

EducEcoRegions Project

Foster the ecological transition of territories and communities through innovative training

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Output 1 - Report on Organic-Districts (or Eco-Regions or Bio-Districts) in Europe

O1-A2: Organic Districts Guidelines

Charter to support the development of new Organic Districts

by Bio-Distretto Cilento (IT), Agrobio (PT), Bergerie Nationale (FR), SEAE (ES)

Coordination by Bio-Distretto Cilento



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ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

ACRONYM	DEFINITION
AGROBIO	Associação Portuguesa de Agricultura Biológica (Portuguese Organic Agriculture Association)
AVET	Agricultural Vocational Education and Training
CILENTO BIO-DISTRICT	Bio-Distretto Cilento - Italy
CEZ/BN	Zootechnic and animal science training center/National sheep center of Rambouillet, Bergerie Nationale, France
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GAOD	Global Alliance for Organic Districts
GIAHS	Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems
IFOAM Organics International	International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements
IFOAM Organics Europe	International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements - Europe
IN.N.E.R.	International Network of Eco Regions
LSFS	Local and Sustainable Food System
OFSP	Organic Food System Program
SEAE	Sociedad Española de Agricultura Ecológica/ Agroecología (Spanish Society of Organic Agriculture/ Agroecology)
VET	Vocational Education and Training

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INTRODUCTION TO THE ORGANIC DISTRICT GUIDELINES

This work aims to be the compass capable of indicating the right course to follow for all the communities that have started or intend to initiate a real ecological transition of their territories, to led them to become Organic Districts.

The Organic-Districts, also defined as Eco-Regions or Bio-Districts, are territories where farmers, citizens, public authorities and other local actors realize a formal agreement aimed at the sustainable management of local resources, based on the principles and model of organic farming and on the agroecological best practices, in order to boost the economic and socio-cultural development of their community.

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.

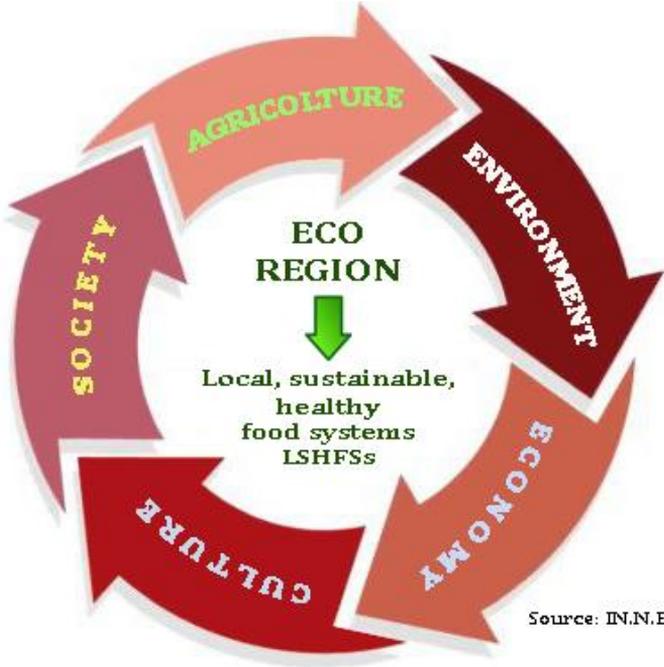
In 2021, thanks to the Erasmus+ EducEcoRegions Project, the Guidelines elaborated by IN.N.E.R. were redefined and validated at European level by the partner organizations of the project, supported by the Associate Partner IN.N.E.R. and the international experts of the Global Alliance for the Organic Districts (GAOD). Thus was developed the "Charter to support the development of new Organic Districts", based on the IN.N.E.R. Methodology, which is presented in this document.

CHARTER TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ORGANIC DISTRICTS

The Organic District adopts a territorial 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.



Organic districts are concrete examples of how “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.

Within the framework of the “European Green Deal” it is an 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.N.E.R. work in accordance with the recommendations and proposed actions from the European Commission and strategic documents 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>

A Tool Kit has been developed to facilitate the start-up and 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 District or Eco-Region).

So, it will be possible to coordinate the already existing Organic District 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 “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: info@ecoregions.eu).

FORM D1.1EN:

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE DOCUMENT “**TOOL KIT ORGANIC DISTRICT**”

The **Tool Kit Organic District IN.N.E.R.** 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 agriculture, the biodynamic methods 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, Eko-bölge, etc.

