

IFOAM ORGANICS EUROPE

Organic policy using the European Union as an example

.....

Transforming territories: The approach of Organic Districts as living laboratories for inclusive sustainable food systems

Virtual side event 24th April 2023

The Green Deal, the Farm to Fork (F2F), and the Biodiversity strategies

Published in May 2020, the F2F is meant to lead a global transition towards competitive sustainability from farm to fork. It consists of 27 actions.

4 aspirational targets in F2F by 2030:



- Reaching 25% of agricultural land under organic farming by 2030



- A reduction by 50% of the use and risk of chemical pesticides and the use of more hazardous pesticides by 50% by 2030



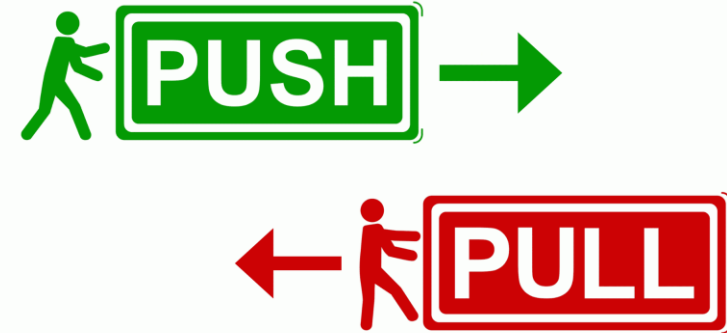
- A reduction of nutrient losses by at least 50% while ensuring that there is no deterioration in soil fertility. This will reduce the use of fertilisers by at least 20% by 2030.



- A reduction by 50% of the sales of antimicrobials for farmed animals and in aquaculture by 2030



A new European Organic Action Plan



Published in March 2021, the action plan includes 23 actions along 3 axes:

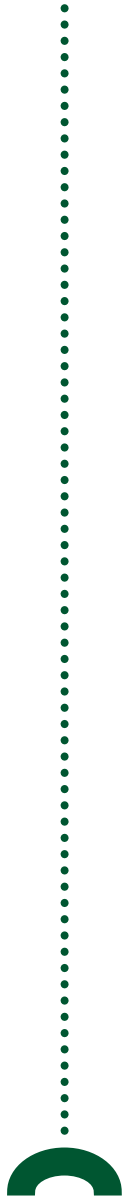
- Axis 1: Organic food and products for all: **stimulate demand and ensure consumer trust**
- Axis 2: On the way to 2030: **stimulating conversion and reinforcing the entire value chain**
- Axis 3: Leading by example: **improving the contribution of organic farmers to sustainability**

Through Action 14, ***“the Commission will, starting in 2023 [...] encourage Member States to support the development and the implementation of ‘Bio districts’.”***

According to the OAP, *“Organic production can help stimulate new business models. ‘Bio districts’ have proven successful in integrating organic farming and other local activities to enhance tourist appeal also in areas that are off the mainstream tourist track. 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 sociocultural potential of the territory. Each ‘Bio district’ includes lifestyle, nutrition, human relations and nature considerations. This results in local agricultural production that is appreciated by consumers and hence has a higher market value.”*

In summary

- EU and national policies increasingly recognise that the development of organic farming is **the best way to achieve a transition to agroecology and more sustainable food systems**, and to incentivise conventional farmers to make their farming practices more sustainable.
- **Organic farming is an effective public policy tool** to reach environmental policy objectives, to better remunerate farmers and to revitalize rural areas.
- The use of organic farming in this transformative process is smart and reasonable: the organic system approach has **proven benefits** for farmers and society, it protects the **ecosystem services** needed for reaching EU Farm to Fork and Biodiversity targets, it is defined and **regulated** at EU level, **well-known** by consumers and Member States, and stakeholders can make full use of such a **well-established and dynamic movement** to make this transition to sustainable food systems a reality.
- The potential of organic farming to revitalize rural areas through **innovative territorial approaches like Bio districts** is increasingly recognized and already acknowledged in the European Commission's **long-term vision for rural areas**.





