



Review

## Intangible Resources in the Development of Agricultural Organisations

Aleksandra Stojković<sup>1</sup> and Nemanja Lekić<sup>1,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Business and Information Studies, Belgrade Business and Arts Academy of Applied Studies, Kraljice Marije 73, 11050 Belgrade, Serbia

\* Correspondence: [aleksandra.stojkovic@bpa.edu.rs](mailto:aleksandra.stojkovic@bpa.edu.rs)

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**Abstract:** The development of agricultural organisations increasingly unfolds within environments characterised by structural transformation, market uncertainty and intensifying climatic and regulatory pressures, which significantly reduce the viability of competitiveness strategies based solely on productivity improvements and tangible assets. In this context, intangible resources assume a central role in shaping the adaptive capacity and long-term viability of agricultural organisations. This paper analyses the contribution of intellectual capital, organisational, innovation and project-based capacities, together with marketing and communication mechanisms, to organisational development in the agricultural sector. Particular emphasis is placed on the processes through which knowledge and organisational capabilities are institutionalised and transformed into market-recognisable value, expressed through reputation, consumer trust and the credibility of origin. The analysis demonstrates that the developmental effects of intangible resources do not stem from their individual presence, but from their systemic interaction and strategic alignment. Such coherence enhances organisational resilience, supports more stable market positioning and underpins the long-term competitiveness and sustainability of agricultural organisations operating under conditions of heightened uncertainty.

**Keywords:** *Intangible resources; intellectual capital; agricultural organisations; organisational capacities; marketing; reputation; sustainable development.*

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### 1. Introduction

Contemporary agricultural organisations operate under conditions of pronounced structural transformation, which across diverse institutional settings increasingly manifests as polarisation between capital-intensive enterprises and smaller agricultural entities. These dynamics cannot be explained by productivity growth alone, as international assessments show that conventional economic indicators often conceal broader environmental, social and market-related costs within agricultural systems [1]. Similar patterns are evident across the European agricultural landscape, where structural change simultaneously supports performance gains while deepening developmental disparities [2]. In response, agricultural policies and strategic frameworks place increasing emphasis on strengthening organisational capacities, knowledge resources and market-oriented capabilities as key mechanisms for addressing these challenges [3]. This context highlights that the developmental constraints of agricultural organisations cannot be understood without examining their internal structures and adaptive capacity under dynamic market conditions.

Intangible resources, including knowledge, experience, organisational capabilities, innovation potential and relationships with key stakeholders, play an increasingly central role in the development of contemporary agricultural organisations. Unlike physical assets, they evolve through learning and adaptation, forming the basis of organisational stability and market differentiation, particularly among small and medium entities. Under conditions of price pressure, structural change

and demographic constraints, knowledge, innovation and organisational capacity emerge as critical mechanisms of survival and development, as supported by empirical evidence on the influence of knowledge and risk perception on the decision-making of agricultural actors [4,5]. Their significance therefore extends beyond adaptation, underscoring a strategic function in competitive positioning.

In agricultural organisations, marketing serves as a key mechanism through which intangible resources are converted into market value by shaping reputation, communication and perceptions of quality. Through this process, organisational and market activities are aligned with changing business conditions, thereby reinforcing organisational credibility [6]. On this basis, the paper examines the role of intellectual capital, organisational capabilities and the communicative dimensions of marketing in shaping market positioning, reputation and the long-term sustainability of agricultural organisations.

## 2. Intangible resources of agricultural organisations

Under conditions of market instability, climatic risks and a changing regulatory environment, agricultural organisations increasingly rely on intangible resources as key drivers of competitiveness and long-term sustainability [7]. Limited material and financial capacities shift the focus from production scale towards the quality of knowledge, experience and organisational capabilities, which enable adaptation to complex external demands and support informed managerial decision-making.

