

1st WORLD GASTRONOMY SUMMIT

27 September 2025, Barcelona - REPORT

FOOD IS CULTURE, HERITAGE AND IDENTITY
EL MENJAR ÉS CULTURA, PATRIMONI I IDENTITAT



Organised by IGCAT and hosted by the Government of Catalonia
Organitzat per l'IGCAT i acollit per la Generalitat de Catalunya



WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY
CATALUNYA AWARDED 2025

IGCAT
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
GASTRONOMY, CULTURE, ARTS AND TOURISM



Generalitat de Catalunya
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WELCOME AND CONTEXT TO THE 1st WORLD GASTRONOMY SUMMIT, DR DIANE DODD



DR DIANE DODD

President of the International Institute of Gastronomy, Culture, Arts and Tourism (IGCAT) & Executive Director World Regions of Gastronomy

Dr Diane Dodd is President of IGCAT (International Institute of Gastronomy, Culture, Arts and Tourism), a global non-profit organisation established in 2010 to empower local communities and regions by highlighting the importance of protecting and promoting distinctive food, culture, arts and natural assets. IGCAT's mission is to ensure that these assets are safeguarded as part of sustainable tourism and balanced development strategies, essential for the planet, health, wellbeing and local economies. The Institute works with regional stakeholder consortiums, a worldwide network of experts and intergovernmental partners. It provides the European and World Region of Gastronomy Award and is the official secretariat of both platforms. In addition, IGCAT has created internationally recognised initiatives including the European Young Chef Award, World Food Gift Challenge, Top Websites for Foodie Travelers Award and the Food Film Menu.

“A GLOBAL CALL TO SAFEGUARD TRADITIONS, IGNITE CREATIVITY, AND CELEBRATE THE FOOD DIVERSITY THAT SUSTAINS OUR WORLD.”

On behalf of the Executive Board of the International Institute of Gastronomy, Culture, Arts and Tourism (IGCAT), it was a profound honour to welcome colleagues from across the globe to the **1st World Gastronomy Summit**.

Bringing culture decisively to the forefront of our discussions has not only been a long-held professional ambition, but a deeply personal one. IGCAT was founded on the conviction that *food is culture*. To see this belief fully embraced within the cultural policy arena, and realised through this Summit, has been profoundly meaningful.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to all participants for their wisdom, generosity, and willingness to share their experiences, which enriched the dialogue beyond measure.

This Summit marked a historic milestone that would not have been possible without the trust, vision, and generous support of the Government of Catalonia, in its role as World Region of Gastronomy 2025. Their commitment to our shared values has been instrumental in turning this aspiration into reality.

For the first time, gastronomy and culture were placed at the centre of a global, cross-sectoral dialogue with agriculture, education, tourism, science, policy and civil society under scrutiny.



At a moment of deep global transformation, the Summit offered a unique space to reflect on a fundamental conviction shared by all participants: food is not merely fuel; food is culture, heritage and identity.

Food not only shapes who we are, how we relate to one another, and how we inhabit our territories. Food carries memory, ritual, creativity and connects generations, sustains landscapes, preserves biodiversity and fosters community well-being.

A SUMMIT AT A CRITICAL MOMENT

This inaugural World Gastronomy Summit took place at a critical juncture. As food systems become increasingly engineered, globalised, digitised and industrialised, societies are confronted with urgent questions:

When we talk about food or culture - what are we gaining in efficiency and scale? Or, what are we losing in diversity, meaning and resilience?

These questions resonate strongly within the broader international context, and it was poignant to raise them in advance of **MONDIACULT 2025**, where global cultural policy was being re-examined.





We argue that gastronomy, understood in its fullest sense, is not an accessory to culture, it is one of its most powerful expressions.

Food, long marginalised within cultural frameworks, is now emerging as a missing yet essential pillar in cultural policy, one that connects cultural diversity, ecological sustainability, social equity, public health and economic vitality.

FROM DYSTOPIA TO UTOPIA: FRAMING THE DEBATE

For this reason, we wanted this Summit to be deliberately framed around the tension between dystopian and utopian futures, not as abstract exercises, but as a wake-up call given that dystopias trajectories are already visible today.

In the dystopian scenario, food systems are driven primarily by hyper-efficiency, scale and profit. Industrial monocultures expand while biodiversity declines; species disappear every day and small-scale farmers, fishers and artisans, who are custodians of ancestral knowledge and lesser-popular species, are marginalised. Food becomes homogenised, stripped of cultural meaning, reduced to nutrients, convenience and marketing claims. Media and algorithms begin to dictate diets detached from place, season and tradition. Culinary diversity fades, along with the stories, crafts, rituals and identities embedded in food.

This dystopia is not fiction. It is already unfolding in probably all regions of the world, with consequences extending far beyond agriculture, threatening cultural, food and economic sovereignty, ecological resilience, public health and social cohesion.

Yet, we also know that there are many people across the world working hard to protect and preserve our food and cultural diversity and we are fortunate to have brought together many in this 1st Summit. And, we asked them to articulate a utopian future, not a naïve dream but policies and actions grounded in possibility. A future where technology serves culture and ecology rather than erasing them; where innovation supports farmers instead of replacing them; where AI and digital tools help safeguard traditional knowledge, promote cultures, protect biodiversity and adapt to climate change; where regenerative agriculture restores soils and ecosystems; and where unique urban and rural communities reconnect through food.

WHY GASTRONOMY MATTERS AND IS A SHARED GLOBAL COMMITMENT

Gastronomy sits at the crossroads of these futures. It is both deeply local and inherently universal. When supported and valued, gastronomy becomes a driver of sustainable development, cultural pride and regional resilience.

We know that to have real impact though requires not just the work of individual people and organisations on the ground, it also requires stronger policies and governmental action across the globe. Our speakers and participants, each one an expert in their field were asked to create a utopian road map to the future – articulating both policies and actions that could benefit a robust and cultural diverse food future.



We were blessed with representatives from almost all awarded World and European Regions of Gastronomy. In this regard, IGCAT warmly acknowledges the pioneering commitment of the first **World Regions of Gastronomy**, whose work demonstrates that food is not only sustenance, but a powerful bridge connecting people to land, culture and tradition.

We celebrate the leadership of Aseer World Region of Gastronomy 2024 (representing the Middle East); Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025 (representing Europe); Manabí World Region of Gastronomy 2026 (representing the Americas); Vanuatu Candidate World Region of Gastronomy 2027 (representing the Pacific); and Cap Bon Candidate World Region of Gastronomy 2028 (representing Africa). Each illustrating how gastronomy can safeguard culinary heritage, empower local communities and reinforce food sovereignty.

We also celebrated the achievements of the **22 awarded European Regions of Gastronomy**, whose decade-long journey has demonstrated that gastronomy, when recognised and supported as culture, can become a powerful driver of sustainable development, cultural identity and regional pride.

In particular, Catalonia's trajectory, from European Region of Gastronomy 2016 to World Region of Gastronomy 2025, exemplifies how culinary heritage, climate action and cultural policy can be interwoven to build resilient and sustainable food systems.

The experience and knowledge found in each of our awarded World and European Regions of Gastronomy needs to be shared with the World and we need a new global alliance between everyone that is committed to safeguarding and promoting food and cultural diversity. For this reason we also invested in bringing key global organizations to the table.



A GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR FOOD AS CULTURE

The inaugural Summit brought together an unprecedented coalition of international organisations including **UNESCO, Crop Trust, Slow Food, Creative Tourism Network, Délice Network of Food Capitals, Alicia Foundation, Regenerative Vanua and Future Food Institute.**

These are our allies alongside governments, universities, chefs, producers, artisans, youth representatives and civil society actors from all five continents.

During the Summit, they shared practices, challenged assumptions and co-created visions that transcend sectors and borders.

The Summit reaffirmed IGCAT's message, that food systems cannot be addressed in silos: they are simultaneously agricultural, cultural, educational, environmental, social and economic.

THE WORLD CAFÉ: THE HEART OF CO-CREATION

At the heart of the Summit, the World Café sessions embodied this integrative approach. Sixteen thematic tables explored futures for 2050, ranging from biodiversity and traditional crops to consumer responsibility, storytelling, creative tourism, inclusive food systems and youth leadership. Participants were entrusted with a central responsibility: to imagine solutions capable of steering societies away from dystopia and towards a future where food diversity, cultural meaning and ecological balance are preserved.

We were not disappointed and we hope to have captured the essence of our debates in this report for you. The Summit called for shared responsibility, courage and purpose. It was acknowledged that the



future of food will be decided in fields, kitchens, schools, markets, homes and communities and therefore policies, media narratives and digital spaces need to influence citizen choices. Governments must integrate food into cultural and public policy. Producers must be protected and valued. Educators must place food literacy at the core of learning. Gastronomy must act as a cultural ambassador for territories. Media must resist homogenisation and give visibility to diversity. Citizens must recognise that every choice, every bite, shapes the world we pass on to future generations.



A FIRST SUMMIT, A LASTING LEGACY

As a 1st World Gastronomy Summit, this gathering is both a beginning and a foundation. Its ambition is not to provide definitive answers, but to open a global pathway, one that recognises food as a cornerstone of cultural heritage, identity and community well-being.

IGCAT is proud that our collective voice, in the form of the Declaration on Food at the Heart of Cultural Policy and Community Well-Being, was presented to MONDIACULT on 29 October. It has seemingly had an impact because for the first time food is now recognized within the discourse on culture. Food, long marginalised within cultural frameworks, is now emerging as a missing yet essential pillar in cultural policy, one that connects cultural diversity, ecological sustainability, social equity, public health and economic vitality.

This is not however our final word. The battle is not yet won. We stand at a crossroads. Dystopia is near but utopia remains possible. The direction we take depends on our collective will, imagination and commitment.

On behalf of IGCAT and the World Regions of Gastronomy, we invite all those who read this report to join us in this responsibility: to defend diversity over uniformity, meaning over convenience, and culture over commodification.

Because the future of food is not only about what we eat, it is about the kind of world our eating creates.



WELCOME FROM CATALONIA, WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY 2025, CRISTINA MASSOT



CRISTINA MASSOT

General Secretary,
Department of Agriculture,
Livestock, Fisheries and Food,
Government of Catalonia

**“FOOD IS CULTURE, HEALTH AND IDENTITY, AND
BY VALUING IT, WE CONTRIBUTE TO BUILDING
STRONGER AND MORE RESILIENT COMMUNITIES.”**

It is a great honour to welcome you all to Barcelona for the first World Gastronomy Summit, held in the year when Catalonia has been distinguished as the World Region of Gastronomy 2025.

Catalonia is a land where food, culture and identity are deeply intertwined. For centuries, our farmers, fishers, artisans, chefs and communities have shaped a gastronomic heritage rooted in creativity, sustainability and respect for the land and the sea. Today, this tradition is combined with innovation, research and international cooperation, making our gastronomy a true reflection of who we are.

This Summit brings together voices from across the world to reflect on the cultural value of food and its crucial role in building fairer, more sustainable and more inclusive societies. By sharing knowledge and diverse perspectives, we can advance towards new models that strengthen our agri-food systems, safeguard biodiversity, and highlight gastronomy as an essential part of cultural heritage.



I am convinced that the debates, ideas and proposals emerging here will contribute not only to shaping future policies, but also to inspiring global action that recognises food as a key driver of wellbeing, identity and dialogue among peoples.

On behalf of the Government of Catalonia, I thank you for your participation and commitment, and I invite you to discover and experience the richness of Catalan gastronomy during your stay. May this Summit be the beginning of new collaborations that continue to celebrate and protect the power of food in our shared world.

Welcome to Catalonia.





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The 1st World Gastronomy Summit was held in Catalonia in October 2025, during the year in which the region held the designation of World Region of Gastronomy 2025.

Convened by IGCAT and hosted by the Government of Catalonia, the Summit marked a historic milestone as the first global forum to place food explicitly at the heart of cultural policy, community well-being, and sustainable development.

Bringing together cultural leaders, policymakers, producers, chefs, researchers, educators, civil society organisations, media professionals, and international institutions from across five continents, the Summit provided a unique platform for dialogue, exchange, and collaboration.

The Summit was structured around plenary sessions and expert dialogues, alongside sixteen World Café tables. The plenary sessions and expert dialogues provided a platform for high-level exchange and thematic exploration, while the World Café tables were designed as participatory, small-group discussions enabling more in-depth, interactive engagement.

At the core of this shared vision is the recognition of food as a system rooted in culture, territory, and care. Participants emphasised the role of producers as custodians of landscapes and heritage, the importance of renewing regenerative practices, and the need for innovation to support biodiversity and cultural memory rather than replace them. In this perspective, citizens are empowered as conscious agents of change, actively shaping more sustainable and meaningful food systems.



Participants further agreed that achieving this vision requires deliberate and coordinated action. The future of food systems cannot be left to market forces alone; it must be shaped through policies, education systems, culinary practices, agricultural models, media narratives, and everyday consumption patterns. Empowering citizens involves equipping them with the knowledge, rights, tools, and opportunities necessary to influence the food environments that, in turn, shape their lives.

Against this constructive and forward-looking perspective, the Summit also reflected on the contrasting risks facing global food systems. Participants recognised the accelerating pressures of a dystopian trajectory, characterised by hyper-industrialisation, ecological degradation, loss of biodiversity, cultural homogenisation, widening inequalities in access to healthy food, and the erosion of local knowledge and food sovereignty. In such a scenario, food risks becoming increasingly standardised and disconnected from place, people, and meaning.

This dual perspective underscores a critical moment of choice. Food systems stand at a crossroads between these two pathways, reinforcing the urgency of collective responsibility and coordinated action to ensure a more sustainable, inclusive, and culturally grounded future.

From these exchanges a clear and shared message emerged: food is culture, heritage, and identity, and it represents a collective, cross-sectoral responsibility.



FOOD AT A CROSSROADS: FROM DYSTOPIA TO PROTOPIA THROUGH SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Key insights and exchanges throughout the World Gastronomy Summit outlined a comprehensive roadmap for future actions to be carried out by IGCAT and the regions that the association works with. The list that follows may not be utopia but will have the power to contribute to a *"protopia"* - a continuous, collective process of improvement:



CROSS-SECTOR GOVERNANCE AND COLLABORATION

IGCAT encourages regions to establish inclusive and expanded governance structures that bring together public, private, third-sector, and academic actors working across sectors. We firmly believe that the complex challenges facing regions can only be addressed through collaborative, cross-sector approaches, reflecting the interconnected nature of food systems.

IGCAT already requires regional governance models that engage multiple stakeholders in identifying challenges and co-creating solutions. We remain committed to monitoring regional progress and promoting good governance practices (see IGCAT's public, private, academic, and third-sector partners listed at igcat.org).

At the international level, IGCAT fosters cross-sector dialogue through Platform meetings, Expert meetings, online webinars, and the World Gastronomy Summit. These initiatives enable the mapping and sharing of best practices across regions and ensure that this knowledge is digitally accessible to all Platform members.

Action needed by regions and their stakeholders

- Develop strong governance models that include diverse stakeholders from multiple sectors;
- Appoint an Executive Director to facilitate stakeholder engagement and drive cross-sector collaboration;
- Establish governance models aligned with IGCAT's philosophy, fostering alliances between producers, chefs, distributors, researchers, educational institutions, communicators, and consumers. These partnerships should function as cultural ecosystems where knowledge circulates and trust is built;
- Participate actively in IGCAT events and projects;
- Engage with best IGCAT's practice resources (available via IGCAT's Dropbox to all members);
- Design and implement cross-sector projects and proposals for the Award year;
- Collaborate with partners from other World and/or European Regions of Gastronomy to strengthen international perspectives and cross-marketing opportunities;
- Develop a long-term gastronomy strategy to ensure a lasting legacy beyond the Award year



DIGNITY AND CONTINUANCE FOR FOOD PRODUCERS

Farmers, fishers, and food artisans are indispensable cultural, environmental, and social actors. Without their knowledge, labour, dignity, and continuity, gastronomy, biodiversity, and food heritage cannot survive.

IGCAT encourages regions to actively value and promote these actors, recognising their role as custodians of landscapes, traditions, and local economies. One key initiative is the development of audio-visual storytelling that showcases regional food diversity and brings visibility to often overlooked food cultures. Selected films are presented internationally through IGCAT's Food Film Menu, with the support of global partners such as Slow Food and other aligned organisations.

To address generational renewal, IGCAT also encourages regions to identify and document young people who have chosen farming, fishing, or food production as a life path, highlighting these stories as sources of inspiration and continuity (see [FoodFilmMenu.org](https://www.foodfilmmenu.org)).

Action needed by regions and their stakeholders

- Support direct trade models, including farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture, and shorter supply chains;
- Strengthen cooperatives as key structures for collective empowerment, fair value distribution, and community resilience;
- Facilitate networks connecting small producers with restaurants, retailers, and food companies;
- Build partnerships with supermarket chains to increase the visibility and presence of local products;
- Ensure fair market conditions for local producers, including recognition and rewards for authenticity, biodiversity, and territorial value;
- Reinforce geographical indications and quality labels that connect products to their landscapes, cultures, and traditional practices;
- Reduce VAT for local products;
- Provide targeted financial support and/or tax incentives for all those promoting biodiverse/ organic food landscapes such as smallholder farms using multi-crop and soil-regenerating practices, land managers maintaining traditional landscapes, orchard owners promoting varieties, forest-based agroecological systems and agroforestry systems;
- Implement market regulations that guarantee space for local products for example, put targets such as 70% local sourcing for public sector catering.
- Implement IGCAT's Food Commitment that incentivise restaurants and hotels to increase their use of local products, rewarding restaurants that prioritise quality, local sourcing, and nutritional value.
- Adopt measures to prevent excessive land concentration and speculation over land and water resources;
- Promote the creation of awards and incentives for young food producers to encourage generational renewal;
- Share best practices across regions through webinars and Platform visits;
- Develop awareness campaigns, especially within cultural events, that promote healthy, local, and seasonal eating, reinforcing circular economies and disincentivising the consumption of environmentally harmful production.



FOOD EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AWARENESS

Food education must be recognised as a foundational right across all generations, reconnecting people with taste, origin, seasonality, health, and cultural meaning. It is not only about nutrition, but also about climate responsibility, cultural identity, social justice and equity, biodiversity protection, and human dignity.

IGCAT encourages regions to embed food education within cultural and educational frameworks, recognising its power to shape more sustainable and equitable food systems. Initiatives such as the Young Chef Ambassadors programme highlight the importance of valuing local products and strengthening connections between territory, stories, and recipes (see [YoungChefAwards.org](https://www.YoungChefAwards.org)).

IGCAT has also established collaborations with organisations such as the Future Food Institute, with potential to further deepen partnerships that support the development of tools and methodologies for educating younger generations about food. In this context, IGCAT promotes international exchange programmes to nurture a new generation of culturally aware and responsible food professionals, while continuing to share best practices across regions through webinars and Platform visits.

Action needed by regions and their stakeholders

- Advocate for the integration of food literacy across all levels of education, linking food to climate, health, and cultural curricula, and placing it at the core of educational practice;
- Educate citizens about harmful and unsustainable food systems to enable informed and responsible consumption choices;
- Strengthen community connections within education by linking schools with farmers, chefs, artisans, and local producers;
- Ensure hands-on learning experiences on farms and in food production environments, bringing children and youth closer to land and sea;
- Integrate regenerative farming principles and practices into school curricula;
- Teach cooking in schools, enabling children to actively engage with heritage foodways, including traditional crops, recipes, preservation methods, and storytelling;
- Develop healthy school food programmes based on local, seasonal products that promote taste awareness and food literacy;
- Provide incentives for families to purchase, cook, and learn about traditional and local crops;
- Create clear career pathways for young people interested in food, hospitality, and agriculture sectors;
- Offer lifelong learning opportunities, including programmes for adults in healthy cooking and pathways for re-entry into the hospitality sector;
- Develop awareness campaigns that revalue professions across the hospitality sector, beyond high-profile chefs i.e. screen food films related to young people that have chosen food production as a lifestyle choice;
- Recognise taste as a cultural and educational resource, integrating it into school curricula and cultural programming;
- Promote storytelling and local food narratives as key educational tools;
- Advocate for stronger national regulations on additives and highly processed foods;



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND GENERATIONAL RENEWAL

Young people must play a central and influential role in shaping future food systems—not as passive beneficiaries, but as active co-creators of new narratives, practices, and solutions.

At the Summit, a shared concern emerged: the custodians of food knowledge are ageing, while too few young people are entering these professions to ensure long-term food sovereignty. Without urgent action, the continuity of food cultures, skills, and sustainable practices is at risk.

IGCAT actively supports the empowerment of youth by fostering platforms, tools, and opportunities that connect younger generations with food systems. Through initiatives such as the Young Chef Ambassadors programme, IGCAT encourages young professionals to value local products and strengthen connections between territory, stories, and recipes (see [YoungChefAwards.org](https://www.YoungChefAwards.org)).

IGCAT also facilitates the exchange of best practices across regions through webinars and Platform visits, and creates spaces for dialogue by organising forums with young people to better understand the barriers they face in entering food-related professions. Storytelling remains a key tool: IGCAT commissions and disseminates films that highlight young individuals who have chosen careers in farming, fishing, and food production, presenting them in educational contexts to inspire others.

In addition, IGCAT promotes hands-on engagement by encouraging opportunities for young people to visit farms, participate in fishing experiences, and gain practical insight into the economics of food production. At an international level, platforms such as the World Gastronomy Summit could serve to elevate youth voices and strengthen their role as agents of change within global food systems.

Action needed by regions and their stakeholders

- Support start-up initiatives that connect young people across sectors, including food, marketing, design, and creative storytelling;
- Establish incubator spaces to help young innovators develop local businesses rooted in sustainable gastronomy;
- Develop youth-led awareness campaigns and projects focusing on food, climate change, and health;
- Provide grants and financial support for studies in food sciences and food entrepreneurship;
- Create dedicated training programmes that combine food knowledge with communication and storytelling skills;
- Address structural barriers and improve access to land, seeds, water, and essential inputs, particularly for small-scale farmers and young producers.



BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCE

Biodiversity, from seeds to landscapes, must be recognised as a strategic asset for resilience, identity, and food sovereignty. Forests, orchards, and small-scale farms are not only sites of food production, but vital custodians of natural habitats, water cycles, carbon storage, cultural heritage, and territorial identity.

To empower local communities, ecosystems themselves must be protected, restored, and valued. This requires a systemic approach that recognises the interdependence between ecological health, cultural continuity, and sustainable food systems.

IGCAT supports this vision by fostering partnerships and raising awareness around biodiversity protection. Through its collaboration with organisations such as Crop Trust, IGCAT contributes to the preservation and revitalisation of ancient plant varieties. It also promotes global awareness of the critical role of pollinators, supporting initiatives such as World Bee Day and working with partners such as the Slovenian Beekeepers Association in promoting the Golden Bee Award.

At the international level, IGCAT facilitates the exchange of knowledge and best practices across regions through webinars and Platform visits, ensuring that innovative and effective approaches to biodiversity protection are shared and scaled.

Action needed by regions and their stakeholders

- Support breeding and varietal improvement programmes that safeguard native and locally adapted species;
- Promote low-input and ecological cultivation systems that reduce dependency on chemical inputs;
- Invest in research and innovation to strengthen the resilience of forests, orchards, and agricultural landscapes to climate change;
- Maintain and restore biodiversity patches that act as natural reservoirs of life;
- Recognise seeds as a global common good in policy frameworks, ensuring they remain accessible and protected from privatisation or monopolistic control;
- Recognise pollinators as essential to food sovereignty, and integrate their protection into all agri-food and environmental strategies, supported by tools such as Pollinator Impact Assessments;
- Map food products at risk of extinction and register them in initiatives such as Slow Food's Ark of Taste;
- Develop awareness campaigns and community-led initiatives that celebrate region-specific foods and encourage the sharing of recipes and traditions;
- Provide fiscal incentives and tax benefits for farmers adopting pollinator-friendly and biodiversity-enhancing practices.



CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT AND FOOD RESPONSIBILITY

Citizens are not passive consumers but active cultural and political actors. Every choice, every bite, contributes to shaping food systems. Empowering citizens means recognising their role in influencing markets, policies, and cultural values—towards healthier, more sustainable, and more equitable food futures.

Building this awareness requires not only access to information, but also opportunities for engagement, participation, and direct connection with food producers and territories. When people understand the origins, traditions, and impacts of their food, they are more likely to support fair practices, demand transparency, and contribute to shaping responsible public policies.

IGCAT supports this shift by raising awareness first and foremost through the World and European Region of Gastronomy Award, using its methodology and criteria for evaluation to encourage regions to invest in citizen awareness campaigns. IGCAT more directly promotes citizen engagement through initiatives such as the annual **Food Film Menu** (FoodFilmMenu.org), presented at international film festivals worldwide. It also encourages regions to empower microenterprises that promote farm visits, crafts, and food experiences, including through visibility platforms such as **Top Foodie Websites** (see Topfoodiewebsites.org).

At the international level, IGCAT facilitates the exchange of best practices across regions through webinars and Platform visits, helping to scale successful approaches to citizen engagement and sustainable consumption.

Action needed by regions and their stakeholders

- Empower citizens by adapting regulatory frameworks to support home production, self-economy models, and the easier establishment of cooperatives, while improving access for rural entrepreneurs;
- Develop public programmes that reward environmentally responsible choices, including sustainable consumption, agroecological production, and community-based initiatives;
- Promote IGCAT's values and mission through public awareness campaigns;
- Activate IGCAT's Food Commitment, enabling restaurants, hotels, events, and producers to adopt and display shared standards (see IGCAT Technical Guidelines);
- Disseminate IGCAT's Sustainable Events Tips to event organisers across the region;
- Ensure that public procurement in institutions prioritises healthy, local, and organic food products;
- Facilitate partnerships with supermarket chains to promote local products while ensuring fair remuneration for farmers and beekeepers;
- Reduce intermediaries in supply chains by supporting direct sales and producer-to-consumer models;
- Reconnect urban populations with food origins by bringing the countryside into cities through farmers' markets, urban gardens, and direct sales initiatives;
- Encourage community-supported agriculture and strengthen urban-rural partnerships;
- Develop cultural initiatives that celebrate orchard varieties, forest products, and seasonal traditions;
- Ensure that schools, hospitals, and public canteens reflect the seasonal and territorial richness of local cuisines;
- Strengthen public awareness so that consumers understand the impact of their choices on health, circular economies, and ecological responsibility;



- Support citizen-led movements that promote education and awareness of local food systems, culinary heritage, and seasonal eating;
- Encourage food storytelling initiatives that reconnect communities with the cultural meaning and origins of food;
- Promote farm education, visits, and hands-on learning experiences;
- Strengthen local markets, community gardens, and cooperative models;
- Encourage seasonal and territorial diets;
- Foster a shared sense of responsibility for the landscapes that sustain us (for example, campaigns to reduce Plastic).





GASTRONOMY, TOURISM AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

Gastronomy and tourism can be powerful drivers of regeneration when rooted in authenticity, community leadership, and respect for local cultures. When aligned with territorial identity, they strengthen local economies, revitalise traditions, and create meaningful connections between visitors and communities.

Rather than extractive models, gastronomic tourism should be understood as a form of cultural exchange, where producers, artisans, and communities are recognised not only as service providers, but as storytellers and custodians of heritage. In this way, value remains within the territory, while visitors experience places through depth, knowledge, and lived culture.

IGCAT encourages regions to position gastronomy as a central pillar of sustainable and regenerative tourism development. Through Platform visits, IGCAT facilitates cross-marketing opportunities and knowledge exchange between regions. Initiatives such as the Food Film Menu (see [FoodFilmMenu.org](https://www.foodfilmmenu.org)), presented at international film festivals, contribute to raising global awareness of regional food cultures. In parallel, webinars and Platform meetings enable the continuous sharing of best practices, supporting regions in developing tourism models that are both economically viable and culturally grounded.

Action needed by regions and their stakeholders

- Empower producers as hosts and storytellers through training, branding, marketing support, and participation in international events, while opening production spaces to visitors e.g., cheesemaking, olive oil mills, vineyards, fishing experiences;
- Design immersive experiences such as cooking with local families, harvesting in the fields, and learning traditional techniques;
- Recognise food heritage as intangible cultural heritage, protecting recipes and integrating them into tourism, cultural events, and educational activities;
- Integrate producers' personal stories into menus, itineraries, and visitor experiences;
- Encourage community-led food trails and festivals that emerge organically from within territories;
- Support agritourism infrastructure, including farmers' markets, visitable farms, and regional food routes;
- Encourage hospitality providers to offer local, seasonal breakfasts and communicate the origin and value of food products, potentially within frameworks such as the IGCAT Food Commitment (see IGCAT Technical Guidelines);
- Promote the adoption of IGCAT's Sustainable Events Tips among tourism operators and hospitality providers;
- Develop certification frameworks that ensure authenticity, traceability, and sustainability, aligned with territorial identity;
- Introduce fiscal incentives linked to sustainability indicators, rewarding environmentally responsible practices across the tourism and food sectors;
- Foster collaboration with the private sector to develop integrated tourism offers combining sustainable accommodation, gastronomy experiences, and producer visits;
- Create loyalty programmes that build long-term relationships between visitors and destinations;
- Recognise and support NGOs that contribute to credibility, authenticity, and the development of strong ecosystems for gastronomic tourism.



STORYTELLING, MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

Storytelling, media, and communication play a decisive role in shaping food imaginaries. They carry the responsibility to counter homogenisation, challenge misinformation, and reconnect people with the cultural, environmental, and social meaning of food.

In a globalised context where narratives are often standardised and disconnected from place, it is essential to elevate authentic voices and stories that reflect the diversity of food cultures. Communication should not only inform, but inspire, making visible the people, practices, and territories behind food systems.

IGCAT supports this approach through initiatives that strengthen storytelling and visibility. The World Food Gift Challenge (see WorldFoodGiftChallenge.org) highlights the role of food and craft products in expressing regional identity and contributing to a territory's unique value. In parallel, IGCAT promotes platforms that support local enterprises and authentic experiences, such as the Top Foodie Websites (see Topfoodiewebsites.org).

Through webinars and Platform visits, IGCAT also facilitates the exchange of best practices, ensuring that regions can learn from each other in developing effective communication strategies rooted in authenticity and cultural integrity.

Action needed by regions and their stakeholders

- Recognise gastronomy as culture within public policies and integrate food into cultural strategies;
- Support digital archives, oral history projects, and participatory research to connect memory with innovation and ensure that food heritage remains dynamic;
- Engage influencers, chefs, and public figures in shaping positive and responsible food narratives;
- Develop media campaigns (TV, social media, digital platforms) that highlight “gastronomy heroes”—including farmers, teachers, researchers, hosts, young talents, and community leaders who embody local food values;
- Create digital platforms (websites/apps) that showcase regional food experiences, supporting microenterprises and preserving food and craft traditions;
- Organise local Food Gift Challenges to encourage producers to evaluate and strengthen the territorial identity of their products;
- Support the introduction and promotion of regional food gifts within hospitality settings, including networks of hotel shops;
- Develop youth-led communication channels (e.g. social media platforms) to engage younger generations;
- Build repositories of regional recipes and document intergenerational knowledge, including audiovisual storytelling with older generations;
- Promote transparent labelling, ethical advertising, and clear information systems that enable consumers to understand origin, production methods, and quality;
- Advocate for policies and incentives that help citizens navigate misinformation and make informed, responsible food choices.



TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION AND ETHICS

Technology and innovation, including artificial intelligence, must remain human-centred, transparent, and aligned with ethical, cultural, and ecological values. When responsibly applied, innovation can strengthen rather than replace traditional knowledge, supporting more resilient and meaningful food systems.

Tools such as blockchain, digital storytelling, QR codes, and traceability platforms offer new opportunities to enhance consumer trust, improve transparency, and increase access to information about the origin, production methods, and cultural significance of food. In this way, technology can act as a bridge between producers and consumers, reconnecting people with the stories behind what they eat.

IGCAT supports this approach by fostering partnerships that promote ethical, clean, and fair food production. Through its collaboration with Slow Food, IGCAT contributes to strengthening responsible practices across food systems. In parallel, IGCAT facilitates the exchange of knowledge and best practices across regions through webinars and Platform visits, ensuring that innovation remains grounded in shared values.

Action needed by regions and their stakeholders

- Invest in education and research on food systems, with a particular focus on AI and technological innovation, ensuring that public funding supports initiatives aligned with ethical, fair, and sustainable practices;
- Encourage food producers to engage with initiatives such as the Slow Food Presidia, strengthening networks that protect biodiversity and traditional knowledge;
- Support training programmes that combine tradition and innovation, enabling producers and professionals to adapt heritage practices to contemporary contexts while maintaining cultural integrity.





EQUITY, SOLIDARITY AND FOOD JUSTICE

Equity and solidarity are non-negotiable. No transformation of food systems is legitimate if it fails to address hunger, inequality, and access to nutritious, culturally meaningful food. Gastronomy must be recognised as a tool for solidarity, cultural identity, and human dignity.

A just food system requires that all regions, regardless of economic capacity, are able to participate, contribute, and benefit. This includes valuing diverse knowledge systems, from indigenous practices to contemporary innovation, and ensuring that opportunities for exchange, visibility, and development are accessible to all.

IGCAT actively works to reduce barriers to participation by supporting lesser-economically developed regions. This includes facilitating access to international exchange through practical support (such as travel and accommodation where possible using IGCAT's FLAG fund), offering reduced or free access to the Platform, and strengthening its role as a non-profit organisation for development. Through webinars and Platform visits, IGCAT also ensures that knowledge and best practices are shared equitably across all regions.

Action needed by regions and their stakeholders

- Embed in policy the equal value of all food knowledge systems, from indigenous traditions to contemporary innovation;
- Promote and share IGCAT's philosophy that gastronomy is a tool for human dignity, cultural identity, and climate resilience;
- Develop mechanisms for cross-marketing and shared commercial opportunities, particularly supporting regions with fewer economic resources to strengthen their food industries;
- Encourage and support the participation of partners from lesser-economically developed World Regions of Gastronomy in Platform meetings and collaborative funding proposals.



FROM DIALOGUE TO ACTION

The Summit reaffirmed that gastronomy is not a marginal or symbolic domain. It is **strategic** - economically, culturally, socially and environmentally. Food systems shape territories, influence health outcomes, sustain identities, and offer powerful tools for dialogue, peace and cohesion.

