

EAST LOMBARDY APPLICATION

A TASTE OF ITALY

EUROPEAN REGION OF GASTRONOMY 2017



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TRAHIT SUA QUEMQUE VOLUPTAS

EACH ONE IS DRAWN
BY HIS OWN DELIGHT
(Virgilio)

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THE CONTEXT

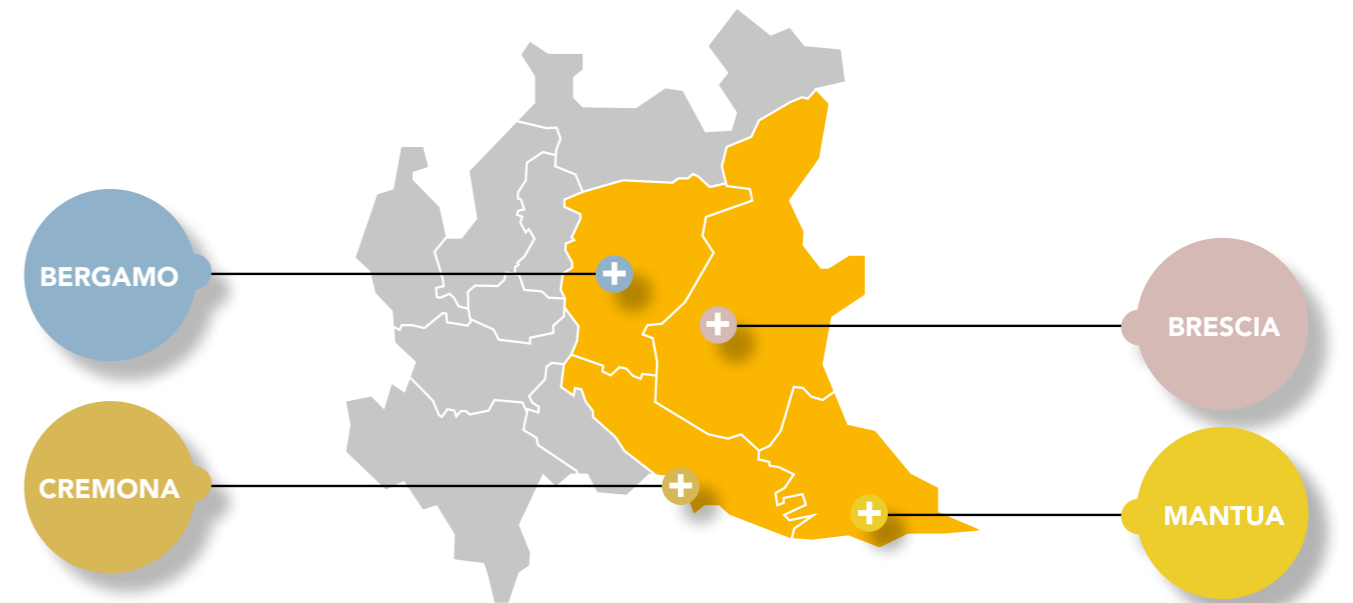
Localization and local production features

A bird's eye view of Lombardy shows three parallel zones: a mountainous area in the north, plains in the south, and a separate urbanized belt. The neighbouring towns of Bergamo, Brescia, Cremona, and Mantua straddle these three zones. The resulting landscape is therefore varied, and includes the Orobic Alps, heavily industrialized cities like Brescia and Bergamo as well as agricultural areas of the Po Valley.

Despite its minor relevance to the local economy when compared to other production sectors, agriculture had significant territorial and social value in the past. Today it boasts numerous outstanding productions, supported by a wide range of high-quality gastronomic offerings. Just think, for instance, of the many certified agricultural and

wine products -29 PDO products, 11 PGI, 168 traditional, 25 DOC, DOCG and IGT - and of excellence in the field of catering recognized by national and international guides - 15 *slow-food* inns and 23 Michelin-starred restaurants. The offer is complemented by the presence of 8 wine and taste routes (out of a regional total of 12), which enable visitors to learn about and benefit from these territories and their agricultural and wine products.

