Using knowledge networks to promote sustainable food

SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

THEME "Environment"

ENV.2010.4.2.3-3 Brokerage activities to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns

Collaborative Project

Project acronym: FOODLINKS

Knowledge brokerage to promote sustainable food consumption and production: linking scientists, policymakers and civil society organizations

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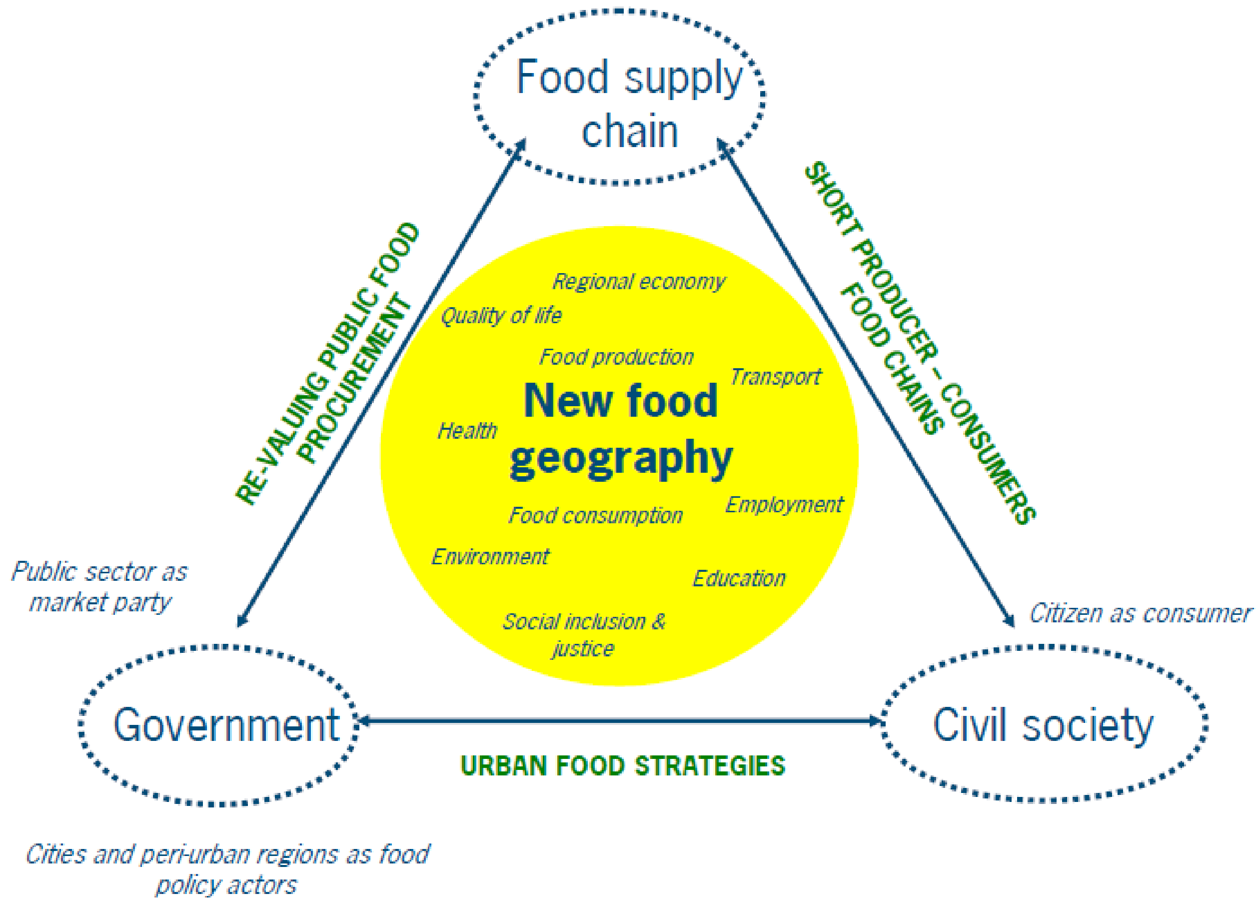
1. Introduction

The "Short Producer to Consumer Food Chains" Community of Practice (SP2C CoP) is one of the three Communities of Practice that are part of the Foodlinks project and that are meant to encourage the collaboration of policy makers, researchers and CSOs and to foster the science-policy-society interaction, to improve the sustainability of the food system. The CoP started in month 6 of the project; this report covers its collaboration and interaction from the start until month 30 of the project.

The specific focus of this CoP derives from the emergence of new relations between the food supply chain and citizens as consumers. In general terms, short producer to consumer food chains represent the development of direct links between producers and consumers. They are considered to be one of the first signs of the emerging new food geography – represented in Figure 1 - which also entails i) new relations between the public sector as buyer and consumer of food and the chain of food provision and ii) the rise of municipalities and city regions as food policy makers, which reflect new relations between government and civil society. The two latter dimensions are matters of interest of two other Communities of Practice, which are respectively "Revaluing Public Food Procurement" and "Urban Food Strategies".

Figure 1 – New Food Geography



The coordination of Work Package 3 (WP3) is assigned to Gianluca Brunori, University of Pisa (Italy). The SP2C CoP was initially composed by a sub group of project members who gathered together on the issues of interest of the CoP, in line with the plan indicated in the Description of Work. This small group will be referred to as "core CoP" in the following as it represents that group of people permanently involved in planning and steering the CoP's activities. The predominance of core CoP members are researchers, while CSO represent a quarter of members, and only one member is a policy maker.

The present report describes how the SFSC CoP developed, which activities were employed and to what extent it has met the objectives assigned to WP 3, described in the Description of Work. We recall the objectives as follows:

O3.1 To create a shared interpretation of what sustainable short P2C food chains mean
O3.2 To prioritize the most important aspects of sustainable short P2C food chains by considering the current political framing
O3.3 To explore the existing research reservoir on P2C food chains in light of meeting the needs of the ones using the knowledge requested
O3.4 To reflect on the relevance of the learning outcomes (related to the defined questions) for the non-scientific context, and to identify future research needs

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The report describes the process of knowledge brokerage between researchers, policymakers and CSO representatives around the SFSC theme and reflects on the effectiveness of the CoP in supporting interaction, knowledge exchange, co-production and collaboration between the three categories of stakeholders. The knowledge brokerage process is organized as a cyclic iteration of scoping, envisioning, research exploration and assessment of learning through which a shared interpretation of short food supply chains is achieved, the need for new knowledge is identified and recommendations for policies that support the development of such food chains, are formulated collaboratively.

The report goes through the phases of scoping, envisioning, research exploration and learning assessment (SERA), by emphasizing how the CoP:

a. reached a shared interpretation of what sustainable short P2C food chains mean
b. developed a strategic action plan to enhance sustainability and prioritized the most important aspects of sustainable short food chains by considering the current political framing
c. explored the existing research reservoir and reached a mutual understanding of the relevance of existing research
d. identified gaps in existing knowledge and defined needs for future research.

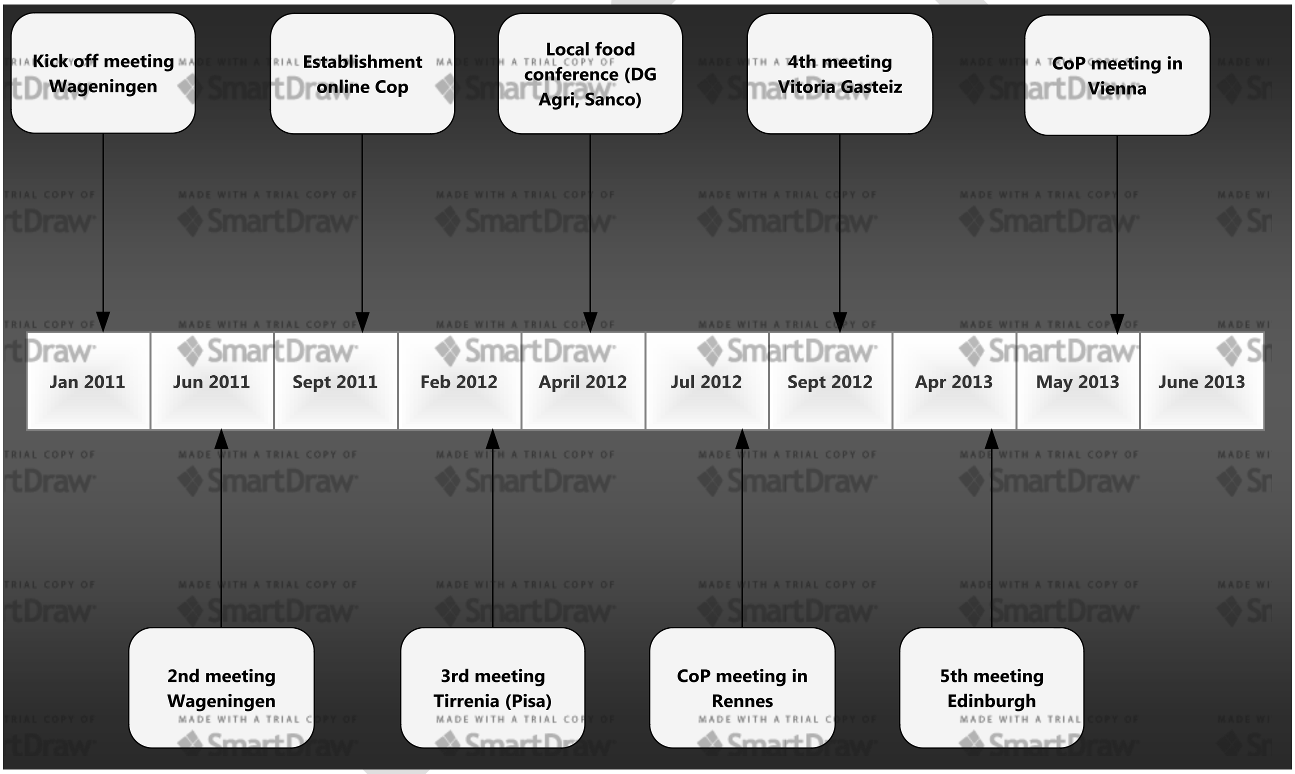
Paragraph 2 describes the development of the Community of Practice throughout the three years of the project, by identifying and discussing the most significant activities and events. The description focuses on face to face encounters and depicts the features of virtual interaction on the web based platform. Paragraph 3 details what has been done per each of the phases of the learning cycle. Paragraph 4 gives an overview of knowledge brokerage tools that were employed and assesses the effectiveness and limitations of each instrument. Paragraph 5 reflects on the facilitation process of the Community of Practice. Paragraph 6 discusses what may be learned from our experience about the successful facilitation of collaboration between science, policymakers and cso in the field of sustainable food production and consumption, if collaboration in a CoP is indeed a promising way and what conditions need to be fulfilled to make it successful.

2. *Chronology of the CoP*

Communities of Practice are meant to encourage social learning and support knowledge brokerage (KB) between researchers, policy makers and civil society organizations by facilitating their collaboration as a community. In the SP2C CoP interaction and collaboration within the community took place during face to face meetings and through online, virtual communication on an internet based platform that provided an open arena for members to interact with regularity and share, store and access relevant data and information useful for the CoP's development itself.

The following timeline summarizes the most significant events in the life of the Community of Practice throughout the three years of the Foodlinks project.

Figure 2 – Timeline critical events in the SFSC CoP



In January 2011, during the kick off meeting, a first reflection on the future establishment of the Short Producer to Consumer Food Chain Community of Practice (SP2C CoP) took place– which started off officially in June 2011.

The SP2C CoP was initially composed by a sub group of project members who gathered together on the issues of interest of the CoP, in line with the plan indicated in the Description of Work and according to preferences. This small group will be referred to as "core CoP" in the following, as it represents the group permanently involved in planning and steering the CoP's activities. The predominance of members are researchers, while CSO represent a quarter of members, and only one member is a policy maker. The core CoP members, by name and institution are:

- Researchers:

Gianluca Brunori, University of Pisa (Italy) – coordinator

Francesca Galli, University of Pisa (Italy)

Ada Rossi, University of Pisa (Italy)

Otto Schmid, FiBL, Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, Frick, (Switzerland)

Sandra Sumane, Baltic Studies Center, (Latvia)

SandraKarner, Inter-University Research Centre for Technology, Work and Culture, (Austria)

Femke Hoekstra, Wageningen University (Netherlands)

Roberto Ruiz, Basque Institute for Agricultural Research and Development (Neiker, Spain).

- Civil Society Organizations

Karin Okonkwo-Klampfer, Via Campesina (Austria)

Monika Thuswald, Via Campesina (Austria)

Pascal Aubrée, FRCIVAM Bretagne (France)

- Policy Makers

Pieter Van der Graaf, Scottish Government, (Scotland)

During the meeting participants expressed their expectations (see Annex 1 for the complete minutes), of which the following box presents a selection (one for each category of stakeholder: research, policy maker, cso).

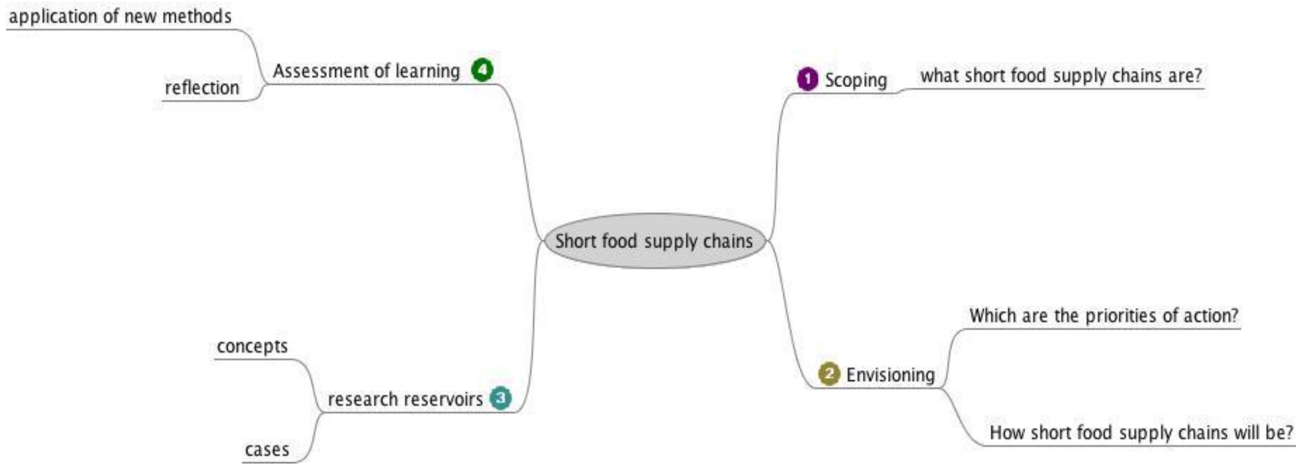
"In Italy the debate over food policy, and especially of local food policy, is at its very beginnings, as so far it has been subsumed into agricultural policy, but the interest around it is growing very fast. From the project I expect to be able to contribute to consolidate an interdisciplinary discourse around local food policies and to develop evidence-based guidelines for implementing local food policies."

"Hope that Foodlinks will aid the implementation of the Scottish Food and Drink Policy, will increase the evidence base and establish information networks"

"Our interests in the project as a civil society organization is to contribute the experiences and perceptions of our farmers members regarding the topics of the CoPs (especially the P2C food chains) and the concept of food sovereignty, which might be interesting to explore in the CoP setting. We are looking forward to learn more about KBA. Our expectation is to get to know the situation, problems, perspectives of C2P networks in other countries and learn more about research that is done in this field."

The meeting was useful to start reflecting on the project objectives and the main steps of the learning cycle applied to SP2C chains were articulated, with the aid of an interactive map exercise.

Figure 3- Interactive map of wp3 work



It is necessary to point out that most CoP members didn't know each other before the project, so that one of the preliminary challenges that the CoP had to face was to create a climate of collaboration among members. Another critical point at this stage was the lack of clarity on the CoP overall direction and the need to define a plan, given the discretion left by the Description of Work to each CoP to articulate its content for the timeframe of the project, the tasks and the roles.

In order to ease reciprocal acquaintance, it was planned that during the second CoP meeting (Wageningen, June 2011 – see plan in Annex 2) all members presented their own short food chain experiences. This also contributed to deepen into what SP2C food chains actually are, and how they become operational in different context and countries. Moreover, this exercise allowed to highlight a first set of priorities, which will become the main themes of reflection throughout the following activities of the CoP (see minutes in Annex 3). The action plan started to be developed, as summarized in the following box, to orient the CoP's activity. A more detailed plan of action is provided in Annex 4.

1. CoP maintenance

Regarding activities of the CoP, it has been agreed that one of the first things to do is to consolidate the CoP through sharing of a) links b) documents c) pictures, d) discussions, e) events. On this regard, a web 2.0 platform should be set up as soon as possible. It should be chosen on the following criteria:

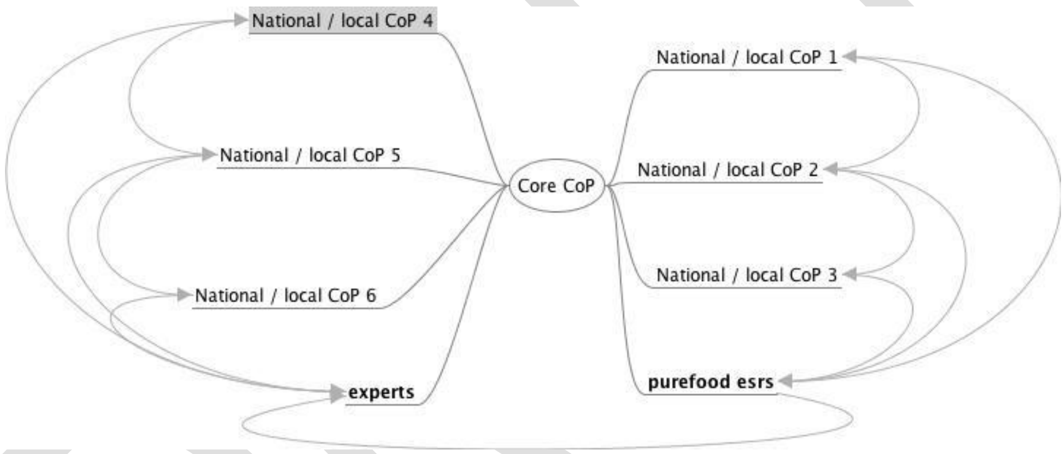
- Easiness of access, also in view of an enlargement of the CoP
- Availability of tools such as forum, wiki, groups, share
- Cost effectiveness

2. Cop enlargement

It is common agreement that, after a first consolidation, the CoP should open as soon as possible. The opening should have two dimensions:

- An horizontal one, involving experts, purefood esrs, individuals and organizations who are already active in the field and who may extend geographical coverage of the network;
- A vertical one, which regards local groups – communicating in national languages – that will see the core community of practice as brokers

The network may take the following shape:



Many CoP members are willing to act as facilitators or as brokers of SERA processes at local level, if possible through creation of synergies with local events organized for other purposes.

3. Next steps

The scoping activity has already gone quite far, so the CoP has agreed to proceed with definition of priorities. After a discussion on this, three main priorities have emerged:

- What is 'short'?
- To what extent does regulation (absence/presence of it) act as a driver or as a barrier for development of short food supply chains?
- How, and to what extent, short food chains can contribute to sustainability and health?

The group has decided to keep the list of priorities open for a while.
CoP members should verify whether the identified priorities are relevant in the specific contexts in which they operate.

The Community of Practice on Short P2C food chains decided to base its functioning on virtual means alongside face to face interaction, given the spatial distance among project participants and the intention to enhance interaction among researchers, policy makers and CSOs across European countries. Crucial to the following development of the CoP, was the decision to set up a web platform in order to enable regular interaction among CoP members and the enlargement of the community beyond the core group, by drawing from local networks that each partner could be in contact with.

There was the need to identify a suitable web platform which combined low costs and flexibility of use. The web platform proposed and chosen was the UK Local Government platform for "supporting collaborative networks of local authorities, other public bodies and the private sector who is in some way delivering for the public", which allowed free access.

The activation of the virtual network was not at all easy or straightforward. In fact online interaction proceeded with difficulty, especially at the beginning, resulting in members frustration which determined quite a low level of participation in on-line activities. Such impasse situation (discussed in particular during a skipe meeting among CoP coordinators in October 2011) was the consequence of several conditions, among which some lack of confidence in on-line tools and the need to clarify the function of all the web tools available to CoP members (i.e. Foodlinks internet, Foodlinks intranet and CoP web platform) in order to avoid confusion. Last but not least, the language barriers are an important problem especially for non-academics, and this was a concrete obstacle in the enlargement process of the CoP at local level.

Given that the activity of the network was not as intense as expected, the project coordinator proposed to organize a set of 30 hours on-line coaching sessions with an expert of online Community of Practices, with the purpose of strengthening CoP facilitators in the understanding of their role and suggesting possible interventions to facilitate the development of the CoP. This revealed to be very useful especially in terms of understanding the importance of facilitation to foster the activity of a CoP which is in its infancy, the time necessary for it to activate properly and the need to reach a critical mass of members for it to expand further.

The third CoP meeting in Tirrenia was a turning point for the CoP's existence (see Annex 5 for the CoP meeting program and Annex 6 for detailed minutes). Until that moment, in fact, the CoP had decided the themes to be discussed and a calendar of seminars. A decision was taken on the main output, which oriented all other CoP's activities from this moment onward: the shared development of a "policy document", after renamed Evidence Document (ED). This would have been the outcome of a collaborative work of the network, facilitated by the core CoP members, and the instrument to interact also locally, to expand the network. The shared elaboration of such output is described in detail in the following section of the report.

In March 2012, after 6 months from the initial establishment, the virtual CoP was transferred to the "Knowledge Hub" (KH), due to the closure of the CoP for Public Service platform. The KH is accessible at the following link https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/group/foodlinksshortproducertoconsumerfoodchains and it is organized into sections that allows sharing of knowledge in different ways:

- Blogging: A blog (it is a contraction of the words web log) allows to make discrete entries ("posts") typically displayed in reverse chronological order (the most recent post appears first).
- Forum: online discussion site where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages.
- Library: allows to make content relevant to the topics discussed available online to all members.
- Wiki: it allows people to add, modify, or delete a text, it serves the purpose of collaborative writing of documents.
- Events: it allows member to signal interesting events (meetings, conferences, etc ...) relevant to the CoP and give details to encourage participation
- Ideas: it allows members to share ideas with the group.

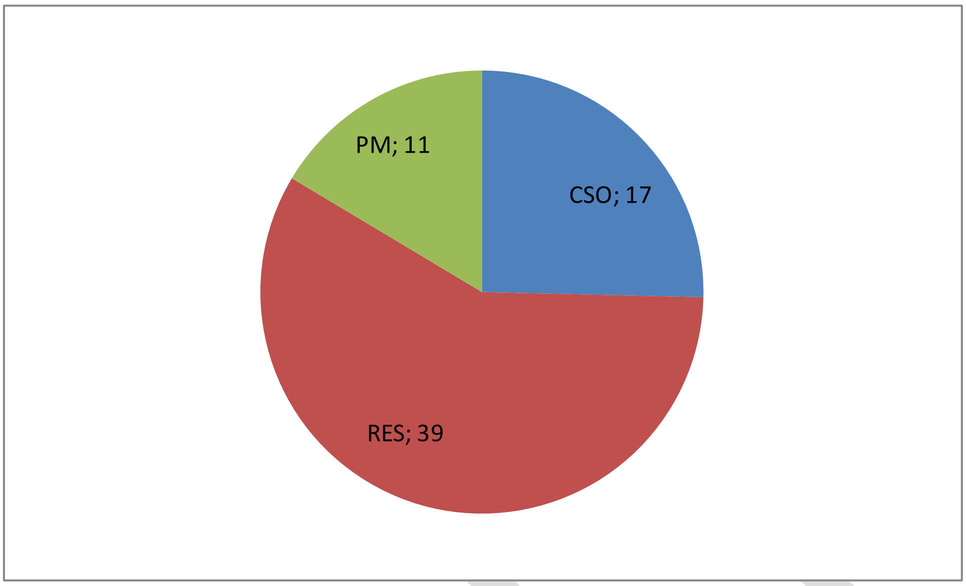
Four facilitators were appointed to steer activity of the on-line community: beyond Gianluca Brunori (Pisa University), Femke Hoekstra (Wageningen University), Pieter van der Graaf (Scottish Government) and Francesca Galli (Pisa University). Facilitation was shared equally by all four CoP members, (i.e. without taking turns) who encouraged other members to interact by posting content and addressing directly other members suggesting discussions on particular topics. The working mode of the online CoP, set by CoP facilitators, was "open" to everyone who subscribed to the CoP, from the beginning. This meant that anyone could contribute to discussions, or make comments, although only members could add files, events or start discussions. Subscription to the Community of Practice has grown over time: it was characterized by a slow start and a gradual increase.

Gradually new members (both from the Foodlinks project and beyond) started to subscribe to this group by following a few online steps, including a brief motivation of the reason to join the SFSC CoP (any personal or professional interest in the topics dealt with is enough to join in).

Up until the present day, 71 members have joined (updated to 21/06/2013). At the beginning mainly project members subscribed, while in the following months many requests of membership concerned researchers, politicians and csos outside the project.

The following graph illustrates the composition of CoP members by type (Civil Society, Policy Makers, Researchers). The supremacy of researchers/academics indicates the strong research interest in the topic on which the CoP is focused.

Figure 4 – Cop members' composition by type



The following box provides a detailed analysis of the level of interaction on the Knowledge Hub, based on data available through Google Analytics, a software that allows to visualize information on number of visits on specific websites and gives information on different features of visitors.

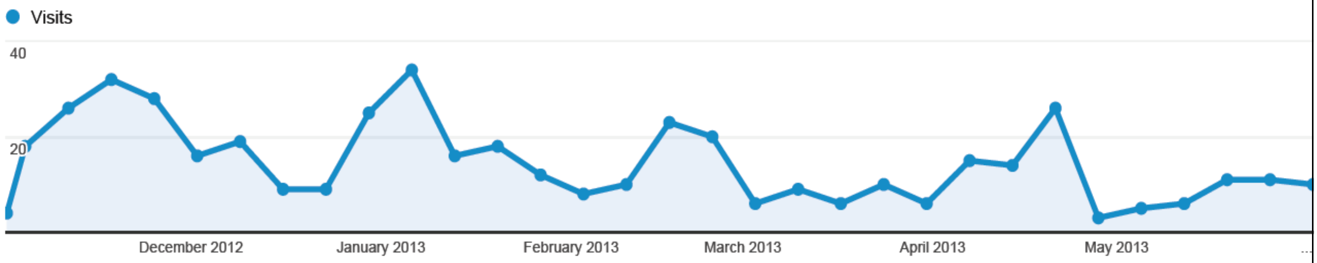
Alongside the Knowledge Hub web platform, a periodic newsletter to all CoP members was developed by CoP facilitators in order to encourage the participation to the Knowledge Hub and to update members on current activities organized within the CoP. A Google Group was created for this purpose, which allowed its members to actively react to the newsletter received (e.g. ask for clarification or integrate the discussion). This proved to be a very effective instrument due to the easiness of use, and it helped to spread the word about the existence of the SP2C CoP, as demonstrated by the numerous requests to join in received by facilitators, who were addressed directly by interested people outside the project.

Google Analytics provides data from November 2012 until beginning of June 2013 (only time frame available on google analytics website).

In this time frame, **105 people visited the CoP** for a total of **465 visits and 2788 page views.** The number of **average pages viewed per visit is 6** and each visit has an **average duration of 7 minutes**. The number of new visits with respect to returning visitors, is approximately 19%.

The following timeline indicates the number of visits per week. It shows an irregular pattern, with higher peaks between 20 and 30 visits, reflecting more intense participation (i.e. in correspondence to project meetings, deadlines given within the CoP or online events such as the webinar held in May) and lower peaks between 5 and 20 in between.

Number of visits per week



Source: Google Analytics on Knowledge Hub (06/04/2013)

The following figure gives indication on the countries from which the visits are made from. It mirrors the project partners distribution across Europe (Scotland, Italy and Netherlands in particular) but also from beyond (i.e. Brazil), reflecting the interest for the topics of the SFSC CoP.

Distribution of visits per country

	Country / Territory	Visits	% Visits
1.	United Kingdom	162	34.69%
2.	Italy	113	24.20%
3.	Netherlands	64	13.70%
4.	Austria	41	8.78%
5.	Spain	25	5.35%
6.	Switzerland	22	4.71%
7.	Poland	10	2.14%
8.	Germany	7	1.50%
9.	Australia	5	1.07%
10.	Brazil	5	1.07%

For what concerns the content offered by the Knowledge Hub, the participation is most oriented to the Wiki facility (out of 2788 page views, 18% goes to it) and the Activity page (which is the first page shown when you visualize the CoP), which gains 17% of views. This last data reflects that often, members (quickly) monitor the Knowledge Hub to check if there is something new to see, but less often interact actively by posting material in the library (10% of visits) or writing on the blog (5% of visits). Whereas a high interaction on the wiki mirrors the way the work within the CoP has been planned, in particular in relation to the shared writing of an Evidence Document (see next paragraphs for detail), which has made vast use of wiki pages for the elaboration of case studies.

		2,788 % of Total: 100.00% (2,788)	2,788 % of Total: 100.00% (2,788)
1.	Wiki - Knowledge Hub	502	18.01%
2.	Activity - Knowledge Hub	466	16.71%
3.	Group hub - Knowledge Hub	376	13.49%
4.	Members - Knowledge Hub	320	11.48%
5.	Library - Knowledge Hub	271	9.72%
6.	Forum - Knowledge Hub	175	6.28%
7.	Blogs - Knowledge Hub	142	5.09%
8.	Events - Knowledge Hub	67	2.40%
9.	Welcome - Knowledge Hub	46	1.65%
10.	Admin - Knowledge Hub	45	1.61%

Source: Google Analytics on Knowledge Hub (06/04/2013)

During the following months, a major event was given by the participation of several CoP members to a conference in Brussels ("Local agriculture and short food supply chains", DG Agri and Sanco, Brussels, 20/04/2012, see http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/events/small-farmers-conference-2012_en.htm). The conference confirmed that the contents identified, discussed and developed within the CoP were actually a priority in the international debate and that considerable progress was made in defining the most relevant issues, case studies available and recommendations.

In summer 2012, an extra Cop meeting in Rennes was organized (see Annex 7 for the program) and concentrated mainly on the Evidence Document content (see minutes in Annex 8), beyond the local event and the field visits. The following box resumes the visit that was organized to a short supply chain experience in Rennes

Brin d’Herbe_Blade of grass

Brin d’Herbe is a group of 20 farmers, who for 20 years have been selling “cottage” and “organic” products in two stores on the outskirts of Rennes . Main products are meat (60 % of the turnover), fruit & vegetables, bakery, dairy products, cheeses, eggs, honey, cider. Their market can be quantified in about 1000 consumers per week. The shop opens three days a week. The turnover is 1,5 million Euro per year.

To run the shop, farmers are organized in a into a specific form of association that allow them to keep their identity and operational autonomy vis a vis consumers, and at the same time to define a common space of coordination. This aspect is also a regulatory requirement, as in this way the shop can be classified as a‘direct selling’ activity. The legal status of the organisation is a "GIE = Groupement d'Interet Economique" (economic interest group). In addition, Brin d'Herbe runs a cooperation with limited liability which enables them to retail activities.

To conciliate the need of managing common operations and of having a ‘direct selling’ profile, which give some regulatory advantages (e.g. only 9 % tax rate in comparision with 26 % in retail), farmers have adopted some organizational solutions.

They hire people to work at the shop, but at least one of the farmers guarantees his/her presence in the shop as well (to improve exchanges with the consumers about the products). They have a labour time bank (linked with the turnover of each producer). The more produce a farmer sells in the shop, the more time he/she should invest into the shop. Every kind of work (communication, reparing, etc.) is valued the same. In general, each of them dedicates one day a week to the shop. Pictures of all associated farmers are displayed in the shops.

The software to register sales can read on the barcode of the products the name of producers. On the top of the invoice is written "Brin d'Herbe", but next to each listed product there is a code which indicates the producer.

Prices are set by individual farmers, although there is internal communication about price policies. However, there is not much overlapping among farmers with regard to product sold, so in shop competition is avoided.

The Shop is only a part of the total farm’s sales. Our host, for example, Sylvie Forel, who produces apples and cider, sells only 10% of her produce in the shop. Other farmers sell up to 90 % of their produce in the shop.

The food from the 20 core farms is never owned by Brin d'Herbe. It is owned by the producers until it is sold to the consumers. Each farmer is responsible for delivering his/her own products to the shop and take home leftovers. The goods from another 50 associated farms, carefully selected on the basis of their production methods and after on-farm "inspection" by Brin d'Herbe, is sold "on consignment" ("depots-vendeurs").

Additional (fair trade) products are bought by the cooperation with limited liability of Brin d'Herbe and then sold to the consumers. These form about 10 % of the sales.

They have chosen not to be only organic (2/3 of the producers are organic now ; at the beginning they were 50%). But this is not a problem when they sell fresh products, as there is no overlapping of categories (either organic or conventional), but has created a problem of external communication, as they need to give a coherent image of themselves to the outside. They have solved this problem by activating an external audit ("NESO") that controls a cluster of indicators against social, energy, environment and origin criteria. Consumers are involved in the audit process. They are repeated every 3-4 years. The results of the audits for each participating farm are communited to consumers via leaflets in the shop. The labels for organic and non-organic products have different colours (green for organic and white for the others).

The shops takes a margin of 9 % on every produce. This money is used to pay the five employees (together 4 full-time jobs) and to make investments. The shop room is rented from a farmer, the interieur is owned by Brin d'Herbe. Many of the hired staff are farmer's wives.

Common decisions are taken during periodical assemblies every 4 - 6 weeks. They are organized also into working groups. At the moment, the operational groups are a) communication; b) labour; c) taste/quality.

Decision making, says our host, is a time consuming activity, and sometime difficult. However, they have managed to carry on their activity for 20 years. They have also chosen not to enlarge, although there is potential for growth. They think, that 20 farms is a good size to cooperate. In fact, they are concerned about the increase of complexity of the business.

The group is member of the FRCIVAM network.

http://www.brindherbe35.fr/Accueil/Accueil.html

In September 2012, the fourth CoP general meeting took place in Vitoria Gasteiz (Spain) – see program in Annex 9 and minutes in Annex 10. The CoP concentrated in particular on the shared writing process and the way it should be planned (beyond the editing and reviewing phases, which will lead to the development of the final version of the ED). Moreover a lot of time was allocated to the production and discussion of case studies which aimed at illustrating the Evidence Document's content.

It was important to discuss the scope and the target of the ED in this phase, by comparing CoP members different perspectives and languages. In particular a bias towards academic language was noticed by other stakeholders (i.e. CSOs) who were feeling constrained by this. This reflects a crucial aspect relevant to the whole project, that is the importance to learn each others' "languages" through continuous interaction and cooperation.

Another important step forward was given by the specific sessions aiming at cross–CoP interaction, to bridge the gap among such close domains (urban food strategies and public food procurement). The guiding questions of the cross-CoP sessions are summarized in the following box, together with the main outputs which suggested various contributions to the enrichment of the Evidence Document.

What does "short" mean to the other groups? How relevant are SFSCs to urban food strategies and public food procurement?

- “Short” has multiple and mixed meanings
- “Local” is better understood than “short” in relation to public procurement policies and urban food strategies
- Importance to aggregate food supply, especially for public procurement

What is sustainable? What criteria are most relevant?

- core meaning based on environment
- wider definition includes also social, economic and health & wellbeing
- Importance of transparency in relations for the other domains: indicators for sustainability
- Food security: resilience and affordability dimensions should be considered when it comes to urban food policies and public procurement

What are the enabling/hindering factors of regulation and policy?

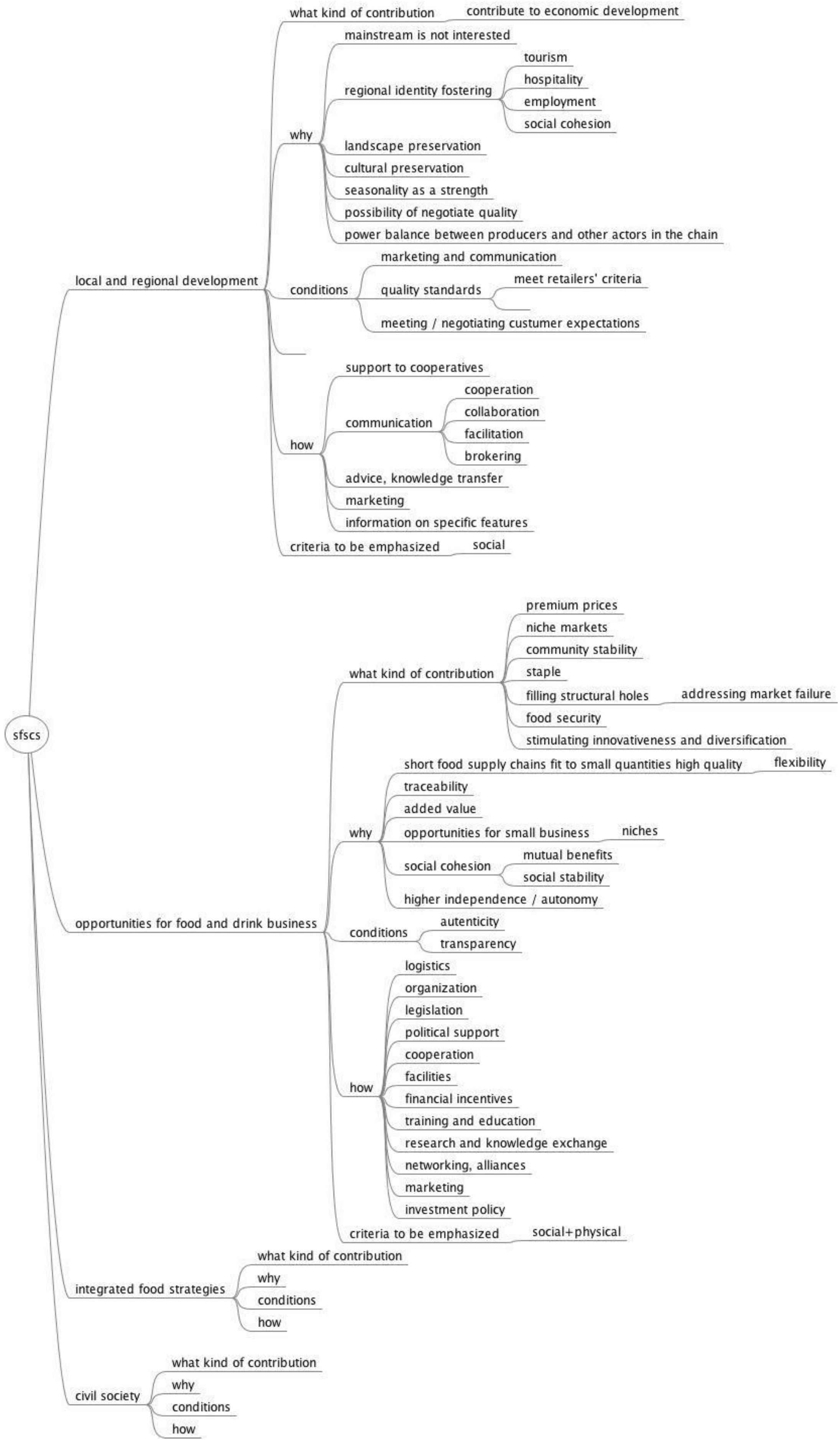
- Role of CAP for urban areas and peri-urban areas should be discussed
- Role of “school fruit schemes” (first pillar policies) should be enhanced
- Role of EU rules in public procurement and creative rules to introduce short food chains in public procurement policies
- Adaptation of national rules to EU framework , in the case of hygienic rules, is a key knowledge brokerage problem

What is the potential for growth and development of SFSCs? To what extent is growth of SFSCs feasible and desirable?

- Growth is not a linear problem
- Need to clarify the conditions under which short chains develop (type of consumer demand, organizational structures that may favor public procurement, model of agriculture to employ, etc..)
- The growth of SFSC has to be linked to local contexts: the local demand,- the local policy, the local production potential

The time span between the Vitoria meeting and the Edinburgh meeting focused on the finalization of the ED. Such process on one side involved all CoP members, on the peer-review process of case studies, published on the wiki of the KH, on the other it was mostly carried out by a smaller group of facilitators who were in charge of different sections of the document. A lack of interaction/communication was observed, also due to the low number of reactions during the review process of the ED. In fact only one of the Expert Forum members gave a feedback on the text, but still this was a matter of discussion during the CoP meeting.

During the Edinburgh meeting (April 2013) – see Annex 11 for plan and minutes – the final version of the ED was discussed and it was decided to produce a short version, to be translated into different languages. The final products of the other CoPs were also shared and presented. The policy relevance of SFSC was discussed. On this regard it was agreed that short food supply chains should be considered as a tool (and not an end) to be mobilized in different policy settings (Rural development, Business, Integrated food strategies, Civil society). The discussion developed around the following mind mapping exercise:


sfscs
local and regional development
what kind of contribution
contribute to economic development
why
mainstream is not interested
regional identity fostering
tourism
hospitality
employment
social cohesion
landscape preservation
cultural preservation
seasonality as a strength
possibility of negotiate quality
power balance between producers and other actors in the chain
conditions
marketing and communication
quality standards
meet retailers' criteria
meeting / negotiating custumer expectations
how
support to cooperatives
communication
cooperation
collaboration
facilitation
brokering
advice, knowledge transfer
marketing
information on specific features
criteria to be emphasized
social
opportunities for food and drink business
what kind of contribution
premium prices
niche markets
community stability
staple
filling structural holes
addressing market failure
food security
stimulating innovativeness and diversification
why
short food supply chains fit to small quantities high quality
flexibility
traceability
added value
opportunities for small business
niches
social cohesion
mutual benefits
social stability
higher independence / autonomy
conditions
autenticity
transparency
how
logistics
organization
legislation
political support
cooperation
facilities
financial incentives
training and education
research and knowledge exchange
networking, alliances
marketing
investment policy
criteria to be emphasized
social+physical
integrated food strategies
what kind of contribution
why
conditions
how
civil society
what kind of contribution
why
conditions
how

In May 2013, a second extra CoP meeting took place in Vienna. The main issues were the preparation of the presentations to Austrian stakeholders in a seminar on SFSCs and on-farms slaughtering. The CoP members prepared their input for the final Foodlinks project conference in Bruxelles. Furthermore there was a discussion about the maintenance of the Knowledge Hub after the project end, the finalization of the Evidence Document and planned articles (see Annex 12 for plan and minutes).

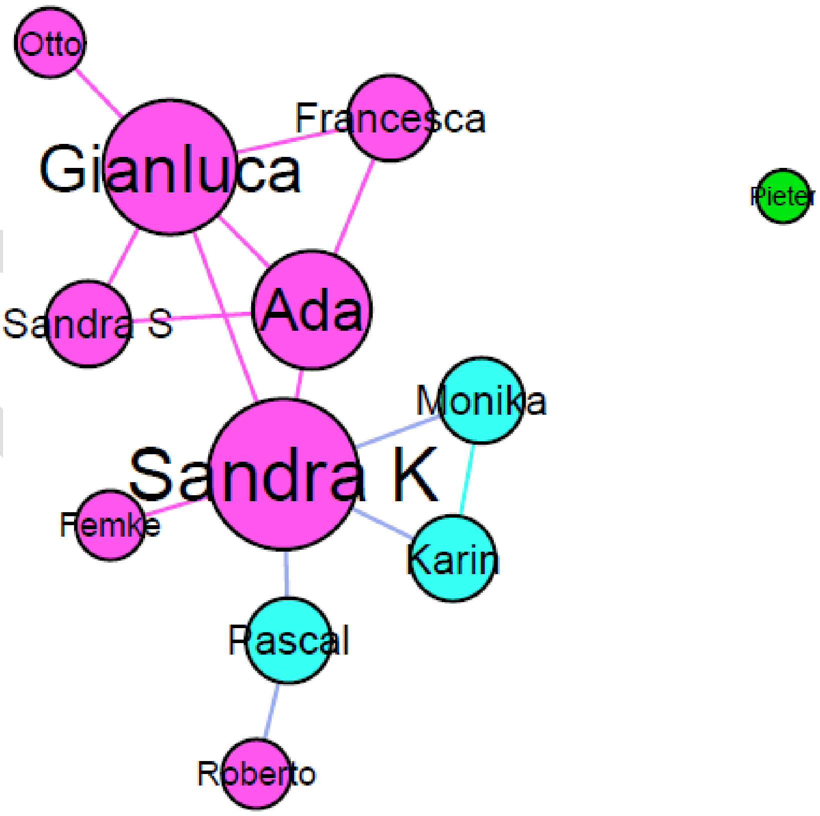
Recently (24th May 2013) the Knowledge Hub Project Lead communicated that, due to budget cuts the Local Government Associations are proposing to close the Knowledge Hub facility. There is statutory 30 day consultation period (consultation closes on 23rd of June) on these proposals. The storage of the material published on the KH will most probably be guaranteed. The CoP is discussing what to do, in case the KH closes down (i.e. storage of material, interaction among CoP members). The Google Group mailing list provides a useful instrument in this sense, as it represents a means to keep its members connected and able to communicate in view of, eventually moving to another web platform. However not all members of the Google Group are also members of the Knowledge Hub and vice versa, therefore the alignment of these two groups is the objective for the last months of the project.

3. The learning cycle

Before discussing the major activities carried out for each of the steps of the learning cycle, we briefly present how the interaction among CoP members translated into stronger relationships among members through a Social Network Analysis. Social Network Analysis (SNA) provides an effective tool to visualize how the relationships among core CoP members varied in time since the beginning of the CoP existence, as a result of the continuous interaction and reiteration of the progressive steps of the learning cycle (scoping, envisioning, research exploration and assessment). The following three maps visualize a significant growth, in terms of knowledge and interaction, in different moments in time, core CoP members being equal (to allow the comparison).

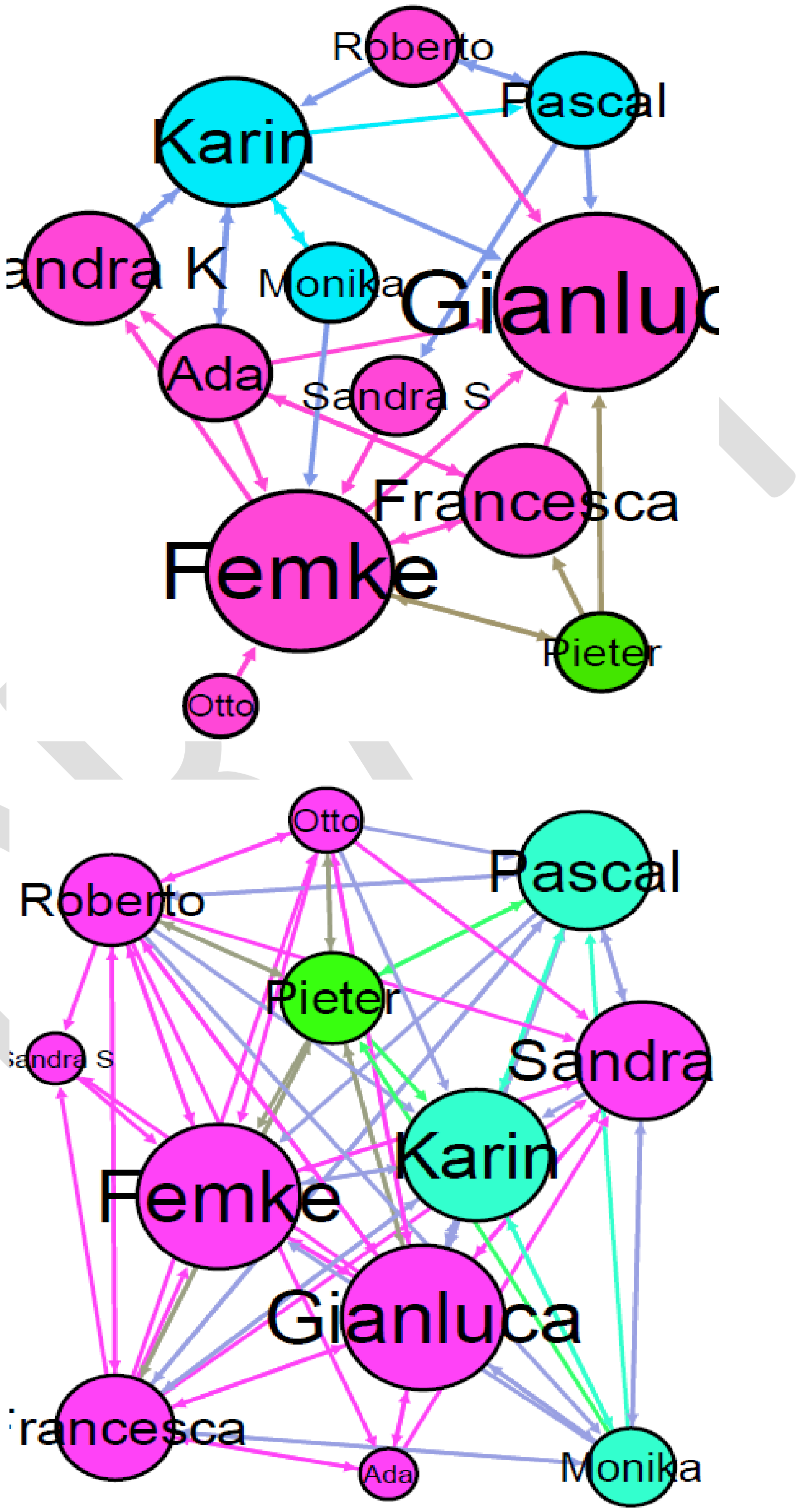
The following SNA map represents who knew whom in autumn 2011, when the CoP was at the start but already running both face to face and virtually. The colors of nodes represent the type of stakeholder (pink= researcher, green=policy maker, blue=CSO) while the size of the nodes indicates the number of people known by each node compared to others.

