

Organic Districts

An Introduction and Tool Kit to support the start-up of new and the management of existing Organic Districts



**International
Network of
Eco
Regions**



**GLOBAL ALLIANCE
FOR ORGANIC DISTRICTS**

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An Introduction and Tool Kit to support the start-up of new and the management of existing Organic Districts

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**International
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**GLOBAL ALLIANCE
FOR ORGANIC DISTRICTS**

Following the work in Europe our aim here is to invite a learning network at global level for the start-up and management of Organic Districts.

This learning process is guided by a comprehensive “Tool Kit” with “Monitoring Tools” and “Examples of relevant forms and documents”.

An Organic District, called “Bio district” in Europe, “is a geographical area where farmers, the public, tourist operators, associations and public authorities enter into an agreement for the sustainable management of local resources, based on organic principles and practices. The aim is to maximize the economic and social potential of the territory. Each “Bio district” includes lifestyle, nutrition, human relations and nature considerations (European Commission, Brussels, 19.4.2021 COM (2021) 141 final/2)

[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0141R\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0141R(01))



2019 – Goesan County – South Korea: at the "ALGOA + 4 International Summit on Organic Farming Policy", the idea of establishing a Global Alliance for Organic Districts was born!



Supported by:



In 2020 was signed in Rome the GAOD Memorandum of understanding

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PART 1 INTRODUCTION TO ORGANIC DISTRICTS

1. The need for urgent action now!

Sustainable food production and consumption are the keys to increasing both human and ecological capacities to cope with major challenges such as health, food and nutrition security, climate change and loss of biodiversity. The transformation of global food and farming systems is also crucial to keep our activities within the Planetary Boundaries, achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to this end, building effective partnerships and scaling up examples of practical solutions is highly important.

Agricultural systems that regenerate soil organic matter by drawing down carbon dioxide via photosynthesis are more resilient to weather extremes caused by climate change. These systems can also make a considerable contribution to protect and enhance biodiversity. However, in order to scale out and scale up the transformation at the pace needed all of us must make our contributions.

As consumers we can use our buying power for truly sustainable food. A scientific basis and practical recommendations have been suggested with the “Planetary Health Diet”. It is symbolized by half a plate of fruits and vegetables. The other half consists of primarily whole grains, plant proteins (beans, lentils, pulses, nuts), unsaturated plant oils, modest amounts of meat and dairy, and some added sugars and starchy vegetables. The diet is flexible and allows for adaptation to dietary needs, personal preferences and cultural traditions. In many places in the world and for many people this is their diet. Examples from our network are such as the Mediterranean and the concept for Diet for a Green Planet – so let us join them in a concerted action for better health for us and the planet!

The founding parties of Organic Districts have established working models and living laboratories for transformation processes towards sustainable food and farming systems based on actions from local and sub national governments and integrating public and private institutions, civil society, farmers, small and medium enterprises.

With the cooperation established and reaching out to all continents we will also be working to support initiatives at national and pan national level, working for food and nutrition security, combat climate change and biodiversity losses, to promote truly sustainable diets, build a new economic system that is more environmentally friendly, supporting health and social fairness globally.

2. Sharing the European experience

In 2004 the Cilento Bio-District in Italy developed the first guidelines, which defined in a simple and clear way who should do what, sharing commitments and responsibilities in a balanced way.

In 2015, after the establishment of the International Network of Eco Regions (IN.N.E.R.), were presented at the world exhibition “EXPO Milan 2015 – Feeding the Planet, Energy for life”, the new international guidelines for the establishment and the management of the Organic Districts.

A major achievement has been made within the framework of the “European Green Deal” and with its objective of reaching 25% of organic agricultural land by 2030 in all the European member states. The related “Farm to Fork” strategy is focusing on promoting the transition to sustainable

food systems and is followed up by an “Action plan for the development of organic production” from 2021, where the European Commission include “Bio districts” as one of the actions:

“... starting in 2023 the EU Commission encourages Member states to support the development of “Bio districts”.

In the European long-term Vision for rural areas from June 2021, the concept of “Bio districts” is regarded as promising and important also to account for the needs of small and medium sized farmers, attracting young, new and female farmers.

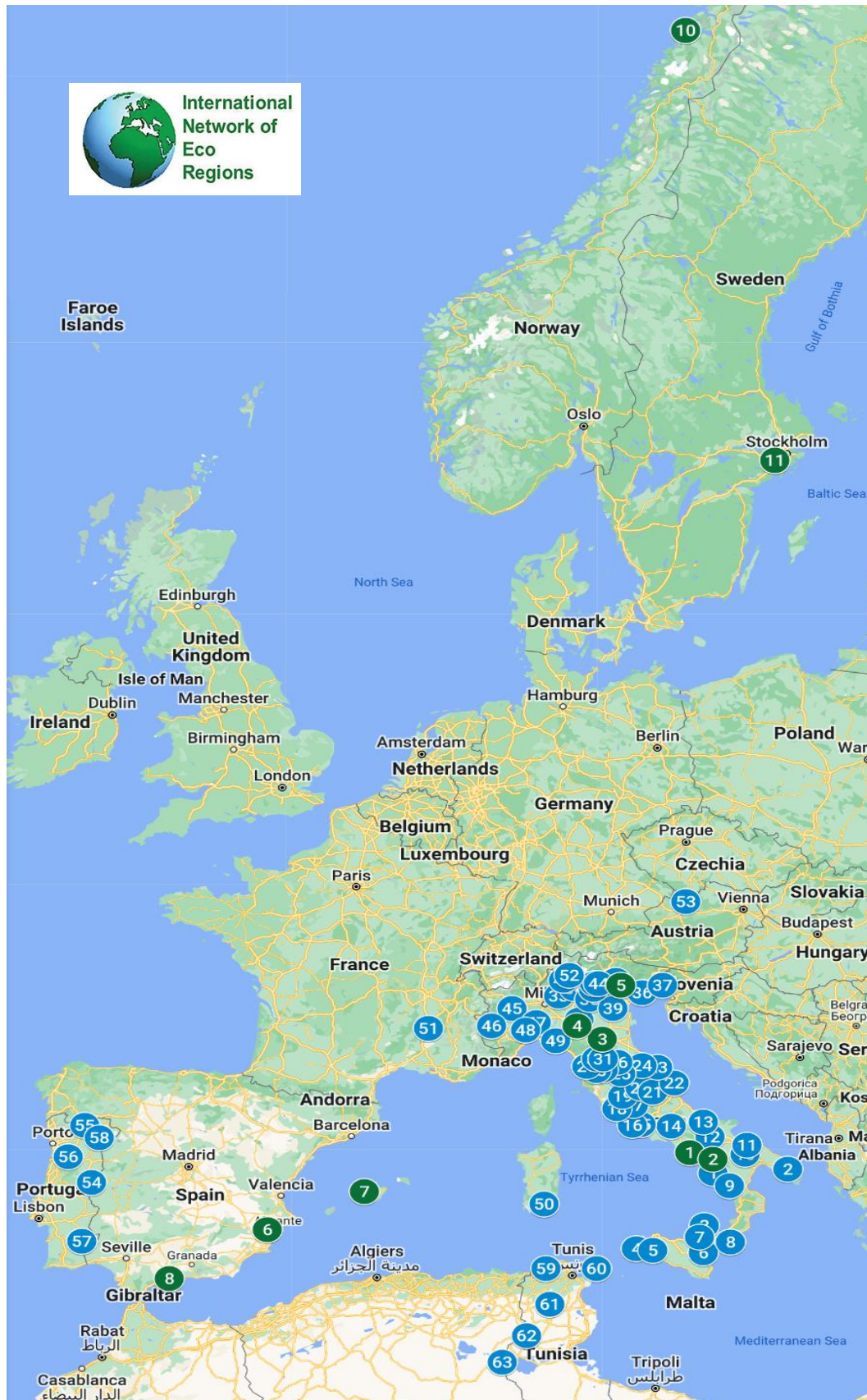
In different EU member states a National Organic Plan has been defined and is being implemented through specific regulations at the different administrative regions level. New Bio districts, as well as the already established ones are now in need to conform to the different national and regional “Bio districts” definition included in the different regulations.

Within this context IN.N.E.R. is ready to support the different “Bio districts” in this transition phase, given its long-time experience and its current works in accordance with the recommendations and proposed actions from the European Commission and strategic documents such as:

- “European Green Deal” https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en
- “Farm to Fork Strategy” https://ec.europa.eu/food/farm2fork_en
- “Biodiversity Strategy to bring nature back into our lives” <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1590574123338&uri=CELEX:52020DC0380>
- “Sustainable blue economy” https://ec.europa.eu/oceans-and-fisheries/ocean/blue-economy/sustainable-blue-economy_en
- “Action Plan Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil” https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_2345
- “New European Bauhaus: new actions and funding to link sustainability to style and inclusion” https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_4626
- “Action plan for the development of organic production” <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0141R%2801%29>
- “A long-term Vision for the EUs Rural Areas- Towards stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas by 2040” <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2021%3A345%3AFIN>

In Europe and Mediterranean there are 63 Organic Districts already established and 10 under development. Below an overview of Organic Districts in Europe and Mediterranean (an update available at www.ecoregion.info)

Organic Districts map



3. Global Alliance for Organic Districts

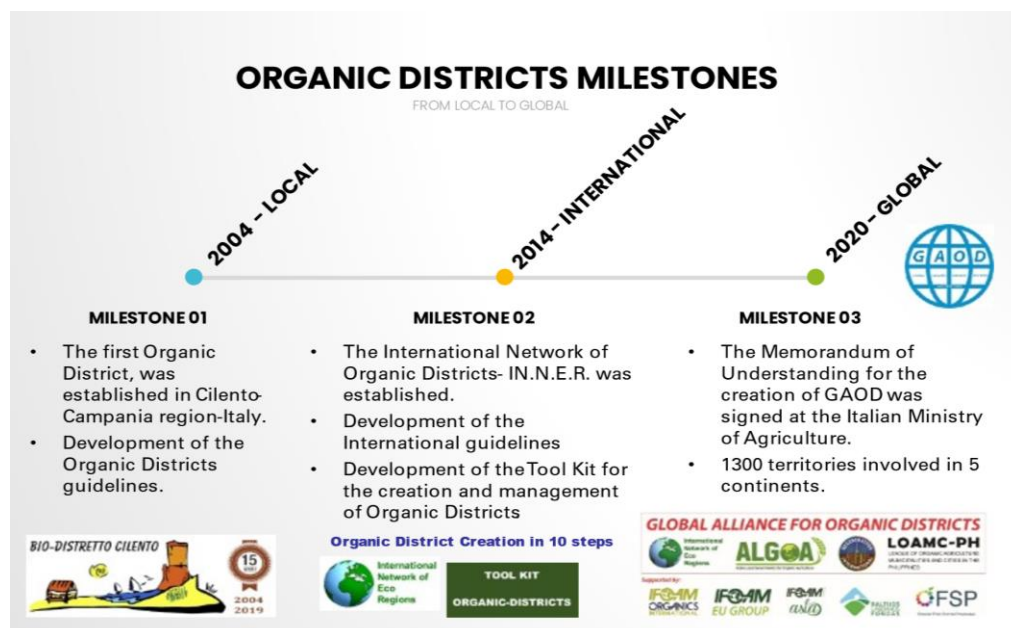
On Feb 6th, 2020, in Rome, Italy, ALGOA signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** with the International Network of Eco-regions, supported by IFOAM-Organics International, IFOAM Asia, IFOAM EU, the Baltic Foundation of Lithuania and the Organic Food System Program for future cooperation. The vision is to co-create a global network able to support the local development of Organic Districts in different territorial contexts and scaling out examples of practical solutions; the transformation of global food and farming systems as key towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in general and Sustainable Food Systems in particular.

The signing ceremony Feb 6th, 2020, in Ministry of Agriculture, Rome, Italy



On April 15th, 2020, the signers of the MoU in February invited Regeneration International, League of Organic Municipalities, Cities and Provinces of the Philippines (LOAMCP-PH) and in the ensuing discussions, the **Global Alliance of Organic Districts (GAOD)** was born.

Organic Districts Milestones



4. GAOD and IN.N.E.R. – core activities and synergies

The vision of GAOD is to co-create a global network able to support the local development of Organic Districts in different territorial contexts and scaling up examples of practical solutions; the transformation of global food and farming systems as key towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in general and Sustainable Food Systems in particular.

IN.N.E.R. takes its starting point from the practical experiences from the creation and management of Cilento eco-region in Italy in 2004 and following this more than 60 eco-regions in Europe. They continuously follow up interest for establishing organic districts at a global level. At present interest has been shown from North Africa, Latin America and Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP) such as Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe and Equatorial Guinea. IN.N.E.R. has also been instrumental with advocacy at the level of the European Commission and for the inclusion of Organic Districts in various policies and concrete strategies.

Though there are various overlapping aspects of GAOD and IN.N.E.R., in its core GAOD is a network of networks that consists of experts, practitioners, representatives from international organizations, central, regional and local governments from all the continents and regions. With its network it has the access to existing concepts, practices and trends within the organic sector.

The core of IN.N.E.R. is more directed to the concrete work related to advocacy, start-up and management of Organic Districts - the "*IN.N.E.R. methodology*" and Tool Kit with Monitoring Tool and branding.

Typically, GAOD works with overall concept development such as proposal for work groups, education programmes/"Peoples Academy", the need to have a common platform for school meals and public procurement, sustainable tourism etc.

When matured and found relevant these concepts are included in the "*IN.N.E.R. methodology*" and Tool Kit for the implementation in the Organic Districts and as practicable in each location.

An important aspect is then the feedback to the work in GAOD from the different Organic Districts both on the practical application of proposed concepts but also on new topics for GAOD to look at.

As two concrete examples of common work and synergies between the networks of IN.N.E.R. and GAOD we would like to mention Organic school meals and public procurement and Sustainable Tourism. Please find below some main features of these topics and enclosed the concept notes.

PART 2 THE IN.N.E.R. TOOL KIT WITH “MONITORING TOOLS” AND “EXAMPLES OF RELEVANT FORMS AND DOCUMENTS”

1. An overview of the “IN.N.E.R. Tool Kit”

This part of the document is based on the latest version of the Tool Kit, published in September 2022 within the project entitled “EducEcoRegions –Foster the ecological transition of territories and communities through innovative training”, promoted under the Erasmus+ EU Programme, by Cilento Bio-District in partnership with Agrobio Portugal, SEAE Spain and Bergerie National France.

Following the “*IN.N.E.R. methodology*”, the “*IN.N.E.R. Tool Kit*” has been developed to facilitate the start-up and management of Organic Districts.

We are of the opinion that a basic structure would help in the start-up and management of Organic Districts. But with the “*IN.N.E.R. Tool Kit*” it is the intention also to be flexible according to local context, to the resources available, priorities and goals. This allows a wide range of diversified initiatives to connect to each other strengthening their own identity but having a common basic structure being able to co-create a global movement.