The beneficiaries of the “**TOOL KIT ORGANIC DISTRICT**” 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 “**TOOL KIT ORGANIC DISTRICT**” are reserved and held by IN.N.E.R..

The “**TOOL KIT ORGANIC DISTRICT**” is made of a cover and various forms that are identified by a recognition code.

FORM D1.2EN: PROCEDURES FOR START-UP OF ORGANIC DISTRICTS IN 10 STEPS

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

PROCEDURE 1: ESTABLISHMENT 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.
4. Preparation of the first draft of the “strategic document”, which contains also the guidelines for communication and education.
5. Resolutions of the bodies in the establishment of the Organic District
6. Establishment of the Organic District.
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 EXISTENCE ORGANIC DISTRICT

IN.N.E.R. association offers its assistance to whom have already established 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”, which contains also the guidelines for communication and education.
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.

INTRODUCTION

The Organic District (or Bio District or 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.
- 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 to this end. 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.

1. FIELD OF APPLICATION

The present disciplinary contains directions valid for all the Organic Districts (Bio Districts or 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.

2. USE OF THE BRAND

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



FEATURES

The brand Eco-Region has to 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.

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

PUBLIC AUTHORITIES: (regions, local administrations, park authorities, etc.) must be members of INN.E.R. and of an Eco-regions, pledging to:

- 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 fair trade groups).

Thanks to Eco-region, consumers can count on well-sourced 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 mutual 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 Eco-regions. The food industry and the agricultural equipment industry can join Eco-regions and benefit from the concentration of organic farms in the area, both for the supply of agricultural equipment and for the production of 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 multi-faceted 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 researches, studies, experimentation, training initiatives.

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

Tourist associations promote eco-tourism in Eco-regions 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.

3. 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.

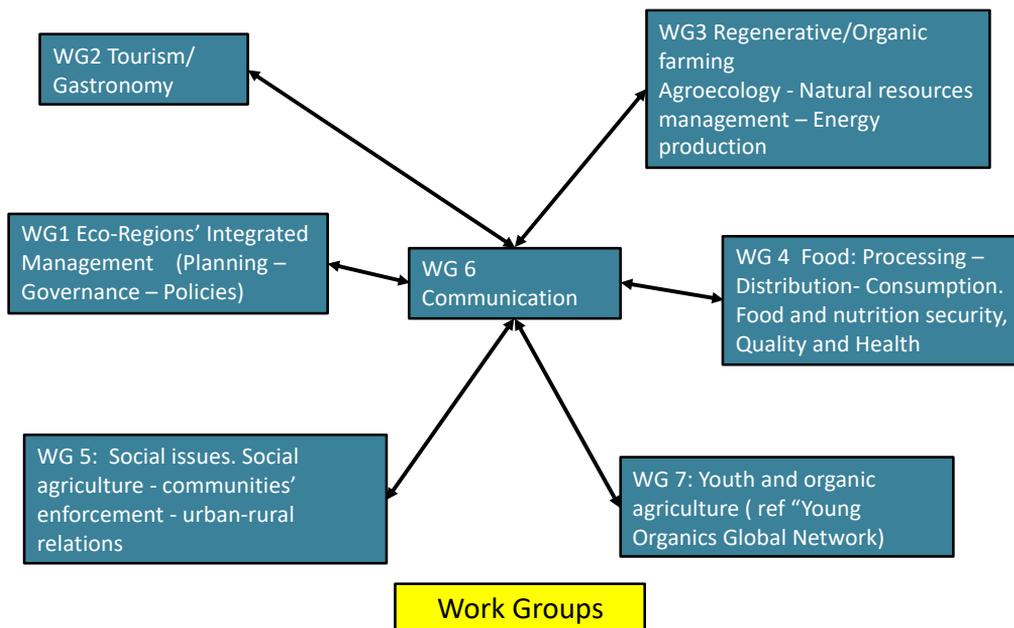
This allows the project to meet local needs, expectations, and interests, avoiding exclusions that could hinder the development of the initiative.