Intangible resources encompass intellectual capital, organisational, innovation and project capacities, as well as marketing capabilities and public relations. Their importance is reflected in improved internal efficiency, enhanced adaptive capacity, the development of market-differentiated offerings and the establishment of stable relationships with consumers, partners and institutions. Through their interrelated functioning, agricultural organisations overcome structural constraints and strengthen their position under conditions of economic and social uncertainty.

### 2.1. Intellectual capital of agricultural organisations

Intellectual capital is a core component of the intangible resources of agricultural organisations, encompassing employees' knowledge, skills, experience and capabilities, as well as organisational knowledge embedded in routines, procedures and managerial practices. Under conditions of climatic and market risks, regulatory change and rising consumer expectations, it provides a critical foundation for informed decision-making and long-term adaptability. Within contemporary agri-food systems, intangible determinants increasingly shape competitiveness and sustainability [1], shifting attention from production volume to the effective management of knowledge. Unlike tangible assets, intellectual capital is not depleted through use but develops through learning, knowledge exchange and interaction with the external environment. Empirical evidence confirms its strong association with organisational performance and competitiveness, particularly in organisations with limited physical and financial resources [8]. In agricultural organisations, often small or medium-sized, intellectual capital thus represents a key source of stability by enabling more efficient resource utilisation and reducing exposure to external disturbances.

The specificity of intellectual capital in the agricultural sector lies in its close connection to local and contextual knowledge related to agroecological conditions, production seasonality, biological risks and market fluctuations. Such knowledge, shaped through long-term experience and intergenerational transfer, is often neither formalised nor institutionally recognised. Research shows that integrating tacit knowledge, advisory networks and collective learning improves risk management and farm-level decision-making [9], thereby strengthening the adaptive capacity of agricultural organisations. At the same time, intellectual capital should not be viewed as a divide between tradition and innovation, but as their complementary interaction, in which traditional knowledge underpins contemporary innovation processes. Viewed through its human, structural and relational dimensions, intellectual capital contributes to regional development and organisational efficiency in agriculture [10], reinforcing its strategic role.

Empirical research further indicates that the attitudes, knowledge and risk perceptions of agricultural actors strongly shape strategic and operational decision-making, particularly with

regard to innovation adoption and sustainable practices. In this context, intellectual capital functions as an intermediary between external challenges and internal organisational responses by enabling the interpretation of climatic, market and regulatory signals and their translation into managerial decisions [4,5]. Knowledge therefore represents a critical link between environmental change and decision-making stability. Beyond the individual level, intellectual capital also includes a structural component embedded in internal procedures, quality standards and management systems, supporting business continuity and knowledge transfer regardless of workforce changes [11]. In agricultural organisations, such institutionalisation of knowledge underpins effective operation under increasingly stringent quality and traceability requirements.

Examining intellectual capital in agricultural organisations thus reveals that its value lies not in the mere possession of knowledge, but in how knowledge is structured, transferred and aligned with developmental objectives. This focus highlights organisational, innovation and project capacities as key mechanisms through which intellectual capital is translated into effective practice.

## *2.2. Organisational, innovation and project capacities*

Organisational, innovation and project capacities form the operational framework through which the intellectual capital of agricultural organisations is translated into development-oriented action. These capacities shape how knowledge and experience are embedded in governance structures, decision-making processes and activity coordination. Research drawing on institutional and cluster-based models shows that well-developed capacities strengthen organisational stability under market and institutional uncertainty [12], while enhancing the consistency and reliability of development planning and implementation.

Organisational capacities comprise formalised procedures, internal communication and coordination, as well as human resource management and work processes. In agricultural systems facing rising requirements for quality, traceability and sustainability, these capacities integrate production, administrative and market activities into a coherent operational structure. Empirical evidence shows that insufficiently developed organisational capacities, particularly among smaller farms with pronounced administrative constraints [13], limit access to institutional support and development instruments, thereby increasing exposure to external disturbances.