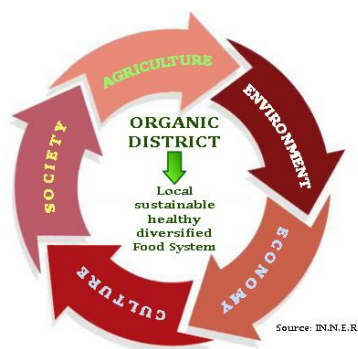
This being said we invite you to our outline of the “*IN.N.E.R. Tool Kit*”.

2. CHARTER TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ORGANIC DISTRICTS

The Organic District adopts a geographical area/landscape development approach which is integrated, participative/inclusive and international to meet the global goals for sustainable development of the UN 2030 Agenda.

The participatory and inclusive community of an Organic District, with all the local actors involved, acts on the territory with a virtuous governance that decides from citizen’s level to shift towards a real local, sustainable and healthy food system.

The 5 components of an Organic District (agriculture, environment, economy, culture, society) are interrelated in a complex system, producing the innovative outcome of a virtuous circle, where the 5 dimensions lead toward a local, sustainable and healthy food system.



The Virtuous circle of the Organic Districts

Organic districts are concrete examples of how IFOAM “Organic 3.0” can be realized in practice. However, it is necessary to put together and coordinate all the experiences already developed, in order to involve other governments, other organizations, other territories, **to create a critical mass to make change possible.**

The Organic District is devoted:

- to improve the quality of life of resident in rural areas;
- to increase the power of attraction of rural areas, boosting the connections between strategies of sustainable development of the rural and urban areas;
- to increase the employment opportunities and the quality of jobs;
- to promote the active engagement of youth in the ecological transition;
- to promote and improve the European and international cooperation of rural areas.

3. FORM D1.1EN: GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE “IN.N.E.R. TOOL KIT”

A tool kit has been developed to facilitate the start-up and the management of Organic Districts, of which a "Monitoring Tool" is part, which allows, among other things, to verify whether a territory has all requirements necessary to define itself as Organic District (Bio/Eco-District or Bio/Eco-Region).

So, it will be possible to coordinate the already existing Organic Districts in the 5 continents and promote the creation of new cases, capable of contributing to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and to the global ecological transition.

The “IN.N.E.R. TOOL KIT” is made of various forms, some of which are shown below (for the full version, please contact the IN.N.E.R. Association: presidente@ecoregions.eu).

The **IN.N.E.R. Tool Kit** has the instruments, built on the “*IN.N.E.R. methodology*”, to establish and manage an organic district, which are based on the first experience that was done in the Cilento organic district in 2004, and then implemented at international level.

The IN.N.E.R. association aims at protecting, promoting and coordinating the correct application of the methodology in the regions/territories where the farmers, local authorities and citizens want to find a deal for the sustainable use of natural resources: on the basis of organic/biodynamic agriculture and agro-ecology.

The “*IN.N.E.R. methodology*” is a unique and worldwide applicable scheme that works for all different forms of organic districts: bio-distretto, distretto biologico, distretto del cibo, bio-district, bio-região, bio-distrito, biorégió, bio-ilçe, eco-region, organic-district, ekoregión, ökorégió, Ekobölge, Ecoterritorio, Ekodistrikt, Økoregion, etc.

The beneficiaries of the “*IN.N.E.R. TOOL KIT*” are citizens, private and public bodies that identify in the IN.N.E.R.’s rulebook and by joining the association decide to pursue the sustainable transition of the territory.

All the rights relative to the “*IN.N.E.R. TOOL KIT*” are reserved and held by IN.N.E.R..

The “*IN.N.E.R. TOOL KIT*” is made of a cover and various forms that are identified by a recognition code.

4. FORM D1.2EN: PROCEDURES FOR START-UP AND THE MANAGEMENT OF ORGANIC DISTRICTS

The “*IN.N.E.R. methodology*” has 2 main procedures.

PROCEDURE 1: START- UP AND MANAGEMENT OF A **NEW** ORGANIC DISTRICT

IN.N.E.R. association offers assistance to whom might want to promote the organic districts and join the association.

In this case the procedure to adopt the “*IN.N.E.R. methodology*” is made of 10 points:

1. Joining IN.N.E.R. and sign of the request form by a promoter of Organic District. Delivery of the Tool kit
2. Pre-feasibility check of the Organic District, by the IN.N.E.R. experts
3. Public forum and establishment of an official promoting committee of the Organic District. Optional: Signing the Letter of Intent
4. Preparation of the first draft of the “strategic document”, which also contains the guidelines for communication and education
5. Resolutions of the bodies in the establishment of the Organic District
6. Establishment of the Organic District **and** signing the “Organic District Partner Agreement”
7. First evaluation of the Organic District’s performances
8. Definition of the action to be taken, as a consequence of the evaluation at point 7 and lastly an update of the “strategic document”.
9. Release of the “Organic District IN.N.E.R. certificate”
10. Support actions to correctly manage the Organic District.

PROCEDURE 2: MANAGING AN ALREADY EXISTING ORGANIC DISTRICT

IN.N.E.R. association offers its assistance to whom have already started an Organic-District and want to manage it with the “*IN.N.E.R. methodology*”, by joining the association and by subscribing to the support request.

In this case the procedure to adopt the “*IN.N.E.R. methodology*” is made of 7 points:

1. Joining IN.N.E.R. and sign of the request form by a promoter of Organic District. Delivery of the Tool kit
2. Pre-feasibility check of the Organic District, by the IN.N.E.R. experts
3. Preparation or update of the “strategic document”
4. Evaluation of the Organic District’s performances
5. Definition of the action to be taken, as a consequence of the evaluation at point 4
6. Release of the “Organic District IN.N.E.R. certificate”
7. Support actions to correctly manage the Organic District.

5. FORM D1.4EN: DISCIPLINARY (GUIDELINES)

INTRODUCTION

The Organic District (or Bio/Eco-District or Bio/Eco-Region) is a territory with an Organisation made of agriculture enterprises, farmers, citizens/consumers (even associated together as in fair trade groups), local public administrations, national and regional parks, protected natural areas, commercial, touristic and cultural enterprises, social cultural and environmental associations. They act according to the principles and methods of the organic production and consumption.

Each Organic District is marked by an “organic” lifestyle, healthy nutrition, human relations, protection of the nature, etc.. The virtuous cycle activated into the territory ends in agricultural productions which are more valuable and typically characterized, hence more appreciated by the market.

The productions resulting from the link between territorial vocations and production techniques are often enhanced by setting in production areas the stages of processing the agricultural product.

Hence the food product in these areas also becomes cultural heritage and a local identity mark: local economic and social actors become more responsible in the management of natural and environmental resources, which are common to several sectors (agriculture, tourism, commerce, etc.). This awareness has made the mobilisation and the protection of local resources easier, most of them being related to agricultural systems and to the agri-food industry.

An integrated approach to sustainable development is adopted by an Organic District. The different actors are involved for shared purposes:

- the improvement of quality of living, the employment of local population and the reduction of population's abandonment of rural areas, a higher employment rate of young people and women, and the quality of agro-food productions and local livestock premises;
- to ensure the consumers safety, a traceable and healthy food, the increasing and seasonal regulation of touristic flows, through a multiple eco-tourism and local culture dissemination, biodiversity protection, enhancement of the landscape and natural resources.

Different workgroups, related to the most relevant dimensions defining an Organic District can be set up. Their task will be to facilitate and support concrete actions at the single Organic District level but also facilitate the exchange of info and best practices if the proposed organization structure of the work groups will be adopted by the different Organic Districts.

The Organic Districts are therefore a real answer to the present trend of economic development causing a massive phenomenon of abandon of rural areas and the increasing urbanization of people in search of better condition of life and a higher income. The process affects both the most industrialized countries and developing countries, causing the degradation and the progressive impoverishment of territory resources, the loss of biodiversity, culture and traditional knowledge.

FIELD OF APPLICATION

The present disciplinary contains directions valid for all the Organic Districts (Bio/Eco-Districts or Bio/Eco-Regions).

In addition, adherence to the specification allows for a licence to use the brand "Eco-Region" by the different categories of users: public authorities, organic farms, other companies, associations, consortia, universities, research, and training centres.

USE OF THE BRAND

The International Network of Eco Regions (IN.N.E.R. Association) has set up the following international brand (mark) "Eco-Region":



FEATURES

The brand Eco-Region must be considered as a transnational mark, functional at the level of the single nations involved in its enforcement. This feature puts it in a position of neutrality and non-competition with every other brand concerning similar issues, both local and national.

The brand can be completed by adding the name of each Eco-Region and combined with the territorial logo. Below is the example of Cilento



Below the requirements to be met by the different categories of users of the brand "Eco-region".

PUBLIC AUTHORITIES such as regions, local administrations, national park authorities etc are invited to discuss the below aspects e.g at different ministerial, regional or local roundtables:

- declare the area to be GMO-free, providing information and valorising the organic farming model in the local area and to a wider public;
- support green purchases, promoting organic food in the canteens of schools, public offices and health facilities;
- provide assistance to farms that want to change over to organic production;
- implement initiatives to valorise local organic production: Eco-region's producers markets, holiday farms that produce and use organic products, organic food catering services, organic restaurants, organic food stores;

- promote the application of organic principles in other areas, such as public parks management, organic waste management, building regulations, and others;
- promote organic farming in state-owned land and collective properties, transforming them into organic farm incubators, with a view also to promoting social agriculture.

CONSUMERS: can buy local organic products, preferably through short supply channels (organic markets, farm outlets, direct distribution, and fairtrade groups).

Thanks to Eco-region, consumers can count on organic products that are traceable, easier to buy and which safeguard the natural resources of the area in which they live.

In addition, citizens can benefit from environmental quality that organic farming guarantees in production areas, and they can establish direct relations of trust and cooperation with the producers.

ORGANIC FARMS AND OTHER FOOD COMPANIES: Farmers are Eco-region's major stakeholders; they adhere to the rules of organic farming and are integrated in the local social and environmental context. The advantage they gain from being part of an Eco-region is that they can market most of their products locally and are part of a multifunctional tourist circuit (organic-farms, organic-routes, organic-educational farms, organic-social farms.) Another advantage is that they can promote their product in territorial marketing plans activated by Organic districts. The food industry and the agricultural equipment industry can join Organic districts and benefit from the concentration of organic farms in the area, both for the supply of agricultural equipment and to produce raw materials for food processing (pasta, animal feed).

COMPANIES OF OTHER SECTORS: The tourism industry and catering industry can expand and offer new products, such as organic-menus and seasonally adjusted visits to the most significant agricultural realities, so that tourists can experience a mix of culture, education and fun. A multifaceted product that attracts tourists and encourages them to extend their stays.

UNIVERSITIES, RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTRES: can use the brand if it supports the activities of the territory with useful research, studies, experimentation, training initiatives.

ASSOCIATIONS: Environmental associations, agricultural associations, eco-tourism associations and others are all involved in promoting Organic districts activities.

Tourist associations promote eco-tourism in Organic districts areas (organic routes for walkers, cyclists, and horse riders, rural tourism, self-catering holidays, study visits, summer camps for children, young people, and families).

Environmental associations work to safeguard the land and valorise its natural resources, which form the basis of the organic agriculture model.

GUIDELINES FOR THE SETTING UP AND THE MANAGEMENT OF AN ORGANIC DISTRICT

It is of strategic importance, when setting up an Organic District, to get all potential actors involved from the very beginning.

This allows the project to meet local needs, expectations, and interests, avoiding exclusions that could hinder the development of the initiative.

To set up and run a successful Organic District, experience shows that the following stages are required and to adopt the “*IN.N.E.R. methodology*” is made of 10 points:

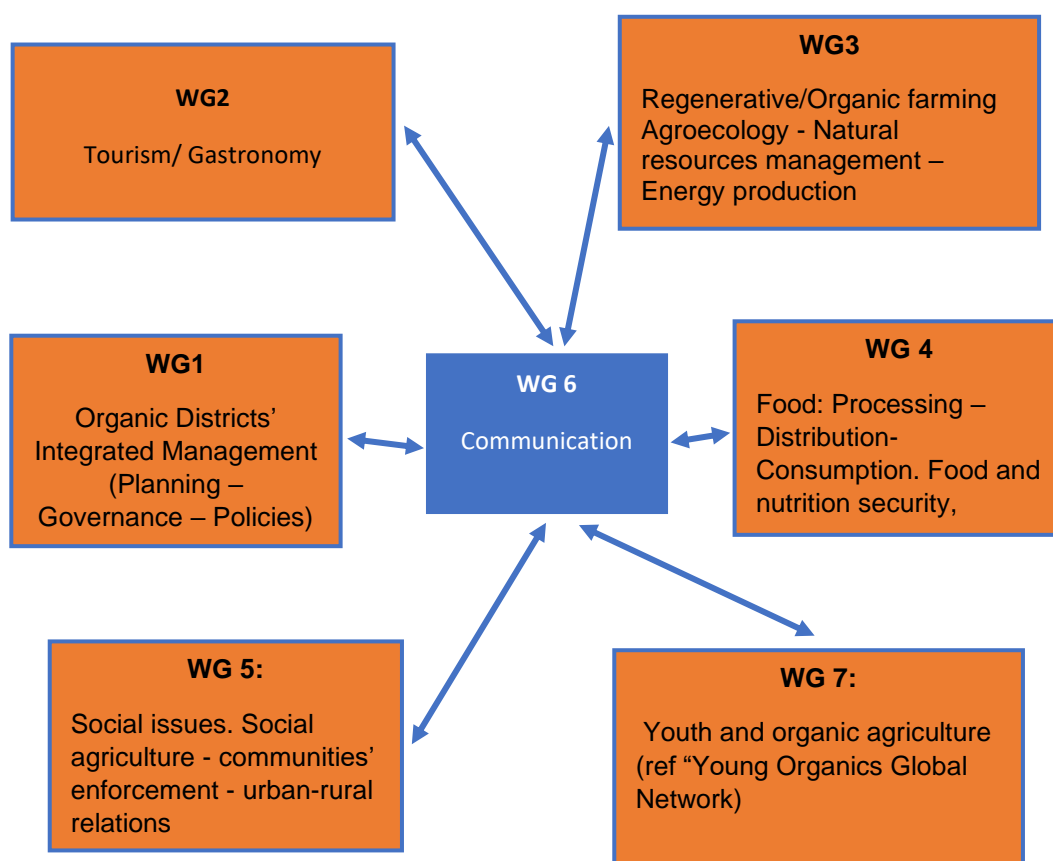
1. Joining IN.N.E.R. and sign of the request form by a promoter of Organic District. Delivery of the Tool kit.
2. Pre-feasibility check of the Organic District, by the IN.N.E.R. experts
3. Public forum and establishment of an official promoting committee of the Organic District. Optional: Signing the Letter of Intent
4. Preparation of the first draft of the “strategic document”
5. Resolutions of the bodies in the establishment of the Organic District
6. Establishment of the Organic District **and** Signing the “Organic District Partner Agreement”
7. First evaluation of the Organic District’s performances.
8. Definition of the action to be taken, as a consequence of the evaluation at point 7 and lastly an update of the “strategic document”.
9. Release of the “Organic District IN.N.E.R. certificate”.
10. Support actions to correctly manage the Organic District.