To set up and run a successful Organic District, experience shows that the following stages are required:

- creation of a promotion committee to organize public forums to share objectives and establish project roadmaps. The committee conducts an initial analysis of the area's potential and problems, leading to the drafting of a programmatic document;
- once interest in setting up an Organic District has been verified, territorial actors willing to support the process (public authorities, producer associations, etc.) are identified and progressively involved in the project. Depending on the actors involved, the perimeter of the Organic District is then defined;
- the participation of public authorities in the Organic District's project and coordination activities should be done through official channels. All levels of local government should preferably be involved (municipalities, provinces, regions, park authorities);

- the Organic District’s promotion Committee then sets up an agreed program of activities to be carried out using existing resources (public and private) and through a communication strategy to find other resources and establish partnerships with local and external actors;
- local social farming associations and cooperatives are identified to provide management services for Organic District’s activities (marketing, promotion, logistics, event management, etc).
- work groups can be set up to facilitate and support concrete actions both at the single Organic District level and between Organic Districts. Different topics will be discussed, and actions taken, according to the Work Groups Structure (Scheme 1) and different types of Actions defining a matrix described in scheme 2. According to each Organic District features (size, resources available, prevailing activities) the different Work Groups can be merged or further detailed.

Scheme 1) Organic Districts Work Groups Description



Scheme 2 WGs/Activities Matrix

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

Analytical description of the Work Groups Topics

WG 1: Eco-Regions' Integrated Management, Planning, Governance and Policies

Objectives of the Work Group: Support the Eco-Regions 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 Eco-Regions vision, organization structure, planning strategies, performance monitoring, private and public policies.

WG 2: Tourism - Gastronomy

Objectives of the Work Group: Support the Eco-Regions 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 Eco-Regions 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 Eco-Regions 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 Eco-Regions 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 Eco-Regions 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 Eco-Regions 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 - urban-rural relations

Objectives of the Work Group: Support the Eco-Regions 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, Eco-Regions 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 up for developing 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 Eco-Regions 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 Eco-Regions not only supporting the management but increasing the awareness and pride of being part of an Eco-Regions. This plays an important role in increasing trust, collaboration and commitment within and Between the Eco-Regions 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.

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 start up of a new Organic District / Bio District / 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)

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 District / Eco-Region by the International Network of Bio districts (IN.N.E.R) including a Tool Kit - see enclosed.
- The Organic District / Bio District / Eco-Region Model 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 District / Eco-Region
- Forming the group of parties to sign the Organic District / Bio District / Eco-Region Agreement – the Founding Members.

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

-

.....

(Place and date)

Surname, Name

.....

Organisation (homepage)

.....

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 EU's 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

FORM D1.8EN: CONSTITUTION

The formal constitution of an Organic District can take place in three ways:

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 Eco-Region 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 DISTRICT / ECO REGION

MODEL AGREEMENT

(EU Version)

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

O. Introduction

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

The name of the Organic District / Bio district / Eco Region is

.....

Located in

.....

- ii. Term of Agreement

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

- iii. Signing parties

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

.....

The Organic District / Bio district / 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 district / Eco Region. Also individuals may be Member of a Organic District / Bio district / 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 EUs 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 a Organic District / Bio district / 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 district / 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 district / 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 district / Eco Region:

(to be proposed by each one)

4. Membership fee

(to be proposed by each one)

5. Bodies of the Organic District / Bio district / Eco Region

The Organic District / Bio district / Eco Region consists of its Members. It is further the recommendation that the following bodies may be in place:

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

6. General Assembly

All the member of the Organic District / Bio district / 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 number of members not less than 3 and not more than 9, 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 district / Eco Region.

10. Coordinator

The Coordinator is selected and assigned by the Steering Committee, as person or organisation 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.)

