



ECHOP

European Cooperation to Help leaders of food aid organizations and Offering Precarious better food choice

PRACTICAL GUIDE AND METHODOLOGICAL



Prologue

In 2023, the European Union (EU) continued its efforts to combat food insecurity within its member states. **The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)**, which now integrates support for food aid, allocated a global budget of nearly €99.3 billion ¹ to promote economic, social, and territorial cohesion within member states, particularly to fight social exclusion and poverty. **In 2022, 16.2% of Europeans were considered poor** ². Food aid in Europe is a crucial pillar in addressing food insecurity and poverty, affecting millions of citizens.

However, the challenges faced by food aid organizations got significantly more complex over the years. Economic crises, geopolitical tensions, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the effects of climate change have destabilized food supply chains, further exacerbating the vulnerability of the most disadvantaged populations.



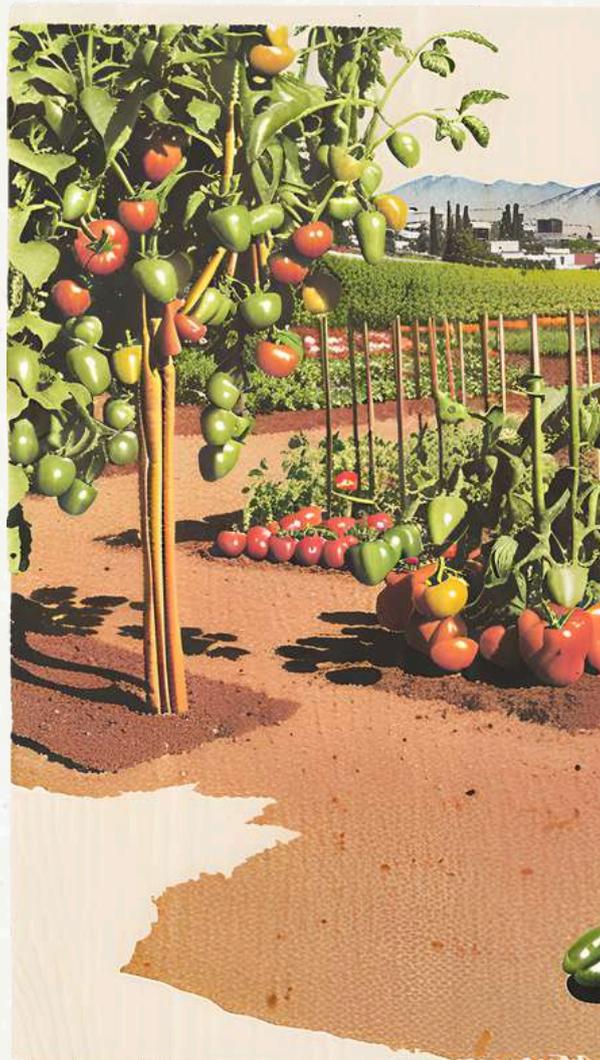
Leaders of food aid organizations must proceed through complex issues: **how to meet a growing demand for food assistance while ensuring stable and diversified supplies?** Relying on single suppliers or specific geographical areas can prove risky during global disruptions, such as the war in Ukraine or climate disasters. Additionally, inflationary pressures and rising raw material costs make it more challenging for organizations to access quality food.

¹ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/fr/sheet/53/fonds-social-europeen>

² <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/5759045>

In this context, **diversifying supply sources becomes a priority to ensure the resilience and sustainability of solidarity actions.** Europe must also reinvent its supply practices by exploring short supply chains, supporting sustainable local production, and revising food redistribution policies. The challenges are numerous : **ensuring equitable access, optimizing stock management, anticipating future crises, and integrating principles of sustainability and food waste reduction.**

This dynamic of diversification and innovation in food supply represents a major strategic axis for leaders of food aid organizations. Their ability to address the economic, social, and environmental challenges of tomorrow will depend on a pragmatic and forward-looking vision that increasingly includes the people concerned.



Summary

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1. INTRODUCTION



The ECHOP PROJECT

The ECHOP project (**European Cooperation to Help leaders of food aid organizations and Offering Precarious better food choices**) aims to support and train European leaders of food aid organizations to ensure regular, high-quality, and sufficient food access for populations in poverty. It is led by four European actors :

- Active Pôle de l'économie solidaire (France)
- Pour La Solidarité (Belgium)
- CEPS (Spain)
- ASBL Perspectiv' (Belgium)



The ECHOP project supports food aid organization leaders by providing tools, training, and resources to foster the diversification of food supplies, the management, and distribution of food. The objectives are to :

- Improve access to healthy food by promoting greater nutritional diversity for those relying on food aid
- Promote sustainable food practices by reducing food waste and encouraging environmentally friendly and agriculturally respectful food choices
- Foster European cooperation by sharing best practices and developing common solutions among participating countries



Four deliverables will be produced as part of the ECHOP project :

- **Role Model Gallery**
- **Methodological Guide**
- **Training and Support Tool**
- **White Paper**

THE METHODOLOGICAL GUIDE

The practical and methodological guide **provides a structured approach, detailing the steps, methods, and tools necessary to apply supply diversification within food aid organizations.** It serves as a roadmap for **leaders of food aid organizations.**

The methodological guide is the result of a collective effort among the four ECHOP members, their expert leaders gathered during a transnational meeting in Barcelona, and decision-makers from nine food aid organizations who responded to surveys conducted in four European countries.

The methodological guide and the compilation of best practices (Deliverable 1 of the ECHOP project) are two complementary tools. The compilation offers a series of recommendations drawn from successful experiences and concrete examples, while the guide provides a framework for implementing supply diversification.

Together, they offer a comprehensive and practical vision, combining theory and application, serving as essential resources for any leader committed to ensuring the quality and effectiveness of their actions.



2. CONDUCTING A GLOBAL DIAGNOSIS TO DIVERSIFY SUPPLIES

The global diagnosis initiated by the leaders of food aid organizations makes it possible to conceive the project to be carried out, the strategy, and the action plan to diversify supplies and ensure its success. It is the result of:

- the internal diagnosis
- the external diagnosis

The strategic challenge : continuing to ensure food aid for most disadvantaged populations



The internal diagnosis

The internal diagnosis allows food aid organization leaders to assess the state of overall management to implement necessary changes for supply diversification. It involves an **in-depth analysis of the organization's resources, processes, and internal capabilities.** The goal is to understand the organization's strengths and weaknesses to better meet beneficiaries' needs, improve operations, and optimize social impact.

Here are two key success factors for this step:

- Assemble a diverse workshop group of people involved in the organization.
- Consult an external body to provide methodical analysis, experience in similar missions, independence, and objectivity.

Strategic resources of a food aid organization can be categorized as follows :

1. **Human Resources**
2. **Material Resources**
3. **Immaterial Resources**
4. **Financial Resources**



Here is a structured approach in several stages to carry out this internal strategic diagnosis :

Skills and qualifications

Evaluate employees', volunteers', and managers' skills level. Education, experience and motivation play a key role in the organization efficiency.

Engagement and motivation

Analyze engagement of workers and volunteers. Internal audits can be used to measure members satisfaction and implication.

Human Resources



Organizational structure

Look for clarity in the organization chart, for the efficiency of roles and responsibilities distribution and whether intern communication is fluid.

Infrastructures and equipment

Assess the quality of equipment (stocks, transport vehicles, facilities) and their suitability to the organization's needs.

Material Resources



Food stock management

Review food stock management (shelf life, product rotation, availability) and the efficiency of the distribution system.

Immaterial resources identification

Analyze the organization's internal and external reputation (values, vision, reputation, brand image...), its partnerships efficiency and communication strategies.

Immaterial Resources



Immaterial resources management and preservation

Enhance the organization's notoriety, implement training plans to develop sharp skills and monitor social impact on the organization's playground.

