

## **Linking people and nature in local heritage food. A social-ecological system approach**

Local heritage food is a widely discussed problem not only in academia, but also in public debates on environmental change, sustainability, and food security. We want to understand how people and nature are intertwined in local heritage food. To achieve this goal, we apply the social-ecological system approach. The project aims to respond to the following research questions:

1. How local food has been defined, understood, and operationalized in the research literature?
2. What are the hotspots (clusters) of local heritage food production in Poland? How these hotspots are related to ecological, economic and social factors?
3. How is local food embedded into the natural environment of where it is produced?
4. To what extent food labelled as 'local' is produced locally, and what does "locally" really mean?
5. What are the synergies and trade-offs between natural environment, food, food producers and food consumers which help local actors in creating successful and sustainable local food chains? What trade-offs between them should be addressed in order to improve the way local food chains work?

Local food has a wide range of implications for sustainability in terms of both production and consumption. The provision and characteristics of local food supply are a key issue for sustainable development, for several reasons. It supports preserving the landscape and local culinary traditions, supports local economy and therefore contributes to communities well-being. Food is deeply rooted in a cultural heritage of a place, space and time, but is also inherently related to the local environmental conditions. Hence, it is a perfect platform where nature and humans meet, interact, and interfere. In this project we will map polish local food heritage and analyse how it is related to spatial ecological, economic and social factors. We will study the problem both on general (entire Poland) and detailed (3 local case studies) scale.