Figure 5 – Social Network Analysis Map – "Who knows whom at the start of the project"



The next two maps describe how the interaction among CoP members grew over time, at one year distance. The interaction is given by the comparison at the end of 2012 and at the end of 2011 of how often people have turned to other members to ask for advice. Size of the nodes indicates how often people have been asked for advice. Arrows indicate the direction of advice. Color of arrows shows advice ties between different types of stakeholders (pink is between research, blue is between CSO, purple is between research and CSO, grey is between policy and research).

Figure 6 – Social Network Analysis Map – “Who did you ask for advice?” – end of 2011 compared to end of 2012.



The two maps clearly indicate the increasing intensity of relationships over time and more advice ties between different types of stakeholders. In the second graph, for first time also advice ties between CSO and policy makers can be observed (see greenish arrows).

It is challenging to allocate activities within each step of the learning cycle, as this one re-iterates several time during the life of the CoP and moreover, the same activity can be classified under different steps, thus causing repetitions in the description of the work done. Nonetheless the following paragraphs provide a list of activities and outputs associated to each step of the SERA learning cycle.

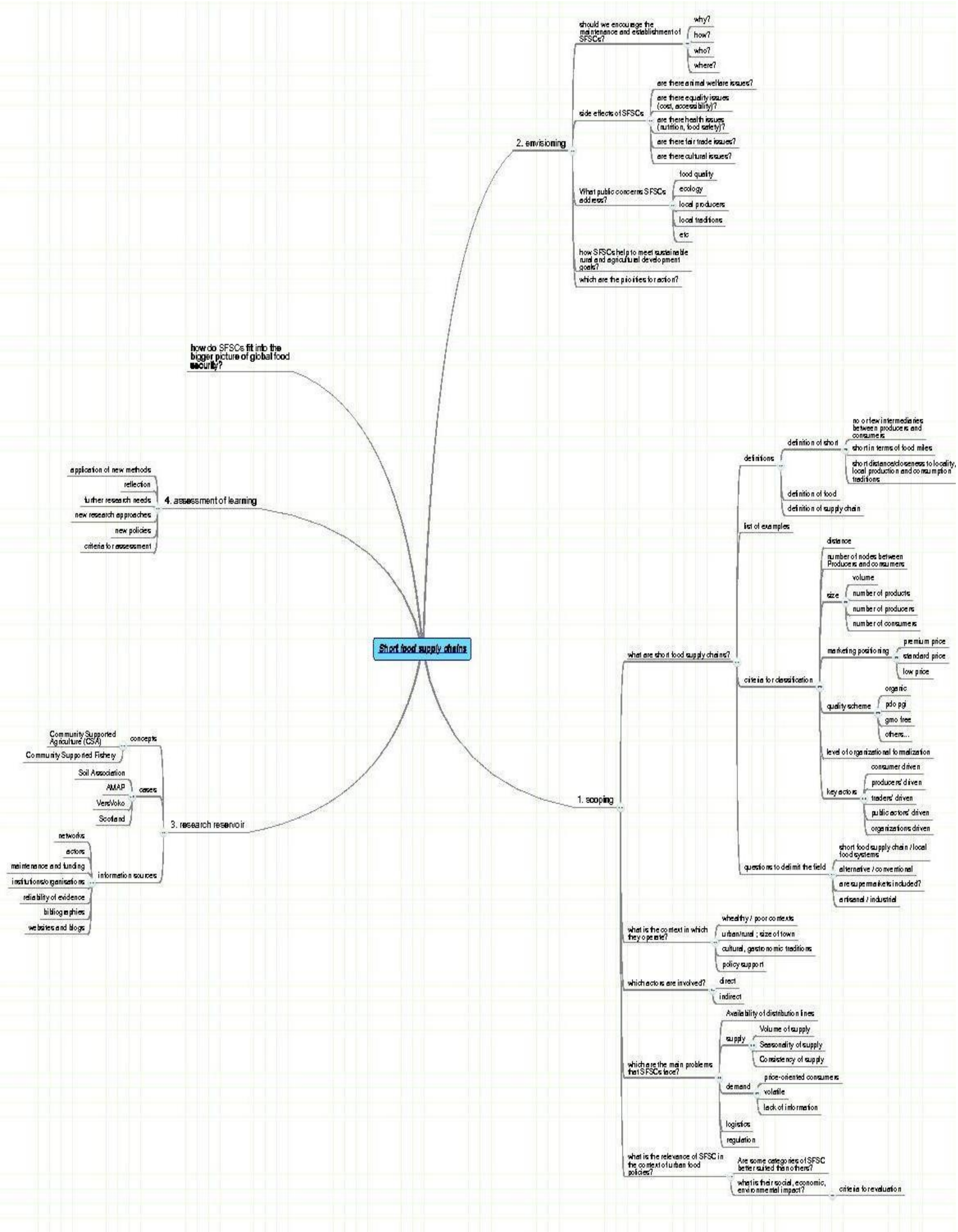
3.1 Scoping

The Scoping stage has been carried out through:

- Presentations given by participants during face to face meetings on issues related to short food supply chains, relevant to them and their perspective.
- Brainstorming/ visualizing mapping exercise on P2C food chains. In a first step participants have created a list of descriptors. In a second step descriptors have been grouped and renamed. The Mindmap in figure 8 shows the result of the exercise.
- The material posted on the blog and the library of the KH, the forum and the events signaling also provide interesting insights on the matter of interest. The documents in the library are labeled with “tags”, which allow their categorization through key words rendering the search easier and faster (see following figure for a selection of tags drawn from the library of the KH).

Figure 7 – Main tags from short P2C food chains CoP library (KH)

Figure 8 – Scoping on short food supply chains



3.2 Envisioning

Given the broad nature of the scoping stage, the envisioning was necessary to the identification of the most strategically significant aspects that the CoP would want to tackle with priority.

- A prioritizing exercise, organized within the first round of CoP meetings and oriented towards priority policy issues defined by all participating groups (policy makers, researchers and csos) has progressively delivered the following set of key issues.

Table 1 - The priorities identified through the envisioning stage

1. What is 'short'?
2. How, and to what extent, short food chains can contribute to sustainability and health?
3. To what extent does regulation (absence/presence of it) act as a driver or as a barrier for development of short food supply chains?
4. How can up-scaling of short supply chains be managed? Are collective 'platforms' for short supply chains feasible / desirable?

The scoping stage allowed to deepen and expand many issues related to SP2C food chains. In order to avoid the dispersion of knowledge and skills available within the CoP, the identification of a common objective became necessary. This also with the aim of fostering the development and activating the expansion of the CoP. The shared writing of a policy document was suggested by the CoP coordinator as a good way of orienting the CoP's work and activating brokerage activities for the vertical/horizontal enlargement of the CoP. The collaborative writing of an "Evidence Document" has the purpose of elaborating on the four priorities identified for short P2C food chains, by presenting the features of the debate and discussing the main questions and contradictions evidenced through case studies, national experiences and knowledge brokerage activities.

- The shared writing process has taken place on the "wiki" provided by the KH, which is a web page (or set of web pages) that anyone in the group can edit. A broad structure of the document was built during the second round of CoP meetings and four facilitators were appointed, one for each section of the document, in order to organize the writing process. Moreover a standard template, as shown in the following box, for each section of the document was produced in order to orient this activity.

- The Evidence Document is also the means through which the research reservoir exploration stage took place, detailed in the following sub-paragraph.

Evidence document on Short supply chains – Template for collective writing

SECTION 1: Characteristics of SFSCs

1.1 Key questions

1.2 criteria for classification (taking account of different view points, e.g. producers, traders, consumers)

1.3 Definitions and examples

1.4 Analysis: implications of criteria on the organization of supply chains – pros and cons

1.5 Recommendations(for different stakeholders, such as policy makers on EU, national and local level)

SECTION 2: SUSTAINABILITY AND HEALTH ASPECTS OF SFSCs

2.1 Key questions

2.2 Criteria to assess sustainability (single issue-assessment versus multi-criteria assessment)

2.2.1 Health

2.2.2 Environmental sustainability

2.2.3 Social sustainability and ethics

2.2.4 Economic sustainability

2.2.5 Other socially relevant criteria (e.g. authenticity, integrity, cultural or ethical dimensions)

2.3 Analysis: implications of criteria for the organization of food supply chains (incl. trade offs between different sustainability and other socially relevant criteria)

2.4 Recommendations

SECTION 3: IMPACTS OF REGULATION

3.1 Key questions

3.2 Regulation fields and their impact (e.g. hygienic and food health regulations, tax regulations such as reduced VAT for farmers)

3.3 Analysis: implications of criteria for the organization of food supply

3.4 Recommendations

SECTION 4: ORGANISATIONAL PATTERNS SUITABLE FOR SFSC

4. 1 Key questions

4.2 Evidence

4.3 Analysis: implications of criteria for the organization of food supply

4.4 Recommendations

For each sub-heading the following aspects need to be collected:

[scientific literature]

[internet websites and blogs]

[cases from CoP correspondents]

[outcome of CoP meetings and events]

[evidence from KBA]

3.3 Research reservoir exploration stage

In a first stage of the development of the CoP, research reservoir was tapped through webinars and face to face encounters during the project meetings.

The webinars (i.e. online seminars) dealt with the issues and themes identified as priorities in short food chains matters during the shared writing process. Several online instruments were tested (Blackboard Collaborate, GotoMeeting, Bigmarker online tools). Online polls (through Doodle) were launched to gather suggestions on topics for the online seminars. After several attempts, a first webinar on "Challenges for small scale producers related to hygienic EU regulation" was held (mid May 2012), relevant to the third section of the Evidence Document. The webinar is visible at the following link: http://www.slideshare.net/francescagalli/hygiene-rules-challenges-for-small-scale/1/yes

A summary of the webinar is available in Annex 13.

Another well-established activity is the document sharing activity on the knowledge hub (the library in particular), that has allowed to accumulate existing information and existing research, reflecting the different national perspectives.

The core stage of tapping research reservoir has been reached during the collaborative writing of the Evidence Document, through the WIKI available on the Knowledge Hub.

Crucial, on this regard, has been the setting up of the template for case studies. This template, strictly connected to the priorities set in the envisioning stage, has provided an easy framework to place members' expertise. All CoP members provided detailed case studies from different countries relevant to each priority identified. Twenty case studies were built, and presented during the General Meeting in Vitoria Gasteiz (Sept 2012).

After the meeting a peer review process of the case studies was activated. This was carried out in two steps:

- a first period of time (ending October 2012) in which CoP members were asked to make comments and ask questions to the authors of three case study each (allocated by CoP facilitators), thorough the wiki comment section. This proved to be an effective tool that enabled the peer review process.
- a second period of time (ending November 2012) in which authors were asked to respond to comments and complete the case studies according to the review.

One of the case studies, Brin d'Herbe (see box above), is an output of a pure collaborative work. CoP members visited the farm in the outskirts of Rennes, discussing with the hosts and among themselves. The CoP leader posted on the wiki a first draft of the case, and all the others contributed to it adding text on the basis of their notes and inserting pictures. Members of the CoP that were not in the field visit contributed with questions and comments. In our view, the case study has contributed to refine a concept of integration of offline-online brokerage. In fact, the field visit strengthened the links among CoP members, as continuous interaction during three days has created a much more fluid interaction.

A draft of the Evidence Document was finalized by end of December 2012, thanks to the work of a specific CoP member appointed by the CoP coordinator, with the aid of the four Evidence document facilitators, responsible of the four sections in which the document is organized (as anticipated in paragraph 2). The document was elaborated in common by using google doc, as main tool.

Two draft versions of the Evidence document were elaborated in order to reach the final product. A longer version of the document is available at the following link:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1am4ANFGFrVDbp_VZwOVXIFve14I3dWr-00BwzW145KY/edit

And a shorter version, elaborated at a following stage:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VDJcVPr4stQ6eQ2omowp3lls19Xe96xpRYmGd7WsrhI/edit

The final Evidence Document is available in the Annex 15.

In the following period of time, (up to the general meeting in Edinburgh, April 2013) the Evidence Document was circulated to Expert Forum members, for a further review phase. The feedback provided was limited to one contribution only, although all experts were invited to contribute. This could be explained by the limited level of interaction between the CoP and the expert forum. However the feedback received was a base of discussion during the Edinburgh Meeting.

Finally during the SFSC CoP meeting in Edinburgh, it was decided on the production of a two-page leaflet based on our evidence document and aimed at policy makers in government, industry and NGOs. This is visible in the following figure.

Figure 9 – Foodlinks fact sheet SFSC

Short food supply chains as a policy tool

Short food supply chains (SFSCs) are an alternative to long globalised food chains and play an increasingly important role in food supply networks.

SFSCs are very varied in nature and practice and exist all over the world in a wide variety of forms, in both commercial and non-commercial settings.

Photo by T & S Middleton

SFSCs are increasingly taken into consideration by policy and decision makers in government, industry and civil society organisations.

Examples of policy areas in which SFSCs can be a useful tool

- **Local and regional development**
- **Integrated food strategies (incl. urban and regional strategies)**
- **Public procurement**
- **Business development and entrepreneurship**
- **Food democracy**

Examples of SFSCs include box schemes, farmers' markets, on-farm sales, consumer cooperatives, direct Internet sales, community supported agriculture, community gardening, Grow Your Own and wild food foraging.

"Short" can only be fully defined within each particular policy context.

Characteristics of short food supply chains

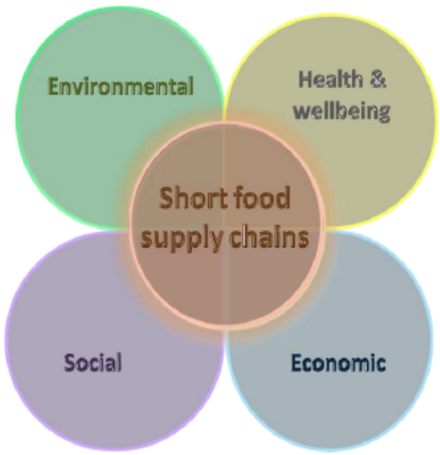
- „Short" refers to both **physical and social distance**.
- Social distance refers to the opportunity for the producer and the consumer (where they are not the same person) to **interact** and share information. There are no or **very few intermediaries** in SFSCs.
- **Information** exchanged includes details about the origin, production method and sustainability of the product, but also about the identity, values and ethics of both the producer and consumer.
- Physical distance covers the **distance a product has travelled** between points of production and sale. Its limitation varies and depends on each particular policy context and situation as well as consumer expectation.
- There is **openness** by the supplier about both the social and physical distance of the product.

Photo by K Berlin

Short food supply chains as a policy tool

Short food supply chains (SFSCs) can act as a driver of change and a method to increase sustainability, trust, equality and growth in agricultural, food, business, social, health and rural policy areas.

Short food supply chains can increase sustainability in all its dimensions



Examples of how SFSCs have increased sustainability:

Environmental: Many SFSCs have minimised the use of fossil fuel or packaging, and/or use less polluting methods of production.
Health & wellbeing: Some SFSCs have increased knowledge and concern about food amongst consumers and led to the adoption of healthier diets.
Social: The direct relationship between producer and consumer has ensured fairness and trust in many SFSCs .
Economic: SFSCs to which consumers are committed long-term have reduced economic uncertainties that result from varying production and sales volumes.

Short food supply chains can increase food supply resilience

- **They complement longer food chains and diversify food supply networks.**
- **They are based on a wider range of producers.**
- **Traceability can be more easily checked.**
- **They are generally more flexible and adaptable to new situations and consumer needs.**

Photo by M Erhart

Policy support mechanisms for short food supply chains

- **Flexible regulation (e.g. on hygiene)**
- **Local facilities (e.g. storage, processing)**
- **Financial and political support**
- **Research, knowledge, skills and training**

This policy brief is based on a wiki evidence report with references and case studies which can be publicly accessed at: http://tinyurl.com/SFSCs

This is an output from the FOODLINKS project supported by

SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

3.4 Assessment and learning

Since the beginning, the CoP has reflected on criteria against which to measure its progress. It was clear, for example, that measuring its progress only on the content basis would not be satisfactory. What had to be assessed was the link between the specific topic and the methodologies of brokering.

Main results in terms of content regard:

- the identification of hygiene rules as a priority issue and constraint for short food supply chain practices. The topicality of this issue was confirmed during a recent conference in Brussels ("Local agriculture and short food supply chains", Brussels, 20/04/2012). In this specific area we have also made considerable progress in defining the most relevant issues, case studies available and recommendations. The event organized by the Austrian team to which the CoP participated, open to policy makers and NGOs, has provided specific inputs to back a campaign on 'on farm slaughtering' carried out by a group of small organic farmers in Austria.

- A definition of short food supply chains was produced on WIKIPEDIA, as it was realized that it was missing until now. It is attached in Annex 14 and available online at the following link: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Short_food_supply_chains.

- During the last general meeting (Edinburgh, April 2013), the reflection on the reviews received on the Evidence Document focused on the controversial meaning and the limited availability of evidence on "sustainability" of short food supply chains.

- The policy relevance of the short food supply chains has also been an important matter of discussion. On this regard it was agreed that short food supply chains should be considered as a tool (and not an end) to be mobilized in different policy settings: i) Rural development, ii) Business, iii) Integrated food strategies, iv) Civil society. The discussion developed around an exercise of Mind Mapping (see minutes of Edinburgh meeting in Annex 11).

On the 'process' side, the CoP has repeatedly reflected on the relation between offline and online. The strong emphasis given to online tools was due to the need to explore a 'new world'. It can be said that there is now a much greater awareness of the importance of online tools to foster communities of practices, and some tools are now entered into daily practices and transferred to other fields.

3.5 Conclusion

The SERA cycle has demonstrated to be an effective instrument to make Communities of Practice work. It provides the rules for identifying different goals and instruments to different stages of evolution of a CoP. Here we would like to remark some general lessons learned, that may bring to refine the SERA methodology:

- The life of an established CoP can be characterized by several SERA cycles, and within each SERA cycles there could the possibility to open new SERA cycles to focus on specific subtasks or goals. The SP2Cs CoP has opened new SERA sub-cycles when a) a definition of SP2C chain was needed; b) a classification of fields where SP2Cs can play a role. This means that CoPs should be able to identify timely when the evolution of the CoP needs to do a step back.

- The SERA methodology is neutral with regard to the evolution of the network. We think that it could be adapted to take into account that CoPs activities may change in relation to the need to open the network to the outside and to adapt the processes to newcomers' characteristics and needs.
- The SERA methodology is mainly focused on internal learning activity, while our work showed that the methodology should explicitly take into consideration the outreach activity. For example, online tools allow to document CoP activities to the outside. The SP2C CoP's choice was to keep the knowledge hub open to the outside (upon invitation and request) since the beginning. How does the choice of opening/keeping close affect the SERA cycle?

4. Knowledge brokerage

Knowledge brokerage methods have the purpose of facilitating communication among actors in order to activate learning processes. It is particularly important in the domain of short food supply chains to bring together policy makers and CSOs, together with researchers, as short food supply chains wouldn't develop without support from society and government, underpinned by factual information provided by science. SP2C food chains demand concerted actions of various agents (not only producers and consumers, but often also other market agents, regulatory and controlling bodies, banks etc.) in order to be successful.

The table below shows the main brokerage methods tested along with SERA phases.

Table 2 – Knowledge Brokerage methods used

	Objective	**Tools**
Scoping	Sharing and organizing members' aims and experience	Mindmapping, world café, microblogging
Envisioning	Selecting and prioritizing issues	Decision making meetings, polls
Research Reservoir	Accumulating existing knowledge	Microblogging, social bookmarking, sharing content, tagging, collaborative writing, field visits
Assessment	Framing concepts, definitions, working out conceptual frameworks	Collaborative writing, mindmapping, workshops

In terms of relevance of KB tools in regard to short food supply chains, CoP members expressed the following perceptions:

- *"The setting / working methods are crucial for creating the enabling environment in which people are comfortable enough to share their ideas, experience and knowledge in a successful way"*
- *"The process should always be directly linked to the content that is being discussed"*
- *"Knowledge brokerage is important especially in the field of regulatory compliance, both among institutions (disseminating good practices) and among farmers. Hygienic rules show that there is no need of regulatory change but a good level of information about how to apply existing regulation"*
- *"In order to organize SFSC a lot of KB is necessary – the more one understands about the other stakeholders in the chain and about the*

organizations/institutions making regulations regarding SFSC, the better one can react to everybody's needs."

- *"Regarding SFSC, KB activities are extremely important to show how a particular challenge has been approached or even already solved in other places, so a particular solution can be known, analysed and then eventually adopted or adapted to the local context."*

The SFSC CoP experimented with various KB tools, both during face to face meetings and through the web based platform. The following table synthesizes the KB tools that were experimented and gives indications on usefulness and limitations. Activities (e.g. teleconference) are indicated separately from tools used (e.g. skipe) because a good activity may be carried out with a poor tool or vice versa.

Table 3 - SFSC CoP experience with learning and knowledge brokering methods

KB activity	When	Tool(s)	Effectiveness / usefulness	Limitations	Recommendations
Foodlinks Intranet	At the very start	Sharepoint	• difficulty to access • too much information. • allocation of files not well organised.	• no access for policy makers	• use simpler tools • use the cloud
Mindmapping	Wageningen Edinburgh	Mindmeister	• good for scoping • organises brainstorming in an organised way • summarises discussions • useful for memorising • useful to set up a basic framework • visualisation of arguments • recombining issues • "naming" things	• confusing if not sorted • not clear to those who did not participate in the creation of the map • for Mindmeister only a limited number of free maps • difficult to get in again; it limits further development	• use freeware software (for example Freemind) • working online is difficult to get the logic. • good when people works on it at the same time
Phone conference	1st year	Skype	• chat function is promising	• technical problems • difficult to access for policy makers • limited to a certain number of participants	Other similar tools: Goto meeting. AnyMeeting. Acrobat connect (not free)
Social bookmarking	At the beginning, then abandoned for software limitations	Delicious	• useful • fits into daily activities if used properly	• regular update needed	Problem of platform that keeps changing
Webinar	1st year	Pre-recorded audio and visual on Slideshare and discussion on Skype	• can be powerful • creates moments of being together • actively engages CoP participants • useful for exploring knowledge reservoir	• difficult to access for policy makers and CSOs • technical problems • tempted to multitask	• needs lot of preparation and good technologies • recorded webinar can go to a bigger audience • chat facilities should

KB activity	When	Tool(s)	Effectiveness / usefulness	Limitations	Recommendations
					accompany joint use
World café	Wageningen 2nd meeting and Vitoria 4th meeting		• good for getting to know each other • to launch something and follow up with other means • identifies common ground	• exclusive: can't hear all presentations • not output focused • no in-depths knowledge sharing • how is cross exchange possible?	• focus on recording discussion; somebody has to be in charge of taking notes • ideally 6 people in one group
Collaborative mapping	1st year	Google maps	• good documentation tool	• not easy to use • very specific use • limited tool	use better tools
Collaborative writing		• Knowledge Hub wiki • Google docs • Wikipedia	• useful to write collaboratively • to define short food supply on Wikipedia	• Knowledge hub wiki did not work properly • problems with longer documents	• use the right platform • train people before using it
Collaborative peer review	Evidence document case studies	• Knowledge hub	• Makes the process of improving efficient and transparent • Foster personal relationships related to the object	• Misinterpretation of the comments	• Need to organise the process
Online community platform		Knowledge Hub	• bring people together in one place • library is very useful • good for exchanging ideas	• distinction between library, forum, blog was not clear • too many overlapping functions • not easy to open it to the outside • no possibility of broadcasting to	• improvements to the tool • preparatory work to use it • keep it open • takes time to be built up • keep it alive!

KB activity	When	Tool(s)	Effectiveness / usefulness	Limitations	Recommendations
				the group • no information about new members	
Field visit	During meetings		Develop common understanding, reinforcing social relations within the group	Cost and time availability	Link the visit to a online follow up with guidance on how to comment
E-publication	Outside the CoP to raise food issues				
Micro-blogging		Twitter	Useful to amplify connections		• use in connection to other tools • useful to strengthen the network
Conventional meeting	Jan 2011 - Wageningen June 2011 - Wageningen Feb 2012 - Pisa July 2012 - Rennes Sept 2012 – Vitoria April 2013 - Edinburgh May 2013 - Vienna		Develop common understanding, reinforcing social relations within the group	Cost and time availability	
E-mail	Throughout the whole project		Can be used by everyone without particular effort	It can become clogged if not followed regularly	• use in connection to other tools • generally easy to use for everybody
Mailing list/group discussion	Throughout the whole project	Google groups	Useful to encourage participation on web platform Encourage new members to join in	Need of a strong facilitation effort by CoP leaders	

5. Facilitation

Facilitating the CoP is a process which needs learning and improves with practice and experience.

For the CoPs within the Foodlinks project facilitation is particularly important as the CoPs are artificially established and do not form spontaneously around the specific topics chosen.

The start of the CoP was characterized by a limited level of activity, the absence of a clear common goal shared by CoP members and, last but not least, the low confidence with online instruments, together with limited access for some CoP members due to security reasons (for instance Skipe cannot be accessed by many public offices, thus limiting the communication when such instrument was used). An important aid in this direction was given by the coaching sessions organized with an expert of online Community of Practices, in addition to planned activities, addressed to all CoP facilitators. The purpose of the coaching and training trajectory was to strengthen the capacity of the CoP facilitators for their role (see also wp1). This allowed to gain:

- a better understanding of the role of a community facilitator, and awareness on strengths and pitfalls. The community's success depends mostly on the vitality of its leadership, especially in the first stage, when members do not know each other and spontaneous interaction is low.
- a wider range of possible interventions to facilitate the development of a CoP (participants, technology, topics, learning activities, rhythm).

- One particular challenge for facilitators was to build connections among CoP members and encourage everybody's participation, without imposing rules in a hierarchical manner. However at the same time it was necessary to imprint a clear direction to the CoP's work and make sure tasks were being accomplished by the deadlines and according to a shared plan. An example in this sense, is given by the shared writing process of the Evidence Document: this was on one side the result of contributions by all CoP members, which interacted among themselves during meetings and on the Knowledge Hub (for example by reviewing the case studies – see Evidence Document, second section) but at the same time it was also the consequence of strong effort of a subgroup of CoP members, appointed by the CoP's coordinator to rewrite the overall document and manage the four sections of the ED. Again the importance of facilitation in achieving tasks was revealed.
- Another important challenge for CoP facilitators was to "build the rhythm" of the CoP strong enough to gain visibility and grow. It was important to fix a set of regular events, such as skipe meetings, to involve experts to organize webinars, send regular newsletter and e-mail reminders. This last instrument in particular encouraged the enlargement of the CoP, as indicated by several requests to join by new members outside the project who got to know the CoP indirectly.
- Finally, it is important to find an equilibrium between face to face and online activities, as they are both important to guarantee the vitality of the CoP.

Face to face interaction is very important to allow direct contact and confidence to build among members, but it is costly and requires a strong organizational effort. This also poses a challenge for the future of the CoP, when face to face meetings will cease (at least in terms of the project financing) at the end of the project. The virtual contact among members is more hard to develop, especially when technical barriers are an obstacle, but allow interaction in-between meetings and a continuity in CoP work on a daily basis. The online activity on the Knowledge Hub will also see a stop (as discussed above, due to cost reductions in the Local Government Association) but will continue through the instrument of the Google group. The last months of the project will be devoted to the re-alignment of the KH members with the Google Group participants, in order to keep the CoP alive beyond the end of the project.

6. Concluding remarks

Communities of Practice are meant to encourage social learning and support knowledge brokerage (KB) between researchers, policy makers and civil society organizations by facilitating their collaboration as a community. In the SP2C CoP interaction and collaboration within the community took place during face to face meetings and through online, virtual communication on an internet based platform that provided an open arena for members to interact with regularity and share, store and access relevant data and information useful for the CoP's development itself.

The CoP, initially composed by a small sub-group of project members interested in the matters related to short P2C initiatives from different perspectives, faced several challenges from the very first steps onward. On one side one of the main challenges at the beginning was given by the lack of clarity on the CoP overall direction and the consequent need to define a plan, given the discretion left by the Description of Work to each CoP to articulate its content for the timeframe of the project, assigning tasks and roles to its members. On the other side, another challenge was developing a suitable working method, in a way that allowed a regular interaction among CoP members in order to reach the common objective. Moreover, the establishment of a network and the facilitation of its expansion, both within and beyond the project boundaries, is not at all an easy task.

For what concerns the first aspect, the decision to develop an "Evidence Document", suggested by the CoP coordinator and shared by all CoP members, was crucial to align the CoP towards a common objective. The Evidence Document had the aim to reflect and expand the priorities identified during the scoping stage and has been the outcome of a collaborative work of the network, facilitated by the core CoP members. It oriented and inspired all the other activities planned and carried out within the CoP.

As resulting from a shared reflection on the short P2C food chain CoP (carried out through a questionnaire filled in by CoP members) there is general agreement that the output achieved is of a good quality. In particular the executive summary that was elaborated after the last face to face meeting in Edinburgh (see paragraph 3.3) represents a valuable instrument to address local governments. Here we report some CoP member perceptions:

> *"The evidence document is very good"*
>
> *"I'm satisfied with the quality of output. The evidence document seems quite ok"*
>
> *"Quite satisfied. I appreciated the participatory manner in which they were produced, even if the participation could have been more active."*
>
> *"We are not fully satisfied with the quality of the evidence paper, but it seems to be usable"*

In particular a bias towards academic language was noticed by cso stakeholders, who felt somehow constrained by this and expressed this point during the meetings. This reflects a crucial aspect relevant to the whole project, that is the importance to learn each others' "languages" through continuous interaction and cooperation. Anyhow, CoP members feel that the learning outcomes, achieved during the project, are relevant also for the non-scientific context:

> *"Both government colleagues and researchers in Scotland have been learning from my experiences. I have communicated about using social media in particular at several occasions. Some information gathered on short food supply chains will be submitted to Ministers in Scotland."*
>
> *"All different stakeholder groups involved into Foodlinks can learn, that it's important to involve CSO / all non-research stakeholder groups- already into the project design."*
>
> *"We regularly communicate to our local CoP about the project -as well as on the content (e.g. regulation in other countries), as well as on the insights into the approaches of other stakeholder*
>
> *groups."*

The work and experience gained by the short P2C food chain CoP has allowed the identification of key action points for the advancement of short food supply chains for the near future. Some examples drawn from CoP members' reflections are:

> *"The need to look at competitiveness of short food supply chains by stressing the role of network interaction and to the process of making it more efficient."*
>
> *"Promotion of SFSCs at various policy levels in order to reach their recognition and adequate support."*
>
> *"Inspiration of practitioners: dissemination of experiences of SFSCs in agricultural and consumers communities. Establishment of a European network of SFSCs."*
>
> *"Need to judge each case individually, integrate cases with longer chains to make them economically viable and take away barriers were possible."*
>
> *"It is very important to "make good practices travel". It's important to hear how others are doing. This is especially interesting and important in the field of regulation. Stakeholders from different countries should exchange information and experience with each other. Often, national governments tell citizens that certain things are not possible due to EU-regulation, but actually those things are possible in other EU countries. For that kind of reasons exchange is important. The work with other local CoP has shown, that favorable regulations (e.g. in hygiene), are crucial for the advancement".*

"Further issues should be analyzed, may be within other projects. Two examples: the Holistic comparison of quality features between food marketed within SFSC of conventional food chains in terms of hygienic-sanitary content (bacteria, etc.), nutrients content (protein, fat, etc.) and organoleptic features (flavour, texture, etc.). - Impact of SFSC in the sustainability of food systems (technical economic profitability of the farms, self-esteem for farmers, education of consumers, reduction of food related wastes, carbon footprints, etc.)"

On the second aspect (i.e. developing a suitable working method), the decision to activate a virtual network was key but not at all straightforward. In fact online interaction proceeded with difficulty, especially at the beginning, resulting in members frustration which determined quite a low level of participation in on-line activities. This was a consequence of several conditions, among which some lack of confidence in on-line tools and the need to clarify the function of all the web tools available to CoP members (i.e. Foodlinks internet, Foodlinks intranet and CoP web platform) in order to avoid confusion. Technical barriers (e.g. good internet connections, software requirements, etc…) or limitations related to security reasons (e.g. some widely used social media, such as Skipe, are not accessible to public offices) should not be underestimated when planning an online CoP's activity. Last but not least, the language barriers are an important problem especially for non-academics, and this was a concrete obstacle in the enlargement process of the CoP at local level. The coaching sessions organized for facilitators were a great aid to understand how online communities of practice work, how they develop and what should be expected from them. In particular, understanding that creating a vibrant community needs a lot of time, and a great effort in facilitation, especially in a newborn CoP, that does not establish spontaneously but artificially.

We can assert that web tools are a precious means to make a qualitative leap towards capacity of network organization. However it cannot be the only means: face to face meetings were always important occasions that gave energy to the CoP's action. It is crucial to find the right balance between online and offline interaction (i.e. face to face) to consolidate a community. The next challenge for the CoP is represented by the possible closure of the Knowledge Hub: the feeling is that without a online platform, a great part of the CoP's work would be lost. The google group could provide a transitory means to carry on the CoP's activity in view of finding another more suitable web platform.

In terms of the ability to link different categories of stakeholders - research, policy-making and csos - it is possible to assert that overall the CoP was able to create effective linkages among project members, considering the different actors and perspectives involved. In particular, the CoP was an instrument to bridging different institutional boundaries and perspectives on short food supply chains, and a help to establish contacts beyond the project itself.

"I participated to international conferences on Short Food Supply Chains and reported part of the insights gained during the activity in the CoP. At the same time I have met several persons with whom I have established a contact, also at national level".

Moreover it made its members more aware of the different working approaches and types of agendas of the different stakeholders:

"Some researchers in the group that are interested to make a comparative analysis of the cases we collected and come to some general findings. Policy makers being very careful with their formulations or specific definitions. And CSO actors particularly interested to learn from other cases in order to take the lessons for their own partners."

Finally, one of the most valuable outcome is given by the relevance of the CoP's activities – and Foodlinks project more in general – into participants daily work.

"I have applied the tools learned both in teaching and in new research projects."

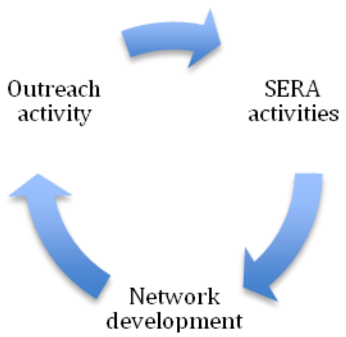
"The project has allowed me to enhance the envisioning of SFSC towards more social approaches as well as into the hygienic and sanitary issues."

"Working in collaboration with researchers on issues of local food systems has enabled us to consolidate our expertise in terms of approach on local food systems. In this sense it has consolidated our thinking and our expertise vis-à-vis institutional actors".

"I appreciated the exchanges with people from other domains – policy and NGOs, they illuminated other approaches to food. The Project contributes to accumulation of knowledge and promotion of more sustainable food practices."

The CoP development can be considered a 'social experiment'. The CoP underwent all phases of the learning cycle in order to deal with the general objectives assigned by the DoW. Very soon we have understood that the SERA cycle must be accompanied by a clear vision of the evolution of the network. The figure below shows the framework that should inspire a CoP building strategy.

Figure 10 – CoP building framework



The decision of creating an 'open' or a 'close' group can change substantially the type of activity and the output. The SP2C food chains CoP chose to keep the CoP as much open as possible, so that its activity embodied from the beginning the awareness of the need to 'speak to the outside'.

Critical points of this strategy are a) technologies – we had to test several ones before taking a clear direction; b) facilitation – in most of cases CoPs don't develop spontaneously, a motivated group of facilitators is needed; c) emotions, necessary to create willingness to participate. Face-to-face meetings have been deemed irreplaceable on this regard. Further research should explore how face to face and online tools, whose potential is still largely untapped, can be integrated in an efficient and effective way.

Annex 1 – CoP members expectations (Kick off meeting Wageningen)

Gianluca Brunori, University of Pisa, Italy

Background

Our group has quite a lot of experience of participatory research at regional and local level, in which the research team interacted with public institutions and representatives of civil society. At the moment the group is carrying out a project to develop a local food plan in the Pisa province. I have quite a long experience on alternative food chains, so I think I can be a point of reference on this regard, especially for younger members of the partnership.

Interest

Working with such a highly competent partnership at international is a great opportunity of personal growth. I am particularly interested in working out a framework of food democracy inspired to sustainability, health and social justice and in exploring the problems of implementation of this framework in national and local contexts.

Expectations

In Italy the debate over food policy, and especially of local food policy, is at its very beginnings, as so far it has been subsumed into agricultural policy, but the interest around it is growing very fast. From the project I expect to be able to contribute to consolidate an interdisciplinary discourse around local food policies and to develop evidence-based guidelines for implementing local food policies.

Francesco di Iacovo, University of Pisa, Italy.

Background

I'm quite involved and I have quite good experience of participatory research at EU, national and regional level. I coordinated a EU research group on social farming and the methodology was based on national and EU platforms. I'm also collaborating in a CoP on the same issue both at EU and national level. In a way, starting from the research project, we managed to increase awareness around the concept of social farming of public and private stakeholders at different level.

Interest

My first interest regards the opportunity to joint a strong and interesting network of researchers as a personal opportunity of growth. I am interested in focusing aspects related to the transition and the impact on food provisions in the social and political dimension. In this respect the participation in a strong network and the knowledge brokerage methodology seems to be a good platform in order to increase scientific as well as practical understanding around the topic.

Expectations

The subject work in a grey zone where many actors with diverse competences are involved. This is quite interesting for many other subjects as well. Transition is highly demanding in terms of new knowledge. It comes out mainly from multi-specialised competences organised in hybrid networks. In this respect the project, starting from the food issue may have the opportunity to define methods e pathways of change able to affect other fields of interest for the society.

Adanella Rossi, University of Pisa, Italy.

Background

Together with the other members of the Italian team, I have developed a good experience of participatory research at regional and local level, in particular within research projects dealing with food-related issues. Through this activity and this approach we could develop fruitful networks of relations, including public institutions and representatives of civil society. During the last ten years, I participated in several EU and regional projects related to the innovative processes characterising the agro-food system, with particular regard to the evolution towards more sustainable food practices. They represented an important opportunity to deepen my understanding of the drivers that can foster these processes.

Interest

Working within this international partnership is another important opportunity to carry on with this experience. As researcher and as a citizen I am particularly interested in contributing to the transition to a more sustainable food system and to the implementation of conditions of food democracy. To that end, I am interested in analyzing the factors that affect these processes within the real contexts, at national and local level, in the different dimensions involved.

Expectations

I would like that this project could allow us to contribute to the further spreading of an alternative discourse on food and to the definition and implementation of appropriate food policies. To that end, to support these processes at methodological level, in particular through a work on knowledge brokerage, seems to be the most important goal.

Sandra Šūmane, Baltic Studes Centre, Latvia.

Background

I see myself as a member of the project's researcher team and as Latvian representative. Correspondingly I will perform the tasks defined, collaborating with partners, sharing my knowledge, ideas and skills, in particular in the WP on short food chains and urban food strategies, but also knowledge brokering and dissemination activities.

Interest

Scientific interest in food matters, alternative and sustainable food networks, food innovation.Ideological and ethical motivation for promoting a more integrated vision of food and more sustainable food practices. Awareness of the need for knowledge brokerage activities among researchers, practitioners and politicians in order to better valorise their knowledge and meet their knowledge needs; in particular, for putting scientific knowledge more in practice and addressing better practitioners knowledge needs in research. Methodological interest in knowledge brokerage. Curiosity to participate in a community of practice, exchange and share knowledge.

Expectations

the established CoPs are successful (partners have succeeded to establish a common language, developped action plans for sustainable food practices, they find the project has been useful for them, they have acquired new knowledge and continue to put it in practice after the project ends, they are messengers and knowledge brokers to broader audiencesÉ), they serve as positive examples for similar initiatives and continue after the project.the developed knowledge brokerage guidelines/tools can serve for (new) initiatives behind the project. the project's lessons, conclusions, recomendations are used in food policy making at local/regional/national/EU level.the project contributes to rise food awareness in society in general and inspires to more sustainable food production and consumption practices.

Claudia Frieden, FiBL, Switzerland.

Background

I see my role as first and foremost to organize dissemination of input on our project website, but I also plan on actively contributing to understanding the role of innovative collaborative tools and how best to implement them within our communities.

Interest

Finding ways to promote sustainable food chains is the reason I decided to get my Master's in Organic Food Chain Management (Uni Hohenheim).

Expectations

To create a platform (website) that will eventually be a source for scientists, decision makers, educators, and interested persons (consumers) alike that will ensure our food systems sustainability.

Sandra Karner, IFZ, Austria.

Background

My personal experiences have been in the context of research projects related to different thematic fields: new biotechnology (red and green biotech) and alternative agro-food networks. In the context of new biotechnology the activities were in the context of controversies on the regulation of green biotech (purpose: awareness raising, fostering the debate), and in the context of ethical, legal and social aspects of genetic research (medical context) (purpose: bottom up involvement of civil society in research issues). In most cases I observed the performance of classical hierarchies in regard to knowledge and expertise. - This was often strengthened through the specific setting of interaction (experts giving inputs/presentations - 'lay' people asking questions and other, 'formal' experts challenging with counter-expertise; informed policy making based on formal experts' inputs). My personal conclusions from these experiences are that mutual learning And the integration of different points of view has been taking place only to a limited extend. In the context of alternative agro-food networks we carried out an experiment of joint knowledge production involving people from research, civil society organizations, practitioners, and policy makers at certain points. Due to a close, continuous engagement of the main partners, and a bottom-up participatory setting, which implied the acknowledgement of different forms of expertise and permanent reflections of the interaction process, this activity was considerably more integrative than others.

Interest

My interest in the project is twofold:a) My main field of work is in the field of Science and Technology Studies, and I am in particular interested in issues related to the interface of research-policy-civil society, the societal relevance of research, and processes related to science governance. I am very much interested on how to better link the realms of research, policy and civil society in order to increase the societal relevance of research. In the context of FOODLINKS I am specifically interested in exploring how knowledge brokerage activities can be implemented in a practical experiment, and how the related interaction processes work out. b) Recently I have been engaged in the thematic field of alternative food networks, which imply P2C, thus I am looking forward to engaging in KBAs related to this topic.Personally I am very much in favor of the idea of 'democratizing researchÓ, and I think that FOODLINKS has a potential to contribute to such a development, which is nurtured by various different activities - KBAs could be one.

Expectations

A) To obtain a better understanding about KB processes (potentials, opportunities, challenges, effectiveness); dissemination material (e.g. guidelines) on KBA processes; academic papers on the theory and practice of KB => I: inform future KB activities; encourage for more integrated approaches in policy and practice relevant knowledge production and policy decisions; bring forward the academic discussion. B) Capacity building for knowledge brokerage activities => I: people involved in FOODLINKS can encourage further actors to involve in KBAs; they may facilitate processes based on their experiences. C) To provide linkages between individuals and organizations on the topics at stake => I: creating the basis for future joint activities beyond the FOODLINKS project; foster social learning and a better mutual understanding of different actors in order to efficiently address problems/challenges related to sustainable food consumption and production. D) To come up with action plans, which can be implemented by the CoP participants => I: implementation of action plans => I: foster the development of sustainable food consumption and production.

Annemiek Canjels, Province of Linburg, Netherlands.

Background

Senior EU Public Affairs officer in the Brussels/Maastricht Office for the Province Limburg and partners. Experience in an ICT Company. Lobbyist on CAP affairs for various networks. Business network developer and adviser on EU Affairs for an horticulture assembly and an export platform CAP, international trade/WTO, food & innovation and Rural Development, including issues like renewable energy, water management and biodiversity.

Interest

Hopefully CoPs will help create support for change and that the project will deliver practical useful tools for both authorities, mainly LRA (local and regional) and industries.

Expectations

Economic benefits of switching to a more sustainable food system must be put forward.

notes

Author of the report on "Local Food Systems" for the EU Committee of the Regions. She wpould sahre results with Foodlinks partners

Pieter van de Graaf, The Scottish Government, UK.

Background

Scientific Adviser for Food to the Scottish Government covering this area in a very wide sense, including related aspects of public health and crop production

Interest

Advising Scottish ministers, liaising between policy colleagues and Scottish research institutes, translating scientific data into policy relevant information and vice versa, decisions on research funding, and liaising with other funding bodies

Expectations

Hope that Foodlinks will aid the implementation of the Scottish Food and Drink Policy, will increase the evidence base and establish information networks

Roberto Ruiz, Neiker Basque Government, Spain.

Background

Head of the Department of Animal Production in Neiker-Tecnalia; PhD in Veterinary Sciences Master in Rural Development and Management of Agro-Food Enterprises Beyond his institutional interests: member of Fundacion Zadorra, a foundation promoting agro-ecology approaches, collaboration with local Slow Food convivium, secondments in R&D centres of Scotland, France, Kenya, Mexico and Bolivia.

Interest

Having access to other schemes, experiences, and stakeholders to get relevant knowledge, to improve existing projects and to design more successful ones.

Expectations Gathering information could provide a wider dimension at a regional scale, and help to overcome difficulties

Bettina Bock, Wageningen University, Netherlands.

Background

Associate Professor Rural Sociology Rural sociology, food policies,sociology and antropology of health, food, animal welfare, rural livelihoods, gender, 'rural-urban change' with a specific interest in social diversity, comparative and cross-disciplinary research

Interest

Getting some of the new knowledge brokerage instruments to work – in the sense that people do use them, like to and profit from using them, and that we can better understand how knowledge exchange between scientists and policymakers but also potentially other groups can be facilitated.

Expectations

Communication as part of the research project is challenging as it interferes with the conventional research process but potentially leads to better results in the sense of more "realistic" or "implementable" results. And probably liked by commissioners.

Otto Schmid, FiBL, Switzerland.

Background

As senior researcher in the socio-economic research group, lecturer for agri-food marketing and organic farming and part-time farmer (old cereals and apples) I am very interested in short supply chain both from a social as well as economic perspective.

Interest

I am interested in new forms of collaboration between producers and consumers, in farmer-food networks (like agriculture contractuelle /CSA). Furthermore I am fasciniated the interaction between practioners and researchers in a common learning network.

Expectations

I hope I can get new insights and inspirations to different approaches at local and regional scale, which can be also interesting for initiatives I am engaged in at the local level.

Femke Hoekstra, Wageningen University, Netherlands.

Background

I worked with the ETC Foundation and the RUAF Foundation on urban agriculture (UA)projects in developing countries mostly. We worked with multi-stakeholder processes to identify UA activities in a city, bringing stakeholders (farmers, Municipalities, researchers, NGOs) together in a platform and find out how UA could link up with policy interests and make it a sustainable economic activity. Furthermore I did a case study on community supported agriculture in Cape Town.

Interest

I am very happy to be a part of this team and eager to learn more on local food issues in Europe from a variety of actors. My main role in the project is related to the M&E of the knowledge brokerage process in the CoPs but I am also very much looking forward to experience this process myself. At the same time I will gather data for a PhD research. Furthermore in the past I had some training on online facilitation and workshop design so I am interested to see whether I can apply some of those techniques as well.

Expectations

Very similar to what Sandra Sumane mentions above J

Karin Okonkwo-Klampfer, Sonja Petrovics Via Campesina Austria.

Background

Via Campesina Austria is an association of 200 farmers member. The association was founded in the 1970s to make the voice of small and medium scale, mostly mountain farmers heard in official Austrian agricultural politics. Direct marketing, as one part of local/regional/short food networks, is constantly discussed within VCA, especially in the last years, when the legal framework has been perceived as becoming stricter.

VCA is part of the worldwide movement La Via Campesina that formulated the concept of 'food sovereignty' as a policy framework that claims "the right of peoples to define their own food, agriculture, livestock and fisheries systems, without dumping regarding third countries". Food sovereignty demands a democratisation of the food system.

Interest

Our interests in the project as a civil society organisation is to contribute the experiences and perceptions of our farmers members regarding the topics of the CoPs (especially the P2C food chains) and the concept of food sovereignty, which might be interesting to explore in the CoP setting. We are looking forward to learn more about KBA.

Expectations

To get to know the situation, problems, perspectives of C2P networks in other countries and learn more about research that is done in this field.

Figure out which ways of KBAs could be helpful in bringing forward the discussion around food sovereignty.

Annex 2 – Preparation of CoP meeting in Wageningen (June 2011)

Preparation of the meeting
(Gianluca Brunori, Adanella Rossi, Francesco di Iacovo, Sandra Karner)

1. Before the meeting, participants will have to prepare a presentation based on 5 slides (see template below) synthesising a short food chain case they are aware. They will have to print handouts or have a pc on which to show their powerpoint. Moreover, they should have already seen the 'scoping' branch of the mindmap created online during these days.

Template of the powerpoint
1. A picture illustrating the dominant system of provision in the chosen town/country
2. A picture related the Short food supply chain that the participants want to illustrate during the workshop
3. Description of the short supply chain:
    - Main actors involved
    - Operations (production, processing, distribution)
    - Internal regulation (do you mean how the SFSC is organised, structured? Or is it about specific internal rules?)
    - Relevant regulatory context (hygiene, quality schemes, commerce, etc.)
    - ….
4. The needs to which the presented Short Supply chain responds (and that are not satisfied by the dominant systems of provision)
5. The reason why the presented Short food chain has been chosen ("I have chosen this case, because....")

