



Fit4Food2030

Policy Lab Romania



Ministries that signed letter of commitment

Ministry of Research and Innovation

The Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences of Romania, under coordination of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

Coordinators

Viorel Vulturescu, Director of International and European Relations

Ministry of Research and Innovation

Denisa E. Duță, Scientific Director National Institute of R&D for Food Bioresources, Associate Member of Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences of Romania

National Institute of R&D for Food Bioresources / Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Science of Romania

Motivation and main objective

The Ministry of Research and Innovation and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, have committed to running a policy lab.

The policy lab is coordinated by The Ministry of Research and Innovation and the National Institute of R&D for Food Bioresources.

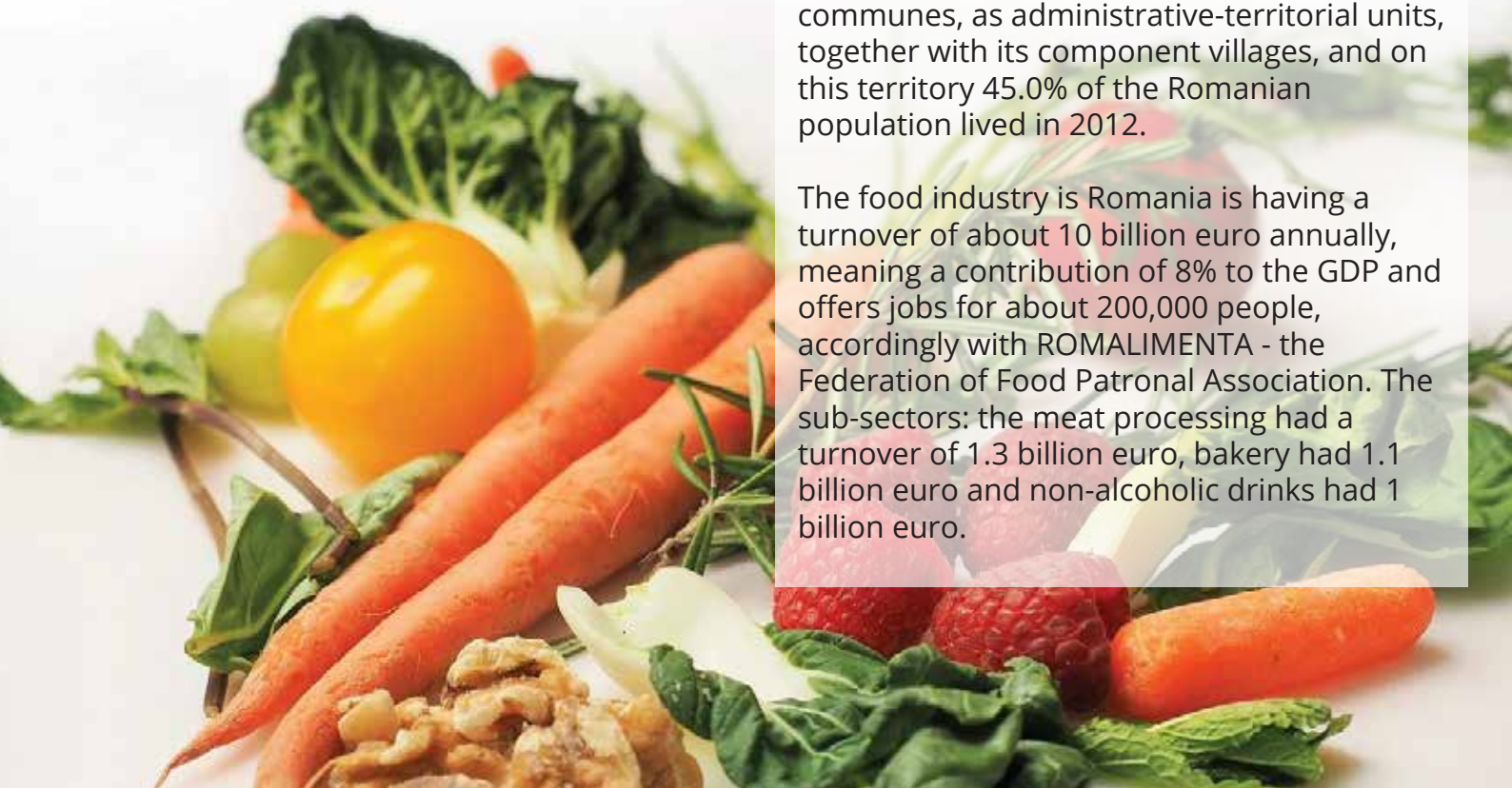
The aim of the Romanian policy lab is to bring together food chain stakeholders to support policies in the Food and Nutrition area and to make the connection with European food systems.

