

Rules of the game



This game is about the sustainability of public procurement of food. Many actors are involved in the process (public procurers, farmers and other producers of food, beneficiaries of public canteens in schools, hospitals and other, etc.): they all have different stakes of the table, and they are represented by the different groups of players.



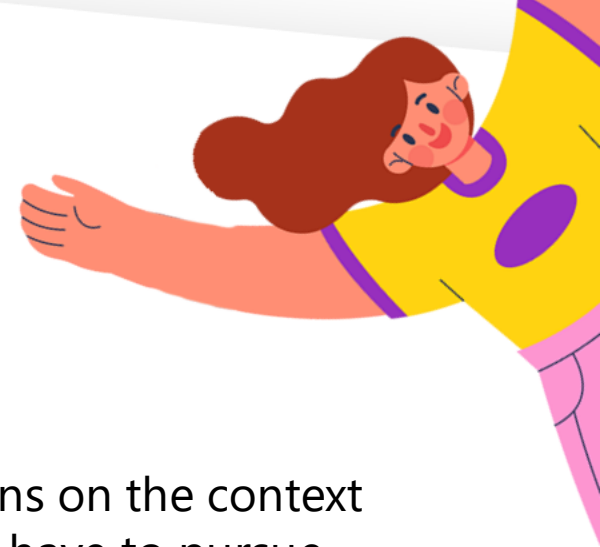
Each group of players has to pursue a specific goal through the formulation of mutually beneficial agreements with the other groups of actors involved. The only condition that must be satisfied by each agreement is that it should not damage other actors, nor the environment.



One point is awarded per each valid agreement among two parties. The point will be multiplied per each involved party in case of multilateral agreements (having more than 2 parties). The group that achieves its goal within the given time adds 10 extra points. The group with more points wins the game.



Stakeholders' guiding cards



Each stakeholder group is given a card providing them with some information on the context where they operate, on their stakes and constraints and the overall goal they have to pursue.

The cards are group specific and should not be shared with members of other groups.

While participants should not act against the instructions given in the guiding cards, they are free to add any other realistic piece of information and conditions they wish to play by.



PUBLIC PROCURERS

The context

Even though the years of austerithy are behind, public spending is still at the center of public debate: how much of private wealth should be spent for public good through taxes and public spending and what actually can be considered as public good is still prone to different answers within and across Europe.

Your stakes

You need to make the best value for money, meaning the most advantageous combination of cost, quality and sustainability to meet government requirements and users needs and taste.

Your costaints

Budget cuts, availability of producys and services that meet suitanibility, quality, cost requirements and users' taste.

Your main goal

You have to grant the provision of healthy and sustainable food to key public sectors (schools, hospitals, social services, prisons, publicly owned enterprises) while meeting important political goals: food security, thriving of local economy, wealth of small farmers, citizens health and fight to food poverty, social inclusion of vulnerable workers

SMALL FARMERS

The context

Small farms make up the vast majority of the EU's 10 million farms. Small farms allocate larger shares of their production to food and have a more diversified produce portfolio than larger farms. They are typically associated with protecting landscape features and biodiversity and the notion of providing public goods. They help to maintain lively rural and remote areas, help preserve the identity of regional production, and offer employment in regions with fewer job opportunities.

Your stakes

You see yourselves as the guardians of traditions, territory and food sovereignty. Through your work you sustain your family and with the other small farmers you contribute to at least 10% of the production of food worldwide. You safeguard higher rates of biodiversity in comparison with larger producers and protect the landscape from drastic modifications.

Your constraints

You suffer most from the challenges facing the agricultural sector (market pressures and weather extremes), and you have little resources to invest in innovation and new technology. Taking part in public tenders is real challenge, both due your scarce knowledge of the legal process but also due to the tender size and lack of flexibility. Often intermediaries separate you from contracting authorities. Ageing population and demographic changes in rural areas are a critical issue as well.

Your main goal

Selling your produce at a price that allows you to sustain your family and to invest in food quality without having to cut on workers' salaries.

LARGE WHOLESALERS

The context

Wholesalers play a vital part in the food supply chain, as they buy directly from the producer/ manufacturer/ larger distributor and distribute to retailers, hospitality businesses, public organisations (schools, Hospitals, etc.) and similarly large organisations.. The wholesaler chooses which source providers to work with depending on several factors – such as their ability to supply, cost, service, end-user demands, current market trends and the like.

Your stakes

You must be competitive if you want to stay on the market: you want quality for low cost to be sold at higher prices. You need trustworthy suppliers that can guarantee timely fixed quantities of the same good with the same characteristics (size, flavour, environmental aspects, etc.). Products must be traceable and in some cases certified.