During the meeting

First session Tuesday 28 june 14.30-16.00 (90 mins, coffee break posponed half an hour)

- (35 min) participants will split into groups of four; in each group two participants will present the case they have prepared in 10 minutes each; discussion (10 minutes) will be focused on locating the presented case into the 'scoping' branch of the map drawn online during preparation of the meeting and on 'tagging' the cases with keywords which identify the main characteristics of the presented short food chain;

- (35 min) those who have presented will leave the group and join another one, where they will listen to other two case study presentations; discussion will follow a pattern similar to above;

- (20 min) Speakers from each group will report the results of discussion to highlight commonalities and differences

Second session **Tuesday 28 june** (60 min) 16.30-17.30

The second part of the CoP session could address **what we want to focus on in the CoP**. - e.g. what do we consider being emerging issues/questions we would like to address within FOODLINKS against the background of the cases presented in the small groups.

What is the relevance of the emerging issues identified for the CoP participants?

How/in what way do we want to address the emerging issues within FOODLINKS? (e.g. do we want to collect information in order to answer emerging questions or do we want to carry out any strategic activities?)

Third session Wednesday 29 June 13.30-15.00 (90 mins)

(world cafe method)

i) (10 min) Intro about wp3 stages and discussion

ii) (20 min) the group will split into three groups, each of which will develop one of the following stages: a) envisioning ;b) research reservoir; c) assessment of learning with the method of mindmapping;
iii) (20 min) the group will split and recombine and continue mindpapping;
iv) (20 min) the group will split and recombine and continue mindpapping;
v) (10 min) short summary done by table hosts

Fourth session (60 mins) Wednesday 29 June 16.30-18.00

This session will be dedicated to discuss on the imminent activities to be carried out within the next months, and in particular:

- how to enlarge the CoP
- Implementation of specific methods
- roles and tasks of CoP members

Annex 3 – Minutes meeting Wageningen (June 2011)

Presentations

Participants have presented one short food chain of their choice to the others.

Scoping

The Scoping stage has been started already during the discussion of the presentations. In a first step participants have created a list of descriptors. In a second steps descriptors have been grouped and renamed. The mindmap in appendix 1 shows the results of the exercise.

Discussion on CoP activities

The main points of the discussion of the group is synthetised in figure 2. Here the most relevant aspects.

CoP maintenance

Regarding activities of the CoP, it has been agreed that one of the first things to do is to consolidate the CoP through sharing of a) links b) documents c) pictures, d) discussions, e) events. On this regard, a web 2.0 platform should be set up as soon as possible. It should be chosen on the following criteria:

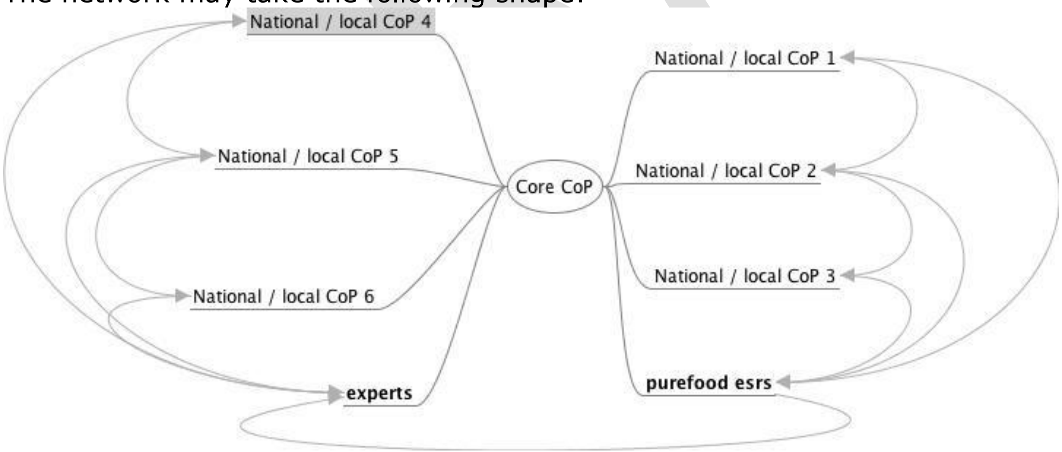
- Easiness of access, also in view of an enlargement of the CoP
- Availability of tools such as forum, wiki, groups, share
- Cost effectiveness

Cop enlargement

It is common agreement that, after a first consolidation, the CoP should open as soon as possible. The opening should have two dimensions:

- An horizontal one, involving experts, purefood esrs, individuals and organizations who are already active in the field and who may extend geographical coverage of the network;
- A vertical one, which regards local groups – communicating in national languages – that will see the core community of practice as brokers

The network may take the following shape:



Many CoP members are willing to act as facilitators or as brokers of SERA processes at local level, if possible through creation of synergies with local events organized for other purposes.

Next steps

The scoping activity has already gone quite far, so the CoP has agreed to proceed with definition of priorities. After a discussion on this, three main priorities have emerged:

- What is 'short'?
- To what extent does regulation (absence/presence of it) act as a driver or as a barrier for development of short food supply chains?
- How, and to what extent, short food chains can contribute to sustainability and health?

The group has decided to keep the list of priorities open for a while. All CoP members should reflect on them and adding other ones in case they think that there are particularly important items not considered during the meeting in wageningen. Moreover, CoP members should verify whether the identified priorities are relevant in the specific contexts in which they operate.
The resulting list of priorities will be submitted to a poll and the three most voted priorities will be addressed for further activities.
Once priorities have defined, the CoP will appoint three facilitators, one for priority.
In october, CoP members will make their proposals for CoP activities, including local events, exchange / invitation of experts to local events, web 2.0 events (for example, webinars).

Summary of decisions taken

july	Uploading presentations on Intranet
July – august	Establishment of a virtual community of practice
august	list of priorities
september	Definition of priorities
september	nomination of the facilitators of discussion on priorities
From july onwards	communication of events / organization of joint events sharing links, documents, pictures
october	starting SERA at local level
february	Second step of SERA Outline of the report

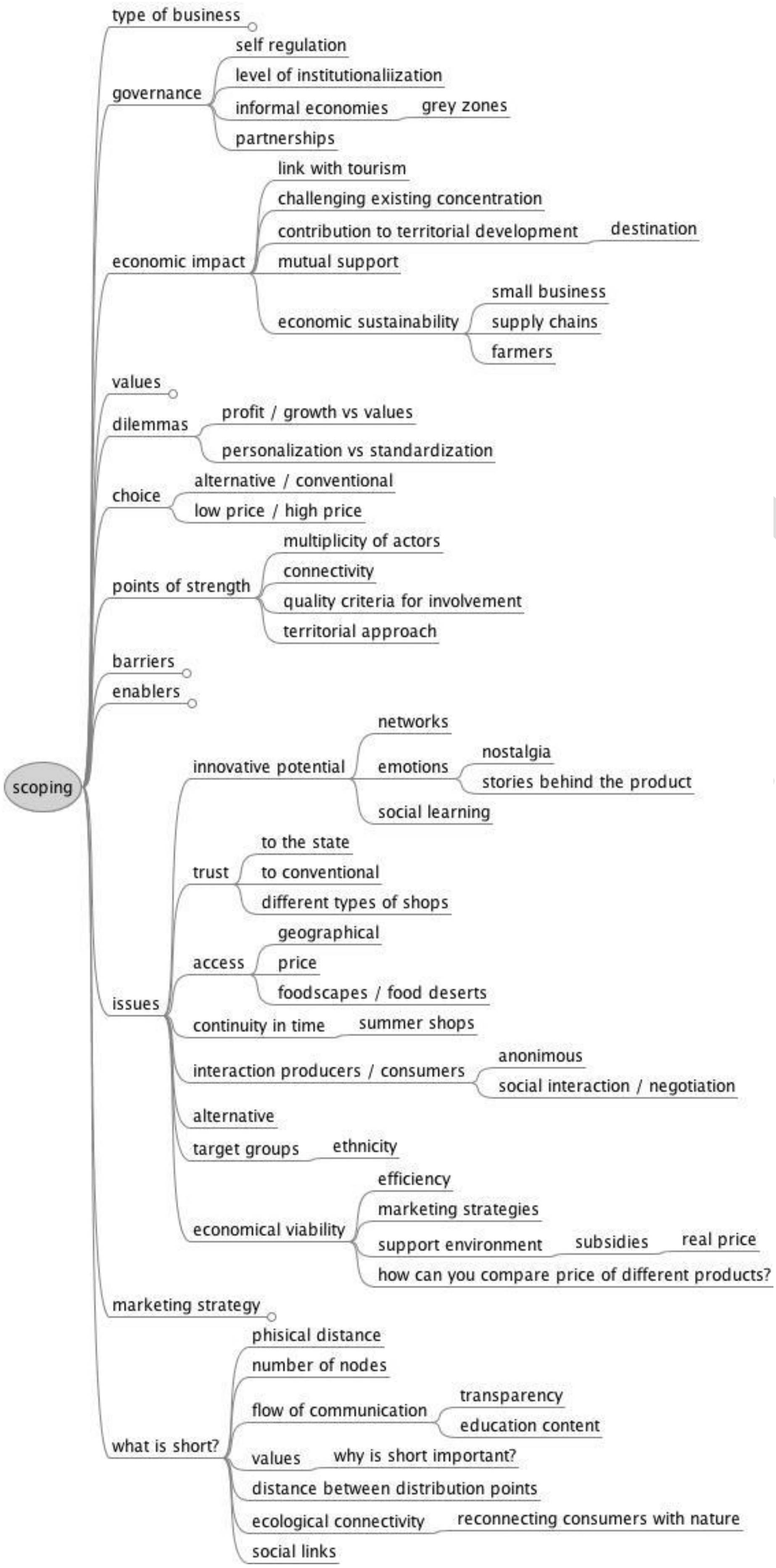


Figure 1 - scoping

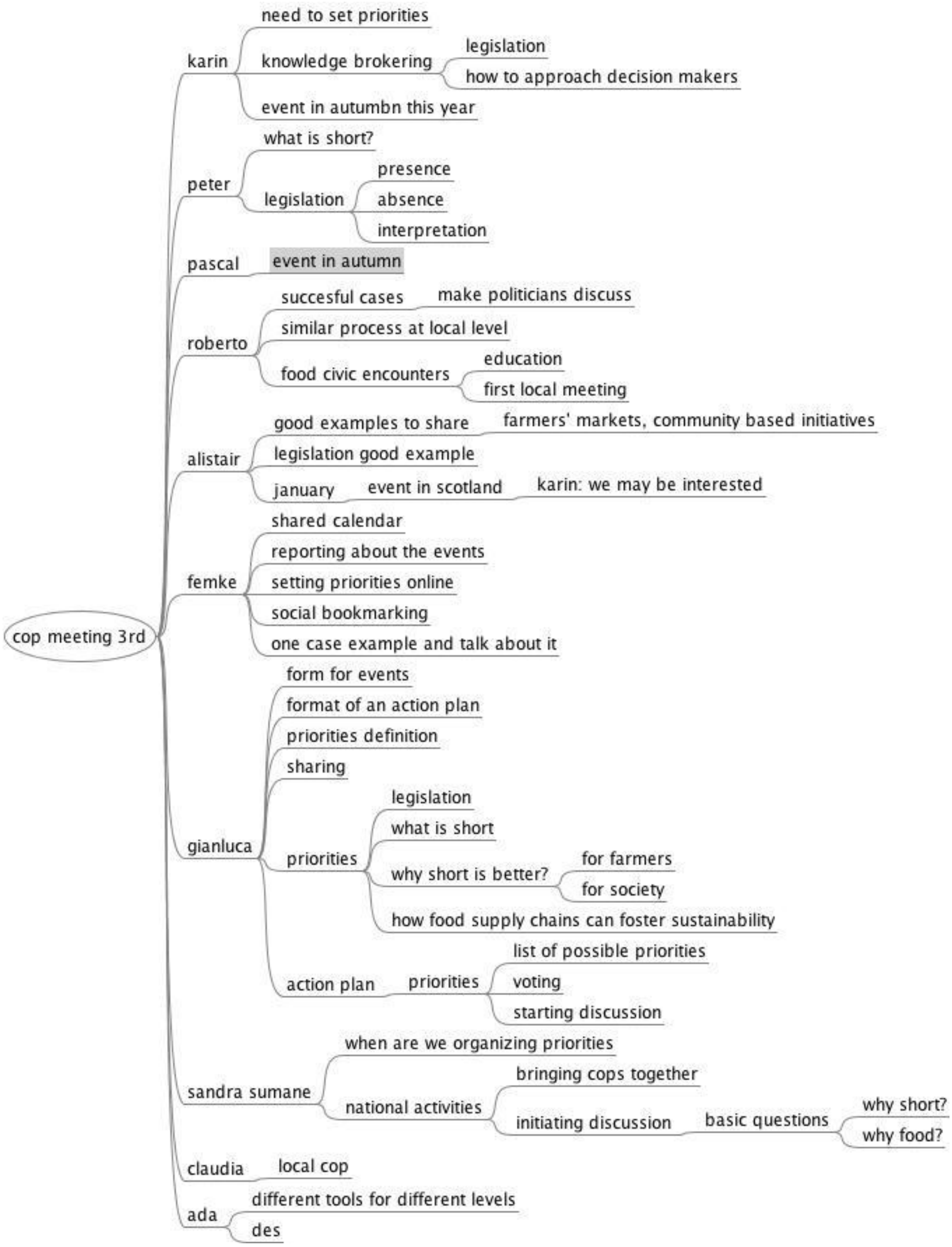


Figure 2 - Discussion on further CoP activities

Annex 4 – Plan of action for the SFSC CoP (Autumn 2011)

SFSC CoP – Plan of action

Dec 2011

1. Introduction

1.1 The objectives are:

- **To build a CoP.** The creation of a "distributed" Community of Practice, (i.e. which doesn't rely solely on face-to-face interactions as a vehicle for interaction) requires to overcome limitations in terms of distance, technical barriers, lack of personal knowledge among members and linguistic/cultural differences. Creating a base of trust, through regular personal participation, is an essential requirement for the development of our CoP and for the creation of value for its members.

- **To enlarge the CoP**. CoP enlargement implies members acting as brokers on the horizontal and the vertical dimensions.

1.2 The process consists in the following (cyclical and iterative) steps:

- Scoping
- Envisioning
- Research Reservoir
- Assessment

1.3 The output is a final report on SFSC CoP activity (Deliverable 3.1, month 30, June 2013) that reflects and explains the process of knowledge brokerage in relation to policy around the theme "Short food supply chains" as a means of achieving more sustainable production and consumption. See a draft template with guidelines for such report in the **Annex 1**.

2. Phases of the activity: building and enlarging the CoP

2.1 What has been done (chronological order)

The virtual Community of Practice was established on the UK CoPs for Public Service web platform (August 2011) and today (January 2012) it counts 29 members. One coordinator (Gianluca Brunori) and two facilitators (Femke Hoekstra and Pieter van der Graaf) were appointed. The CoP platform is animated by fairly regular interaction through: social bookmarking, blogging, geographical mapping, documents posts, wiki, videos, announcements about upcoming events. The platform is also used to ask direct questions, to request for specific contributions, to discuss on concrete issues. A Skipe meeting was organized to discuss the CoP's activity (October 2011), several critical issues have emerged (ex. lack of focal points and consequent risk to get lost; need to be familiar with the tools and risk for someone to be less active/reactive; the necessity to enlarge the platform to other people). It was decided to hold a 'webinar' (a seminar on the web) to allow the participation of most people at the same time, involving experts to discuss on specific issues. A poll was launched to identify specific relevant questions (see the **Annex 2**) and to find the related experts. Different on-line tools were explored (Blackboard collaborate, Gotowebinar, Bigmarker) within sub-groups of the CoP.

2.2 What is to be done

2.2.1 Orienting the CoP's activity. In order to orient and finalize the CoP's activity, it was decided to elaborate a Policy Document, with the involvement of all CoP members, focused on the four priorities identified during the scoping stage (see **Annex 3**). Everything that will be planned within the CoP from now on (and further KBT used) will contribute to the development of such Policy Document.

2.2.2 CoP enlargement. This implies the brokerage by CoP members, that tap into the national networks, if possible through the creation of synergies with local events organized for other purposes, and finding an efficient way of connecting them to the CoP.

2.3 How it will be done

2.3.1 The policy document. A first webinar among CoP members will be held in the beginning of February to discuss the structure of the Policy Document (PD, **Annex 4**), the coordination of the writing process (who does what and when) and the functioning of the on-line facilities (how the WIKI works), in order to reach our aim. The use of agreed tags (ex. one for each priority), will be discussed to help in the selection of material posted on the CoP. A calendar of webinars related to the relevant themes will be constructed. The discussion during this first webinar will continue and develop during the February meeting in Pisa.

2.3.2 CoP enlargement. During the Pisa meeting we shall discuss if we want to organize extra face to face meetings as a CoP (we have budget for two extra meetings). The migration of our CoP, announced on the UK CoPs for Public Service web platform (to be completed by March), could also serve the purpose of making the access to the CoP more "user friendly" (with the agreement of the two other CoPs, TBD).

3. SERA activity

	KBA used	**Output**	**Level of completion**
Scoping	Mindmapping, World Café, Story Telling, Blogging, Social Bookmarking, Wiki	Development of a mind map of issues related to the CoP (http://www.mindmeister.com/maps/show/99622826)	✓
Envisioning	Mindmapping, on-line meetings, Blogging, Social Bookmarking, Wiki activity	Identification of priorities (see Annex 3)	✓
Research reservoir	Mindmapping, Geographical mapping, on-line meetings, Webinars, Social Bookmarking, WIKI activity, Writeshop?	Policy Document	**Ongoing**
Assessment	Mindmapping (Mindmeister), Writeshop?	Policy Document, the CoP's Deliverable	**Ongoing**

Annex 5 – CoP meeting program – Tirrenia (Pisa) (February 2012)

Work plan - SFSC CoP
Pisa 15th- 17th 2012, Tirrenia

Wednesday - 9:30 - 13:00 - First CoP meeting

9.30-11.00 Introduction

- Where are we? Reflection "Dynamic Learning Agenda style" (Femke).
- Phases for the development of the CoP and roles within the CoP (based on training with Joitske).

11.30-13.00 Tapping knowledge reservoir

- Everybody will present 10 minutes pictures, text, video, stories about 'problems' and 'evidence' related to the scoping priorities ('what is short', ' regulatory constraints'; sustainability, 'platforms'). Everybody coming with content and issues fitting with the frame.
- Method: world café.

14:00 - 17:30 - Second CoP meeting

14.00-16.00 Tapping knowledge reservoir (cont.)

16.00-17.30 Turning knowledge reservoir into policy

- Objectives and roles within the CoP's activity and the overall project (with respect to the final deliverable).
- Debate on the proposed structure of the document, in the light of the first webinar's outcomes.
- Use of the document as tool to widen the CoP at local level, by involving significant organizations in processes of 'validation' (i.e. by asking them for remarks and comments to a first draft sent or by interviewing them).

Thursday - 9:00 - 13:00 - Third CoP meeting

9.00-11.00 Policy document: the shared writing process

- Agreement on the structure of the document
- Agreement on tasks. roles and timing of the writing process

11.30-13.00 Policy document: how do we work on it?

- Pieter→ Overall presentation of the platform
- Roberto → mindmeister
- Peter → geographical mapping
- Femke → newsfeed / video
- Gianluca → wiki
- Karin→ webinars

14:00 - 17:30 - Fourth CoP meeting

14.00-17.30 Plan for action

- Webinar calendar
- Face to face meetings → Field-trip in Scotland?
- Platform: roles, rotation in the facilitation process, CoP's migration in March.

Annex 6 – CoP meeting minutes – Tirrenia (Pisa) (February 2012)

Short Food Supply Chain CoP
15th- 17th 2012, Tirrenia (Pisa, Italy)

SHORT MINUTES

Wednesday

9.30-11.00 Introduction – Gianluca and Femke

- Where are we? Reflection "Dynamic Learning Agenda style" (Femke).

Presentation by Femke (Social Network Analysis)

- Phases for the development of the CoP and roles within the CoP (based on training with Joitske).

11.30-13.00 14:00 – 18:00 _ Tapping knowledge reservoir

- Presentations from all the participants about 'problems' and 'evidence' related to the scoping priorities ('what is short', ' regulatory constraints'; sustainability, 'platforms'). See ppt attached.

Ada: What prices for food? Lessons from short food chains in Italy.
Leo: Short food supply chain in Ukraine and its potential to create social capital.
Olga: Examples of short food supply chain activities from St. Petersbourg, Russia.
Elena: SOLINSA project and its Italian case study presentation
Pieter: Health in relation to short food supply chains
Roberto: Presentation of the CoP meeting in the Basque Country
Elisa: Earth Markets
Karin: problems faced by Austrian farmers within the short food supply chains.
Amanda: Influence of regulations on short food supply chains in Scotland
Otto: Community supported agriculture in Switzerland
Jared: Short food supply chains and local employment in Scotland
Pascal: Consumption studies of local food in the Rennes metropolitan area.
Alessandro Agostini: presenting Fattoria Le Prato and its business plan to be a short food supply chain in Pisa.
The presentations took longer than expected and lasted until mid-afternoon.
The discussion on the presentations started on Wednesday late afternoon, but was moved to the morning after.

Thursday

9.00-11.00 Discussion on the Evidence Document

Debate on the proposed structure of the document.
Method: working in small groups (2); mindmapping/cards exchange to respond to the following questions:

- What points do presented cases/examples raise in relation to the scoping priorities?
- What similarities and differences can be identified between cases?
- What demand for research / further knowledge cases generate?

Participants to working groups were asked to use post-it to respond to each of the above mentioned questions and then to discuss.

11.30-16.00 Evidence document: the shared writing process

Agreement on the structure of the document
Method: working in groups. Each group took care of two sections of the policy document. Then each group reporteded to plenary.

First Group: WHAT IS SHORT, SUSTAINABILITY

Points raised

- DISTANCE. Most participants agreed that it doesn't make sense to include 'distance' (such as 40 km from production to market) as the main feature of 'what is short'. This distance strongly depends on the size of the particular city (for big city 40 km from the market is still within the city), different distance for every city? Also it's not clear what to do in case of Internet sales. Though there's a connection of distance/food miles (in terms of transportation) with sustainability. If the product is not produced in the region – for example, there's no wine production in Bretagne, can any wine chain be considered 'short' in Bretagne? Also it's important to think about 'perceived' distance (in relation to consumers).

- INTERMEDIARIES. For 'short chain' the number of steps/knots/intermediaries should be 0 or 1. But it's important to clarify who can be these intermediaries (and include it in the list of terms in the introduction), probably these knots/intermediaries are where product changes ownership. There should be different regulation for raw and processed products (producer=primary producer), exceptions should be made for such ingredients as spices, chocolate, etc., probably for complex food there can be settled restrictions (no less than 75% of ingredients are local). Intermediaries/middlemen are not always bad for SFSCs, they can act as brokers, promote SFSCs.
- KNOWLEDGE and PRODUCTION METHOD. The minimal amount of information should be defined that have to be on the package, and also it's necessary to explain the difference between 'short' – 'artisanal' – 'local' food. Should there be limitations on production methods?
- SEASONALITY.
- FOCUS. It's necessary to define whether our focus is on 'producers' or 'consumers' because our criteria for 'short' and 'sustainable' can vary depending on who we want to support (is it about producers welfare or healthy diet for consumers?). But anyway all SFSCs should meet hygienic requirements. Also we should define the geographic scope – focus on EU.
- SUSTAINABILITY – to break it into economic – social – environmental sustainability, and within each probably also to divide, for example, environmental sustainability: water, biodiversity, soil, energy, etc.

Sustainability, for example, can be presented in the form of spider diagram (as the one which was in Otto's presentation).

Effects on local community.

It's 'short' when it's socially embedded.

There's local specific in what is 'short', and also in what is 'sustainable/healthy'.

There are various types of SFSCs with different effects, we can analyze the best practices.

Is it important if producer also partly sells his products to China (is not supporting environment)?

Is the scale of farm important (can large scale be short)?

Range of definitions needed to cover different policy area.

Certification – in some cases relevant, in others – not?

Spin-offs/side effects of SFSCs on other policy areas.

There're mostly bottom-up initiatives, how to approach them from top down?

Daily vs high-end products.

Links to inputs

Infrastructure, logistics (abattoirs)

Research gaps

there's need to study:

- how much and which information consumers what to know and see on the products' package;
- what people on farmers' markets themselves consider 'short';
- impacts of SFSCs on employment, food quality, food risks & safety;
- why people buy from SFSCs (motivation of consumers);
- learning and mechanisms of knowledge creation;
- which SFSCs benefit consumers, which are favorable for producers, and which short chains influence which aspects of sustainability (so that policy makers understand how to use particular SFSCs as instruments to support producers, etc.).

Document

In the document the examples probably should be not from countries but according to points/problems.

New proposed structure:

1. Characteristics of SFSCs
1.1. Typology (structure/size)
1.2. Definitions and examples
1.3. Analysis: pros and cons
2. Sustainability and health aspects of SFSCs
2.1 Environmental sustainability
2.2. Health (physical and mental)
2.3. Social sustainability (affordability, etc.) and ethics
2.4. Economic sustainability (fair price, etc.)
2.5. Analysis: pros, cons and trade-offs.

Second Group: REGULATIONS, UP-SCALING

The second group started its work by reviewing the feedback provided by post-its. The main themes that arose from this session were:

- There is a need for a simplification of regulations;
- Interpretation of regulations and their implementation should be consistent;
- Empowerment of farmers and power relations in the food supply chains (creating windows of opportunities for the farmers and consumers in order to represent their interest and views);
- There is a need for physical platforms and organizational structures to assist the scaling up processes.

After the first discussion and analysis of the here above described issues the group went on to discuss the three main questions:

- What points do presented cases/examples raise in relation to the scoping priorities? (Regulations)

It is clear from the examples presented in the CoP that regulations can have a secondary and knock- on effects on the local agriculture. The closing of slaughter houses in Scotland presents such an example, where farmers have to transport their animals to greater distances because the local smaller slaughter houses could not comply with the EU regulations on hygiene.
Development of participatory process for developing of legislation should be included in the scoping of the priorities. This could be achieved through shared responsibilities supported by information and tools to act empowered. One of the examples provided was the reconnecting of farm inspections with the consulting of farmers.
Another point of focal attention raised was the reduction of enforced dependency of the primary producers and elimination of the communication problem between the legislative local en EU governments` bodies and the farmers. Often farmers lack time, knowledge or financial resources to anticipate the changes or to even adapt to the announced changes.

Also the issue of self-regulation was raised. Some parts of the agriculture are overregulated, while others are not regulated at all (this is the case of organic farming in comparison with conventional farming). At the same time there are parts that do not need regulation, because grounded on self-organization of producers and consumers, as in the case of the consumer supported agriculture, that is an example of short food supply chains that is conducted without any regulations at the moment. A right of self-regulation could be provided to this type of SFSCs.
Finally there is a need for research & development in relation to SFSCs (e.g. food safety and food risks issues) in order to base assumptions and opinions on scientific evidence.

- What points do presented cases/examples raise in relation to up scaling?

The group agreed to ri-define these issues as 'organizational patterns for SFSC'.
One of the main challenges for the SFSCs is the ability to supply food on a continuous basis a year round within the current food system.
Logistics and related organizational structures present major challenges for scaling up in economic, environmental and efficiency terms for the SFSCs.
In order to scale up, a new form of leadership and visionary behavior is required within the networks active in the SFSCs.
A related topic raised in the discussion was the importance of social innovation. Social innovation can be assessed in terms of new ways of management of SFSCs (dynamic

management), in terms of new ways of organizing the chains (flexibly organizations and structures), and in terms of new ways of working (smarter working practices).
An important related issue is also that of power relations (example of Austria) and of farmers' empowerment. Need to create opportunities for empowerment.
Assessment of regulations should be also conducted on their sustainability value. Does a certain regulation increase sustainability or is it hindering it? Also in this case, sustainability assessment should be based on participatory processes.

- What similarities and differences can be identified between cases? (Regulations)

All the presented cases shared the same principals on hygiene. But the difference in implementation and interpretation of these regulations was big per country.
It seems from the presentations that the regulations are favoring bigger agricultural structures over small scale farmers.
There are major differences in skills and knowledge among farmers. This allows certain producers to perform better under the same conditions while others struggle with the same regulations.
Access to financial resources was another major difference identified by the group.
There are also geographic constraints which can either favor local producers or present them with disadvantages.

- What similarities and differences can be identified between cases? (Up scaling/organizational patterns for SFSC)

The new Common Agriculture Policy that will be introduced in 2013 presents opportunities for the SFSCs to be officially integrated into the EU and local governments'` policies.
Trends among consumers and involvement of civil societies among the European countries present similarities in terms of involvement and interest in SFSCs. There are many bottom-up initiatives all over Europe. But at the same moment the consumers and their needs, food cultures, buying power, etc., differ strongly among countries and regions.
Availability of infrastructure was considered one of the main differences among the different cases.

- What demand for research / further knowledge cases generate? (Both regulations and up scaling)

There is a need to find more scientific evidence for the impact of SFSCs on such topics as employment, risk management, economic efficiency, food quality, safety, environment and social resilience.
Another identified issue is the need for appropriate technologies to be able to produce food on small scale. Not only for the farmers to work on the land but also to process it.
Also attention should be devoted to the understanding of purchasing patterns of the consumers. It is important to know why and how they buy certain products and services from short chains.
Finally there is a need for understanding the mechanisms of development of new skills and learning among European (small scale) farmers.
Structure of the evidence document: open space approach to writing of the document, either by using a Wiki or Google Docs (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1frimzGKCrAn5MVc46k3a8nwRXzExdcTy6Z43m0klXpU/edit?pli=1#)
Chapter 2: regulations

- Scoping by describing the current issues;
- Presenting the evidence from different cases;
- Discussion; and
- Recommendations for an improved policy.

Chapter 4: up scaling

- Describing of the issues at stake;
- Asking the question whether collective platforms are needed and feasible;
- Discussion; and
- Recommendation for an improved policy.

16.00-17.30 Instruments and Plan for action

- Pieter→Overall presentation of the platform
- Roberto → mindmeister

- Peter → geographical mapping
- Femke → newsfeed / video
- Gianluca → wiki
- Karin→ webinars

Summary of final decisions taken

In order to orient and finalize the CoP's activity, it was decided to elaborate a Evidence Document. A layout of the document was discussed and agreed. The document should be the outcome of a collaborative work of the network, facilitated by the core CoP members. The timing of writing has also been agreed:

- Final draft end june 2013
- First draft september 2012
- Cop face to face meeting (2nd week july 2012) -> discussion of first outline
- Facilitators of the writing:
    - Pieter: sustainability
    - Roberto: what is short
    - Otto: scaling up
    - Gianluca: Regulation

- A calendar of webinars related to the relevant themes will be constructed. Hygiene regulations will be the first one.
- 1st extra face-to-face meeting 2nd week of july 2012 in Rennes with a discussion on the outline of the document to be written together (o.o version)
- To ensure regularity to the life of the CoP, it was agreed that everybody posts at least one post per week
- CoP enlargement has been considered a key to fulfil the objectives of the CoP: everybody pledge to recruit 3 new members

Annex 7 – Meeting in Rennes – Program (July 2012)

FOODLINKS
CoP meeting – Short Food Supply Chains
11 – 13 July
Rennes (France) – Agrocampus Ouest

Wednesday 11th

Arrival to Rennes
Joining the hotel (each participant has to book his room – see below)

Thursday 12th Welcome – CoP meeting, SFSC public session and field trip

9:00 – 9:30 Welcome
Introduction to the meeting ; aims and activities ; agenda

9:30 – 11:00 CoP meeting

11:00 – 13:00 Public session
Presentation of FOODLINKS
Presentation of the study – Rennes Ville Vivrière – Agrocampus Rennes – Guy Durand or a student
Exchange session between partners and public

13:00 – 14:00
Lunch

Afternoon : field trip
14:30 – 16:30
Visit of Brin d'Herbe – a local farmer shop selling local and organic products.
http://www.brindherbe35.fr/

16:30 – 19-00
Visit of box-schemes and AMAP in the areas of the city

20:00
Dinner : Creperie paysanne – restaurant using local products

Friday 13th CoP meeting

9:30 – 13:00
CoP meeting
Work on the evidence document

Including session on the value creation stories – WP6 – Femke and Sandra

13:00 – 14:00
lunch

Saturday 14th (optional field trip – visits and departure)

Visit of a city market « Les Lices ». France's second largest market of aver 300 producers from across Brittany.http://www.tourisme-rennes.com/en/market-rennes.aspx

Annex 8 – CoP meeting in Rennes – Minutes (July 2012)

Agenda

Thursday 12th Welcome – CoP meeting, SFSC public session and field trip

9:00 – 9:30 Welcome
Introduction to the meeting ; aims and activities ; agenda
9:30 – 11:00 CoP meeting
11:00 – 13:00 Public session
Presentation of FOODLINKS
Presentation of the study – Rennes Ville Vivrière – Agrocampus Rennes – Guy Durand or a student
Exchange session between partners and public
13:00 – 14:00
Lunch
Afternoon : field trip
14:30 – 16:30
Visit of Brin d'Herbe – a local farmer shop selling local and organic products.
http://www.brindherbe35.fr/
16:30 – 19-00
Visit of box-schemes and AMAP in the areas of the city
20:00
Dinner : Creperie paysanne – restaurant using local products
Friday 13th CoP meeting
9:30 – 13:00
CoP meeting
Work on the evidence document
Including session on the value creation stories – WP6 – Femke and Sandra
13:00 – 14:00
lunch
Saturday 14th (optional field trip – visits and departure)
Visit of a city market « Les Lices ». France's second largest market of aver 300 producers from across Brittany.
http://www.tourisme-rennes.com/en/market-rennes.aspx

Session 1

Assessment of the work done

The first 90 minutes of the meeting are dedicated to an evaluation of the process of collaborative writing. These are the main aspects emerged:

1. According to participants, a lot of material has been added, now there is the need to organize better the process. It is agreed that contributions to the evidence document will be of the following types:

   - Quotes from literature
   - Examples and case studies
   - Identification of gaps
   - Suggestions on how to improve the framing

2. There is a generalized agreement that the online collaboration is necessary, but at the same time there is concern for the fact that the wiki of the knowledge hub is not flexible enough to allow the management of documents of such dimensions. The group has decided to experiment another tool, google drive, that allows to trace the history of modification and to put comments in the lateral column. However, there is the risk that

the Scottish team cannot have access to it. If the experiment won't work a plan B will be decided.

3. There is a need of clarifying what will be the function of the evidence document. The following proposals have emerged:

   a. A part of it may constitute an item of Wikipedia. After a brief research, it seems that the item 'short food supply chains' does not exist.

   b. The document, when at an advanced stage, should be circulated among policy makers and civil society organizations to get feedback

   c. Not necessarily only ONE text has to come out of the document that we are working on now. The document with all the evidence and all the links can be used as sort of a "library" and as basis for several texts for different target groups.

Decisions

1. The timetable decided in Tirrenia is confirmed:

   - Agreement on tasks roles and timing of the writing process october 2013
   - Final draft end june 2013
   - First draft september 2012
   - April 2013 0.0 version
2. In view of the meeting in Victoria in Semptember, a synthesis of the evidence document – based on the synthesis done by the facilitators - will be sent to experts of the expert board so to receive feedback during the meeting.
3. A section with links to other Cops will be introduced
4. In Victoria, all CoP members will have to prepare at least two examples of short food supply chains (case studies) and indicate to what point of the evidence document they want to address them. If possible, examples will be taken from national or foreign correspondents.

Chapter 1 Identification of SFSCs (Roberto Ruiz)

ACTIVATED NETWORK

Roberto Ruiz, Femke Hoekstra, Sandra Sumane, Francesca Galli, Pieter van der Graaf, Gianluca Brunori

Characteristics of sfscs: structure of the section

- Key questions
- The meaning of SFSCs
- Criteria for identification (taking account of different view points, e.g. producers, traders, consumers)
- Definitions and examples
- Analysis: implications of criteria on the organization of supply chains – pros and con**s**
- Recommendations

Key questions

- How are SFSCs understood and defined in different spheres of action (consumption, policies, science, etc.)?

- How are ‘short food supply chains’ defined in theory and in practice?
- How different definitions link to other concepts such as ‘local food’, ‘local food systems’?
- What are the implications of different definitions?
- Which consumers’ and societa**l** demand do SFSCs address?

Meaning of SFSC

The discussion has clarified that „Meaning‟ of Short Food Chains is to be understood as the set of characteristics and values associated to them in the discourse. On this regard, „meaning‟ is different from „criteria for identification‟ and from „definitions‟.

The meanings of SFSC are socially constructed and their interpretations may differ across various social groups, institutional settings and regional contexts

There are encoded intertwined dimensions of geographic, social and economic proximity.

During the meeting in Rennes the concept of ‘social distance’ was discussed to complement geographical distance.

Authenticity and “good, local, food” are socially constructed and based on values that differ between producers, consumers, and institutional settings and in different regional contexts.

Meaning of food in SFSCs	**Meaning of distribution in SFSCs**
“fresh”, “diverse”, “organic”, “slow” and/or “quality”, “seasonal”	“small scale”, “short”, “traditional”, “local”, “environmentally sustainable” and “embedded”

Criteria for definitions

As we have seen in the preceding sub-section, in the lay discourse „short food chains‟ overlap their meaning with „local food‟, „alternative food chains‟, „local systems‟ etc. There is therefore the need to identify criteria to delimitate the concept.

The project GLAMUR identifies four main (interrelated) axes:

- physical / geographical distance;
- governance and organization issues;
- the kind of resources, knowledge and technologies employed in the production process; and
- the role of territory in defining the identity of the product

Definitions

Slow food	According to Slow Food a short food supply chain is created when producers and final consumers realize they share the same goals, which can be achieved by creating new opportunities that strengthen local food networks. It is an alternative strategy enabling producers to regain an active role in the food system, as it focuses on local production - decentralized regional food systems that minimize the number of steps involved and the distance traveled by food (food miles). (**http://www.earthmarkets.net/pagine/eng/pagina.lasso?-id_pg=2**)

Criteria for classifications

Some CSA activities may include several «types» of the previous activities.

Should we identify SFSC according to different parts of the chain and see what kind of variations we can find evidence for?. For instance specify them according to:

- Organisational structure (incl. staffing & management)
- Type of membership
- Initiators
- Marketing research and design choices
- Inputs (incl land arrangements, wáter, electricity)
- Production (incl. Planning, contracting arrangements, training, production methods)
- Harvesting
- Packing
- Delivery options
- Type of customers (type of payments options, low income consumers – work options / sliding scale, food stamps, talents/lets system)
- Additional activities

Analysis: implications of criteria on the organization of supply chains – pros and cons

Recommendations

- Recommendations emerged from a workshop in Victoria

In this section, recommendations regarding characteristics should emerge

Main points discussed in Rennes about chapter 1

- *At this moment there is no need to agree on definitions of SFSC. Much better to add, compare and contrast alternative definitions and examples, and analyse the implications for policy*
- *Short food supply chains are not per se sustainable, healthy etc. They rather have a certain POTENTIAL for sustainability, health etc.*
- *SFSC are rather about distribution than about production systems.*
- *Develop discussion – and evidence – on criteria used to defin**e short food ch**ains*
- *A point discussed at length is the concept of social distance, to be paired to physical distance to classify SFSCs. Social distance is associated with number of intermediaries between consumers and producers, intensity and directionality of information flows, balance of power between the parts. Sometimes intermediaries connect, rather than disconnect, producers with consumers: their role should be investigated.*
- *When considering distance, it is important to consider the length of the travel necessary to reach consumers, as well as the travel of inputs (see for example feed).*

Gaps identified for section 1:

- *evidence for which characteristics the definition builds on (very general categories may not be sufficient for serious political recommendations*
- *definitions within the scientific literature*
- *what is the outcome of some criteria (e.g. trust, perceived social distance, etc.)*

Section 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSCs

Layout

- 2.1 Key questions
- 2.2 Criteria to assess sustainability and health
- 2.3 Analysis: implications of criteria for the organization of food supply chains (incl. trade offs between different sustainability and other socially relevant criteria)
- 2.4 Recommendations

2.1 Key questions

- Introduction explaining the different aspects of SFSC sustainability and health and how they relate to each other
- Pros and cons of using these criteria
- Assessment methods
- Clarity needed about what definition of short relates to each bit of evidence (see section 1)

2.2 Criteria to assess sustainability and health

2.2.1 Health

- Evidence of nutritional and other health aspects of SFSCs
- Comparison of local and imported produce
- Mental health impacts
- Promotion of Healthy/obesogenic environment
- Position paper: is local more nutritious?
- *Ample discussion on the link between food and health*

2.2.2 Environmental sustainability

- Evidence of environmental impact of SFSCs compared with alternatives
- Impact of production methods, processing, packaging, distribution, cooling, transport, waste
- Ensure short/local is not confused with organic

2.2.3 Social sustainability and ethics

- Effects on producers, local communities, employment, workers' rights, animal welfare, fairtrade, food inequalities, affordability, food security

- *Accessibility*

2.2.4 Economic sustainability

- Embeddedness
- Efficiency, reliance,
- Barriers to economic success
- Seasonality
- Logistics
- Consumers/ retailer trends
- Available labour/skills facilities
- Other socially relevant criteria (e.g. authenticity, integrity, cultural or ethical dimensions)
- In touch with your food, know where it comes from
- Trust, Integrity
- Education, cultural and natural heritage

Issues

- Trade offs, effect of type of SFSC, food product, location, season.
- How can sustainability and health impacts be clearly communicated in an integrated manner, certification, labelling.

Outcomes of discussion in Rennes

- *More evidence on health*
    - *School meals*
    - *Hospitals*
- *Social sustainability:*
    - *accessibility of products form SFSC (distance, price)*
    - *what are motivations for different actors to engage in SFSC ? (e.g. farmers: self esteem)*
- *Economic sustainability:*
    - *what factors make SFSC economocially sustainable?*
- *sustainability of the FOOD CHAIN is not the same as the sustainability of the PRODUCT ; but the sustainability of the production system has a big influence on the sustainability of the whole chain*
- *We should look not only on the health impact of SFSC, but also on the impact on overall well-being. Mental aspects have a big influence on the well-beeing.*
- *There was the idea to make a short online survey on trade-offs concerning different types of sustainability. E.g. simulate decision problems when buying food: animal welfare versus fair trade versus organic etc. Maybe compare how CSO, policy officials,*

researchers deal with trade offs. Example of online-survey about trade offs concerning agricultural subsidies: meine-landwirtschaft.de

Section 3 Impacts of Regulation

Outline

- Key questions
- Relevant regulations
- Impact of Hygiene regulations
    - The problem
    - The solutions
    - The gaps
    - Recommendations
- General recommendations

3.1 Key questions

- To what extent, and at what level, does regulation creates obstacles to the development of SFSC?
- How to improve the existing regulation?
- What strategies should complement regulation in order to make it more effective?

3.2 Relevant regulations

3.2.1 Hygiene regulations

3.2.1.1. Regulatory framework

- The hygiene package gives Member States a broad autonomy in defining appropriate rules related to the specificities of food production
- Difference between flexibility and derogation

3.2.1.1. Hygiene regulations: the problem

In the literature

Authors constrasted "agro-industrial mode" of rural development (economy of scale) with 'bureaucratic/'hygienic' mode"

… ratcheting up the regulatory costs of small producers and food processors and reducing market entry into the most lucrative supply chains (marsden)

Evidence

- Italy: Webinar
- Hungary: Balasz Belint
- Austria:
- Scotland: Number of abattoirs

[Can we provide some numbers?]

Sectors

- Mainly animal production
- Some problem in processed fruit and vegetables

Critical points

- Frequency of controls that have to be paid by producers;
- Prescription of separate locals for each operation;
- Investments necessary to introduce HACCP;
- Use of dedicated vehicles to transport the produce;
- Arbitrariness of the vets
- Discrimination of small farmers in the access to information and to public funding.

Evidence on critical points

- Karin/Monika report
- Slow food Raviggiolo

3.2.1.2. Hygiene regulations: Solutions

Implementing flexibility

- The approval of specific national / regional guidelines
- Stakeholders' involvement (roundtables)
- Training, education, communication
- Guidelines need expertise, often lacking: the importance of brokerage

Promoting appropriate technology

- Mobile slaughterhouses

Evidence: good practices

- Austria
- Bolzano
- Slow Food

3.2.1.3. Hygiene regulations: Recommendations

- Mainly taken from the ouctomes of the conference in Brussels, 4 april

Gaps:

- Provide links to very concrete regulations in different countries + eventually translate a summary of them - that might be very interesting evidence for competent authorities

Section 4 ORGANISATIONAL PATTERNS SUITABLE FOR SFSC - OVERVIEW

Outline

- the structure of the section;
- main issues and evidence emerged so far;
- the network activated or to be activated to populate the section;
- knowledge gaps to be filled.

Key questions

In general the section aims at answering the following questions

- What are trends in the organisation of SFSCs?
- How can upscaling of SFSCs been managed?
- What are conditions and limiting/favouring factors for upscaling SFSC?
- What are opportunities and risks for upscaling or multiplying SFSCs?
- What are policy recommendations for different stakeholders?

4.2 Evidence: Development trends and context (Title?)

SOURCES:

FAANs, 2011 and EU-Study Local Market, 2010
IFSAS 2012 Papers Civic Food Networks
Important Papers:
Renting &nd Wiskerke, 2010; Schermer 2012; Fernandez, &Swagemakers et al. 2012, USA: Johnson, 2012; Ostrom, 2012, Karner, Verdier 2011

iSSUES:

Trends (still to be summarised – linking to time phases and political/economi context (Schermer 2012) as well as to typology of different forms (in chapter 2)
Opportunities and threats/risks, when upscaling

NETWORK

Henk Renting, Sophie Réviron, Markus Schermer

GAPS:

- Little information abut Initiatives which failed
- Consumer (participants) motives, perception and Willingness to pay

4.3 Analysis: implications of criteria for the organization of food supply (Title?)

SOURCES

- Schermer, 2012; Avoiding the local trap (Burn and Purcel 2007
- OMIaRD Handbook 2007; G. Brunori, C. Lamine? Life cyle / Actor Network development theory

ISSUES

- Challenge: distribution systems – what solutions?
- Does growth hurt? Does growth change perception & trust?
- Does adoptation lead to loss of attractivness (alternative image)? Is it just another wave?
- FAANs, 2011 and EU-Study Local Market, 2010
- IFSAS 2012 Papers Civic Food Networks

NETWORK

- M. Schermer

GAPS

- not enough information about distribution costs (when upscaling, additional investmenst versus economics of scale
- little scientific evidence on social-impacts of growth of SFSCs
- Recommendations for different actors (certain analogy to local market initiatives with some differences

NETWORK

Involve potential users / policy makers

GAPS

- Some new initiatives are not longtime enough operating?
- Impact of governance systems
- Factors facilitating or hindering the development of LFS (certain analogy for SFSCs)

- Funding schemes
- Hygiene regulations
- Trading rules
- Public procurement
- Territorial and quality branding
- Social co-operation and trust
- Operational challenges
- Skills and knowledge needed
- Consumer support and recognition
- Others (from C. Darrot, 2011)
- Overworking of farmers
- Access to land
- Success strategies for SFSCs (FAAN 2010)
- Building networks
- Societal attitudes
- Creative marketing
- Innovation
- Networks toward a new model : specific role of local authorities

Recommendations

- *Stakeholder Recommenations FAANs II*
- *EU study local markets 2011 some of interest for SFSC*

1. Different classification systems (evidence doc)
    - Renting et al. (2003) proposed :
    - Marsden et al (2000) on the base of their study, have identified three main types of short food chains

Categorisation related to type of relationship between producers and consumers

2. Producer-consumer co-operation
    - OMIaRD Publications
    - A Guide to Successful Organic Marketing Initiatives (also in German)by FiBL (Hrsg.) Authors: Otto Schmid, Ulrich Hamm, Toralf Richter, Andrea Dahlke
    - FiBL, OMIaRD Publication, Volume 6, 2004, 210 Pages, Bestellnr. 1338,
    - Life cyle of organisations and/or Actor Network theorie (Callon 1986)

Outcomes of the Rennes meeting

4.1 Key questions

There was a discussion if the term scaling up is really appropriate in the title. It concluded that it would be better to speak of "Growth and development of Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) it was proposed that in a first introduction chapter, some more explanations on the terminology used, are given. Below is a summary of the discussions, which could be used for this purpose.

Although the term scaling up (or up scaling) is used in many policy documents, there are some questions, limitations or even concerns, when using the term. Is it meant a bigger share in the food chain? Is the term limited to the individual case? Is it about expanding certain food systems characterised by short physical and social distance? Or is it understood that niche drivers will get regime or even landscape drivers, in other words mainstream? Certainly when we speak about up scaling or scaling up, it is about conditions and implications for growths, even their trade-offs thereof. But it is not only about scale or even economics of scale. It will need reflections on how this growth will happen, e.g. more or larger initiatives/operational units, most likely to lead to more market share of some of these food supply chains. However some SFSCs will even limit their size/growth in order to remain operational and socially inclusive. It will also consider what might be optimal organizational structures of different forms in different stages of development and contexts. In order to match all these aspirations we will speak rather of "Growth and development of SFSCs than on scaling up.

4.2 Evidence - Growth and Development trends and context

The implication of growth on trust might be visualized in a graphic.

