RURACTIVE OPEN CALL - CHALLENGE 21

Title of the challenge	**Setting up a direct distribution system for a sustainable local market**
Dynamo (pilot location)	Fiastra Valley, Italy (territories of the municipalities of Loro Piceno, Colmurano, Ripe San Ginesio, Urbisaglia, Sant'Angelo in Pontano, San Ginesio)
RDD (Rural Development Driver) *addressed by the challenge*	Sustainable agri-food systems and ecosystem management / Local services, health and wellbeing
Overall context description and specific context to be addressed by the challenge	The Fiastra Valley is a sparsely populated rural district, covering a hilly area characterised by ancient settlements and agricultural land crossed by the Fiastra river. The land cover is mainly arable land, with a few forests occupying mostly riparian and high-inclination areas. It is located in the inner part of Le Marche region, in central Italy, at the foothills of the Apennine mountains. It has 11,764 inhabitants and an extension of 180 km². The direct distribution of products locally has always been complex because of logistical and organisational problems among the various stakeholders involved. The people of the Fiastra Valley today struggle to access local food, due to a lack of political incentives, a lack of awareness, and the difficulty of finding and purchasing these products. As a result, people have to buy products from supermarkets or greengrocers that offer non-local, often non-regional products. This shift impoverishes the area's biodiversity, undermines local producers, forcing them to large distribution chains, and discourages the growth of new sustainable farms. An easy-to-use and sustainable system for the direct sale and distribution of local valley products could benefit both local residents and those from outside the valley who are interested in supporting local agriculture. Promoting local products would benefit the local agro-ecosystem and protect biodiversity, while reducing emission caused by long distance transport of non-local goods, with a positive contribution to climate mitigation. Moreover, this would foster local connections and networks.

Scope of the Challenge	Develop a direct distribution system for local products that supports local sustainable agricultural products, reduces food waste, enhances local biodiversity and connects producers directly with consumers, while increasing public awareness of the role of agriculture in natural ecosystems. The solutions should be replicable in other similar rural areas.
Solution requirements	• An easy-to-use platform/app/tool that improves direct local distribution of products, better the access to quality food for the community and reduce food waste. • An easy-to-use platform/app/tool with low running costs and a user-friendly interface, crafted to be highly intuitive for both producers and consumers, streamlining the uploading and buying of local valley products through robust integration with popular instant messaging apps like Telegram and WhatsApp. This allows users to interact seamlessly without the need to learn a new application. • Based on an open source code, and open access in order to maximise the accessibility and the replicability of the system.
Specific objectives and expected outcomes	• Mapping of local farmers • Previous engagement of local producers with agriculture-themed meetings organised by Borgofuturo • Possibility of consulting local agronomists and agricultural consortia in the valley • Data on local production: types of crops, quantities produced, distribution of producers across the territory
Available resources	• Availability of a test plot belonging to the municipality and already in use for the shared management and maintenance of crops. • Support in gathering regional and local data. • Agronomic and agricultural competences. • Existing technical support from the local municipality.