IGCAT, together with its global network of Regions of Gastronomy and partners, commits to advancing the outcomes of the Summit through advocacy, policy dialogue, projects, concrete joint and individual actions and developing international cooperation.

The **Declaration on Food at the Heart of Cultural Policy and Community Well-being**, presented at **MON-DIACULT**, crystallises this commitment and calls upon governments, international organisations and civil society to recognise food as a central pillar of cultural policy.

The 1st World Gastronomy Summit has made clear that **the future of food cannot be left to market forces, algorithms or short-term efficiency alone**. It must be shaped deliberately, collectively and courageously.





UNESCO'S ENGAGEMENT IN SAFEGUARDING FOODWAYS AS LIVING HERITAGE, **SUSANNE SCHNÜTTGEN**



SUSANNE SCHNÜTTGEN

Head of Capacity Building and Heritage Policy, UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

Ms Susanne Schnüttgen is Head of the Capacity Building and Heritage Policy Unit in UNESCO's Living Heritage Entity, which serves as Secretariat for the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. She leads the Convention's global capacity-building programme and the intersectoral global programme on living heritage and education. Ms Schnüttgen oversees thematic work on the intersections of living heritage with foodways and climate change. She coordinates the UNESCO University Chairs programme in living heritage and collaborates with eight regional specialized centres under the auspices of UNESCO. Previously, she led intersectoral cultural policy programmes, coordinated UNESCO's collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, and served in the Education Sector at UNESCO Headquarters and in West Africa.

"FOODWAYS ARE A DEFINING MARKER OF CULTURAL IDENTITIES, EMBODYING THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND SOCIAL PRACTICES THAT MAKE UP THE LIVING HERITAGE OF COMMUNITIES WORLDWIDE. UNESCO IS COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING THESE COMMUNITIES IN SAFEGUARDING THEIR FOODWAYS AND WELCOMES THE WORLD GASTRONOMY SUMMIT'S EFFORTS TO HIGHLIGHT THE CENTRAL ROLE OF FOODWAYS IN CULTURAL POLICY AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING."

Food is more than nourishment. It is memory, knowledge, identity and creativity. Around the world, foodways embody practices, skills, rituals and traditions transmitted across generations, connecting people to their environments, to biodiversity, and to one another. They are living heritage: constantly evolving while maintaining deep cultural significance.

Since the adoption of the **2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage**, UNESCO has worked with States Parties and communities to ensure that foodways-related heritage is recognized, valued and safeguarded. Today, more than fifty foodways-related elements from fifty-four countries are inscribed on the [Lists of the Convention](#). The knowledge, know-how, and practices related to Mediterranean Diet, Washoku of Japan, the Arabic Coffee and Traditional Mexican Cuisine are just a few examples of how foodways have globally been recognized as the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Community-led efforts to promote and raise awareness on traditional foods in Kenya have also been inscribed in the Convention's Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.



UNESCO's commitment to safeguarding foodways extends beyond the listing mechanisms of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Through [International Assistance projects](#) and **capacity-building initiatives**, the Convention helps States Parties and communities safeguard their foodways as living heritage at national and local levels. Complementing these efforts, **donor-supported projects** such as the [International Food Atlas and Digital Platform for Safeguarding, Promoting and Transmitting Foodways to Future Generations](#) are strengthening community capacities, generating new knowledge, and developing interactive tools that enhance the visibility of foodways and their safeguarding worldwide.

Foodways are also deeply connected to the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** and their safeguarding contributes concretely to several **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. By safeguarding foodways, we advance health and well-being, inclusive economic growth, gender equality, intergenerational exchange and resilience in the face of climate change. Traditional knowledge and practices help sustain biodiversity, support sustainable livelihoods and foster intercultural dialogue, ensuring holistic community well-being.

UNESCO recognizes communities as the true bearers and custodians of their heritage, and their key role in related decision-making and safeguarding efforts. UNESCO advocates for the development of inclusive and transversal policies that support their efforts to ensure the transmission of this heritage to future generations.



The **World Gastronomy Summit** provides a unique opportunity to reinforce these messages. By bringing together governments, experts, communities and international organisations, the Summit fosters a collective commitment to safeguarding foodways as cultural expressions and underlines the central place they deserve in cultural policy and community well-being.

UNESCO remains committed to working with all stakeholders—state actors, policy makers, public and private sector institutions, academics and researchers, cultural and creative industry professionals, and most importantly, the communities – as the heritage bearers –to advance the safeguarding of foodways as living heritage.

Together, we can safeguard foodways as living heritage, nourishing not only those who prepare and savour each meal, but also enriching our communities, shaping our identities, and sustaining our shared future.



THE CATALAN CUISINE, CARLES VILARRUBÍ



CARLES VILARRUBÍ†

President of the Catalan Academy of Gastronomy and Nutrition (2016 - 2025), and Member of the Promoting Committee for Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

The Catalan Academy of Gastronomy and Nutrition, established in 1989 by a group of renowned gastronomy enthusiasts including journalist and businessman Nèstor Luján, is officially recognised as a public law entity. Its mission is to promote Catalonia's culinary heritage, support research, and advance knowledge about the links between gastronomy, health, and culture.

The Academy has become a benchmark institution, known for safeguarding Catalan cuisine and enhancing its international projection. It organises debates, conferences, and meetings with chefs, scientists, and local producers, while also publishing books, producing documentaries, and creating social media content. Its annual National Gastronomy Awards honour leading figures such as Carme Ruscalleda, Ferran Adrià, the Roca brothers, and Fermí Puig.

Under Carles Vilarrubí's leadership, the Academy has strengthened dialogue across the sector, positioning gastronomy as both cultural heritage and a driver of innovation, while contributing to Catalonia's visibility as World Region of Gastronomy 2025.

"CATALAN CUISINE: THE TERRITORY AND THE LANDSCAPE ON A PLATE." - JOSEP PLA

Editor's note

This text reproduces the intervention delivered by Carles Vilarrubí at the World Gastronomy Summit held in Barcelona in September 2025. He passed away on 28 December 2025. This contribution is published as a tribute to his vision, leadership, and enduring commitment to Catalan gastronomy as a living cultural heritage.

Catalan cuisine is one of Europe's oldest documented culinary traditions, proven by written records dating back to the Middle Ages. The book of *Sent Saví* (s. XIV) was the first known cookbook in Europe not written in Latin. Over the centuries, it has evolved through Mediterranean exchanges, encounters with other cultures, and the creativity of countless generations, while remaining deeply rooted in the landscapes and produce of Catalonia.

At its heart, Catalan cuisine is about balance, seasonality, and respect for ingredients. It reflects the diversity of our territory: the richness of the sea, the fertility of the plains, and the generosity of the mountains. From simple preparations that highlight vegetables, legumes, and fresh fish, to elaborate recipes developed in noble households and monasteries, Catalan cuisine embraces both everyday nourishment and festive occasions.



This tradition is distinguished by an extraordinary ability to innovate while preserving its essence. The use of *picada*—a paste of nuts, garlic, and herbs—as a flavour base, or the pairing of sweet and savoury flavours in dishes such as *mar i muntanya* (sea and mountain), are hallmarks of a unique identity. Catalan chefs stand at the forefront of global culinary innovation, reinterpreting tradition with cutting-edge techniques and earning worldwide recognition.

The **Catalan Academy of Gastronomy and Nutrition** was created precisely to study, safeguard, and promote this heritage. Its mission is to ensure that Catalan cuisine is recognised not only for its flavours and creativity, but also for its contribution to culture, health, and sustainability. The Academy works closely with universities, public institutions, cultural organisations, and the agri-food sector to promote nutritional education and respect for biodiversity, and transmit knowledge to future generations. In 2025, as Catalonia celebrates its designation as the World Region of Gastronomy, we take particular pride in sharing our culinary traditions with the world. This recognition highlights the richness of our food culture and the vitality of the communities that sustain it. It is also an invitation to look forward: to strengthen agri-food systems, to protect the environment, and to reinforce the link between gastronomy, science, and society.

Ultimately, **Catalan cuisine is a reflection of our identity. It speaks of diversity and dialogue, of respect for the land and sea, and of a people who have always valued both tradition and innovation.** By sharing our food culture, we aim not only to offer joy at the table, but also to contribute to global conversations about heritage, sustainability, and the role of gastronomy in building a better future.





A YOUNG PERSPECTIVE ON CATALAN CUISINE, HERITAGE AND ITS FUTURE, MARTINA PUIGVERT PUIGDEVALL



MARTINA PUIGVERT PUIGDEVALL

Chef Les Cols Restaurant

Martina Puigvert Puigdevall is Chef at Les Cols, the renowned Michelin-starred family restaurant in Olot, Catalonia, founded by her mother, Fina Puigdevall. Representing a new generation of chefs, she combines creativity with a deep respect for nature, seasonality and local traditions. Martina is committed to sustainability, working closely with local producers and incorporating organic ingredients from the restaurant's own gardens. Her cuisine reflects a dialogue between heritage and innovation, and she is recognised internationally as one of Catalonia's most promising young voices in contemporary gastronomy.

“YOUNG CHEFS HAVE BOTH THE RESPONSIBILITY AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO HIGHLIGHT THE RICHNESS AND QUALITY OF LOCAL PRODUCTS, BRINGING THEM INTO OUR CUISINE AND TELLING THEIR STORIES, WHILE HONOURING THE WORK OF PRODUCERS AND THE LAND THAT NOURISHES US, AND SHAPING A GASTRONOMY THAT IS ROOTED YET COMMITTED TO SUSTAINABILITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.”

This is a special year for Catalan gastronomy, as Catalonia holds the title of World Region of Gastronomy 2025. It is both an honour and a responsibility for all of us who form part of this living culinary heritage.

We are fortunate to inhabit a privileged landscape, where each season brings a rich variety of products. At Les Cols, our restaurant in La Garrotxa –a rural county near the Pyrenees, within the Volcanic Zone Natural Park– our daily inspiration is drawn directly from this surroundings. Nature shapes our identity, our cuisine, and the values we transmit to our guests.

ROOTS AND CONTINUITY

Les Cols is housed in a 15th-century family farmhouse, where my mother, Fina Puigdevall, was born and where she initiated the project that my sisters and I now continue. As the new generation, we aim to bring a youthful perspective while maintaining an intergenerational dialogue. We are grateful to those who came before us for opening the path and passing on their knowledge, and we embrace the responsibility of caring for and renewing this legacy.



Our philosophy has always been rooted in the radical use of local products. We work with what surrounds us, respecting the rhythm of the seasons and the humility of the land. This is not only a culinary choice but a way of life: sobriety yet essentiality, austerity yet intuition, intimacy and authenticity.

To us, food is more than sustenance; it is love for the land, a commitment to sustainability, and a refusal to accept long journeys for our ingredients. Our ambition is that guests experience the landscape through our dishes: a volcanic broth offered as a welcome gesture of hospitality, or a bouquet of leaves, herbs and flowers gathered each morning from our garden.

OUR VEGETABLE PLOT AS LABORATORY AND HERITAGE

We call our vegetable plot a “biological garden” because it is more than a space for cultivation: it is a space for research and for imagining a greener, more sustainable future. It promotes biodiversity, hosting vegetables, flowers, fruit trees, animals and insects in coexistence. It is cared for by a diverse team of biologists, naturalists, geographers and experts in organic agriculture and seed preservation.

A central mission is the recovery of ancestral varieties. *El Fajol* (buckwheat), for example, is still cultivated in La Garrotxa and has become a hallmark of our cuisine and culture. We also preserve varieties such as *blat de moro de la Creu* (a specific variety of corn), which we grind in a traditional stone mill powered only by hydraulic energy to produce flour for *farro*. These products, humble yet distinctive, are integral to our identity.

The *fesols de Santa Pau* (a variety of local beans), so valued in our region that we call them the “caviar of La Garrotxa”, are another emblem. We serve them with wooden spoons handcrafted in Tortellà, thereby connecting gastronomy with local craftsmanship. Our crockery too is created by artisans from local clay, closing circles that matter to us: from soil to plate, and back again.

CIRCULAR GASTRONOMY

This vision has led us to embrace what we call “Circular Gastronomy.” It means using organic ingredients from regenerative agriculture, minimising waste, guaranteeing animal welfare, supporting local producers, reducing plastic, recycling and relying on renewable energies. It is a philosophy that aspires to maximum circularity, where even waste becomes resource: vegetable scraps, eggshells and other remains are returned to the soil as compost or used to feed our hens and sheep.

Circularity is not a trend; it is an ethical commitment. It is a way to live coherently, ensuring that every step of the gastronomic process honours the land and its cycles.

CATALAN CUISINE, A LIVING HERITAGE

Growing up in this environment has taught me that Catalan cuisine is a living heritage. It tells the story of our people and our way of relating to nature. It has always been characterised by balance: between land and sea, simplicity and refinement, tradition and innovation.



But as a young chef, I am acutely aware of both opportunities and challenges. Catalonia is admired internationally for the creativity of its chefs, the richness of its products and the strength of its traditions. Yet globalisation, climate change and modern pressures put at risk the continuity of small producers, local foodways and sustainable practices.

Our task as a new generation is to honour our roots while reimagining them for today and tomorrow. Sustainability cannot be seen as a fashionable label: it is an imperative. Supporting local farmers, protecting biodiversity, and reducing waste are no longer optional; they are essential. At the same time, curiosity and respect must guide us when reinterpreting traditional recipes, making them relevant and inspiring for younger audiences.

Heritage is not something static, kept in a museum. It lives through practice, reinvention and transmission. We young chefs must listen to our elders, learn from their wisdom, and at the same time add our own voice, shaped by today's challenges and tomorrow's hopes.

Technology and global networks are transforming gastronomy, but they must not separate us from our essence. Used wisely, they can help us share knowledge, promote diversity and innovate responsibly. The future of Catalan cuisine depends on our ability to combine authenticity with creativity, memory with innovation, and local commitment with global awareness.



LOOKING AHEAD

My hope is that Catalan cuisine will continue to inspire the world, not only through its flavours and creativity but through the values it represents. The future of our gastronomy depends on keeping it connected: connected to the land that nourishes us, to the communities that sustain us, and to the global conversation on sustainability and culture.

This is both our responsibility and our privilege. With humility, curiosity and hope, we embrace the challenge of carrying Catalan cuisine into the future, ensuring it remains a source of inspiration, resilience and identity for generations to come.



GASTRONOMIC CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES, TONI MASSANÉS



TONI MASSANÉS

Director General, Alícia Foundation,
Member of the Promoting
Committee for Catalonia World
Region of Gastronomy 2025

Alícia is a private, non-profit foundation created in 2003. With its research laboratory located at Món Sant Benet, it operates under the umbrella of Fundació Catalunya La Pedrera. With a strong social vocation, its mission is to ensure that everyone can eat better. Combining scientific rigour with culinary creativity, Alícia is dedicated to research and innovation in cuisine, developing solutions to improve diets, promote healthy eating and safeguard agri-food heritage.

Its work focuses on two main areas. Alícia Health addresses food education, culinary medicine and dietary solutions for people with diseases or dietary restrictions, contributing to a better quality of life through adapted nutrition. Alícia Territory is dedicated to preserving food heritage, biodiversity and local products, positioning them as drivers of sustainability, cultural identity and economic vitality.

Through collaborations with hospitals, universities, public institutions, companies, chefs and producers, Alícia ensures that its research has real social impact, reinforcing the role of food as a cornerstone of health, culture and sustainable development.

**“GASTRONOMY IS CONSCIOUS EATING, AND WITH
CONSCIOUSNESS COMES RESPONSIBILITY.”**

Gastronomy is much more than cooking. It is a meeting point of culture, science, health, economy and the environment. It shapes our identity, brings people together and connects us with the landscapes where our food originates. At the same time, it is at the heart of some of the most pressing challenges facing humanity today. As Director of the Alícia Foundation—a centre devoted to technological innovation in cuisine and to improving people's eating habits—I would like to share some reflections on the challenges and opportunities that define our gastronomic future.

FOOD SECURITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

The most urgent challenge of our time is to ensure that all people have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food. Despite advances in technology and productivity, hunger and malnutrition persist in many parts of the world, while obesity and diet-related diseases are increasing globally. Gastronomy cannot solve these issues alone, but it plays a crucial role in shaping demand, educating consumers, and inspiring healthier and more sustainable diets.



Climate change, soil degradation, water scarcity and biodiversity loss threaten the foundations of our food systems. In this context, gastronomy has the opportunity to be an ally of sustainability: by promoting seasonal and local produce, by valuing biodiversity and by reducing food waste. Chefs and food professionals can become ambassadors of responsible consumption, raising awareness among citizens and setting examples that inspire wider change.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

The relationship between what we eat and our health is now clearer than ever. Non-communicable diseases linked to diet, such as diabetes, cardiovascular illness and certain cancers, represent a global epidemic. Gastronomy must rise to the challenge of making healthy eating attractive, accessible and enjoyable. This is precisely one of the central missions of the Alicia Foundation: to transform scientific knowledge into practical solutions that help people to eat better without renouncing pleasure.

Cultural traditions offer valuable insights. Many traditional cuisines, including the Mediterranean diet, are models of balance, variety and moderation. By revaluing these food heritages and adapting them to contemporary lifestyles, we can build bridges between cultural identity and public health.

KNOWLEDGE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Another great challenge is how to integrate knowledge and technology into gastronomy without losing authenticity and meaning. Today we have extraordinary tools—from digitalisation to biotechnology—that can revolutionise how we produce, distribute and consume food. Yet technology must be guided by values: it should serve to reduce inequality, preserve heritage and improve sustainability.

Innovation in gastronomy is not only about creating new dishes or techniques. It is about rethinking the role of gastronomy in society. This includes research on alternative proteins, circular economy practices in restaurants, and educational initiatives that empower younger generations to cook and to understand food.





CULTURAL IDENTITY AND GLOBALISATION

In a globalised world, food travels faster than ever. This has enriched culinary creativity, but it has also generated risks of homogenisation and loss of local traditions. One of the most important challenges we face is to safeguard the diversity of food cultures while promoting intercultural dialogue.

Catalonia provides an excellent example of this dynamic. Our cuisine is the result of centuries of exchange and adaptation, deeply rooted in our territory but enriched by many influences. The challenge is to ensure that these traditions remain alive, practised and transmitted, while also opening up to innovation and global conversation.

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Food is a powerful educational tool. Cooking and eating together teach us about cooperation, responsibility, diversity and respect. Gastronomy can help reduce inequalities by providing skills, opportunities and dignity to vulnerable groups. Initiatives that combine culinary training with social programmes show how gastronomy can be an engine of inclusion and empowerment.

At Alícia Foundation, we work closely with schools, hospitals, community organisations and social enterprises to demonstrate that gastronomy is not an elite activity, but a shared space where everyone can participate and benefit.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

Despite the challenges, we are living in an extraordinary moment of opportunity. Never before has gastronomy been so visible and valued globally. Chefs have become cultural figures, food has entered the realm of public policy, and gastronomy is increasingly recognised as a key dimension of heritage and sustainable development.

The opportunity lies in harnessing this momentum responsibly. We must avoid reducing gastronomy to a spectacle or a commodity, and instead channel its influence towards social good. This means building stronger links between gastronomy and science, education, agriculture, health, culture and tourism. It means encouraging multidisciplinary collaboration and listening to the voices of producers, communities and consumers.

The World Gastronomy Summit is a platform to advance this agenda. By bringing together experts from diverse fields and regions, it creates space for collective reflection and concrete action. The discussions held here can inspire new policies, strengthen networks and generate solutions that respond to global challenges while respecting local contexts.

Gastronomy is not only about what is on the plate. It is about how we live, how we care for each other and for the planet, and how we imagine our future. The challenges are complex, but the opportunities are immense. If we approach gastronomy with responsibility, creativity and solidarity, we can ensure that it contributes to healthier people, stronger communities and a more sustainable world.

At Alícia, our motto is simple: "We research for people to eat better." I believe that this should be the guiding principle of gastronomy everywhere: to nourish not only bodies, but also cultures, societies and the environment that sustains us.

PLENARY 1





PLENARY 1: FOOD AT THE HEART OF CULTURE: A NEW PARADIGM FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE



DR EDITH M SZIVAS

Vice-President IGCAT

Dr Edith M Szivas is Vice President of IGCAT (International Institute of Gastronomy, Culture, Arts and Tourism) and an internationally recognised strategist, advisor, and executive board member. With extensive expertise in sustainable tourism planning, heritage conservation, and capacity building, she plays a key role globally in shaping strategies that integrate cultural identity, gastronomy, and responsible tourism development. She has been leading projects for major international organisations, including the UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), the World Bank, UNDP, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and the Asian Development Bank, and continues to advise Ministries, destinations, and private sector companies. Her work bridges policy and practice, fostering innovative solutions that balance the preservation of cultural heritage with community development, economic growth, and sustainability. She holds an MSc in Tourism Planning and Development and a PhD in Tourism Policy from the University of Surrey, UK.

**“UNITING CULTURE AND CREATIVITY TO
PROTECT FOOD DIVERSITY AND INSPIRE
A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.”**

This plenary session, moderated by **Dr. Edith Szivas** Vice-President IGCAT, will explore the transformative potential of placing food at the heart of cultural, social, and environmental agendas. As the world faces growing challenges around sustainability, identity, and community well-being, there is a pressing need to rethink the role of food beyond nutrition and commerce. Inspired by the **FOOD STRATEGY FOR CATALUNYA 2025-2028**, this discussion will present a new paradigm for policy and practice, showcasing how food can serve as a connector across sectors such as agriculture, education, tourism, and environmental protection. The session will also examine how gastronomy can drive innovation and creativity, promote regional distinctiveness, and support food and cultural sovereignty.

The invited speakers from across the globe –ranging from policymakers and institutional leaders to grassroots innovators and international advocates–will provide a rich tapestry of perspectives to inspire integrated, forward-thinking approaches that recognize food as a vital pillar of cultural development. Speakers will share experiences from diverse regional and cultural contexts, offering practical examples of how food strategies can contribute to preserving cultural heritage, building resilient rural economies, empowering youth, and fostering inclusion.



A FORWARD-LOOKING FOOD SYSTEM



JOAN GÒDIA

Director General of Agri-food Enterprises, Quality and Gastronomy, Department of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food, Government of Catalonia

Joan Gòdia is Director General of Agri-food Enterprises, Quality and Gastronomy at the Government of Catalonia. With extensive experience in the agri-food sector, he leads policies that support enterprises, promote food quality schemes and reinforce gastronomy as a strategic asset for the region. Under his direction, Catalonia has launched the Catalan's Food Strategy 2025-2028 and achieved the title of World Region of Gastronomy 2025, positioning gastronomy as a driver of sustainability, cultural identity and national and international competitiveness.

CATALONIA'S FOOD STRATEGY 2025-2028 IS OUR COMMITMENT TO A SUSTAINABLE, HEALTHY, AND FAIR FOOD SYSTEM THAT STRENGTHENS BOTH OUR TERRITORY AND OUR PEOPLE.

Food can no longer be understood solely through the lens of production or consumption. Today, it stands at the intersection of some of the most pressing challenges of our time: environmental sustainability, public health, economic competitiveness, cultural identity and territorial cohesion. In this context, Catalonia has chosen to move forward with a clear and ambitious vision: to articulate and project its food system as a strategic pillar for the future.

The designation of *Catalonia as World Region of Gastronomy 2025* reflects both recognition and responsibility. It provides an opportunity to demonstrate how food can act as a driver of innovation, cultural vitality and sustainable development, while reinforcing Catalonia's position as a reference in the international agri-food landscape.



At the heart of this approach lies the *Catalan Food Strategy 2025-2028*. More than a technical framework, it represents a country-level commitment to understanding food as an interconnected ecosystem – one that links agriculture, gastronomy, health, environment, education and culture. This integrated perspective allows for a more coherent and resilient model, capable of adapting to global transformations while preserving local identity and value.

The importance of the agri-food system in Catalonia goes far beyond its economic contribution. It plays a fundamental role in structuring the territory, sustaining rural communities, shaping landscapes and ensuring access to quality food for all citizens. Without a strong and balanced food system, there can be no real territorial cohesion or long-term sustainability.

A defining feature of this strategy is its collective nature. It has been shaped through an extensive participatory process involving producers, enterprises, chefs, researchers, public institutions and civil society. This shared governance approach not only strengthens the legitimacy of the strategy, but also enhances its capacity to generate tangible impact and long-term transformation.

One of the central challenges addressed is how to advance towards a more sustainable food system without compromising competitiveness or inclusivity. The response lies in combining multiple dimensions: fostering innovation and digitalisation, improving efficiency across the value chain, and at the same time reinforcing local production, proximity-based models and traditional knowledge. Progress and preservation must go hand in hand.

Innovation plays a key role in this transition. Technologies such as artificial intelligence and advanced data management can support better decision-making, improve traceability, reduce environmental impact and anticipate future scenarios. However, innovation is not an end in itself; it must serve broader societal goals, including sustainability, resilience and cultural continuity.

Equally important is the cultural dimension of food. Catalonia's gastronomic heritage – deeply rooted in the Mediterranean diet – represents a unique combination of diversity, balance and connection to seasonal and local products. Preserving and promoting this heritage is not only a matter of identity, but also a strategic asset for health, tourism and social cohesion.

Food policy is therefore increasingly understood as a transversal public policy. The forthcoming *Catalan Food Law* reflects this shift, placing the right to adequate food at the centre of public action. It recognises that access to healthy and sustainable food depends not only on individual choices, but also on structural conditions – economic, social and territorial.

This framework also promotes concrete instruments to drive change, such as public food procurement, support for sustainable production models and measures to ensure fairer relationships across the food chain. At the same time, it reinforces the role of education as a key lever: empowering citizens with knowledge about what they eat, where it comes from and its broader impact.



Ultimately, the vision underpinning the *Catalan Food Strategy* is one of open and connected food sovereignty – not isolation, but the capacity to define and strengthen a model that is rooted in local realities while actively engaging with global challenges.

The World Gastronomy Summit has provided a unique platform to share this vision with international stakeholders, fostering dialogue, exchange and collaboration. It has also reinforced the idea that food is not only an economic sector, but a central element of culture, identity and collective well-being.

Catalonia today has the opportunity to consolidate a food system that anticipates future challenges while remaining deeply anchored in its values and traditions. A system that integrates knowledge, innovation, territory and culture – and that can serve as a reference for others.

The strategy sets the direction. The shared commitment of all actors will determine how far we go.





BUILDING A FOOD AND CULTURAL LEGACY



SEBA ZAREA

General Manager Strategy and Operations, Culinary Arts Commission, Aseer World Region of Gastronomy 2024 (Middle East)

Seba Abdulrahman Zarea is a distinguished professional in the fields of food culture and community development. With extensive experience in promoting gastronomy as a driver for cultural identity, education, and sustainable development, she has collaborated with institutions and local communities to strengthen food heritage and creative industries. Her work highlights the importance of gastronomy as a tool for social cohesion, women's empowerment, and intercultural dialogue. Through her initiatives, she has contributed to raising awareness of the cultural and economic value of food, while fostering innovative approaches that connect tradition with contemporary challenges.

“PLACING FOOD AT THE HEART OF CULTURAL POLICY IS ESSENTIAL TO PRESERVING IDENTITY WHILE SHAPING SUSTAINABLE FUTURES. THE CULINARY ARTS COMMISSION IS COMMITTED TO SAFEGUARDING SAUDI ARABIA'S AND THE WORLD'S CULINARY HERITAGE, EMPOWERING OUR CHEFS AND COMMUNITIES, AND CONTRIBUTING TO GLOBAL DIALOGUE THAT CELEBRATES FOOD AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN CULTURES.”

BUILDING A FOOD AND CULTURAL LEGACY - ASEER WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY 2024

Aseer World Region of Gastronomy 2024 presented us with many **challenges:**

- 1 - Balancing Tradition & Innovation.** The adaptation of traditional dishes for modern tastes or global markets risks losing heritage identity.
- 2 - Digital Gap in Heritage Preservation.** There is limited use of technology to document, archive and share traditional food culture with wider audiences.
- 3 - Sustainability & Climate Pressure.** Environmental changes threaten crops, fishing grounds and livestock breeds unique to local cuisine.
- 4 - Market Visibility & Competitiveness.** Small heritage-based producers struggle to compete with global brands and enter export markets.
- 5 - Cultural Underrepresentation.** There is insufficient storytelling and branding that connects food with cultural identity on international platforms.



But this presented us with opportunities, so we came up with some **proposals**:

1 - Digital Heritage Platforms. Interactive archives with recipes, oral histories and immersive experiences to showcase food culture. A flagship initiative is the International Food Atlas, documenting global food heritage, linking dishes to their local environments and ensuring culinary diversity for future generations.

2 - Heritage Innovation Labs. Culinary incubators where chefs and entrepreneurs reimagine traditional dishes with modern techniques while preserving authenticity.

3 - Sustainable Food Networks. Partnerships with farmers, fishers and foragers to ensure ethical sourcing, biodiversity preservation and climate-resilient agriculture.

4 - Global Branding & Storytelling. Stronger narratives connecting food to place, history and culture, to be used in tourism, exports and cultural diplomacy.

5 - Cross-Cultural Collaborations. Partnerships with global chefs, institutions and festivals to exchange expertise and amplify the reach of heritage cuisine.

A MILESTONE FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

Aseer's designation as World Region of Gastronomy 2024 marked a milestone for the Middle East, the first Arab region recognised globally for its gastronomy, cultural richness and commitment to sustainable development. This recognition has been both a celebration and a call to action: to honour heritage, empower communities and build a lasting legacy.

A DEEP-ROOTED HERITAGE

Situated between mountains, valleys and coasts, Aseer's landscape is mirrored in its diverse food culture. For centuries, communities have cultivated grains such as millet and sorghum, raised livestock and produced honey, coffee and spices that tell stories of trade, migration and adaptation.

Food here is more than sustenance: it is a social and cultural expression. Hospitality is sacred, meals bind families and transmit values of generosity and belonging. This living heritage is practised daily and passed across generations.

FROM RECOGNITION TO ACTION

The Culinary Arts Commission and local partners designed a year-long programme connecting gastronomy with culture, tourism, education and development. Farmers, producers, artisans and chefs were given visibility, while festivals, exhibitions and workshops showcased culinary diversity. Training programmes opened opportunities for young people in gastronomy.

Inclusivity has been central. Women, always custodians of food traditions, are increasingly visible in professional roles. Rural communities at risk of marginalisation have been placed at the heart of cultural promotion, ensuring the legacy is shared and sustained locally.



BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Connecting heritage with sustainability has been a key priority. Traditional systems in Aseer offer valuable lessons in biodiversity and resource management. Reviving ancient practices while adapting them to current needs strengthens food security and environmental stewardship.

Culinary tourism has been embraced as an engine of diversification, but with a focus on authenticity, quality and community leadership to ensure that development is environmentally and socially responsible.

EDUCATION AND INNOVATION

Legacy requires transmission. Culinary heritage has been integrated into schools, encouraging children to learn traditional recipes and engage in intergenerational exchanges. At the same time, innovation has been fostered through support for chefs and entrepreneurs who reinterpret traditions.

Technology plays an increasing role, from digital recipe documentation to platforms connecting producers and consumers. This fusion of heritage and innovation ensures relevance in a changing world.

INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE

Through the World Regions of Gastronomy platform, Aseer has engaged with regions across Europe, Asia and the Americas, exchanging best practices and reinforcing the idea that gastronomy is both rooted in place and a bridge across cultures.

TOWARDS A LEGACY

Beyond 2024, the focus is on embedding achievements into long-term policies, infrastructure and practices. Legacy means institutions that support farmers, chefs and communities, and ensuring that knowledge and pride in culinary traditions are passed to future generations. It means placing food at the centre of sustainable development strategies in health, education, tourism and culture.

For me, as the General Manager of the Culinary Arts Commission, this journey has been about witnessing the energy, resilience and creativity of our communities. Gastronomy here is not only flavours and recipes—it is identity, dignity and opportunity.

By building a food and cultural legacy, Aseer has taken an important step towards shaping a more inclusive, sustainable and culturally rich future—for our region, for the Middle East and for the world.



FOOD AS A TOOL TO REAFFIRM THE PAST, IMAGINE THE FUTURE AND CHANGE THE PRESENT: THE CASE OF MANABÍ, ECUADOR



ORAZIO BELLETTINI

Fuegos Foundation, Manabí -
World Region of Gastronomy 2026

Orazio Bellettini Cedeño is a social entrepreneur and IGCAT Expert (since 2023) with extensive experience promoting sustainable development and agro-food system transformation. He holds degrees in Agricultural Economy, Political Science, Business Administration and a Master in Public Administration from Harvard Kennedy School. Orazio has advised governments, civil society organisations and international agencies in Latin America and Europe on education, policy and sustainability. Recognised as an Ashoka and Avina Fellow (2008) and Rockefeller Fellow (2013), he co-founded FUEGOS in 2017. The Foundation works with farmers, fishers, chefs and communities to safeguard culinary traditions, promote food sovereignty and generate sustainable opportunities in Manabí, Ecuador and across Latin America.

“FOOD HAS THE POWER TO CONNECT PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE – THE LOCAL AND THE GLOBAL. THIS SUMMIT OFFERS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO COME TOGETHER AND, THROUGH FOOD, CULTURE, AND ART, SHAPE SOCIETIES THAT ARE MORE PROSPEROUS, INNOVATIVE, PEACEFUL, INCLUSIVE, AND RESILIENT.”

Food is memory, imagination and action. It allows us to reconnect with our roots, to envision new possibilities, and to transform the realities of our communities. In Manabí, on Ecuador’s Pacific coast, food has always been central to identity, survival and creativity. As we prepare to celebrate Manabí’s designation as World Region of Gastronomy 2026, we reflect on how gastronomy can help us reaffirm the past, imagine the future and change the present.

REAFFIRMING THE PAST

Manabí is a land where ancestral knowledge is alive. Our traditional cuisine is based on products such as maize, peanuts, cassava, plantain and fresh seafood, combined in recipes that have been transmitted orally from generation to generation. Dishes like encebollado, viche de pescado and tonga are not just meals, but cultural expressions that carry history and identity.



Food is also linked to rituals, celebrations and everyday practices that reinforce community bonds. In rural households, recipes are still prepared in clay pots over wood fires, using techniques that embody respect for nature and resourcefulness. By valuing and documenting this heritage, we strengthen pride, continuity and resilience in our communities.

IMAGINING THE FUTURE

At the same time, food allows us to imagine a better future. Gastronomy is a tool to address today's challenges: climate change, malnutrition, migration and inequality. In Manabí, we see food as a bridge between tradition and innovation, as a way to design futures that are more sustainable, inclusive and hopeful.