The process of growth can be characterised through specific criteria, e.g. process of professionalization and other typical internal developments and changes.
The development of short or alternative food supply chains has always been influenced by external factors, such as specific policies, market opportunities, support systems (different phases, e.g. cases study Markus Schermer for Austria, presented in IFSA 2012 Symposium).
Other aspects to be considered:

- *Role of supermarkets (e.g. misusing the label "products from my farm")*
- *Change of bargaining power or power relations in different phases*
- *Why the initiative have started*
- *Although economics are always important (e.g. profit) other factors might be important reasons for participation such as self-determination and self-esteem of the actors (in particular farmers)*

4.3 Analysis

Opportunities and risks:
See list of FAAN Project, in addition was mentioned:

- *Technologies (Hardware, Software)*
- *Public procurement*
- *Trading rules – fiscal aspects (e.g. lower VAT for farmers)*
- *Tourism – interesting potential. – needs a good networking (large differences between regions, often influenced by personalities).*

Annex 9 – CoP meeting program, Vitoria Gasteiz (Spain) (September 2012)

VITORIA-GASTEIZ, 11-14TH September 2012

Tuesday 11 September: WORKING WITHIN COPs

09.00-09:30 Welcome by Eva Ugarte (Director of the Unit of Agricultural Innovation)
Bettina Bock (coordinator of the project)
Roberto Ruiz: General Agenda for the meeting.

09:30-13.30 CoP Meetings (Coffee Available at around 11:00)

- (1,5 h) Value Narratives Exercise (led by Femke)
- (2h) Presentation of two case studies each that relate to the content of the Evidence Document
  - Pieter, Gianluca, Femke, Sandra, Francesca, … (20 mins each)
  - Questions and pressing issues

13:30-14.30 LUNCH

14.30-17.30 CoP Meetings (Coffee Available at around 16:00)

- (1h) Discussion on the development of the Evidence Document
  - how do we finalize it? How do we disseminate it?

  Preparation of the 5 points to be presented at the Cross CoP meeting
- (2 h) Plan for future CoP activity:
  - contribution to WIKIPEDIA: short food supply chain http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia_talk:Articles_for_creation/Short_food_supply_chains
  - Next face to face CoP meeting

17:30 closure for today

- After 17:30 the leaders of the Evidence Document sections meet to discuss the facilitation process (Gianluca, Pieter, Otto and Roberto).

Annex 10 – CoP meeting minutes, Vitoria Gasteiz (Spain) (September 2012)

CoP meeting Vitoria – 11 September 2012

Participants:

Pieter, Pascal, Roberto, Gianluca, Karin, Femke, Alistair, Otto

First session: Value narratives

Femke Hoekstra lead the value narratives (Minutes seperate)

Second session: case studies

Short presentation on the cases already uploaded on the Knowledge Hub and discussion in terms of the points of the evidence document

- **Pieter:** BioRomeo, 'defensive localism' case

- **Pascal:** box scheme [consumers' flexibility in the purchase. All farmers have a range of options to sell the product]

- **Roberto:** meat box scheme. Slaughter houses not available locally and affecting quality

- **Gianluca:** san Zeno [consumers' cooperatives: the problem of growth and voluntary vs paid work]

· **Karin:** in Austria there are a lot of producer cooperatives but not many consumers' cooperatives. Good opportunity to see the problems in setting up cooperatives

· **Karin:** Bioalpin: organizational structure and the brand. Important role of regional supermarket.

· **Femke:** Oregional, Tuinderij De Stroom (box scheme within University premises). Important role of consumers as enablers [by providing facilities]

· **Alistair:** two case studies. One is on locality food, related to tourism. Another is on a transnational project

· **Otto:** collaboration between farms. 12 dairies members of the group, selling to local specialized shops, not to supermarkets. Picobio: intermediary

General keywords

· Intermediaries

· Social distance / geographical distance

· Voluntary work / social capital

· Logistic infrastructures

· Premium / ordinary food

· (Consumers') Cooperatives

· Exclusive / not exclusive 'short'

· Relation to consumers' purchasing and eating styles

· Use of 'short' criteria in communication to consumers

· Authenticity

· Organizational structures

· Dimensions of short

· Collaboration

· Distribution costs

· Innovation

· Feedback from consumers / consumers' attitudes / purchasing strategies

· Future: new ways to sell short

Gaps:

· Local food supermarkets

· Consumer grown food

· Historic short food chains (markets)

Decisions

· All case studies should be posted on the knowledge hub and peer reviewed using the 'comments' of the wiki section of the knowledge hub. The process will finish on 30th October. Case study authors will then respond to the comments by 30th November.

· Each CoP member should peer review at least three case studies and make comments. The CoP Leader will propose the allocation of case studies to CoP members

· A draft of the evidence document will be finalized by 15th December. The evidence document leaders will hold a skype meeting to organize the process

· Otto will start the process of comparison of case studies, in view of a possible scientific publication. Collaboration will be done on voluntary basis

· The feedback process to the evidence document will be organized and will started after 15th December. Feedback will be asked to experts and local networks. The knowledge hub will be the center of the feedback, but also other initiatives may be taken.

· A wikipedia page on SFSCs will be launched

4 questions formulated to put to the cross CoP meeting

· What does "short" mean to the other groups? How relevant are SFSCs to urban food strategies and public food procurement?

· What is sustainable? What criteria are most relevant?

· What are the enabling/hindering factors of regulation and policy?

· What is the potential for growth and development of SFSCs? To what extent is growth of SFSCs feasible and desirable?

Cross cop meeting outputs

· **what is short**

mixed meanings / who is interested to SFSCs? / **local is better understood than short** / SFSCs opportunity to low income families / farmers should play a greater role / important to aggregate food supply (especially PP) / regulation in Brasil from family farms / relation with food security and food safety.

o **What is sustainable**

Diversity of opinions on how sustainability should be taken into consideration / arguments for a core meaning (based on environment)/ wider definition would include also social, economic and health & wellbeing impacts / social inclusion, participation and bringing people together are important aspects / impossible to cover all aspects covered in every situation

/ **transparancy is key** / indicators can be used for measurement but how
to weight them? / food security: resilience and affordability dimensions should be considered

- **What are the Enabling/hindering factors of regulation and policy?**

The discussion with experts was centered on a) CAP; b) hygiene rules; c) Public procurement rules

As far as CAP is concerned, it emerged that so far RD policies have focused their attention on (remote) rural areas, giving for granted that urban and periurban areas have a more competitive agriculture. Evidence shows that this is not true, as the pressure of urban expansion make land managers expect change in land use and therefore an increase of land prices, so they don't invest. It is agreed that RD policies should address this issue. It is also stated that EU rules are flexible enough to allow this change of perspective, and it is national interpretation of the rules that should change.

Also the first pillar (and namely school fruit schemes) has potentialities that should be taken into consideration. A need for more integration between CAP and RD is highlighted.

EU Public procurement framework has generaged stimulated creativity in some member states to introduce 'local' criteria through the 'fresh' and 'environmentally sound' criteria. Given that the 'single market' is the general eu framework, more evidence is needed to articulate it with environmental and health principles to open the way to local and organic. Tuscan government introduced measures to compensate extra costs of getting organic. However, the dilemma of Organic vs local, as in the case of Malmo, was raised. Also small business (often associated with short food chains) vs large busines is an issue related to procurement policies.

Also in the case of hygienic rules, it emerged that a key knowledge brokerage problem is adaptation of national rules to the eu framework in a way that favours short food supply chains.

What the potential for growth of sFSCs? To what extent should growth of SFSCs feasible and desirable?

From the case studies, we have collected and discussed, we can see that after the initial phase there has been in many cases a considerable growth, both in terms of turn-over, number of actors, quantities of marketed products. However this further growth was often not a linear process and in several cases this process was associated with a change of organisational structures, diversification of activities, sometimes even with a change of the relationship to the consumers (e.g. more virtual - Internet supported contact instead of physical direct contacts). Evidence shows that there has been and is still is a potential for further growth. Nevertheless the issue of limits to growth, e.g. non-desired implications of further growth on short food supply chains, needs more careful considerations, when reflecting about the feasibility and desirability of Short Food Supply Chains in evidence document.

The potential for growth of SFSC dpends on what we are talking about. And the issue of

Short food supply chains refers to different criterias. At the beginning, we have to know what we are talking about. What is short?

For us, "short" refers to :

1- the distance. Short means local for people.

2- the number of intermediaries (short means few intermediaries)

3- the quality of the production system (health and quality according environnemental aspects)

If we want to develop SFSC at a large scale, we have to ask the pertinence of these criterias. By developping, them, it would imply not meet the definition as we see now.

Actually, if we take these criterias (for example the number of intermediaries), we would say for exemple that selling products in supermarket is not included in SFSC. But yet most people buy their products in supermarkets. It seems that there is a contradiction between developping SFSC and the definition we have.

The question is : under what conditions we are ready to develop the SFSC?

Then, even having in mind these criterias, it is difficult to imagine the growth of SFSC. It would imply differents conditions :

- to identify clearly a new consumers demand (actually, we are not sure it is clear...)

- to imagine a new model of agriculture. Our models in europe are adapted to an industrial scale and mainly organized for long chains. But SFSC, in our case, refers to a new model. The issue of growth implies a mutation of the agricultural model and a new organization of the agro-food system.

- to imagine a new organization between production and consumption (for example on food procurement it is not possible to contract with each producer - we sould think to new collective organizations).

- to resolve global questions (for exemple the use of land which is identified as a problem to resolve if you want to link local consumption with local production, especially in the urban areas)

The growth of SFSC has to be linked to local contexts :

- the local demand

- the local policy (ex. The city if Malmö decided to build a policy for public procurement. Their first prirority is organic, but not expecially local - in this case, the question is : is it sufficient to say it that it is linked with SFSC?).

- the local production potential. Producers have to produce enough. In our example of Malmö, they only have 1 organic chicken producer in the country.

Annex 11 – Edinburgh Cop meeting – plan and minutes (April 2013)

Edinburg, 23-25 April 2013
AGENDA

Monday 22 April Arrival
Tuesday 23 April: WORKING WITHIN COPs
09.30-13.00 **SFSC CoP Meeting**
Evidence Document
- Analysis of feedback from the experts (introduction: Peter)
- Final Editing of the Evidence Document (for those who are interested) (Introduction: Gianluca)
  - Recommendations
  - Synthesis and translation → what are the most important points?
  - In relation to other CoPS

  Coffee Available at around 11:00

13.00-14.00 LUNCH
14.00-17.30 **CoP Meetings** (Coffee Available at around 16:00)
Beyond the CoPs:Discussion of other CoPs' document: what lessons can be learned from other CoPs? what feedback can we give to them
  - Urban Food Strategies CoP: introduction by Roberto
  - Public procurement: introduction by Otto

17.30 closure for today
Thursday 25 September: COP MEETING AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
09.00-13.00 **CoP meeting**
- M&E activity (Femke)

11.00-11.15
- Analysis of the evaluation report
- Agenda of CoP meeting in Vienna
- Workplan for the final period
  - Dissemination of the evidence document outside the CoP: meetings, **webinars** at national level
  - Publications
  - The final Report

13.00-14.00 LUNCH
14.00-15.00 Cross-CoP feedback on documents produced by each CoP (Francesca/Gianluca)
In parallel special meeting for members of conference working group: elaborating conference programme (Heidrun)
15.00-15.30 COFFEE BREAK

Minutes

Evidence Document

Analysis of feedback from the experts (introduction: Peter)

The group read collectively the comments of the only expert giving feedback. They were mainly addressed at highlighting relevant points and to better identify priorities. The expert also asked for more evidence when comes to sustainability of short food supply chains.
The discussion of the expert from the feedback also generated a discussion about policy relevance of the short food supply chains. On this regard it was agreed that short food supply chains should be considered as a tool (and not an end) to be mobilized in different policy settings:
- Rural development

- Business
- Integrated food strategies
- Civil society

The discussion developed around an exercise of mindmapping (attached)

Final Editing of the Evidence Document (for those who are interested) (Introduction: Gianluca)

The group agreed:

- To review the evidence document on the basis of the points discussed above
- To make an executive summary. The group also selected some important messages to be included. Pieter will be in charge of it, deadline 15 may. The executive summary will be translated in German by the date of the CoP meeting in Vienna

Beyond the CoPs: Discussion of other CoPs' document: what lessons can be learned from other CoPs? what feedback can we give to them?

Roberto and Otto presented the documents produced by other CoPs (respectively, UFSs and Public Procurement. The synthesis of discussion is available as power point presentations which are the basis for discussion in the Cross-CoP meeting

Monitoring and evaluation

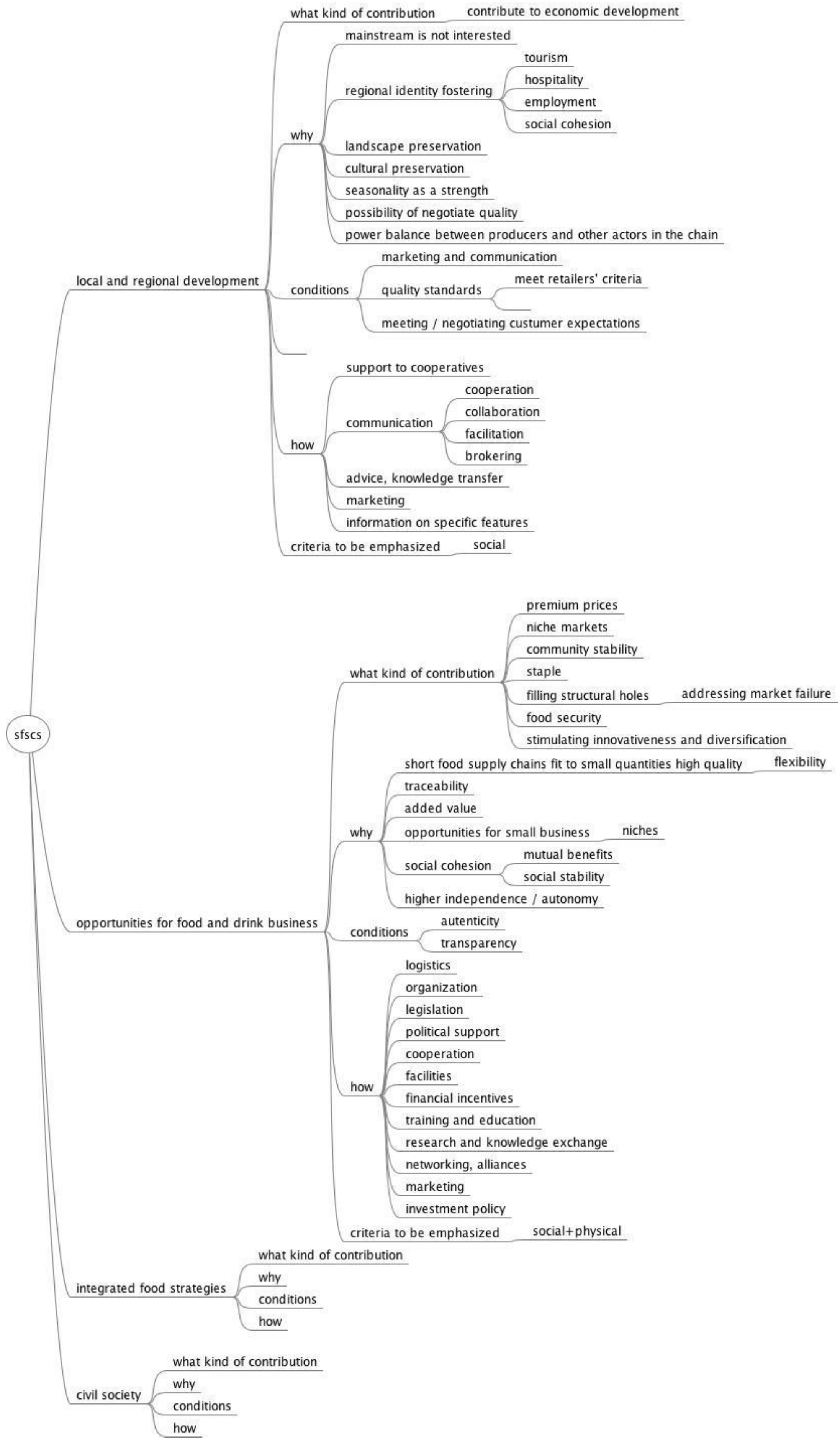
Under supervision of Femke, the group filled collectively a table to evaluate tools used in the Project.

Agenda of CoP meeting in Vienna

Karin illustrated the agenda of the meeting in Vienna of 27th and 28th may.
On 28th Otto Schmidt will illustrate a synthesis of the evidence document in German on behalf of the group to Austrian stakeholders and public officers. Translation will be available.
On 27th the CoP will meet to discuss the following points:

- Main messages to convey to the meeting with stakeholders
- Publications
- The final Report

Annex 1 – mindmapping Short food supply chains


sfscs
local and regional development
what kind of contribution
contribute to economic development
why
mainstream is not interested
regional identity fostering
tourism
hospitality
employment
social cohesion
landscape preservation
cultural preservation
seasonality as a strength
possibility of negotiate quality
power balance between producers and other actors in the chain
conditions
marketing and communication
quality standards
meet retailers' criteria
meeting / negotiating custumer expectations
how
support to cooperatives
communication
cooperation
collaboration
facilitation
brokering
advice, knowledge transfer
marketing
information on specific features
criteria to be emphasized
social
opportunities for food and drink business
what kind of contribution
premium prices
niche markets
community stability
staple
filling structural holes
addressing market failure
food security
stimulating innovativeness and diversification
why
short food supply chains fit to small quantities high quality
flexibility
traceability
added value
opportunities for small business
niches
social cohesion
mutual benefits
social stability
higher independence / autonomy
conditions
autenticity
transparency
how
logistics
organization
legislation
political support
cooperation
facilities
financial incentives
training and education
research and knowledge exchange
networking, alliances
marketing
investment policy
criteria to be emphasized
social+physical
integrated food strategies
what kind of contribution
why
conditions
how
civil society
what kind of contribution
why
conditions
how

Annex 12 – Agenda and minutes CoP meeting in Vienna (May 2013)

SFSC CoP-meeting in Vienna
May 27th + May 28th 2013
draft of the agenda

Meeting location:
University of Applied Life Sciences – Universität für Bodenkultur
Gregor Mendel Straße 33
Bus stop 37A + 40A Linnéplatz or Dänenstraße
Bus stop 10 A Dänenstraße

Monday May 27th
Location:
Guttenberghaus, Feistmantelstr. 4, Room EG 04,
Bus stop 37A or 40A or 10A Dänenstraße

10.00 – 11.30 internal CoP meeting
11.30 – 13.00 lunch at "Mayerei" in Türkenschanzpark (5 min walk)
13.00 - 15.00 internal CoP meeting: organise work for CoP report, prepare meeting for the next day
15.00 – 15.20 coffee break
15.20 – 18.00 internal CoP meeting

In the morning we can decide if we want to go for dinner together (booking a table might be necessary).

Tuesday May 28th
Location:
Mendelhaus, Gregor Mendel Str. 33, Nördliches Turmzimmer, top floor
Bus stop 37A or 40A Linnéplatz or bus stop 10A Dänenstraße

Participants:
- Dr. Martin Luttenfeldner, Ministry of Health, section Consumer Protection
- Dr. Martina Ortner, Chamber of Agriculture Austria
- DI Reinhard Geßl, FIBL Austria
- members of local CoP (farmers)
- to be invited: researcher from the University of Agriculture
- Core CoP members

Agenda

9.00 - 12.30 semi-public meeting with simultaneous interpretation between English and German

Presentation of the evidence paper (1 h 15 min)
- Introduction (15 min)
- Presentation of the evidence paper (30 min)
- Discussion of the evidence paper (30 min)

Coffee break (15 min)

Knowledge brokerage between policy, research and civil society on the topic of slaughtering and meat processing (2 hours)

- Input from Martin Luttenfeldner, Ministry of Health: Implementation of hygiene regulations on slaughtering and processing of meat in Austria (20 – 30 min)
- Input from Martina Ortner, Chamber of Agriculture: Hygiene regulations from the view of farmers doing direct sales (15 min)
- Input from farmer from ÖBV-Via Campesina Austria (15 min)
- Discussion (60 min)

13.00 - 14.30 lunch at "Mayerei" in Türkenschanzpark (5 min walk)

14.30 – 20.00 field trip

We're going by bus to the farm of family Frühwald in Langenschönbichl (near Tulln)
It is an organic farm with a slaughtering room and a farm shop. They process a lot of their own products and market them themselves. We will be back in Vienna between 18.00 and 19.00. In Vienna we might visit a consumers cooperative / buying cooperative / food coop – depending on time and interest.

Minutes CoP Meeting in Vienna

Knowledge Hub
We have to find a solution, as End of June the Knowledge Hub was supposed to close. If we want to keep it, we have to react now and protest against closing
It would be good to keep the knowledge hub to show the Commission, how we used it. At least we can make Screenshots for reporting and the archive.
Possibilties:
- Download and parking might be possible
- Park it on the official project website, but then we do not have the interaction functions

Indepentently we should explore if the Knowledge hub can be moved to another project like SUPURBFOOD as already Wageningen is the coordinator.
Han and Bettina should be approached. Pieter will speak with Bettina. We should also involve the other CoP, but this should be done by Bettina. Also Gianluca should be involved as WP leader.
We have to find out from Knowledge Hub administrators. Responsible: Pieter to inform us about the process.
- When they are they closing it down?
- If yes if they would archive it and for how long they will keep it alive
- Is it possible that the information can be put in an archive or moved to another Website?

Gianluca has concerns that a lot of information will be lost, when transferring to another project.
We still think that there is a need for a Commission supported or government supported platform in this area with long-term perspective. Solutions have to be found, either link to on-going projects or something new. We should approach the Commission with a proposal.

Gianluca thinks that maybe also the Purefood website could be used.
Other possibility is the Innovation Partnership Initiative. We should explore the possibilities.

ACTION:
- Pieter will inform about the Knowledge Hub situation until Mid of June 2013.
- Alternatives found until End of June anyway necessary; this has to be discussed with Bettian with support of Gianluca, Pieter will take care.

CONFERENCE in Bruessels
It remains unclear if the place is fixed. Alistair had provisionally booked a place; it is important to inform Hanna.
We discuss how we present the results from our CoP. The idea was to inform about the content but as well the methodology used. We should show it as a knowledge hub event.
Ideas presented by Heidrun at the last minutes for the Conference. Idea of a market place.
Our CoP should communicate our ideas for the conference:
Ideas discussed in our group for the market place: **3 Methods proposed**

1. **Virtual field trip**: (Roberto takes the lead)
   Alley / Corridor with pictures/posters in an exhibition way. Paired walking (e.g. policy maker and market actor) , they will have to go together through the alley and need to agree on a statement. Desirable: to collect pictures at the field trip of the Vienna meeting
2. **Spider web exercise** to show the complexity of the food systems. Lead: Pieter with support of Karin
3. **Marbles vote for sustainability**. Alistair and Peter
   Which dimensions are most important (e.g. 2 marbles each person). Give a case: different options. 4 colours of marbles. Alistair. Otto for 4 Plexiglas containers. A story has to be constructed: Box Scheme with imported food. Another possibilities would be to

take a supermarket as a case and compare it with a box scheme. Simplified: What do you think SFSCs do contribute most in the 4 dimensions of sustainability?

The 3 methods should be complimentary.

Final project report

Gianluca informs that Francesca is working on the draft report. Circulate first draft until the 20 of June, comments until End of June worked in.

Evidence Paper and articles

We should polish the evidence text. This is how we proceed: Gianluca has time after the 10 of June, Otto after 17 of June and then Pieter (20-25 June) to refine the text before End of June. Then the most recent final evidence document will be sent by Gianluca to Bettina for the EU Commission.

Gianluca will also ask Sandra Sumane to have a look.

In addition some publications would be useful and desirable.

- Gianluca would be ready to lead one article as collective papers: SFSCs as policy tool in which fields
- Comparative analysis of the cases: Otto will take the lead for an article (Automn 2013).
- 4 page synthesis for Civil Society Organisations would be useful. Sandra will make an article, maybe with one part summarising and a second part in a Via Campesina Austria perspective.

Annex 13 - Webinar on Hygiene rules for short food supply chains - 15th May 2012

Title: Hygiene Rules on the hygiene of foodstuffs in Europe. Which challeges for small scale producers?

Author: Elisa Bianco, Slow Food Research Center

Participants: Gianluca Brunori, Leo Dvortsin, Roberto Ruiz, Monika Thuswald, Karin Okonkwo-klampfer, Sandra Karner, Otto Schmidt, Fabio Bartolini, Francesca Galli, Elisa Bianco.

Development of the webinar

1) Gianluca Brunori called participants through skype and Elisa Bianco gave a brief introduction.

2) We watched the webinar individually by clicking on the address: http://www.slideshare.net/francescagalli/hygiene-rules-challenges-for-small-scale/1/yes
During the vision everyone could comment and ask questions through the skipe chat.

3) At the end of the vision, Elisa answered the remaining questions and discussed further comments. Gianluca concluded.

Main issues addressed

- Meaning of ``flexibility`` for small scale producers within the EU Hygiene Regulations.
- Definition of ``small scale producers`` throughout the EU
- Different interpretations of EU hyginic requirements at national level, with respect to in house slaughtering, mobile slughtering, treatment of raw milk, etc...

General Comment on the webinar

It was a fruitful lively discussion which required an active approach from participants: listening, reading and writing at the same time was needed to keep up with the conversation. The Skype chat is a useful instrument to make comments and ask questions. The voice discussion was limited to the minimum to avoid the poor quality of audio.

Annex 14 – Wikipedia entry on definition of short food Supply Chains

Short food supply chains

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The term "Short food supply chain" identifies a broad range of food production-distribution-consumption configurations, such as farmers' markets, farm shops, collective farmers' shops, Community supported agriculture, solidarity purchase groups. More in general, a food supply chain can be defined 'short' when it is characterized by short distance and/or small number of intermediaries between producers and consumers.

Contents

[hide]

Origin of the concept [edit]

SFSCs were originally identified as examples of 'resistance' of farmers to modernization of the food system, characterized by the development of supply chains based on long distance trade.[1]Resistance consists in the fact that, by selling directly to consumers, farmers bypass intermediaries and thus can develop autonomous marketing strategies based on differentiation. These strategies give farmers the possibility of keeping a bigger share of the added value within the farm and within the local economies. Given these characteristics, short food supply chains are increasingly taken into consideration by rural and food policies as a driver of change in the food system and a policy tool for rural development.[2] The analysis of Short food supply chains has fed a broader debate on 'Alternative food chains',[3] 'Alternative food networks',[4] and 'Sustainable food chains'.[5]

Specificity of Short Food Supply Chains [edit]

SFSCs are considered the most appropriate channels for organic and locally specific products and for small farmers. In fact, a closer relation between producers and consumers gives producers the opportunity to develop a richer communication, and to identify market niches. As Ilbery and Maye[3] state, "*…the crucial characteristic of SFSCs is that foods which reach the final consumer have been transmitted through an SC that is `embedded' with value-laden information concerning the mode of production, provenance, and distinctive quality assets of the product*" (see also Renting et al.).[6] Likewise, Marsden et al.(2000)[7] state that "*a common characteristic, however, is the emphasis upon the type of relationship between the producer and the consumer in these supply chains, and the role of this relationship in constructing value and meaning, rather than solely the type of product itself*".

Criteria for identification [edit]

In order to develop a definition of SFSCs, there are a number of candidate criteria that may be used. Short food supply chains incorporate dimensions of geographic, social and economic proximity.[8] **Geographical proximity** means physically close, and is measured as a distance between producers and consumers. **Social proximity** finds expression as direct (or with very few intermediaries) and trustful relations between a producer and consumer who know each other and the product, solidarity between producers and consumers, civic engagement in local food system, (re)connection with local food traditions and identities. **Economic proximity** means that market exchanges happen and money circulates within a community or a certain locality; a short food chain is owned and governed locally, it is transparent and traceable.

Classification of Short food supply chains [edit]

SFSCs are classified by Renting et al.[6] into face-to-face, proximate, extended. **Face to face** are characterized by physical encounters between producers and consumers (as in the case of farmers' markets). In the **proximate** short food supply chains producers are not necessarily managing product distribution (as in the case of consumers' cooperatives). In the **extended** short food supply chains, although geographical distances between producers and consumers may be long, consumers are aware of the identity of the producers and of the products (such as in the case of fair trade and protected denominations of origin).

Short food supply chains in national regulations [edit]

An action plan developped in 2009 at the French Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry was aimed at supporting the development of short food chains. Accordingly to the plan, short food chains are defined on the base of the number of actors involved; precisely : SFSC are considered as « *commercialisation of agricultural products through direct selling or indirect selling when only one intermediary is involved* ». (« *Un circuit court est un mode de commercialisation des produits agricoles qui s'exerce soit par la vente directe du producteur au consommateur, soit par la vente indirecte à condition qu'il n'y ait qu'un seul intermédiaire*. » .

However, there have been discussions at the senate and at regional levels that short-ness should not be reduced to the number of intermediaries but also geographical distance should be considered (f.i., one can buy vine directly, but what if it travels 1000 km?). Following the national action plan (or maybe prior to it in some cases), there have been regional SFSC plans developed. Regional action plans refer to the definition above, but they also complement or precise it. F.i. Aquitaine region adds also short or reduced geographical distance between producers and consumers (link). The French Law on modernisation of agriculture and fishing, updated in 2010 (n° 2010-874), among its many other intervention actions states also «*the development of short food chains and facilitation of geographical proximity between producers and processors*. »

Examples of Short food supply chains [edit]

Farmers' markets, are physical retail markets featuring foods sold directly by farmers to consumers.

Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA), network or association of individuals who have pledged to support one or more local farms, with growers and consumers sharing the risks and benefits of food production. The URGENCI network federates initiatives of CSA from all over the World.

Gruppi di acquisto solidale (GAS) Italian networks initiated by consumers that link up to farmers to organize alternative food provision systems

AMAP - French Associations pour le maintien d'une agriculture paysanne - support peasant and organic agriculture through direct links between farmers and consumers

Research projects on Short food supply chains [edit]

FOODLINKS - Knowledge brokerage to promote sustainable food consumption and production: linking scientists, policymakers and civil society organisations

SUS-CHAINS - Marketing sustainable agriculture: an analysis of the potential role of new food supply chains in sustainable rural development

PUREFOOD - is a Marie Curie Initial Training Network funded by the European Commission's Seventh Framework PEOPLE program. The objective of PUREFOOD is to train a pool of early-stage researchers in the socio-economic and socio-spatial dynamics of the (peri-)urban and regional foodscape

See also [edit]

Alternative food systems

Local food and short food supply chains, an ENRD (European Network of Rural Development) publication

References [edit]

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Short FoodSupply Chains Community of Practice

Short food supply chains: evidence document

Authors

Version 1.0, 31 december 2012

Chapter 1 Identification of SFSCs

1.1 Key questions

- What are SFSCs and how are they defined in theory and practice?
- How different definitions link to related concepts, such as 'local food', 'local food systems'?
- How are SFSCs understood and defined in different spheres of action (consumption, policies, science, etc.)?
- What are the implications of different definitions and meanings?

1.2 Introduction

Short food supply chains (SFSCs) have established in parallel to conventional food chains, playing a key role in the emerging food networks that are continuously arising as an alternative to the globalized agri-food model. The diversities and particularities of the experiences existing all over the world (box schemes, farmers' markets, on-farm selling, consumer cooperatives, Internet sales, business cooperatives, Grow Your Own, retailing etc) have attracted a growing interest from academia and policy-makers due to the nature of these initiatives, as well as for the socio-economic, territorial and environmental scope (See Annex A for more examples).

SFSCs can represent traditional and/or alternative ways of producing, distributing, retailing, and buying food and they have served as niches for those food system actors, mostly producers and consumers, who look for alternatives to the dominating agro-industrial model.

The very concept of SFSCs emerged at the turn of the century in the context of the broader debate on 'Alternative food chains' (Ilbery & Maye, 2005), 'Alternative food networks' (Goodman & Goodman, 2009) or 'Sustainable food chains' (Roep & Wiskerke, 2006). The point of departure of this debate is that, given that the prevailing trend in the agro-food system is the development of 'global value chains' dominated by retailers (Gereffi, 1994) and characterised by unequal distribution of power between the different actors, long distance trade and industrialised food, SFSCs are analysed and interpreted as an strategy to improve the resilience of the family farms with the support of concerned consumers, local communities and civil society organisations. Short food supply chains are increasingly taken into consideration by rural and food policies as a driver of change towards sustainability both in agro-food system and rural areas. For instance see European Commission conference on "Local agriculture and short food supply chains" (Brussels, 20/04/2012, http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/events/small-farmers-conference-2012_en.htm).

1.3 Meaning associated to SFSC

What do we understand by short food supply chains? It is a common specific characteristic of SFSCs that they are highly value-laden and meaningful for their participants. The direct relationship between the producer and the consumer involves construction of knowledge, value and meaning about the product and its provenance, production and consumption, the producer and the consumer themselves, rather than solely an exchange of a product (Ilbery & Maye, 2005; Marsden et al, 2000). The actual meaning of SFSC differs across various social groups, institutional settings and regional contexts. It involves certain characteristics of SFSCs and values associated to them. In general, SFSCs are perceived as re-establishing authenticity in production and consumption (Lamine, 2005; Wittman et al, 2008).

For LavkaLavka (St. Pietersburg, Russia) consumers "Short" means transparency and traceability - products come to consumers embedded with information about method of production, etc. On the project's website each farmer has a page describing farmer's biography, farming experience and ideology, production methods, location of the farm, etc. It is also possible for consumers to visit some of the farms as LavkaLavka tries to develop agro-tourism.

As indicated by the manager of Zolle (Roma), the main criteria for selecting the products are essentially three: the techniques of production used and the environmental health of the product, the proximity of the production site, the taste. "This is very important and inseparable from the place of production. In fact, we prefer not to sell a local product that does not also taste good (and it happens often!)".

Oregional (The Netherlands) talks about 'regional food'. They associate regional food with physical (50km range of Nijmegen) and social (transparency) aspects. They talk about regional (and not local) food because they want to offer their customers enough variety of products that requires sourcing from a regional instead of a local area. Key issues for them: Delicious and healthy; Seasonal; Freshness (within 24 hours from farm to plate); Supports local economy; Corporate social responsibility (reduction Co2, food miles); Transparency – know your farmer, know your food.

When purchasing food products, consumers may decide to engage into SFSC due to a diversity of reasons, but basically they are related to:

Origin of the product and identification of the farm and the farmer (name, location, etc.), as a compromise with the local and regional development. The concepts of locality and territory, closeness (lower distance and fuel requirements) and fewer emissions are on the basis of this issue, but also the ideas of cultural identity and food heritage are embedded.

Food quality features:

Hygienic and sanitary guarantees, especially after the food crisis outbreaks related to highly intensified production systems.

Healthier and safer composition, regarding the content with higher quality ingredients (less saturated fatty acids), less additives and preservatives.

Organoleptic features (taste, flavour, etc.)

Management practices (traditional, organic, extensive, pasture-based systems, etc.) and utilisation of inputs (usually lower utilisation of herbicides and pesticides) linked to more sustainable food systems.

Values and ethics (biodiversity, local breeds and vegetal varieties, GMO free, tradition, seasonality, landscape preservation, etc.).

Governance of the food system (i.e. transparency, food sovereignty, fair prices, etc.). It is assumed that the closer relationship established between producers and consumers in SFSCs, results in fairer prices and added value that returns back to the producer. This liaison results in empowerment of the farmers within the food system and a higher self-esteem of the rural and periurban dwellers.

Marsden et al (2000) use the concept of SFSC as an umbrella term and to go beyond the conventional and classical definitions of short food chain and the question of the distance, proposing that SFSC should show four defining characteristics:

1. the capacity to re-socialize or re-spatialize food, thereby allowing consumers to make value-judgements about the relative desirability of foods on the basis of their own knowledge, culture, experience or perceived imaginery.
2. The redefinition of the relationships between producer and consumers showing clear signals as to the origin of food.
3. The development of new relationships for new types of supply and demand with new criteria that link pricewith quality criteria and the construction of quality. Usually, this food is defined by the place and the farm where it has been produced, and serve to enhance the image of the farm and the territory as a source of quality foods.
4. Emphasis on the relationship between producer and consumer to construct value and meaning, rather than solely the type of product itself, and all these are summarized in the ability to engender some form of connection between the consumer and the food producer.

Table 1 Meanings attributed to SFSCs

Meaning of food in SFSCs	**Meaning of production-distribution system in SFSCs**
“fresh”, “diverse”, “organic”, “slow” , “quality”, “seasonal”, “traditional”, “local”, “regional”, “taste”, “delicious”, “food heritage”, “cultural identity”, “fair”, “sustainable”	“small scale”, “short”, “traditional”, “local”, “environmentally sustainable”, “embedded”, “fair”, “transparency”, “traceability”, “corporate social responsibility”, “local economy”, “lower emissions”, “rural-urban linkages”, “self-esteem” “social acknowledgement”, “prestige of food producers”, “sustainability”

1.4 Towards a definition

The two basic criteria needed to define SFSCs are physical and social proximity. As "short" indicates, in SFSC these distances are reduced in comparison to conventional food chains.

As seen is the preceding section, SFSCs is often associated to other concepts such as "local food", "alternative food chains", "local food systems", "direct sales" etc. However, evidence shows that these are different concepts. For example, although "short" may be a necessary condition to identify many of these types, not necessarily is "short" linked to "local", if we consider 'fair trade' schemes. There is therefore a need to identify criteria to delimitate the concept of SFSC.

Physical distance refers to the distance of transportation (or food miles) (Pretty et al, 2005; Hogan & Thorpe, 2009) of a product from the place of production to the point of sale. Coley et al, 2009 propose that this distance should be extended to the distance between the place of production of other inputs (e.g. pesticides, animal feed).

Some SFSC initiatives have set exact distances (or radiuses) or territorial boundaries as a benchmark to qualify for shortness.

According to the definition adopted by the U.S. Congress in the 2008 Food, Conservation, and Energy Act (2008 Farm Act), the total distance that a product can be transported and still be considered a "locally or regionally produced agricultural food product" is less than 400 miles from its origin, or it has to remain within the State in which it is produced.

In England, CPRE has promoted a definition of local food as "food produced, grown and processed within 30 miles of the store". This distance has also been adopted by a number of UK large retail chains including Waitrose, Asda, Booths and The Cooperative. Tesco uses a county or neighbouring county definition.

The UK National Farmers Retail and Markets Association (FARMA) has developed this definition into a set of certification criteria for farmers' markets to protect their integrity. It uses 30 miles as the ideal radius, but this can be stretched to 50 miles for larger cities, or coastal or remote regions, with 100 miles as the maximum recommended.

There are also private initiatives that consider a reference figure for an acceptable distance for local food (i.e. Willem&Drees in the Netherlands establishes local from within a circle of 40 kilometers from the supermarket, although it depends on the availability of the products).

FARMA also recognises distinct geographical areas such as counties and National Parks.

However, due to regional and cultural diversity of food systems there is no universal definition possible that would define the optimal physical distance of SFSCs. So in practice their metrical and physical boundary interpretations vary. Nevertheless, geographical proximity and location matter, as "short" is first of all perceived as something that is comparatively close physically and/or located in and grown in a certain region or a locality.

Social distance (proximity) in formal terms finds expression as the number of intermediaries between producer and consumer. In SFSCs, this number equals zero or very few (often one, but no more than two). In the latter case, intermediaries have to connect, rather than disconnect producers with consumers. Therefore, in addition to the number of intermediaries, it is crucial to take into account the qualitative face of the relationship, so in all cases, the amount of information about the product transferred to the consumer is expected to be increased in SFSCs.

Reducing the number of intermediaries between production and consumption has been also a widespread strategy of large commercial food distribution in the context of globalization (Sevilla et al., 2012). Usually this strategy does not guarantee neither putting producers and consumers into a more direct contact and closer sort of relationship, nor offering better prices to any of them. Therefore, by integrating retail and wholesale functions and establish contact with both production and consumption, large commercial distribution companies consolidate their strategic power (Burch and Lawrence, 2007).

On the other hand, there can be the case of certain farmers' cooperatives that sell their products to final consumers through shops managed by cooperatives of consumers. According to the number of intermediaries, this could be envisaged as a "long" food supply chain. Therefore, although the number of intermediaries is important in the definition of SFSC, it should not be the main factor.

Given these examples, it is important to highlight that social proximity implies the capacity of the chain to establish a channel of communication between producers and consumers, that give producers the possibility to control information given to final consumers and to receive feedback from them, regarding not only the name of the producer, food quality features or farming practices but also the ethical and social values of the process. Then, the consumer can make connections and associations with the society and territory involved (Marsden et al., 2000).

The direct interaction between producers and consumers in many SFSCs brings about more intangible social proximity aspects such as: mutual knowledge and respect of each other, trust, solidarity and compromise between producer and consumer, acknowledgment of the quality features of the food product and the conditions of production, ethics and values, (re)connection with traditions and identities, collective civic engagement in the local food system, intensity and directionality of informationflows, and balance of power between the actors.

In many cases, SFSCs increase the possibility for the consumer to make informed choices and increase food sovereignty. Therefore, SFSCs allow consumers and producers opening wider dimensions than those strictly limited to food production-distribution-consumption practices and become engaged together in new forms of food citizenship or civic food networks (Renting et al., 2012).

Reduced distances have implications on the organisation of food supply chains. The developed mutual commitment and trust between producers and consumers often substitute or reduce the need for formal confirmation of certain qualities materialised in forms of certificates and labels (Lamine, 2005). However, this also can make SFSCs vulnerable to misuse and its customers to deception.

Table 2 Examples of definitions of SFSCs

Author	Definition	Criteria of definition
Slow food	A short food supply chain is created when producers and final consumers realize they share the same goals, which can be achieved by creating new opportunities that strengthen local food networks. It is an alternative strategy enabling producers to regain an active role in the food system, as it focuses on local production - decentralized regional food systems that minimize the number of steps involved and the distance travelled by food (food miles). Source:http://www.earthmarkets.net/pagine/eng/pagina.lasso?-id_pg=2	Governance, locality, the number of intermediaries, physical distance
French Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry	Commercialisation of agricultural products through direct selling or indirect selling when only one intermediary is involved. Source: http://agriculture.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/100809-lettreCircuitsCourts.pdf.	Number of intermediaries
European Network for Rural Development	„… the definition of local food networks and short supply chains is not only focused on the distance between production and sale of the product, but also the number of links in the food supply chain, with the goal being to reduce these as much as possible – the shortest option being direct sales from the producer. In other words, short supply chain means reducing the number of intermediaries who are necessary to deliver the final product to the consumer." Source: R. Peters (ed.) (2012) Local Food and Short Supply Chains, *EU Rural Review* N°12.	Number of intermediaries and physical distance

SFSCs represent alternative type of governance and organisation of food chains. Many of them are bottom-up initiatives in which producers and consumers, who are often passive and subordinated participants in conventional global chains, become influential and active actors as owners of these chains who exert power and control in them. The role of territory evokes the embeddedness of SFSCs in local territorial resources and its contribution to territorial development (see Chapter2).

1.5 Criteria for classifications

On the base of the criteria outlined above, a great variety of SFSCs can be identified and various classifications or typologies developed. Such classifications are useful for a more systematic exploration of SFSC and development and implementation of necessary support measures. The EC IMPACT project (Marsden et al, 2000; Renting et al, 2003) proposed three main types of short food chains on the basis of the number of intermediaries, physical distance and organisational arrangements:

1. *Face-to-face SFSCs* in which a consumer purchases a product directly from the producer/processor on a face-to-face basis and authenticity and trust are mediated through personal interaction (e.g. on-farm sales, farm shops, farmers' markets).

2. *Proximate SFSCs* which extend reach beyond direct interaction and are essentially delivering products which are produced and retailed within the specific region (or place) of production. Consumers are made aware of the 'local' nature of the product at the point of retail (e.g. consumers' cooperatives, community supported agriculture).
3. *Spatially extended SFSCs* where value and meaning laden information about the place of production and producers is transferred to consumers who are outside of the region of production itself and who may have no personal experience of that region (e.g. certification labels, restaurants, public food procurement to catering services for institutions).

The case studies analysed within the Foodlinks project belong to:

- 9 to the Face to Face initiatives (many box schemes of different size, farmers market, collective farm shop),
- 4 to proximate SFSCs (several channels) and
- 4 to spatially extended (linked to farmers associations or specialised wholesaler for gastronomy).

Many box schemes as part of a Community Supported Farm Initiatives deliver mainly fresh and seasonal products (often also organic) from their farms directly to consumers or to deposits in a town.

For example the Birkenhof Farm Dairy (in Switzerland) offers a diverse range of fresh local milk products (including some organic products) and pig meat of an old breed to local shops (no supermarkets), canteens and restaurants, households and on local markets all within a range of 20 km. The initiative Brin d'Herbe near Rennes (France), where 20 farmers run 2 shops in the town periphery offering seasonal mostly organic fresh products.
The CROC project (Chaffotte & Chiffoleau, 2007) found it useful to distinguish between individual and collective, direct and indirect (with one intermediary) SFSCs. The European Network for Rural Development in their report on SFSCs have identified three types of SFSCs on the basis of their individual or collective organisation and initiators (producers and consumers): Direct sales by individuals, Collective direct sales, Partnerships of producers and consumers (Peters, 2012).
According to the report elaborated by EHNE, a farmer´s union of the Basque Country, Spain (Mundubat, 2012) SFSC can be classified on the basis of the level of compromise (low, medium and high) that may be adopted either by producers or consumers into nine categories.

Table 3 - Short Food Supply Chains classified on the basis of level of compromise adepte by producers and consumers

		Producers

	Level of compromise	Low	Medium	High
Consumers	Low	Supermarket of organic food	Shop purchasing directly from producers	On-farm sales Farmer's shop
	Medium	Cooperative of consumers		Box-schemes
	High	Cooperative of consumers managed by consumers		Cooperative of consumers managed by consumers and producers

Chapter 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSCs

2.1 Introduction

Interest in SFSCs is growing due to their potential to contribute to more sustainable food systems, rural development and healthier communities. Chapter 1 listed some common characteristics of SFSCs, but also exposed the great diversity in SFSCs which are often operating in very different social, economic, political and geographical contexts. These differences between SFSCs mean that no common description of the sustainability impacts of SFSCs can be provided, as they vary from chain to chain. The three common pillars of sustainability (economic, social and environmental) themselves cover both complimentary and conflicting issues complicating an overall analysis even further. Nevertheless, evidence shows that both close physical and close social proximity often have favourable impacts on the sustainability of products from SFSCs. On the basis of evidence from scientific literature, reports, expert opinion and practice, we have analysed the diverse sustainability aspects of SFSCs in a systematic manner. We have categorised these aspects under the headings of "health and well-being", "environmental", "social" and "economic" sustainability and discuss the impact of physical and social proximity on each of these at individual, community and/or regional level.

2.2 Criteria to assess sustainability

2.2.1 Health and well-being

Reliable access to affordable, safe and nutritious food is essential to the food security, health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. There are numerous factors along the production chain (including environmental influences, agronomy, harvesting, processing, storage and transport) that determine a food product's safety and nutritional quality (Chahbazi & Grow, 2008; Edwards-Jones, 2010; Frith, 2007). It is hard to separate out the individual effects of each of these factors in each particular food chain, but there are several characteristics of SFSCs that show potential for better quality products.

In some regions, SFSC chains offer a more diverse variety of products, especially fruit and vegetables, therefore contributing to nutritional diversity, food security and balanced diets (Lamine, 2005) although this may be heavily dependent on season (Edwards-Jones, 2010). Overall, the evidence is limited in quantity and quality regarding the effect of SFSCs on increased access to affordable healthy food. SFSCs including farmers markets (Freedman et al, 2011; Ruelas et al, 2012) and those where consumers participate in growing or producing food themselves, such as Grow-Your-Own (GYO) (Corrigan, 2011; Kortwright & Wakefield, 2011; Wakefield et al., 2007), have been shown to increase aspects of the access to healthy food, in particular fruit and vegetables . However, several SFSCs specialise in luxury high fat or high sugar products thus also increasing exposure to foods which are less healthy (Rose et al., 2008).

A wide range of evidence shows that SFSCs increase knowledge about food amongst consumers and lead to the adoption of a healthier diet, particularly with regard to fruit and vegetables, in a range of social groups but especially school children. However, there is also evidence that SFSCs can lead to less healthier diets due to limitations in the supply of a varied range of foods (McCormack et al, 2010; O'Hara, 2011; Page, 2012; Robinson-O'Brien et al, 2009; Rose et al, 2008; Saltmarsh et al, 2011).

Products in SFSCs often travel shorter distances, are sold fresher and therefore have no or less need to contain preservatives or be extensively processed. Shorter duration of transportation and storage also reduces damage and spoilage, whilst a reduced time between harvesting and purchase may prevent nutrient loss (Frith, 2007). SFSC products are more often harvested when ripe and with less mechanical intrusion which may both improve their nutritional qualities. Yet in general, there is insufficient evidence to argue that SFSCs offer food that differs nutritionally from food from elsewhere (Edwards-Jones et al, 2008; Lindgren, 2007) or that there is a difference in microbial food safety. General sanitary and hygiene regulations provide the guarantee of food safety standards in SFSCs just like any other food chain. There is an effect on nutritional health as a result of improved diet for some SFSCs (see above). GYO activities can also increase physical activity levels (Hawkins et al, 2011; van den Berg et al, 2010). Pollution of GYO produce (through contaminated soil or air) can be a problem in SFSCs in urban environments in some cases (Leake et al, 2009; Saumel et al, 2012).

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and GYO activities have been shown to improve mental health and wellbeing, whereas a few different forms of SFSCs can contribute to social inclusion due to the social proximity between producer and consumer (Hale et al, 2011; Hawkins et al, 2011; McCormack et al, 2010; Oglethorpe, 2009; Perez-Vasquez et al, 2005; Wakefield et al, 2007). The transparency within SFSCs contributes to trust by consumers that more subjective food characteristics contributing to wellbeing – such as freshness, diversity, flavour etc – are upheld. Some SFSCs have internal regulations that guarantee certain negotiated qualities of products, f.i. some schemes may guarantee that the products are fresh and that they have not been transported long distances or conserved too long (Lamine, 2005).

