

# STRATEGIC GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE "BOROVELLA" PLANTATION

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Borovella, a Croatian organic blueberry farm, aims to lead Croatia's organic sector and expand into the growing European market with a strategy for 2025–2030. The European blueberry market is projected to grow from €8.88 billion in 2024 to €12.40 billion by 2029, driven by demand for sustainable foods (Research and Markets, Data Insights Market). Borovella plans to boost production using Croatia's favourable climate and securing essential organic certifications for key EU markets like Germany and the Netherlands. To strengthen its brand, Borovella will diversify into organic jams, snacks, and eco-tourism experiences such as farm tours and workshops. Digital strategies, including e-commerce and social media, will enhance customer reach, while partnerships with retailers will increase product availability. With a focus on sustainability and innovation, Borovella is poised to lead Croatia's organic farming sector and set a standard in Europe's growing organic market.

DOI  
[https://doi.org/  
10.18690/um.ft.3.2025.14](https://doi.org/10.18690/um.ft.3.2025.14)

ISBN  
978-961-299-044-2

**Keywords:**  
organic blueberries,  
sustainable farming,  
eco-tourism,  
digital marketing,  
brand development,  
European blueberry  
market trends



University of Maribor Press

DOI  
[https://doi.org/  
10.18690/um.ft.3.2025.14](https://doi.org/10.18690/um.ft.3.2025.14)

ISBN  
978-961-299-044-2

**Ključne riječi:**  
organske borovnice,  
održivi uzgoj,  
eko-turizam,  
digitalni marketing,  
razvoj robne marke,  
trendovi na europskom  
tržištu borovnica

# STRATEGIJA RASTI I ODRŽIVOG RAZVOJA PLANTAŽE »BOROVELLA«

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Borovella, inovativna ekološka farma borovnica iz Hrvatske, nastoji postati lider hrvatskog organskog sektora i relevantan akter na rastućem europskom tržištu. Prema izvješću Research and Markets (2024), procjenjuje se da će vrijednost europskog tržišta borovnica porasti s 8,88 milijardi eura u 2024. na 12,40 milijardi eura do 2029., što ukazuje na značajan potencijal potražnje za zdravom i održivo proizvedenom hranom. U tom kontekstu, Borovella razvija strategiju usmjerenu na povećanje proizvodnih kapaciteta, iskorištavajući agroekološke prednosti hrvatske klime i stjecanje certifikata za organsku proizvodnju, ključnih za tržišta poput Njemačke i Nizozemske. Nadalje, planirano je diversificiranje asortimana kroz razvoj organskih preradevina (npr. džemovi, grickalice) te uvođenje eko-turističkih aktivnosti kao što su obilazak farme i edukativne radionice. Poseban naglasak stavlja se na izgradnju digitalne prisutnosti putem e-trgovine i društvenih mreža radi izravne komunikacije s potrošačima i jačanja njihove lojalnosti. Istodobno, strateška partnerstva s maloprodajnim lancima omogućit će širu distribuciju proizvoda na europskom tržištu. Ova strategija, utemeljena na načelima održivosti, inovacije i kvalitete, pozicionira Borovellu kao potencijalnog predvodnika u razvoju organske proizvodnje u Hrvatskoj i šire.



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## **1 Introduction**

This paper explores the strategic development of Borovella, a Croatian organic blueberry farm, as it navigates the growing demand for sustainable agricultural practices and health-conscious products. With a unique position in Croatia's agricultural sector, Borovella has the potential to leverage its natural resources and the rising consumer preference for organic and local food in Europe. As the European blueberry market continues to expand, Borovella's efforts focus on addressing critical industry challenges, including climate impacts, competition, and labour shortages, while capitalizing on opportunities such as eco-tourism and digital marketing. The purpose of this research is to evaluate Borovella's strategy for 2025–2030, which aims to establish the farm as a leader in organic blueberry production in Croatia and a recognized player in the European market. The paper specifically examines the farm's branding efforts, its integration of eco-tourism, and the use of digital innovations to reach broader audiences and strengthen market presence. The main objectives include analysing Borovella's potential to expand product offerings, improve sustainability, and build a strong brand identity. Research questions focus on how the farm can utilize Croatia's agricultural advantages, align with EU trends, and adopt innovative strategies to achieve sustainable growth. The structure of this paper begins with an analysis of market trends, followed by an evaluation of Borovella's priorities, including eco-tourism, product diversification, and digital marketing. Finally, the paper discusses the expected outcomes and broader implications for Croatia's organic farming sector.