General introduction to Work Groups

Work Groups are where vital concepts and concrete actions are discussed, planned and implemented. Here different capacities and interests may meet each other and the carrying idea of our inclusive partnership approach will come to fruition.

To have the same structure of Work Groups in the Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region will also facilitate sharing between us both at European and global level. But the intention is also to be flexible according to local context, to the resources available, priorities and goals. To this end it is the recommendation that in each location the detailed content and number of Work Groups are adjusted to the local context.

Scheme 1 Organic Districts Work Groups Description



Matrix	Research/ Testing	Application	Education/ training	Dissemination/ Advocacy
WG1				
WG2				
WG3				
WG4				
WG5				
WG6				
WG7				

Analytical description of the Work Groups Topics

WG 1: Organic Districts' Integrated Management, Planning, Governance and Policies

Objectives of the Work Group: Support the Organic Districts in all the start-up, management and organization related activities involving the integration of the different dimensions of the Eco-Region (technical, environmental, social, and economic). Focus areas are Organic Districts vision, organization structure, planning strategies, performance monitoring, private and public policies.

WG 2: Tourism – Gastronomy

Objectives of the Work Group: Support the Organic Districts in the development of activities related to the start-up, management and organization of activities of promotion of the territory in terms of its natural, historical and cultural heritage, including gastronomy. An efficient integration of tourism and gastronomy within the Organic districts provides a much-needed support to valorize the multifunctional dimension of the farming activity and its integration with different actors of the community (touristic agencies, cultural associations, restaurant owners). This can provide an important contribution to the overall Organic districts' sustainable development, provide a better understanding and value of the work, quality and lifestyle in rural areas and inspire the re-population of these areas.

WG 3: Regenerative/Organic farming - Agroecology - Natural resources management and Energy production

Objectives of the Work Group: Support the Organic districts in the development of activities related to the start-up, management, and organization of different sustainable production models where the Regenerative/Organic farming – Agroecology go hand in hand with the strictly related Natural resources management and Energy production. This will provide a strong support for the Organic districts in the sustainable supply of food, fiber and ecosystem services which represent the core of the activities.

WG 4: Food: Processing – Distribution- Consumption. Food and nutrition security quality and health

Objectives of the Work Group: Support the Organic districts in the development of activities related to the start-up, management and organization of activities supporting the different stages following the farming activity. The differentiation of the Organic District economic system, by adding sustainable and locally based Food Processing – Distribution- Consumption activities will contribute to the territorial economic development; the support to a sustainable model of agriculture and food production, provided by this WG, will also involve social and environmental benefits in terms of food quality and health for the communities and other external actors, such as tourists, consumers outside the Organic District.

WG 5: Social issues. Social agriculture - communities' enforcement – gender equality - urban-rural relations

Objectives of the Work Group: Support the Organic districts in the development of activities related to the start-up, management and organization of activities related to the improvement of the social conditions of the Eco-region Communities. This involves the strengthening of the community bonds, the creation of a virtuous cycle linking the urban and rural areas where the Eco-Region insist. By facilitating exchanges of ideas, experiences and simply increasing the level of mutual knowledge among people living in urban and rural areas, a mutual benefit for the communities will be provided. Integrating socially fragile and marginalized people within inclusive Eco-Region communities is also another area of intervention this WG will consider in its activities.

Generally, Organic districts are in rural areas and their main activities are related to agriculture. They supply the local population but also to the population living in cities. Seen in the perspective of the need for an integrated food system approach for healthy and environmentally friendly dietary patterns, this opens to the development of new rural-urban linkages to provide more and better jobs for youth in agriculture and food systems and in general, a potential for the revitalization of rural areas.

WG 6: Communication

Objectives of the Work Group: Collect, organize, and distribute all the relevant information related to the Organic districts activity with the aim of promoting their development in relation to the relevant stakeholders (public, private, and civil society organizations) including the general public. Another relevant aspect related to this WG is the communication among the members of Organic districts not only supporting the management but increasing the awareness and pride of being part of an Organic districts. This plays an important role in increasing trust, collaboration, and commitment within and Between the Organic districts' communities. The WG communication plays a strategic role for the GAOD success.

WG 7: Youth and organic agriculture (ref "Young Organics Global Network)

Objectives of the Work Group: valorize the role of young members as carriers of innovative ideas ensuring a sustainable and food-secure future. Provides GAOD updated info on new trends and available innovations.

6. FORM D1.7EN: PRE CONSTITUTION

Example of Organic District / Bio District / Eco-Region

LETTER OF INTENT

(EU Version)

We the undersigned members of the **Promoting Committee** are engaged in the startup of a new Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region located in in the country of.....

For our work we take the definition of a Bio district as defined by the European Commission "Action plan for organic production":

A "Bio district" is a geographical area where farmers, the public, tourist operators, associations and public authorities enter into an agreement for the sustainable management of local resources, based on organic principles and practices. The aim is to maximise the economic and social potential of the territory. Each "Bio district" includes lifestyle, nutrition, human relations and nature considerations (European Commission, Brussels, 25.3.2021 COM (2021) 141 final, modified by COM(2021) 141 final/2, Brussels, 19.4.2021).

In its core the Bio districts takes an inclusive food system approach and has the potential to serve as a turning point and leverage in our common journey to achieve the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Though we are based on the organic principles of Ecology, Health, Fairness and Care as further defined by IFOAM Organics International we invite the cooperation with likeminded organizations such as agroecology etc.

We plan to carry out activities such as (to be looked further at in each location):

- A further study on strategic documents of the European Commission the "European Green Deal", "Farm to Fork", "Biodiversity Strategy to bring nature back into our lives", "Sustainable blue economy", "Action Plan Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil", "New European Bauhaus: new actions and funding to link sustainability to style and inclusion", and where Bio districts are particularly mentioned: "Action plan for the development of organic production" and "A long-term Vision for the EU's Rural Areas - Towards stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas by 2040" (references to the documents below)
- The methodology for Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region by the International Network of Bio districts (IN.N.E.R) including a Tool Kit - see enclosed.
- The Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region Agreement
- The work of the "Global Alliance for Organic Districts" (GAOD www.gaod.online)
- Making a list of relevant parties to contact
- Interact with relevant parties

- Convening a Public Forum to share and discuss the idea of the Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region
- Forming the group of parties to sign the Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region Agreement – the Founding Members.

It is our aim to enter into an agreement based on the enclosed Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region Model Agreement.

.....

(Place and date)

Surname, Name

Organization (webpage).....

Address

Tel. E- mail

Signature

.....

Reproduce the form for the number of signatories.

Documents of the European Commission:

- “European Green Deal” https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en
- “Farm to Fork Strategy” https://ec.europa.eu/food/farm2fork_en
- “Biodiversity Strategy to bring nature back into our lives” <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1590574123338&uri=CELEX:52020DC0380>
- “Sustainable blue economy” https://ec.europa.eu/oceans-and-fisheries/ocean/blue-economy/sustainable-blue-economy_en
- “Action Plan Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil” https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_2345
- “New European Bauhaus: new actions and funding to link sustainability to style and inclusion” https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_4626
- “Action plan for the development of organic production” <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0141R%2801%29>
- A long-term Vision for the EUs Rural Areas- Towards stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas by 2040 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2021%3A345%3AFIN>

Enclosures

7. FORM D1.8EN: CONSTITUTION

An important undertaking before the constitution is the signing of the “Organic District Partner Agreement”.

Following this the formal constitution of an Organic District may take place in three ways as mentioned below:

1. Establishment by the notary of an autonomous legal entity (e.g. public-private non-profit association);
2. Establishment of an autonomous legal entity (eg. Public-private non-profit association) through a public assembly and subsequent public registration of the constitution act and statute;
3. Taking charge of the establishment, coordination and management of the Organic District by a public body (eg municipality, park authority, etc.) or private (eg organic farming association). In this case, since there is no autonomous legal entity, all formal and substantial acts must be taken by the managing body, which will involve all the various components (farmers, consumers, representatives’ local authorities, etc.).

Whatever the form chosen, the Organic District will have to start the inclusive and participatory management path for the progressive improvement and achievement of strategic objectives.

As described in the Procedures (Form D1.2EN), before the establishment of an Organic District it is necessary to hold one or more public forums and set up an official Organic District promoting Committee.

EXAMPLE

OF ORGANIC DISTRICT, BIO/ECO-DISTRICT / BIO/ECO-REGION

PARTNER AGREEMENT

(EU Version)

Giving a common framework and to be completed according to the local context for each Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region.

Introduction

- i. Name and location of the Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region

The name of the Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region is

.....-.....

Located in

ii. Term of Agreement

This Agreement is entered into..... (date) and shall be in force until so is decided by the General Assembly.

iii. Signing parties

The signing parties are the Founding Members of the Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region as follows:

.....

The Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region is at any time open to receive more Members that are in agreement with the purpose and guidelines otherwise for the Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region. Also individuals may be Member of a Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region.

1. Background

Following the establishment in 2004 of the Bio district in Cilento, Italy, the concept has been further documented, developed and shared both in Europe and worldwide such as in the “International Network of Eco Regions” (IN.N.E.R). and the “Global Alliance for Organic Districts” (GAOD).

In 2021, and following the European Commission “GREEN DEAL” and “FARM TO FORK” the concept of Bio district was included in two European Commission Communications:

- “Action plan for the development of organic production”, COM(2021) 141 final/2, Brussels, 19.4.2021, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0141R%2801%29>
- “A long-term Vision for the EU's Rural Areas- Towards stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas by 2040”, COM(2021) 345 final, Brussels, 30.6.2021 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2021%3A345%3AFIN>,

This inclusion by the EU Commission facilitates both a scaling out to all 27 member states in the EU and a continued process of learning and co-creation at a global scale.

In different countries and depending on the regional/local context the name used for the concept may vary, however sharing a common understanding of the core principles and attributes. The “Action plan for organic production” offers the following definition:

A “Bio district” is a geographical area where farmers, the public, tourist operators, associations and public authorities enter into an agreement for the sustainable management of local resources, based on organic principles and practices. The aim is to maximise the economic and social potential of the territory. Each “Bio district” includes lifestyle, nutrition, human relations and nature considerations (European Commission, Brussels, 25.3.2021 COM (2021) 141 final)

In its core the Bio districts takes an inclusive food system approach and has the potential to serve as a turning point and leverage in our common journey to achieve all the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2. Structure of the Organic District / Bio district / Eco Region

Depending on the local context and the wish of the Members the supporting structure may vary from establishing an autonomous legal entity (e.g., public-private non- profit association) to a joint venture that in effect does not create a formal partnership or any other fiduciary relationship between the parties.

3. Purpose of this agreement

i. General

The general purpose of this agreement is to form a supporting structure and invite the co-creation from farmers, the public, tourist operators, associations and public authorities for the establishment, coordination and management of an Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region and based on the organic principles of Ecology, Health, Fairness and Care.

The approach we are taking is to share common core principles, values, approach and messaging that flows into a universal understandable framework and basic activities of research and practice, so that globally we can become a unified, louder and more powerful voice for change and with the general purpose as follows:

- improve the quality of life of resident in rural areas;
- increase the power of attraction of rural areas, boosting the connections between strategies of sustainable development of the rural and urban areas;
- increase the employment opportunities and the quality of jobs;
- promote the active engagement of youth in the ecological transition;
- promote and improve the European and international cooperation of rural areas

The 5 components of an Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region (agriculture, environment, economy, culture, society) are interrelated in a complex system, producing the innovative outcome of a virtuous circle, where the 5 dimensions lead towards a local, sustainable and healthy food system.

ii. Specifics

The intention with the creation of an Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region is to be flexible according to local context, to the resources available, priorities and goals. This allows a wide range of diversified initiatives to connect to each other strengthening their own identity but being able to co-create a global movement.

The following are the specific purpose of the Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region:

(to be proposed by each one)

4. Membership fee

(to be proposed by each Organic District)

5. Bodies of the Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region

The Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region consists of its Members. It is recommended that the following bodies may be present:

- General Assembly
- Steering Committee
- President
- Coordinator
- Work Groups
- Accountant
- Auditor

6. General Assembly

All the member of the Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region may participate to the General Assembly's Meetings, convened by the President at least once a year to approve the balance.

7. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is made up of a not less than 3 and not more than 9 members, elected by the General Assembly, every 3 years.

8. Appointment of the Steering Committee

.....

.....

(name, legal status and contact information) are appointed Members of the Steering Committee.

9. President

The president is elected every 3 years by the Steering Committee and is the legal representative of the Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region.

10. Coordinator

The Coordinator is selected and assigned by the Steering Committee, as person or organization to be appointed for the day to day management of the activities. The coordination of the Bio district involves the following activities:

1. Development and update of Strategic Plan
2. The preparation and following up of a yearly budget and activity plan
3. Financing opportunities
4. Establishment and managing a communication platform (homepage, social media, etc.)

5. Preparation of Members Meetings, formally convened by the President
6. Contact and co-creation with the International Network of Eco Regions (IN.N.E.R.), other Bio districts, both in EU and globally
7. Finance opportunities (grants, applications etc.)

The remuneration of the Coordinator is to be decided locally.

11. Work Groups

Work Groups are where vital concepts and concrete actions are discussed, planned and implemented. Here different capacities and interests may meet each other and the carrying idea of our inclusive partnership approach will come to fruition.

To have the same structure of Work Groups in the Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region will also facilitate sharing between us both at European and global level. But the intention is also to be flexible according to local context, to the resources available, priorities and goals. To this end it is the recommendation that in each location the detailed content and number of Work Groups are adjusted to the local context.

Below the list of the proposed Work Groups. Objectives of each Work Group follows in Enclosure 2 and an updated table of members and coordinators of each Work Group is in Enclosure 3.

WG 1: Organic Districts' Integrated Management, Planning, Governance and Policies

WG 2: Tourism – Gastronomy

WG 3: Regenerative/Organic farming - Agroecology - Natural resources management and Energy production

WG 4: Food: Processing – Distribution- Consumption. Food and nutrition security quality and health

WG 5: Social issues. Social agriculture - communities' enforcement – gender equality - urban-rural relations

WG 6: Communication

WG 7: Youth and organic agriculture (ref "Young Organics Global Network)

12. Appointment of members and coordinators of the Working Groups

Members of the Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region and others may join the Work Groups. The Coordinator of the Bio district shall keep an updated list of the members and coordinators of the Work Groups.

13. The role of the accountant

The role of the accountant involves bookkeeping and ensuring the accuracy of financial documents.

14. Appointment and term of office of Accountant

..... (name, company) is appointed Accountant of the Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region. The term is 3 years.

15. Auditor(s)

The role of the Auditor(s) is to give an opinion on whether financial statements of the Bio district are presented fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with the financial reporting framework.

