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SYSTEMS AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT: ANALYSIS AND CASE  
STUDIES

**COOPERATIVE PATHWAYS TO TERRITORIAL SUSTAINABILITY: LESSONS  
FROM THE RE-LOCI PROJECT**

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This contribution presents the preliminary results of a participatory action research aimed at strengthening territorial governance and localized production systems through the development of short supply chains within a consumer cooperative context. The experience is part of the Re-Loci project, which is implementing an integrated approach to enhance food democracy and promote local sourcing models based on participation.

The work is structured in three main phases. First, a comparative analysis of best practices for selecting local suppliers and engaging member-consumers is carried out through direct contact with cooperative organizations and an in-depth

review of internal procedures. This activity produces a detailed mapping of practices, highlighting success factors, critical issues, and operational constraints. Second, an innovative participatory process is launched, involving member-consumers in defining territorial needs and expectations regarding short supply chains. Through facilitated meetings shared priorities have been identified, guiding governance choices and sourcing strategies. Third, a mapping of local producers potentially interested in collaboration is conducted to build supply networks aligned with members' needs and principles of territorial sustainability.

Thanks to this project, we intend to verify the hypothesis that combining practice analysis with active participation of local actors support socio-institutional coordination and reduces information asymmetries between producers and consumers. The adopted approach fosters polycentric governance models capable of integrating economic, social, and cultural dimensions, generating positive impacts on community well-being. This experience provides insights for designing territorial public policies aimed at enhancing local supply chains and promoting solidarity-based economies in line with sustainability and social inclusion goals.

Palavras-chave: territorial governance; localized agri-food systems; short supply chains; cooperative networks.