Innovation capacities refer to the ability of agricultural organisations to identify, adapt and implement new ideas, practices and business models, encompassing not only technological but also organisational and market-related innovations. In the agricultural sector, innovations typically emerge through cumulative learning and adaptation to local conditions, with their sustainability depending on well-developed organisational and analytical capacities for assessing economic, environmental and social effects [14]. Within this framework, innovation becomes embedded in broader development processes rather than remaining an isolated activity.

Project capacities refer to the ability of agricultural organisations to design, implement and manage development projects. They enable access to external funding, cooperation with institutions and the implementation of complex initiatives under climatic and market uncertainty. Empirical evidence shows that project success relies on clear role allocation, actor coordination and the management of learning processes in unstable environments [15], positioning project capacities as an integral element of long-term development governance rather than a standalone activity.

The interconnection between organisational, innovation and project capacities plays a critical role in strengthening the adaptive capacity of agricultural organisations. Research drawing on dynamic capability theory shows that learning, technological adaptation and the effective use of institutional incentives reduce long-term operational disruptions under climatic and market uncertainty [16], contributing to more stable development paths. At the same time, analyses of sustainable and agroecological practices indicate that innovation outcomes depend on work organisation, institutional support and market conditions, underscoring the need for their coordinated development [17]. These relationships emphasise the importance of considering a broader organisational framework.

Organisational, innovation and project capacities represent the strategic link between the internal resources of agricultural organisations and their market recognition. Within this framework, marketing capacities and public relations acquire particular analytical importance.

### *2.3. Marketing capacities and public relations*

Marketing capacities constitute a key intangible resource of agricultural organisations by linking production and organisational capabilities with market demands. In the agricultural sector, marketing goes beyond a sales function to include strategic positioning, identity and reputation building, as well as long-term relationship management with consumers and other stakeholders. The ability to communicate market value clearly and consistently underpins differentiation and long-term development orientation [18], positioning marketing as a mechanism of sustained competitiveness rather than short-term market response.

In agricultural organisations, marketing capacities are closely associated with intangible sources of value such as reputation, credibility of origin, consumer trust and social legitimacy. Consumers increasingly base their choices not only on price and functional attributes, but also on information about production methods, input origin, compliance with environmental and social standards and ethical business practices. Changes in consumption patterns therefore highlight the importance of coordinated and collaborative marketing approaches that link market offerings with broader value narratives [19], reinforcing marketing as a long-term communicative anchor in building trust and a distinctive market position.

Public relations are an integral part of marketing capacities, as transparent and consistent communication with consumers, institutions, media and local communities shapes organisational perceptions and strengthens reputation. In contexts of food safety crises, climatic extremes and market disruptions, reputation acts as an intangible buffer against institutional and market pressures [20], while participatory and dialogical communication, particularly farmer-led initiatives, supports trust-based relationships and improves understanding of production practices among consumers [21]. Public relations thus emerge as a strategic component of development management rather than a supportive communication function.

In contemporary agricultural systems, marketing and communication capacities increasingly rely on digital channels and direct consumer interaction, enhancing market reach and producer adaptability [22]. The development of digital capacities, particularly among small and medium-sized agricultural organisations, reduces reliance on intermediaries and strengthens market stability, with empirical evidence confirming positive effects on sales growth and operational efficiency [23]. Digital marketing therefore constitutes an integral element of modern communication practices in agricultural organisations.

An important segment of marketing capacities relates to the management of collective forms of promotion, including geographical indications, quality standards, sustainability certifications and collective brands. These mechanisms enable smaller producers to overcome individual resource constraints through cooperation and to strengthen market visibility and bargaining power. Empirical analyses of cooperatives and cooperative distribution models confirm that such forms of organisation facilitate market integration and the modernisation of agricultural product marketing [24]. Their effectiveness is closely linked to organisational and communication capacities and the stability of mutual trust.

