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BIO-DISTRIKT

*Connecting Nature and
Community Rooted in Organic Principles*



WHAT IS A BIO-DISTRICT?

A Bio-district is an area where organic farmers and producers, rural tourism and hospitality hosts, schools, local authorities, businesses, associations, citizens, and other local actors work together to develop and promote organic production, strengthen the local economy, protect the environment, and build a stronger local community.

A Bio-district connects:

-  nature and society
-  producers and local markets
-  local products with consumers
-  sustainable production and tourism
-  farmers with the local community
-  knowledge and practice





KEY PRINCIPLES OF A BIO-DISTRICT



Organic production and agroecological practices

Application of methods that exclude synthetic chemicals, preserve soil fertility and biodiversity, and support natural cycles.

Local economy and short supply chains

Connecting producers and consumers within the territory, while strengthening local production, processing, markets and added value.

Cooperation and networking

Active collaboration among agriculture, tourism, education, culture, business and the public sector.

Sustainable management of natural resources

Responsible use of land, water and energy while preserving ecosystems.

Cultural and historical heritage and identity

Preservation and valorisation of local traditions and heritage.

Education and knowledge exchange

Continuous learning and practical exchange of experience.

Participatory and inclusive governance

Active involvement of local actors in decision-making and the development of the bio-district.

Social sustainability and equity

Creating conditions for decent work, youth inclusion and more balanced development of rural areas.

Nature-based innovations

Application of solutions inspired by natural systems, including permaculture and other circular models.

Local approach

Development based on the natural, cultural and social characteristics of the local territory.



WHY IS A BIO-DISTRICT IMPORTANT?



- * Protects nature and biodiversity
- * Improves environmental quality
- * Enables the production and availability of local, healthy food
- * Supports the development of the local economy
- * Creates new business opportunities and partnerships
- * Contributes to climate change adaptation
- * Promotes sustainable tourism
- * Strengthens cooperation and connections among actors





BENEFITS OF A BIO-DISTRICT

Producers

- Easier and more stable access to markets
- Greater visibility of products
- Support for converting to organic and sustainable production
- Added value of products
- Direct connection with customers
- Joint market presence

Community

- Creation of new jobs
- Strengthening social inclusion
- Greater availability of local and healthy food

Environment

- Preserving soil and water quality
- Protecting biodiversity
- Reducing pollution and waste
- More responsible use of resources
- Contributing to climate change mitigation

Tourism and Hospitality

- Development of sustainable rural, agro-tourism, ecotourism and educational tourism
- Richer local gastronomic offer
- Connecting with local producers
- Authentic experiences and offerings for visitors

Children and Young People

- Expanding knowledge and awareness of nature, organic production, and healthy food
- Participation in volunteering and other activities
- Encouraging creativity and innovation

Women

- Supporting women in agriculture and entrepreneurship
- Empowering women to participate in local activities
- Development of new services and business opportunities

Local Economy

- Strengthening small and medium-sized enterprises
- Development of new services and business opportunities
- Strengthening the circular economy
- Development of tourism and hospitality

SUPPORT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF BIO-DISTRICTS

The Role of Serbia Organica

With many years of experience in the development of organic agriculture, the National Association Serbia Organica supports and coordinates the establishment of bio-districts, connects local initiatives, designates new bio-districts, promotes, and monitors their work and development.

To this end, the Bio-District Centre has been established as a dedicated organizational unit providing support, coordination, assessment, and verification of compliance with the requirements for establishing bio-districts. Based on the agreement with the International Network of Eco Regions – IN.N.E.R. (International Network of Eco Regions), the role of Serbia Organica in Serbia includes:

-  national coordinator for the development and implementation of the bio-district model;
-  holder of the methodology for establishing and developing bio-districts, based on the IN.N.E.R. methodology;
-  coordinator of cooperation with international partners and networks;
-  initiator and founder of the first bio-district in Serbia and the region – Kolubara Bio-District.

Serbia Organica also represents bio-districts from Serbia and promotes them at the international level.