Financial resources

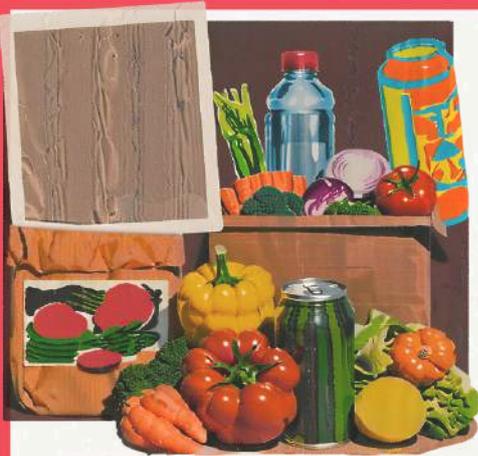
Examine sources of funding (public subsidies, donations, private partnerships, etc.) and their stability, as well as the fund management for implemented actions. The cost-benefit analysis is essential for each activity.

Financial Resources



Treasury

Evaluate cash flow, working capital requirements and projections. Reporting and followup tools are essential.



B

To conduct an external diagnosis

the project team must analyze the **macro-environment** (economic, technological, political, sociocultural factors) and **micro-environment** (users, other food aid actors, suppliers, distribution channels) to **identify key factors** for supply diversification.

1. Macro-environment Analysis

The PESTEL method

Aims to identify the influence (either positive or negative) of macro-environmental factors on an organization to adjust strategical orientations.

The acronym each of the 6 main external influences.



Political



What are the state policies towards food aid, subsidies and support program for food aid diversity and security ?

Is there any change in the regulation that could influence food procurement or stock management ?

Economic



What are the local and national economic situations ?

Inflation, unemployment or economic fluctuations can affect the cost of foodstuffs ?

Are there any budgetary constraints for the organization ?

Sociocultural



What are the specific dietary needs of food aid recipients ?

Are food preferences changing ?

Cultural diversity and local eating habits can influence supply choices ?

Technological



What technologies are available to optimize food supply (inventory management platforms, order automation...) ?

Are there any innovations in the supply chain (such as traceability, distribution logistics...) ?

Ecological



Are there any environmental factors, such as ecological standards or concerns about food waste, that may affect the way products are sourced ?

Can climatic conditions (droughts, floods...) disrupt supplies ?

Legal



Are there any regulations concerning food safety, product quality standards or food distribution conditions ?

Are there any changes in legislation concerning food donations or the management of food surpluses ?

2. Micro-environment Analysis

Porter's 5 forces

Help us understand the competitive dynamics of food procurement, as well as the factors that influence relationships with suppliers and partners.



Suppliers' bargaining power

Who are the food aid organization's main suppliers? Is their bargaining power high? Is there excessive dependence on certain suppliers, and what are the risks?



Customers' bargaining power

Do food aid recipients (and partners such as donors) have significant bargaining power? If demand is high for specific products, this may influence sourcing choices.



Knowledge of new entrants

Are there any new players in the food access sector who could offer alternative sourcing solutions?



Threat of substitute products and distribution channels

Are there alternatives to the products currently supplied? What distribution channels are used?



Rivalry between competitors

What other players are competing for the same resources and sources of supply? Does the structure face increased competition for donations or available food resources?

SWOT analysis

SWOT analysis

The SWOT matrix (**for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats**) is an analysis tool that combines internal and external diagnosis and provides an overall strategic vision.

Example of applying the SWOT analysis for the overall diagnosis

Strengths

- Skills and motivation of the teams
- Strong network of partners
- Sufficient material and logistical resources
- Commitment to local initiatives
- Solid donor networks
- Reputation and credibility with beneficiaries and the community
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Knowledge of local needs and distribution channels
- Commitment of volunteers and staff

Weaknesses

- Lack of financial resources or stable funding
- Aging or inadequate infrastructure
- Challenges in managing a diverse group of beneficiaries
- Challenges in complex distribution
- Dependence on a limited number of suppliers
- Vulnerability to fluctuations in the food market
- Increased complexity of the supply chain
- Lack of visibility and traceability of new sources

Opportunities

- Development of new partnerships (private sector, public institutions)
- Implementation of more comprehensive support programs (training, social integration)
- Expansion of new funding sources (crowdfunding, corporate sponsorship)
- Collaboration with local producers
- Favorable legislation for partnerships with local or international businesses
- Increase in government subsidies or dedicated funding initiatives for food aid
- Innovations in sustainable food distribution (waste reduction, logistics optimization, new technologies)

Threats

- Reduction in public or private funding
- Increased demand due to economic or social crises
- Regulatory risks (health standards, food safety)
- Growing competition for food products due to rising demand
- External shocks such as natural disasters that may disrupt supply chains
- Rising food costs due to inflation or global supply chain issues
- Legislative changes that could make it more difficult or costly to obtain certain food products
- Food safety or sanitary risks that could impact the organization's reputation

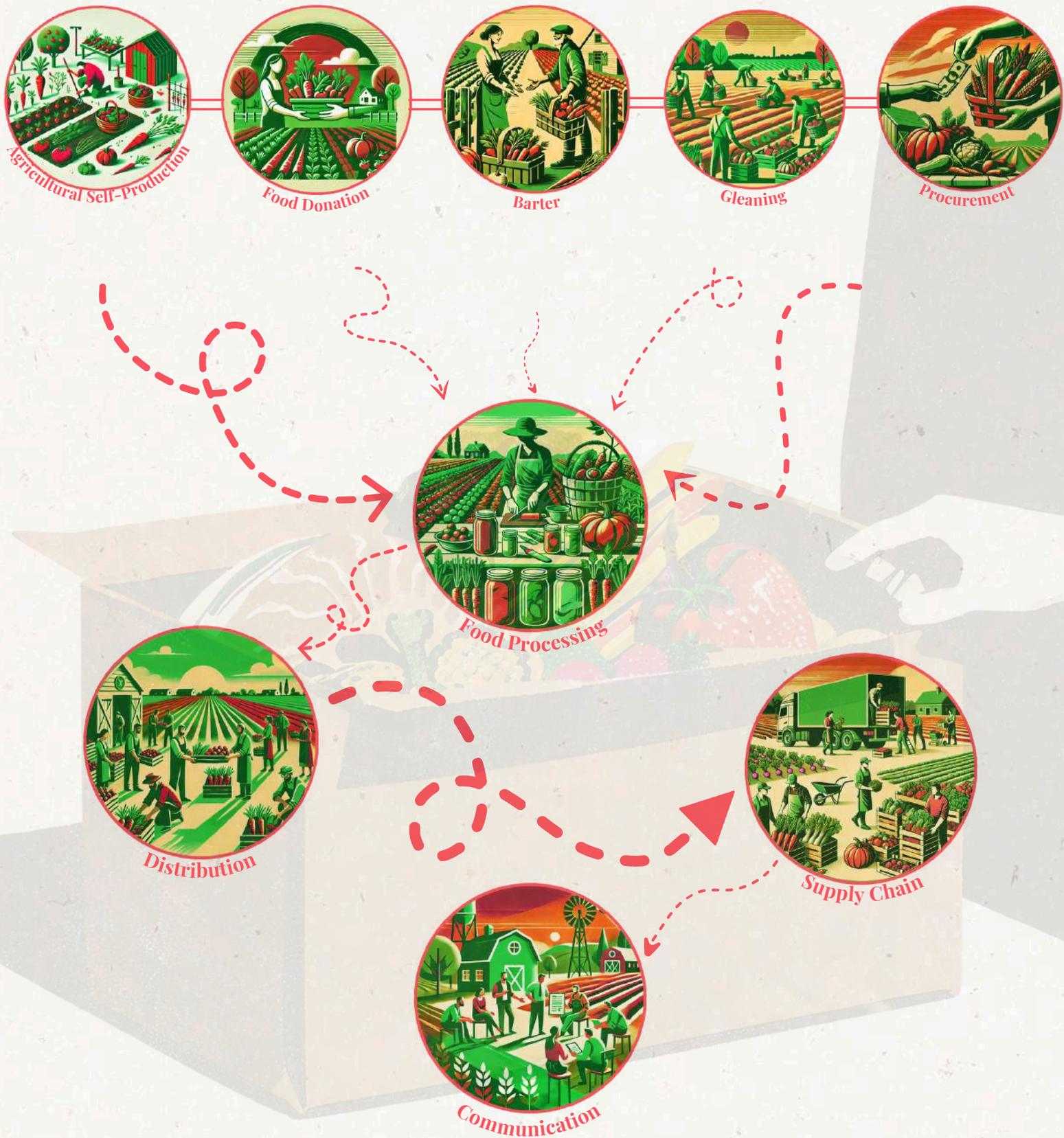
After conducting a comprehensive diagnosis, it is essential to move on to a mapping phase.