For agriculture is not simply a matter of high-quality products, food or wine. It also refers to a cluster of local history, culture and tradition. These are protected and enhanced through museums of rural life and eco-museums. The area we address includes 39 and 24 respectively, which provide valuable insight into the agricultural life of the areas of Bergamo, Brescia, Cremona and Mantua.





This offer, which is related to food and rural life and has great potential for tourism, is complementary to the rich natural and cultural heritage these provinces have: consider, for example, the Brescia side of Lake Garda, a popular tourist destination both nationally and internationally; Bergamo and its Upper Town, boasting museums and monuments, which thanks to the driving force of the nearby airport of Bergamo-Orio al Serio (Caravaggio Airport) has over time become a destination for cultural tourism; and finally the rich cultural areas of Cremona and Mantua, the former linked to a music tradition heritage and the latter UNESCO World Heritage City from 2008. The morphological features of these provinces are also reflected in their socio-economic system. In the agricultural sector, while agro-industry firms

(zootecnics, horticulture and cereal production) are prevalent in the plains, other areas present a wide range of local products, which however are produced in limited quantities. This supports a strong local identity.

Agriculture accounts for a relatively small share in total employment and economics albeit with differences between each province. That is also generally true for most industrialized and service-based regions. At the same time, agriculture continues to have a key social value in the region, and boasts numerous productions of excellence. Agriculture plays a more decisive role in the area of the Po valley, although we are still dealing with much lower figures than those recorded for the manufacturing and service sectors. The agricultural sector maintains a strategic role in the Province's

EXPO AND THE MILAN CHARTER

economy, because around the primary sector there revolve the whole agri-food processing industry, much of the economy of disadvantaged upland areas and the entire socio-economic system of rural areas. The total number of farms in 2013 is 38,616.

The agricultural sector shows strong dynamism, particularly in mountains and hills where landscape features and the need to differentiate products and services have favoured the development of multifunctional agriculture. Farms and farmers complement production with other area-based services, such as gastronomic tourism, cultural activities, and education projects. They often interact with local educational institutions. This happens especially in educational farms, quite prevalent even in hilly and mountainous areas. These are "farms that supplement their income with teaching and information activities, aimed at raising awareness of the rural world and food chains and at promoting conscious and responsible consumption and the protection of the environment."

So, there is already a number of institutionally recognized presidia for spreading awareness on the theme of the project. Yet another form of agricultural activities are farm tourism activities (753 in 2013).

In 2015 Milan will be hosting EXPO. Traditionally, the Expo revolves around a theme of universal interest, which for 2015 is "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life". The theme provides ample scope for interpretation around all aspects related to food, for instance undernourishment in some parts of the world, dietary education, or the GMO debate. At the heart of the issue is the right to a healthy and adequate nutrition for all; the elimination of hunger, thirst, infant mortality, and malnutrition - which affects 850 million people on the planet - and the eradication of pandemics. In the course of the Expo, the high-quality agri-food sector will have its high point.

More than 140 countries are hosted; 20 million visitors are expected; 10,000 volunteers are involved; 23,6 billion euro of additional production will be generated in Italy between 2012 and 2020 from this event; 191,200 units of additional jobs are expected. The Lombardy Expo has led local government bodies and regional organizations to focus intensely on the theme of "Feeding the planet" and of food in general. Numerous conferences, events and school courses address this issue to prepare citizens, students and operators to this



key event for the area. An estimated 11,000 young participants will be involved in Expo to offer recreational and educational courses on food issues to more than 2,000,000 students. Attention paid to food, in terms of sustainability, innovation, biodiversity is expected to increase significantly thanks to this ongoing process.

During Expo 2015 and in the years to follow a thorough investigation of crucial issues of the global food challenge is expected to take place. The debate will culminate in the Charter of Milan, a kind of Kyoto Protocol dedicated entirely to food, a tool that guides the discussion taking place during all the initiatives and events in the six months of Expo (starting with the Italian Pavilion). It is a closing statement of the Universal Exhibition, to be delivered to the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, as a way of setting international guidelines and providing a contribution to the consultations to be held during

the Millennium Goals conference in November. The Charter of Milan is a charter of responsibility, of practical and measurable commitments aimed at citizens, governments, institutions, associations and businesses. The document can be freely endorsed by visitors who come to pavilions, and the underlying goal is to empower each individual on issues such as food waste, the right to food, product safety, and sustainable agriculture. All this in view of the update of the Millennium Goals of the United Nations, which this year will be replaced by the new Sustainable Development Goals, with Italy and Expo as main protagonists. A large team of experts contributed to the drafting of the document. Work was broken down into 42 thematic groups, a set of good practices against food waste and for a healthy and sustainable nutrition; an agenda for equitable development; shared accountability in ensuring the fundamental right to food and water.



PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

PROMOTING A LOCAL SYSTEM OF SUSTAINABLE FOOD

Sustainable systems related to food at the local, regional and global levels are essential for the future of us all. The ERG Award aims to spark debate on responsible tourism, on food and on gastronomy practices with a view to achieving a food production and food consumption that are more sustainable and attentive to their environmental, social, cultural and economic impact.

At a time when food adulteration, pollution of production sites and the poor quality of some of the processed food and “fast-food” have come under



media attention, a growing number of citizens are becoming increasingly health conscious in their choice of food. There is also a mounting emphasis on environmental, social and economic aspects of production and their effects on the region. Based on these trends, our application represents an additional tool for enhancing and strengthening the local food industry seen as the key element of a sustainable development of cities and their surrounding rural areas. The aim is to draw producers and consumers closer on the one hand, and to connect cities and rural areas around the city and in the province on the other. By valuing local and organic products and environmentally friendly productions, by reducing the food miles, shortening the distribution chain and rekindling a relationship of trust between producers and consumers we intend to promote a local food systems that integrates different economic sectors. The theme of food has both cultural and economic relevance, involving different social actors (citizens-consumers, companies, institutions) and economy agents (the food industry but also school and business canteens or business, local tourism, crafts etc. .: just think of the bond that exists between the local agricultural food production and local tourist trails). From this point of view, the actions and experiences

our region boasts are many. Our application then marks a further opportunity for connecting various organizations involved in the strengthening of a sustainable local production and consumption, supporting and spreading a shared goal based on the perspective of a local system. In this regard, it should be emphasized that all the provinces involved already have well-established schemes of food supply as an alternative to the large-retail sector, such as direct sales or direct collection at the company, which are ways to shorten the supply chain. Also, more and more projects involve the three key players of local society: institutions, consumer groups and producer groups. In addition to more structured projects, there are a number of initiatives related to enhanced pro-activism on the part of citizens seen as “consumers-actors”. By that is meant the ability to urge the productive sector to meet the demand for greater transparency, assurance and attention to sustainability expressed by consumer choices. For example, all the provinces have seen a remarkable growth in new forms of citizen participation related to the spread of new styles of life and consumption. Similarly to what happened in other Italian regions, for example, in the provinces of East Lombardy we have witnessed a widespread growth of Solidarity Purchase Groups in recent years .

In 2013 there were already over 70 of these groups in the province of Bergamo, 50 in the province of Brescia; 7 in the province of Cremona and 4 in the province of Mantua. Consisting, as we know, of people who agree to come together to purchase and redistribute food and everyday goods that meet ecological and social criteria, these group mark an important innovation. By aggregating the demand for certain types of products they often act as the driving force or initial critical mass that is crucial for activating the processes of reconstruction and promotion of the local food chain. Ultimately, our application furthers that shared process of development, already initiated and supported by several projects already in place in the various provinces, **whose aim it is to create stable connections between subjects of the local agricultural sector in order to increase opportunities for economic, social and environmental development.** The vision for integrated sustainable development promoted by the Erg Award aims to facilitate the implementation of strategies for territorial governance in the various provinces, in accordance with the so called *Food Policy Councils*, i.e. coordinating bodies for activities which spur more sustainable practices of consumption and production. Works is being conducted along three main routes:





Photo: Francesco Tassetti

A) Raising awareness and teaching sustainable consumption

Demand for sustainable consumption is still very much a niche phenomenon. Information and education policies about healthy and sustainable styles of life and of consumption must be implemented for such demand to become widespread. To this end, measures will be undertaken both in terms of research and of information/education with a view to promoting:

- Studies and research on styles of life and of consumption among young people and adults;
- Projects involving schools;
- Strategies for informing parents through school children;
- Measures to provide information to citizens, for example on the subject of food label reading.

