



THE GEOFOOD MANIFESTO

The food industry is a key sector for the deep changes required by the society in order to fulfill the SDGs by 2030. The agricultural sector plays a fundamental role in facing the World's challenges linked with climate change, biodiversity loss, food scarcity and growing population. Representing some 500 Million, or 88% of the 570 Million farms globally, family generates about 80% of the Earth's food.

Climate crisis- actual scenario

Food production and cotton farming, biofuels, and other non-food products from agriculture and forestry are the most significant drivers of environmental degradation in developed and developing countries. Half of the world's tropical forests have been cleared, and we continue to lose about 18 million hectares per year – an area the size of England and Wales. Biodiversity loss now occurs at 1000 times the normal background rate, and populations of major species have fallen by some 60 percent since 1970. Rising per capita demand for meat and dairy products increases human demand for land further, yet as the world population increases from 7.6 billion to an estimated 11 billion by the end of the century, there is little room to expand agriculture further without undermining critical environmental and climate objectives.

Intensive farming methods, including the growing reliance on chemicals, are key drivers of the loss of roughly 80 percent of insects in Germany since the late 1980s. Similar trends have been reported around the World.

Agriculture, food processing, and the resulting land-use change are responsible for just under a third of global greenhouse emissions. Humans also catch unsustainable volumes of wild fish, with a third of commercial fisheries classified as over-fished. In little over half a century, humans have wiped out 90 percent of the populations of top predator fish, such as tuna, swordfish, and sharks. Moreover, destructive fishing techniques, such as bottom trawling, cause massive damage to coastal and marine ecosystems. Half the world's population is expected to experience high water stress by 2030, and agriculture accounts for two thirds of water use. Since irrigation is particularly common in water scarce regions, the sector is responsible for 90-95 percent of scarcity-weighted water use. Finally, the food system drives at least three quarters of nitrogen release that drives algae blooms and dead zones in freshwater ecosystems and the ocean. It has been estimated that the release of reactive nitrogen species is already twice the maximum sustainable level and similar concerns apply to phosphorus. Increased nutrient concentration in the oceans, combined with other water pollution and rising temperatures from climate change, put high stress on marine ecosystems. During a heat wave in 2016-2017, some 90 percent of the Great Barrier Reef was affected, and half the corals died.

The EU has established a long-term strategy to achieve zero net greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 ("Green Deal" European Commission, 2020). The production of sufficient food, feed, and fibers will remain key for the European economy but at the same time, the agriculture and forestry sectors are also expected to contribute to the mid-century carbon neutrality objective. Biomass demand is expected to increase to produce heat, biofuels, biogas, building materials, and sustainable bio-based products such as biochemicals. Increased biomass supply is expected to come from diverse sources in order to ensure the sustainability of the production and the stabilization or enhancement of the carbon sink in existing forests. Reduction of non-CO2 emissions from agriculture will be mainly achieved through innovation e.g. precision farming to optimize the field application of fertilizer and other chemicals, improvement of cattle productivity, and treatment of manure in aerobic digesters. The EU strategy also relies on increasing carbon sequestration on agricultural land through better farming practices including agroforestry techniques, zero-tillage, and the use of cover crops.

Finally, afforestation and restoration of degraded ecosystems could contribute to several objectives: CO2 sequestration, biodiversity, soils and water conservation, and biomass production.¹

¹Sustainable Land-Use and Food System, 2019 Report of the FABLE Consortium.

8. Reduce losses, encourage reuse and recycle, and promote sustainable consumption.
9. Empower people and fight inequalities.
10. Promote secure tenure rights.
11. Use social protection tools to enhance productivity and income.
12. Improve nutrition and promote balanced diets.
13. Prevent and protect against shocks: enhance resilience.
14. Prepare for and respond to shocks.
15. Address and adapt to climate change.
16. Strengthen the ecosystem resilience.
17. Enhance policy dialogue and coordination.
18. Strengthen the innovation systems.
19. Adapt and improve investment and finance.
20. Strengthen the enabling environment and reform the institutional framework.

UGG's role for Sustainable Food and Agriculture

UNESCO Global Geoparks are defined as: “single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development”. Their bottom-up approach of combining conservation with sustainable development while involving local communities is becoming increasingly popular.

Geoparks are running many different activities in various fields related with culture, tourism, education and sustainable development and local food experiences. Even though Geoparks are very peculiar territories characterized by different areal sizes, local economy, social background, culture and landscape the connection with “food” is very recurrent within the most typical geopark’s activities across the Globe. In fact, sustainability within the local food, the valorization of agricultural activities and local producers, the connection between natural resources and tourism are common themes within UNESCO Global Geoparks.

