

# HEALTHYGROWTH - Healthy growth: From niche to volume with integrity and trust, Project No 2812OE020

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*- Description of the German subproject -*

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Title: Healthy growth: From niche to volume with integrity and trust

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## 0 Summary

Organic markets differ between countries, but all local organic market chains have inherent problems in moving from niche to volume, and mainstream large-scale market chains have inherent problems in securing and advancing organic values. The wish to increase the volume of the organic food markets has become of significant importance throughout Europe. HEALTHYGROWTH aims to investigate a range of successful mid-scale organic value chains in order to learn how they are able to combine volume and values, and to use this knowledge to support the further development of the organic markets.

Eleven partners cooperate closely in the HEALTHYGROWTH project. The German team contributes to the workpackages WP2 - WP6 and leads WP7. The German case studies of mid-scale organic value chains (WP3) will be carried out in different enterprises/initiatives with particular focuses following the jointly defined case study methodology. The cross-country comparison of cases will be based on different perspectives. The German team is responsible for two of these 'tasks'. The multi-perspectival analysis provides an understanding of the underlying principles for healthy growth of organic value chains. Dissemination activities will be a core WP, coordinated by the German team. WP6 will involve stakeholders in joint learning processes and network building. HEALTHYGROWTH aims to share knowledge between countries and to enhance network building among actors within regions and across borders.

The project will provide knowledge on how integrity and trust can be maintained in the transition from niche to volume, and develop general as well as locally adapted recommendations for the development of organic markets. The target groups are not only other mid-scale value chains, but also smaller organic producers, consumers, and potential new organic actors in new forms of partnership and cooperation, as well as large-scale market chains.

Zusammenfassung:

Märkte für ökologisch erzeugte Nahrungsmittel unterscheiden sich zwar in den europäischen Ländern. In allen aber ist eine Steigerung des ökologischen Handelsvolumens erwünscht, wobei kleine wie große Vermarkter mit spezifischen Problemen konfrontiert sind. Während kleine Unternehmen oder Initiativen oft an der Verfügbarkeit großer Mengen scheitern, müssen sich große Unternehmen der Herausforderung stellen, den umfassenden Qualitätsanforderungen gerecht zu werden und dem Kunden die Werte ökologisch produzierter Nahrungsmittel glaubhaft zu vermitteln.

Das Projekt HEALTHYGROWTH beruht auf der Kooperation von elf Partnern. Das deutsche Team leistet einen Beitrag zu den Arbeitspaketen WP2 bis WP6 und ist verantwortlich für WP7. Die deutschen Fallstudien von mittelgroßen ökologischen Wertschöpfungsketten

werden in unterschiedlichen Unternehmen oder Initiativen jeweils mit spezifischen Untersuchungsschwerpunkten stattfinden. Die vergleichende Auswertung der Fallstudien wird thematisch nach Themenfeldern aufgegliedert. Diese mehrdimensionale Analyse soll beim Verständnis der Mechanismen wachsender organischer Wertschöpfungsketten helfen. Eine Aufgabe des HNEE-Teams besteht in der Koordination des Transfers von Ergebnissen in Wissenschaft und Praxis. Schlüsselpersonen der Branche werden von Beginn an konsequent eingebunden, um die Praxisrelevanz des Ansatzes und eine effektive Verbreitung der Ergebnisse durch Veröffentlichungen, Seminare usw. zu gewährleisten.

## **1 HEALTHYGROWTH: Aim and objectives (Ziele des Projektes)**

### **1.1 Aim of the project (Zielsetzung)**

The main rationale of the project is that a healthy and sustainable growth in the organic market depends on the ability of market chains to combine volume marketing with measures that secure integrity and trust based on the organic values and principles, thereby generating a prize premium that can be distributed along the chain. The organic markets have developed differently in different countries, but common to all is that the bifurcation of organic market chains into either volume or quality hampers a healthy growth of the organic market share. Local small-scale market chains have inherent problems in moving from niche to volume, and larger chains and retailers have inherent problems in securing and advancing the organic values.

The project's hypotheses are:

- There are mid-scale value chains which operate by a different marketing logic than either small- or large-scale chains, based on different forms of organisations, partnerships and strategies.
- The characteristics of mid-scale value chains enables them to combine growth in volume with a high and growing level of organic values throughout the market chain as a sound foundation for organic integrity and consumer trust.
- The related organisational forms constitute a new potential for development and growth of organic markets.
- Lessons learned from successful mid-scale chains provide new options for small-scale producers to act and compete on the market while ensuring a premium prize for their added organic values.

The main aim of the HEALTHYGROWTH project is to study a range of successful mid-scale food value chains and to show the fundamental prerequisites for their success in combining

volume and values. This will then support the development of new organic value chains and provide new opportunities for organic actors.

## **1.2 Objectives of the project (wissenschaftliche Arbeitsziele)**

The more specific objectives of the project are:

- To explore the characteristics of successful food value chains, and to describe the strengths and weaknesses of different organizational forms and pathways.
- To analyse and extract the main principles and lessons learned and jointly derive the main mechanisms and generalizable organisational principles underlying successful food value chains – taking into account national, cultural and geographical context factors.
- To support exchange of knowledge, network building and cooperation between relevant actors, and jointly develop locally adapted best practice recommendations. This also includes the exchange of ideas between relevant actors across national borders and the stimulation of national and international cooperation using existing networks and relevant websites.

A close cooperation and interaction between the consortium partners will be the cornerstone in obtaining these objectives.

The related analyses focus on the hampering factors related to growth processes in organic food value chains (Grundlagenforschung). We will study real life approaches and cooperate closely with the stakeholders and the networks of organic food production and marketing on a regional, national and European level (Anwendungsorientierung).

## **2 State of the art and former work of the German team members (Wissensstand; bisherige Arbeiten)**

### **2.1 State of the art**

A healthy growth in the organic market depends on a development in two dimensions 1) increasing volume and 2) securing and advancing the organic values. The organic values form the basis for integrity and trust, for differentiation in the market, and for generating added economic value. However, as it has been well described in the literature, the prospects for such a growth is challenged by the polarisation of organic marketing into global food market chains on the one hand and small-scale local marketing initiatives on the other, while intermediate forms are relatively scarce (see e.g. Knudsen et al. 2006).

