

Project code: 16.4.2-1
e-MS code: ROBG - 145
Interreg V-A
Romania-Bulgaria
e-MS report
Value:

Contents

Introduction. Why Do We Need Strategy and Network?	2
Organic Farming	4
Analysis on the Actual State of Romanian and Bulgarian Cross-border Organic Agriculture	16
Description of the Romanian and Bulgarian Network of Organic Farming Entrepreneurs in the Field of Organic Farming	31
Goals of the Strategy of Romanian and Bulgarian Network of Organic Farming Entrepreneurs	34
Are you a consumer? What's in it for you if you join?	35
Are you a producer? What's in it for you if you join?.....	36
Are you a distributor? What's in it for you if you join?	36
Are you an authority? What's in it for you if you join?	36
3 Language Web Portal “Cross-Border Nature Friendly Entrepreneurs”	37
Bibliography	39

Introduction. Why Do We Need Strategy and Network?

A farmer network is a group of farmers working w to improve farm practices through collaborative, scientific evaluation of those practices, and sharing the evaluation results through meetings in groups or one on one. Farmer networks can conduct on-farm research through replicated strip trials using production-scale equipment, and by testing a change in practice or management from the farmer's normal practice following a standard protocol. Networks of farmers who learn from each other how to improve farm practices have probably existed for centuries, but the widespread availability of combine yield monitors has greatly increased farmers' ability to create scientifically valid data on a field scale from which to learn. Farmer networks can follow several different types of models and typically involve agronomists, scientists and other stakeholders in addition to the farmers, who come together to identify and solve pressing issues or questions related to crop production and environmental conservation.

The key elements of a farmer network can be:

1. Participatory learning and adaptive management, using basic research principles
2. Use of the right data collection tools, technologies and protocols for the research conducted, assuring that results are scientifically valid and repeatable
3. Proven methods for sharing, discussing, and communicating results of on-farm studies

Focus areas for farmer network research can include:

- Nutrient management (both commercial fertilizers and animal manure)
- Crop protection, such as weed, insect and disease management
- Crop production, such as seeding rates, row spacing, and population studies
- Soil and water quality
- Energy efficiency and life cycle analyses
- Technology evaluation and adoption
- Product and practice testing

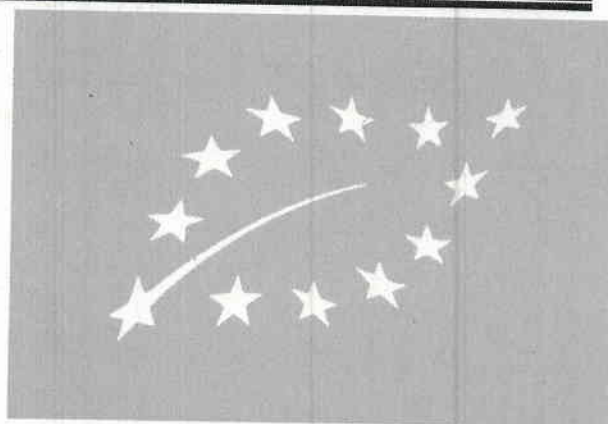
Increasingly, farmers need decision support tools and platforms that provide the **foundation** for objective and defensible farm management. They need information that helps them understand the impact of management decisions on both economic and environmental outcomes, and to adjust management to achieve ever better outcomes. Farmers need to have confidence that they are achieving a high level of stewardship and preserving the land for future generations. The best person to make decisions about the land being farmed is the farmer and/or the landowner—but often they receive conflicting information, confusing messages and high level marketing materials that do nothing to advance their understanding of what is happening on their farms, in their fields. Farmer networks combine precision agriculture tools, advisor technical assistance, and peer-to-peer learning in a model that maximizes the potential for incorporating new information into management adjustments over time. The data generated by farmer networks provides a gold mine of information that can deliver new insight as new data is added and analysed.

Farmer networks provide more than just an arena for farmer learning. Non-traditional partners that are engaged in farmer networks through their roles as funders, collaborators, advisors or even environmental organizations can learn from their involvement and gain a much greater appreciation and understanding of what occurs on the farm and how complex farm management can be. Farmer networks offer great untapped potential for exchange of ideas, clearing up of misconceptions, and forming collaborations around mutually beneficial solutions to pressing issues like water quality, product quality and efficient production.

A network gathers individual experience and turns it into a collective experience. In the Romania-Bulgaria region, there is a predominantly agricultural interest and a potential to ensure organic production. Successful examples are found on both sides of the border, but so far they have not been capitalized and shared. Being a neighbouring area with common history and similar characteristics, a network of Romanian and Bulgarian farmers would

General Strategy for development of "Romanian - Bulgarian Organic Entrepreneurial Network"

help develop and capitalize on the organic potential of agriculture in South-eastern Europe.



Organic Farming

Organic Farming – Definition and Importance

EU definition of organic farming - Organic production means a sustainable agricultural system respecting the environment and animal welfare, but also includes all other stages of the food supply chain.

Organic farming is an integrated system for managing the agriculture and food production that combines best environmental practices, maintains a high level of biodiversity, preserves natural resources, enforces high standards of humane treatment of animals and production methods, tailored to the preferences of some consumers towards products made by using natural substances and processes.

Encouraging farmers to convert to or maintain organic farming contributes simultaneously to: **environmental protection** - strengthens agro-ecosystems, preserves biodiversity and enables future generations to benefit from preserved nature; **producing healthy food** - this form of farming meets the needs of the growing number of consumers as it uses safe and transparent production methods; **social effect** - creates employment in rural areas and more jobs than conventional farming.

Organic has become a way of living. Some people see these products as being tastier



General Strategy for development of "Romanian - Bulgarian Organic Entrepreneurial Network"

or healthier than those coming from conventional agriculture while others appreciate them because of the good practices towards the environment or the labour force employed on organic farms. We have also seen new organic shops open or old ones remaining in business even through the economic crisis, which would hint at an increasing demand for these products.

Universal principles of organic farming are:

Principle of health: to maintain and enhance the fertility of soil, plants, animals and humans as a whole;

Principle of ecology: to be based on vital ecological systems and cycles, to work with them and to help with their maintenance;

Principle of honesty: build on the basis of interrelations that ensure honesty with respect to the nature of life relationships;

Principle of care: to be managed with a cautious approach, to protect the health and well-being of present and future generations and the environment.

Benefits of Organic Farming over Conventional:

- Healthy foods of high technological quality are produced;
- Ground water is protected from contamination with nitrates, pesticides and others;
- Increasing biodiversity, utilizing natural, local and renewable resources;
- Improving soil structure and fertility;
- Reducing the energy consumption by about 50% ;
- Reducing soil erosion by about 4 times;
- Saving rain worms and beneficial types.

What is the organic production in the European Union (EU) and who are the people producing it?