This step helps identify, analyze, and structure diversification opportunities. By clearly visualizing supply possibilities, mapping becomes a strategic tool for building a more resilient and sustainable food aid model.

3. SUPPLY DIVERSIFICATION MAPPING

Mapping supply diversification is not just a preventive measure. It is also a **strategic lever that strengthens the sustainability and performance of food aid organizations.**

The supply diversification practices adopted by food aid organizations must **guarantee economic, physical, social and egalitarian access to sustainable, chosen and desirable food.** These must be culturally acceptable, in line with the values, preferences and practices of the people concerned, of good health quality, nutritionally adequate, environmentally friendly and economically viable.



Mapping supply sources made it possible to identify and structure the different options available. In order to refine this reflection and guide strategic decisions, it is now necessary to evaluate these different sources using a multi-criteria approach.

This analysis will make it possible to compare the sources and methods of supply diversification, taking into account criteria and thus choosing the solutions best suited to the objectives of your structures.

4. THE MULTI-CRITERIA MATRIX

The **multi-criteria matrix** is an essential tool for collective decision-making to establish a strategy for supply diversification. It is based on an objective comparison of various criteria, which may not be directly comparable.

The multi-criteria matrix is a tool that can be used to **make a choice, allocate resources or even create a ranking**. In other words, it can be used to develop a collective strategy.

This tool ensures **that different interpretations are avoided, as negotiation takes place at the level of criterion weighting rather than solution analysis**.

Operational Steps to implement a multi-criteria matrix

Define selection criteria

Currently, the issues within food aid and supply can be summarized in **3 cross-cutting criteria**

Social Justice

Provide adequate food volumes and regularity based on beneficiary numbers



Territorial Involvement

Engage in public-private dynamics within the local food sector



Ecological Transition

Offer high-quality, health-conscious, and environmentally friendly products



And 4 technical criteria

and that these staff do their best to improve the organization's performance, while at the same time developing themselves.

Human Resources

Ensure that the organization has the necessary staff to implement the procurement diversification strategy



Logistics

Identify the needs of all stakeholders (users, volunteers, employees) as well as technical constraints ³



The stakeholders of a structure encompass all individuals directly or indirectly associated with its activities. Identifying them and taking their interests into account are necessary for the development of the structure.

Innovative Economic Models

Hybridize resources to consolidate budgets



Shared Governance

Involve all stakeholders (internal and external) in supply decisions.



These criteria are not exhaustive. Each leader can adopt criteria specific to their structure and its environment.

B

Establish a weighting scale

For each of the above criteria, according to the importance attached to it. This is a choice to be made collectively on the basis of the values of the organization, its history, its experience and the context in which it finds itself. All criteria can be of equal value.

Construct the multi-criteria matrix

With a row for each weighted choice criterion and a column for each option studied.

- Each decision maker assigns a score from 0 to 3 to each option based on the criteria selected.
- The scores are assigned the weighting coefficient for the criterion.
- The total of the scores awarded to each option determines the overall result, with regard to all the criteria.

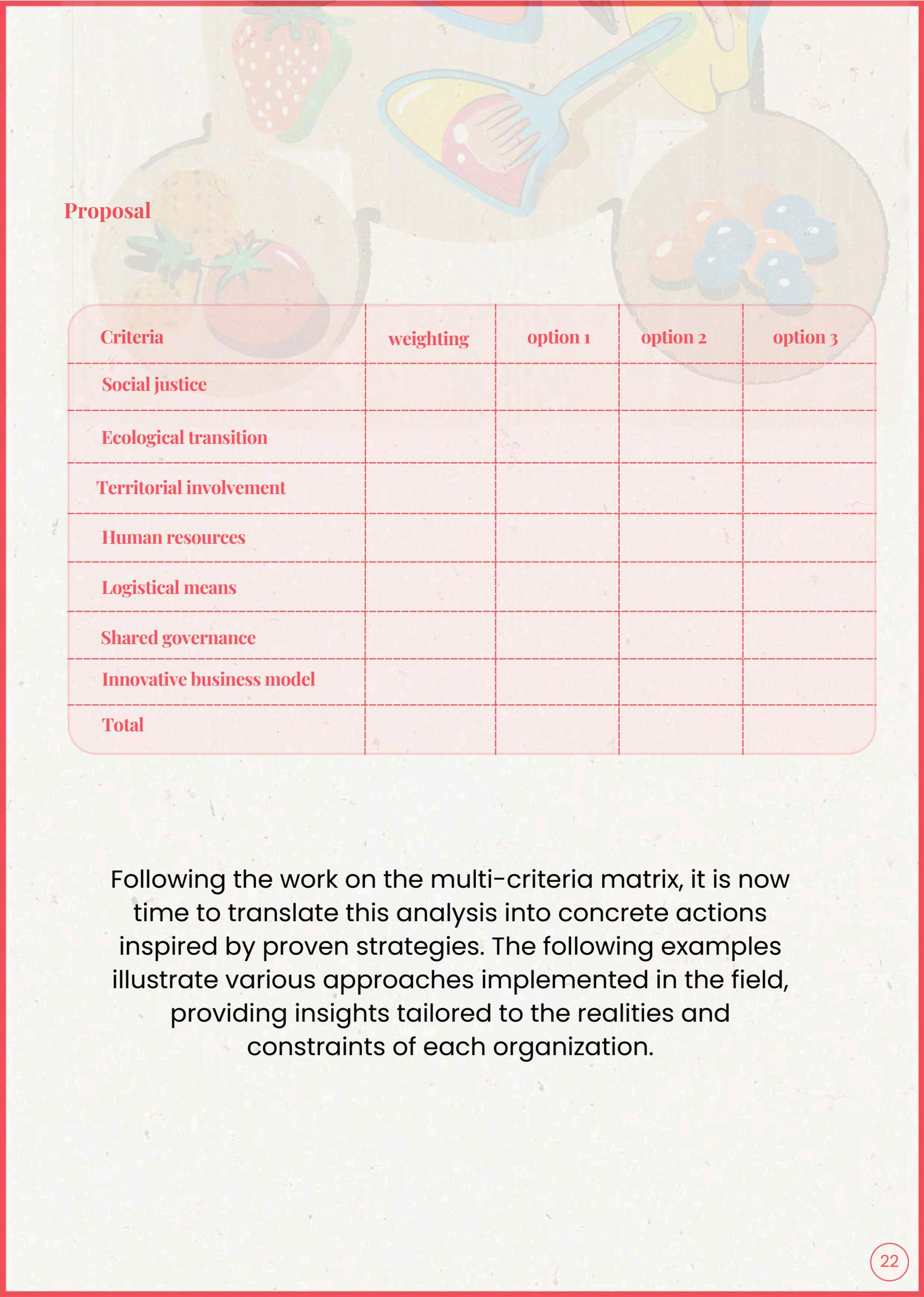
The leaders of the food aid organizations will select the idea that totals the most points based on the overall ranking.