Reviewing scientific evidence of organic food consumption impacts on nutrition, health and sustainability

Denis Lairon, PhD, Emeritus research director at INSERM, French National Institute of Health and Medical Research, Marseille.

A **review** based on data published in scientific journals from:

- The French **BioNutrinet study**, coord. Emmanuelle Kesse-Guyot (EREN): with the prospective **NutriNet-Santé cohort**, **170 000 adults**, **2009 → now**:
Records of food consumption, socio-economics, life-style,... & anthropometrics, health events; blood and urine samples (**20 000**). Plus other databases.
- Other international **cohort surveys or clinical trials** (Germany, EU, USA, ...)

Organic food consumption & impacts: 2022 Conclusions (1)



and others

Regular consumers of organic products exhibit:

- specific socio-demographic characteristics (higher **education** level, more physical activity, less smoking; less low income)
- with a healthier dietary pattern (**more plant food-based**) of better nutritional quality better fitting food-based and nutritional guidelines
- they consume much less foods contaminated by **chemical pesticides** (-80%), and have significantly less pesticide residues (OP, Pyr) in urine (-40 to -90%)

- *after adjustments for confounders,* they are markedly less **overweight and obese** (men & women: -20%, -31%)

and have a significantly reduced probability of **cardiovascular risk** (MetS: -31%), **type 2 diabetes** (-24%, -35%) and **cancers** (mean: -25%, with -34% for postmenopausal breast cancer & up to -80% for lymphomas).

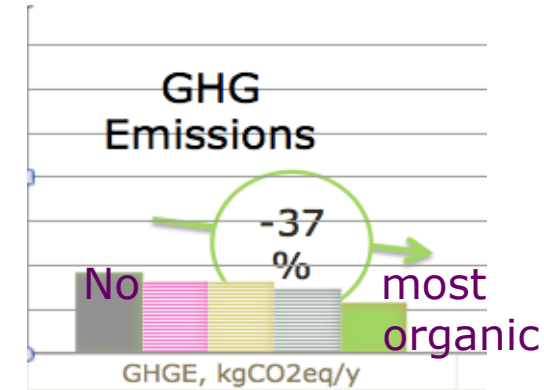
- **Reduced health risks** can be mostly explained by the reduced exposure to food chem. pesticide residues mixes (type 2 diabetes, postmenopausal breast cancer)

Organic food consumption & impacts: 2022 Conclusions (2)

Regular consumers of organic products (70% of foods) show:



a plant-based **dietary pattern** with significantly **less impacts** for its production on natural resources (**agr. land –23%**, **energy –25%**, and **GHGe –37%**).



- Scientific evidence shows that **we need to adopt a plant-based diet for both human and planet healths**, ... but its potential beneficial impacts can be attained only by **producing/consuming** chemical pesticide-free **organic foods**.

Recommended by new French dietary guidelines (PNNS4, 2019)

Indeed, organic food consumers show a better compliance with the sustainable diets definition (cf. FAO definition, 2010) and the UN sustainable food systems & One Health concepts.

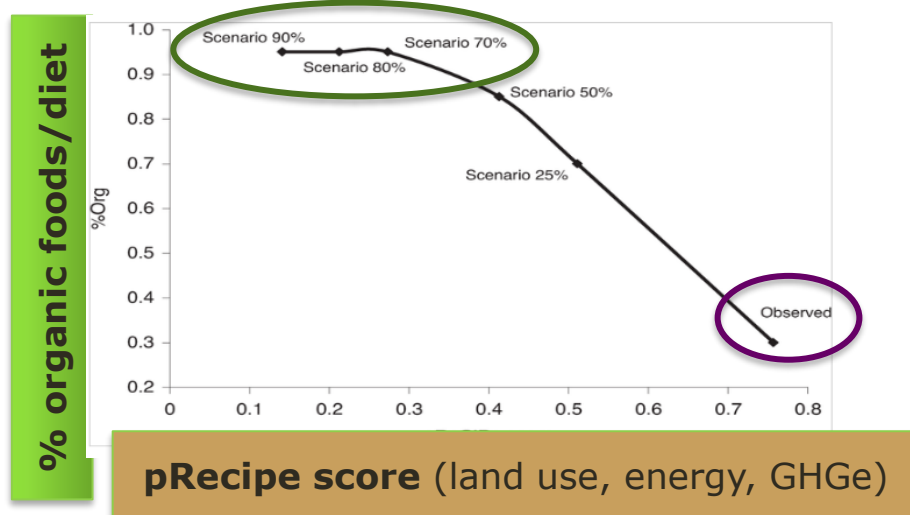


From the UN concept (« One health ») for humans and the planet to real life (3)