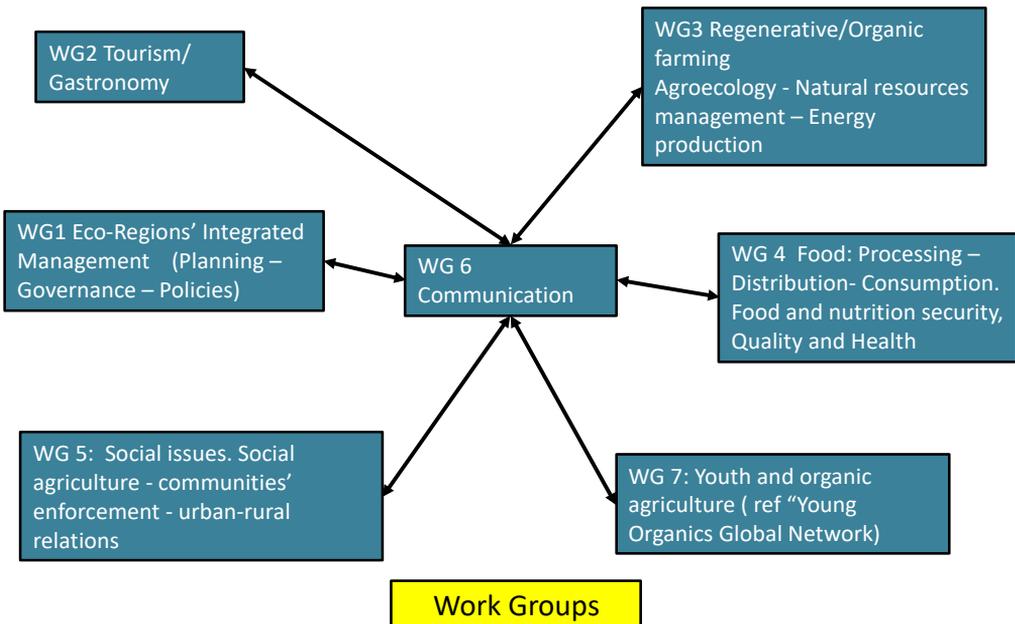
The remuneration of the Coordinator to be decided locally.

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 district / Eco Region will also facilitate sharing between us both at European and global level.

Below is a figure (ref. Cesare Zanasi) giving an overview 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.



12. Appointment of members and coordinators of the Working Groups

Members of the Organic District / Bio district / 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 is such as 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 district / Eco Region. The term is 3 years.

15. Auditor(s)

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

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

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

17. IN.N.E.R. Membership

The Organic District / Bio district / Eco Region becomes a member of The International Network of Eco Regions (IN.N.E.R.), the umbrella organization for Organic District / Bio district / 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 district / 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 district / 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 district / Eco Region
- 3. Procedures and templates for start-up of Organic District / Bio district / Eco Region in 10 steps
- 4. Procedures and templates for the management of an already existing Organic District/ Bio district / Eco Region in 7 steps
- 5. Monitoring Tool for the evaluation of Organic District / Bio district / 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

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 district / 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 district / Eco Region
- 1.2 Why a strategic plan for the Organic District / Bio district / Eco Region
- 1.3 The Strategic Plan

2. THE TERRITORY

3. A FUTURE'S VISION

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

- 3.5 list of priority actions, with the different levels of governance
- 3.6 overview of the expected benefits from the implementation of the strategic plan

4. THE PRODUCTION

- 4.1 the implementation paths
- 4.2 protocol of intent

FORM D1.10EN: TRAINING

Training is delivered through the “EDU-INNER” Platform (<https://biodistretto.net/edu-inner/>) 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- 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.

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.

1. 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.

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2. 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.

FORM D1.11EN: COMMUNICATION

Collect, organize and distribute all the relevant information related to the Eco-Regions/Organic Districts/Bio-Districts 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 Eco-Regions.