## **2 Historical-theoretical, retrospective and explicative part**

The Croatian agricultural sector has experienced a significant shift towards organic farming in recent years, driven by both evolving consumer preferences and supportive government policies. According to the Croatian Ministry of Agriculture (n. d.), demand for organic produce in the country has risen by 15% annually over the past five years, with organic blueberries emerging as one of the fastest-growing categories. This growing interest in organic products reflects a broader European trend towards healthier and more sustainable food systems, presenting both opportunities and challenges for local farmers. As consumers become increasingly conscious of the environmental impact of their food choices, demand for locally

grown, organic produce is expected to continue to rise, putting Croatian farmers in a favourable position to meet this demand.

This transition to organic farming aligns with EU policies focused on environmental sustainability, biodiversity, and local food production. The EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which offers financial support to farms adopting organic practices, is a critical driver in this shift. By incentivizing small-scale farms to implement sustainable agricultural techniques, CAP aims to minimize environmental impact, boost the resilience of local agricultural systems, and stimulate rural economies (European Commission, 2021). The financial support provided by CAP has been vital in fostering organic farming within Croatia, making it easier for local producers to transition and align with EU sustainability goals. This policy framework has positioned Croatia as an emerging leader in the European market for sustainable produce, allowing the country to capitalize on the growing European demand for organic products.

In addition to its agricultural advancements, Croatia has become a recognized leader in eco-tourism, strategically integrating agricultural activities with tourism offerings. Activities such as farm visits, workshops, and hands-on experiences are becoming increasingly popular, drawing tourists seeking authentic, sustainable travel experiences. This convergence of agriculture and eco-tourism provides farms with a valuable opportunity to engage directly with consumers. By offering experiences that educate visitors on sustainable farming practices, Croatian farms can foster stronger brand loyalty and deepen consumer connections to their products. Eco-tourism not only promotes sustainable farming but also serves as a platform to market organic produce to an international audience, further expanding Croatia's reach in global organic markets (Biederman et al., 2020).

This coordinated regional development plan, blending organic agriculture with eco-tourism, supports Croatia's ambition to become a leader in sustainable farming practices within the EU. By continuing to invest in both sectors, Croatia is positioning itself to meet the growing demand for organic products while promoting environmentally responsible agricultural practices that align with broader EU sustainability goals. With the combined support of EU policies, local government initiatives, and eco-tourism trends, Croatia is poised to establish itself as a major player in the European organic farming and tourism markets.

### **3 Analytical and experimental part**

This section evaluates Borovella's market position and growth potential within Croatia's expanding organic blueberry sector. Borovella, an organic farm committed to sustainability and environmental responsibility, is well-positioned to capitalize on the rising demand for organic produce, both domestically and across the European Union.

#### **3.1 Market overview**

The European blueberry market is experiencing significant growth, driven by an increasing consumer demand for organic and health-conscious products. The market is projected to expand from €8.88 billion in 2024 to €12.40 billion by 2029, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.9% (Research and Markets, 2024). This surge is attributed to the growing awareness of the health benefits of blueberries, such as their antioxidant properties, and their versatility in a variety of food products like smoothies, snacks, and desserts. As consumers continue to prioritize health, the demand for organic blueberries is rising across Europe.

The demand for organic produce is also being supported by shifting consumer preferences towards sustainable and ethically sourced food. European countries like Germany, France, and the Netherlands are seeing strong consumer interest in organic food, which is influencing blueberry production. The EU's focus on sustainability and environmental stewardship, coupled with the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) incentives for organic farming, is making it easier for producers to meet these consumer demands (European Commission, 2021).

At the same time, advancements in agricultural technology are helping to meet the rising demand for blueberries. New farming techniques, such as precision farming, and the development of improved blueberry varieties are expanding cultivation areas, especially in major producing regions like Spain, Poland, and Germany. These innovations are improving crop yield, quality, and environmental sustainability, which helps producers keep pace with market growth while minimizing environmental impact (Fresh Fruit Portal, 2023).

As the European blueberry market grows, competition is becoming more intense. For Borovella, this presents both challenges and opportunities. The farm must innovate and diversify its product offerings, embrace sustainable farming practices, and expand into new markets to maintain competitiveness and meet the rising demand for organic blueberries across Europe (Data Insights Market, 2024).

The growth of the European blueberry market is not only fuelled by changing consumer behaviours but also by advancements in farming techniques. New cultivation methods, along with the development of innovative blueberry varieties, are expanding the geographical areas suitable for blueberry production. This is particularly evident in key European markets such as Spain, Poland, and Germany, which are leading the way in blueberry cultivation (Data Insights Market, 2024; Fresh Fruit Portal, 2023). These improvements in farming practices are expected to increase supply while meeting the rising demand for fresh, organic blueberries across Europe.