Global food market chains are playing an increasingly important quantitative role in the marketing of organic food. The large players of these food chains can effectively handle

sizeable volumes, but their capacity (and interest) to transmit information about the organic values that are connected to the products and production conditions, tend to be limited to basic generic standards and regulations, such as the EU regulations (Noe and Alrøe 2011). Furthermore, the mechanisms of mainstream marketing lead to smaller economic returns to farmers and loss of their control over the supply chain (Schermer et al. 2011), and to a conventionalisation of organic food chains (Guthman 2004). This undermines the ability of committed producers to implement the original principles of organic farming and can create problems with maintaining integrity and consumer trust. Recent events throughout Europe, such as elevated dioxin levels in organic eggs or animal health issues in organic poultry systems in 2012, have arguably contributed to a growing scepticism towards the mainstream organic food system. Simultaneously, the progressive conventionalisation of the organic sector, especially in processing and marketing, has become controversially discussed in the media. The mainstream development therefore poses inherent risks to a sustainable long-term growth of the organic market. Local food marketing initiatives based on short food supply chains and consumer-producer cooperation are at the opposite end of the spectrum. They tend to function through close, trust-based relationships between producers and consumers, which ensure a high level of integrity (e.g. Milestad et al. 2010a & b, Lamine 2005). However, they have a much smaller turnover and contribute little to overall growth and export. Small and medium sized farms cannot handle larger-scale marketing themselves and they are 'price squeezed' in mainstream marketing chains (Smith and Marsden, 2004). There is a high potential for growth in the many small-scale value chains throughout Europe, but their organisations are typically not scalable, and a substantial growth in volume therefore requires significant organisational change (cf. Mount, 2012).

Given these inherent limitations of both large- and small-scale chains, the question is how a healthy growth in the organic market can be achieved. During the last years, researchers witnessed a promising development of new forms of organic marketing, in terms of dedicated medium scale food retail businesses and larger producer-consumer initiatives all over Europe (e.g. Schermer et al. 2011, Megyesi et al. 2011, Knickel et al. 2006, 2008). These represent a third type of business model that tends to be overlooked in research and business strategy development, a model that combines quality and volume in value-based supply chains, referred to as mid-scale food value chains.

Value chains are long term strategic alliances between business enterprises, which place emphasis on both the values associated with the food and values associated with relationships and the fair distribution of profits along the chain (Stevenson and Pirog 2008). Some organic mid-scale value chains have managed to grow to considerable volume while striving to maintain trust and integrity in terms of the original social-ecological and ethical aspirations embodied in organic farming, and thereby maintaining a higher 'added value' of

the organic products. The EU project COFAMI concluded that the success of a collective farmers' marketing initiatives cannot be explained by a specific set of factors, but the combination of different contextual factors (market, policies, institutional, social and cultural) with the available resource assets (financial, physical, natural, human, social, cultural), which lead to the design and construction of context-specific strategies, organisational forms and networks (Schermer et al. 2011). Successful strategies include quality differentiation either in chains based on product quality (e.g. regional speciality, quality standards, labelling), or in territorial networks, often combined with a focus on dedicated markets based on process quality (e.g. organic, face-to-face).

The involvement of business partners and policy actors is crucial for the initiatives, which often integrate a diversity of actors. In the founding phase of a collective farmers' initiative, the bonding, bridging and linking social capital of key initiators and their leadership play a vital role, while for the further development a coherent strategy needs to be combined with flexibility and capacity to adapt to changing contexts. These findings are supported by a Norwegian study of growth strategies among small-scale firms (Bjørkhaug and Kvam, 2011), and by US research which suggests that the development of sustainable mid-scale food value chains depends on the favourable confluence of a number of factors. Stevenson et al. (2011) conclude that successful value chains are built on three foundations:

- 1) Appropriate volumes of high-quality, differentiated, market-engaging food products coupled with value-adding stories of people, land and practices;
- 2) Strategic business partnerships based on trusting, transparent, and win-win relationships; and
- 3) Effective supply chain management and logistics, including product marketing, aggregation, processing, distribution and accounting.

A key point for organic value chains is that the essential qualities of organic products are created in primary production, and that they must be sustained, mediated and built upon in the value chain (Noe and Alrøe 2011). This is the basis for the potential risks of losing these qualities in large-scale, mainstream marketing, and it is the basis for the potential for sustainable growth in small- and mid-scale value chains.

There are, however, significant challenges associated with developing successful mid-scale food value chains. In an analysis of the role and potential of food supply chains in the process of rural development, Marsden et al. (2000) examine how 'alternative' or 'short' supply chains are built, shaped and reproduced in a European context. They conclude that the impacts of these food supply chains are positive in terms of value added; but that it is less clear to what degree they can be sustained and developed over time and space. One main challenge is how such initiatives can be built through the capacity of farmers to interact

with other supply chain agents. Another challenge is that the institutions and agencies in charge of supporting economic and social regeneration in rural areas need to balance opportunities and potentials to develop local speciality products against regional strategic considerations associated with more generic marketing and promotion. A third challenge is how the local social and natural resources come to be incorporated into networks of food supply chains that were previously dominated by the industrial and commercial modes of evaluation. And, in particular, how struggles around new definitions of quality can empower local producers, such that they can develop sustained levels of value from production of food products. In the US context, research findings indicate that successful chains must address the following challenges (Stevenson et al., 2011):

- 1) Finding appropriate value chain partners and developing mechanisms for value chain decision-making, transparency and trust;
- 2) Determining effective strategies for product differentiation, branding, and regional identity;
- 3) Determining appropriate strategies for product pricing based on understanding true cost structures;
- 4) Acquiring adequate capitalization and competent management;
- 5) Developing effective quality control and logistical systems; and
- 6) Developing economic power for value chain negotiations.
- 7) It is expected that these factors apply also to the European situation.

As explained in the main proposal, property rights are irrelevant in the field of research and the issue of protected property rights will not arise within the group of researchers and the cooperating experts and stakeholders.

## **2.2 Former work of the HNE team related to the topic (Bisherige Arbeiten des Antragstellers)**

The University of Sustainable Development in Eberswalde (HNEE) is dedicated to research and teaching on sustainable development, particularly of agriculture and rural areas. Within HNEE the Policy and Markets in the Agro-Food Sector Unit, since 2004 led by Dr Anna Maria Häring, focuses on the following areas:

- Development of organic markets
- Innovation in the organic food, marketing and farming sector
- Assessment of agricultural and rural development policy impacts.

