ALTERNATIVE FOOD NETWORKS IN POLAND

Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE

Co-funded by the European Union

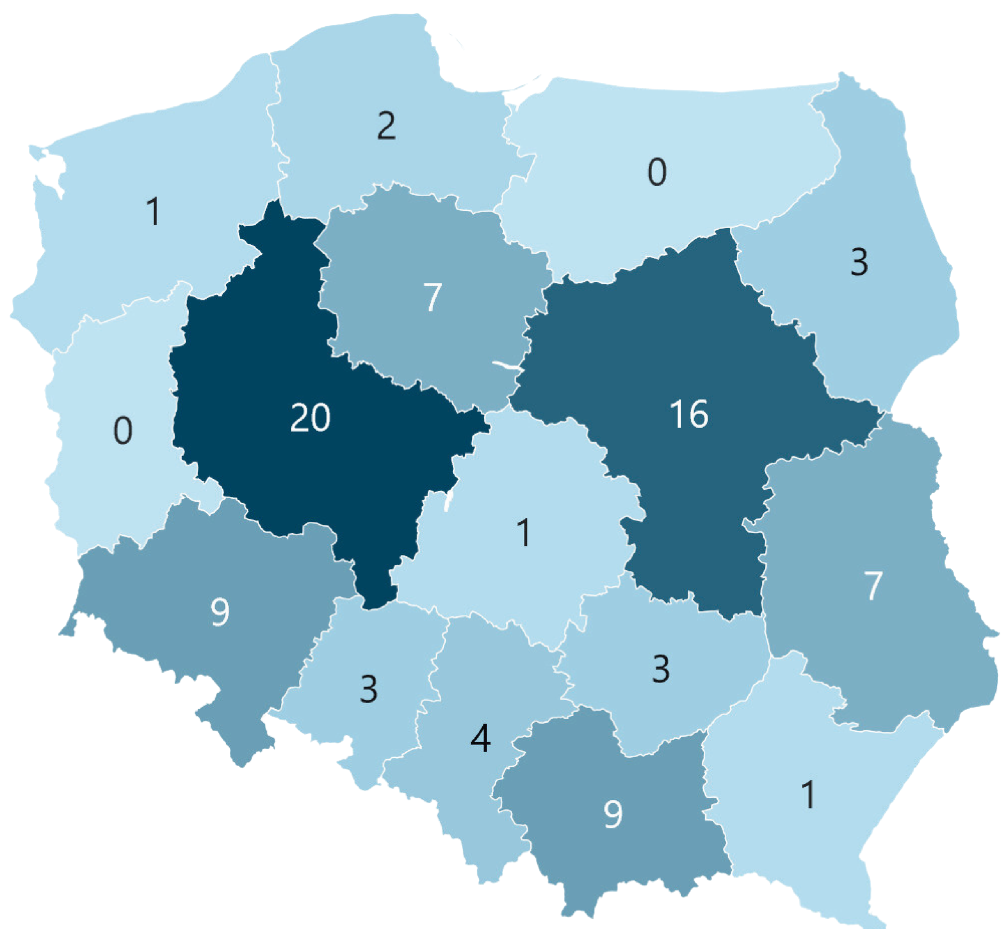
Food4CE

Regional partner involvement

POZNAŃ UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES

Łukasiewicz PIT

Geographical location

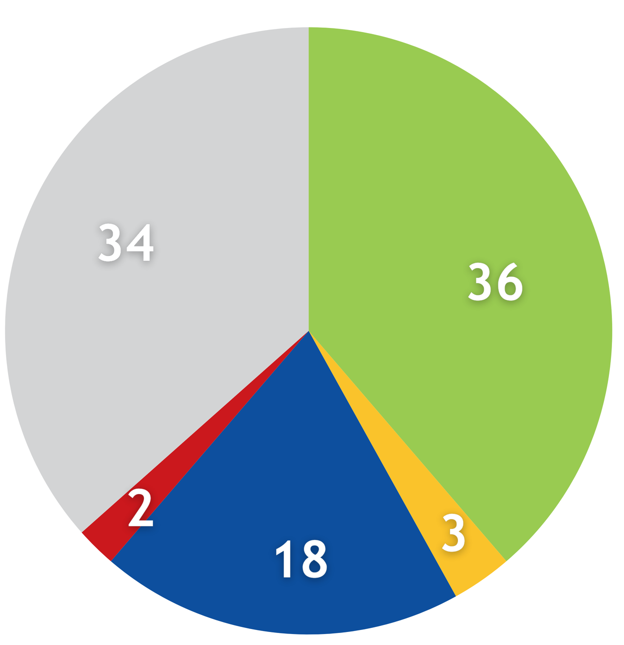


Geographically, the majority of identified AFNs are located in the **voivodeships (regions) of Wielkopolska** (22%), followed by **Mazowieckie** (17%), **Małopolskie** (10%) and **Silesian** (10%).

AFNs' level of complexity

In the research, **93 potential AFNs** have been identified throughout Poland. Among these, **5 were identified as potential best practices**, constituting 5% of the total. 37 AFNs were identified as direct, as well as advanced, while 19 classified as intermediaries.

Forms of identified AFNs



What Polish AFNs stand for:

- Local production
- Sustainable practices
- Traceability
- Community engagement
- Ethical standards
- Cooperation
- Freshness and quality
- Logistics solutions