The potential for healthier food in SFSC is created by both formal and informal measures, but cannot always be fully reached due to trade-offs that need to be made with other characteristics.

2.2.2 Environmental sustainability

SFSCs are not by definition more environmentally friendly than conventional, longer supply chains. To that regard, the impact of production methods, processing, packaging, distribution, cooling, transport and waste in each chain should be considered. However, SFSCs do present advantages in environmental sustainability in some cases, for instance when the use of fossil fuel or packaging is minimised, or when there is the adoption of pesticides free / less intensive methods of production.

The close physical proximity between producer and consumer within SFSCs means that the distance over which products are transported is often shorter, but this is not necessarily always the case. The transport distance regularly has to be unwillingly increased due to logistics, in particular a lack of local facilities such as storage, packaging and processing plants, flower mills, slaughter houses or retail outlets (see also Chapter 4). Although this affects the closeness of physical proximity, it does not necessarily impact negatively on environmental sustainability. The concept of "food miles" (distance transported) is now seen as an unrepresentative measure of environmental sustainability of food supply systems (Desrochers & Shimizu, 2008; Edwards-Jones, 2010; Smith et al, 2005) and more holistic approaches using a range of indicators for environmental sustainability are currently favoured. Although these indicators are not yet generally agreed upon, a key factor is the amount of non-renewable resource used for processing, transport and storage (Edwards-Jones, 2010; King et al, 2010; Mariola, 2008; Oglethorpe, 2009; O'Hara, 2011). Many SFSC use less packaging than supermarkets what makes them use less resources.For example plastic packaging for bread or yoghurt in supermarkets travels huge distances, whereas in many SFSC bread is sold without packaging and yoghurt in reusable glass containers. In order to use reusable glass containers in an efficient way, physical distances should not be too long - this is a potential of SFSC (Neugebauer W., 2003, Speiseplan und Transportaufkommen, http://www.arbeiterkammer.at/bilder/d13/Verkehr21.pdf).

This of course may vary greatly between different SFSCs.
According to Gustavson et al (2011) food losses in Europe and North America amount up to about 280 to 300 kg per year. and person. About 2/3 of these occur in production and retail due to quality standardisation etc. These can be reduced substatially in SFSCs. Moreover concerned consumers with more knowledge and attention to food can be assumed to produce less food wates on household level.
Efficiency is key and, as individual supplies of small quantities are characteristic to many SFSCs, resource consumption per product is often increased compared with

larger scale, conventional chains, particularly when fuel consumption of consumers' transport is included which is often higher for SFSCs (Coley et al, 2009; Edwards-Jones, 2010; King et al, 2010; Mariola, 2008). However, environmentally friendly transport solutions are used by some SFSCs (e.g. in Italy, Zolle box scheme uses a mixed “van-bicycle” delivery formula). Likewise, inititatives involving people at neighbourhood level allows avoidance of the use of cars.

The length of time between harvest and sale (freshness, seasonality) plays an important role in the environmental impact of SFSCs as the energy used for storage can be a key factor in reducing their environmental sustainability (Edwards-Jones, 2010). It often also means less processing and packaging which saves energy and resources as well.

The close social proximity of SFSCs means that very often consumers will be informed about the method of production which is therefore generally expected to be highly sustainable in many respects. The same applies for most SFSCs where consumers are directly involved in the production, such as GYO. For this reason and the fact that growers selling via SFSCs are more environmentally conscious; many SFSCs deal with organic products or products which have similarly recognisable sustainability characteristics (e.g. pesticide free) (O'Hara, 2011). SFSC initiatives often rely on the attachment to nature and seasonal processes in agriculture, and they favour environmentally friendly practices. For instance, it is typically for box schemes to be organised around natural irregularities and the respect of natural metabolisms (Lamine, 2005). Many SFSCs contribute to agro-biodiversity as producers are keen to cultivate diverse varieties and raise traditional breeds. Moreover often they are local varieties, which are well adapted to local environment (In the case of Italian GAS, seasonality, respect of biodiversity, adoption of organic methods of production are central elements of the agreements between consumers and producers (Brunori et al., 2012).

Environmental benefits exceed the food chain and can favour broader territories and communities. SFSCs can potentially reconfigure the periurban landscapes, supporting multifunctional farming and creating a resistance to urban sprawl and degradation of periurban agricultural land. They can also provide new opportunities for survival and revitalisation to the agriculture of marginal rural areas (Brunori and Di Iacovo, 2012)
Many SFSCs can be considered as an expression of rising ecological citizenship (Seyfang, 2006) that manifests itself as active environmentally friendly life style, based on ethical considerations and values.
For instance, KaDzi initiative in Latvia is strongly driven by consumers’ ecological motivation to consume organic and local products.

Environmentally friendly practices are observed here all along the whole food-chain; they involve organic production methods, collective supplies, reduced food-miles, few packaging and repeated use of it. So, not only producers are organic, but also consumers are "green", and their ecological activism overpass food as many of them are members and/or take part in other ecological organizations and events.

2.2.3 Social sustainability and ethics

Social sustainability of SFSCs refers to their capacity to contribute to the equity or fairness among food chain actors, food security and the viability of local communities. It is much rooted in the trustful, fair and personal relations, solidarity and shared values between consumers and producers.
For instance, members of CSA KaDzi initiative stress the sense of community, collective identity and collective benefits that motivates and advances them.

The direct, single relationships between producers and consumers in SFSCs makes it easier to establish fairness. They facilitate consumers' understanding of the 'real' costs of agriculture and food production and their readiness to pay for products they know and trust, which in turn allows producers to receive a dignified income for their work (Renting et al, 2003; Brunori et al, 2011). Fairness involves not only fair price but also ethical recognition and appreciation of farmers' work – direct interaction and feedback from consumers increases farmers' belief that their work is necessary (Ka Dzi case, Straupe rural goods market, GAS San Zeno, Brin d'Herbe, Birkenhof Farm Dairy, etc.). Presumably, this adds to farmers' socio-psychological comfort and improves their self-esteem to keep on with farming. In addition, more fair power relations are established in SFSCs: from passive or subordinated food chain actors producers and consumers become active and equal owners and governors who establish rules, organise and control these food chains.

Besides social impacts at food-chain level, SFSCs also can contribute to revitalise local communities in multiple ways. The very values and meanings attributed to a product and its origin develop a sense of pride, social cohesion and belonging in a certain area and community (Peters, 2012). Many SFSCs put in value (traditional) local products, production and marketing methods and knowledge and consumption habits and therefore strengthen local culture and identities. SFSCs provide space for community member interactions thus strengthening their social capital in terms of networks, inclusion, knowledge and social cohesion.
For instance. Selbsternte (pick-yourself) initiative's plot in Austria serves also as a meeting and recreation point for local residents which has facilitated their communication and development of new networks, in which opinions, knowledge and information are exchanged (Vogl et al, 2004).

Especially some forms of collective “do it yourself” agriculture, like urban gardening fulfill more social integrative motives than food production in itself.
For instance the integrative and intercultural gardens in Germany and Austria (Müller 2007) provide social integration and empowerment of marginalised groups primarilly,but food production comes only secondary.
Often SFSCs also reconnect urban and rural territories and communities, creating new opportunities to meet their food, social and economic needs. The impact of certain SFSC in urban areas (such as regular farmers’ markets) goes beyond the mere commercial relationship and into a higher social cohesion of the population in these areas, which determines the education and sensibilization of the people, and even the sense of identity and security

2.2.4 Economic sustainability

Economic sustainability of SFSCs addresses such issues as competitiveness and economic viability of food chains and their actors, efficient use of and contribution to resources (including human ones), contributions to communities in terms of creation of jobs and income. Although there are variations among various SFSCs regarding their economic sustainability, several commonalities can be identified.

It is characteristic that especially small and medium farmers are involved in SFSCs. This stems from the fact that they are often less competitive in the conventional chains due to their higher costs of production (because of the lack of economies of scale and the different organisation of production processes) and the higher prices. In many cases these farms do not have easy access to the conventional channels also because of the inconsistency in their supply, in terms of volume, quality and/or continuity. Providing a fair access to the market, SFSCs represent a solution to increase economic viability of small and medium farms and processing companies. SFSCs are often developed as collective economic initiatives in response to aggravating disadvantageous market conditions, and therefore they “shorten” and strengthen links among local entrepreneurs and mobilize local resources in a synergetic manner (Schermer et al, 2006).

During the ‘80 Gilmar Pontel and Jamir Vigolo, small farmers of Antonio Prado, belonged to an association of young farmers promoted by the local priest, Pe. João Bosco Luiz Schio. After that a young farmer of the area died by intoxication of pesticides in 1986, the group started to work at a project to turn their farm into ‘ecological farming’. They created a cooperative, AECIA, and joined the network ‘ecovida’ through which they obtained organic (participatory) certification. They started to diversify, as they grew raspberries, grapes, caki, apples. In a first time the cooperative would not find retailers or wholesalers willing to recognize the difference of ecological production. Thanks to the initiative of Mrs Guazelli, an *activist with very influencial frends in Porto Alegre, a farmers' market was in the meanwhile open in Porto Alegre (200 km far) in 1990. The first time he went to the market, says Gilmar Pontel, he sold all his production in 9 hours.*

As there are fewer intermediaries in SFSCs, many of them, especially direct ones, provide producers with relatively high degree of independence in production and marketing decisions, lower overhead costs, and premium prices when compared to conventional retail and wholesale channels (Ruiz et al, 2010; Wittman et al, 2012).
Certain types of SFSCs in which consumers are engaged on the basis of long-term commitment reduce economic uncertainties related to variations in production and sales volumes. In box schemes, consumers pay in advance costs that are set beforehand, and producers are sure to sell their products at a given price (Brunori et al., 2011), including those non-standard products that would be discarded from conventional chains (Lamine, 2005). The latter contributes also to resource saving and reduces food waste.
SFSCs can contribute to (re-)vitalise local economies. As stated above, they preserve small and medium farms which are at the core of local rural economies (Rosset, 1999). SFSCs increase or help re-circulate community income and create new jobs (Wittman et al, 2012; Peters, 2012). SFSC help to sustain the knowledge and skills of many small food producers and processors (especially knowledge about local varieties). In addition, contributions of SFSCs to local economy may both boost agro-food sector and reach beyond it.

For instance, in Austrian Selbsternte (pick-your-own) plots, there are local organic gardeners, tool retailers and other providers who benefit from the demand of self-harvesters as well as the local farmer involved (Vogl et al, 2004). In Straupe rural goods market (Latvia), direct exchanges with consumers and among producers have encouraged farmers towards economic diversification and creativity: several of them have started processing on farm, many invented new products. Moreover, this market contributes also to local tourism development since the market has become a major object of tourists' interest.

In the meantime, operating in a SFSC often demands additional investments and/or special skills which may create barriers to economic success. Also competition with expanding supermarket chains, of which some started even with regional product lines and local deliveries in larger towns, put economic pressures on SFSCs.

2.2.5 Issues regarding sustainability

The evidence outlined above about sustainability of SFSCs is mostly based on single cases, studies that explore SFSCs without comparing them to conventional counterparts or research that details only one particular dimension of sustainability. In order to make overall conclusions about SFSCs in terms of their sustainability, these chains should be assessed systematically in their complexity and in a comparative manner (short versus conventional) in long-term. This is a challenging task, and there are few such analysis performed so far. The different pillars of sustainability and health are often complementary, but they can be also conflicting (Leat et al, 2011). Analysing the trade-offs between indicators representing the different dimensions of sustainability is an important challenge (for any food supply chain). Finding a way to represent such an analysis to consumers in an easily understood manner which enables them to make an quick but informed and evidence-based decision is an even greater dilemma.

Brin d'herbe (Rennes, FR) has established an external audit ("NESO") that controls a cluster of indicators against social, energy, environment and origin criteria. Consumers are involved in the audit process. They are repeated every 3-4 years. The results of the audits for each participating farm are communicated to consumers via leaflets in the shop. The labels for organic and non-organic products have different colours (green for organic and white for the others).

The most promising method for both of these seems to be the use of Principal Component Analysis, its representation in spider-diagrams, and the translation of these into simplified pictorial representations (Sustain, 2007; Barnes, 2012).
On the basis of our meta-analysis we can conclude that the degree of sustainability varies among different types of SFSCs, their products, locations etc. Also various participants in SFSCs may interpret sustainability differently and experience different impacts.

Chapter 3 ORGANISATIONAL PATTERNS SUITABLE FOR SFSC - OVERVIEW

3.1 Key questions

In general the section aims at answering the following questions:

- What are trends in the organisation of SFSCs?
- How can growth of SFSCs been managed properly?
- What are conditions and limiting/favouring factors for growth of SFSC?
- What are opportunities and risks for growth of or multiplying SFSCs?
- What growth is desirable and feasible?
- What are policy recommendations for different stakeholders?

3.2 Introduction

This chapter deals with organisational and growth issues of SFSCs. One of the key question is what growth of SFSCs is desirable and feasible? What does growth mean? Does it mean a bigger share in the food chain? Is growth limited to the individual case? Is it about expanding certain food systems characterised by short physical and social distance? Or is it understood more from a sociological point of view that niche drivers will get regime or even landscape drivers, in other words mainstream?

Certainly when we speak about growth, it is about conditions and implications for growth, even the trade-offs thereof. But it is not only about economics of scale it is often also about "social (human) scale". It will need reflections on how this growth should happen, e.g. larger or more operational units, most likely to lead to a higher market share of SFSCs.

However, some SFSCs will even limit their size/growth in order to remain operational and socially inclusive (see later).

Therefore we have also to consider what might be optimal organizational structures of different forms in different stages of development and contexts. In order to match all these aspirations we will speak rather of growth and development of SFSCs than on scaling up.

3.3 Organisation, growth and development of SFSCs: trends and context

Short food supply chains provide an alternative outlet for farmers. The most important benefits they give are a reduction of dependence on powerful actors in the chain and the possibility of a more direct relationship with consumers. Short food supply chains, in fact, give farmers a channel tailored to small (and sometimes inconstant) quantities and high/special quality, which are anyway appreciated on the market.

Once they are established, short food supply chains have low entry costs for farmers. Moreover, the setting up costs are considerably lower than other outlets and the costs can be distributed over a large number of actors. From organisational and governance aspect, in fact, SFSCs are at the basis of new forms of collective engagement of consumers, producers and other actors as "food citizens" within food networks. Various types of SFSCs presented in the Chapter 1 and explored more in detail in empirical studies (e.g. the 16 case studies analysed in the Food Links project and within specific sessions on "Civic Food Networks" at many recent conferences (Renting et al., 2012)) show similar organisational characteristics:

- Active engagement and cooperation of producers, consumers, other actors of civil society and also public sector;
- A small leader group of initiator(s);
- Network type of governance;
- Collective learning;
- Importance of Internet in organisation and performance of SFSCs.
- Good communication to involved consumers (co-producers) and clients.

One important organizational issue is the relationship that SFSCs establish with supermarkets. Although most SFSCs are 'alternative' to supermarkets, some adopt the 'short' formula (short physical distance, reduced social distance, information about producers and values) but involve supermarkets as well.

Among our cases, Willem&Drees has specialized as intermediary between farmers and supermarkets, delivering local food to local supermarkets ('local for local'). The company was started with a dream: to deliver local food to the supermarkets, with a convenience for the consumers. According to Willem and Drees local is a farm from within a circle of 40 kilometers from the supermarket, but local also depends on the availability of the products. At the moment Willem&Drees are mainly active in the middle and southern part of the Netherlands and are slowly expanding their activities into the western part of the country.

Once established, farmers often see SFSCs as a component of mixed marketing strategies: they deliver both through short and conventional market channels (Villa of Roses Ukraine; Straupe rural goods market). This would mean that, in many farmers' eyes, there is a complementarity of both types of food supply chains. This mixed strategy can put some competition stress on SFSCs, especially the newborn ones. It is for this reason that some SFSCs we have studied ask their producers not to sell to supermarkets, as in the case of Birkenhof (Ch).

3.3.1 Internal factors and challenges influencing growth of SFSC?

Although many SFSCs are comparatively small-scale and remain of very local character, in general the sector experiences dynamic growth that is characterised by the diversity of SFSC forms, spring up of new initiatives and multiplication, maturation and consolidation of the existing ones. It happens at interaction of various internal and external context factors.

The process of growth in SFSCs can be characterised through their specific internal developments and changes in different phases of development, e.g. process of professionalization, organisational structures, power relations, knowledge management, etc.

Although economics are always important (e.g. profit) other factors might be important reasons for participation such as self-determination and self-esteem of the actors (in particular farmers), as mentioned in several case studies (e.g. Meet box scheme Alava ES; Uagalur Food from the land ES).

In general, internal developments of SFSCs follow a certain organisational life cycle. As known from management literature, marketing initiatives evolve through several development stages, which have specific characteristics, outlined by Schmid et al. 2004a in a guide for organic marketing initiatives:

- Pre-start-phase: nucleus of ideas, network building, idealistic unpaid work, etc.
- Start-up phase: often strong role of initiator, change in professionalism, higher investments, etc.
- Maturing phase: reorientation, strategic turning points, often enlargement of network and change of initiators' role.

Key factor for the growth and development of SFSCs are: the vision and role of the founder(s), the ability of the core actors to adapt their strategies objectives to changing consumer trends, market and political environments during different phases of development. Also, maintaining motivation of members and other internal and external cohesion factors are major challenges to achieving not only economic, but also wider social, environmental and political goals. As known from the projects OMIaRD and COFAMI on farmer's marketing initiatives, it is important that such iniatives are improving their supply policy (in sufficient quantity and quality), keeping logistic costs to a minimum, and are not relying not too much on public funding. A final key success factor is networking; along the supply chain and also in the region (Schmid, 2004b, Schermer *et al*., 2006). SFSCs through their close contact to consumers and, in many cases, the sharing of sustainability goals with other societal groups, can better address these challenges.

However what is often lacking is sufficient knowledge in marketing and food processing. In particular small SFSCs have often little financial resources to buy in this expertise from outside. Therefore it is a need to offer also training and coaching possibilities for such initiatives, in particular in the start phase.

3.3.2 External conditions and limiting/favouring factors for growth of SFSC?

The development and growth of SFSCs have always been influenced by external factors, both changing agricultural policies and consumer behaviour and fragmentation. As Schermer (2012) showed for Austria in a paper at the IFSA 2012 Symposium, the changing consumer-producer have to be seen into the context of wider societal changes encouraging or hampering the various approaches over time. Thus a picture of changing, and partly progressing consumer-producer relations evolves. Summing up the changing consumer – producer relations during the last decades in Austria, we can distinguish four distinct phases (each decade roughly). Different actors and civic networks shape each phase:

- 1st phase: regional developers in connection with third world activists are actors with a very ideological approach, supported by political actors of the ruling socialist party.
- 2nd phase: the federal ministry of agriculture and later the chamber of agriculture who aim to assist farmers in making direct links with individual consumers.
- In the 3rd phase retailers become the dominating actors together with the organic farmers associations.
- Recently a 4th phase with newly emerging civic food networks linking critical consumers and (post) organic farmers can be observed.

A cycle of changing consumer relations from being very close in the first phase, becoming more and more distanced during the second and third phase to recently emerging re-connections. The major goals have changed correspondingly along the cycle. However the four phases are not strictly consecutive, there are certain features practices and institutions remaining from each phase even at present. Some of the early food coops are still existing, albeit in a more professionalized form, but still maintaining some core values as the case studies conducted in the frame of the EU-Project "Facilitating alternative Agro-food Networks, FAAN" demonstrate (Karner et al. 2010). The same applies to various forms of direct marketing and to the organic brands in the supermarkets. This leads to a diversified landscape with a varying degree of cooperation between producer and consumers (Schermer, 2012).

As described in Chapter 4, regulatory framework and public support systems may facilitate or hamper SFSCs. In some countries farmers profit from lower VAT Tax than other market actors (e.g. the collective farm shop of Brin d'Herbe in FR).
However, the existing regulatory framework tends to increase disproportionally various costs for small producers (see chapter 2 on regulations).
Another factor is market opportunities or constraints. SFSCs emerge in response to various market situations, which often involve limited access to conventional market

channels, their inconvenience and limited, unsatisfactory to certain consumers, food supply. Although SFSCs most often take the market niches of special quality products they face competition from the conventional food chains, which, on one hand, propose cheaper products, on the other, tend to absorb also local and traditional food (e.g. supermarkets misusing the label "products from my farm").

SFSCs face also common problems of rural and agricultural development: outmigration that reduces available local labour, consumers and also producers, increasing pressure on land due to urbanization.

Growth in SFSCs is more subjected to seasonal variations as they often follow natural seasonality of products. For example, in the case of farmer markets, the major challenges for growth as reported by Wittman et al (2008) are their accessibility in terms of locations, hours, supply and variety, competition from the conventional food system, pricing and availability of products, declining number of farmers, pressure on farmland from urban growth, escalating land prices, labour shortages, increasing production costs, a limited growing season, unpredictable weather patterns, declining processing facilities, lack of research and development, and a changing regulatory climate.

3.4 What are opportunities and risks for growth of or multiplying SFSCs?

There are several organisational aspects which need more attention, when analysing the growth of SFSCs. Growth is challenging for many SFSCs as it demands appropriate knowledge and management. Several more complex and extended SFSCs with different sales channels and a larger number of consumers indicate that through the process of growing much more efforts in communication are needed (e.g. Uagalur Food from the Land ES; Zolle IT).

In several regions there are good opportunities for SFSCs to grow with delivering local food to public canteens and schools (e.g. Original NL, Corazzano Farm IT, Uagalur Food from the land ES, Le Bon Repas FR). Also the potential of tourism by delivering hotels with local food is an opportunity, but which until now only few SFSCs have used (e.g. Bio vom Berg AT).

- *Distribution costs*

Some SFSCs have faced logistic problems, which not always could be solved through voluntary work of consumers willing to be directly involved (e.g. GAS San Zeno IT). In some cases it was solved that new initiatives emerged (e.g. new local CSAs or box schemes (other CSAs beside Panier Bio in Rennes FR).

In other cases the SFSC has been more centralized to be more efficient. However the distribution costs remain a key factor for the economic success of SFSCs, mainly due to the small quantities transported. Innovative solutions have to be found also with the aid of information technology for better planification of the collection from farms and the distribution. In some cases these costs could be reduced through the collaboration with a regional wholesaler (e.g. SpeiseLokal AT).

- *Search for optimal size and appropriate growth*

Growth can also undermine the essence of SFSCs and their advantages rooted in direct relations between producers and consumers. In a paper "Does growth hurt?" by R. Milestad (2012) based on two box schemes in Sweden and Austria of different sizes the impact of growing food networks on the resilience of farms have been reported, showing that in some cases the growth has led to changes in the network and the relationship with consumers. In the Austrian case producers that could provide larger quantities became more important in the network than small local producers and could therefore stay well in contact with end consumers. On the other hand, diversified and/or small-scale producers had to make an effort to find new connections with consumers. The other side of such growth might give an opportunity to have better access to public procurement, contract growing, pooling arrangements and regional clustering.
For several cases here is a risk that a too strong growth might damage the direct links between producers and consumers and potentially threatening values of authenticity and inclusion, education, and economic advantages (Wittman et al, 2012).

For example the Brin d'Herbe collective farm shop in France will not take up more farmers as this would rise the complexity of the SFSC. The Box Scheme GAS San Zeno and Birkenhof Dairy in CH wants rather to reduce the size of the operation to keep it at a human size and to avoid high new investments.

As a conclusion from the analysis of the cases we can see that there is a search to find the optimum size for each SFSCs, which is still economic but maintains the social nearness to consumers and costumers. Often this size is also determined by the available financial resources for investments in buidlings or human resources.

For example Birkenhof Dairy in CH cannot affort to pay highly qualified and expensive cheese-maker(s) without a much higher turn-over and profit, which is only possible with high investments.

This shows that further growth of SFSC enterprises is not a simple linear process. It is about making strategic decisions what size fits best to the operation both economically and socially. Some SFSCs have decided to further grow with more sales channels (including public procurement) supported by more communication. Other SFSCs decided not to growth more or only in a qualitative way. Instead of more volume and more costumers rather to go for more added value on the farm through product diversification or on farm processing (e.g. Corazzano farm, IT).

Often the collaboration with other local farmers is searched and intensified, which allows a better specialisation and a diversification of the supply through other products.

3.4.1. Adaption/appropriation to the current dominating food regime

Another issue to look at when considering growth of SFSCs is the increasing interest about local products from the side of conventional chains. Schermer (2012) showed how different alternative food networks, including SFSCs, go through an adaptation/appropriation process, e.g. through uptake in dominating structures at a meso-scale either by supermarkets (e.g. local and regional food) or transformation into agricultural policies (organic food, farmers markets). Originally alternative initiatives loose part of their alternative characteristics through professionalization and regulation pressures, but persist with their core values. What will happen with the new wave of SFSCs /civic food networks? Evidences seem to show that these initiatives are aware of this risk and are engaged in the search of really innovative organizational models (e.g. Bio Alpin and SpeisLokal in AT, Birkenhof Dairy in CH).

3.5 Knowledge gaps and challenges

For a more thorough notion on the process and impacts of growth and development on SFSCs it is necessary to gain more knowledge (partly taken from Darrot, 2011) about:

- those SFSCs initiatives which have failed.
- skills and knowledge needed of the main SFSCs actors (e.g. about innovative marketing and communication systems and organizational models).
- participating consumers' involvement in terms of their motives, perception, willingness to pay or directly engage, recognition, etc.
- social impacts of growth of SFSCs, e.g. on overload of work for farmers through diversification.
- possibilities to reduce distribution costs (with and without growth) and additional investments costs (economies of scale versus new models of cost sharing).
- innovative models of cooperation on local level with other farms or societal groups.
- impacts of different governance systems (including the role of local authorities) and funding schemes (initial funding versus continuous funding).
- the potential of public procurement for SFSCs.
- the use of territorial and quality branding.

In the analysis the local and regional context of SFSCs have always to be taken into account.

Chapter 4 Short food supply chains and policy

4.1 Key questions

- Why, and to what extent, can SFSCs deserve support from public policies?
- What are the support policies that can be mobilized to develop short food supply chains?
- To what extent, and at what level, does regulation create obstacles to the development of SFSC?
- What strategies should complement regulation in order to exploit the potential of SFSCs?

4.2 SFSCs as targets of policy support

"Local food systems provide many societal benefits – such as environmentally more sustainable cultivation methods, high-quality and fresh food, community engagement, re-linkages between rural and urban areas, local economic development. Consumers gain awareness of those societal benefits through greater proximity to producers, thus developing knowledge and trust as a basis for their economic relationship. Often these benefits are integral to the practices of a Local Food System." (Karner et al., 2010).

As they contribute directly and indirectly to social, environmental and economic sustainability, many SFSCs deserve support from public policies. At the same time, if adequately supported, SFSCs can represent significant policy tools, as catalyst for broader processes of change in attitudes and practices around food. To that regard we can for instance consider the following relations:

- *SFSCs and food policies:* the inherent SFSCs character of reconnecting production and consumption makes them play a central role in the definition and implementation of local food strategies aimed at meeting city dwellers' needs for quality food as well as in the reconstruction of a culture of food.
- *SFSCs and environmental policies:* SFSCs could be instrumental to policies addressed to support/reward virtuous practices of food production-distribution-consumption (e.g. low input/low carbon emission/low energy consumption methods of productions; use of recyclable packaging; optimisation of transport, etc.).
- *SFSCs and rural policies:* the spread and consolidation of SFSCs represent an opportunity for the revitalisation of local communities and for the valorisation of human and natural resources of rural areas, also considering the capacity to recreate social and economic linkages with the urban contexts; their role should so assume a central role in rural policies definition and implementation;
- *SFSCs and urban policies:* SFSCs can represents the way to reconnect rural and urban areas or, as said above, to recreate spaces of direct relationship with food production within the urban spaces.

4.3 Supporting short food supply chains

There are many support tools already in place at European level. Many of them fall within the second pillar of CAP. SFSC actors are eligible to various support measures, a considerable part of which is financial support to investments, certification, research, training, advice.

Family S. near Wels in Upper Austria runs an organic farm with 50 ha. Their main activities are big breeding, lying hens and geese fattening. They always sold part of their products from the farm gate. In 2008 they built a farm shop. 1/3 of their investment costs were subsidised from Axis 3 (diversification) and Axis 4 (Leader).

The Austrian Ministry of Agriculture, in cooperation with the Chamber of Agriculture, runs the program "Bildungsoffensive Direktvermarktung" (Educational offensive on direct sales), in order to ensure good training for farmers that sell their products directly to consumers. This program includes for example trainings for teachers and trainers.

As short supply chains are the product of a collective endeavour and a multi-actor process, the effectiveness of public policies is higher when support measures are framed into broader territorial and collective projects. Most interesting examples of successful public support come from projects aligning short food supply chains with actions related to the development of local products, creation of thematic tourist routes and public procurement.

The project "Natur-Kulinarium" is a cooperation of three Austrian partners and one Hungarian partner and aims at developing touristic offers based on nature and local culinary. It is financed by 85 % from the ERDF and 15 % from national budgets.(http://www.natur-kulinarium.eu/)

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperate/cooperation/crossborder/index_en.cfm

The regional and county authorities pay the Défis Ruraux (A CIVAM from the North of France - Normandie) to organize meals and refund schools the difference (capped at €1) between the cost of "sustainable" meals and ordinary meals. The funding bodies pay for 220 two-hour workshops in a school year, 150 in 11–15 schools and 70 in 15–18 schools or colleges. After a general presentation, pupils are given worksheets to fill in as they circulate between five activities designed to be entertaining and thought-provoking and to develop critical faculties.

LEADER and National Rural Networks have a key role in supporting SFSCs. LEADER is a method to achieve the objectives of the EU's rural development policy through bottom-up implementation rather than the traditional top-down approach. The LEADER approach cedes a high degree of control to local partnerships, encouraging them to design development strategies, foster innovation, promote co-operation and build networks.

The Scottish Rural Development Programme has facilitated local action on short supply chains. This has been done largely through the Scottish National Rural Network (SNRN) and the LEADER programme. Every year the SNRN agrees a programme of activities with the Scottish Government that look to stimulate new ways of working with others, with activities taking place at the appropriate scale.

Examples include: I) visiting businesses and projects: in 2012 SNRN members visited the award winning Kirkmichael Village Shop to discuss issues, experiences and ideas with each other on how a community owned shop, post office, petrol station, café and exhibition space can operate in a remote rural area at a time when rural services are depleting. II) Hosting events: in 2011 SNRN hosted a Taste for Tourism event in the Cairngorms to provide opportunities for networking and collaboration between food & drink businesses and tourism businesses in rural Scotland. The event was organised in partnership with Cairngorms National Park and Scotland Food & Drink.

LEADER has also been instrumental in stimulating action on short supply chains, examples include:

Argyll and Bute Agricultural Forum employ a development manager to deliver actions identified within the local Agricultural Strategy. The Forum has initiated training events, studies and regional lobbying initiatives. The Forum has also secured further funding to become involved in a transnational LEADER project which is aiming to promote five regions across Europe as good food destinations.

Savour the Flavours is an initiative led by food and drink businesses supporting producers, retailers and manufacturers in Dumfries and Galloway to grow and develop; by encouraging chefs and the wider hospitality sector to use local food and drink; by encouraging local people and visitors to embrace Dumfries & Galloway produce and by helping children learn about local produce.

The innovative and successful 'Ceanglaichean Croitearachd - Crofting Connections' project teaches sustainable farming skills to young people and reconnects them with their crofting heritage. The flourishing project supported by a number of funding partners including a number of LAGs. School pupils are participating through a range of crofting related activities to learn about the connections between food, health and the environment. They learn about practical crofting skills from experienced crofters, growing their own food, cooking traditional recipes, the relevance of crofting and the links with Gaelic and their cultural heritage.

Local Produce - this is a project between Tarbert & Skipness Community Trust and North/South Skane in Sweden allowing the exchange of experiences on topics such as local food and drink production, logistics and transport, horticulture, cultivation, and employment and training opportunities through rural skills. The project builds on work relating to local food production that has been done across the Kintyre area by co-ordinating the sharing of experience, skills and resources between local food projects in Tarbert, Campbeltown, Islay and Gigha and Skane in Sweden.

The implementation of specific policies should require an assessment of the potential in terms of SFSCs contribution to development goals. For example, sustainability assessment should be carried out, as not necessarily short is sustainable. Attention should also be devoted to avoiding excess of demand on supply. For example, financing farmers' markets infrastructures without an appropriate analysis of the production environment could put stress on the production system itself, encouraging sourcing from outside and the transformation of farmers' markets into more conventional retail markets.

4.4 Removing regulatory barriers

Food production and distribution is a highly regulated field. Within this frame, SFSCs are subjected to the whole body of agri-food system regulation. It involves rules of hygiene, food health, standards, taxation, certification, trading etc. Often, regulation is tailored to industrial companies, and this represents an objective constraint to development of short food supply chains. For this reason, *"Public sector authorities face the challenge of not only needing to identify ways to support the development of the sector, but also having to refocus their role from legislative enforcer to legislative modifier"* (Peters, 2012: 19). In many cases it has been shown that it is possible to carry out an adaptation of regulations at the level of EU Member States within the same European regulatory framework. Local authorities have a very important role, as they can use their unique position to remove at least in part barriers, to facilitate the development of networks and develop opportunities for the valorisation of local products (Peters, 2012).

Straupe market (Latvia) was the second established regular farmer market in the country and as a pioneer it had to face some constraining shortcomings of the regulations at the time. It has adapted itself to some rules and incited changes in other. A problem the market faced soon after the opening was that the regulation of that moment allowed to organize only eight market days per year for this type of markets. The organizers took the initiative and together with the cook of Slow Food movement mentioned above and a coordinator of another farmer market approached the Ministry of Agriculture with propositions to change the existing regulations. The minister of agriculture agreed that the existing regulations were out of date and farmer markets should be supporte.

The Scottish Government has recently launched (Dec 2012) a review of farm regulation that potentially impact on farmers and land managers. The areas covered are "Agricultural support", "Protection of the environment legislation", "Animal health and Welfare", "Food and Feed law" and "Employment legislation". For further info, please see http://www.farmregulation-doingbetter.org/

4.4.1. Case study - The implementation of the hygiene regulation

The relevant hygiene regulations at European level are associated in the General Food Law - Reg. (EC) No. 178/2002 - and in the Food Hygiene Package - Reg. (EC) No. 852/2004, Reg. (EC) No. 853/2004, Reg. (EC) No. 854/2004 -. The first aims at ensuring a high level of food safety and at harmonising existing national requirements in order to ensure the free movement of food and feed in the EU. The Food Hygiene Package is a complementary set of rules to tighten and harmonise EU food safety measures: it sets down stricter, clearer and more harmonised rules on the hygiene of foodstuffs, specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin, and specific rules for controls on products of animal origin intended for human consumption. The principle on which the package is based is flexibility. So, it gives Member States a broad autonomy in defining appropriate rules related to the specificities of their food production. To that regard there is a large variety across countries and regions on how regulators deal with small farming and SFSCs in relation to food hygiene. However, in general, it can be said that Member States have assisted passively to the flexible implementation of the hygiene rules. There is a general inertia, often accompanied by the attempt to charge the EU for the rigidity of rules. This inertia creates inadequate burdens for SFSCs and hampers the optimal use of their potential in attaining sustainability goals (as described in chapter 2).

As a result of this situation it is widely acknowledged that the implementation of hygiene regulation in the EU has strongly favoured the food industry and marginalized small farmers, artisanal processes and short food supply chains. Hygienic regulations (or «bureaucratic /hygienic mode» of rural development (Marsden et al., 2001)) appear developed at big extent in response to food risks created by agri-industrial mode, with stronger negative effects on small producers. They are "ratcheting up the regulatory costs of small producers and food processors and reducing market entry into the most lucrative supply chains (often linked to the main corporate retailers) to those larger producers and processors who can more easily meet the demanded quality criteria that are now set." (Marsden et al., 2001: 77). Fragmentation of food production and turnover into many standardized technical procedures also complicates application of locally developed farm management, food production and turnover practices (which are often embedded in and adapted to specific local environmental and social conditions) and threatens specific local food traditions which are at the core of many SFSCs.
The mechanism of marginalization is based on a) standards tailored to large scale processing; b)proportionally higher costs of adaptation to the new standards; c) discriminatory attitude of implementing and controlling authorities; d) lack of information on how to comply; e) lack of initiative of national / regional authorities to fill the gaps left by EU regulation.

After the emergence of initiatives around local food and the increase of attention of public opinion on it in many countries a demand and some initiatives to apply flexibility have developed.
In order to better understand why SFSCs demand appropriately adjusted approach in the implementation of food hygiene regulation, the specificity of SFSCs has to be taken into account. It is characteristic that mainly small farms, which often carry out a multiplicity of operations and cover the whole cycle of production, engage in SFSCs. To that regard, it is important to take into account that diversity of food and production processes that small farms represent is a value to be preserved. Next,

SFSCs have a lower level of complexity, as they involve a smaller number of nodes and often apply simplified methods. This implies different risks and different risk management design in comparison to bigger producers (ENRD, 2012). The SFSCs organization facilitates, for example, a continuity of responsibility along the process, as in the case of farmers processing on farm and selling directly. In this cases, the use of guidelines of good practice, as foreseen in EU food hygiene legislation, is possible without hampering food safety (ENRD, 2012). Another important point is that of the direct communication between producers and consumers which has implications on the transparency of the food production-turnover system: consumers are encouraged to be involved in the quality control and producers are stimulated to increase their accountability towards them. Taking these specificities into account does not imply, however, different hygiene standards for SFSCs. Instead, a tailored design of risk management practices and control systems should be adopted.

The problems presented by small producers and SFSCs are so not inevitable. It depends much on the role of public institutions - Member States, regional and in particular local administrations, and local health authorities -, if and how they interpret and apply regulations and define specific support tools.
The successful examples of application of the flexibility principle (see the cases of Good practices below) show that in order to implement regulations EU Member States and their relevant authorities have to consider:

- the approval of specific national / regional guidelines that take into account the specificities of national and regional food production systems.
- the stakeholders' involvement (roundtables): particularly small farmers are not adequately represented in decision making. As a consequence, public authorities lack complete information of their problems and needs, which risk to be not addressed in the relevant policies. Similarly, also consumers interested or directly involved in SFSCs functioning are not adequately represented in decision-making; their conception of quality of food and their attitude towards different farming systems should find proper voice and be taken into consideration.
- the promotion of training, education, communication: Firstly, the lack of necessary knowledge and expertise to develop and implement national guidelines has to be overcome. Second, informative, training and education measures have to be organized in order to translate and transfer the guidelines to practitioners, both producers and inspectors. Good communication practices among these actors can help the search of proper solutions to solve specific difficulties in complying with regulations.
- the promotion of fine-tuning and adoption of appropriate technology (f.i., mobile slaughterhouses) to ensure the practical implementation of flexibility.

4.4.2. Evidence: good practices

*In **Austria**, the Standing Hygiene Committee of the Ministry of Health, which consists of several ministries, professional and consumer organisations, has developed national guidelines for meat, egg and fish producers, small dairy processors and fruit processors. These guidelines are based on EU hygiene regulation, but they define simplified documentation, monitoring and laboratory testing procedures. Afterwards training courses for rural advisors and producers were organised in order to ensure their application in practice.*

*In **Italy**, Sardinia region is an area characterized by a high presence of sheep, goat and pig farming. To remedy the hygienic problems related to on-farm slaughtering of animals, the Regional Government in recent years enacted laws providing for fully funding the purchasing of mobile slaughterhouses by Municipalities that do not have slaughterhouses within 20 km. The Municipalities assign the management directly to groups of farmers.*

*In **Italy**, Coldiretti (the largest of the three national Farmers' Unions) has developed national guidelines aimed at supporting the implementation of the EU hygiene regulations. In particular, the handbook aims to provide:*

- *operational support to farmers involved in all the different sectors of the primary production and in the processing of agricultural products, through farm procedures of self-control of the hygienic risks of production processes and a simplified application of a HACCP system (where required by regulations);*
- *an operational tool for those who are in charge of controlling the application of the Regulations, in particular advisors and control authorities, who so can make use of guidelines consistent across the country.*

The handbook also provides formats and practical information for the preparation of the documentation to be submitted to the control authorities.

*In **Switzerland** the agriculture central advisory service centers of AGRIDEA support farmers with leaflets and courses for direct marketing and on-farm processing, with particular focus on the hygienic rules. Furthermore it is important that farmers starting with on farm processing do get advice already in the planning phase from the offical food inspection agencies before they are making larger investments relevant for food safety (e.g. in the case of the Birkenhof Farm Dairy in Switzerland this worked quite well).*

5. Recommendations[1]

5.1 SFSCs actors

- Get the necessary knowledge, when starting or further developing SFSCs.
- Invest enough time in networking and communication (externally and internally in the own operation)
- Keep the size of the operation at the appropriate level, both economically and socially.
- When there are opportunities for enlarging the market, take into consideration the possibility to make agreements or ally with suitable intermediaries, such as local shops, managers of public food procurement initiatives,etc.
- Involve public authorities mainly on local level in the planning process (e.g. on hygienic requirements) and envisage public-private partnership.
- Find innovative solutions in reducing distribution costs through collaboration.
- Monitor and communicate the levels of sustainability of the product and of process

5.2 Local administrations

- Learn from success strategies at local level, and better use local planning to facilitate SFSCs (e.g. territorial planning, preserving farmland; retailing policies, leaving space to other channels than the dominant ones).
- Public procurement: To facilitate local sourcing in public procurement through more effective communication and sharing of experiences, updating of existing Green Public Procurement criteria for 'food and catering services', and, possibly, introduction of social considerations into public procurement within the broader framework of a socially responsible purchasing policy.
- Behaviours, mindsets: To consider linking the development of local food systems to educational programmes for children, adults, professionals and public catering managers, to create substantial and regular demand for local food.
- Urban planning can help to develop certain SFSCs (i.e. farmers' markets), specially when designing new areas of cities, including facilities and installments suitable to receive the people involved. The impact of these infrastructures usually goes beyond the mere commercial and into a higher social cohesion of the population in these areas.

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[1]The recommendations for policy makers are partly taken from from the project Facilitating Alternative Agro-food Networks (FAANs) (Karner et al. 2011) and the funded EU study on "Marketing on local markets" in 2011. The focus of these recommendations have been extended from Local Food Systems to SFSCs.

5.3 National governments

- Develop an official definition of short food supply chain taking into account the following aspects:
    - → Take into account both physical and social distance and their interrelation when defining SFSCs, organising and/or formulating their support measures. Regarding the physical distance, not only the travel between a producer and consumer, but also the travel of inputs (for example feed) and the amount of travel needed by consumers to buy and collect the products can be considered.
    - → Ensure flexibility of interpretations of SFSCs and their support measures according to the context in which the SFSCs are functioning. Over the time several SFSCs have developped also more differentiated and diversified complex delivery and sales systems, were a certain share of non-seasonal products are procured from more distant producers (e.g. Original NL, Birkenhof Dairy CH).
    - → Ensure that definition allows the control of communication flows is in the hands of producers, so that the consumer acknowledges the origin of the product and the producer, and the quality features of the product, and the producer can get feedback from consumers in order to improve its production.
- Build recognition of SFSCs into multiple policy areas – including health, environment, rural development and agriculture – noting that they can deliver solutions to many cross-departmental policy challenges, especially at a local level.
- Use the flexibility of EC rules as a means to remove unnecessary hindrances to SFSCs, such as over-burdensome interpretations of hygiene regulations.
- Ensure there is increased funding for projects which have been initiated by local communities, in partnership and taking innovative approaches and keeping administrative efforts for farmers low.

5.4 Recommendations at EU level

- Create an inter-DG task force for SFSCs: this would promote on-going, detailed examination of policy. Agree on a certain definition of SFSCs.
- Facilitate a Europe-wide structure for information exchange among and about SFSCs.
- To consider systematically using relevant EU funded projects, especially those encompassing multi-country partnerships, as operative tools for the spreading of information on modalities for the practical implementation of SFSCs at the local and regional level.

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ANNEX A

Examples of SFSC according to the IMPACT classification criteria:

Definition	Trust is based on	Type	Examples
Face to face	Personal interaction	farm shops	http://www.parkfarmshop.co.uk/ ,http://fattoriadicorazzano.it/chi-siamo.aspx
		farmers markets (open air / indoor)	Earth markets (slow food)http://www.earthmarkets.net/ http://www.lfm.org.uk/markets-home/ http://www.mercatsantacaterina.net/ http://www.straupe-hanza.lv/index.php?p=4574&lang=828
		roadside sales	http://www.organicexplorer.co.nz/shop/New+Directory/Browse+By+Region/Canterbury/Tree+Hugger+Organic+Ltd.html
		pick your own	http://www.pickyourownfarms.org.uk/ http://www.selbsternte.at/
		box schemes	http://fattoriadicorazzano.it;http://www.zolle.it/
		home deliveries	http://www.riverford.co.uk/
		mail order	http://www.fruitforthought.co.uk/shopfront/shopfront.php http://www.dabasdobe.lv/en/home
		e-commerce	http://www.organickingdom.com/
		farm to work (training component)	Wwooff (world wide opportunities on organic farms)http://www.wwoof.org/
		mobile urban farm	http://prinzessinnengarten.net/about/
		consumers as producers	http://www.earthmarkets.net/pagine/eng/pagina.lasso?-id_pg=1
Proximate SFSC	Relations of proximity	farm shop groups	Landwinkel (http://www.landwinkel.nl/)
		regional hallmarks	http://www.gegarandeerdgroningen.net/
		consumer cooperatives	http://www.versvoko.nl/ http://www.voedselteams.be/content/wat-een-voedselteam

			http://www.retegas.org/ www.bioparadeis.org/
		community supported agriculture	http://www.soilassociation.org/communitysupportedagriculture http://www.reseau-amap.org/ www.ochsenherz.at/csa.html
		Community supported fishery	http://namanet.org/events/community-supported-agriculture-fisheries-csacsf-fair
		A combination of consumer coops and CSA	Canastas communitarias
		on farm vending machines	http://www.milkmaps.com/
Extended SFSC	Label, brand& certification	certification labels	http://www.sustainweb.org/news/oct11_msc_welcomes_government_fish_standards/
		production codes	http://www.earthmarkets.net/filemanager/official_documents/product_rules.pdf
		reputation effects	?
		special events (local food festival)	http://www.realfoodfestival.co.uk/
		thematic routes (articulation in space)	http://www.fietsmenu.nl/
		fairs (articulation in time)	http://www.specialityandfinefoodfairs.co.uk/
		local shops	http://www.uagalur.com/
		restaurants	Restaurants "Slow Food-Km 0"http://cocineros.slowfood.es/nosotros/programa-km-0/ http://ekovirtuve.lv/index.php/ideja/
		public food procurement + catering for institutions Farm to school	http://delicious.com/stacks/view/It0ux9 http://www.civam.org/spip.php?article66
Extended SFSC	Label, brand& certification	tourist enterprises `dedicated' retailers (for example, whole food, speciality, or dietetic shops)	?

		Participatory guarantee system	http://www.ifoam.org/about_ifoam/standards/PGS-Brochure-Dec2011_Web.pdf http://www.barcelona.degrowth.org/fileadmin/content/documents/Proceedings/Boza.pdf http://www.befair.be/sites/default/files/all-files/brochure/Participatory%20Guarantee%20Systems.pdf

1. Case study LavkaLavka (St.Petersburg branch, Russia)

1. Type of short supply chain addressed

Internet farm shop/cooperative (one intermediary). The focus of this organization is on providing tasty and healthy food for consumers and on supporting farmers. The main slogan of the LavkaLavka is “Support local farmer!”.
The main activity of the LavkaLavka (**http://lavkalavka.com/en**) is purchasing from farmers products that are transported by farmers to the office in St. Petersburg (where they can be picked up by consumers or delivered to them for additional charge). It is also possible to subscribe for the box scheme and buy the gift certificate. The delivery is made three times a week. The organization is shifting from ‘shop’ to ‘cooperative’.
In addition to the before-mentioned activities, the LavkaLavka has several other projects. One of them has to deal with urban agriculture – during the summer of 2011 the vegetable garden was open in the centre of St. Petersburg (people could sub-rent a piece of land in the glasshouse and plant greens – price for the use of 1 sq.m. for the whole summer was 52 euro), while during weekends farmers’ products were being sold nearby. The LavkaLavka also arranges cooking master classes, dinners cooked from farmers’ products (by appointment, around 13 euro) and private events.
In November 2011 they announced creation of the Cooperative engaging farmers, consumers, shops, restaurants, etc., and the launch of the Fund for support of farmers’ projects (the idea is to allot a part of money from sale of products and attract donations, and later this money will be used to provide loans for farmers’ projects and can be returned not in cash but in products). They also develop their own organic certification system and make efforts to arrange agro-tourism (in this case 100% of money from farm tours goes to farmers).

2. Area and territory where the initiative takes place

For the St.Petersburg branch of LavkaLavka - 13 farmers are based in Leningrad region or St. Petersburg, 15 in other regions of Russia, one in Greece (about two farmers there is no information on the website). The nearest productions are bakery (around 2 km) and chocolate producer who are based in St. Petersburg, and beer and meat producers from Leningrad region (30-40 km from the office where consumers can pick up their orders). The most distant is the sea food producer from Sakhalin island in Russia (around 10 000 km). About half of farmers are based in Leningrad (or adjacent - Novgorod and Pskov - regions), and they sale mainly fresh food - vegetables, meat, eggs, milk, bread, etc. More distant ones provide preserves, jams, cheese, oil, herbs and tea (which can be stored for longer period of time and do not require deliveries several times a week). The office from which consumers can pick up the products is in the centre of St.Petersburg.