16. Appointment and term of office of the Auditor(s)

..... is appointed Auditor of the Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region. The term is 3 years.

17. IN.N.E.R. Membership

The Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region becomes a member of The International Network of Eco Regions (IN.N.E.R.), the umbrella organization for Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region in the European Union. It aims at sharing, coordinating and further develop the good application of the methodology in the Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region.

To this end IN.N.E.R. develops supporting documents and guidance for Bio districts. An example is the “IN.N.E.R. Tool Kit” with the following main topics:

1. Milestones for the development of Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region and the inclusion of the concept in the new “European Green Deal” and action plans for organic production
2. The IN.N.E.R. Methodology for Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region
3. Procedures and templates for start-up of Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region in 10 steps
4. Procedures and templates for the management of an already existing Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region in 7 steps
5. Monitoring Tool for the evaluation of Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region

The initial version of the IN.N.E.R. Tool Kit is in Enclosure 1. The “Tool Kit” will be updated as need be.

18. Governing law

This agreement shall be governed by the laws of.....

Name:

Name:

Name:

.....

.....

.....

(Signature)

(Signature)

(Signature)

ENCLOSURES

Enclosure 1: Supporting documents and guidance – “The IN.N.E.R. Tool Kit”

Enclosure 2: Work Groups

Enclosure 3: Updated list of members and coordinators of each Work Group

8. FORM D1.9EN: STRATEGIC DOCUMENT

This form contains the basic information on how to develop the strategic document by area, which all Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region.

The Strategic Document is divided into the strategy, objectives and actions. This setting is the result of a negotiation process in which three categories of decision makers participate:

1. local authorities who decide to participate in the development and adoption of the strategic document;
2. other public entities participating in the preparation and the management of the plan;
3. the private entities who participate in the various actions of the strategic plan.

To these are added a set of internal officials and technicians and experts called from outside. The role of the technicians is to formulate the various analyses required during the planning process and, above all, they are involved in the translation of the results of the negotiation process into documents to be submitted to the approval of the members, better if organized in a forum.

Strategy, goals and plan actions express an objective indication, above all a desire to transform reality in a participatory and shared manner. **The strategic plan expresses a vision of a possible future for a given territory and indicates the path to achieve it, through a series of specific actions.**

The choice to include some actions in the plan among the many possible is motivated by three essential factors: the search for the strategic value of each action, the expected benefits from the action and the contribution that can provide to the achievement of the objectives and the strategy of the plan itself.

The goals that can be achieved in a given territory and the actions to be taken in order to reach those objectives are parts of a plan. In the absence of a strategy, objectives and individual actions, the plan to have generic development direction, which postpones concrete transformation decisions to a future time.

EXAMPLE

INDEX of the Strategic Plan by Area

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Description of the Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region
- 1.2 Why a strategic plan for the Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region
- 1.3 The Strategic Plan

THE TERRITORY

A FUTURE'S VISION

- 1.4 the method
- 1.5 the path
- 1.6 the actors involved
- 1.7 the strategy lines
 - 1.7.a *1st example of a strategy:* promote entrepreneurship and quality employment throughout process and product innovation, training and enhancement of the territory
 - 1.7.b *2nd example of a strategy:* improve access to information and communication technologies
 - 1.7.c *3rd example of a strategy:* protection of the territory and local communities (promoting adaptation to climate change, risk prevention and management)
 - 1.7.d *4th example of a strategy:* improve the competitiveness of SMEs, with particular regard to those in the agri-food sector
 - 1.7.e *5th example of a strategy:* enhance natural and cultural resources throughout forms of responsible eco-tourism
 - 1.7.f *6th example of a strategy:* promote social inclusion and the fight against poverty and all forms of discrimination
 - 1.7.g *7th example of a strategy:* promote more sustainable mobility and integration
 - 1.7.h *8th example of a strategy:* investing in education and training for the development of new knowledge / skills and for lifelong learning
- 1.8 list of priority actions, with the different levels of governance
- 1.9 overview of the expected benefits from the implementation of the strategic plan

THE PRODUCTION

- 1.10 the implementation paths
- 1.11 protocol of intent

9. FORM D1.10EN: TRAINING

Training is delivered through the “EDU-INNER” Platform and the virtual environment of the Collaborative b-Learning Platform, developed in the context of the Erasmus+ EducEcoRegions Project. The students/trainees can select the contents and create their personal learning itineraries (adaptive learning) and share experiences and knowledge.

In 2021 IN.N.E.R. started to collaborate within GAOD on the development of 10 Lectures and Building a Learning Network.

ENHANCING PRACTICAL ACTIONS AT LOCAL LEVEL

10 GAOD Lectures and Building GAOD Learning Networks

Building Learning Networks

The approach we are taking is to share common core principles, values, approach and messaging that flows into a universal understandable framework and basic activities of research and practice, so that globally we can become a unified, louder and more powerful voice for change. But the intention is also to be flexible according to local context, to the resources available, priorities and goals. This allows a wide range of diversified initiatives to connect to each other strengthening their own identity but being able to co-create a global movement.

To this end we will provide an open learning platform in assisting people to understand the nature and potential of Organic Districts and how they may develop Organic Districts in their own local context. This will also increase the awareness of the participants in existing ODs and enhance their commitment and effectiveness in contributing to the ODs development.

GAOD Local Learning Centers and GAOD Centers of Competence

The capacities and interactions to be developed in the learning networks and as an outcome of the GAOD Lectures should land in “GAOD Local Learning Centers” in every Organic District. Learning Centers are meeting places- with different levels of formalization, depending on local preferences - that engage in several aspects of a food systems and societal transformation. Learning Centers are both in rural and urban areas. It can be on a farm, a university, a school, NGO, shop, restaurant etc. based on local preferences and opportunities.

Following capacities and opportunities in our global network we could nominate dedicated “GAOD Centers of Competence” for taking a responsibilities for the whole alliance on specific topics such as Ceraso, Italy for Organic Districts in general/ monitoring tools, Tourism and Gastronomy, the ALGOA Center for Public Procurement and School Meals (New Taipei City), ALGOA Center Organic Leadership (Goesan County), ALGOA Center for Organic Marketing (Baima City, Nanjing) and Good Governance (LOAMCH-PH, Philippines), Regeneration International , the inclusive Diet for a Green Planet concept in Södertälje in Sweden, Mouans-

Sartoux and Un Plus Bio in France, Center for Ecological Economy in Bodø, Norway, Organic Food System Program, Nutrinet Santé etc .

In the process of building the learning network all partners are invited to come with their suggestions and share their experience and aspirations.

The main objective of the 10 GAOD Lectures and building GAOD Learning Networks is to align and enhance GAOD members' knowledge and capacities to allow activities of practical actions.

Based on our common organic principles of Ecology, Health, Fairness and Care, our aim is also to be flexible according to local context, to the resources available, priorities and goals. This allows a wide range of diversified initiatives to connect to each other strengthening their own identity but being able to co-create a global movement.

An open learning platform will be provided as local study material and as of date the following resource base:

1. **GAOD Local Learning Centers**
2. **GAOD Centers of Competence and Supporting Initiatives**
3. **10 GAOD Lectures**

Users will be introduced to understanding the nature and potential of Organic Districts and how they may develop Organic Districts in their own local context.

This will also increase the awareness of the participants in existing ODs and enhance their commitment and effectiveness in contributing to the ODs development.

GAOD Local Learning Centers

The capacities and interactions to be developed in the learning networks and as an outcome of the GAOD Lectures should land in "GAOD Local Learning Centers" in every Organic District.

GAOD Local Learning Centers are meeting places- more or less formal, depending on local preferences - that engage in several aspects of a food systems and societal transformation. Learning Centers are both in rural and urban areas. It can be on a farm, a university, a school, NGO, shop, restaurant etc. based on local preferences and opportunities.

GAOD Centers of Competence and Supporting Initiatives

Following capacities and opportunities in our global network we could nominate dedicated "GAOD Centers of Competence and Supporting Initiatives" for taking a responsibility for the whole alliance on specific topics such as:

GAOD Centers of Competence:

- Ceraso, Italy for Organic Districts in general/ monitoring tools, Tourism and Gastronomy
- ALGOA Center for Public Procurement and School Meals (New Taipei City)
- ALGOA Center for Organic Leadership (Goesan County)
- ALGOA Center for Organic Marketing (Baima City, Nanjing) and Good Governance (LOAMCH-PH, Philippines)
- Mouans-Sartoux and Un Plus Bio in France (tbc)
- Diet for a Green Planet concept in Södertälje, Sweden
- Center for Ecological Economy in Bodø, Norway

Supporting Initiatives:

- Regeneration International
- Organic Food System Program
- Nutrinet Santé (tbc)
- The international research network Food Quality and Health (tbc)
- 4 per 1000 (tbc)

In the process of building the learning network all partners are invited to come with their suggestions and share their experience and aspirations.

10. FORM D1.11EN: COMMUNICATION

Collect, organize and distribute all the relevant information related to the Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region activities with the aim of promoting their development in relation to the relevant stakeholders (public, private and civil society organizations) including the general public.

Another relevant aspect is the communication among the members of Organic Districts not only supporting the management but increasing the awareness and pride of being part of an Organic District. This plays an important role in increasing trust, collaboration, and commitment within and Between the Organic Districts communities.

It's necessary to put together and coordinate all the experiences already developed, in order to create a critical mass to make change possible. This goal can be achieved also through simple, effective communication strategy, directed to all the target groups (producers, consumers, public administrators, Touristic operators, etc.).

IN.N.E.R. already developed communication tools dedicated to organic districts: a magazine and a series of books dedicated to best practices in organic districts.

Communication Strategy in all the Organic districts.

Communication plan that includes both an "Internal Communication" and an "external communication".

11. FORM D1.12EN: ASSESSMENT « THE MONITORING TOOL »

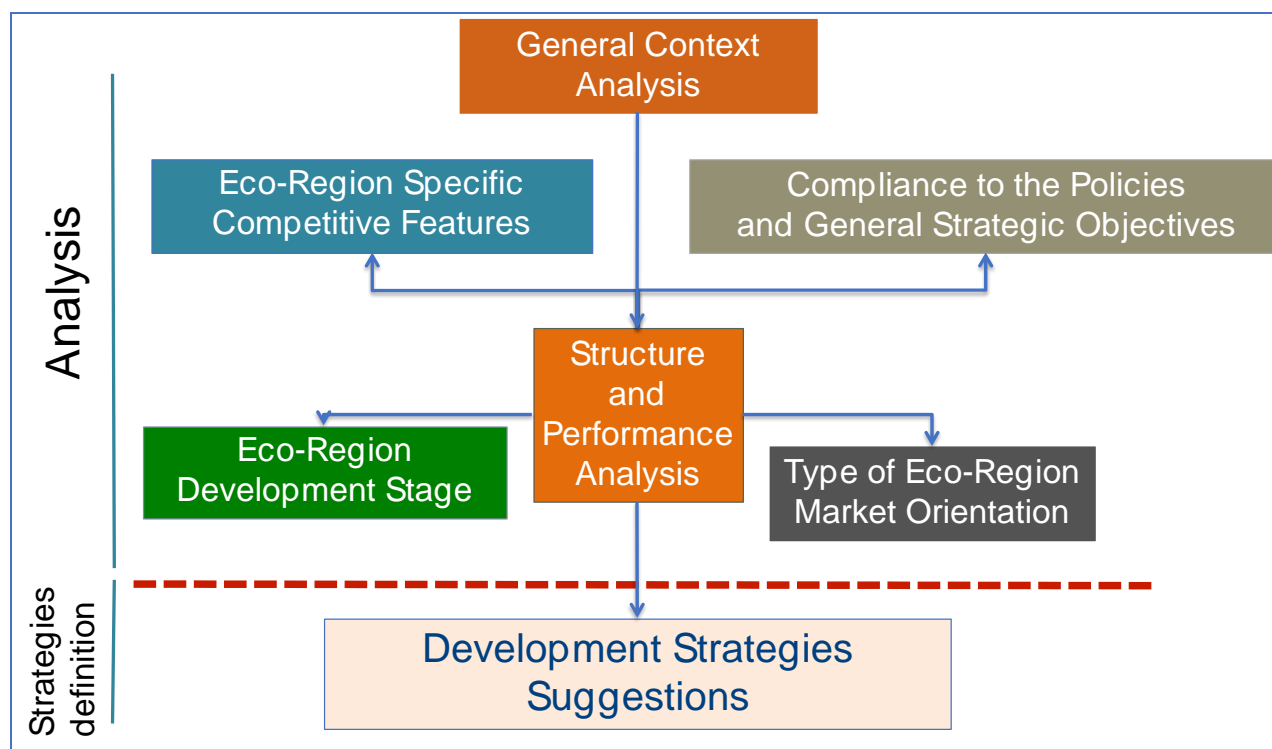
1. Monitoring the Structure and Performance of an Organic district

Considering the necessity for Organic Districts to monitor their structure and activities both before and during their existence, a monitoring tool has been developed and tested for the analyses of the Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region structure and performances.

The Monitoring tool involves 5 modules:

1. a *General context analysis*;
2. a *Compliance* module, listing the basic characteristics needed to be qualified as an Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region;
3. a *Development stage* module;
4. a *Competitive features* module;
5. a *Market orientation* module.

