

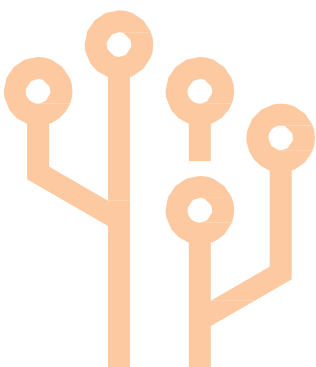


ENGINE

Education for Rural
Entrepreneurship
& Innovation



D2.03. Rural Development Potential Map Province of Foggia



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1. Socio-economic profile of the region and its rural areas

1.1 Area description: Apulia region and the Province of Foggia

The Apulia region is located in southeastern Italy, bordered by the Adriatic Sea to the east and the Ionian Sea to the southwest. It has a semi-arid Mediterranean climate, characterised by warm, dry summers and mild, rainy winters. The mean annual rainfall for the region is approximately 685 mm, with most areas receiving between 450 and 550 mm (Petito et al., 2024; Roseto et al., 2024). The lowest rainfall, around 400 mm, is found in the Tavoliere area, contributing to water scarcity challenges, while the highest rainfall, exceeding 900 mm annually, is recorded in Daunian Mountains and Gargano (Petito et al., 2024; Roseto et al., 2024). Apulia covers an area of approximately 19,000 sq. km, with around 51.4% classified as inner areas – i.e., territories far from essential services, especially education, healthcare, and transport – according to the National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI), which are home to about 1,017,709 of its 3,907,683 inhabitants (Labianca, 2023; Alhadj Ali et al., 2024a; ISTAT, 2024). It also hosts the highest number of active agricultural enterprises, whilst it ranks second (behind Sicily) in terms of hectares of utilised agricultural area (UAA) (Regione Puglia, 2021a). The region's gross marketable output includes cereals (43%), particularly durum wheat, whilst horticultural crops (23%) and processed products (21%) such as oil and wine, together account for 44%, followed by livestock (9%), and, finally, flower and ornamental plants (3%) (Regione Puglia, 2021a). Apulia is primarily agricultural but is actively diversifying into sectors like aerospace, digital systems, and innovative technologies. The region leads in energy and technology-related funded projects. Even though southern Italy has faced challenges in internationalisation, Apulia maintains a higher global presence in terms of exports, similar to central Italy (Ministro per gli Affari Europei,



il Sud, le Politiche di Coesione e il PNRR, 2024).

The province of Foggia is located in the northern part of Apulia and is classified as a NUTS III area. Geographically and culturally, it is divided into three main areas: Daunian Mountains, Gargano and Tavoliere delle Puglie. The Daunian Mountains, covering approximately 1,884.8 km², are characterised by rough topography and struggle with land abandonment due to hydrogeological instability (Alhajj Ali et al., 2024a; Contillo et al., 2022). Most of the Daunian Mountains area is woodland, pasture and uncultivated area (Conversa et al., 2020). Its economy is primarily based on agriculture, with common crops including forage and cereals (54%), olive orchards (4.3%) and vegetables (2%) (Alhajj Ali et al., 2024a). Gargano spans about 1,960 km², of which only 14% is urban. Agriculture plays a significant role, with forage and cereals (17%), olive orchards (11%), and intensive livestock grazing as the main activities. Besides agriculture, tourism is a fundamental part of the local economy, particularly along the coast during the warmer months, generating many seasonal jobs (Alhajj Ali et al., 2024a; Agenzia per la Coesione Territoriale, 2020; Giordano, 2020). Meanwhile, Tavoliere delle Puglie, the largest plain area in Apulia, covering approximately 3,524 km², stands as one of the most productive agricultural areas in the region. Geographically, it is bounded by the Daunian Mountains to the west, the Gargano Promontory and the Adriatic Sea to the east, the Fortore River to the north, and the Ofanto River to the south (Conversa et al., 2020). Only 0.05% of Tavoliere area is urbanised, with the cities of Foggia, San Severo, and Cerignola concentrating half of the population of the entire Province of Foggia (Conversa et al., 2020). In its fertile soils, wheat, barley, tomatoes, olive orchards, legumes, and vineyards are cultivated. This has been accompanied by the extension of arable farming, along with intensive irrigation (De Santis et al., 2023).



1.2 Definition of rural and inner areas

The National Strategic Plan has classified the Italian territory into four macro-typologies, based on administrative units, at the municipal level, and their degree of rurality, as shown below.

A - Urban and peri-urban areas: Including provincial capitals and municipalities where the rural population constitutes less than 15% of the total. Agriculture is mainly practiced in areas surrounding major cities, which act as key markets for agriculture products.

B - Rural areas with intensive farming: Comprising rural municipalities, whether urbanised, significantly or predominantly rural, mainly situated in lowland areas. Some of these zones may have a high population density, however, rural land still accounts for more than two-thirds of the total area.

C - Intermediate rural areas: Covering municipalities situated in hilly and mountainous areas, characterised by higher population density and moderate levels of development. It encompasses urbanised areas in hills and mountains, as well as zones that are significantly or predominantly rural in the central-northern hills, or relatively rural in the mountains.

D - Rural areas with development challenges: Typically found in southern hill municipalities, significantly and predominantly rural, and rural mountain municipalities with lower population density, such as C areas, where agricultural land abandonment and depopulation are more pronounced, even though agro-forestry-pastoral resources remain vital for the area. Both C and D areas are characterised by rich landscapes and cultural heritage, especially high-quality food, which contribute to the local development, particularly through tourism.

This classification has been adopted in the implementation of rural development policies in Italy, as it best suits the specificities of its territories (Regione Puglia, 2021b).



The map below illustrates the classification of the Province of Foggia.

Figure 1

Map of the Province of Foggia According to Rural Development Policies



Note. Adapted from *Position Paper N. 4 – Economia delle Aree Rurali e Sicurezza Alimentare*, by Regione Puglia, 2021b.



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While the classification of rural areas highlights the varying degrees of rurality across Italy's diverse territory, the classification of inner areas, as defined by the National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI), is based on the distance required to access three key services: healthcare, education, and mobility. Together, both classifications give a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics and obstacles encountered by the Province of Foggia, offering a clear framework for rural development (NUVAP, 2022).

Service provision centres, which are the municipalities where these essential services are located, are defined as having the following facilities:

- Healthcare: A hospital with at least a Level I Emergency and Acceptance Department.
- Education: At least one high school (Liceo, either scientific or classical track) and a technical and/or vocational institute.
- Mobility: A Silver-category railway station.

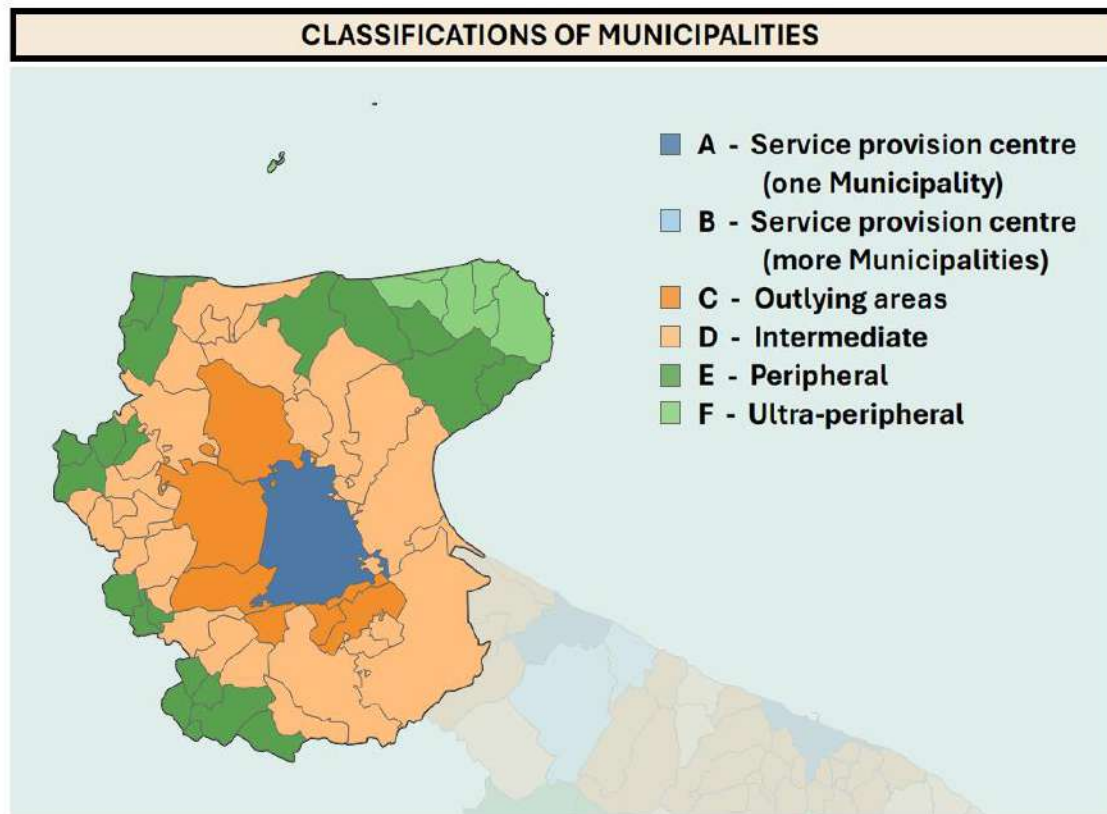
The distance is measured as the travel time by car from the centre of each municipality to the nearest service provision centre. According to SNAI, areas are classified as follows:

- Outlying: Travel time is less than 27.7 minutes.
- Intermediate: Travel time is between 27.7 and 40.9 minutes.
- Peripheral: Travel time is between 40.9 and 66.9 minutes.
- Ultra-peripheral: Travel time exceeds 66.9 minutes.



Figure 2

Map of the Inner Areas of the Province of Foggia



Note. Adapted from *Mappa Comuni Aree Interne*, by Fondazione IPRES, 2024.

The map illustrates that the Province of Foggia lacks additional service provision centres, relying solely on the city of Foggia to access the majority of essential services. Most of Tavoliere is classified as outlying or intermediate, indicating good connectivity and relatively easy access to services. The Daunian Mountains are mainly intermediate or peripheral, where access becomes more difficult due to increased distances. The Gargano region includes areas in all categories (intermediate, peripheral, and ultra-peripheral), with the most distant municipalities facing the greatest difficulties in reaching essential services.



1.3 Perspectives on socio-economic development

The Province of Foggia is home to 15.2% of Apulia's inhabitants and deals with several socio-economic issues, such as a demographically ageing population, low income, high unemployment rates, and low levels of education (Agenzia per la Coesione Territoriale, 2020; Vendemmia et al., 2020). Furthermore, as services (e.g., transport, healthcare, educational facilities, and leisure activities) are concentrated in the main municipalities, this contributes to the depopulation of less connected localities (Vendemmia et al., 2020).

In 2023, the unemployment rate for individuals aged 15-64 was 18%, higher than the regional average (11.8%) and the national rate (7.8%) (ISTAT, 2024). Additionally, in 2022, Apulia recorded a population decline of 15,258 residents (-0.4%), exceeding the national average decline of 0.1%. Notably, the Province of Foggia experienced a decrease of 3,346 residents (-0.6%) – one of the most significant demographic contractions in the region. This trend is further intensified by a decline in the birth rate (-80 across the entire region), which is consistent with Italy's record-low birth rates (ISTAT, 2024). Similarly, the NEET rate (not in education, employment or training, aged 15-29) in the Province of Foggia stood at 34.9% in 2022, the highest percentage in Apulia (ISTAT, 2024). This figure has remained consistently high in recent years, reflecting persistent challenges in youth employment.

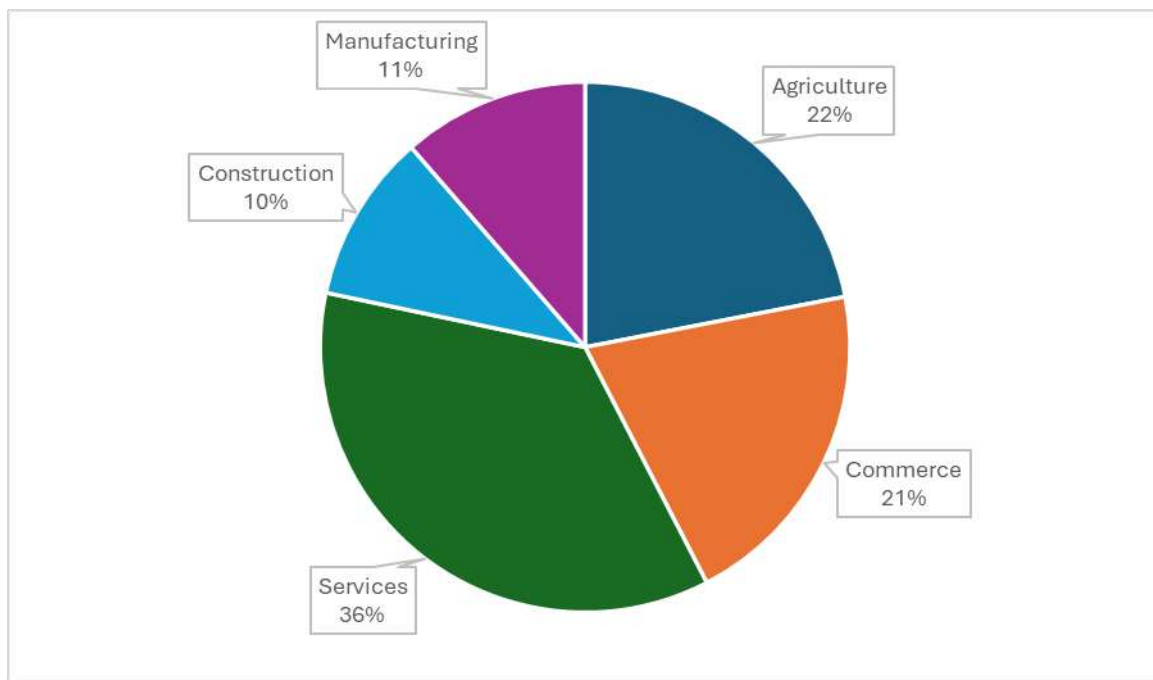
Currently, there are 69,940 companies registered with the Chamber of Commerce of Foggia. The municipalities of San Severo and Manfredonia have the highest concentration of commercial activities, while Foggia, Carapelle, Vieste, Peschici, Rodi Garganico, and the Isole Tremiti are specialised in the service sector. All other municipalities primarily focus on agriculture (InfoCamere, 2024).



The pie chart below illustrates the employment distribution across different sectors in the Province of Foggia, based on the number of people employed in registered companies.

Figure 3

Employment distribution by sector in the Province of Foggia



Note. Data processed by InfoCamere using Registro Imprese data. Osservatorio Economia Foggia, by Camera di Commercio di Foggia, 2024.

In 2024, according to the Chamber of Commerce, the Foggia area recorded a trade deficit of €118 million, with exports totalling €603 million and imports amounting to €721 million. The main export partners are the European Union, Eastern Asia, and Central and Eastern Europe, whilst the primary imports come from the European Union, Eastern Asia, and Northern Africa.



The leading exported products are vehicles, processed and preserved fruits and vegetables, and products from non-permanent crops. In contrast, the main imported products are machinery, processed and preserved fruits and vegetables, and products from non-permanent crops (InfoCamere, 2024).