Your constraints

Monitoring the supply chain can be very difficult. You have many suppliers from many different countries, where working and environmental standards are often much lower than the ones where you sell your products. You would need a team of auditors employed fulltime worldwide to be able to monitor constantly your supply chain.

Your main goal

You want to be considered liable only for the processes that you directly control (basically logistics). You want public procurers to monitor themselves the supply chain if they need to. You can provide names of suppliers but no other sensible data that could interfere with your business practices.

RIGHT WING NATIONAL PARTY

The context

The global financial crisis and the Eurozone crisis have exacerbated economic inequality in rural Europe, which has influenced villagers' support for right wing parties in many European countries. Likewise, the fears of losing a cultural identity due to globalisation, multiculturalism and the refugee crisis has favoured sympathies to stringer nationalistic and protectionistic views, in open contradiction with the main neoliberal predicament of the EU. In many rural areas, it led to deindustrialisation and deagrarianisation. Five millions of people lost their jobs, mainly in small farms and 60% of European rural areas experience depopulation, while 3% of European farms now own 52% of agricultural land.

Your stakes

Part of your backbone electorate thrives in rural areas. Your political discourse revolves around the restoration of the status quo in your rural homelands and the return to 'the national glory' which is threatened by external pressures: migrants, minorities, cosmopolitan elites, the EU, and so on.

Your costaints

Although you have to take into account the various factors that threaten the agricultural sector, the significant increase in agricultural production costs translates into a general increase in life cost that affects severely other parts of your electoral base. In order to contain it, you count on EU financial contribution, while formally you take distance by EU policies on sustainable food systems.

Your main goal

You want to guarantee food security and a viable future for local farmers through public procurement of food, even if this could mean overcoming the EU legislation on free trade and overlooking on environmental performance.

LEFT WING NATIONAL PARTY

The context

European agriculture suffers from conflicts, price volatility, energy costs and climate change. Neoliberalism has led to deindustrialisation and de-agrarianisation. 5 millions of farmers lost their jobs, mainly in small farms, rural settlements are underpopulated. Neoliberalism has also led to an uneven distribution of land: 3% of European farms now own 52% of agricultural land, while 75% of small farms are left with just 11% of the land.

Your stakes

Transitioning towards sustainable food systems and strengthening the resilience of EU agri-food systems is crucial for a longer-term response. This is a prerequisite for achieving food and nutrition security, protect the livelihoods of millions of people and preserve the unique social fabric and cultural heritage of the region. Through public action at national and EU level you want to achieve: a "decent" income for small and medium farms, higher social protection for farmers and agricultural workers, a "fair" alternative to free trade agreements and the end of export subsidies; a "climate-friendly and healthier CAP" and a gender and age balance in the sector.

Your constraints

About 80 per cent of the €55bn a year of the CAP budget has gone to just 20 per cent of recipients, favouring larger farms. The international law on free trade make it complicated to support local farms through public procurement. Sustainability and social inclusion have a cost that is not easily covered by public budget.

Your main goal

You want the public administration to buy local, healthy and sustainable (mainly organic) food from smaller farms, favouring social inclusion of youth, women and migrant workers.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PARENTS OF SCHOOL PUPILS

The context

Family members share the same food environment, that affects eating habits alongside with individual factors. Parental role modeling influences significantly the dietary habits of children. On average across the 27 EU member states, only 12% of adults reported consuming five portions or more of fruit and vegetables daily in 2019, while 55% reported consuming between one and four portions a day, and 33% indicated eating less than one portion a day. Daily consumption of at least five portions of fruit and vegetables is consistently highest among adults with higher level of education compared to those with lower education attainment. Interventions to promote healthy diets include subsidies for fresh fruit and vegetables, regulations on promotion of foods high in fat, salt and sugar, setting nutrient-based standards in school and public institutions, reformulation of products with high-levels of sugar, simple and informative front-of-pack labels, and youth programmes on nutrition education.

Your stakes

You want your children to consume a nutritious and healthy meal at school. This means first of all that the food must be appetising and similar to what you offer at home. No veggie burger and similar nonsense. Steak and "easy vegetables", white bread and dairy products will help your kids to have the energy and the nutrients to go through the day. You want them to maintain steady roots by consuming traditional and local food.

Your constraints

The health and nutrition office imposes a diet that children will not like and you have no power to contradict it. Also the Ministry of Education claims that with the given budget it's not possible to improve further the food quality, and you cannot ask parents to contribute more. Also religious minorities are getting organised to lobby for their own menus.

