

## **Exploring the adaptive capacity of growing mid-scale organic value chains in Europe**

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It is clear that the industrialised food system is in need of a transformation into something less environmentally and socially destructive and less vulnerable to scarcity of non-renewable resources. While there are alternatives, there are very few examples of alternative/organic/localised/civic food systems that have been able to grow out of their niche and make a substantial difference. The examples that are available can tell us a lot about what it takes to create new models within the hegemonic food system and about what is needed for such food chains to develop and maintain momentum.

Using some key notions in resilience thinking, this paper explores the adaptive capacity of organic food value chains from 10 European countries that have been able to grow trying not to compromise their integrity and values. Adaptive capacity in this context is the ability of food system actors to manage their food value chain as to enhance desired resilience. Key aspects of adaptive capacity that are often mentioned are diversity, trust, social networks and learning.

While all cases have different trajectories and are embedded in different national contexts they have experienced challenges with which they have dealt more or less effectively, drawing on their adaptive capacity. For example, mid-scale organic value chain initiatives that use diversity as a strategy (products, involved actors, knowledge etc.), that work to establish long-term partnerships and that enhance learning potential are more likely to embark on a trajectory that builds resilience.