CASE STUDY IT-1

PROCESSED TOMATO SUPPLY CHAIN OF NORTHERN ITALY

BRIEF PROFILE OF THE CASE STUDY

The **processed tomato supply chain** of northern Italy covers four Regions (Emilia-Romagna, Lombardy, Piedmont, Veneto) and an autonomous Province (Bolzano) and the case study focuses on an area belonging to **37 municipalities of the Provinces of Parma and Piacenza** where historical roots and core business are mainly located.

The supply chain is organised in an Inter-branch Organisation recognised by the Region and the European Union. It accounts for 39,000 hectares of tomato plants, comprises 2,000 producers grouped in 15 Producers Organisations and 24 processing companies operating in 29 plants, processes 3 million tons of tomatoes into concentrate, pulp and paste that represent 50% of the overall Italian processing tomato, 25% of the European production and 6.5% of world production.

Main environmental and social benefits investigated are **water quality and supply** and **healthy functioning soils**, whose provision is **market-driven** (increasing demand for sustainable food products and for quality, social and environmental certifications) and characterised by **policy support with indirect focus**.

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KEY FACTORS IMPACTING THE PROVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL BENEFITS

The provision of environmental and social benefits is **indirectly delivered** through **productive and investment choices of the supply chain actors** (producers and processors), which were urged to guarantee production and processing viability by dealing with **severe emergencies related to soil and water** (mainly nitrate pollution, drought, floods, competition for natural resources) and to **gain competitive advantage** by meeting new consumers' demand (certified quality food, environmental-friendly productions).

Faced with the pressing need to tackle the challenges of environmental, economic and social sustainability, the supply chain found a collective response marked by two major turning points: the introduction and **widespread application of integrated production** in the early '90s and of **drip irrigation** in the early 2000s.

Environmental and social benefits provision is favoured by **private initiative** and a key role is played by **collective action** rooted in shared history, mutual trust, common values and goals. However, the **supportive role of policies** with indirect focus (CMO, RDP, regional funding and services) is also highly relevant.

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EMERGING FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Public policies enhanced only indirectly progress and factors enabling awareness and provision of environmental and social beneficial outcomes.

Networking, rigorous respect of production protocols, agreed rules of behaviour and widespread use of innovation connected to use of soil and water resulted from **economic decisions** and **governance arrangements of supply chain private actors**. The supply chain acts as a point of convergence of all existing policies and financing (sectoral, territorial, environmental, etc.) and managed to drift them to support and implement local economic and environmental strategies over time.

Policies frame a **comprehensive local plan** for change of the tomato supply chain, but isolated single measures and projects do not necessarily assure robust long-term economic, social and environmental sustainability. In the near future, best practices adopted by the supply chain and changes occurred in local organisational patterns should be taken into deeper consideration and should help to rewrite policy provisions accordingly.

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