

15. Public food procurement as a lever to foster the just and green transition – The Dordogne Case Study

Lead researcher: Maurizio Mariani (Risteco)

Supporting researcher: Giuseppe Mastruzo (IUC Turin)



Strawberries from the Dordogne Region. Image: Cochise Ory.

Summary

The Dordogne case study exemplifies a successful public policy-led transition towards sustainable school food systems. Initiated by the Departmental Council of Dordogne and supported also through the European SchoolFood4Change project, this initiative focuses on three core pillars: 100% organic certification, local sourcing, and homemade food preparation. Starting with one pilot school in 2019, the project expanded to certify 15 colleges by 2024, with the goal of converting all 35 departmental schools by 2028. This shift was made possible through integrated public procurement reforms, cross-departmental coordination, the development of digital and logistical tools (such as Agrilocal and the "À Table" planning tool), investment in training and infrastructure, and a multi-stakeholder engagement approach that includes producers, chefs, educators, and families.

The policy framework emphasises environmental sustainability (e.g., low-carbon meals, zero-waste kitchens), social equity (affordable and nutritious meals for all, including grant-aided students), and economic revitalisation (millions of euros reinvested annually in the local food economy).

Dordogne's case stands as a leading example of how regional governments can operationalise the EU Green Deal and Farm to Fork Strategy through public food procurement. Its replicability is reinforced by rigorous evaluation data, strong community ownership, and clear alignment with national laws such as EGalim and the Climate and Resilience Law.

Key data points

- 100% of meals in 15 secondary schools certified as organic local and home-made style by ECOCERT (2024).
- Over 80% of ingredients sourced from within the Dordogne; foodstuff cost per meal: €1.80–€2.10 lower than national average.
- Reduction in average food waste to 40g/meal/student vs. national average of 135g.

