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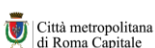
**SSPICE IT!**

Sustainability Skills Program for International Catering  
operators and Entrepreneurs through Integrated Training

## **SSPICE IT! – Sustainability Skills Program for International Catering operators and Entrepreneurs through Integrated Training**

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CIPFP CAMINO DE SANTIAGO  
ESCUOLA DE HOSTELERÍA & TURISMO DE LA RIQUJA



Escola Profissional AMAR TERRA VERDE



## Submodule n°13: Building a Network with Local Producers

<b>THEMATIC AREA</b>	<b>How to create a sustainable supply chain</b>	
<b>SUB AREA OF REFERENCE</b>	<i>Sustainable Food</i>	
<b>HOURS</b>	4	
<b>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Understand the various components of sustainability in relation with the production systems and be able to identify sustainable producers</b></li> <li><b>2. Be able to build a network with local producers, to create a sustainable supply chain</b></li> </ol>		
<b>LEARNING ACTIVITIES</b>		
<b>Theoretical</b>	<b>Practical</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Main impacts of the food system on the environment</li> <li>✓ Selection of more sustainable production systems and foods</li> <li>✓ Construction of networks of local producers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ How to evaluate the sustainability of a production system</li> <li>✓ How to reduce one's water consumption</li> <li>✓ How to evaluate the impact of food on the environment and choose sustainable suppliers</li> <li>✓ How to create a network of local producers</li> </ul>	

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## SUBMODULE 13: Building a Network with Local Producers

To reduce the environmental impact of unaware consumption, besides choosing sustainable food (as explained in Chapter 2), we should prefer local products, certainly fresh, that should not have completed hundreds of kilometers to end up in our plate, sold by the farmer, that grows them in his piece of land in our areas.

Local food distribution chains play a pivotal role in connecting farmers and producers with consumers in the same region, offering numerous advantages that extend beyond the mere act of buying and selling. These advantages range from environmental benefits to socio-economic considerations, fostering a deeper connection between people, food, and the land.

In this exploration of local food distribution chains, we will delve into the diverse advantages they offer, including reduced carbon footprint, enhanced food quality, and support for local economies. We will also address the challenges that arise in establishing and maintaining such systems, such as logistical complexities, scale limitations, and competition with mainstream supply chains.

By understanding both the benefits and obstacles of local food distribution, we can gain valuable insights into how these systems contribute to sustainable food practices and inform strategies for strengthening and expanding their reach. Ultimately, the examination of local food distribution chains invites us to envision a future where food consumption becomes a regenerative force, nurturing communities, ecosystems, and the well-being of all involved.

### 1. Advantages of local food distribution chains

Local food distribution chains offer a range of advantages, both for consumers and the broader community. Here are some key advantages of local food distribution chains:

- **Freshness and Quality:** Local food is often fresher because it doesn't have to travel long distances. This results in better flavour, nutritional value, and overall quality of the products.

- **Seasonal Variety:** Local food encourages seasonal eating, promoting a diverse and healthy diet. Consumers learn to appreciate and enjoy foods when they are naturally in season.
- **Health and Nutrition:** Local food tends to be more nutritious because it is picked at its peak ripeness. It can also support dietary preferences, such as organic, gluten-free, or vegan diets.
- **Reduced Carbon Footprint:** Local food travels shorter distances, reducing the carbon emissions associated with transportation. This contributes to lower greenhouse gas emissions and mitigates climate change.
- **Support for Local Economy:** Purchasing from local producers helps support the local economy by keeping money within the community. It bolsters the livelihoods of farmers, artisans, and small businesses.
- **Transparency and Traceability:** Local food often comes with transparent sourcing information, allowing consumers to know where and how their food was produced. This fosters trust and accountability in the supply chain.
- **Community Building:** Local food initiatives build a sense of community by connecting consumers with local producers. Farmers' markets, CSAs, and local food cooperatives often host community events and activities.
- **Preservation of Open Space:** Supporting local agriculture helps preserve open spaces, farmland, and rural landscapes. This, in turn, maintains biodiversity and prevents urban sprawl.
- **Reduced Food Waste:** Local food distribution chains often minimize food waste. Shorter supply chains mean less food spoilage during transportation and storage.
- **Economic Resilience:** Communities with strong local food systems are often more resilient in times of crisis. They can better withstand disruptions to global supply chains.
- **Cultural Preservation:** Local food often includes traditional and culturally significant products, helping preserve culinary traditions and heritage foods.
- **Diverse Product Selection:** Local food distribution chains showcase a diverse range of products, including heirloom varieties and unique, hard-to-find items.
- **Education and Awareness:** Local food systems provide opportunities for consumers to learn about food production, farming practices, and the importance of sustainable agriculture.

Overall, local food distribution chains play a crucial role in promoting sustainable, community-centred, and environmentally responsible food systems. They offer numerous benefits to consumers, producers, and communities, making them an important component of a more resilient and sustainable food future.