- Using a SDI with 7 indicators (incl. most organic foods, nutrition, purchase cost and reduced impacts), **adopting at present the most sustainable diet in France** vs. the least one is associated after 3-4 yrs:
 - with a reduction in the risk of **overweight** (-50%) and **obesity** (- 4 fold)
 - with a reduction in the risk of **cancers** (-39%) et **± cardio-vascular diseases**.
- **Scenarios showed that progressive increases in diet sustainability (incl. organic foods) can reduce impacts on the planet (agric. land, , energy, GES) from 28% to 86%.**

Seconda et al., Nature Food, 2021



Humans fitting Planet ... is possible !

Organic districts can be an efficient tool

Science: Plans for future monitoring of community impacts

Carola Strassner

FQH – International Research Association for Organic Food Quality and Health

www.fqhresearch.org

strassner@fh-muenster.de

www.insum.eu

Indicators for assessment of health effects of consumption of sustainable, organic school meals in Ecoregions (INSUM)



INSUM

- 2 year programme
- funded by Ekhagastiftelsen
- Management group: Susanne Bügel, University of Copenhagen; Dominika Srednicka-Tober, Warsaw University of Life Sciences and Carola Strassner, Münster University of Applied Sciences



Aims of the INSUM project

- To systematically review available research results and biomarkers/indicators used to study the health impact of organic vs. non-organic foods/diet and environment
- To create a strong, multidisciplinary network of experts covering fields such as child nutrition and health, organic and sustainable food and health, psycho-social research areas, various areas of biomarkers, i.e. microbiome and the different omics techniques.
- To reach consensus on the best markers for future monitoring and research on the societal and mental as well as the somatic health effects of dietary transitions towards more sustainable and organic diets.
- Based on the above, to develop publications with guidelines to be used worldwide

Conference Report

Identifying Future Study Designs for Mental Health and Social Wellbeing Associated with Diets of a Cohort Living in Eco-Regions: Findings from the INSUM Expert Workshop

Friederike Elsner ^{1,*}, Lea Ellen Matthiessen ^{2,*}, Dominika Średnicka-Tober ³, Wolfgang Marx ⁴, Adrienne O'Neil ⁴, Ailsa A. Welch ⁵, Richard Peter Hayhoe ⁶, Suzanne Higgs ⁷, Marja van Vliet ⁸, Ephimia Morpew-Lu ⁹, Renata Kazimierzczak ³, Rita Góralska-Walczak ³, Klaudia Kopczyńska ³, Thea Steenbuch Krabbe Bruun ², Beatriz Philippi Rosane ², Susanne Gjedsted Bügel ² and Carola Strassner ¹

¹ Department of Food, Nutrition, Facilities, FH Münster University of Applied Sciences, 48149 Muenster, Germany

² Department of Nutrition, Exercise and Sports, University of Copenhagen, 1958 Frederiksberg, Denmark

³ Department of Functional and Organic Food, Institute of Human Nutrition Sciences, Warsaw University of Life Sciences, 02-776 Warsaw, Poland

⁴ Food & Mood Centre, IMPACT—The Institute for Mental and Physical Health and Clinical Translation, School of Medicine, Barwon Health, Deakin University, Geelong, VIC 3220, Australia

⁵ Norwich Medical School, University of East Anglia, Norfolk NR4 7TJ, UK

⁶ School of Allied Health, Faculty of Health, Education, Medicine and Social Care, Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmsford CM1 1SQ, UK

⁷ School of Psychology, University of Birmingham, Birmingham B15 2TT, UK

⁸ Institute for Positive Health, 3521 AL Utrecht, The Netherlands

⁹ The Center for Nutritional Psychology, San Jose, CA 95129, USA

* Correspondence: friederike.elsner@fh-muenster.de (F.E.); lem@nexs.ku.dk (L.E.M.); Tel.: +49-251-836-401 (F.E.)