To take advantage of this growing trend, Borovella plans to diversify its offerings beyond fresh blueberries. The farm intends to expand its product line to include organic jams, snacks, and other value-added products, thereby capitalizing on consumer demand for convenience and healthier alternatives. Additionally, Borovella aims to integrate eco-tourism into its business model, offering farm tours and workshops on sustainable farming practices to further engage consumers and build brand loyalty (International Blueberry Organization, 2022). This combination of product diversification and eco-tourism aligns with the broader trend of merging agriculture with tourism, which is increasingly popular in Europe.

However, Borovella faces several challenges that could impact its growth trajectory. These include the seasonality of blueberry production, which can create supply gaps, labour shortages, particularly during peak harvesting seasons, and rising competition from other EU producers who are scaling up their operations to meet demand (Research and Markets, 2024). Despite these challenges, Borovella's commitment to sustainability, innovative marketing strategies, and digital transformation through enhanced e-commerce platforms provide a solid foundation for growth. By leveraging digital marketing, social media, and direct-to-consumer sales, Borovella can reach a broader audience and build a stronger brand presence both locally and within the European market.

The farm's strategic plan for 2025–2030 is designed to take full advantage of the EU's increasing demand for organic, sustainable products. By focusing on product diversification, sustainability, and eco-tourism, Borovella aims to not only expand its market share but also strengthen its position as a leading brand in Croatia's organic farming sector. This approach, combined with its focus on addressing operational challenges, provides Borovella with strong potential for long-term success in the competitive European market for organic blueberries (MarkWide Research, 2024; Research and Markets, 2024).

**Table 1: SWOT analysis**

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– High-Quality Organic Products</li><li>– Commitment to Sustainability</li><li>– Tourism Trends</li><li>– Health-Conscious Consumer Appeal</li><li>– Diversified Offerings (e.g., organic jams and snacks)</li><li>– Access to EU Funding</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Limited Brand Awareness</li><li>– Small Production Scale</li><li>– Dependence on Local Market</li><li>– Distribution Challenges</li><li>– Seasonality of Products</li><li>– High Operational Costs</li><li>– Vulnerability to Weather Conditions</li><li>– Limited Product Range</li></ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Expansion into EU Markets</li><li>– Growth of Eco-Tourism</li><li>– Increased Demand for Organic Products</li><li>– E-Commerce Expansion</li><li>– Branding as Sustainable Leader</li><li>– Partnerships with Health Stores</li><li>– Collaboration with Local Government</li><li>– Development of Value-Added Products</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Intense Competition in Croatia and the EU</li><li>– Fluctuations in Consumer Preferences</li><li>– Regulatory Changes</li><li>– Economic Uncertainty</li><li>– Rising Production Costs</li></ul>

The SWOT analysis for Borovella, a Croatian organic blueberry farm, provides valuable insights into its current position and prospects in the organic food market.

Strengths:

Borovella's primary strengths lie in its high-quality organic products and commitment to sustainability. As consumer demand for organic and locally sourced produce continues to rise across Europe, these attributes position the farm

favourably (Mordor Intelligence, 2024). The farm's potential for eco-tourism aligns with growing trends in sustainable travel, offering opportunities to diversify income streams and build brand loyalty (Grzinic & Vojnovic, 2014). Borovella's diversified offerings, including organic jams and snacks, cater to the increasing consumer preference for healthy, convenient food options (FinModelsLab, n.d.). Additionally, as an organic producer in Croatia, Borovella may have access to EU funding aimed at promoting sustainable agriculture practices.

#### Weaknesses:

Despite its strengths, Borovella faces challenges typical of small-scale organic producers. Limited brand awareness and a small production scale may hinder its ability to compete with larger producers (Njavro et al., 2014). The farm's dependence on local markets and distribution challenges could restrict growth opportunities. Seasonality of blueberry production and high operational costs associated with organic farming practices may impact profitability (Research and Markets, 2024). The farm's vulnerability to weather conditions and limited product range also presents potential risks to its stability and market appeal.

#### Opportunities:

Expansion into EU markets presents a significant opportunity for Borovella, given the projected growth of the European blueberry market from €8.88 billion in 2024 to €12.40 billion by 2029 (Mordor Intelligence, 2024). The rising popularity of eco-tourism could allow Borovella to diversify its revenue streams through farm tours and educational experiences (Grzinic & Vojnovic, 2014). Increasing demand for organic products across Europe, coupled with e-commerce expansion, offers potential for market growth (Mordor Intelligence, 2024). Borovella could position itself as a sustainable leader in Croatia's organic sector, potentially leading to partnerships with health stores and collaboration with local government initiatives promoting sustainable agriculture (MarkWide Research, 2024).

#### Threats:

Borovella faces intense competition both within Croatia and the broader EU market as more producers enter the organic sector (Research and Markets, 2024). Fluctuations in consumer preferences and economic uncertainty could impact



demand for premium organic products. Regulatory changes, particularly in EU organic certification standards, may require additional investments or adaptations (IFOAM, 2021). Rising production costs, including labor and inputs, could squeeze profit margins if not carefully managed.

