

## Title

**PROVE – helping small agricultural producers**

## Short description

PROVE is a project that has responded to the difficulties of agricultural producers, especially those with small and very small productions. Building on producers' concerns and local entities' know-how about their territory and producers, the project has created a proximity trade, dispensing intermediaries. In addition, this practice involves building solutions through collaboration between local entities, producers and consumers, generating specific responses to each situation. This flexibility of work methodology makes it capable of responding to very diverse situations in very different areas. This practice promoted more appropriate management of the agricultural business, ensured the monitoring of agricultural production by technicians, diversified production through collaboration with other producers, provided computer tools for order management and accounting, and linked producers to information technologies and communication, giving another business visibility. In short, it enabled producers in the different levels of business, generating a sense of ownership that was dimmed.

The work done with the producers has resulted in a greater interest in this type of products, increasing the number of consumers and their geographical coverage. This has contributed to the flow of production, which results in higher incomes for producers and in healthier eating practices by consumers who eat local fresh products. Recognized as a good practice at the level of the European rural network, recently PROVE was the only one selected at national level to represent Portugal in Ireland at Cork2.0, the European Conference on Rural Development. To this aspect are added several prizes won over time.

## Topic

Consuming – food.

## Characteristics (type, level)

Local/Regional, National Intervention.

## Country/Countries of implementation

Portugal

## Aims and Objectives

The main objectives of PROVE are to create close links between consumers and producers of agricultural products, promote the use of technology, improve business management, and facilitate the access of small producers to the market for the disposal of the products.

## Target Group

The targeted groups are producers, consumers and technicians from local entities.

## Status

Implemented on a continuous basis.

## Start and Completion dates

Since 2006.

### Lifestyle and Behavior Change

At the level of producers, new, more balanced and sustainable forms of production were created, along with the greater capacity of producers to manage their businesses. At the level of consumers, they gained greater knowledge of the rural world and changed and/or adopted their habits of consumption.

### Effects on:

<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	The agricultural products marketed are fresh (harvested on the same day or the day before), are more biologically produced and invite healthier food practices (in the basket are provided cooking recipes), which will have an impact on health.
<b>Vulnerable populations</b>	The practice has led to the valuation of an activity associated with a low level of schooling, an increase in the self-esteem of the producers and the growth of the income of the household (some receive 1600€/2000€ per month, almost four times more than the national minimum wage).
<b>Environment</b>	Agricultural practice has become less polluting, has been based on less intensive production systems and respects the seasonality of products. Also due to the proximity of the consumer's location, there is less need for refrigeration of the products and, consequently, the lower consumption of fuels and the emission of gases.

### Initiated and/or implemented by

PROVE was created under the EQUAL Community Initiative by ADREPES - Association for Rural Development of the Peninsula of Setúbal. In a first phase the project partnership worked with a group of small Producers of the districts of Palmela and Sesimbra, to improve the flow of their productions. Given the results achieved, this experience has been replicated in other territories.

### Stakeholders and sectors involved

The main stakeholders were the local entities. In addition to the participation in the initial stage, they actively collaborate in the implementation of the project, often contributing with their know-how about the territory and the producers.

### Financial support

The intervention was initially funded by the Community Initiative EQUAL. Subsequently they had the financial support of PRODEP.

### Evidence-base

A survey was made from which local farmers realized that some producers were facing great difficulties in the disposal of products, mainly due to lack of planning, organization and poor supply diversity. The PROVE initiative was created to answer these worries. The practice is based on good practices applied internationally, so it indirectly relies on the scientific evidence underlying those practices.

### Main activities

PROVE activities include the creation of producer centers, the production and agricultural activities monitoring by technicians, development and supply of specialized management and accounting software, creation of a platform for the sale of products and development of marketing campaigns.

### Evaluation

The practice was evaluated through a set of questionnaires applied to producers, consumers and other actors. Consumers were satisfied with the current model of operation of PROVE (quality, quantity, price, variety and place of delivery). In the case of producers, they were satisfied that this practice had led to the diversification of agricultural crops, improved marketing conditions and increased family income.

### Main results

PROVE is a good and sustainable idea for actors, producers and consumers. It has been found that the effects of this practice on the income of the families involved are significant. In addition, it was concluded that this intervention constitutes an important contribution to the development and sustainable maintenance of local territorial dynamics.

### Key success factors and barriers

PROVE success factors include the consideration of producers' and local entities' know-how in relation to the territory; the involvement of producers, consumers and local authorities (case-specific) to find solutions for the disposal of the products; the created proximity between producers and consumers; the empowerment of farmers; the brand consolidation through marketing campaigns; the created software that allows to manage the production, the orders and the accounting. In opposition, PROVE is challenged by the future sustainability of the project itself (funding is over); lack of public policies that promote the short circuits of commercialization; poor understanding of agricultural activity and seasonality of production (consumers require products that are not produced at that time); the need to diversify the supply; resistance to the use of new information and communication technologies by producers; need for constant technical monitoring on holdings; or by some difficulties in consumers to assume the established commitments, such as picking up the basket or respecting schedules.

### INHERIT Perspective

This project has been chosen for inclusion because of its role in promoting more sustainable forms of food production and consumption. New, more balanced and sustainable forms of production were created, along with the greater capacity of producers to manage their businesses. The agricultural products marketed are local, fresh and invite healthier food practices. Consumers gained greater knowledge of the rural world and changed and/or adopted their habits of consumption. Also, PROVE led to the valuation of an activity associated with a low level of schooling, increasing the income of the households of small producers.

### More information

<http://www.prove.com.pt/www/>

Evaluation reports available at: <http://www.prove.com.pt/www/relatorios-de-avaliacao.T171.php>.

### Contact

PROVE

Tel.: (+351) 212 337 930

Email: [prove@prove.com.pt](mailto:prove@prove.com.pt)