: https://tinyurl.com/37mr32um

This factsheet was produced by Dr Charlotte Chivers, Countryside & Community Research Institute.

Research authors: Josselin Rouillard, Halima Abdessadok, Isabelle Baldi, Mathilde Bureau.