## **4 Strategic part**

Borovella's strategic plan for 2025–2030 focuses on innovation, growth, and sustainability, with a clear emphasis on enhancing its market position through product diversification, smart farming practices, and obtaining organic certifications. The plan aims to strengthen Borovella's competitiveness in the European blueberry market by addressing both current market trends and operational challenges. Below are three key priorities that Borovella should focus on to achieve long-term success and growth:

### **4.1 PRIORITY 1: Vertical Integration through Value-Added Products**

Borovella's strategy for vertical integration, particularly through value-added products, will play a key role in mitigating the risks of seasonality and providing a stable, year-round revenue stream. This approach will not only allow Borovella to expand its product offerings but will also strengthen its brand by aligning with evolving consumer preferences for healthy, organic, and convenient foods.

#### **Measure 1: Develop a Range of Value-Added Products**

The first step for Borovella is to diversify its product line by creating value-added offerings such as organic jams, frozen blueberries, blueberry-based snacks, and potentially blueberry-infused beverages. This move addresses the seasonality of fresh blueberry production, allowing Borovella to utilize excess harvests and continue generating revenue during the off-season. By converting fresh blueberries into jams, juices, or snacks, the farm can extend the shelf life of its products and enter new market segments (Data Insights Market, 2024).

These products will appeal to the growing European consumer base that values healthy, functional foods but also seeks convenience. The demand for functional foods—products that offer health benefits beyond basic nutrition—is rising rapidly

across Europe. As consumers become more conscious of the health benefits of blueberries, such as antioxidants and immune-boosting properties, these value-added products will allow Borovella to meet both the convenience and health-focused preferences of modern consumers (Research and Markets, 2024).

## **Measure 2: Brand Development through Packaging, Storytelling and Innovation**

For Borovella to effectively stand out in a competitive market, building a strong brand around its value-added products is crucial. The next step is to focus on brand storytelling, emphasizing Borovella's commitment to sustainability, local production, and the organic farming methods it employs. Packaging will be an important tool in communicating these values to consumers. Borovella should adopt eco-friendly packaging solutions, such as recyclable or compostable materials, aligning with consumer expectations for sustainability.

By highlighting its organic certification, ethical farming practices, and the story behind its farm, Borovella can differentiate its products from conventional brands. It is important for the farm to emphasize that its value-added products are not just about convenience but also about high-quality, sustainably sourced ingredients. This storytelling can be extended across digital channels, building deeper consumer loyalty and trust (CBI, 2022).

In addition to basic products like jams and frozen berries, Borovella can explore more innovative product lines, such as blueberry-based energy bars, smoothies, or even blueberry powder for use in baking or health supplements. This would appeal to a broader range of consumers, including athletes, health-conscious professionals, and parents looking for healthy snacks for children. Borovella could also investigate collaborations with other sustainable brands to create co-branded products, which could further enhance brand visibility and increase consumer awareness. Creating limited-edition or seasonal products, such as blueberry-infused beverages or holiday-themed products, can generate buzz and attract attention in retail environments.

### **Measure 3: Distribution and Retail Partnerships**

To maximize the reach of its new products, Borovella must establish partnerships with retail chains, health food stores, and online marketplaces. The farm should look to collaborate with distributors who focus on organic products, as this will ensure that Borovella's value-added products reach the right consumer segments. Retail partnerships in key European markets, such as Germany, France, and the Netherlands, will provide access to premium shelves and organic produce sections within stores (International Blueberry Organization, 2022). Additionally, Borovella could explore opportunities in the growing sector of online direct-to-consumer sales, which allows the brand to control its narrative and reach customers who are increasingly purchasing organic products online (Data Insights Market, 2024).

### **Measure 4: Digital Marketing and Social Media Strategy**

Building a strong brand in the digital space is essential for Borovella's success. With an increasing number of consumers relying on social media for product recommendations and health tips, Borovella should develop a robust digital marketing strategy. This could include influencer partnerships with wellness bloggers, food bloggers, and sustainability advocates who align with Borovella's brand values. Educational content about the health benefits of blueberries, eco-friendly farming, and sustainable living can help build a dedicated online following. Borovella can also create engaging online campaigns, such as recipe sharing, behind-the-scenes looks at the farm, and sustainability challenges, to involve customers in the farm's mission. Offering discounts, giveaways, or loyalty programs on its website can also help to foster repeat purchases and customer retention. This strategy ensures that Borovella's brand reaches a broader audience, particularly the younger demographic that increasingly values organic, sustainable products and is active on social media platforms (Fresh Fruit Portal, 2023).