The younger generation of chefs, farmers and entrepreneurs are reinterpreting traditional recipes, experimenting with new presentations, and creating added value for local products. This innovation does not break with the past; rather, it renews it, ensuring that heritage remains alive and relevant. Technology, research and international collaboration are helping us to explore new ways to protect biodiversity, reduce waste and connect producers with global markets.

Food education is another cornerstone of our future. Schools, universities and community centres are engaging children and youth with local food heritage, teaching them not only to cook but also to understand the nutritional, cultural and environmental value of their diets. In this way, food becomes a platform for citizenship, creativity and leadership.

CHANGING THE PRESENT

Perhaps the most urgent task is to use food to change the present. Manabí faces challenges of poverty, inequality and vulnerability to natural disasters. Gastronomy can be part of the solution. By supporting local farmers and fishers, promoting short food chains, and strengthening women's participation in the food economy, we generate livelihoods and dignity.

Community projects that link gastronomy with tourism create opportunities for sustainable development. Visitors are invited not only to taste local dishes, but also to meet producers, learn traditional techniques and engage in cultural exchange. This form of tourism is not extractive; it is regenerative, giving value to local knowledge and ensuring benefits remain in the community.

Food also plays a role in health and resilience. Revitalising traditional diets—rich in fresh fish, vegetables and legumes—helps combat malnutrition and non-communicable diseases. At the same time, local food systems, adapted to the environment, provide resilience in the face of earthquakes, floods and climate variability.



MANABÍ AS WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY 2026

The designation of Manabí as World Region of Gastronomy 2026 is more than a recognition: it is a commitment. It commits us to showcasing our heritage, but also to using gastronomy as a tool for sustainable development. It commits us to engaging in dialogue with other regions of the world, sharing experiences and learning from each other.

Through the Fuegos Foundation and in collaboration with public and private partners, we are developing a programme of activities that will highlight the diversity of Manabí's cuisine, support our producers, and connect gastronomy with culture, health, education and innovation. Our ambition is to leave a legacy that extends well beyond 2026.

In Manabí, food is more than taste: it is identity, creativity and transformation. By reaffirming the past, we strengthen our roots. By imagining the future, we open new possibilities. By changing the present, we create dignity and opportunity.

The case of Manabí demonstrates that gastronomy is not only about pleasure, but also about resilience and hope. As World Region of Gastronomy 2026, we will invite the world to discover our flavours, but also to share in our vision: that food can be the pathway to cultural pride, social justice and sustainable development.





REGENERATIVE STRATEGIES TO PROTECT FOOD AND CULTURAL SOVEREIGNTY



VOTAUSI MACKENZIE-REUR

Regenerative Vanua and Lapita
Café, Vanuatu Candidate World
Region of Gastronomy 2027

Votausi MacKenzie-Reur is founder of Regenerative Vanua, a grassroots initiative in Vanuatu dedicated to protecting indigenous food systems, biodiversity and cultural heritage through regenerative practices. An advocate for food sovereignty and sustainability in the Pacific, she has worked extensively to empower women and youth as custodians of culinary traditions. Under her leadership, Regenerative Vanua is spearheading Vanuatu's candidacy for World Region of Gastronomy 2027, promoting Pacific foodways as a model for resilience, cultural identity and sustainable development in the face of global challenges.

**"TO RESTORE, RESPECT AND REGENERATE
OUR ENVIRONMENT: OUR OCEANS, RIVERS, AND
FORESTS FOR OUR FUTURE GENERATIONS"**

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND CULTURAL RESILIENCE IN VANUATU

For island nations in the Pacific, food is life. It is the foundation of health, culture, spirituality and resilience. In Vanuatu, food connects people to their land (vanua), their ancestors and their communities. Yet today, traditional food systems are under threat from climate change, globalisation and shifting consumption patterns. Protecting food and cultural sovereignty has therefore become not just a matter of pride, but a matter of survival.

ROOTS OF VANUATU'S CUISINE

Vanuatu's cuisine is deeply rooted in the soil, the sea and the forest. Root crops such as taro, yam and manioc, along with coconut, fish and seasonal fruits, form the basis of the national diet. These foods are more than ingredients: they are cultural symbols, embedded in ceremonies, rituals and social exchanges. Cooking methods such as the laplap—prepared in earth ovens with layers of root crops, coconut cream and leaves—carry centuries of wisdom about nutrition, ecology and community life.



But imported foods—white rice, processed snacks and sugary drinks—are increasingly displacing traditional diets. Malnutrition and non-communicable diseases are on the rise, while climate change brings cyclones, rising sea levels and soil erosion. Beyond physical hunger, there is the danger of cultural hunger: the erosion of identity, dignity and intergenerational connection.

THE VISION OF REGENERATIVE VANUA

Regenerative Vanua was established to restore pride in Indigenous Knowledge Systems and support land and food sovereignty through regenerative agritourism and regenerative gastronomy. At its core is the desire to enable Vanua to finance their regenerative practices through the Regenerative Verification Program, ensuring sovereign and self-determined access to land and food.

Lapita Café Limited, a pioneering value-adding business in Vanuatu, has been a vital partner in this journey. It played a central role in Vanuatu's nomination as Candidate World Region of Gastronomy 2027, and in the development of regenerative agritourism and gastronomy standards. These standards safeguard Indigenous knowledge while ensuring that tourism and gastronomy develop in ways that are resilient to climate change.

Regenerative Vanua emerged from the Food Tourism and Agritourism (FTA) Initiative – *ProduktifTurism-BlongYumi Initiative* – which won the Islands Innovation Award for Most Transformational Sustainable Government Initiative. This recognition highlighted how regenerative models could successfully integrate culture, environment and economy.

IMPACTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Since its inception, Regenerative Vanua has created opportunities for Indigenous people across Vanuatu's islands. By linking cultural heritage with tourism and agribusiness, it has generated livelihoods, enhanced health outcomes, supported adaptation to climate change and reduced rural poverty.

The initiative has also strengthened international recognition of Vanuatu's cuisine and agriculture. Winning a global award raised the country's profile, positioning its food and agribusiness as attractions in their own right. Today, Regenerative Vanua's board includes representatives from across the Pacific, laying the foundations for regional standards in regenerative indigenous agritourism.

REGENERATIVE STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE

Building on this success, Vanuatu is advancing a set of regenerative strategies that go beyond sustainability, seeking not just to maintain but to restore ecosystems, communities and cultures.

1 - Reviving indigenous food systems. Communities are documenting and revitalising traditional crops, recipes and farming methods. Initiatives such as seed banks, school gardens and community workshops ensure the transmission of knowledge to younger generations.



2 - Climate-resilient agriculture. By integrating agroforestry, permaculture and traditional wisdom with scientific research, farmers are creating diversified and adaptive food systems that protect soils, increase biodiversity and ensure long-term resilience.

3 - Empowering women and youth. Women remain the custodians of food knowledge, and their leadership is central to regenerative strategies. At the same time, opportunities are created for youth to innovate, learn and take pride in their heritage.

4 - Strengthening local economies. Promoting local produce in markets, restaurants and tourism reduces dependence on imports and provides sustainable livelihoods. Culinary tourism, managed responsibly, is both an economic opportunity and a cultural celebration.

5 - Education and awareness. Schools and community centres are incorporating food heritage into curricula through storytelling, cooking classes and intergenerational learning. This fosters respect for cultural and ecological values.

6 - Policy and governance. Food sovereignty requires political support. Governments must recognise the role of traditional food systems in health, climate resilience and cultural identity, integrating them into national development plans.

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AS CULTURAL SOVEREIGNTY

Food sovereignty in Vanuatu is inseparable from cultural sovereignty. Planting taro, preparing laplap or sharing kava are more than everyday practices: they are affirmations of identity and continuity. They connect people to land and ancestors, providing strength to face the future.

As candidate for World Region of Gastronomy 2027, Vanuatu seeks to share this vision with the world. Its message is clear: gastronomy is not a luxury; it is a necessity. It is a path to resilience in times of crisis, to regenerating ecosystems, and to protecting identities.

A MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

Vanuatu's call is an invitation to global solidarity. The Pacific offers lessons of respect for land, communal sharing of food and regenerative visions of the future. In return, Vanuatu is eager to learn from other regions, exchange ideas and strengthen collaboration.

Protecting food and cultural sovereignty requires courage, creativity and collective action. It demands honouring the wisdom of ancestors while embracing today's tools. It requires regenerating not only soils and seeds, but also traditions, relationships and hope.

For Vanuatu, food is both legacy and future. By implementing regenerative strategies, it ensures that the next generation inherits not only nourishment, but also identity, dignity and resilience.



BUILDING A CULTURAL AND FOOD DESTINATION



LAMIA TEMIMI

Sawa Taste of Tunisia and Cap Bon candidate World Region of Gastronomy 2028 (Northern Africa)

Lamia Temimi is a French-Tunisian entrepreneur, consultant and IGCAT Expert with a distinguished career in tourism, hospitality and communications. A graduate of Oxford Brookes University, she has held senior PR and marketing roles with Marriott across North Africa and the Middle East. In 2006 she founded Sawa PR Agency, later establishing Sawa Guesthouse and Sawa Taste of Tunisia, an initiative that works with farmers, chefs, artisans and youth to revitalise traditions, empower communities and foster sustainable food tourism. Her vision is to position Tunisia as a global reference where gastronomy connects heritage, creativity and future opportunities.

“SAFEGUARDING RECIPES, RITUALS, AND THE PEOPLE BEHIND THEM IS KEY TO BUILDING FOOD SYSTEMS THAT HONOR THE PAST WHILE FEEDING THE FUTURE.”

Food is much more than sustenance—it is memory, identity, and a bridge between communities. Across the world, gastronomy is increasingly recognized as a crucial element of cultural heritage and a driver of sustainable tourism and economic development. Yet, building a food and cultural destination requires careful planning, collaboration, and attention to local realities.

Drawing from experiences in Tunisia, where Sawa Taste of Tunisia has pioneered immersive culinary tourism experiences, this document outlines key challenges faced when establishing a culinary and cultural destination, alongside proposals for policymakers, tourism actors, and cultural stakeholders.

KEY CHALLENGES

1 - Fragmentation of the culinary value chain

In Tunisia, small-scale farmers, artisanal producers, and chefs often operate independently with little coordination with tourism operators or cultural institutions. This fragmentation limits the potential to deliver coherent and high-quality visitor experiences.



For example, olive farmers in many regions produce exceptional extra virgin olive oils, but without structured collaborations, these products rarely reach culinary tours or cooking workshops. Bridging these gaps requires creating networks and partnerships that connect local makers with tourism professionals, cultural organizations, and policy actors.

2 - Preservation of culinary heritage

Tunisia's culinary heritage is rich and diverse, spanning North African, Mediterranean, Andalusian and Ottoman influences. Yet, globalization and changing lifestyles threaten the survival of traditional recipes and food rituals.

For instance, Tunisian couscous, once a communal and ceremonial dish, is often simplified for convenience. Similarly, harissa production and traditional pickling methods are at risk of disappearing without deliberate efforts to document and teach them to younger generations.

Preserving culinary heritage requires not only recording recipes but also maintaining the social and cultural practices surrounding food, such as communal cooking, market rituals, and seasonal festivals.

3 - Limited policy recognition and funding

Despite its economic and cultural potential, gastronomy is rarely recognized as a driver of national development. Funding and policy support are limited, leaving small-scale producers, culinary workshops, and community-based tourism initiatives under-resourced.

In Tunisia, initiatives like Sawa Taste of Tunisia have had to rely on small grants, partnerships, and private investment to operate. There is a need for structured policies that recognize gastronomy as an essential component of both tourism and cultural identity. National recognition could unlock funding, training, and infrastructure support for culinary tourism, particularly in rural and underrepresented areas.

4 - Sustainability and authenticity challenges

Tourism growth can put pressure on the authenticity and sustainability of culinary experiences. Standardized cooking classes risk diluting the rich cultural context that makes Tunisia unique.

Additionally, climate change affects local agriculture. For example, rising temperatures and water scarcity in Cap Bon threaten the cultivation of key ingredients essential to traditional Tunisian cuisine. Sustainable tourism models are therefore critical to ensure that cultural and natural heritage are preserved for future generations.

5 - Skills and capacity gaps

Another challenge lies in human capital. Artisans, chefs, and small-scale producers often lack training in tourism management, marketing, and visitor engagement. Conversely, tourism operators may not fully understand the depth of culinary traditions or the importance of storytelling in creating authentic experiences. Bridging this gap is essential for delivering quality experiences while preserving authenticity.



PROPOSALS FOR A NEW PARADIGM

1 - Integrated Policy Frameworks

Gastronomy must be positioned at the intersection of culture, tourism, agriculture, and education. Integrated policies should:

- Recognize culinary heritage as part of national cultural strategies.
- Facilitate collaboration between ministries, local authorities, and civil society.
- Include gastronomy in regional tourism and economic development plans.

Such policies could, for example, link olive oil, harissa or floral waters producers with tourism initiatives, culinary schools, and local markets to create a unified, high-quality visitor experience.

2 - Empowerment of local makers

Empowering local makers—producers, artisans, and chefs—is central to sustainable culinary tourism. Tunisia offers many examples:

- Women-led harissa cooperatives benefit from training in branding and direct-to-consumer sales.
- Artisans are invited to participate in culinary tours, gaining visibility and income.
- Local chefs are engaged as cultural ambassadors, teaching cooking classes and sharing stories about traditional dishes.

This approach strengthens communities economically and socially while enriching the visitor experience.

3 - Safeguarding culinary heritage

Tunisia has successfully piloted programs where traditional recipes, food rituals, and culinary skills are documented and transmitted:

- Cooking workshops teach younger generations traditional techniques, such as preserving harissa.
- Market tours in Tunis medina highlight historical street food routes and seasonal ingredients, keeping traditional knowledge alive.
- Festivals celebrating local gastronomy, like olive, flowers and citrus harvest events or seafood feasts in coastal towns, reinforce cultural identity.

This combination of documentation, education, and celebration ensures heritage remains relevant and dynamic.

4 - Sustainable and responsible tourism models

Tourism should prioritize slow, immersive, and community-based experiences:

- Visitors can engage in farm-to-table experiences.
- Limiting group sizes preserves authenticity and reduces environmental pressure.
- Sourcing ingredients locally supports producers and reduces carbon footprints.

By aligning tourism with sustainability, Tunisia protects its ecosystems, preserves culinary traditions, and enhances the overall quality of visitor experiences.

5 - Capacity building and education

Bridging skills gaps requires investment in both culinary and tourism education:

- Training programs for local makers in marketing, visitor engagement, and business skills.
- Workshops for tourism operators on storytelling, food history, and authentic experience design.
- Mentorship programs linking emerging chefs with experienced culinary professionals, rural women and grandmothers.

Such initiatives create an ecosystem where heritage is both preserved and professionally leveraged for tourism.



6 - International cooperation and exchange

Global collaboration strengthens culinary destinations:

- Cross-cultural exchanges with Mediterranean and global gastronomy organizations share best practices and foster innovation.
- Participation in international events promotes Tunisian culinary heritage worldwide.
- Gastronomy serves as a tool for cultural diplomacy, fostering dialogue, cooperation, and understanding between nations.

For instance, Sawa Taste of Tunisia's collaborations with chefs, writers, journalists and cultural institutions in Europe and elsewhere have amplified Tunisia's visibility while respecting and showcasing authentic culinary practices. Sawa Taste of Tunisia is also the proud organizer of two major events that will take place before the end of year at the International Diplomatic Academy of Tunis:

- A culinary and cultural day for 100 future diplomats, including two high-level discussion panels, an exhibition and sale of local products, and a dedicated focus on sustainable tourism.
- A culinary and cultural presentation for the diplomatic corps accredited in Tunisia, bringing together approximately 250 ambassadors and their spouses.

Building a food and cultural destination is a multifaceted endeavor that requires strategic thinking, integrated policies, community empowerment, and a commitment to sustainability.

By addressing fragmentation, preserving heritage, empowering local makers, and embedding sustainability at the heart of tourism, destinations can create experiences that are culturally rich, economically inclusive, and globally recognized.

Placing gastronomy at the heart of culture is more than nostalgia; it is strategy for resilience, sustainability, and identity.



REGIONAL AND NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON FOOD - HOW CULTURE EVENTS WIDEN PERSPECTIVES



**DR. JUTAMAS
(JAN) WISANSING**

President, Thailand
Gastronomy Network

Dr. Jutamas Wisansing, President of the Thailand Gastronomy Network (TGN), is a leading advocate for culture-based territorial development through food. With expertise in creative tourism, sustainability and cultural diplomacy, she has spearheaded national initiatives linking gastronomy with tourism, education and soft power, and has received Thailand's Food Film Award. She plays a key role in international collaborations on gastronomy policy and branding. Under her leadership, TGN connects public, private, academic and community actors, positioning food as a driver of sustainable development, cultural identity and inclusive economic growth, while empowering local producers and promoting culinary diversity beyond major cities.

“EVERY MEAL IS A CHOICE FOR THE WORLD WE WANT TOMORROW. GASTRONOMY IS NOT ONLY ABOUT TASTE, BUT ABOUT TRUST, TOGETHERNESS, AND TOMORROW.”

CASE SPOTLIGHT: SONGKHLA GASTRONOMY NETWORK (SGN) A SOUTHERN THAI GASTRONOMY FRONTIER

The Songkhla Gastronomy Network, a regional initiative supported by TGN, is a model for territorial collaboration. It brings together chefs, food heritage experts, universities, artists, local businesses, and tourism agencies to reimagine Songkhla's rich and diverse food identity. This unique culturally diverse province in southern Thailand, lies between the Gulf of Thailand and the Malaysian border. With deep-rooted Thai, Malay, and Chinese influences, it offers a uniquely rich foodscape shaped by coastal biodiversity, inland farming traditions, and interfaith culinary exchanges.

Signature ingredients such as stingless bee honey from Bang Klam, double egg yolk in eggshell (ไข่ครอบ), sugar palm fruit (ตาลโตนด), and mini mango (มะม่วงเบา) form the core of Songkhla's emerging gastronomy identity. Through the Songkhla Gastronomy Network (SGN), the province has begun mapping its food ecosystem from the ground up connecting producers, storytellers, chefs, and creatives to reimagine local food as a tool for inclusive development and territorial pride.



CHALLENGE: LOW SYSTEMIC FOOD LITERACY – SOLUTION: INGREDIENT-LED DIALOGUE DESIGN

In Songkhla, many local ingredients remain undervalued or disconnected from wider understanding, even among locals. This reflects a deeper issue: low systemic food literacy, where people do not see how ingredients relate to ecology, culture, health, and economic potential. As a result, hidden gems remain hidden unused in tourism, underpriced in markets, and disconnected from identity.

We developed a method called Ingredient-Led Dialogue Design, a structured process using ingredients as anchors to spark dialogue, facilitate systems thinking, and build shared understanding. This included:

- Food system mapping (ecology-people-economy)
- Taste-based workshops to make food “speak” through all senses
- Stakeholder role reflection across generations and sectors
- Cross-knowledge exchange (scientific + cultural)
- Design prototyping for new food products, menus, travel experiences, and branding
- Market pathway identification to link ingredients to viable economic channels

Open storytelling or exhibitions without facilitation often felt abstract or unrelatable. Without visible market incentives, engagement faded over time. Some saw food dialogue as cultural preservation, not a livelihood opportunity.

When ingredients were linked to market innovation, interest surged. For example, stingless bee honey was used in cafés, luxury desserts, gift hampers, and wellness travel, reframing it as a high-value product. Designed dialogue helped communities see both cultural value and financial potential, enabling farmers, youth, and chefs to co-create not only meaning but markets. This made the system emotionally resonant and economically rewarding.

CHALLENGE: FRAGMENTED LOCAL ECOSYSTEMS – SOLUTION: TERRITORIAL GASTRONOMY MAPPING AND PRODUCT HERO ANCHORING

Territorial gastronomy mapping key step was identifying “product heroes”, not to overshadow others, but to create anchor points that allow broader systems to emerge. For Songkhla, these included Stingless bee honey (Bang Klam), Double egg yolk in shell (ไข่ครอบ), Sugar palm fruit (ตาลโตนด), Mini mango (มะม่วงเฒ่า). These hero products were used to design collaborative interventions, such as ingredient trails, chef collaborations, and sustainable rail journeys.

Identify a few product heroes that have cultural depth and economic potential. These anchor products help bridge community pride with consumer appeal and can pull other products into the system, creating scale without losing identity.



UNDERLYING CHALLENGE: HOW DO WE GET EVERYONE TO AGREE ON PRODUCT HEROES?

Identifying product heroes can create tension, who decides? Why this product and not another? In Songkhla, this was one of the biggest hurdles. With dozens of local ingredients and producers, building consensus was not about voting, but about systemically surfacing value through open processes. Our approach was based not only on popularity, but also on cultural significance, ecosystem value, and market readiness. Key to success is our “narrative framing”; product heroes were framed as entry points, not “winners.” This helped shift the mindset from competition to cooperative scaffolding, where one strong product lifts others.

CHALLENGE: VALUE CHAIN DISCONNECT – SOLUTION: BRIDGING LOCAL CRAFT WITH MAINSTREAM CHANNELS

A recurring tension is the divide between crafted, community-based food products and mainstream trade systems. Many locals saw no clear path to scale, while buyers or urban consumers viewed local food as either too rustic or lacking consistency. This limited producers' income and stifled innovation. Rather than forcing local producers to adapt to industrial norms, SGN focused on the difference between handcrafted vs. commercial trade routes and identify the right path for their identity and goals.

Design collaborations and value-added formats connected local products to the right audiences. Scaling is not about one-size-fits-all. Craft and trade need different strategies both can succeed.

Stingless bee honey, for example, was introduced into as local craft into high-end cafés and creative tourism experiences without stripping away its story or identity. Visitors learned about the ecosystem behind the honey, and producers gained new income streams through value-added formats.

KEY TAKEAWAYS: THREE PRACTICAL STEPS FOR BUILDING TERRITORIAL GASTRONOMY FROM THE GROUND UP

From our experience in Songkhla, sustainable gastronomy systems are designed through three practical and transferable steps:

1 - Design Dialogue Tools: Move beyond informal storytelling. Use ingredient-led facilitation and structured dialogue to construct shared meaning across generations and sectors. Let local ingredients “speak” and serve as entry points for mapping systems, roles, and aspirations.

2 - Focus on Market Viability through Product Heroes: Identify a few product heroes that have cultural depth and economic potential. These anchor products help bridge community pride with consumer appeal and can pull other products into the system, creating scale without losing identity.

3 - Clarify Pathways to Scale: Craft vs. Trade: Help producers see and choose how they want to grow. Recognize the distinct strategies needed for crafted goods (e.g., experiential travel, bespoke gifting) versus modern trade (e.g., retail distribution, food service). Supporting both pathways ensures inclusion and long-term viability.

Together, these steps offer a replicable roadmap for building gastronomic identity and innovation at the territorial level—one rooted in pride, precision, and possibility.

For more information visit: www.thailandgastronomynetwork.com



PLENARY 2





PLENARY 2: THE CULTURAL VALUE OF FOOD: SHAPING FUTURE POLICIES



OMAR VALDEZ

IGCAT Board

Omar Valdez is a member of the Board of IGCAT and a specialist in global cultural and tourism cooperation. He has extensive experience in international organisations, including leadership roles that promoted intercultural dialogue and sustainable development through tourism. With a strong commitment to building bridges between cultures, Valdez contributes to IGCAT's mission of linking gastronomy with culture, creativity and community wellbeing, fostering international collaboration across regions and sectors.

**"WHEN WE PROTECT OUR FOOD AND HERITAGE, WE
NOURISH IDENTITY – AND BY TRAINING FUTURE
GENERATIONS, WE ENSURE THAT LEGACY THRIVES."**

This plenary session, moderated by **Omar Valdez**, IGCAT Board, will examine the cultural value of food and its critical role in shaping future policies for healthier, more inclusive, and resilient societies. Recognizing food as more than a commodity, the discussion will explore how culinary heritage, traditional foodways, and local knowledge systems contribute to cultural identity, community well-being, and sustainability. Inspired by **THE FOOD AND WINE TOURISM PLAN 2022-27** in Catalonia, topics will deepen further to include the preservation of intangible cultural heritage, the integration of food in European cultural programmes, the links between nutrition, education, and public health, and the importance of protecting biodiversity and traditional seeds.

Speakers from international organizations, cultural networks, NGOs, and research institutions will share forward-thinking strategies and policy recommendations that affirm food as a powerful cultural and educational tool. By bringing together voices from different regions and sectors across the globe, the session will offer a comprehensive and interdisciplinary view of how food policies can evolve to support cultural diversity, social cohesion, and long-term resilience.



THE FOOD AND WINE TOURISM PLAN 2022-2027



PATRICK TORRENT

Executive Director,
Catalan Tourism Board

Patrick Torrent is Executive Director of the Catalan Tourism Board and a leading figure in tourism strategy and policy in Catalonia. With extensive experience in destination management and international promotion, he has been instrumental in positioning Catalonia as a reference in sustainable, cultural and gastronomic tourism. Torrent has driven innovative programmes linking gastronomy, territory and tourism diversification, and plays a key role in the implementation of the Food and Wine Tourism Plan 2022-2027 and Catalonia's designation as World Region of Gastronomy 2025.

"FROM CATALONIA, AS WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY, WE ARE PROUD THAT THIS SUMMIT SERVES TO HIGHLIGHT THE VALUE OF GASTRONOMY AND THE CUISINE-PRODUCT-TERRITORY TRIANGLE AS A VITAL ELEMENT IN DISTINGUISHING THE IDENTITY AND CULTURE OF REGIONS AND COMMUNITIES."

Catalonia is recognised worldwide for its culture, creativity and gastronomy. With a Mediterranean diet inscribed by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, a network of distinguished chefs, and a landscape that offers extraordinary wines and food products, Catalonia has become a leading destination for food and wine tourism. The Food and Wine Tourism Plan 2022-2027 has been designed to consolidate this position, to ensure sustainable growth and to strengthen the role of gastronomy as a pillar of Catalonia's tourism strategy.

OBJECTIVES AND VISION

The Plan is based on the conviction that gastronomy and wine are not just attractions for visitors, but also key elements of identity, sustainability and economic development. Its vision is clear: to position Catalonia as one of the world's foremost destinations for food and wine tourism by 2027, while ensuring that tourism generates value for local communities, respects the environment and enhances cultural heritage.



The Plan sets out to:

Integrate gastronomy and wine into the core brand identity of Catalonia as a destination.

Promote high-quality, authentic and diverse experiences that highlight local produce, landscapes and traditions.

Strengthen cooperation between tourism operators, producers, restaurants, wineries and cultural institutions.

Ensure that food and wine tourism contributes to sustainability, inclusivity and territorial cohesion.

STRATEGIC PILLARS

The Food and Wine Tourism Plan is organised around four main pillars:

1 - Product development

New itineraries and experiences are being created to connect visitors with local food and wine cultures. This includes routes through wine-growing regions, immersive visits to farms and markets, and culinary workshops with renowned chefs. The aim is to create experiences that are authentic, participatory and memorable.

2 - Promotion and international positioning

The Catalan Tourism Board is intensifying its promotion of food and wine tourism in priority international markets. Marketing campaigns highlight Catalonia's diversity—from coastal seafood traditions to mountain cheeses and world-class wines. The designation of Catalonia as World Region of Gastronomy 2025 will provide a powerful platform to reinforce this positioning.

3 - Knowledge and innovation

The Plan emphasises the importance of research, training and digitalisation. Data on visitor profiles and trends inform decision-making, while training programmes support professionals in adapting to changing demands. Digital platforms expand visibility for small producers and create direct links with visitors.

4 - Sustainability and territorial cohesion

Sustainability is a guiding principle. The Plan promotes responsible tourism practices, supports short food chains, and encourages visitors to explore lesser-known territories. By distributing flows beyond the most visited areas, it fosters economic opportunities across Catalonia's diverse regions.



STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

The Food and Wine Tourism Plan 2022-2027 has been developed in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders: producers, wineries, restaurants, local governments, cultural institutions and tourism operators. This collaborative approach ensures that the strategy reflects the needs and aspirations of those directly involved in food and wine, while building synergies across sectors.

IMPACT AND LEGACY

Food and wine tourism is more than an economic activity. It is a way of strengthening identity, preserving traditions and showcasing innovation. By bringing visitors closer to the people and places behind Catalonia's gastronomy, the Plan fosters deeper cultural exchange and mutual understanding.

The legacy of this Plan will not only be measured in visitor numbers, but in the quality of experiences, the sustainability of practices, and the pride of local communities. By 2027, we aim to demonstrate that gastronomy and wine can be central drivers of a tourism model that is inclusive, resilient and internationally respected.

The Food and Wine Tourism Plan 2022-2027 reflects Catalonia's ambition to align tourism with cultural heritage, sustainability and innovation. It recognises food and wine as strategic assets, not only to attract visitors but also to create value for citizens. We are confident that this Plan will contribute to positionate Catalonia as a global reference in food and wine tourism. It will also strengthen our role in the international conversation on how gastronomy can contribute to sustainable development, cultural exchange and a richer quality of life for all.



BIOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY: MAIN CHALLENGES FROM SLOW FOOD'S PERSPECTIVE



LUDOVICO ROCCATELLO

Director Knowledge Hub,
Slow Food, (Global based in Italy)

Ludovico Roccatello is Director of the Knowledge Hub at Slow Food. Over the last 15 years, he has worked on food systems through project and network development. He has extensive experience in initiatives aimed at valorising the biological and cultural diversity of food within the Slow Food headquarters. Slow Food is a global movement working to ensure good, clean and fair food for all. Its network of local communities and activists defends cultural and biological diversity, promotes food education and the transmission of traditional knowledge and skills, and influences policies in both the public and private sectors.

“FOOD IS AN INTRINSIC AND UNIVERSAL COMPONENT OF EVERY HUMAN CULTURE. AS SLOW FOOD WE THINK THAT RECOGNISING ITS VALUE AND ITS DIVERSITY IS ESSENTIAL TO DEVELOPING PRACTICES AND POLICIES THAT CONCERN ITS PRODUCTION, PREPARATION, DISTRIBUTION, AND CONSUMPTION – IN OTHER WORDS, A VITAL PART OF THE LIVES OF ALL OF US ON EARTH”

Some of the greatest ecological and social crises of our time are deeply interconnected and closely tied to the way we eat. A critical examination reveals that many of the structural problems of today's food systems are the result of political and economic choices. Our current food systems are both cause and victim of these crises. Yet, Slow Food believes they can also be part of the solution.

The global food trade system, as it functions today, is failing humanity. While it has brought efficiency, interconnectedness and availability, it has also deepened inequalities, harmed ecosystems and eroded cultural diversity.

Driven primarily by profit and scale, industrial agriculture dominates with monocultures, chemical inputs and long supply chains. This logic undermines biodiversity, contributes heavily to greenhouse gas emissions, and marginalises small-scale farmers who are the true custodians of food diversity.



At the same time, producers in the Global South are often underpaid while added value is captured elsewhere. Local economies face volatility, and paradoxically, food-producing countries frequently suffer high levels of malnutrition as resources are exported rather than feeding local populations.

Consumers are offered an apparent abundance, yet most supermarket shelves contain only a narrow range of standardised crops and varieties. This illusion of choice erases cultural foodways and replaces unique flavours and traditions with uniform products designed for global logistics.

To overcome these failures, we need a paradigm shift: food must no longer be seen merely as a commodity but as culture. More than anything else, food binds us to the ecological systems we live in and are part of. This relationship is complex and rooted in the vast biological and cultural diversity expressed through food. Every recipe carries history; every ingredient reflects centuries of adaptation and knowledge. Recognising food as culture means anchoring production to territories, connecting with local communities, and diversifying distribution and consumption according to real needs.

This cultural recognition would also reshape policy. Trade agreements could account not only for tariffs and quotas but also for cultural and ecological impact. Support could shift towards small-scale producers, indigenous communities and traditional knowledge bearers. Governments might invest in safeguarding culinary diversity as they do in protecting languages, monuments or cultural landscapes. Equally, consumers would gain a new awareness: every purchase and meal would be seen as a cultural act with social and ecological consequences. Such a perspective fosters responsibility, solidarity and connection.

For over 35 years, Slow Food has pursued this vision, starting from the involvement of those whose lives are tied to food: farmers, fishers, herders, artisans, cooks, educators, policymakers, communicators and ultimately all of us, "because we all eat," as Brillat-Savarin reminded us. Slow Food is a global network where people from diverse backgrounds, yet united by the same values, collaborate on concrete initiatives. These range from school gardens and local farmers' markets to international campaigns and major continental events.

Slow Food's work rests on three core pillars:

- **Defence of biological and cultural diversity**, protecting endangered food varieties, traditional knowledge and sustainable practices.
- **Education**, promoting food literacy, awareness of ecological systems, and transmission of skills across generations.
- **Advocacy**, influencing policy in both public and private sectors to create fairer, more sustainable food systems.

These pillars are expressed through practical programmes across contexts, from grassroots projects to international policy initiatives. Around the world, communities are resisting the failures of the current system by saving seeds, cultivating neglected crops, promoting local markets and educating youth. Such initiatives demonstrate that alternatives exist: food systems that prioritise people and culture over profit and standardisation.



UNESCO's recognition of foodways as intangible cultural heritage marks an important step, but much more is needed to integrate cultural perspectives into trade, agriculture and health policies. The urgency is clear: climate change, pandemics and economic crises have exposed the fragility of global supply chains. Building resilience requires diversity: biological as well as cultural. Protecting and promoting cultural food systems is therefore not nostalgia, but a pragmatic necessity for sustainable and equitable societies.

The transformation of our food systems will not come from technical adjustments alone. It requires international cooperation and, above all, a profound cultural shift. By recognising food as culture, we change the paradigm: every meal becomes an expression of identity, history and community, and we commit to protecting this heritage for future generations.

Slow Food's motto "good, clean and fair food for all" captures this ambition. Food must be tasty and nutritious (good), produced in ways that respect the environment (clean), and accessible and just for both producers and consumers (fair). This vision is expressed through concrete practices and projects across contexts, from the local to the global level. Only by embracing such a holistic approach can our food systems become truly sustainable, equitable and resilient.