The organic sector in the EU has been rapidly developing during the past years. According to Eurostat data, the EU-28 had in 2015 a total area of 11.1 million hectares cultivated as organic, up from 5.0 million in 2002. During the last decade, organic area in the EU increased by about 500 000 hectares per year. This is a big increase, but the whole organic area represents only 6.2% of total utilised agricultural area in Europe. The organic area is cultivated by almost 185 000 farms across Europe. Most of the organic land (78%) and of organic farms (81%) are situated in the EU Member States having joined the EU before 2004 (the so called EU-15), in which national and European legislation, among others, helped stimulate the development of this sector. The European countries having joined the EU since 2004 (called in the report the EU-N13) are not lagging behind and are quickly expanding the organic sector as well. They registered a 12% yearly growth rate in their organic area for from 2002 to 2015 and saw their number of holdings increase almost tenfold between 2003 and 2015.

But are organic holdings showing particular trends in comparison with conventional ones or are their managers different? Organic holdings tend to be bigger than conventional farms in the European Union. Organic farm managers tend to be generally younger than the average conventional farmers in Europe.

Around 306 500 organic operators (producers, processors and importers) were registered in the EU-28 in 2015. A good part of these operators (271 550) were represented by agricultural producers, who may also process and/or import organic products, and which were mostly active in the EU-15. Though about 11 600 producers were counted in the EU-N13 in 2002 their number grew to more than 65 650 in 2015, also as a result of additional financing provided by the European Union for this type of production following their accession.

Organic farms are active both in the arable crop and orchard as well as animal sectors. Figures show that at EU level both types of production are registering a positive trend for the studied years. But what sort of crop or animal products come out of organic production?

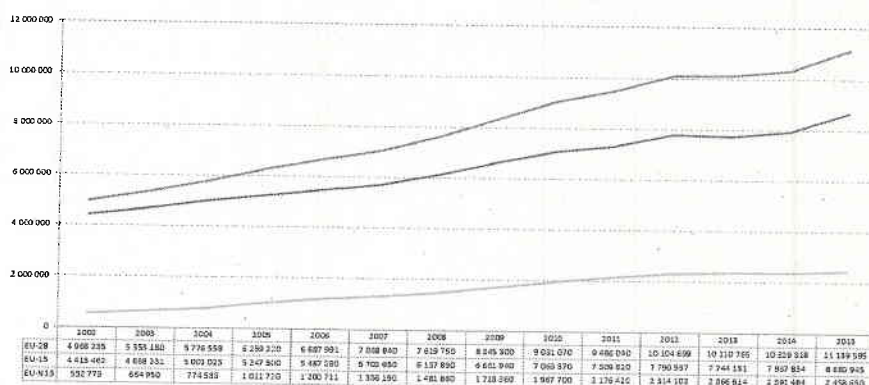
Data shows that permanent pasture represents the biggest share of the organic area (58%), followed by cereals (20%) and permanent crops (15%). Sheep (42%)

General Strategy for development of "Romanian - Bulgarian Organic Entrepreneurial Network"

and cattle (34%) are the most important types of organic animal production at European level, after poultry. However, other types of animal production should be mentioned in the EU- 28, such as pigs, which registered 9%, and goats, which were at 7% of organic livestock in European Union in 2015.

The report gives an overview of the situation of organic agriculture in Europe, for given years, according to data availability. Since detailed data is not available for all countries and varies within the Eurostat databases, other sources and own estimations were also used in this report.

The area under organic agriculture has increased significantly in the last years. Graph 1 shows the evolution of the area under organic cultivation in the period 2002-2015. In fourteen years, the total (fully converted and in-conversion organic area) have increased from 5.0 million ha to an estimated 11.1 million ha (+6% per year) for the EU-28. The speed of growth has been most spectacular for the EU-N13, in which organic area has jumped from 0,55 to 2.4 million ha (+12% per year), whereas in the same period the surface increased from 4.4 to almost 8.6 million ha in the EU-15, at an average yearly growth rate of 5% per year. Despite the strong growth of the sector in the EU-N13, the majority of organic area in Europe currently exists in the EU-15. The EU-15 represented 78% of all EU-28 organic area in 2015.



Graph 1. Area under organic cultivation in the EU

EU Rules for Organic Production

The EU regulation on organic production and labelling of organic products ensures that the same high quality standards are respected all over the EU. The rules refer to agriculture and aquaculture farming practices, food processing and labelling, certification procedures for farmers as well as to the import of non-EU organic products.

Organic farmers in the EU use energy and natural resources in a responsible way, promote animal health and contribute to maintaining biodiversity, ecological balance and water/soil quality.

Organic farming practices in the EU include:

- Crop rotation for an efficient use of resources
- A ban of the use of chemical pesticides and synthetic fertilisers
- Very strict limits on livestock antibiotics
- Ban of genetically modified organisms (GMOs)
- Use of on-site resources for natural fertilisers and animal feed
- Raising livestock in a free-range, open-air environment and the use of organic fodder
- Tailored animal husbandry practices

Organic farming and conventional farming

Organic production is an overall system of farm management and food production that combines best environmental practices, a high level of biodiversity, the preservation of natural resources and the application of high animal welfare standards, and a production method in line with the preference of certain consumer for products using a natural substances and processes.

In recent years the organic market in the EU, driven by steadily increasing demand, has developed significantly (19.7 billion euro with a 9% growth rate in 2011). In parallel, during the last decade, the number of organic producers as well

General Strategy for development of “Romanian - Bulgarian Organic Entrepreneurial Network”

as the surface under organic production have grown at a fast pace. Each year, 500.000 hectares of agricultural land convert to organic in the Union. In the period 2000-2012, the total organic area² has increased by 6.7% yearly on average, to reach an estimated 9.6 million ha, which is 5.4% of the total utilized agricultural area in the EU. Organic aquaculture production is also growing fast, following the introduction of EU rules in 2009.

The sector encompasses producers in the agricultural and aquaculture sectors, as well their suppliers, food manufacturers and distributors who all comply with strict rules.

The overall challenge faced by the organic sector is to ensure a steady growth of supply and demand, while maintaining consumers' trust. It is essential to guarantee the credibility of the scheme and the added value in a long term perspective.

Put simply, organic farming is an agricultural system that seeks to provide the consumer, with fresh, tasty and authentic food while respecting natural life-cycle systems.

To achieve this, organic farming relies on a number of objectives and principles, as well as common practices designed to minimize the human impact on the environment, while ensuring the agricultural system operates as naturally as possible.

Typical organic farming practices include:

- Wide crop rotation as a prerequisite for an efficient use of on-site resources
- Very strict limits on chemical synthetic pesticide and synthetic fertilizer use, livestock antibiotics, food additives and processing aids and other inputs
- Absolute prohibition of the use of genetically modified organisms
- Taking advantage of on-site resources, such as livestock manure for fertilizer or feed produced on the farm
- Choosing plant and animal species that are resistant to disease and adapted to local conditions
- Raising livestock in free-range, open-air systems and providing them with organic feed

- Using animal husbandry practices appropriate to different livestock species
- But organic farming is also part of a larger supply chain, which encompasses food processing, distribution and retailing sectors and, ultimately, you. So every time you buy an organic apple from your local supermarket, or choose an organic wine from the menu at your favourite restaurant, you can be sure they were produced according to strict rules aimed at respecting the environment and animals.