† These authors contributed equally to this work and shared first authorship.



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Citation: Elsner, F.; Matthiessen, L.E.; Średnicka-Tober, D.; Marx, W.; O'Neil, A.; Welch, A.A.; Hayhoe, R.P.; Higgs, S.; van Vliet, M.; Morpew-Lu,

Abstract: Diets influence our mental health and social wellbeing (MHSW) in multiple ways. A rising community concept, Eco-Regions, has gained interest. The research project "Indicators for



Plans for monitoring community impacts

- Through all the previous: to develop a strong basis for a multi-centre Horizon Europe project about dietary transition, consumption of organic and sustainable food, health and wellbeing of children and adults in ecoregions

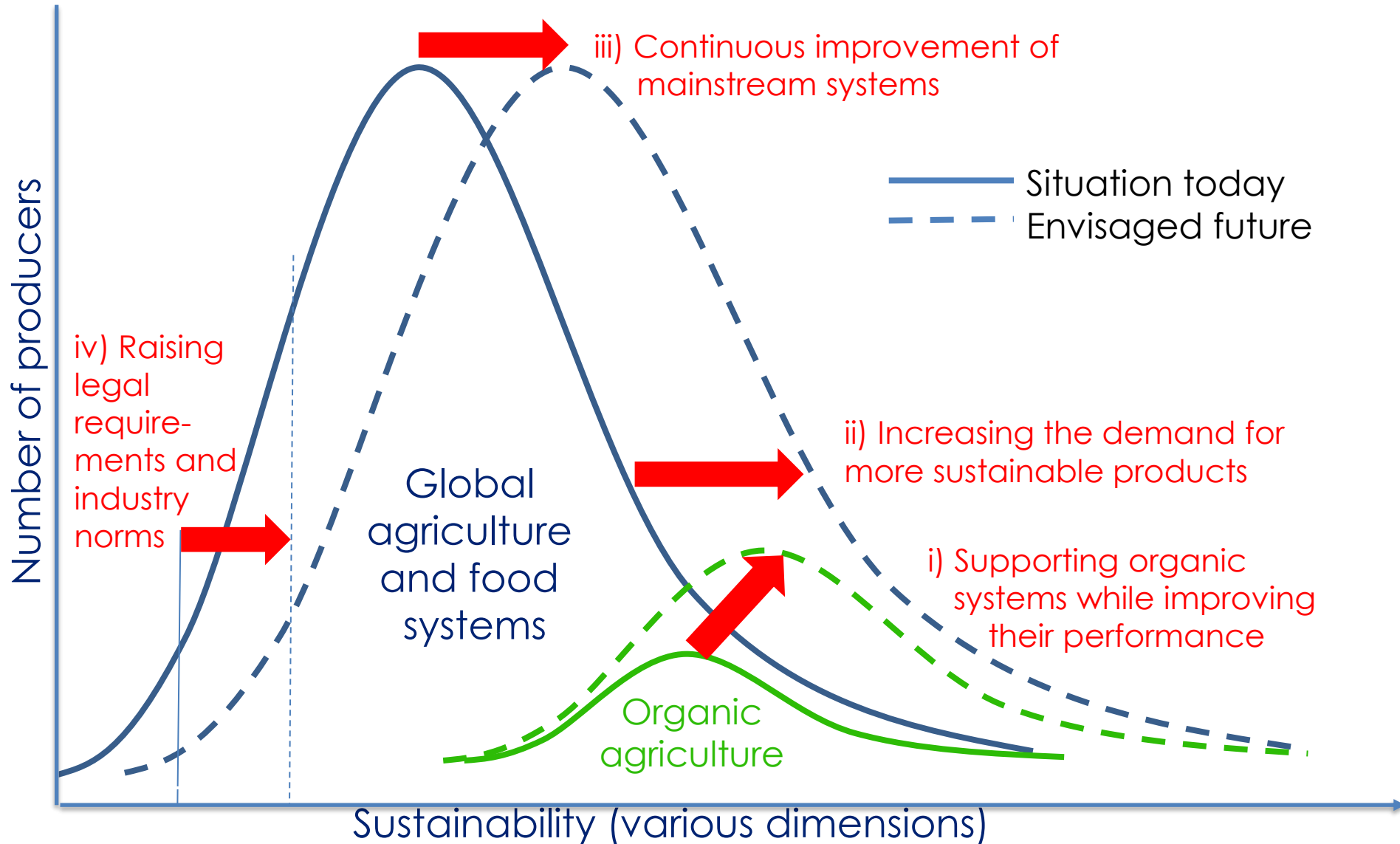
**4th Global Conference of the One Planet network's Sustainable
Food Systems Programme
THE TRANSFORMATION WE NEED**