By embracing vertical integration, Borovella can add value to its existing blueberry production and further strengthen its position in the market.

## **4.2 PRIORITY 2: Smart Agriculture and Precision Farming**

Implementing advanced farming technologies, including precision farming powered by IoT (Internet of Things) and AI (Artificial Intelligence), is a key priority for Borovella to enhance sustainability, increase operational efficiency, and strengthen its position in the organic blueberry market. These innovative practices will enable Borovella to optimize resource use, improve crop yield, and maintain the highest product quality, all while reducing the environmental impact of its farming operations.

### **Measure 1. IoT-Driven Precision Monitoring for Resource Optimization**

Borovella will integrate IoT (Internet of Things) sensors across its farm to monitor real-time data on critical parameters such as soil moisture, temperature, and nutrient levels. These sensors will allow the farm to dynamically adjust irrigation schedules and fertilization practices, ensuring resources are used efficiently and only when necessary.

By optimizing irrigation based on soil moisture readings, Borovella can significantly reduce water usage, addressing a key concern in sustainable farming. This measure aligns with EU sustainability goals, such as reducing water consumption and promoting environmentally friendly agricultural practices (MarkWide Research, 2024; Fresh Fruit Portal, 2023).

Targeted application of water and nutrients prevents overuse, reduces costs, and enhances crop health. This approach improves blueberry quality and yield while minimizing environmental impact (FinModelsLab, 2023).

The EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) incentivizes sustainable practices like water conservation and efficient resource use, making this measure both environmentally and financially advantageous (European Commission, 2021).

### **Measure 2. AI-Powered Predictive Farming Analytics**

Borovella will complement IoT technology with AI algorithms to analyze data collected from sensors. These algorithms will provide actionable insights for optimizing planting schedules, pest management, and harvest timing.

AI can process complex variables such as weather patterns, soil health metrics, and historical data to optimize farming operations. For instance, AI can predict the best time to irrigate based on upcoming rainfall or detect early signs of pest infestations (Fresh Fruit Portal, 2023; Data Insights Market, 2024).

By reducing dependency on pesticides and fertilizers through targeted application, Borovella can lower operational costs while maintaining high product quality (FinModelsLab, 2023).

AI-driven insights ensure blueberries are harvested at peak ripeness, maximizing both yield and market value. This measure also reduces waste from premature or delayed harvesting (International Blueberry Organization, 2022).

### **4.3 PRIORITY 3: EU Organic Certification**

Obtaining EU Organic Certification is an essential milestone for Borovella to solidify its presence in the competitive European organic food sector and expand its market reach. This certification will open doors to premium markets, such as Germany, France, and the Netherlands, where the demand for organic produce is consistently growing. The certification process begins with a thorough evaluation of Borovella's existing farming practices to ensure they meet the EU Organic regulations. This includes reviewing farming methods related to soil management, pest control, and fertilization to ensure they align with organic farming standards, which emphasize sustainability, biodiversity, and environmentally friendly practices. As noted by the European Commission (2021), these practices must reduce dependency on synthetic chemicals and fertilizers while promoting the long-term health of the farm ecosystem.

#### **Measure 1: Align Farming Practices with EU Organic Standards**

To obtain EU Organic Certification, Borovella must ensure its farming practices comply with the EU Organic Regulation (EU) 2018/848. This involves adopting sustainable practices such as crop rotation, green manure cultivation, and the use of approved organic inputs like certified fertilizers and biological pest control methods. Key actions are:

1. Transition to organic soil management techniques, such as avoiding synthetic fertilizers and using nitrogen-fixing plants to maintain soil fertility (European Commission, 2021; IFOAM, 2021).
2. Implement natural pest control measures by selecting resistant crop varieties and encouraging biodiversity to manage pests and diseases naturally (AGRINFO, n. d.).

These practices will reduce dependency on synthetic chemicals, enhance soil health, and align Borovella's operations with EU sustainability goals under the European Green Deal (IFOAM, 2021).

### **Measure 2: Document and Monitor Compliance**

Proper record-keeping is essential for demonstrating compliance with organic standards during inspections. Borovella must document all farming activities, including crop rotation schedules, pest management strategies, and the use of organic inputs.

Key actions are:

1. Maintain detailed records of farming practices to provide transparency during audits by certification bodies like Ecocert or Control Union (ECOCERT, 2024).
2. Use of digital tools or farm management software to streamline the documentation process and ensure traceability across all production stages.

Accurate documentation not only ensures compliance but also builds consumer trust by showcasing Borovella's commitment to sustainable and transparent farming practices. This is critical for accessing premium markets like Germany and France (European Commission, 2021).