Strengths and weaknesses of the way the food system functions in Romania

Accordingly with The National Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 which covers the entire territory of Romania, 61.3% from the land is agricultural land (approx. 14.6 mil. ha, of which 64.2% arable land, 32.9 % meadows and natural grasslands and 2.7% plantations of trees and vineyard); 28.3% forests and other forestry vegetation lands; 10.4% the built area of the localities, waters, roads, railways and unproductive lands (INS Tempo Online, 2012).

Out of the total area of the country, around 87.1% is the rural area that comprises communes, as administrative-territorial units, together with its component villages, and on this territory 45.0% of the Romanian population lived in 2012.

The food industry in Romania is having a turnover of about 10 billion euro annually, meaning a contribution of 8% to the GDP and offers jobs for about 200,000 people, accordingly with ROMALIMENTA - the Federation of Food Patronal Association. The sub-sectors: the meat processing had a turnover of 1.3 billion euro, bakery had 1.1 billion euro and non-alcoholic drinks had 1 billion euro.



Strengths of the way the food system functions in Romania

- Geographical position
- Management capacity
- Highly skilled personnel
- Product and Process Quality
- Open exchange of experience in research and technology development
- Public-private cooperation
- Product Diversification



Weaknesses of the way the food system functions in Romania

- No clear international orientation
- Low financial capacity
- Weak understanding between researchers and industry complicates joint projects
- Lack of formal collaboration between actors
- Poor networking with public actors

Most important challenges of the food system in Romania:

- Farm's fragmentation with low efficiency
- Insufficient training programs and motivation ways for human resources in agri-food domain (including Education: Developing and supporting vocational schools to train and educate around sustainable food principles)
- Young population migration from rural areas & ageing
- Insufficient inter-relationships between policy makers (agriculture, food, health, research, education) & between food systems stakeholders
- Insufficient knowledge to attract R&D funds for research and innovation
- Lack of food system waste valorisation programs/projects
- Poor linkage between industry and research
- Low level of application of innovative and new technologies to perform research (biotech, ICT, etc.)
- Insufficient R&D projects on food security, food nutrition, food safety
- Insufficient technical and financial Support
- Insufficient appreciation and support for small and medium-sized producers
- Low level of sustainable production methods implementation according to needs of local conditions, markets and consumer demands
- Low support for vulnerable farmers (through assessment and provision of market and weather information, crop insurance, debt restructuring, and shifting from disaster relief to early warning systems to ensure, as far as possible, action well in advance of food emergencies, as well as develop contingency plans to tackle emergencies)

1st meeting

18th of May 2018

Workshop 1-Round table with Policy makers (Core group):

Venue: Ministry of Research and Innovation Bucharest

Title event: Policy lab within European project Fit4Food2030

Envisaged actors: Policy makers

Food System Awareness & System Understanding (food and nutrition security research priorities, barriers, challenges)

Facilitator: Ministry of Research and Innovation

Participants (Core group): 8 representatives – policy makers (Ministry of Research and Innovation, Romanian Academy of Agriculture and Forestry Sciences, National R&D Institute for Food Bioresources-IBA Bucharest, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, National Technology Platform Food for Life)

1. There is needed to develop a common R&I vision involving all stakeholders from food.

2. Building up a food waste mitigation strategy 2020-2030.

3. The need for innovative management systems for food authenticity.

4. Boosting food chain stakeholders' collaboration.

5. The Romanian policy lab established a core group which plays a central role in the policy lab.

2nd meeting

(1st national meeting)

11th of October 2018

(connected to industry event Ingredients Show Trade Fair)

Venue: Sibiu, Romania

Title event: Policy lab within European project Fit4Food2030-Science Coffee

Envisaged actors: Industry

Food System Awareness & System Understanding, Vision of the Romanian food system for 2030 and beyond.

Main challenges and trends for the Romanian Food System on the basis of the 4 key priorities: Nutrition for sustainable and healthy diets; Climate smart and environmentally sustainable food systems; Circularity and resource efficiency of food systems; Innovation and empowerment of communities.

Facilitators: National R&D Institute for Food Bioresources-IBA Bucharest, patronage association ASMP, National Technology Platform Food for Life.

Participants: 46 (food industry-27, research -6, university-2, food education-high school level- 5, food associations and platforms-4, NGOs-2).

Event organized in collaboration with media (SAB Union Media SRL, <http://www.roaliment.ro/>), food training companies (Inaq) as well as patronage associations (ASMP, Romalimenta, Rompan, ARC, APRIL) and health organizations.