All research activities of the HNE team focus on sustainable economic activity. The unit has been very successful in acquiring third-party funds, providing relevant and up-to-date knowledge and business relationships for research and teaching related to organic farming

and rural sustainability issues. The members of the German team are Dr Häring, Dr Susanne von Münchhausen and a PhD student (NN) representing the Policy and Markets Unit. Dr Karlheinz Knickel will contribute as a subcontractor in particular by securing the connection to previous EU funded projects related to organic marketing (IMPACT, SUSCHAIN, COFAMI, INSIGHT as well as a recent study on 'Sustainable Competitiveness and Innovation' for the European Parliament). Dr Knickel has more than 20 years' experience in relevant transdisciplinary research at EU, national and regional level. HNE team members had been responsible for policy related analyses and dissemination in COFAMI, EU CEEOPF, OFCAP projects.

The HNEE, University of Applied Sciences in Sustainable Development in Eberswalde (HNEE), Germany, plays a core role in the project: The German team will be involved as a partner in all work packages. The team will lead WP 7 dissemination and policy recommendations (co-lead: SLO), co-lead WP2 State-of-the-art review (lead: NO) and WP3 Analytical framework for case studies (lead: AT), and carry out German case studies in WP4. In WP5, the HNE team will be responsible for task 2 on business and management logics (co-lead: TR). The research experiences of the team members ensure that earlier work and findings are taken into account which will be important for the review of relevant organic market research and findings (WP2) as well as the formulation of a common case study methodology (WP3). Related to the role of work package leader (WP7 and task 2 of WP5) and co-leader (WP2 and WP3), the experiences of the HNE team are of major importance for a successful implementation of the HEALTHYGROWTH project. More recently the HNE team coordinated a number of projects on related topics such as:

- "Lifelong Learning in organic farms in Brandenburg", funded by ESF and the State of Brandenburg; 240,000 Euro; 2011-2013.
- "Concept for and implementation of further qualification in change management for rural actors at HNE Eberswalde (FH)", sub-project 1: "Certificate and MSc Rural Development, Knowledge and Value Chains, AdB@HNE", funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Science; 520,000 Euro; 2011–2015.
- „Qualification Network in the Agriculture and Food Marketing Sector in Brandenburg (QNet)“, funded by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Women and Family, State of Brandenburg; 10,000 Euro; 2011-2012.
- "Alternative Value Added Networks: Economic Assessment and Management within the ELAN Project", funded by BMBF, the Federal Ministry of Education and Science; 104,000 Euro; 2011-2013.
- "Sustainable competitiveness and innovation in EU agriculture", funded by the European Parliament, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Directorate B -

Structural and Cohesion Policies / Countryside and Community Research  
Institute, University of Gloucestershire; 140,000 Euro; 2011 – 2012

Häring, A. M., D. Vairo, S. Dabbert, R. Zanoli. 2009. Organic farming policy development in the EU: What can multi-stakeholders processes contribute? Food Policy 34 (2009): 256-272. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2009.03.006>.

Knickel, K., C. Zerger, G. Jahn, H. Renting (2008) Limiting and enabling factors of collective farmers' marketing initiatives: results of a comparative analysis of the situation and trends in 10 European countries. Journal of Hunger, Environmental Nutrition, 3 (2-3), Taylor, Francis, 247-269.

Knickel, K., Jahn, G., Roep, D., Wiskerke, H. (2006) Enhancing sustainable food supply chain initiatives. Roep, D., H. Wiskerke (ed) Nourishing networks: Fourteen lessons about creating sustainable food supply systems. Doetinchem: Reed Business Information, 165-175.

Knickel, K., Mikk, M. (2007) Local marketing strategies: a case study based analysis of the role of local food chains in Europe. N. Sorensen (ed) Marketing of organic and regional values. Schwäbisch-Hall: IFOAM, 101-107.

Knickel, K., Münchhausen, S.von, M. Kröger, H. Bergmann (2011) The Wetteraukreis in Germany – a metropolitan countryside area that connects the urban and the rural. Bryden, J. et al. (eds), Studies in Development and Society, New York: Routledge, 214-228.

Knickel, K., Münchhausen, S.von, Peter, S. (2006) Strengthening the positive links between organic farming and a sustainable development of rural areas. C.B. Andreasen, L. Elsgaard, L. Sondergaard Sorensen, G. Hansen (ed) Organic farming and European rural development. Tjele (DK): Darcof, 22-23.

List of references related to the topic:

Wirsig, A., Profeta, A., Häring, A., Cerjak, M. (2011) Branding of rural regions and autochthon agricultural products linked to their terroir. In: Pospíšil, M. (ed.): Book of Abstracts/ Proceedings of the 46th Croatian & 6th International Symposium on Agriculture, February 14 - 18, 2011, Grand Hotel Adriatic, Opatija. University of Zagreb, Faculty of Agriculture, Zagreb, Croatia. ISBN 978-953-6135-71-4. pp. 301-305.

Mayer, E., Häring, A.M., Bloch, R. (2009) Lehr- und Lernformen in der Hochschulbildung für das Berufsfeld Ökolandbau. Proceedings/Beiträge zur 10. Wissenschaftstagung Ökologischer Landbau, Zürich, 11.-13.2.2009, Vol. 1: 254-257. Verlag Dr. Köster, Berlin.

Münchhausen, S. von, Peter, S., Knickel, K. (2010) Realising sustainable development on the basis of social networks of knowledge. P. Milone, F. Ventura (eds): Networking the rural: the future of green regions in Europe. Assen (NL): Van Gorcum, 151-166.

Münchhausen, S. von, Häring, A.M.: (2012): Lifelong learning for farmers: enhancing competitiveness, knowledge transfer and innovation in the eastern German state of Brandenburg. Studies in Agricultural Economics 114 (2012) 86-92.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.7896/j.1217>

Runge, S., Cornehl, M., Häring, A.M. (2008) Opportunities for small organic shops despite the rise of organic supermarkets. Proceedings of the 16th IFOAM Organic World Congress, Modena, Italy, June 16-20, 2008.