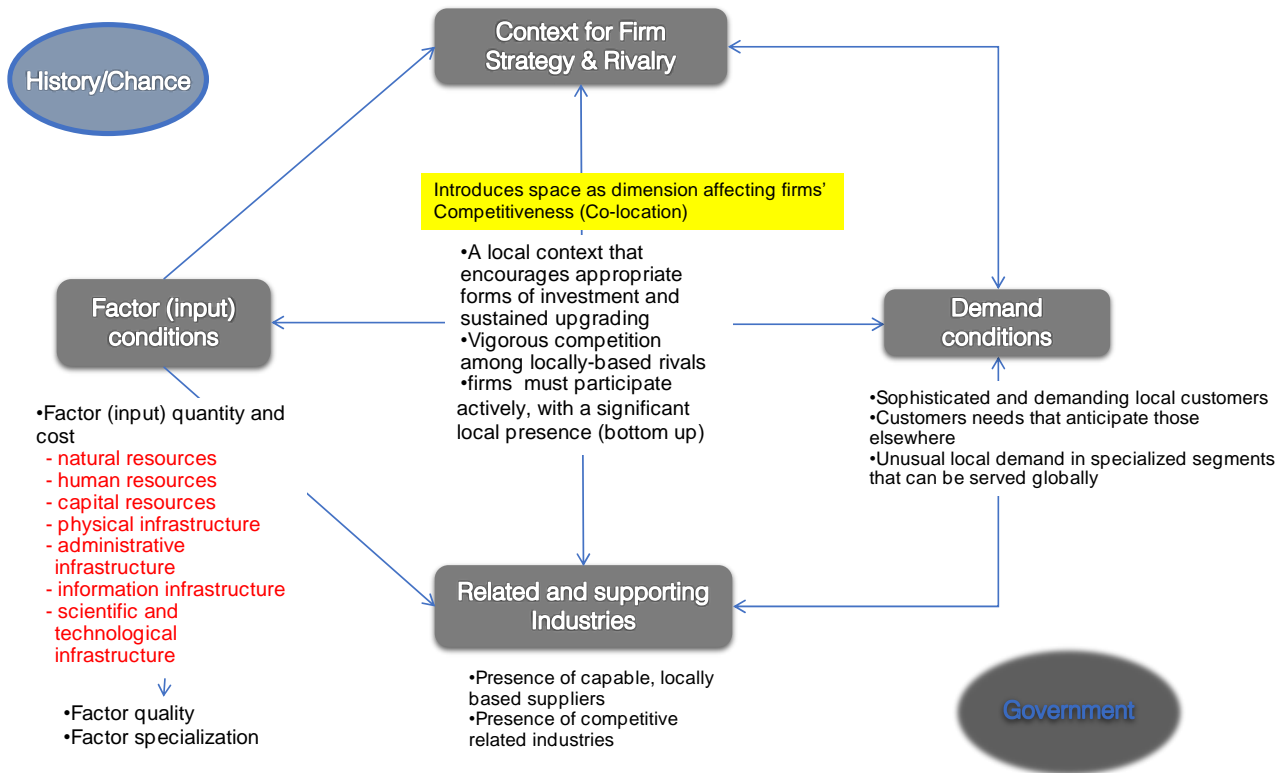
Scheme 3 Scheme The Monitoring tool Modules and Logical Framework



The aim is to support the Organic Districts definition, creation and management (e.g. definition of the Strategic Plan), by also facilitating their cooperation through the exchange of knowledge and best practices. Its contribution to the creation of a critical mass of Organic districts' related organizations like GAOD will improve their capacity to influence the local and global debate.

The Core of the monitoring Tool is provided by the Structure and Performance analysis Module, the results collected by interviewing representative stakeholders of an Eco-region will be integrated by secondary data providing a General context analysis of the structural and conjunctural data of the Eco-Region, including the stakeholders' network and the supply chain description.

Scheme 4 The Porter Diamond for Clusters

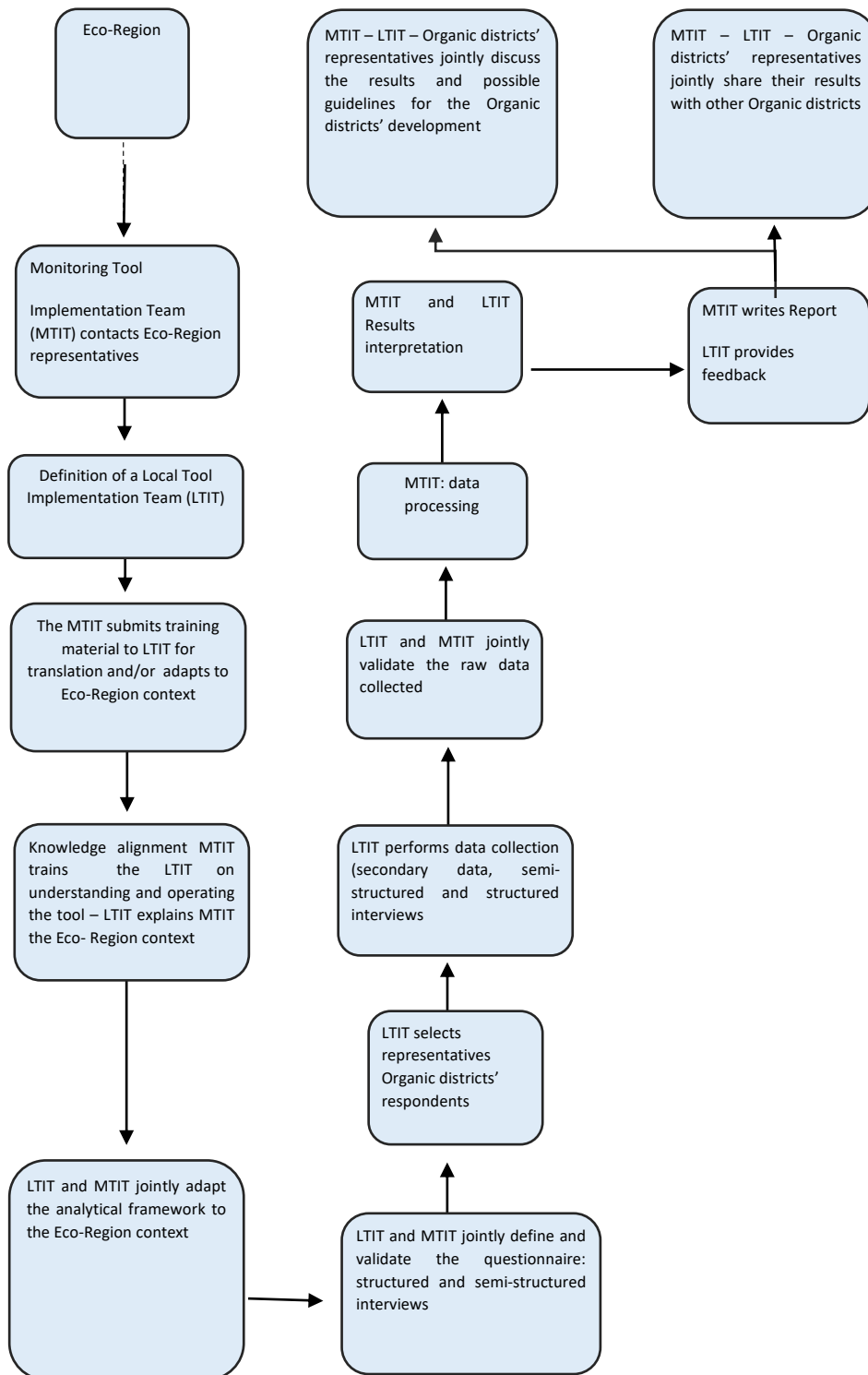


These information will provide a knowledge base which is adopted to define the results of the other modules and finally to develop suggestions to support the Organic districts' development strategies.

A must stakeholder, participative approach is adopted in order to

- tailor the depth and breadth of the monitoring tool analysis to the different Organic districts needs and contexts
- a central role is played by the Monitoring Tool Implementation Team which will be involved in all the different stages of the analysis implementation up to the definition of the report. The choice of the development strategies will of course be entirely managed by the Organic districts.

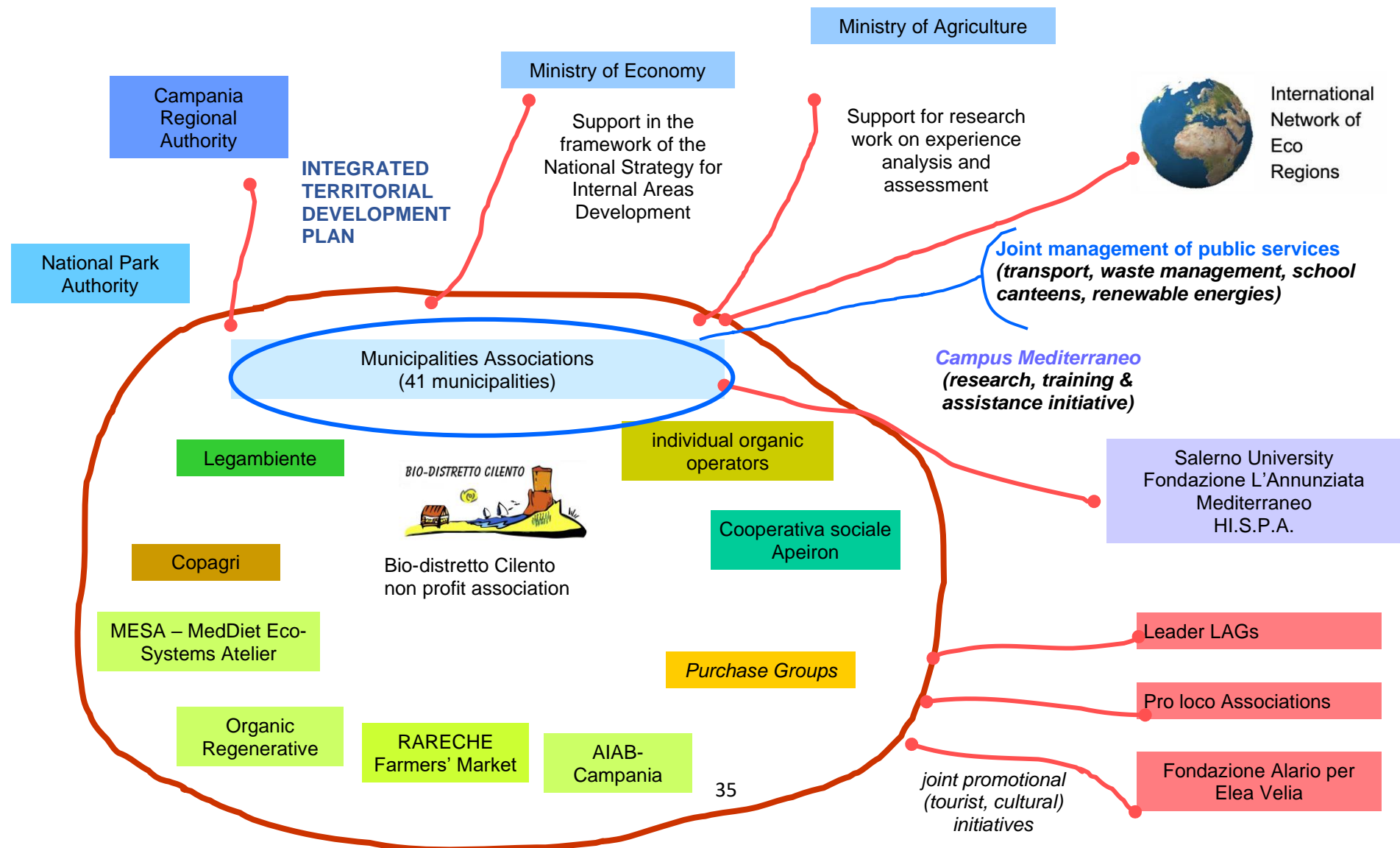
Scheme 6) Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region Implementation Activity Action Map



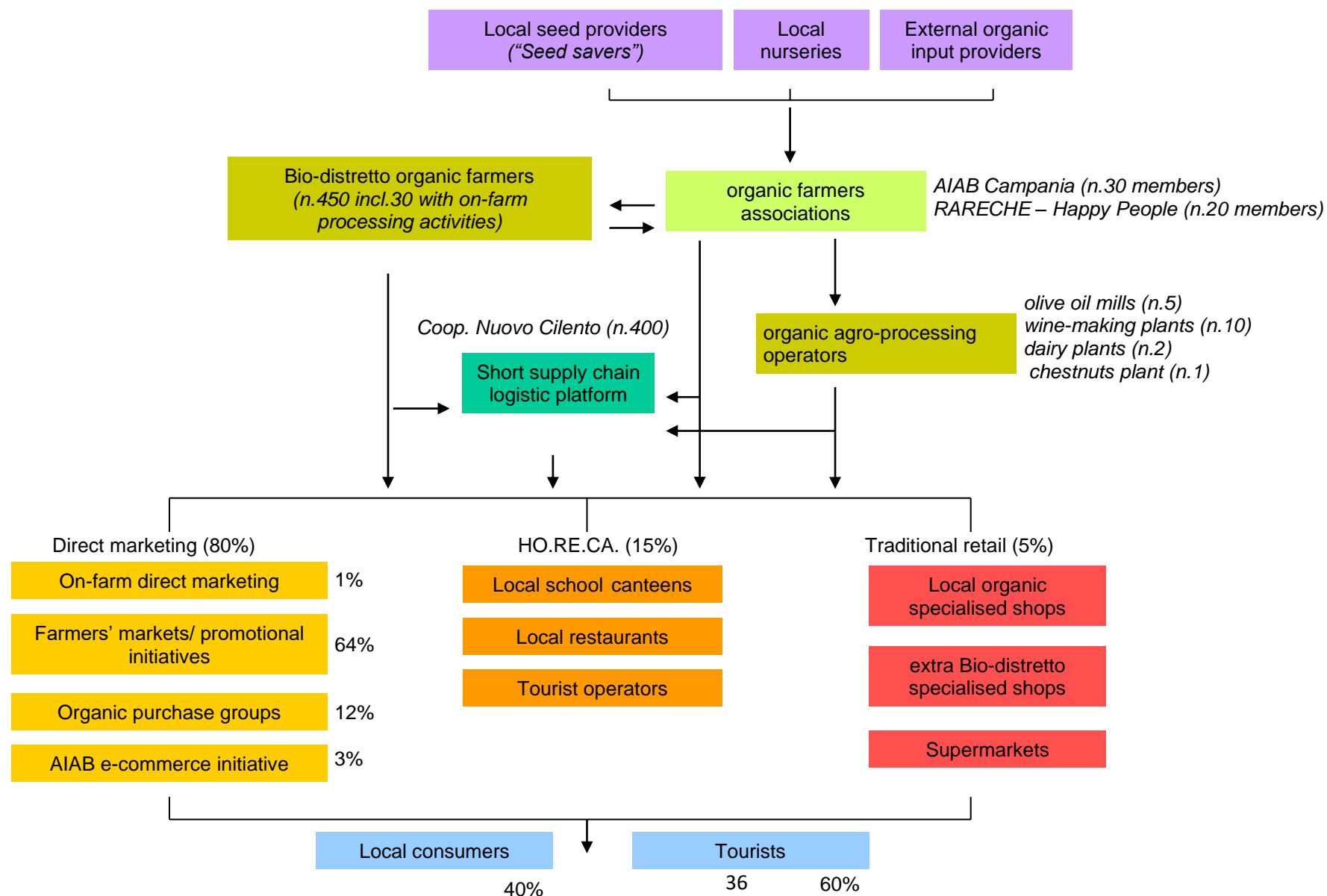
Source: Zanasi C., Basile S., Paoletti F., Pugliese, P., 2020

An example of the possible results of the monitoring tool is provided with reference to a first analysis of the Cilento Eco-Region in carried (Pugliese, P., Antonelli, A., Rota, C., Zanasi, C., and Basile, S., 2016).

