



INSIGHTS INTO THE PEER TO PEER EXCHANGE WITH EUROPEAN BROADENING CITY-REGIONS

TBILISI, GEORGIA
16 - 19 June 2026

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About this report

This short report documents the FoodCLIC peer-to-peer exchange for European Broadening city-regions, that was held in Tbilisi, Georgia from 16 – 19 June 2026. The report provides a record for participating city-regions, it also contributes to ongoing learning and knowledge capture across the FoodCLIC project and shares with external readers the value of peer-to-peer exchange for food system transformation.



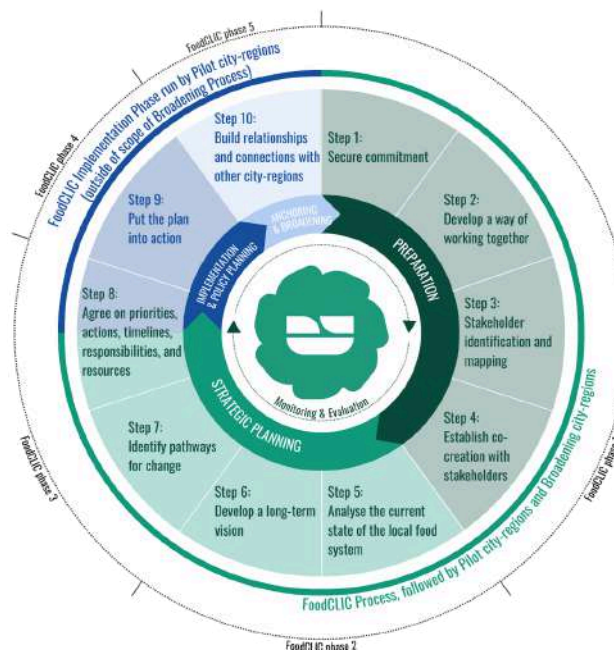
THE FOODCLIC BROADENING PROCESS IN BRIEF

Overview of the FOODCLIC Broadening Process

The FoodCLIC Broadening process supports eight Broadening city-regions (BCRs) to adopt and adapt the methodologies and good practices developed in the FoodCLIC Pilot city-regions (Living Labs) to enable transformations in their local food systems. The eight BCRs involved are: Freiburg (Germany), Thessaloniki (Greece), Tirana (Albania), Tbilisi (Georgia) and Wroclaw (Poland) in Europe; and Ebolowa (Cameroon), EtheKwini (South Africa), and Fort Portal (Uganda) in Africa.

The Broadening process began in May 2024 and runs through June 2026. Over this timeframe, the BCRs work through Steps 1 to 7 of the Broadening process (see image below) with support from ICLEI Europe, ICLEI Africa, and ICLEI World Secretariat.

Picture 1: The FoodCLIC Broadening Wheel



The Broadening process entails three main phases:

1. **Preparation.** Conducting baseline assessments, stakeholder mappings, and drafting a vision for their city-region food systems.
2. **Strategic Planning.** Creating or strengthening a multi-stakeholder group focused on food policy, initiatives, and activities.



3. **Implementation and Policy Planning**, followed by *anchoring and broadening*. Identifying pathways for change towards an integrated city-region food strategy.

BCRs' work consisted in organising a series of three workshops in their local contexts in line with these phases. The workshop series differed slightly across city-regions, as it was adapted to the needs and emerging priorities of each local context.

ICLEI Europe and ICLEI Africa supported the BCRs through online guidance, including three joint webinars on mapping and baseline assessments, stakeholder engagement, and visioning and strategy planning. Tailored training packages were also provided, offering agendas, templates, and process notes to help city-regions address gaps, leverage opportunities, develop a vision, identify pathways for change, and make planning frameworks more food-sensitive. In addition to this, ICLEI Africa supported the three African BCRs with in person support.

OVERVIEW OF THE PEER-TO-PEER EXCHANGE WITH EUROPEAN BROADENING CITY-REGIONS

The FoodCLIC peer-to-peer exchange for European Broadening City-Regions took place in Tbilisi, Georgia, from 16 to 19 June 2026. Organised by ICLEI Europe, the 2.5-day gathering brought together representatives from the five European BCRs to share experiences, reflect on challenges, and learn from one another. Discussions spanned a wide range of topics –from food governance and policy development to planning frameworks and links with other sectors, including climate action and economic development.