Your main goal

You want to exclude from the menu all the meat substitutes and to have pulses only as a side dish instead of a main dish. The meat should be local and the recipes should be national.

ANIMAL RIGHTS' ASSOCIATION

The context

Reducing meat consumption may improve human health, curb environmental damage and greenhouse gas emissions, and limit the large-scale suffering of animals raised in factory farms. Indeed, meat accounts for nearly 60% of all greenhouse gases from food production and causes twice the pollution of production of plant-based foods. While the number of industrial livestock slaughtered each year is eight times the human population on Earth, the conditions of intensive animal grazing and breeding are inhumane. Millions of animals never see the natural light, live in cages, mutilated and subject to daily torture before slaughter. Good animal welfare practices not only reduce unnecessary suffering but also help to make animals healthier. The Lisbon Treaty of 2009 included an explicit recognition that animals are sentient beings and that the EU and its Member States bear an ethical responsibility to prevent maltreatment, pain and suffering.

Your stakes

You want animal suffering to end. You want the progressive reduction of meat consumption and animal derived food, up to the point that veganism becomes the most common diet in Europe.

Your constraints

On average, an EU citizen consumes 22 kg per year of animal-based proteins and 16 kg per year of plant-based proteins. The general public is still unready to take up cruelty free diets, because the general opinion is that animal proteins are tastier and healthy, while consumers are unwilling to pay higher prices for food that meets animal welfare standards. Ministerial nutritionists are unwilling to take out animal derived proteins from the public plate.

Your main goal

You want public procurement to reduce significantly the consumption of animal derived products and to make plant based menus the first option for everybody. The remaining part of menus that still contains animal proteins, should be procured taking into consideration all the factors that impact on animal welfare: from housing and bedding, space and crowding, transport conditions, stunning and slaughter methods, to castration of males and tail docking.

NATIONAL SHEPHERDS ASSOCIATION

The context

Shepherds carry out many functions in territorial development. They play a direct economic role by maintaining jobs and services in difficult areas and supplying consumers with quality agricultural products. Livestocks play a role in the management of natural areas stretching from coasts to highmountain transhumance areas, and the surface areas involved account for hundreds of thousands of hectares in each of the regions involved.

Your stakes

Livestock production is central to your livelihood, where there are few land use alternatives, as crop farming and tree growing are not feasible in the mountains where you graze your animals. You produce wealth where there's nothing else, and you preserve an endangered cultural heritage. You produce healthy food, instead of the ultraprocessed plant based alternatives that people buy in supermarkets. And you are very much aware of the importance of protecting the environment and the climate, because that's exactly what you do day by day by protecting natural and semi-natural pastures and the biodiversity they contain. You do not want to become the scapegoat of an unreasonable fight against animal proteins.

Your constraints

Due to the lack of data from many parts of the world, assumptions on livestock emissions are based on studies of intensive, contained, industrial systems, with data often extrapolated to extensive livestock production, implying that livestock production is always a major greenhouse gas emitter. As a category you are not strong at lobbying, and the large multinational of soy and other plant based alternatives to animal proteins are taking over the public discourse.

Your main goal

You want public procurers to adopt criteria that favour the consumption of meat and dairy products coming from local pastures.

MIGRANT SEASONAL FARM WORKERS' ASSOCIATION

The context

The EU fruit and vegetable sector is heavily dependent on a non-national labour force, either from other EU Member States or third countries. Germany, Italy, Spain, France and Poland, in particular, employ high numbers of migrant seasonal farm workers. While these numbers have been steadily increasing, they compensate only partly for the ongoing decline in national agricultural workforces. Hired workers do most of the harvest work on farms that produce fruit, horticultural and vegetable commodities in western European countries. A significant share of them are migrants, from the EU and beyond. Official figures do not reflect reality, as many migrant seasonal workers go un-recorded. This is where abuses can easily take place: violations of minimum wage requirements, inhumane working conditions and violence are common in many European countries.

Your stakes

You want to have access to legal work with the same guarantees for European legal workers in terms of hours of work, salary, health and safety, freedom of movement, freedom of association, protection from verbal and physical abuse.

Your constraints

What you earn from seasonal work is a significant part of your annual income, and you cannot be too choosy. Often you are not aware of national laws and sometimes you enter illegally, which cuts you out from any institutional protection.

Your main goal

You want public procurement to exclude food produced with the illegal exploitation of migrant workers and you want awarding criteria for the producers that employ migrant workers and that support their welfare beyond the payment of a fair salary and fair working conditions.