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

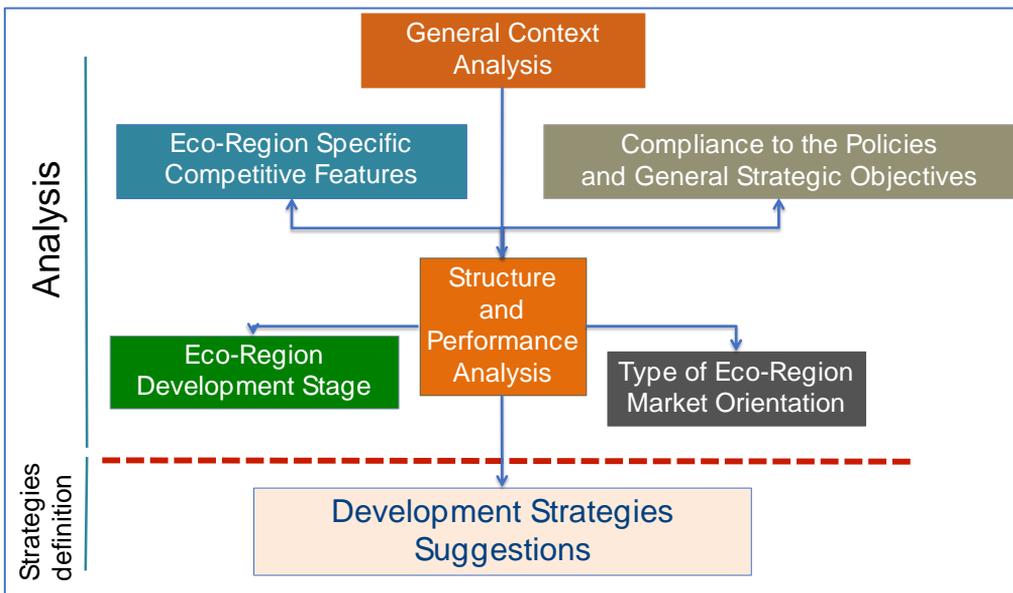
FORM D1.12EN: ASSESSMENT

A monitoring tool has been developed and tested for the analyses of the Eco-Regions/Organic Districts/Bio-Districts 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 Eco-Region;
3. a *Development stage* module;
4. a *Competitive features* module;
5. a *Market orientation* module.

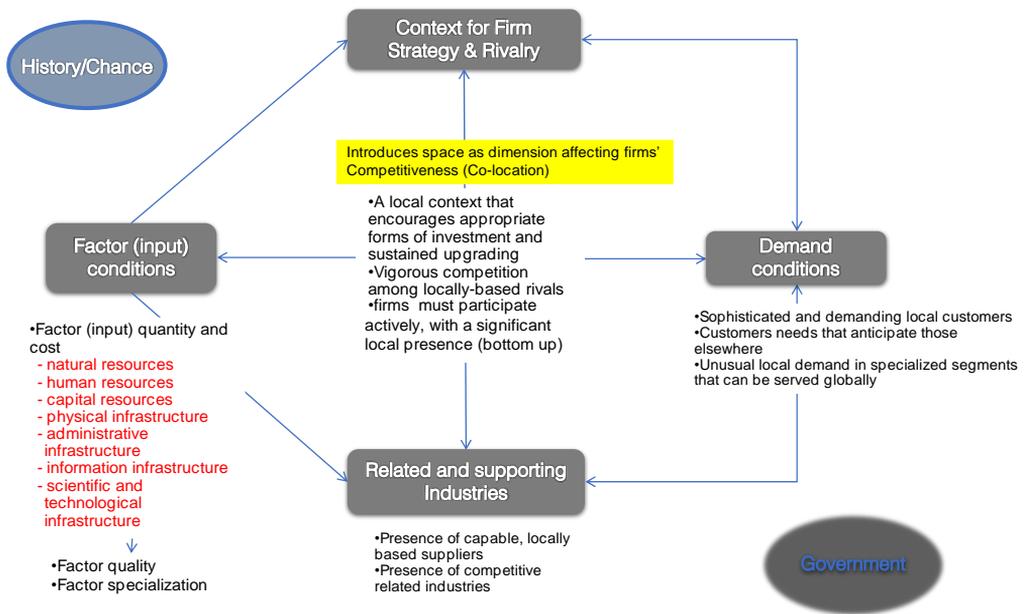
The Monitoring tool Modules and Logical Framework



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 an 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.

