

ROMANO DE VIVO

Independent advisor · Food security, nature risk and agrifood systems

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ADVISORY PROPOSITION

I help agrifood companies, investors and public institutions test their food security and sustainability strategies against nature-related risk, regulation and international negotiations. My advice draws on senior roles in industry, where I ran soil and biodiversity programmes on 15 million hectares verified by PwC, and on my current role in the governance of public agricultural research. I have sat on both sides of the table: as an industry negotiator and as Vice-Chair of a global research forum. This lets me help clients understand how governments, researchers and civil society are likely to read a corporate position.

WHERE I CAN CONTRIBUTE

- **Food security and agrifood strategy.** Testing company and investor strategies against supply risk, farmer livelihoods and the expectations of public research and donors.
- **Nature and biodiversity risk.** Assessing dependencies and impacts on nature and preparing disclosure, in line with Target 15 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
- **Policy and negotiation processes.** Preparing positions for the UN conventions and their conferences, including access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing.
- **Public-private research partnerships.** Designing partnerships with the CGIAR and national research systems: choice of partners, terms of agreements, intellectual property and scientific independence.

SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS

- Negotiated the first industry benefit-sharing agreement on digital sequence information, with South Africa.
- Led Syngenta programmes on 15 million hectares in about 100 countries (8 million for soils, 7 million for biodiversity) under the Good Growth Plan, with project audits and independent verification by PwC.
- Reviewed responsible sourcing for more than 10,000 natural raw materials in over 100 countries at Givaudan, and set corrective measures for hot spots.
- Built supply chain programmes with farmers, food companies and retailers that are still part of the sourcing and reporting standards of large confectionery and biscuit makers.
- Represented the crop protection industry in regional and global negotiations as Vice President, Sustainability, at CropLife International.
- Analysed the CGIAR governance model against international standards, and chaired an advisory committee on research and market pathways in the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT.

GOVERNANCE AND ADVISORY ROLES

Vice-Chair · Global Forum on Agricultural Innovation and Research (GFAiR)	2024 – present
Steering Committee member · GFAiR	2023 – 2024
Chair, Research and Market Pathways Advisory Committee · Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT	2025 – 2026
Chair, A4IP Flagship Event · Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT	2025
Advisory Board member · Deep Matter Impact, NGO, Zurich	2026 – present
Founding board member · Startup Academy Ticino, Lugano	2020 – 2025
Steering Committee member · OPERA Research, Università Cattolica	2010 – 2024
Review committee member, Agrobiodiversity Index · Bioversity International	2019 – 2020

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- Founder and Managing Director** · VIVO Advisory GmbH, Basel 2026 – present
- Advice to international organisations, research institutions, companies and family offices on food systems, biodiversity and nature-based investments.

Strategy Advisor and Senior Researcher · OPERA Research, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Piacenza	2025 – present
Senior Research Fellow · Center for Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability, University of Zurich	2019 – present
Head of Strategic Partnerships, A&R Global · OCP Nutricrops	2025 – 2026
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and development partnerships for a global plant nutrition company, with research institutes, governments and supply chain partners. 	
Vice President, Sustainability · CropLife International, Brussels	2021 – 2024
Partner, Sustainability · EUFOCUS, Brussels	2020 – 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice to companies on new sustainability rules and reporting duties. 	
Global Head of Sustainability · Givaudan International, Geneva	2018 – 2019
Global Head of Environmental Policy · Syngenta, Basel	2014 – 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships with the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, Bioversity International and the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Funding for ecosystem projects in Brazil, Europe and China. 	
Earlier roles · Basel and Milan (Europe, Africa and Middle East)	2002 – 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At Syngenta: Sustainability and stewardship; government and stakeholder relations; scientific communications. Earlier: Johnson & Johnson (1996 – 2002) and statutory auditor (1994 – 1996). 	

EDUCATION AND CREDENTIALS

- CAS in Board Governance, University of St. Gallen (2026).
- Executive Master in Environmental Governance and Policy-Making, Graduate Institute, Geneva (2018).
- MBA, STOA and MIT Sloan School of Management (1996). Certified statutory auditor (1999).
- Degree in Economics and Business, University of Salerno, cum laude (1993), with majors in agricultural economics and corporate finance.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Languages: Italian (native) · English C2 · French C1 · German B1. Swiss and Italian citizen.
- Teaching: Visiting Professor in food systems, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (2021 – 2022); guest lectures at ETH Zurich, University of Zurich, UC Berkeley Haas School of Business and Bocconi University.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- Zaccari C., De Vivo R., Pawera L., et al. (2023). Lessons learned from the Second International Agrobiodiversity Congress: adopting agricultural biodiversity as a catalyst for transformative global food systems. *Current Opinion in Environmental Science & Health* 31, 100411. Elsevier. doi:10.1016/j.coesh.2022.100411
- De Vivo R., Capri E., Rueff H., Gaudioso A., Marchis A., Menza G. (2020). Agriculture in the face of climate change: sustained and inclusive economic growth as a prerequisite for sustainable development. In: *Transitioning to Decent Work and Economic Growth*. MDPI Books. doi:10.3390/books978-3-03897-779-7-7
- Syngenta, Arcadis, Bioversity International (2018). Multifunctional Field Margins: assessing the benefits for nature, society and business. Position paper; coordinator for Syngenta.
- Academic volume on landscape fragmentation (2023).

Full list of publications on request.