

# Case

# study

Boosting organic  
certification to  
enhance export  
markets access




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## Case study

Organic certification of enhance export market access

The Non-Wood Forest Product (NWFP) and Medicinal Aromatic Plants (MAPs) sub-sector in Kosovo was underdeveloped until 2016, with mostly wild collection and a short value chain. However, export demand and long-term contracts have encouraged growth. The high export potential depends on the market players' capacities and sustainable wild collection in organic certified zones of around of 373,488 hectares. Kosovo has great potential for MAPs cultivation, However, opportunities of MAPs cultivation, for which Kosovo has ideal climate and soil conditions was very much untapped.

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# Objective and strategic purpose

The goal of PPSE was to boost organic certification among farmers and products to reach export markets which ultimately results in higher income for farmers. PPSE accomplished this by addressing constraints on multiple levels, such as enhancing farm efficiency with contract farming and product development, ensuring collection centers and processors comply with international organic standards through certification programs, and aiding SMEs in accessing international markets through market linkage facilitation.

# Our approach and key action

PPSE partnered with the sector association Organika to establish a certification service for its members and beyond. A support scheme was created for SMEs to adopt organic standards, with Organika providing additional services to association members to enhance their knowledge and capacities.

## PPSE's Facilitative Role and Partnership Model

Organika held info sessions to inform SMEs on the organic certification process and involved parties. Implementation services were offered by Organika at a discount, partially funded by PPSE, to help companies prepare for certification. A 3-year declining support scheme was offered for SMEs entering the certification program, with PPSE covering up to 45% in year 1, 25% in year 2, and 15% in year 3. Online training sessions, including demo videos, were provided for women-owned SMEs and contracted women farmers through Organika.

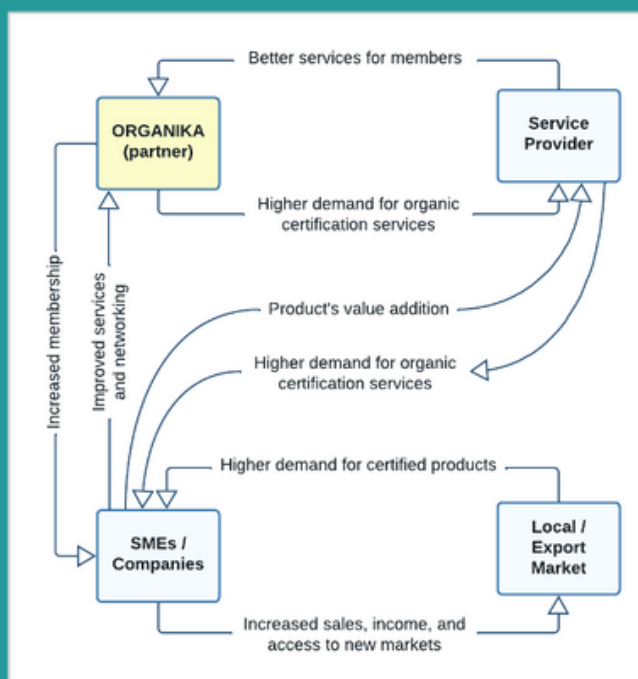


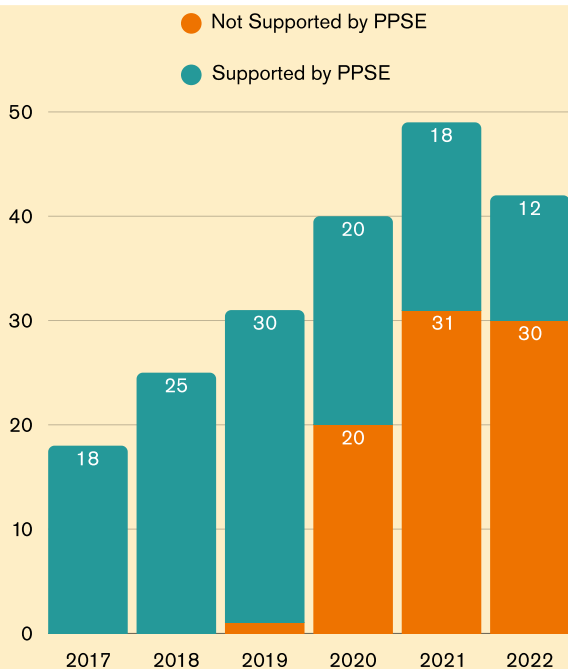
Figure 1. Simplified logic of the intervention

