

FICHE – ORGANIC FARMING CASE

“BIOREGION MÜHLVIERTEL - DEVELOPING AN ORGANIC BRAND IN RURAL AUSTRIA”

Data extracted in January 2022

Note to the reader: This set of *fiches – organic farming case* is offering additional information to the meta analysis literature review summarised in *general fiche* and set of *fiches* on the environmental aspects of ORGANIC FARMING SYSTEMS. Each individual case describes an initiative in different parts of organic food systems within the European Union, delivering more detailed information on possible ways to help develop organic systems.

1. DESCRIPTION OF THE ORGANIC SYSTEM

Geographical location	Austria
Geographical level	Region
Description	Austria’s Mühlviertel region has seen its organic sector expand significantly in recent decades. The area is remote, rural, and economically disadvantaged, with no major industry. The brand BioRegion was set up in 2010 to promote local food producers, suppliers and tourism, and develop the organic sector.
Key descriptors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Territorial approach towards regional development based on a strong organic agriculture sector. • Strengthening cooperation between organic producers • Adding value to the supply chain and boost sales through marketing • Encourage tourism in the area • Develop local organic production, support processors of ready-to-consume products, suppliers and restaurants
Production system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very hilly, rather rough climate, unfavourable soil conditions → grasslands, arable crops, forestry. • Organic producers. Mainly dairy products, but also meat, grains, cereals, potatoes, + some fresh fruit and vegetables, herbs, hops.
Actors involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In march 2014, the members of the bioregion were : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 72 direct marketing organic farms ○ 16 processors (bakers, butchers, brewers, vintner, miller, beekeeper, mountain herb cooperative, fruit processing company) ○ 12 enterprises from the gastronomy sector ○ 6 public service providers ○ 4 public caterings (schools, bed & breakfast housing) ○ 4 artisanry/handicraft businesses ○ 3 agritourism farms • Other partners include seven LEADER regions, the Chamber of Agriculture, the Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Upper Austria, Bio Austria, the province of Upper Austria itself, and the organic agricultural school ‘Bioschule Schlägl’
Project type	European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development-funded project
Project status/ date of report	2014

2. VISUALS ASSOCIATED TO THE ORGANIC INITIATIVE



Graphic 1: Geographical Location of the Bioregion Mühlviertel in Upper Austria



3. ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVMENTS OF THE ORGANIC INITIATIVE

Rationale / Motivation for the project	
<p>According to core-team members, the pivotal motive of establishing the Bioregion Mühlviertel was that the public appearance, significance and value of organic farms within the region was, at the time of starting the project, unsatisfactory.</p>	
Actions	
<p>Communication, education, marketing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and dissemination of promotion materials (tourist brochure, folders, postcards, stickers...) to raise awareness about the organic sector and promote tourism • Organisation of events focusing on communicating healthy, holistic lifestyles and the circular economy at regional level • Development of a 'school-on-farm' programme and a hiking exhibition
<p>Organization and governance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participatory process (farm visits, organic-days, workshops, surveys, meeting) that lead to establishing a steering group, the organizational structure, and a long-term regional development concept.
<p>Network building</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular activities for members for getting to know each other, mutual exchange, cooperation etc. (e.g. roundtables)
Lessons	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and establishing a brand for a region requires a long-term vision • A large number of actors are needed in the development process. 	

4. SOURCES, PROJECT WEBSITE OR DATA COLLECTION ON THE CASE STUDY

ENRD fiche

https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/project/attachments/gp_at_muehlviertel_web_final_v.pdf

Full case study report from the University of Innsbruck

https://projects.au.dk/fileadmin/projects/healthygrowth/Case_Study_reports/Report_Austria_BioregionMuehlviertel.pdf

BioRegion Mühlviertel association's website <https://www.bioregion-muehlviertel.at/>