NIGHTS OF MAGIC: POSITIONING NAMIBIA THROUGH GASTRONOMY AND CULTURE



PATRICK SAM

Creative Culture Investments (CCI), Namibia

Patrick Sam is a cultural policy expert and co-founder of Creative Culture Investments (CCI), a Namibian initiative dedicated to promoting the intersection of food, creativity and cultural industries as tools for development. With extensive experience in cultural diplomacy, media and arts advocacy, he has championed programmes that empower young people, foster entrepreneurship and strengthen African cultural identity. Through CCI, he highlights the transformative power of gastronomy within the creative economy, positioning Namibia as a voice for innovation, sustainability and inclusive growth.

“IF THE WORLD WANTS THINGS IT HAS NEVER HAD, THEN THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD MUST DO THINGS THEY NEVER HAVE.”

Globally, gastronomy is increasingly recognised as a cornerstone of cultural tourism. Travellers no longer seek only landscapes; they crave authentic experiences that connect them with local traditions and identities. Food, as a universal language, is one of the most powerful mediums for such encounters.

Namibia, long celebrated for its safaris and dramatic scenery, is now positioning itself as a destination where culture and cuisine are equally compelling. At the heart of this transformation lies Nights of Magic, an event that brings international chefs to interpret Namibian ingredients, creating a dialogue between global culinary expertise and local food heritage. This dialogue both elevates Namibia's cuisine to international recognition and reinforces its value to local communities.

While Nights of Magic is the flagship, it is framed within Magic in May, a month-long festival that turns Namibia's public holidays into cultural capital. Anchored in May, it introduces a new rhythm to the national calendar –one that foregrounds culture as a driver of identity, unity and prosperity. For local audiences, it fosters pride and a sense of belonging; for global audiences, it provides a reason to travel and engage with Namibia.



The impacts of Nights of Magic, and by extension Magic in May, go far beyond entertainment:

- **Tourism development.** Signature culinary experiences strengthen Namibia's tourism offer, attract new markets and extend visitor stays.
- **Local economies.** Partnerships with farmers, fishers and artisans ensure that benefits reach communities.
- **Cultural diplomacy.** Hosting international chefs alongside local talent fosters exchange, positioning Namibia as a soft-power leader in Africa.
- **Sustainability.** Celebrating local ingredients reduces reliance on imports, supports food sovereignty and promotes environmentally responsible gastronomy.

For visitors, Nights of Magic offers depth beyond sightseeing; the chance to taste the land, hear its stories through poetry, feel its humour through comedy, and be carried by its music. For Namibia, it shows how cultural tourism can diversify the economy, reduce over-reliance on traditional models, and highlight the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) as engines of sustainable development.

CCI are increasingly recognised worldwide for their ability to generate employment, foster innovation and strengthen social cohesion. For Namibia, gastronomy provides an accessible entry point with unique strategic potential:

- **Economic diversification.** Culinary tourism around indigenous ingredients stimulates value chains that link farming, fishing, hospitality and entertainment. Farmers cultivating millet, winemakers in Erongo or seafood suppliers can all find greater demand through gastronomy-led tourism.
- **Cultural preservation and innovation.** Placing local food at the centre of an international festival safeguards culinary traditions while encouraging creative reinterpretation by young chefs and artists.
- **Global positioning.** In a competitive tourism market, Namibia can brand itself not only as a safari destination but also as Africa's rising gastronomic hub. Its culinary identity –shaped by indigenous traditions, colonial history and global influences– holds great potential for recognition.
- **Youth empowerment and job creation.** Gastronomy intersects with performance, hospitality, agriculture and entrepreneurship. By showcasing comedians, poets and musicians alongside chefs, Nights of Magic highlights the interlinked opportunities of the creative economy, supporting youth employment and positioning CCI as a pathway for development.

Namibia itself is a land of wonder: the ochre dunes of Sossusvlei, the rugged Skeleton Coast, the wildlife-rich Etosha plains and the vibrancy of its towns and villages. Yet beyond its landscapes lies an equally rich, underexplored resource: its culinary traditions and food heritage. Food in Namibia is not merely sustenance but storytelling, identity and memory, tied deeply to the land and its people.



It is in this context that Magic in May has been conceived: a national celebration of creativity and cultural capital, offering diverse activities for both local and international audiences. Among these, Nights of Magic stands out as a key component –an event designed to bring the world to Namibia and Namibia to the world through gastronomy, performance and cultural exchange.

More than a dining experience, Nights of Magic is a curated journey through food and performance. Built on the theme “Global Chefs, Local Talent”, it weaves the artistry of international chefs with the soul of Namibian creativity. Each course highlights the country's abundance: game meats from the savannahs, oysters and fish from the Atlantic, millet and mahangu grains cultivated for generations, and indigenous herbs valued for both flavour and medicine.

Ultimately, Nights of Magic is not simply about food on a plate or songs in the air. It is about creating a stage where Namibia's landscapes, people and creativity converge. By situating gastronomy at the heart of cultural tourism, Namibia takes a bold step in using its Cultural and Creative Industries as a strategic lever for development. Culture becomes capital –social, economic and symbolic. For Namibia, it is not only an opportunity to showcase its wonders but to chart a sustainable, inclusive and creative future.



URBAN CHALLENGES ON THE ROUTE TO SUSTAINABLE, CREATIVE AND AUTHENTIC GASTRONOMY



JESSICA FÉREY

Executive Director, The Food Capitals by Délice Network

Jessica Férey is Executive Director of The Food Capitals by Délice Network, a global platform that connects cities through gastronomy. With extensive experience in cultural and international project management, she coordinates initiatives that showcase food as a driver of creativity, sustainability and urban identity. Férey works with city leaders, chefs and cultural stakeholders worldwide to exchange best practices, promote inclusive food strategies and position gastronomy as a key tool for building resilient, innovative and authentic urban communities.

"I'M EXCITED TO JOIN THE 1ST WORLD GASTRONOMY SUMMIT AS A PANELIST AND TO ADVANCE THE IGCAT-FOOD CAPITALS PARTNERSHIP, WORKING TOGETHER TO HIGHLIGHT FOOD'S CENTRAL ROLE IN CULTURAL POLICY AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING."

The Food Capitals network unites pioneering cities that see food as a driver for cultural identity, sustainability, creativity, and community well-being. By sharing experiences, testing new solutions, and amplifying local stories, our cities are shaping a future where gastronomy connects people, places, and traditions.

Below are key challenges we face, along with examples of how our cities are addressing them. We invite your feedback and experiences as you navigate similar issues.

FARM TO TABLE > SEED TO FORK: REBUILDING URBAN-RURAL CONNECTIONS

As urban populations grow, many citizens become disconnected from the land, producers, and traditions that shape their food. This weakening of urban-rural links reduces awareness of seasonality, biodiversity, and provenance, and risks eroding local identity.



To tackle this challenge, Food Capitals cities are strengthening distribution channels between regional farmers and urban centers through short food chains and local procurement. Farmers and urban markets are increasingly seen not only as commercial spaces but also as cultural and social anchors. Education also plays a key role: schools and community programs integrate food literacy to help citizens understand where their food comes from.

Several cities illustrate this approach with creative initiatives. In **Brussels, Lyon**, and now **Montreal**, special events connect local farms and producers directly with restaurants and distributors. Lyon's annual "En Terroirs Connus," now in its fourth edition, functions like a speed-dating event for producers, chefs, and retail managers, strengthening local networks while promoting the farm-to-table ethos. Inspired by Brussels' "Good Food Speed Dating," Montreal will trial a similar event this fall.

In **Wrocław**, Poland, the city established the Wrocław Gastronomy Council to advise the Mayor on supporting local catering businesses. **Malmö**, Sweden, has created the Malmö Food Council that brings together individuals, organizations, and institutions from diverse sectors to co-create a sustainable and inclusive food system.

Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, demonstrates how the Bazurto Market preserves Afro-Caribbean culinary traditions, making the market itself a living cultural archive. Meanwhile, **Guangzhou**, China, promotes food clusters and gardens that allow people to gather socially around food, and **Izmir**, Turkey, is piloting the Peninsula Project, linking agriculture and sustainable rural tourism.

BALANCING AUTHENTICITY: PROTECTING AND PROMOTING LOCAL FLAVORS

Cities constantly adapt to trends, yet they must consciously preserve culinary heritage. Without careful attention, authentic recipes risk dilution, and urban food cultures begin to converge.

To address this, **Castelldefels** in Spain and **Gothenburg** in Sweden have launched signature city dishes that honour tradition while embracing creativity. Castelldefels' "Arroz de Castelldefels" reinforces local identity and pride, while Gothenburg's "Gothenburg Meal" competition celebrates local culinary innovation and seasonal ingredients, with this year's winner, the "Gothenburg Royale," combining sustainable seafood with adaptable accompaniments. **Tucson**, Arizona, leverages its rich culinary heritage for cultural branding, transforming food into a driver for both identity and economy.

Other cities are focusing on awareness campaigns that celebrate their food culture. **Tartu**, Estonia, building on its legacy as European Capital of Culture 2024, has been named Estonia's Food Region 2025, hosting over 100 culinary events in 2025, highlighting local gastronomy for both residents and tourists. In Turkey, **Gaziantep** and **Hatay** are gathering historic recipes while educating the next generation of chefs, ensuring culinary traditions endure.

Several cities are also developing their own recognition programs to complement global guides. **Lausanne's** "Guide Délicieux" and **Brussels' "Brusselicious"** label highlight establishments serving authentic, sustainable cuisine. **Puebla**, Mexico's "Mesas Poblanas" certifies restaurants that represent the city's multicultural culinary legacy, while **Turin's "Mangébin"** network commits restaurants to serving predominantly traditional Piedmontese dishes and wines, encouraging regional sourcing alongside innovation. **Lisbon**,



Portugal, has hosted the annual “Lisboa à Prova” competition since 2009, establishing a benchmark for the city’s restaurant sector by promoting service quality, professional excellence, and gastronomy as a driver of cultural development.

Cultural integration plays a key role in sustaining authenticity. In **Cali**, Colombia, Afro-Colombian and Indigenous food traditions from nearby rural communities are incorporated into urban gastronomy, strengthening urban-rural ties. **San Antonio**, Texas, promotes heritage dishes internationally through its Chef Ambassador program, sharing local culinary stories with global audiences.

Food festivals are another powerful tool for cities to celebrate identity, educate citizens, and promote sustainable gastronomy. They provide spaces where tradition and creativity meet while also supporting local economies. In **Barcelona**, the Mercat de Mercats Fair celebrates markets, sustainable consumption, and local products. **Pittsburgh**’s “Picklesburg” festival elevates a local delicacy with creativity, while **Chicago**’s “Taste of Chicago” showcases multicultural cuisine and pilots sustainability measures such as composting and food waste reduction. In 2024, **Helsinki** organized a year-long event that highlighted seasonal ingredients and sustainable practices, teaching citizens—from schoolchildren to seniors—about food origins and climate-friendly diets. **Busan**, South Korea, holds multiple festivals annually, combining gastronomy tours and restaurant promotion, and **Stavanger**, Norway’s “Gladmat Festival” has established itself as Scandinavia’s leading food festival, blending traditional and contemporary flavours for over 250,000 visitors.

FOOD AT THE HEART OF URBAN POLICY

Feeding cities places immense pressure on ecosystems. Long supply chains, convenience-driven demand and high food waste generate environmental costs. The challenge is to shorten distances—literally and metaphorically—through urban agriculture, zero-waste initiatives, and responsible procurement.

More broadly, food must be integrated into urban policy. Gastronomy is not only an economic sector but also shapes health, environment, education, culture and social cohesion. Cities that embed food strategies in their planning are better equipped to respond to crises and to create thriving, inclusive communities.

A SHARED HORIZON

Every meal tells a story of people and place. Cities, as laboratories of innovation and diversity, are uniquely positioned to ensure these stories thrive.

No single city can tackle today’s challenges in isolation. That is why international collaboration is essential. Networks like The Food Capitals allow cities to learn from one another, accelerate transformation and collectively safeguard authenticity, inclusivity and sustainability.

Urban challenges are daunting, but cities are also where solutions can be born and tested. By nurturing creativity, protecting authenticity and committing to sustainability, cities can ensure that gastronomy nourishes not only bodies, but also cultures, communities and futures.



CREATIVE TOURISM AS A CATALYST FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD DESTINATIONS



CAROLINE COURET

Executive Director,
Creative Tourism Network

Caroline Couret is Executive Director of the Creative Tourism Network, an international organisation that promotes creative tourism as a driver of sustainable development. With a background in cultural management and international cooperation, she has pioneered initiatives that connect travellers with local communities through hands-on experiences in gastronomy, crafts and the arts. Couret collaborates with destinations worldwide to design innovative tourism models that foster cultural exchange, empower communities and highlight gastronomy as a core component of creative economies.

“CREATIVE TOURISM: THE RECIPE FOR FLAVORFUL, WHOLESOME, AND SUSTAINABLE DESTINATIONS.”

Food is one of the most universal languages of creativity. It embodies heritage and innovation, it carries memory while opening space for imagination, and it provides one of the most powerful ways for visitors to connect with local communities. Within the field of creative tourism, food is not just an attraction—it is an essential tool to design meaningful, participatory and sustainable experiences.

BEYOND CONSUMPTION: PARTICIPATION AND CREATIVITY

Traditional models of tourism have often focused on consumption: seeing monuments, buying souvenirs, tasting dishes. Creative tourism shifts this perspective. Instead of being passive consumers, travellers become active participants. They cook alongside local chefs, harvest seasonal products with farmers, learn traditional techniques from artisans, and create their own interpretations of local dishes.

This participatory approach transforms gastronomy into a co-creation of culture. A cooking class in a rural kitchen, a workshop on wine blending, or a storytelling dinner where recipes are shared with personal anecdotes—these are not simply experiences to remember, but opportunities for visitors to feel part of the living heritage of the place they visit.



EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

Food-based creative tourism generates direct benefits for local communities. By involving residents as hosts, guides, mentors or storytellers, it ensures that income stays in the territory and that intangible heritage is valued. Women, young people and small-scale producers often find new opportunities to showcase their knowledge and skills.

In this sense, creative tourism contributes to inclusion and empowerment. It provides economic opportunities, but it also generates pride and recognition for traditions that may otherwise be undervalued or forgotten.

SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Creative tourism also supports sustainability. By focusing on local products and short supply chains, it strengthens regional economies and reduces environmental impact. Seasonal food activities encourage visitors to understand rhythms of production and to respect biodiversity. At the same time, creative gastronomy can revitalise rural areas, offering alternatives to mass tourism and creating balanced territorial development.

Resilience is also a key dimension. In times of crisis—whether economic, environmental or social—communities that know how to share and reinvent their food culture have stronger capacities to adapt. Creative tourism provides the framework to showcase this resilience to visitors, turning challenges into opportunities for cultural exchange.

THE ROLE OF NETWORKS AND COLLABORATION

The Creative Tourism Network has observed a growing interest from destinations worldwide in connecting food and creative tourism. From Mediterranean villages offering olive oil storytelling to Asian cities promoting street food workshops, from Andean communities reviving ancestral recipes to island nations integrating fishing traditions into tourism programmes—the diversity is extraordinary.

International collaboration allows these initiatives to learn from each other, to share best practices and to gain global visibility. This is particularly relevant at a time when travellers increasingly seek authenticity, responsibility and connection rather than standardised packages.

A NEW NARRATIVE FOR TOURISM

Food in creative tourism also helps rewrite the narrative of destinations. Instead of being defined only by landscapes or monuments, places can present themselves through the flavours, aromas and stories of their cuisine. Gastronomy becomes the entry point to culture, offering experiences that are intimate, multisensory and emotionally engaging.

This new narrative is particularly important for younger generations of travellers, who value experiences over possessions and seek deeper encounters with culture. By integrating food into creative tourism strategies, destinations position themselves as innovative, sustainable and inclusive.



AN OPEN INVITATION

The intersection of food and creative tourism is an open invitation—to visitors, to communities, and to policymakers. It invites travellers to step into kitchens and markets, to taste and to create. It invites communities to share their knowledge with pride. And it invites governments and institutions to rethink tourism as a force for cultural sustainability and local development.

Food is, ultimately, an experience of sharing. When creative tourism embraces gastronomy, it transforms a meal into a dialogue, a recipe into a bridge, and a kitchen into a stage of creativity.

Imagine arriving in a small town, welcomed not by brochures but by the aroma of bread baking, invited not just to taste but to knead, to listen, to share. That is creative tourism with food: an encounter where culture is lived, created and savoured together.





EDUCATING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF FOOD LOVERS



SARA ROVERSI

President, Future Food
Institute, Italy

Sara Roversi is a visionary social entrepreneur and global leader in sustainable food systems. She founded the Future Food Institute in 2014, building a worldwide network of Living Labs from Italy to Japan that foster dialogue on sustainability, climate action, and social prosperity. In 2020, she launched the Paideia Campus in Pollica, Italy, a Mediterranean Living Lab and prototype for sustainable villages integrating environmental protection, health, and social justice. Active in food diplomacy, she collaborates with the Kofi Annan Foundation, UNESCO Mediterranean Diet communities, Google Food Lab and others, promoting climate-resilient food systems. Recent projects include "Villa Montepaldi and the Lands of Renaissance" with the University of Florence, linking innovation and heritage. Expanding across the Mediterranean and beyond, she advocates for food as a driver of regeneration, cultural identity, and inclusive prosperity.

"FOOD EDUCATION IS NOT A LUXURY; IT IS A NECESSITY. BY EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION WITH KNOWLEDGE, VALUES AND LOVE FOR FOOD, WE CAN SHAPE A MORE SUSTAINABLE, INCLUSIVE AND HOPEFUL FUTURE."

The future of food depends on the people who will grow it, cook it, share it and protect it. If we want a food system that is sustainable, inclusive and nourishing, we must start by educating and empowering the next generation. Education is not only about knowledge transfer—it is about cultivating values, curiosity and love for food. At the Future Food Institute, this is our daily mission.

WHY FOOD EDUCATION MATTERS

Food is a powerful entry point to understand the world. Through food, we learn about health, culture, environment, economy and identity. Teaching children to cook a simple meal is not just a skill; it is an invitation to care for themselves, their families and their planet.

Yet too often, education systems treat food as secondary. Nutrition is reduced to charts, agriculture is absent from curricula, and gastronomy is seen as leisure rather than knowledge. This gap leaves young people disconnected from the origins of their meals, unaware of the impacts of their choices, and unprepared to face the challenges of the future.



FROM AWARENESS TO EMPOWERMENT

Our task is not only to inform but to empower. Awareness is the first step—understanding how diets affect health, how farming affects climate, how waste affects ecosystems. But education must go further, offering tools to act, innovate and lead.

Future Food Institute promotes experiential learning: gardens in schools, workshops with farmers, immersive labs with chefs, and international exchanges. These experiences allow young people to taste, touch and create, making food education tangible and inspiring. By connecting learning with real-life practice, we nurture agency; the sense that young people can shape the future, not just inherit it.

FOOD LITERACY FOR ALL

Food education should not be limited to privileged groups. It must be accessible to all, across different backgrounds and regions. Vulnerable communities in particular can benefit enormously from programmes that combine food literacy with skills training and entrepreneurship.

Educating the next generation of food lovers means equipping them not only with culinary knowledge but also with digital skills, cultural awareness and entrepreneurial capacity. Food can open doors to new jobs and industries—from agri-tech to creative gastronomy—while also strengthening local resilience.

INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE

Another key dimension is intergenerational learning. Elders carry knowledge of traditions, seeds, recipes and values that are vital for cultural continuity. By creating spaces where young people learn from their grandparents, and where grandparents also learn from youth, education becomes a dialogue rather than a one-way transmission. This exchange ensures that traditions are not lost, while also allowing innovation to flourish.

BUILDING GLOBAL CITIZENS

The challenges of the food system are global: climate change, biodiversity loss, hunger and malnutrition, overconsumption and waste. Educating food lovers today means preparing global citizens who understand interdependence and solidarity.

The Future Food Institute has developed programmes that connect students across continents, encouraging them to learn from diverse food cultures and to co-create solutions. In these exchanges, young people discover that food is not only about local identity but also about shared responsibility for the planet.



THE ROLE OF FOOD LOVERS

Why focus on “food lovers”? Because passion is as important as knowledge. We need a generation that does not see food as a commodity but as culture, creativity and connection. Food lovers are people who appreciate diversity, who celebrate taste and tradition, and who are willing to defend the ecosystems and communities that make food possible.

To cultivate food lovers, education must engage the senses, the imagination and the emotions. A child who remembers harvesting their first tomato, or cooking a family recipe, will carry that memory as motivation to care for food and for the world.

A VISION OF TOMORROW

Imagine classrooms where cooking is as valued as coding, where gardens are laboratories of science and culture, where children graduate not only with diplomas but with the capacity to nourish themselves and others. Imagine young leaders who design policies and businesses grounded in respect for people and the planet, because they grew up as food lovers.

This vision is within reach if we choose to prioritise food education today. It is not a luxury; it is a necessity. The future of food—and the future of humanity—will be shaped by what the next generation learns about food now.

And when tomorrow's food lovers gather around the table, they will bring not only dishes but also stories, values and hope. That table will be the beginning of a better world.



SEEDS - KEY TO CULTURAL AND FOOD DIVERSITY



STEFAN SCHMITZ

Executive Director, Global Crop Diversity Trust (Crop Trust), Global based in Germany

Stefan Schmitz is Executive Director of the Crop Trust, the international organisation safeguarding crop diversity to ensure global food security. He leads efforts to support gene banks worldwide and collaborate with the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, protecting seeds for future generations. With a distinguished career in international development and food security, Schmitz previously served at Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. His leadership strengthens global collaboration to preserve biodiversity and cultural food heritage.

"I'M HONORED TO JOIN THE 1st GASTRONOMY SUMMIT. THIS IMPORTANT EVENT AFFIRMS WHAT THE CROP TRUST HOLDS DEAR: FOOD IS CULTURE, AND CONSERVING BIODIVERSITY SECURES IT FOR ALL."

CROP DIVERSITY: THE FOUNDATION OF FLAVOR, CULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

Every memorable dish begins long before it reaches the plate. It begins with a seed. The crunch of an apple, the aroma of bread baking in a kitchen, the spice of chili in a sauce - these sensations exist only because, over the centuries, farmers cultivated, saved and shared countless varieties of hundreds of different food crops. Each seed holds not just nutrition, but also flavor, identity and heritage.

Yet this living library of diversity is vanishing. Today, three-quarters of the world's food comes from just 12 crops and five animal species. Traditional heirloom varieties are disappearing from fields, gardens and orchards. Each loss narrows our culinary imagination, weakens our ability to adapt agriculture to climate change, and risks erasing entire traditions tied to food and flavor.

For chefs, food innovators, and everyone who cares about gastronomy, the stakes could not be higher. Crop diversity is the foundation of the past and the raw material for the future of cuisine.



GENEBANKS: GUARDIANS OF OUR INGREDIENTS

The world's great dishes are built on ingredients, and those ingredients are safeguarded by farmers. However, sometimes they need a helping hand, and that's why we have genebanks. These institutions conserve seeds, roots and cuttings of crops from every corner of the globe. Inside their cold rooms, labs and fields are treasures – purple-fleshed sweetpotatoes from Madagascar, wild wheats from the Fertile Crescent, and rare Mexican beans with unique colors and textures.

Genebanks make it possible for breeders to develop new crops that can withstand droughts, resist pests and thrive in shifting climates. They also give farmers and chefs alike access to forgotten or overlooked varieties, bringing diversity back into fields and kitchens.

Without genebanks, we could lose what feeds our creativity and sustains our tables.

CHALLENGES WE FACE

Despite the critical role of crop diversity, it faces multiple threats, even in genebanks:

- **Conflict and instability:** Wars and political unrest can destroy collections overnight, as we saw in Syria when the international genebank near Aleppo was lost.
- **Limited resources for national genebanks:** Many national collections, especially in low- and middle-income countries, struggle to maintain operations from one year to the next.
- **Lack of awareness:** Too often, policymakers and the public do not realize how much our food security depends on safeguarding seeds.

For the culinary world, this means the potential disappearance of flavors, textures and varieties that could inspire new recipes or sustain old ones. Without reliable support, the pantry of the future shrinks.

THE ROLE OF THE CROP TRUST

The Crop Trust was created with a single, simple, but huge, mission – to secure crop diversity forever. We do this by providing long-term funding and technical support to the world's most important genebanks, ensuring they can care for and share their collections of crop diversity in perpetuity.

We help safeguard the backbone of food security, the international genebanks of CGIAR, which hold over 700,000 unique crop samples. These collections represent a global public good – open to all, serving farmers around the world. From disease-resistant bananas to climate-hardy beans, they are a lifeline for the future of food.

The Crop Trust also supports capacity building in national genebanks, and the tools and partnerships that bring all kinds of genebanks together in a truly global system.



STRENGTHENING THE GLOBAL GENE BANK SYSTEM

The Crop Trust is working to build a strong, interconnected global system for conserving crop diversity. This includes:

- **The Crop Trust Endowment Fund:** A financial foundation that ensures key genebanks can operate with stable, predictable funding.
- **The Svalbard Global Seed Vault:** The ultimate back-up for the world's seeds, the Vault protects them deep inside a mountain on a remote Arctic Island.
- **Collaborative projects with national genebanks:** Providing training, upgrading facilities, and strengthening the capacity of staff to conserve and share diversity.
- **Information systems:** Building platforms like Genesys that provide data about millions of crop samples to researchers, breeders and food innovators.

These efforts are not abstract. They are what make it possible for farmers in Africa to grow new drought-tolerant millets, or for chefs to rediscover ancient grains with extraordinary flavor profiles and characteristics like low gluten content.

WHY GASTRONOMY MATTERS

Chefs, food producers, and gastronomic leaders are essential allies in this mission. You are the storytellers of food – the ones who can connect a rare vegetable to a beloved dish or explain why a forgotten fruit variety is worth preserving. By championing crop diversity, you help bring it back to life, from genebank to field to plate.

Imagine a future where climate-resilient rice saves harvests in Asia, while also offering new textures for risotto or paella. Where a nearly lost African yam not only secures food security but also inspires a new signature dish in a restaurant. Where the diversity safeguarded in genebanks sparks culinary inspiration, as well as agricultural transformation. Every variety saved is a possibility preserved – for farmers, for breeders, for chefs and for eaters everywhere.

A CALL TO ACTION

Protecting crop diversity is too important to leave to scientists alone. We need a global coalition of partners – governments, businesses, donors, and yes, the gastronomy community. The Crop Trust cannot do this work alone. But together, we can secure the future of food:

- **Partner with us:** Help connect the world of conservation to the world of cuisine.
- **Champion crop diversity in your work:** Highlight forgotten varieties on your menus, tell the stories of the farmers and seeds behind your dishes, and inspire curiosity about what biodiversity tastes like.
- **Donate to the Endowment Fund:** Every contribution helps safeguard seeds forever, from individual donations to the governments we work with.

Because every plate we serve depends on the diversity we conserve. Every chef, every diner and every food lover has a stake in ensuring that the flavors of yesterday are not lost and we safeguard the food security of tomorrow.





FOOD IS CULTURE'S FRONTLINE: GASTRONOMY, IDENTITY, AND THE FUTURE WE FEED, **ROBERT PALMER**



ROBERT PALMER

IGCAT Ambassador

Expert consultant (former Director of Culture, Cultural and Natural Heritage, Council of Europe), Robert Palmer is an independent cultural consultant with over 30 years of international experience. He was Director of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage at the Council of Europe, overseeing programmes on policy, diversity and intercultural dialogue across 47 member states. Formerly, he directed the European Capitals of Culture in Glasgow (1990) and Brussels (2000), and evaluated 20 Capitals for the European Commission. He has advised governments, foundations and international organisations including UNESCO, and continues to work globally on cultural policy, heritage and festivals.

“FOOD IS THE FIRST STORY PASSED FROM PARENT TO CHILD, AND OFTEN THE LAST CONNECTION A DISPLACED PERSON HOLDS. RECIPES OUTLIVE BORDERS. INGREDIENTS CARRY MEMORY. AND ACROSS THE GLOBE, COMMUNITIES ARE TURNING TO FOOD NOT ONLY TO REMEMBER THE PAST - BUT TO IMAGINE NEW FUTURES.”

Across continents—from Pacific islands to African markets, from the Andes to Alpine villages—one truth persists: food is an important part of culture's frontline. Food is more than nourishment; it is a living archive of who we are, how we belong, and what we value.

In a world marked by ecological crisis, social disconnection, and the erosion of cultural memory, food remains an anchor. Food is the first story passed from parent to child, and often the last connection a displaced person holds. Recipes outlive borders. Ingredients carry memory. And across the globe, communities are turning to food not only to remember the past—but to imagine new futures.

THE TABLE AS A CULTURAL SPACE

Throughout history, food has played a central role in community life. The table is more than a place to eat—it is where values are taught, stories are told, and bonds are renewed. Before we built treaties, we shared meals. Before there were flags, there were flavours—curated over centuries by farmers, foragers, fishers, and grandmothers.

Today, the act of gathering around food is perhaps more important than ever. As societies struggle with polarisation and rapid change, gastronomy offers a rare common language—a medium through which identity, sustainability, economy, and tradition meet.

Food tells us who we are. It also shows us who we could become.



REGIONS OF GASTRONOMY: LOCAL ROOTS, GLOBAL REACH

Across the world, regions of gastronomy are stepping into the spotlight. These are not simply culinary hotspots—they are places where food is used as a strategy for regeneration, resilience, and pride.

In Oceania, Indigenous chefs are reimagining ancestral diets built around taro, seaweed, and breadfruit—reconnecting communities with sustainable food systems. In Kenya, women-led agricultural cooperatives are shaping new forms of food tourism that celebrate local cuisine and empower rural economies.

Colombia is seeing a revival of Afro-Caribbean and Indigenous recipes through festivals and culinary schools. These dishes—once marginalised—are now symbols of resilience and identity. Meanwhile, in Italy's Apennine villages, food festivals and culinary routes are revitalising areas hit by deindustrialisation and depopulation.

What these examples show is clear: food is not peripheral to development—it is central to it.

IGCAT: ELEVATING FOOD TO CULTURAL POLICY

The Institute of Gastronomy, Culture, Art and Tourism (IGCAT) is at the forefront of this movement. Through initiatives like the European and World Regions of Gastronomy, the Institute connects policymakers, chefs, researchers, and cultural practitioners to turn gastronomy into a tool for sustainable regional development.

IGCAT's work demonstrates that when we invest in food systems, we are not indulging in luxury. We are cultivating equity, preserving heritage, boosting economies, and creating cohesion. In a fragmented world, food can be a force for unity.





WHERE CULTURE, POLICY, AND TASTE CONVERGE

The power of gastronomy lies in its intersectionality. It is not confined to kitchens or restaurants—it touches every aspect of life:

- Politics: Food sovereignty is about dignity and autonomy.
- Tourism: Travellers increasingly seek meaning over monuments—and cuisine offers authentic connection.
- Agriculture: Climate justice begins with the soil and is practiced through sustainable food traditions.
- Culture: Food is not a relic in a museum. It is living heritage—renewed every day in kitchens and markets.
- Community: The table is where we learn to care, to belong, and to imagine a better world.

From youth-led food trucks to heritage bakeries, from school lunches to coastal fisheries, gastronomy is shaping new narratives of identity, place, and purpose.

STORIES FROM EUROPE'S GASTRONOMIC REGIONS

Within Europe, designated Regions of Gastronomy are showcasing how local food cultures can drive holistic change.

In Kuopio, Finland, Sámi culinary traditions are being revitalised by young chefs— blending Indigenous knowledge with contemporary innovation. It is about more than preserving the past; it is about ensuring cultural survival through pride and creativity.

In Minho, Portugal, farmers, universities, and artists are collaborating to produce festivals rooted in seasonal cycles and ancestral rituals. These events foster regional pride and boost eco-tourism while reinforcing community bonds.

In Catalonia, cuisine meets architecture, visual art, and local activism. Culinary cooperatives are bringing life back to depopulated towns, where gastronomy becomes both resistance and renewal.

These regions are not passive beneficiaries of funding or policy. They are active co-creators of their futures—rooted in local knowledge, flavoured with innovation, and served with joy.

CULTURE BEGINS AT THE TABLE

We must challenge the narrow definitions of culture as something confined to galleries or concert halls. Culture begins at the table. It is in the hands of the grandmother shaping dumplings, in the rhythms of the market square, in the migrant kitchen where ingredients cross borders and create new fusions.

Gastronomy is not sentimental—it is strategic.

It drives:

- Circular, regional economies
- Ecological practices grounded in tradition
- Social cohesion based on shared experience

By investing in food systems, we are not only feeding bodies—we are feeding belonging.



A CALL TO ACTION: FEEDING THE FUTURE

To all those who grow, cook, serve, teach, legislate, and write about food: the question is no longer whether gastronomy matters—but how we mobilise its full potential.

We must ask:

- What kind of culture are we cultivating?
- What kind of tourism are we inviting?
- What kind of future are we feeding?

Let us build a future that is rooted in place, shared in joy, and guided by care. Let us set a table so wide, no one is left behind. Because the world does not need more fear—it needs more flavour. It needs cultural leadership. And it needs regions brave enough to place food at the centre of identity and innovation.

ISSUES AND PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE

If gastronomy is to play the transformative role it promises, there are critical issues that must be addressed by stakeholders in culture, gastronomy, and regional development:

1 - Food Sovereignty and Equity

Policies must prioritise access to land, seeds, and markets for local producers—especially women, Indigenous communities, and young farmers. Gastronomy cannot thrive without justice in food systems.

2 - Cultural Preservation and Innovation

Traditional knowledge must be safeguarded—but not fossilised. Support is needed for cultural practices that adapt and evolve, while retaining core values and identity.

3 - Climate-Responsive Food Systems

Regional food systems should be supported as vital components of climate action. Regenerative agriculture, biodiversity, and seasonal diets are not trends—they are necessities.

4 - Inclusive Tourism Models

Tourism strategies must avoid commodifying or erasing local cultures. Instead, they should amplify authentic stories and support host communities through ethical practices.

5 - Cross-Sector Collaboration

True transformation happens when artists, chefs, farmers, educators, and policymakers collaborate. Multi-disciplinary networks like IGCAT are essential for this integration.

In the end, food is more than what we eat—it is who we are. And in defending culture, rebuilding regions, and reimagining futures, food may be our most powerful tool.

Because food is culture's frontline.
And it's time we all showed up.