The rural areas of the Province of Foggia need to align economic growth with socio-environmental necessities, such as improving living standards and competitiveness. This can be achieved through enhanced mobility (e.g., increased availability of public transportation, modernisation of infrastructure), better public services, and addressing delayed investments. Strengthening innovation, fostering investment attractiveness, and ensuring inclusive development are essential to mitigate marginalisation and depopulation, ultimately paving the way for more sustainable development (Tejada-Gutiérrez et al., 2023).



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1.3 Rural local resources in the Province of Foggia

The resources of the Province of Foggia are classified into two main categories: universal resources and specific resources, each with distinct groups and a corresponding description.

UNIVERSAL RESOURCES

RLR 1: Human capital

Group	Description
Higher education	<p>University of Foggia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic institution with faculties in Economics, Agriculture, Medicine, Law, and Humanities. Ranked internationally in Times Higher Education (THE) and considered one of the best universities in Southern Italy. Actively participates in research projects such as Horizon2020, PRIN, and PON (Università degli studi di Foggia, 2025).
Research centres	<p>Bonassisa Lab (with ENA collaboration)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialised in food safety, environmental safety, microbiology, and other related fields, including the training of professionals responsible for ensuring the certification of the safety and quality of food products (Bonassisa Lab, 2022).



CREA - Council for agricultural research and economics

- Conducts studies and research on agricultural and forest ecosystems, focusing on their characterisation and spatial-temporal modelling through an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach, aiming to support their sustainable management (CREA, 2025).

DARe - Apulia agro-food technology

- A technological district promoted by Apulia that facilitates the technology transfer process between the research system and the agri-food sector (Prosperi et al., 2020).

Giepi s.r.l

(authorised by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport)

- Research and testing laboratory specialising in materials used in the construction industry. It plays a key role in ensuring the quality and safety of construction materials, performing tests in accordance with scientific research standards (Giepi, n.d.).

IZSPB - Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale di Puglia e Basilicata

- Control and research activities in animal health, food safety, and zoonoses (IZSPB, n.d.).

ISPA-CNR - Institute of sciences of food production

- Involved in project design, studies, and research related to Post-harvest Management of Horticultural Products. Laboratories at CS-DAT include Processing and Packaging, Physical and Physiological Analysis, Chemical, Microbiological, and Prototype Laboratory for scaling up machinery and plants for the agri-food industry and post-harvest (CNR, n.d.).



Vocational & professional training

ITS (Italian tertiary educational institution)

- Offers specialised programmes in agri-food, digital skills, and sustainability, preparing students for the workforce (ITS Academy AgriPuglia, n.d.).
-

RLR 2: Physical capital and technologies

Infrastructure

- Key industrial areas located in Incoronata, Bovino, Lucera, San Severo, and Manfredonia, supporting business development and manufacturing (Consorzio ASI Foggia, n.d.).

- Airport with potential for cargo and passenger transport, connecting Foggia to the wider region, the rest of Italy, and some international destinations. It plays a key role during the summer season in bringing tourists to the Gargano area (Aeroporti di Puglia, n.d.).

- A comprehensive transport network, particularly the Autostrada Adriatica, which connects the south to the north of the country. The railway network primarily links Foggia to central and northern Italy, with important stops in other cities of the province, such as San Severo and Cerignola Campagna. Most small towns rely on bus connections, although regional trains operate between Tavoliere and Gargano areas (San Severo–Peschici line) and between Foggia and Lucera.
-

ICT and digital infrastructure

- Expansion of fibre-optic networks and 5G to improve connectivity in both urban and rural areas.
-

Coastal and marine resources

- A strategic port on the Adriatic coast, facilitating transport, logistics, and fishing, with connections to tourism, including ferry services to the Isole Tremiti.



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- Significant hospitality infrastructure, particularly in the Gargano area, supports seasonal tourism.
-

SPECIFICALLY RURAL RESOURCES

RLR 3: Natural resources

Group	Description
RLR 3.1: Renewable energy resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abundant sunlight, making it suitable for solar energy. Onshore windmills can be seen in the Daunian Mountains, and a project for offshore windmills in Gargano has been approved.
RLR 3.2: Mineral resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apricena (Tavoliere area) is home to important limestone quarries. This mineral resource is crucial for construction and other industries in the region.
RLR 3.3: Sea resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The coastline is rich in marine life, supporting both fishing and aquaculture. • Aquaculture includes both sea and land-based fish breeding, with a particular focus on the Gargano area. • Additionally, recreational activities such as sailing, canoeing, kayaking, and windsurfing, snorkelling are popular, particularly in the summer.



RLR 3.4: Raw materials of agricultural or forestry origin

- Marginal lands, where crops are difficult to grow, can be used for biomass feedstocks (Alhajj Ali et al., 2024b). Biomass is produced throughout the entire Province of Foggia.
- Mostly rainfed arable crops, such as cereals and forage, along with permanent crops, predominantly olive, whilst Tavoliere is mostly durum wheat, vegetables and tree crops (Conversa et al., 2020).
- Livestock grazing, olive groves mostly cropped in Gargano (Conversa et al., 2020).
- Gargano wood is widely used in furniture-making.

• Mediterranean climate.
The Daunian Mountains experience the lowest average temperatures, while the Tavoliere records the highest. Rainfall is most abundant in the Daunian Mountains and Gargano. In contrast, the Tavoliere receives the least rainfall in the entire Italian peninsula (Conversa et al., 2020; Petito et al., 2024).

RLR 3.5: Natural productive assets

- The Fortore River flows through the regions of Molise, Campania, and Apulia, covering an area of 1,604 km². It is dammed by the Occhito Dam, one of the largest dams in Europe, which was built to support crop irrigation and manage flood control (Magliulo et al., 2023). Key watercourses include the Celone, Vulgano, Salsola, and Triolo, which cross the Tavoliere plain and flow into the Candelaro torrent (Consorzio per la Bonifica della Capitanata, 2025). Beyond Candelaro, Cervaro and Carapelle are important torrents facing the Gulf of Manfredonia (De Santis et al., 2023).



- In addition to the Occhito Dam, two other dams are managed by the Consorzio per la Bonifica della Capitanata, playing a crucial role in irrigation and water management for the surrounding agricultural areas.
 - The Ofanto River flows through the regions of Campania, Basilicata, and Apulia, with a catchment area of 2,790 km². It is vital for agriculture, supporting the cultivation of vineyards, olive groves, and fruit trees in the surrounding areas (Campanale et al, 2020).
 - Groundwater is also crucial for meeting irrigation needs.
-

RLR 4: Natural heritage

- Gargano National Park is home to diverse habitats, including rocky coasts, Mediterranean pine forests with Aleppo pines, and rare flowers, making it the richest location for orchids in Europe (with 56 species and 5 subspecies). Its rich flora and fauna include the Gargano roe deer, foxes, and various species of woodpeckers. The Umbra Forest, with its central beech woodlands at low altitudes, is also one of the park's most important features. Additionally, the park contains significant wetlands, including the coastal lagoons of Lesina and Varano, the wetlands of Frattarolo and Lago Salso, the mouth of the Fortore River, the swamp of Sant'Egidio, and the marsh of Sfinale, which provide critical habitats for migratory birds (Ente Parco Nazionale del Gargano, 2025). Moreover, Oasi Laguna del Re is a wetland area, particularly a vital habitat for various bird species.
 - Bosco Incoronata Regional Park is a protected area covering approximately 1,000 hectares, preserving natural vegetation, including oak forests, within a predominantly cultivated landscape. The park is traversed by the Cervaro stream and features a mix of high-trunk forests and grasslands (Comune di Foggia, 2025).
 - Monte Cornacchia – Bosco Faeto: Path connecting Monte Cornacchia, the highest peak in Apulia (1,151 m), to Faeto's rich beech forests and fauna (Visit Monti Dauni, 2025).
-



RLR 5: Tangible cultural, historical and architectural heritage

- Prehistory: Grottone di Manaccore and Grotta Paglicci (caves), as well as Passo di Corvo Archaeological Park (CartApulia, n.d.).
 - Pre-Roman and Roman periods: The Siponto and Herdonia archaeological sites, along with the Museum of Bovino (CartApulia, n.d.).
 - Via Traiana, an ancient Roman road, connected Benevento to Brindisi. In the Province of Foggia, it passes through Troia, the Ponte Rotto sul Cervaro in Castelluccio dei Sauri, the Ponte Rotto sul Carapelle, and then Herdonia (CartApulia, n.d.).
 - Medieval religious architecture: the Province of Foggia was an important pilgrimage route. Notable sites include the Sanctuary of San Michele Archangelo, the pilgrims' shelter at the Abbazia di San Leonardo, the Cathedral of Troia, and Santa Maria di Devia. The Pulsano hermitages, hidden in the mountains, once served as secluded retreats for monks in prayer (CartApulia, n.d.).
 - Castles: Castelpagano, Castello di Monte Sant'Angelo, Castello di Manfredonia, Castelfiorentino, the Svevo-Angioino Fortress in Lucera, Castello Ducale di Bovino and Castello di Sant'Agata di Puglia (CartApulia, n.d.).
 - Traditional fortified farmhouses, grain and oil mills. (CartApulia, n.d.).
 - The granary pits of Cerignola.
-



RLR 6: Intangible cultural heritage

- Foraging wild vegetables and selling them on the street corners of Foggia, a tradition once carried out by the terrazzani and still practiced by local people today (Alhajj Ali, 2024b).
 - Soft drinks, spirits, and liqueurs made with local fruits. Sausages, prosciutto (e.g., Prosciutto di Faeto), pancetta, ricotta, mozzarella, and honey, all traditionally produced locally. Locally sourced meat, seafood, and legumes. Musciska, a traditional dried meat from Rignano Garganico, made from marinated and air-dried goat, sheep, or beef, originally eaten by shepherds. Local cheeses (Caciocavallo Podolico del Gargano, Canestrato Pugliese DOP). Taralli, fresh pasta, various types of olives (e.g., Bella di Cerignola), and products preserved in olive oil (e.g., lampascioni). Wine (e.g. Nero di Troia), bread (e.g., pane di Monte Sant'Angelo), rustic pastries (e.g., Farrata di Manfredonia, Calzone di Ischitella, paposcia), as well as traditional sweets.
Local dishes: each town has its own traditional specialities (Didonna et al., 2022).
 - Dance and music: Tarantella del Gargano, quadriglia.
 - Culture and dialects: Each city has its own dialects. Particularly, the province is home to the Arbëreshë, descendants of Albanians who settled in several villages, preserving their unique culture and dialect, and Franco-Provençal, a French dialect spoken by the inhabitants of Faeto, descendants of French émigrés from Provence.
 - Handcrafted ceramics from Gargano.
-



RLR 7: Resources of agriculture, forestry and other typical rural activities

Livestock typically found in the Province of Foggia:

- Sheep breed: Gentile di Puglia.
 - Goat breed: Capra garganica.
 - Cattle breed: Vacca Podolica del Gargano.
 - Pig breed: Suino Nero Pugliese.
(Fondazione Slow Food, n.d.)
-
- Agrotourism: masserie, educational farms, rural accommodations.
 - Km0 food networks: Food products sourced from local farms, often sold through farmers' markets or direct-to-consumer sales, strengthening local economies, community ties while boosting sustainability (Contò and Fiore, 2020; Nemes et al., 2021; Silvestri et al., 2023).

RLR 8: Local, traditional knowledge and skills

- Traditional preparation of dishes: Involves recipes and cooking techniques passed down through generations, using local ingredients such as olive oil, durum wheat, tomatoes, and cheeses.
- Crop cultivation: Knowledge of growing crops specific to the area, such as durum wheat, tomatoes, olives, and traditional farming techniques.
- Traditional food processing: Techniques such as cheese-making, ricotta-making, unstuffed cured meats, vegetables preserved in oil, and handmade fresh pasta.
- Expertise in aromatic plants: Their uses in herbal remedies and traditional cuisine (Alhajj Ali, 2024b).
- Familiarity with edible mushrooms and wild plants: Identifying, foraging, and using them safely. (Alhajj Ali, 2024b).
- Understanding of local fauna: Recognising native animal species and their role in the ecosystem.



- Gargano and Daunian Mountains have a long-standing tradition of woodworking and timber processing.
-

RLR 9: Social capital

- Agriculture and food associations: Coldiretti, Confagricoltura, Copagri, Fondazione Slow Food.
 - Local development agencies: Gal Daunia Rurale (responsible for Tavoliere), Gal Gargano and Gal Meridaunia.
 - Grassroots promotional association: Pro Loco.
 - Business and trade associations: The Chamber of Commerce of Foggia, Confindustria.
 - Wine Association: Movimento Turismo del Vino di Puglia.
 - Environmental and forestry associations: Osservatorio di Ecologia Appenninica, FAI, Lipu, Legambiente, WWF, Federparchi (environmental protection and sustainable tourism).
 - Cultural: Puglia Culture, Fondazione Apulia Felix, Italia Nostra.
 - Tourism: Ecogargano, Daunia Avventura, Associazione Italiana Turismo Responsabile.
-



1.4 Rural development potentials of the Province of Foggia

The Province of Foggia offers a wealth of untapped resources and development opportunities that could contribute significantly to rural growth and revitalisation. Its biodiversity, cultural and natural heritage provide a strong foundation for sustainable development initiatives. However, marginal landscapes have undergone significant transformation due to the increasing homogenisation of agriculture, leading to the loss of important natural features such as isolated trees, hedgerows, embankments, walls, copses, and canals. These elements, once integral to the areas' identity, have been disappearing over time and need to be preserved (Giordano, 2020).

Integrating underutilised crop species such as figs, almonds, and pistachios into marginal lands could help restore biodiversity while mitigating soil degradation. These crops thrive in harsh environments and offer potential for both environmental preservation and economic growth. Similarly, wild plants like *Salicornia patula*, which are well-suited to saline soils, could be cultivated to manage salinisation and improve soil health, while also offering new economic avenues. Another promising crop is cardoon (*Cynara cardunculus* L.), a hardy plant that can grow in poor soils and be used for multiple purposes, including biomass production, biofuel, food, and pharmaceuticals. (Alhajj Ali et al., 2024b).

Tourism in the area has grown steadily from 2015 to 2024, with arrivals increasing by 126,000 and overnight stays reaching 4.6 million in 2024, after a brief decline during the pandemic. Interestingly, 4 of the top 5 destinations are in Gargano (Vieste, San Giovanni Rotondo, Peschici, and Rodi Garganico), with Foggia (4th place) being the only exception in the Tavoliere (Ufficio Osservatorio di Puglia Promozione, 2025). The Daunian Mountains, still overlooked, possess remarkable natural beauty and historic villages, with potential for further tourism development.



Rural tourism can be an alternative form of sustainable tourism, allowing urban residents to reconnect with the natural environment (e.g., digital detox, yoga retreats, mindfulness, trekking, birdwatching, and water-based activities), as well as engage in hands-on activities (e.g., learning traditional craft techniques or cooking local meals) (Reitano, 2024). Moreover, cultural heritage tourism presents an outstanding opportunity for the area, enabling visitors to explore the rich history, art, and architecture of its historic towns and villages, while immersing themselves in unique traditions and customs.