Vairo, D., Häring, A.M., Dabbert, S., Zanolli, R. (2009) Policies supporting organic food and farming in the EU: assessment and development by stakeholders in 11 European countries". In: Baourakis G. and Mattas K. (eds) (2009), "Competitiveness in International Markets", Journal of International Food and Agribusiness Marketing, Vol. 21 (2&3).

Vairo D., Häring A.M., Dabbert S., Zanolli R. (2008). Policies Supporting Organic Food Markets in the EU: Analyses by Stakeholders in 11 European Countries, in "Organic Farming", Icfai University Press (Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts of India), Andhra Pradesh, India.

### **3 Scientific description of methods and work plan (Ausführliche Beschreibung des Arbeitsplans)**

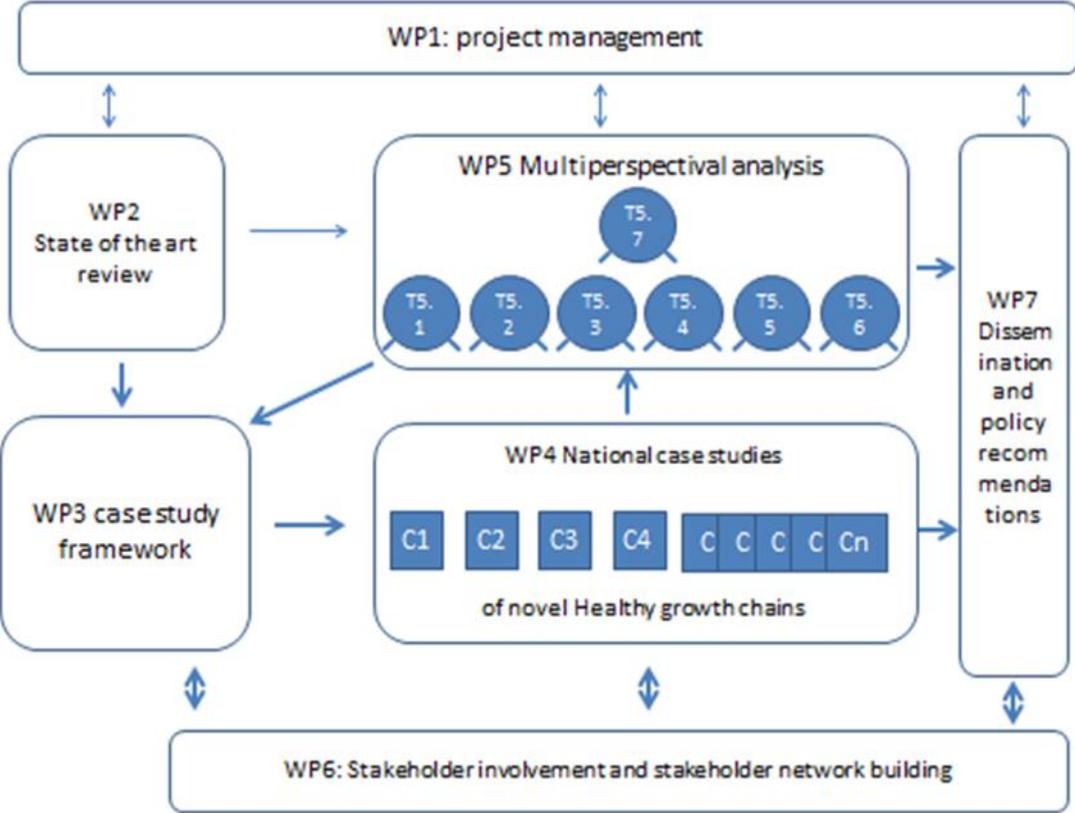
#### **3.1 Resources (Vorhabenbezogene Ressourcenplanung)**

The personnel, infrastructure and development capacity of the team are adequate for a successful engagement in the project and implementation of the defined work programme. Technical investments, apart from an additional work place (HNEE financed), are not necessary for the successful engagement in the project.

At the same time it is noted that the work input planning at international level and, in particular, for the German team, has been rather tight due to the prefixed budget and the ambitious project planning. Room for manoeuvre, in particular in personnel input, is extremely limited which means that we will need to ensure a very efficient implementation of the research programme.

The project will start with a state-of-the-art review of relevant organic market research and findings with a particular focus on the questions addressed in this project including on-going

and completed EU projects as well as national projects. The German team will contribute with a review of German publications and research projects. Based on the review, the German team will contribute to the development of the main research method which will be defined for the comparative case study analysis. The in-depth cases studies will be carried out by all national partners with case study contributions. The comparative analyses will be conducted in cross-national teams to benefit from the contextual knowledge and the multidisciplinary competences within the consortium. Where it is relevant, existing case studies will be re-examined to support the analyses. Stakeholders and actors will be actively involved in the project both to discuss and verify the findings and to support an effective exchange of knowledge, network building and cooperation on a national and on the European level. Overall, the work will be divided into seven work packages, whereby WP1 is dedicated to project management. Each WP has both a WP leader and a co-WP leader in order to enhance the cross-national project cooperation. The graph shows the interconnection between work packages.



The diagrams below show the time schedule of the HealthyGrowth project for all partners and for the German team in particular. The work intensity of the German team members is represented below. Due to budget restrictions the person NN (50% position) will only contribute 28 months. The milestones and deliverables that the German team will prepare



The case study regions are not yet defined. For that reason, the planning is based on the assumption that the case studies will be located in southern Germany (e.g. Munich region), in Hessen or Rheinland-Pfalz (e.g. destination Mainz) und in northern Germany (e.g. Emsland). All project team members will contribute to the case study related work, because the case studies are the core part of the Healthygrowth project. The faires „Biofach“ and „Anuga“ will be visited by one team member. All national travel costs are based on Bahncard 50 tariffs. The annual costs for one Bahncard 50 will be covered by the project budget (for NN person). The other team members are holding Bahncards.

The tables below represent the full lists of HealthyGrowth milestones and deliverables. The contributions of the German team are highlighted. National events are not yet mentioned.