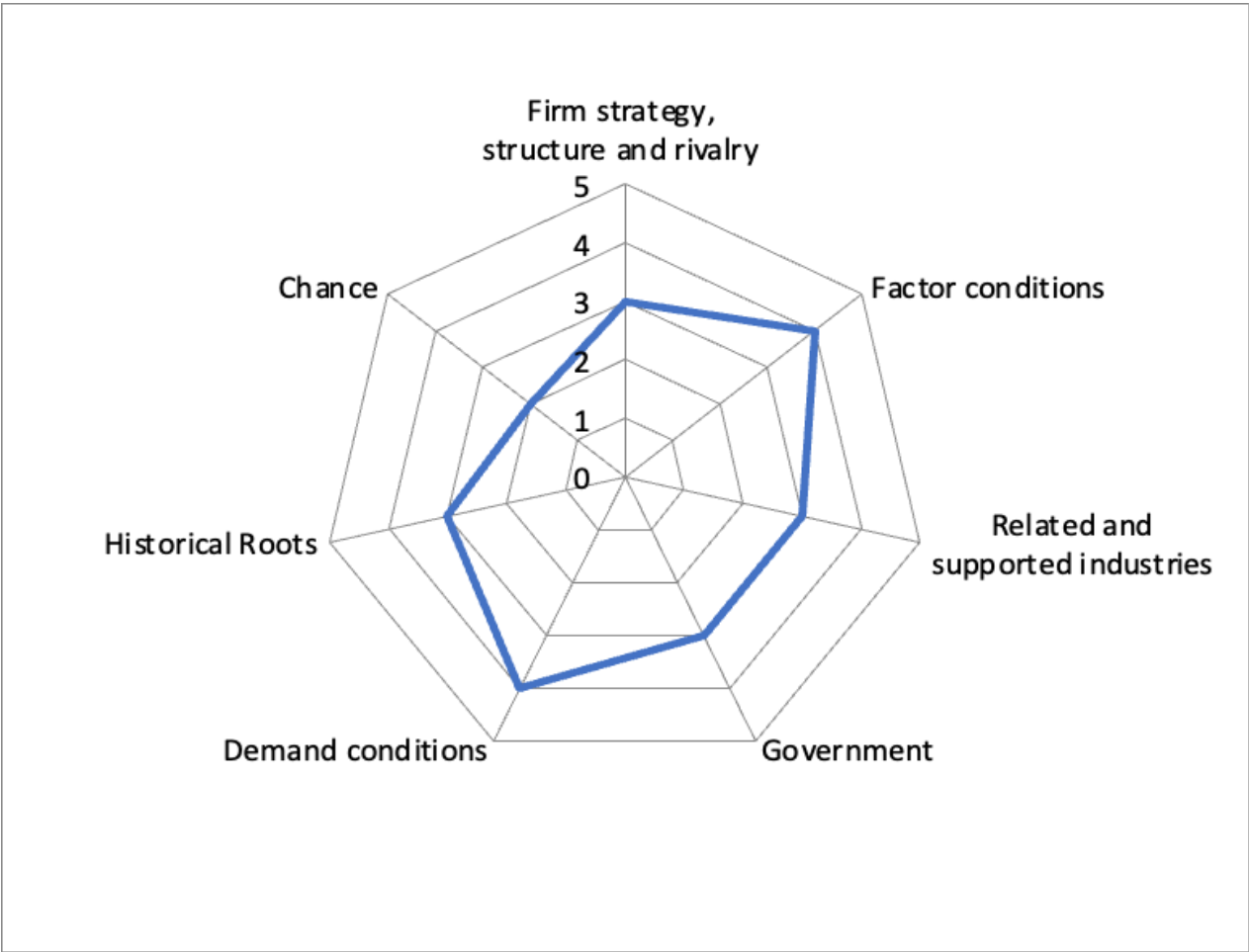
Scheme 7) Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region Context - Stakeholders' Network



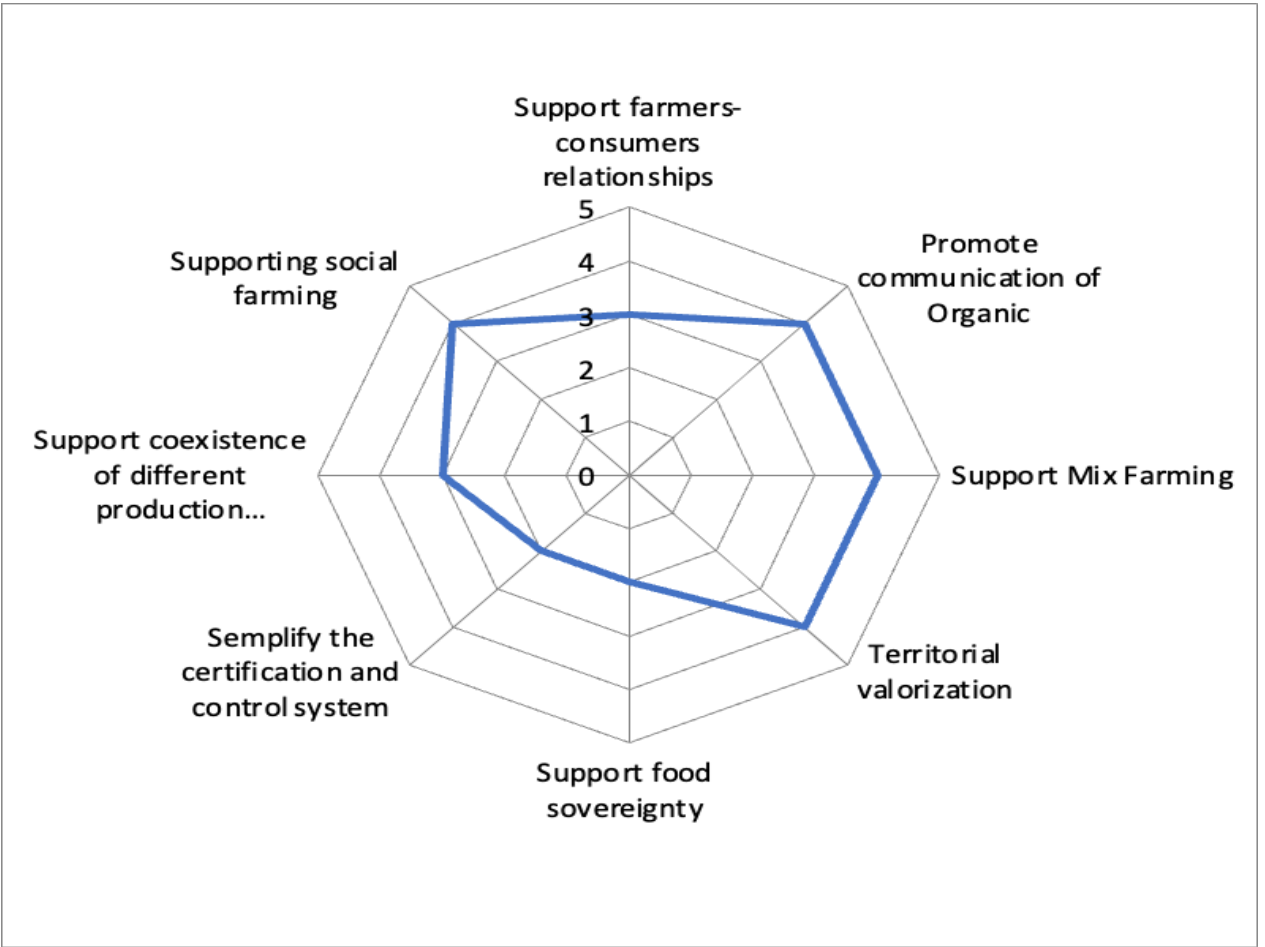
Scheme 8 Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region Context - Supply Chain Structure



Graph. 1 Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region competitive features – performances



Graph. 2 Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region Compliance to criteria



Graph. 3 Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region Development Stage

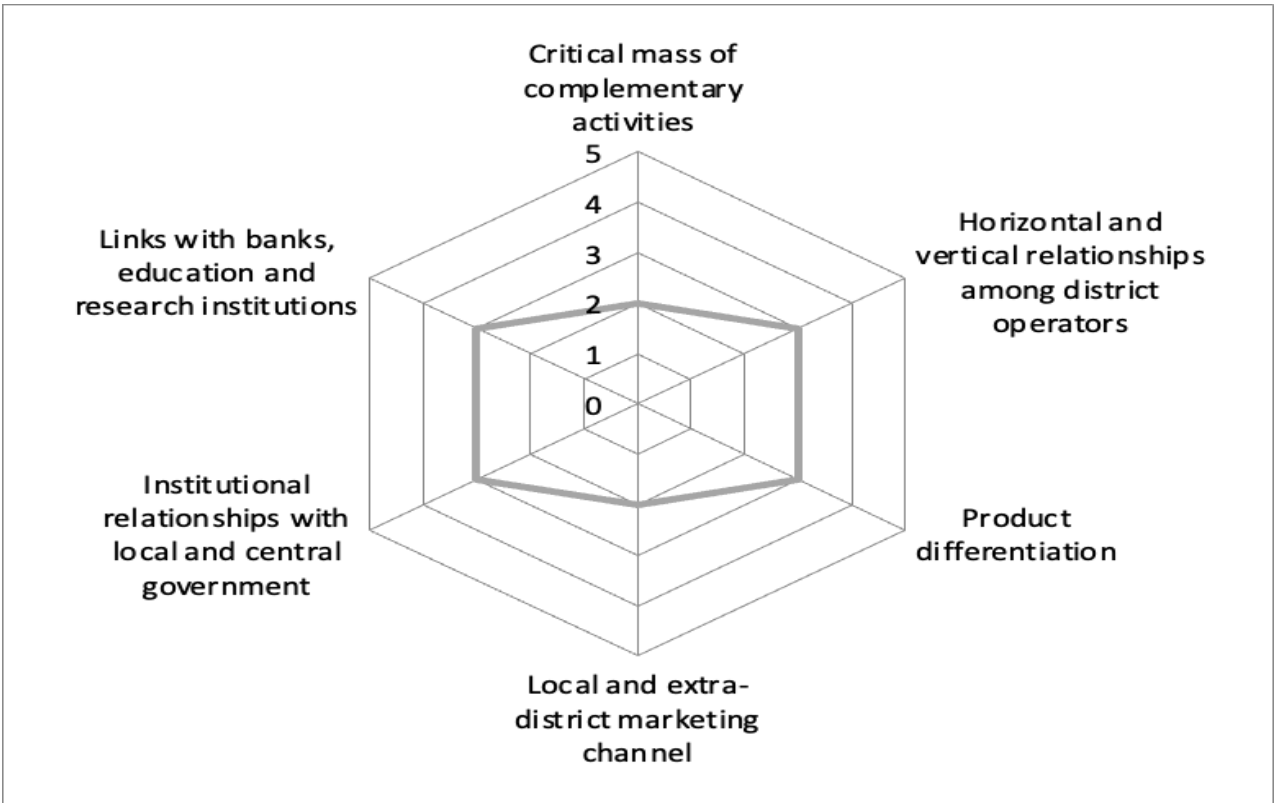


Table 1 Present and potentially most efficient market orientation of the Organic District, Bio/Eco-District, Bio/Eco-Region

Market orientation: <u>an example</u>
<u>Present orientation</u> : Local market selling to residents
Potential orientation: non-residential population (tourists-neighboring urban settlements, etc.)

Table 2 Development Strategies Suggestions

- Increase number and size of the companies
- Organic agriculture activities growth driven by tourism
- Improve coordination among the chain actors
- Create Technical and economic services able to externalize some functions that small farmers cannot perform
- Simplify the organic certification procedures

2. Assessment of Organic Districts farmers and food processors' access to organic school meal programs

Introduction

A strong interconnectedness between organic production itself and Green Public Procurement exists. The former is, in fact, present in different EU initiatives aimed at the adoption of more sustainable practices. Among these, the 2021 Action Plan for the development of organic production, a plan drafted by the European Commission aimed at reaching 25% of agricultural land under organic farming by 2030. This initiative is primarily focused on reducing agricultural footprint, which accounts for approximately 20–30% of the overall environmental impact in the EU (Koch, 2020, p.30).

The relationship between GPP and farmers involved in organic production is also believed to favor rural development: thanks to the increasing awareness towards sustainable farming, the latter are given the possibility to not exclusively focus on food production but also promote their business through other initiatives (e.g., by entering the tourism industry), which can increase their entrepreneurial spirit and income. (Risku-Norja and Løes, 2016;

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_1275.

In this regard, an interesting example of sustainable rural development is represented by organic districts (also referred to as “bio-districts” or “eco-regions”), namely, “a geographical area where **farmers**, citizens, tourist operators, associations and **public authorities** enter into an **agreement** for the sustainable management of local resources, based on organic production and consumption” (Basile S. and Cuoco E., 2013, p.2).

The definition mentioned above highlights an important relationship with public authorities, which are the stakeholders that can highly foster sustainable local development (ibidem). Analogously, schools play an important role in driving consumption towards organic and local food in general (Sturla A. et al., 2017; Pugliese P. et al., 2016). Hence, the strong link between

organic districts, Green Public Procurement and Public School Food Procurement (Basile S. and Cuoco E. 2013;

<https://www.organicseurope.bio/news/suggestions-new-organic-action-plan/>.

Despite its advantages, this sourcing method is subject to several barriers, as a consequence of the complexities of public procurement and of several characteristics specific to organic production. For instance, despite Italy's great interest towards the introduction of organic food in school meals (see above), 100% organic canteens account only for around 5% of the total (Maietta O.W and Gorgitano M.T., 2016, p. 45).

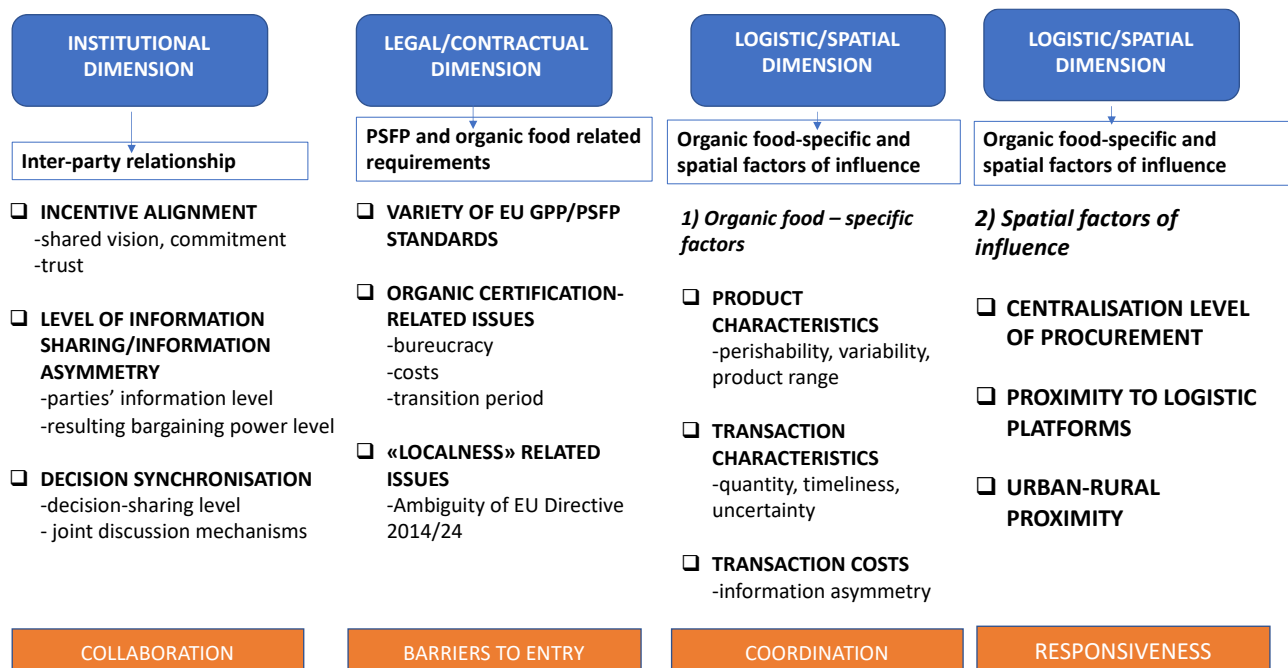
Given their highly limiting effects, the constraints related to the procurement of organic food have received significant academic attention (Jouzi Z. et al., 2017; Risku-Norja H and Løes A.K., 2016; Sonnino R., 2009). Nevertheless, despite the interest that Organic districts have attracted in the field of research, politics and within supranational institutions like the EU (Sturla A. et al., 2017 (https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_1275)) the factors shaping the supply chains involving school canteens and organic districts are not considered.