WORLD CAFÉ





WORLD CAFÉ

16 round tables strategising how to elevate gastronomy within international cultural policy frameworks, with a view to influencing the global MONDIACULT agenda. Each table has a provocateur, a host and a rapporteur.

Moderated by **Davinia Galea** (Malta) and **Jaume Gomila Saura** (Menorca)



DAVINIA GALEA

Founder and Managing Director
- ARC Research & Consultancy

"I BELIEVE FOOD IS FAR MORE THAN NOURISHMENT, IT IS ABOUT OUR MEMORIES, IDENTITIES, AND CREATIVITY. BY SAFEGUARDING OUR CULINARY HERITAGE, WE PROTECT OUR COMMUNITIES, OUR FUTURE GENERATIONS, AND THE FRAGILE PLANET THAT SUSTAINS US ALL."

Davinia Galea is an IGCAT expert since 2016, currently collaborating on Gozo's bid for European Region of Gastronomy 2026. With over thirty years of experience in the cultural sector, she has worked as a musician, cultural producer, policy maker and CEO. She founded ARC Research & Consultancy in 2014 to support creation and practice in the cultural and creative sectors, partnering with European networks such as EFFE and Medinea. Formerly Executive Director of the Malta Council for Culture and the Arts, she co-authored Malta's Cultural Policy and set up the national Arts Fund. She has contributed to Valletta's successful bids for European Capital of Culture 2018 and the IFACCA World Summit 2016.



JAUME GOMILA SAURA

Chairman of Adult Education
Schools of Menorca

"THE UNIVERSAL PRESERVATION OF GASTRONOMY AS INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE STANDS AS A LANDMARK STEP IN OVERCOMING NUTRITIONAL INEQUITY AND MOVING TOWARDS FOOD SOVEREIGNTY."

Jaume Gomila Saura is a philologist, teacher and cultural manager with professional training in Music and Theatre and a postgraduate degree in Literature Studies from the University of Barcelona. He has held diverse roles across creative and heritage sectors, including Director of the Public Library and Historical Archive of Mahón (2014–2015) and Director General for Culture of the Balearic Islands (2015–2017). Since 2018 he has been a civil servant in the Balearic Government, leading the creation of new artistic studies in Ibiza and Menorca. Active in numerous cultural and social NGOs, he currently serves as Chairman of the Adult Education Schools of Menorca, and is co-owner of Mahón's historic bistro, Nou Bar.



Table 1:

FEEDING OUR IMAGINATION: GASTRONOMY IN THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

Utopia: In 2050, chefs, artists, and storytellers collaborate seamlessly, and gastronomy is recognized globally as a cultural artform, embedded in school curricula and cultural policies.

Dystopia: By 2050, culinary creativity has been homogenized by algorithm-driven menus and synthetic flavors, and food is no longer a space for imagination or expression.



Provocateur:

WENDY BARRIE

Scottish Food Guide, Slow Food and IGCAT Expert, United Kingdom

“This Summit signals a decisive marker for the future of world gastronomy, and IGCAT’s key role in establishing, supporting and enriching sustainable gastronomy destinations for experiential travellers who appreciate local food and culture. As someone with great respect for IGCAT, its philosophy and standards, I am honoured to contribute to this inaugural event and together we can make a difference.”



Host:

SIRMA GÜVEN

Founder, The Kitchen Project Spain / Turkey

“The strength of Mediterranean cuisine lies in its ability to bring different communities together around the same table. From Spain to Turkey, from Greece to Morocco, people prepare and share similar ingredients in different ways. The table is not only a place to eat, but also a bridge for friendship, solidarity, and cultural exchange. This summit brings us all together at the same table in Barcelona, and I am proud to take part in it.”



Rapporteur:

MAJED ALMUHANNA

Head of Research, Culinary Arts Commission, Saudi Arabia

“Safeguarding culinary traditions is not just about preserving recipes—it is about protecting identities, histories, and cultures. Their diversity is a testament to our shared humanity, and together we must honour and preserve them.”



Additional participants in this table:

VOTAUSI MACKENZIE-REUR, Lapita Café & Regenerative Vanua, Vanuatu candidate World Region of Gastronomy 2027

JESSICA FÉREY, The Food Capitals by Délice Network, France, Global

DR. JUTAMAS JAN WISANSING, Thailand Gastronomy Network, Thailand

DAMIÀ SERRANO, Catalan Tourism Board (ACT), Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

EVA CANALETA SAFONT, Sant Pol School of Hospitality and Culinary Management, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

IMELDA MUÑOZ POGGI, Manabí Provincial Government, Manabí World Region of Gastronomy 2026

Table 1 has explored how gastronomy can become a central force in the creative economy by 2050. The discussion has been framed by two contrasting futures: a utopia in which creativity flourishes across cuisine, culture, education, and storytelling; and a dystopia where culinary imagination has been replaced by algorithm-driven menus and synthetic uniformity.

From these two extremes, participants have reflected on how to build a future where gastronomy is recognised as a cultural artform, deeply connected to biodiversity, creativity, and community identity.





UTOPIA VS. DYSTOPIA: TWO VISIONS SHAPING THE PATH FORWARD

In the utopian scenario, by 2050 chefs, artists, producers, educators, and storytellers collaborate seamlessly. Gastronomy has become widely recognised as a cultural discipline, part of school curricula, cultural policies, and public institutions. Children grow up understanding flavours the same way they learn music or visual arts. Food is a medium for creativity, dialogue, and imagination.

In the dystopian future, the opposite has happened: menus are dictated by algorithms, synthetic flavours dominate food systems, and culinary creativity has been reduced to standardised products optimised for efficiency. Food is no longer a space for culture or emotion but merely for functional consumption.

Table 1 has aimed to understand which values, skills, and policies will determine which future becomes reality.

AUTHENTICITY, BIODIVERSITY, AND THE POWER OF DIVERSITY

Participants have insisted that authenticity – not uniformity – must guide the future of gastronomy. The metaphor of “the one banana” has captured this idea: although the world offers many of banana varieties, most consumers only encounter one. This loss of diversity reflects a deeper cultural and ecological problem.

By 2050, the group imagines a world where local production and seasonal, place-based foods are celebrated; where biodiversity is not only protected but made visible through creativity. Communities, chefs, researchers, and storytellers all contribute to this celebration, translating diversity into narratives, dishes, and cultural experiences that honour the land.

Biodiversity, they have argued, is strengthened not only by nature but by community creativity, through festivals, recipes, stories, and the reintroduction of forgotten varieties.



STORYTELLING AS CULTURAL NOURISHMENT

A recurring theme has been the decisive role of storytelling. Taste becomes more meaningful when people understand the story behind a dish: who grew its ingredients, how traditions evolved, why a technique exists, and what values it carries.

Storytelling has been recognised as a creative tool that:

- strengthens identity,
- connects generations,
- supports sustainability,
- and captures the imagination of visitors and residents alike.



Participants have highlighted that in 2050, gastronomy should be understood not only as food but as narrative culture, a way of transmitting memory, values, and knowledge.

RESPECTING NATURE: AN ATTITUDE, NOT AN OCCASIONAL EXPERIENCE

The discussion has emphasised that respecting nature must go beyond experiencing it. It must become an attitude, integrated into daily choices and professional practices.

Participants have noted that the creative economy cannot thrive if ecosystems collapse. Soil health and social health are interconnected. Healthy food requires healthy communities, and creativity requires environmental stability.

This ecological mindset must be cultivated from early education to professional training.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS: REBUILDING THE CREATIVE FOUNDATIONS

A major concern has been the loss of traditional skills, knowledge, and techniques. Participants have highlighted that not enough culinary and agricultural know-how is being passed down.

Therefore, the future of creative gastronomy depends on:

- education on farms and food production, bringing children and youth closer to the land and seas,
- clear career pathways for young people interested in food, hospitality, and agriculture,
- international exchange programmes for youth, creating a new generation of culturally sensitive food professionals,
- and training that blends tradition with innovation, honouring heritage while adapting it to contemporary contexts.

The table has emphasised that creative gastronomy requires creative roots: understanding where we come from to imagine where we can go.

“WE NEED TO GO SLOW, BUT HURRY UP!”

This phrase has emerged as one of the session's strongest reflections. It captures the paradox of the moment:

- we need to slow down to reconnect with values, terroirs, biodiversity, and cultural meaning;
- yet we must act urgently to prevent further loss, of skills, varieties, landscapes, and cultural capital.

Participants have agreed that the window of opportunity is now. Creativity, sustainability, and education cannot wait for 2050; they must start shaping decisions today.

THE NEED FOR GASTRONOMY HEROES – AND VISIONARY POLICY

Table 1 has insisted that the future will require gastronomy heroes: individuals and communities who champion creativity, biodiversity, and cultural identity in everyday practice. These heroes are not only chefs, but also farmers, teachers, researchers, hosts, young talents, and community leaders.

However, creativity alone is not enough. Participants have stressed that visionary policy and political commitment are essential to:

- recognise gastronomy as culture,
- support small-scale local producers,
- integrate food into cultural strategies,
- fund education and research,
- and promote gastronomy within the wider creative economy.

Public institutions must understand that investing in creativity is investing in sustainability, identity, and community wellbeing.



ADAPTING TRADITION IN A MODERN WAY

A meaningful future of gastronomy will require the ability to adapt tradition without losing its essence. Innovation should enhance, not erase, cultural memory. Participants have discussed how reinterpreting old recipes, ingredients, and rituals can create new forms of expression while strengthening belonging.

This balance between tradition and modernity is at the heart of the creative economy: using creativity as a bridge between past and future.

IMAGINATION AS A RESOURCE FOR THE FUTURE

The discussion at Table 1 has made it clear that imagination is as essential to the future of gastronomy as soil, water, or seeds. Creativity nourishes biodiversity, strengthens communities, and connects cultures.

By 2050, gastronomy can become a major force in the creative economy, but only if authenticity, education, biodiversity, and storytelling guide our choices.

Ultimately, the group has concluded that food is one of the most powerful cultural languages we have. To feed imagination is to feed identity, and to feed identity is to protect the future.

The challenge ahead is to cultivate a world where creativity, community, and nature coexist, and where gastronomy continues to inspire, connect, and transform.



Table 2:

TASTING DIVERSITY AND CELEBRATING BIODIVERSITY IN OUR FOOD

Utopia: In 2050, pollinators thrive thanks to biodiversity-friendly agriculture and every meal celebrates this living biodiversity, with indigenous ingredients, diverse crops, and revived recipes.

Dystopia: Pollinators have vanished, and agriculture is dominated by global monocultures. 80% of people eat only five crops, and culinary diversity survives only in museums and digital archives, while ecosystems collapse.



Provocateur:

ANA PAULA SANÇANA

Lousamel Beekeepers Coop., Coimbra European Region of Gastronomy 2021, Portugal

“At the World Gastronomy Summit, we honor the vital yet often overlooked role of bees, not only as key pollinators sustaining biodiversity and food security, but also as silent architects of flavor, terroir, and ecological balance. Their contribution is essential to preserving culinary heritage and advancing sustainable gastronomy for future generations.”



Host:

DR. MOHAMMED HAMOUD

Aseer World Region of Gastronomy 2024, Saudi Arabia

“Our culture and heritage flourish when all of society takes part in carrying them forward. Gastronomy is not only about food, but a living archive of memory, identity, and creativity.”



Rapporteur:

EIRINI MAKEDONA

Cultural Policy & Development Expert, Project Director, Crete European Region of Gastronomy 2026, Greece

“Placing food culture at the heart of cultural policy is crucial to safeguarding heritage, strengthening sustainability, and ensuring that well-being, resilience, and diversity stand at the core of our common future. I am honoured to join IGCAT at the World Gastronomy Summit in advancing this vision.”

Additional participants in this table:

DR. STEFAN SCHMITZ, Global Crop Diversity Trust, Global based in Germany

DR. HEINI UTUNEN, South Savo Regional Council, Saimaa European Region of Gastronomy 2024

ROSA MAYORDOMO, Catalan Academy of Gastronomy and Nutrition, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

PAU GASCÓ, Fragments Cafè, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

DR. PAOLA SARCINA, ALES SpA, IGCAT

DR. HELENA MARTÍN GÓMEZ, Directora del grup de recerca de cuina i gastronomia, CETT-UB



Table 2 has explored a central question of the World Gastronomy Summit: how can societies protect both *biodiversity* and *taste diversity* while safeguarding pollinators, landscapes, and the local food cultures that sustain them?

Anchored between a utopian horizon and a dystopian warning, the discussion has highlighted that the real future of food will not move toward either extreme: neither a perfect ecological harmony nor a total collapse of diversity. Instead, the pathway forward lies in the constant and conscious balancing of sufficiency, sustainability, cultural heritage, and market dynamics.



UTOPIAN AND DYSTOPIAN FUTURES: WHAT IS AT STAKE?

In the utopian scenario, by 2050 pollinators thrive thanks to biodiversity-friendly agriculture, and every meal becomes a celebration of living diversity: indigenous ingredients, varied crops, revived recipes and food systems rooted in ecological respect. Diversity is experienced not only as a biological resource but as a cultural right.

The dystopian vision shows the opposite future: pollinators have vanished, global monocultures dominate, and 80% of the world's population survives on just five staple crops. Culinary diversity exists only in museums and digital archives, disconnected from the ecosystems that once supported it.

Participants have insisted that the space between these extremes, the *space of responsibility*, is where the urgent work must unfold.

RETHINKING THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF FOOD

A central theme at the table has been the need to fundamentally rethink the political economy of food. Current market structures too often prioritise efficiency, uniformity and volume over ecological resilience and cultural meaning.

Participants agreed that:

- Markets must evolve to support small-scale, diverse and ecologically respectful production.
- Seeds should be protected as a global common good, freely accessible and shielded from privatization or monopolistic control.
- Pollinators, as guardians of biodiversity, must be recognised not only as environmental actors but as essential components of food sovereignty.

This new political economy calls for transparency, accountability and the recognition that food systems are not merely economic structures but cultural, ecological and social ones.

THE ETHICAL FOOD CHAIN: RECONNECTING PRODUCERS AND CONSUMERS

Participants have highlighted the need for an ethical and transparent food chain that brings producers and consumers into closer relationship.

This includes:

- reducing the number of intermediaries in supply chains,
- ensuring fair remuneration for farmers and beekeepers,
- and enabling consumers to make informed choices rooted in values rather than price alone.

Fiscal incentives and tax benefits were seen as key tools to support farmers who adopt pollinator-friendly and biodiversity-enhancing practices. Public procurement policies, too, can play a transformative role, especially when schools, hospitals, and public institutions prioritise diverse crops and local producers.

TASTE AS A CULTURAL RESOURCE AND EDUCATIONAL TOOL

One of the strongest insights emerging from the table concerns the role of taste. Participants described taste as much more than an individual sensory experience: it is a cultural lens, a form of memory, and an educational tool capable of shaping values.

Taste diversity allows communities to:

- understand their landscapes and histories,
- appreciate local identity,
- and develop pride in traditional knowledge.

For this reason, the integration of food storytelling into cultural and educational policies is seen as essential. Reviving forgotten recipes, recovering indigenous seeds, amplifying local narratives and reconnecting youth with traditional practices are all part of a cultural strategy to protect biodiversity through daily choices.



BIODIVERSITY AND POLLINATORS: AN ECOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL DUTY

The table has made clear that protecting biodiversity and safeguarding pollinators is not only an environmental responsibility but a cultural and social imperative. Pollinators are intertwined with culinary heritage, agricultural identity and the future of food diversity.

Participants agreed that a world without pollinators is a world without flavours, without ecological balance, and without many of the foods that sustain communities culturally and nutritionally.

Safeguarding pollinators, therefore, requires:

- coordinated political action,
- education and public awareness,
- cross-sectoral collaboration,
- and an understanding that biodiversity is both a biological asset and a cultural inheritance.

FINDING BALANCE: THE “TRUE UTOPIA” OF THE PRESENT

Rather than aiming for perfection, the group has concluded that the real utopia of 2050 is the ability to maintain a balanced, adaptive, community-driven food system. This balance integrates environmental health, cultural continuity, economic fairness, and sensory richness. It is an achievable utopia, grounded in political will, shared responsibility and collective care.

This balanced approach requires courage from policymakers, creativity from educators and cultural actors, and everyday commitment from consumers.

POLICY PROPOSALS EMERGING FROM TABLE 2

To support this vision, participants have identified a set of policy priorities:

- **Recognition of seeds and pollinators as a global common good**, protected through international frameworks.
- **Integration of pollinator protection into all agri-food and environmental strategies**, supported by tools such as a Pollinator Impact Assessment.
- **Fiscal and economic incentives** for producers who adopt biodiversity-friendly practices.
- **Reform of market structures** to prioritise small-scale and local production over monopolised systems.
- **Shortening of supply chains** and the strengthening of direct producer–consumer relationships.
- **Recognition of taste as a cultural and educational resource**, integrated into school curricula and cultural programming.
- **Public procurement policies** that prioritise diverse crops and local producers.
- **Promotion of storytelling and local food narratives** within cultural heritage and tourism strategies.
- **Political commitment to cross-sector collaboration**, integrating agricultural, cultural, environmental and educational policies at both national and international levels.



Table 3:
**FEEDING CURIOSITY: CREATIVE TOURISM STRATEGIES
 ROOTED IN GASTRONOMY**

Utopia: Gastronomic tourism in 2050 is slow, immersive, and community-led, connecting visitors with local stories, producers, and landscapes.

Dystopia: Tourists consume “local experiences” via virtual headsets, never leaving global food courts designed to simulate culture.



Provocateur:

BEATRIZ NUBIOLA DE PALACIO

Catalan Tourism Board, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

“For me, coordinating the action plan we have created due to the designation of Catalunya as World Region of Gastronomy is proving to be a wonderful opportunity for professional growth and learning. Having the chance to exchange views and opinions with experts from the IGCAT platform is highly enriching, as well as showing them Catalunya’s gastronomy and landscape.”



Host:

FRANCISCO GUITARD

Instituto Nauta & CEO First Coast, candidate World Region of Gastronomy 2030

“From kitchens to classrooms, culinary diversity teaches respect, health, and hope, placing food at the heart of cultural life.”



Rapporteur:

VASIA PAPAILIA

South Aegean European Region of Gastronomy 2019

“Representing the South Aegean, Europe’s largest island region, I am proud to join the World Gastronomy Summit to strengthen the collective voice of our communities. Building on our journey as European Region of Gastronomy 2019, we know that food is not only heritage but also a pathway to sustainable futures. Together, let’s ensure gastronomy takes its rightful place at the heart of cultural and community well-being worldwide”



Additional participants in this table:

DANIEL BRASÉ ARNAU, Federació Intercomarcal D'Hosteleria, Restauracio I Turisme - FIHRT, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

FELIX RIVAS, Cámara de Industrias y Producción de Manabí, Manabí World Region of Gastronomy 2026

PROF. SMILJANA PIVČEVIĆ, Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism, University of Split, Central Dalmatia European Region of Gastronomy 2027

RICARDO MIGUELÁÑEZ PASTOR, Agrifood Comunicación

ASST PROF DR. WITTAWAT DIDYASARIN SATTAYARAK, SHatyai University & Songkla Gastronomy Network Office

Table 3 has explored how gastronomic tourism can evolve towards 2050 as a meaningful, immersive and community-led experience. The discussion has revolved around two contrasting futures: a utopia in which food becomes a bridge connecting visitors

with producers, landscapes and local stories; and a dystopia in which “local experiences” are consumed through virtual headsets in globalised food courts that simulate, rather than nurture, culture.





The group has reflected on how to build a future where curiosity becomes a source of connection rather than consumption, and where gastronomy acts as a gateway to identity, creativity and sustainability.

IMAGINING THE FUTURE: BETWEEN DEEP IMMERSION AND EMPTY SIMULATION

The utopian vision presented at the table imagined 2050 as a time when gastronomic tourism is slow and rooted in place: visitors learn directly from farmers, fishers, artisans and local cooks; landscapes become edible classrooms; and food stories are carried by real voices, not digital avatars. Curiosity leads visitors into orchards, cellars, fishing boats and home kitchens.

The dystopian scenario showed the opposite: tourists experiencing “glocal culture” through screens and algorithms, where flavour is synthetic and landscapes are replaced by simulations. In this world, cultural experience has been diluted into convenience and uniformity.

Table 3 has centred its efforts on mapping the strategies needed to avoid this dystopia and to nourish a tourism model that is authentic, participatory and transformative.

A SHARED STARTING POINT: INTERCONNECTED PRIORITIES

The discussion began with the idea of a pyramid of priorities, but participants quickly agreed on a different approach: no single sector stands above the others. Gastronomic tourism requires interdependence. Instead of a pyramid, the group adopted an integrated, intersectoral vision combining vertical dimensions (government, private sector, commu-

nities, visitors, NGOs) with horizontal ones (media, digital tools, and shared spaces for exchange).

This framework has guided the reflections that follow.

GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: ENABLING AUTHENTIC, COMMUNITY-LED EXPERIENCES

Participants emphasised the critical role of public administrations in shaping the frameworks that allow creative gastronomic tourism to flourish.

Key priorities discussed include:

- **Empowering producers as storytellers and hosts**, through training, branding, marketing support and participation in international expos.

Example: “Welcome to the Farm – Catalonia Project”.

- **Supporting agritourism infrastructure**, including farmers' markets, visitable farms, and food routes.

- **Developing certification frameworks** that guarantee authenticity, traceability and sustainability.

Example: the Aegean Cuisine label.

- **Introducing taxation linked to sustainability indices**, rewarding companies that adopt environmentally conscious practices.

- **Recognising food heritage as intangible cultural heritage**, protecting recipes and integrating them into local tourism events and learning experiences.

- **Encouraging community-led food trails and festivals**, ensuring initiatives grow from within communities rather than being imposed from above.

Collectively, these actions position the public sector as a facilitator of genuine encounters between producers, landscapes and visitors.

PRIVATE SECTOR & INDUSTRY: FROM PROVIDERS TO CO-CREATORS

The private sector has been identified as a crucial actor in translating authenticity into viable, sustainable tourism products. Participants highlighted the need for:

- **Joining local networks** that connect food, culture and nature.
- **Adopting sustainable practices** that visitors can directly observe and experience.
- **Collaborating to form cooperatives and networks of “heroes”** committed to environmental responsibility.
- **Opening production spaces to visitors:** cheese-making, olive oil mills, vineyards, fishing trips, etc.
- **Integrating producers’ personal stories** into menus, itineraries and visitor experiences.
- **Designing immersive activities** such as cooking with local families, harvesting in the fields or learning traditional techniques.

A notable example discussed was Sawa (Tunisia), where community and gastronomy intertwine to create participatory tourism.

Participants also stressed the importance of:

- Collaborative packages that combine accommodation, gastronomy tours and producer visits.
- Loyalty programmes that build long-term community between visitors and destinations.
- Digital tools that ensure transparency and authenticity, without replacing human connection.
- Strengthening intergenerational knowledge transfer.

This approach turns the private sector into a steward of local identity rather than a mere service provider.



COMMUNITIES & CITIZENS: THE CUSTODIANS OF MEANING

Table 3 has strongly emphasised that communities are the beating heart of gastronomic tourism. Their role includes:

- Acting as ambassadors of culture and traditions.
- Forming associations and cooperatives to promote local gastronomy collectively.
- Co-creating experiences that genuinely reflect community values.
- Sharing intergenerational knowledge, ensuring that culinary traditions, farming skills and local stories are passed on.
- Encouraging volunteerism in festivals, food trails and community-led events.

Visitors connect most deeply when local people participate proudly and authentically in the storytelling of their own gastronomic heritage.



VISITORS: CURIOSITY WITH RESPONSIBILITY

The group has highlighted that the future of gastronomic tourism depends also on visitor behaviour. Responsible travellers in 2050 should:

- Choose slow, respectful, community-led experiences.
- Participate actively – learning, co-creating and engaging, not merely consuming.
- Support local economies by buying local products and paying fair prices.
- Use digital tools as facilitators, not substitutes, for real experience.
- Turn travel into a relationship of exchange, leaving with gratitude and understanding.
- Use holidays as educational moments for children, about sustainability, culture and identity.
- Make conscious choices based on values, not prices: every bite matters.

Curiosity, when paired with responsibility, becomes a powerful tool for transformation.

NGOS: CONNECTORS AND FACILITATORS

NGOs have been recognised as key actors bridging sectors and ensuring collaboration. Their roles include:

- Facilitating dialogue between producers, institutions, private actors and communities.
- Helping shape common narratives.
- Fighting misinformation and promoting transparency.
- Supporting innovation and shared commitments.

NGOs sustain the ecosystem that makes authentic gastronomic tourism possible.

MEDIA, DIGITAL TOOLS & SHARED SPACES: AMPLIFYING AUTHENTICITY

Media and digital platforms were seen as essential for:

- Making information accessible, transparent and trustworthy.

- Designing shared spaces for exchange – both digital and physical.

Example: "Speed dating" moments from food capitals.

- Supporting loyalty-building initiatives.
- Amplifying local stories and voices, without overshadowing them.

Digital tools must serve as bridges – not as replacements.

CURIOSITY AS A PATHWAY TO RESILIENCE AND CONNECTION

The table has concluded that if producers, landscapes and communities remain at the centre, curiosity will not only inspire tourists – it will nourish resilience, pride and sustainability.

The journey towards 2050 is not about creating faster or more spectacular experiences. It is about slowing down, listening, respecting the land, and creating encounters rooted in community and meaning.

Ultimately, gastronomic tourism can become a bridge:

- from field to fork,
- from heritage to innovation,
- from host to guest.

A bridge built through curiosity, and sustained by authenticity.



Table 4: NURTURING CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION IN THE FOOD SECTOR

Utopia: Food labs across regions experiment with sustainable ingredients, cultural fusion, and low-waste design, making innovation accessible to all.

Dystopia: A handful of tech companies patent all food innovation, stifling creativity and marginalizing traditional knowledge.



Provocateur:

PATRICIO TAMARIZ

Executive Director, Manabí World Region of Gastronomy 2026

“In Manabí, the ancestral oven is more than a culinary tool – it is a gathering place, a women’s heritage, and a vessel of memory. From these fires we invite the world to celebrate with us in 2026.”



Host:

DÈLIA PERPIÑÀ GINÈ

General Director, Prodeca and Catalonia, World Region of Gastronomy 2025

“I believe that food is a strategic driver of economic, social, and cultural development, and I am committed to strengthening its value, global reach, and positive impact on society.”



Rapporteur:

TEODORA MORARU, DBA

Vice President, National Union of Romanian Employers -South-East Region and Dobrogea, candidate European Region of Gastronomy 2029

“Innovation can transform organizations and communities. I believe the same applies to gastronomy heritage: by making it visible, accessible and connected online, we give local producers the tools to thrive, strengthen community bonds, and ensure that gastronomy becomes a true catalyst for cultural identity and sustainable development.”



Additional participants in this table:

LUDOVICO ROCCATELLO, Director Knowledge Hub, Slow Food, (Global based in Italy)

CANDELARIA ANDREU SABATÉ, Consell Regulador DOP Oli Terra Alta, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

MARIA BASSEGODA TORRES, Luma Digital, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

ISAAC ARMANDO SOSA LOOR, Manabí Provincial Government, Manabí World Region of Gastronomy 2025

DR. SAMUEL AZZOPARDI, Gozo Regional Council, Gozo European Region of Gastronomy 2026

Table 4 has explored how creativity and innovation can reshape the food sector between now and 2050, guided by a powerful vision: “Resilient systems, not profit booms. Diversity, not uniformity. Ownership, not exploitation. Creativity and tradition – hand in hand.” This principle, proposed during the session, has served as the foundation for imagining a future where agricultural landscapes—symbolised through the metaphor of Cacao Forests 2050—stand

as living examples of a harmonious blend between biodiversity, cultural heritage, and innovative food systems.

Participants have reflected on the pathways needed to make this vision a reality, identifying two key stages: a Transition Phase (present-2035) centred on trust-building, awareness, and inclusion, and a Consolidation Phase (2035-2050) focused





on spreading knowledge and expanding impact. Across both phases, the group has emphasised that true innovation emerges when tradition, ecological respect, and fair ownership are placed at the core of food systems.

1. TRANSITION PHASE (PRESENT–2035): BUILDING TRUST, AWARENESS AND INCLUSION

During this initial phase, the table has identified several foundational pillars that must be strengthened to build a creative and equitable future.

A. Fair Ownership and Transparency

A central idea has been the importance of fair ownership structures, ensuring that farmers are not just providers of raw materials but co-owners of the products derived from their work. Participants have advocated for models in which farmers share in the value created by established companies, with full transparency for consumers regarding how much of the revenue goes back to producers.

Fair trade policies, both national and international, were highlighted as essential tools to protect small farmers, guarantee equitable partnerships, and prevent exploitative market structures.

B. Certification and Authenticity

The table has agreed that certification systems will be indispensable for building trust in food products. Labels, traceability mechanisms, online verification platforms, and even blockchain-based systems were proposed to ensure transparency, authenticity, and consumer confidence.

These tools can help distinguish genuine, ethically sourced products from those that imitate them, while also strengthening market integrity.

C. Youth and Education

Participants have underlined the urgency of investing in training for young people to ensure the con-

tinuity of sustainable and innovative food systems. This includes:

- grants for studies in food sciences and food entrepreneurship,
- dedicated training programmes,
- and incubator spaces to help young innovators establish local businesses rooted in sustainable gastronomy.

This focus on youth is seen as essential for renewing the sector with creativity, scientific knowledge, and entrepreneurial energy.

D. Incentives and Policy

Policy has been recognised as a powerful driver of innovation. Participants have proposed:

- tax incentives for restaurants using authentic, ethical and certified products,
- support for cooperatives that strengthen local ownership and resilience,
- and policy frameworks that reward long-term sustainability over short-term profit.

Cooperatives, in particular, were viewed as key structures for collective empowerment, fairer distribution of value, and improved resilience across communities.

E. Communication and Awareness

Finally, participants stressed the importance of communication strategies capable of shaping public perception. Focused campaigns should help consumers understand authenticity, biodiversity, and ethical food systems.

Scientists, young talents, strong community leaders and chefs have been identified as essential ambassadors who can bring these messages to national and international platforms. Their role in communicating the value of biodiversity and food heritage is crucial to making the broader public feel part of the movement.



2. CONSOLIDATION PHASE (2035-2050): SPREADING KNOWLEDGE AND EXPANDING IMPACT

From 2035 onwards, the table envisions a phase where the achievements of the transition period become embedded, celebrated and scaled.

A. Heritage Recognition

One of the key ambitions for this phase is achieving UNESCO recognition for cacao forests and other biodiverse food landscapes. This would position these ecosystems not only as agricultural assets but as cultural and ecological treasures that deserve global attention and protection.

Such recognition can strengthen national pride, promote responsible tourism, create market opportunities, and ensure the long-term safeguarding of traditional knowledge.

Positioning cacao and other biodiverse food landscapes, as both a cultural symbol and an ecological resource at national and international levels, was seen as a natural extension of this strategy.

B. Diversification and Resilience

A resilient food future cannot depend on a single crop, not even one as culturally rich as cacao. The table stressed the importance of diversifying production, focusing on a wider range of rainforest products and building agroforestry systems that embrace complexity.

Participants agreed that:

- resilience, not profit maximization, must guide future systems,
- agroforestry diversity provides ecological stability,
- and long-term sustainability can only be achieved through diversified economic and ecological strategies.

This broad, multi-species agricultural approach mirrors the richness of natural ecosystems and protects communities from market and climate volatility.



CREATIVITY AND TRADITION HAND IN HAND

Table 4 has painted a future in which innovation is inseparable from heritage, and where creativity grows not from disruption but from respect: respect for farmers, for biodiversity, for culture, and for the landscapes that feed us.

The journey to 2050 requires trust, inclusion, transparency, and a global commitment to recognising food systems as cultural, ecological and social pillars. Resilient systems, diverse landscapes, shared ownership, and strong community voices form the basis of this long-term transformation.

In this vision, cacao forests—and by extension all biodiverse food landscapes—, become symbols of what gastronomy can achieve when tradition and innovation truly walk hand in hand.



Table 5:
HERITAGE IN THE SOIL: SAFEGUARDING TRADITIONAL CROPS
FOR REGIONAL IDENTITY AND WELL-BEING

Utopia: Heirloom seeds are protected and thriving in diverse climates, forming the backbone of regional economies and diets.

Dystopia: Climate change and corporate patents have wiped out traditional crops; communities are disconnected from their agricultural heritage.



Provocateur:

EMANUELA PANKE

President, Itervitis, Cultural Route of the Council of Europe

“The Summit provides an essential space to build alliances, share knowledge, and influence international cultural policy, ensuring that gastronomy and wine are understood not only as economic assets, but as vital pillars of community well-being, biodiversity, and cultural diversity.”



Host:

ANA MARIA BARATA

Portuguese National Genebank (BPGV), Minho European Region of Gastronomy 2016

“Food tells us our story as a person, a community and a country. Food is the moral right of all who are born into this world. Traditional crops, the ways of production and using them in gastronomy, are the heritage of each one of us, the heritage of each country and a world heritage.”



Rapporteur:

JERRY SPOONER

Regenerative Vanua, Vanuatu candidate World Region of Gastronomy 2027

“As someone who believes in the transformative power of traditional food culture for our rural communities, particularly in addressing economic leakage, unhealthy lifestyles and loss of traditional food systems knowledge, I value Regenerative Vanua’s partnership with IGCAT and their support in our mission to enable rural communities to participate meaningfully through Regenerative Gastronomy”

Additional participants in this table:

DR. EDITH M SZIVAS, Vice-President IGCAT

ÀGATA ALBERO MIRALBELL, Tinspira Gastronomia, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

NACHO BALLESTA MARTINEZ-PÁIS, Slow Food Educa Spain / The Foodtellers, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

ING. JOAN GENÉ ALBESA, Institut Català de la Vinya i el Vi (INCAVI), Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

DRA. PAOLA QUIFER RADA, Coordinadora del grau Ciències Culinàries i Gastronòmiques, CETT-UB



Table 5 has brought together two complementary dimensions of the food system: regenerative tourism and the safeguarding of traditional crops and agricultural heritage. The session has explored how future tourism models can revitalise landscapes, support small producers and protect heirloom seeds – while strengthening regional identity and community wellbeing.

Moderated through a multi-speaker format, the conversation has offered perspectives from across sectors and regions, reflecting different stages of regenerative journeys. Despite the diversity of contexts, the group has shared a common conviction: that regeneration must go beyond sustainability, moving from reducing harm to actively restoring ecosystems, cultures and communities.