3. Number of actors/producers/farmers involved

Currently the St.Petersburg LavkaLavka works with 31 farmers – among them 17 male farmers and 5 female farmers, three monasteries, one bakery, and at least five family farms.

4. Type of products delivered

The range of products is quite big: meat, fish, poultry, milk products, vegetables, soft drinks and beer, bakery, grains, oil, honey, herbs, sauces, jams, juices and pickles. Among products are both ordinary food such as milk, eggs, honey, and rare products (made by new or ‘old-and-almost-forgotten’ recipes such as ‘sbiten’ - tea with honey and spices - and jam from green pine cones, etc.).

Among the requirements for farmers published on the LavkaLavka website are: organic farming; availability of all required hygienic, veterinary, etc. certificates; openness (including provision of soil, water, products' tests, and readiness to communicate with consumers on farmers' personal blogs on the website and arrange farm visits for them).
Photos of products sold by LavkaLavka.

5. Qualification of actors and/or the farmers involved

Most of the farmers are first-generation farmers – some of them have started farming more than 20 years ago while many of them have just begun a couple of years ago. Most of the farmers are stating adherence to the principles of organic farming (two even have European organic certificates), free grazing of animals, hand picking of berries, etc.
For most of the farmers and LavkaLavka employees it is the main/full-time activity. The manager of the LavkaLavka told in the interview**[1]** that they prefer to consider themselves not as a shop but as a club of people having the same interests and way of life. The initial motivation of founders was to get tasty farmers' products - they could not find them on the market and that is why they decided to go directly to producers (first for themselves and later, when they realized that there is demand for such products, for other consumers as well).
Photo of the farmer collaborating with LavkaLavka.

6. Time length of the initiative

The project started in Moscow in 2009 and now it is also running in St. Petersburg, Kaliningrad and Chelyabinsk (Russia) and Kiev (Ukraine). The St. Petersburg branch was opened in the summer of 2011.

7. Other actors directly or indirectly involved

The main actors except farmers and LavkaLavka are consumers who are mainly from middle and upper class, often pregnant women or new mothers, families with children. The price level is quite high (2.3 euro for 1 liter of raw cow milk, and prices of jams are between 4 and 27 euro).
Moreover LavkaLavka actively tries to engage restaurants, shops, suppliers of equipment, seeds, fertilizers, forage, energy, etc.
Photo of the urban agriculture initiative by LavkaLavka (in the centre of St.Petersburg).

8. In relation to the Evidence Document

Section 1: Characteristics of SFSC.

"Short" in this case means transparency and traceability - products come to consumers embedded with information about method of production, etc. On the project's website each farmer has a page describing farmer's biography, farming experience and ideology, production methods, location of the farm, etc. It is also possible for consumers to visit some of the farms as LavkaLavka tries to develop agro-tourism.
This case is not exactly 'direct' chain (there's one intermediary) and not always short distance (some products come even from other countries). Intermediary acts as knowledge broker and promoter of sustainable practices so in this case less nods in chain or shorter distance is not necessarily better from sustainability point of view.

Section 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSC.

LavkaLavka promotes many of the values associated with sustainability (organic farming, animal welfare, reconnection of producers with consumers, support of local producers and fair price, etc.). The organization pushes farmers into following more ecological practices by stating it as a selection criterion, and by offering consulting and support in transition to organic farming, certification, etc. They increase the awareness of consumers by providing information about organic farming, production methods, living conditions of animals, etc.

9. Key questions emerging from the case study analyzed.

Due to the high prices (small scale production, small number of farmers, nearly organic methods, plus around 30% costs added by intermediary) it is accessible mainly for upper middle class consumers and higher (sustainability for the rich?), while such issues as food access are not addressed.
Will this chain become more open/accessible for low income consumers with increasing the number of branches and farmers involved (or are there other factors which may hamper it – for examples, focus on fair price for farmers' than food access, and 'elitist' life-style social club, etc.)? Which side effects do LavkaLavka activities have on those actors not directly involved in this chain (for instance, other farm shops, low income consumers, etc.)?

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[1] The interview was conducted by the researcher in January 2012.

Comments and questions

gianluca brunori commented 15/09/12 11:23
* it is very interesting that the cooperative form is gaining interest among farmers. For post-socialist countries, as far as I understand, this is not usual
* what is the price that farmers take paid intermediation? Are they happy with it?
* are consumers involved in the cooperative?

Pieter van de Graaf commented 24/10/12 14:22
Some questions to add:
The slogan is "Support the local farmer" but the products sold are often not local. Is there a case of misselling here. Are customers aware which products are truely local and which ar from further away?
It is stated that this is an internet initiative. Are products delivered to customers or is it pick-up only?
Following organic principles is a requirement to join, yet only two farmers have the required certificates. How is the adherence to organic principles checked, or is this a question of trust?

Otto Schmid commented 07/11/12 08:54
Interesting case study regarding with a quite broad assortement
Questions in general:
- What does Internet farm shop mean
- How is it possible to make delivery only every 3 weeks fresh products – is there not enough demand or supply?
- What does it mean that the organization is shifting from 'shop' to 'cooperative'?
- It is unclear how and by whom the delivery is organised?

Questions related to the evidence document:
- In which way this initiative can be scaled up, e.g. by funding more such types of initiatives or/AND by growing in size of consumers and producers?
- Is it necessary to make an organic certification?

2. Case study "Willem and Drees" (the Netherlands)

1. Type of short food chain addressed

Dutch supermarkets provide floor space for the products. Willem&Drees take care of the most vulnerable part of the alternative food networks` and short food supply chains and regional/local food systems in general: distribution. All the vegetables and fruits are packed and delivered in Willem&Drees wooden crates. At the moment Willem&Drees are using what they call a hybrid distribution system with one hub (in Cothen, which is a small town near the city of Utrecht) and several vans and drivers who collect the products bring them in at the head quarter. Here the products are sorted, labelled and organized in parcels for the different stores. The same drivers redistribute the prepared pallets in the supermarkets. Next to being the drivers the men also serve as they eyes and the ears of the company, checking the visibility of the products, stocks and freshness.

The main idea is that the developed business model can be copied and diffused all over the Netherlands and even beyond the country`s borders. Willem&Drees are providing an interface for both the consumers and producers. Consumers know where their food is coming from and the farmers know where their produce is going to. This creates mutual trust, respect, better fit between supply and demand, supports local communities and economies. Also the company is stimulating the participating farmers to grow special local species of fruits and vegetables in order to preserve the biodiversity and local traditional varieties. This is also a business opportunity for the supermarkets to offer something unique and special to its customers. Willem&Drees work with different types of farmers but not necessarily only with the organic ones.

2. Area and territory where the initiative takes place

The company was started with a dream: to deliver local food to the supermarkets, with a convenience for the consumers. According to Willem and Drees local is a farm from within a circle of 40 kilometers from the supermarket, but local also depends on the availability of the products. At the moment Willem&Drees are mainly active in the middle and southern part of the Netherlands and are slowly expanding their activities into the western part of the country.

3. Number of actors/producers/farmers involved

the initial investors were Triodos Bank, LTO Noord (farmers` union) and Stichting Doen (a NGO foundation). Today the company employs 14 staff members and distributes products from almost a 100 farmers to Jumbo supermarkets (more than 180 locations), the second largest supermarket chain of the Netherlands.

4. Type of products delivered

fresh fruits and vegetables (seasonal, local and sometimes organic)

5. Time length of the initiative

the company has been in operation since 2009 and is for the 100 % owned by Willem Treep and Drees van den Bosch.

6. In relation to the Evidence Document

Section 1: Characteristics of SFSC.

One of the main problems within alternative food networks and short food supply chains is the farmers wish to deliver small quantities of their harvest while most supermarket chains prefer steady and large supply quantities of produce on a year round basis for all of their shops. The retailers remain the main selling point for fresh fruits and vegetables in the Netherlands and therefore small hold farmers face a problem of entering the retail market. Willem&Drees have designed an alternative distribution system to solve this problem. Their dream is a problem next to being a great opportunity, as the same supermarkets were responsible for the destruction of local food systems in the past. Simplifying the reality it can be said that the supermarkets rely on mass supply chains and focus primarily on supply assurance and quality and to a lesser extent on localness of food. But the dream appealed to the sentiment of founders`, vision, ideals and educational background but was approached with marketing and sales skills and experience of working for a multinational firm.

Section 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSCs.

Willem&Drees clearly believe in the strength and ability of SFSC to provide fresh and diverse produce to the Dutch consumers. Also they look for farmers who are able to grow fruits and vegetables in a sustainable way, meaning using less fuel and chemicals or even no chemicals at all. Also the seasonality factor is emphasized through the Willem&Drees sales channel. This should lead to a more sustainable production of food and a healthier lifestyle of Dutch consumers.

Section 4: Growth and development of SFSCs.

Willem Treep points out that there are two dilemmas, which Willem&Drees faces at the moment. First, creating a match between alternative food networks and conventional supply chains. Clearly the alternative food networks affect conventional businesses but it is difficult to find the right balance when you want to be profitable. Second, distribution chain requires integration with the conventional wholesale system in order to "beat" the economics of distribution.

At the moment the distribution goes through the following steps: farmer selection; aggregation; order picking and storage; distribution to the supermarkets; presentation and storytelling. Selection of the right farmers (based on reputation and intuition) and storytelling are the two core competences of the company according to Willem. And the main driver of innovation is the question how Willem&Drees can enrich the life of supermarket chains.

The story telling happens through different communication channels. First of all on their home page Willem&Drees present what they call their heroes: excellent farmers who are showing their product and share their visions. Secondly the information is spread through on the shop floor through flyers and QR codes that can be "read" by consumers if they use smartphones...at least this was the plan.

Also Willem&Drees in cooperation with the supermarkets to which they supply the produce organize once in a while special dinners on special locations. These events are used to target specific groups of people who are invited as guest at the W&D table. And finally, in the weekends Willen&Drees organize farmer markets together with their suppliers in front of the supermarkets, which they supply with the local products. This is a good promotion of both Willem&Drees themselves as well as the farmers cooperating with them.

2 Key questions emerging from the case study analyzed.

How to manage the integration of SFSC and keep its unique advantages compared to the conventional chains?

How to optimize the logistics and distribution model for a better service within the entire country in order to meet the growing demand?

Comments and questions

Leo Dvortsin commented 24/09/12 11:39
Here is link in English summarizing their story: http://cookingupastory.com/willem-and-drees-local-for-local-distribution

Femke Hoekstra commented 09/10/12 10:30
Hi Leo, do you know if this example is already being copied by others / diffused in or beyond the Netherlands?

Leo Dvortsin commented 09/10/12 13:36
Hi Femke,

I am not aware of other similar initiatives. Willem&Drees have told me that their business model can be expanded to other countries. So I think that their dream is to expand the network beyond the Dutch borders in the future.
By the way, from my conversations with Jan-Willem van der Schans I also understood that Willem&Drees is thinking about including local dairy products into their supply.

Leo Dvortsin commented 07/12/12 16:13
Starting from January 2013 Willem&Drees are going to introduce a new logistical system in their distribution channel: cross-docking. The new system should significantly bring down the transportation costs of the initiative. This will allow liberation of cash flow which Willem&Drees want to invest in new campaigns, better services, and prices for the farmers. Also cross-docking opens up access to the supply chains of the supermarkets for local products.

3. Case Study - Brin d'Herbe

Brin d'Herbe is a group of 20 farmers, who for 20 years have been selling "cottage" and "organic" products in two stores on the outskirts of Rennes . Main products are meat (60 % of the turnover), fruit & vegetables, bakery, dairy products, cheeses, eggs, honey, cider. Their market can be quantified in about 1000 consumers per week. The shop opens three days a week. The turnover is 1,5 million Euro per year.

To run the shop, farmers are organized in a into a specific form of association that allow them to keep their identity and operational autonomy vis a vis consumers, and at the same time to define a common space of coordination. This aspect is also a regulatory requirement, as in this way the shop can be classified as a'direct selling' activity. The legal status of the organisation is a "GIE = Groupement d'Interet Economique" (economic interest group). In addition, Brin d'Herbe runs a cooperation with limited liability which enables them to retail activities.

To conciliate the need of managing common operations and of having a 'direct selling' profile, which give some regulatory advantages (e.g. only 9 % tax rate in comparision with 26 % in retail), farmers have adopted some organizational solutions.

· They hire people to work at the shop, but at least one of the farmers guarantees his/her presence in the shop as well (to improve exchanges with the consumers about the products). They have a labour time bank (linked with the turnover of each producer). The more produce a farmer sells in the shop, the more time he/she should invest into the shop. Every kind of work (communication, reparing, etc.) is valued the same. In general, each of them dedicates one day a week to the shop. Pictures of all associated farmers are displayed in the shops.

· The software to register sales can read on the barcode of the products the name of producers. On the top of the invoice is written "Brin d'Herbe", but next to each listed product there is a code which indicates the producer.

· Prices are set by individual farmers, although there is internal communication about price policies. However, there is not much overlapping among farmers with regard to product sold, so in shop competition is avoided.

· The Shop is only a part of the total farm's sales. Our host, for example, Sylvie Forel, who produces apples and cider, sells only 10% of her produce in the shop. Other farmers sell up to 90 % of their produce in the shop.

- The food from the 20 core farms is never owned by Brin d'Herbe. It is owned by the producers until it is sold to the consumers. Each farmer is responsible for delivering his/her own products to the shop and take home leftovers. The goods from another 50 associated farms, carefully selected on the basis of their production methods and after on-farm "inspection" by Brin d'Herbe, is sold "on consignment" ("depots-vendeurs").
- Additional (fair trade) products are bought by the cooperation with limited liability of Brin d'Herbe and then sold to the consumers. These form about 10 % of the sales.

They have chosen not to be only organic (2/3 of the producers are organic now ; at the beginning they were 50%). But this is not a problem when they sell fresh products, as there is no overlapping of categories (either organic or conventional), but has created a problem of external communication, as they need to give a coherent image of themselves to the outside. They have solved this problem by activating an external audit ("NESO") that controls a cluster of indicators against social, energy, environment and origin criteria. Consumers are involved in the audit process. They are repeated every 3-4 years. The results of the audits for each participating farm are communicated to consumers via leaflets in the shop. The labels for organic and non-organic products have different colours (green for organic and white for the others).

The shops takes a margin of 9 % on every produce. This money is used to pay the five employees (together 4 full-time jobs) and to make investments. The shop room is

rented from a farmer, the interieur is owned by Brin d'Herbe. Many of the hired staff are farmer's wives.
Common decisions are taken during periodical assemblies every 4 - 6 weeks. They are organized also into working groups. At the moment, the operational groups are a) communication; b) labour; c) taste/quality.
Decision making, says our host, is a time consuming activity, and sometime difficult. However, they have managed to carry on their activity for 20 years. They have also chosen not to enlarge, although there is potential for growth. They think, that 20 farms is a good size to cooperate. In fact, they are concerned about the increase of complexity of the business.
The group is member of the FRCIVAM network.
http://www.brindherbe35.fr/Accueil/Accueil.html

Comments and questions

gianluca brunori commented 27/07/12 10:09
This are my notes on Brin d'Herbe. Those who participated to the visit are warmly encouraged to add information, modify, add pictures, etc.!
Andrea Marescotti commented 27/07/12 11:03
Nice experience.
Some questions:
1) any information about the typology of consumers who buy at the shop?
2) are there any connection with AMAP or something like that?
3) Are the prices "competitive" with regards to other marketing channels (supermarkets, traditional detail, etc.)?
4) Are the price set according to some "fair price" principle?
5) can we know more about the "cluster of indicators" used by external auditors?
Sandra Sumane commented 30/07/12 11:02
Thanks Gianluca for the report!
It would have been better to be on the spot to ask the questions some of which might be too specific, but probably some answers can be provided by the visitors.
How sustainability is manifested in this food chain? Was it somehow expressed in your host's discourse? On production side, apparently it is related also to environmentally friendly production, but if one looks along the whole chain?
What is consumers' role in this initiative? How actively are they involved? Regarding the mentioned auditing in which they take part - how are they involved in it?
Why producers do not sell all their products via the Brin d'Herbe? What are the other market channels they use? Are those various channels competing or rather complementary?
Why don't other 50 associated 'temporary' producers become permanent members-suppliers? Is it because of the limits of possible sales or Brin d'Herbe has reached its optimal size, or there are some other reasons? And the related question – is this initiative still growing, scaling-up or it has stabilized?
Thanks again!
Monika Thuswald commented 07/08/12 13:58
Thank you Gianluca for your report. I added some information according to my notes.
Sandra, about your questions regarding the consumers: our host said, that Brin d'Herb would like the consumers to organise themselves. Brin d'Herbe would like if the consumer had their own organisation. But consumers are not really interested in organising themselves.
About why producers do not sell all their produce via Brin d'Herb: I don't know for sure, but I guess that there is not more demand for the produce in their two stores.
The auditing system "NESO" is not only about environmental sustainability, but also about social aspects.

It seems to me, that this example is very interesting to many of us. And I think that all the questions posted in the comments are very interesting. I propose that we wait a little more if there are more questions and then send all the questions together to Brin d'Herb (or ask Pascal to pass them on to Brin d'Herb).

Adanella Rossi commented 22/10/12 09:48

Very interesting initiative. Some questions:

- You mention an increase of the percentage of organic produce: could you say more about the turn to organic farming of part of the farmers? This is related also to another question: how close are the relationships among the 20 core farms?
- It seems that there is potential for growth. If this is related also to the demand, the success of this initiative has been / could be a stimulus for other farmers/other actors?
- What is the area of provenance of the products sold in the shops? How far are the farms?

4. Case study - Oregional (The Netherlands)

1. Type of short supply chain addressed

Oregional is a farming cooperative of 22 producers (the shareholders). The producers are all located within an area of 50km from the city of Nijmegen. Oregional sells produce of their members directly to caterers, care institutes, restaurants and shops in the region. In 2012, they have started a webshop where they sell fruit and juice boxes and boxes with an assortment of regional products. Type of short food chain: products are produced and retailed in the specific region (or place) of production, and consumers are made aware of the 'local' nature of the product at the point of retail.

2. Area and territory where the initiative takes place

Area around Arnhem and Nijmegen.

3. Number of actors/producers/farmers involved

Oregional has 22 member producers. They deliver to about 9 restaurants and 4 care institutes.

4. Type of products delivered

Products they currently source regionally include fruit; dairy (sour milk, yoghurt, custard, milk, cheese); poultry; vegetables; veal, pork and beef; eggs and juices.

5. Qualification of actors and/or the farmers involved

Oregional is an intermediary between the producers and the buyers. They collect the produce from the farms and deliver it to the customers preferably on the same day. Oregional has 5 board members and the following staff members: a manager, a sales person, a marketing and communication specialist, a product and market developer, a driver and a logistical manager. They work with 22 producers including pig farmers, arable farmers, dairy farmers, producers of ducks, poultry, water cress, mushrooms and fruit (blue berries, apples, pears, prunes, cherries, red berries, raspberries, black berries, gooseberries and grapes).
For all (or most) producers involved, Oregional is just one of their marketing channels.

6. Time length of the initiative

Oregional started from an Interreg pilot project with a care institute (St Maartenskliniek) in 2009. This pilot started from a question on how to enhance the value of rural areas with a specific focus on regional products. The pilot was successful and leads to the foundation of the area cooperative Oregional 2,5 years ago.

7. In relation to the Evidence Document

Section 1: Characteristics of SFSC.

Oregional talks about 'regional food'. They associate regional food with physical (50km range of Nijmegen) and social (transparency) aspects. They talk about regional (and not local) food because they want to offer their customers enough variety of products that requires sourcing from a regional instead of a local area. Key issues for them:

- Delicious and healthy
- Seasonal
- Freshness (within 24 hours from farm to plate)
- Supports local economy
- Corporate social responsibility (reduction Co2, food miles)
- Transparency – know your farmer, know your food

Section 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSC.

The criteria they apply to select new regional producers are first of all taste and quality, then reliability, then sustainable production method. Producers do not have to be organic but at least they should make an effort regarding sustainability (e.g. in terms of animal welfare or energy use). In addition, the producers should fit a certain philosophy and have a passion for good quality food.

In terms of economic sustainability, the St Maartenskliniek found that buying regional food does not have to be more expensive. Buying seasonal products saves costs since the products are widely available and therefore less expensive. Buying fresh ingredients is less expensive than processed products. Furthermore less food is wasted because of better quality products. In general, care institutes waste around 40% of the food because patients do not like it or are unable to eat it due to their illness. In addition, they decided to eat less meat or buy better quality meat that loses less moisture during cooking.

Price comparison of before and after the switch to regional products has been difficult since the price agreements with the wholesaler are not transparent. They often offer quantity discounts for example.

Oregional's aim is to give producers a fair price. "Fair" in this case means in general a price of 15% above the normal market price. Part of the money earned by Oregional (who take a percentage) is reinvested in nature and landscape management in the area.

The care institutes involved with Oregional did not measure the effects of the diet change on the patients' health but they observe that especially elderly gained weight.

Section 4: Growth and development of SFSCs.

In general they want to increase their product volume. What has been challenging is the fact that the producers they work with are not used to deliver highly customised products (exact weights, type of packaging, cut or processed). At the same time, customers prefer to work with one big supplier having one receipt that can deliver highly customised items.

Focus in the care institutes has been mainly on introducing regional products in the patients' meals. However, on a daily bases the restaurant for the staff and visitors serve more meals. These staff/customer kitchens are not yet using regional products (except for fruit and juice). This could be a next step.

In their experience, opportunities depend a lot on passion of individuals and personal motivations to change something in an environment that is not yet completely institutionalised.

Comments and questions

gianluca brunori commented 11/09/12 12:14

How does the process of designing the menu occur? how does Oregin, nutritionists and patients interaction occur?

Femke Hoekstra commented 09/10/12 09:31

Hi Gianluca,

thanks for reading and commenting on this case!

Regarding the interaction about the menu: They use a digital menu system in which the patients can make their own choice on where they want to eat their meal, what they would like to eat (they can choose from 4 to 5 menu options), and how much when and with whom. They have saved a lot of admin time and food waste by introducing this system.

Regarding the design: Besides working as much as possible with regional and seasonal food, the chef (Jelle Ferwerda) pays attention to colour, taste, smell, overall look and detail. Food is served on porcelain plates. He and his staff regularly visit patients to get feedback on the meals.

Next to that, they work with a menu cycle of 4 weeks. Only then you will find things on the menu that you have eaten before. They serve more traditional meals like potatoes, meat and vegetables as well as more modern meals like 1-pot dishes. They try to respond to the demands of the patients (for exampe serving cold meals on very hot days in summer).

The chef of the St Maartenskliniek has organised 6 workshops for chefs from other care institutes to their share knowledge and experience.

Sandra Sumane commented 16/10/12 07:42

Thanks Femke for the story! I have some more questions about it; maybe you have the answers.

Oregional has been developed within Interreg project. How important was this public support stimulus, would the initiative be possible without it? Does it still receive some public support?

How were cooperative members assembled? Where they participants of the initial Interreg project? Did they have some other common background?

There are several criteria applied (taste, quality, sustainability...) Do you know how were they decided and negotiated? Is there any quality control to check if they are followed or does it work by trust and „a word of honour"?

How does Oregional deal with the challenge you mention, that of uncostumized farm products and the even quality/quantity demand by the cooperative's clients?

The observation of people gaining weight from better regional seasonal fresh food is not completely surprising but still curious. It makes me wonder if people discover the pleasure of eating or is this food more rich or maybe there are some other reasons.

Femke Hoekstra commented 22/10/12 13:35

Hi Sandra, thanks for your questions . I have a meeting next week with someone from Oregional so I will also bring your questions into the discussion.

As far as I know now, the Interreg funding was something that made realisation possible of the ideas and plans that were already there. The funding allowed them to go into this with less financial risk.

The cooperative members are selected on the basis of customer requirements and a balanced composition in supply. They are of course all from the same region so that is what they have in common. The area is not that big so Oregional has a fairly well overview of potential suppliers.

I have asked them before about how they balance their selection criteria and how they monitor this. It is not entirely clear to me yet but you are right most is decided on the basis of knowing someone but also visiting their farm (not sure about the frequency of this).

Not all customers have strict guidelines on how they want the products to be delivered. For example the St Maartenskliniek just accepts that it is part of the deal when working with regional suppliers. In other cases, Oregional tries to mediate between farmers and customers and see what is the 'space for maneuver' by explaining requirements and working styles on both sides of supply and demand and to increase understanding about certain realities.

I am not sure about all the reasons for weight gain but from the experience in the St Maartenskliniek it is clear that patients just eat more because there is a menu choice and because the quality of the food is regarded better.

Otto Schmid commented 07/11/12 08:57

Interesting case with criteria to select new producers with first priority on taste and fair price policy.

Questions in General:

- How can they deliver the whole range of products, in restaurants and care institutes is needed? Or do the cooks have also other firms, which deliver them?
- What share do producer deliver to Oregional, are they the main costumer?

Questions related to the Evidence Document

- What are their criteria for sustainability?

Femke Hoekstra commented 07/11/12 16:48

Hi Otto, thanks for your questions I will try to answer them. Producers were selected on the basis of regionality and transparency and a balance in type of producers. The volumes remain fairly limited so far and therefore they do not accept/look for new members. Plenty of the current members have much more produce then they currently deliver to Oregional. So with rising demands they will source from current members.

For producers, Oregional is just a small portion of their market (I don't have the numbers but for sure Oregional is not their main customer). Producers are interested to expand their deliveries but there is no market.

You can find a list of producers here: http://www.oregional.nl/NL/Ondernemers to get an idea.

Because the volume remains rather low they have not put much effort into further defining their criteria for sustainability. They have focused more on increasing demand I think and assuring market for the produce. I expect that the producers would be careful in making any (sustainability) investments required by Oregional since they have no guarantee that Oregional will actually buy their produce.

I am not sure if they deliver the whole range of products but last week, I heard that they decided to work with two intermediaries to supply their clients (care institutes/catering) since they lack the capacity to increase the volumes by themselves. This was against principles but they have to (original project funding is drying up and they have to look for market opportunities)

So public procurement has been very difficult to realise and they are re-thinking their strategy and are thinking of getting into the consumer market (selling fresh produce through web shops & using pop-up locations in different areas of the city).

5. Case study : Les Bons Repas de l'Agriculture Durable - BRAD (Good Meals from Sustainable Farms)

Description of project

The project was started in 2004, at the instigation of the (Seine-Maritime) county council. The regional and county authorities pay the Défis Ruraux (A CIVAM from the North of France - Normandie) to organize meals and refund schools the difference (capped at €1) between the cost of "sustainable" meals and ordinary meals.

Suppliers are filtered by several entry criteria: the farm must be within the relevant administrative area (county for 11–15 schools and region for 15–18 schools or colleges); it must be GM free as regards both crops grown and animal feedstuffs; it must comply with hygiene regulations (this applies especially to on-farm processing of dairy products); hormones and antibiotics must only be used to treat medical conditions, not systematically; frequency of herbicide and pesticide inputs must be below the regional average; the farm's nitrogen balance must be below 150 kg/ha.

Their certification is based on the IDEA method (evaluation of food sustainability) for analysing whole-farm sustainability. Two farm visits are made by a Défis Ruraux agronomist, the first to collect data and the second to give feedback and negotiate a progress agreement with the farmer. The supplier's results and progress agreement are then submitted to an "Ethics Committee" made up of Défis Ruraux representatives, experts and consumers (school bursars, cooks, parents etc.). Progress is monitored via a second IDEA analysis after two years. Wherever possible the Défis Ruraux try to provide help with technical solutions in the meantime.

There is a rota by area (= 1/3 of county) to help schools source as locally as possible and keep farmers' transport costs down. School bursars are sent a list of products once a month. Contact details for suppliers are provided once a school has placed its order.

Schools workshops on food choices are run by a partner organization called CARDERE, which has run workshops on environmental issues for many years and is licensed by the Ministry of Education.

The funding bodies pay for 220 two-hour workshops in a school year, 150 in 11–15 schools and 70 in 15–18 schools or colleges. After a general presentation, pupils are given worksheets to fill in as they circulate between five activities designed to be entertaining and thought-provoking and to develop critical faculties.

<u>2010 figures :</u>

65 suppliers (farmers or short supply chain processors)
Total collective turnover: **€400,000 before tax**
Average meal price: **€2.18**
Average top-up subsidy per meal: **€0.60**
193 schools workshops (150 in 11–15 schools, 43 in 15–18 schools or colleges)

<u>Les Défis Ruraux</u>

"Les Défis Ruraux" is a voluntary organization belonging to the CIVAM network. They organize meals for 11-15 schools and 15-18 schools and colleges with produce from local farms we have certified as "sustainable". The package for schools includes educational workshops for pupils on sustainable eating

Related publications, website, links etc.

http://www.defis-ruraux.fr; http://www.idea.portea.fr

Comments and questions

<u>Femke Hoekstra</u> commented 22/10/12 15:00

Hi Pascal, so the average difference between an 'ordinary meal' and a 'sustainable meal' is 60 cents. How long will Les Defis be able to pay this difference and where do

they get their funding? Have the schools tried to make any changes to the menu to try to get a lunch that does meet their ordinary expenses? or is that not feasible?
And how does the produce get to the schools once they ordered it (do they have an online system for the orders?)?
What does the IDEA method on analysing whole farm sustainability imply? Is that similar to what we have seen in Brin d'Herbe?
(And what is 11-15 and 15-18 schools? Schools based on age of pupils?)
Francesca Galli commented 23/10/12 09:31
Dear Pascal, in addition to Femke's questions (which I also have) I would like to understand better:
- is the set of criteria on producers alternative (or complementary) to Organic certification?
- what are the main difficulties/limitations for producers, kitchen staff, Défis Ruraux?
- how do they deal with limitations in local product availability (if this is an issue of course)?
-does the change in "raw produce" used for meals go together with other types of recipes/menus?
Thank you, to me it is a very interesting case (especially because I'm also into Public Procurement).

6. CH Case Study: Farm dairy Birkenhof & Uster plus association

1. Type of short supply chain addressed

The Farm dairy Birkenhof (www.hofmolkerei.ch) is a pioneer initiative, which is located ca. 20 km outside of Zürich at the periphery of the town of Uster (30'000 inhabitants) has been started by an innovative farmer family, Martin and Elsbeth Pfister. The Birkenhof dairy and farm is on one hand a farmer group (3 farms working together in farmer cooperation). In addition there is since several years a strong collaboration with an organic farm in the near neighbourhood. And recently 2 other non-organic farms deliver milk.

What is unique is that the initiator Martin Pfister is also strongly involved in a local food initiative, the "Uster plus" Association. Furthermore the Birkenhof is associated to a regional dairy initiative of the Zurich Mountain Area, which has a specific label ("Natürli") and a supportive regional organisation PZB (see later).

In the Birkenhof dairy the milk is daily processed (ca. 1200 litres per day). The milk comes from the own farm and from the organic farm Dietenrain nearby. The main products are farm-made; these are: fresh cheeses as well as yoghurt (nature and with fruits), cream and pasteurised fresh milk. In addition a whole range of cheeses from small mountain/highland dairies of the PZB-Initiative is sold.

The Birkenhof farm has an own logistics with few vehicles. They deliver to private persons, specialised shops, canteens of social institutions for elderly persons. In addition there is a special gastro delivery service and a household delivery service.

The main aim of the founders (Martin Pfister and his wife), quoted from the website, was to maintain a high value added on the farm(s) and in the local region. The principal orientation is therefore also to serve clients in the near region. The Birkenhof has a strong link between producer, and different costumers including also consumer. This is also facilitated by the local food promoting organisation "Uster Plus".

Price: They try to make a fair price both for the other farmers and in the shops. But they have some limitations regarding the price, because of the price level of supermarket.

The loyalty of the costumers is high, however to gain new costumers is rather difficult. The main buying motive is to get local products, therefore there is some tolerance regarding the price. Some years ago when the official milk price has fallen strongly, the Birkenhof could maintain their price level. However as now also supermarkets promote more regional products, this makes it more difficult for Birkenhof dairy to gain new consumers, which radically change their shopping habits (large majority is still not yet enough aware of local food).

In fact the strength of the initiative is to have a high authenticity with their local orientation and can also offer a broad assortment thanks to different forms of collaborations.

Martin and Elsbeth had of course made training courses in milk processing but learned a lot on the job

2. Area and territory where the initiative take place

The initiative operates mainly in the local area of the town of Uster and a few surrounding communities in a perimeter of ca. 20 km. All the milk, which is processed in the dairy, is coming either from the own milk farm and three neighbour farm (of which one organic).

In addition the Birkenhof-Team distributes the speciality cheeses of small dairies in the mountain/highland area of Canton Zürich, which is in a distance of ca. 50 km.

3. Number of actors/producers/farmers involved

Currently ca. 12 people are working on the farm and in the dairy and in the distribution (corresponding to ca. 7-8 full working places).
Directly involved are 4 milk farms: the Birkenhof own milk farm (cooperation with 2 arable farmers) and the neighbouring organic farm Dietenrain. Additionally since a few years 2 non-organic farms can also deliver part of their milk, which allowed a certain growth of the production (now ca. 450’000 Litres per year)
Indirectly much more farmers from the Zürich mountain/highland area, which deliver their milk to the local dairies, have a benefit. Birkenhof is selling the cheese of ca. 12 small dairies, member of PZB.

4. The type of products delivered

A broad assortment of all kind of milk products from the local milk farms and from the small Zurich mountain/highland dairies (member of a regional organisation called PZB) are delivered such as ca. 20 types of cheese, yoghurts, pasteurized fresh milk, etc.
Beside this broad assortment of dairy products other products are also delivered, due to the demand of some social institutions and some shops. Nowadays there is an online shop, where for smaller and specialist retail shops products such as eggs noodles, beverages and also some meat products and local wine (also one of the farms they cooperate) can be ordered.
Orders from gastro/canteens and shops are on a regular weekly basis (2-3 times/week). Birkenhof can count on them: 40 % of the milk goes to 8-9 public residences for elderly people and ca. 10 shops. Ration to consumers is less than 10 %.
Transport and separation: transport is in cool vans. The separation of the organic and non-organic milk is done by different times, when the milk is processed.
Since 4 years also an organic milk and yoghurt line has been taken up in the production, however with a clear separation of the milk (separate day for processing the organic milk). This was possible thanks to an excellent collaboration with an organic neighbour farm. It helped to rise also the turn-over as before some organic oriented consumers did not buy the Birkenhof milk.
The private customers are delivered once a week (different times in different local areas) however only in 2 neighbouring communities. Special or small local shops and some gastronomes are delivered ca. 2 times per week.
In addition there is a farm shop, which is open one evening in the week and on Saturday morning. Also the Birkenhof is present on 3 weekly markets.
The Birkenhof is very innovative in product development and services, e.g. by making special fondue mixtures or new types of soft cheeses.

5. Actors and or farmers involved

The Birkenhof is managed by Martin Pfister, supported by his wife Elsbeth and with their staff. Martin is the driving force and is also very well respected in the local farmer community and by the local town administration and in the association “Uster Plus”. The collaboration with the farmers and with the involved costumers is very good.
Legal status: it is a society with restricted liability (GmbH). Decisions are taking by the farmer family, which have the shares of the GmbH.
Status with other farms: they have a delivery contract. The influence the other farms have is very limited.
A strong service orientation is very important, in particular for local shops, which compete with the large supermarkets. Through the participation at local fairs or

events (2-3 times a year) the Birkenhof has a good recognition by consumers and in the public, although generally little advertisements are made. Their products are also carrying the logo of the local food initiative "Uster plus". However this logo has a minor importance now, as the Birkenhof with their engaged persons is well known.

6. Time length of the initiative:

The activity started already in 2002 by building the farm dairy. Over the years new investments have been made. Also in that time the "Uster plus" Initiative started, where Martin was also one of the initiators.

7. Other actors directly or indirectly involved

The most interesting of the Birkenhof initiative is that there are mainly two groups of actors strongly involved.
One actor group is the Uster plus Association, the other one PZB.
Uster plus is an association in the city of Uster, founded already 10 years ago. The association has been founded by few producers and consumers. Their goal, following their website (www.usterplus.ch), is to bring producers, traders and consumers together and to promote the production, processing and marketing of local products and special services (even with an own logo). They have their own website with ca. 100 products and the information in which shops or on which farms they can be bought. Martin Pfister is co-president of the association as the Birkenhof is probably most profiting of the "Uster plus" Association. Most of the specialised shops (ca. 20) in the town of Uster are member of "Uster plus". "Uster plus" has also a good relationship with the town council and administration.
Pro Zürcher Berggebiet (PZB, www.pzb.ch), meaning "Pro Zürich mountain area", is an association of 15 communities in Canton Zürich and a neighbouring canton, which has created an own organisation for their marginal mountain areas. The PZB has an own private but partially publically supported marketing platform for regional products with an own label "Natürli". This platform owns an own cheese storage building for cheese maturing ("affinage") and an own distribution system. Most of the products they distribute are cheese specialties from ca. 12 smaller dairies but also some meat products.
One special internal rule, which tey kept until 2011, was that their products are only sold in specialised local shops but not in the large supermarket chain shops in order to maintain the authenticity of their products. However in 2012 they made an exception with one supermarket chain, which sells explicitly regional products. The collaboration with the Birkenhof is that in the area of the City of Uster the distribution of the "Natürli" products is done by Birkenhof-Team, which allows them to offer a broad assortment of ca. 10-15 specialty cheeses in addition to the own products. The PZB is considered in Switzerland as one of the most successful regional marketing initiative.

8. In relation to the Evidence Document

Section 1: Characteristics of SFSC.

What is meant by "short" in this case?
The main goal of the Birkenhof dairy is to process locally produced milk and to sell it direct to larger consumers households, specialised and local shops and social institutions in the town and some neighbouring communities.
Criteria for selecting additional products are that they come from smaller dairies in the local region (Zürich disfavoured mountain area) and from some other local producers.
Therefore in this initiative the characteristics of a SFSC are:

1. the proximity of the production and processing site (milk for processing within 3-5 kilometres from local neighbouring farms: The speciality cheeses come from small dairies not more than ca. 50 km away.
2. The relationship with the producers and processors through different forms of close collaboration (social nearness trough direct delivery).
3. The strong engagement of the initiator in a local producer-consumer initiative, which was created in the same time as the farm dairy.

The social relationship is in this initiative very important. This has also allowed to continuously enlarging the production.

Section 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSC.

Health: One of the key issues are that the milk products are very fresh (generally 24 hours storage) as they are from the neighbourhood. They are delivered several times per week and are also sold on different places. The freshness of the products might also be associated as healthy by some consumers.

Environment: The food miles of the collection are very low for milk (within 3 km from the farms). The cheese and other products are coming from ca. 50 km perimeters.
The transport is done with a small van.
The farms are either integrated farms and one organic farm, Birkenhof is also involved in a local nature conservation project.

Section 3: Impacts of regulation on SFSCs.

When the dairy has been built the hygienic regulations (which are similar to the once in the EU) lead to costly investments. Fortunately this could be planned in advance and the local hygienic public body did show some flexibility. Before the dairy was built they got some "reasonable advice" from sanitary control body of the canton, what needs to be considered. Furthermore to fulfil the separation requirements of the organic food regulation (equivalent to the EU organic regulation) there were some additional measures necessary to well document that organic and non-organic milk are not mixed.

9. Key questions emerging from the case study analysed.

- Personal skill development:

This initiative was very much influenced by the engagement of the farm manager. He has not only developed excellent technical skills but also very good management skills. Furthermore one of his strengths was also the networking with the local consumer-producer group with the neighbouring farmers as well as with the Regional marketing initiative. It is difficult to say what would have been happened without the strong role of the initiator. However as in many other initiatives this bears also a certain risk for the continuity, as long as no other persons can already overtake this important role of the initiator.
Another characteristic is the professionalization within the initiative with high skill specialist (like a cheese maker, bookkeeper, etc.).
However most recently the cheese maker (a professional) has left and now the initiator will make the cheese-making because the farmer family cannot afford to pay a very good professional, which would earn almost at least a third more than the initiator and manager.

- Upscaling / Further development:

Looking at the Birkenhof dairy over the last 10 years. We can observe 4 main phases:

- The initial phase: Mainly the own milk from the farm was processed and first the distribution of the products have to be organised. In this phase the "Uster plus" Initiative was helpful to make the Birkenhof products better known (although probably more through actions and participation in fairs than through the local logo).

- The first take up phase I: here the collaboration with the PZB Regional Marketing Initiative with their cheese specialty assortment was a big step forward but for the image and economically (here an scaling up of the assortment and number of costumers was possible).
- The second take up phase II after a short adaption phase: it was strategically very clever to include an organic line, which was not that complicated as the neighbouring farm was organic. This allowed to both enlarging the assortment with some organic products and to reach new consumers.
- Consolidation phase: Currently new collaboration models are developed and searched, e.g. with a new founded Community Supported Agriculture initiative with a box scheme. There are also some niches searched for new products, e.g. with a local beer or pasture beef farm. The main goal of this phase is rather to downscale a bit - because of too high workload. The initiators want to concentrate on the products of their farm for processing trough diversification of the own specialty assortment and not to buy additional products from a big wholesalers and processor from outside the region. Additional services (e.g. schools on farm) are envisaged.

- Risks and opportunities

As already mentioned the strong role of the initiator is both a risk and opportunity due to his strong networking.

A key question for the future might be if the further growth has quantitative limits, as otherwise larger investments would be necessary in buildings and publicity for new costumers. This might also change the character of the initiative. Therefore the initiators decided for a phase with more qualitative instead of quantitative growth (see above).

A risk might be that the dairy products from the association Züri-Natürli will now also be sold in one supermarket. Unclear how this will affect the image and the demand from costumers.

Birkenhof Dairy has established quite a diversity of different SFSCs (direct sales, shops, etc.). This multitude of activities and sales channels is quite an organisational challenge and requires high management skills and almost permanent presence of the manager and good communication, which can also be considered as risk. On the other hand the different marketing channels reduces the economic vulnerability (standing on different legs).

ANNEX: market actor network of Birkenhof Farm Dairy

7. Case study Pico Bio Switzerland

1. Type of short supply chain addressed:

Pico Bio AG is an SME in the Zürich town area with a special focus on smaller producers and is specialised in the delivery of food to the gastronomy in the large Zürich Town area.
Pico Bio sees themself as a central chain element (intermediary) between producers and consumers. Their understanding is not the one of a classical wholesaler.
Pico Bio's main goals are:
a. To sell authentically produced products with main priority from farmers from the region,
b. to bring the fair and organic concept together through the whole chain;
c. To bridge between the producer and consumer
Pico Bio has a long standing experience of over 15 years in delivering in the special market segments of gastronomy.

2. Area and Territory, where the initiative take place

The Pico Bio initiative is since 2008 located in the Zürich town periphery. Before they were in the real city centre and had in addition to the store house and distribution centre also a restaurant ("Les Halles"), which was very important to gain experiences in delivering organic food to the gastro-sector. Now the restaurant is independent from Pico Bio.
Their main delivery area is ca. in a 30 km radius around Zürich and their agglomeration.
The provision of products is basically first from a few farms around Zürich (partners from the beginning) in ca. 20 km distance. One of the aim is to support smaller farmers also in less favoured areas. Pico Bio has slightly enlarged the provision area.
Instead of getting the products from two very big horticulture farms outside Zürich, they get vegetables from "Seeland" near Bern (where a lot of small organic producers are located), which is about 150 km distance. The same is with some speciality cheeses from mountain areas from fully converted organic dairies.

3. The number of actors/producers/farmers involved:

Pico Bio is a wholesaler with 17 fulltime employees and a turnover of ca. 7.32 Mio Euro in 2011 with a growth of ca. 5 % per year.
Pico Bio works together with 58 producers and 65 processors (mostly dairies and butchers). The main producers, which deliver since the beginning (fruits, vegetables and potatoes) are organic farms in the peri-urban area of Zürich.
Pico Bio buys most of the products directly from farmers, which either directly deliver in the Pico bio distribution centre near Zürich (larger producers) or where Pico Bio picks it directly on the farms after having delivered restaurants (on the way back to economize distribution costs).
Pico Bio delivers to over 170 costumers (of which 28 % Gastronomy and 30 % restaurants and 37 % to small retailers/organic shops).The main products groups marketed are fresh products (80 % based on turn-over). Most of the costumers are in the City town of Zürich or in the larger urban area of Zürich.

4. The type of products delivered

Pico Bio offers a broad range of ca. 5000 products (over 98 % organic), mainly different vegetables and fruits as well as milk and milk products as well as meat. Longer transportation is avoided. Ca. 1200 articles are stored in the central store in

Dietikon near Zürich, but only very short time to save costs. In fact Pico Bio is somehow the extended cooling house for the gastronomes.
Almost half of the turn-over of 6.5 Mio Euros is from fruit and vegetables.
Pico Bio tries to keep the price difference to conventional products on a moderate level. For example producer price for radishes: CHF 1.20 / Sold to costumer (canteens and restaurants): CHF 1.85.

5. Qualify the actors and or the farmers involved

Most of the staff is involved in handling the distribution to the gastronomes. The hierarchy is very flat. Most of the staff is already a long-time working for Pico Bio.
The general manager of Pico Bio has been a farm manager on a relatively large organic farm in the Zürich periphery before. He has decided together with 2 other farmers to sell their products collectively to shops and restaurants in Zürich.
Several farms delivering products to Pico Bio have also given money for the start of the enterprise (as a shareholder) and later when a large investment was necessary for the new distribution and storage centre.
Pico Bio is delivering to day schools and children day nurseries, however without a contract with the town of Zürich. For the relative small canteens they can guarantee quantities and quality. In bigger canteens the cooks have to learn again how to cook with unprocessed food.

6. Time length of the initiative

The activity started ca. 15 years before 1997. For over 10 years they had 3 activities, an own restaurant, an organic shop in the restaurant and a distribution centre for food products.

7. Other actors directly or indirectly involved

An important relationship is with the kitchen chiefs in the restaurants or canteens to which there is a daily direct contact.
When Pico Bio has moved to a new place, which needed quite some investments, some costumers (market partners, consumers) did provide money to pre-finance these investments as it was difficult to get money from a bank. This solidarity of some costumers has allowed making the take-off.
Since two years a stronger collaboration has started with a regional platform initiative of organic farmers in Central Switzerland (ca. 100 km away), which focuses on regional and fair. Several speciality products from them are in the assortment.

8. In relation to the Evidence Document

Section 1: Characteristics of SFSC.

What is meant by "short" in this case?
Basically short means 2 steps to the consumer in the restaurant (1-step to Pico Bio – 1 step from Pico Bio to restaurant/kitchen).
The Pico Bio is an interesting case to discuss the complexity of finding an appropriate definition.
One of the goals of the SME was to deliver regional organic products to restaurants and canteens in Zürich. This happens mostly in a diameter of ca. 60 km.
However regarding the provision of the products there was a certain dilemma, either support smaller farms in a more distant area (around 150-200 km away) or to support the biggest organic horticulture farm in Canton Zürich (ca. 60km away). Their decision was to give priority to the smaller farms but to accept longer transport distances and have higher collection costs.

Section 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSC.

Health: One of the key issues is freshness, high quality and high taste as well as typical origin/flavour (e.g. broad assortment of tomatoes of different taste).
Environment: The building (store house and office) is relatively new and is relatively energy saving. The transport is done with small vans.
The farms and processors providing products are organic farms, which mean high sustainability. Pico Bio is one of four pilot companies, which makes an overall sustainability assessment with ca. 16 different indicators based of the FAO-SAFA Guidelines in a project with FAO and FiBL. Pico Bio is interested in the outcome; the results should help them to better communicate the added value to the costumers but also to have a tool to judge sustainability aspects of single products (in order to give them guidance for the product choice).

Section 3: Impacts of regulation on SFSCs.

When the storage and service centre has been built the hygienic regulations (which are similar to the once in the EU) lead to more costly investments, then they had before in the old buildings.

9. Key questions emerging from the case study analysed.

- Personal skill development:

This initiative is still carried by the strong engagement of the initiator and his good management and human skills. The social sustainability is very important for Beat Ledermann and his team-

- Up scaling up / further development:

Looking at the Pico Bio development over the last 15 years there was a continuous slow growth.
We can observe the following main phases:

- The initial phase: took place in old buildings with a restaurant and a shop. Delivery to a small number of restaurants in the inner city. They did get advice from a marketing specialist, gaining experiences. More and more capacity problems – too diversified.
- The take up phase: A big step was the move in an existing empty building at the city periphery – very close to the main farms, which provide products. Investment in better cooling and distribution equipment. Critical to find money for investments. Stop or find private money loans – no bank support. Solidarity was very stimulating.
- Now a consolidation phase: Looking for new partnership with other regional platforms. Social sustainability check.

A key question for the future will be how Pico Bio will go on, once the general manager would leave the company.
The main key dilemma remains here the issue of short distance versus small holders from more distant rural areas. Local and cheaper provision from big farms versus fairness for smallholders in small areas.
A challenge was in the beginning to respond always to the specific quality needs of cooks(especially since they buy from smaller holders in longer distance), hower in the meantime there are no major problems anymore.

