

1) Describe the implemented activities and main achievements. For the final report, include the outcomes of the action.

Description of the implemented activities

As part of the implementation of activities within the CICERO project, the Croatian Association of Markets, as a project partner, organized and implemented a three-day event entitled: “The Contribution of Market Food to Citizens’ Health and the Development of Local Food Production” (Osijek, 24–26 October 2024). The following project partners also participated in the implementation of the event:

- Fondazione Campagna Amica, Rome (Italy),
- Stichting Rotterdamse Oogst, Rotterdam (Netherlands),
- Fundacja Targ Pietruszkowy, Krakow (Poland), and
- Grønt Marked, Copenhagen (Denmark).

The event programme was divided and implemented over three days.

On the first day, an introductory Kick-off Conference was held to present the CICERO project to citizens, explaining the potential of local food for health and food security. Opening remarks and presentations of project activities were delivered by the event hosts, a representative of the project team, and representatives of the local community responsible for agriculture and food production. The conference conveyed the message that citizen engagement is essential for shaping sustainable food production and supply chains.

This was followed by a workshop entitled “Health and Food from Markets”, including a demonstration of the preparation and tasting of green juices and smoothies made from market produce. The aim of the workshop was to raise awareness about the benefits of fruit and vegetables in our diet for achieving a healthier lifestyle, and to educate people to pay more attention to the links between their health, environmental issues, and the food they choose to consume. The workshop focused on showing citizens how to integrate local seasonal food and fresh produce into their diets and how this affects health outcomes.

After the workshop, a social dinner was organized for all participants of the first day, where they had the opportunity to taste local cuisine, get to know each other better, and strengthen connections. All first-day activities took place in the open-air market area in the centre of Osijek.

A total of 182 participants attended the event, including citizens purchasing local food at the market, market vendors/local food producers, project partners, market managers from across Croatia, representatives of two associations dedicated to preserving traditional cultural heritage, tourists, and representatives of local authorities.

More than 700 cups of green juices and smoothies made from local fruits and vegetables were distributed to citizens, as well as around 300 leaflets presenting the CICERO project, its objectives, and information about the importance of consuming healthy locally grown food and its contribution to citizens’ health, environmental protection, and local economic development.

The entire event was covered by local and national media representatives, who reported directly from the venue and disseminated information about citizens’ access to healthy locally grown food through the Osijek market. Information was also shared through social media channels to encourage as many citizens as possible to participate in the democratic processes of their communities and become active members of society, shaping it in a direction that supports

sustainable economic opportunities, alternatives to mainstream distribution systems, and community self-sufficiency, while strengthening the feeling of belonging to a larger and cohesive community.

This sense of community was additionally strengthened through the organized social dinner attended by more than 120 citizens and stakeholders.

By presenting the goals of the CICERO project, distributing promotional materials, and offering tastings of local food, a significant level of public awareness was achieved regarding the objectives and expected results of the project. Participants gained a better understanding of their fundamental rights related to access to healthy food, while awareness was raised about the importance of local market food as a source of health, environmental protection, and local economic development. The participation of cultural heritage associations and local authorities responsible for agricultural policies also improved cooperation between local authorities and civil society organizations.

On the second day, 25 October 2024, an interactive workshop entitled “Local Food for the Local Community” and a partner meeting of all CICERO project stakeholders were held at the Faculty of Economics in Osijek, near the market area.

The workshop highlighted the importance of local food for local and regional communities and explored the relationship between local food and food security. Participants also learned about the work of the Croatian Association of Markets and its projects, as well as examples of good practices in market management and operations in Croatia (Dubrovnik, Osijek, Koprivnica, and Sisak) and abroad (Krakow, Rotterdam, Copenhagen, and Italy).

Experts from the Faculty of Food Technology Osijek and the Faculty of Agrobiotechnical Sciences Osijek presented the impact of local food on citizens’ health and explained how markets create short supply chains for fresh locally produced food. Additionally, the story of a successful family farm selling its agricultural products at the market was presented.

A total of 13 lectures were delivered.

The workshop was attended by 70 participants, including citizens, market managers, market vendors, experts in agriculture, nutrition and rural development, and students. All presentations were made publicly available through the Croatian Association of Markets’ website, Google Drive, and Instagram profile, while links were shared through the project WhatsApp group. All participants also received canvas bags containing CICERO project materials and workshop-related content, with 70 sets distributed in total.

