PRACTICE ABSTRACT

Using Scenario Analysis and Backcasting to Strengthen Organic Food & Farming Strategies

Problem

Organic sector actors often lack structured tools to anticipate future challenges and test long-term strategies.

Solution

Apply scenario analysis and backcasting to identify resilient pathways and align actions with long-term goals.

Benefits

Improved foresight, shared vision, and more adaptive, evidence-based strategies for organic food systems.

Practical recommendations

To test opportunities, threats and strategies, combine **scenario analysis** (aka **scenario planning**, exploring multiple plausible futures) with **backcasting** (building pathways connecting milestones and actions to be implemented to reach a desirable 2040 vision).

- **Co-create scenarios** with farmers, processors, policymakers, and researchers to identify key drivers of change (markets, climate, regulation, technology).
- **Explore impacts** of each scenario on organic farming practices, markets, and value chains.
- **Backcast** from preferred futures to define concrete policy and business steps needed today.
- **Compare options** across scenarios to identify robust strategies that perform well under uncertainty.
- **Integrate results** into regional action plans and CAP Strategic Plans to enhance coherence and resilience.

Applicability box

Theme

Environment and society

Keywords

Society

Context

EU organic sector, applicable at regional and national levels for policy and strategic planning

Application time

Throughout any policy or business planning cycle

Required time

1–3 months for full stakeholder workshop cycle

Period of impact

Medium to long term (3–15 years)

Best in

Multi-actor platforms, policy design groups, advisory services, innovation hubs

Further information

Further reading

- Scenario Analysis: A Primer. The Pentland Centre for Sustainability in Business, 2024, Ciftci N., Bebbington J., Pollard D. The Pentland Centre for Sustainability in Business.
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Weblinks

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