But organic farming is also part of a larger supply chain, which encompasses food processing, distribution and retailing sectors and, ultimately, you. So every time you buy an organic apple from your local supermarket, or choose an organic wine from the menu at your favourite restaurant, you can be sure they were produced according to strict rules aimed at respecting the environment and animals.

5 reasons to choose organic products

1. Healthy!

Generally, these products are richer in vitamin C and important minerals: calcium, magnesium, iron, chromium. For example, organic milk contains more omega 3 fat, vitamin E and vitamin A (beta carotene). It has 80% more antioxidants. Organic fruits and vegetables contain 40% more vitamins and minerals. They are all raised free of artificial fertilizers and pesticides. The organic products prolong life, health and protect the cardiovascular system.

2. Tasty!

Many people find organic foods more delicious, perhaps because they follow natural rhythm of growth, have less water and are grown without chemicals. More and more quality and taste are more important for people than the low price.

3. No pesticides

The best way to avoid harmful pesticides (they are over 440 in conventional agricultures) is to consume organic foods.

General Strategy for development of "Romanian - Bulgarian Organic Entrepreneurial Network"

4. No GMO!

Animals bred on conventional methods are often fed with GMO plants. Later such animals are used as a source of meat and dairy products. Fortunately, GMOs are banned in organic production.

5. No antibiotics

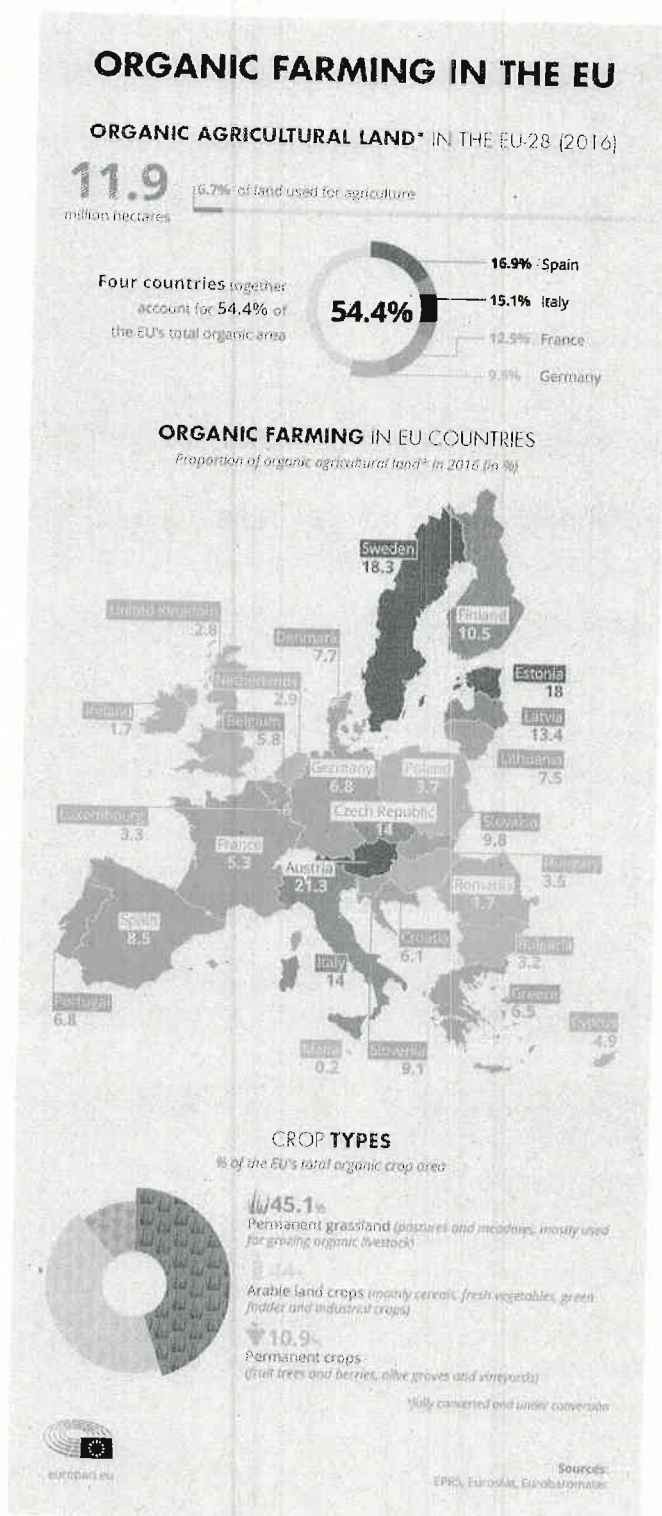
70% of livestock antibiotics are given to healthy animals for preventive purposes and for stimulating growth. However, in organic livestock farming, routine antibiotic use is prohibited.

Organic products are geared towards a cleaner environment. Removing toxins from agriculture saves a lot of money for the state to clean drinking water from chemicals and pesticides. Organic food has proven origins, it is regularly inspected, and its requirements are set by the regulations of the European Union. Organic standards are a special care for animals that are grown under natural conditions and are fed with clean and natural organic food. Organic farming supports biodiversity, causes less pollution, generates less carbon dioxide.

General Strategy for development of "Romanian - Bulgarian Organic Entrepreneurial Network"

Organic Labelling and Logo

The EU's organic logo on food products guarantees that EU rules on organic production have been respected. It is compulsory for pre-packaged food. In the case of processed food, it means that at least 95% of the ingredients of agricultural origin are organic. Super markets and other retailers can label their products with the term organic only if they comply with the rules.



Organic Market and Farmland

The EU's organic market has constantly expanded and is now worth about €30.7 billion per year. Although the EU's organic farmland has increased over the years, it still only uses 7% of the total agricultural area. The difference between demand and production is covered by increasing imports.

Main Points of the New Rules

The EU is working on an update of existing rules on organic production and labelling in response to major changes that have transformed the sector. **Proposed alterations include:**

Stricter controls: all operators throughout the food supply chain (farmers, breeders, processors, traders, importers) are checked at least once a year.

General Strategy for development of "Romanian - Bulgarian Organic Entrepreneurial Network"

Fairer competition: producers from non-EU countries who want to sell their products in the EU need to comply with the same rules as producers in the EU.

Prevention of contamination with pesticides: farmers must take precautionary measures to avoid accidental contamination with non-authorised pesticides or fertilisers. A product loses its organic status if the contamination is due to fraud or negligent behaviour. EU countries that have thresholds for non-authorised substances in organic food can continue applying them, but they must allow other organic foods from other EU countries in their markets. The European Commission will assess the anti-contamination rules in 2025.

Better supply of organic seeds and animals: a computer database on the availability of organic seeds and animals is set up in every EU country.

Mixed farms: farmers are allowed to produce conventional products in addition to organic ones, but need to clearly separate their farming activities.

Certification procedures for small farmers are made easier.

New products such as salt, cork and essential oils are included. Others can be added later on.

MEPs adopted the new rules on 19 April 2018. The agreed text still needs to be formally approved by the Council before it can enter into force. German Greens/EFA member Martin Häusling is the MEP responsible for steering the proposals through Parliament.

Strengths and Weaknesses for Organic Agriculture

Strengths

Profitability

In many cases, organic agriculture is significantly more profitable than conventional agriculture when premium prices are considered.

