

SAE 5 Benchmarking



ENSEMBLE,
CULTIVONS
LA SOLIDARITE

Source :

<https://jardins-cocagne-thaon.fr/>

Introduction

“Les Jardins de Cocagne” is a French network of associations promoting integration through organic farming. Each garden produces organic vegetables that are distributed in baskets to members, while providing employment and support to people experiencing social or professional difficulties. The model combines three dimensions: ecological (sustainable agriculture, short supply chains), social (reintegration and training), and economic (memberships, sales, subsidies). More than a hundred gardens are federated within the Cocagne Network, which coordinates national actions and pools resources. This project will serve as a reference here for comparison with similar foreign initiatives.

The objective of this benchmark is to compare Cocagne with five similar foreign associations in order to identify their commonalities, differences, and respective strengths and weaknesses. This work will highlight Cocagne's specific place in an international context.



Presentation of foreign associations

In Denmark, Kolonihaveforbundet brings together local associations of family and workers' gardens, known as kolonihaver. These gardens are rented to city dwellers to grow vegetables, fruit, and flowers, promoting food self-sufficiency and social ties. Each association operates democratically with an elected committee. The model dates back to the 19th century and has been developing on a large scale since 1908 with the national federation. It combines collective appropriation of space and community participation. This structure is reminiscent of the spirit of the Jardins de Cocagne, which focuses on market gardening and local cooperation.





Organopónicos are intensive urban farming systems that use raised beds filled with enriched soil or organic substrate, often developed in contexts of food scarcity. Originating in Cuba in the 1990s, they aim to produce fresh vegetables in cities with minimal chemical inputs. Management is collective or cooperative, and production is intended for local consumption or direct sale. The approach combines sustainability, optimization of urban space, and community participation.

Ooooby (Out Of Our Own BackYards) is a cooperative network founded in New Zealand that focuses on local food distribution. It organizes direct supply between small producers, urban farmers, and consumers via weekly boxes. The model is based on a digital platform and collective logistics, promoting short supply chains and price transparency. Each local group operates semi-autonomously, according to cooperative principles. The central objective is to reconnect communities with their food production and reduce dependence on industrial supply chains.



The Songhai Center, founded in 1985 in Porto-Novo (Benin), is an integrated agroecological complex. It combines agricultural production, livestock farming, aquaculture, and artisanal processing with a focus on self-sufficiency and durability. The model is based on resource recycling: organic waste is converted into compost, biogas, or animal feed. Songhai is also a training center, welcoming young people from all over Africa to learn about agricultural entrepreneurship. The organization acts as an incubator for local initiatives, promoting a model of endogenous, ecological, and reproducible development.

Provinces produkti, in Latvia, is a regional cooperative bringing together local producers to promote their products and strengthen short supply chains. It organizes direct sales, tastings, farm visits, and culinary events, linking agriculture, gastronomy, and rural tourism. The association acts as a collective showcase for regional expertise, while supporting the local economy and bringing producers and consumers closer together.