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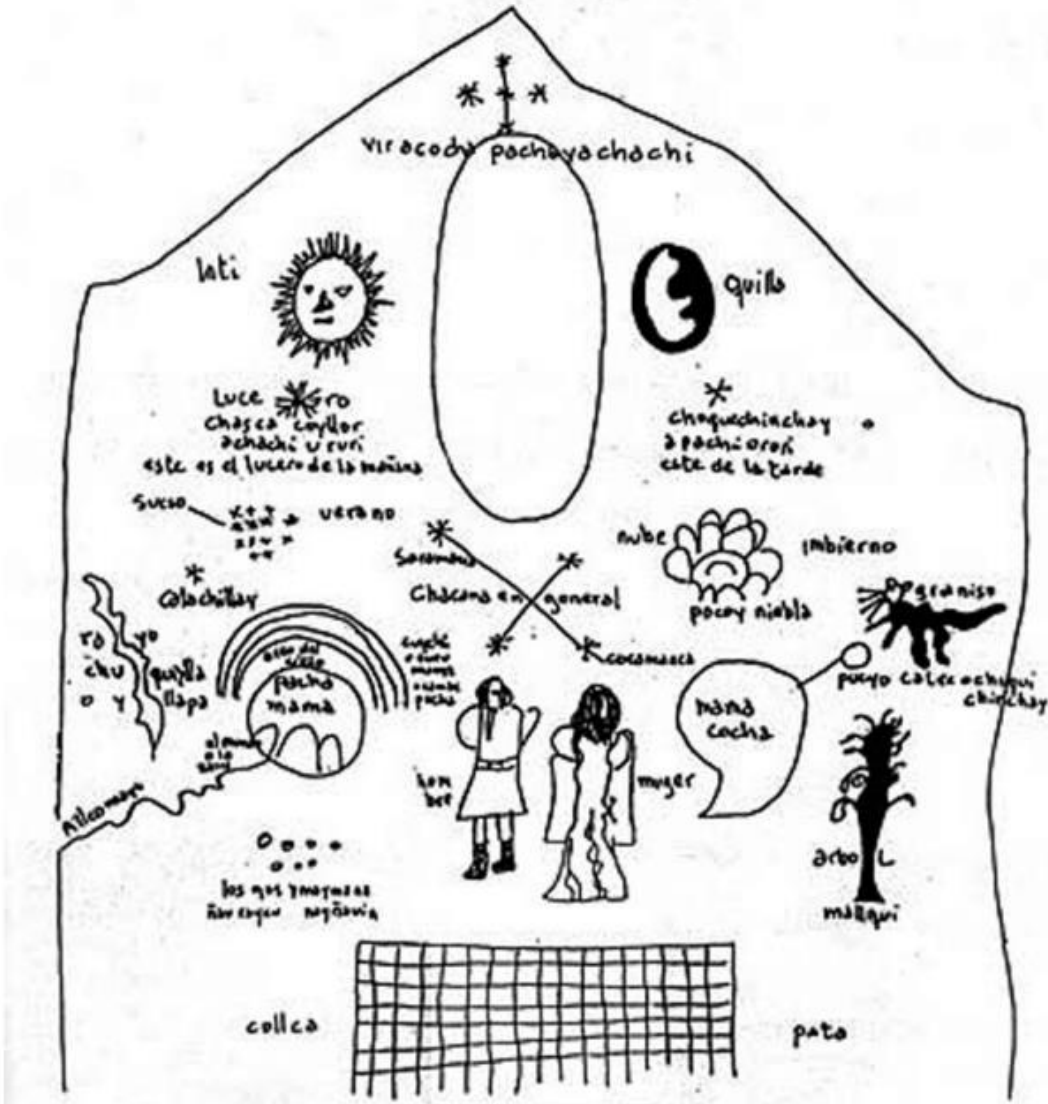
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Patricia Flores
Global Academy Manager
IFOAM Organics International