### **Measure 3. Collaborating with Accredited Certification Bodies**

Engaging with an accredited EU Organic Certification body early in the process is crucial for a smooth transition. Certification bodies such as Ecocert or ABCERT will assess Borovella's compliance with organic standards and provide guidance on necessary improvements.

Key actions are:

1. Partner with a recognized certification body to conduct a pre-certification audit and identify gaps in current practices (ECOCERT 2024).
2. Address feedback from certification bodies during the transition period to ensure full compliance before the official inspection (International Blueberry Organization, 2022).

Working closely with certification experts ensures that Borovella meets all requirements efficiently. Once certified, Borovella can market its products as EU Organic Certified, enhancing its reputation and accessing financial incentives under the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) (European Commission, 2021).

#### **4.4 Indicators**

Indicators are essential tools for measuring the progress and success of Borovella's strategic priorities. They provide a clear and objective way to evaluate whether the farm's goals are being achieved and help identify areas where adjustments may be needed. By defining indicators that are SMART—specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound—Borovella can ensure that its strategic plan remains focused and actionable. Below is a detailed discussion of the indicators for each priority, supported by evidence and context.

##### **Priority 1: Vertical Integration through Value-Added Products**

The priority focuses on diversifying Borovella's product offerings by introducing value-added products like organic jams, frozen blueberries, and snacks. This strategy addresses the seasonality of fresh blueberry production while tapping into the growing European demand for convenient, health-conscious food options (Data Insights Market, 2024). Two key indicators will monitor progress in this area:

1. Number of New Value-Added Products Launched

This indicator measures Borovella's ability to innovate and expand its product portfolio. The target is to launch at least three new value-added products by the end of 2026. Tracking this metric will demonstrate whether the farm is successfully

addressing consumer demand for organic, functional foods while mitigating the risks associated with seasonal production (Research and Markets, 2024).

- *Relevance:* The introduction of new products directly supports Borovella’s goal of year-round revenue generation and market diversification.
- *Measurement Methodology:* Internal records will document product development milestones, and sales data from retail partners and e-commerce platforms will confirm market availability.
- *Time Frame:* Quarterly reviews will track progress during development phases, while annual evaluations will confirm the number of products launched.

## 2. Revenue from Value-Added Products

Revenue generated from value-added products is a critical financial indicator of the success of this diversification strategy. The target is to achieve €500,000 in annual revenue from these products by 2027 (Fresh Fruit Portal, n.d.). This metric reflects both market acceptance of the new offerings and their contribution to Borovella’s overall profitability.

- *Relevance:* Revenue growth demonstrates the financial viability of product diversification efforts and supports long-term sustainability goals.
- *Measurement Methodology:* Financial statements and sales reports from distributors and online platforms will provide quantitative data on revenue performance.
- *Time Frame:* Monthly tracking will allow for early detection of trends or issues, while annual evaluations will assess cumulative revenue growth.

## Priority 2: Smart Agriculture and Precision Farming

The second priority focuses on adopting advanced farming technologies to enhance sustainability and operational efficiency. Precision farming powered by IoT (Internet of Things) sensors and AI (Artificial Intelligence) analytics will enable Borovella to optimize resource use, improve crop yields, and reduce environmental impact (European Commission, 2021). Two key indicators will monitor these efforts:



## 1. Reduction in Water Usage

This indicator evaluates the effectiveness of IoT-enabled precision irrigation systems in reducing water consumption. Borovella aims to achieve a 30% reduction in water usage by 2026. This aligns with EU sustainability goals under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which incentivizes resource-efficient farming practices (European Commission, 2021).

- *Relevance:* Reducing water usage demonstrates Borovella's commitment to environmental stewardship while lowering operational costs.
- *Measurement Methodology:* IoT sensors installed across the farm will collect real-time data on water usage during irrigation cycles. Monthly reports generated by these sensors will be compared with historical consumption records to calculate percentage reductions.
- *Time Frame:* Monthly monitoring will track operational adjustments, while annual evaluations will measure cumulative reductions against baseline levels.

## 2. Increase in Crop Yield

Crop yield per hectare is a key indicator of the impact of AI-driven predictive farming analytics on productivity. By optimizing planting schedules, pest management strategies, and harvest timing, Borovella aims to achieve a 20% increase in blueberry yield per hectare by 2027 (Data Insights Market, 2024).

- *Relevance:* Improved yields demonstrate the effectiveness of smart agriculture technologies in enhancing productivity while maintaining sustainability standards.
- *Measurement Methodology:* Farm management software will record yields during harvest seasons. AI tools will analyze correlations between improved practices and yield outcomes. Comparisons with baseline data from previous years will provide insights into progress.
- *Time Frame:* Seasonal monitoring during harvest periods will collect yield data; annual reporting will assess cumulative improvements.