Immediately after the workshop, a partner meeting was held to evaluate the outcomes and results of the event and discuss lessons learned that could be applied to future activities. Project partners announced future event dates and expressed positive impressions regarding the market, workshops, and strong participant turnout during the first two days.

A press conference and media interviews with selected speakers were organized to further disseminate workshop messages to the wider public. At the same time, information was continuously shared through social media, e-mail, and WhatsApp communication channels.

Workshop participants learned more about the importance of critical thinking in food purchasing decisions and the benefits of informed and conscious choices. Their understanding of the relationship between small-scale family farming and market sales was deepened, as well as the

importance of supporting local food production and short supply chains, particularly for seasonal fresh food. Participants also gained additional knowledge and experience through examples of good practices from markets in several EU cities, strengthening their future development plans for the markets they manage. Cooperation between market managers, local producers, and representatives of scientific and research institutions in the field of local food supply and safety was also improved.

The third day of the event (26 October 2024), attended by 33 participants, was divided into two parts.

The first part included an organized visit to Kopački Rit Nature Park, featuring a professionally guided boat tour through the wetlands. Participants became more familiar with the flora and fauna of this large wetland area along the Danube River and observed the rich biodiversity preserved despite the impact of agriculture in the region.

The second part included a visit to the organic farm OPG Orlov Put, located on the border of Kopački Rit Nature Park. The farm covers approximately seven hectares of land that has not been chemically treated or cultivated since 1988. The farm's name, "Orlov Put" ("Eagle's Path"), was inspired by nature itself, as eagles and other birds regularly fly over the area within the protected park.

The farm, managed by Goran Gusak, produces organic fruits, vegetables, and medicinal herbs, while also raising sheep, cattle, pigs (the indigenous Mangalica breed), horses (Lipizzaners), and various types of poultry. For eco-tourism purposes, the first wooden eco-house in Croatia was also built on the farm using black pine logs and traditional Baranja reed roofing.

Through the farm visit, participants learned how organic farming can be organized in harmony with a protected natural area and combined with tourism and educational activities, especially for preschool and school children. The farm represents a good example of self-sufficiency and food security while contributing to the preservation of traditional plant varieties and indigenous animal breeds in situ.

Participants deepened their knowledge of the biological and agricultural diversity of wetland areas and learned how ecological agricultural production can be successfully organized near a protected natural park. They gained new insights into organic fruit and vegetable production, indigenous livestock breeding, and local food offerings. The acquired knowledge increased participants' capacities for decision-making related to ecological farming and connecting agriculture with tourism in protected natural areas. Cooperation between market representatives, food producers, and managers of protected natural areas was also strengthened.

Main achievements of the project

- The Croatian Association of Markets successfully organized and implemented the three-day international event "The Contribution of Market Food to Citizens' Health and the Development of Local Food Production" in Osijek from 24 to 26 October 2024, with the participation of partners from Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, and Denmark.
- The CICERO project was presented to the wider public through conferences, workshops, lectures, study visits, and media activities.
- A high level of public and stakeholder participation was achieved, with more than 280 participants attending throughout the three-day event.

- A total of 13 expert lectures were organized on local food, citizens' health, short supply chains, and examples of good market management practices from Croatia and other EU countries.
 - More than 700 green juices and smoothies made from local fruits and vegetables, as well as around 300 promotional leaflets about the CICERO project and the importance of healthy local food, were distributed to citizens.
 - Participants were introduced to examples of good practices in markets and local food production from Croatia, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, and Denmark.
 - All presentations and educational materials were made publicly available through the Croatian Association of Markets' website and social media channels.
 - The project achieved significant visibility through local and national media, social media, and partner communication channels.
 - A partner meeting was held to analyse event results, exchange experiences, and define guidelines for future project activities.
 - Through study visits to Kopački Rit and the OPG Orlov Put organic farm, participants gained practical knowledge about organic agriculture, biodiversity conservation, and the connection between agriculture and sustainable tourism.
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Project outcomes

