



November 2018

Instituto Superior Técnico (IST)

Maria do Rosário Partidário

mariapartidario@tecnico.ulisboa.pt

## Snapshot: Expressions of Urban – Peri-Urban – Rural Relationships

### PROVE – short marketing chains for agricultural produce

#### Lisbon Metropolitan Area (LMA)

#### 1. Brief Description

The objective of PROVE is to promote a direct link between small local producers and consumers contributing to the flow of local products and short supply chains. This is achieved by providing small farmers (with no requirements in relation to the production model of the farms) with a marketing tool for their products based on food basket schemes. PROVE – Promote and Sale - was launched in 2004 by three LAGs (Leader Local Action Group: ADREPES, MONTE e ADERSOUSA) under the EQUAL Community Initiative financed by the European Social Fund and co-funded by the EU Member States within the 2000-2006 programming period. Its target groups are urban families.

In 2013, PROVE had 54 nuclei, 83 delivery sites, 120 farms and 3,000 consumers. Consumers have the following profile: 40% are between 36-45 years, 65% have a bachelor's degree or higher, and most of them live in small households (1 to 3 people). Local farmers benefit from safety in the flow of their production, increased local employment, and encouragement to adopt new information technologies. PROVE also benefits the farmers in that they keep all profits, have no storage costs, and have reduced transportation costs, due to the short distances between producers and consumers. On the other hand, urban consumers benefit from high quality products at a fair price. The trading process started in 2006 in the municipalities of Palmela and Sesimbra.

The leading LAG – ADREPES – is located in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area. Due to its success, the project has

**Núcleos PROVE**



Figure 1: Districts in continental Portugal with PROVE nucleus

<http://www.prove.com.pt/www/sk-pub-nucleos.php?dst=11>

been replicated in other parts of the country since 2010. Currently there are PROVE nuclei in 12 districts in continental Portugal (painted in green in Figure 1), of which three are within the Lisbon metropolitan area; only two (Lisbon e Setubal) have nuclei within the LMA boundaries.

PROVE established the following partnerships: two municipalities (Sesimbra and Palmela), one higher education institute (Instituto Politecnico de Setúbal), 14 development associations (ADER-AL, ADER-SOUSA, ADIRN, ALENTEJO XXI, ADRIMINHO, ADREPES, ADRITEM, ATAHCA, CHARNECA RIBATEJANA, DESTEQUE, LEADER OESTE, MONTE- ACE, TAGUS, Minha Terra), two other associations (Associação IN LOCO, MARP) and three European countries, as well as other types of partners (PRO-RAIA, SAL, Sociedade Turística do Cabo).

According to the project evaluation report, its success is due to its institutional support from LAG, Municipalities authorities and other local institutions. The quality of the products commercialized across the country through PROVE is ensured through a guide of good practices applied to the PROVE Farms. It is a success story of increasing the interaction and synergies of production (rural) and consumption (urban) in the LMA driven by a community-based approach to local development.

One important aspect of PROVE is the affordability of its baskets (10€). This is perceived differently by the producers and consumers. There are producers who understand that the price is cheap compared to large markets and prices, taking into account the quantity and quality of the products. They also recognize that there are consumers who consider the basket expensive due to their purchasing experiences with large supermarkets.

PROVE seeks to enhance the relationship between local producers and urban consumers with benefits for both. The relationship with the producers, on the basket delivery includes also an information exchange on types of products included in the basket and the agricultural practices adopted by producers themselves, which contributes to broadening consumer knowledge. But at the same time and, indirectly, it also helps to assess the quality of the basket products. To encourage this relationship, the project promoters launched a questionnaire in 2012 where they asked consumers if they were willing to visit the farms and if they consider this action important. Results showed that consumers consider farm visits interesting and therefore this availability may become a new "space of action" for the PROVE Project. On top of this, several limitations regarding hygiene, safety, and taxation have yet to be addressed.

## 2. Questions and/or Challenges

In the context of urban-rural relationships, the main challenges that have motivated the project include:

- > Foster the relationship between local producers and urban consumers establishing short supply chains using ICT;
- > Promote local economies through initiatives that stimulate farmers entrepreneurship and autonomy, and contribute to the economic and social revitalization of rural territories;

- > Reduce importation of agricultural products.
- > The nature of the picking points (rural and urban) generates some constraints, namely the greater difficulty of rural settlements to attract customers.

### 3. Main Insights

#### 3.1. Indications of the application of the new concept of 'New Localities'

As seen in Figure 1, there are 12 Portuguese districts with PROVE settings, three of which are within the Lisbon metropolitan area, but only two (Lisbon e Setubal) have their site location within the borders of LMA.