Example of multi-criteria matrix

This section of the methodological guide helps you determine which supply diversification strategy would be most beneficial for you. To implement it effectively, you can refer to the training offered as part of the ECHOP project:

www.projet-echop.eu

Proposal

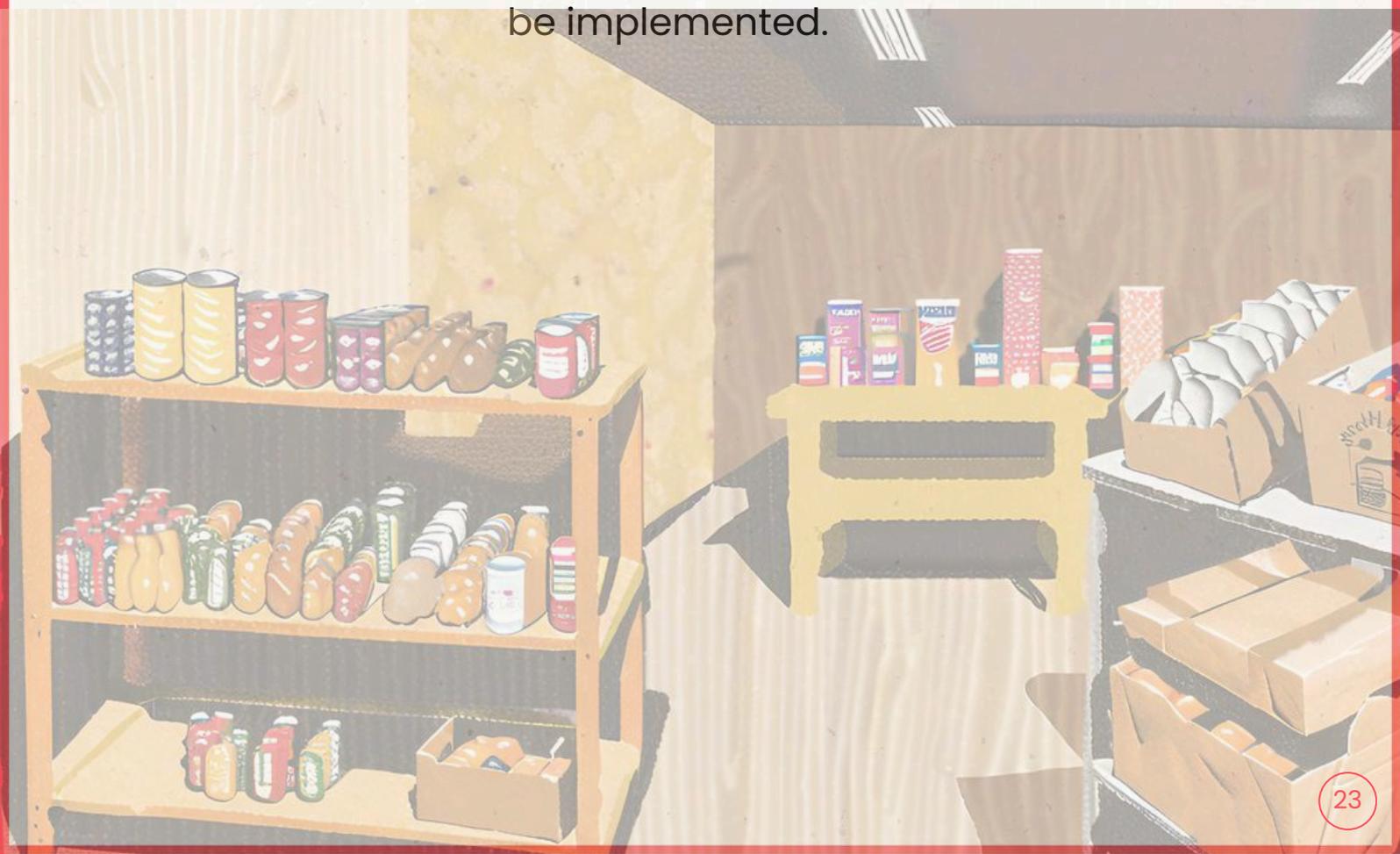


Criteria	weighting	option 1	option 2	option 3
Social justice				
Ecological transition				
Territorial involvement				
Human resources				
Logistical means				
Shared governance				
Innovative business model				
Total				

Following the work on the multi-criteria matrix, it is now time to translate this analysis into concrete actions inspired by proven strategies. The following examples illustrate various approaches implemented in the field, providing insights tailored to the realities and constraints of each organization.

5. EXAMPLES OF SUPPLY DIVERSIFICATION STRATEGIES

Once a full diagnosis has been carried out for the structure, a multi-stakeholder project group has been set up, a decision has been taken on the choice of diversification project and there is a better understanding of potential funding, an action plan can be implemented.





Scenario 1 : A strategy for creating partnerships with local farmers

Action plan

- Identify and establish relationships with local farmers and cooperatives
- Knowing the production volumes and the constraints of farmers
- Set up long-term supply contracts to guarantee a regular volume of produce
- Organize field visits to gain a better understanding of farming practices and farmers' needs
- Offer training to improve sustainable farming practices

Results

- Increased quantity and quality of local produce available to beneficiaries
- Strengthening of the local economy through the creation of sustainable partnerships
- Reduced transport costs and carbon footprint



Scenario 2 : A strategy for creating collaborations with food businesses

Action plan

- Identify food companies willing to donate or sell at reduced prices taking into account the quality of the products
- Set up a regular surplus food collection program
- Create an online platform to facilitate contact between companies and the food aid organisation

Results

- Increased quantities of food distributed
- Reduction in food wastage by recycling surpluses
- Strengthened links with the private sector, which may open up opportunities for further collaboration



Scenario 3 : A strategy to ensure community integration

Action plan

- Organize workshops and community events to raise awareness of the importance of food aid and the diversity of supply sources
- Encourage beneficiaries, volunteers and citizens to take part in collections and distribution
- Set up a decision-making process and a feedback system so that beneficiaries can express their food needs and preferences

Results

- Improved community involvement and awareness of food security
- Offerings adapted to the real needs of beneficiaries
- Strengthening of the social fabric around food aid

Scenario 4 : A strategy for using new technologies

Action plan

- Develop a mobile application to facilitate stock management and supply
- Use data management tools to analyze consumption trends and adapt supplies accordingly
- Work with technology start-ups to innovate in food aid logistics

Results

- Optimization of the supply chain and reduction in food waste
- Improved responsiveness to fluctuations in demand
- Increased operational efficiency through better resource management

Scenario 5 : A strategy to create group purchases and initiate inter-structure collaborations

Action plan

- Participate in consortia or purchasing groups with other companies to negotiate preferential rates with suppliers
- Identify suppliers with whom it is possible to collaborate for larger purchasing volumes
- Set up a common supply management platform to optimize costs

Results

- Reduced purchasing costs through economies of scale
- Better negotiation with suppliers to guarantee advantageous terms

To facilitate the practical implementation of these strategies, we now offer a series of practical guides. These methodological tools provide clear guidelines, detailed steps, and tailored advice to effectively support stakeholders in deploying sustainable and relevant solutions.

6. PRACTICAL GUIDES

The methodological sheets are summary documents that present in a clear and structured way the steps, tools and good practices needed to diversify supplies in a food aid organisation.



Engaging Stakeholders : Building Cooperation

Involving stakeholders means including them in the planning, ensuring regular communication, resolving conflicts and taking their needs and concerns into account when making decisions. These measures play a key role in reducing the project's risks and ensuring its success.