The group was joined by ICLEI Africa, representing the three African Broadening City-Regions, as well as key food-system actors from Tbilisi City Hall and FAO Georgia. Their contributions during Day 2 offered valuable insights into how food-system governance and implementation operate in Georgia and specifically in Tbilisi, helping participants gain a clearer picture of both policy and practice. *(The full list of participants is available in the Annex)*

The programme combined focused workshop sessions with hands-on activities. Alongside discussions on priorities and thematic needs, participants took part in cooking experiences and site visits that provided an authentic introduction to Georgian cuisine, culture, and the local food system.



DAY 1 - 16 JUNE 2026

The programme began on the evening of 16 June with a culinary workshop hosted in the workshop space of Restaurant Rigi, a venue known for its traditional Georgian cuisine. The session opened with an introduction to Georgia's rich food heritage, followed by a hands-on cooking class.

Participants prepared *Khachapuri* and *Lobiani*, two emblematic dishes of Georgian gastronomy, creating a relaxed atmosphere that encouraged early exchanges and offered a first taste of Tbilisi's vibrant food culture.



Picture 2: *Khachapuri* and *Lobiani* cooking class

DAY 2 - 17 JUNE 2026

Day 2 took place at **Bazari Orbeliani, a historic bazaar** in Tbilisi that was restored and renovated in the 1990s and today hosts more than 70 food outlets, making it Georgia's first food mall. The venue provided a lively backdrop for a full day of workshop sessions organised by the five Broadening City-Regions and ICLEI, totalling six one-hour sessions.

The first session of the day was hosted by **Elene Lobjanidze from Tbilisi City Hall** and Jumber Maruashvili, Senior Policy Advisor at FAO Georgia. Elene Lobjanidze introduced the initiatives Tbilisi City Hall has developed over the past decade to support cultural and food-related events—such as the Autumn Harvest Festival, Independence Day markets, Christmas markets, and the upcoming Taste Tbilisi Festival. These events have enabled small businesses, local entrepreneurs, and crafts people to participate at no cost, illustrating how cultural events can be inclusive, strengthen livelihoods and celebrate local food traditions.



Jumber Maruashvili presented FAO Georgia’s work on reducing food loss and waste and promoting food donation. Georgia has made significant progress toward establishing a national framework in this area, with FAO playing a central role in shaping and implementing policy. A key milestone was the adoption of a national law in October 2023, which sets rules for food donation and requires municipalities to update their waste management plans to include a food waste hierarchy. These provisions create new opportunities for municipalities and local actors to expand food donation systems and reduce environmental impacts.

Together, these presentations offered a substantive introduction to Georgia’s food-system landscape and set the stage for the more detailed thematic discussions that followed.



Picture 3: Elene Lobjanidze



Picture 4: Jumber Maruashvili

Tbilisi Workshop Session — From Culinary Heritage to Food Governance

The first workshop, hosted by the Tbilisi BCR, explored how the city’s rich **culinary heritage can serve as an entry point for developing a more coordinated approach to food governance.** Georgian food culture—shaped by traditions such as the supra (a festive feast) and recognised as intangible cultural heritage—plays a central role in social life and community identity. Despite this importance, food-related responsibilities remain dispersed across municipal departments, with limited coordination.

The session encouraged participants to reflect on how cultural heritage could help bring stakeholders together, strengthen collaboration, and support a more integrated food-system approach in Tbilisi.



Key Takeaways: recommendations for Tbilisi

- Tbilisi's strong food traditions can be used to promote responsible consumption and reduce food waste. Understanding citizens' food habits and designing targeted awareness campaigns can help engage and mobilise the community around these topics.
- To strengthen food governance at the local level, establishing a municipal focal point and gradually building a multi-stakeholder food policy network were identified as the essential early steps.

ICLEI Workshop Session — Food Policy Councils

ICLEI facilitated a peer-learning session on Food Policy Networks, bringing together BCRs with established councils (Freiburg and Thessaloniki) and those currently working towards the development of a multi-stakeholder platform (Tbilisi, Wroclaw) or a more formal Food Policy Council (Tirana). The format combined short inputs with an interview-style exchange, allowing cities to compare approaches and identify transferable lessons.

Key Takeaways

- In most cities, Food Policy Councils begin with motivated individuals or organisations. Municipal involvement tends to grow gradually, but civil-society energy remains a driving force for keeping discussions active and inclusive.
- Food Policy Councils function best when municipalities provide a focal point, political backing, and basic coordination capacity. This support helps maintain continuity, especially during periods of limited funding or administrative change.
- Funding is rarely stable. Food Policy Councils often rely on a mix of municipal contributions and project grants, making long-term planning difficult. Clear roles and committed members help keep networks active even when resources fluctuate or during times of crisis.

