

## Farmer Consumer Partnerships

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### 1 Background

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Globalisation and anonymity of trade with organic products are seen as a problem by

(a) farmers

- ▶ with standardised organic products, world-wide competition is mainly a question of production costs
- ▶ as soil and climate are given for a farmer, production costs for organic products can mainly be reduced by
  - lowering production standards
  - lowering labour costs
  - lowering product quality
  - increasing yields (e.g. via high yield varieties)

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## 1 Background

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**Globalisation and anonymity of trade with organic products are seen as a problem by**

**(b) consumers**

- ▶ **discontented with anonymous and uniform organic products and unsatisfactory quality characteristics**
- ▶ **showing increasing interest in sound social and ethical behaviour**
- ▶ **searching for information on production conditions and specifics of origin and transport**
- ▶ **looking for „pleasure without bad conscience“**

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## 2 Project idea

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**There are several smaller organic farmers' initiatives in Europe which**

**(1) try to differentiate their organic products by**

- **guaranteeing higher standards in production or processing**
- **communicating social and ethical arguments similar to the arguments used in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) concepts**

**(2) do not know each others' concepts and thus invest a lot of time and money to elaborate own communication concepts**

- ▶ **„wheel must not be invented several times“**

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## 2 Project idea

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Project idea is:

- (1) **Identification of successful organic farmers initiatives in five European countries using CSR communication arguments to better sell their products with premium prices**
  - ▶ **„learning from neighbours“**
- (2) **Test of different communication arguments in different countries in an approach using several test methods ending in a near-reality-buying-experiment with consumers (consumer choice test)**
  - ▶ **„testing possibilities of partnerships between farmers and consumers“**

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## 3 Motivation for working transnationally and expectations

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Advantages of a transnational team:

- (1) **Viewed superficially:**
  - **Identification of smaller regionally based initiatives in foreign countries is much easier for domestic researchers**
  - **Understanding of different communication arguments is easier for researchers with the same cultural background**

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### **3 Motivation for working transnationally and expectations**

#### **Advantages of a transnational team (continuation)**

#### **(2) Viewed in depth:**

- **Transdisciplinary cooperation between agricultural economists (CH, UK), marketing researchers (DE, IT) and specialists for regional development (AT, IT)**
- **Exchange of different scientific approaches and experience of team members working on common tasks**

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### **3 Motivation for working transnationally and expectations**

#### **Expectations for the transnational cooperation:**

- **Exchange of knowledge with regard to**
  - ▶ **designing appropriate scientific approaches**
  - ▶ **using scientific methods**
- **Exchange of ideas**

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#### 4 Common use of research facilities

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##### Common use of research facilities:

- **Researchers in economics mainly work with computer software**
- **One partner (DE) will develop a computer software for a so-called Information-Display-Matrix and will provide the other five partners with the software for data collection and data analysis**

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#### Farmer Consumer Partnerships

##### Project partners are:

- Austria:** Prof. Dr. Bernd Freyer, University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, Vienna
- Germany:** Prof. Dr. Ulrich Hamm, University of Kassel
- Italy:** Prof. Dr. Raffaele Zanolì, University of Ancona  
Dr. Roberta Callieris, Mediterranean Agronomic Institute, Bari
- Switzerland:** Dr. Matthias Stolze, Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, Frick (partner without financial assistance through CORE organic)
- United Kingdom:** Dr. Susanne Padel, University of Wales, Aberystwyth

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**Thank you for your kind attention**

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