As a result, there is a need to address this gap by assessing the conditions that shape the relationships between PSFP and Organic Districts.

To this end an Organic School meal tool has been developed (see table 3)

It assesses the influence of different dimensions on the relation between Organic Districts and School meal programs' actors: Institutional, Legal/Contractual and Logistic/Spatial. The relations involve the level of Collaboration, Barriers to entry, Coordination and Responsiveness. The higher the score in these different dimensions the more feasible/efficient is the relation between the Organic District in an Organic school meal program.

Table 3 Dimensions affecting the implementation of Organic districts' based School meal programs

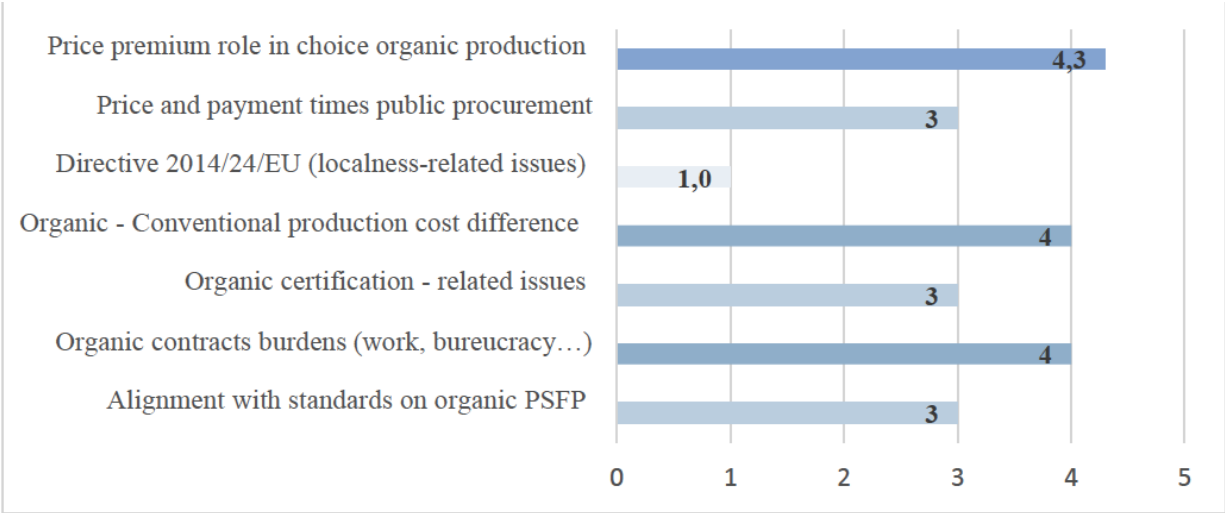


Source: Kraljievic, 2022

The questionnaire definition, the choice of respondents and the data collection procedures will be defined adopting a multistakeholders' approach similar to the one described in Scheme 5

An example of results for the Cilento Bio-district involvement in an Organic school meal programme:

Graph. 4 Barriers to Entry the Organic School Meal program in Cilento Organic District



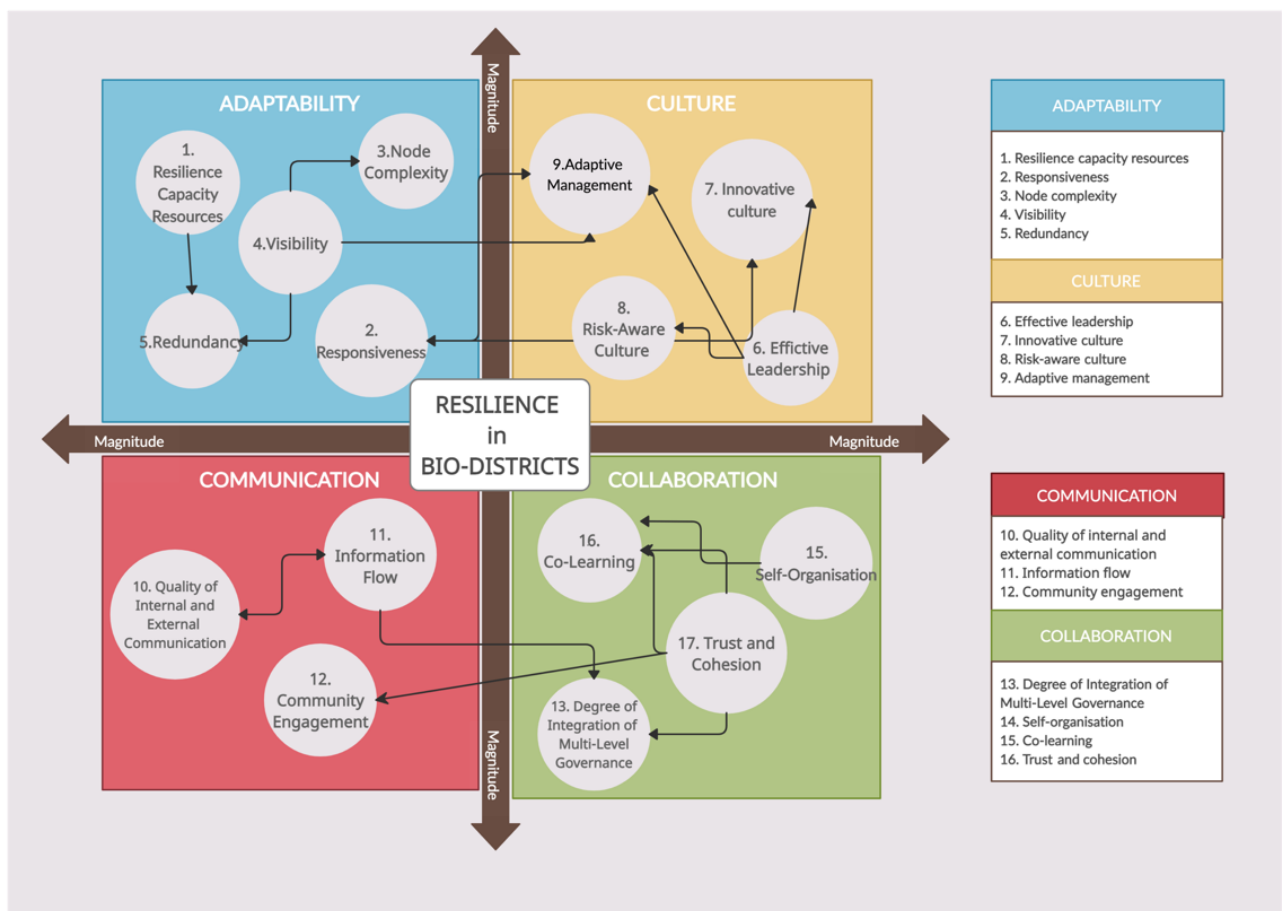
Source: Kraljievic, 2022

3. Monitoring the Organic districts resilience: the resilience factors-based model

There are several reasons for implementing the *Resilience Factors-Based model*. First, providing the local organic districts communities with a specific monitoring tool for improving bio-district's management practices and local policies in view of resilience framework. Second, integrating the organic districts monitoring tool to assess the factors driving and influencing resilience in organic districts. Third, by adopting a common advanced monitoring tool, the international organic districts' network will have a common framework to serve as point of reference to monitor the advancement of organic districts management and policies practices. Further developments of this research should consider the refinement of the analytical framework through the application of the model to different contexts; this will also provide a broader vision of different types of organic districts in relation to their resilience profile.

The *Resilience factors-based model* is represented by the following conceptual map (see figure).

Conceptual map of The Resilience Factors-Based Model



Source: Cicerchia F., Zanasi C., 2021

The conceptual map is composed of four different macro areas, representing respectively four different dimensions of resilience in organic districts: *Adaptability*, *Culture*, *Communication* and *Collaboration*. The four macro areas represent specific different dimensions of resilience, which have been mainly re-elaborated from the academic research by Stone j. and Rahimifard S. (2018). For each area, sixteen resilience categories have been selected. These sixteen categories have been mainly elaborated from four research papers: Stone and Rahimifard (2015 and 2018), as mentioned

before, Singh CS. et al. (2019) and Zhao G. et al. (2017). The categories selected by Stone and Rahimifard (2018) represent a review on past literature on resilience and agri-food supply chain. In their research paper, these categories have been divided into two main groups: some categories are grouped into the dimension of “intra-organizational resilience”, while others are grouped into the dimension of “intra-supply chain resilience”. Moreover, the authors make a distinction between “core resilience elements” and “support resilience elements”.

The four macro areas and the sixteen related resilience categories have been selected taking into account the nature of organic districts and their unique context. The criterion for which these categories have been selected is based mainly on the context of organic districts.

In the model, none of the macro areas or their resilience categories are more relevant than the others. Each macro area represents a specific aspect of the multi-dimensional topic of resilience; the resilience categories can be defined as determinant elements of macro areas, which taken together, give an overall framework of resilience in organic districts. As can be seen by the conceptual map, many categories are conceptually interconnected to each other in terms of conceptual correlation.

The questionnaire definition, the choice of respondents and the data collection procedures will be defined adopting a multistakeholders’ approach similar to the one described in Scheme 5

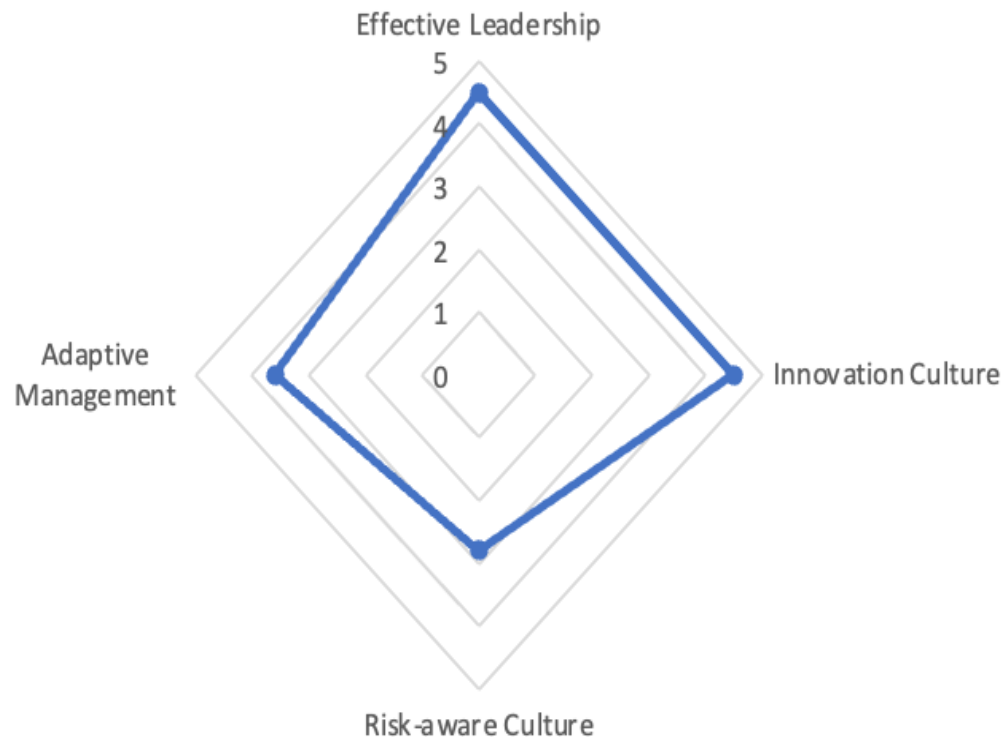
An example of results for the Cilento Bio-district involvement in an Organic school meal programme is shown in graphs 5-8.

Graph. 5 Adaptability average scores



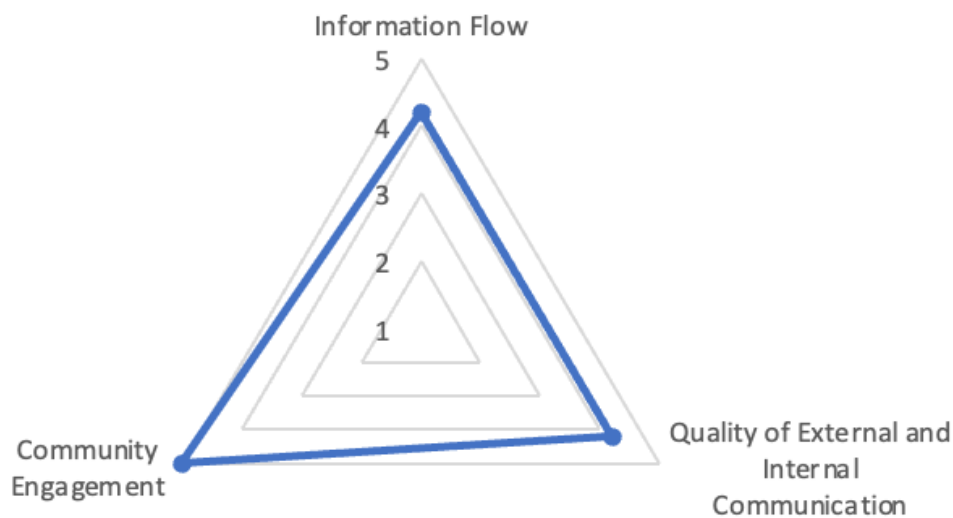
Source: Cicerchia F., Zanasi C., 2021

Graph. 6 Culture average scores



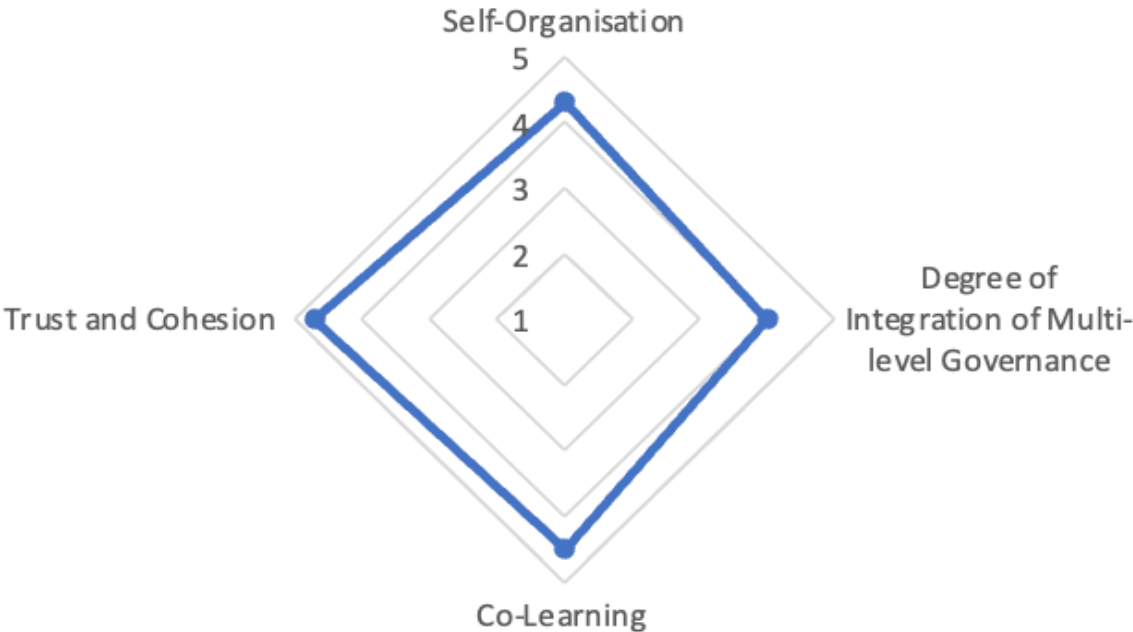
Source: Cicerchia F., Zanasi C., 2021

Graph. 7 Communication average scores



Source: Cicerchia F., Zanasi C., 2021

Graph. 8 Collaboration average scores



Source: Cicerchia F., Zanasi C., 2021

12. FORM D1.13EN: EXAMPLE OF CERTIFICATE

Example of an Organic district Certificate

Certificate N.