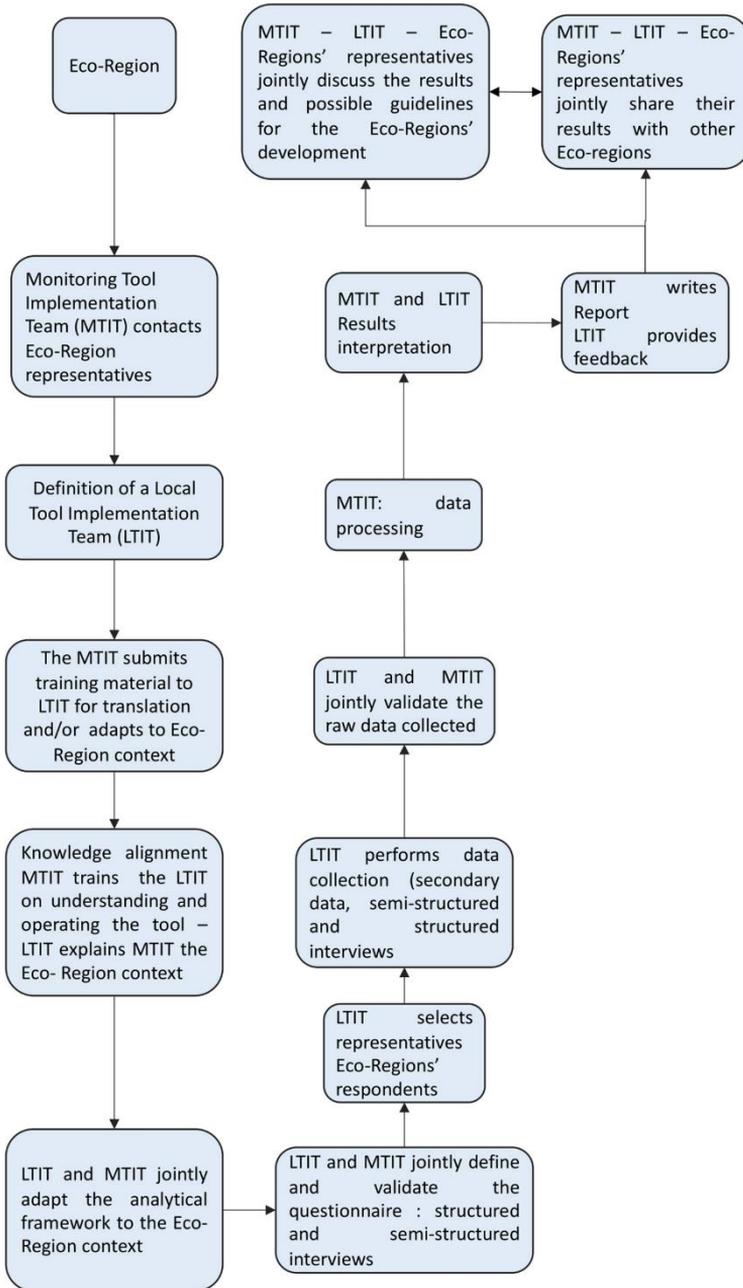


These information will provide a knowledge base which is adopted to define the results of the other modules and finally to develop suggestions to support the Eco-Regions' development strategies.

A mustistakeholder, participative approach is adopted in order to

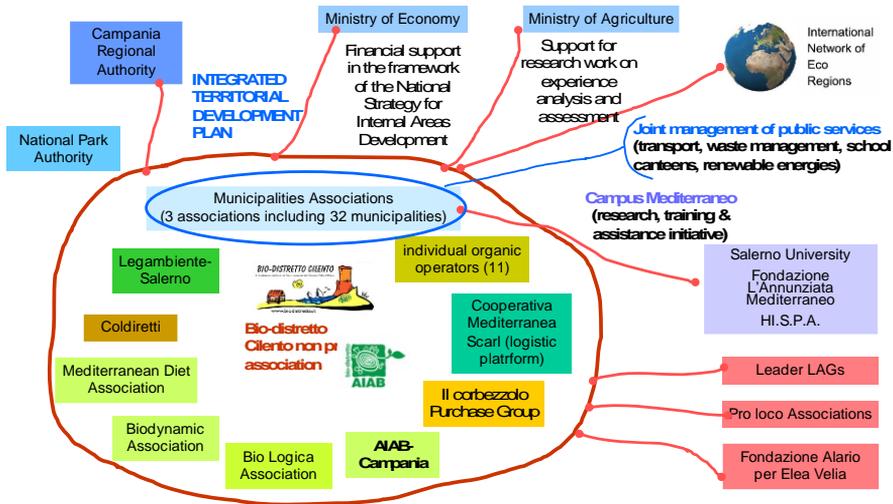
- tailor the depth and breadth of the monitoring tool analysis to the different Eco-Regions needs and contexts
- a central role is played by the Monitoring Tool Implementation Team which will be involved in all the different stages of the analysis implementation up to the definition of the report. The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