Forms of eco-agrotourism and off-grid accommodations also appeal to sustainability-conscious tourists and are viewed as essential in promoting regenerative tourism, supporting the preservation of both tangible and intangible heritage while fostering economic development in local communities (Reitano, 2024). Furthermore, urban residents might be drawn to rural areas in search of spirituality, ranging from a need for a break from the hustle and bustle of daily life to a deep sense of belonging offered by many religious sites (e.g., Via Sacra Longobardorum) (Contò and Fiore, 2020; Alhaji Ali et al., 2024b). Spirituality can also inspire farmers to adopt more sustainable agricultural practices, such as organic and biologic farming or other eco-friendly techniques (e.g., water management, crop rotation, energy efficiency), as they see themselves as stewards of the natural environment (Alhaji Ali et al., 2024b). This sense of environmental stewardship aligns with their commitment to preserving the land, while also fostering potential for economic growth.

Another critical aspect is the provision of healthcare services, especially considering the ageing population. The development of medical centre infrastructure in non-urbanised areas could provide opportunities for the region, addressing healthcare needs in rural communities and improving access to services (Kusio and Fiore, 2022). Moreover, short supply chains, such as direct sales or farmers' markets, contribute to the local economy by reducing the distance between producers and consumers, promoting sustainability, and

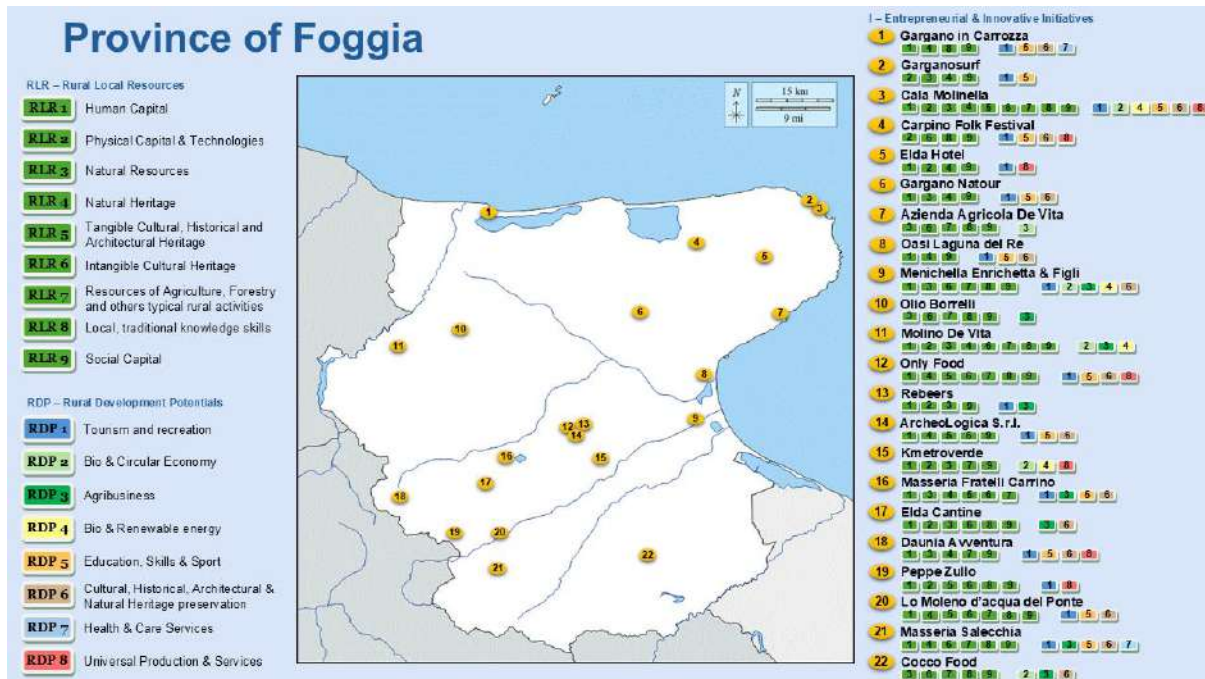


supporting local businesses (Contò and Fiore, 2020; Nemes et al., 2021; Silvestri et al., 2023). Recently, urban consumers have shown increased interest in buying fresher, traditional foods from rural areas (Wiśniewska-Paluszak et al., 2023). Initiatives such as green certifications, agritourism, and ecomuseums have already been implemented but can be further expanded (Contò and Fiore, 2020).



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2. Visualization of the development potential of rural areas in the region



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3. Overview of E&I Initiatives in the region's rural areas

3.1. Initiative 1

1. Initiative characteristics:

1.1. Name of the initiative:

Gargano in Carrozza

1.2. Location of the initiative:

Lesina

1.3. Type of stakeholder involved:

Non-profit organisation.

1.4. Initiative type:

Social.

1.5. Scale of activity:

Small.

1.6. Legal form:

Association.

1.7. Planned implementation period:

Long-term.

2. Description of initiative:

The Gargano in Carrozza project aims to promote ecological knowledge,



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focusing on school-age children and social inclusion for people with disabilities. This initiative involves educators, psychologists, therapists and environmental and wildlife experts, who guide children on carriage rides through the stunning landscapes of the Gargano National Park, such as Bosco Isola and the Lesina Lagoon.

The strategic choice of an electric carriage, which moves independently, ensures the horse's well-being, transforming it from a servant of the carriage to the star of the vehicle. In fact, the carriage, equipped with autonomous electric propulsion, follows the horse, rather than the other way around. As a result, children can visit areas otherwise inaccessible.

Other activities include:

- Ortho therapy: A rehabilitation method for discomfort and disability that falls under the field of occupational therapies. As found by several studies, these activities improve mood, stimulate a sense of responsibility and socialisation, strengthen confidence and self-esteem, and enhance relationships with others.
- Onotherapy: Rehabilitation with the donkey, a friendly and generous equine with great communicative potential and excellent qualities such as affection. It stimulates curiosity and the search for interaction. This therapy is also used to recover memory, psychomotor, cognitive, muscular, and linguistic functions. The donkey is a sturdy animal, which immediately offers guarantees of reliability and safety. A typical empathetic animal, it is ideal for interacting with children, the elderly and, in general, with vulnerable individuals.
- Pet therapy: An intervention promoting the child-animal relationship, carried out with the help of pets, especially dogs, which have shown their effectiveness in countering some behavioural problems such as learning difficulties (often due to attention deficit) and episodes of aggression. The



relationship that is established with the animal, especially during play, can help to promote social behaviours in the child, facilitating their methods of approach and interaction with other children and with adults.

- Flight of the falconers: An exhibition of falcon flight led by the master falconer Angelo Pagano.

Visitors will also learn how to care for the environment and recognise the importance of preserving biodiversity, through activities such as waste collection on beaches and visits to unspoilt natural areas.

3. The main rural local resources that form the basis of the initiative:

RLR1 – Human capital

RLR 4 – Natural heritage

RLR 8 – Local, traditional knowledge and skills

RLR 9 – Social capital

4. The development potential(s) of rural areas that the initiative utilizes:

Development potentials:	
Tourism & recreation	✓
Bio & circular economy	
Bio & renewable energy	
Education, skills & sport	✓
Agribusiness	
Cultural, historical, architectural & natural heritage preservation	✓



Health & care services	✓
Universal production & services	

5. Entrepreneurial and innovative knowledge, skills, and competencies required for the implementation of the initiative:

- Highly skilled personnel to work with therapies, along with expertise in working with children and adults with disabilities.
- Highly skilled personnel to ensure the well-being and care of the animals.
- Familiarity with the legal and regulatory framework governing environmental education projects, animal therapy programs, and social inclusion initiatives, alongside compliance with animal welfare standards.
- The adoption of sustainable practices in protected areas, such as the Gargano National Park.
- Active engagement of the local community in the project.

6. Key rural stakeholders supporting the initiative:

The project is currently supported by visitors who contribute based on the activities they choose to participate in, as well as volunteers.

7. Socio-economic barriers and challenges related to the initiative:

- The project currently does not receive external funding and relies solely on visitors' contributions and volunteers' efforts.
- Retaining skilled personnel may be challenging if the initiative is primarily volunteer based, leading to turnover or lack of specialised expertise.
- The costs associated with maintaining the animals, including food,



veterinary care, and other necessary resources. Currently, food for the animals is donated by individuals.

- Limited financial resources may hinder improvements in infrastructure.

3.2. Initiative 2

1. Initiative characteristics:

1.1. Name of the initiative:

Garganosurf

1.2. Location of the initiative:

Vieste

1.3. Type of stakeholder involved:

Small enterprise.

1.4. Initiative type:

Business.

1.5. Scale of activity:

Small.

1.6. Legal form:

Limited Liability Company (LLC).

1.7. Planned implementation period:

Long-term.

2. Description of initiative:



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Garganosurf, the school founded by former world champion Astrid Berz, offers lessons in kitesurfing, windsurfing, wingfoil, SUP, e-foil, wave surfing, and yoga.

They also organise special events, such as:

- Sunrise Paddle Tours: Paddleboarding at sunrise, with equipment provided and a meditation session on board at dawn.
- Sunset SUP: Stand-up paddleboarding at sunset, with equipment provided and an aperitivo included.
- Full Moon SUP: Stand-up paddleboarding under the full moon, with equipment provided and an aperitivo included.

3. The main rural local resources that form the basis of the initiative:

RLR 2 – Physical capital and technologies

RLR 3 – Natural resources

RLR 4 – Natural heritage

RLR 9 – Social capital

4. The development potential(s) of rural areas that the initiative utilizes:

Development potentials:	
Tourism & recreation	✓
Bio & circular economy	
Bio & renewable energy	
Education, skills & sport	✓
Agribusiness	



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Cultural, historical, architectural & natural heritage preservation	
Health & care services	
Universal production & services	

5. Entrepreneurial and innovative knowledge, skills, and competencies required for the implementation of the initiative:

- Expertise in water sports and instruction across various levels, ensuring that lessons cater to beginners through to advanced practitioners.
- Event management skills with the ability to organise unique activities.
- Marketing and digital marketing skills, particularly for reaching international customers and tourists from other regions.
- In-depth knowledge of safety protocols and first-aid, ensuring the wellbeing of all participants during lessons and events.
- Adaptability to water sport trends.
- Implementation of eco-friendly practices.

6. Key rural stakeholders supporting the initiative:

Garganosurf has built strong relationships with various local businesses to offer its clients special discounts and a great experience while staying in the area. Among its partners are campsites, bungalow villages, and local restaurants.

7. Socio-economic barriers and challenges related to the initiative:

- Seasonal fluctuations, with high demand in summer and limited activity during the off-peak season.
- Activities are highly dependent on weather conditions, which can lead to



cancellations or reduced demand.

- Costly equipment maintenance and the need for regular updates to courses to ensure safety and quality.
- Recruiting and retaining experienced instructors, which can be challenging given the specialised nature of the sports.
- Competition from other water sports providers located in other tourist towns, which may affect market share.

3.3. Initiative 3

1. Initiative characteristics:

1.1. Name of the initiative:

Cala Molinella

1.2. Location of the initiative:

Vieste

1.3. Type of stakeholder involved:

Small enterprise.

1.4. Initiative type:

Business.

1.5. Scale of activity:

Small to medium.

1.6. Legal form:

Limited Partnership (LP) – Società in Accomandita Semplice (SAS)



1.7. Planned implementation period:

Long-term.

2. Description of initiative:

Eco-sustainable holiday village offers comfortable cottages a few meters from the sea, a private beach club, a swimming pool surrounded by an olive tree grove and suggestive dry-stone walls, an educational farm with donkeys, a wooden tree house, a panoramic hill and a wonderful olive tree grove with a garden where guests can devote themselves to creative workshops and experiences.

Activities:

- Didactic garden

Through the laboratory of orthodidactics, children can get rid of urban inhibitions through a valuable exercise of education and responsibility that sees them working in a real garden.

- The Olive Tree of Books

An open-air library for adults and children to enjoy the shade of beautiful olive trees, books and pamphlets inspired by the Sea, Time, and Apulia divided by age.

- Hands in the dough

Learning how to make orecchiette, focaccia, gnocchi and taralli from Apulia.

- The Tree House

A wooden house among the pines and clouds, safe, cozy, and lit up at night. A magical place to read fairy tales under the stars in summer.

- Educational Farm

A family of donkeys, Her Majesty the Queen Bee and her hive, a family pointer, litters of kittens, a tribe of hens and chicks, and a couple of piglets. This and much



more on the scenic hillside of Cala Molinella, which offers educational trails for all tastes.

- Creative recycling

The theme of many workshops offered during the afternoons at the Cala Molinella: shells, bottle caps, glass, and much more to create while learning.

Guests can also enjoy olive oil from Cala Molinella's own production, made from its olive trees and offered as a taste of the land.

The village is committed to sustainability. For this reason, a total of 130 photovoltaic panels and solar thermal systems are installed, producing clean energy and hot water. There is also a desalination plant that helps filter and purify the groundwater for the entire village, as well as a micro-filtering system for still, sparkling, cold, and room temperature water, which is offered at the bar to avoid the use of plastic bottles. The village cleans Baia Molinella once a week and practices composting.

Other sustainable activities include:

- Circular economy workshops held in summer, involving local partners and associations.
- Use of packaging in natural cardboard or fibre, instead of plastic.

3. The main rural local resources that form the basis of the initiative:

RLR1 – Human capital

RLR2 – Physical capital and technologies

RLR3 – Natural resources

RLR4 – Natural heritage

RLR5 – Tangible cultural, historical and architectural heritage

RLR6 – Intangible cultural heritage



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RLR7 - Resources of agriculture, forestry and other typical rural activities

RLR8 - Local, traditional knowledge and skills

RLR9 - Social capital

4. The development potential(s) of rural areas that the initiative utilizes:

Development potentials:	
Tourism & recreation	✓
Bio & circular economy	✓
Bio & renewable energy	✓
Education, skills & sport	✓
Agribusiness	
Cultural, historical, architectural & natural heritage preservation	✓
Health & care services	
Universal production & services	✓

5. Entrepreneurial and innovative knowledge, skills, and competencies required for the implementation of the initiative:

- Knowledge of sustainable technologies.
- As a seasonal business, Cala Molinella experiences high demand for bookings during the summer season, remaining open with lower demand during the off-season. The business strategy must take this into account. For example, the village also offers the possibility of hosting events.
- Vieste is an important town in Gargano, attracting both national and international tourists. The business needs to publicise itself widely online



and offer proper training to its seasonal workers.

- Financial forecasting is extremely important for a seasonal business, which must manage significant costs before opening, such as hiring temporary workers and maintenance. Cala Molinella has also received tax credits over the years.
- Legal and regulatory requirements for operating a tourism activity, such as safety regulations, environmental protection laws, consumer protection, and labour laws, must be followed.
- The ability to identify potential risks and create strategies to mitigate them.
- Innovation and adaptation to sustainable practices and tourism strategies.
- Establishing good relationships with local suppliers and the community.

6. Key rural stakeholders supporting the initiative:

Although the establishment offers traditional meals, it has partnerships with local restaurants, fruit and vegetable shops, and other food producers, which it recommends to its guests. Local suppliers, maintenance workers, and service providers, such as housekeepers and landscapers, are essential to the operation of the village. The business has also benefited from tax credits provided by the government to support its operations. In a small town like Vieste, businesses often collaborate to support one another, strengthening the local economy and fostering a sense of community.