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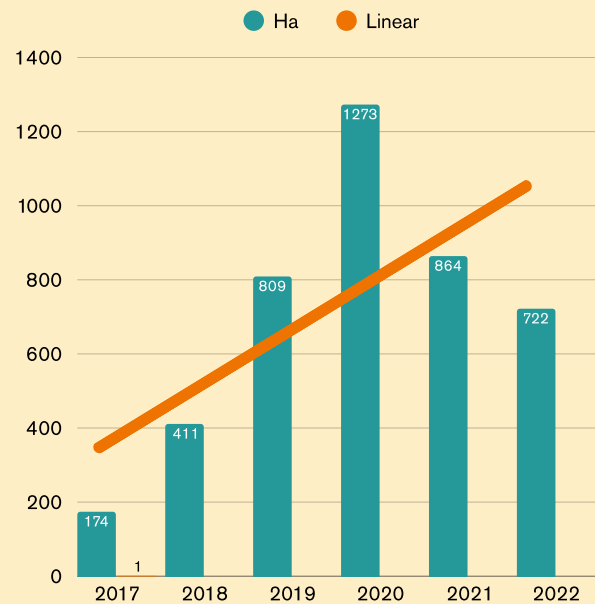
### Organic certification of enhance export market access

## Key achievement and success factor

The organic certification service provided by association Organika was widely adopted by targeted SMEs, especially in the last year of the project phase. With organic production of MAPs being a promising sector with growth potential and opportunities for women, Organika offered additional services such as training and information sessions specifically for women farmers in this sector. As the main BMO in the sector, Organika played a key role in facilitating organic certification, providing advisory services, and connecting certified SMEs to markets. Over four years, the area dedicated to organic MAP production grew from 174 hectares in 2017 to around 600 hectares, and including other organic crops, the total organic production area reached over 1200 hectares. PPSE's support of BMOs like Organika in offering certification programs helped increase the number of Organika member SMEs from 2 in 2017 to over 40 in 2022.



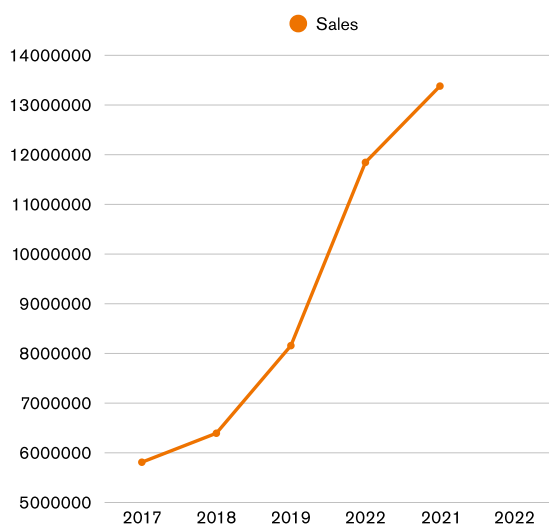
Graph 1. Certification of SMEs



Graph 2. MAP hectares under organic certification

## Key learnings and recommendations

Adherence to food safety standards, including organic certification, and the availability of advisory services are crucial for the sector's growth and sustainability in agriculture. Organic production contributes to sustainable agriculture by using methods that minimize harm to the environment and promote soil and ecosystem health. As a result, organic farming helps to preserve natural resources, reduce pollution, and promote a more sustainable food system. Considering these facts, efforts to further strengthen the sector BMOs and involvement of public institutions is essential for further sector development and sustainability.



Graph 3. Total sales (export) of NWFPs / MAPs

Collaborating with Swisscontact has greatly enhanced our capacity to support organic operators and service providers in Kosovo. Together, we've facilitated the growth of certified organic operators from just 2 to over 40, enabling us to promote Kosovo's organic products abroad with stronger impact. This partnership aligns seamlessly with Organika's mission to empower members and to lead the organic certification process. Within the next five to seven years, we aim for certified organic products to make up the majority of our exports. With Swisscontact's technical support, we have achieved milestones we couldn't reach alone. "

*Faton Nagavci, Executive Director of Organika Association*