

The Girolomoni experience: what can we learn about building territorial food ecosystems?

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What do we mean with Med Diet? Not only food, but the territory that makes it possible



HEALTH

BIODIVERSITY

ECONOMY

CULTURE

It's the framework connecting healthy soils, biodiversity, farmers, local economies, food culture, tourism and communities. Connect these dimensions instead of treating them as separate projects.



Girolomoni's vision: «*Dignity to the Land!*»

A story that began in Montebello in 1971 with Gino Girolomoni and his choice to rebuild rural life in abandoned territories around organic farming.

FARMS

- 400+ farmers
- 90%+ of wheat supplied from the Marche



COOPERATION

- Collectively organized
- Mutual value creation



TRANSFORMATION

- Own mill
- Own pasta factory
- 65+ employees



MARKET

- 100% Organic
- Worldwide distribution



TERRITORY

- Hospitality
- Education
- Culture
- Community

Not a company or a product, but an ecosystem of relationships.
Key idea is integration: each activity strengthens the others



Layer 1: Organic farming

Organic agriculture is not only absence of synthetic pesticides or fertilisers. Real significance is broader: organising production around ecological processes, soil fertility, biodiversity and long-term resilience.

In our experience:

- Crop rotation: wheats, legumes, sunflower, to maintain soil fertility and biodiversity
- Processing: milling and pasta production located next to the agricultural base, making the origin and transformation of the food much more visible
- Energy: 100% renewable energy for thermal and electricity consumption

Sustainability is much more credible when embedded in the whole production model and not only added as a label at the end.



Layer 2: Cooperation

**It's what makes the chain resilient. The farmer is not simply a supplier:
the whole system is designed around the value of member's production.**

COLLECTIVE SCALE

Hundreds of farms access
shared processing,
organisation, market
access and a common
identity

LOCAL VALUE CAPTURE

Grain is milled and
transformed at Montebello,
keeping more stages of
value creation connected to
the territory

FAIRER RELATIONSHIPS

A fair organic supply chain
intended to give farmers a
fair return while offering
quality food to consumers
at affordable prices

**This is the difference between a “local product” and
a resilient local value chain**



Layer 3: Territory

The territory is part of the food experience. Agriculture generates not only food and income, but also hospitality, culture and a reason to visit.

BIO TOURISM

Montebello, the monastery, hospitality and guided visits make the production landscape an experience.

EDUCATION

The educational farm and visits connect students, families and visitors with how food is produced.

CULTURE

The Girolomoni Foundation and cultural activities keep rural knowledge, debate and memory alive.

MEDITERRANEAN IDENTITY

The food chain is connected to landscape, hospitality, conviviality and the cultural meaning of food.

**Tourism does not sit outside the food system,
it can help finance, explain and celebrate it.**



Can this be a role model? What is transferable?

Not the pasta factory itself, but the architecture behind it.

First: organise producers around a shared territorial purpose

Second: add value locally through local processing, branding, quality and market access

Third: make biodiversity and soil health part of the economic model

Fourth: connect agriculture with tourism, education, culture, research and public authorities

And fifth: tell the story. If people can visit, taste, learn and understand the production system, sustainability becomes something tangible.

So the model is not 'build another pasta factory'. The model is to identify the strategic assets of a territory and connect them into an ecosystem.



What role for the «Distretto Biologico Marche»?

Can it be viewed as a potential territorial communication amplifier?

A WIDE BASE

The regional Bio-district was created in 2021 and brings together more than 2,000 agricultural enterprises. But can it be the platform for an ecosystem architecture?

BEYOND FARMING

Its stated ambition is to connect farmers with universities, research centres, local authorities, consumers and businesses. That's the type of multi-actor logic MEDDIET seeks

A NEXT QUESTION

How can the Bio-district connect more systematically with tourism, healthy diets, hospitality, public procurement, education and cross-border Mediterranean cooperation? How can it bring together farmers and production?

We have the ingredients, but how we connect them?

Move from “many good initiatives” to a recognisable regional innovation ecosystem.



A message for the MEDDIET Innovation Network

A platform connecting existing territorial experiments where to exchange models

CONNECT

Organic farms
Cooperatives
Processors
Restaurants and Tourism
Schools and Universities
Researchers
Public authorities

EXCHANGE

Practical models («how to»):
Organise farmers
Build resilient value chains
Use public procurement
Connect food with tourism
Create educational formats
Measure territorial impact

ACT

Develop pilot territories
and measurable
cooperation projects
across the Adriatic-Ionian
Region

Girolomoni's lesson is simple: resilient food systems are built by connecting people, places and value and not by optimizing one link in isolation



Thank you!

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