Multi-functionality and resilience

Besides producing food, organic food and farming systems usually enhance the resilience of agro-ecosystems by contributing to many ecosystem goods and services, some of which are outlined below. Thereby, they may fulfil environmental and social policy targets. For example, they encompass the

livelihoods of farmers and farm workers, as well as animal welfare. Grazing animals are an integral part of the land use.

Biodiversity, pollination and pest regulation

In most cases, organic food and farming systems increase overall biomass abundance and conserve biodiversity both within and between species, which in turn may enhance pollination of crops and natural pest regulation.

Soil protection and carbon sequestration

Organic food and farming systems generally conserve soil fertility in a sustainable way, and may reduce soil erosion, and store carbon in organic matter.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation

Organic food and farming systems emit fewer greenhouse gases under best farm practice, show higher yield stability in climatically extreme years, and reduce the risk of floods.

Product quality and food safety

In some cases, organic food contains higher concentrations of secondary plant metabolites, antioxidants and vitamins, as well as polyunsaturated fatty acids. Furthermore, organic food is often less contaminated with cadmium, nitrate, nitrite and other residues.

Weaknesses and Challenges

Yield gap

Organic food and farming systems generally have lower yields and need more land to produce the same amount of food, which may have negative impacts on the environment and food security. Moreover, lower yields may translate into higher unit costs of production and lower profits for farmers in the absence of price premiums. The many excellent examples of best organic practice frame the way future innovations must go.

Economy penalizes diversity

Current policies and markets stimulate the production of single commodities in large quantities that are sold at distortedly low prices at the cost of the environment and humankind.

Deficits of standards and regulations

Social standards and animal welfare are not consistently codified. In addition, the sensory quality of organic products is not part of the certification. Organic standards prohibit or restrict the use of certain technologies, and a scientific case-by-case assessment is not in place. The standards require burdensome and bureaucratic certification procedures.

Insufficient funding

A very small part of the budget for food and farming systems research spent on organic, there is a lack of funding for basic and applied projects, which hinders development of innovations by scientists and farm advisors.

Competition

Other sustainability standards compete with organic production, and the multitude of labels causes confusion amongst different stakeholders such as consumers.

Analysis on the Current State of Romanian and Bulgarian Cross-border Organic Agriculture

The main goal of the analysis is to describe the current situation within the border region by properly selecting the analysis of data relevant to organic farming. The analysis is based on the study and the link between the Dobrich and Constanta counties including: geographic location and natural resources.

The importance of organic agriculture, the current level in the European Union and its representation in Romania and Bulgaria are further defined and presented.

Geographical location and historical development

Geographical location

Dobrich County

Dobrich County is part of the Romania-Bulgaria border area. It includes eight municipalities: Dobrich, Toshevo, Krushari, Tervel, Balchik, Kavarna and Shabla. The total population of the county is 189 677 persons (according to the National Institute of Statistics, 2011).

The county is located in North-East Bulgaria and occupies most of South Dobrogea, falling in the East of the Danube Plain. To the north, it borders on Romania, eastwards on the Black Sea, South on the county of Varna, Shumen on the Southwest and Northwest on the Silistra county.

Three municipalities in the region - Balchik, Kavarna and Shabla, border on the Black Sea. The municipality of Balchik is the most attractive, thanks to the tourist resort Albena, which is the emblem of the seaside. Dobrich County has a varied landscape, which is the unique character of the region - coast, lakes, forests and hills, plains and steppes, rocks and plateaus. Situated in the immediate vicinity of various natural resources, it allows the formation of diverse and exotic trails.

The geographical location of these three Black Sea coastal municipalities is crucial for the development of tourism in the navigation area.

The administrative centre of the county is the town of Dobrich, which is located 30 km away from the Black Sea and 40 km from the national highway "Hemus". The city is an independent municipality, occupying an area of 109497 ha. There are to be found here the municipality of Dobrich, the Dobrich County Administration, the local structures of the central, financial, cultural and educational institutions, health institutions, social institutions and.

Constanta County

Constanta County is located in the South-East of Romania. The Eastern Border is the Black Sea, and the Danube River to the West. Constanta County covers an area of 7,071 km² (3% of the total territory of the country) and has a total population of 717,323 people (since 1 January 2007). The population density is 101 inhabitants / km². The degree of urbanization is 73.5% - much higher than the average for Romania (52%). The county counts eight cities and 52 villages.

The administrative centre is the city of Constanta - the largest port on the Black Sea and the fourth largest city in Romania. The Romanian seaside stretches over 82 km, which gathering 13 resorts, including Mamaia, which has the largest accommodation base along the coast.

Constanța Prefecture includes 12 municipalities with more than 200 localities: Constanța, Mangalia, Medgidia, Cernavodă, Năvodari, Ovidiu, Băneasa, Murfatlar, Hârșova, Eforie, Techirghiol, Negru Vodă.

The relief forms of Constanta County are mainly low, other forms of low altitude relief, as well as lakes and lagoons. This populated region is among some of the oldest in Romania, dating from the ancient times of the Greek colonies. In 1991, Constanta celebrated 2500 years from its founding and 2250 years of existence, according to written evidence.

5 km from Constanta, there is the tourist resort Mamaia - the oldest, the largest and most famous Romanian resort. The beach of Mamaia, of about 200 meter wide, stretches over more than 8 km. Hotels, restaurants and attractions are built on the land strip lying between the Black Sea and Lake Siutghiol, one of the largest freshwater lakes in Romania.

Natural resources in the cross-border region

Constanta and Dobrich counties are part of the Dobrogea geographical area. North Dobrogea has a low-altitude seaside, portions flooded with marshes and shoreline lakes in the northern part of the Danube, low hills, wooded inland.

Bulgaria's Dobrogea is divided into two parts by a virtual line between Stozher village and Rosica village - plain to the East and hilly plateau to the western part of Dobrogea. The territory of Dobrogea is covered by several counties in Bulgaria - Varna (Valci Dol and part of Aksakovo), Dobrich and Silistra, and part of Ispirih Province - Razgrad County. The average altitude of Dobrogea plateau is about 230 m, and the seashore is intercalated and declivitous. The alternation between wetlands and steppe is a unique characteristic of Dobrogea which makes it particularly interesting for specialized tourism.

There are no rivers in the Bulgarian Dobrogea. There are mainly carbonate and leachate chernozems. The climate here is not extreme, although it seems that the winters are heavy because of the winds constantly blowing.

Dobrogea is predominantly an agricultural region. The Bulgarian part mostly cultivates cereals and industrial plants, while in northern Dobrogea there are favourable conditions for the development of viticulture and horticulture. In most of the cities, light industry is developed and specialized. In Constanta and other coastal cities, fishing and port activities are the main activities.

The whole coast has significant tourist potential. From these locations, Albena resort is considered to be the "pearl" of the Bulgarian Dobrogea coast, followed by the Rusalka resort. The town of Balchik is also particularly impressive, as it is the only town on the coast of Dobrogea, located directly on the seashore. Other cities (Kavarna and Shabla) are extended to the interior of the shore. Other remarkable places are Cape Kaliakra, an ancient and medieval city, Shabka, with its oldest functional lighthouse on the Black Sea, Yalata archaeological and natural reserve, including its fortress in which it is believed to have lived and died the ancient poet Ovid, and the lagoon Durankulak near which the oldest stone

constructions in Europe was found, as well as the second largest beach on the Black Sea coast, in Krapets.