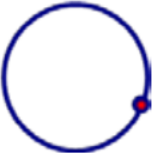


ORGANIC 3.0



BIOCULTURAL TERRITORIES



Source: Cabrera, G. (2012)

 <p>I-in-me</p>	<p>1 Downloading: Talking nice</p>	<p>Speaking from what <u>they</u> want to hear Polite routines/empty phrases <i>Autistic system</i> (not saying what you think)</p>
 <p>I-in-it</p>	<p>2 Debate: Talking tough</p>	<p>Speaking from what <u>I</u> think Diverging views: I <i>am</i> my point of view <i>Adaptive system</i> (saying what you think)</p>
 <p>I-in-thou</p>	<p>3 Dialogue: Reflective inquiry</p>	<p>Speaking from seeing myself as part of the whole From defending to inquiry of viewpoints <i>Self reflective system</i> (seeing yourself/collective)</p>
 <p>I-in-now</p>	<p>4 Presencing: Generative flow</p>	<p>Speaking from what is moving through Silence, Presencing the future flow. Collective creativity. <i>Generative system</i> (authentic self)</p>

“Food as a medium for healing the planet and people”

THANK YOU

p.flores@ifoam.bio





Transforming territories: the approach of Organic Districts as living laboratories for inclusive, sustainable, food systems

ORGANIC DISTRICTS: WHAT ARE THEY?



Salvatore Basile

President of IN.N.E.R. – International Network of Eco Regions
Co-President of GAOD – Global Alliance of Organic Districts



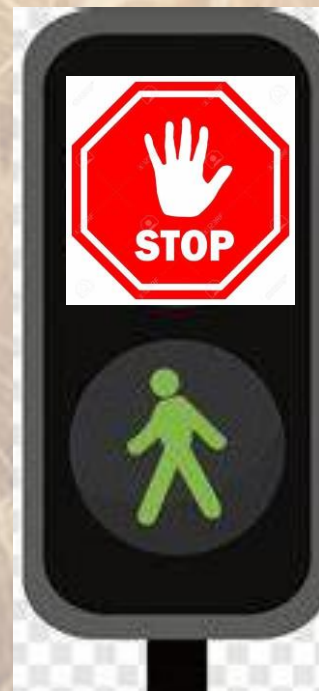
The **Organic-Districts** (also called Bio/Organic Districts or Bio/Eco-Regions) are **living territorial laboratories** where the whole communities (farmers, consumers, public authorities, touristic operators, reserchers, students and other local actors, representatives of civil society, environmentalists, animal rights activists, vulnerable groups, youths, women, etc.) realize a **pact**, aimed at the sustainable management of local resources and at the **local sustainable food systems development**, on the basis of the **Agroecology best practices** and of the IFOAM **principles of organic agriculture** (Health, Ecology, Fairness, Care).