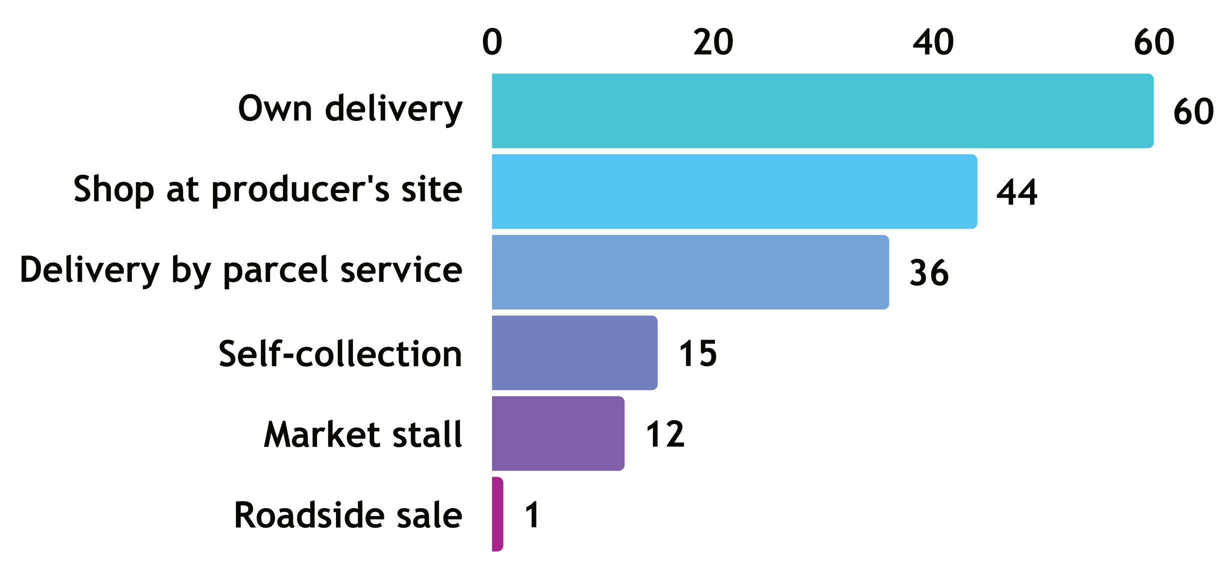
Overview

AFNs in Poland are developing dynamically, responding to changing consumer preferences as more and more consumers pay attention to the local origin and ecology of the products they buy. Although short food chains are not yet a widely promoted initiative and operate only at the local level, these networks include a variety of forms, such as local markets, grocery shops that bring together local producers, and social initiatives that promote conscious consumption. AFNs in Poland therefore play a key role in the transformation of the food sector: their economic, social and ecological importance is transforming traditional approaches to food production and consumption. However, although government policies aim to shorten food supply chains and promote AFNs, there is still no structured programme to support producers in promoting them. Furthermore, the rate of computerisation and automation of AFNs in the context of logistics management is low. Poland is therefore a country, where the potential for developing AFNs initiatives is evident.

