

EIT Food becomes partner in Flemish food coalition 'Vlaamse kost' to develop food strategy for the future

Due to the corona crisis, the interest of Flemish citizens in local food and the local food supply chain is increasing rapidly. Flemish Minister of Agriculture and Food Hilde Crevits responds to this trend with 'Vlaamse Kost', a project that will consist of various organisations and activities, eventually culminating into a real Flemish food strategy. EIT Food West director Martine van Veelen is invited as an advisory partner to assist with the development of the Flemish food strategy for the future.

In the coming year, a food coalition with food changers and creative citizens will shape the vision for the food economy in the future. As part of the Vlaamse Kost project, a society-wide debate will be held where citizens can share their vision. In 2022, this will lead to a major Food Summit. The overall goal of the minister, together with the food coalition, is to innovate the food system and make it more resilient.

"With Vlaamse Kost, we place the emphasis on our food and on a fair wage for those responsible for food production. Today we are starting a process to achieve a strong Flemish food economy. A broad story that we want to write together with many people, with organizations and with citizens." - Hilde Crevits

Director Martine van Veelen is excited to participate in the Vlaamse Kost project as she sees a lot of opportunity and is convinced of EIT Food's added value to spur innovation. *"The goal of the Flemish food strategy is fully in line with our vision to make healthy, safe and sustainable food available for everyone, in such a way that trust and fairness is guaranteed from farm to fork",* she explains. *"With our community that consists of stakeholders across the full food supply chain, including citizens, we can definitely help shape the strategy for a healthy and resilient food system in Flanders."*

The ambition for 2022

A variety of goals are being taken into account to develop a food strategy. *"We want to bring farmers and citizens closer together and make consumers rethink the origins of their food. And importantly, farmers must receive a fair price for their products. In addition, attention must be paid to sustainability, the way in which products reach us and access to healthy food for everyone",* explains Flemish Minister of Agriculture and Food Hilde Crevits. *"With Vlaamse Kost, we want to emphasize our food and a fair wage for those who produce our food."*

Innovation plays a big role in the food strategy as circular and sustainable businesses and producers will be supported while consumers need convincing. Cleaning up the environment, creating healthier soil, preventing food loss and spur protein diversification are important challenges to tackle in the near future.

Are you a food innovator? Share your idea!

The food coalition will consist of 20 partners from the food sector, private and policy partners including scientific expertise and experts from the hospitality industry. Committed food innovators are invited to support the coalition. Whether you are a student, an entrepreneur, a researcher, representatives of civil society organisations. If you have an idea for a food challenge and you would like to join forces with the food coalition, you can sign up [here](#).

The most promising ideas will be tested in pilot projects that help reach the goals of the food strategy. Food innovators will receive support from experts in the food coalition to turn these pilots into a success story. While these test projects are running, the food coalition will use the feedback and results to design a food strategy.