

THE BIO-DISTRICT VIA AMERINA E DELLE FORRE AND ITS RESULTS IN ITALY

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The [*Via Amerina e delle Forre Bio-District*](#) was established in 2010 in the northern part of the Lazio Region in Italy, after a wide participative building process. In ten years of activities it continues to reach high impact results in the area.

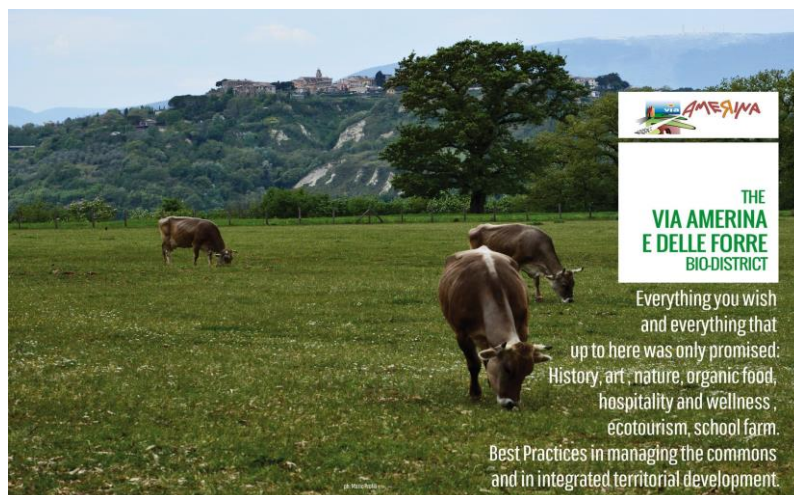
In 2020 more than two hundred organic farms are functioning in the Bio-district's territory, providing a great diversity of organic produce: vegetables, wine, oil, eggs, hazelnuts, chocolate, saffron, meat, cheese. On March and April, marked by the quarantine for the corona virus pandemic, organic farms recorded an increase in production and direct sales to consumers of up to 25%.

The Bio-district operates in a territory where 80 thousand inhabitants live, with an agricultural and manufacturing sector of great importance: it is the first pole of Italian hazelnuts production and the second one in the ceramic industry. It is also a place of precious natural beauty and wonderful landscapes, with a cultural history of great value that is reflected in the urban planning of the villages, in the archaeological remains, in the medieval castles and palaces, in the places of worship.

The total area of the Bio-district is 421 square kilometres, with a population density of 138.4 inhabitants per square kilometre. The agricultural area used for organic production is 4,266 ha, more than 20 percent of the total.

Thirteen Municipalities, producer associations and social organizations participate in the *Bio-district of Via Amerina e delle Forre*. [The governance of this innovative territorial pact](#) is ensured through an Assembly, which is the seat of fundamental decisions and brings together the Mayors of the municipalities, representatives of the associated partners, producers and citizens; a Scientific Committee based at the Tuscia University, which includes university researchers and experts, the National Research Center, FAO and other entities; an Executive Committee that manages the initiatives in the territory. The Agency for development and innovation of the Lazio Region, ARSIAL, participate in the Bio-district, too.

The direct participation of all these actors, as well as the interaction between administrators, private producers, associations, technicians and intellectuals requires a great commitment, but it has been and it is the condition to tackle complex problems, share solutions and produce effective changes in the territory.



A bio-district is a territory where farmers, citizens, tourist operators, associations and public authorities enter into an agreement for the sustainable management of local resources, based on organic production and consumption (short food chain, purchasing groups, organic canteens in public offices and schools). In bio-districts, the promotion of organic produce is inextricably linked with the promotion of the territory and its special characteristics so that it can fully realise its economic, social and cultural potential.



The Bio-district adopts the sustainable development objectives indicated in the 2030 Agenda of the United Nations, with an approach that values territorial resources to increase territorial added value, understood not only in commercial profits and local income, but rather in the well-being of all its inhabitants and producers.

With the active support of all its partners and citizens, the Bio-district has developed and implements a complex strategic plan that includes many different lines of action:

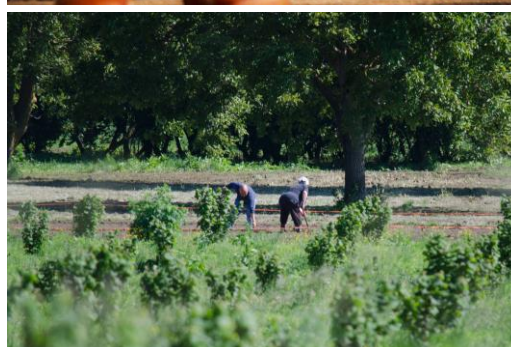
Support to production and commercialization of typical products of the organic farms, by developing short commercial chains and supporting organic farm practices in direct sale to consumers. In collaboration with ARSIAL, an *Information and Training Center* for the conversion to organic production of hazelnuts and chestnuts has been implemented, involving municipalities and local producers. Studies, training activities and information campaigns on the value of sustainable agriculture are also carried out, both for the health of citizens and for the economic future of the territory, in collaboration with FAO and the ISPRA regional Institute for Environmental Protection and Research.

The resolute protection of the environment. The opposition to the intensive cultivation of hazelnuts and its secondary effects such as intensive use of pesticides, water pollution and reduction of biodiversity, is a field of debate and sometimes of conflict with multinationals and some associations of producers. On demand of the Bio-district, the Municipalities issued very strict measures, among the most advanced in Italy, to protect organic crops, regulate the use of pesticides, and prohibit the use of harmful herbicides. Initiatives are also being carried out to contrast the plans to transform the numerous quarries in the area into landfills for inerts, which would have very serious consequences for deep and shallow aquifers. Selective waste collection initiatives are also improved, promoting circular economy activities.

The development of a sustainable economy of the territory. Within this framework, important results were achieved in orienting the European financial resources of the Local Action Group to the Bio-district strategies; in the promotion of the great tourist potential of the territory also through the [production of a tourist guide](#), in collaboration with the Department of Culture and Tourism of the Lazio Region and ARSIAL. A project for the use of renewable energy in the territory has been designed and financed by the European Union, in collaboration with Italian and European actors. At the Universidad della Tuscia, based on the territory, an *Agro-ecology School* has been implemented with the participation of FAO.

In 2019 the Lazio Region approved the Law *Provisions for the regulation and promotion of bio-districts* (n.11/2019), concluding a long process of political and technical exchanges with the 13 municipal administrations of the Bio-District and thanks to the synergy of the plural institutional, productive and associative involved. The Law defines the conditions to create the Bio-districts and the regional financial and technical tools to support them.

The *Via Amerina e delle Forre Bio-district* is currently officially recognized by the Lazio Regional Administration as a development body. This Law has generated great interest throughout the Region, whose regional capital is Rome, and the



Bio-district of the Via Amerina e delle Forre, with the collaboration of the [IN.N.E.R- International Network of Bio-districts and Eco-regions](#), is providing its direct support to four other territories that are in the process of creating their own Bio-district.

To know more

[Biodistretto Via Amerina e delle Forre website](#)

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[Biodistretto Via Amerina in SINAB website](#)

[Regional Law Provisions for the regulation and promotion of bio-districts](#)

[Biodistretto in newtuscia.it website](#)

[Biodistretto in urbicapus.com website](#)

[INNER Network website](#)