Consumption education and information are key factors for ensuring the enlargement of sustainable consumption.

B) Raising awareness and teaching sustainable food production

Sustainable farming practices, as well as marketing strategies in markets other than the dominant ones are still scarcely known among local farmers. In that respect, projects will be set up to conduct studies and

research on short supply chain actors (producers and small chain retailers) and to promote training courses for farmers both on technical and on marketing issues.

C) Rationalisation of logistics

One obstacle to the spread of sustainable styles of life and of consumption is the accessibility of products. In this regard the Erg Award promotes the study and development of logistics solutions capable not only of making regional products more accessible, but also of cutting costs for small producers whose income is often too low to cover multiple expenses. The system of regional markets and of urban vegetable gardens falls within this category. These make certain types of products readily available, and are crucial areas of socialization and integration that possess a set of self-education and production solutions.

Work in this area will be an important incentive to the creation and sharing of “food plans or charters” aimed at:

- Promoting local food culture based on the concept of sustainable diet;
- Enhancing awareness among citizens of the links between diet, health and the environment;
- Developing pathways for civic innovation that can improve eating habits and reduce waste;
- Strengthening the ability of the area - and of local



farmers - to provide sustainable food at affordable prices;

- Promoting institutional innovation for an integration of policies capable of consistently pursuing local food security.

ENHANCING THE GASTRONOMIC OFFER AND INTEGRATING IT IN TOURIST PROGRAMS

Bergamo, Brescia, Cremona and Mantua are now tourist towns quite different from each other. Bergamo consolidated over the years as a destination for cultural tourism, aided by the presence of Orio Al Serio Airport, and today is home to around 1 million arrivals, twice the number of ten years ago (source: ISTAT). Brescia is the second province of Lombardy in terms of tourism (preceded only by Milan) and is known nationally and internationally for the tourist resorts of Lake Garda and, to a lesser extent, the Alpine destinations of Valle Camonica and the city. Cremona is instead a smaller town tied mainly to cultural tourism of its capital, rich in monuments and art paintings and famous for its tradition of lute makers (Cremonese violin craftsmanship tradition was inscribed in 2012 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity). By virtue of its outstanding architectural





heritage related to the Gonzaga's court, Mantua was declared a World Heritage Site in 2008 for the value of its architecture and for the prominent role in the dissemination of Renaissance culture.

Food and culture are particularly important in these areas, where territory, traditions, arts, cultural heritage, gastronomy and hospitality are inextricably intertwined. Local cuisine and products are among the factors that can spur innovation and promotion and ultimately ensure development at the regional level. Above all, they can enhance the local tourist offer even further. Nowadays, gastronomy-based tourism:

- Is clearly undergoing a phase of growth;
- Has a marked positive impact on the economy, on employment and on local heritage;
- Acts as a catalyst for reevaluating local sets of knowledge and culture within the local economy;
- Supports food as a labour-intensive sector;
- Attracts tourists with high spending power, who look for high quality products;
- Increases the positive perception of a destination;
- Entails numerous benefits at low costs;
- Deseasonalizes the tourist flow;
- Diversifies rural economies.

In recent years food has taken centre stage in the expectations and motivations of travellers: it has become a real factor of attraction and promotion for destinations. Food has become a point of connection between the authenticity of a territory and tourists, who are increasingly eager to find a selection of genuine and participatory offers closely linked to the specific features of the area they visit. The gastronomic offer becomes the key element of local development only if it is set up according to a strategy, in an articulate, multi-faceted manner involving all local actors. **Innovative, creative and sustainable:** these are the three essential keywords we adopt as we set ourselves the aim to develop **a gastronomic tourism offer integrated with other local assets.** The goal is for tourism, culture, food and other local resources to no longer remain isolated clusters, but to become complementary and mutually enhancing features, with a view to promoting the area as a tourist destination through a more attractive and creative offer targeted to current consumer needs.

The goal of creating **a destination that possesses these features** requires partners who are focused on a number of relevant factors. These factors are crucial, because they clearly respond to the new

needs expressed by tourists, as well as to the new trends identified by international experts.

THEME-BASED OFFER: The offer must be structured thematically and unequivocally, so as to convey a unified image of the destination presented. Recognition of a single theme on the part of the tourist allows for an easier memorization of the product. Dine & wine routes can be themed accordingly, as well as other initiatives and elements of the tourism industry that will develop harmoniously.