### Priority 3: EU Organic Certification

Obtaining EU Organic Certification is a critical step for Borovella to access premium markets such as Germany, France, and the Netherlands, where demand for certified organic produce is consistently growing (CBI, n. d.). This certification also enhances consumer trust in Borovella's commitment to sustainability and ethical farming practices (European Commission, 2021). Two key indicators have been identified for monitoring this priority:

#### 1. Certification Achievement

This indicator tracks Borovella's progress toward meeting EU organic farming standards as outlined in Regulation (EU) 2018/848 (European Commission, 2021). Achieving certification by the end of 2025 is essential for expanding into premium markets.

- *Relevance:* Certification confirms compliance with organic standards and enhances Borovella's credibility among eco-conscious consumers.
- *Measurement Methodology:* Internal audits will verify adherence to organic standards such as soil management techniques, pest control methods, and crop rotation schedules. Feedback from certification bodies like Ecocert or Control Union will guide adjustments during the transition period. Pre-certification assessments and final inspections will confirm readiness for certification.
- *Time Frame:* Semi-annual reviews during the certification process (2024–2025) will ensure timely completion.

#### 2. Number of Certified Products Marketed

This indicator measures Borovella's ability to market certified organic products in premium European markets. The goal is to have at least five certified products available by the end of 2026 (International Blueberry Organization, 2022).

- *Relevance:* This metric reflects how effectively Borovella leverages its certification to expand market reach and meet consumer demand for organic produce.

- *Measurement Methodology*: Sales data from distributors and e-commerce platforms will quantify the number of certified products sold in target markets like Germany and France. Consumer feedback surveys may also provide qualitative insights into market reception.
- *Time Frame*: Quarterly monitoring post-certification (starting late 2025) will track product availability and sales performance.

By defining clear indicators for each priority—product diversification, smart agriculture adoption, and organic certification—Borovella ensures that its strategic objectives are measurable and actionable. These indicators not only provide a framework for tracking progress but also allow for timely interventions if deviations occur. Through regular monitoring using robust methodologies such as IoT sensor data analysis, financial reporting, internal audits, and consumer feedback surveys, Borovella can stay on track toward achieving its long-term vision as a leader in Croatia's organic farming sector and a recognized player in Europe's growing organic blueberry market.

#### 4.5 Monitoring

Monitoring is an integral part of Borovella's strategic implementation process, ensuring that progress toward achieving its objectives is consistently tracked and measured. By defining clear methodologies and timeframes for evaluating indicators, Borovella can maintain accountability, identify deviations early, and implement corrective actions when necessary. This section outlines the monitoring framework for each priority, focusing on how the indicators will be measured and the tools used to ensure their accuracy.

##### Priority 1: Vertical Integration through Value-Added Products

To monitor the success of Borovella's product diversification strategy, two key indicators—the **number of new value-added products launched** and **revenue from value-added products**—will be systematically tracked. The first indicator, **the number of new value-added products launched**, will be monitored by documenting each stage of product development, from conceptualization to market introduction. Internal project management tools will be used to record milestones, while sales data from retail partners and e-commerce platforms will

confirm whether the products have reached consumers. Quarterly reviews will assess whether product development is on schedule, while annual evaluations will verify that the target of launching three new products by 2026 has been achieved (Data Insights Market, 2024). This regular monitoring ensures that Borovella remains aligned with its diversification goals and can adapt quickly if delays or challenges arise. The second indicator, **revenue from value-added products**, will measure the financial impact of this strategy. Monthly financial statements and sales reports will provide quantitative data on revenue performance. These figures will be analyzed to identify trends or issues early on, allowing Borovella to adjust pricing strategies or marketing efforts as needed. Annual evaluations will assess cumulative revenue growth against the target of €500,000 by 2027 (Fresh Fruit Portal, n. d.). This approach ensures that Borovella can track not only the volume of sales but also their contribution to overall profitability.

## Priority 2: Smart Agriculture and Precision Farming

The implementation of advanced farming technologies requires precise monitoring to evaluate their impact on sustainability and productivity. Two primary indicators—**reduction in water usage** and **increase in crop yield**—will be used to measure progress in this area. For the first indicator, **reduction in water usage**, IoT-enabled precision irrigation systems installed across the farm will collect real-time data on water consumption during irrigation cycles. This data will be analyzed monthly to assess progress toward the target reduction of 30% by 2026 (European Commission, 2021). Historical water usage records will serve as a baseline for comparison. Additionally, environmental impact assessments may be conducted annually to validate improvements in water efficiency. By combining real-time monitoring with long-term evaluations, Borovella ensures that its resource optimization efforts are both effective and sustainable. The second indicator, **increase in crop yield**, will be monitored using farm management software that records harvest data per hectare during each growing season. AI tools will analyze this data to identify correlations between improved farming practices—such as optimized irrigation schedules and pest management—and yield outcomes. Seasonal monitoring during harvest periods ensures timely data collection, while annual reporting provides a comprehensive view of long-term improvements in productivity (Data Insights Market, 2024). The target is a 20% increase in blueberry yield per hectare by 2027. This systematic

approach not only tracks technological adoption but also ensures that these innovations deliver measurable benefits.