It was not evident that it generated new localities, although some points could be seen as a contribution of the project to the creation of new localities:

- > Maintain agricultural activity
- > Alternative way for the flow of agricultural production
- > Creation of employment and stimulate entrepreneurship
- > Immediate and fair payment for agricultural products
- > Development of the local economy
- > Recognition of agricultural work by consumers and reconnections to natural processes through seasonal local products
- > Access to a registered trademark and recognition in the market
- > Technical support of a group of partner entities with different competencies
- > Rural-urban proximity
- > Landscape stewardship

#### 3.2. Insights related to the broad area of 'Smart Development'

PROVE has tested and developed a system of commercialization of proximity of agricultural products in Palmela and Sesimbra. The good results achieved allowed them to replicate the experience in other territories. Currently, the PROVE methodology is fully operational in the municipalities of Lousada, Penafiel, Paços de Ferreira, Montemor-o-Novo and Mafra. Its application is more favourable in peri-urban areas.

The use of new information technologies and the willingness to collaborate, share knowledge and trust-building herewith, are features of this project regarding smart development. Consequently, this enabled:

- > Establishing a platform that interconnects farmers/ producers and consumers.
- > Immediate and fair payment of agricultural products.
- > Recognition of agricultural work by consumers.
- > Integration in the NETwork of PROVE partners.
- > Establishing partnerships between farmers to implement PROVE in their region.
- > Shared resources and knowledge on the process of PROVE: Producers meet and organize the baskets according to the orders of the customers and to share the revenue from the previous week.
- > Share experiences on agriculture production, namely on methods and environmental protection, regional varieties, product quality, difficulties arising during production, customer wishes and motivations.

### 3.3. Other insights that could be relevant for further work

With this project, PROVE developers intend to contribute to the Portuguese economy and to increase the quality of life for Portuguese people. Analysis shows that consumer perceptions for their motivation to join the project is also connected to supporting the local economy, contributing to the reduction of food imports, or contributing directly to the livelihood of local farmers.

Nowadays the impacts of PROVE on the local economy are reduced, given the low number of producers involved. However, the effects on household incomes are significant. PROVE is an opportunity to create employment for some and a way of complementing incomes for many others. It should also be highlighted that the project has promoted the value given by consumers and other actors to the rural environment and agriculture. Another important contribution of the project for the sustainable development is the maintenance of local territorial dynamics.

Another opportunity brought by Prove was the training actions for producers and exchange of experiences among them. In this context, producers are made aware of the importance of using little or no fertilizers and phytopharmaceuticals. The actors involved in this process, in particular the local partners (LAGs, associations), are crucial to maintain and grow this form of direct sale. LAGs act as a surveillance for the project and producers claim more involvement from them for the success of the project.

## 4. Data Sources and Indicators

Table 1 Data / Indicators for Example 1

Data / Indicator	Source
<p>CHARACTERISTICS/CONTEXT/ DIMENSION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•€/year</li> <li>•Clients/consumers (Nº)</li> <li>•Working team (number by function/job):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Developers' agents,</li> <li>o Farmers,</li> <li>o Producers,</li> <li>o Other type of workers</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	To be collected with PROVE developers
<p>BENEFICIAL RELATIONS</p> <p>Maintenance of agricultural activity; Creation of employment; Development of the local economy; Stimulating entrepreneurship; Landscape maintenance)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of new jobs</li> <li>• Stimulating entrepreneurship: replication, franchising, increasing scale</li> <li>• Landscape valorization: organic farming versus traditional</li> </ul>	To be collected with PROVE developers
<p>RURAL-URBAN PROXIMITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residence of the clients/consumers</li> <li>• Residence of farmers</li> <li>• Flow of Products/ Activities between territories</li> </ul>	To be collected with PROVE developers
<p>NEW TECHNOLOGIES</p> <p>(in particular ICT/digitization)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital elements (existence)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Website,</li> <li>o platform,</li> <li>o ...</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Dependence of the digital elements</li> </ul>	To be collected with PROVE developers

## 5. Critical Appraisal of Data Use

The information available concerning PROVE, at the moment, was collected from technical reports available on its website and other web references.

## 6. References

PROVE website

<http://www.prove.com.pt/www/sk-pub-contactos.php>

<https://www.publico.pt/2013/12/29/economia/noticia/agricultura-sustentavel-vendida-em-cabazes-1617790>

Assessment reports (from April 2012):

<http://www.prove.com.pt/www/wst/files/l171-03XRELATXCONSUMIDORESXPVEXUVX.PDF>

<http://www.prove.com.pt/www/wst/files/l171-04XRELATXPRODUTORESXPVEXUVXXTESTE003.PDF>

<http://www.prove.com.pt/www/wst/files/l171-02XFOCUSXPVEXANALISEV6X31MAIOXFINAL.PDF>

---

*\*The content of this publication does not reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Responsibility for the information and views expressed therein lies entirely with the author(s).*