STORIES, NARRATIVES AND TALES: Food must be told through stories, legends and local tales. Tourists are increasingly looking for the so-called authenticity or otherwise for experiences that convey the everyday life quality of local communities. As in the case of children, tales enable tourists to identify with the local territory itself.

UNIQUE VALUE: The offer must be unique and not repeatable elsewhere. Tourists require a specialized, personalized and unique product. Therefore, it is essential for the tourist offer to be customized and for the tourist to feel privileged.

PARTICIPATION: The tourist product being offered

is no longer an isolated element of the supply chain. Interaction and participation with the local community are factors of the utmost importance.

ACCESSIBILITY: Products must be clearly outlined and documented. Services must be clear, explicit, and must provide all the information for visitors. Tourists must feel at home, must be directed and guided with caution. They must have ready access to correct and clear information.

MULTISENSORY EXPERIENCE: Tourists are not content to see, but want to feel, touch, smell, taste, and be immersed in and embraced by local culture.

EMOTIONS: The experience of travelling is unique and unrepeatable, eliciting distinctive emotions, especially if visitors can communicate and get in touch with the local people, who must be able to welcome them warmly and caringly.

SOCIALIZATION: Travelling is an opportunity for interaction and sharing. The participation and collaboration of the local community is called for, and an attitude of bashful distance must be discouraged.



EMPATHY and SHARING: Food becomes a time for rediscovering one's own traditions, one's identity, and one's roots: human rapport and not the mere consumption of products.

LEARNING and GROWING: Tourists must have the opportunity to visit the places of production to be able to understand and link all the knowledge they acquire to the reference culture.

Modern consumers are increasingly looking for products able to meet the needs of **variety**, of **novelty**, and of a high degree of **authenticity**. Offers must be set up accordingly, with policies of differentiation based on high-quality standards in terms of safety and dietary health. From this point of view, typical local products are better suited to meet these requirements, because they are characterized by **uniqueness** and intrinsic **differentiation**. Able as they are to boost the identity, quality and culture of a region, typical local products have led to the establishment of new social networks that guide the choices of local development towards issues relating to the sustainability of development, the quality of community life and the advancement of regional identities. Enhancing gastronomic offers goes well beyond the mere supply of goods and services. Rather, it involves the development of an **articulate offer of experiences, based**



on gastronomic resources, but enriched by intangible features that stimulate and engage the sensory and experiential component of consumption. The perspective of an economy of experiences suggests, therefore, that we consider a local product as a supply system proposed by one or more companies and institutions that are rooted in a geographically, culturally and historically defined area. Such system will meet demand in the form of a set of tangible features (food products, handicrafts, manufactures, markets, manufacturing companies, ...), intangible features (information, culture, history, knowledge, traditions, etc.) and service and experience offers (entertainment services, events, folklore, etc. .) all characterized by a unique image or brand identity.

In the perspective of the modern consumer, who pursues ever new emotions and new ways of being, demand turns into a demand for experiences and cultural events. Supply will hence have to deal with these profound changes in innovative product management policies. In this context, the search for tourist activities that enhance the sensory component requires an overhaul of traditional offers, which we envisage in the creation and promotion of wine&dine experiences (in a 3.0 perspective) for tourists: Experience-based routes; visitor centres, museums of taste and typical local products; creative events based food and tourism; visits to producers; typical product markets; cooking classes; combined food

and spa/wellness packages; enhanced, diversified and select range of foods in restaurants; packages geared towards various types of tourists (gourmand, foodies, ...) covering different time frames (daily trips, gastronomic events, weekend or weeks, ...).

What is needed is a change of approach that goes beyond the perception of self-contained sectors to envisage the **involvement** of local actors in the development of the gastronomic offer. All this represents an opportunity, because it links **art, food, culture, tourism, and creativity**; it increases synergies to add value; it brings creative solutions to global and local issues; it supports the sustainability of the environment, of culture and of economics; it connects cultures. Our regions already present great examples of such practices that are worth highlighting. In other cases, we would be able to suggest and share a more innovative approach. It is essential, therefore, that we should build and develop a first-rate local gastronomic offer, set up and systematized within the region with the cooperation of all the stakeholders. We firmly believe this is a driving sector with numerous strengths.