Eco-Regions' Implementation Activity Action Map

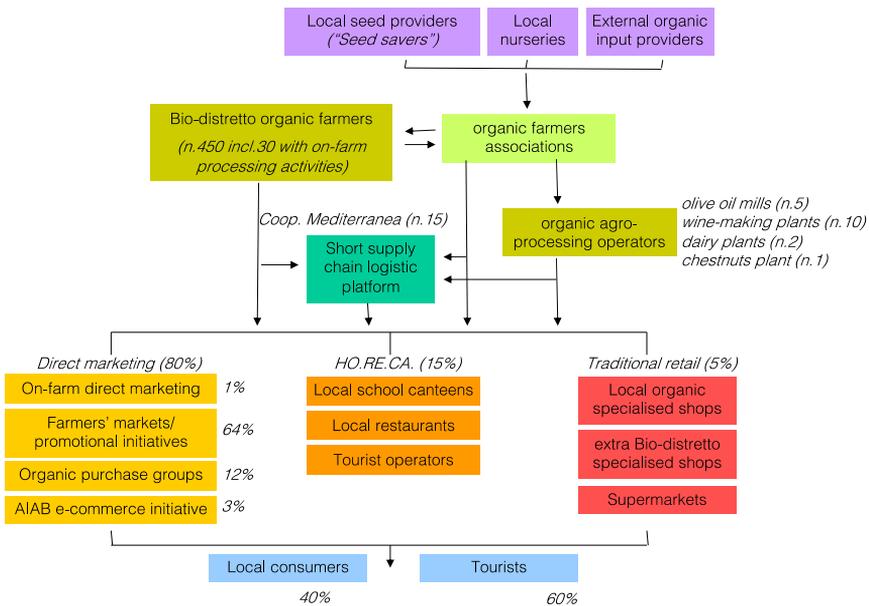


Source: Zanasi C., Basile S., Paoletti F., Pugliese, P., 2020

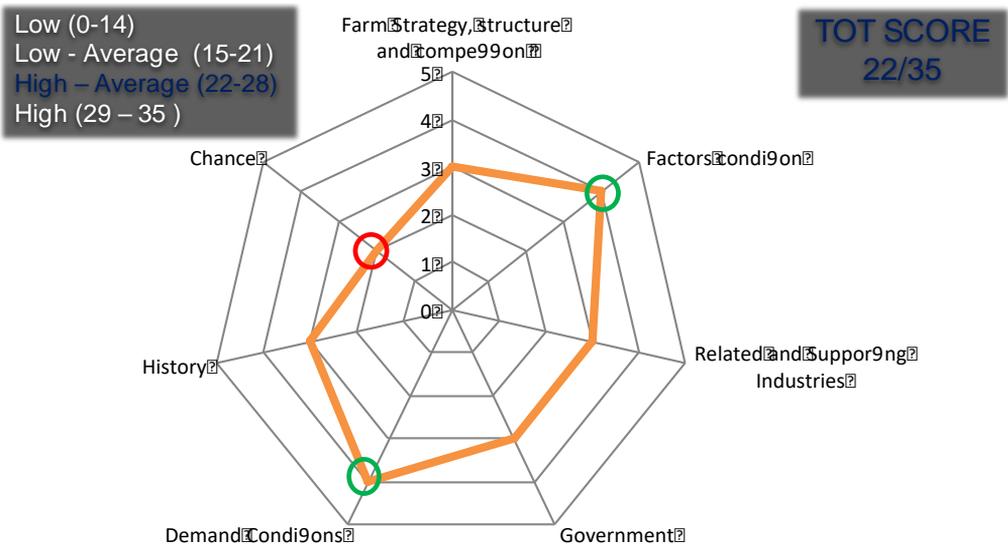
An example of the possible results of the monitoring tool is provided with reference to a first analysis of the Cilento Eco-Region in carried (Pugliese, P., Antonelli, A., Rota, C., Zanasi, C., and Basile, S., 2016).