7. Socio-economic barriers and challenges related to the initiative:

- As a seasonal business, Cala Molinella encounters fluctuating income, which can make maintaining cash flow during the off-peak months burdensome. This may impact the ability to invest in necessary



improvements or reinvest in the business outside of the peak season.

- Mobility is a significant challenge for towns in the Gargano region due to the limited availability of public transport. Most towns are connected to Foggia by bus, and the railway offers limited connections to the Gargano area via the San Severo-Peschici Calenella railway line. These connections are mostly available during the summer season, with very few services in the off-peak months. It is often necessary to take a bus after arriving at the train station.
- The area is home to many tourism providers, making the competition extremely high. Despite this, Cala Molinella has successfully marketed itself as a sustainable enterprise, aiming to attract a niche market of eco-conscious travellers.
- As a tourism-based activity, Cala Molinella is vulnerable to fluctuations in the tourism market, which can be influenced by various factors, for instance, economic downturns, global crises (e.g., pandemics), or shifts in travel trends and preferences.
- Difficulty in recruiting seasonal skilled employees.

3.4. Initiative 4

1. Initiative characteristics:

1.1. Name of the initiative:

Carpino Folk Festival

1.2. Location of the initiative:

Carpino

1.3. Type of stakeholder involved:



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Municipality, Apulia region, Teatro Pubblico Pugliese, Puglia Sounds.

1.4. Initiative type:

Non-profit organisation.

1.5. Scale of activity:

Large.

1.6. Legal form:

Cultural association.

1.7. Planned implementation period:

Annual.

2. Description of initiative:

The first festival was organised in 1996 to promote the artistic and anthropological heritage of the Cantori di Carpino. These three elderly men are the custodians of a vast, centuries-old repertoire of sonnets and serenades and are the only ones in the world to play the five-stringed chitarra battente. The festival has attracted the attention of artists and scholars of traditional music, becoming one of Italy's most important cultural initiatives. During the festival, stages and workshops are held for musicians, dancers, enthusiasts and experts. Attendees can explore different aspects of musical panorama through book and record presentations, as well as meetings with key figures in the folk scene. The evenings feature concerts and performances by groups, singers and virtuosos from Italy, Europe and the Mediterranean.

3. The main rural local resources that form the basis of the initiative:

RLR2 - Physical capital and technologies



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RLR 6 – Intangible cultural heritage

RLR 8 – Local, traditional knowledge and skills

RLR 9 – Social capital

4. The development potential(s) of rural areas that the initiative utilizes:

Development potentials:	
Tourism & recreation	✓
Bio & circular economy	
Bio & renewable energy	
Education, skills & sport	✓
Agribusiness	
Cultural, historical, architectural & natural heritage preservation	✓
Health & care services	
Universal production & services	✓

5. Entrepreneurial and innovative knowledge, skills, and competencies required for the implementation of the initiative:

- Event planning for the *Carpino Folk Festival* requires a deep understanding of logistics, scheduling, and coordination, as it involves organising performances, workshops, and managing artists. It also includes working with the media and ensuring the safety and satisfaction of a large number of visitors every day.
- Understanding of folk music, local traditions, and culture to create authentic programming and content.



- Collaborating with the hospitality sector is crucial to ensuring an overall positive experience for visitors.
- Skills in marketing to promote the event.
- Management of the budget and securing funding from sponsors.
- Obtaining permits for public events and coordinating with local authorities.

6. Key rural stakeholders supporting the initiative:

Key rural stakeholders supporting the initiative include the City Council of Carpino, the Apulia region, Teatro Pubblico Pugliese, and Puglia Sounds. Other partners include Ferrovie del Gargano, which provides additional trains and buses on the event date, many local sponsors who contribute financially, and volunteers who help ensure the smooth operation of the festival. The festival also contributes to the local economy, with many visitors dining and staying locally.

7. Socio-economic barriers and challenges related to the initiative:

- Limited access to funding and sponsorships can affect the festival's organization.
- Mobility issues due to Carpino's location in Gargano.
- Infrastructure costs and logistics management.
- Managing waste from large crowds, particularly in a rural area, presents environmental and logistical complications.
- Ensuring safety and comfort for visitors in crowded spaces.
- Solving conflicts between stakeholders and with the local community.
- Accommodating large crowds in a small town with limited resources.



3.5. Initiative 5

1. Initiative characteristics:

1.1. Name of the initiative:

Elda Hotel

1.2. Location of the initiative:

Monte Sant'Angelo

1.3. Type of stakeholder involved:

Small enterprise.

1.4. Initiative type:

Business.

1.5. Scale of activity:

Small to medium.

1.6. Legal form:

The hotel's legal classification is not specified.

1.7. Planned implementation period:

Long-term.

2. Description of initiative:

Elda Hotel is a restoration project of the historic "Rifugio" Hotel in the Foresta Umbra, originally inaugurated on July 21, 1940.

The building was designed in 1938 thanks to the Province of Foggia, after the state transferred two land parcels to the local authority for the construction of a



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hotel along the road to Monte Sant’Angelo. As one of the first hospitality structures in Puglia, it served as a key destination for visitors and tourists coming to the Foresta Umbra for decades. However, in the 1970s, the hotel began a slow decline, eventually becoming a ruin within a few years.

Following an extensive restoration project, the hotel has reopened its doors after thirty years of abandonment. Nearly 80 years after its original inauguration, it has been returned to the community in all its former glory. The restoration was carried out with absolute respect for the extraordinary ecosystem of the Foresta Umbra Biogenetic Nature Reserve, which was established in 1977.

With Elda Hotel, the story continues...

3. The main rural local resources that form the basis of the initiative:

RLR1 – Human capital

RLR2 – Physical capital & technologies

RLR4 – Natural heritage

RLR9 – Social capital

4. The development potential(s) of rural areas that the initiative utilizes:

Development potentials:	
Tourism & recreation	✓
Bio & circular economy	
Bio & renewable energy	
Education, skills & sport	
Agribusiness	



Cultural, historical, architectural & natural heritage preservation	
Health & care services	
Universal production & services	✓

5. Entrepreneurial and innovative knowledge, skills, and competencies required for the implementation of the initiative:

- Promoting an eco-friendly hospitality model within the Foresta Umbra.
- Minimising disruption to the local ecosystem through sustainable hospitality operations.
- Developing a strong brand identity rooted in the hotel's rich history.
- Understanding legal requirements related to historical building restoration, environmental conservation, and hospitality industry regulations.
- Enhancing online presence to attract tourists from other regions and abroad.
- Employing skilled staff to ensure an exceptional customer experience.

6. Key rural stakeholders supporting the initiative:

Elda Hotel hosts many jazz concerts, particularly during the summer season. Among its partners are: the Gargano National Park, as the hotel is located within the park, the municipal councils of Monte Sant'Angelo, Vico del Gargano, and Vieste, the Apulia Region, the Ministry of Culture, Teatro Pubblico Pugliese, and the Consorzio Regione per le Arti e la Cultura.

Elda Hotel also maintains a close partnership with Elda Cantine. Moreover, the hotel's own restaurant was recognised by Gambero Rosso, the Italian food and



wine magazine, as one of the best restaurants in Italy, receiving one forchetta (fork) from the range of 1 to 3.

7. Socio-economic barriers and challenges related to the initiative:

- As most of the tourists come to visit the Apulia region in summer, Elda Hotel needs to develop a strong business strategy to attract visitors to Foresta Umbra during the off-season.
- As a 4-star hotel, Elda needs to recruit skilled hospitality staff, which can be tough considering its location in a remote area.
- Located within the Gargano National Park, Elda benefits from its natural surroundings, which attracts tourists, but this location also presents challenges in terms of accessibility.
- Like any hospitality activity, it is susceptible to broader economic factors that can increase or decrease the influx of tourists to the area.
- High costs related to maintaining the historical building, staff training and balancing the needs of the business with the conservation of the natural environment surrounding the hotel.

3.6. Initiative 6

1. Initiative characteristics:

1.1. Name of the initiative:

Gargano Natour

1.2. Location of the initiative:

San Giovanni Rotondo



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1.3. Type of stakeholder involved:

Non-profit organisation.

1.4. Initiative type:

Social.

1.5. Scale of activity:

Small.

1.6. Legal form:

Association.

1.7. Planned implementation period:

Long-term.

2. Description of initiative:

Gargano Natour operates in the territory of the Gargano National Park, in northern Puglia, primarily offering visitors guided services along hiking trails, at archaeological sites, at outstanding agro-zootechnical farms, and in historic town centres.

Below there are some activities organised by Gargano Natour:

- Guided tours, including multi-day excursions, for groups, families, and schools in the natural and cultural sites of the Gargano, also offering lesser-known destinations of natural, geological, and historical significance.
- Educational projects with schools, such as work-based learning programmes and career orientation.



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- Travel consultancy: Gargano Natour plans the trek according to customer's needs and level of difficulty, providing a GPX track of the itinerary, topographic maps, and assistance in finding accommodation and transport.
- Support for self-guided tours: mainly for foreign hikers who want to fully immerse themselves in the nature of the Gargano without a guide but in total safety and awareness.
- Tailor-made experiences and gifts, such as personalised hen and stag dos, even multi-day ones, focused on adventure and connecting with nature.
- Accompaniment of photographers and location managers for shoots and film productions.
- Location scouting for TV and film productions.
- Outdoor team-building activities for companies that have chosen nature as their path, in collaboration with psychologists and team-building professionals.
- Consulting and designing itineraries and travel packages for travel agencies, tour operators, and other entities.
- Communication and web marketing activities for businesses and public administrations, especially in the tourism and cultural sectors.
- Training on digital cartographic tools essential for guides, speleologists, and rescue operators.
- Teaching in training courses on cultural heritage and sustainable tourism, aimed at both young people seeking new employment opportunities and professionals looking to enhance their skills, particularly in the tourism and cultural sectors.
- Educational talks and classroom testimonials for children and young people, both online and in person.



- Project planning for public administrations (municipalities and other entities) in the field of cultural and tourism development.
- Promotional events on the Gargano and in Puglia, focused on local identity and sustainability while always keeping an eye on the future.

3. The main rural local resources that form the basis of the initiative:

RLR1 – Human capital

RLR3 – Natural resources

RLR4 – Natural heritage

RLR9 – Social capital

4. The development potential(s) of rural areas that the initiative utilizes:

Development potentials:	
Tourism & recreation	✓
Bio & circular economy	
Bio & renewable energy	
Education, skills & sport	✓
Agribusiness	
Cultural, historical, architectural & natural heritage preservation	✓
Health & care services	
Universal production & services	

5. Entrepreneurial and innovative knowledge, skills, and competencies required for the implementation of the initiative:



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- Detailed knowledge about Gargano National Park's ecosystem.
- Deep understanding of local archaeological sites, traditions, folklore, history, and practices.
- Expertise in tourism industry, which involve skills, such as travel planning and fluency in foreign languages.
- Knowledge of safety protocols and emergency procedures in remote areas.
- Adaptability to different audiences, such as cultural sensibility for international visitors.
- Team coordination for complex projects and events.
- Ability to work with diverse stakeholders.
- Flexibility to scale services based on seasonal demand
- Creative approaches to packaging and pricing services.

6. Key rural stakeholders supporting the initiative:

Gargano Natour works together with many accommodation structures (e.g., agritourism facilities, hotels, glamping and b&b) and restaurants at the Gargano area. Furthermore, as Gargano Natour has some preset excursions, it has partnerships with local farmers and small artisanal producers to showcase their products for tastings during the excursions. This allows visitors to experience authentic local flavours and traditional production methods firsthand. Moreover, it has established partnerships with several local associations, such as Ostello Torre Francigena, as well as municipalities and local towns where they conduct their excursions, ensuring community support and access to unique sites and experiences.



7. Socio-economic barriers and challenges related to the initiative:

- Seasonal tourism fluctuations and weather conditions: Gargano Natour is heavily dependent on the weather and experiences a peak in activities during the warmer seasons.
- Limited awareness of Gargano's potential as an ecotourism destination compared to more well-known Italian areas.
- Remote areas within the Gargano National Park, with limited transportation, can make accessibility challenging.
- Costs related to ongoing training, safety measures, and difficulties in accessing funding.

3.7. Initiative 7

1. Initiative characteristics:

1.1. Name of the initiative:

Azienda Agricola De Vita

1.2. Location of the initiative:

Mattinata

1.3. Type of stakeholder involved:

Small enterprise.

1.4. Initiative type:

Business.

1.5. Scale of activity:



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Small to medium.

1.6. Legal form:

Family farm. The company's legal classification is not specified.

1.7. Planned implementation period:

Long-term.

2. Description of initiative:

De Vita is a well-known dairy and butchery family farm in Mattinata, producing and selling its products through direct sales, serving as a reference point for the entire community. Especially famous for its caprine Pat cheese, De Vita promotes the traditional foods and practices of the Gargano area.

The company breeds native breeds such as the Podolica cattle, Gentile di Puglia sheep, and the Garganica goat. The latter, in particular, is raised in the wild or semi-wild state and is a species registered in the Regional Register of Native Genetic Resources of the Apulia region.

Currently, the company raises 240 goats for the production of dairy products (ricotta, cacioricotta, fresh and aged canestrato, and primo sale) produced in its own dairy. The choice of a short supply chain to counter the competition from large-scale distribution has proven successful. In fact, demand for these products has grown in recent years, and some of them have even won awards and recognition for their high quality, which is reflected in their low lactose content and rich presence of nutrients such as calcium and phosphorus. In addition to its dairy products, De Vita is also dedicated to meat production, which is distinguished by its low-fat content.

3. The main rural local resources that form the basis of the initiative:



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RLR 3 – Natural resources

RLR 6 – Intangible cultural heritage

RLR 7 – Resources of agriculture, forestry and other typical rural activities

RLR 8 – Local, traditional knowledge skills

RLR 9 – Social capital

4. The development potential(s) of rural areas that the initiative utilizes:

Development potentials:	
Tourism & recreation	
Bio & circular economy	
Bio & renewable energy	
Education, skills & sport	
Agribusiness	✓
Cultural, historical, architectural & natural heritage preservation	
Health & care services	
Universal production & services	

5. Entrepreneurial and innovative knowledge, skills, and competencies required for the implementation of the initiative:

- Expertise in breeding and caring for native breeds.
- Knowledge of sustainable farming practices.
- In-depth understanding of traditional dairy processes and butchery techniques.



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- Competence in direct sales techniques, including determining the target audience, understanding customer needs, and building strong relationships.
- Knowledge of local traditions.
- Knowledge of food safety, animal welfare, and legal regulations for dairy and meat production.

6. Key rural stakeholders supporting the initiative:

De Vita is a key company in Mattinata. The stakeholders supporting the initiative include local residents and authorities, as well as PugliaPromozione, a regional organisation that promotes tourism in Apulia.

Furthermore, De Vita engages in educational activities in schools, such as demonstrating traditional cheese-making to students. It also organises product tastings for tourists, including trekking groups, to promote local food traditions.

7. Socio-economic barriers and challenges related to the initiative:

- De Vita has chosen to work with direct sales to avoid competing with large-scale producers and retailers. However, consumer awareness about the benefits of locally produced, high-quality food can be limited, and not everyone is willing to pay a premium for it.
- Compliance with safety standards, animal welfare regulations, food certifications, and environmental policies can be complex and demanding.
- Gargano is well known for its natural landscapes, but traditional farming and native breeds are less recognised. This can be a challenge for a small business looking to diversify its target audience.