However, it is essential to understand the concept of stakeholders, to identify and analyse them, and to put in place an engagement plan to determine their level of participation, as well as a communication plan to better meet their needs.

What is a stakeholder ?

A stakeholder is defined as 'An individual, group or organization that may affect, be affected by or perceive itself to be affected by a decision, activity or outcome of a project'. Stakeholders are involved at all stages of the project life cycle: from start-up to closure. They provide information and perspectives on their needs, expectations and priorities. Their contributions define the objectives and the action plan.



Why involve stakeholders?

Stakeholders are people who have an interest in or influence on your project. Some can make your project a success, others can make it a failure. So you need to :

- Understand the interests of your stakeholders because they all have different priorities
- Determine the projects / actions they are in favor of or against, and what they want to be active or passive about
- Benefit from their knowledge, skills, and perspectives

Stakeholder involvement is essential for the success of a project, taking into account their expectations and fostering a collaborative dynamic.

Among them, the user holds a central role, as they are the primary beneficiary of the actions implemented. Therefore, it is crucial to analyze their role, needs, and influence in the decision-making process.

How can food aid users be involved?

Involving food aid users in processes that affect them requires a participative, inclusive and respectful approach. Here is a method structured in several stages to encourage their involvement :

1

Create a framework conducive to participation

- **Establish a climate of trust :** make sure that users feel listened to, respected and free to express themselves without judgement.
- **Clarify objectives :** explain why their involvement is important and how their contributions will be used.
- **Ensure an inclusive environment :** take account of linguistic, cultural or physical barriers so that all users can participate.

2

Identify users' needs and expectations

- **Organize interviews or surveys :** carry out questionnaires or individual discussions to understand their needs, perceptions and ideas.
- **Lead discussion groups :** hold small-group discussions to gather a variety of viewpoints.
- **Observe usage and behaviour :** take users' habits into account to better understand their implicit needs.

3

Involving users

- **Offer concrete roles :** encourage users to take part in planning, organising or evaluating food aid services.
- **Make the most of their skills :** identify participants' talents or know-how and incorporate them into the activities (cooking, logistics, awareness-raising).
- **Use accessible materials :** use visual aids, maps or posters to make it easier to understand.

4

Facilitate expression and collaboration

- **Adopt a participatory approach :** use tools such as brainstorming, collaborative workshops or open forums to gather ideas.
- **Mediate :** appoint a neutral moderator to encourage people to speak out and prevent conflict.
- **Give everyone a chance to speak :** ensure that each participant has equal speaking time.



5

Incorporate their suggestions

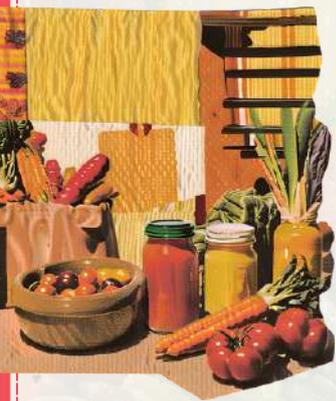
- **Co-construct solutions** : involve users in the design of services to better meet their expectations.
- **Experiment together** : test their ideas in pilot projects to assess their feasibility and impact.
- **Be accountable** : share the results of the actions implemented thanks to their involvement.



6

Value their participation

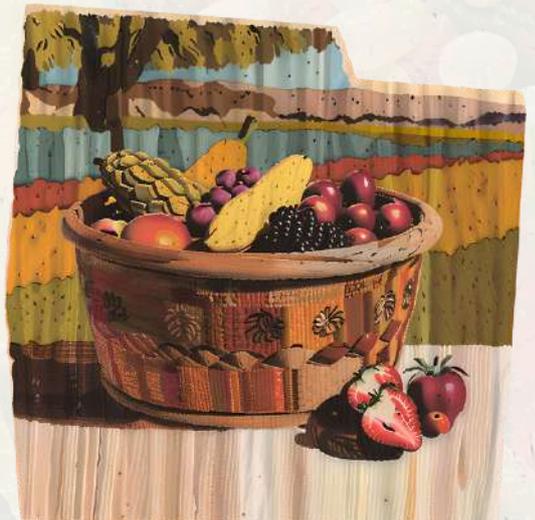
- **Recognize their commitment** : thank them and highlight their contributions (through certificates, public acknowledgements...).
- **Create areas of continuity** : suggest user committees or groups to maintain their involvement over time.



7

Evaluate and adjust

- **Ask for feedback** : ask participants about their satisfaction with the involvement process.
- **Learn lessons** : identify the strengths and areas for improvement for future participatory actions.



By involving users, you not only give them a voice, but you also promote solutions that are adapted to their realities and strengthen their sense of belonging to the process.

Financial management benchmarks: resources available to finance your supply diversification project (provisional budget - management chart (2 pages)).

Despite their non-profit nature, food aid organizations need funds to operate. The search for funding can be a real obstacle course. Fortunately, there are many and varied ways of funding projects. Memberships, donations, events, bank financing, crowdfunding, subsidies.... Funding sources can be multiplied and combined, but each will have its own way of working.

a. Self-financing

This is the income generated by the association's own activities, which helps to finance its operations and projects. Self-financing is often seen as an indicator of an association's durability and solidity, as it shows its ability to mobilize its internal resources and develop in a sustainable way. In France, for example, self-financing can come from membership subscriptions, entrance fees or even paid services.

***In France for example:** self-financing can come from membership subscriptions, entrance fees or even paid services.*

b. Private support

Private support for an association refers to all financial, material or in-kind support from non-public sources, i.e. structures or individuals other than public institutions (State, local authorities, etc.). This support helps to finance or develop the association's activities and is often conditional on partnerships or shared objectives. Private funding therefore plays a complementary role to other forms of funding and helps to strengthen the associations' ability to implement their projects.

***Examples in Europe:** include corporate foundations, endowment funds, sponsorship, philanthropic networks, private collections and even prizes and competitions.*



c. Public funding

Public funding refers to all financial, material or organizational support granted by the public authorities (Europe, States, local authorities or public institutions) to favour certain projects, sectors of activity or categories of population. It can take a number of forms and meet a variety of objectives, such as support for households in difficulty, or the economic and social development of local areas.

Example in Belgium: *In Wallonia, there is accreditation from the Ministry of Social Action for social grocery stores and social restaurants. By meeting certain conditions (access, hours of operation, training, etc.), organizations can be recognized and even funded. There are also various employment support programs that help reduce the cost of hired staff, thus supporting the development of your activity.*



d. Bank financing

Bank financing for food aid organizations is a solution often used to supplement public subsidies, cover temporary cash flow needs or finance specific projects. They can access various banking products adapted to their status.

Example in Europe: *Food Banks or the Red Cross that receive ESF+ funds take out loans to complete the financing of their projects to extend or improve infrastructures, storage equipment or to expand a distribution network in order to meet the growing needs of vulnerable populations.*

e. Profit-making activities as ancillary financial resources

Food aid organizations can carry out economic activities to finance their activities on an ancillary basis. There are many ideas for profit-making activities :

- Provision of services (meals, training, workshops, etc.)
- Sale of goods (t-shirts, calendars, handmade items, etc.)
- Organization of charity events (fairs, garage sales, etc.)
- Fundraising
- Solidarity customers

Examples in Spain: *sales of second-hand clothes, objects and furniture in charity shops are often organized. Concerts can also be organized. Profits from these sales are used to fund food aid and social integration programs.*

f. Crowdfunding

This is a quick and easy way of raising funds via specialist digital platforms. Launching an association crowdfunding campaign via a recognized site maximizes a project's credibility. It also increases visibility, legitimacy and appeal to the general public, public institutions and even private funders. Crowdfunding also allows you to create a community around your project.