No <sup>1</sup>	Title of Deliverable	WP no.	Lead participant	Nature	Dissemination level	Delivery month <sup>2</sup>
D7.1	Project Leaflets	7	HNEE	Leaflets	PU - national	4
D1.1	Project website	1	AU-AGRO	Website	PU	6
D3.1	Methodological Guideline for case studies	3	UIBK	Guideline and grid for data collection	INT	9
D2.1	State-of-the-art of organic food value chains	2	CRR	Scientific article	PU	12
D1.2	Midterm report	1	AU-AGRO	Report	PU	18
D6.1	Network building and cooperation across borders	6	MTT	English article targeting stakeholders	PU	21
D4.1	Case study reports	4	KTH //(All)	Reports	PU webpage	22
D5.1	Successful organisational forms of mid-scale food value chains	5	INRA SAD	Scientific paper	PU-ESRS	31
D5.2	Business and management logics of food value chains ensuring economic performance and efficiency	5	HNEE	Scientific paper	PU-ESRS	31
D5.3	Balancing between quality differentiation, volume and economic performance	5	MTT	Scientific paper	PU-ESRS	31
D5.4	Communication of values, qualities, and how to motivate actors from producer to consumer and vice versa	5	UIBK	Scientific paper	PU-ESRS	31
D5.5	Qualities of primary production and food value chains	5	AU-AGRO	Scientific paper	PU-ESRS	31
D5.6	Resilience of food value chains - the long-term perspective	5	KTH	Scientific paper	PU-ESRS	31
D5.7	Meta-analysis: Prerequisites for establishing and managing successful mid-scale food value chains	5	AU-AGRO (all)	Scientific paper	PU-ESRS	31
D7.2	Articles on how to organise food value chains	7	HNEE	Article targeting stakeholders	PU	32
D.73	Policy briefs on how to support food value chains	7	HNEE	Series of policy briefs for policy makers	PU	34
D1.3	Final report	1	AU-AGRO	Report	PU	36

<sup>1</sup> Deliverable numbers in order of delivery dates. For example, D4.2 would be the second deliverable from work package 4.

<sup>2</sup> Measured in months from the project start date (month 1).

No	Title of Milestone	Lead participant	Work packages involved	Delivery month <sup>1</sup>	Means of verification <sup>2</sup>
M1.1	Kick off meeting	AU-AGRO	1, 2 & 7	3	Meeting Held
M2.1	National state of the art reports	CRR	2	3	National reports circulated to CRR
M1.2	Project intranet	AU-AGRO	1 & 3	4	Project intranet platform running
M7.1	HEALTHYGROWTH Website	HNEE	7	4	Website running
M3.1	Template of criteria for the selection of cases finalised	UIBK	3	7	Template circulated to all
M5.1	List of requirements to the case studies framework	AU-AGRO	5	7	List distributed
M1.3	Project Workshop 2	AU-AGRO	1 & 3	9	Meeting held
M6.1	Framework for national stakeholder networks meetings	MTT	6	9	Frame work description circulated and discussed at 2nd project workshop
M2.2	State-of- the-art report	CRR	2	9	State of the art circulated to all
M3.2	Selection of cases finalised	UIBK	3	9	List of selected cases
M3.3	Analytical framework for case studies (empirical + analytical) finalised	UIBK	3 & 5	9	Input to Project workshop 2
M4.1	Working case study reports	KTH	4	17	Reports circulated
M1.4	Project Workshop 3	AU-AGRO	1, 4 & 5	20	Meeting held
M6.2	Network building and across borders	MTT	6	20	Cross national stakeholder workshop at IFOAM
M5.2	Draft report task 1-6	AU-AGRO	5	25	Draft reports circulated
M1.5	Project Workshop 4	AU-AGRO	1, 4, 5 & 6	26	Meeting held
M5.3	Project workshop on meta-analysis	AU-AGRO	5	26	Workshop held
M7.2	Workshop on Biofach	HNEE	7	28	Workshop organised
M1.6	International seminar (ESRS Congress)	AU-AGRO	1, 5 & 7	36	Meeting held

<sup>1</sup> Measured in months from the project start date (month 1).

<sup>2</sup> Confirmation of milestone organisation; referring to appropriate indicators; For example: a laboratory prototype completed and running; software released and validated by a user group; field survey complete and data quality validated.

## 3.2 Milestones planning (Meilensteinplanung)

The following table gives an overview of the work packages, the leading and co-leading team and the requested work contribution of the other Healthygrowth teams. The HNEE team is leading WP7, co-leading WP3 and contributing to all other work packages except WP1.

Work package	Lead	Co-Lead	Contributing
WP1: Project management	Team DK	Team AT	
WP2: State of the art	Team NO	Team TR	All teams
WP3: Case study methodology	Team AT	<b>Team DE</b>	
WP4: National case studies	Team SE	Team FL	All teams organising case studies
WP5: Multi-perspective analyses with tasks 1 to 7	Team DK	Team FR	Task 2 lead: Team DE with team TR Task 6 lead: Team SE with team DE
WP6: Stakeholder involvement and network building	Team FI	Team SLO	All teams contribute to the cross-border activities and organize WP6 on the national/regional level
WP7: Dissemination and policy recommendations	<b>Team DE</b>	Team SLO	All teams contribute to international publications/events and organise national dissemination activities

### 3.2.1 State-of-the-art review (WP2)

Work package leaders: Hilde Bjørkhaug (CRR, NO), Adem Atasay (MARIM, TR); All teams participate; Start and end dates: Month 1-9.

To compile the most current research on organic markets and value chains in a state-of-the-art review that is to be used in WP3-7. Of most relevance will be studies of mid-scale food value chains and growth processes in the organic food sector. However, research on expansion pathways from the conventional food or non-food sector will widen the perspective. Through this review the teams will learn more about growth processes with its challenges, risks and options. Moreover, the review will point out main mechanisms and organisational principles underlying the successful development of businesses or initiatives, and identify the theories and methodologies most commonly used in the field. All partners will provide short reports of relevant research from their respective nations.

The WP will gather knowledge from on-going and previous research projects such as the EU projects SUS-CHAIN, DOLPHINS, OMIARD, QLIF, COFAMI, FOODLINKS and CORASON, and national studies (e.g. C3D, Tracks, EPAB, Dynrurabio, "Growth strategies among specialty food enterprises"). The review will also incorporate relevant studies from outside Europe such as Stevenson and Pirog's (2008) US study of mid-scale food value chains. Since trust and integrity are core values of organic values-based chains or enterprises, the literature review will also focus on theoretical frameworks regarding consumers' trust, product/chain certification and quality controls, image and integrity as well as the tools of corporate communications such as brands, labels, trademarks, promotion and public appearance of enterprises (e.g. Kjærnes et al. 2007, Torjusen et al 2004).