UTOPIA AND DYSTOPIA: THE FUTURE OF FOOD HERITAGE IN THE SOIL

The utopian vision imagined a future where heirloom seeds thrive in diverse climates, forming the backbone of regional diets and local economies. Traditional crops are celebrated, protected and integrated into regenerative tourism pathways. Landscapes become living classrooms where visitors learn directly from farmers, and where biodiversity and cultural identity reinforce one another.

The dystopian scenario has warned of the opposite outcome: climate change, corporate patents and homogenised agriculture wiping out traditional crops. Communities become disconnected from their agricultural heritage, relying on imported monocultures while local knowledge and food identity evaporate.

Participants have agreed that current trends place us dangerously close to this dystopia, but that a regenerative transition is still possible.

CURRENT SITUATION: PRESSURES, GAPS AND EMERGING SIGNS OF RENEWAL

The table has outlined a series of current challenges affecting both tourism and agriculture:

- Producers often lack crop diversity, leaving food systems vulnerable.
- Low profitability discourages new generations from entering agriculture.
- Export-oriented models favour high-profit crops over local varieties.
- Supermarkets and markets are dominated by standardised, non-seasonal products.
- Vegetables and produce tend to cater to tourist-oriented restaurants rather than local diets.

- There is a widespread lack of public awareness about crop varieties, origins and value.
- “Perfect”, lab-grown produce is increasingly preferred, contributing to food waste and loss of biodiversity.

However, participants have also identified positive signals: renewed interest in regenerative agriculture, the rediscovery of ancient grains and vines, and opportunities for tourism to act as a bridge between visitors and local food heritage.

REGENERATIVE TOURISM: A NEW MODEL FOR HOSTING, NOT JUST HOSPITALITY

One of the core messages from speakers has been the distinction between sustainable tourism and regenerative tourism. While sustainability often focuses on reducing negative impacts, regeneration emphasises actively restoring landscapes, cultures and communities.

Two insights have guided this reflection:

1. Regeneration starts bottom-up.

Success depends on community-led initiatives that begin small and grow through collective intelligence and local ownership. Villages, cooperatives, and family farms must be central actors – not peripheral suppliers.

2. Hosting over hospitality.

Regenerative tourism requires shifting from offering services to hosting meaningful encounters between visitors and communities. Tourists become participants rather than spectators, and the emphasis lies on learning, exchange and respect.



Examples shared during the session illustrated how regenerative tourism can integrate food narratives, landscape stewardship, and traditional knowledge into experiences that nourish both culture and nature.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES HIGHLIGHTED IN THE DISCUSSION

The conversation has brought forward several critical points:

- Good and bad farming practices shape landscapes and visitor experiences; tourists should be exposed to both realities.

- Rural depopulation threatens food heritage, as young people leave farms, leaving elders to manage land alone.
- Regenerative farming must be supported urgently, especially under the pressure of climate change.
- Small-scale farmers face structural obstacles in value adding, despite being key stewards of biodiversity.
- Policies and metrics are needed to clearly differentiate “sustainable” from “regenerative” practices, avoiding superficial or misleading claims.

These challenges require coordinated policy support, education and investment to unlock regeneration at scale.



PATHWAYS FOR ACTION: PROTECTING HERITAGE IN THE SOIL

Building on the discussion, participants have outlined concrete directions for regenerating food heritage through tourism, agriculture and community engagement.

1. Information and Awareness

Consumers must receive accurate, accessible information to make informed decisions. Storytelling, transparent labelling and digital tools can illuminate origins, producers and practices.

2. Policy Support

Policies should protect and prioritise local product consumption, regulate markets and incentivise restaurants, hotels and retailers that source ethically and locally.

3. Education for Schools and Families

Education must start early. Participants called for:

- regenerative farming content in school curricula,
- healthy school food programmes that use local seasonal products,
- and incentives for families to purchase and learn about traditional crops.

4. Open-Air Collections and Living Seed Banks

Visits to open collections of crops, vines and native varieties can reconnect communities and visitors with agricultural heritage. Seed banks are essential to safeguard food security and adapt crops to climate change.

5. Direct Sales and Short Supply Chains

Investment and incentives should strengthen direct-to-consumer platforms, improving farmer visibility and economic viability while building trust.

FUTURE VISION: 2050 AND BEYOND

The table has articulated a forward-looking vision grounded in education, regulation and investment. Priorities include:

- National education programmes (starting from pre-school) focused on regenerative farming knowledge and cultural heritage.
- Market regulation that guarantees space for local products (e.g. targets such as 70% local sourcing, reduced VAT on local products, limits to generic food stands).
- Investment in regenerative farming, agritourism and gastronomic innovation, ensuring that traditional crops remain alive in fields – not only in archives.

Table 5 has made it clear that the soil is heritage, and that regeneration must begin from the ground up: in the seeds we preserve, the landscapes we steward, the stories we transmit and the tourism models we choose to foster.

A regenerative future is one in which communities lead, visitors learn, producers thrive, and food landscapes become living bridges between culture and nature.

This is not simply about sustainability: it is about restoring life, identity and resilience where they are most needed.



Table 6: EDIBLE DESTINATIONS: STRENGTHENING REGIONS THROUGH GASTRONOMY AND THE ARTS

Utopia: In 2050, regions are celebrated for their edible cultures, where gastronomy and the arts form the soul of regenerative rural development.

Dystopia: Gastronomic identity is reduced to branding exercises for mass tourism, with little benefit to local artists or farmers.



Provocateur:

IDA BONDØ LEE-WRIGHT

Chief Communications and Marketing Officer, Oi! Food & Beverages,
Trondheim-Trøndelag European Region of Gastronomy 2022

“The declaration fully aligns with both my personal beliefs and those of Oi! Mat & Drikke. We work to ensure local, sustainable food production is grounded in historical and cultural traditions. Food education, youth participation, indigenous heritage and innovation are supported and celebrated.”



Host:

RUQAYA AL-HABSI

Head of Quality & Sustainability Department,
Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Oman

“Promoting Omani cuisine as a driver of economic, social, and environmental sustainability – placing our culinary arts on the global cultural tourism map, empowering local communities, and creating opportunities for SMEs and culinary professions.”



Rapporteur:

HENRIK BRIAN ZEEGERS

Menorca European Region of Gastronomy 2022

“Menorcan cuisine is a harmony of land and sea, where humble tradition and modern creation meet to turn flavours into poetry.”

Additional participants in this table:

ANNA AMIGÓ VILALTA, Anna Amigó Music, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

CRISTINA CAPARROS, La Platjeta i Cap a Mar, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

DR. PAULA MOLES, Catalunya Ràdio, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

LAMIA TEMIMI, Sawa Taste of Tunisia, Cap Bon candidate World Region of Gastronomy 2028

NATAŠA BUŠIĆ, Croatian Chamber of Economy, Split County Chamber, Central Dalmatia European Region of Gastronomy 2027

PITON THONGCHIM, Hatyai University & Songkhla Gastronomy Network, Thailand



Table 6 has explored how gastronomy and the arts can act as engines of regional development, cultural identity and social cohesion. The discussion has been framed through two contrasting scenarios

– utopian and dystopian – offering participants a powerful lens through which to examine the role of food culture in shaping resilient, thriving regions for 2050.



Throughout the session, one idea has guided the group: gastronomy is not merely an economic sector or a leisure pursuit. It is a living bridge linking people with land, memory, creativity and community. The real challenge is ensuring that this bridge remains authentic, regenerative and rooted in place, rather than diluted into commercialised and disconnected experiences.

1. UTOPIAN VISION: A FUTURE WHERE CULTURE AND SOIL THRIVE TOGETHER

In the utopian scenario, food becomes a profound educational, cultural and social resource. Children learn through hands-on experiences – tending school gardens, preparing meals with seasonal, local ingredients, and visiting farmers' fields to understand the origin and meaning of food. Gastronomy permeates school curricula as a pathway to creativity, health, and cultural heritage.

Farmers and chefs are recognised as custodians of knowledge. They act as mentors, sharing insights about biodiversity, agricultural cycles, fermentation, preservation techniques, and the seasonal rhythms that shape local cuisines. Their expertise is woven into community life and educational programmes.

Tourism, in this vision, is slow, immersive and rooted in human connection. Visitors travel along “edible itineraries”, staying in eco-farms, vineyards, smallholdings, and artisan workshops. They engage in tastings, storytelling, and creative arts experiences that reveal the cultural landscapes behind each product. Gastronomy and the arts merge into a single narrative, both expressing regional identity, memory and imagination.

This utopia sees a harmonious relationship between humans and soil: rural areas flourish, young people remain connected to their territories, and food becomes a powerful medium for wellbeing, belonging and cultural pride.

2. DYSTOPIAN VISION: WHEN CONVENIENCE REPLACES CULTURE

In stark contrast, the dystopian future depicts the erosion of authenticity. Local gastronomy has been reduced to a superficial brand, used mainly as a marketing tool. Products labelled as “regional” are mass-produced far away, disconnected from the land and the people whose traditions they claim to represent.

Restaurants serve frozen, standardised meals; diversity is replaced by uniformity. Speed and efficiency have overtaken craftsmanship. In schools, children eat industrialised canteen meals with no awareness of their origin: food becomes mere fuel.

Communities lose their cultural anchors. Farmers, artists, chefs and artisans – the carriers of tradition – are pushed to the margins. Rural areas suffer depopulation, and urban populations become alienated from natural rhythms and agricultural heritage. The deeper meaning of food – as knowledge, resilience, identity and story – fades away.

This dystopian scenario serves as a warning: without action, current megatrends such as monoculture farming, climate pressure, industrial standardisation and cultural detachment could lead us down this path.

3. KEY INSIGHTS: WHAT MUST BE PROTECTED AND STRENGTHENED

Several essential insights emerged throughout the conversation:

- **Food literacy and education** are crucial for transmitting identity and fostering respect for gastronomy as culture.
- **Authentic gastronomy-driven tourism** must prioritise participation and immersion, ensuring that benefits remain in the region rather than being extracted by external actors.



- **Cross-sector collaboration** – among farmers, chefs, artists, educators, policymakers, and cultural institutions – is indispensable for building strong, resilient local networks.
- **Preservation of food heritage** through foraging, fermenting, drying, and traditional processing reinforces regional distinctiveness.
- **Community wellbeing** depends on vibrant rural life, fair economic opportunities and pride in gastronomy as a shared cultural asset.

These insights highlight that gastronomy and the arts are not decorative additions to territorial development – they are foundational components of a region's identity and future.

4. CHALLENGES: THE BARRIERS TO ACHIEVING THE UTOPIAN VISION

Participants identified several structural challenges threatening the utopian scenario:

- **Economic fragility** of rural areas, combined with depopulation, accelerates the loss of agricultural knowledge and cultural continuity.
- **Climate change and monocultures** degrade soil health and reduce biodiversity.
- **Administrative and regulatory complexity** hinders small producers, creative initiatives and new rural businesses.
- **Fragmented public policy**, with agriculture, education, culture and tourism often acting independently rather than through coordinated strategies.
- **Cultural shifts**, especially among urban populations, where food is increasingly seen as convenience rather than culture.

These challenges risk weakening regional ecosystems, both ecological and cultural.

5. PATHWAYS FORWARD: SOLUTIONS AND STRATEGIC ACTION

To counter these threats and move toward the utopian vision, the table proposed several forward-looking actions:

A. Integrating Rural and Urban Life

Bringing the countryside into cities through farmers' markets, urban gardens, school programs, and direct producer-consumer initiatives can reconnect citizens with the origins of their food.

B. Creating Immersive Cultural Experiences

Combining gastronomy, storytelling and the arts helps visitors and residents understand the deeper cultural value of regional food landscapes.

C. Promoting Interministerial Collaboration

Sustainable development requires policies that link agriculture, culture, tourism and education under a unified vision. Cross-sectoral governance is essential.

D. Harnessing Digitalisation for Meaningful Communication

Digital tools – together with influential chefs, artists, scientists and cultural ambassadors – can promote new lifestyles centred on authenticity, responsibility and regeneration.

E. Restoring the Human-Soil Relationship

Support for regenerative agriculture and community-based food systems is essential to rebuild ecological balance and strengthen local economies.



F. Recognising Food as Emotion, Identity and Culture

Food should be understood not as energy but as a medium of creativity, connection and shared heritage – a source of resilience and meaning.

6. CONCLUSION: WALKING TOWARD THE UTOPIAN FUTURE

The session concluded with a shared understanding that the path to 2050 must place gastronomy and the arts at the core of territorial development.

Achieving this future requires balancing tradition and innovation, bridging rural and urban realities, and strengthening the bond between people and soil.

If cultivated wisely, food culture can regenerate landscapes, empower communities and inspire belonging. If neglected, regions risk losing their essence to mass production and empty branding.

As one participant expressed: “We know the way forward; the question is whether we will have the will and the wisdom to walk toward the utopian future, rather than drift into the dystopian one.”





Table 7:
**SAVOURING FOOD CULTURE AND TOURISM INNOVATION
 IN THE CREATIVE ECONOMY**

Utopia: Food culture tourism is co-designed with local communities, promoting deep connections and creative exchanges across borders.

Dystopia: Culinary tourism is dictated by influencers and AI trends, leaving local traditions exploited and misrepresented.



Provocateur:

CAROLINE COURET

Creative Tourism Network

“Taste the local culture, craft the journey— a DIY path through culinary heritage and tourism innovation, where every bite tells a story.”



Host:

BARBARA ZMRZLIKAR

Slovenian Tourism Board and Slovenia European Region of Gastronomy 2021

“Gastronomy is a vibrant canvas of cultural memory—rooted in place and tradition, renewed through creativity and community. Through culinary narratives, we connect generations, celebrate our histories, and affirm our shared identity. By signing the Declaration, we pledge to safeguard this richness so that gastronomy fosters sustainability, community well-being, and cultural diversity for a resilient future.”



Rapporteur:

PATRICK SAM

Founder and Director, Creative Culture Investments, Namibia

“The future of gastronomy lies in its power to connect people, preserve traditions and inspire new pathways for prosperity.”



Additional participants in this table:

MATILDE RINALDIS, Freixenet & Segura Viudas Winery, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

PRYSCILA VILLACÍS DUEÑAS, Manabí Provincial Government, Manabí World Region of Gastronomy 2026

SANDRA BERGSNEV, Smaker fra Øyriket, Trondheim-Trøndelag European Region of Gastronomy 2022

MBA MAISA HÄKKINEN, Mikkelin Development Miksei Ltd., Saimaa European Region of Gastronomy 2024

ABDULLAH AL MASROURI, Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Oman

Table 7 has explored how food culture and tourism innovation can shape the creative economy of 2050. The discussion has been guided by two opposing visions: a utopia where communities co-design tourism experiences rooted in local culture and creative exchange, and a dystopia where culinary tourism is shaped by algorithmic trends, influencers, and superficial narratives that exploit and distort local traditions.

Throughout the session, participants emphasized that food culture is not simply an attraction or commodity: it is a living system shaped by communities, intergenerational knowledge, creative expression, and cultural memory. For tourism to be meaningful and sustainable, it must strengthen these ecosystems – not extract from them.





1. UTOPIAN VISION: CO-DESIGNING EXPERIENCES WITH COMMUNITIES

In the utopian scenario, by 2050 food culture tourism is built with local communities, not imposed on them. Visitors engage in co-created experiences that honour diversity, respect local identities, and encourage creative exchanges across borders. Communities feel confident and empowered to interpret, celebrate, and innovate within their food systems.

This vision rests on a powerful principle: food systems must be safeguarded and strengthened at community level, while building the capacity of people to produce and consume diverse foods – confidently, competently and consistently – across global, regional, national and local contexts.

This utopia imagines:

- gastronomy rooted in authenticity and cultural relevance,
- villages and towns acting as creative laboratories,
- children and youth involved in gardens, school food programmes and food storytelling,
- local food narratives flourishing through new tools, arts and digital creativity.

Food culture becomes a medium of exchange, creativity and resilience – not a commodity extracted for tourism.

2. A MULTILAYERED PROCESS: SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR FOOD CULTURE

Participants emphasised that safeguarding food culture requires shared responsibility across multiple levels of society.

Global Level

Governments, scientific bodies, NGOs, civil society organisations, consumers and private actors all contribute to policies, standards and incentives that protect diversity rather than weaken it.

National Level

National governments, farmers, producers and indigenous peoples play a crucial role in:

- protecting food sovereignty,
- supporting diverse production systems,
- and ensuring that regulations empower rather than marginalise local actors.

Local Level

Local governments, school systems, regional tourism bodies and development agencies help embed food culture into education, community life and tourism strategies.

Community Level

Elders, youth, children, small producers, families and local entrepreneurs form the living heart of food culture. Their knowledge, creativity and daily choices create the continuity and vitality that food tourism depends on.

This multilayered approach ensures that gastronomy remains connected to place, identity and community – even as tourism expands.

3. PRACTICES THAT STRENGTHEN FOOD CULTURE AND CREATIVE TOURISM

The table has underlined the importance of integrating food culture into daily life through practices that are authentic, participatory and culturally grounded.

These include:

- safeguarding culturally relevant and traditional recipes,
- supporting research and documentation of local food heritage,
- integrating food and agriculture into school art programmes and gardens,
- strengthening markets and public spaces as community hubs,
- using contemporary communication tools – including social media – to celebrate local food culture



in meaningful ways,

- blending culinary production with artistic and creative experiences,
- and supporting local communities in creating innovative gastronomic content through ICT, storytelling and design.

Participants noted that creative tourism should never replace human connection. Rather, it should use new tools to reinforce communities' ability to interpret and express their cultural identity.

4. DOMINANT FOOD NARRATIVES: THE THREAT OF COMMERCIAL CAPTURE

The table discussed the risks posed by commercial and corporate capture of food narratives. Across global, regional, national and local levels, large

corporations and global tourism chains shape how food is produced, marketed and perceived.

This dynamic often leads to:

- homogenisation of food experiences,
- marginalisation of local cuisines,
- cultural commodification,
- and loss of authenticity in favour of trends dictated by branding and influencers.

Participants warned that corporate and algorithm-driven narratives – amplified by media, advertising, and AI-curated content – can distort cultural meaning and undermine local communities. Food risks becoming an image rather than a story; a commodity rather than culture.



5. THE “NOW”: HOMOGENISATION, SPEED AND DISCONNECTION

Participants recognised that current global dynamics already show signs of the dystopian vision:

- global tourism shaping local menus more than communities do,
- food experiences becoming increasingly similar across destinations,
- mass consumption driven by influencer culture,
- and digital platforms reinforcing the same images and trends everywhere.

This homogenisation threatens food diversity, cultural identity and the dignity of local food producers. Without intervention, it could accelerate the decline of authentic food culture worldwide.

6. DYSTOPIAN VISION: FOOD TOURISM DICTATED BY INFLUENCERS AND AI

The dystopian scenario illustrates a future where culinary tourism is dictated by:

- algorithms,
- viral trends,
- influencers,
- and AI-generated experiences.

Local traditions would be exploited, misrepresented or trivialised. Visitors would seek “Instagrammable moments” rather than meaningful encounters. Communities would lose agency, identity and economic benefit. Food culture would become a caricature of itself.

This dystopia underscores the urgency of reclaiming and reshaping the narrative around food culture tourism.

7. CHOOSING THE NARRATIVE THAT SHAPES 2050

Table 7 concluded with a shared understanding: **the future of food culture tourism depends on who shapes the story – communities, or algorithms.**

To move toward the utopian future, several principles must guide action:

- co-design with communities,
- protect and strengthen diverse food systems,
- empower local voices through education and creativity,
- ensure responsibility at every governance level,
- and resist the homogenising force of commercial food narratives.

Food culture tourism can either become an engine of resilience, creativity and meaningful connection – or a reflection of digital and commercial homogenisation.

The choice, participants agreed, must be collective, intentional and rooted in the wisdom of local communities.



Table 8:
CONSUMPTION CONSCIOUSNESS: CULTURAL AWARENESS
SHAPING RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION

Utopia: Citizens make mindful food choices guided by cultural respect, planetary boundaries, and social equity.

Dystopia: Hyper-consumerism persists, masked by greenwashing campaigns and cultural erasure in global food supply chains.



Provocateur:

ALMA HARAŠIČ BREVEC

ŠKMER Academy, Central Dalmatia European Region
of Gastronomy 2025

“Sustainable human resources are key to building tourism destinations of excellence.”



Host:

AMALIA TZIKOU

Certified Internal Auditor & Public Health Officer,
South Aegean European Region of Gastronomy 2019

“Positive changes on a daily basis, preferring food produced sustainably, ethically and with minimal negative consequences for health and the planet.”



Rapporteur:

CHEF RANDIE ANDERSON

President, Culinary Concepts and Solutions, Jamaica

“Good food is more than nourishment; it connects culture, health, and community. By embracing local traditions and making conscious choices, we can create a future where food is sustainable and appreciated by everyone.”



Additional participants in this table:

MOURAD BELHASSEN, General Director for Economic and Cultural Diplomacy and the Francophonie within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Migration, and Tunisians Abroad, Cap Bon candidate World Region of Gastronomy 2028

ANNA RAVENTÓS ESPACS, Slow Food Educa, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

BLANCA CROS, Catalan Tourism Board (ACT), Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

CRISTINA PORTA FATJÓ, Unió de Licoristes de Catalunya, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

GURO LARSEN BROWN, Northern Norway Competence Center for Food, Nordland candidate European Region of Gastronomy 2028

DR. ADRIANA ARISTA ZERGA, University of Nottingham

Table 8 focused on one of the most urgent and cross-cutting challenges of our time: how cultural awareness and consumption consciousness can reshape food systems towards sustainability, equity, and respect for local identities. The discussion explored contrasting future scenarios – a

utopia in which communities make informed, culturally rooted and environmentally responsible choices, and a *dystopia* in which hyper-consumerism, greenwashing and homogenised global supply chains dominate daily life.





Participants approached this topic from social, cultural, environmental, and political perspectives, agreeing that responsible consumption must be understood as a multidimensional practice. It requires not only individual awareness, but also supportive policy frameworks, culturally grounded education, and resilient local food economies.

1. UTOPIAN VISION: A CULTURE OF CONSCIOUS CONSUMPTION

In the utopian scenario envisioned by the table, societies in 2050 have embraced a food culture that prioritises sustainability, equity, and cultural meaning. Citizens intentionally shift towards plant-rich diets, lowering environmental impact while valuing culinary diversity. Food systems are characterised by local and seasonal consumption, supporting regional economies and reducing carbon intensity across the chain.

Communities play an active role in shaping their own food futures. Decision-making is inclusive, involving residents, producers, and consumers in discussions about how food is grown, distributed, and consumed. Cultural relevance is central: traditional foods, culinary heritage, and community knowledge are recognised as anchors of identity and wellbeing.

Leadership is understood as a collective responsibility. Policymakers, educators, cultural actors, and citizens adopt systems thinking, ensuring that food policies reflect environmental integrity, social justice, and cultural continuity.

In this future, the outcomes are clear:

- a food system that is both sustainable and equitable,
- a reduction in food waste and overconsumption,
- greater community resilience,
- and the preservation of cultural food identities, which continue to evolve while honouring their roots.

2. DYSTOPIAN VISION: HYPER-CONSUMERISM, GREENWASHING AND CULTURAL LOSS

In the dystopian scenario, everyday consumption is driven by globalised marketing logics, convenience culture, and the illusion of choice. Hyper-consumerism dominates food behaviour, encouraging excessive intake of cheap, mass-produced products whose real costs – environmental, social and cultural – remain hidden from consumers.

Greenwashing becomes pervasive: misleading labels, vague sustainability claims and superficial “eco-friendly” campaigns mask unsustainable practices, creating the false impression that harmful products are healthy, ethical or environmentally responsible. This misinformation undermines consumer trust and prevents informed decision-making.

At the same time, cultural erasure accelerates. Traditional food practices, local varieties and regional identities are pushed aside by homogenised global supply chains. As industrially standardised products take centre stage, locally adapted crops, ancestral recipes and craft-based food knowledge lose visibility, viability and value. Food becomes detached from territory, seasonality and heritage.

This dystopian outcome brings profound and interconnected consequences:

- **accelerated environmental degradation**, including soil exhaustion and loss of biodiversity;
- **increased carbon emissions**, due to long-distance transport and resource-intensive logistics;
- **widespread disconnection** between people and the origins of their food;
- **health risks** associated with ultra-processed diets and excessive packaging;
- **deepening social inequalities**, where access to nutritious, culturally relevant foods is increasingly shaped by income, geography and marketing power.



Ultimately, this dystopia reveals the dangers of allowing globalised food systems, unchecked advertising and unregulated industry practices to shape consumption patterns. It is a future in which food loses meaning, identity and connection – and where both people and the planet bear the cost.

3. KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE DISCUSSION

Across the group, several core insights emerged:

a. Food Production and Consumption Patterns Matter

Every consumption choice influences ecological balance, public health, cultural continuity, and rural livelihoods. Food is never neutral: it is a cultural and environmental act.

b. The Hidden Impact of Industrialised Foods

Highly processed foods – often transported long distances and wrapped in environmentally harmful packaging – generate waste, reduce nutritional quality, and increase dependence on global logistics systems.

c. The Importance of Policy and Governance

Participants underscored the need for culturally informed, transparent regulation. Labelling, advertising ethics, and incentives must help consumers navigate misinformation and resist greenwashing.

d. Community Engagement

Meaningful community participation ensures that food systems remain relevant, resilient, and socially equitable. Community voices must guide local strategies and food-related decision-making.



e. Education and Awareness

Cultural and environmental literacy must be strengthened through schools, families, media and public campaigns. Citizens need clear, reliable information to make informed and responsible choices.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOVING TOWARDS CONSCIOUS CONSUMPTION

The group identified a series of strategic actions that institutions, governments, and communities can implement to progress toward the utopian future:

1. Promote Awareness Programmes

Public education should highlight the consequences of consumption choices on health, the environment, and cultural identity.

2. Support Local Food Systems

Incentivising local, seasonal and culturally grounded foods strengthens regional economies, reduces emissions, and preserves biodiversity.

3. Reduce Dependence on Processed Foods

Encouraging minimally processed foods can reduce waste, improve nutrition, and promote transparency.

4. Implement Transparent Labelling

Accurate, trustworthy labels on nutritional content, sourcing and environmental impact empower consumers to act responsibly.

5. Integrate Culture into Food Systems

Traditional recipes, products and culinary practices should be preserved and made visible within contemporary markets.

6. Policy Interventions

Governments must introduce measures that counteract hyper-consumerism, regulate marketing practices, and support ethical, sustainable food systems.

5. TOWARDS A CULTURE OF RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION

Table 8 concluded that consumption consciousness is not merely a behavioural shift but a cultural, environmental and social transformation. It requires a combination of informed citizens, supportive policies, and local systems capable of offering real alternatives to industrialised, homogenised food models.

By strengthening awareness and grounding consumption in cultural appreciation and ecological responsibility, societies can advance toward a future where food choices nourish both people and planet. Avoiding the dystopian trajectory depends on collective action, political will, and citizens empowered to shape their food environments.

At the end of the session, participants expressed gratitude to IGCAT and the Government of Catalonia for hosting the discussion and for creating a space where learning, exchange and collaboration could flourish.



Table 9:
FEEDING CURIOSITY: CREATIVE STRATEGIES TO RAISE LOCAL FOOD AWARENESS

Utopia: In 2050, communities proudly engage in food storytelling, public markets are hubs of education, and children grow up knowing where their food comes from.

Dystopia: Food knowledge is outsourced to apps, and fewer people than ever can identify, grow, or cook local produce.



Provocateur:

DR. SIMONA NEUMANN

Director General, Association for the Tourism Promotion and Development of the Timis County, Banat candidate European Region of Gastronomy 2028

“Participating in the World Gastronomy Summit is an opportunity to share our experience and learn from others committed to using food as a force for cultural identity, sustainability, and innovation. The Declaration, that will shape international policy at Mondiacult, reflects a much-needed global commitment to recognising gastronomy as a vital pillar of regional and international cooperation.”



Host:

RITA MIFSUD ATTARD

Executive Secretary, Gozo Regional Council, Gozo European Region of Gastronomy 2026

“As we look ahead to holding the title of European Region of Gastronomy next year, we are inspired by the World Gastronomy Summit Declaration to place food at the heart of cultural policy and community well-being. This commitment will guide our programmes and partnerships, ensuring that gastronomy becomes a catalyst for cultural pride, sustainability, and community resilience.”



Rapporteur:

SUNANTHEE TAK KANCHANAWAT

Integrated Gastronomy Design Advisor, Thailand Gastronomy Network

“As an educator, I am dedicated to guiding others on a gastronomy journey where every flavour tells a story, every meal preserves heritage, every shared table connects us and creating lasting memories.”



Additional participants in this table:

DR. DIANE DODD, IGCAT President & Executive Director World Regions of Gastronomy

SEBA ZAREA, Culinary Arts Commission, Ministry of Culture, Aseer World Region of Gastronomy 2024

PROF. TXABER ALLUE MARTI, Congrés d'Investigació Tècnic-Cultural al voltant del romesco, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

SVEIN MAGNAR ØIEN EGGESVIK, Nordland County Council, Nordland candidate European Region of Gastronomy 2028

EKATERINA BREDIKHINA, Green Rock Foundation, Armenia

LEVAN KHARATISHVILI, Creative Spark, Georgia

Table 9 explored how communities can rebuild meaningful connections with their food systems by strengthening food literacy, celebrating local produce, and fostering a sense of shared responsibility. The discussion revolved around the contrast

between a hopeful future in which food knowledge is widely accessible and culturally valued, and a worrying dystopia where such knowledge is out-sourced to technology and gradually lost.





In the utopian vision of 2050, communities actively engage in food storytelling, public markets become vibrant centres of learning, and children grow up with a clear understanding of where their food comes from. Food education is embedded in daily life, and local producers, families, schools and cultural institutions work together to preserve and transmit culinary knowledge.

Conversely, the dystopian scenario depicts a world where individuals rely exclusively on apps and digital interfaces to understand food. Basic skills—identifying local ingredients, growing produce, or cooking simple dishes—become rarities. As convenience replaces connection, communities drift ever further from their agricultural and gastronomic heritage.

Participants noted specific challenges that already threaten this vision:

- the widening divide between rural and urban contexts, including differences in space, policies and food environments;
- and the dynamics of population movement and migration, which influence how food knowledge is preserved, transformed and transmitted.

Against this backdrop, the group identified three essential pillars that must advance in parallel, and with urgency, to ensure that food knowledge remains alive and relevant for future generations.

1. EDUCATION FOR ALL

Education emerged as the foundation for any lasting change. Participants stressed the importance of integrating hands-on food education – from early childhood to university level – across all learning environments. Schools should teach children how food is grown, harvested, and prepared, while also emphasising nutrition, seasonality, and respect for local products.

Equally important is the role of families, cultural institutions, and community organisations in passing

on practical skills and culinary traditions. Without a coordinated educational effort, future generations risk losing essential knowledge about food origins, cooking methods, and the cultural meanings embedded in local gastronomy. Education, the group concluded, must be systematic, experiential and continuous.

2. PUBLIC POLICY

Public policy plays a decisive role in shaping food environments and ensuring that citizens have the tools and opportunities to learn about food. Participants highlighted the need for clear, actionable strategies at local, regional and national levels – strategies that encourage healthy lifestyles, protect local food systems, and guarantee access to food education.

Policies might include:

- mandating food literacy within school curricula,
- supporting local food markets, farmers and short supply chains,
- or launching public campaigns that highlight the value of local produce and culinary heritage.

The urgency was strongly emphasised: without swift governmental action, the disconnect between people and their food will continue to deepen, making recovery significantly more difficult.

3. SOCIAL AWARENESS

Social awareness is the cultural fabric that holds the other two pillars together. Communities, businesses, restaurants, media and cultural venues must work collaboratively to elevate the importance of food knowledge in everyday life. Communication campaigns, public events, farmers' markets, storytelling projects and partnerships with schools can help embed food awareness within the rhythms of daily living.

A society that values food culture – its flavours, rituals, stories and landscapes – is far more likely



to protect and transmit this heritage. Participants stressed that fostering this social awareness requires a shared urgency: citizens must recognise that food knowledge is fragile and act collectively to safeguard it.

WORKING IN PARALLEL WITH URGENCY

A key conclusion of the table was that education, public policy and social awareness must progress simultaneously. If one pillar advances while the others lag behind, the entire system weakens. Real transformation requires a coordinated effort where each actor – from policymakers to teachers, families, farmers, cooks and consumers – contributes to a common purpose.

Only by working together, and by recognising the urgency of the moment, can communities prevent the erosion of food knowledge and ensure that future generations remain connected to the origins, values and cultural richness of their food.

Raising local food awareness is not a single initiative but a shared cultural responsibility. Through coordinated efforts in education, policy, and social engagement, communities can build a resilient food culture that honours tradition while embracing innovation. If these actors move forward together, deliberately and urgently, the utopian vision of 2050 can become a tangible reality, safeguarding food knowledge from the risks of technological dependence and cultural loss.



Table 10: EDUCATING FOR A MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY FOOD FUTURE

Utopia: Education inspires sustainable food choices, leading to clean, circular, and waste-free food systems.

Dystopia: Lack of awareness fuels destructive food systems, where clean, healthy food becomes a luxury.



Provocateur:

ROBERT PALMER

IGCAT Ambassador, Scotland

“Food is culture’s frontline. It is not simply nourishment. Supporting food, in all its diversity and as a living archive of memory, belonging and identity, strengthens resilience, sustainable economies, social cohesion and cultural futures. Far from being a luxury, gastronomy is a strategic force for change.”



Host:

ANU-ANETTE VARHO

Project Specialist, Saimaa European Region of Gastronomy 2024

“In a time when the world feels increasingly fast-paced and disconnected, our ties to nature, culture, and community matter more than ever. They are the roots that keep us grounded, and the foundation of resilience in uncertain times. Authenticity lives in everyday moments – in shared meals, heartfelt hospitality and stories passed down through generations.”



Rapporteur:

CHEF ADENIKE ADEFILA

Co-founder and Head Chef, The Burgundy, Nigeria

“To tell our own food stories is to honor our culture, our communities, and our creativity. Celebrating and safeguarding our culinary heritage is how we define who we are to the world. I am proud to support a Summit that inspires this vision.”

