

The awareness of what we eat



A segmented research programme that starts from the food quality schemes in order to reach the consumer's habits



THE CONSORTIUM OF THE STRENGTH2FOOD PROJECT INCLUDES 30 PARTNERS (11 EU AND 4 NON-EU COUNTRIES) OF VARIOUS BACKGROUNDS: ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS, COMMUNICATION SPECIALISTS, SMEs AND STAKEHOLDERS' ORGANISATIONS

What impact do the so-called “food quality schemes”, with the Pdo, Igp and BIO designations, have on the European consumer? How sustainable are they from an environmental, economic and social standpoint? For those who deal with food and nutrition these are important questions, to which “Strength2Food”, a segmented Horizon 2020 project (five years’ duration, with a budget of nearly €7 million) coordinated by the Newcastle University but with a number of Italian partners, amongst which the University of Parma’s Department of Economics and Business Studies, seeks to give answers. Having reached the end of the third

year, it has finished the segments involving field research and now awaits the dissemination and data systematisation stage. “The issues tackled are quite complex, and interact at various levels between the territorial dimension and the value chain – explains Professor Filippo Arfini, project manager for the University of Parma –. The work has been based on an assessment of the analysis of impact on various specific aspects, linked with one another yet separate at the same time”. There are four levels of research segmentation. First and foremost, the definition of the food quality schemes’ indicators, carried out in connexion with 29 case studies (including cases

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from outside Europe): “We determined how each product contributed to the creation of public assets, comparing its sustainability level with that of products not covered by quality systems”. The second area was the analysis of public sector food procurement policies, with particular regard to elementary schools in certain European countries (Italy, Britain, Serbia). The third level analysed “short chains”, forms of food supply with which many families throughout Europe nowadays are experimenting – ethical purchasing groups, farmers’ markets and local distribution points –, seeking to ascertain the benefits for both families and producers. Finally, the project analysed consumers: what they knew about labels and logos, but also about the values and information transmitted by the products (not only of taste and aroma but also, for example, as concerns animal welfare, principles of plant health protection etc. “And we’ve come to the conclusion that cognitive marketing action would certainly help a lot in developing a more informed mode of food shopping, based not only on advertising, fashion, emotions ...”.