FORM AND STATUS OF A BIO-DISTRICT

Bio-districts in Serbia function as territorial development models within the National Association “Serbia Organica”, as its territorial branches.



BIO-DISTRICT NETWORK

Local – Regional – International Level

In Serbia, bio-districts are connected through a network established by the National Association “Serbia Organica”.

At the international level, they are connected through a network of similar territories across the region, Europe, and the world.

Networking enables the exchange of experiences, learning, joint activities, and greater visibility of bio-districts.

THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS AND ORGANIZATIONS

The International Network of Eco-Regions provides methodological support, knowledge exchange, and verification of bio-districts.

The Global Alliance for Organic Districts promotes the development and visibility of bio-districts through global networking and cooperation.

These international organizations actively support the development of bio-districts, connect them, and contribute to their international recognition and visibility.

EXPANDING THE MODEL

The bio-district model is developed through the exchange of knowledge and good practices, as well as through connecting new territories that apply the principles of organic and sustainable production.





HOW IS A BIO-DISTRICT INITIATED?

A bio-district emerges when farmers, hospitality and tourism providers, organizations, citizens, and other relevant actors from a defined area come together around a shared vision – to improve quality of life and jointly develop organic agriculture, sustainable production, the local economy, and the environment.

**A BIO-DISTRICT CAN ALSO
BE INITIATED BY A SMALLER
GROUP OF STAKEHOLDERS,
PROVIDED THAT THERE IS A CLEAR
VISION, STRONG COOPERATION,
AND SHARED GOALS.**

THE PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING A BIO-DISTRICT IN SERBIA

From Initiative to Bio-district

INITIATIVE → BIO-DISTRICT IN FORMATION → BIO-DISTRICT

* Local Stakeholder Initiative and Pre-feasibility Check

Launching the initiative by bringing together interested local stakeholders and providing the Biodistrict Center with basic information on the initiative and the territory for a pre-feasibility assessment.

≡ Detailed Analysis of the Territory

Following a positive assessment of the territory's fundamental conditions, a detailed analysis of its resources and potential is carried out to guide the further development of the initiative.

🔗 Establishment of the Promotional Committee and Letter of Intent

Establishing the Promotional Committee to promote the bio-district concept, engage local stakeholders, coordinate activities, and preparing a Letter of Intent outlining the intention to establish a bio-district.



≡ Status of "Bio-district in Formation"

Following a positive assessment of the Letter of Intent, the Biodistrict Center recognizes the initiative as a "Bio-district in Formation" and a temporary visual identity for promotional purposes, and informs IN.N.E.R. accordingly.

* Preparation of the Strategic Framework

Drafting a strategic document that includes the action plan as well as guidelines for communication and education.

≡ Establishing the Structure and Formalizing the Partnership

Forming the bio-district bodies established under the methodology and formalizing cooperation among partners through a Partnership Agreement defining their roles, responsibilities and common goals. The Agreement is then submitted to the Biodistrict Center.

Recognition of the Established Bio-district

Following verification of the fulfilment of the requirements in the previous phase, Serbia Organica grants the status of an established bio-district, which is designated as its territorial branch. IN.N.E.R. is informed accordingly.

First Performance Evaluation

First performance evaluation of the bio-district, conducted by Serbia Organica and IN.N.E.R.

Performance Improvement Measures and Updating of the Strategic Document

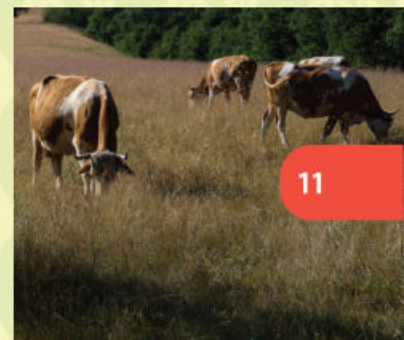
Based on the results of the evaluation, improvement measures are defined and, if necessary, the strategic document is updated.