General Assembly of an Organic District



Multi-stakeholders' approach

Territorial Ri(e)volution



- Environmental and social degradation
- Loss of democracy
- deterioration of human relations

- Territorial eco-transition
- New human relations
- inclusivity
- Democratic governance

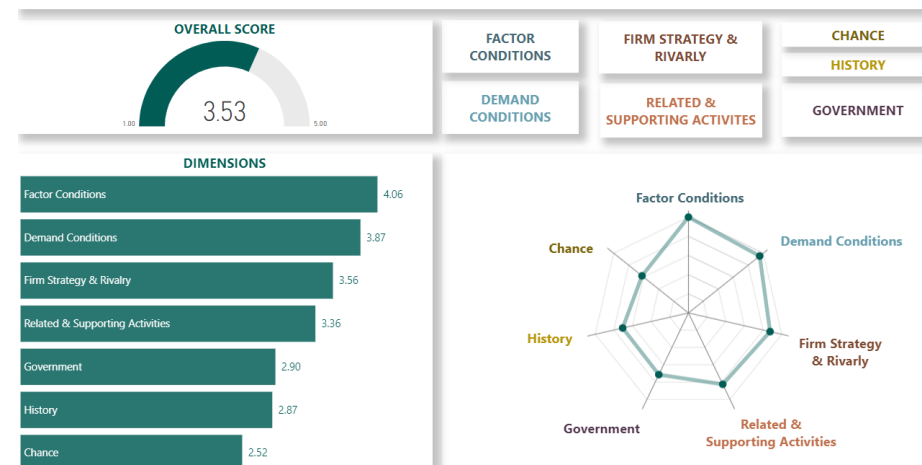
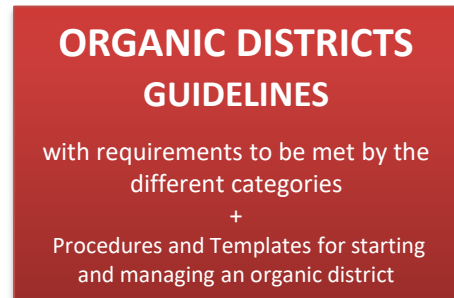


We can no longer hide the consequences and the costs of the globalised unsustainable junk food systems.



The Organic Districts are aimed at the local sustainable food systems development

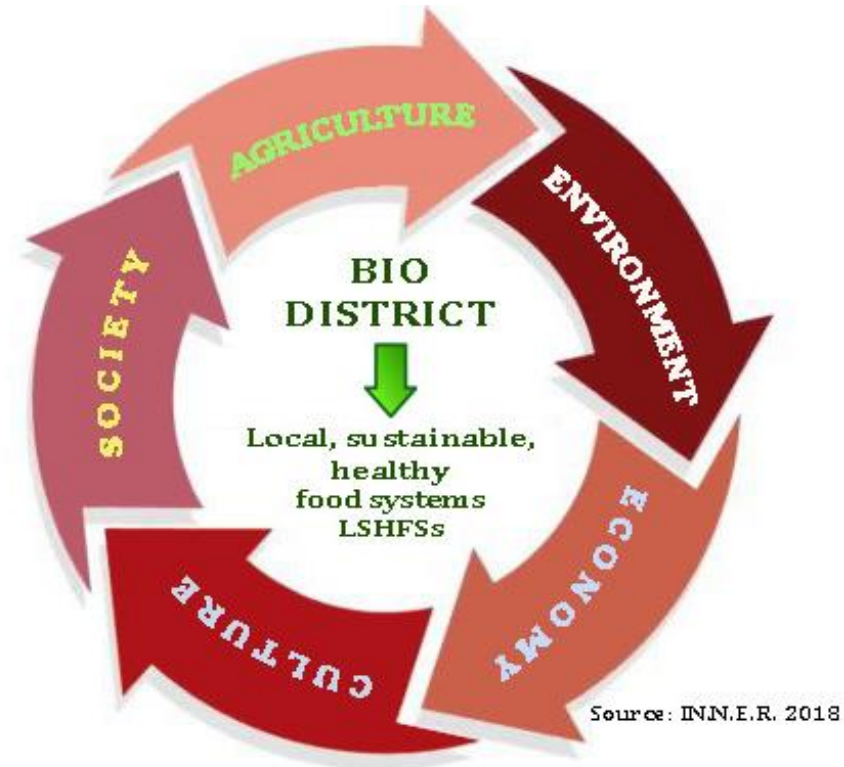
IN.N.E.R. has developed a toolkit for the establishment and management of the Organic District and a Monitoring tool for the analysis of territorial performances.