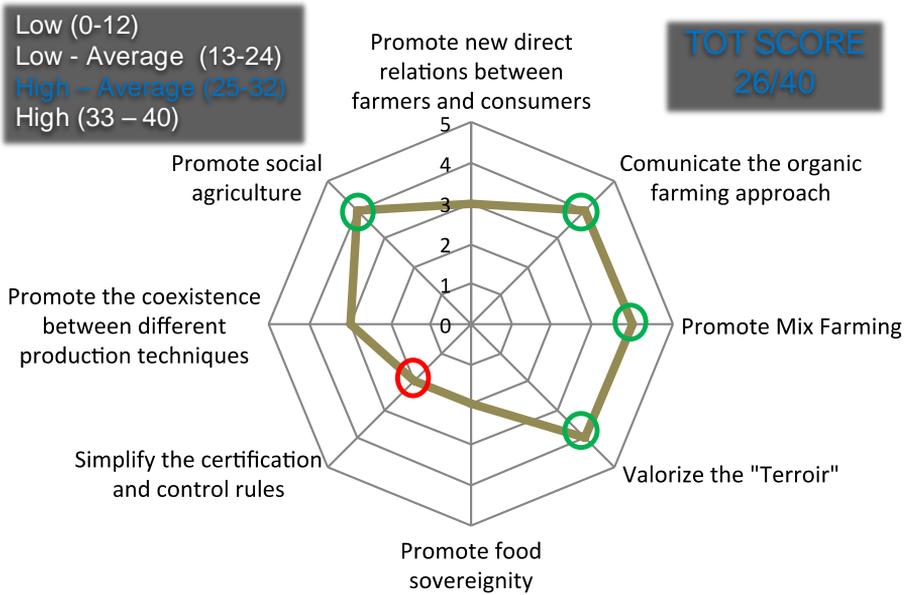
Eco-Region Context - Supply Chain Structure



Graph. 1 Eco-Region competitive features – performances



Graph. 2 Eco-Region Compliance to criteria



Graph. 3 Eco Regions Development Stage

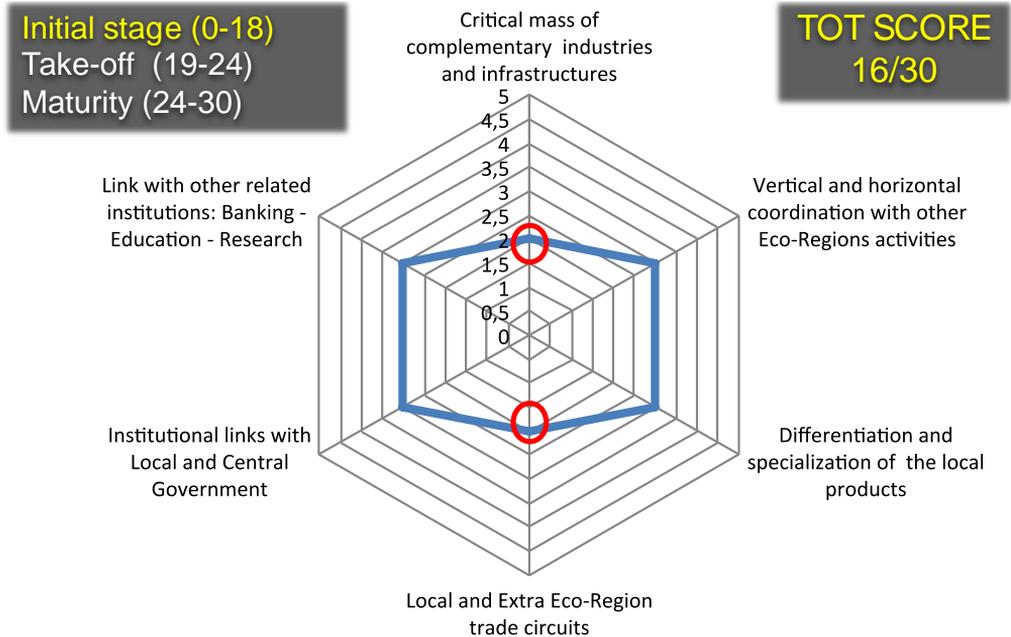


Table 1 Present and potentially most efficient market orientation of the Eco-Region

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

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 |
|---|

FORM D1.13EN: EXAMPLE OF CERTIFICATE FOR PORTUGAL

<p>IN.N.E.R</p> <p>International Network of Eco Regions  Rede Internacional de Bio Regiões</p>		
<h1>IDANHA-A-NOVA</h1> <h2>Bio-Região</h2> <p>from/desde</p> <h3>20/02/2018</h3>		
<p>IN.N.E.R. ASSOCIATION Roma-Italia</p> <p>Salvatore Basile</p>	<p>IDANHA-A-NOVA Bio-Região  Rede Internacional de Bio Regiões</p>	<p>IN.N.E.R. PORTUGAL</p> <p>Custódio De Sousa Oliveira</p>

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