Budget: € 90,000

ORGANIZATION

The project involves as promoters:

- Lombardy Region
- University of Bergamo
- Municipality of Bergamo
- Municipality of Brescia
- Municipality of Cremona
- Municipality of Mantua
- Bergamo Chamber of Commerce
- Cremona Chamber of Commerce

The project is formally joined and endorsed by local stakeholders.

Organization

The program is coordinated by a Steering Committee consisting of one representative from each of the organizations that joined it and now support it financially, as well as by the Scientific Coordinator. The scientific project head and coordinator of shared actions between the various territories is the University of Bergamo, assisted by project staff that includes experts and professors.

A Scientific Committee is set up, which acts as a consultant in relation to actions defined in the Program by

virtue of its scientific expertise, with a view to increasing the program's overall quality and guaranteeing its consistency and integrity in form and substance. In addition, technical round tables are established in relation to the various activities in order to improve coordination and communication between the different courses of action. Each working group will be tasked not only to implement and develop planned activities, but also to report and monitor their implementation.

A project head for the Training and Education section is appointed from the University of Bergamo, with the task of following that line of action and implementing it in accordance with agreed objectives.

A coordinator responsible for supervising the whole assessment process of the Programme is appointed, with the task of ensuring a continuous performance improvement, of monitoring the implementation of planned activities, of reporting to the Steering Committee and to the local community on the action and the results of operations; of auditing the quality of work performed. A secretarial support service should be put in place.

Budget: € 171,500



Activity Planning





ACTIONS

INCLUSION OF CITIZENS

The involvement and active participation of the local community is of paramount importance, especially when it comes to sustainability, the local food system and the involvement of citizens in their different roles (producers, consumers, hoteliers, restaurateurs, distributors etc.). The presence of tourists and their interaction with local citizens in cultural consumption is fundamental in order to bolster innovation and foster development. A select range of activities have been especially planned with that goal in mind and with a view to familiarizing citizens of all ages with the issues identified as central to the Erg application. In the application year and in the years leading to it a variety of gastronomic events should be organized. Specifically, within the already existing projects, the most multi-faceted ones were selected as allowing sustained interaction amongst the three key players of the local society, namely: institution, group of consumers, groups of producers. This is the case of those local agricultural industries which have already started to integrate production with other services in the guise of wine and food tourism, cultural initiatives, educational projects. The plethora of activities of this kind already running across the region or which have been already planned for the candidacy year, were managed into two main categories: **events for citizens and tourists** and **projects with citizens**.

The **events for citizens and tourists** section includes a hive of events centred on promoting the local food chain and its related production areas. This is achieved pre-eminently through gaming and leisure activities. In particular, we have developed a solid core of projects focussed on local products enhancement by means of tastings, guided tours of wine cellars or historical centres, thematic paths etc. Other events included in this macro area are aimed instead to spark discussion on the theme of food through the creative use of different mediums, such as film and photography. Restaurant tournaments and, star chefs and local chef competitions involving local catering institutes make sure that the local supply chain is valorized.

The **projects with citizens** section addresses all those projects more explicitly, and aims to educate and inform citizens by upholding best practices and sustainable local systems. Projects range from more structured activities linked to universities to bottom-up initiatives, generated by the pro-activism of citizens defined as "prosumers", or consumers who recognize the complexity and externalities of their acts of consumption and purchase. In fact the success of events and the maintenance of results in the medium to long term strongly depends on the level of participation/ involvement of the people and on the interest they

develop in the themes proposed. As part of a wider goal of environmental and social sustainability, over the last few decades there have been widespread attempts to champion local and sustainable food, through a plethora of initiatives. These often start solely among consumers, and respond to a growing attention to food safety issues or to the environmental and social impact of the food system, both locally and globally. The new strategies and paths of food production, distribution and consumption now offered could then form the core of a new, integrated economic model that starts with individual territories and the “local” dimension of development, in line with project objectives. During the planning and execution phase, those actors who, for various reasons, are already operating in or around the food supply chain will be therefore encouraged to take an active role: small farmers, active associations of citizens that are attentive to promoting local agricultural products, and non-profit organization that promote local products and their links with the territory, but also projects focussed on recycling production surplus; educating towards a moderate use of salt in cooking and to incentivize sporting.