Climatic conditions

The territory of the Dobrich and Constanta counties falls within the North coast of the Black Sea, which belongs to the continental climate. The most important climatic feature of Black Sea is the sub-region with relatively light, warm and humid winters and relatively dry and sunny summers.

The day, from April to September is 13 to 15 hours and sun shines 8-11 hours a day. The average annual temperature in the area is 12.1 C/54 F. Humidity is about 77%, normal for the coastal areas. These values are directly related to air temperature. At low temperature, humidity is high and vice versa.

Precipitations are 444.3l/sq m, but are unevenly distributed, depending on the Nordic winds that dominate. The summer is characterized by the breezes caused by the open sea water.

Hydrological conditions

A distinctive feature of the area is the presence of the natural lakes of sea and river, fluvial-marine lakes, lagoons, therapeutic mud lakes, ponds, as well as recreational lakes (Techirghiol, Taşaul, Tatladzhak, Mangalia, Oltina, Hazardjik, Istria, Sinoe, Corbu, Nuntaşi, Suitghiol, Tăbăcărie).

The hydrographic network is enriched with the commissioning of the Danube - Black Sea Canal, with 64,2 km and Poarta Albă - Midia Năvodari Canal, with 27.5 km, as well as the irrigation canal in Valea Carasului.

The surface is crossed by numerous valleys in different directions. Among the most important valleys, we can mention: Casimcea, Saraturi, Nuntaşi, Topolog - Saraiu, Chichirdjaua.

Southern Dobrogea, almost devoid of surface water, has dry valleys. The dry valleys Gyorensko and Shabla are replaced in its lower parts with Durankulak and Shabla lakes. The only river flowing through Southern Dobrogea was Batova. Groundwater is at a depth between 1 and 70 m.

Vegetation

Regarding vegetation, Black Sea region is very specific and differs from other biogeographical regions in Bulgaria and Romania. This specificity is expressed by the presence of many missing species within the country.

The vegetation from the Black Sea region is mainly composed of grassy psamofites, halophytes and marine hazzmophytes (rock plants), as well as Batova valley where a dense vegetation of longus grows. Only on the Northern coast are met 10 rare species of plants. They represent a great wealth of flora and most of them have been places under the protection and prevention of nature.

Fauna

Many species that live in the Black Sea region cannot be found in the other parts of the country. The gentle climate and wide variety of coastal habitats and wetlands allow a particularly rich diversity of wild species, despite its low surface. The area is of major strategic importance, being on the way of bird migration - Via Pontica, a distinct location.

Black Sea

The Black Sea flora is represented by large - scale marine algae – macrofitobenthos, 165 species. In the biogeographical region of Black Sea, only 125 species of fish from different families are found. By placing area of unique plant species and fauna under protection, they are trying to keep intact in their natural complexes of self-regulation of ecosystems.

General Strategy for development of “Romanian - Bulgarian Organic Entrepreneurial Network”

Analysis of economic trends and processes

The key objectives of the regional development strategies for Dobrich and Constanta are to create environmental parameters and conditions that could ensure the sustainable irreversibility of the region's socio-economic development in the future.

A key priority is to increase the competitiveness of the local economy in a free market economy and sustainable development of the region. A thorough analysis of the current situation, strengths and weaknesses of the economy in both areas helps to develop relevant strategic and sub-objectives, programs and plans to implement the proposed objectives.

However, maintaining Bulgaria's financial stability in the context of the global financial and economic crisis, the implementation of certain measures and projects have been delayed and the regional economy is facing new challenges.

The most important economic sectors

Dobrich County

The structure of Dobrich county industry is based on agriculture and tourism. After 1997, the agricultural sector in Dobrich cuts its share of 55,8% to less 25%, to the detriment of the service sector. However, Dobrich region remains one of the main producers of agricultural products, the food industry and tourism sector.

Traditionally, textiles, clothing, leather, fur and footwear industries are developed. Currently, it is the leader in the fur industry and shoes manufacturing. In 2009, the value of foreign direct investment (FDI) in non-financial enterprises in Dobrich has accumulated EUR 194,9 million or 9.4% of total FDI in the North - East region, according to the data provided by NIS.

General Strategy for development of "Romanian - Bulgarian Organic Entrepreneurial Network"

According to the list of the Bulgarian Investment Agency, the only foreign major investment in Dobrich County is a German company that has invested in a wind firm near Odurtsi village. The total purchase cost of fixed assets is 74,7 million levs. Among the largest investments in the area are: AES Geo Energy, St. Nicholas' wind farm, "Kaliakra Wind Power" near Bulgarevo village, Enel Green Power Bulgaria with wind generators in the Shabla region and Kamen Bryag (put on sale); Golf Tourism: playgrounds "Thracian Cliffs Golf&Beach Resort" and "Black Sea Rama", Kaliakra Cape.

Types of tourism in Dobrich county and development trends in the last 5 years:

I. Seaside holiday tourism

Seaside holiday tourism in Dobrich county includes Shabla, Kavarna and Balchik villages, which is the main structure of the sector. The number of accommodation units in Dobrich county that worked for 2011 was 102. They are concentrated in Albena, which is one on the list of resorts of national importance, introduced by Decision no. 45 of the CM, 25.01.2005.

In Albena resort, for 2011, 37 accommodation units were available, the number of beds being 15 237 or around 2/3 of Dobrich county - 23 691 accommodation places.

Albena is a seaside resort that support the long-term sustainable development trend. The company responsible for tourism development has developed business strategies, which are a clear commitment to sustainable development as a whole in the context of local, regional, national and European documents.

In 2012, Albena was the winner of the national competition project "RELACS - Alternative Energy in Tourism 2013" and received a certificate of responsible and efficient management of energy resources. The completion was organized under RELACS project, FP7, an EU-funded program, "Intelligent energy - Europe 2007 - 2013".

In Blachik, visitors have possibility of accommodation in private hotels, various holiday homes converted into hotels, rental of family hotels and residences in the city. Feeding is characterized by the absence of a defined marketing strategy. Occupancy of accommodation has a seasonal character, concentrating the largest number of accommodation in summer, from July to August.

Shabla municipality records an increase of this kind of tourism, mainly in "Dobrogea" and "Durankulak" camps (2 stars) and "Space" (1 star), as well as accommodation possibilities in Ezerets, Tyulenovo and Krapets villages. Accommodation in private rooms in Shabla is hampered by the remoteness of the sea. There is a hotel located in the city center, in case if the charter contracts operate with partners from Russia and Belarus. Most of the problems arise from the common accommodation conditions. Since September 2012, Shabla municipality has provided 1247 beds, which are classified into 84 accommodation units in accordance with the requirements of the Tourism Order and the classification of accommodation, hospitality, catering and entertainment.