4 round tables were organized with 10-12 participants. After the short presentation of the project, each table identified: Mega-trends; Trends in Food Processing; Consumer Trends; Trends in Agricultural Production; Trends in marketing, packaging and waste.

1. Strengths of the food system in Romania: the geographical position, management capacity, product and process quality, open exchange of experience in research and technology development, public-private cooperation and product diversification.

2. The main challenges are: the fragmentation of farms with low efficiency and low support for vulnerable farmers and SME's; insufficient training programmes for human resources in agri-food domain; migration from rural areas (especially the young population), insufficient interaction between different policy makers and food system stakeholders, low level of sustainable production.

3. Trends that influence the four FOOD2030 priorities (nutrition, climate, circularity and innovation), were identified during the meeting.

4. The participants concluded that R&I projects on the following topics are needed: digitisation of industry, efficient use of resources, climate changes, economic globalisation, demographic changes and non - communicable diseases.

5. A common R&I vision involving all stakeholders from the food system needs to be developed.



3rd meeting

(2nd national meeting)
21st of May 2019 (connected to EU presidency event on "Circularity and Resource Efficiency of Food Systems")

Venue: Faculty of Biotechnologies, University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest

Title event:

Policy Lab – Circularity and Resource Efficiency of Food Systems

Envisaged actors: policy makers-research-industry-European exchange

Food System Vision & Pathways

Topics: Food Waste (including food plastics) and Food Safety

(State-of the art: What R&D priorities are considered on food waste/food plastics/-food safety related to food circularity topic in your country? Is there any R&D program in your country on these areas: food waste/food plastics/food safety related to food circularity?)

Visioning: What do you imagine when you think to the future of our food systems?

Drafting roadmap: How we can get there? What policies need to be implemented?)

Facilitators: The National R&D Institute for Food Bioresources – IBA Bucharest/ The Ministry of Research and Innovation (MCI), The Executive Unit for Financing Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation (UEFISCDI), The University of Agronomy and Veterinary Medicine, Bucharest (USAMVB) and The Academy of Agriculture and Forestry Sciences "Gheorghe Ionescu-Șișești" (ASAS).

Speakers in the general session: EC Policy Officer DG Research&Innovation, Agri-Food Chain-Unit; Flemish Government-Department of Economy, Science&Innovation Research Division, The Research Council of Norway-Department for Environment and the Bioeconomy, IBA Bucharest/ASAS).

Participants: 70 (the policy lab exercise was organized in two separate discussion groups on Food waste/Food plastics and on Food safety)

1. Vision on food waste/plastics and on food safety.

2. Drafted Roadmap for food waste and food safety domain (the main actions to be implemented and the responsible organizations).

3. The need of R&I to realize the vision and the areas in which a radical change is necessary.

4. Best practices in the field of food waste and food safety.

5. Exchange ideas with participants from abroad (working in the field or involved in other Policy labs).

4th meeting

(3rd national meeting)
1st of October 2019

Venue: Department for Sustainable Development of the Government of Romania,, Victoria Palace, Transylvania Hall, Bucharest

Title event: Policy lab. food research policies and strategies

Envisaged actors: policy makers, funding authorities, decision-making actors

Identifying and opening the most useful ways of communication and inter-ministerial collaboration between ministries and research organizations in the field, in order to support and streamline the national food system through research and innovation

Organizers/Facilitators: Department for Sustainable Development of the Government of Romania, The National Institute for Research and Development for Food Bioresources IBA Bucharest

Participants: ~60

Participants Profile: state councillors, state secretaries, directors from authorities (The Government of Romania; Ministry of Health-European Affairs and International Relations; Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences; National Veterinary and Food Safety Authority; Ministry of Research and Innovation-Directorate of European and International Relations and European Business Advisor; The Government of Romania-Department for Sustainable Development; Pro-Consumers Association; Romanian Academy; food industry associations and platforms representatives, education and research professors, agriculture and farms association representative).

1. There is a need for collaboration between ministries, active participation in European work programs.

2. The innovative component should be included in the existing policies in all ministries.

3. There is a need for a national strategy on bioeconomy in which all ministries collaborate, in order to prioritize the problems in this area.

4. There is a need for a long-term strategy of agriculture and food industry considering that Romania has considerable agro-food potential.



**5th meeting
(4th national meeting)
27th of February 2020**

**Venue: Headquarters IBA
Bucharest**

Title event: Efficiency of food systems through the use of clean technologies

Envisaged actors: food industry associations, national federation of food industry, food bank, funding authorities (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development , Department for Sustainable Development-Government of Romania)

Existence of national strategies and action plans for reducing and preventing food waste, analyzing their efficiency (comparing with examples of success in other European countries)

The level of food waste, the actual implemented measures, adherence to European strategies and recommendations

Establishing collaborations between the public and private sectors in order to comply with EU requirements.

