HuMUS - WP4 pilot projects

Structure of the Short final report and its publishable summary

Publishable summary

The information provided herein is intended for use in public documents and reports by the HuMUS consortium.

The REVALS project, part of the HuMUS initiative, supported the long-term transformation of a disused urban plot in the Trichon neighbourhood of Roubaix into a vibrant urban farm. Since 2018, this site has been co-developed by residents, local associations, public authorities, and urban farmers to promote ecological restoration, social cohesion, and food justice. With HuMUS funding, the project intensified its efforts by developing shared assessment tools, piloting ecological accounting methods, and formalising a new Territorial Management Agreement (TMA).

REVALS employed participatory methodologies, particularly the HuMUS soil health governance model and the CARE ecological accounting framework, to highlight the environmental and social value generated by the urban farm. These tools supported the co-creation of a business model and helped align stakeholders around shared goals. The farm's activities—including compost production, soil restoration, biodiversity education, and food workshops—were systematically evaluated for their ecological and community impact.

A key achievement of the project was the update and signing of a new Territorial Management Agreement (TMA) in June 2025, which formalised commitments from multiple stakeholders, including the City of Roubaix, the hospital (nursing school), housing providers, social services, and grassroots organisations. This agreement recognised the farm's contributions to soil restoration, social ties, health promotion, and enabled new land-use protections: the City of Roubaix proposed to classify the site as an agricultural zone in the metropolitan urban plan, effectively protecting it from future construction.

Throughout the project, several public events engaged residents and raised awareness around healthy soils and sustainable food systems. Over 60 institutional and community representatives participated in governance events, and hundreds of residents attended workshops and festivals. Testimonials from diverse community members underscored the farm's vital role in neighbourhood life.

Ecological accounting experiment based on the CARE (Comprehensive Accounting in Respect of Ecology) method revealed not only the costs of restoring polluted soils but also the public value created through environmental and health benefits. By mapping social and environmental

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contributions, REVALS positioned the farm as a key actor of the transition to a more sustainable, livable and inclusive city. The project also initiated an experiment of the CEROI (Community Engagement Return on Investment) method to quantify these benefits.

Lessons learned included the importance of soil as a unifying theme among diverse stakeholders and the need to secure stable funding and staffing to maintain soil health. The collaborative dynamic generated by REVALS will encourage the future application of ecological accounting at metropolitan level, as well as supporting its replication in other urban contexts. Thanks to ecological accounting tools, the working hypothesis is to propose a compensation mechanism for degraded soils at the metropolitan scale, caused by urbanisation (housing, infrastructure and other construction projects). The idea is to propose that investors in urban projects finance urban agriculture projects that can demonstrate, through ecological accounting, that they restore soil functions.

REVALS demonstrates how participatory governance, ecological commitments, and accounting innovation can reinforce the collective management of commons and align local actors toward shared goals of ecological restoration and social resilience.

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