Transport & Logistics

The most prevalent distribution channel among the identified AFNs is **own delivery**, utilized by 60 AFNs. This is followed by **shop at the producer's site**, used by 44 AFNs. **Parcel services** are employed by 36 AFNs for distribution, while 15 use **self-collection**, and 12 rely on **market stalls**. **Roadside sales** are the least common distribution channel, with only 1 AFN using this method.

Distribution channels



Transportation methods

Bike 25%

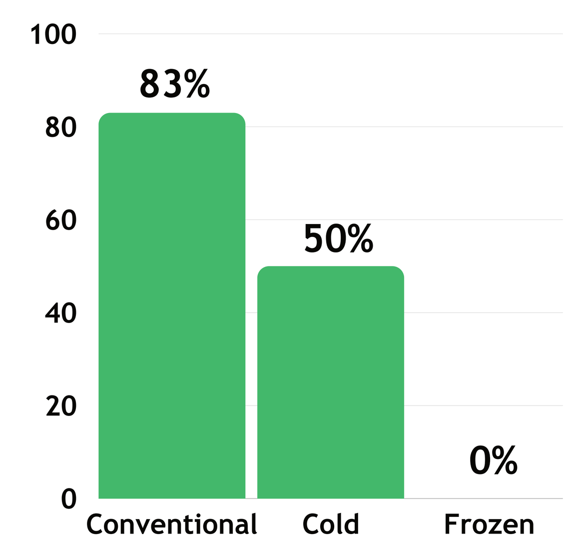
Car 100%

Van 60%

Truck 25%

Cars are the predominant mode of transportation for deliveries among AFNs, with 100% of AFNs using them, followed by vans (60%). Bicycles and trucks are both used by 25% of AFNs.

Storage facilities



Catchment area

Up to 50 km 50%

Between 50 and 100 km 0%

Above 100 km 50%

Challenges

- Increased cooperation between the different actors to foster economies of scale, consolidation of logistics services and cost reduction
- Measures to reduce the distance between producers and consumers focus on local sourcing and direct procurement
- Increase the promotion of initiatives, including through investments in marketing strategies, to reach more consumers
- Problematic transport and packaging processes and difficult order management, with the need to implement transport services for deliveries
- The use of IT tools in the supply chain is still negligible and therefore the implementation of IT tools and technologies is necessary

Logistics solutions

Digital order management: Most AFNs receive orders electronically, primarily through email, online platforms, or websites. Order frequency varies from daily to weekly, with an emphasis on maintaining product availability year-round.

Mixed use of warehouse management equipment: Shelving is the primary storage method, complemented by various warehouse equipment. Order picking is predominantly manual, with limited automation. Managing the cold chain remains a significant challenge for AFNs.

Outsourcing of transport services to manage complexity and use of sustainable means in urban areas: Many AFNs outsource transport services due to the complexity involved. Cars are the dominant mode of delivery, while bicycles are commonly used in urban areas.

Use of recyclable packaging and low return rate: Reverse logistics practices are limited, particularly in returns management and packaging recycling. Recyclable packaging is the most widely used, while deposit packaging remains rare.

Trust and communication with partners and consumers: collaboration with trusted partners is the most important transparency measure, followed by open communication with customers and consumer education. Local sourcing and direct purchasing are the preferred methods to shorten the supply chain and improve transparency. Strict selection of suppliers, proper storage, temperature control and transparency of expiry dates are crucial to ensure the quality and freshness of products.