Freiburg Workshop Session — Planetary Health Diet

The **Freiburg BCR focused on promoting healthy diets aligned with the Planetary Health Diet (PHD)** at regional level. Germany's Nutrition Society has adapted its standards accordingly, and Freiburg has committed to integrating PHD principles into school meals, public canteens, hospitality services, and households. As implementation is still at an early stage, Freiburg invited peers to share ideas on how to translate the PHD into practice for institutions and professionals and for community and civil society.



Key Takeaways: Recommendations for Freiburg

- Engaging institutions requires clear messaging and collaboration with actors already active in nutrition and health. Supporting producers who want to diversify toward PHD-aligned foods and using train-the-trainer approaches to spread knowledge are useful strategies.
- Making the PHD visible in everyday settings—menus at restaurants, school activities, recipe cards—helps normalise healthier choices. Communication must be adapted to different audiences and linked to taste, tradition, and wellbeing.
- Framing PHD principles through familiar food traditions may reduce resistance to uptake. Identifying local “champions” who can advocate for the diet across sectors was seen as key for scaling efforts.

Tirana Workshop Session — Strengthening Markets and Short Supply Chains

The Tirana BCR session focused on exploring with participants **new ways to strengthen short food supply chains and local markets**. Rapid urban expansion has reshaped Tirana’s food system over the past decades, increasing pressure on peri-urban production areas. The city has begun addressing structural barriers—fragmented small-scale production, limited direct sales channels, and insufficient logistics—through initiatives such as AgroPark Farka, the AgroHub, awareness campaigns, and farmer support schemes. Tirana is now working toward establishing a Food Council to consolidate and expand these efforts and develop concrete actions to improve supply chains and support local farmers.

Key Takeaways: Recommendations for Tirana

- Certified organic markets, weekly farmers’ markets and cooperative B2B initiatives have shown that direct sales channels help build trust, improve market access, and make local food more visible to consumers.
- Alternative initiatives such as vegetable box schemes or community-supported agriculture could help create a stronger, multi-pronged, approach to shorten supply chains.
- Public procurement can create predictable demand for farmers. Public procurement for schools and kindergartens often offer strong entry points for increasing local sourcing.





Picture 5 and 6: Khinkali Masterclass

Day 2 concluded with a cooking masterclass led by Georgian Chef Luka Todua, where participants learned to prepare *Khinkali* in a hands-on session. A shared dinner featuring the freshly prepared Khinkali provided a tasty end to the day and another opportunity to experience Georgian culinary traditions together.

DAY 3 - 18 JUNE 2026

Day 3 began with a walk along Rustaveli Avenue to meet the bus that took the group to **Bazaleti Cider Club**, a family-run, zero-emission craft cidery and eco-compound located an hour north of Tbilisi. After arriving at the location, the day began with two workshop sessions hosted by Thessaloniki and Wroclaw.

Thessaloniki Workshop Session — The Recipe: From Food to Climate

The Thessaloniki session focused on how the city can better **connect its food system with climate action**. Thessaloniki has built a strong foundation over the past decade—food festivals, urban vineyards, edible green spaces, and participation in major international networks—supported by a Food Policy Council and active stakeholder collaborations. At the same time, the city is part of the EU Mission for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities and has an established climate strategy. Despite this progress, food governance remains fragmented and often dependent on short-term projects, making it difficult to integrate food into long-term climate and urban planning. The session invited BCRs to act as “co-chefs,” sharing practical approaches that could help Thessaloniki shape a more coordinated “Climate Recipe.”



Key Takeaways: Recommendations for Thessaloniki

- Food can meaningfully support climate neutrality when linked to urban farming, local sourcing, and reduced food waste. These actions help cities cut emissions while strengthening community wellbeing.
- Involving national and regional policymakers, climate adaptation experts, and chefs in events can help build political commitment and ensure continuity beyond project cycles. Media campaigns linking gastronomy, heritage, and sustainability were seen as effective tools for public engagement.

Wroclaw Workshop Session — Food Management in Times of Crisis

Wroclaw's session focused on how cities can **strengthen food-related crisis management**. Following the arrival of around 200,000 refugees from Ukraine, the city examined how food aid had been distributed and found that, although NGOs coordinated the response, no formal procedures existed. The 2024 flooding in Wroclaw further highlighted the need for a structured food crisis model to ensure preparedness and access to food during emergencies. Recognising that risks such as droughts, flooding, and disrupted supply chains require more robust systems, Wroclaw focused on the stability pillar of crisis management—prevention, preparation, response, and recovery—and explored how food security could be better integrated into regional crisis planning across the Wroclaw Functional Area. BCRs were asked to consider how crisis management models could be applied to food-related emergencies and identify practical actions, responsible entities, and resources needed to strengthen response in the case of food contamination.

