

BIO-DISTRICTS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EUROPEAN UNION ACTION PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANIC PRODUCTION

The territorial Bio-districts have been recognized as good practices and new business models in the framework of the [Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production](#) launched by the European Union In March 2021.

For the EU Action Plan, “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 maximize 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” (Action 13).

The European Union engages with Member States and stakeholders to foster local and small-scale processing to move towards ‘shorter organic supply chains, providing environmental and social benefits’ as part of its efforts to support trade for organic products within the EU. The Action Plan also encourages Member States to support the development and implementation of Bio districts (Action 14).

The [Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production](#) is part of the [Farm to Fork](#) Strategy and the [Biodiversity](#) Strategy, in which the Commission has defined the objective of ‘at least 25% of the EU’s agricultural land under organic farming and a significant increase in organic aquaculture by 2030’. These strategies are part of the [European Green Deal](#), the Commission’s policy agenda for a sustainable, climate-neutral Europe by 2050, acting as a vehicle for investment and growth.

In this framework the Action Plan for Organic Production highlights that by producing high quality food with low environmental impact, organic farming will play an essential role in developing a sustainable food system for the EU. The Plan sets out concrete actions covering the full value chain from food production to consumption, actions that also encompass international cooperation on sustainable food systems.

In particular, the Action Plan is broken into three interlinked axes that reflect the structure of the food supply chain and ambitions of the Green Deal sustainability objectives: 1. stimulate demand and ensure consumer trust; 2. stimulate conversion and reinforce the entire value chain; 3. organics leading by example: improve the contribution of organic farming to environmental sustainability.



The Bio-districts operating in different European countries have been implemented on the initiative of local actors adopting an innovative and participatory governance for an integrated management of their territorial capital and resources: organic producers and their associations, local governments and public services, citizens and environmental associations, tourist operators. Their recognition in the framework of the Action Plan adopted by the EU represents a great opportunity to strengthen their actions aimed at responding to local needs, to encourage other territories in their implementation and to stimulate governments and regions to support their work through new legislative instruments and financial resources.

In a Bio-district, the promotion of organic products is closely linked with the promotion of the territory, to achieve the full development of its economic, social and cultural potential. As highlighted by the EU Action Plan, “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” (Action 13).

In rural areas of the European countries most often left aside from investments, Bio-districts can play a prominent role in increasing the value of local and typical food produce, culture, traditions, natural resources and landscape in an overall integrated strategy aimed at renewing the territorial development and reducing depopulation.

The EU Action Plan mentions that in 2017 the Bio-districts were included among the agro-ecology practices featured by the [Agroecology Knowledge Hub](#) managed by FAO.

To know more

[Organic Action Plan in EU website](#)

[EU Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production](#)

[News in IFOAM organicseurope.bio website](#)

[EU Biodiversity Strategy](#)

[EU Farm to Fork Strategy](#)

[Bio-districts in FAO Agroecology Knowledge Hub website](#)

[Bio districts brochure in FAO website](#)

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