## **3. Strategic and communication aspects of marketing in agricultural organisations**

Strategic marketing in agricultural organisations enables the alignment of production capacities, organisational capabilities and market requirements, thereby establishing the foundations for long-term sustainability and differentiation. Within this process, intangible resources play a central role by fostering flexibility, innovativeness and adaptive capacity in response to changes in the economic and institutional environment, as evidenced by empirical findings on the importance of coordinating organisational structures, market dynamics and strategic decision-making in agricultural companies [18]. Marketing is thus positioned as an integrative function that links organisational development

objectives with the evolving realities of market conditions. At the same time, effective communication strategies enhance the coherence of internal decisions and external market signals, supporting more consistent positioning and the long-term credibility of agricultural organisations.

### *3.1. Intellectual capital as the foundation of marketing in agricultural organisations*

Intellectual capital underpins strategic marketing in agricultural organisations by enabling the understanding of market needs, the interpretation of consumer values and the development of authentic value propositions. Knowledge of consumer expectations, particularly regarding quality, origin and sustainability, is central to creating and communicating market value. Empirical evidence indicates that sustainability-oriented marketing generates reputational and market effects only when grounded in genuine organisational practices and value alignment with consumers [25]. In such contexts, trust and loyalty arise from consistency rather than promotional rhetoric.

Unlike operational marketing, strategic marketing relies on the ability of employees and management to translate market information into consistent and knowledge-based communication. Intellectual capital supports the identification of latent needs, the interpretation of evolving consumption patterns and the alignment of offerings with diverse market segments, as marketing becomes increasingly embedded in value chain management and the development of long-term market relationships [26]. The focus therefore shifts from discrete campaigns towards an ongoing process of learning and adaptation.

Knowledge rooted in the local and contextual characteristics of agricultural production allows market communication to be anchored in authenticity and credibility. Understanding agroecological conditions, seasonality and production constraints enables the integration of traditional knowledge with contemporary market requirements, thereby reducing tensions between innovation and tradition in regional development [10]. Market messages are thus grounded in tangible realities rather than abstract constructs.

Intellectual capital plays a key role in shaping market narratives by linking products to broader social, environmental and cultural values. Knowledge-based marketing interprets origin, production practices and responsible engagement with the environment and communities, a process particularly evident in niche markets oriented towards sustainable agri-food systems [27]. Empirical syntheses of sustainable consumption behaviour indicate that consumer responses to sustainability-oriented marketing are shaped not only by individual attitudes and values, but also by social norms, perceived behavioural control and contextual factors, highlighting the importance of coherent and knowledge-based communication in addressing the gap between stated intentions and actual behaviour [28]. Digital communication serves as a mediating channel that conveys these meanings to diverse consumer segments [29], supporting coherent and value-driven market communication.

The human and relational dimensions of intellectual capital support the consistent communication of marketing messages across market touchpoints. Employees' knowledge and competencies act as carriers of brand value, as direct interactions with consumers and other stakeholders shape organisational perceptions and trust. Dialogical and farmer-initiated communication enhances understanding of production practices and fosters stable, trust-based relationships [21], reinforcing credibility in market communication.

Conceived as an outcome of organisational learning and the continuous interpretation of market signals, marketing enables knowledge to be systematically embedded in strategic positioning and offer development decisions. In doing so, intellectual capital serves as a foundation for long-term market stability rather than merely supporting isolated marketing activities.

### *3.2. Marketing, reputation and public relations*

The reputation of agricultural organisations is a key intangible resource shaped by the long-term consistency of marketing messages, the quality of communication and the management of stakeholder relationships. In a sector where trust, traceability and perceptions of product quality are critical, reputation underpins market stability and resilience to economic and institutional

disruptions [1,3]. Marketing thus extends beyond promotion to align market expectations with actual production and organisational practices.

Public relations play a central role in building and maintaining reputation by enabling structured, two-way communication between agricultural organisations, consumers, institutions and local communities. Transparent communication about production methods, quality standards and environmental practices reduces information asymmetry and strengthens trust, particularly amid heightened public sensitivity to food safety and sustainability issues [6,19]. In such contexts, reputation acquires a tangible market dimension, influencing an organisation's ability to remain stable under disruption [20], which reinforces its strategic relevance for long-term market positioning.