UNESCO Global Geoparks are part of Agenda 2030 and deeply committed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) fostering the protection of the planet and its natural resources, to achieve a better future for all. The essence of Geoparks is, in agreement with SGD 12, to “develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products”. UNESCO Global Geoparks act as incubators for best practices and innovative solutions to empower local communities and stimulate investment to enhance agricultural practices, value food systems, support SME’s, increase employment opportunities and better job conditions. These territories work in close international, national, regional and local cooperation, promoting partnerships and networking.

GEOfood can contribute specifically to face the following challenges (FAO):

- Ending rural poverty, a critical step to ensure food security (SGD 1)
- Food should be safe, sufficient and affordable for all (SGD 2)
- Good health starts with nutrition (SGD 3)
- Nutritious food is critical to learning (SGD 4)

- Gender equality could boost agricultural productivity by a fifth (SGD 5)
- Sustainable agriculture has the potential to address water scarcity (SGD 6)
- Food systems must overcome their dependence on fossil fuels (SGD 7)
- Food production growth in low-income economies can reduce poverty by half (SGD 8)
- Innovation opens new markets for smallholders (SGD 9)
- Land reform can give faire access to rural land (SGD 10)
- Rural investment can deter unmanageable urbanization (SGD 11)
- Achieving food security involves reducing waste (SGD 12)
- Agriculture is key in responding to climate change (SGD 13)
- Fish gives 3 bn people 20% of daily animal protein (SGD 14)
- Forests contain over 80% of the world's terrestrial biodiversity (SGD 15)
- Ending hunger can contribute to peace and stability (SGD 16)
- Partnerships help raise the voices (SGD 17)

The GEOfood VISION

Behind the GEOfood label lies a clear philosophy: the support to local communities, the holistic and bottom-up approach which characterizes the UNESCO Global Geoparks is also the core of the GEOfood brand.

The GEOfood brand has its routes within the UNESCO Global Geoparks and it can be used only in such UNESCO designated areas.

The GEOfood aims to be in use in at least 30% of the UNESCO Global Geoparks in Europe by end of 2023, and the 10% of Geoparks in the rest of the World by 2025.

The GEOfood MISSION

GEOfood's mission is to support the sustainable development of local communities, increasing the actions towards the achievement of the UNSDGs.

GEOfood aims to operate within the UNESCO Global Geoparks values and bottom-up approach.

The GEOfood GOALS

The GEOfood aims to strengthen the connection between the local stakeholders and the Geopark's identity.

In particular the main goal is to increase awareness of general public regarding the connection between the raw food and the local peculiar geoheritage: the GEOfood concept is developing label and specific explanation for the members to underline the exclusivity of their geological heritage in connection with the local food and cultural tradition.

GEOfood is an innovative way to connect all targets of the population with the territory, food is an international language that anyone can understand; in fact, through the food we like to connect people with soil, nature and strengthen the food education towards km zero food and responsible use of the resources.

The GEOfood brand aims to create a network of partners within the UNESCO Global Geoparks under the common mission of influencing local, regional, national policies towards innovative food system and territorial planning which can strengthen urban-rural linkages.

We believe that the UGG territories are playing a key role for connecting rural and urban spaces, working together with inhabitants and communities: the GEOfood will support the territories to reinforce the connection, providing them with a tool for strengthen local economy.

The GEOfood ACTIONS

✓ Together we support sustainable development: the GEOfood brand can be used only by companies which can prove certain environmental standards:

- No use of pesticides or others source of poisons.
- Responsible use of water resources
- Effective waste recycling system
- Growing seasonal products
- Respect for the rights of the workers during the entire production process.

✓ Together we work for supporting Geopark's producers, farmers, entrepreneurs to preserve traditions and increase their local scale economy.

- GEOfood certified small and medium local enterprises
- The Geopark support the local enterprises: offering them opportunities for promotion, using their services (catering or location) at events or conferences.

✓ Together we support the use of local food:

- GEOfood products come from local raw material.
- We aim to enhance the use of km zero food in daily use, both in private and public sectors.
- Promotion of Kmzero food as GEOfood in restaurant and hotels, in each single Geopark's house and in the public services like canteen, schools or offices.

✓ Together we are looking for new projects opportunity to support the communities within the European Geoparks Network and Global Geoparks Network, developing new educational projects focusing on local economy food waste, circular economy, km zero food, agriculture, sustainable development and tourism.