



Growth of values-based organic food chains

Supporting the development of organic businesses, initiatives and value chains

HEALTHYGROWTH



Aim of the project:

To provide knowledge on development pathways from niche to volume while maintaining integrity and trust.



Introduction

In HealthyGrowth, eighteen mid-scale and four regional value chains for organic food are investigated in order to learn how they are able to combine values and increasing volumes.

- Managing specific challenges related to growth
- Understanding success factors
- Fostering cooperation and partnership in values-based food chains

Background

A sustainable growth in the organic market depends on the ability to combine increasing volumes with measures that safeguard integrity and consumer trust based on organic values and principles.

- Mainstream large-scale value chains have major difficulties in securing and advancing organic values
- Organic markets differ between countries and sectors; however face generic challenges related to growth
- Examples show that medium-scale food chains are able to increase volumes of premium quality products while mediating organic values from farmer to consumer

First results

Reviews of existing research on organic marketing highlights

- The diversity of values and product qualities in addition to the organic standard
- The importance of personal relationships between chain actors along the chain to secure communication of product qualities
- Utilization of a diversity of sale and communication channels
- Diversity of organizational forms and structures
- A lack of information and research related to growth issues of values-based food chains

The selection of case studies (see Figure 1) was based on the following criteria with the aim to cover a broad variety of:

- Business type (cooperative, enterprise, retailer etc.)
- Supply and distribution range
- Products
- Growth history
- National context
- Innovative features



Main project activities

- Literature review related to organic and other forms of sustainable food chains
- Methodological approach for the selection of case studies
- Interdisciplinary and multiperspectival analysis of case studies
- Case studies including interviews and workshops with relevant chain partners
- Active stakeholder involvement, network building and cooperation on national and European level
- International research cooperation e.g. with US-project "Agriculture of the Middle"

Expected results

Case study analyses will highlight challenges and success factors of expanding organic values-based food chains. The approach is based on six analytical perspectives of growth processes.

- Task 1: Governance and organisation based on formal and informal agreements and processes
- Task 2: Business strategies and management instruments ensuring economic performance and efficiency
- Task 3: Balance (trade off) between quality differentiation, volume and performance
- Task 4: Communication of values, qualities, and motivations between producers and consumers
- Task 5: The ability of the chain to mediate value relations
- Task 6: Long-term perspective, resilience and risk management

Grounded on these analyses, the researchers will – together with practitioners and decision makers in administration and politics – derive general and locally adapted (policy) recommendations for businesses, initiatives and values-based chains for organic food. This is to support

- Fostering knowledge exchange between researchers and actors
- Stimulation of national and international cooperation and network building
- Strategy development for stakeholders and networks planning to establish co-operative food chains.



Figure 1:
Localisation of the cases studied

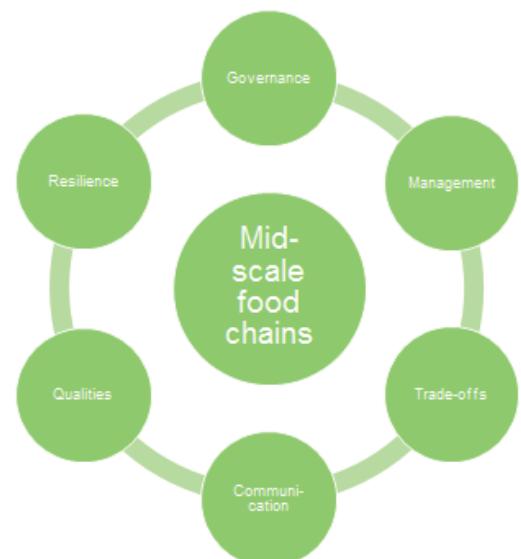


Figure 2:
Six perspectives for analysing the preconditions for successful growth of values-based organic food chains.

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Further information

Healthy Growth - a project funded by via the ERA-net CORE Organic II by national funds to each partner. CORE Organic II is a collaboration between 21 countries on initiating transnational research projects in the area of organic food and farming.

For further information,
see www.coreorganic2.org

Project information on
<http://www.coreorganic2.org/>
healthygrowth;

Find all publications at [orgprints.org/](http://orgprints.org/view/projects/HealthyGrowth.html)
[view/projects/HealthyGrowth.html](http://orgprints.org/view/projects/HealthyGrowth.html)



Expected post-project (long-term) impact

HealthyGrowth will promote organisational forms and strategies that

- Address consumer expectations
- Meet requirements of organic farmers, processors, wholesalers and retail businesses and initiatives
- Support a sustainable increase in organic production

Target groups

- Actors ad businesses of growing values-based food chains
- Small organic producers, consumers, and potential new organic actors in innovative forms of partnership and cooperation
- Large-scale market chains, retailers, and related advisory services
- Administration and policy-makers
- Scientists and interested stakeholders

Related projects

EU-projects like SUS-CHAIN, DOLPHINS, OMIARD, QLIF, COFAMI, FOODLINKS, CORASON and non-European studies like Agriculture of the middle (ATOM).

Knowledge exchange

- Peer-reviewed articles in scientific journals
- Stakeholder involvement during case study work
- Fostering organic food networks through cooperation on national and European level
- Discussion and verification of findings
- Organization of workshops and seminars (e.g. Biofach, ESRS conferences)
- Participation at national and international conferences on food, rural development, and organic agriculture
- Presentations and interviews on public media



The project participants visiting one of the cases.