Example in Ireland: *'Save food, feed people': FoodCloud has launched crowdfunding campaigns on GoFundMe to finance food exchange programs and the management of food surpluses.*

Typical profile of a 'supply diversification/development manager'

The profile of a 'supply diversification/development manager' in the field of food aid is crucial to ensuring effective management and diversification of supply sources for humanitarian organizations or charities. This role aims to develop new supply strategies, ensuring that foodstuffs are available, varied and adapted to the needs of beneficiaries, while optimizing costs and logistical processes. Here is a detailed description of this profile.

1. Diversification of supply sources:

- Identify and develop new food supply sources (local producers, businesses, other organizations).
- Ensure the establishment of strategic partnerships with suppliers, producers and distributors to guarantee a diversified, high-quality food supply.
- Seek out specific products based on the needs of beneficiary populations and dietary constraints (allergies, special diets, specific nutritional requirements).

2. Managing relationships with partners:

- Maintain a close relationship with suppliers and partners to guarantee product availability.
- Negotiate supply conditions (prices, lead times, volumes) to optimize costs and logistical conditions.
- Manage supply contracts, deliveries, and ensure compliance with food safety standards.

3. Monitoring requirements and stocks:

- Analyze and anticipate beneficiaries' food needs, in collaboration with the operational teams.
- Steering stock management so as to avoid shortages or surpluses, while complying with expiry dates.
- Monitor supplier and supply chain performance indicators, suggest improvements.

4. Supply chain management:

- Coordinate logistics aspects related to supply, such as transport, warehousing and distribution of food products.
- Work with distribution teams to ensure that products arrive in optimum conditions.

Main tasks :

5. Strategic intelligence and innovation:

- Monitor food market trends and innovations in the food aid sector.
- Propose new initiatives to diversify products, improve sustainability (e.g. organic, local, responsible products) and reduce the ecological footprint.

6. Compliance with standards and regulations :

- Ensure that all products comply with health standards, legal requirements and the organization's internal policies.
- Oversee food quality controls, in particular to avoid risks of contamination or spoilage.

Skills required



Knowledge of the food aid sector

Understanding of the issues and specificities of humanitarian organizations, food distribution to vulnerable populations.



Supply chain management skills

Expertise in stock management, negotiating with suppliers and optimizing costs.



Negotiation skills

Ability to negotiate with different types of suppliers (local producers, supermarkets, wholesalers).



Project management skills

Ability to manage diversification or development projects in a complex environment.



Sensitivity to social and environmental issues

Commitment to responsible, sustainable and ethical food.



Communication skills

Ability to work as part of a team and communicate effectively with different stakeholders (suppliers, partners, volunteers, beneficiaries).

Profile required

Training

Purchasing management, logistics, supply chain management, or in a similar field.

Experience

Significant experience in a similar position, ideally in a humanitarian or voluntary sector or in food supply chain management.

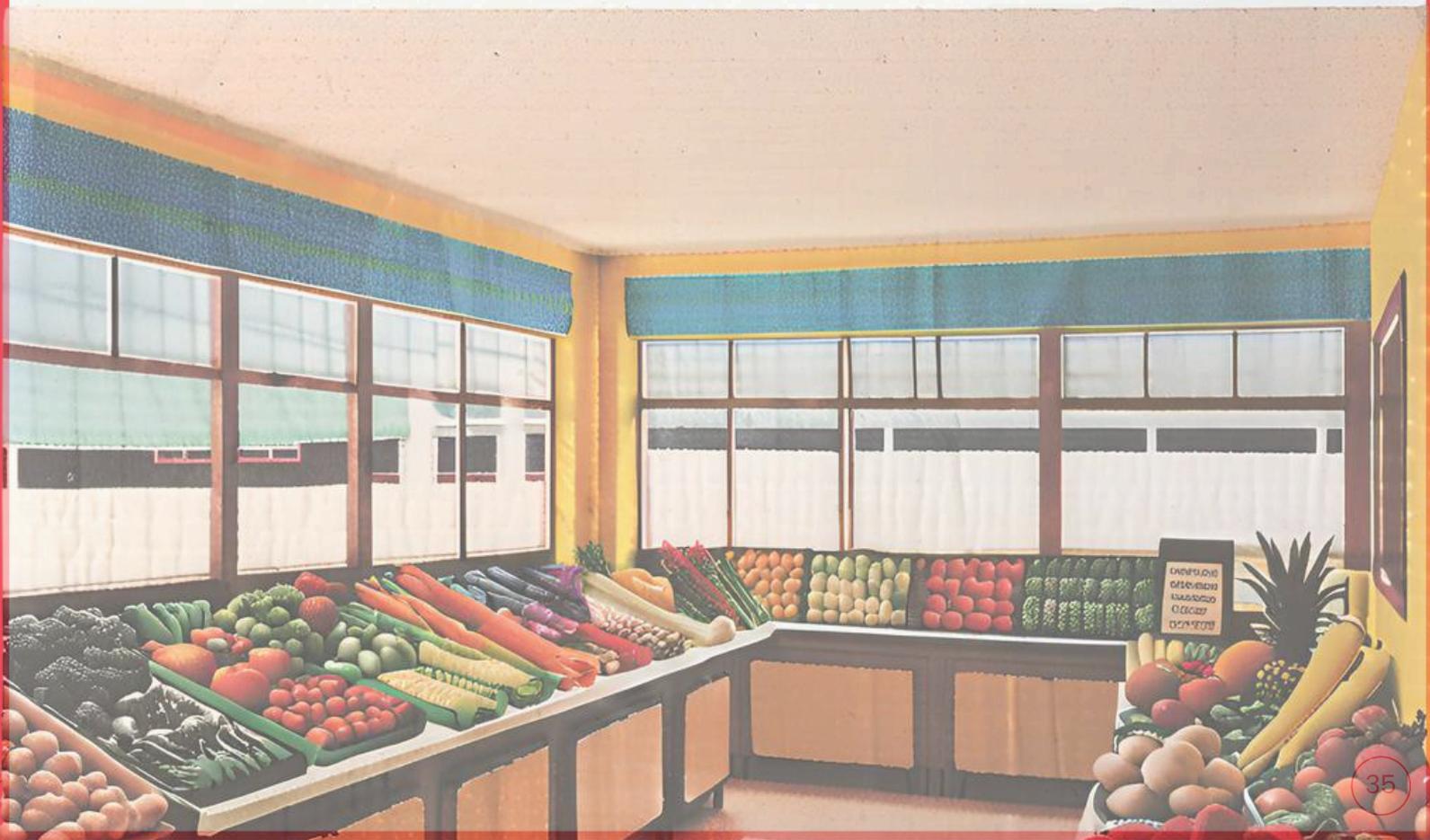
Personal qualities

Autonomy, organization, rigour, ability to work under pressure, good interpersonal and negotiation skills.