Organizers/Facilitators:
The National Institute for Research and Development for Food Bioresources IBA Bucharest

Participants: 27
(National Platform Food4Life, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADR), Agency for Regional Development Bucharest Ilfov, The Government of Romania, The Department of Sustainable Development, Food Bank, The Association of Specialists in Milling and Baking (ASMP), The National Veterinary and Food Safety Authority (ANSVSA), The Romanian Federation of the Food Industry (Romalimenta), Romanian Association of Manufacturers and Suppliers of Ingredients in the Bakery, Confectionery and Confectionery Industry (Fedima Romania), The Association of the Plant Protection Industry of Romania (AIPROM), Romanian Meat Association (ARC), some research organisations, SMEs.

1. Actions were identified for preventing/valorisation of food waste.

2. Consumer level: development and use of a range of methods to understand the consumers' behavior and attitude for food donation; consumers' education for preventing/reducing food waste .

3. Manufacturers level: encouraging the integration of food waste prevention along the entire supply chain (from purchasing raw materials to marketing, logistics) .

4. General level:
(1) promoting the value of food and changing social norms, so that food waste is no longer socially acceptable.
(2) Strengthening the capacity for innovation, promoting circularity and new market opportunities and ensuring support for stakeholders to take measures for their operations.

Direct and visible impact

Raised awareness about the food system, about RRI and the initiatives at European level on this topic.

Direct and concrete outcomes obtained so far:

- **Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development** launched in December 2018 a research program (ADER 2019-2021) and, based on the involvement and discussions within Policy lab on discussed topics: food waste prevention/reduction (2nd result from the first meeting) and food authenticity (3rd result from the first meeting). The projects are funded and are ongoing.
Funded Projects on food waste and circular economy:
 - Methods to reduce food waste in the agri-food chain, at national level, in order to prevent and reduce the socio-economic impact, by 2030 (2019-2022) - (2nd result from the first meeting).
 - Research on identifying the potential for setting up regional circular economy clusters - case studies (2019-2022) - (2nd result from the first meeting).
 - Funded Projects on food authenticity: Innovative methods for preventing and combating food fraud, forecasting their effects on product integrity and traceability and assessing the impact on the agri-food economy (2019-2021) (3rd result from the first meeting).
- **Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development** launched on 13 March 2020 a Consumer education and information campaign on reducing food waste (in collaboration with FAO and INFOCONS, consumer association) <https://www.madr.ro/comunicare/5902-campanie-de-educare-si-in-formare-a-consumatorilor-privind-reducerea-risipei-alimentare.html> -(2nd result from the fifth meeting).
- **Direct involvement by topic proposals in elaboration of:**
National Research Plan Strategy 2021-2027 (Ministry of Education and Research).
Research Strategy of Intelligent Specialisation on regional level (structural funds).

Other achievements:

Presentation of the Romanian policy lab as a promising initiative at the EU presidency event: People's Food, people's health in Vienna in November 2018.

Informative documents with recommendation for food stakeholders were prepared by Policy lab Romania regarding COVID-19 and food safety issues on the whole food chain which were disseminated to stakeholders.

Next steps (planned and in discussion)

- Collaboration with Ministry of European Funds for launching a call on collaborative research projects between research organisations and industry for transfer of research results into the market on food field (in progress, the call will be launched in 1-2 months).
- Research topics (discussed inside policy lab) were proposed to the Agency for Regional Development (structural funds) for the next calls (in progress this year).
- Planned Agreement between ministries for inter-connected research on food system (process being delayed by political developments and upcoming elections).
- Policy lab presentation paper (in progress).
- Collaboration between the research institute and The Department of Sustainable Development (The Government of Romania) for further actions.
- Actions on food waste and public/consumers awareness are foreseen in collaboration with media company RoAliment (in progress).
- Project ideas planned between the participants: industrial stakeholders-research and education organisation for next calls (national and European-e.g. EUREKA, ERA-NET); R&I potential projects on the following topics were planned: digitisation of industry, efficient use of resources.





1st Workshop – policy makers' round table
Ministry of Research and Innovation
18th of May 2018,
Bucharest



2nd workshop with stakeholders- food industry
Ingredients Show Trade fair
October 11, 2018, Sibiu





3rd meeting 21st of May 2019 (connected to EU presidency event on "Circularity and Resource Efficiency of Food Systems")



4th national meeting
Policy lab on food research
policies and strategies
Venue: Department for
Sustainable Development
of the Government of
Romania, Victoria Palace,
Transylvania Hall,
Bucharest
1st of October 2019