Budget: € 2,429,500

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

In line with recent EU directives, this project provides for the involvement of schools and youth organizations as the main tool for the dissemination and education of younger generations. The goal is to spread the principles of a healthy and varied diet that educates young people to discover local products and appreciate food diversity, and to provide information on the importance of local gastronomy and of sustainability. Food is vital for health and gastronomy is literally “the art of well-being.” By encouraging the use of local and regional food, ERG hopes to contribute to raising awareness of health issues and to promote “healthy eating”.

The projects are replicated periodically by the organization involved, and pave the way to the establishment of a more complex cluster of activities that will develop and expand in the following years. The education and training activities are carried out primarily by institutions (schools of different types and levels) in collaboration with the municipalities (Municipality of Brescia, Cremona, Mantua, and Bergamo) and local authorities. The involved municipalities already provide today numerous projects aimed at raising awareness, in order to get young

consumers closer to the rhythms of nature, the origin of products, the seasonality of food and the varied heritage of culinary traditions. Projects are many and include the introduction of organic products in canteens, zero-mile menus for canteens, awards and/or competitions, visits to educational farms, workshops with experts, “anti-waste” projects, and teaching school gardens. Students are encouraged to follow a balanced and healthy diet, urged to develop a sense of responsibility and involved in activities addressed

to establish responsible patterns of behaviour and environmental awareness. These activities often involve parents and teachers in long-term training programs set up in collaboration with local organizations and associations. But there are also activities proposed by cooperatives and local associations with wide ranging interventions in schools of all levels, aimed at raising awareness among young generations of economic, social and environmental issues and at offering practical tips for alternative choices (critical





consumption, ethical finance, active participation of everyone to cultural changes).

A key role in all this is also played by Centres of Knowledge, research bodies and universities that promote training programs and multidisciplinary and multi-joint research projects, with the collaboration among students, researchers and teachers and the mutual mobility of students of different universities.

Budget: € 170,500

SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES

The involved regions are characterized by a strong presence of small and medium enterprises, as analysed in the introductory paragraphs that represent the vital fabric of the local economy. They are the engine of economic growth, innovation, employment and social integration. Therefore, they are also the backbone of food production and the core of gastronomic experiences. ERG's goal is to promote the activity of SMEs and help them achieve a higher degree of environmental, economic and cultural sustainability through a range of actions aimed to bring innovation,

creativity and digital technology. To date there are diverse projects of this kind already running ranging from collective trademarks monitoring productions rules of traditional products or to mark specific restaurants, but they also involve refreshers courses or field operators.

Budget: € 1,176,000

SUSTAINABILITY AND LEGACY

The ERG Award 2017 matters only if the values and principles promoted are bequeathed to future generations, and the processes is recognized as sustainable. In this sense, the parties involved are working in a coordinated and tangible way in order to:

- Create an integrated district of hospitality, networked with cultural resources, tourism facilities, and enogastronomy actors;
- Increase awareness about environmental protection and the sustainable use of resources;
- Promote greater use of local products;
- Ensure the development of the local economy;
- Increase the attractiveness of the territory.

With reference to the concept of sustainability we have included all those structural and infrastructural projects that provide opportunities for economic investment already in 2015, but our goal is also long-term. There are also a number of projects that reflect attention to local sustainable development: projects that monitor production activities with regard to keys biological, microbiological, and chemical materials in order to ensure the safety of food products for domestic consumption and export; public events that protect and enhance small-scale, family businesses also by establishing food communities and groups of producers who strive to reshape their territory towards a more sustainable agriculture; measures to reclaim and recondition abandoned agricultural areas, through community gardens that grow organic products or recover seed varieties used in the past thus providing quality ingredients for school meals and the social circuit; cultivation of ancient seeds and vegetable varieties. .

In line with the information provided so far, the ERG Award aims to encourage debate on sustainable tourism, on food and culinary practices that are attentive to environmental, social, cultural and

economic development and that favour the spreading of good practices. The tourist products that will be developed, therefore, will pay particular attention to these values: they will involve existing public bodies that already protect the territory and make sure that local actors are encouraged to take on eco- bio-compatible and sustainable practices.