Dialogical and participatory communication contributes significantly to reputation by enabling direct interaction between producers and consumers. Evidence from farmer-initiated consultations shows that such approaches improve understanding of production practices, reduce value misalignment and strengthen long-term trust, particularly in sectors where consumer choices increasingly reflect ethical and social considerations [21]. Communication thus functions as a process of relationship building rather than one-way information transfer.

Marketing and public relations in agricultural organisations function as interconnected elements of an integrated communication system oriented towards long-term reputation and social legitimacy. Their effectiveness depends on aligning communication messages with actual practices, the quality of digital presence and transparency in social and environmental responsibility [30], which in turn shapes market perceptions. At this intersection of reputation and perception, space emerges for analysing creative strategy and marketing campaign design.

### *3.3. Creative strategy and marketing campaign design*

Creative strategy and marketing campaign design in agricultural organisations constitute the operational articulation of strategic marketing and intangible resources, linking creative decisions to broader strategic and tactical business objectives [31]. Marketing is thus conceived as a planned process of market positioning rather than a series of isolated promotional actions. In the agricultural sector, where trust and authenticity strongly shape consumer perceptions, message structuring, channel selection and the alignment of market narratives with organisational identity are particularly important [6]. Creative decisions therefore draw directly on actual production practices and existing intangible resources.

Marketing campaign design is based on an understanding of consumer preferences, cultural patterns and local specificities of agricultural production. Authentic narratives and consistent visual elements support a distinctive identity that extends beyond functional product attributes, particularly in highly standardised markets [19,27]. Alignment between brand identity and consumer value orientations promotes stable purchasing behaviour and longer-term market relationships [32], as differentiation increasingly derives from product meaning rather than technical features.

Contemporary creative strategies are increasingly shaped within digital environments, where campaign design requires messages to be tailored to different platforms and consumer segments across diverse market contexts and evolving communication ecosystems globally and locally. Digital channels facilitate more interactive communication and rapid feedback, while also demanding the development of new skills and analytical capacities within organisations [22,33]. Research further suggests that digital campaign effectiveness depends on selective channel choice and strategic resource allocation, reinforcing digital marketing as an integral element of broader organisational decision-making processes.

Creative strategy plays a key role in communicating products with added value attributes, such as quality labels, geographical indications and sustainable production practices. In these contexts, campaign design serves an interpretative function by enabling consumers to understand the meaning of certifications, standards and production processes. Clear and targeted messaging facilitates the recognition of intangible values and strengthens trust [29], particularly in settings characterised by complex information and rising consumer expectations.

Creative strategy and marketing campaign design integrate organisational knowledge, communication capabilities and core values. Their effectiveness depends on alignment with actual practices and long-term strategic objectives, positioning creativity as a constitutive element of contemporary marketing management.

#### 4. Conclusions

The contemporary development of agricultural organisations cannot be understood solely through productivity and material resources, but requires recognition of intangible determinants of competitiveness and sustainability. Knowledge, organisational capabilities and market communication emerge as key mechanisms of adaptation under conditions of structural change, climatic risk and market instability. Intellectual capital plays a central role in interpreting external signals and shaping coherent organisational responses, while its full developmental potential is realised through organisational, innovation and project capacities that institutionalise knowledge and orient it towards long-term strategic objectives rather than short-term, fragmented reactions.

Marketing capacities and public relations enable intangible resources to be recognised, interpreted and valued in the market through reputation, credibility of origin, consumer trust and contemporary communication practices. Taken together, intangible resources provide the strategic foundation for more stable market positioning, enhanced organisational resilience and the alignment of economic, social and developmental objectives. Their value derives from the interdependence of knowledge, organisational capacities and communication mechanisms within contemporary agricultural systems, highlighting the need for integrated and strategically coordinated approaches to agricultural development.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declares no conflict of interest.

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