- Maintaining high-quality standards in dairy and meat production can be costly, especially as the animals are free-range, requiring more land and resources.
- Operational costs, including veterinary care, agronomists, animal feed, and farm maintenance, represent a significant financial burden for small-scale farms.

3.8. Initiative 8

1. Initiative characteristics:

1.1. Name of the initiative:

Oasi Laguna del Re

1.2. Location of the initiative:

Manfredonia

1.3. Type of stakeholder involved:

Micro-enterprise.

1.4. Initiative type:

Social.

1.5. Scale of activity:

Small.

1.6. Legal form:

Non-Profit Organisation Centre for Naturalist Studies.

1.7. Planned implementation period:



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Long-term.

2. Description of initiative:

Oasi Laguna del Re is part of the network of Oases managed by the National Federation Pro Natura, the oldest environmental association in Italy.

Covering 40 hectares of land, this coastal wetland offers a mosaic of unique habitats: from the brackish lagoon to lush reed beds and wet meadows.

Here, nature expresses itself in all its beauty and complexity. Over 100 species of birds find refuge in its waters, while marsh plants such as common reed and salt-tolerant species like *Salicornia* thrive in this unique and distinctive environment.

The Oasi is more than just a wildlife sanctuary. It is an open-air laboratory, where scientific research and environmental education come together. It is a place of connection between humans and nature, where visitors can rediscover their bond with the environment through immersive and multi-sensory experiences.

The area has been restored thanks to the LIFE “Zone Umide Sipontine” project, funded by the European Union and successfully carried out by Apulia region, the Consortium for the Reclamation of Capitanata, and the Centro Studi Naturalistici ONLUS, which manages the Oasi.

This intervention, one of the most significant in Italy, had a dual purpose:

- On one hand, it enabled the ecological restoration of an important coastal wetland.
- On the other, it helped restore legality in a public area, part of the Gargano National Park, which had previously been occupied illegally.

The restoration work involved the demolition of numerous illegal structures and the removal of fences and walls that restricted access. This was followed by the hydraulic restoration of the lagoon, which included reopening canals, excavating basins, and installing water regulation systems to improve water exchange. These



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actions have recreated the typical transitional wetland environment of Apulia, where flooded areas alternate with dry land, making the site suitable even for agriculture. Today, the Oasi also serves as a natural nursery for juvenile fish of various species.

Located near the mouth of the Candelaro River, within the Gargano National Park, this site holds immense ecological value. As part of the wetland system of the Gulf of Manfredonia, it is one of the last remaining examples of the vast marshlands that once covered over 80,000 hectares of Capitanata until the early 20th century.

Oasi Laguna del Re is an integral part of the Natura 2000 network, as it is included in both the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) “Zone Umide della Capitanata” and the Special Protection Area (SPA) “Paludi presso il Golfo di Manfredonia”.

To enhance accessibility, several visitor-friendly infrastructures have been developed, including:

- A visitor centre.
- Birdwatching hides and observation towers.
- A walkway across the lagoon.
- Various trails for walking, cycling, and horse riding.

These facilities allow the public to experience the extraordinary biodiversity of the Oasi, while also raising awareness of the crucial role of wetlands in protecting the environment and natural resources.

3. The main rural local resources that form the basis of the initiative:

RLR1 – Human capital

RLR4 – Natural heritage

RLR9 – Social capital



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4. The development potential(s) of rural areas that the initiative utilizes:

Development potentials:	
Tourism & recreation	✓
Bio & circular economy	
Bio & renewable energy	
Education, skills & sport	✓
Agribusiness	
Cultural, historical, architectural & natural heritage preservation	✓
Health & care services	
Universal production & services	

5. Entrepreneurial and innovative knowledge, skills, and competencies required for the implementation of the initiative:

- Expertise in wetland conservation, biodiversity management, and ecosystem restoration.
- Knowledge of sustainable land use and species protection, particularly for birds and fish. Monitoring of local flora and fauna.
- Familiarity with conservation legislation and best practices.
- Experience in developing and managing conservation and research projects.
- Ability to engage with local communities, public authorities, and conservation organisations.
- Knowledge of fundraising strategies, with a focus on EU conservation programs.



- Experience in eco-tourism management, including the organisation of guided tours and educational workshops.
- Proficiency in marketing and communication tools to promote the Oasi.
- Ability to assess environmental impact and monitor habitat quality.

6. Key rural stakeholders supporting the initiative:

- University of Foggia: Involved in an experimental project on the cultivation of *Salicornia* within the Oasi, as well as other related research initiatives.
- City Council of Manfredonia, Apulia Region, and EU Conservation Programs providing support and funding for conservation and restoration efforts.
- Local Communities and Schools engaged in environmental education and community-driven conservation activities.
- National Federation Pro Natura (historical Italian environmental association).

7. Socio-economic barriers and challenges related to the initiative:

- Dependence on external funding.
- Raising awareness about the importance of wetlands for the environment and receiving support from local community and authorities.
- Establishing a good relationship with landowners near the Oasi.
- Adapting to the impacts of climate change.
- Attracting qualified volunteers to contribute to specialised projects and conservation efforts.
- Balance conservation with the necessity of financial resources, ensuring



sufficient tourists visits without disturbing migratory birds, as well as the cultivation and sale of *Salicornia* without losing its social purposes.

3.9. Initiative 9

1. Initiative characteristics:

1.1. Name of the initiative:

Menichella Enrichetta & Figli

1.2. Location of the initiative:

Manfredonia

1.3. Type of stakeholder involved:

Small enterprise.

1.4. Initiative type:

Business.

1.5. Scale of activity:

Small to medium.

1.6. Legal form:

Società Semplice (often used in agriculture and other non-commercial ventures).

1.7. Planned implementation period:

Long-term.

2. Description of initiative:

Menichella Enrichetta & Figli extends over 135 hectares in the Manfredonia countryside, within an area of high natural value classified as a Site of Community



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Interest (SIC) and a Special Protection Area (SPA). It is located near the Lago Salso Nature Reserve, which is part of the Gargano National Park's protected area.

Land Management and Drainage System

Over the years, to improve field drainage, the company has developed a network of 10 km of canals connected to a Consorzio per la Bonifica della Capitanata canal. This system is linked to a pump station that regulates water levels, preventing excessive accumulation. This drainage network ensures the efficient removal of rainwater from the flat terrain.

Following the creation of these canals, the land has been divided into eight plots, each separated by tree and shrub hedges. These hedgerows serve to stabilise and protect the drainage channels while also enhancing and safeguarding the various crops. Along these buffer strips, grassed paths have been created to facilitate access to the plots. The grass cover ensures that the paths remain walkable and accessible by vehicles, even after rainfall.

Environmental Conservation and Biodiversity

To establish the 10 km of hedgerows, the company has planted over 44,000 trees and shrubs, including holm oaks, mastic trees, mulberries, tamarisks, manna ashes, pomegranates, and myrtles. They encourage the presence of bees, dragonflies, and other beneficial insects while providing shelter for wildlife, such as foxes, hares, and badgers. Furthermore, six wetland areas have been created, consisting of small lakes or ponds surrounded by wooded areas featuring pines, holm oaks, tamarisks, and mastic trees. These habitats support the natural repopulation of local wildlife, including species such as the white stork, great egret, grey heron, little egret, cranes, lesser kestrel, marsh harrier, and common buzzard.

Sustainable Agritourism and Energy Efficiency

The company has also renovated a rural building on-site to provide agritourism accommodation, offering single and double rooms. Sustainable materials with a



low environmental impact, such as wood and reclaimed natural stone, have been used for construction. Additionally, the required electricity is generated by a photovoltaic roof, ensuring energy efficiency.

A Balance Between Environmental Conservation and Agriculture

The company aims to harmonise environmental and landscape conservation with the production of healthy food.

The 10 km of grassed paths along the canals and hedgerows can be travelled on foot, by bicycle, or on horseback, allowing visitors to fully experience the farm, which has been designed as a multifunctional agricultural park.

The ultimate objective is to enhance and fully appreciate the area's environmental, natural, cultural, and agricultural resources, ensuring that every farming practice aligns with these values. This approach maximises value while minimising environmental impact, safeguarding the economic sustainability of the farm. This, in turn, ensures that the territory remains a unique, authentic, and healthy heritage for people to enjoy.

Crops and Production Process

The crops consist exclusively of ancient varieties of cereals and legumes, such as Senatore Cappelli durum wheat, spelt, barley, white chickpeas, black chickpeas, broad beans, lentils, chickling peas, and flax, along with the cultivation of legumes like vetch, essential for crop rotation. In addition to the olive trees, almond trees, quince trees, pear trees, and plum trees that have long been established, a few years ago, they planted 1,000 olive trees spread across five hectares, with a sixth planted traditionally, which will soon supply a company olive mill for the extraction and bottling of extra virgin olive oil from Peranzana and Coratina varieties.

Menichella Enrichetta & Figli packages and markets black chickpeas and flax seeds under its brand, both on-site and at local biologic stores, and is in the



process of setting up a laboratory for the extraction and packaging of essential oils, as well as for the production of preserves.

3. The main rural local resources that form the basis of the initiative:

RLR1 – Human capital

RLR3 – Natural resources

RLR6 – Intangible cultural heritage

RLR7 – Resources of agriculture, forestry and others typical rural activities

RLR8 – Local, traditional knowledge skills

RLR9 – Social capital

4. The development potential(s) of rural areas that the initiative utilizes:

Development potentials:	
Tourism & recreation	✓
Bio & circular economy	✓
Bio & renewable energy	✓
Education, skills & sport	
Agribusiness	✓
Cultural, historical, architectural & natural heritage preservation	✓
Health & care services	
Universal production & services	

5. Entrepreneurial and innovative knowledge, skills, and competencies required for the implementation of the initiative:

- Understanding the demand for organic products and sustainable farming practices.



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- Ability to develop new products while preserving traditional agricultural methods.
- Knowledge of local fauna, flora, and sustainable irrigation techniques.
- Competency in building partnerships with local businesses and stakeholders.
- Expertise in ancient crop varieties and crop rotation.

6. Key rural stakeholders supporting the initiative:

Key stakeholders include mills, oil mills, bakeries, local stores, and anyone engaged in organic farming practices. Additionally, agricultural cooperatives, local farmers, and the community play a crucial role in promoting sustainable farming and supporting local produce.

7. Socio-economic barriers and challenges related to the initiative:

- Lack of awareness about the benefits of organic production and ancient grains.
- Difficulties in maintaining consistent production levels.
- Challenges in maintaining high standards for organic certification.
- Labor shortages and increased operational costs.
- Climate change and unpredictable weather patterns.

3.10. Initiative 10

1. Initiative characteristics:

1.1. Name of the initiative:

Olio Borrelli



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1.2. Location of the initiative:

Torremaggiore

1.3. Type of stakeholder involved:

Micro enterprise.

1.4. Initiative type:

Business.

1.5. Scale of activity:

Small.

1.6. Legal form:

Imprenditore agricolo (Agricultural Entrepreneur, with legal and tax benefits associated with agricultural activities).

1.7. Planned implementation period:

Long-term.

2. Description of initiative:

Peranzana cultivar – an oil with unique and unmistakable organoleptic qualities. The aim of the company is to make even those less experienced in the sector aware of the great virtues of our olives, particularly the Peranzana cultivar. The production takes place in the northern part of Puglia, specifically in Torremaggiore, in the province of Foggia, thus producing a 100% Italian Olive Oil with guaranteed origin, Made in Italy.

The land, which has been personally worked with care and passion for about 80 years, is cultivated entirely naturally, without the use of chemicals or pesticides that could compromise the quality of the product. The olives are carefully hand-



picked, following the best tradition. The oil is cold-pressed and preserved at a low temperature, ensuring it maintains all its best characteristics.

These are the same lands that the current owner's father worked, and even before him, his grandfather. The latter is credited with the creation of the company. With perseverance and foresight, during the Second World War, in a time of great difficulty, he planted the olive trees from which today's cold-extracted PERANZANA BIOLOGICAL extra virgin olive oil originates.

3. The main rural local resources that form the basis of the initiative:

RLR3 – Natural resources

RLR6 – Intangible cultural heritage

RLR7 – Resources of agriculture, forestry and other typical rural activities

RLR8 – Local, traditional knowledge and skills

RLR9 – Social capital

4. The development potential(s) of rural areas that the initiative utilizes:

Development potentials:	
Tourism & recreation	
Bio & circular economy	
Bio & renewable energy	
Education, skills & sport	
Agribusiness	✓
Cultural, historical, architectural & natural heritage preservation	



Health & care services	
Universal production & services	

5. Entrepreneurial and innovative knowledge, skills, and competencies required for the implementation of the initiative:

- In-depth knowledge of the specific characteristics and qualities of the Peranzana cultivar.
- Understanding of olive cultivation, including pruning methods, irrigation, harvesting and curing, and pest control techniques.
- Expertise in organic farming practices and knowledge of certification standards.
- In-depth knowledge of olive oil extraction, conservation, bottling, and packaging to preserve its quality.
- Knowledge of food safety standards.
- Soil management skills.
- Ability to communicate traditional farming practices passed down through generations, which contribute to the uniqueness of the Peranzana extra virgin olive oil.
- Understanding of supply chain management.

6. Key rural stakeholders supporting the initiative:

Olio Borrelli has developed strong relationships with the Slow Food organisation, which promotes local food and traditional cooking, and with Olea, an organisation of olive oil tasters. The business actively promotes Made in Italy products and biologic production. It has received prestigious awards, such as



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the Puglia Food Awards, and holds a biologic certification from Sidel Bio.

7. Socio-economic barriers and challenges related to the initiative:

- Like any small-scale farmer, Olio Borrelli faces strong competition from foreign countries where olives are cultivated on a large scale using more resistant tree species and lower production costs. These countries often produce olive oil of lower quality, yet many consumers are unaware of the differences in quality between these oils and the premium products offered by smaller producers such as Olio Borrelli.
- Trade barriers and export difficulties.
- Costs related to the maintenance of the biologic certification.
- Climate change may affect the production.
- Local market competition with other high-quality oil producers, as the Apulia region is the most important producer of oil in Italy.

3.11. Initiative 11

1. Initiative characteristics:

1.1. Name of the initiative:

Molino De Vita

1.2. Location of the initiative:

Casalvecchio di Puglia

1.3. Type of stakeholder involved:

Small enterprise.



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1.4. Initiative type:

Business.

1.5. Scale of activity:

Small to medium.

1.6. Legal form:

Limited Liability Company (LLC).

1.7. Planned implementation period:

Long-term.

2. Description of initiative:

Molino De Vita employs 45 staff members, including both permanent and indirect workers, and boasts a milling production of 5,000 quintals of wheat per day. In addition, the company has received numerous national and international awards, such as being ranked among the top 10 companies in Apulia at the Best Value Award. Furthermore, it is an ambassador of "Made in Italy," recognised for combining tradition and innovation in the production of biologic durum wheat semolina.

The territory is highly valued, to the extent that De Vita was among the first companies in Italy to join a new territorial marketing development project: localtourism.it. The wheat used comes from the company's own fields as well as from farms across Italy, ensuring that it is 100% Italian. This allows Molino De Vita to offer a wide range of high-quality semolina and flours.