II. Hunting tourism

Hunting territories are located in four areas of Dobrich, Balchik and General Toshevo municipalities. Their infrastructure, for the most part, is in good condition, the best being Dobrich hunting forest, which was renovated in 1996.

The main beneficiary of the tourism resources in this domain is the Bulgarian Hunters and Fishermen Association, through contracts with tour operators. Short stays are between 2-5 days and have a pronounced seasonal character, depending on the hunting season. Combining stays with other types of tourism is not practicable.

III. Business tourism and events

In addition to their own reasons, business travelers to Dobrich have the opportunity to visit the annual events organized by "Dobrich Fair" SA.

Impact on the offer of business events also have the Chamber of Commerce and Industry - Dobrich, the International College - Dobrich, The Dobrogea Agricultural Institute - General Toshevo municipality.

IV. Cultural - cognitive tourism

The cultural events organized in Dobrich are, to a large extent, local and of regional importance. They are of interest and "consumption" mainly for locals and visitors who are in town on other occasions, for example tourists, guests who have come to holiday. Events that want to grow into such a national nature, need further promotion and publicity.

The cognitive excursions on Dobrich territory are mainly focused on familiarizing tourists with the cultural specifics and visiting the historical, architectural and ethnographic objectives. These visits are mainly organized for foreign visitors who have come to spend they holiday or business trip in the region. The most important objectives are concentrated in Balchik, Kavarna and Dobrich municipalities.

V. Medical tourism

Tuzla resort, from Balchik is profiled as a spa resort that uses curative mud, with basic indications for the treatment of diseases of bone and muscular system, gynecological, neurological, poliomyelitis, heart disease and, as additional indications, endocrinological diseases.

In the area of "Shabla Tuzla" resort there are no curative and prophylactic units. There is interest from potential investors to build a modern spa center and recreation, but negotiations go with the the local municipality.

"Tauk Liman" mud lake is devoid of a treatment base.

This continued development of medical tourism has to be done very delicately in the use of natural resources in order to preserve and restore balance.

VI. Sports tourism

In connection with the desire to expand the tourist season and to create a stable occupancy level of Albena, for years, several attempts have been made to develop a new approach in resort tourism, such as sports tourism. In addition to the excellent facilities of accommodation, restaurants, swimming pools and spa centers, there are several football fields, golf, hockey, there is a cover indoor gym, tennis court and other sports. According to Balchik Municipal Council agreement, Albena AD manages also the Obrocishte stadium, the nearby village.

Dobrich has excellent conditions for the development of sports tourism. The sports complex "Izida", located in the central part of the city, has four outdoor tennis courts, a volleyball court and a basketball court, a football pitch with artificial grass, an indoor pool. Also, here can be found a tennis club, football school, volleyball school and swimming school for children.

In recent years, golf fields with close circuit holiday homes have been built:

- Lighthouse Golf resort&Spa, opens in early September 2008, that is located near Balchik. This is situated on the cliffs overlooking Black Sea.
- BlackSeaRama - this world-class golf field was designed by the legendary Gary Player. The Golf Academy offers the newest training equipment for beginners and advanced players. The complex offers a tennis school and a spa center, which are supplied with minimal water from their own mineral spring. This is where international golf tournaments take place.
- Thracian Cliffs Golf Resort - world-class golf field that hosts numerous sporting events and international golf tournaments. It also has a basic range of accommodation - hotel, apartments, even offering accommodation apartments with sea or golf fields view.

It shall be noted that although this is a sport practiced mainly by wealthy tourists, the influence of the region will be more sustained than before the inauguration of such international objectives and attractions. Even so, the diversification of the

General Strategy for development of "Romanian - Bulgarian Organic Entrepreneurial Network"

tourist offer in Dobrich county will be rich, will provide new opportunities for locals and local support companies.

Constanta County

Constanta county is one of the most developed counties in Romania. In economy, it has become very important through its port operations, shipping, agriculture and food, tourism and trade. The most developed industries are the chemical and oil industries, shipbuilding, power engineering, cloth industry, feed and agro-tourism.

Here is the largest shipyard, well equipped and that repairs foreign ships. Only 40% of customers are from Romania, rest of the ships that request repairs and technical interventions are from abroad.

The main oil source is the Black Sea mainland platform, which is operated by Petromar CA (recently acquired by Rompetrol). The quantity extracted from rock oil reaches 4,000,000 tons of rock oil and petroleum products, aromatic hydrocarbons, liquefied gases, coke, sulfur and others.

in the region, the building materials, energy, machinery, furniture, telecommunications and mining industries are further developed. The agricultural sector is represented by fruit, wine, horticulture, canning, livestock, dairy, fish farming and fishing.

Viticulture is the hallmark of the economy of Constanta county. The most popular and important vineyards are Murfatlar and Medgidia.

The service sector is also very developed, with the largest contribution to the tourism economy. Its accommodation capacity is 41% of the country's total.

Constanta county is one of the most important tourist area in Romania, due to Black Sea. Tourists can choose from almost all types of tourism - balneary, leisure,

congresses and more. Guests can choose the resting place between Black Sea, Danube area and Danube - Black Sea Canal.

According to National Statistics Institute of Romania, for the period January - September 2012, the following data were reported, showing a positive trend of net growth indicators for tourism:

- the number of tourist visit Constanta - 908400 people, which represented 14,2% more than the previous period, in 2011.
- number of nights spent: 3648800 units, compared to 3197400 in the same period of the previous year.
- the number of foreign tourists was 48991, which was 25.5% more then same period in 2011 and 5.4% more than the total number of tourists.

According to the Border Service, between January and September 2012, Romania was visited by 6.26 million foreign tourists, with an increase of 5,8% compared to the same period of the last year. Most foreign tourists are from Europe - 57.7% of the total number. The largest percentage of these are people from Hungary(32,3%) and Bulgaria (19,7%).

Data from May 2012 show impressive results for spa tourism, which is why the country's government has put tourism as a priority in the national development strategy.

Sanatorium and spa rehabilitation center on Techirghiol Lake was awarded with a medal and a merit certificate, recognized by the International Conference on Spa and Resorts in China. In connection with this success, Techirghiol sanatorium is the only member of the International Federation of Hydrotherapy and Climate Therapy in Romania.

Constanta county is extremely attractive for foreign investments. Major supermarket chains such as Metro, Billa, Dora Mall and Jim are firmly rooted in urban areas.

SWOT analysis of the region from the agricultural point of view

Strengths

- Diversity of natural resources, beautiful and relatively clean environment and affordable prices, long beach coast, a strategic position on the Black Sea, favourable climate and temperatures;
- Protected areas, nature reserves, attractive landscapes, varied soil and good climatic conditions, complex relief, poly-profiled agriculture, fertile land with a high degree of utilization;
- Ecological balance, the absence of aggressive pollution sources, specific flora and fauna, with representatives of several phytogeographical and zoogeographical areas, rare and endangered species, endemic and relict species and a variety of valuable medicinal plants with large quantities of biologically active substances;
- Increasing knowledge and public participation to environmental issues;
- Qualified work resources in many areas, especially in tourism and agriculture;
- Tradition, experience and attitude towards agricultural work;
- Interethnic tolerance and lack of ethnic conflicts;
- Fertile soils and suitable agro-climatic conditions, traditions in agriculture. Consolidated agriculture, use of modern technology, advanced scientific services for agriculture.