Date



Bio-Distretto Cilento is an Eco Region
since 2nd of January 2004

IN.N.E.R. Association
President
Signature



IN.N.E.R. Association
National Responsible
Signature

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ENCLOSURES

1. 2022 ORGANIC 3.0 LOCAL GOVERNMENTS DECLARATION



2022 IFOAM-Goesan

International Organic EXPO • Industry Fair

The future we want and the need for action now

We, the representatives of local governments in Asia and Europe, are gathered here in Goesan County, in commemoration of the 2022 IFOAM-Goesan International Organic Expo, to re-affirm the “Organic 3.0 Goesan Declaration”.

We, are here, once again, making the pledge to abide and to implement the six components of the Organic 3.0 Goesan Declaration and to unite and work together in mainstreaming organic agriculture in our respective countries.

The role of local governments is central in the transformation of the global food and farming systems. Sustainable food production and consumption are keys to increasing both human and ecological capacities and providing solutions to deal with major global challenges such as poverty, food and nutrition security and health, climate change and loss of biodiversity.

Facilitating regional and global partnerships such as the Asian Local Governments for Organic Agriculture (ALGOA) and the Global Alliance of Organic Districts (GAOD) are crucial in the scaling-up of practical solutions for other local governments to emulate.

The success of the Organic Districts initiated in Europe can be showcased in other countries in the world – a fine example of private-public governance where local governments enters into formal agreements with local stakeholders to promote the transition into local organic food systems.

In acknowledging the above, we hereby pledge our commitments as follows.

Ten Goals to Achieve

1. To promote the development of inclusive Local Organic Food Systems and Organic Districts by engaging the participation of all interested organizations and citizens to co-create thriving local economies;
2. To collect and disseminate research, best practices, mindsets, and values in Organic Districts facilitating the shift into healthy, sustainable, and inclusive food systems;

3. To support the development of sustainable and inclusive value chains, addressing all stakeholders in cross-cutting policies;
4. To prioritize green public procurement such as the provision of organic meals in kindergartens, schools, hospitals, military and elderly care centers;
5. To promote ecotourism that is environmentally, socially and culturally sustainable to link the values and ways of rural living to urban lifestyles;
6. To implement programs and policies that favor the sustainable management of the common goods such as water, land and air;
7. To advocate the “organic approach” in other sectors emphasizing on energy-saving, the use of renewable energy, recycling and waste reduction, and lower impact modes of transportation;
8. To achieve gender equality and facilitate the integration of young people in the decision-making processes as they are the key drivers of innovation and stewards of our future;
9. To implement education and communication programs aimed at promoting food and nutrition security, healthy lifestyles and quality of life;
10. To establish mutual cooperation among the local governments to promote the coordination of local policies and plans with regional, national and international policies to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Proclaimed on 16th October 2022, Goesan County, Republic of Korea

At the Official Closing Ceremony of the 2022 IFOAM-Goesan International Organic Expo

2. CONCEPT NOTE: ORGANIC SCHOOL MEALS

Organic School Meals and Public Procurement - “Leave no child behind” as an integrated part of the concrete actions for Organic Districts (Dr. Lilliana Stefanovic, Department of Organic Food Quality and Food Culture, University of Kassel. Dr. Shaikh Tanveer Hossain, Director, Policy & Strategy, IFOAM- Organics Asia and Jostein Hertwig, Executive Director GAOD)

Background

Too many children lack sufficient, healthy and nutritious food. Concrete actions are needed now. With what we all will bring of knowledge and experience from the organic sector enables us to provide an important contribution in giving every child during their school day sufficient, healthy, nutritious and safe food.

The Government of New Taipei City together with ALGOA and GAOD arranged the 1st international conference on organic school meals and public procurement from 17 – 19 June 2022. Discussions were held on the state of affairs at global level for children on healthy, nutritious and safe food.

Further discussion on the topic took place during the 5th Organic Asia Congress held 13th to 15 October 2022 in Goesan, South Korea. During this congress we launched the “International Committee on Organic School Meals and Public Procurement” with representatives from New Taipei City, South Korea, Japan, Tanzania, Argentina, Italy, France, Portugal and Sweden.

From the inputs from different countries, we have noticed the diversity of challenges ranging from:

- giving the children at least one nutritious meal a day
- malnutrition resulting in overweight and obesity
- safe food and the need to monitor the production chain from farm to school
- from well-organized governmental supported school meal programmes to examples more dependent on initiatives from each school with the support of parents.
- From high content of organic food to only some organic products provided occasionally-

Opportunities

In our work with the aim of giving every child during their school day sufficient, healthy, nutritious and safe food we should fully appreciate the potential that public procurement represents and together with that of favorable policies. Here, a summary of focus points.

- School meals are one of the most effective measures for giving children sufficient, healthy and nutritious food.
- For people and planet, more plant-based food is needed. Especially in plant-based food there is a risk for harmful substances such as from the use of herbicides, insecticides and pesticides in conventional agriculture. Thus, a shift to organic agriculture is needed.

- Public procurement represents a large share of the economy at a global scale. When it comes to food It is important to channel this into “buying power for organic products”.
- Both at the level of United Nations and in many regional and national policies there are strategies for a truly sustainable development and with food systems as a leverage. We should as a concerted action advocate for organic school meals to be included in these strategies.

Public procurement represents a large share of the economy. In OECD countries 12% of the GDP. In other parts of the world up to 2/3 of government spendings. Channeled into “buying power for organic products” this becomes an important leverage for the whole organic sector. It is a strategic tool and market transformer with impact both on the demand side and supply side.

Also, organic food should to the extent possible be sourced from local farms fully appreciating the positive impacts for local economy, social and cultural aspects.

When it comes to supporting policies, we may mention:

- For many countries of the world there is a recommendation to eat more plant-based food. In the conventional plant-based food production, there is in particular used pesticides, insecticides and herbicides. There are good arguments that we now must turn to organic production.
- United Nations SDG 12:7: “Promoting public procurement practices that are sustainable and include environmental, economic and social aspects”.
- European Commission: “Green Deal”, “Farm to Fork” with “Action plan for Organic Agriculture” and concrete actions on school meals and public procurement
- In Sweden for example the aim is 60% organic in public sector within 2030.

Our proposed actions and next steps to be taken.

With what we all will bring of knowledge and experience from the organic sector enables us to provide an important contribution in giving every child during their school day sufficient, healthy, nutritious and safe food.

Our platform is the four principles of organic agriculture; Health – Ecology – Fairness and Care together with the six components of the Organic 3.0 Goesan Declaration and taking a holistic and inclusive food system approach.

Our global partnership covers all aspects of organics from farm to table and with local and regional authorities, governance, research, a diverse range of education programmes, policies and advocacy work.

Based on the above platform and our global partnership are below some first ideas of what we may offer in our work with organic school meals.

- A leverage for increasing organic and local food in other sectors of the societies.
- Further the potential in giving support to our farmers facilitating access to market.
- Enhancing urban – rural relations.

- Support urban and sub urban agricultural policy programs as a supplement to local food and nutrition security.
- Invite an inclusive cocreative process at local level.
- Develop the understanding of the importance of education activities at the schools including such as school gardens/ organic sack gardening systems.
- Providing the opportunity to work with “Diet for a Green Planet” as our common concept.
- That the observations and results obtained may be used also in other segments of public procurement such as in kindergartens, hospitals, elderly homes and military and also in general in the private sector, in restaurants, hotels etc. (Out of Homes Meals).

Below a proposal for next steps to be taken.

1. **Prepare an overview globally** of existing initiatives of school meal programmes and related education programmes including school gardens/ organic sack gardening systems together with an overview of relevant supporting policies and publish a book/online presentation on “good practices”.
2. **Disseminate and share the examples** for the better understanding of the diversity of challenges and opportunities both locally but also at a global level.
3. Based on the above invite the creation and implementation of “**Pilot Projects**” in **all continents**. As a first step to take 3-5 schools/kindergartens from every continent and to be complemented by research in delivering on the five criteria of “Diet for a Green Planet”; tasty, nutritious food, from organic agriculture, local and in season, more plant -based and reduction of food waste. Also, to include issues of awareness by the children, motivation and feedback from parents.
4. **Share lessons learned** and invite a discussion from the “Pilot Projects”.
5. Develop **Guidelines and Recommendations** for the implementation of organic school meal programmes and related education programmes including school gardens/ organic sack gardening systems and proposed supporting policies.
6. **Scale out and scale up** to more schools in all continents based on Guidelines and Recommendations.
7. That the Guidelines and Recommendations developed may also be used in other segments of public procurement such as in kindergartens, hospitals, curative homes, elderly care and military and also in general in the private sector, in restaurants, hotels etc. (Out of Homes Meals).

3. CONCEPT NOTE: SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN ORGANIC DISTRICTS

(Raffaele Basile and Jostein Hertwig)

Introduction

In 2020 the EU adopted the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 under the heading: “Bringing nature back into our lives”. In fact, this represents a remarkable shift in our relation with nature. We take the liberty to cite from page 2 in the document from the EU Commission (Brussels, 20.5.2020 COM (2020) 380 final)

*“From the world’s great rainforests to small parks and gardens, from the blue whale to microscopic fungi, biodiversity is the extraordinary variety of life on Earth. We humans are part of, and fully dependent on, this web of life: it gives us the food we eat, filters the water we drink, and supplies the air we breathe. Nature is as important for our mental and physical wellbeing as it is for our society’s ability to cope with global change, health threats and disasters. **We need nature in our lives.**”*

In the 2020 IFOAM-Goesan International Organic EXPO in Goesan County, South Korea, in October 2022, a Chinese speaker shared with us the following wisdom:

“Please remember that the food we eat carries the spirit of the land”.

In our work with Organic Districts, we fully agree to the direction given by the European Commission and are thankful to our colleague from China in reminding us her wisdom.

A more aware tourism in the Organic District

Traveling is one of the greatest metaphors of existence, of human life and of every living being. Being minimally invasive in the landscape where you pass, interacting as much as possible with the local people, is the most sustainable and conscious way to get to know the places. The Organic Districts have the right tools so that the travelers do not end up being simple “tourists” in the invasive meaning that this word has acquired following mass phenomena managed in an unresponsive manner. The natural environment and the human presence can interact harmoniously in the Organic Districts.

Diluting tourist flows by conveying them to places that are not among the most popular, but that also know how to offer ample attractions at the level of territories and initiatives, is the winning tool of the Organic Districts. The offer of the latter must be carefully considered, in order to attract as many travelers as possible attentive to values such as active and non-invasive interaction with places, culture, traditions, the local economy. The Organic Districts can also aspire in the future to realize a sort of partnership with the major destinations of world tourism, where it began an intolerance towards tourism which subtracts instead of to add value. It’ll be possible relieving them from the unsustainable number of attendances.

Synergy between farms and tourism

In Organic Districts, the activities of farms can combine well with those of tourism. The type of approach to be implemented in the tourism sector in these innovative areas is precisely that of managing tourism together with other productive and commercial areas, in particular sustainable agriculture. The ingredients to maximize tourism activities must consist in a responsible and multifunctional way of doing things, with respect for the environment, a creative imagination and

a well-targeted organizational capacity. The innovative models of sustainable and attractive geographical areas - created by bodies such as Organic Districts can represent an innovative and effective starting point for creating more responsible and aware forms of tourism. Organic farming can be one of the best practices to maximize the positive effects of the mentioned multifunctional approach of the different activities of a territory. Local organic producers and local actors in the food supply chain can become an important tool, through excellence in food and excellent cuisine. It will also be important that farmers and tour operators can be connected in a structured and synergistic network with the other operators involved in the organic districts, also guaranteeing a good level of protection of the territory. Agriculture, thanks to the Bio-District approach, can and must improve the propensity and ability to carry out their business in close operational conjunction with other activities carried out at the company level. These activities will obviously be "tourism" proper, but also activities related to leisure time, gastronomy, health and wellness therapies. Farmers, and in particular organic farmers, must then try to act in synergy with other existing realities in the area, promoting cultural activities related to them. In this way, the promotion of local agricultural products (in particular organic ones) will be strictly connected to the promotion (and safeguard) of the territory and its specific features.

Expendability of cultural identity

The cultural "identity" that characterizes the territory of an Organic District can also become a sort of strong brand to be spent on the tourist market, attracting more aware, less intrusive and respectful travelers to the territory. Each Organic District can thus offer an offer of "qualified diversity" in terms of lifestyles, human relations, cultural heritage, food and gastronomic excellence, nature protection, etc. It is time to redirect tourist flows in a sustainable way towards marginal rural areas. That will be possible increasing their attractiveness through the multifunctional approach to agriculture, combined with other compatible activities. All this have to be realized maintaining the centrality of the territory and the host population. It will also be important that models based on a multifunctional approach to agriculture can have their best implementation especially in those rural areas neglected by standard tourist flows. Relevant are some excellent experiences made in some Organic Districts.