The processing plants are located far from major urban centres and smog, ensuring a clean environment for production. The production processes and products undergo careful inspections and procedures according to relevant



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standards. All biologic traceability processes are certified. Thanks to the installation of a 1-megawatt wind turbine and the use of photovoltaic systems, Molino De Vita is completely energy self-sufficient in powering its production facilities. This means it produces and uses clean energy derived from renewable sources, making a significant and real contribution to the territory and the environment, as highlighted by the recent Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) study.

The organisation was among the first in Italy to implement two traceability concepts. The TECHNICAL traceability is based on blockchain, which details every stage of production—from sowing right through to the packaging of semolina—to protect the pasta manufacturer, with data preserved using tamper-proof technology (Authentico). The TERRITORIAL traceability, on the other hand, explains in detail Molino De Vita by participating in an innovative project called Localtourism.it. This project allows the company to introduce itself to customers via a QR code on its packaging, which, when scanned, directs them to a digital portal that presents the company and its territory in an innovative and original manner (Localtourism.it).

3. The main rural local resources that form the basis of the initiative:

RLR1 – Human capital

RLR2 – Physical capital and technologies

RLR3 – Natural resources

RLR4 – Natural heritage

RLR6 – Intangible cultural heritage

RLR7 – Resources of agriculture, forestry and other typical rural activities

RLR8 – Local, traditional knowledge and skills

RLR9 – Social capital



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4. The development potential(s) of rural areas that the initiative utilizes:

Development potentials:	
Tourism & recreation	
Bio & circular economy	✓
Bio & renewable energy	✓
Education, skills & sport	
Agribusiness	✓
Cultural, historical, architectural & natural heritage preservation	
Health & care services	
Universal production & services	

5. Entrepreneurial and innovative knowledge, skills, and competencies required for the implementation of the initiative:

- Sustainability and environmental impact assessments, including familiarity with Life Cycle Assessment methodology, are crucial for evaluating and minimising the environmental impact of the production processes, and biological certifications.
- The implementation of advanced technologies, such as blockchain for traceability, helps improve transparency, security, and trust in the product lifecycle, ensuring the integrity of the supply chain from farm to final product.
- Utilisation of green technologies, such as renewable energy systems, to ensure efficiency while reducing carbon footprint.
- The ability to innovate and improve production processes while preserving



traditional methods.

- In-depth knowledge of industry regulations and the ability to maintain certifications
- Expertise in coordinating the supply chain and leadership skills.

6. Key rural stakeholders supporting the initiative

- Localtourism.it:
Molino De Vita has been selected as one of the ambassadors for the Apulia region, promoting local culture and agricultural heritage through its involvement in the localtourism.it project.
- TasteAtlas has named Molino De Vita as one of the top 20 pasta producers in the world, helping to enhance the company's international recognition.
- Biofach:
Molino De Vita participates in Biofach, the world's largest trade fair for organic food and agriculture. This event provides valuable opportunities for networking with other agribusinesses and advancing the company's presence in the organic sector.
- Pastificio Granoro:
Promotion of the 100% Italian grain supply chain used in Granoro's "Dedicato" pasta line, enhancing the brand's visibility and reputation.

7. Socio-economic barriers and challenges related to the initiative:

- Ensuring consistent compliance with stringent organic standards and food safety regulations
- The integration and ongoing maintenance of advanced technologies and



machinery require significant investment and expertise.

- Adverse weather conditions can impact the quality and quantity of wheat.
- Recruiting and retaining skilled workers.
- The availability of cheaper wheat from countries like the US and Canada creates price pressure in the market.
- Disruptions in the supply of raw materials, especially with the company's dependence on 100% Italian wheat.

3.12. Initiative 12

1. Initiative characteristics:

1.1 Name of the initiative:

Only Food

1.2. Location of the initiative:

Foggia

1.3. Type of stakeholder involved:

Micro-enterprises, small enterprises, and private citizens (either associated with or participating in their events).

1.4. Initiative type:

Non-profit social organisation.

1.5. Scale of activity:

Medium - The initiative has a local to regional reach, with some national and international efforts.

1.6. Legal form:



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Association.

1.7. Planned implementation period:

Long-term.

2. Description of initiative:

Only Food APS was founded in 2015 by a group of women from the Province of Foggia with the aim of promoting its unique food, cultural, and natural heritage. It focuses on enhancing local tourism, including social, cultural, and food-related experiences, while also celebrating the area's rich landscape and history. The organisation strives to create networks and partnerships that bring together businesses, institutions, and professionals to address challenges in the global market.

3. The main rural local resources that form the basis of the initiative:

RLR1 - Human capital

RLR4 - Natural heritage

RLR5 - Tangible cultural, historical and architectural heritage

RLR6 - Intangible cultural heritage

RLR7 - Resources of agriculture, forestry and other typical rural activities

RLR8 - Local, traditional knowledge and skills

RLR9 - Social capital

4. The development potential(s) of rural areas that the initiative utilizes:

Development potentials:	
Tourism & recreation	✓



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Bio & circular economy	
Bio & renewable energy	
Education, skills & sport	✓
Agribusiness	
Cultural, historical, architectural & natural heritage preservation	✓
Health & care services	
Universal production & services	✓

5. Entrepreneurial and innovative knowledge, skills, and competencies required for the implementation of the initiative:

- Understanding the dynamics of different markets (local, national and international), such as cultural differences and expectations, in order to develop an effective strategy that aligns with the needs and preferences of each market.
- Expertise in brand development, its promotion, digital marketing strategies, and the organisation of events.
- As a non-profit organisation, the transparency of the financial activity and clearly communicating financial reports to associates is crucial for the continued success and trust in the initiative.
- Knowledge of regulations regarding food safety, intellectual property rights, consumer protection, marketing, and other relevant laws.
- Communication and negotiation skills to engage with diverse stakeholders and dialogue.
- Network: building partnerships across different sectors.

6. Key rural stakeholders supporting the initiative:



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- Local farmers, food producers and processors: supplying raw materials for the initiative.
- Local residents as participants in workshops, masterclasses, and events, contributing to the community engagement and success of the initiative.
- Regional and local authorities, such as PugliaPromozione and the city council of Foggia.

7. Socio-economic barriers and challenges related to the initiative:

- Strong competition from other Italian regions and locations within Apulia.
- Legal and regulatory challenges, especially when promoting trade outside the European Union.
- Managing diverse stakeholder interests, resolving conflicts, and ensuring alignment among associators involved in the initiative.
- Operational coordination, including managing venues, suppliers, schedules, securing sponsorships, and balancing budgets while meeting stakeholders' expectations.

3.13. Initiative 13

1. Initiative characteristics:

1.1. Name of the initiative:

ReBeers

1.2. Location of the initiative:

Foggia

1.3. Type of stakeholder involved:



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Small/medium-sized enterprise.

1.4. Initiative type:

Business.

1.5. Scale of activity:

Small to medium.

1.6. Legal form:

Limited Liability Company (LLC).

1.7. Planned implementation period:

Long-term.

2. Description of initiative:

Rebeers is a brewing project that approaches the world of craft beer with the genuine passion of an artisan. Alongside the craftsmanship in selecting the finest raw materials, it also brings the necessary scientific expertise to recipe development and analytical control throughout the production process. Thanks to its in-house agricultural supply chain, Rebeers produces most of the raw ingredients on its farms in Apulia and carefully selects the best additional ingredients available on the market.

Every beer is made using a truly artisanal method: unfiltered, unpasteurised, additive-free, 100% natural, and absolutely alive! After the initial fermentation and maturation in tanks, the beer undergoes a secondary fermentation in bottles and kegs, at a controlled temperature, to refine its taste and aroma while ensuring a completely natural long shelf life.

Rebeers combines the best ingredients, which are selected slowly, in a patient



process like artisans, to achieve the highest standards of refinement and maturation, offering to its customers an authentic sensory experience.

3. The main rural local resources that form the basis of the initiative:

RLR1 – Human capital

RLR2 – Physical capital and technologies

RLR3 – Natural resources

RLR9 – Social capital

4. The development potential(s) of rural areas that the initiative utilizes:

Development potentials:	
Tourism & recreation	✓
Bio & circular economy	
Bio & renewable energy	
Education, skills & sport	
Agribusiness	✓
Cultural, historical, architectural & natural heritage preservation	
Health & care services	
Universal production & services	

5. Entrepreneurial and innovative knowledge, skills, and competencies required for the implementation of the initiative:



- The owner holds a bachelor's degree in Agronomy and has completed numerous courses on beer production in Italy and internationally, combining agricultural expertise with brewing knowledge to bring a unique approach to the business.
- This is the owner's second venture in the brewing industry, having successfully launched the first brewery in 2013, which won awards. The current venture, established in 2017, has been thriving ever since, winning several additional awards and receiving nationwide recognition.
- Knowledge of marketing tools such as branding, promotion, e-commerce, customer relationship management, digital marketing, and local marketing.
- Knowledge of laws and regulations regarding the brewing industry, including licensing, safety, and production standards.
- Since 2016, Rebeers has been working to transform durum wheat into a perfect ingredient for beer. In 2019, it succeeded in producing the world's first 100% malted durum wheat beer. The next step is to create a fermented, non-alcoholic plant-based beverage, using ingredients like soy, spelt, or rice. This work is being carried out with scientific support from the University of Foggia.
- A brewery requires a suitable location, specialised machinery with ongoing maintenance, and skilled employees in the sector, which makes careful financial planning essential for ensuring long-term success.

6. Key rural stakeholders supporting the initiative:

- Local farmers, suppliers, and producers.
- Craft beer associations and networks, established through beer competitions and events.



- Local retailers, pubs, restaurants, tourist activities, and e-commerce platforms that sell Rebeers.
- Employees and brewmasters.
- The University of Foggia and CNR, providing scientific support to develop new products.

7. Socio-economic barriers and challenges related to the initiative:

- High production costs.
- Intensive competition, with many artisanal breweries entering this market.
- Educating consumers about the value of artisanal beer and encouraging them to pay a premium for it.
- The regulatory environment related to alcohol production, distribution, and taxation.
- Economic downturns can shift consumer spending habits, favouring commercial beers.
- Securing high-quality raw materials.
- Difficulty in finding and retaining skilled workers.
- Distribution and limited access to markets.

3.14. Initiative 14

1. Initiative characteristics:

1.1. Name of the initiative:

ArcheoLogica S.r.l

1.2. Location of the initiative:

Foggia



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1.3. Type of stakeholder involved:

Micro-enterprise.

1.4. Initiative type:

Business.

1.5. Scale of activity:

Small.

1.6. Legal form:

Limited Liability Company (LLC).

1.7. Planned implementation period:

Long-term.

2. Description of initiative:

ArcheoLogica S.r.l. was founded in 2009 as a spin-off of the University of Foggia. The company is made up of 9 archaeologists, many of whom hold PhDs in Archaeology. We focus on research, enhancement, and communication within the field of cultural heritage, particularly in the Capitanata area.

The main activities of ArcheoLogica include preventive archaeology, topographic surveys for cultural heritage, and educational programs for both children and adults, focusing on archaeology and the enhancement of local heritage. They also offer guided tours, project design, and cultural planning.

3. The main rural local resources that form the basis of the initiative:

RLR1 – Human capital

RLR4 – Natural heritage



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RLR 5 - Tangible cultural, historical and architectural heritage

RLR 6 - Intangible cultural heritage

RLR 9 - Social capital

4. The development potential(s) of rural areas that the initiative utilizes:

Development potentials:	
Tourism & recreation	✓
Bio & circular economy	
Bio & renewable energy	
Education, skills & sport	✓
Agribusiness	
Cultural, historical, architectural & natural heritage preservation	✓
Health & care services	
Universal production & services	

5. Entrepreneurial and innovative knowledge, skills, and competencies required for the implementation of the initiative:

- In-depth knowledge of local history is essential to accurately interpreting cultural and archaeological sites.
- Expertise in cultural heritage preservation.
- Event planning competences to organise tours, workshops, and educational programs.
- Collaboration with local communities and stakeholders, such as schools and tourism companies.



- Practical competences in archaeology to conduct professional work as archaeologists.

6. Key rural stakeholders supporting the initiative:

Local archaeologists provide specialised knowledge and skills. Local educational institutions, touristic companies, communities, residents, and municipalities of historically significant towns are key stakeholders. Furthermore, the university, from which the initiative originated as a spin-off, contributes its academic expertise.

7. Socio-economic barriers and challenges related to the initiative:

- Engaging local communities and education institutions in archaeological activities.
- Limited funding available for archaeological projects and research.
- Abundance of skilled professionals coupled with low payments rates.
- Competition with volunteers in educational and touristic activities, as many individuals passionate about archaeology organise unpaid activities in their spare time.
- Permits required for archaeological work.

3.15. Initiative 15

1. Initiative characteristics:

1.1. Name of the initiative:

Kmetroverde



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1.2. Location of the initiative:

Foggia

1.3. Type of stakeholder involved:

Medium enterprise.

1.4. Initiative type:

Business.

1.5. Scale of activity:

Medium to large.

1.6. Legal form:

Joint-stock company (S.p.a).

1.7. Planned implementation period:

Long-term.

2. Description of initiative:

In line with Sistemi Energetici's philosophy of eco-sustainability and zero waste, the company has decided to create Kmetroverde by revitalising an industrial site previously abandoned by Ferrovie dello Stato, ensuring zero new land consumption. The aim is to transform the property through industrial activities that align with the company's history, by repurposing the abandoned warehouses and buildings and restoring them to full operability.

Current ongoing projects include:

- Spazio Forma, focused on the production of components for biogas and biomethane plants.



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- Spazio Lab, a laboratory and research centre.
- Spazio Vento, dedicated to the maintenance of wind turbine speed multipliers.
- Spazio Bio, a warehouse for the storage, pre-treatment, and stabilisation of organic material for the biomethane production plant.
- Spazio Ciclo, a warehouse designated for the installation of a recycling plant for plastic waste and WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment).
- Spazio Futuro, a warehouse for the installation of a green hydrogen production plant.

3. The main rural local resources that form the basis of the initiative:

RLR1 – Human capital

RLR2 – Physical capital and technologies

RLR3 – Natural resources

RLR7 – Resources of agriculture, forestry and other typical rural activities

RLR9 – Social capital

4. The development potential(s) of rural areas that the initiative utilizes:

Development potentials:	
Tourism & recreation	
Bio & circular economy	✓
Bio & renewable energy	✓
Education, skills & sport	



Agribusiness	
Cultural, historical, architectural & natural heritage preservation	
Health & care services	
Universal production & services	✓

5. Entrepreneurial and innovative knowledge, skills, and competencies required for the implementation of the initiative:

- Renewable energy expertise: In-depth knowledge about biogas, biomethane production, and wind energy.
- Circular economy: A system thinking approach with a deep understanding of sustainability, along with communication skills, data analysis and modelling, as well as knowledge of Agile principles.
- Competences in machinery and equipment maintenance, and manufacturing processes.
- Project management: Ability to coordinate projects, manage multiple stakeholders, oversee timelines, and deliver results on time and within budget.
- Understanding of environmental regulations, labour legislation, and other sector specific requirements.
- Ability to develop strong relationships with local stakeholders to develop sustainable projects.

6. Key rural stakeholders supporting the initiative:

The initiative is supported by both the Italian and Apulia governments through funding. Other key stakeholders include local communities (expected to benefit



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from the creation of around 300 jobs), suppliers and contractors, industry partners and collaborators, and research institutions (which might assist in the development of some projects). Additionally, investors, environmental and sustainability NGOs are involved, with the latter interested in the initiative's sustainability outcomes.

