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## About CERERE:

Through a balanced, multi-actor network of researchers and communities of practitioners, the project promotes innovation by producing and disseminating accessible end-user materials and training products for farmers, food manufacturers, consumers, researchers and policy makers.

# PRODUCERS, PROCESSORS AND CONSUMERS ARE PROMOTING LOCAL DEVELOPMENT BY SUPPORTING SHORT SUPPLY CHAINS OF BREAD THROUGH A COMMUNITY BRAND NAMED VIRGO.

## PROBLEM

Organic cereal farms find often difficult to compete on equal terms with which growing in the conventional sector, highlighted into the gap between producer and consumer prices. The number of intermediaries throughout the supply chain makes the process unsustainable for farmers who are faced to a progressive reduction of their margins and rising production costs. Consumers are often unable to recognize the real value of these alternative products.

## SOLUTION

Facing these problems, an alternative approach in the food system is emerging, aimed at "relocating" the systems of food production and consumption. Starting from the knowledge of seeds, a local bread supply chain is being built based on a strong pact of confidence between the actors. This pact provides a new income opportunity for producers and allows them to provide quality food to consumers. The mutual relation among the partners supports the transition of farms from the conventional to the organic system.

## Outcomes

VIRGO is a collective brand that brings together farmers, millers, bakers, and citizens, to ensure the origin and quality of products, through the respect of strict rules of production related to farming methods, cultivation and processing. The short supply chain built through VIRGO excludes the intermediaries (wholesalers, retailers, etc.), reduces the distance covered by the product to the benefit of the environment and enables the producers to sell their goods at an affordable and profitable price. Meanwhile the consumer supports the local economy based on healthy food at a fair price.

## Practical reccomandation

In this alternative framework, short supply chains are characterized by being rooted in the territory and therefore linked to its natural, cultural and social resources. The experiences that are generally linked to the short supply chain include a variety of initiatives, but VIRGO focuses on those ones supported and activated by the community. These collective actions reduce the social and cultural separation from food production to consumption, thus reducing the loss of knowledge and safeguarding the value generated within the community. The effectiveness and sustainability of these alternatives is based on building strong community links. These relationships are based on the construction of a system of shared and participatory rules. This rules concern many aspects, from the seed materials to the price of products and service fees between partners, including the production and processing model on a guarantee system and the conflict resolution between members of the association.

## Evaluation and sharing of the results

Use the comment section on the CERERE website to share your experiences with other farmers, processors, retailers, advisors and scientists. If you have any questions concerning this Practice Abstract, please contact the author by e-mail.



## Project partners

The University of Reading (*United Kingdom*),  
 The University of Florence (*Italy*),  
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 The Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority (*Ireland*),  
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 Organic Research Centre (*United Kingdom*),  
 SEGES P/S (*Denmark*),  
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 The University of Debreceni (*Hungary*).

## Further Information

VIRGO's products are grown in accordance with rules that include the principles of organic farming allowing a production respectful of the environment and ecological balances. More information at <http://www.granvirgo.it>

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