Additional participants in this table:

SUSANNE ELIZABETH SCHNÜTTGEN, Chief, Capacity Building and Heritage Policy, UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

TONI MASSANÉS, Alícia Foundation, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

SARA ROVERSI, Future Food Institute, Italy

LLUIS SERRA, Sant Pol School of Hospitality and Culinary Management, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

ORAZIO BELLETTINI, FUEGOS Foundation, Manabí World Region of Gastronomy 2026

KATRINE REMMEN WIKEN, Northern Norway Competence Center for Food, Nordland candidate European Region of Gastronomy 2028

The discussion at Table 10 explored the profound role that education can play in shaping the future of food systems, environmental responsibility, and cultural preservation. Participants examined three possible trajectories for the future – *dystopia*, *utopia*, and *protopia* – and reflected on how

education can become either a driver of deeper disconnection or a catalyst for meaningful transformation. The table addressed how education can reconnect people with food, land and culture in an era marked by climate crisis and shifting food identities.





1. FROM UTOPIA AND DYSTOPIA TO PROTOPIA

Participants acknowledged that elements of *dystopia* are already present today: food reduced merely to calories and convenience, monocultures dominating landscapes, marketing distorting values, and sustainable diets still out of reach for many. Cultural heritage is increasingly vulnerable, and food knowledge is disappearing as industrial systems become more dominant.

The *utopian* scenario – a perfect world of circular economies, zero waste, thriving biodiversity and strong food cultures – inspired hope but was recognised as distant and static. Its completeness risks immobilising efforts to act in the present.

The table therefore embraced a third concept: *protopia*, the idea of incremental, continuous improvement. *Protopia* places emphasis on achievable steps – school gardens, community partnerships, inclusive curricula, ethical technology – that collectively shift the trajectory of food and education. It allows ambition without paralysis, innovation without abandoning cultural roots, and progress without unrealistic expectations.

Participants agreed that food education is not only about nutrition, but also about climate responsibility, cultural identity, social justice and equity, biodiversity protection, and human dignity.

In this perspective, gastronomy becomes a fundamental cultural and environmental infrastructure for a sustainable future.

2. PATHWAYS FOR ACTION

Discussions revolved around two-time horizons: immediate priorities, which can be implemented rapidly, and long-term goals, which must guide the evolution of food systems up to 2050.

Immediate Priorities (by 2025)

Participants agreed that urgent actions are necessary to counter current negative trends:

- Integrate circular, local and sustainable gastronomy into mainstream education.
- Establish farm-to-classroom programmes, including school gardens, foraging practices, and urban farming.
- Link food literacy to climate education, health, and cultural curricula.
- Build school-producer-kitchen alliances to root food education within communities.
- Recognize gastronomy as a form of cultural and environmental infrastructure, integral to policy-making at local, regional and national levels.

These immediate interventions were seen not as optional enhancements but as necessary foundations for a resilient future.

Long-Term Goals (by 2050)

- Looking ahead, the table envisioned a world where:
- micro-schooling models place food literacy at the core of educational practice;
 - heritage foodways – traditional crops, recipes, preservation methods and stories – are embedded in education worldwide;
 - all food systems, from indigenous knowledge to contemporary innovation, are valued equally;
 - technology is used ethically, supporting biodiversity and empowering local producers rather than displacing them;
 - gastronomy becomes recognised globally as a tool for human dignity, cultural identity and climate resilience.

The long-term vision sees education as a bridge between generations, landscapes and cultural memory.

3. KEY WARNINGS

Participants also identified critical risks that must be addressed urgently:

- Political inertia continues to block comprehensive food education in many countries.
- Branding and global marketing distort perceptions, reducing food to status, convenience or profit.
- Sustainable, nutritious food risks becoming elitist



if affordability and accessibility are not ensured.

- Cultural erosion is accelerating, with traditional foodways, seeds and stories at risk of disappearing.

These warnings underscored that the transition to a protopian future hinges on decisive political leadership and strong community involvement.

4. STEADY AND COLLECTIVE PROGRESS

Table 10 concluded that the future of food education lies not in chasing perfection nor resigning to decline, but in cultivating protopia – steady, collective progress through everyday actions. Every school garden planted, every cooking lesson in a classroom, every partnership between producers and educators, and every policy reform that values gastronomy as culture and infrastructure contributes to a more equitable and sustainable food future.

Food education, participants agreed, must be understood as a living bridge:

- connecting generations and communities,
- preserving ecosystems and cultural heritage,
- ensuring dignity, equity and human wellbeing,
- and fostering hope in a time of global uncertainty.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Embed Food Literacy Across All Education Levels: Recognise food as essential to health, climate action, cultural identity and active citizenship.

2. Strengthen Community Links: Connect schools with farmers, chefs, artisans and local producers.

3. Preserve Heritage Foodways: Protect traditional crops, recipes and knowledge as cultural resources.

4. Ensure Accessibility: Guarantee that sustainable and nutritious food is affordable and available to all.

5. Promote an Ethical Innovation: Use technology responsibly to support biodiversity and empower local economies.

6. Mobilise Political Will: Advocate for integrating food education into cultural, environmental and education policies.

7. A Champion Protopia: Encourage incremental, community-driven progress as the most resilient path toward transformation.

Final Word: Food education is not only about what we eat. It is about who we are, how we live with our planet, and how we preserve dignity for generations to come.



Table 11:
FOOD AS A CATALYST FOR SOLIDARITY: BUILDING INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

Utopia: Food systems in 2050 are guided by justice, where all communities have agency, access, and dignity in their food choices.

Dystopia: Hunger persists amid abundance, and food aid is used as a tool for political control rather than empowerment.



Provocateur:

GEORGIA PATSOURAKI

Regional Implementation Project Coordinator, Ploigos, Crete
 European Region of Gastronomy, Greece

"I'm excited to contribute to this Summit as someone deeply committed to cultural preservation and development. Through my role managing regional implementation for Crete's European Region of Gastronomy 2026, I've witnessed firsthand how celebrating food culture can serve as a bridge between communities and generations while revitalising local economies and preserving traditions, making this gathering particularly meaningful."



Host:

CARMEN ISPAS

Dobrogea candidate European Region of Gastronomy 2029

"I believe that things are achieved with people and through people and that our responsibility is to give back to communities, by passing on knowledge and values to inspire future generations."



Rapporteur:

OSCAR EKPONIMO

Innovator and Founder/CEO - Chowberry Inc, Nigeria

"Reimagining a world where the right to feed and be fed is a fundamental human right protected by national laws."

Additional participants in this table:

GABRIEL DE MARISCAL, Llet Nostra Alimentaria, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

GEMMA MOLINER, PRODECA, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

MNZM ROBERT OLIVER, Pacific Island Food Revolution, Oceania

MAI DAMGAARD RASMUSSEN, FoodFilmFestival.dk - Filmselskab, Central Dalmatia candidate European Region of Gastronomy 2027

COLLEEN SWAIN, World Heritage Office & UCCN Focal Point & Coordinator Gastronomy Subnetwork, San Antonio, Texas

VÍCTOR CERDAN I AGUIRREGOMEZCORTA, President GECAN



The discussion at Table 11 explored how food can become a force for solidarity, dignity and social equity. The session opened with introductions guided by host Carmen Ispas, followed by two contrasting narratives that framed the debate.

First came the utopian vision: a world in 2050 where no child goes to bed hungry, where every family – regardless of income, culture or geography – has

the agency to choose what they eat, and where farmers are respected as guardians of the land. Immediately after, provocateur Georgia Patsouraki delivered a dystopian counterpoint in poetic form: a world where food choices are dictated, not chosen; where people queue for food aid without dignity, while politicians celebrate “record harvests” that benefit few.



These two visions – one aspirational, one uncomfortably close to present realities – set the tone for a thoughtful and deeply human discussion. Participants (Carmen Ispas, Georgia Patsouraki, Gabriel De Mariscal, Robert Oliver, Mai Rasmussen and Coleen Swain) agreed that the real task was to imagine a credible, positive pathway for 2050 and to identify the steps needed to bridge the gap between dystopia and the desired future.

1. SHARED OBJECTIVES

The group aligned rapidly on a common goal: to identify between three and five essential takeaways that would serve as guiding principles toward building equitable and inclusive food systems. Central to this objective was understanding how food can act as a catalyst for solidarity – not only as nourishment, but as a social

connector, a symbol of dignity, and a driver of fairness in the food chain.

2. KEY DISCUSSIONS AND INSIGHTS

After introductory remarks and a review of the agenda, participants shared their perspectives on how current food systems either reinforce inequalities or can be leveraged for social well-being. The dystopian scenario was recognised as already present in many parts of the world: food insecurity, lack of access to land and seeds, diminishing biodiversity, and communities disconnected from the origins and cultural value of food.

Against this backdrop, the table placed particular emphasis on **people-led action**, local food cultures, and equitable access to resources.





3. POSITIVE PATHWAYS

Participants identified several promising routes toward a fairer food future:

Strengthening local food systems

Eating habits grounded in local and seasonal foods can reinforce circular economies, support farmers, and reduce dependence on globalised supply chains.

People-led solutions and social movements

Grassroots initiatives were considered more transformative and durable than policy-driven reforms alone. When citizens mobilise to defend local food cultures, promote awareness, and demand transparency, meaningful change becomes possible.

Traceability and seasonality

Eating locally and seasonally strengthens the connection between people and the land, improves trust in food systems, and promotes sustainability.

Rebuilding trust in institutions through people power

Strong social movements can influence policy and governance, pushing institutions to adopt measures that foster equity and resilience.

4. CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

Despite the positive outlook, several structural obstacles were highlighted:

- Restrictive regulations and unclear labelling, which complicate fair distribution and consumer understanding.
- Lack of awareness of the nutritional and cultural value of local cuisines, leading to shifting preferences toward imported or processed foods.
- Limited access to land, seeds, water and essential inputs, especially for small-scale farmers and young producers.
- The rise of GMOs and the commercialisation of seeds, which create barriers to accessing organic or traditional seed varieties and increase dependency on large corporations.

These challenges underscored the need for systemic change as well as community mobilisation.

5. PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

To respond to the challenges, the table proposed:

- Supporting people-led movements that promote education and awareness of local food systems, culinary heritage and seasonal eating.
- Encouraging communities to engage in food storytelling, reconnecting citizens with the origins, traditions and cultural meaning of food.
- Reinforcing local production and distribution channels, making it easier for consumers to choose traceable, local and nutritious foods.
- Advocating for equitable access to land, seeds and water, essential for ensuring sovereignty and dignity in food production.

Participants highlighted that when people understand and value their food system, they are more likely to demand transparency, support fair practices, and help shape equitable public policies.

6. FOOD AS A MEANS FOR SOLIDARITY, IDENTITY, AND DIGNITY.

The session successfully fulfilled its objectives, generating a constructive and forward-looking dialogue. Table 11 reaffirmed that food is much more than sustenance: it is a tool for solidarity, identity, and dignity. By promoting people-led movements, strengthening local systems, and addressing structural barriers, societies can move towards a future where food becomes a catalyst for equity and resilience.

The insights and recommendations captured here will guide ongoing work and support the broader ambition of placing solidarity at the heart of sustainable and inclusive food systems.



Table 12: EMPOWERING CITIZENS - FOOD SYSTEMS IN OUR HANDS

Utopia: In 2050, citizens decide on their food systems, with gardens, markets, and cooperatives that guarantee healthy and sustainable food.

Dystopia: The population is fed cheap, packaged, mass-produced food, laden with chemicals; people are passive consumers with no real choices.



Provocateur:

DR FRANCISCO MADRID FLORES

Head of Sustainable Tourism Advanced Research Centre,
Universidad Anáhuac Cancún

“At Anáhuac University Cancún, we feel privileged to be part of the 1st World Gastronomy Summit. We believe that the gastronomic boom is part of the postmodern society we live in, and if we agree with this, perhaps it's time we started discussing post-gastronomy.”



Host:

ELISABET FERRER FERNANDEZ

Directora General , CETT Barcelona School of Tourism, Hospitality
and Gastronomy-UB

“In every bite we choose lies the power to shape tomorrow: knowledge gives us the courage to turn food into a bridge towards a fairer, healthier and more sustainable world.”



Rapporteur:

OMAR VALDEZ

IGCAT Board

“The World Gastronomy Summit is a landmark opportunity to strengthen the links between gastronomy, tourism and culture, and to harness their potential as engines for sustainable economic and social development.”



Additional participants in this table:

ECON. ANDRÉS ORTIZ CHANCAY, Manabí Provincial Government, Manabí World Region of Gastronomy 2026

CRISTINA MASSOT BERNA, Department of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food (DARP), Government of Catalonia

ING. FELIPE CENTENO GUILLEM, Manabí Provincial Government, Manabí World Region of Gastronomy 2026

LEONARDO ORLANDO ARTEAGA, Manabí Provincial Government, Manabí World Region of Gastronomy 2026

MARIA ANTONIA TALTAVULL FERNANDEZ, Island Council of Menorca, Menorca European Region of Gastronomy 2022

PEDRONA SEGUÍ SERRA, Government of the Balearic Islands, Menorca European Region of Gastronomy 2022

SVEN ROCK, Lligams Orgànics, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

Table 12 has explored one of the most urgent questions of the World Gastronomy Summit: how can citizens reclaim power over their food systems? The discussion has been shaped by two contrasting futures: a utopia in which communities actively shape their diets, territories, and economies; and a dystopia in which people become passive recipients of cheap, industrial, and soulless food.

The exchange has highlighted that the future of food will depend largely on whether society can move from passive consumption to active participation, embracing food not only as nourishment but as a social, cultural and political right.





UTOPIA VS. DYSTOPIA: IMAGINING OUR FOOD CHOICES IN 2050

In the utopian scenario, by 2050 citizens have regained control over their food systems. Urban gardens, local markets, cooperatives, and community-supported agriculture ensure access to healthy, seasonal, ethical food. People understand where food comes from and how it is produced. They participate in decisions about land, resources, and public procurement. Food has become a shared, democratic responsibility, and a source of wellbeing, identity, and dignity.

The dystopian vision depicts the opposite: a society fed on cheap, packaged, industrial food filled with additives, where communities have lost their sovereignty and are dependent on global supply chains. Citizens merely consume, with no real choices, no transparency, and no connection to the origins of what they eat. Food is used as a “weapon”, a tool of social control, leaving vulnerable communities without guaranteed access to nutritious ingredients.

Table 12 has focused on how to avoid this dystopia and build a food system that is ethical, resilient, and firmly in the hands of the people.

FOOD AS A RIGHT, NOT A COMMODITY

Participants have insisted that food is increasingly being used as an instrument of power. Geopolitical tensions, corporate concentration, and climate challenges are turning access to healthy food into a global inequality marker. Ensuring food security must therefore go beyond productivity: it must include rights, values and justice.

The group has underlined the urgent need for policies that prioritise: access to healthy food for all communities, protection of local producers, resilience of short supply chains, and continuity of agro-ecological practices.

Food systems, participants have stressed, must be guided by principles – not only by markets.

RECONNECTING PEOPLE TO LAND AND ORIGIN

One of the central concerns has been the growing disconnection between people and the land. Many citizens no longer know where their food comes from, how it is grown, or who produces it. This distancing weakens cultural identity, reduces consumer awareness, and fosters passivity and social subordination.

The discussion has emphasised that it is essential, now and in the future, to reconnect citizens with the origin of food. This includes:

- promoting farm education, visits, and hands-on learning,
- strengthening local markets, community gardens, and cooperatives,
- encouraging seasonal and territorial diets,
- and fostering a sense of responsibility for the landscapes that feed us.

Citizens who understand the story behind each product make better choices, not only for themselves, but for their communities and the planet.

ETHICAL, LOCAL, SEASONAL: THE FOUNDATIONS OF A CONSCIOUS FOOD SYSTEM

Participants have highlighted the need to advocate for a food system that is ethical, local, seasonal, and purposeful. An ethical system respects producers, ecosystems, and the cultural meaning of food. A local system reduces vulnerability, supports territorial economies, and strengthens community identity. A seasonal system aligns diets with ecological rhythms, reducing waste and reinforcing biodiversity.

Purposeful food systems, they have argued, are those that generate wellbeing – not only calories. They promote solidarity, dignity, and shared responsibility.



POLICY AND ACTION: THE FRAMEWORKS NEEDED FOR REAL CHANGE

The table has agreed that meaningful transformation requires decisive political action. Policies must create the conditions for citizens to participate fully in their food systems. Participants have stressed several priorities:

1. Legal frameworks that empower, not restrict

Many regulations, especially in Europe, still limit self-production, small-scale processing, direct sales, or community initiatives. Participants have argued for the need to liberalise certain activities to allow:

- more home-production and self-economy,
- easier establishment of cooperatives,
- and greater access for entrepreneurs interested in rural life.

This regulatory shift is essential to give citizens real agency.

2. Incentives that reward good decisions

Values and incentives must align. Participants have called for public programmes that reward choices supporting:

- environmental stewardship,
- sustainable consumption,
- agroecological production,
- and community-based initiatives.

Policies should not only correct problems but encourage the right behaviours.

3. Plans and strategies built on principles

The group has insisted that all public plans, from tourism to education, from land-use to public procurement, should follow principles of ethics, sustainability, and citizen empowerment. Food policy cannot be separated from cultural policy, environmental protection, or social justice.





SOIL HEALTH AND SOCIAL HEALTH: A SHARED DESTINY

Participants have drawn a strong parallel between the health of the soil and the health of society. Degraded soils produce fragile communities; resilient ecosystems produce resilient people. Agroecology, local knowledge, and regenerative practices were highlighted as essential elements for long-term food sovereignty.

Empowering citizens requires empowering ecosystems, and vice versa.

EDUCATION AND YOUTH: THE LONG-TERM FOUNDATION

Participants have emphasised the need to invest in the next generation. Empowering youth is crucial for achieving long-term food sovereignty. This includes:

- creating educational pathways from school to vocational training,
- encouraging youth engagement in agriculture, gastronomy, and sustainability,
- developing exchange programmes across regions and cultures,
- and strengthening food education within schools, not only theoretically but experientially.

Young people must see food not only as consumption, but as identity, creativity, opportunity, and citizenship.

A FUTURE FOOD SYSTEM BUILT BY AND FOR CITIZENS

The discussion at Table 12 has made one message absolutely clear: empowering citizens is essential to building resilient food systems. Food cannot remain in the hands of markets alone; it must be reclaimed as a cultural, social, and political resource.

A future where citizens take responsibility for their food choices – cultivating, cooking, exchanging, and deciding – is a future that strengthens democracy, identity, and health.

Ultimately, the group has concluded that food systems thrive when people are not passive consumers but active participants. Empowering citizens means giving them knowledge, rights, tools, and opportunities to shape the food landscapes that in turn shape their lives.

The final reflection can be summarised simply: when food systems are in the hands of citizens, communities flourish; when they are not, both people and places are left vulnerable.



Table 13:

THE POWER OF THE PLATE: STORYTELLING AND NEW NARRATIVES

Utopia: Every food package in 2050 tells a story of place, memory, and culture—shared and celebrated in schools, media, and markets.

Dystopia: The power of storytelling is lost; food is anonymized, stripped of meaning, and reduced to nutrient labels.



Provocateur:

KÁROLY SZABÓ

Visit Harghita and Harghita European Region of Gastronomy 2027, Romania

“Only way to preserve our food culture and identity is through strengthening local communities. In this I believe”



Host:

IVANA VLADOVIĆ

Split-Dalmatia Tourist Board , Central Dalmatia European Region of Gastronomy 2027, Croatia

“Gastronomy reveals the soul of a region - a tapestry of flavours shaped by seasons, local ingredients and customs. In order to preserve this culinary heritage for the future, we must work hand in hand with professionals, institutions, and stakeholders.”



Rapporteur:

PER THEODOR TØRRISSEN

Northern Norway Competence Center for Food , Nordland candidate European Region of Gastronomy 2028, Norway

“At the World Gastronomy Summit, we reaffirm our commitment to empowering communities, fostering sustainable development, and building meaningful connections through the language of food.”

Additional participants in this table:

JORGE BERNÁRDEZ LÓPEZ, Famtàstic · Evenings of Gastronomic Arts, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

MARC CASANOVAS ANGUERA, Diversos mitjans com CUINA, Arrels o Catalunya Ràdio, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

NADEEM MANSOUR, Thuraya Delights Inc., Canada, Jordan

ASST PROF DR. PAKORN LIMYOTHIN, Songkla Gastronomy Network, Thailand

PATRICK TORRENT, Catalan Tourism Board (ACT), Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

Storytelling has the potential to transform the way societies understand, value and engage with food. The conversation revolved around two contrasting futures: a *utopia* where every food product communicates a sense of place, memory and culture, and a *dystopia* where food is reduced to any-

mous nutrient labels, stripped of meaning, identity and emotional connection. Through this lens, participants examined what is needed to reclaim the cultural power of food and harness storytelling as a tool for sustainability, health and local development.





1. FOOD, HEALTH AND THE VALUE WE GIVE TO WHAT WE EAT

The group began by acknowledging a paradox that exists today: while good, healthy and responsibly produced food is often perceived as expensive, it is also essential for human wellbeing. Participants highlighted that society urgently needs to reframe its priorities, recognising that food is not merely a commodity but a pillar of public health, cultural identity and social cohesion.

Importantly, there was broad agreement that people are increasingly willing to pay more when food carries authenticity, transparency and a compelling story. Narratives of origin, heritage, producers and landscapes add value and foster emotional connection. In this sense, storytelling was seen not as a luxury but as a strategic tool for shifting consumer behaviour towards healthier, more responsible choices.

2. FARMER-CONSUMER CONNECTION: REBUILDING TRUST AND PROXIMITY

A recurring theme in the discussion was the need to strengthen the ties between farmers and consumers. Direct trade models, farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture and shorter supply chains were identified as essential strategies. These create not just economic links but symbolic ones – they allow consumers to see, know and appreciate the people who grow their food.

To support this connection, participants emphasised:

- subsidies and financial incentives for small and local producers,
- the importance of fair pricing and market access,
- and the creation of networks that connect small producers with restaurants, retailers and food companies.

This closer relationship fosters trust, supports rural livelihoods, and encourages consumers to value and choose local, seasonal products.

3. EDUCATION AND AWARENESS: TEACHING HOW TO READ THE PLATE

Education was described as the backbone of any transformative food system. Participants stressed that schools, from early childhood to secondary levels, should integrate food literacy – including understanding origins, cooking skills, nutrition and local culture – as a central pillar of learning.

The group called for:

- clear and transparent labelling systems that indicate origin, production method and quality,
- public campaigns that promote healthy and local eating,
- the involvement of influencers, chefs and public figures to shape positive food narratives,
- and education on harmful or unsustainable foods to empower informed consumer choices.

Ultimately, a society that understands food stories is one that makes better choices, both individually and collectively.

4. POLICY AND REGULATION: SETTING THE FRAMEWORK FOR FAIR AND MEANINGFUL FOOD SYSTEMS

Participants underscored that meaningful change cannot depend solely on consumers or producers. Government policies are indispensable for shaping food environments and ensuring fairness.

Recommendations included:

- stronger regulation to prevent monopolies and ensure market diversity,
- tax incentives that reward healthy, sustainable foods and penalise nutritionally poor or environmentally damaging options,
- higher standards for additives and processed foods,
- and fiscal benefits for restaurants that prioritise quality, local sourcing and nutritional value.

Such policies can shift consumption patterns, facilitate access to good food, and reinforce storytelling as part of cultural and environmental governance.



5. CULTURAL AND TOURISM LINK: STORYTELLING AS A DRIVER OF IDENTITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Food and culture are inseparable, and participants highlighted the central role of gastronomic tourism in preserving and promoting culinary heritage. When tourists seek authentic food experiences, they help protect traditional crops, recipes, landscapes and practices. Storytelling becomes a medium for strengthening identity and pride.

The group advised focusing on attracting visitors who value authenticity and depth rather than those driven by convenience or fast-food models. Festivals, guided tastings, producer visits and culinary routes offer powerful ways to bring food stories to life and contribute to local economies.

6. TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: TOOLS FOR TRANSPARENCY AND ENGAGEMENT

Far from opposing tradition, participants viewed technology as a valuable ally when used ethically and transparently. Innovations such as blockchain, digital storytelling, QR codes, and traceability platforms can enhance:

- consumer trust,
- education,
- and accessibility to stories of origin and production.

Tools that merge creativity and communication – from social media to immersive experiences – can amplify the cultural narratives behind food.

7. FROM ANONYMOUS FOOD TO MEANINGFUL NARRATIVES

The final part of the discussion synthesised a hopeful vision for 2050. In this future, food is far more than sustenance: it is a medium of storytelling, a vessel of memory and identity. Every package tells a story that is celebrated in schools, media and markets. Food is valued for its authenticity, cultural meaning and contribution to health. Local economies thrive through strong farmer-consumer relationships. Education equips citizens with an understanding of food origins, while clear labelling and cultural pride guide responsible choices.

Policies reinforce this ecosystem by regulating monopolies, incentivising healthy foods and rewarding restaurants dedicated to quality. Gastronomic tourism flourishes, preserving cultural heritage and attracting visitors who seek authentic experiences. Technology supports transparency and trust, making narratives visible and accessible.

By contrast, the dystopian path portrays a future where food becomes anonymous, stripped of identity and cultural connection. Without education, policy or innovation, small producers disappear, health declines, and societies lose the emotional bonds that tie people to what they eat – and to one another.

During the group discussion, there was unanimous agreement that the future depends on the stories we choose to tell, support and celebrate. The plate can be a powerful tool: it can nourish the body, connect communities, and preserve cultural memory for future generations.



Table 14:
**FROM FOREST AND ORCHARDS TO PLATE: PROTECTING
 BIODIVERSITY AND NATURAL HABITATS**

Utopia: Catalan forests and fruit fields are managed sustainably and nourish local tables with unique and healthy ingredients.

Dystopia: Natural habitats have disappeared under urban speculation and the disconnection between society and territory.



Provocateur:

EVARIST MARCH

Naturalwalks and IGCAT Expert

“The landscape placed in the pot; it perfectly captures the idea of the complex relationship between nature and culture through the world of cuisine.”



Host:

ROSA RODON

Food and Gastronomy Journalist, Ara.Cat

“Thinking about what we will eat and how we will produce it should be at the top of our priorities. Our lives depend on it.”



Rapporteur:

CHEF JOEL CASTANYÉ

La Boscana Restaurant

“The haute cuisine of fruit reminds us that flavour and biodiversity are inseparable; preserving one means safeguarding the other.”

Additional participants in this table:

GEMMA ARNILLAS PLA, Pla Oví, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

DR. IGNASI IGLESIAS, Agromillora Group, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

MARÍA ÁNGELES CHIRIBOGA, La Boscana Restaurant

JOSEP PERE COLAT CLUA, Federació Catalana DOP/IGP, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

MIQUEL A. ZAGUIRRE BRUQUE, Gremi de Pastisseria De Barcelona, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

GRAN DIPLOMA D'HOSTELERIA HOFMANN OSCAR ROCA ORTEGA, Menorca European Region of Gastronomy 2022

PEPA AYMAMÍ, Institut del Patrimoni Culinari Català, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

SUSANA BELTRAN MENA, Grameimpuls SA, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

PROF. VINYET CAPDET, Directora del Grau de Ciències Culinàries CETT-UB



Table 14 has examined how the landscapes that define Catalonia's identity – its forests, orchards and mosaic of agroforestry systems – can continue to nourish both people and ecosystems in a rapidly changing world. The discussion has been framed by two contrasting visions. In the utopian scenario, Catalonia's forests and orchards are sustainably

managed, providing diverse, healthy ingredients while supporting rural livelihoods and ecological resilience. In the dystopian scenario, natural habitats have been overtaken by urban speculation and industrial monocultures, leading to the collapse of biodiversity and the erosion of cultural ties between communities and their food.



Between these two extremes, the table has reflected on the concrete steps needed to safeguard biodiversity and strengthen rural economies. Contributions have converged around three main axes – technical, regulatory and social – which together outline a cohesive roadmap for action.

1. TECHNICAL AXIS: PRESERVING BIODIVERSITY THROUGH KNOWLEDGE, INNOVATION AND ECOLOGICAL INTELLIGENCE

Participants have underlined the importance of strengthening technical capacity in biodiversity management. Protecting genetic diversity is essential not only for environmental resilience but also for preserving the culinary and cultural richness associated with local produce.

The table has emphasised the need to:

- support breeding and varietal improvement programmes that safeguard native species;
- promote low-input and ecological cultivation systems that reduce dependency on chemical inputs;
- use research and innovation to understand how forests, orchards and agricultural landscapes can adapt to climate change;
- and maintain biodiversity patches that act as natural reservoirs of life.

Innovation has been viewed not as a replacement for tradition, but as a tool for enhancing and preserving it. Participants have stressed that ecological intelligence – the ability to work with rather than against natural systems – is key to ensuring long-term viability.

2. REGULATORY AXIS: COHERENT POLICY FRAMEWORKS TO PROTECT DIVERSITY AND RURAL LIFE

The regulatory dimension has emerged as central for guiding and stabilising transitions. The group has agreed that political commitment is indispen-

sable: without strong, coherent policies, efforts to protect biodiversity will remain fragmented.

Key proposals have included:

- targeted financial support for farmers and land managers who maintain traditional landscapes, orchard varieties and forest-based agro-ecological systems;
- measures to prevent excessive concentration of land ownership, which threatens small-scale, biodiversity-friendly farming;
- active market regulation to ensure fair competition for local producers;
- and the reinforcement of geographical indications and quality labels that tie products to their landscapes, cultures and traditional practices.

Participants have argued that policy must recognise the multifunctional role of forests, orchards and small-scale farms – not only as producers of food, but as custodians of natural habitats, water cycles, carbon storage, cultural heritage and territorial identity.

3. SOCIAL AXIS: RECONNECTING PEOPLE, PRODUCERS AND ECOSYSTEMS

The third axis has focused on the social and cultural dimensions of biodiversity protection. Participants have insisted that ecological resilience cannot be achieved without cultural resilience – without people valuing, understanding and feeling connected to the landscapes that sustain them.

Education has been described as the cornerstone of this transformation. Food literacy, biodiversity awareness and a deeper understanding of ecosystem services must be integrated into school curricula, community programmes and public communication strategies. Participants have emphasised that people protect what they know, and even more so what they taste and love.



The table has highlighted the potential of:

- community-supported agriculture and urban-rural partnerships that create direct links between producers and consumers;
- cultural initiatives that celebrate orchard varieties, forest products and seasonal traditions;
- and communication strategies that make visible the stories of landscapes, producers and ecosystems.

These approaches can help rebuild trust, restore pride in local foodways and reconnect citizens with their surrounding environments.

A CULTURAL VISION OF BIODIVERSITY

In line with broader reflections across the Summit, Table 14 emphasized that biodiversity is not only a scientific or technical matter, but a cultural asset. Forests and orchards are living archives of memory, knowledge and taste. They are expressions of centuries of interaction between people and nature, and they embody the evolutionary intelligence of communities that have adapted their food systems to local soils, climates and traditions.

Participants have warned that if society loses this living heritage, it will lose a fundamental part of its identity, as well as ecological resilience. Protecting biodiversity therefore requires a new culture of responsibility, where science, policy and daily practice converge.

The future of forests, orchards and biodiversity will not depend solely on environmental policies or agricultural techniques. It will depend on society's collective capacity to value and understand these landscapes, to integrate ecological principles into food systems, and to support the communities that maintain them.

Catalonia's forest and orchard landscapes can continue to nourish both people and ecosystems – but only if they remain alive in the hands of farmers, embedded in policy, connected to consumers and celebrated in culture. As the group concluded: we will protect what we understand, and we will love what we taste.





Table 15:
**RECLAIMING TASTE: HOW CONSUMERS CAN REVIVE
 GASTRONOMIC TRADITIONS**

Utopia: The consumer's palate has become a force to protect traditions, flavors and local products.

Dystopia: Tastes have been standardized by global industry, and gastronomic traditions are only staged folklore.



Provocateur:

CHEF CARLES GAIG

Catalan Academy of Gastronomy and Nutrition

"Catalan cuisine is truly unique in the world: few culinary traditions can claim such extraordinary richness of heritage, diversity, and quality—both in its products and in its dishes."



Host:

DR. MARIA ABELLANET I MEYA

President and CEO, CETT Barcelona School of Tourism, Hospitality and Gastronomy - UB

"Education, knowledge, and research are essential pillars for defining the taste experience and, at the same time, preserving and transmitting the culinary identity and collective palate of Catalan gastronomy. A cuisine rooted in tradition and territory, which takes into the future with rigor and excellence through various forms of consumption".



Rapporteur:

RAMON SENTMARTÍ

IGCAT Board and Ambassador, Catalonia European Region of Gastronomy 2016

"Food producers, chefs, policymakers and all stakeholders joining forces to shape better food systems."

Additional participants in this table:

BLANCA CASAÑOLA RIBES, Cuadrat Valley, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

LLORENÇ LLOP MANUEL, Ass. Venda de Proximitat de Catalunya, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

JOAN GÒDIA, Director General of Agri-food Enterprises, Quality and Gastronomy, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

JORDI TERES GARDEÑES, Pla Oví s.l, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

JOSÉ FRIGULS JOE, ANAFRIC, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

JOSEP BOSCH CAMPS, Menorca Professional Hospitality and Catering Association, Menorca European Region of Gastronomy 2022

OLGA CID CORTÉS, Dones Arrosseres Del Delta De L'Ebre, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

OLIVIER FERNANDEZ, Fundació Escola de Patisserie Del Gremi i Museu de la Xocolata de Barcelona, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025



Table 15 has explored how taste and the consumer's palate can become a living force for protecting culinary traditions, preserving native flavours, and recognising the cultural and social value of food. The discussion has begun with two contrasting visions of the future: a utopia and a dystopia.

In the utopian scenario, local cuisines such as the Catalan have become a source of pride, recogni-

sed both by local communities and visitors. Catalan cuisine, as a living example of a local food culture, has achieved national and international prestige for its authenticity, creativity, and connection with local produce. In the dystopian vision, tastes have been standardised, and the global food industry has turned eating into a rootless, homogeneous act, detaching people from their traditions.



From these two extremes, participants have reflected on how to steer towards the desirable future, the utopia, and avoid the dystopia. The debate has produced shared proposals across seven key areas, expanding the notion that taste is not only sensory but cultural, ethical, and social.