## 2. Challenges in local food distribution

While local food distribution chains offer numerous advantages, they also face several challenges that can impact their operations and growth. Here are some common challenges associated with local food distribution:

- **Seasonal Availability:** Local food availability is often limited to what is in season. This can lead to seasonal fluctuations in product availability and challenges in meeting year-round demand for certain products.
- **Scale and Consistency:** Small-scale local producers may struggle to meet consistent demand, leading to supply shortages. Maintaining product consistency can be challenging for smaller operations.
- **Price Competitiveness:** Local products can sometimes be more expensive than mass-produced alternatives due to higher production costs. This can pose a barrier for price-sensitive consumers.
- **Distribution Infrastructure:** Developing and maintaining efficient distribution networks can be a challenge for local food systems. Transportation, storage, and delivery logistics can be complex.
- **Consumer Education:** Raising awareness among consumers about the benefits of local food and changing their purchasing habits can be a slow and ongoing process.
- **Market Access:** Some local producers may have limited access to markets beyond farmers' markets and direct-to-consumer channels, limiting their potential customer base.
- **Regulatory Hurdles:** Compliance with food safety regulations and certifications can be demanding for small-scale producers, adding to their operational costs.
- **Land Use Pressures:** As urban areas expand, farmland can be at risk of development. Preserving open space for agriculture becomes crucial.
- **Infrastructure and Technology:** Limited access to modern technology and infrastructure, such as online marketplaces and e-commerce, can hinder the growth of local food distribution.
- **Competition with Large Retailers:** Local food systems often compete with large supermarket chains that have significant resources and marketing power.
- **Access to Capital:** Securing financing and capital for local food businesses can be challenging, hindering their ability to expand and invest in infrastructure.
- **Scale-Up Issues:** Successfully scaling up a local food initiative while maintaining the principles of sustainability and community can be a delicate balance.
- **Consumer Preferences:** Consumer preferences for convenience, which may favour one-stop shopping at large grocery stores, can pose a challenge for local food distribution.
- **Climate and Weather:** Local farmers are highly susceptible to the impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events, which can disrupt production.

Addressing these challenges often requires collaboration among local producers, policymakers, consumers, and community organizations. Creative solutions, such as cooperative distribution networks, farmer's market incentives, and public awareness campaigns, can help mitigate these challenges and support the growth of local food distribution systems.

### 3. How to create distribution chains with local producers

Creating a distribution chain with local producers requires careful planning, collaboration, and a clear vision. Here are the steps to help you establish a successful distribution chain with local producers:

1. **Research and Identify Local Producers:** Start by researching and identifying local producers in your region who offer products that align with your distribution chain's focus. Consider products such as fruits, vegetables, dairy, meat, or artisanal goods.
2. **Build Relationships:** Reach out to the local producers you have identified and start building relationships with them. Visit their farms or facilities, learn about their products and production practices, and discuss their interest in participating in your distribution chain.
3. **Define Your Distribution Model:** Decide on the distribution model that best suits your vision and the needs of the local producers. Options include farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture (CSA), wholesale to restaurants and grocery stores, or an online platform for direct-to-consumer sales.
4. **Collaborate with Stakeholders:** Engage with local stakeholders, such as farmer cooperatives, community organizations, and local government. Collaboration can provide valuable support, resources, and networks to strengthen your distribution chain.
5. **Create an Efficient Logistics System:** Develop a robust logistics system to handle the collection, storage, and transportation of products from producers to customers. Ensure that the system maintains product quality and freshness throughout the supply chain.
6. **Set Fair Pricing:** Establish fair pricing that benefits both the local producers and the end consumers. Consider the costs of production, transportation, and distribution, while ensuring the prices remain competitive and reasonable.
7. **Educate Consumers:** Educate consumers about the benefits of supporting local producers and the positive impacts of their choices on the environment, economy, and community. Raise awareness about the importance of local food and its contribution to sustainability.
8. **Promote Transparency:** Foster transparency by providing information about the origin of products, the production methods used by the local producers, and the positive impacts of supporting local food systems.
9. **Adapt to Seasonal Changes:** Embrace seasonal variations in product availability. Educate consumers about the benefits of eating seasonally and the diverse range of products offered throughout the year.
10. **Comply with Regulations:** Ensure that your distribution chain complies with all relevant regulations and permits required for food distribution and handling.
11. **Invest in Marketing and Outreach:** Invest in marketing efforts to promote your distribution chain and the local producers involved. Use social media, local events, and partnerships to create awareness and attract customers.
12. **Seek Feedback and Continuous Improvement:** Seek feedback from both producers and consumers to identify areas for improvement. Continuously adapt

and refine your distribution chain to meet the changing needs and preferences of all stakeholders.