8. Case Study SpeiseLokal! Austria

1. Type of short supply chain addressed

Community Supported Retailing.
SpeiseLokal started as a consumer-driven initiative in cooperation with a female organic farmer. Inspired by the Scottish consumer-network 'The Five Diet', SpeiseLokal was originally thought of as becoming a platform that connects people, interested in local food, providing information on local and global food systems and on the various aspects of food, nutrition or gardening. Very soon the idea arose of setting up the possibility to purchase local organic food. From the beginning onward the people involved were families who were already active in various other civic initiatives (e.g. parent-organised kindergarten and school). Thus, the idea of setting up a Food Coop in its classical sense, including a rather high amount of voluntary work, neither seemed attractive nor realistic. Also the idea of setting up a CSA seemed to incorporate too much voluntary work. Furthermore the initiative did not want to stay exclusive, only attracting a small group of people already interested in a local, organic diet. The question was: How can we provide local, organic food for everyone?
Inspired and encouraged by other Austrian civic food networks, three women continued to work on this question. They visited about 40 farmers, between 6 and 80 km away from Maria Anzbach, asking whether they would be prepared to deliver them their products once a week. This was done in cooperation with two women who started a similar civic food network in nearby St. Pölten. The idea was to set up a solidarity based small enterprise that sells organic food from the farmers nearby. Solidarity based means: fair prices as well as fair and close relationships between consumers, producers and retailers. As most of the farmers agreed to deliver their products, SpeiseLokal! soon started to sell once a week. People order between Friday noon and Tuesday morning via a web shop. The farmers get the orders by Tuesday afternoon and deliver on Thursday or Friday morning. On Friday consumers pick up their orders at the farmers store, rented on a farm by SpeiseLokal!.
SpeiseLokal! sells what farmers decided to offer each week. Thus, only local and seasonal products are sold. Trust in the producer and retailer is based on personal interaction between the three women that run SpeiseLokal! and the farmers/producers. In order to establish close relationships between farmers, consumers and retailers, SpeiseLokal! still serves as a platform that connects people and initiatives. Every month it organises excursions to the farmers who deliver. It organises, coordinates and promotes cookery workshops, lectures, seminars, feasts and other events somehow related to food issues. It provides information on (sustainable) food production, distribution and consumption and helps people share their ideas, recipes, initiatives.

2. Area and Territory

The retailing system is based in Maria Anzbach/Austia. The produce is mainly produced within the region of Lower Austria (max. 100 km from where it is sold and consumed, mostly less than 40km).

3. Number of producers involved

SpeiseLokal! has basically 5 people working within the structure. Currently they interface with about 40 farms in the region of Lower Austria. They serve about 70 families each week. Farms get a high percentage of the final product price (two thirds of the final product price).

4. Type of products delivered

Fruits and vegetables, eggs, cheese, meat, bread, pasta, fruit juices, cereals, oil and vinegar, honey and jams, biscuits and cakes, chutney, sugo, beer and wine, herbs, beans and lentils, seeds.

5. Organizers and producers involved

SpeiseLokal! is managed by three women Juliana Lutz, Judith Schachinger, Sabine Rosenberger and engages with farms with whom there is mostly a direct relationship, consisting of a pact of mutual trust with the farmers and his or her family. In some cases produce is delivered by a small wholesale trader (BerSta). This is due to the fact that some farmers cannot deliver their produce themselves to SpeiseLokal. BerSta has developed out of the first Austrian consumer-producer coop and mainly sells handmade produce from small farmers in the northern part of Lower Austria. SpeiseLokal also cooperates with a CSA.

6. Time length of the initiative

The activity started one year ago (Sept. 2011). It took nearly 12 months of research on the territory to select the farmers to work with.

7. Other actors directly or indirectly involved

Consumers have an active role since they must get in contact via the web shop or via telephone or by visiting the shop on Fridays. Also, consumers have the possibility to join excursions to the farms/producers and they have the possibility to do voluntary work or to bring their own stuff they grew in the garden. SpeiseLokal! also cooperates with initiatives situated in Maria Anzbach (e.g. alternative schools and kindergartens). As one of the women that runs SpeiseLokal! works at the University, SpeiseLokal! interacts with researchers as well.

8. Problems rising that match issues addressed in the Evidence Document.

Section 1: Characteristics of SFSC

What is meant by "short" in this case?

The main criteria for selecting the products are essentially three:

1) They must come from small farms/enterprises,

2) They must be seasonally and organically grown/produced - as near as possible, with very few exceptions (beer, butter) not further away than 80 km

Section 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSC

Health: products are fresh and do not remain stored for longer than a morning, after which everything is delivered. Meat is stored in suitable refrigerators.

Environment: resource use linked to SpeiseLokal remains low due to the fact that farmers only provide the amount of food that is actually needed (i.e. ordered) and consumers eat what they bought. Thus, hardly any food is wasted. Further, transport-routes are generally short (between 0 and 100 km) and farmers as well as consumers cooperate as regards to transport. Packaging is low and food is grown organically on small scaled farms (closed substance cycle) and none of the products is processed industrially. Especially the use of milk bottles and the absence of packaging for fruit, vegetables or eggs make most consumers experience a significant drop in household waste.

Section 3: Impacts of regulation on SFSCs

There are restrictions of what can be sold in what way (e.g. packaging for cheese and meat). Further, European regulations concerning slaughter and the marking of eggs make it difficult to get meat (esp. poultry) and eggs from small farms.

9. Key questions emerging from the case study analyzed.

How can such an initiative sustain (economically) in the existing economic system and its related food system? That is, how viable economically is this experience in the long run?

Will scaling up be an inevitable step? What would this imply? How could this happen without distorting the main principles of cooperation?

What would be the alternatives for scaling up?

Comments and questions

Leo Dvortsin commented 07/11/12 14:58

Dear Karin,

Thank you for this contribution. SpeiseLokal has similarities with the Italian solidarity purchasing groups. What is interesting is the fact that besides the economic interaction and accompanying transactions the initiative also provides space for community building through the organized activities. You mention that there has been significant drop in household waste due the lower usage of packaging materials. I guess this is a smart way of involving people without direct involvement of fixed voluntary work.

Examples from this case can be seen as open innovations where both the producers and consumers are involved in the processes with SpeiseLokal being the intermediate agent. Do you know if there is any specific targeting by SpeiseLokal to initiate these types of changes?

My last question concerns the logistics. Do those farmers who do not make use of the services provided by BerSta bring their goods to the shop themselves?

Thank you for your answers in advance.

Juliana Lutz commented 14/11/12 13:39

Hi Leo,

thanks for your questions!

..... Do you know if there is any specific targeting by SpeiseLokal to initiate these types of changes?

Answer: The entire target of SpeiseLokal! was to set up a closer relationship between consumers and producers. The whole organisation is based around this. SpeiseLokal! regards itself as an intermediator, allowing people to get involved without being obliged to do voluntary work. People usually appreciate this and interestingly a lot of people nevertheless start getting involved. The same applies to farmers - some of them even offer to help in the shop from time to time .... Does this answer your question?

My last question concerns the logistics. Do those farmers who do not make use of the services provided by BerSta bring their goods to the shop themselves?

Answer: Yes, the farmers bring their produce to the shop. However, not each farmer has to drive as some farmers bring the stuff of other farmers. From time to time SpeiseLokal! picks up the goods from the farms or they meet half way inbetween.
best regards,
juliana
Adanella Rossi commented 27/11/12 11:24
Dear Julia,
I posted the following comment on 21 of October... but in the other file of the case on the wiki. So, I post it again here, in the case you havn't seen it.
....
Thanks Julia for the interesting case. It seems a very well organised initiative.
Some questions:

- Have the producers been supported in some ways in complying with the regulations?
- Before starting to cooperate with SpeiseLocal! did they sell directly?
- How do the producers plan their production in terms of volume? Is there any agreement with the 70 families buying the products? Or do these consumers vary but the dimension of demand is almost constant?
- This is related to another aspect. Is there a real relationship between the consumers and the farmers? Do the consumers attend the visits to the farms? Are there information about the farms available in the shop?
- Moreover, it seems to me that there is a certain disproportion in the number of actors involved: 40 farmer for 70 families… at a first evaluation, this channel appears not very relevant for the farmers. Are the farmers involved constant suppliers? How many of them sell the same products? How much of their produce do they sell in the shop? Do they have other direct or indirect channels to sell their products? Could you provide some details?
- Also the number of people working in SpeiseLocal! seems not adequate (too high) to the operations that have to be done. This could represent a point of inefficiency influencing the value distribution. What is the organization of the work in the shop?
- Is there transparency in pricing? Is there some communication about it to consumers? how are the prices compared to the 'conventional' channels?

Juliana Lutz commented 29/11/12 10:47
Dear Adanella,

- Have the producers been supported in some ways in complying with the regulations? **No - I think in many cases farmers know regulations even better than SpeiseLokal does ;-)*
- Before starting to cooperate with SpeiseLocal! did they sell directly? **Yes, most of them did sell directly.*
- How do the producers plan their production in terms of volume? Is there any agreement with the 70 families buying the products? Or do these consumers vary but the dimension of demand is almost constant? * *No, there is no agreement with the families and, yes, the consumers vary to a certain extend. The demand is almost constant (less during summer). For most of the farmers Speiselokal is a 'small fish', thus, it is not difficult for them to calculate. Further, SpeiseLokal is in constant contact with the farmers which also helps them in terms of calculation. And last but not least, our consumers know and accept the fact that some products are limited.*
- This is related to another aspect. Is there a real relationship between the consumers and the farmers? Do the consumers attend the visits to the farms? Are there information about the farms available in the shop? * *There is information available in the online shop as SpeiseLokal writes a 'profile' of the farmers once they have visited them. Regarding the 'real relashionship': SpeiseLokal organsises*

excursions to the farmers (but not many people join them), some farmers come to the shop from time to time to present their products, two farm women help in the shop and Speiselokal organsises events and feasts were consumers are able to meet the farmers. However, experience shows that the most important thing is the fact that the people running SpeiseLokal know the farmers well and that they are able to talk about the farmers and the products.

• Moreover, it seems to me that there is a certain disproportion in the number of actors involved: 40 farmer for 70 families… at a first evaluation, this channel appears not very relevant for the farmers. Are the farmers involved constant suppliers? How many of them sell the same products? How much of their produce do they sell in the shop? Do they have other direct or indirect channels to sell their products? Could you provide some details? **The farmers involved are constant suppliers, though some of them deliver only at certain times of the year as they deliver seasonal products (e.g. grapes) or durable products (e.g. polpa). Few sell the same products (e.g. pumpkins), if they do, they offer different qualities and prices (e.g. vegetables grown according to demeter-guidelines). As I mentioned above, most of the farmers deliver only a very small amount of ther produce to SpeiseLokal as they have various other ways of (direct-)selling. Many farmers are part-time farmes and some of these sell most of their stuff to us. There is an incredible variety how farmers organise themselves. Speiseloakl also tries to be open for different ways of cooperation: It will soon be hosting a CSA project, about 3 producers sell their stuff directly at the store, the others only deliver .....*

• Also the number of people working in SpeiseLocal! seems not adequate (too high) to the operations that have to be done. This could represent a point of inefficiency influencing the value distribution. What is the organization of the work in the shop?**The thing is that selling local, organic products in a socially sustainable way hardly allows you to survive economically in the given free-trade market-environment. The women working for SpeiseLokal are all very motivated, though with very different backgrounds. The work is organised quite efficiently (but not stressful!) with extremely useful IT-support (Database and logistics etc.). This is something that is appreciated by the farmers (they have different experiences). Still, the whole thing takes 55 hours per week. The 5 women involved work between 3 to 15 hour each week for SpeiseLokal (each has a specific function), according to their personal and professional situation as they all have children and another professions (3 academics).*

• Is there transparency in pricing? Is there some communication about it to consumers? how are the prices compared to the 'conventional' channels? **Yes there is transparency - consumers know how prices are calculated. Prices are lower (e.g. vegetables) and higher (e.g. cheese) than in conventional channels but the surcharge is less as there is no food waste.*

hope this is useful for you!
best,
juliana

Adanella Rossi commented 29/11/12 11:19

Thanks a lot Juliana, for answering all my questions! This is very usefyl to understand better the case.

9. Meat Box Schemes in Alava (Spain)

Generally speaking, the price perceived for the meat by livestock farmers has experienced little changes during these last years, even despite they are certified by quality labels (i.e. Euskal Okela) or are produced under organic farming systems. In order to achieve better prices, there is a growing presence and interest for developing SFSC for meat products based on box schemes.

1. Type of short supply chain addressed

Livestock farmers sell directly to consumers their meat in chilled storage vacuum-packed format. Farmers usually get in touch with consumers either by email or telephone call announcing the next slaughter date and the delivery of packages. Animals are taken to the abattoir, which prepares the packages, and are then taken back by the farmer in a suitably conditioned vehicle to keep refrigeration. Different sites and time schedules can be agreed for collecting the packages, so consumers attend, pay and take their package home. In some cases, meat packages are sold directly on farm, and then consumers (with their families and children) can visit the farm, facilities, livestock, grasslands, etc. Whenever the farmer has a website, packages can also be purchased through internet. Farmers might also provide directly to restaurants or take part of the joint commercialisation initiative of UAGALUR.

2. Area and Territory

Farmers are placed in the province of Alava, at a distance to Vitoria-Gasteiz ranging from 15 to 40 kms. However, there is no abattoir in the province, so livestock has to be slaughtered in the territories nearby (mainly Gipuzkoa) at around 80-100 kms from the farm.

3. Number of actors/producers/farmers involved

According to my knowledge in the province of Alava, there are 4 livestock farmers commercialising their meat in this way: one for horse meat and three for beef meat:

- Organic livestock farmer;
- Two producers of meat labelled under Euskal Okela PGI (both with local breeds: Terreña and Pirenaica)

In Biscay and Gipuzkoa, there are similar individual initiatives in a number that can be assessed between 15 and 20.

4. Type of products delivered

Meat is commercialised in chilled storage vacuum-packed format.

- Beef and horse meat packages: they are 5 kg packages divided in 8 smaller ones containing the diverse portions of the carcass (steak, 1st and 2nd quality fillets, ribs, minced meat, etc.). Prices: 60-65 kg / package.
- Suckling Lamb half-carcass packages.

5. Qualify the actors and/or the farmers involved

They are basically full-time farmers affiliated to UAGA, the Farmers' Union of Alava. They take part in different degrees of the existing advisory and support programmes (breeding schemes, technical and economic advisory, etc.). Feeding practices are to a great extent pasture based, but fattening is done basically indoors. The organic farmer also belongs to the local association of organic farmers (Bionekazaritza). In general, all of them are able to communicate to consumers the benefits of their product, which is not so common within farmers.

6. Indicate the time length of the initiative

The first SFSC of this type in Alava was initiated by the horse farmer in 2006. The other three ones will appear more or less at the same time (around 2009)

7. Actors directly or indirectly involved:

the main actors involved are the farmers and the consumers (or co-producers). The local convivium of Slow Food has also played an outstanding role in the promotion of these schemes and the quality of these products.

8. In relation to the Evidence Document

Section 1: Characteristics of SFSCs

What is meant by "short" in this case?

The SFSC is based on direct sales to final consumers. Therefore, short has clearly both a social and a physical meaning. One of the farmers has some basic info and photographs in his website. There is also info in the website offered by Slow Food after visits to 3 of these farms. Farmers are opened to receiving visits in their farms, as well as to offering info about their farming practices. Moreover, there are no intermediaries when food is purchased in the shop of UAGA, local markets or at the farm, and there will be one intermediary when these products are sold in certain small food shops that collaborate with the initiative.

The physical distance is bound to be much shorter than most of the meat purchased at conventional shops, markets and supermarkets. At least, there is clear info about the origin of the meat.

Section 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSCs

Health & wellbeing: horse meat is presented as local, nutritional, traditional, safe, healthy, produced by natural methods. The Terreña breed meat producer argues the outstanding fattening qualities of the breed (fat content within the muscle). Trust on beef meat can be guaranteed since two of the farmers also produce on the basis of the rules set by the PGI Euskal Okela. The third farmer is certified as organic.

Environment: All of them rear their animals through pasture based farming systems, even grazing on mountain areas for some time every year. Therefore, they have a clear impact on landscape management, prevention of fire hazards. Farmers rear local breeds (Terreña, Pirenaica and mountain horse of Alava), except the organic farmer who is changing the herd into a foreign breed (Sallers). Information about the production methods is easily accessible: the organic farmer is certified, and the producers of Euskal Okela PGI follow well established rules in terms of feeding practices, veterinary treatments, etc.

Social and economic: the reason for starting this initiative was to improve the profitability of the farms by adding value activities, as well as to have feedback from final consumers. At the same time, farmers have tried to make their farms closer to consumers by attending famers markets, visits to their farms, presence in the local media, etc.

These SFSC also contribute to improve the self-esteem of the farmers by means of the increasing presence and importance of their products.

Section 3: Impacts of regulation on SFSCs

Farmers complain about the lack of abattoirs or slaughterhouse availability in the province of Alava. Building their own facilities is simply not an option for them. Sometimes farmers also complain about the services that the existing abattoir facilities provide: they are so busy that they do not manage carcasses and meat with the required delicacy to achieve the best quality possible, or at least the standards they expect. Farmers are allowed to commercialise their meat under the Sanitary Registration of the slaughterhouse (printed on the meat box).

Section 4: Growth and development of SFSCs

Around the horse meat, a community of co-producers (named, Zalmendi) has been established. It comes from an idea of a farmer of the village of Okina (Álava), nearby Vitoria-Gasteiz, together with a group of people interested in purchasing this meat directly from the producer and consuming it due to the natural and healthy properties. The community must be understood as a group of consumers or co-producers sharing and consuming original good food (natural, high quality, nutritive, safe), healthy and clean (because of their ecological origin) and fair (by price). Nowadays there are more than 160 co-producers, an average of between six and seven slaughters per year for more than twenty foals.
Farmers are targeting also work places, restaurants, etc. for their SFSC.
More info:
Horse meat: **http://zalmendi.blogspot.com.es/**
Beef meat: **http://www.ismacarneecologica.com/**
http://slowfoodaraba.es/visita-a-la-explotacion-ganadera-de-adolfo-martinez-de-santos.htm

Comments and questions

gianluca brunori commented 11/09/12 10:57
Are customers individual consumers or groups?
The case highlights the role of policy in enhancing the logistic infrastructure for Short Food supply chains
Sustainable consumption: consumers get accustomed to use not only rear legs.
Are the prices satisfactory for farmers and consumers?
Develop further the concept of co-producers in this case.
Sustainability of these schemes: the role of private conservation (freezing)
Roberto Ruiz commented 16/10/12 14:31
Dear Gianluca,
They are basically individual consumers. The point is that these consumers go into a closer (more personal) sort of relationship with the producer, and even with other consumers. In that way, the sense of belonging to a group (sharing the same appreciation of a certain type of meat, probably common points of view, even lifestyles, etc) has arrived to the concept of community of co-producers (=farmer + consumers)
Both consumers and farmers consider that it is quite a fair price (on average 12 €/kg). For the farmer, it is over the average price that he would get into the conventional food channel (3.8 to 4.5 €/kg). And for the consumer it is similar or slightly cheaper than when purchased on the butchery. The point is that consumers must be so convinced on the compromise so as to be willing to freeze it.
Hope that it is clearer now. Otherwise, let me know. Many thanks and best regards.
Roberto
Adanella Rossi commented 23/10/12 08:08
Thanks Roberto for this case study. It described an initiative that seems to work very well.
Some questions:

- It seems that the consumers who buy the meat packages have established a stable relationship with the farmers; is it right? Or there is some variability?
- How do the farmers manage their different market channels (direct selling to consumers, to restaurants, in the joint commercialisation initiative)?

- For what reason only in the case of horse meat the relationship has given rise to a community of co-producers? It has depended on the farmer's character and communicational ability?
- What was and is the role of Slow Food?
- Do the farmers interact, have relationships?

Roberto Ruiz commented 24/10/12 12:32
Dear Adanella,
Many thanks for your comments. I will try to answer.
- I do not have exact data, but as far as I know, I would say that the majority of the consumers keep a certain regularity in their purchases (although they might do not buy every time), so the relationship between farmers and consumers is personal and frequent. I am sure that the producers do know the name of most of their consumers.
- Direct sales to consumers are managed by e-mail (horse-meat) or by phone calls (the beef meat producers). The other ones (restaurants and UAGAlur shop) are probably managed in person and by telephone.
- The community of co-producers is partly the result of the innovative character and skills of this particular producer, but also to the unestimable role of the local convivium of Slow Food. Slow Food took this traditional, local and minoritary farming system (with evident problems for commercialisation, generational turnover, etc) as a flag to try to contribute to conserve and promote it. As a result of this joint collaboration, in 2006 they created the Community of Horse Meat of the Mountains of Alava. Today the farmer is a member of Terra Madre and tutor of the horse meat within the Arca del Gusto of Slow Food Int. (http://slowfoodaraba.es/visita-a-la-explotacion-de-caballo-de-monte-del-pais-vasco-en-okina.htm)
- This is a really very small area, so farmers do really know each other personally; they usually meet around the same or similar associations (farmers' union), training activities, or advisory services. They also share the same facilities and constraints in terms of abattoirs, etc.
I hope that everything is clearer now. Otherwise, let me know. Many thanks and best regards
Roberto.

Sandra Karner commented 29/10/12 20:57
dear roberto,
unfortunately I am late with my comments as you have already answered some of the questions I would have had. - :-)
however, there are still some:

- if I understood you right, farmers share facilities, but running their own slaughter house is no option for them. is there a tradition for cooperatives in this region? I am wondering, because near to my place alternative initiatives of sheep, pork and beef farmers rebuilt together with a small regional butcher a slaughter house (eco-certified) with money from the leader programme. Have there been any discussions about similar ideas?
- the reason for starting the initiatives were to improve the profitability. - I am wondering if they also offer processed products (sausages, smoked products, spreads, etc.), which is usually an effecient strategy to add value to products.
- you have been addressing the issue of self-esteem of the farmers through valued products. I have been investigating similar initiatives of beef farmers here in austria, and this was also an issue for them. in addition to the valued high quality of their products aspects of professional identity and culture also were relevant for them. - I am wondering if this is similar for "your" initiatives. - e.g. the use of traditional breeds or pasture farming as a traditional practice in the region.

• horse meat is presented as being "healthy". is this a culturally based tradition or are there any efforts from scientists to proof this (e.g. as it was done for some traditional free range pork varieties: proof of high amount of unsaturated fatty acids)?
looking forward to your reply,
best, sandra k.
Roberto Ruiz commented 16/11/12 12:55
Dear Sandra,
In fact, there is a long tradition of cooperatives around here, but not yet anyone has arisen as a consequence of this particular issue. Of course, it could be an option.
Until now, they only sell raw meat (nothing processed), and it seems that it is more than enough (for them) in terms of added value. The option of more added value products should be conditioned to investments in facilities.
Two of the farmers do "sell" the concept of their local breeds (Terreña cattle breed and the mountain horse breed); the third one (Pirenaica cattle) do not (probably because the census of this breed is much higher and the farmer do not perceive it as an specificity). All of them manage the cows in pastures, but calves are fattened indoors.
Regarding the health attributes of horse meat, it is commonly accepted that horse meat has a higher content of iron, less calories, etc. Also, the farming system is more extensive, pasture based, and the use of supplementary feeding is lower, so it is easy so sell the concept of "natural food". At least here, I do not think that there is special research to go deepen into the fatty acids profile.
Many thanks to you, and best regards
Roberto

10. Case study: Zolle (Rome)

1. Type of short supply chain addressed

The prevailing relationship is face to face and trust in the producer is based on personal interaction. Zolle” is a shopping (intermediary) service that allows you to receive fruits and vegetables, grown in small companies mainly located in the Lazio region, directly at the front door of the house. You can select on the website different sizes of Zolle (i.e. the boxes) based on the eating habits of your family, which contain a certain amount of fresh produce (fruits, vegetables, meat, cheese, eggs). An e-mail or a phone call is enough to activate the service.

This is the core idea: the quantity is chosen by the consumer based on the needs of the family, while the producers select the quality based on what is available on farm. It is the farmers who decide what is best to be delivered according to the season and production available on the territory, ensuring freshness and wholesomeness. It is a formula based on trust: trust of the families in the good sense and wisdom of farmers and farmers' confidence in the families, because it is the constancy of purchase that provides a market for small high quality producers. The entrepreneur is a young woman who used to work on a farm in the Piedmont region (i.e North of Italy). One day she received the visit of some Japanese farmers who had started this activity more than thirty years ago. She realized that this could be a really innovative way to create a market for small family farms that often face difficulties in accessing conventional channels (or do not have an interest to access them).

2. Area and Territory

The box scheme is based in Rome and the produce mainly comes from within Lazio Region, with a few exceptions.

3. Number of producers involved

Zolle has 18 people working within the structure. Currently they interface with 90 farms, 80 of them located in the Lazio region. They serve about 1000 families. The top 20 farms with whom they work in strict contact get a high percentage of the final product price (on average, out of ten Euros of sales, 6 go to the farm and 4 to Zolle).

4. Type of products delivered

Fruits and vegetables, eggs, cheese, meat, bread, pasta, fruit juices, cereals, legumes, olive oil and vinegar, honey and jams, biscuits and cakes, and other non food products (ex. soaps).

5. Organizers and producers involved

Zolle is managed by two main leaders Simona Limentani e Ghila Debenedetti and engages with farms with whom there is a direct relationship, consisting of a pact of mutual trust with the company owner and his family.

Quoting from the website: “Constituent part of this agreement are the regular company visits by Zolle with the aim of better understanding, all stages of the production processes and any changes that occur over time, in addition to the organoleptic quality of products. Zolle works with family-sized farms that for history, tradition and environmental conditions embody what is called “local agriculture”. These farmers who sell to Zolle practice the following techniques of cultivation and / or farming: i) organic farming; ii) agriculture without the use of synthetic chemicals (for farmers who decided not to seek organic certification despite not using synthetic chemicals and they practice crop rotation. These companies most often self-certify their production methods. In the opinion of the organizers this type of certification is effective all the time in which there is direct selling or otherwise store within a local market such that the buyer is able to verify the statement made by the company; iii) Biodynamic farming; iv) Integrated agriculture.

6. Time length of the initiative

The activity started three years ago. It took 10 months of research on the territory to select the most preferred farmers to work with.

7. Other actors directly or indirectly involved

(consumers, cooperatives, civil society associations etc…): consumers have an active role since they must call or write to order the box. *"We do not look for new consumers directly, it is the consumer who contact us through a very powerful "word of mouth", newspaper articles, radio interviews. We started with about twenty families, with which we had personal relationships and we now serve about a thousand. The profile of our customers is fairly homogeneous: families with children, working women, a medium-high cultural level, average income, even if of course there are exceptions. However, these are people who are open to a different way of thinking of "shopping"*

8. In relation to the Evidence Document

Section 1: Characteristics of SFSC

What is meant by "short" in this case?
As indicated by the manager of Zolle, the main criteria for selecting the products are essentially three:
1) the techniques of production used and the environmental health of the product,
2) the proximity of the production site,
3) the taste. *"This is very important and inseparable from the place of production. In fact, we prefer not to sell a local product that does not also taste good (and it happens often!).*
We support local farms, but do not aspire to self-sufficiency. That is, during winter we get the oranges from Sicily (Lazio does not grow other fruits other than kiwi, in winter time) and recently I added Parmesan cheese in the Zolle (the boxes). Or when I have time to travel I add a good pesto made in Liguria. Obviously I do not put apples from Argentina because they are organic: it's a matter of common sense, we ponder and evaluate gradually. I believe that the return to the "local product" must be a way forward, not backward!"
With respect to 1.4: implications of the organization of SFSC, in reference of Sandra's *comment "In direct producer-consumer relations, developed mutual commitment and trust between producers and consumers substitute or reduce the need for formal confirmation of certain qualities materialised in forms of certificates, labels..."*
The relationship between producers and consumers is the indirect result of the professional experience of a group of young entrepreneurs, who act as mediators and take care of the logistics and of the relationship more in general (it took 1 year to select the farmers throughout Lazio). So there are intermediaries within the Zolle experience, who make a living out of it. The consumer comes to know the identity of the producer (through the box received, the website and facebook page, direct contact) and starts trusting him and eventually addressing him directly.

Section 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSC

Health: products are fresh and do not remain stored for longer than a morning, after which everything is delivered. Meat is stored in suitable refrigerators.

Environment: The delivery formula is low impact on the environment. They use a mix of “van plus bicycle”. The van loads a large number of boxes, it meets the bicycles in an easily accessible part of the city (ex. a square), each bicycle charges up to 5/6 boxes which then depart to reach the houses. After some time, the van meets the bicycles in another area and so on. *“This mechanism seems to be the most efficient. In terms of costs, compared to when we only relied on vans, the result is equivalent: instead of paying gasoline, we have to pay the people who run the bikes (but we save in terms of time and pollution!).”*
In addition the production practices followed by producers is not necessarily organic but they consider the environmental impact of their activity in some way, as ascertained by Zolle managers.

Section 3: Impacts of regulation on SFSCs

This is an example in which control authorities act in a less strict way. Simona says: *“From this point of view Lazio is a good environment. In general, products of animal origin would be expected to be processed in factories that are EEC certified. However this is a set of rules aimed at big business, not small family farms. Fortunately, in Lazio there is an exemption for small companies that sell the processed animal product in their province (or in nearby areas). Otherwise all the farms we work with could not afford the EEC certification. From the point of view of sanitation, HACCP is an adequate protection. In addition, the ASL (i.e. local health authority) in our territory works in a collaborative way: when problems have arisen, they have always helped to solve them in practice, rather than hinder. The truth is that our type of business is kind of “border-line”, in many ways (e.g. packaging, sale structure, etc ...), not yet being explicitly ruled ad hoc.*

2. **Key questions emerging from the case study analyzed.**

- This experience is based on the initiative of the two young entrepreneurs, on their personal relationship with the farmers: it is already of a considerable size. Would scaling up of this experience be possible?
- How can this happen without distorting some principles used for example in the selection of farmers and products?
- How viable economically is this experience in the long run?
- How can outbound logistic be improved?

FAO with “Food for the cities” came to visit recently: **http://www.zolle.it/web/senza-categoria/ci-e-venuta-a-trovare-la-fao/**

Comments and questions

Sandra Sumane commented 29/10/12 03:33
Thanks Francesca, this is a great initiative. How widespead are « zolles » in Italy in general? Are there some regional differences ? Is there some umbrella organisation ?
As you note, it is a good exemple of trust-governed food-chain relations. You say that consumers have an active role in it. Besides being dedicated shoppers, are there some other expressions of their involvement in this initiative? Farmers seem to be well coordinated and organised, is there some coordination or organisation also among consumers ?
Good taste is one of the key defining factors at this initiative, and it is said to be an important criteria when deciding if to introduce a product into the scheme. But how does it happen in practice ? Who and how decides if a product tastes good ?
I am positively surprised that in three years they have grown up to 90 participating farmers and 1000 families. Can we conclude what has been at the base of this growth ?
This is a bit out of the scope of the initiative, but maybe you have some idea of what would be other market alternatives for those family-farms who take part in Zolle ?

How other regional but non-participating farms of a similar profile market their products ?

Francesca Galli commented 29/11/12 17:58

Dear Sandra,thanks for your revision

I will try to answer your questions.

1) Zolle is a unique experience, and it is based in Rome, involving producers of the Lazio region. In terms of box scheme experiences there are some all over Italy, but as afar as I know there is no umbrella organization. For example in the Pisa province there are one or two small experiences (single farms, see my other case study Corazzano, quite innovative for the area). They are usually single farmers initiatives. However it would be a good idea to have an umbrella organization! May be if these experiences spread further, there might evetually be something like that.

2)Single consumers order their boxes, they do not organize themselves like a solidarity purchasing group does.

3)The quality of products is evaluated and chosen by the entrepreneurs. They do this based on their experience. It is a key feature of this initiative, which in my view makes it very "personalized".

4)They have told me that the main "vehicle" to get known is word of mouth and internet (facebook and website).

5)I was told that Lazio farmers involved in Zolle mainly market their product in Rome (through the whole sale market): therefore when they do the journey to Rome they also stop at Zolle to leave their produce. But I would need to do further explorations to understand the marketing profile of those firms.

I hope this is what you expected. thanks again for your work,

11. Case study: Straupe market of rural goods

1. The type of short supply chain

This is an open-air farmers' market, organized twice per month. The market was initiated by a group of local activists who decided to create a space for local producers and consumers to make them meet directly at the local area. This initiative was intended to change or provide an alternative for the practice that both local producers and consumers go regularly to towns in order to, respectively, sell and buy products [3].
(Fotos are available here: **http://www.straupe-hanza.lv/index.php?p=4574&pp=6225&lang=828&g=2011**)

2. Area and territory where the initiative takes place

The market is located in Straupe, a rural village (1500 inhabitants) in central Latvia, some 60 kilometers from the capital. The market has an advantageous location: it is situated next to a major road with a regular traffic, which makes it easy accessible also for casual passing customers. Another possibly important landmark is the local dairy's shop right next to which the market is organized. The dairy is quite well known among Latvian consumers for its qualitative products, and presumably both the market and the dairy benefit from each other's customers.
Big part of the producers-sellers come from the local territory /region (up to 30 (??) km), but there are also some sellers who move from even more than 100 km distant places – often those are mobile producers who practice various modes of direct selling.

3. The number of actors involved

There are around 70 food and non-food producers who regularly take part in the market. There is no estimation about the number of consumers.

4. The type of products delivered

Straupe market regulations [2], developed at local level by the market organizers, state that it is allowed to sell in the market agricultural and other artisanal products which are honestly [*godpratigi*] produced and processed by farmers themselves and which are closely linked to local food or local traditions. There is a limited space at the market and when choosing the participants the preference is given to products which are of local origin, organic, produced accordingly to Slow Food principles (ie, natural, traditional, environmentally friendly) and which contribute to the diversity of products at the market. Artisanal non-food products have to be related to local food or traditions.
There is a quite broad range of food products sold on the market: milk, bread and pastries, vegetables, fruit, honey, fish, meat, herbal tea, eggs, wine etc. Also seedling and some smaller livestock (rabbits, sheep…) are available. Non-food products include such traditional articles produced from natural materials as wicker and forging works, wool and woolen articles, wood articles, pottery etc.

5. Qualify the actors and/or the farmers involved

A range of actors have been involved in various phases of the market development (see time length below). The key actors who implemented the market have been a group of local activists, farmers and the local municipality, united by the idea that local producers and local food has to be better put in value.

Majority of sellers are local and regional small and medium farmers and artisanal producers. There are also local habitants who sell overproduce from their household plots or picked-up wild or natural products (mushrooms, berries, flowers). There are also some local or regional food companies that take part in the market – this could mean that not on all market days there are enough local producers who register for selling.
Consumers are local and regional people, as well as passers-by. No specific consumer profile is identified, but all ages, both genders can be observed among them. Local young families often arrive with children.

6. The time length of the initiative

The market is operating since 2008. There can be identified several phases of organizational processes in setting up the market. At the *initiating* phase, early 2008: the idea of local food market was generated by local activists, farmers were among them. *Building of a partnership* network followed. Firstly, links with the local tourism association was established. The idea was presented to local and regional governments. It was outlined in the project which received public funding from both institutions. *Learning* phase followed during which project developers and market participants learned from other farmer market organize, national Slow food movement members, marketing experts and also from public institutions specifically about food production and distribution regulations and taxation. *Putting into action*: the first market took place in June 2008.

7. Other actors directly or indirectly involved

Local dairy provides the venue for the market: it is organized on its land.
The market is networking in Slow Food movement – the farmer market's idea was supported by a celebrity cook running a restaurant in Riga who considered that the farmer market movement has to be encouraged together with the ideas of Slow Food. In august the market received visitors from Italian and French Slow Food.
The organizers have developed good cooperation with Food and Veterinary service and State Revenue Service regarding the formal requirements of market organization.

8. In relation to evidence document

Section 1: Characteristics of SFSC

The FSC was initiated by local people in reaction to the specific situation in local food production, distribution and consumption system. The basic idea of the market organizers was to reduce food miles, geographical and also social distance between local producers and consumers.
Geographical distance has been literally reduced as far as it concerns local producers and consumers. The market attracts also some direct-selling producers from outside the region. In these cases, food miles may be not reduced, but in presence social exchanges between producers and consumers those distant geographical places are directly connected, loose of their anonymity and are brought virtually closer.
Direct link between producers and consumers on the market days facilitates their social proximity, they get to know each other better, learn from each other. Social proximity finds expression also as honesty and trust between the two parties, which are presented as basic principles of the market. Trust is sustained by getting to know producers and also by the quality of products to which producers are attentive, of course, in order to keep their clients. (Correspondence to certain quality standard is also guaranteed by all the food production and distribution norms which producers have to fulfill in order to be accepted on the market – so there are also formal rules, not only pure trust relations.)

Another characteristic discovered in this SFSC is related to localness, construction of authentic local identity. Markets are quite popular food purchasing places among Latvian consumers. However, almost all of them are full of imported food stuff (that quite often happens to be misleadingly presented as local) and industrial food and articles. The organizers of Straupe market wanted to create an authentic space exclusively for local and traditional products that would clearly distinguish it from the existing markets. Local origin is stressed in the market's regulations. Still, not all products are 100% local (presumably, there are not yet enough of local producers who want and can sell on the market), but all the products bear the qualities of traditional Latvian products or are artisanal.
Finally, local ownership and governance of the food chain is another aspect of shortness: the specific rules of the market were developed by its organizers (according to national laws and regulations though) and they take the relevant decisions.

Section 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSC

Health: the market diversifies food choice and in particular improves access to fresh, seasonal and also organic products, which might lead to a more diverse and balanced diet, but this is not verified in the case in practice. (Regarding organic products, there are contradictory conclusions about their nutritional superiority. However, one thing is apparently clear that there are less pesticide residues in these products.) Local traditional food cannot be regarded as obligatory healthier though (f.i., pastry, high-fat cheeses and meat products are not highly recommended daily products).
Environmental: food miles have been reduced at some extent. Possibility to sell on the market allows some small local producers to avoid searching for more distant outlets [4]. However, it is questionable that the market can fully absorb all produce of all producers (especially of more commercial ones), as it is organized only twice per month and the number of customers, albeit considerable, is comparatively moderate. This indicates also that some SFSCs have a limited capacity and producers have to develop mixed marketing strategies (this point is relevant for characteristics of SFSC).
Economic: improves market access for small and artisanal producers. Moreover, the market also provides a space for finding other clients (restaurants, guest houses etc. [7]). Some of the producers witness that their income have increased [4]. The market format and direct exchanges with consumers and other producers encourage economic diversification and creativity: several farmers have started processing on their farms, many invent new products. The market has animated local economy – both agriculture and also tourism as the market has become an object of tourists' interest [4].
Social: similarly as in the other Latvian case of CSA, also in the farmer market case there are witnesses that stress that direct interactions with customers contribute to the valorization and recognition of farmers' work and local products [3]. Presumably, this adds to / increases farmers' socio-psychological comfort to keep on with farming.
At community level the market has facilitated some revitalization of the local community. The market has become a crucial social event in the community, it animates local social life, has become a place of meeting for local people.

Section 3: Impacts of regulation on SFSCs

The case evokes the question of suitability and flexibility of existing regulation to new FSC forms. Straupe market was the second established regular farmer market in the country and as a pioneer it had to face some constraining shortcomings of the regulations at the time. It has adapted itself to some rules and incited changes in other. A problem the market faced soon after the opening was that the regulation of that moment allowed to organize only eight market days per year for this type of markets. The organizers took the initiative and together with the cook of Slow Food movement mentioned above and a coordinator of another farmer market approached the Ministry of Agriculture with propositions to change the existing regulations. The minister of agriculture agreed that the existing regulations were out of date and farmer markets should be supported. Although the law was not changed immediately, an agreement was reached that the market can continue operating, exceeding the eight legal days.

Another problem was that there were no specific regulations for production and distribution of artisanal food products, which excluded them from legal market. This question had been raised already by other producers (specifically organic) and in the result of increasing demand for legalizing artisanal food production the relevant legislation has been put in place with time, too.

Finally, in order to expose and sell even the smallest animals in the market there was needed an additional demarche: a livestock stand had to be registered on the venue's address.

Besides, there is local regulation of the market (regarding what type of products are accepted, organization and order in the market etc.), but the majority of the document refers to the many national / EU regulative norms that the producers must meet in order to be able to sell on the market [2]. Some participants acknowledge that there is overbureaucracy, but they agree that some standards and regulation must be in place [6]. In order to comply with all the regulations during the preparation phase of the market participants followed specific courses.

Section 4: Organisational patterns suitable for SFSC

The market initiative presents a partnership in which a wide range of actors have cooperated in order to implement it. Cooperation has been necessary in order to provide the initiative with all the needed particular resources (initiative, knowledge, funding, venue…).

9. Key questions emerging from the case study analyzed.

Not questions, but some concluding themes sticking out from the case:

- It demonstrates a collective, bottom-up, endogeneous process of initiating and implementing change in food system;
- Involves (social) learning and innovation (organisation, marketing, production);
- Improves local control over production, marketing and distribution;
- Synergy with local development: animation of social life and traditions (farmers market and cultural), contribution to local economy, tourism.

SOURCES

Internet and media materials:

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2. **http://www.straupe-hanza.lv/index.php?p=4574&pp=10383&lang=828**
3. **http://www.laukutikls.lv/vietejas_iniciativas/laba_prakse/31-straupes_lauku_labumu_tirdzins**
4. Grinvalde- Iruka, A. (2009) Ciemošanos Straupe pielago tirgum**http://www.diena.lv/sabiedriba/novados/ciemosanos-straupe-pielago-tirgum-679177**
5. Majore – Line, M. (2011) Popularize vietejos sezonasproduktus **http://www.edruva.lv/zinas/sabiedriba/zina/34225**
6. Feldmane, S. (2008) Isti lauku labumi Straupe.**http://www.edruva.lv/zinas/zinas_no_vecas_e_druvas/zina/4866**
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8. Straupes Avize. Straupes pagasta padomes informativais izdevums Nr. 161 2008. gada augusts.
9. http://www.laukutikls.lv/citi_pasakumi/pieredzes_apmaina_latvija/563-biedribas_lauku_partneriba_upe_8_dalibnieku_pieredzes_apmainas_brauciens_uz_cesu_rajonu
Observations on the market during 2011.

Comments and questions

Femke Hoekstra commented 09/10/12 10:44

Hi Sandra, are the outcomes of the "learning" phase documented somewhere?

Adanella Rossi commented 22/10/12 09:40

Thanks Sandra for this case study, it is interesting and very well developed.

Some questions in order to add some other information to your careful description and analysis.

- About farmers involved: have they had other experiences of direct selling? How did they sell their produce? About the present: you mention the need for mixed marketing strategies, on what other forms they sell their products? What are the reasons of the difficulty to involve other local farmers?
- About economic aspects: you mention the presence of public funds. Is there some temporal limit to them? In other words, is there some plan to make the market self-sustaining?

About prices: how are they fixed? Is there some internal regulation or mechanism, or some form of social control?

- About regulations: did the farmers find some difficulties in complying with the regulations?

Francesca Galli commented 23/10/12 11:05

Dear Sandra, I add a couple of questions to Ada's:

- how does the monitoring of producers quality standards work? who is in charge of verifying producers compliance with production and distribution standars? how are consumers informed of them (ex some form of labelling or other means)?
- from your point of view, how will the market develop in perspective (further growth or size limitation)? how are organizers behaving with respect to new non local producers entering the market (how do they select them?)?

Sandra Sumane commented 25/11/12 10:53

Thanks Femke, Ada and Francesca for your questions! Here come some answers:

About learning phase : So far the learning phase and its outcomes have not been systematically documented. The pieces about learning that I can gather from the existing sources and my recent conversation with one of the organizers witness that this formal and informal learning has been of crucial importance to put the market into operation and maintain during these years. A formal educational project developed before the start-up lasted for one year and it was aimed at future participating producers to provide them with more or less all the relevant knowledge they would need to know as producers and sellers on the market. As the food production and turnover are rather strictly regulated, both organizers and producers had to know the relevant regulations and adopt their operations accordingly. For producers it was also important to acquire some marketing knowledge as many of them have not had selling experience. Finally, the experience of another market organizers and visits there were useful from a practical point of view and convincing, ie reducing farmers' scepticism about the success of the market. Learning, of course, is continuing still now, but more on individual base and as learning by doing.

About farmers involved, their experiences of direct selling and mixed marketing strategies: Again, there is no formal survey done on these issues. Still what I can extract from the existing sources and knowledge is that not many farmers had some well established, systematic previous experience of selling directly. In the meantime, it is quite common in rural communities that one can buy products directly from a producer s/he knows, even if direct selling is not a regular producer's practice. For instance, from time to time my father was buying honey from one of the producers who is selling now also on the market. Some farmers had seasonal experience on selling on the market places (not specifically farmer markets). One farmer has been selling in a basket system. Regarding the mixed marketing strategies, the other market channels that farmers use are both conventional ones, like selling to processors, retailers, catering, and also other direct selling modes are developing, e.g., selling on farms, through basket system, on market places. One of the reasons the organizer mentions as a difficulty to involve local farmers is their disbelief, passivity as life position, lack of entrepreneurial spirit.

About economic aspects and public funding: The public funds were used only at the preparation stage to launch the project. From the regional municipality's (probably EU funding was involved here, too) program of life-long learning the educational project mentioned above was funded. Local municipality has co-funded some facilities for the market. Since then the market has not received any public financial support and it is self-sustaining (the costs to organize one market event are estimated around 300 euros, which is covered by the participation fees paid by sellers). The organizers stress though the important moral support from the side of the local municipality.

About prices: Prices are completely left up to producers to fix. However, organizers stress that prices should be reasonable and satisfactory for both sides. They believe that the market regulates the prices anyway: if the prices are too high, consumers will not buy.

About regulations: I have few information about this. There are difficulties reported for meat producers as many local small slaughter houses have been closed down. The organizers say the very organisation of the market is quite a bureaucratic procedure.

About quality standards :The products should be of local origin but there are no formal internal quality control procedures and there is no any labelling either. The organizers still follow what producers sell (for instance, meat bought from other sources and then only processed on farm is not welcome). Compliance with formal food production and distribution standards are at farmers' responsibility – they have to provide the market organizers with all the relevant documentation.

The market's future development:I think rather qualitative than quantitative changes are possible in the nearest future. In terms of the size, it seems the market has reached close to its optimum. The limited physical space of the market limits also its growth in terms of the number of participants. More consumers are still possible, so turnover on the market might increase, moreover because the organizers are increasingly linking the market with local tourism offer. As the market has proven to be a success, probably, more local producers will join (also the sceptical ones! .

How are organizers behaving with respect to new non local producers entering the market? : The market has become quite famous and there is a big interest from non-local producers. Before each market event, the producers willing to sell there have to apply to get a place. However, preference is always given to local producers. Non-local producers are only accepted if there is enough space on the market-place. Among them, accordingly to the market regulations, the preference is given to organic producers; also recommendations or reputation from other markets can be taken into account; potential to increase the diversity of products is another criteria.

12. Case study KA DZI' : CSA RIGA-GULBENE

Hereby I come back to the initiative which I have already presented to you in a video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snCSs9YUVcQ. Here I will detail it more specifically along the case presentation guidelines.

1. The type of short supply chain

In the classification table the initiative fits in the box of community supported agriculture; the participants present themselves as a group of direct buying. The initiative was started by a group of devoted consumers who wanted to consume local, ecological products and also support local farmers. The idea originated in a woman, a young mum, who was looking to switch completely her consumption to organic products. She found many like-minded people in her entourage. They established links with organic farmers from Gulbene district who are selling now them their products. Consumers organize weekly ordering and delivery of products. In difference from traditional CSA groups where consumers receive prepaid ready-made food boxes, in this one consumers can also order specific products they like (there is a weekly list circulated in which participating consumers mark their choices); still seasonality and yield of products are respected. This individual ordering demands some extra organizational efforts both from consumers and producers, as well as it may involve some irregularities in farmers' income. However, so far the system functions well. It is made possible also by (1) good communication between farmers and consumers – farmers are informed about qualities and defects of their products, and farmers keep consumers updated about their offer; (2) good self-organization among consumers. There is a strict division of duties: there is a consumers' group responsible for ordering, sorting and delivering products, another for organizing travels to farmers and, thirdly, there are collectors who collect, wash and arrange packaging

2. Area and territory where the initiative takes place

The consumer group is based in the capital Riga. The supplying farmers are located in Gulbene district – a bit less than 200 km from the capital. (See map.)

3. The number of actors/producers/farmers involved

At the moment there are 67 consumers and 8 farmers involved in the initiative. At some point the number of interested consumers has reached 120, but it has decreased. As the initiators explain, the reason why people fell apart was that not everyone was ready to take active part, invest their time and energy to make the initiative run. One more crucial actor for the initiative's logistics and green ideology is an organic shop "Uzkodu naminš" in Riga which serves as a supply and delivery point of products.

4. The type of products delivered

There are around 100 products on the delivery list (they are available according to their seasonality). All products are organic and produced in the participating farms. The assortment contains both raw products (vegetables, fruits, herbs, milk…) and processed products (cheese, cream, bread, pastry, juices, processed fruits and vegetables…). The range of products has increased with time in learning interactions (feedback) between consumers and producers: producers take up creatively consumers' tastes and wishes and develop new products, whereas consumers in turn learn famers' facilities and capacities. Consumers confirm that cooperation with farmers considerably diversify their menu; it makes some (traditional) products available which are otherwise difficult to obtain. Membership in the CSA has changed their consumption habits: f.i., it has reduced their visits to supermarkets and it demands more creativity in preparing food.

5. Qualification of the actors and/or the farmers involved

One of the main characteristics of this initiative is its strong ecological base. As consumers depict themselves, they "are "green" by their conviction." They are organized in an informal group "Ka dzi'" which unites like-minded people on the base on their shared values of nature protection and human relations. Their ecological life-style is not limited to buying local organic products. Some of them are involved in other environmental groups (anti GMO) and activities.
Also farmers follow the strong ecological line: all of them are certified organic.