Budget: € 563,000

CROSS COLLABORATIONS WITH OTHER ERG PARTNERS AND EUROPEAN SCOPE PROJECTS

The ERG project rests on the cooperation of a cluster of territories united by the will to cooperate and share some issues, with the aim to increase mutual knowledge, exchange best practices, and enhance promotion policies through the development of joint actions. In this context, for the purpose of our application proposal, we paid special attention to possible links with the European context, because of the value in terms of wealth, inter-cultural dialogue and exchange that planning of this type entails. We focused particularly

on the close-knit network of relations and rapports built and maintained with other European countries, with a view to linking and sharing various features of European cuisine and culture. Gastronomic events that will be proposed in 2017 throughout the territory will serve as a showcase for promoting common-heritage values that we share with other ERG and EU countries. Actions in this sense will include: conferences and meetings for sharing good practices; university master programs designed to develop a shared core of study courses related to food, tourism and gastronomy; public international events addressed to citizens and tourists, in order to enhance awareness of local products, local venues and in general about our common heritage.

Budget: € 90,000

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION PLAN

Marketing and communication activities are central to a project that aims to promote a locally sustainable food system and to enhance gastronomic offers by integrating them into tourism planning. Interaction with the identified targets will have to be constant: a press office for national and international action; a website and social network presence (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, ...); dedicated online broadcasting tools (food blogs); press initiatives (press tours and educational tours for journalists); tools for territorial communication (roll up and totems positioned in key places of arrival and passage for local events; windows transparencies for shops participating in the project; brochures, leaflets, postcards for tourists and visitors) will be used to communicate with the many identified targets. Identified targets, and tools are described in detail in the next table. There will also be promotion activities started by individual consortia and / or tourist offices of the various territorial areas.

Budget: € 386,500

Local companies	Citizens and local community	Stakeholders	Potential sponsors	Potential event visitors	Tourism intermediaries
Roundtables Training classes, distribution of specialized handbooks, regular newsletters etc.	Conferences and roundtables, local contests, promotion through celebrities, merchandising etc.	Meetings, public visibility events, press conferences, regular newsletters etc.	Project presentation and enhancement of visibility for the offer range, via the Communication Agency etc.	Website, apps, social networks, multilingual brochures, newsletters, totems, food bloggers etc.	Participation in fairs, B2B website, direct mailing, personal contacts, press and educational tours for journalists etc.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Among the mandatory requirements for participation in the ERG Award, there is the need to verify the efficiency of the project, the effectiveness of the activities with regard to objectives and, therefore, to assess positive spill-over effects for the region. This led us to select a strategy for monitoring and assessment that will accompany the project in all its phases. It will be overseen by a working group of the University of Bergamo, which will assist the Steering Committee and the organizers of individual events.

Early stage. The first step of the monitoring strategy consists in the preparation of an evaluation report on existing resources. The starting point is the collection of quantitative and qualitative data on the economy and on tourism, with a special attention to gastronomic. Planning stage. During each event, each organizer will be responsible for filling in a report card of their activities/events. This consists of two sections, a quantitative section (number of visitors, number of news items / press release, number of web contacts and social networks ...) and a qualitative part (surveys on the profile of visitors). This information will be



collected in periodic reports, which will enable us to identify and address potential issues.

Final phase (post-project). The effectiveness of the project will be measured at the end of the same through an assessment of achievement for each of the four macro-objectives and on the basis of the degree of satisfaction expressed by those involved locally in the project. The final report will be available within a year of completion.

Budget: € 21,000

BUDGET

Here is the budget overview, which gathers individual budgets proposed by each partner. A search for sponsors will be started with the aim to further expand the range of activities and/or cover part of these costs.

Action	Budget
Projects involving citizens	€ 2,429,500
Education and training	€ 170,500
Small and medium enterprises	€ 1,176,000
Legacy	€ 350,000
Sustainability	€ 213,000
Cross collaborations with other ERG and EU partners	€ 90,000
Marketing and Communication Plan	€ 386,500
Assessment Process	€ 21,000
Development of integrated tourist products	€ 171,500
Total	€ 5,098,000



A TASTE OF ITALY

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PARTNERS