Weaknesses

- Aggravating environmental parameters - water, soil, air, noise;
- Large urban areas in active landslides with unfinished consolidations;
- Few surface water streams, few rainfalls, prolonged drought, less irrigated land, untapped opportunity for intensive agriculture;
- Poor implementation of environmental legislation, inadequate monitoring and analysis of environmental factors;
- Developing a trend of increasing mortality and aging population, depopulation of rural and border areas, migration of qualified young people to cities outside the county. A large number of small villages with low resources;
- Illiterate population growth, precarious health status, ecological culture and low population motivation towards environmental protection, low economic importance of tourism;

General Strategy for development of "Romanian - Bulgarian Organic Entrepreneurial Network"

- Insufficient training of employees on environmental issues, low wages;
- There is no business tradition of interaction and partnership. Public-private partnerships are in their early stages of development. Lack of incentives and support for investors;
- Fragmented and limited land ownership, lack of local markets and commodity markets, decline in livestock farming development;
- Development opportunities for irrigation, irrigation systems destroyed by wind erosion in agricultural areas;
- Lack of mechanization and automation of the workforce;
- Lack of training programs required by employers;
- Lack of business infrastructure (and others);
- Poorly developed business infrastructure (business incubators, business support centres, conference rooms, fairs and exhibitions, etc.);
- Insufficient knowledge and information to prepare business projects on EU funds.

Opportunities

- Use of increased international interest in preserving biodiversity, existing natural resources
- Training the population on sustainable development and environmental protection, awareness of the need to protect the environment and prevent pollution;
- Access to EU funding programs - national and local funding programs can be an important source for the implementation of European environmental projects.
- Increasing the competitiveness of human resources, increasing the level of education and involvement in production;
- Understanding the need for lifelong learning and technicalness;
- Continuous improvement of the business environment;
- Increasing foreign investment and increasing competitiveness through technology and innovation transfer;
- Land consolidation;
- Update and diversification of agricultural production, introducing new technologies and new crops in agriculture;
- Organization of the production of cultivated plants and new crops, production of organic products;

General Strategy for development of "Romanian - Bulgarian Organic Entrepreneurial Network"

- Creation and development of private European farms, closing the cycle in agriculture and developing modern agriculture;
- Rehabilitation and active use of irrigation systems;
- Development of marketing infrastructure for agricultural product markets, development of sales markets;
- Stimulating the development and modernization of food processing industries;
- Developing industries that serve tourism and integrated tourism products.

Threats

- Relapse of environmental parameters, persistence of climate changes and global warming;
- Large industrial and infrastructure projects in the region, intensive farming practices;
- Development and growth with disregard to the green areas, uncontrolled increase of the number of vehicles, triggering negative effects of gas emissions, increased investment pressures that threaten to compromise recreational resources and natural balance;
- Accumulation of the demographic situation and continuing labour migration, especially among young people, with negative impact on economic activity and high added value, and delay of people's development;
- Reduced staffing capacity to implement innovations;
- Unsatisfactory labour remuneration compared to other EU countries, which creates the prerequisites for the emigration of skilled workers.
- Strong competition within the common market, failure in business requirements and competition in the EU;
- High inflation rate, high cost of energy;
- Rapid changes in economic legislation.

Description of the Romanian-Bulgarian Network of Entrepreneurs in the Field of Organic Farming

The Romanian-Bulgarian network of entrepreneurs in the field of organic farming provides a framework for organizing cooperation and manifestation for farmers, producers, institutions and users of organic products. As it is the first initiative of this kind, this network aims at bringing together Romanian and Bulgarian farmers and distributors, and to provide them with support in developing and increasing competitiveness on the national and European markets.

The network is open and allows permanent registrations and operates through tools such as:

- Web Portal
- Training course
- Meetings and work sessions
- Festivals or product fairs

The current framework of organic agriculture in the Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border area

The presentation of the current framework of organic agriculture in the Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border area is based on a market research conducted simultaneously on the territory of Dobrich district and on the territory of Constanta County. The market research focused on different target groups: users, manufacturers, distributors of organic products, and public institutions.

The final big picture is complete and comprehensive, and highlights general characteristics of organic production in Constanta and Dobrich area.

The market of organic food is in full process of development, formation and settlement. Producers, distributors or consumers, altogether they need information and education in order to correctly understand differences between "biologic" and "organic". Nevertheless, the image on organic products is a

positive one and most of the people associate organic to healthy. This state of health is envisaged from two points of view:

- Health of people consuming organic products
- Health of the environment in which these organic products are made

More, consumers are disappointed about the quality of the food products present on markets and do not trust products they find in supermarkets. Available certifications are not enough known and do not guarantee conformity to a product. Consumers have many times a distorted perception as they frequently associate organic products to those made in local farms or sold directly by producers.

The demand of organic products is obviously growing but many local companies do not have either logistics to cover all needs, or availability to insure a genuine organic and certified production.

The research made by those involved in organic production and distribution is often shallow, being limited to information found on the internet, while the advertising are made by word of mouth or in fairs and exhibitions. Nevertheless, all the categories involved are open to improvement, are willing to get more accurate information and consider education to be very important.

Companies involved in organic production are small, but willing to develop and to grow their business or their turnover. They lack instruments and knowledge to act in that direction. The competition coming from neighbour region producers or from other regions of the country is welcome, but also risky, as long as local producers do not have access to support and counselling for sustainable development. For the time being, consumers search local and regional products, but they are disappointed, the mistrust will grow and thus they will be pushed towards imported products. And thus there is an imminent risk for the local market to lose field, so seriously that they could even disappear to the pressure of magnate producers.

Due to its strategy, the project “Ro BG Organic – Entrepreneurial Network” could start a trend of information and education “from bottom to top”, starting from

producers and consumers and then targeting policies and institutions. The course organized within this project is oriented to business sustainable growth, means of advertisement of organic products and ways of bettering the quality of organic products.

Profile and habits of organic product food buyers

- The profile of organic food buyer is envisaged by medium- aged females
- Consumer prefer to buy organic products mainly from the marketplace, as they trust more local and regional products
- At this point, the most wanted products are vegetables, fruits and milk products
- Consumer consider organic products to be of better quality, but having a higher price
- The term organic is associated with the terms healthy and environment-friendly
- Rules and regulations are considered important for consumers, especially because a significant percentage of consumers bought organic products which were potentially false.
- The quality of organic products available on markets is not so trustable, although consumers incline to pay extra for organic products
- Most consumers would buy from a marketplace in their neighbourhood, especially because they want to interact with the very producers of organic food and to support local production
- There is little information known on ecolabels and what an organic product actually implies

State of art of organic producers

- There is poor knowledge about organic products and their certification
- Producers ascertain a growing demand for local organic products, as long as their prices are lower or similar to the imported ones
- Producers do not know well enough the market they try to win and they cannot name any other brands similar to those they compete with
- Information and education campaigns are considered a good solution and they may be a real support for organic production

General Strategy for development of "Romanian - Bulgarian Organic Entrepreneurial Network"

- Producers have little trust in supporting programmes, whose effects are insignificant
- Producers' companies are small and they cannot cover the market's demand, but they are willing to extend their business in the future
- The segment of organic products is appreciated as insufficiently developed and is associated only with food.