- Citizens' awareness of the importance of healthy locally produced food and its contribution to health, environmental protection, and local economic development was increased.
 - Participants developed a better understanding of the right to access healthy and safe food and the importance of sustainable food systems.
 - Awareness of the role of markets as short supply chains connecting local producers and consumers was strengthened.
 - Participants' knowledge of sustainable and organic agriculture, local food production, and food safety was increased.
 - The capacities of market managers and food producers were strengthened through the exchange of experiences and good practices from several European countries.
 - Cooperation between local authorities, civil society organizations, market managers, research institutions, and food producers was improved.
 - More active citizen participation in local communities and sustainable food production and distribution models was encouraged.
 - The activities contributed to strengthening community cohesion and the sense of belonging through joint activities and shared meals.
 - Participants gained practical knowledge about linking organic agriculture, nature conservation, and rural tourism.
 - The project contributed to promoting sustainable eating habits, local self-sufficiency, and the preservation of traditional and natural heritage.
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2) Describe the project results (so far) and the actual and expected impacts (on target groups, changes, procedures, capacities, innovation, etc.). For the final report, include an overview of the results.

Project results (so far)

So far, the CICERO project has achieved significant results in informing, educating, and connecting citizens, food producers, market managers, experts, and local institutions regarding the importance of locally produced food, healthy eating habits, and sustainable food systems.

Through the three-day international event held in Osijek, conferences, workshops, expert lectures, partner meetings, and study visits were successfully organized, bringing together more than 280 participants from Croatia and partner countries of the European Union. The project enabled the exchange of knowledge and experiences among civil society organizations, local food producers, market managers, the academic community, and representatives of local authorities.

An important result of the project has been the increased visibility of local food and short supply chains through media coverage, social media activities, and the distribution of promotional and educational materials. Through workshops and practical demonstrations, citizens learned about the benefits of consuming fresh local food, its impact on health, and the relationship between food choices, environmental protection, and local economic development.

The project also contributed to strengthening international cooperation among partners from Croatia, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, and Denmark through the exchange of good practices related to market management and the development of local food systems. Participants acquired new knowledge about sustainable and organic food production, short supply chains, the role of markets within local communities, and the possibilities of connecting agriculture, tourism, and nature protection.

Additionally, the project improved cooperation between local food producers, market managers, scientific and research institutions, and public sector representatives, creating a foundation for future joint activities and new initiatives in sustainable food production and distribution.

Actual and expected impacts of the project

Impact on target groups

The project had a direct positive impact on citizens, food producers, market managers, students, experts in nutrition and agriculture, as well as representatives of local authorities and civil society organizations. Participants increased their knowledge and awareness regarding healthy nutrition, locally produced food, and sustainable food systems.

Citizens became more aware of the importance of informed food choices and the benefits of purchasing local and seasonal products at markets. The project encouraged citizens to participate more actively in local communities and provide greater support to local food producers.

For producers and market managers, the project contributed to the exchange of experiences and strengthening capacities for developing more sustainable business models, promoting local food, and improving short supply chains. Examples of good practices from several European countries provided additional ideas for the development of markets and local food initiatives.

Changes and improved procedures

The project contributed to strengthening cooperation between civil society, local authorities, academia, and food producers, thereby improving communication and joint action procedures in the field of food security and sustainable agriculture.

Participants gained practical knowledge about:

- the importance of short supply chains,
- organic and sustainable food production,
- linking agriculture with tourism and nature protection,
- promoting healthy eating habits, and
- developing local food systems and markets.

The project also contributed to stronger citizen involvement in discussions related to sustainability, local self-sufficiency, and environmental protection.

Capacity building and innovation

Through international cooperation and the exchange of experiences, the organizational and professional capacities of project partners and participants were strengthened. The project enabled the transfer of innovative approaches to market management, local food promotion, and the organization of educational activities for citizens.

An important innovative aspect of the project was the integration of citizens' health, local food, organic production, cultural heritage, and nature protection into a single educational and participatory model of community engagement.

Long-term expected effects

The project is expected to contribute in the long term to:

- increased demand for locally produced food,
- strengthening short supply chains and the local economy,
- the development of sustainable markets and local food systems,
- greater citizen involvement in issues related to sustainable nutrition and environmental protection,
- the development of organic agriculture and sustainable rural tourism, and
- continued international cooperation and exchange of good practices among project partners.

Overview of project results

- 700 cups of green juices and smoothies distributed
- 120 meals served during the community lunch
- 300 brochures distributed
- 1 Kick-off conference organized
- 13 lectures delivered
- 2 workshops organized
- 1 project partner meeting held
- 70 gift packages distributed
- 1 press conference organized
- 1 study visit to an agricultural farm conducted