Release of the IN.N.E.R. Certificate

Release of the "Bio-district IN.N.E.R. Certificate."

IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIC GOALS

After the establishment process is completed, the bio-district implements activities in accordance with its strategic goals and applicable standards, promotes products and services, and continuously monitors its development through periodic evaluation, with the support of Serbia Organica and IN.N.E.R.



KOLUBARA BIO-DISTRICT A SUCCESS STORY

The Kolubara Bio-district is the first Bio-district in the region and a territorial branch of the National Association Serbia Organica.

Strategic Objectives

- * Increase the number of organic producers and organic products
- * Improve local sales and market opportunities
- * Ensure the implementation of agroecological measures and regenerative practices
- * Promote sustainable tourism and gastronomy
- * Encourage afforestation and the application of agroforestry systems
- * Preserve and enhance biodiversity
- * Develop the local economy and short supply chains
- * Engage, educate, and empower young people
- * Organize festivals, eco-tours, and promote local products and services
- * Increase visibility through the "Bio-district" quality label



**Bio —
distrikt**
Kolubara



KEY ACTIONS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND RESULTS

- Active involvement and networking of local producers and other stakeholders
- New organic producers
- Development of new products and services
- Joint organisation of product processing activities
- Joint distribution and marketing of products
- Implementation of innovations in production, business operations and service development
- Application of agroecological measures and regenerative practices
- Protection and enhancement of biodiversity
- Regular organisation of workshops, training and capacity-building activities
- Establishment of demonstration organic farms and knowledge exchange platforms
- Strengthening the capacity of the local community
- Cooperation with schools and education of children and young people
- Development of sustainable tourism
- Implementation of environmental actions

IMPACT

Impact In a short period of time, the Kolubara Bio-district has brought together different local stakeholders who now cooperate, support each other and develop new initiatives.

- 🍃 New opportunities for cooperation and joint action have been created
- 🍃 Interest in organic production and sustainable business practices is growing
- 🍃 The Kolubara Bio-district is increasingly recognised as an example of good practice in Serbia and internationally

The Kolubara Bio-district has been presented at global congresses and international conferences, from Portugal and Italy to China, as an example of good practice. It has received the international recognition “Grand Tour Bio Destination”.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Citizens / Consumers

- Buy local and organic products
- Support local initiatives and activities
- Follow the activities of the Kolubara Bio-district on its website and social media channels
- Visit the Kolubara Bio-district and meet local producers, discover their products, and experience their farms and households
- Enjoy the beautiful landscapes
- Take part in events

Farmers/Producers

- Join the Bio-district
- Engage in organic production
- Apply agroecological methods
- Connect with local markets
- Protect the natural and social resources of your area
- Visit the Kolubara Bio-district and experience sustainable practices first-hand

Institutions and Donors

- Support development programmes
- Support capacity building and strengthening of human resources
- Support programmes for the exchange of knowledge, practices, and experiences
- Integrate Bio-districts into public policies



* WHY BIO-DISTRICTS?

A Bio-district is not a project, but a process of joint development and continuous improvement of the local community.

Bio-districts represent a new and innovative model of sustainable development that connects people, nature, and the local economy, creating healthier, more resilient, and more connected communities.

→ VISION

A sustainable future based on organic production, collaboration, and the preservation of natural resources and heritage.

= JOIN US

Get involved and contribute to the development of your territory through a Bio-district!

Start the establishment of a Bio-district in your territory!





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NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION
FOR ORGANIC
PRODUCTION

Office and Info Centre

Bulevar Kralja Aleksandra
210 Beograd

Contact

- +381 (0) 65 855 68 68
- office@serbiaorganica.org
- Serbia Organica
- serbiaorganica
- OrganicaSerbia
- Serbia Organica
- serbiaorganica.org



Bio — distrikt
Kolubara

Contact

- +381 (0)64 2502 356
+381 (0)65 8556 868
- info@biodistrikt.rs
- Биодистрикт Колубара
- biodistriktkolubara
- biodistrikt.rs