The results of WP2 will provide a knowledge base for case study selection and offer relevant perspectives for the HEALTHYGROWTH research that will take place in the following work packages. The main conclusions of the state-of-the-art report will be published in a scientific paper.

### **3.2.2 Analytical framework for case studies (WP3)**

Work package leaders: Markus Schermer (UIBK, AT) and Karlheinz Knickel/Susanne von Münchhausen/Anna Häring (HNE, DE); all national teams carrying out case studies contribute to WP3; start and end dates: Month 2-12

WP3 aims to develop a case selection procedure and a framework for data collection and data reporting in the case studies in WP4 based on the state-of-the-art review from WP2 and requirements from WP5. The selection procedure is to ensure that case studies reflect the diversity of organizational approaches to combine growth and integrity in organic marketing chains across the partner countries, and at the same time have relevance for each national situation. The joint framework is an important prerequisite for the comparative analyses in WP5. The WP-leaders will elaborate a set of criteria and provide a template of case study selection. Each partner will select 1-2 potential in-depth cases and additionally 2-3 satellite cases, depending on available national budgets. In-depth case studies will exemplify the national situation, while the satellite cases offer the opportunity to study particular aspects not covered by the in-depth case studies. By doing this, the overall variation of medium scale organic food chains will be covered. The definite selection of cases will be the result of PW2 ensuring all teams to participate in the selection process.

The theoretical methodological foundation for the case studies will be inspired by Actor Network Theory (e.g. Latour 2007). This will be complemented by a perspective on the entire value chain from production to consumption as described by the Commodity Network Approach (Hughes 2000). We aim to follow actors and products through the commodity chain and to identify influencing factors for promoting or eroding the integrity of and trust in organic products. On this basis, and adjusted in accordance with the outcome from WP2 and the input on necessary requirements from WP5, the WP-leaders will elaborate a methodological guideline for the case studies, including instructions for the empirical inquiry, and a grid for data collection. This will ensure the comparability of data across all cases for the different tasks of the multi-perspective analysis in WP5. This guideline will be discussed and refined in PW2 (M9) with all partners. The work package aims at providing a theoretically substantiated analytical framework for the empirical data collection and analysis of case studies in WP4.

### **3.2.3 Case studies implementation and coordination (WP4)**

Work package leaders: Rebecka Milestad (KTH, SE) and Helmi Risku-Norja (MTT, FI); All national teams carrying out case studies are strongly involved in the work package; Start and end dates: Month 9-24

The objective of the WP will be obtained by using the framework for data collection and data reporting from WP3, producing guidelines for implementation of national level project workshops for the discussion of findings with the main actors/stakeholders, and by organizing PW3 for exchange and discussion of overall results within the project. In this process, gaps between the case studies will be identified and additional case studies proposed (if necessary). An internal WP4 workshop will be organised between PW2 and PW3 for the national teams that conduct case studies. The German team, as well as the other national teams carrying out case studies, will contribute their results to the overall WP4 workshop and also organize national workshop(s) with actors. The case study results will give rich descriptions of a range of different forms of food value chains. Furthermore, national actors will be invited to participate aiming to involve practitioners in the project (relevant for WP6 and WP 7 as well). The case study analyses will be the core input for the multi-perspective comparison in work package 5.

### **3.2.4 Comparative multi-perspective analysis of case studies (WP5)**

Work package leaders: Hugo F. Alrøe (AU-AGRO, DK) and Claire Lamine (INRA-SAD, FR); All teams participate; Start and end dates: Month 6-9 and 18-30.

The teams accomplish a multi-perspective meta-analysis based on the conducted case studies to show the fundamental prerequisites for how mid-scale value food chains are able to combine volume and values. The input for the comparative analysis will be the in-depth case studies conducted in WP4. Each of tasks 1-6 will produce an independent comparative case analysis addressing a particular research question from a specific perspective. Based on these outputs a multi-perspectival meta-analysis will be carried out addressing the main objectives of the project.

WP5 will be organised in two phases; the first phase will develop the analytical approaches and questions of each perspective and, as an input to WP3, produce a list of the necessary requirements to the data collection and analytical framework for the in depth case studies. The second phase will be the comparative analysis and meta-analysis after the case study reports are finalised in WP4.

Task1: What are successful organisational forms of mid-scale food value chains?  
(Claire Lamine INRA-SAD, FR and Egon Noe AU-AGRO, DK).

For each of the initiatives identified in the national case studies, their emergence (starting date, initiators), trajectories (growth, development), links to other networks, and modes of coordination with various actors and institutions will be studied. The comparison of these initiatives will allow analysing the modes of coordination between producers, consumers and diverse intermediaries (quality criteria, types of contracts, communication towards consumers, etc.), the management and governance models and the way the possible implication of other actors (such as local authorities and civil society) might contribute to maintain the 'added value'. The expected outcome of this task is a description of the characteristics of the organisational forms identified in the different case studies and a typology of these forms and of their strategy to combine value and volume.

Task 2: What are the business and management logics and what are the processes behind ensuring economic performance and efficiency in mid-scale food value chains?

(Anna Häring/Susanne von Münchhausen, HNE, DE and Adem Atasay, MARIM, TR)

By comparing the business models and managements logics of the different cases, this task will analyse the role contract economy and strategic alliances play in the mid-size value chains. How and to which extent contract and market economies are combined, and what kinds of logics and management processes are involved in enhancing the economic performance of the food value chains? The outcome will be a description of different business models involved, a comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of the different forms, and a discussion of how and how well they support medium size value chains and growth in volume.

Task 3: What is the balance (trade off) between quality differentiation, volume and economic performance? (Helmi Risku-Norja, MTT, FI and Hilde Bjørkhaug, CRR, NO)

Based on technical and economic data, information on the quality differentiation strategy, and qualitative data on the stakeholders own considerations, this task will explore alternative strategies to differentiate from mainstream organic marketing in terms of different values, like taste, locality, history, ecological and ethical concerns, etc.; and compare how the different food value chains combine the differentiation deepening strategy with the concern of an effective production, processing and distribution.