Key Takeaways: What we learned

- Food is not explicitly included in local crisis management plans. Water or general emergency protocols exist, but food safety and distribution are rarely addressed, leaving municipalities unprepared for food-related emergencies.
- Effective crisis response requires dedicated communication pathways within municipalities and between local and national authorities. Information often remains siloed, delaying coordinated action.
- Cities differ in their ability to test samples, mobilise health services, or provide emergency food. Some rely on national systems; others depend on local actors such as caterers or food banks. Ensuring adequate technical and organisational capacity is essential.



- Examples such as Wroclaw's 2024 flood showed that citizens and food banks can respond quickly when formal systems are overwhelmed. Strengthening community-based capacities can significantly improve resilience.



Picture 7 and 8: Tour of the Bazaleti Cider Club

Following the two workshop sessions and a lunch break, the group had a tour of the Bazaleti Cider Club, guided by owner Zaal Kheladze. Founded by Kheladze and Nino Lezhava, the Cider Club produces organic sparkling ciders and apple cider vinegar using only renewable energy sources—solar, biomass, and wind—and serves as a hub for green entrepreneurship, training, and eco-innovation in Georgia. Its combination of sustainable production, eco-tourism, and architectural design has earned recognition within the regional and international sustainable development community. The visit concluded with a tasting of locally produced ciders and vinegars, before the group returned by bus to Tbilisi.

DAY 4 - 19 JUNE 2026

The final day of the exchange was dedicated to a study visit to **Tbilisi's Deserter Market and Station Bazaar**, two of the city's most emblematic food markets. The visit offered participants a direct look at Tbilisi's everyday food environment and the dynamics that shape local trade, livelihoods, and consumer habits.

Guided by Mamuka Gvilava, representative of the Tbilisi BCR, the group began at one of the market's first stands, where a vendor welcomed participants with tastings of locally produced drinks, fruits, and spices. The tour continued through the market's main sections—fresh vegetables, butchers, dairy stalls, dried goods—while Mamuka shared insights into the market's long history, its role in supplying the city, and how it has transformed over time in response to urban development.



The visit concluded at an area where an informal farmers' market traditionally operates on weekdays. The space had recently been damaged by a fire, yet local farmers continue to return, informally reclaiming their usual spots to sell seasonal produce. This moment prompted a short reflection and discussion among participants on how such spaces could be revived: how they might become attractive, accessible areas for residents, while offering fair conditions for farmers and encouraging younger generations to remain engaged in agriculture.

After a brief moment to explore and visit the colourful stalls and aromas of the market, the group left the bazaar—marking the end of the FoodCLIC peer-to-peer exchange in Tbilisi.



PHOTO MEMORIES

Day 1 - Khachapuri and Lobiani workshop, followed by dinner



Day 2 - Workshops...



...Kinchali Masterclass... and fun moments!



Day 3 - Workshops... and tour at the Cider Club



Day 4 - Market visit



ANNEX

1. Participants list

	Name	Organisation
1	Beatrice Ruggiero	ICLEI Europe
2	Anna Bruen	ICLEI Europe
3	Nanuna Amisulashvili	ICLEI Europe
4	Matteo Bizzotto	ICLEI World Secretariat
5	Selina Emmanuel	ICLEI World Secretariat
6	Tashi Piprek	ICLEI Africa
7	Mamuka Gvilava	The Greens Movement of Georgia / Friends of the Earth Georgia (Tbilisi BCR)
8	Nino Chkhobadze	The Greens Movement of Georgia / Friends of the Earth Georgia (Tbilisi BCR)
9	Eva Coydon	Ernährungsrat Freiburg (Freiburg BCR)
10	Lea Bartels	Ernährungsrat Freiburg (Freiburg BCR)
11	Klaudia Marzec	Wrocław Municipality (Wrocław BCR)
12	Małgorzata Bartyna-Zielińska	Wrocław Municipality (Wrocław BCR)
13	Olga Voutsikaki	Thessaloniki Municipality (Thessaloniki BCR)
14	Evangelia Kouidou	Thessaloniki Municipality (Thessaloniki BCR)
15	Adela Laci	Tirana Municipality (Tirana BCR)
16	Egis Muho	Tirana Municipality (Tirana BCR)
17	Elene Lobjanidze	Tbilisi City Hall
18	Merab Machavariani	Tbilisi City Hall
19	Nino Tsagareishvili	Tbilisi City Hall
20	Jumber Maruashvili	FAO Georgia





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