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, organic,
sustainable and
healthy Food System.**

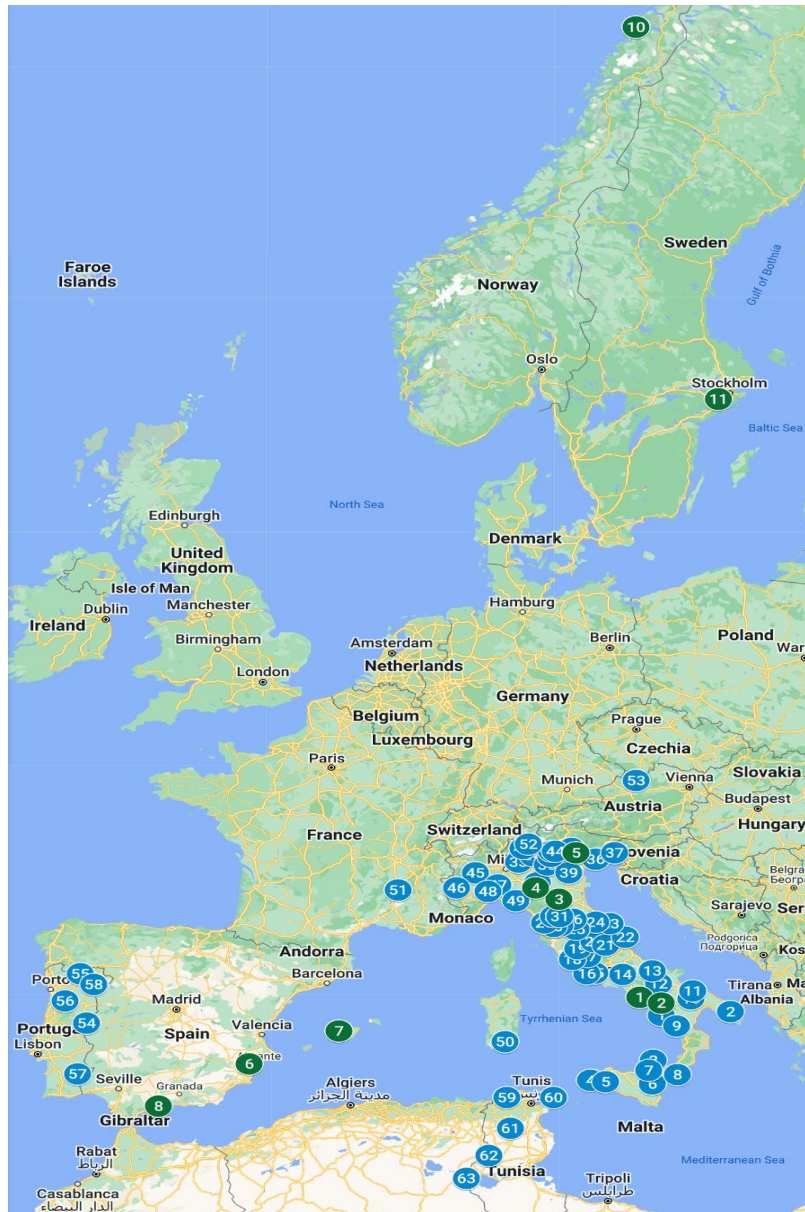
THE REAL ORGANIC LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS IN ORGANIC DISTRICTS



The Organic Districts are the practical demonstration that is possible to shift from a sectorial to a territorial approach:

**people don't live in sectors
but in places!**

In Europe and Mediterranean there are 63 Organic Districts already established and 10 under development.



Thanks to GAOD we can spread the Organic Districts in all five continents



GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR ORGANIC DISTRICTS

International Network of Eco Regions

ALGOA
Asian Local Governments for Organic Agriculture

REGENERATION INTERNATIONAL

LOAMC-PH
LEAGUE OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE MUNICIPALITIES AND CITIES IN THE PHILIPPINES

Supported by:



This is what Organic Districts are:
territories where local communities have democratically chosen to
live in harmony with nature and other living beings on our Planet

www.ecoregion.info – www.gaod.online



Thank you!