7. Socio-economic barriers and challenges related to the initiative:

- A shortage of qualified workers in rural areas may make it difficult to employ local residents.
- The need to secure both private and public funding for the projects.
- Market volatility, such as fluctuations in the prices of raw materials and energy, can affect the demand for renewable energy and impact circular economy practices.
- The risk that the infrastructure may become outdated or less effective due to the rapid pace of technological change.
- Possible environmental risks, depending on how the projects are implemented.

3.16. Initiative 16

1. Initiative characteristics:

1.1. Name of the initiative:

Masseria Fratelli Carrino

1.2. Location of the initiative:

Lucera



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1.3. Type of stakeholder involved:

Small enterprise.

1.4. Initiative type:

Business.

1.5. Scale of activity:

Small to medium.

1.6. Legal form:

Società Semplice (often used in agriculture and other non-commercial ventures).

1.7. Planned implementation period:

Long-term.

2. Description of initiative:

Fratelli Carrino is an enterprise focused on cereal farming, livestock breeding, and olive cultivation, producing olive oil, pecorino cheese, and wool. The olive oil is made from Ogliarola olives, harvested directly from the tree in the company's olive grove, which spans about 40 hectares. The cold pressing, low acidity, golden-yellow colour, delicate aroma, and exceptional taste are the standout characteristics of the extra virgin olive oil branded "Pavoni."

The company also produces organic DOP (protected denomination of origin) olive oil and organic pitted olive oil, rich in polyphenols, vitamins A and E, and antioxidant substances. The pecorino cheese, "canestrato di fossa granaia," is exclusively made from sheep's milk and undergoes a maturation process lasting from three to eighteen months. This process takes place in the pits where grain used to be stored, which impart a unique aroma and flavour to the cheese due to the moulds present and the lack of oxygen. Finally, from the wool of the sheep



bred on the farm, of the fine "Gentile di Puglia" breed, high-quality sweaters and blankets are produced, distinguished by their natural colours.

The "Fratelli Carrino" agricultural company is located in the historic Masseria Pavoni, dating back to the 17th century, in the countryside of Lucera (FG). It overlooks the Capaccio dam, a water reservoir near Borgo San Giusto, and is dedicated to organic farming with a focus on livestock breeding, cereal farming, and olive cultivation.

The Carrino family has a long history in the sector. Originating from Frosolone in Molise, they have been practicing transhumance since the early 1900s, moving their livestock – sheep, Podolica cows, and horses – in winter to Masseria Pavoni and in summer to the mountains of Molise. This tradition continues today, with the horses moved in spring to the pastures of Molise and the sheep to the sub-Apennine hills of Daunia, returning in autumn to the Tavoliere delle Puglie.

Today, the Carrino brothers breed "Gentile di Puglia" sheep, "Mediterranean" buffalo, "Podolico Pugliese" cattle, horses descended from the ancient "Pugliese" breed, and "Martina Franca" and "Amiatina" donkeys.

From Borgo San Giusto to Santa Luciella, in the countryside of Orsara di Puglia, passing through the centre of Troia, is the route the Carrino brothers take to bring their 600 sheep to pasture. Transhumance is a family tradition that has been passed down since the 1800s, when their great-grandparents practiced this system of grazing.

3. The main rural local resources that form the basis of the initiative:

RLR1 – Human capital

RLR3 – Natural resources

RLR4 – Natural heritage



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RLR5 - Tangible cultural, historical and architectural heritage

RLR6 - Intangible cultural heritage

RLR7 - Local, traditional knowledge and skills

4. The development potential(s) of rural areas that the initiative utilizes:

Development potentials:	
Tourism & recreation	✓
Bio & circular economy	
Bio & renewable energy	
Education, skills & sport	✓
Agribusiness	✓
Cultural, historical, architectural & natural heritage preservation	✓
Health & care services	
Universal production & services	

5. Entrepreneurial and innovative knowledge, skills, and competencies required for the implementation of the initiative:

- Knowledge of sustainable farming practices and animal husbandry. Understanding of biologic farming, soil, crop rotation, and livestock care.
- Traditional cheese and olive oil production techniques, such as artisanal cheese-making and olive oil extraction.
- Food safety regulations and quality standards.
- Ability to diversify production, such as selling wool goods (e.g., sweaters



and blankets).

- Brand development and positioning in the market, using the transhumance tradition to attract attention and position the brand as one that values heritage and sustainability.
- Knowledge and practical skills related to the tradition of transhumance, such as managing grazing routes, ensuring animal welfare during the seasonal movements, and maintaining the cultural and historical significance of transhumance.
- Knowledge about biological certifications. Understanding organic certifications and navigating the certification process to ensure the products meet the required biological and quality standards.

6. Key rural stakeholders supporting the initiative:

- City Council of Troia, Lucera, and other nearby areas.
- Local organisations promoting the territory.
- Associazione Tratturi e Transumanze, which promotes the heritage of transhumance.
- Partnerships beyond the Apulia region to promote the wool of *Gentile di Puglia* sheep in other Italian regions.
- University of Foggia.
- LOCAL Project, which promotes the breeding of native animals.
- Various local NGOs focused on natural conservation.

7. Socio-economic barriers and challenges related to the initiative:



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- High production costs associated with animal care and sustainable farming practices.
- Climate change, which can affect the entire production process, but is particularly challenging for the practice of transhumance.
- Difficulty in recruiting a skilled workforce.
- Educating consumers about the value of preserving these traditions and encouraging them to purchase the products.

3.17. Initiative 17

1. Initiative characteristics:

1.1. Name of the initiative:

Elda Cantine

1.2. Location of the initiative:

Troia

1.3. Type of stakeholder involved:

Family-owned small enterprise.

1.4. Initiative type:

Business.

1.5. Scale of activity:

Small to medium.

1.6. Legal form:

Limited Liability Company (LLC).



1.7. Planned implementation period:

Long-term.

2. Description of initiative:

Elda Cantine is located in Troia, an ancient city in the Daunian Mountains, renowned for its unique terroir that has nurtured Nero di Troia for centuries. This native grape is the cornerstone of its wines. Dry-farmed vineyards encourage deep root growth, allowing the vines to absorb essential nutrients. The grapes are hand-harvested, carefully selected, and placed in crates, sourced from trellised vineyards on white limestone soils.

3. The main rural local resources that form the basis of the initiative:

RLR1 – Human capital

RLR2 – Physical capital and technologies

RLR3 – Natural resources

RLR6 – Intangible cultural heritage

RLR8 – Local, traditional knowledge and skills

RLR9 – Social capital

4. The development potential(s) of rural areas that the initiative utilizes:

Development potentials:	
Tourism & recreation	
Bio & circular economy	
Bio & renewable energy	



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Education, skills & sport	
Agribusiness	✓
Cultural, historical, architectural & natural heritage preservation	✓
Health & care services	
Universal production & services	

5. Entrepreneurial and innovative knowledge, skills, and competencies required for the implementation of the initiative:

- In-depth knowledge of grape cultivation (specifically Nero di Troia), vineyard management, and winemaking techniques, as well as an understanding of how the local terroir influences wine quality.
- Strong market positioning and niche identification: Elda Cantine has established a strong position in the competitive wine market by identifying a niche for those interested in cultural heritage and a deep connection to the land. Its ancient connection to the Daunian Mountains, the slow life movement, "anarchistic values," and a commitment to sustainability are key differentiators.
- Understanding of regulations related to agricultural practices, wine production, health and safety standards, as well as labelling and certification requirements.
- Good knowledge of e-commerce platforms, online marketing strategies, and consumer behaviour in the wine industry.
- The ability to apply innovative practices in both winemaking and business operations.
- Understanding of the wine industry supply chain.



6. Key rural stakeholders supporting the initiative:

- E-commerce platforms, online retailers, distributors, and retailers that sell Elda Cantine's wines, helping to expand its market.
- Wine Associations, such as Associazione Italiana Sommelier, which promote Elda Cantine's wines within the industry.
- Certification Bodies that certify Elda Cantine wines with Protected Geographical Indication (IGP), ensuring the wine meets the standards for origin, quality, and production.
- Local farmers and suppliers who provide essential agricultural products and materials for vineyard management.

7. Socio-economic barriers and challenges related to the initiative:

- The wine market is highly competitive, with many well-established and larger brands dominating both local and international markets, making it difficult for smaller wineries to stand out.
- Agriculture is traditionally vulnerable to extreme weather events, and with climate change, such events are becoming more frequent and intense, threatening both grape quality and yields. Since Elda Cantine does not use irrigation, it is highly susceptible to climate-related challenges.
- Logistical challenges: Issues related to transportation, distribution, and supply chain management, along with rising production and personnel costs, can affect profitability and efficiency.
- Regulatory and compliance issues: Ensuring proper certification of the wine, adhering to stringent regulations, and maintaining high standards are necessary to participate in wine events, competitions, and to access certain markets.



- Skilled labour shortages.
- Adapting to changing consumer preferences.

3.18. Initiative 18

1. Initiative characteristics:

1.1. Name of the initiative:

Daunia Avventura

1.2. Location of the initiative:

Biccari

1.3. Type of stakeholder involved:

Non-profit organisation.

1.4. Initiative type:

Social.

1.5. Scale of activity:

Small enterprise.

1.6. Legal form:

Social cooperative.

1.7. Planned implementation period:

Long-term.

2. Description of initiative:

The Adventure Park consists of a series of high-rope courses with suspended



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passages between trees, generally tall ones, or in some cases, on wooden poles or rock walls.

The courses are created by installing steel cables, wooden platforms, and ropes, with absolute respect for the trees and their natural habitat. These are recreational and sports activities that the user, after receiving training from highly qualified staff and equipped with a safety device, can complete independently. The activities test balance, speed, obstacle navigation, and the desire for adventure.

Entry to the nature park is free! People can eat there by booking a table, bringing their own lunch, or enjoying the products available in the parks' picnic baskets! Only activities and services are chargeable.

Other available activities include trekking, orienteering, archery, educational forest, eco-art for children, and the "Bike Park" (mountain biking trails). Services include camping, "Bed&Tree" (sleeping in treehouses), table reservations, and picnic basket bookings.

3. The main rural local resources that form the basis of the initiative:

RLR1 – Human capital

RLR3 – Natural resources

RLR4 – Natural heritage

RLR7- Resources of agriculture, forestry and other typical rural activities

RLR9 – Social capital

4. The development potential(s) of rural areas that the initiative utilizes:

Development potentials:	
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Tourism & recreation	✓
Bio & circular economy	
Bio & renewable energy	
Education, skills & sport	✓
Agribusiness	
Cultural, historical, architectural & natural heritage preservation	✓
Health & care services	
Universal production & services	✓

5. Entrepreneurial and innovative knowledge, skills, and competencies required for the implementation of the initiative:

- Skilled instructors and guides trained in high-rope courses, trekking, archery, and other outdoor sports. Qualified personnel for educational forest activities and eco-art workshops for children.
- In-depth understanding of safety protocols and risk management.
- Sustainable practices to minimise negative impacts on nature (e.g., damage to the landscape) while maximising positive impacts on the community (e.g., job creation, nature preservation).
- Networking and partnerships with businesses located in the Daunian Mountains and government bodies.
- Knowledge of how to market the adventure park to different target audiences (e.g., families, school groups, and individuals). Online marketing strategies to increase Daunia Avventura's recognition beyond the local area.
- Ensuring customer satisfaction to encourage repeat visits to the park.



- Effective financial planning.

6. Key rural stakeholders supporting the initiative:

- Parchi Avventura Italiani (Adventure Parks Association).
- Associazione Italiana Turismo Sostenibile (Italian Sustainable Tourism Association).
- Associazione Borghi Autentici d'Italia (Italy's Authentic Villages Association, promoting local villages).
- Biccari City Council.
- Boschi Didattici (Educational Forests).
- Consorzio Con.F.A.T.
- Local residents.

7. Socio-economic barriers and challenges related to the initiative:

- Competition from other parks or local tourist attractions.
- Difficulty in attracting visitors from outside the Province of Foggia, which could result in lower visitor numbers outside holiday periods and weekends, thereby limiting revenue.
- High costs for park maintenance, as well as challenges in recruiting expert staff and the high costs of their training and certification.
- Dependence on weather conditions and seasonal fluctuations in revenue (e.g., peak during the summer, and off-peak in winter).
- Costs involved in meeting compliance with regulatory requirements.
- Lack of adequate transportation options to the area and poor road



conditions.

3.19. Initiative 19

1. Initiative characteristics:

1.1. Name of the initiative:

Peppe Zullo

1.2. Location of the initiative:

Orsara di Puglia

1.3. Type of stakeholder involved:

Small enterprise.

1.4. Initiative type:

Business.

1.5. Scale of activity:

Small to medium.

1.6. Legal form:

Limited Liability Company (LLC).

1.7. Planned implementation period:

Long-term.

2. Description of initiative:

Peppe Zullo was born in Orsara, nestled among the gentle hills at the foot of the Apennines, overlooking the vast Tavoliere. It's a green part of Puglia, full of stone



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villages still waiting to be explored. Here, alongside his studies, he helped his family, who ran the only petrol station in town, along with a guesthouse that often provided the only rest stop for travellers and workers away from home.

In the 1970s, he emigrated to North America to seek work and opportunities in the restaurant industry. In 1978, he opened his first restaurant in Boston. He learned to cook from his mother, creating simple, humble dishes that stood in stark contrast to the fast-food culture of the US. In the mid-80s, Peppe decided to go back to Italy to explore a new way to feed the world: one that would rediscover the slow rhythms of the seasons, wild herbs, and the natural cycles of the garden and the vine.

Peppe Zullo's farm extends over a total area of 180,000 square meters. It's a vast, green, and harmonious estate, home to the 22,000 square meters of the garden, 35,000 square meters of vineyard, and 20,000 square meters of forest, where fruit trees, mushrooms, wild herbs, and medicinal plants thrive. The Farm is also equipped with facilities dedicated to animal husbandry, a dairy, small resorts, and the headquarters of the International Culinary School. In 2012, the Restaurant in the Garden was inaugurated, adding to the one that had been operating for over 20 years. The quality of the products grown, selected, and prepared by the Farm is delivered daily "from the earth to the table," from the producer to the consumer, who can taste its excellence, flavour, and uniqueness.

3. The main rural local resources that form the basis of the initiative:

RLR1 – Human capital

RLR2 – Physical capital & technologies

RLR5 – Tangible cultural, historical and architectural heritage

RLR6 – Intangible cultural heritage

RLR8 – Local, traditional knowledge skills



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RLR9 – Social capital

4. The development potential(s) of rural areas that the initiative utilizes:

Development potentials:	
Tourism & recreation	✓
Bio & circular economy	
Bio & renewable energy	
Education, skills & sport	
Agribusiness	
Cultural, historical, architectural & natural heritage preservation	
Health & care services	
Universal production & services	✓

5. Entrepreneurial and innovative knowledge, skills, and competencies required for the implementation of the initiative:

- In-depth understanding of traditional Apulian cuisine, with ability to innovate, experimenting with new cooking techniques without losing its roots.
- Farm-to-table practices.
- Knowledge of sustainable farming and attention to the reduction of food waste generation in hospitality.
- Expertise in personal brand management and communication.
- Building strong relationships with local communities and farmers,



suppliers, as well as with national and international partners.