Perspectiv'

7. EXAMPLE OF THE SUPPLY DIVERSIFICATION APPROACH WITHIN THE ASBL Perspectiv' in Comines-Warneton (Belgium)





1. Executive Summary

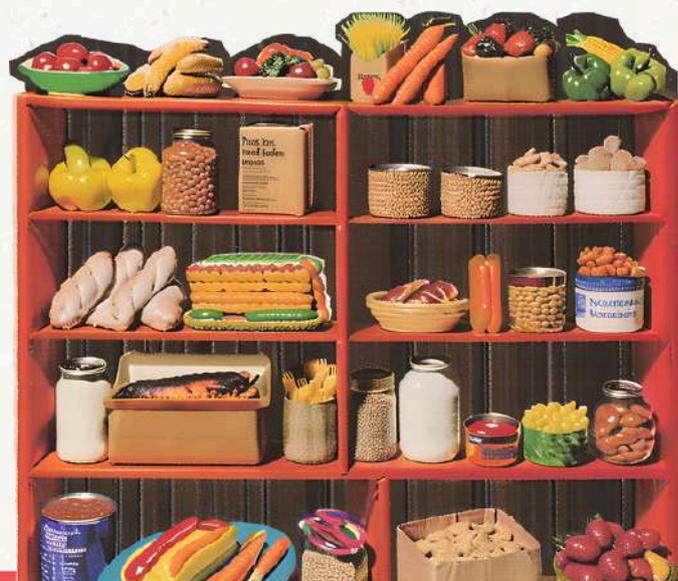
. Brief presentation of EPIS

Epis (Solidarity Grocery Store) is the food aid project of the 'Perspectiv' association. This Comines-Warneton-based organization has historically coordinated food aid throughout the town in partnership with the local public service CPAS (Public Social Action Center). Epis offers two activities: the distribution of free parcels each week and a social grocery store approved by Wallonia⁴. The food parcel is designed on Wednesdays and Thursdays for distribution in Comines on Friday mornings and in Bizet on Friday afternoons. The parcel is prepared by EPIS staff thanks to FSE+ (formerly FEAD) programs and the Food Bank of Western Hainaut. The number of products increases depending on the size of the beneficiary family. The grocery store is supplied by donations from the Bizet church and purchases made with proceeds from grocery store sales. To achieve this, each of the two partners is devoting 0.5 FTE of their own funds, plus an "Article 60"⁵ contract when possible. As for the Comines solidarity grocery store, the Régie des Quartiers also provides support on Friday mornings.

. Brief presentation of the diversification project

Since 2012, operations have changed little, except for the arrival of the community grocery store. Workers compose packages each week and distribute them on Fridays to the two most remote locations in the town. On this occasion, beneficiaries can purchase additional products from the grocery store.

Epis' diversification project will allow us to offer a better quality service while reducing logistics costs. Furthermore, as part of this change project, we aim to increase supplies, generate new financial revenue, and strengthen the management team.



⁴ French-speaking region of Belgium

⁵ Articles 60 or 61 are employment contracts concluded between the CPAS and a beneficiary of its services.

. Key objectives and expected impact

- Improved service
- Increased opening hours
- Increased beneficiary autonomy
- Increased turnover
- Expanded product range
- Reduced inequalities and injustices
- Improved visibility
- Strengthened team
- Increased responsiveness in the event of absences or problems



2. Context and rationale

. Problems or challenges encountered

Today, several issues exist and pose risks of destabilizing the organization. This impacts its organization and reputation, and is a source of tension.

It's difficult to replace existing staff during vacations, illnesses, or absences. The product range offered is quite limited. We're seeing an increase in the number of recipients, but without any increase in supplies. Recipients are sometimes dissatisfied with the packages and find them quite repetitive.

. Need for modification and opportunities identified

To ensure the stability and sustainability of food aid, a diversification project is needed. Furthermore, the various criticisms of this activity, whether due to a lack of communication or transparency, are destabilizing the structure and future of these activities.

Following the SWOT analysis of our structure and the PESTEL diagnosis (see next page), we identified the following opportunities :

- Seeking stable funding
- Opening up to Europe
- Program to combat supermarket food waste
- Team motivated by change
- Beneficiaries and users in demand



SWOT ANALYSIS

Perspectiv'



STRENGTHS

- Strong partnerships
- Solid reputation
- Funding representatives
- Various public funding sources
- Logistics
- High level of commitment
- Historic and unique operator
- Satisfaction of beneficiaries and partners
- European projects



WEAKNESSES

- No volunteers
- Dependence on subsidies
- Two people
- Impossible to expand the service
- Little visibility
- Cumbersome legislation



OPPORTUNITIES

- Working on self-financing
- Possibility of establishing new partnerships
- Demand for volunteer work
- Growing awareness of food issues
- Opportunity to expand our services
- Favorable legislative developments



THREATS

- Financial risks
- Increased demand
- Decreased supply
- Possible arrival of competitors
- Fragile logistics
- Regulatory changes
- Fluctuating food prices

PESTEL ANALYSIS

Perspectiv'



POLICY

- Politique favorable à l'aide alimentaire
- Financement publics
- Partenariats avec les pouvoirs publics
- Fort impact des décisions politiques
- Législation spécifique de l'aide alimentaire



ECONOMIC

- Strong impact of the economic situation on demand for aid
- Strong impact on beneficiaries and funders
- Funding: Grants, Sales, and Donations
- Little competition



SOCIOCULTURAL

- Diverse beneficiary profiles
- Constantly evolving beneficiary needs and expectations
- Strong community involvement
- Multiple responses to poverty



TECHNOLOGICAL

- Acquisition of hardware and software
- Improving communication
- Exploring collaborative platforms
- Using social media to raise awareness and mobilize



ECOLOGICAL

- Fight against food waste
- Various regulations
- Just Transition



LEGAL

- Different legislation
- Multiple obligations (hygiene and food safety)

Internal strategic diagnosis:

Perspectiv'

Skills and qualifications

The staff has over a year of experience within the organization. They have had time to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the current organization. They participated in the European ECHOP project and visited other projects.

Human resources



Commitment and motivation

The staff wants to engage in a process of change and improve the quality of the service provided.

Organizational structure

The structure is managed by a delegated administrator in direct contact with the staff.

Infrastructure and equipment

Perspectiv' has two distribution premises, a grocery store and a storage shed.

Material resources



Food inventory management

Perspectiv's good organization allows for inventory management, but this requires a lot of logistics and a storage challenge at certain times of the year.

Identification of intangible resources

Perspectiv' has a good reputation among beneficiaries and the public. However, questions sometimes arise due to poor communication or a lack of transparency in its procedures.

Intangible resources



Management and preservation of intangible resources

The change process should improve Perspectiv's reputation and address all questions.

Financial resources

The annual budget is destabilized following the withdrawal of an annual operating subsidy by the city.

Financial resources



Cash

The funds allow us to temporarily fill this lack of subsidies, but it is not sustainable in the long term.

3. Description of the proposed amendment

. New processes or changes planned

It is therefore proposed to implement the following changes in three phases:

Phase 1

a) Search for stable financing

The association's bylaws were amended to include our CPAS partner in exchange for an annual membership fee of €25,000.

We also reworked the grocery store project to generate more revenue. We optimized purchasing and offered more attractive products.

c) Supermarket food waste prevention program

Delhaize and Colruyt supermarkets, both located in our city, have programs to combat food waste. As part of this, we have established agreements with these stores to collect fresh produce every day. With our CPAS partner, we have acquired a refrigerated vehicle and community refrigerators. We redistribute more than 150 kg of food every day.



b) Openness to Europe

Perspectiv' embarked on its European adventure through the Erasmus+ program and, initially, the ECHOP project. This openness, the resulting discussions, as well as the work we conducted and visits to other organizations, allowed us to develop a clear idea of where we wanted to go and what steps we needed to take to get there.

At the end of this project, we worked on phase 2.

d) Launch of a short circuit project

Our CPAS partner has launched a short-circuit market gardening project to supply vegetables to the EPIS project.

e) Soup bar

As part of a specific funding initiative, we launched a soup bar where each beneficiary was given a reusable glass bottle. Each time a soup is distributed, they can help themselves to a soup bar.

f) Solidarity Weekend

To raise awareness about food aid and collect food and financial donations, we launched a solidarity weekend with schools and partner organizations. A variety of activities allow us to collect 500 kg of food each year.

Phase 2

a) Accountability of beneficiaries.

Perspectiv' employees will no longer prepare packages prior to distribution. This will free up work time and also give beneficiaries the opportunity to create their own packages.

All products for free distribution will be arranged as in a grocery store and will be awarded points. Each family will be allocated a certain number of points per week based on their composition. With this number of points, they will be able to choose from the products offered each week and create their own package. For exemple, an adult will obtain 13 points per week, while a child will have 8 points. Each point will be worth 1 euro to spend on the products offered.