1. STRENGTHENING COLLECTIVE AWARENESS AND SELF-ESTEEM

A first consensus has been the need to educate the palate and cultivate pride in gastronomic identity. Society must be made aware of the cultural, social, economic, and environmental values behind every dish and product. Participants agreed that defending local cuisine is not an expression of nostalgia, but a form of cultural affirmation and a meaningful commitment to sustainability. The conversation has emphasised that strengthening the self-esteem of local producers, chefs, and consumers is key to preserving culinary diversity and transmitting it to future generations. In this way, taste becomes a tool for empowerment: to know one's own flavours is to value one's own culture.

2. BUILDING ALLIANCES ALONG THE FOOD CHAIN

The future of local cuisines depends on the connection among all actors in the chain, from production to consumption. Alliances among producers, chefs, distributors, researchers, educational centres, communicators and consumers are essential to ensure that gastronomy truly acts as a bridge between communities and their territories. These partnerships are not merely economic; they are cultural ecosystems where knowledge circulates and mutual trust grows. Participants have underlined that collaborative networks – linking schools of gastronomy, local markets, research centres, and rural communities – are key to regenerating both culinary practice and food sovereignty.

3. ENCOURAGING PUBLIC POLICIES

Public administrations must protect and promote local cuisines through supportive regulation, fair procurement policies, and market mechanisms that reward authenticity, local products and biodiversity. Policy, the group has agreed, should also encourage diversity in food education and institutional catering, ensuring that schools, hospitals, and public canteens reflect the seasonal and territorial richness of local cuisines. Protecting traditional foodways means protecting the rights of communities to eat according to their landscapes and histories.

4. FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE GASTRONOMIC TOURISM

Tourism, when grounded in authenticity, can place food at the heart of cultural experience. Responsible gastronomic tourism can generate economic value while reinforcing identity and sustainability. Participants have highlighted that visitors are increasingly seeking meaning and connection in their travels, and food, as an emotional and narrative medium, can build that bridge. However, if disconnected from real communities, gastronomy risks being turned into empty spectacle. The group has therefore insisted that sustainable tourism must return value to territories, strengthen local supply chains, and tell truthful stories of people and places.

5. REINFORCING EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Education and research are crucial to transform the food system. Schools and hospitality centres should integrate food culture and culinary heritage into their curricula, promoting respect for local products and sustainable innovation. Participants have proposed the creation of dedicated educational programmes – from primary education to higher studies – that teach children and professionals alike about taste, biodiversity, and cultural identity. Research institutions, meanwhile, should docu-



7. CULTURE, MEMORY, AND THE ETHICS OF TASTE

Beyond economics, taste has been described as a repository of collective memory. Eating local food connects individuals to ancestors, seasons, and territory. Participants have reflected on the need to reclaim the ethical dimension of taste – understanding pleasure not as indulgence but as awareness. This consciousness turns everyday eating into an act of cultural participation and sustainability. In a world of abundance and waste, to choose with care becomes an act of freedom and responsibility.

Reclaiming taste is far more than talking about gastronomy: it is about culture, identity, education, social and territorial balance, and sustainability. The experience of taste connects past, present and future. It has been highlighted that the defense of local cuisines cannot depend on a single sector: it is a collective endeavour in which every consumer is also, and above all, an active agent of change. Taste, understood as sensitivity, as memory and as discernment, has been recognised as a transformative force. Every meal is a choice about the world we wish to create tomorrow. Thus, the future of food and gastronomy will not be decided only in restaurants or markets, but also in every home, every school, and every daily act of eating.

Ultimately, reclaiming taste means reclaiming our connection to place, people, and purpose, transforming the simple act of eating into an act of culture, care, and commitment.

ment and revitalise traditional recipes, ingredients, and techniques before they are lost. Digital archives, oral history projects, and participatory research can connect memory and innovation, ensuring that heritage remains dynamic rather than static.

6. EMPOWERING THE RESPONSIBLE CONSUMER

Every act of consumption is a political and cultural choice. Educating taste means educating responsibility. Conscious consumers can reorient markets and strengthen local food ecosystems. The discussion has emphasised that consumers are not passive recipients of products but active participants in shaping the food system. Access to transparent information, fair labelling, and contact with producers empowers citizens to make meaningful choices. In doing so, they help preserve landscapes, livelihoods, and flavours.



Table 16:
GASTRONOMY WITHOUT PRODUCERS?

Utopia: In 2050, small producers are the guardians of the territory and protagonists guarantors of the richness, quality and diversity of the gastronomic offer.

Dystopia: Regional cuisine survives as a soulless spectacle, while local producers are subtitled by an increasingly global and uniform agri-food industry.



Provocateur:

LAURA RUANA PAVON

Deputy Director General for Enterprises, Agri-food Quality and Gastronomy, Catalonia

“Sharing Catalonia’s gastronomic heritage on the international stage means honoring our roots while shaping pathways for future collaboration.”



Host:

TANA COLLADOS

Food and Gastronomy Journalist, Catalan National Public Media Corporation

“Do we have alternatives to the current global food system?”



Rapporteur:

RAQUEL SERRAT TUBAU

Unió de Pagesos (Farmer’s Union)

“Agriculture is the heartbeat of food and gastronomy, and farmers are the guardians who keep it alive.”

Additional participants in this table:

ALBERTO PONS MELICH, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

CARLES VILARRUBÍ, Catalan Academy of Gastronomy and Nutrition, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

DOMINGO MORILLA RIBELLES, Federació Intercomarcal D'Hosteleria, Restauració i Turisme - FIHRT, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

JOSEP LLUÍS CARDONA GAVALDÀ, Denominació d'origen protegida (DOP) de l'oli del Baix Ebre -Montsià, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

MARLENY COLMENARES, Ajuntament de Barcelona, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

PEP PALAU, Gastronomic Forum Barcelona, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

RAMON SARROCA, Federació Cooperatives Agràries de Catalunya, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025

ROSA PRUNA ESTEVE, Associació Productors km0, Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025



Table 16 has confronted one of the key questions: can gastronomy survive if farmers disappear? The debate has been shaped by two opposing scenarios – a utopia and a dystopia – that illuminate what is at stake and what actions will define our collective future.

In the utopian scenario, by 2050 small local producers have regained centrality. They are recognised

as guardians of landscapes, biodiversity and food culture; their work sustains the wealth, quality and diversity that define authentic gastronomy. In this future, farmers are not peripheral actors but pillars of a resilient food system, respected for their knowledge and supported by society.

In the dystopian scenario, local producers have been replaced by a hyper-globalised agri-food



industry. Regional cuisines survive only as hollow performances for tourists, severed from territory, memory and meaning. Food culture becomes a façade; landscapes, abandoned; and gastronomy, stripped of its essence.

Between these two visions, participants have agreed that the present moment is dangerously close to the dystopian path. The signs are unmistakable: an ageing farming population, a dramatic lack of generational renewal, the disappearance of small farms, and speculation around land and water that pushes producers out of rural territories. The reality is stark: without farmers, there is no future for local food systems. As someone at the table pointed out, *we rarely ask why food is so cheap – only why another seems expensive*. This inversion of values lies at the root of today's crisis.

Against this backdrop, the group has outlined the conditions necessary for reversing the trend and reclaiming a future where food, culture and territory remain inseparable.

1. RECLAIMING VALUE THROUGH EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Participants have emphasised that the defence of producers begins with cultural change. If society fails to understand the role of farmers, their work will continue to be undervalued economically and symbolically.

Education – in schools, universities, media and gastronomy – must reconnect people with the origins of their food. Children should grow up understanding who produces their food, how landscapes are maintained, and why biodiversity depends on local agriculture. Public communication must highlight that buying locally sourced food is not an act of nostalgia or privilege but an investment in sustainability, identity and resilience.

Reclaiming this awareness is the first step towards restoring dignity to producers.

2. BUILDING ALLIANCES BETWEEN ADMINISTRATION, GASTRONOMY AND COMMERCE

The table has stressed that the future of small-scale producers cannot rely solely on individual effort. Stronger, fairer alliances are needed across public institutions, restaurants, retailers, cooperatives and communities.

A real *farm-to-fork* approach – and its counterpart, *fork-to-farm* – requires:

- fair and stable prices for producers,
- long-term relationships between farmers and restaurants,
- procurement systems that prioritise seasonal and local produce,
- and visibility for all those who contribute to the food chain.

Gastronomy, in particular, has enormous transformative potential. Chefs and restaurateurs, as cultural ambassadors, can play a decisive role in promoting local agriculture and local seafood, and influencing consumer habits. When gastronomy speaks, society listens – and when it allies with producers, territories thrive.

3. POLICY AND GOVERNANCE: PROTECTING THOSE WHO FEED US

Participants have highlighted that agriculture must be treated as cultural and territorial infrastructure, not merely as a sector of economic activity.

To guarantee the survival of small producers, public administrations must:

- prevent land and water speculation;
- support cooperative and community-based models;
- ensure fair income for farmers;
- and design fiscal and regulatory frameworks that reward biodiversity, quality and sustainability.



The table has insisted that policies should protect landscapes as much as they protect livelihoods. Without coherent governance, producers remain vulnerable to market pressure, climate threats and territorial imbalances.

4. CULTURAL IDENTITY AND DIGNITY OF THE FARMER

A deeply shared conviction has emerged: gastronomy and agriculture are inseparable. Without farmers, culinary heritage collapses. Without landscapes, flavours disappear. Without producers, chefs lose their raw material – literally and metaphorically.

Participants have argued that food narratives must once again place the producer at the centre. The expertise, creativity and historical memory of farmers deserve as much visibility as the work of chefs. Restoring the dignity of the farmer is essential not only for justice but for the survival of food cultures.

5. THE CONSUMER'S ROLE: CONSCIOUS CHOICE AS RESPONSIBILITY

Every consumer decision has consequences. Every purchase is a vote for the food system we want:

- a vote for local agriculture or for anonymous global supply chains;
- a vote for biodiversity or for monoculture;
- a vote for living landscapes or for their disappearance.

Participants have insisted that conscious consumption is the most immediate and accessible way to support producers. Transparency, proximity and seasonality must guide consumer choices, turning daily food habits into acts of cultural and ecological responsibility.



WITHOUT PRODUCERS, THERE IS NO GASTRONOMY

The discussion at Table 16 concluded with a firm and unequivocal message: there can be no gastronomy without producers.

Farmers are not remnants of the past; they are the living foundation of our shared future. It is they who cultivate, preserve and renew the extraordinary diversity of local ingredients that makes gastronomic richness possible. Without the diversity and uniqueness of local products – seeds, varieties, landscapes and practices – gastronomy becomes diminished, homogenised and disconnected from place. Ultimately, it loses its very essence and defining attributes: without producers and their local foods, gastronomy would wither and cease to be.

The challenge ahead is not only to feed people, but to ensure that the people who feed us every day can live with dignity, stability and a hopeful future.

Protecting producers means protecting our landscapes, our biodiversity, our food cultures – and ultimately, our humanity.



TOWARDS 2050: TEN PRIORITIES EMERGING FROM THE WORLD CAFÉ SESSIONS

The **World Café sessions** of the **1st World Gastronomy Summit** have generated a shared and urgent message: **food is culture, heritage and identity**. Transforming food systems requires coordinated commitment from producers, governments, educators, chefs, researchers, youth, civil society, consumers, and also from the media, communication platforms and all channels that shape public narratives around food and gastronomy.

Across all sessions, participants converged on **ten overarching priorities** that must guide future action at local, national and international levels. These recommendations form a roadmap toward resilient, fair, biodiverse and culturally vibrant food systems.

1. Recognise Food as Cultural Heritage and a Strategic Public Good

Food must be fully integrated into cultural, educational, agricultural, tourism and environmental policies. Protecting culinary heritage is essential for preserving identity, community well-being and cultural diversity.

2. Defend and Strengthen the Role of Food Producers

Farmers, fishers and artisans are vital custodians of biodiversity, landscapes and cultural heritage. Ensuring fair income, land access, dignified working conditions and long-term viability is fundamental to food security and cultural continuity.





3. Safeguard Biodiversity as a Foundation of Resilient Food Systems

Seeds, pollinators, traditional varieties, forests, waters and local ecosystems must be protected through supportive policies, research, and community stewardship. Biodiversity is inseparable from culinary diversity and territorial identity.

4. Rebuild Food Education as a Foundational Right

From early childhood to adulthood, food literacy must become central in education. Hands-on learning, taste education, school gardens, intergenerational knowledge transfer and cultural storytelling are essential to reconnect people with food heritage and sustainability.

5. Empower Youth as Key Agents of Transformation

Young people must be active co-creators of future food systems. They need meaningful platforms to design innovative, climate-responsible, culturally sensitive projects that strengthen food sovereignty and gastronomic diversity.

6. Reinforce Local Economies Through Fair, Transparent and Short Food Chains

Fair pricing, direct producer-consumer relationships, clear labelling, territorial branding and public procurement prioritising local, seasonal and diverse products are essential to return value to communities and rebuild trust.

7. Promote Regenerative, Community-Led Tourism Models

Tourism must support, not extract from, local communities. Culinary and cultural experiences should regenerate ecosystems, strengthen identity, and prioritise authenticity over spectacle-driven globalised food trends.

8. Foster Cross-Sector Alliances and Integrated Governance

Food systems are cultural, economic, environmental, educational and social at once. Policies must break administrative silos and promote coordination among agriculture, tourism, culture, health, youth, environment and education sectors.



9. Elevate Storytelling and Cultural Narratives to Counter Homogenisation

Food is memory, meaning and identity. Public campaigns, media, culinary communities and educational institutions must strengthen narratives that celebrate local flavours, producers, landscapes and traditions, resisting global uniformity.

10. Empower Citizens as Conscious, Responsible Agents of Change

Consumers shape markets with every choice. Transparent information, ethical communication and accessible food education are essential so that citizens can support biodiversity, local cultures, health and sustainability through daily decisions.

CROSS-CUTTING CALL TO ACTION

Across all tables, the conclusion is clear: the future of food systems will be decided in our everyday purchasing choices, in our kitchens and homes, in restaurants and markets, in schools, in public policies, and in the cultural narratives that shape how societies value food.

Achieving the desired future requires **shared responsibility**, courage to challenge dominant global models, and collective commitment to protecting biodiversity, cultural heritage, local economies and the dignity of those who feed us.





ENSURING A WORLD LEGACY

From Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy 2025 to Manabí World Region of Gastronomy 2026

One of the most significant moments of the 1st World Gastronomy Summit was the symbolic and strategic transfer of the World Region of Gastronomy legacy from **Catalonia 2025** to **Manabí 2026**. More than a ceremonial handover, this moment embodied the very essence of the World Regions of Gastronomy programme: continuity, shared responsibility, and the collective construction of a global movement rooted in culture, territory and people.

Catalonia's designation as World Region of Gastronomy 2025 has demonstrated how gastronomy, when understood as culture, heritage and identity, can become a powerful driver of transformation. Over the past year, Catalonia has shown that food can connect policy and practice, bridge rural and urban realities, mobilise citizens, and align agriculture, culture, education, tourism and sustainability within a coherent vision. Its journey has reaffirmed that gastronomy is not an end in itself, but a means to strengthen community well-being, cultural pride and ecological responsibility.

The transition to **Manabí World Region of Gastronomy 2026** represents both continuity and renewal. Rooted in one of the world's most biodiverse and culturally rich territories, Manabí brings forward a powerful narrative where food, land, sea, memory and community are inseparable. Its gastronomic heritage—shaped by Indigenous knowledge, coastal ecosystems, ancestral techniques and strong social bonds—offers a compelling perspective on how food systems can sustain identity, resilience and dignity.





This handover reflects the truly global nature of the World Regions of Gastronomy network. From the Mediterranean to the Pacific coast of Latin America, the legacy is not transferred as a fixed model, but as a shared framework of values: respect for producers, protection of biodiversity, transmission of knowledge, empowerment of youth, and the recognition of food as living cultural heritage.

Ensuring a World Legacy means recognising that each World Region of Gastronomy builds upon the experience of those that came before, while contributing its own voice, challenges and solutions to the collective journey. Catalonia passes on not only visibility and momentum, but also responsibility: to continue advocating

for food as a cultural right, to foster inclusive and regenerative food systems, and to engage local communities as active protagonists of change.

For Manabí, the year ahead represents an opportunity to amplify its unique food culture on the world stage, while deepening local pride and safeguarding ancestral practices for future generations. It also represents a commitment to dialogue—between regions, continents and cultures—reinforcing gastronomy as a shared language capable of fostering understanding, solidarity and cooperation.

The World Gastronomy Summit reaffirmed that legacy is not about closure, but about transmission. As Catalonia and Manabí stand together in this moment of transition, they exemplify the spirit of the World Regions of Gastronomy: a living, evolving network where each region both receives and contributes, learns and leads.

In ensuring this World Legacy, IGCAT and its partners reaffirm their commitment to accompanying this transition, strengthening international collaboration, and ensuring that the values articulated throughout the Summit continue to inspire action beyond borders and beyond years.

From Catalonia to Manabí, the baton passes—not as an end, but as a promise: that food, as culture, heritage and identity, will remain at the heart of global conversations and collective futures.



THE PROMOTING COMMITTEE OF CATALONIA WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY 2025:



The Generalitat de Catalunya, the Government of Catalonia, has positioned gastronomy at the heart of its cultural, social, and economic strategy. Recognising food as both intangible heritage and a driver of innovation, the Government has led landmark initiatives such as Catalonia, European Region of Gastronomy 2016 and Catalonia, World Region of Gastronomy 2025. These milestones have consolidated Catalonia's reputation as an international benchmark in culinary excellence. Through dedicated programmes, the Government promotes gastronomic routes that show-

case diverse landscapes, invests in food education to empower new generations, and supports local producers to preserve traditions while fostering creativity and sustainability. By linking gastronomy with tourism, innovation, and regional development, Catalonia demonstrates how food can generate inclusive growth, strengthen cultural identity, and build global visibility. The Government's commitment makes Catalonia a model for policies that connect gastronomy with the major challenges of our time.



The Catalan Academy of Gastronomy and Nutrition (ACGN) is dedicated to promoting excellence in gastronomy, culinary research, and nutritional awareness. Recognised by the Catalan Parliament, the Academy works to raise awareness of the social, cultural, and health-related value of food. As a promoter of Catalonia, World Region of Gastronomy 2025, it underscores the cultural and scientific dimensions of gastronomy, emphasising the role of the Catalan Cuisine in safeguarding culinary traditions while improving health and

well-being. The Academy brings together chefs, academics, scientists, and cultural leaders to stimulate dialogue and organise events that showcase Catalonia's culinary richness. Its awards and recognitions celebrate talent and creativity, bridging tradition with contemporary trends. Through these contributions, the Academy strengthens Catalonia's reputation as a hub of culinary excellence and innovation, deeply rooted in heritage yet open to global collaboration.



alícia

The Alícia Foundation is a pioneering research centre devoted to food, science, and health, created with the mission to improve people's eating habits through creativity, sustainability, and innovation. Founded in 2003, it works as a non-profit initiative that combines culinary expertise with scientific research, positioning itself as a unique reference point where gastronomy meets health and social responsibility. As a promoter of Catalonia, World Region of Gastronomy 2025, Alícia contributes by addressing key challenges such as nutrition, food education, biodiversity, and the valorisation of local products and pro-

ducers. Its multidisciplinary projects involve chefs, scientists, producers, schools, and local communities, translating knowledge into practical solutions that improve health and foster sustainable food practices. The Foundation's work ranges from developing educational programmes for children to supporting innovation in professional kitchens, always with the aim of making gastronomy accessible, responsible, and transformative. Through this, Alícia strengthens Catalonia's international leadership in linking culinary heritage with science, creativity, and social progress.

elBullifoundation

The El Bulli Foundation, created by world-renowned chef Ferran Adrià, is an international reference in creativity, culinary innovation, and knowledge dissemination. Its mission is to preserve the legacy of the iconic El Bulli restaurant while transforming it into a platform for experimentation, reflection, and learning. As a promoter of Catalonia, World Region of Gastronomy 2025, the Foundation contributes its pioneering expertise in creativity management, research, and cross-disciplinary collaboration. Through projects such as elBulli1846, a unique space for experi-

mentation, reflection, and dissemination of knowledge, the Foundation positions gastronomy as a cultural, artistic, and scientific discipline with global impact. Beyond cuisine, El Bulli Foundation develops methodologies that apply creativity to diverse fields, reinforcing Catalonia's reputation as a hub of innovation. Its work ensures that gastronomy is not only celebrated as heritage but also projected as a forward-looking discipline that inspires transformation. In doing so, the Foundation helps secure Catalonia's leadership in the global dialogue on food and creativity.



THE PROMOTING COMMITTEE OF MANABÍ WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY 2026:



The Prefecture of Manabí, Ecuador, integrates gastronomy as a key element of its development strategy, recognising food as both cultural heritage and a driver of innovation, sustainability, and inclusive growth. Designated World Region of Gastronomy 2026, Manabí highlights its extraordinary biodiversity, ancestral culinary traditions, and the creativity of its communities. The Prefecture promotes initiatives that strengthen rural-urban connections, foster food education, and empower farmers, fishers, and chefs to protect traditions while

embracing innovation and responsible tourism. The candidacy is seen as an extraordinary opportunity to unite stakeholders across the province, reinforce belonging and pride, and project Manabí globally. By linking gastronomy with cultural identity, economic progress, and sustainability, the Prefecture demonstrates how food can address contemporary challenges such as climate change, social inclusion, and resilience, positioning Manabí as a hopeful, forward-looking model for sustainable development.



Eloy Alfaro Laic University of Manabí (ULEAM) plays a pivotal academic role in the Manabí World Region of Gastronomy 2026 candidacy. As a member of the Promotion Committee, ULEAM actively contributes to the Five-Year Plan 2025-2029, ensuring that gastronomy becomes a central pillar for cultural identity, sustainability, and socioeconomic development. The University leads research on the sustainability of gastronomic services in coastal and rural areas, where food identity, environmental care, and tourism intersect. It also supports the Iche School (Escue-

la-Restaurante-Laboratoriolche), a space for culinary training and innovation that links students, producers, and chefs in preserving ancestral techniques and reinterpreting indigenous ingredients. Through its academic programmes, research projects, and community engagement, ULEAM strengthens the candidacy by ensuring it is rooted in both heritage and innovation. Its work underscores the vital role of universities in connecting gastronomy to sustainable development, social empowerment, and global visibility.



The Fuegos Foundation, established in Manabí in 2017, is dedicated to safeguarding culinary traditions, promoting food sovereignty, and creating sustainable opportunities for local communities. As a key member of the Promotion Committee for Manabí World Region of Gastronomy 2026, Fuegos ensures the candidacy reflects the voices and values of farmers, fishers, chefs, and educators. The Foundation champions ancestral knowledge, indigenous ingredients, and short food chains that directly connect producers with consumers. It also develops training

programmes and community-based initiatives that empower younger generations to view gastronomy as a bridge between cultural identity, innovation, and sustainability. Through research, advocacy, and local engagement, Fuegos contributes to building food systems that are resilient, inclusive, and environmentally responsible. Its involvement in the candidacy highlights how gastronomy can tackle global challenges such as biodiversity loss, climate change, and social inequality, while generating pride, resilience, and international recognition for Manabí.



The Chamber of Industry and Production of Manabí (CIPMAN) plays a strategic role in strengthening the province's economic fabric and linking gastronomy to entrepreneurship, competitiveness, and innovation. As a member of the Promotion Committee for Manabí World Region of Gastronomy 2026, the Chamber contributes to the Five-Year Plan 2025-2029, ensuring the candidacy reflects the dynamism of local enterprises and industries. CIPMAN mobilises its network of companies to support local producers, invest in food-related industries, and strengthen value chains

that connect agriculture, fisheries, and tourism. It also promotes training, sustainability practices, and knowledge-sharing to prepare businesses for new markets and global challenges. By bridging industry with culture and gastronomy, CIPMAN demonstrates how the private sector can be a key driver of inclusive growth, social progress, and environmental responsibility. Its active involvement in the candidacy reinforces Manabí's international projection as a competitive, innovative, and sustainable region.



WORLD GASTRONOMY SUMMIT DECLARATION: FOOD AT THE HEART OF CULTURAL POLICY AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

Adopted in Catalonia during its tenure as
WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY 2025

We, the undersigned, gathered in Barcelona at the inaugural **World Gastronomy Summit**, in the presence of cultural leaders, policymakers, chefs, producers, scholars, and representatives of civil society, declare our shared commitment to recognising, preserving, and celebrating **food as a fundamental pillar of cultural heritage and identity**.

We affirm that food is far more than nourishment. It is a living expression of culture—rooted in memory, territory, tradition, creativity, and community. Culinary practices connect generations, narrate the histories of our peoples, reflect our natural environments, and shape our shared sense of belonging.

On the eve of MONDIACULT 2025, we call upon governments, international organisations, regional bodies, and civil society to join us in:

- **Recognising food as cultural heritage**, and integrating it fully into cultural, agricultural, tourism, and education policies;
- **Supporting local and regional initiatives** that promote sustainable food systems grounded in evolving cultural traditions, promoting cuisine and its ingredients;
- **Empowering youth and communities** to preserve and innovate upon their gastronomic heritage with pride, investing in producers and protecting region's ways of life;
- **Encouraging research and storytelling** that document and celebrate food traditions across the globe;
- **Fostering inclusive dialogue** that bridges cultures and generations through the shared language of food.

Let this Declaration stand as a milestone in **a growing global movement that calls for gastronomy to be placed at the heart of cultural policy and community well-being**.

Together, we commit to nourishing both people and planet through the protection and celebration of one of humanity's most profound cultural expressions – **the food that defines us**.



This Declaration is inspired by **UNESCO's leadership** in recognising foodways as part of the world's Intangible Cultural Heritage, and marking 15 years since UNESCO recognised the Mediterranean diet as intangible cultural heritage, we reaffirm the critical role of gastronomy in safeguarding cultural diversity and fostering intercultural dialogue. From traditional farming and artisanal preparation to festive rituals and everyday meals, UNESCO's work on foodways highlights the richness and vulnerability of our shared food heritage.

Barcelona, Catalonia - 27 September 2025



This Declaration reflects the collective effort of numerous individuals and organisations that have long been dedicated to advancing this commitment. It is formally open for endorsement by all stakeholders, including governments, policymakers, chefs, producers, scholars, representatives of civil society...

Comprehensive information on the founding organisations, as well as the institutions, entities, and individuals that have already expressed their support, is available at worldregionofgastronomy.org/wgs-declaration.

More than 50 institutions have thus far joined the Declaration, which remains open and warmly invites further endorsements from organisations and individuals across the world and from all sectors of society.

Institutions supporting the **WORLD GASTRONOMY SUMMIT DECLARATION**
at the time of final editing of this report:







CLOSING REMARKS, MIQUEL SÀMPER



MIQUEL SÀMPER

Minister of Business
and Labour of Catalonia

“CATALONIA'S SUCCESS IS NOT THE RESULT OF CHANCE. IT IS BUILT ON A STRONG AND DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRODUCT AND CUISINE – BETWEEN THOSE WHO CULTIVATE THE LAND AND THOSE WHO FISH OUR SEAS, AND THOSE WHO TRANSFORM THESE PRODUCTS INTO CULINARY EXPRESSIONS. “

It is a great honour to address you at the closing of this 1st World Gastronomy Summit, here in Catalonia – a land where food is not only an economic sector, but a fundamental expression of culture, identity and collective life.

Allow me, first of all, to express my sincere gratitude to IGCAT for its vision and leadership in bringing this Summit to life, and in particular to Dr. Diane Dodd for her commitment, energy and capacity to connect people, ideas and regions around a shared purpose.

I would also like to warmly thank all speakers, participants and contributors who have made this Summit possible. The richness of the discussions, the diversity of perspectives and the depth of the reflections shared over these days clearly demonstrate that food is at the heart of many of the defining challenges and opportunities of our time.

Catalonia has long been recognised for the strength and vitality of its gastronomy. Our cuisine has achieved international recognition, but just as importantly, it remains deeply rooted in everyday life. In Catalonia, food is not only celebrated at the highest level – it is lived daily, across homes, markets and communities. Quite simply, we are a country where people eat well, and where eating well is understood as part of a broader way of life.

This success is not the result of chance. It is built on a strong and dynamic relationship between product, cuisine and landscape – between those who cultivate the land and those who fish our seas, and those who transform these products into culinary expression. This connection is essential, and it is also reflected at the institutional level. Catalonia attracts millions of people for visiting our territory, whatever their motivation for visiting, where they can get to taste in such a concrete way the diversity of its landscape that is expressed through its gastronomy. I would also like to highlight the importance for a territory to be able to have its own cuisine like Catalan in order to express the uniqueness and identity of our territory, as one of the main axes of our country brand. And how this identity is reflected in all the festivals on the calendar that have a characteristic dish or product.



Already in 2016, when Catalonia was recognised as European Region of Gastronomy, we understood the importance of working across departments and sectors. Today, as World Region of Gastronomy 2025, we reaffirm this approach: strengthening collaboration between agriculture, fisheries, business, tourism and culture, and recognising that only through this integrated vision can we build a robust and forward-looking food system.

Our commitment is clear: to continue supporting the entire value chain – from field to plate – ensuring that producers, enterprises, chefs, researchers and citizens are all part of a shared project. Because gastronomy does not begin in the kitchen; it begins in the land, in the sea, in the knowledge and dedication of those who produce our food.

Throughout this Summit, one message has resonated strongly: food is culture, heritage and identity. In Catalonia, this is not a new idea – it is a deeply embedded reality. Gastronomy is an intrinsic part of who we are. It connects generations, preserves traditions and allows us to express our creativity and diversity.

At the same time, food is also a powerful tool for bringing people together. Kitchens, meals and shared tables have always been spaces of encounter, dialogue and mutual understanding. In a world that often feels fragmented, gastronomy reminds us of the importance of connection – of sitting together, sharing and building relationships.

The conversations held during this Summit have highlighted both the challenges we face – from sustainability and climate change to food security and cultural preservation – and the opportunities ahead. They have also reinforced the need for collective action, for stronger governance and for a shared vision of the future.

Catalonia is committed to being part of this global effort. We will continue to work with our partners, locally and internationally, to strengthen our food systems, to promote innovation and sustainability, and to ensure that gastronomy remains a source of well-being, economic development and cultural richness.

As we close this first edition of the World Gastronomy Summit, we do so not with a sense of conclusion, but of continuity. The work does not end here. On the contrary, it is only just beginning.

Let us continue to build together a future where food nourishes not only our bodies, but also our cultures, our communities and our shared humanity.

Thank you very much!





CONCLUDING WORDS FROM IGCAT PRESIDENT, DR DIANE DODD



FROM INAUGURAL MOMENT TO ONGOING RESPONSIBILITY

As the 1st World Gastronomy Summit, this gathering marked a point of departure. Its purpose was never to offer definitive answers, but to establish a shared global reference, one that affirms food as a core dimension of culture, and positions gastronomy within the realm of cultural policy, governance and long-term societal transformation.

Throughout the Summit, one conclusion became unmistakably clear: food systems cannot be shaped in isolation. They are influenced simultaneously by agriculture, culture, education, environment, media, tourism and public policy, and ultimately by the everyday decisions of citizens. This is indeed the premise upon which IGCAT has been built.

The World Café sessions demonstrated the depth of responsibility and creativity that emerge when these perspectives are brought together and entrusted with imagining long-term futures.



IGCAT is particularly proud that this collective process resulted in the **Declaration on Food at the Heart of Cultural Policy and Community Well-Being**, presented at MONDIACULT on 29 October. This moment represented a significant shift. For the first time, food has entered the global cultural policy discourse as an integral expression of culture itself. This achievement reflects not only the voices gathered at the Summit, but years of sustained work through IGCAT's programmes, partnerships and advocacy.

However, recognition alone is not sufficient. The structural forces driving homogenisation, ecological degradation and cultural disconnection remain powerful. The challenge now is to translate shared vision into concrete policy frameworks, durable alliances and sustained action. The responsibility that emerges from this Summit is therefore not symbolic, but practical and long-term.

In this context, the World Regions of Gastronomy and the European Regions of Gastronomy stand out as essential pillars of the next phase. Across continents and over more than a decade of experience, these regions have demonstrated that when gastronomy is recognised as culture, it becomes a catalyst for food sovereignty, social cohesion, sustainable tourism and regional resilience. Their accumulated knowledge and tested methodologies now form the backbone of an emerging global movement.

This continuity will be further strengthened through the **2nd World Gastronomy Summit** already in preparation (to be hosted 12-15 October 2026 in Manabí World Region of Gastronomy 2026), which will place a strong emphasis on youth empowerment through gastronomy. By focusing on intergenerational transmission, food education, creative entrepreneurship and youth leadership, the next Summit will recognise young people not merely as beneficiaries, but as co-creators of resilient and meaningful food systems.

The true legacy of this first Summit will not be measured by declarations alone, but by how its ideas are carried forward into regional strategies, national cultural policies, educational frameworks and international cooperation. It has shown that when gastronomy is approached as culture, it becomes not just a sector, but a shared responsibility and a source of renewal.

On behalf of IGCAT and the World Regions of Gastronomy, I invite all those engaging with this report to take up this responsibility with us: to choose food diversity over uniformity, cultural meaning over convenience, and local resilience over commodification.

Because the future of food is not only about what we eat; it is about the kind of world our eating creates.



WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY

World/European Regions of Gastronomy, guided by IGCAT, are working together to strengthen food security through the celebration of distinctive food cultures; create employment by stimulating creativity and gastronomic innovation; nourish children and adults through culinary and cultural education; driving environmental sustaina-

bility in tourism, hospitality and agricultural sectors; supporting balance and sustainable tourism practices; highlighting and supporting expertise from within rural and urban communities, creating connections and sharing good practices; and contributing to community health and well-being.



IGCAT aims to empower local communities by raising awareness of the importance of protecting and promoting distinct regional food, culture, arts and natural assets as part of sustainable and balanced tourism and development strategies. This is essential to safeguarding our planet, health, wellness and local economies.

IGCAT is a non-profit institute established in 2012, working with regional stakeholder consortiums in the fields of gastronomy, culture, arts and tourism. It counts on

the expertise of a worldwide network of experts and works in partnership with specialised intergovernmental organisations.

IGCAT founded the World/European Region of Gastronomy Award and is the official secretariat for the World/European Regions of Gastronomy Platforms. Furthermore, the Institute has developed the European Young Chef Award, the World Food Gift Challenge, the Top Websites for Foodie Travelers Award and the international Food Film Menu.





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