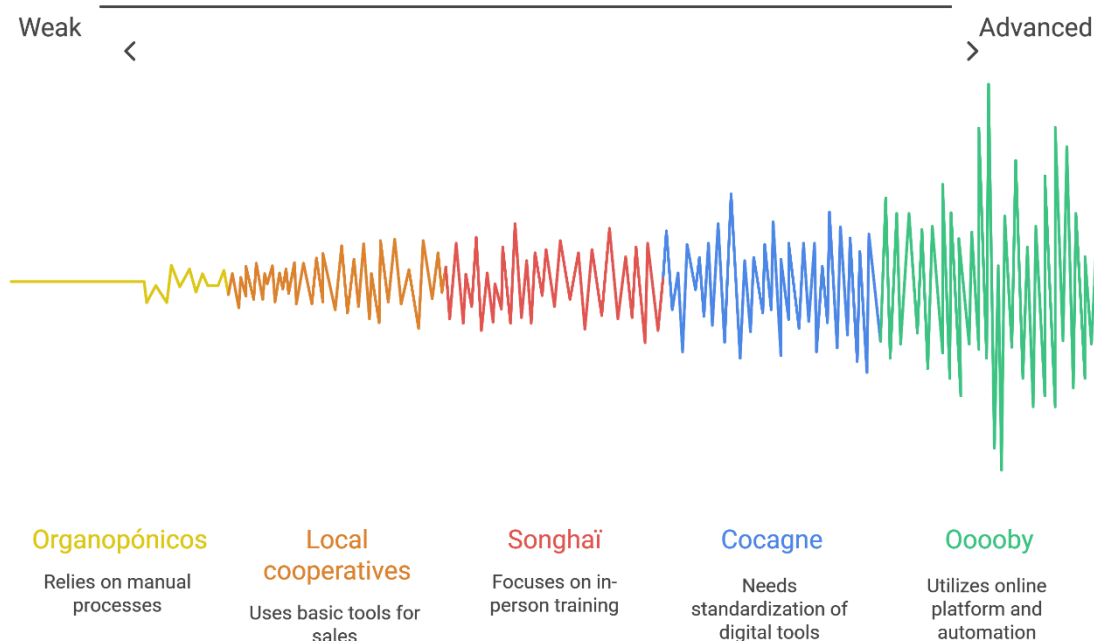
Comparative analysis

Comparison Table

Associations	Social mission	Business model	Digital tools	Logistics organization	Environmental impact	Strengths	Weaknesses
<i>Koloniaveforbundet Danemark</i>	Shared governance, food solidarity	Membership fees + direct sales	Heterogeneous web platforms, non-centralized tools	Collective pick-up points, local supply	Short supply chains, reduced transport	Democratic governance, transparency.	Reliance on volunteers, no unified IT system, weak interoperability
<i>Organopónicos Cuba</i>	Urban food autonomy, collective gardens	Limited public subsidies + local sales	Almost no digitalization	On-site production, distribution through local markets	Reduced ecological footprint, use of vacant urban spaces	Resilience, community self-management	Lack of IT tools, low productivity, dependency on institutions
<i>Ooooby Nouvelle-Zélande</i>	Connect producers and urban consumers through food boxes	Suscriptions + online direct sales	Centralized web platform, integrated e-commerce and logistics	Decentralized logistic network, weekly deliveries	Reduced transport, anti-food waste, seasonal consumption	Strong digital presence, support for small farmers	Dependence on private logistics infrastructure, high competition pressure
<i>Songhai Afrique / Bénin</i>	Training, empowerment, integrated agroecology	Agricultural sales + processing + training + partnerships	Limited digital tools, no structured ERP	Integrated agroecological centers (production → distribution)	Agroecology, recycling, circular resource management	Holistic model, knowledge transfer	Weak digitalization, dependency on initial funding, climate constraints
<i>Provinces produkti Lettonie</i>	Support local farmers, rural tourism promotion	Cooperative + sales platform + events	Transactional website, active social media, basic e-commerce	Physical shop, mobile stands, markets/festivals	Short supply chains, promotion of regional products	Decent digital integration, strong local anchoring	Reliance on physical events, IT limited to visibility/sales

Comparative summary

Comparing initiatives based on their level of digital tool adoption



Made with Napkin

Organizational and logistical impacts of digital choices

Digital choices determine the scalability and resilience of models. Ooooby illustrates the power of a centralized platform for managing memberships, logistics, and payments. Conversely, Kolonihaveforbundet suffers from the heterogeneity of its local tools. Organopónicos and Songhai show that low digitization limits productivity and reach. Provinces produkti uses digital technology as a commercial showcase but remains dependent on physical events.

Identified limitations

- Low digitization or lack of integrated tools for certain initiatives.
- Fragmentation of systems (multiple non-interoperable tools).
- Dependence on volunteers or physical events for visibility.
- Vulnerability to external funding and logistical constraints.

Technical recommendations for Cocagne

1. Deploy a centralized, shared digital platform inspired by the Ooooby model.
2. Implement an open-source ERP (e.g., Odoo) for managing memberships, baskets, and logistics.
3. Develop inter-garden APIs to share data and digital services.
4. Integrate a cybersecurity and GDPR strategy to protect member data.
5. Use Business Intelligence (BI) tools to track social, economic, and environmental performance.

Conclusion

Cocagne stands out for its unique social role but suffers from a digital lag. Its future depends on a structured digital transformation, combining system sharing, data security, and analytical tools. Adopting open-source and collaborative solutions will strengthen its resilience and capacity for international expansion.