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Le **cpas** et **ép** vous invitent au
Week-end Solidaire 8^{ème} Edition
du 2 au 6 avril 2025
Une multitude d'activités organisées
au profit des familles précarisées de Comines-Warneton

17-18-20-21 MARS
REPAS GASTRONOMIQUES
12H00
AU PETIT CDLYS - COLLÈGE DE LA LYS - COMINES
LUNDI 17 ET MARDI 18 : 55€PP
JEUDI 20 ET VENDREDI 21 : 35€PP
RÉSERVATIONS : RESTO.CDLYS.BE

MERCREDI 2 AVRIL
ATELIER PÂTISSERIE
POUR ENFANTS DE +DE 6 ANS
DE 13H30 À 16H30
RÉGIE DES QUARTIERS - COMINES
MAISON DE VILLAGE - LE BIZET
INFOS & INSCRIPTIONS : 056/39.39.39

VENDREDI 4 AVRIL
SOLIDARI'QUIZ
DÉFILÉ DE MODE SOLIDAIRE
BAR SOLIDAIRE / PETITE RESTAURATION
À PARTIR DE 19H00
ATHÉNÉE ROYAL F. JACQUEMIN - COMINES
INFOS & INSCRIPTIONS QUIZ : 056/58.93.47

SAMEDI 5 AVRIL
CAFÉ GOURMAND
BAR SOLIDAIRE
DÈS 14H30
HOME PAUL DEMADE - COMINES (04239.08.00)
HOME LA CHÂTELLENIE - WARNETON (04239.08.00)
HOME SACRÉ-CŒUR - PLOEGSTEERT (04239.08.00)
RÉSERVATION INDISPENSABLE POUR LE CAFÉ GOURMAND

SAMEDI 5 ET DIMANCHE 6
RÉCOLTE DE DENRÉES
À DIVERS ENDROITS DE COMINES-WARNETON

DIMANCHE 6 AVRIL
LOTO BINGO
BAR SOLIDAIRE / CRÊPES
NOMBREUX LOTS DONT UNE TABLETTE IPAD APPLE
PREMIER TIRAGE À 14H
INSTITUT SAINT-HENRI - COMINES
RÉSERVATION POSSIBLE AU : 056/58.93.47

Retrouvez toutes les infos et le programme complet sur :
www.weekend-solidaire.be ou au 056/39.39.39

Une grande opération de solidarité à Comines-Warneton organisée avec l'aide de nos partenaires :

ACODA JEUNES, Collège de la Lys, Le Kéfi, PERSPECTIV', REGIE QUARTIERS

b) Widened opening

The time freed up by not designing the packages will allow Perspectiv' to open beyond Fridays. Beneficiaries will therefore be able to choose a time slot to access food aid. We plan to access food aid as follows :

Tuesday: 10:00-12:00 / 12:30-15:30

Wednesday: 10:00-12:00 / 12:30-15:30

Thursday: 10:00-12:00 / 12:30-15:30

Friday: 10:00-12:00 / 12:30-15:30

Phase 3

a) Solidarity restaurant

As part of the Maison des Solidarités project, which will be completed in 2026, plans are underway to integrate a solidarity restaurant. This will reduce food waste and also offer a new service.

The modernization of food assistance in our City, structured in three phases, marks an essential step in the evolution of our organization.

These changes aim to increase the efficiency of our operations, improve the experience of beneficiaries, and ensure the sustainability of our social mission in a constantly changing environment.

Through these initiatives, we hope not only to respond to growing food needs and supply challenges but also to offer a dignified, inclusive, and respectful environment to all the people we support.

The success of this project relies on the mobilization of all stakeholders: volunteers, partners, institutions, and the beneficiaries themselves. Together, we have the opportunity to build a more resilient and supportive model, serving a more just society.



8. CONCLUSION

The strategic analysis of your organization, through various internal and external diagnostic tools, highlights its strengths, weaknesses, as well as the opportunities and threats it must face. From an internal perspective, human, financial, and organizational resources, and from an external perspective, the association operates in an environment shaped by legislative, technical, technological, social, and societal developments, etc.

These elements underscore the importance for the organization to capitalize on its strengths while implementing corrective actions to address its weaknesses. In this sense, several strategic directions can be considered, including the development of new partnerships, improving governance, diversifying funding sources, and supply sources, etc.

At the end of this diagnostic work, you will develop future scenarios including some of these parameters. Then, you will need to make a choice, take a direction, and prioritize one or two scenarios.

Ultimately, to ensure its sustainability and strengthen its impact, your organization will need to adapt its strategy, staying agile in response to changes in its environment. The implementation of a coherent action plan, supported by thorough monitoring, will be crucial for its future development and the achievement of its objectives. To continue supporting European food aid leaders, ECHOP offers free online training on supply diversification, aimed at enhancing skills on this topic and supporting the success of projects.

Sources and deeper approach

Our website : <https://projet-echop.eu/>

“Galerie des rôles modèles – Bonnes pratiques de l’approvisionnement dans le secteur de l’aide alimentaire” Auteurs : Pour La Solidarité, Active Pôle de l’économie solidaire, ASBL Perspectiv’, CEPS (2024)

“The Politics of Food Aid: A Comparative Study of European and International Approaches” Auteur : Marcia B. (2020)

“Étude des systèmes d’aide alimentaire innovants en Europe – Observations et recommandations” Auteurs : Pour La Solidarité–PLS pour Active Pôle de l’économie solidaire (2021)

“Comment renforcer et développer mon Épicerie Sociales et Solidaires”
Auteur : Active Pôle de l’économie solidaire (2018)

“Les Épicerie Sociales et Solidaires au coeur de la transition socio-écologique sur les territoires” Auteur : Active Pôle de l’économie solidaire (2022)

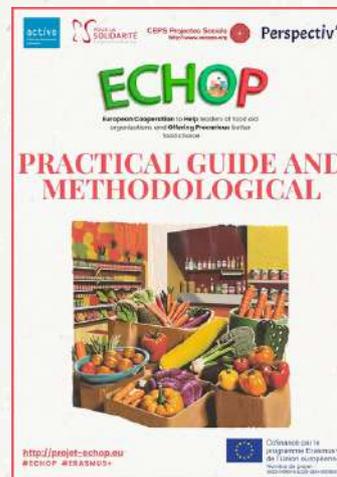
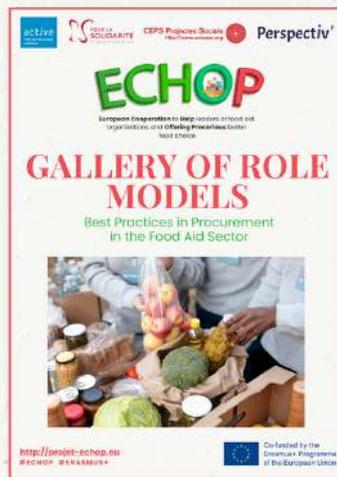
“Le programme européen Fonds Social plus” consultable sur : <https://european-social-fund-plus.ec.europa.eu/fr>

“ASDO, Étude qualitative sur les épicerie sociales et/ou solidaires (concept et fonctionnement). Volet 1 – Rapport final, mars 2017”
consultable sur : <https://bit.ly/3mO5qA5>

ECHOP

European Cooperation to Help leaders of food aid organizations and **Offering Precarious** better food choice

The development of this report would not have been possible without the invaluable contribution of individuals and organizations who generously shared their experiences and best practices. The ECHOP project partners wish to express their sincere gratitude to everyone who participated in this work: your active involvement provided essential insights to strengthen the skills of leaders in food aid organizations and improve the accessibility and quality of food offered to the most vulnerable populations. We thank you wholeheartedly.



CEPS Projectes Socials
<http://www.aceps.org>



Perspectiv'

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