- Ability to teach his skills to young chefs.

6. Key rural stakeholders supporting the initiative:

Peppe Zullo has built strong relationships with Slow Food, Eataly, Gambero Rosso, local and national authorities, other restaurateurs and farmers, the local community, as well as the Italian media.

7. Socio-economic barriers and challenges related to the initiative:

- Significant investment is required to manage the farm, the hospitality business, and the cookery school.
- Recruiting and retaining skilled workers.
- Attracting customers willing to pay for high-quality service in Orsara can be difficult due to its remote location.
- High competition in the hospitality industry in Italy, where customers expect a high standard of service and possess a deep knowledge of food and traditions.

3.20. Initiative 20

1.1. Name of the initiative:

Lo Moleno d'acqua del Ponte

1.2. Location of the initiative:

Bovino



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1.3. Type of stakeholder involved:

Micro enterprise.

1.4. Initiative type:

Social.

1.5. Scale of activity:

Small.

1.6. Legal form:

Association.

1.7. Planned implementation period:

Long-term.

2. Description of initiative:

Lo Moleno d'acqua del Ponte is a magnificent place. Along the Cervaro River, in the heart of the Daunian Mountains, there is a magical spot that has been welcoming travellers, producing good flour, and sowing smiles since the 1500s. It is a place full of magic and a history of hard work, passion, the recovery of tradition, the land, and healthy, sustainable living.

Lo Moleno d'acqua del Ponte (the name found in old maps and documents) is on the right bank of the Cervaro. Its presence has been attested since the 16th century. An important source of livelihood, it could harness the flow of the Cervaro River, duly channelled, to grind wheat for food, both for humans and animals (as evidenced by the presence of two distinct millstones). Originally belonging to the bishops of Bovino, it later became the property of notary Domenico Caneva, who owned it until 1916, when it was purchased by Luigi Grasso, who had just returned from the Americas with the fruits of his work



overseas. Since the times of Pliny, the route connecting Naples to Apulia was the Royal Road of Apulia, which stretched for over 430 kilometres. Travellers would stay at inns, taverns, and post stations, places where horses would be changed, such as the impressive Posta del Ponte. On the opposite bank to the Posta with its monumental Bourbon Fountain, lies the water mill. In the garden next to the mill, in October, the fruits of the old walnut tree are collected, “rich in omega 3 for the joy of the heart,” and pomegranates, a symbol of fertility and protector of the vascular system, are harvested. These are used to prepare special dishes for what today is called Halloween, but which is a celebration of everywhere and every time.

There are many crafts that are shared at the mill, many of which are related to wheat, but many others as well. The millstones of the mill were made of quartzite, a very hard stone. This allowed even the less wealthy to access a service that had previously been the preserve of the wealthier, enabling them to grind their durum wheat. The mill also preserves the old wooden blades, now worn by use and floods, which have since been replaced with metal blades that are fireproof, durable, and eco-friendly. Technology is a web of balances between materials and construction solutions.

At the mill, there are tools from rural civilisation. There is also a switch from the 1930s, more specifically, an air disconnect switch that was used to interrupt or restore the electrical supply.

A careful and passionate restoration, carried out by the Grasso family, who are the current owners, using original materials, elements, and techniques, has allowed for the near-complete recovery of the structure. This was aimed at enhancing and making it accessible, with the creation of a “museum itinerary,” open to tourists and especially to school groups, as a hands-on and educational project.

The ancient and unique mill, still operational, has become a “small museum,” where tools, machines, utensils, and implements (manual water mill, millstones,



mortars, wooden scale, etc.) are displayed. They recreate the charm and enchantment of their original function and introduce visitors to the secrets and stories of the place, the production process, and the techniques used for working with ancient wheat varieties such as marzellina (marzuola), bianchetta (bolero), “strambèll” (Senatore Cappelli), and risciola.

3. The main rural local resources that form the basis of the initiative:

RLR1 – Human capital

RLR 4 – Natural heritage

RLR 5 – Tangible cultural, historical and architectural heritage

RLR 6 – Intangible cultural heritage

RLR 7 – Resources of agriculture, forestry and other typical rural activities

RLR 8 – Local, traditional knowledge and skills

RLR 9 – Social capital

4. The development potential(s) of rural areas that the initiative utilizes:

Development potentials:	
Tourism & recreation	✓
Bio & circular economy	
Bio & renewable energy	
Education, skills & sport	✓
Agribusiness	
Cultural, historical, architectural & natural heritage preservation	✓



Health & care services	
Universal production & services	

5. Entrepreneurial and innovative knowledge, skills, and competencies required for the implementation of the initiative:

- Understanding of traditional water mill operations, including how historical mills functioned and their significance.
- Preservation of antique machinery, wooden structures, and historic artefacts.
- The ability to communicate the importance of the rural heritage left by the water mill.
- Organising guided tours and developing workshops for schools and tourists.
- Awareness of traditional grain varieties and sustainable farming practices related to the milling process.

6. Key rural stakeholders supporting the initiative:

- City council of Bovino
- FAI (National Trust of Italy)
- #WeAreInPuglia (Association for the promotion of the Apulia region)
- Local residents and schools.

7. Socio-economic barriers and challenges related to the initiative:

- Preserving the historical structure is expensive and requires significant



investment. Funding can be obtained through public grants, making it essential to establish relationships with Italian and EU authorities.

- Low tourist visibility due to the water mill's location in the Daunian Mountains, which is not yet a widely popular destination.
- The area is at hydrological risk, and the water mill could be affected by flooding.

3.21. Initiative 21

1. Initiative characteristics:

1.1. Name of the initiative:

Masseria Salecchia

1.2. Location of the initiative:

Bovino

1.3. Type of stakeholder involved:

Micro-enterprise.

1.4. Initiative type:

Business.

1.5. Scale of activity:

Small.

1.6. Legal form:

Società Semplice Agricola (Simple agricultural company under Italian law).

1.7. Planned implementation period:



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Long-term.

2. Description of initiative:

Masseria Salecchia was founded in 1933 when brothers Pietro and Francesco Antonio D’Innocenzio, young and enterprising farmers, decided to purchase the hunting reserve from the 5th Duke of Guevara, Don Giovanni, the last descendant of one of the most noble families in Southern Italy.

Located in the heart of a 350-hectare nature reserve protected by the EU, the masseria lies at the foot of one of the highest mountains in the Apennines. Historically the Duke of Guevara’s hunting residence, it has belonged to the D’Innocenzio family since the 1930s, who transformed it into a sustainable livestock and forestry farm. To this day, it remains dedicated to breeding native livestock breeds, from which exclusive local delicacies are produced. Now in its third generation, the family-run business is led by Dr Francesco and his team, who offer warm hospitality and provide tourist services tailored to all needs and ages, with the same dedication inherited from his family.

The Masseria Sociale project offers therapeutic and rehabilitative experiences through animal care, farming, and gardening, helping individuals with physical or mental disabilities regain confidence, a sense of purpose, and social balance while also providing training and employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups.

Masseria Salecchia has an adventure park with a series of acrobatic courses on trees, which offers an unforgettable experience. The park features 18 platforms placed at different heights, equipped with a continuous lifeline, complete equipment and expert guides to allow guests to do evolutions and acrobatics in complete safety in close contact with nature.

Activities in the Masseria also include:

- Visits to the stables.



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- Excursion in the woods.
- Trekking and mountain bike experiences.
- A day of farmer experience: the guest participates in the production of cheese, take care of the animals, take the sheep to pasture with the shepherd, there is the organic cultivation of the fields, the harvesting of pears, apples, and medicinal herbs, the cutting of wood, the harvesting of olives, and then sowing, pruning, etc.
- Cooking lessons are led by an expert cook with a passion for typical local cuisine. The lesson is followed by dinner or lunch (wine included).
- Summer camp for scouts.

Masseria Salecchia also offers an educational forest program, which provides workshops for elementary, middle, and high school students. The workshops include:

- Cereals on the Farm

A fun, hands-on cooking workshop where children learn how wheat is transformed into flour. They make biscuits or fresh pasta, engaging in a real farm-to-table experience.

- The Milky Way

Children discover the rare Gentile di Puglia sheep and take part in traditional farm activities like sheep shearing and hand milking. They also make cheese using artisanal methods in the farm's dairy.

- On the Old Farm

This workshop introduces children to farm animals like sheep, pigs, and chickens, helping them overcome any fears. The experience ends with a short pony or horse ride as part of the "Baptism of the Saddle."

- The Fantabosco



Children actively engage with costumed characters in a reimagined fairy tale, set in a magical forest, where they become part of the story, riding an old train to reach the adventure.

- The Five Colours of Fruit

A fun way to learn about healthy eating, this workshop focuses on fruits and vegetables in the Mediterranean diet. Children also make jam from fresh produce.

- Farming Museum

A visit to the museum of peasant life, where children learn about farming tools and techniques from the past and compare old agricultural machinery with modern equipment.

- Ortobimbo

Children will explore organic farming principles and nutrition while planting vegetables and working the soil in this hands-on gardening workshop.

- From Grapes to Wine

During the grape harvest season (September/October), kids help harvest grapes and press them to make must. They also learn how grapes turn into wine through fermentation.

- From Olives to Oil

Children gather olives and visit a mill to see how olive oil is made. They also taste fresh oil and learn to distinguish different types.

- Soap King

Children create their own soap and experience traditional hand washing with an old-fashioned wooden board, learning about the craft of soap making and the washerwoman's role.

- Herb Friends



In this aromatic workshop, children explore the benefits of herbs for health and nutrition, making scented chalks and bath sachets.

- Of the Woods

Children take an old cart ride to Mount Salecchia's forest, where they discover animal tracks, wild herbs, and birds of prey like the short-toed falcon. The adventure also includes a visit to the icehouse and a forestry worksite.

- Sensory Lab ("I Explore the Environment with My Body")

This workshop, perfect for younger children, engages the five senses to help them connect with nature. Through interactive activities with water, earth, and air, children will explore the environment in a tactile and educational way.

The initiative "adopt a sheep" aims to protect the endangered "Gentile di Puglia" sheep by offering adoption opportunities, ensuring the preservation of this ancient breed while supporting biodiversity and providing high-quality, natural products.

In addition to its educational programs, therapeutic initiatives, and immersive farm experiences, Masseria Salecchia also hosts events and offers comfortable accommodations, allowing guests to fully experience rural life.

3. The main rural local resources that form the basis of the initiative:

RLR1 – Human capital

RLR4 – Natural heritage

RLR6 – Intangible cultural heritage

RLR7 – Resources of agriculture, forestry and other typical rural activities

RLR8 – Local, traditional knowledge and skills



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RLR9 – Social capital

4. The development potential(s) of rural areas that the initiative utilizes:

Development potentials:	
Tourism & recreation	✓
Bio & circular economy	
Bio & renewable energy	
Education, skills & sport	✓
Agribusiness	✓
Cultural, historical, architectural & natural heritage preservation	✓
Health & care services	✓
Universal production & services	

5. Entrepreneurial and innovative knowledge, skills, and competencies required for the implementation of the initiative:

- In-depth knowledge of sustainable farming practices, livestock breeding, and comprehensive animal care.
- Understanding of biodiversity conservation and environmental sustainability.
- Competences in ergotherapy and animal-assisted therapy for individuals with disabilities or special needs.
- Experience in training strategies for disadvantaged groups.
- Educators with expertise in working with children and teenagers, especially in agricultural education and heritage conservation.



- Ability to coordinate workshops and organise private events.
- Skilled professionals for the adventure park, particularly trained in safety measures.
- Expertise in logistics planning for guest visits, seasonal activities, and summer camps.
- Marketing strategies to attract visitors.

6. Key rural stakeholders supporting the initiative:

- Slow Food Organisation – Promotes local food, traditional cooking, and sustainable agriculture.
- Masserie Didattiche Puglia – Recognises and supports educational farms in the Apulia region.
- Boschi Didattici – Recognises and promotes educational forests in the Apulia region.

7. Socio-economic barriers and challenges related to the initiative:

- Protecting endangered breeds (e.g., Gentile di Puglia sheep) and promoting biodiversity while balancing commercial viability.
- Finding, training, and retaining skilled workers.
- Mobility challenges due to the Masseria's rural location, with limited public transportation options, making a car necessary to reach it.
- High costs associated with animal care and the maintenance of the facilities.



3.22. Initiative 22

1. Initiative characteristics:

1.1. Name of the initiative:

Cocco Food

1.2. Location of the initiative:

Stornarella

1.3. Type of stakeholder involved:

Family-owned business.

1.4. Initiative type:

Business.

1.5. Scale of activity:

Small activity.

1.6. Legal form:

Sole proprietorship.

1.7. Planned implementation period:

Long-term.

2. Description of initiative:

A family-owned business specialising in the production of preserved foods, particularly tomatoes.

The products are made using traditional processing methods and high-quality raw materials, cultivated directly, as well as sourced from small local farmers,



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ensuring genuine, locally grown ingredients.

Products are biologically certified and km0.

3. The main rural local resources that form the basis of the initiative:

RLR 3 - Natural resources

RLR 6 - Intangible cultural heritage

RLR 7 - Resources of agriculture, forestry and other typical rural activities

RLR 8 - Local, traditional knowledge and skills

RLR 9 - Social capital

4. The development potential(s) of rural areas that the initiative utilizes:

Development potentials:	
Tourism & recreation	
Bio & circular economy	✓
Bio & renewable energy	
Education, skills & sport	
Agribusiness	✓
Cultural, historical, architectural & natural heritage preservation	✓
Health & care services	
Universal production & services	



5. Entrepreneurial and innovative knowledge, skills, and competencies required for the implementation of the initiative:

- Positioning Cocco Food as a traditional, sustainable, and organic food producer, with local growth as an integral part of the brand. Among its preserved products, Cocco Food proposes a unique item that involves preserving food in seawater, providing customers with an authentic taste of the sea. E-commerce also plays an important role in helping Cocco Food reach its niche market. Cocco Food emphasises its commitment to sustainability and support for organic farming.
- Fostering relationships with retailers, restaurants, and other key stakeholders in the community.
- Expertise in local food preservation traditions and artisanal methods, allowing Cocco Food to offer authentic products, alongside knowledge of local crops and the supply chain. An understanding of the importance of cultural heritage in building connections with customers.
- Familiarity with regulations related to food safety, packaging, and labelling for biologic and artisanal food products, as well as an understanding of consumer protection and sustainable certification standards and requirements.
- Knowledge of sustainable farming practices, short supply chains, and eco-friendly production methods. The ability to innovate within the food sector, such as experimenting with new preservation techniques (e.g., using seawater instead of brine) and creating new flavours with a traditional touch.

6. Key rural stakeholders supporting the initiative:

Local farmers, food producers, processors, and other entrepreneurs operating in



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rural areas who provide raw materials. Retailers, e-commerce platforms, and local businesses such as hotels, restaurants, and shops that are interested in using local products. A partnership with Steralmar for the seawater supply.

7. Socio-economic barriers and challenges related to the initiative:

- Other small businesses offering similar products, in particular those focusing on local, organic, and sustainable food.
- Maintaining biologic certification and upholding high standards of food production, ensuring compliance with food safety regulations and certifications. The complexities of these regulations can be demanding and costly for a family-owned business.
- Higher cost of biologic production compared to products made with traditional methods.
- Educating consumers on the value of biologic products.



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