Task 4: How is the communication of values, qualities, and motivations supported along the value chains from producer to consumer and vice versa?

(Markus Schermer UIBK, AT and Andreja Borec FALS, SLO)

The main research question of this task focuses on the potential of consumers' feedback within indirect marketing channels. The methods are quantitative and qualitative analyses of upstream and downstream communication patterns, which include 1) the mapping of different forms of communication between the actors along the chain, 2) the ways to carry producer identity through the chain up to the point of sale and 3) the existing and potential feedback loops from consumers to producers. The task is expected to illuminate positive (and possibly negative) examples on trust building measures between actors in the chain. This will help to improve integrity, transparency and trust.

Task 5: What dimensions of qualities linked to primary production do food value chains mediate to consumers, and what are the preconditions of the food value chains to mediate (to value) qualities? (Egon Noe AU-AGRO, DK and Hilde Bjørkhaug CRR, NO)

This task will compare the different food value chains related to maintaining the qualities the farmers add to the products by their way of production (e.g. handling of animals, use of special breeds, feeds and seeds), all the way through the chains to tables. The analysis will focus on how the different links in the chain relate to these qualities and compare different strategies of the food chain network.

Task 6: What is the long-term perspective of the different value chains studied and how do they deal with change and fluctuations?

(Rebecka Milestad KTH, SE and Anna Häring/Susanne von Münchhausen, HNE, DE)

This task will analyse how value chains deal with change and surprise in a long-term perspective, framed with the concept of resilience. Social-ecological resilience is the capacity of a system (or in our case, a value chain with its social and physical parts) to absorb changes and reorganise while retaining essentially the same functions and structure (Walker et al., 2004). Building on on-going research in Sweden and Austria, the resilience framework will be used to analyse adaptive change in value chains by analysing how the initiative maintains functions (e.g. consumer-producer interaction and other qualities) and how it (self)-organises in the face of change, and how learning is accommodated. Resilience in the value chain is likely to connect with learning activities in the growth/change process, communication and knowledge exchange between participating farmers and consumers. The analysis will show if growth processes of the initiative, enterprise or chain impact on farmers' practices and production systems. In addition, the results of task 6 will illuminate the interlinkages of social and ecological systems within organic value chains.

Task 7: What are the prerequisites for establishing and managing successful mid-scale food value chains?

(Hugo Fjelsted Alrøe AU-AGRO, DK and all partners involved in the comparative analysis)

Building on the approach to multi-perspectival analysis (Noe et al. 2008, Alrøe and Noe 2011), this meta-analysis will be organised around a workshop involving participants from tasks 5.1 to 5.6. Given the insights obtained in the comparative analyses based on different research perspectives and questions in the six tasks, this workshop will address the key question: What are the prerequisites for combining volume and quality in organic marketing? The multi-perspectival meta-analysis will be able to draw on the experiences made with this approach in the MultiTrust project. The final output will be a shared academic publication and popular presentation of the results in cooperation with WP6 and WP7.

The multi-perspective analysis aims at enabling the comprehensive understanding of important issues for stakeholders, organisers and policymakers to support a healthy growth of organic high value food chains. The main outcome will be 4 to 7 conference papers describing and discussing different aspects of food value chains and combining value and volume. These papers will also serve as an important input to the dissemination activities in WP7.

### **3.2.5 Cross-national/regional stakeholder network building and knowledge exchange (WP6)**

Work package leaders: Helmi Risku-Norja (MTT, FI), Andreja Borec (FALS, SLO); all teams participate; Start and end dates: Month 9-36.

The work package's objectives focus on testing the tools and strategies supporting learning and knowledge exchange between stakeholders in mid-size food value chains. The leading team will, supported by the national teams involved in the case studies (WP4, WP6), develop a concept for national stakeholder workshops that can be fitted into the various national contexts. This will include the involvement and training of potential key facilitators of e.g. extension and advisory services. A major challenge will be the stimulation of the related network building, the successful knowledge exchange and the cooperation across national borders. This WP will look into the possibilities for utilizing new social media (e.g. blogs, Twitter, Facebook, etc.) to overcome the barriers. WP6 will also exploit the possibilities to use new social media in the organising of cross-national stakeholder network building seminars in connection with BioFach and IFOAM. A further element in WP6 is to formulate support strategies for stakeholders and networks that plan to establish co-operative food value chains. The HealthyGrowth teams aim to contribute to the establishment of local and national networks and to stimulate cross-national stakeholder network building.

### 3.2.6 Dissemination and policy recommendations (WP7)

Work package leaders: Anna Häring/Susanne Münchhausen HNE, DE and Andreja Borec, FALS, SLO; All project teams contribute; Start and end dates: Month 1-36.

The team will focus on the dissemination strategies for the project results and communicate the jointly developed and locally adapted recommendations related to the improvements for organic food businesses and initiatives. All teams aim at developing specific recommendations focusing on national issues and the dissemination of these results. Target groups are not only medium scale businesses and initiatives, but also large market chains and retailers, as well as small-scale producers and related advisory services and advertising agencies. Moreover, dissemination activities address consumer-producer co-operations and food networks that are aiming to grow without losing their main asset – integrity and the consumer's trust. The dissemination of practical and policy recommendations will be based on two principles: The first is the principle of conformity between recommendations and decision-making structures. This means that recommendations will be elaborated and disseminated in a joint action undertaken by the research team with representatives of stakeholders. The second is the principle of regular consultation. This means that recommendations will be elaborated and disseminated in a process of regular consultation between the project team and the target groups aiming to ensure validity and practical relevance of recommendations.

Dissemination work starts in the beginning of the project, aiming to inform target groups of the existence HEALTHYGROWTH . In month 6, the HEALTHYGROWTH website will be launched in cooperation with the coordinating team. The website platform will be developed and maintained by the scientific co-ordinator. All synthesis reports, executive summaries of national reports and reports of the national seminars will be placed on the website. The website will also entail descriptions of the participants; brief CV's of the scientific teams and links to websites of relevant stakeholders' organisations. The website is an additional means to disseminate results to different target groups. Publications, briefs and discussions on midterm results aim to establish a fruitful relationship between project team members and experts and practitioners. The development of policy recommendations and the organization of publications will be the most intense phase of WP 7. Series of policy briefs – partly in national languages - will help to spread the results within governmental and non-governmental organizations. BioFach, the largest organic market fair in Europe, held in February 2014 and 2015, as well as other conferences (ESRS) will provide an ideal background for workshops aiming to discuss the projects' methodology and results with national and international experts.

