



Governance

Action 1.4

FOOD POLICY

Urban agroecological food production for citizens in vulnerable situations

KEY WORDS

Access to food for all, urban farming, agroecology

OBJECTIVES

- To improve access to quality and healthy food for residents living in vulnerable situations.
- To facilitate income-generating activities for residents in vulnerable situations.
- To utilize unused public land.
- To allocate urban land for agricultural production and improve citizens' food autonomy.

POLICY DESCRIPTION

Despite lacking any rural agrarian areas, the Belo Horizonte City Council decided to promote the use of urban spaces for agroecological production, specifically targeting residents in vulnerable situations, from the perspective of the right to healthy and sustainable food for all. Thus, in 2020, the City Council established a yearly open call for tenders for citizens interested in urban farming. The selection of candidates is based on social and vulnerability criteria as defined by the City Council (poverty level, minority race, gender, etc.) The surface area of each plot of land given to the selected urban farmers ranges between 2,000 and 10,000 sqm (averaging around 500 sqm). Beneficiaries must be at least 3 people from 3 families per plot, with no maximum number and they can use the plot up to 5 years, respecting existing rules (organic management, not living on the plot). Also, beneficiaries participate in an initial 4-month training on agroecological techniques and can request further training depending on their interests. To increase urban farmers' knowledge, the City Council adapts the training offer to better suit their demands.

Regarding inputs, the City Council delivers agricultural tools and seedlings. Urban farmers have access to small common facilities (toilets, composting container, etc.) and access to water and electricity (paid for by the City Council for a year). They can choose how to work on their plot, but they need to organize in a group to interact with the City Council. Social-service workers accompany the initiative. Farmers can decide what to do with their production (self-consumption, donations, sales) and since 2021, the City Council organizes a weekly farmers' market in the vegetable gardens area to facilitate product sales.

CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Between 2017 and 2019 the testing and experimental phase was developed and in 2020 the policy initiative was launched.

DEPARTMENTS IN CHARGE

Department of Promotion of Agroecology and Food Supply (within the Secretariat for Welfare, Food Security and Citizenship).





KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Service of Infrastructure Maintenance (within the Secretariat for Public Works and Infrastructure).

Agronomists within the department in charge of social-service workers.

BENEFICIARIES

350 farmers

BUDGET

380,000 – 570,000 € / year

ASPIRATIONAL QUANTITATIVE OBJECTIVES

At least 5 production units of agroecological urban agriculture on municipal land per year;
110 ha of urban agriculture land;
350 new farmers per year.

Overall aspiration of the Belo Horizonte's food policies committed to The Barcelona Challenge:
<https://toolkit.thebcnchallenge.org/challenges/report/226>

STRENGTHS AND SUCCESS POINTS

This policy enables the use of derelict municipal land. In addition, it provides citizens with an example of tangible action that in turn has increased the number of people interested in starting a farm. The initiative has generated a good perception among civil society as a response to the critical social, economic and environmental context.

CRITICAL POINTS

The potential impact of a change in municipal authorities (the next election is expected to take place in 2024) since most of the staff have temporary contracts and only a few of them are civil servants.

OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

Although the food and nutrition security policy is organized following a systemic logic, there is no legal provision facilitating co-funding among the different government levels. Thus, there is no transfer of federal and state resources to fund the food and nutrition security policy of Belo Horizonte, that is fully dependent on municipal resources.



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FURTHER INFORMATION

Urban food production website