ORGANIC TARGETS 4EU

ROMANIA
ORGANIC SECTOR AKIS FACTSHEET

SUMMARY REFLECTIONS
ORGANIC SECTOR AGRICULTURAL KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION SYSTEMS

The strength of the Romanian Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) for organic agriculture lies in regional cooperation and commitment of different actors. Current developments aim at strengthening the position of organic actors within the system. Challenges persist, however, in terms of fragmentation, funding, coordination, and specialisation. New policy goals are set to improve coordination and target training; on the other there is not a clear implementation plan on how to achieve these goals.
In Romania, processors and retailers argue for a lack of comprehensive support corresponding to their information needs. Partially because those needs have not been properly explored. A strategic approach and coordinated efforts to develop supportive services is missing. Nevertheless, regional clusters play a crucial role in supporting organic processors. For organic processors and retailers, important information sources are their current business partners, certification bodies, certain associations, IFOAM Organic Europe, Inter-Bio Association and FIBL.

GENERAL INFORMATION

MAIN CULTIVATED CROPS

1. Cereals
2. Industrial Crops
3. Plants Harvested Green

CROPPING PATTERN (% OF UAA)

Arable Land	Permanent Grassland	Permanent Crops
67.2%	29.2%	2.7%

CONTRIBUTION OF AGRICULTURE TO ECONOMIC OUTPUT
3.98 % (2022)

CONTRIBUTION OF AGRICULTURE TO EMPLOYMENT
21.12 % (2022)

UTILIZED AGRICULTURAL AREA (UAA)
12,762,830 Hectares (2020)
53.54 % of Total Area (2020)

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ORGANIC SECTOR OVERVIEW

The organic sector in Romania has grown significantly over the last two decades. Between 2001 and 2021, the organic land area expanded by 1,916%, reaching 4.3% of the utilised agricultural area (UAA) in 2021. The organic sector in Romania is highly dependent on export to Western-Europe and Middle East.

GROWTH OF ORGANIC AREA (2001-2021)
1916 %

AQUACULTURE PRODUCTION
N.A.

GROWTH OF ORGANIC RETAIL (2001-2021)
N.A.

NO. OF PRODUCERS
11,562

EXPORTS AND IMPORTS
200 / 35 (million €)

NO. OF PROCESSORS
209

DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION
2,06 €/Person

NO. OF IMPORTERS
34

MAIN CROP TYPES

1. CEREALS
2. OILSEEDS
3. FRUIT

SUPPORTING STRATEGIES, POLICIES & REGULATIONS

Legislation supporting the organic sector was introduced in the early 2000s, following the EU legislative framework. The first set of standards were introduced in 2004, along with the first subsidy system. The new Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plans (CAP SP) includes the specific objective of strengthening the position of the organic actors in the AKIS. However, in the absence of capacity building for key planning actors, the SP does not include critical details on national priorities and implementation.

KEY COMPONENTS & FUNCTIONS OF AKIS FOR ORGANIC

KNOWLEDGE CREATION, RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Although agricultural research in Romania is only recently becoming participatory, it is already generally demand-driven and responsive to the information needs of organic farmers. However, knowledge transfer in a post-socialist country principally suffers from a fundamental lack of trust between actors. Experience with structured dialogue is scarce and the capacities of AKIS actors in organic agriculture are still broadly insufficient. Knowledge exchange works particularly well where clusters provide an enabling environment for networking and cooperation. The main knowledge hubs are the InterBio consortium with four clusters active in different regions and knowledge centres, some university departments, and some public research institutes. In the absence of a centralised digital information platform for organic farmers, local e-infrastructures developed for the clusters, business and export purposes, technology transfer and R&D can fill this gap. Knowledge creation and efforts in information dissemination are still mainly dependent on EU funding and programmes. National R&D programmes and private organisations or investors provide complementary funding.

ADVICE AND CONSULTANCY

In Romania, organic farmers and processors do not have access to extension services specialised in organic agriculture, and there are no concerted efforts to change this any time soon. There are not centrally coordinated, strategic efforts to develop advisory services for organic. Existing advisory covers general aspects, such as sales support, assistance in internationalisation and Business to Business (B2B) negotiations, branding, marketing, or business plan development.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

There are few public education programmes and vocational or other types of training programmes focusing on organic farming. There are training and educational programmes that do not focus on organic farming practices, but still offer knowledge on more sustainable alternatives to conventional practices. There are some training programmes that cover regulation and other aspects of organic conversion. These are usually organised by AKIS actors actively involved in the development of clusters, farmer umbrella organisations, and even certification bodies. Most training programmes and knowledge transfer events are linked to EU projects. At national level no effort has been made to develop training programmes for advisors to improve their knowledge of organic farming.

CONCLUSIONS

AKIS actors formally responsible for professional training of advisors for organic are not in place. Therefore, advisory service providers in most cases are not sufficiently familiar with organic farming, certification requirements, or the conversion process. Moreover, there is little effort to improve farmers' access to extension services. The sector is also characterized by the lack of funding and institutional capacities. Inadequate management results in unorganised and inefficient knowledge transfer and exchange.

FIND OUT MORE HERE

Deliverable D1.1 Assessment of Knowledge and Innovation Systems for Organic Agriculture, Aquaculture and Value Chain Actors

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