The overall synthesis of WP7 as well as detailed findings from WP2, WP4 and WP5 will be translated into practitioners' language. Most importantly, WP7 will produce and disseminate a

series of briefs and guidelines, and short discussion papers translated into national languages aiming to inform stakeholders and policy oriented target groups (practitioners, administration, policy makers, NGOs, etc.).

## **4 Expected results and impacts of the project (Verwertungsplan)**

### **4.1 Economic and scientific prospects of success**

New forms of mid-size food value chains show promising potential for growth and development of the organic markets. The project will promote organisational forms and marketing strategies which meet not only differentiated consumer expectations, but also the requirements of farmers, and thus support a sustainable increase in organic production. Based on a better understanding of dedicated medium scale businesses and initiatives, the teams will, together with practitioners and decision makers, derive locally adapted recommendations for improvements in this segment as well as in large chains and retailers and in local food initiatives, co-operations and networks. This is to support the exchange of ideas between actors across boundaries and to stimulate national and international cooperation.

In previous research most emphasis had been on either small scale marketing initiatives of organic products or on the inclusion of organic products in the conventional large scale food chains. This project will help to better understand what it implies for a mid-size value chain (e.g. a food business, retailer, farm association or marketing initiative) to increase turnover and expand while, at the same time, trying to maintain the original social-ecological and ethical aspirations embodied in organic farming ('added value'). The limited understanding and lack of best practice examples and transferable features and strategies are presently a major constraint for a sustainable market development. Together with practitioners and decision-makers, the HealthyGrowth teams will derive the main mechanisms and organizational principles underlying successful value chains, businesses and initiatives (success in terms of market performance, volume as well as integrity and trust).

### **4.2 Dissemination of results and knowledge transfer (Aufbereitung und Verbreitung der Ergebnisse)**

The project outcome focuses on scientific results and the dissemination of the findings which have both, practical and theoretical relevance. Two work packages (WP6, WP 7) are devoted to the dissemination and exploitation of results. The dissemination plans are specified in the WP descriptions. Three kinds of dissemination processes will be organised in the project with different target groups (scientists, stakeholders and policymakers):

- 1) The scientific communication and dissemination of the research results will be organised in cooperation with WP1, WP2 and WP5 teams. The dissemination activities will take place at international and national events (IFOAM World Congress 2014, ESRS 2015, Wissenschaftstagung Ökologischer Landbau 2015) in order to ensure evaluation and testing of research activities and scientific value of the approach. Project results will also be published in peer-reviewed journals.
- 2) The transdisciplinary communication and dissemination of the results will be based on regional and national network building and exchange of ideas and experiences between stakeholders, as well as training of facilitators. The case studies and public events such as the Biofach Messe are starting points for network facilitation. WP6 is dedicated to support and ensure the network building to become an essential outcome of the HealthyGrowth project.
- 3) A core element will be the translation of the scientific findings into practitioners' language in terms of articles in English and in German or other partner languages. The German flyer showing main results for the practical implementation of the project outcomes which is explicitly required by BLE-project management will part of the dissemination strategies ("Merkblatt zur kompakten Darstellung praxisrelevanter Projektergebnisse").

The case studies of the project will cover different phases of business development and different market volumes, as well as various product chains. The wide range of project results will therefore be relevant for many facets of organic food market development. The case studies, undertaken in different countries and in a variety of businesses or initiatives, will encourage an exchange of experiences with other regions or value chains in Germany and abroad. All work packages' methodology focusses on the knowledge transfer of the outcome. The list of deliverables and milestones shows a wide range of themes and a mixture of theoretical and practical publications or events. The HNE team is leading the work package 7 which aims at disseminating the projects results. The team is experienced in inter- and transdisciplinary knowledge exchange due to the involvement in local projects with farmers and agricultural stakeholders and will therefore secure the translation of theoretical outcomes into practical results.

### **4.3 Continuation of the project's outcome (Wissenschaftliche und wirtschaftliche Anschlussfähigkeit)**

The list of deliverables shows the areas of scientific interest which are of core relevance for the development of the organic food market. Based on these analyses, future research questions are likely to emerge. The field of food marketing research is likely to increase further in the near future. The HealthyGrowth project will contribute to the theoretical and

practical knowledge related to trust and integrity in food production and marketing chains. Furthermore, it will raise questions and research issues for further projects which will build on the HealthyGrowth results. The cooperation of the German team in the EU Core Organic project will strengthen the research network of the University of Applied Science in Eberswalde related to national and, in particular, European research projects. HealthyGrowth will be a promising starting point for the successful participation in future national and European research proposals.

The HealthyGrowth projects aims at strengthening the development of organic food initiatives, chains and businesses. The closer the cooperation and the more intense the knowledge exchange with stakeholders of the sector will be, the more direct the implementation of project results into practice will be. For that reason, this objective is clearly defined in the HealthyGrowth proposal.

## **5 Cooperation with third parties (Arbeitsteilung/Zusammenarbeit mit Dritten)**

Since this project proposal is part of the European Core Organic project HealthyGrowth, the cooperation of the HNE team focuses on the European project partners. Other agreements with partner organisations or private enterprises are not foreseen.

## **6 Need for funding (Notwendigkeit der Zuwendung)**

The HealthyGrowth project and the European cooperation of research partners emerged from the Core Organic Call II (2012). Without funding the project would not take place because funding for additional staff was not available at the HNE Eberswalde.

The following measures are devoted to minimise the risk of failure in the project:

All WPs have affiliated a co-WP leader which means that the project is resilient towards situations where a partner has to redraw or to exchange personnel. All partners have to produce case studies which mean that the necessary fundament of data for the comparative analysis will be rather robust to incidences and conditions that would affect the participation of individual partners. The comparative analysis will also be able to draw on a range of existing case studies which makes the comparative analysis more robust. Project workshops with stakeholders and scientific seminars are organised in conjunction with large international events such as BioFach, IFOAM and ESRS, and this will help secure visibility and attendance. Furthermore, case study methodology and stakeholder involvement will be adjusted to the specific national context while at the same time respecting the scientific requirements of the comparative analysis.

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