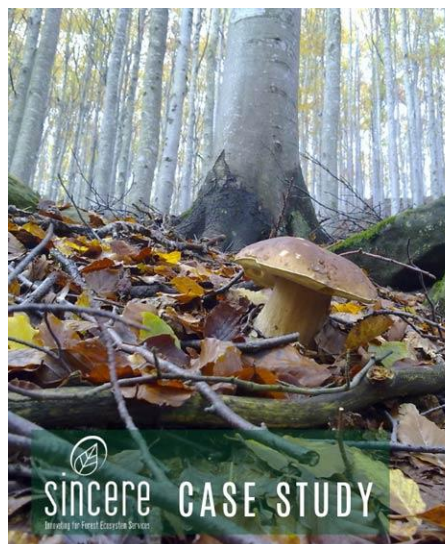


The Mushrooms of Borgotaro IGP

This case study developed a new online tool to improve the potential for commercializing the existing market for permits for mushroom picking and the recreational experience of mushroom pickers in the local forest of Borgotaro.



The Mushrooms of Borgotaro IGP

The Borgotaro case study uses an online platform...

...for improved commercialisation of recreational permits to collect wild mushrooms.

Consorzio Comunalie Parmensi (Borgo TV)
in collaboration with University of Padova

Location: Borgo Val di Taro, Italy

Type of business model:

App-based tool to improve the commercialisation of recreational wild mushroom picking permits

Ecosystem services targeted:

Recreational mushroom picking

Providers:

Consorzio Comunalie Parmensi (CCP), consisting of forest owners and managers

Users:

Recreational wild mushroom pickers

Stakeholders consulted:

CCP members, Recreational and professional wild mushroom pickers association, Buyers and processors of wild mushrooms, Tourism Organization, Municipal authorities

📍 Context

The 'Mushrooms of Borgotaro IGP' are produced in the forests of the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines. The forests primarily consist of chestnut and beech species and have been managed as coppice forests for centuries with a 40-year coppice cycle. National laws have formally privatized the wild mushroom grown in managed forests. This makes it possible to sell harvesting rights within specific local regulation.

In 1964, the Consorzio Comunalie Parmensi (CCP) was established to organize the commercialization of permits for recreational wild mushroom picking. The existing permits are paper-based and have to be bought in-person at designated sales points. The market is already well developed, with almost 100,000 paying mushroom pickers per year, but the innovation mechanism (IM) rests on the assumption that there is an excess supply of mushrooms that can be targeted by creating or accessing demand from other user groups through lower costs of entry.

Additionally, recreational wild mushroom picking has changed over time. Today's recreational pickers have less time to spend in the forests and even less to find the place to purchase a mushroom picking permit. Novice pickers might have less knowledge of the forest and the rescue of lost pickers has become increasingly frequent in the last decade.

🎯 Objective

- Develop a **new online platform or [smart phone application](#)** to improve the commercialization of the permits and the pickers' experience.
- **Expand the type of users and demands:** to reach younger customers; to orient pickers to areas specific to their permit category; and to improve visitor security.

➔ Implementation

A technological transition from an old-fashioned paper-based permit system to an online system that allows easy access for all users. Specifically, the online system is developed so that users can access and buy permits through a mobile phone application, which at the same time offers maps of the forest and works as a way-finding tool.

↑ Outputs

- Targeting new types of users and creating demand, eg. by reaching younger citizens, thus increasing the number of recreational mushroom pickers.
- Mushroom pickers can be allocated to designated areas, creating a link between the probability of harvest and the price of the permit, which creates a clear incentive structure to buy permits.
- Converting to an online platform to sell permits potentially reduces transaction costs for forest owners.



Outcomes

The online platform offers the possibility for geographical control of the distribution of mushroom pickers. This enables mushroom pickers to be allocated to areas with mushroom production that reflects their payment, keeps the concentration of pickers low in certain areas and avoids potential conflicts.

App downloads and buy-in from users not previously active as mushroom pickers are key indicators, alongside use by existing mushroom pickers.

The funds generated could provide conditions for further FES provision in the future. Revenues are distributed according to written rules and are either reinvested in the forest management that will allow for specific silvicultural treatments or invested in community projects such as the renovation of forest infrastructure.



Impact

- Recreational services provided by the forest might be enhanced for all mushroom pickers, as ease of access and experience are improved for both existing and new pickers.
- As a result of the increased willingness to pay for permits, forest owners' income and welfare would be improved.



Upscaling potential

National geographical upscaling:

If similar structures of selling paper permits for mushroom picking exist in other regions of Italy, the innovation mechanism (IM) has the potential to be adopted elsewhere. App development has already taken place so the entry costs for another implementation appear low. Such a platform has several generic features and would need little adjustment to fit other areas.

Upscaling to other schemes:

Given the format and focus of the case study, it is questionable if there are other related existing regulation and instruments in place addressing the same service that may adopt aspects of this IM.

Upscaling in scope:

Contingent on the existing legal framework allowing permit selling for different forest services, the online application appears to be potentially expandable to activities, such as mountain biking, horseback riding, walking trails, shelter camping, etc.

Upscaling to other countries:

Selling permits allowing the use of FES is an ever-present activity and as such the conversion to an online platform offers the potential to reduce forest owners' transaction costs. However, the underlying legal framework must allow for commercialization of the service, as around Europe traditionally a number of these services are free for the public to enjoy. Thus, the service must offer something that is above and beyond the existing right enjoyed by forest users.

Further information

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[Case study webpage](#)

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[Application A Funghi In Val Taro](#)

Synthesis report: [D4.2 Synthesis report of the experiences and lessons learnt, situating them in the global experiences and knowledge](#)

Upscaling report: [D4.1 Assessing the upscaling potential of SINCERE IAs using a Theory of Change structure](#)

Explore more findings from SINCERE case studies: www.sincereforests.eu/resources/factsheets/



About SINCERE

Spurring INnovations for forest eCosystem sERVICES in Europe (SINCERE) is a four-year project to develop novel policies and new business models by connecting knowledge and expertise from practice, science and policy, across Europe and beyond.

This project has received funding from the European Union's H2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 773702



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