Profile and state of art or organic distributors

- Most distributors are also producers
- Local stores are the most predominant distributors
- Annual turnovers of organic product companies are less than 3 million €, which shows that such businesses are still rather small.
- Products vary to a certain extent, still the most predominant are the food products, while cosmetic products, clothes and soaps are scattered.
- Informing sessions, fairs and exhibitions are openly embraced
- All distributors wish to expand their business, but they do not know enough in this field

Goals of the Strategy of Romanian and Bulgarian Network of Organic Farming Entrepreneurs

Objectives

- To promote nature-friendly, scientific, farming systems and practices that are economically viable, energy efficient, climate friendly and oriented towards the conservation of the environment and the empowerment of rural communities, building upon indigenous and traditional knowledge, skills and practices. It will aim to help organize farm-households and families engaged in organic farming and connected activities into a recognizable entity that will effectively represent their interests at local, state, regional and national levels.
- To lobby with the State and Central Governments to install and follow policies geared towards the promotion of organic farming in Romania and Bulgaria including the provision of subsidies, price support, markets,

legislation on organic seed regulation, farmer driven certification and other related needs.

- To work for the special educational needs of children from farm households, the next generation of organic farmers. Such work will include networking among farming families, apprenticeship opportunities, workshops, enabling children from farm-households to have a special priority link with national open school;
- To assist families engaged in transitional organic farming to access practical know-how from experienced families or farmers through various means such as organizing regional workshops on need-based themes as expressed by the transitional farming families.
- To work with other organic farming associations in India and internationally in order to strengthen the organic farming movement.
- To build community by creating new friendships and business partnerships and by deepening existing ones;
- To provide education and mentoring opportunities;
- To give farmers a venue for peer-to-peer discussion, which often results in innovative production and marketing strategies;
- To provide an effective way for agricultural professionals to reach and increase the success of sustainable agriculture producers.

Data suggest that when farmers convene, new opportunities arise for increased economic viability, improved quality of life, and greater community interaction.

Are you a consumer? What's in it for you if you join?

- You will receive updated information on organized agriculture at regional and European level
- You will have access to local organic products
- You will receive information about local and regional events (markets, festivals or organic products)
- You will meet people who produce what you consume and you will learn about production and distribution conditions
- You will be able to attend training courses and you will know more about organic products

Are you a producer? What's in it for you if you join?

- You will receive updated information on organized agriculture at regional and European level
- You will be able to attend training courses and you will know more about organic products
- You will meet people with similar concerns to exchange experiences
- You will be able to develop business relationships with farmers and distributors in the Romanian-Bulgarian region
- You will have a better promotion of your products among distributors and users
- You will know and you will be able to access financing opportunities for agricultural fields more easily

Are you a distributor? What's in it for you if you join?

- You will receive updated information on organized agriculture at regional and European level
- You will be able to attend training courses and you will know more about organic products
- You will be able to develop business relationships with farmers and users from the Romanian-Bulgarian region
- You will have a better promotion of the products you distribute to your users
- You will know and you will be able to access financing opportunities for agricultural fields more easily

Are you an authority? What's in it for you if you join?

- You will receive updated information on organized agriculture at regional and European level
- You will be able to attend training courses and you will know more about organic products
- You will more easily promote funding opportunities for agricultural fields

3 Language Web Portal “Cross-Border Nature Friendly Entrepreneurs”

The development of 3- language Web portal “Cross-Border Nature Friendly Entrepreneurs” is essential for establishment of sustainable RBOEN. Its main goals are:

- Better access for consumers and businesses to organic goods and services across Romanian and Bulgarian border region including production and distribution of organic products;
- Creating the right conditions and a level playing field for digital networks and innovative services to flourish and thus giving new employment opportunities;
- Maximising the growth potential of the digital economy.

The role of the online portal is key in delivering benefits to the population in the cross border region and its visitors and guests: The Web portal “Cross-Border Nature Friendly Entrepreneurs” is bringing together consumers and producers, allowing contacts that would otherwise not happen. Both the members of the network and interested parties get aware of the current national and EU regulations in the agricultural and market sector. The web portal is useful for start-ups and seeking jobs providing information about the eco-friendly franchises ; giving advice about the main steps to start an eco-friendly business in the target region or just “Do it yourself” green garden/house.

The 3-language Web portal “Cross-Border Nature Friendly Entrepreneurs” contains:

- Admin section- It is so called CMS, which is a portal management system. It gives access to all the other sections and it is the place where all the users’ functionalities are controlled and managed in accordance with GDPR.
- Network members’ section- It is focused to all registered members of the network. They have admin rights on their advertisements and other information they would like to share with their clients. In addition they will have the right to publish job and business offers.

General Strategy for development of “Romanian - Bulgarian Organic Entrepreneurial Network”

- General section with information about RBOEN – It contains a number of subsections: RBOEN - goals and objectives; Strategy for RBOEN development and its structure; events organized by or with participation of RBOEN; News
- EU and National regulation
- On-line marketing – There each of the network members can publish information about their production or the one they need. A map will show the location of the member of the network and its production and demands.
- Eco-friendly “Green franchising” for job seekers and start-ups – Opportunities for start-ups and jobs will be published there as well as this is the place for advertising different supporting services, including legal to start or develop eco- friendly business.
- DIY – video lessons in organic entrepreneurship- applied videos showing different techniques to plant, grow, treat and process agricultures.
- Help desk – The map of the portal with description of functionality and section “Q&A”
- Forum – it is open for both members and non-members of the RBOEN and gives a chance different opinion and suggestions to be shared.

Values of the Web portal “Cross-Border Nature Friendly Entrepreneurs” to the consumers:

We do expect that with the help of the web portal the consumers will have the chance:

- to have one more tool to communicate and stay in touch with eco- friends and to achieve better social integration and cohesion in the cross border region;
- to browse eco posts, videos and photos;
- to buy products from producers;
- to find information about and compare organic products and services;
- to reduce costs or improve competition among producers;
- to get aware of healthy food and lifestyle.

Benefits of the Web portal “Cross- Border Nature Friendly Entrepreneurs” use to businesses:

General Strategy for development of “Romanian - Bulgarian Organic Entrepreneurial Network”

- It will reduce the impacts of geographic barriers and the market that businesses are able to access is increased.
- It can support new and different types of businesses – the web portal can allow some projects to access a market of investors who are motivated by a variety of returns funding. It can make niche businesses more viable by expanding the potential customer base;
- It can change the cost structures of businesses – the cost reductions could come from several different channels including search costs (for customers or staff), gathering customer feedback, or reducing marketing spend/improving its effectiveness;
- In addition it can be used for other benefits (brand value, or expanding the customer base)

Bibliography

***Strategy for Sustainable Development in Dobrich-Constanta Cross-border Area, 2012-2015

*** Facts and figures on organic agriculture in the European Union, 2016

*** A Global Vision and Strategy for Organic Farming Research, 2017