### **Priority 3: EU Organic Certification**

Achieving EU Organic Certification requires rigorous monitoring to ensure compliance with regulatory standards. Two key indicators—**certification achievement** and **the number of certified products marketed**—will guide this process. The first indicator, **certification achievement**, tracks Borovella's progress in aligning its farming practices with EU organic standards as outlined in Regulation (EU) 2018/848 (European Commission, 2021). Internal audits will verify adherence to requirements such as soil management techniques, pest control methods, and crop rotation schedules. Feedback from certification bodies like Ecocert or Control Union will guide necessary adjustments during the transition period. Pre-certification assessments and final inspections will confirm readiness for certification by the end of 2025. Semi-annual reviews during this process ensure that all steps are completed on time while providing opportunities for course correction if needed. The second indicator, **the number of certified products marketed**, measures Borovella's ability to leverage its certification for market expansion. Sales data from distributors and e-commerce platforms will quantify the number of certified organic products sold in premium markets such as Germany, France, and the Netherlands. Consumer feedback surveys may provide additional qualitative insights into market reception (International Blueberry Organization, 2022). Quarterly monitoring post-certification (starting late 2025) ensures timely tracking of product availability and sales performance. Annual evaluations assess cumulative growth toward the target of five certified products by 2026.

### **General Monitoring Framework**

Borovella's monitoring framework integrates both quantitative and qualitative approaches to ensure comprehensive evaluation across all priorities:

#### **1. Methodological Approach:**

Quantitative methods include statistical analysis of IoT sensor data (e.g., water usage), financial reports (e.g., revenue), and yield records (e.g., crop performance). Qualitative methods involve stakeholder feedback (e.g., distributor reports),

consumer surveys (e.g., product reception), and internal audits (e.g., compliance with organic standards).

## 2. **Time Frame:**

- Monthly tracking for operational metrics like water usage or sales trends.
- Quarterly reviews for developmental milestones like product launches or certification progress.
- Annual evaluations for high-level outcomes such as revenue performance or cumulative yield improvements.

## 3. **Corrective Actions:**

- If deviations are identified during monitoring:
- Investigate root causes (e.g., delays in product development or inefficiencies in farming practices).
- Adjust timelines or reallocate resources where necessary.
- Engage external consultants or experts (e.g., organic certification bodies) if gaps persist.
- Reassess measures annually to ensure alignment with changing market conditions or policy updates.

By implementing this comprehensive monitoring framework, Borovella ensures that its strategic priorities are executed effectively while remaining adaptable to challenges or changes in its operating environment. Regular evaluations not only track progress but also foster continuous improvement, enabling Borovella to achieve its long-term vision as a leader in Croatia's organic farming sector and a recognized player in Europe's growing organic blueberry market.

## 5 **Conclusion**

Borovella is uniquely positioned to lead Croatia's organic farming sector and establish itself as a prominent player in Europe's growing organic blueberry market. By leveraging advanced technologies such as IoT-enabled precision farming and AI-driven analytics, the farm will optimize resource efficiency while enhancing crop

yields and quality. These innovations align with EU sustainability goals and demonstrate Borovella's commitment to environmentally responsible practices.

Through diversification into value-added products like organic jams, snacks, and frozen blueberries, Borovella aims to mitigate seasonality risks and meet rising consumer demand for convenient, health-conscious foods. The integration of eco-tourism experiences further strengthens its brand identity by fostering direct consumer engagement and loyalty while creating additional revenue streams.

Achieving EU Organic Certification will unlock premium markets in Germany, France, and the Netherlands, solidifying Borovella's reputation as a trusted producer of certified organic products. With clear targets—such as launching three new value-added products by 2026 and reducing water usage by 30% by 2026—the farm has established a robust framework for monitoring progress and ensuring accountability.

Looking ahead, Borovella has the potential to become a model for sustainable agriculture in Croatia and beyond. By continuously innovating and aligning with evolving consumer preferences, it can set new standards for organic farming while contributing to rural development and environmental stewardship across Europe. As Borovella executes its strategic plan for 2025–2030, it invites stakeholders to join in shaping a future where sustainability meets profitability in agriculture. This revised conclusion maintains alignment with the document while addressing its weaknesses through specificity, forward-looking insights, and a stronger call to action. It reinforces Borovella's position as both an industry leader and a pioneer in sustainable practices.

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