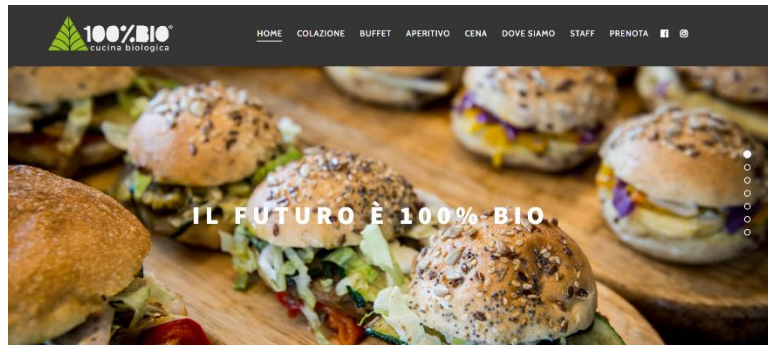
By following these steps and staying committed to sustainability, transparency, and collaboration, you can create a successful distribution chain with local producers. Such a distribution chain can contribute to the local economy, promote environmental stewardship, and build a stronger sense of community around food.

<b>Exercise: <i>Analyse the sustainability of your local producers</i></b>	
<b>Pre-requisites</b>	/
<b>Time</b>	1 hour
<b>Tools</b>	SSPICE IT! Manual, PC or smartphones, internet connection, printer
<b>Objectives</b>	1. Use the information provided by the Manual to evaluate the sustainability of a supplier
<b>Instructions</b>	
<p>This exercise should be realised, when possible, in group.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Step 1: With the support of the teachers, choose two suppliers of your territory. They will have to be located within 70 km of your VET centre</li> <li>Step 2: Using the information provided by the Manual, develop a sustainability check list. Each check list should include the list of products obtained, the area of production, the product's characteristics, as well as any elements that characterize the products and production system in terms of sustainability.</li> <li>Step 3: Using the check list, assess the sustainability of the two suppliers, identifying the most sustainable one.</li> </ol>	



## CASE STUDY

### 100%Bio, a restaurant in the centre of Rome - [www.centopercento.bio](http://www.centopercento.bio)



The restaurant's owners, who have always been passionate about organic culture and attentive to the cultural transformations taking place in the field of food and catering, as well as those taking place in the environment, decided to open in Rome, in front of the Pyramid, a restaurant that would use and offer its customers only 100% certified organic products.

What were initially pleasant chats gradually turned into a concrete project and operational business plan... And so, in the historic Pyramid Square, 100% BIO opens. From an ideal to reality.

The restaurant has made the commitment to make its activity as sustainable as possible, under all aspects.

The ingredients used by the restaurant are all certified organic and a special attention is paid to the quality and origin of the raw materials.

Moreover, the suppliers with whom it has been collaborating for several years espouse their project and philosophy; they are an integral part of the project.

Lately the owners of the restaurant have even taken a small plot of land in which they make cultivation trials, using natural techniques.

Their commitment to sustainability extends also to the use of compostable material, and the effort, together with their suppliers, to reduce the amount of plastic from packaging.

Last but not least, it embraces also sustainability from a socio-economic point of view: their employees work with consonant and regular shifts and hours, and their suppliers are also chosen and selected according to the company policy they adopt in relation to the welfare of the person and the protection of workers.

The restaurant is open from the morning till evening, with three different offers:

- ✓ for breakfasts, with only handcrafted products realised by the cooks,
- ✓ for lunch, which is held with a buffet with different dishes every day according to the seasonality and availability of raw materials,
- ✓ for dinner, "a la carte", with a creative menu that emphasizes first and foremost the material used.

## EXTRAS

### 1. Glossary

- **CAP:** Common agricultural policy supports farmers and ensures Europe's food security. The CAP is a common policy for all EU countries, managed and financed at European level with resources from the EU budget.
- **Farm to Fork (F2F):** The Farm to Fork Strategy (F2F) is the ten-year plan developed by the European Commission to guide the transition to a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system.
- **MEC: Minimum Environmental Criteria (MEC)** are environmental requirements established for the various phases of the purchasing process, aimed at identifying the best product, service or design solution in environmental terms, throughout its life-cycle, taking account of availability on the market.
- **MAI: Mediterranean Adequacy Index (MAI),** whose function is to express the degree of adherence of a meal to the Mediterranean Diet. It does this by comparing the calories, therefore the energy, provided by the different classes of foods present in the dish we consume.
- **PNRR:** the National Recovery and Rehabilitation Plan (PNRR) is the program by which the government intends to manage the funds of the Next Generation EU. It is the instrument of economic recovery introduced by the European Union to heal the losses caused by the pandemic
- **GSP:** Global Soil Partnership. A globally recognized mechanism established in 2012 with the mission of promoting sustainable soil management and ensuring productive soils towards Food Security

### 2. Acknowledgments

This module has been written by Loreta Grande and Andrea Palmieri, with the support of the SSPICE IT! Team in Italy and Portugal.

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