6. The time length of the initiative

The group started to operate in 2010.

7. Other actors directly or indirectly involved

At the start-up representatives of French CSA (AMAP) have shared their experience and knowledge with consumers and producers. This sharing of positive experience was important to gain farmers' trust in consumers' intentions.

8. In relation to evidence document

Section 1: Characteristics of SFSC

The initiative of direct buying emerged in opposition to conventional unknown (in terms of provenance, production methods, ingredients, producer…), unnatural (modified, with preservatives, out of natural season…) food which has lost consumers' trust and liking. The consumers were looking for alternative ways to provide themselves with food that would correspond to their ecological and humanistic values.
Shortness in this CSA initiative is manifested in several ways. Social proximity between farmers and consumers finds expression as consumers' solidarity with local farmers, sharing similar values, trust (which substitutes formalized contractual relations), getting to know each other and learning from each other (producers, consumers and products are not anonymous; there are faces and stories behind them which make them meaningful). Geographical/ physical proximity: farmers are located comparatively close to consumers and this allows more intense interactions between them: consumers are visiting farms and also assisting there. Smaller geographical distance reduces the length and time of physical travel of products that permits that they arrive fresh and natural (there is no need for lengthening of products' life with the help of preservatives). Geographical proximity also allows association of products with a certain place – albeit products are not traditional/ specific to the particular locality, they have the identity of place. The particularity of Ka dzi' is its strong ecological dimension. The ecological embeddedness of this food-chain manifests as reconnecting to local nature and ecological cycles via environmental friendly production and consumption practices and natural-ness, freshness, diversity and seasonality of products. Economic proximity is established as direct market exchange of products and money, in which farmers are direct and the only profit makers. Finally, the governance of this SFSC is local: participants – local stakeholders own and control the initiative; they have agreed on rules and roles and execute them. Still it should be noted that the local governance happens in compliance with formal regulations of food production and distribution.

Section 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSC

Health: products are fresh and known, with no agrichemical residues, less processed (which means also less preservatives, sugar, fat…), consumers are sure about their good quality. The diversity of products may provide with a higher diversity of nutrients.

Environmental: As noted above, this SFSC initiative is strongly driven by consumers' ecological motivation to consume organic and local products. Not only producers are organic, but also consumers are "green", and environmentally friendly practices are observed all along the whole food-chain (organic production methods, collective supplies, reduced food-miles, few packaging and repeated use of it…). The participants represent ecological citizenship (Seyfang, 2006) which chooses active environmentally friendly life style, based on ethical considerations and values. Several of them are members/ take part in other ecological organizations and events.

Social sustainability is much ensured by the trustful, fair and personal relations, solidarity between consumers and producers. Several consumer members stress the sense of community, collective identity and collective benefits that advances them. The CSA initiative serves also as appreciation of farmers' work – farmers receive direct feedback from consumers and their belief increases that their work is necessary.

Economic: The initiative witness several economic advantages both for farmers and consumers that contributes to its economic sustainability. Farmers' access to market has increased. It is of particular importance for organic farmers as due to few organic market channels in Latvia, a big part of them is still distributed in conventional food-chain without organic label. "Ka dzi'" provides regular income for farmers; income security is increased by prepayments and the negotiated price is fair for producers, "not dictated by global markets". There are economic benefits also for consumers. They witness that for them it is a cheaper way (in comparison to shops) to obtain organic products; moreover, the offer is diverse.

(Section 3: Impacts of regulation on SFSCs.

So far, the gathered information about the initiative does not permit to make conclusions about some particular policy or regulation impacts. Organic agriculture and artisanal production per se are quite strictly regulated. Another similar CSA initiative in Riga witnesses that there are difficulties to introduce meat and its products in CSA initiatives because of more specific regulations.)

Section 4: Organisational patterns suitable for SFSC

This initiative is informal; though there are rules and roles established. It demands high self-organization and active involvement from participants. In particular, it raises the level of consumers' participation – from relatively passive buyers they turn into active organizers, managers, also they are more directly involved in developing the offer of products. In order to make the initiative run, there is a division of duties introduced (see above under General information The type of short supply chain).

The case illuminates the role of trust and social capital in establishing alternative food initiatives. Both on consumer and producer sides, many participants were recruited via existing social links (friends of friends, members of organic farmers' community). In the meantime the trust had to be built and maintained, especially between actors coming from different domains (ie between farmers – consumers). Shared values and mutual trust form a very solid base for integration (confirmed also by backsliders).

9. Key questions emerging from the case study analyzed

It seems that most of regulations and support mechanisms concern producers. The question rises if and what policy support is needed for consumer driven SFSC or at food supply chain level? Actually there are two questions (1) How to animate consumers and encourage them for more active engagement? (2) How to avoid

standardization and the related risk of absorption of alternative initiatives by conventional chains?
This SFSC raises reflection about upscaling and integration. It witnesses that there might be some "natural" limits for informal initiatives. "Ka dzi'" seems to have reached its optimal scale, when its manageable and personal relations, sense of community can be maintained. So, now it seems rather closed for new members. Neveretheless the participants popularize direct buying, invite people to form their own groups and propose their assistance. So, it is rather upscaling via multiplication, not growth in volume.
Resources:
Rugena – Bojare, Z. and E. Zuša (2012) Tieša pirkšana. Presentation at "Par zalu tuvošanos" 24/03/2012 in Jurmala, Latvia. Available at http://www.tautasforums.lv/?p=5297 (Accessed 7/08/2012).
Seyfang, G. (2006) Ecological citizenship and sustainable consumption: Examining local organicfood networks. Journal of Rural Studies, 22 (4), p. 383-339.

Comments and questions

gianluca brunori commented 17/10/12 07:33
Hi Sandra,
congratulations with your case, it is very interesting and complete. Only a few questions:
- what is the income level and professional status of the group?
- what facilities do the group use? (for storage, processing orders, transportation etc.)?

Roberto Ruiz commented 26/10/12 13:48
Dear Sandra
Many thanks and congratulations for such a complete and clear report. I did really enjoy it.
However, I have some doubts/questions.
About the self-organization procedure of the system. How many people take active part in each one of the groups? Do they receive any sort of payment for their work? Or is it based on the leadership and voluntary role of a core-group of people?
There were also some people that joined the initiative (up to 120 at some point) but later abandon due to (apparently) lack of active participation. Which are the obligations of members? I am sure that they will have to contribute to pay some fix expenses (facilities), but anything else?
Regarding health issues, consumers seem to be sure about food good quality, partly certified by the organic farming system. But what about the health of soils, heavy-metals from air-pollution, etc.? Are there any analysis to certify it?
Just in case: Do you have information about how are prepayments negotiated with farmers? And any assessment of the price of these organic food products in comparison to their purchase in other type of shops?
By the way, I find it very interesting the point of the suitability of upscaling via multiplication for this sort of SFSC instead of growth. This case study reminds me of an association of consumers here in Vitoria (Bio-alai), but with a very different origin (since 1991, consumers interested in the purchase of cheaper organic food - but not necessarily local) and evolution (growth and growth until they have to face some critical decisions). I will tell you about it.
Best regards
Roberto

Roberto Ruiz commented 26/10/12 13:55
I wonder about the English subtitles in the video. Were they in the original video, or did you get them (somehow) for the interests of the project? Because I could have

access to some videos in Spanish (or Basque) but do not know how to be able to share them within the project.
Many thanks in advance
Sandra Sumane commented 22/11/12 04:49
Hi Roberto, I prepared and added the subtitles myself. As it was my first experience, it was quite time-consuming, but it worked at the end. I used Windows Movie Maker, which might be not the best software, but it's for free. Yes, it would be great to see some videos with Spanish (or Basque) experience!
Sandra Sumane commented 22/11/12 04:47
And thanks Gianluca and Roberto for your questions. I did not have answers to all of them, so I have recontacted the group's initiators. Until they respond, here are some responses I can extract from the sources at my disposal.
Regarding the group's income level and also Roberto's question about the price in comparison to organic products in shops: The initiator of the group was willing to consume healthy, organic products, but she found the prices of organic products in retail shops were too high for her: "shopping in organic shops would be devastating for my family's budget." (Puke, 2012) She was ready to strive against the principle that good quality food is available only for rich people. So she looked for the alternatives and finally arrived at the option of direct buying from farmers, which is cheaper. Also other consumers witness that direct buying is cheaper for them. (However, I do not have estimations how much cheaper.) Farmers recognise that they can maintain these "consumer-friendly" prices because of the certain volume they deliver to them. From this I conclude that these are rather medium (moderate) than upper income-level consumers.
Professional status of some members: project manager and IT specialist, bank employee, housewife (mother at home), small business owners, employee at client service. Majority are young professionals with families and children.
The facilities that the group uses are quite few and simple. Producers deliver their products to a cafe in Riga. A person-on-duty of the week sorts them into baskets, which then consumers come to pick up the evening of the same day. This seems to be the only external facility used. For ordering, there is created a list in googledoc's platform where everyone places his/her order; the list is coordinated by the weekly person-on-duty, s/he contacts farmers to update the information about the available products, collects and sends the orders to farmers and informs consumers about the price of their purchase. Transportation is consumers' or producers' owned and organised.
Self-organization of the system and obligations: The first (and only??) «obligation» seems to be the willingness to devote some time and participate in the organisational work (coordination of orders, sorting and delivering products...). All the members have to take part in these tasks on a regular basis; the persons-on-duty are changing (seems weekly). No one receives any payment; this is fully and truly voluntary work of motivated people. So far I do not have information that the members would have additional payments because of some fixed expenses. The group does not pay for the café facilities they use for sorting and delivering products. Transportation costs should be included in the product's price (moreover, the supplying farmers are delivering their products also to other places in Riga that in total reduces the transport costs for this group as they are shared).

Analysis of environmental impacts (health of soils, heavy-metals from air-pollution, etc): There has not been any analysis about environmental impacts of this particular initiative. Regarding consumers' attitudes, however, they are motivated not only by healthy food, but also by their care for environment and conviction that organic farming is better for nature. They regard care for environment as one of the principles of direct buying. “Less we intervene in the natural processes, better it is!” And from the group’s future vision: “Consumers are aware that they take care not only of healthy and fresh food for their families, but also of maintenance of clean environment.” (Rugena - Bojare and Zuša, 2012).

13. Case study_GAS San Zeno

1. Type of short food chain addressed

GAS San Zeno is a Solidarity-based Purchase Group (GAS), that is a group of citizens-consumers organized to collectively manage provisioning through direct relationships with producers and direct engagement in managing activities through volunteer labour.

According to the general features of GAS movement in Italy, a central aspect of this kind of organization is the sharing of ethical principles, referring to solidarity and to environmental and social sustainability of production and consumption practices. These principles are turned into criteria for interrelating with producers and for managing all the activities within the Groups. Also GAS San Zeno has adopted this approach (formalized in 2011 in a 'Code of behavior'), assuming as organisational criteria:

- the choice of products based on seasonality and, preferably, on organic production methods;
- the preference given to local producers;
- the continuity of the relationship with the producers, through agreements;
- the definition of a fair price, through agreements with producers;
- the reduction of packaging and the preference given to recyclable or reusable materials;
- the promotion of trust and co-operation within the group.

The communication between the members of the Group and the farmers with whom the Group is linked is a central element. The physical relation is in part mediated by the members who are in charge of the management of the orders, and involves the other members through the periodical visits to the farms. The condition of direct relationship with producers is however experienced by all the members through the internal discussion about the various aspects involved.

Area and territory where the initiative takes place: the activities of the GAS are located in the town of Pisa, in Tuscany (Central Italy). As many other groups, it uses as base to meet and to collect and redistribute the boxes spaces made available to it by other organizations (a community centre for many years and more recently spaces in parish buildings) .

The farms linked to the Group are situated at a different distance, depending on the kind of product. In the case of the most important products - vegetables and fruit - the distance is approximately 30-40 km. For product that are not present in the area it is greater, but always within the province or the region, with a few exceptions (e.g. oranges from South Italy).

2. Number of consumers and producers involved

The GAS includes at the moment about 40 'families' purchasing in a steady way, and 10 producers (in some cases providing the same kind of product). The number of the families refers to the purchasing of vegetables and fruit; for the other products it is usually lower. The number of the producers can increase if new relations are established (as in this moment, in which members are assessing the possibility to start the provision of a new product), or, on the contrary, it can decrease because of the lack or the too reduced orders. Also the latter is a situation that the Group is experiencing, which is leading it to consider the opportunity to reduce the number of suppliers to guarantee conditions of economic sustainability.

3. Type of products delivered

The Group started its activity of direct provisioning with vegetables; later it introduced fruits, cheese, fruit juices and jams, flours and, more recently, eggs; it is under evaluation the introduction of pasta and cereals. Some products that were previously purchased are now no more ordered (e.g. bread, wine). The products are provided on the basis of periodical orders, which generally refer to periods ranging from one to three months. The deliveries are weekly, with the exceptions of: apples, potatoes and cheese for which they are be-weekly; oranges have monthly deliveries.

4. Qualify the actors and/or the farmers involved

Almost all the farmers adopt organic or biodynamic methods; most of them are certified. They are mainly full-time (8), but there are also 2 part-time farmers. Among the full-time, 3 farmers have not agricultural professional background. The two suppliers of vegetables (the most important supplier for the GAS) have quite large farms (18 ha); both of them have relationships with other GAS and sell their produce also on other channels (i.e. school canteens, small retailers specialized in local food). Also the cheese comes from a big cooperative. None of the suppliers sell to big retailers.

The members of the GAS present different features, as many other GAS. There are people of different age, from young students to elderly people. The level of education is medium-high, while the income level appears varying from low to medium.

As for the other GAS, at the basis of the adhesion to the Group there are a sense of dissatisfaction with the conventional food system and a search for alternatives for food provisioning. However, the intensity of this kind of motivations is not the same among the members. All of them are looking for 'good food' - fresh, local, organic, seasonal - at a fair price; but only some of them are more consciously seeking to free themselves from the conventional retailing system, perceived as unsustainable and untrustworthy. In general, differently from other GAS, San Zeno is not characterized by an ideological approach by its members. Also its origin is peculiar. Instead of being constituted through self-organization of a group of citizens-consumers, it was promoted for initiative of a single person (a doctor, engaged on activities related to health and social inclusion) in collaboration with a farmer (one of the two current suppliers of vegetable, who has been one of the first experience of social farming in Italy). Very soon, however, the consumers decided to organize themselves as a real GAS, also on the basis of the experience of the other similar initiatives developing in the area, to which the farmer was linked. The farmer has so played in that first phase a role of broker, fostering the transmission of information and experience. This kind of role is not unusual, especially when the farmers have relationships with many GAS (as in this case). This brokerage activity can regard the organization of the GAS practices (since its establishment on) and also the attitude of GAS members to the food provisioning (e.g. question of certification for organic products, composition of the boxes, seasonality, level of price). In the latter case the farmer can facilitate consumers learning processes.

5. Time length of the initiative

The GAS was established about 10 years ago (2003).
In relation to the Evidence Document

6. Problems rising that match issues addressed in the Evidence Document

Section 1: Characteristics of SFSC

The meaning of shortness in this experience finds different expressions. There is firstly the choice to establish a direct relationship with local farming, aimed at getting fresh and environmentally sustainable food. This geographical proximity however does not translate in rigid criteria with regard to the distance. There is also the desire to know better the reality behind that food, that is the farmers, the farms, the characteristics of the production processes and the related problems. There is here an effort to overcome the social separation which has established between the two parts (social proximity). Another important expression is the choice to translate the value acknowledged to the food, linked to its quality and the “quality” of its production processes, into a fair price. Looking more generally at the experience of GAS, the possibility to “reconstruct” the price, on the basis of the values acknowledged to the product, represents a way to recreate an alternative economic space within which the exchanges are regulated differently, with reference to a shared basis of different criteria and strongly re-embedded into a relational dimension (economic proximity).

Section 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSC

Health: the products are fresh and do not remain stored: when they arrive at the delivery point they are collected by consumers. Almost all the products are organic or biodynamic, and the methods of processing are artisanal, without use of preservatives.

Environmental sustainability: as said, the methods of production are organic or biodynamic and the farms are not far. The packaging is reduces as much as possible, and recyclable or reusable materials are used for the packaging. Moreover, the producers make the deliveries also to other GAS in the same day, and this minimizes the transport impact.

Social sustainability: the relationships established with the producers are addressed to mutual respect, solidarity, trust, reciprocal knowledge.

Economic sustainability: there are economic benefits for both parties. The producer can take advantage from a stable relationship, which gives possibility to better organize the activity (the orders are generally for two or three months); moreover, the price is negotiated with the producers and the payments are in advance or at the delivery. Consumers can benefits of good prices in relation to the quality of the products.

Section 3: Impacts of regulation on SFSC

At the moment, there are not particular regulations that have strong impact on this experience, though they are indirectly interested by the regulations that hamper the activity of small farms.

The law acknowledges GAS activities as non-profit associations and, as such, entities not subject to tax, provided that they are formally constituted. GAS San Zeno, as most of the Italian GAS, is an informal group and so it has not this requisite. At national level, the condition imposed by the law has been strongly contested. The requirement to formalize the association as condition to remain legal is considered a limitation of private freedom (GAS activity being essentially a cooperation among private individuals and not an economic activity). Moreover, it is seen as a first step towards a process of institutionalization which if, on one side, could strengthen these organizations, giving them visibility and space (i.e. in the relationship with public institutions), on the other, could foster their absorption in the conventional framework, so diluting their innovation potential, or hampering their activity for the necessity to comply with rules. It is significant, to that regard, the choice of Banca

Etica (an Italian bank strongly engaged in re-defining credit with reference to ethical principles), which has recently introduced special conditions to GAS to open accounts and has found solutions to overcome the difficulties related to their informal nature. This choice has been considered as a very different approach, aligned to the vision of GAS and more fitting their needs, very far from the need for homologation, according to conventional rules, which seems to characterize many public institutions.

Section 4: Organisational patterns suitable for SFSC

As for the most of GAS, an essential aspect of this organization is the volunteer labor of its members and their level of participation in the social activities, from management of orders and deliveries to all the other communal moments. They both contribute to strengthen the sense of community and to guarantee the good functioning of the organization, preserving its peculiarity in relation to conventional forms of provisioning. Anyway, the maintaining of these characters is less and less easy, as not all the members are willing to participate actively with the result of a greater burden for the others. This problem is in part related to the growth of the Group (from 12 to 60 families), which has caused an impoverishment of the interpersonal interaction and a consequent decrease of the sense of moral commitment and of the social control among the members. The lack of a common vision of this experience and of its meanings has reinforced this process.

More recently, as a consequence of this situation, there has been a decrease of the number of orders and this has started to create problems in the relationships with producers.

This critical point has often been the subject of much discussion in San Zeno assemblies. The worsening of the situation has recently triggered off an intense debate, addressed to find a solution. To that end two hypotheses has been considered: to radically reorganize the group, by reducing the number of the members to those really willing to contribute (and also of suppliers…); to accept a different level of participation but also diversify the prices paid for the products. The Group has chosen the first way to 're-found' itself and has started a new phase with about 30 members.

This case so highlights some critical points of this kind of experience. On one side, it point out the importance of the development within these networks of common frames to read the sense and the potential of the common 'enterprise', as a basis on which to build a robust organization through which to manage this 'alternative'. On the other, it highlights the importance of the scale, in the sense of the risks linked to an excessive growth, which can compromise the delicate but essential social mechanisms that are at the basis of this particular organization. The growth and scaling-up of this "movement" appears rather linked to the increase of the adhesion to these initiatives and on the consolidation of each of them.

Another important point, which also regards the whole GAS experience, is that of the organizational model to efficiently manage the phase of distribution. A fundamental feature of GAS is the establishment of direct relationships with the producers. Within this kind of organization farmers can increase efficiency by optimizing the plan of delivery (i.e. same days for close GAS) or by sharing transport with other farmers. In the case of GAS San Zeno both of these two solutions are adopted by the suppliers. Notwithstanding, in some cases (i.e. when there is a great distance between consumers and producers, as for big urban centers, or when the relationships are complicated by the lack of producers in the periurban areas) the difficulties related to the direct relation lead to look for more organized solutions, especially through forms of coordination among producers (i.e. through the establishment of cooperatives and a centralization of the management of orders and deliveries) or through the involvement of matchmaking services provided by small enterprises (their presence is growing hand in hand with 'food relocalisation' trends). When the Groups are small and/or spread in the territory, a solution sometimes adopted by producers is that of combining the deliver to a retailer whom they supply with the deliver to a local GAS (which so maintains the relation with the producer).

7. Key questions emerging from the case study analyzed

Is scaling up of this kind of experiences always advisable?

- How can it occur without changing the fundamentals of these experiences and reducing their innovation potential?
- How could this type of organization be improved?
- How could the relation between these forms of organization of demand and the features of supply be improved?
- What kind of policy support could be useful to help these particular systems of food provisioning to 'grow' and consolidate?

Links:

https://sites.google.com/site/sanzenogas/home
http://www.retegas.org

Comments and questions

Monika Thuswald commented 22/10/12 17:21
Dear Adanella, thank you for the very detailed description of the GAS San Zeno.
This case reminds me very much of the "Food cooperatives" (Consumer cooperatives, Buying coperatives) in Vienna. I think they have very similar characteristics and similar problems (e.g. the difficulty to share tasks equally). Also the size (40 to 60 families or households) is very similar. A difference might be, that most of the foodcoops in Vienna rent a storage room. I guess that is not the case for the GAS!?
About the definition of short: It seems to me, that in your case and also in the case of foodcoops in Vienna, "short" very often means "the shortest possible". Some products will always be available locally (lets say 10 km) and some others farer away (50 or 100 km). In Vienna its not Oranges but cheese that often travels longer (e.g. 500 km from the West of Austria). I think it's not possible to indicate a number of kilometres that mean "short".
It's very interesting that you also talk about ECONOMIC proximity. That is a new term to me.
Another very interesting aspect is, that it's the farmer who has the role of a knowledge broker. Do you know if that's the case for several GAS, or only for San Zeno. Does this farmer supply other GAS too?
The farmers that deliver to the GAS – where do they sell the rest of their products? Do you know which percentage of their turnovers is related to GAS?
I do not really understand the chapter about impacts of regulation. Do you mean, that many GAS are not a formal association? In which way they are afraid that they could be absorbed by the conventional framework?
What about retailers? Have the GAS ever considered to cooperate with a retailer (that is commited to local organic products – are there such retailers)? This is a new issue for foodcoops in Vienna. Sometimes its not profitable for producers to deliver to such a small group (of 40 families), it would be easier to do it over a retailer. But that produces more social distance.
Which people are involved in the GAS San Zeno and in other GAS? Is it mainly young, well educated people or very mixed?

I think it’s crucial to search for good practise examples for up scaling or consolidation of such groups and create a lower threshold.
Looking forward to further discussions,
Monika

PS: Karin and I are sharing the tasks in this CoP, so I'm doing this peer reviewing although she is asigned for it.
Adanella Rossi	commented 28/11/12 09:55
Thank you, Monika, for your comments. They helped me to revise the case, which I hope is now clearer in all the aspects. I have integrated the answers to your questions directly in the text, but if you have some points to clarify let me know.

14. Corazzano Farm (Pisa, Central Italy)

1. Type of short supply chain addressed

This is an organic agricultural firm whose marketing strategy is totally focused on direct consumption: it provides fresh produce to GAS (Solidarity Purchasing Groups), it participates to farmers' market, it has its own farm shop and is about to start selling on-line. They also sell to the local municipally school canteens (Comune di San Miniato, Pisa serving 1400 meals a day). The prevailing relationship is face to face and trust in the producer is based on personal interaction. The percentage of product sold through different channels is:
20% of sales is through box scheme to private customers.

- 30% is sold to solidarity purchasing groups
- 10% is sold to small shops and restaurants
- 40% is sold to school canteens

2. Area and Territory

The farm is based in the countryside of San Miniato, a municipality in the countryside (province of Pisa).
Number of people involved.
The farm involves 7 to 9 people, beyond the owner and the agricultural consultant. It reaches Gas members (?), the administration of the local municipality

3. Type of products delivered

fruits and vegetables mainly.
The farm is spread over 52 hectares, of which half cultivated, 12 acres of vegetables in rotation with another 10 hectares of cereals, pulses, fodder. Two and a half hectares of vineyard and a small olive grove and a future orchard covering about 1 hectare, and the rest is woodland. This year they have planned over 45 varieties of vegetables, including artichokes and potatoes, carrots, celery, salads and cabbage of all forms and types. They have also barley, wheat and maize (for polenta). A modern system of underground irrigation take the water of the pond plants with a network of pipes, drop by drop. The extensive use of sheeting cover (mulch) made of fully biodegradable corn starch helps in the fight against weeds, not using any kind of chemical herbicide

4. Organizers and producers involved

The farm is managed by the owner Carlo Agliardi with his wife and his two young children, who "land" in Tuscany after a long career abroad in the golden world of yachting, determined to confront a more natural and more genuine way of life. They were soon joined Loredano Bellesi who is an experienced farmer (the councelor) in the area, which has enthusiastically embraced the project to do "sustainable" business with organic farming. Corazzano sells its own produce, plus other types of products provided by other farms in the area (pasta produced by a mill not too far from the farm and preserves) through a shop on farm which serves around 150 regular clients. I was told that they are planning to introduce a direct sale of processed products produced on the farm (soups, first courses, cooked vegetables etc…). This is way they are building a kitchen in the farm shop. This will allow them to enlarge their offer. The target is always high value products (high quality- high price). Hygiene issues will be part of the definition of quality.

5. Time length of the initiative

The farm started in 2009, the land was abandoned and this allowed organic to be a viable option (February 2010 they were certified, except the vineyards and the olive trees, which need a 3 years transition period).

Other actors directly or indirectly involved: consumers have an active role since they must call or write to order the box. The local administration was very keen on developing a relationship with the farm for what concerns school canteen provision. San Miniato is a small town: it serves 1400 meals per day, one big central kitchen, and the local administration works closely and regularly with local producers. San Miniato municipality wants to support local farmers, and it is a very clear political decision. This is why the San Miniato municipality leaves extra budget to buy from local producers: they buy local produce (meat, eggs, vegetables) worth 80 thousand euros (per year). They are willing to support a local organic farm such as Corazzano (there are very few organic producers in the Pisa province), so they keep buying from him. On his side, he provides vegetables as clean and washed as possible, but it is more a cooperation rather than an imposition of requirements. According to the entrepreneur the school catering service district is a good sales channel: " The door were opened to us in a very friendly way when three years ago the municipality decided to convert the service to organic. In fact they pay a good price, higher than what they pay to Ecor (one of the two largest distributors of organic products) because they want to support local farms. The price is still low for us, but it's the best we can get, so we are not complaining. We value this sales channel for two reasons: the first is that we want to maintain a good relationship with the local administration. We need them, the bureaucracy can become a huge problem and if we see a good eye, the better for us! The other aspect is that often we host schools for visits and this is a great way to promote our image and our products. The kids come home and talk about it with their family, take our leaflets and this allows us to let us know, it is a great marketing tool! "

The access to the GAS (as a supplier) has allowed him to enter a much wider network of people (in relationship to another local farmer).

Figura 1The farm shop: the vegetables

Figura 2The farm shop: products coming from other farms

Figura 3– The box for the GAS in preparation

6. In relation to the Evidence Document

Section 1: Characteristics of SFSC

What is meant by "short" in this case?

The whole farm is conceived to be in "short" relationship with its clients. They aim at niche clients that can pay for high quality a sufficiently high price.

Section 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSC

- Environmental: he choose organic, he was brave!
- Social: well integrated on the social ground, with the local PA. Good working team with a passion for organic (don't just aim at "the end of the month"!)
- Economic: hard work, he can't afford glass houses as he spent all his money in all investments required up to now

Section 3: Impacts of regulation on SFSCs

- The PA doesn't allow in principle glass house for landscape reasons. But this may change in time. Other regulatory aspects do not seem to arise yet.

Section 4: Upscaling

This is the most relevant aspect rising within the case analyzed. It came up several times in the conversation.
“We never had problems with quality – we have a large variety - but we did with quantity!”
“Seasonality is a constraint: sometime we only have cabbages!”
“We had periods when it was impossible to fill the boxes decently and this can make us loose clients”
“We have no glass houses – the climate is very continental – and this limits our production”
“We started this year to buy products from other farmers in winter, to extend our offer”
“Fall of demand during peak production season: in summer, when we have the most produce, families go on holidays so we cannot get the most out of it yet”

7. Key questions emerging from the case study analyzed

An organic farm for a non-conventional market (small quantities, not stable etc..) run in a “conventional way”…. Do these two “worlds” clash in some way?
What factors contribute/hamper economic sustainability in the medium long term, given this size (quite large) and the technology (structural endowment and way of production) of the farm?

Comments and questions

Femke Hoekstra commented 09/10/12 10:55
It seems that the limitations of this case are in the production side not so much a lack of access to/creation of market channels. So I am wondering why is he considering to also start selling online because it seems that he has no problem to sell his produce to the already developed channels (the school, the GAS, the farm shop)?
Francesca Galli commented 10/10/12 10:38
Hi Femke, thanks for your question. Indeed I agree that he has not much problem in selling (much effort is put in the diversification of channels and he achieves quite high prices), but he is limited on the production side. The real issue is that he has now limited financing capacity to build glass houses and increase production. Therefor he is kind of "blocked" as far as I know now. We will follow his experince in the time to come to hear how it is going...
Roberto Ruiz commented 30/10/12 21:34
This is a clear example of diversity of SFSC within the same farm, and also about the link with PFP initiatives. Do you have any (gross) idea about the percentage of food products sold in each way (direct, GAS, school canteen, etc.)?
But it is also significant the point that the farm acts as a trader / intermediary for other farmer´s products. How do they play that role in terms of providing info to the final consumer about the original producer, farming system, etc.? And regarding the final price? WHich is the added value they provide in that link?
Although trust based on face to face relationships seems to be prevailing, I wonder about the importance of organic certification and eco labelling. Up to what point is it necessary?
As for PFP, how do they manage to upscale food production in order to meet the particular (food quantity & quality, presentation, hygienic and sanitary) requirements of the catering service? Which are the conditions they impose to the farm?
The impact on the three pillars of sustainability seem to be evident. However, regarding the PFP, I have some doubts. On the one hand, you say that "They pay a good price, higher than what they pay to Ecor (...) because they want to support local farms". That reason would not be accepted here, unless there is a more important and objective reason than that. Why is it then?

On the other, the farmer says that price is still low. Do you say that this is true?
In order to cope with seasonality and even to match to food demand later, imagine that they have economic resources available (although it seems that it is not the case right now): could it be an to start added value initiatives (conservation, processing, etc.)? Can it be an option? Would they have labour resources available? Which would be the hygienic-sanitary requirements then?
Many thanks in advance and best regards
Roberto
Francesca Galli commented 21/11/12 10:27
Dear Roberto, Thanks for all your questions, I will try to answer them all.
1) Percentage of product sold through different channels:
20% of sales is through box scheme to private customers.
30% is sold to solidarity purchasing groups
10% is sold to small shops and restaurants
40% is sold to school canteens
2)About direct sale on farm: I can report that the owner is not very satisfied with this channel, in terms of number of regular clients (approx. 150) and in terms of sales in general. The products they sell on behalf of other producers are mainly pasta and preserves. They indicate who the producer of other products is. For pasta it is a well known local producer who produces organic grains. I have no info on the value added related to this intermediation.
3) Is organic worth the effort: the decision to produce organic was taken in the first place. Actually the challenge for him was: let's try to produce organic in an economically successful way. He is facing several issues now because in fact it was a very hard challenge he chose to cope with (give the endowment of production factors he has).
4) On PP: San Miniato is a small town: they serve 1400 meals per day, one big central kitchen, and the local administration works closely and regularly with local producers. I do not think that these small tenders are subject to EU laws. San Miniato municipality wants to support local farmers, and it is a very clear political decision. This is why the San Miniato municipality leaves extra budget to buy from local producers: they buy local produce (meat, eggs, vegetables) worth 80 thousand euros (per year I guess). They are willing to support a local organic farm such as Corazzano (there are very few organic producers in the Pisa province), so they keep buying from him. On his side, he provides vegetables as clean and washed as possible, but it is more a cooperation rather than an imposition of requirements.

6) I was told that they are planning to introduce a direct sale of processed products produced on the farm (soups, first courses, cooked vegetables etc…). This is way they are building a kitchen in the farm shop. This will allow them to enlarge their offer. The target is always high value products (high quality- high price). Hygiene issues will be part of the definition of quality.
7) I think that when he complains about the price, saying that it is not enough, he refers to the possibility to re-enter the economical investment that was required to start this farm: he estimates that 3 euro per kg on average is required. Of course he aims at a niche market, with high quality and service (ex. box scheme delivered at home).

15. Case study: BioRomeo (the Netherlands)

1. Type of short supply chain addressed

Direct internet sales. The relationship of the consumer is direct with a group of farmers via the internet without intermediaries. Only limited information about the supplying farmers and their farming systems are given on-line. Communication is via on-line comments, email or premium rate phone number only. Delivery by post or pick-up at farm. Produce is also sold to restaurants, on farm and in a selection of local shops. A "harvest your own potatoes" event was organised on farm to closer connect local consumers with their food. Link: http://www.bioromeo.nl/

2. Area and Territory

The produce all comes from farms in the Noordoostpolder region of the Netherlands. On-line sales appear to be within the Netherlands only which would mean a maximum of 250 km distance from the region of production to consumer.

3. Number of actors/producers/farmers involved

8 different farms/companies are involved

4. Type of products delivered

fresh organic potatoes and field vegetables, some of heritage and unusual varieties
Qualify the actors and/or the farmers involved: all farmers appear to be full-time farmers also involved in the direct marketing of their produce. One of the farms is CSA.
Indicate the time length of the initiative: operational since August 2012, its predecessor, Krispijn, was founded in April 2012. The initiative was started by farmer Krispijn van den Dries and two other farmers who were seeking new markets for their potatoes left unsold due to cheap imports. Their predicament received a lot of attention in the Netherlands after van den Dries dumped 7 tonnes of potatoes in the central square in Amsterdam in protest on 1 April 2012.
Link: http://youthfoodmovement.nl/nieuws/126

5. Actors directly or indirectly involved

The main actors involved are the consumers and the farmers. The only other actors involved are the members of the CSA initiative on one of the farms and the delivery companies/postal services.

6. In relation to the Evidence Document

Section 1: Characteristics of SFSCs

What is meant by "short" in this case?
The website mostly uses the term "direct" rather than "short". The introduction refers to "love", "involvement" and "passion" of the farmers, "freshness" of the produce, and the right of consumers to know where their food comes from.
Technically, "short" here refers mostly to social distance, the number of intermediaries (none for internet and farm sales) and the amount of information available about the methods of production. The physical distance is not necessarily shorter than for Dutch potatoes and vegetables bought at conventional markets or supermarkets in the Netherlands.

Interestingly, although all produce is sold as organic, not much detailed information is given about the way this is certified. It seems that the consumer is suppose to trust the farmers in question regarding this aspect.

Section 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSCs

Health & wellbeing: products are presented as "fresh" although in reality this is not possible for all types at all times (e.g. potatoes are stored on farm after harvest for many months). Products are less likely to be in transit for a considerable time than in conventional food supply chains.

Environment: the produce is organic and therefore has environmental benefits from that respect. The dispatch of small quantities of produce to individual customers (by presumably fossil-fueled transport) is unlikely to be environmentally more friendly than bulk sales to supermarket buyers. Whether the consumption of Dutch produce is environmentally better than imported produce is not argued. The website simply claims that Dutch produce is wasted as it remains unsold due to competition from imports. Details on individual farmer's production methods are scarce even though Krispijn van den Dries gives much more information on other websites such as Nature & More. Link : http://www.natureandmore.com/growers/krispijn-van-den-dries

Social and economic: the livelihood of the farmers is clearly at stake, hence the reason for starting this initiative. From an economic point of view, it therefore enhances sustainability. Socially, it also contributes as 10% of the produce from the farms is donated to food banks in urban areas. Some production by van den Dries is on a "social care farm" (form of CSA) on which people with mental limitations are employed. Link: http://www.zorgboer.nl/index.php

Section 3: Impacts of regulation on SFSCs

Not much reference is made to regulation. It seems market forces have been the key lever here.

Section 4: Growth and development of SFSCs

This initiative is relatively new and it remains to be seen whether it continues seeing how the key reason for starting it was the absence of demand from the conventional supply chain. This is clearly an example of supply outstripping demand. Other marketing channels such as public procurement might be able to offer a longer term solution.

Comments and questions

gianluca brunori commented 11/09/12 10:04

This seems a story of 'defensive localism' (see winter 2003).

Are potatoes delivered by post? Maybe there could be possibilities to improve the sustainability of the chain (for example, linking to purchasing groups)

Sandra Karner commented 29/10/12 21:15

hi femke,

thanks for the description of the BioRomeo initiative! here are my questions/comments:

do consumers, who pick the produce at the farms use the opportunity to get into physical contact with the farmers? do farmers (except the CSA :-)) arrange specific events, where they invite the consumers to their farms? does the online communication also imply issues beyond orders?

you argue that consumers trust the farmers in terms of production methods (since there is not much information about this on the initiative's internet site. I am wondering if the products are officially certified or if the certification follows rules specifically defined by the initiative? Would there be a difference in trust in the consumers vs. in the official certification scheme?

best, sandra k.
Leo Dvortsin commented 07/11/12 16:28
Dear Femke,
Thank you for the publication of this case study. It seems that farmers within this initiative produce both commodities and special vegetables that can work as a distinguishing factor in their marketing towards consumers. Are you familiar with any information about whom these are and where they live?
In terms of logistics and cooperation among the farmers how does the back office look? Do the farmers bring their products to the central warehouse/office where the boxes are assembled? Do they cooperate with PostNL or are they just using the postal services for sending the orders?
Thank you in advance for your reply.

16. Case study "Villa of Roses" (Ukraine)

1. Type of short food chain addressed

Villa of Roses is farm that grew out a family farm into a middle sized multifunctional organic farm that sells its produce via the online farm shop and in some of the supermarkets in the Ukrainian capital Kiev. The individual orders made by consumers can be delivered home at an extra cost, picked up from the office in Kiev or bought on the farm itself. The farm tries to own the entire supply chain when it comes to serving the individual consumers by eliminating the middle men and by dealing directly with the local branch managers of supermarkets in Kiev.

At the moment there a few new initiatives being developed by the farmer owner, Yuriy Sergeyev, together with a restaurant to set up a special menu at the restaurant only based on the produce from Villa of Roses and a solidarity purchasing group of 10-12 families from Kiev has asked him if he could set up a box scheme together with them.

The farm is open for group or individual visits by interested consumers. Also a small onsite restaurant is being constructed at the moment. This will allow the visitors to taste the products of the farm right on sight.

2. Area and territory where the initiative takes place

The farm is located in a village 80 kilometers away from Kiev, place where the main group of consumers lives. The distance can be covered within 1 hour of driving if there are no traffic jams in Kiev.

The farm is 150 hectares large and divided into different plots, which are physically separated from each other by plots owned by others. Some of the land is covered with woods, there is also a lake and other plots are used as pasture land and others to grow crops that can be used as animal feed for the livestock. Fruits and vegetables are cultivated on smaller plots closer to the farm.

3. Number of actors/producers/farmers involved

Yuriy Sergeyev works himself on the farm but next to that he employs between 30- and 50 people of personnel depending on the season. For example, one of the employees is a veterinary who is responsible for the wellbeing of the animals on the farm.
Other actors are the local authorities in the village, which support the initiative, phytosanitary authorities (both on local and national level), individual consumers and supermarkets in Kiev.

4. Type of products delivered

Villa of Roses is an organic farm that produces fruits and vegetables, breeds flocks of free-ranging pigs, geese, ducks, cows and free-range chicken for eggs and meat production, keeps beehives for honey and has its own dairy line. The production of dairy is its main business activity with the dairy products being sold in supermarkets in Kiev as well as online while other products are mainly being sold via the online farm shop.

5. Time length of the initiative

Yuriy Sergeyev is a new and young farmer who started this initiative in 2008. In the future Yuriy Sergeyev hopes to be able to offer agro-tourism activities on his farm.

6. In relation to the Evidence Document

Section 1: Characteristics of SFSC

One of the most characteristic things about this SFSC is the fact that it wants to be totally independent from others due to the low level of trust among the members of Ukrainian society. Therefore Yuriy Segeyev and his team try to control the entire chain themselves. There are some long lasting relations but they are based on an individual level rather than on a network concept.

The initiate managed to cover a particular niche due to its uniqueness in the Ukrainian food and agricultural landscape. Most farmers are actually self-subsistence peasants or there are huge agro holdings active in Ukraine with almost nothing in between and especially not multifunctional.

One of the main challenges is logistics due to the outdated infrastructure. Also it is hard to find the right personnel that are willing to work on the farm and finally due to the high costs the products are accessible to a limited group of consumers.

Section 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSC

One of the main claims made by Yuriy is that by eating natural food people are not only supporting sustainability but also save money on medical care. Eating organic food is better for your health and therefore there is less need for medical care and associated costs.

Section 3: Impacts of regulation on SFSCs

Recently a law on organic agriculture will be implemented in Ukraine. This means that the sector will finally be institutionalized and can be developed further with governmental support.

Section 4: Growth and development of SFSCs

During the last two years the farm has experienced a strong growth in the demand from both individual consumers as well as from the supermarkets. This puts a lot of pressure on the farmer and his team to constantly perform and to grow as a business or value chain. The future developments are quite uncertain as in general there is high uncertainty rate in the daily life in Ukraine. On one hand this provides opportunities for further growth but on the other hand this situation is being experienced as very damaging for further sustainable development of the SFSC.

7. Key questions emerging from the case study analyzed

How to build trust in this short food supply chain and involve other actors?
How to maintain the values and norms while growing as a sfsc?

Links:
http://milk-shop.com.ua/index.php
http://www.fibl.org/en/media/media-archive/media-release/article/organic-market-development-in-ukraine.html

Comments and questions

gianluca brunori commented 08/09/12 09:11
how important are geographical and social distance in yurli business? would kiev consumers be equally pleased by organic food coming from longer distances?
Leo Dvortsin commented 10/09/12 14:30
This is hard to say at the moment but I think that due to the lack of quality organic produce in Ukraine they might accept longer distances as they for example do with

other organic products coming from abroad (wine, oils, certain grains, etc.) but you can definatelly feel that the Kiev consumers are looking for local products that are produced by people they can visit themselves and get to know...this is becomng more and more important. So I would say that at the moment geographic distances are less important but that the situation is changing.
Speaking about social distances is very important and therefore thank you for rasing this question! Most of the Ukrainians can not afford certified organic producs due to their low incomes so the social distance is quite big. Youri and other farmers try to explain this that at the moment the demand is higher than supply, that there is no competition, that this is the fair price and that you actually need less of their products in comparison with the industrialised foods. Still the issue of affordability is under discussion.
Sandra Sumane   commented 15/10/12 08:40
Thanks Leo! Villa of Roses was even more interesting for me as it reminds me the situtation of organic farmers in Latvia some time ago (general instability that increases the sense of vulnerability among farmers, low trust, lack of legislation, individual entrepreneurship...).

Similarly as many other producer participants of SFSC, also Yuriy implements mixed market strategies: direct (online and on-farm purchases; a box scheme and a restaurant in preparation) and conventional (supermarkets) channels. Do you know his motives of such a choice? What are the advantages and disadvantages of these various channels for him? What are the the proportions, interaction between those channels? Have they changed since 1998; is there some trend appearing? Would his short channels have a capacity to absorb the proportion of products sold through supermarkets?

There is no legal regulation for organic agriculture in Ukraine yet and I do not know how aware are ukrainian consumers about organic. But does Yuriy communicates this special quality of his products to his consumers? How? Which qualities attract his consumers most?

What about supermarkets in this respect: how their standards (e.g., constant supplies of a certain size products) meet with those of Yuriy's organic farming ones (seasonality, less predictable variations in harvest, natural shapes and colours)? How do they negotiate, what are their power relations?

The growing demand is pushing him towards growth. What are the evidences of his business' growth? Does it bring about any kind of problems? What? (F.i., availability of workforce or land, implementing organic methods, maintaining quality and short channels...) How does he cope with them?

Finally, are all his consumers in the capital or is there also some more local clientele?
Leo Dvortsin commented 23/10/12 10:23
Pieter van de Graaf commented 23/10/12 16:31
Interesting case which also raises some questions with me:
"delivered home at an extra cost": Yuriy sells online but is there a limit to the (free) delivery? Ukraine is a big country and this could become an expensive and time consuming activity!
"control of the entire chain": this is not true for the supermarkets, presumably Yuriy has little control over them? It would be different if he owned the supermarkets.
What range of crops does the farm grow? How does it deal with seasonality?

"Eating organic food is better for your health": not clear whether this is your view or Yuriy's. In any case, there is little scientific evidence to support this statement.

17. Case study - Tuinderij De Stroom (The Netherlands)

1. Type of short food chain

De Stroom is an organic box scheme. Relationship: Face-to-face since consumers can purchase organic vegetables directly at a farm shop. But mostly it can be defined on the basis of spatial proximity since the (bags with) vegetables are retailed in the region of production and consumers are made aware of its origin.

2. Area and territory where the initiative takes place

Tuinderij De Stroom is located in Hemmen. Hemmen is located about 6km from the city of Wageningen and 20km from both the city of Nijmegen and the city of Arnhem. The garden itself is situated next to the river de Linge, hence the name of the garden (stroom is synonymous for river). The garden is approximately 4ha distributed over different plots. Every year different parts of a larger garden plot are cultivated going along with the crop rotation of an adjacent organic arable farm called De Lingehof.

3. Number of actors/producers/farmers involved

Three (female) farmers work in cooperation with the adjacent arable farmer from De Lingehof who cultivates about 100ha. This cooperation consists of an exchange of labour in times of need and De Stroom is able to rent land and make use of machinery and surplus manure. De Lingehof uses solid animal manure from an organic dairy farm close by. De Lingehof also produces certain crops for the vegetable boxes such as broccoli, cauliflower and onions. These vegetables require less handwork or are more risky to produce on a small scale in case of pest outbreaks. While, De Stroom experiences an increasing demand for their organic vegetables, De Lingehof has difficulty finding an outlet for his organic produce. Next to the cooperation with De Lingehof, they have some (regular) volunteers (around 10). During busy periods, they send around a request for temporary support to their customer network. Currently there is also one intern that is about to start a biodynamic education this year. She works both with the De Lingehof and De Stroom.

4. Type of products delivered

A majority of the produced vegetables goes directly to consumers in the area by means of a vegetable box scheme. The remaining produce is sold in organic shops in the area and at the farm. They started with vegetable boxes and now they are changing towards (biodegradable plastic) bags because they are easier to handle and transport. There are 4 different types of boxes/bags: 1 person for €6.25; 2 persons for €8.50; 3 persons for €12; and a family box for €14.

They produce seasonal, mostly quite common, vegetables such as: broccoli, beans, carrots but also parsnips and turnip stems which are less common in the Netherlands. In general, each box contains at least 5 different vegetable varieties. The box of week 35 for example contained: lettuce, zucchini, sweet corn, beet roots and broccoli.

During the winter months they sometimes buy-in products from the wholesaler for a more varied supply.

They currently produce around 230 boxes and the numbers have been steadily increasing over the last seasons. At their maximum, they produced 280 boxes. They have the facilities to easily produce around 380 boxes. In terms of upscaling it is therefore more logical to increase the number of boxes instead of looking for different marketing channels.

They deliver 3 days per week to different points in their vicinity. One of their biggest distribution points is the University of Nijmegen; they distribute 100 boxes a week. An intermediary (a student union) takes care of the logistical distribution of the boxes

and possible changes in subscriptions as well as weekly cancellations. They are working on a similar set up in Wageningen University.
The distribution points, like an artisan butcher shop, are free to ask for an additional fee for their services. The butcher for example adds 1 euro to the 2 person bag for keeping the bags cool etc.
De Stroom has an EKO certification which means that they do not use pesticides and fertilizers. De Lingehof has an organic SKAL certification.

5. Time length of the initiative

About 8 seasons.

Packing of boxes at De Stroom Arable farmer De Lingehof

6. In relation to the Evidence Document

Section 4: Growth and development of SFSCs

I think an interesting aspect of this case study is the collaboration with intermediaries in the distribution and administration of the vegetable bags. It is very efficient for De Stroom to work with an intermediary since they cannot only deliver 100 bags at one point but this local partner can also take care of some local marketing which facilitates upscaling. Perhaps this is an interesting model to explore for other box schemes
Tuinderij De Stroom:
http://www.degroenekring.nl/stroom/pages.php?page=9
De Lingehof:
http://www.degroenekring.nl/lingehof/pages.php?page=29
Intermediary:
in Nijmegen: http://www.studentenvakbondakku.nl/diensten/groentepakketten/
in Wageningen: http://www.wageningenenvironmentalplatform.nl/

Comments and questions

gianluca brunori commented 11/09/12 11:57
Do they need a special agreement with the university to store the food?
In Italy we have several initiatives starting from agricultural faculties (Bologna, Udine)
Femke Hoekstra commented 09/10/12 10:09
I will check with them!
Femke Hoekstra commented 09/10/12 15:29
I just found out that WEP (Wageningen Environmental Platform) is actually an independent organisation that tries to encourage students to live sustainably. Their office space is used to distribute the bags. They made some agreements with the University about using the office space on the campus and regarding the vegetable bags they have to make sure that all bags are picked up (or removed) by the end of the week. He did not mention any other special requirements. They further agreed that WEP could make use of the office for a year and then evaluate how it goes. What kind of agreements have you seen in Italy?
Monika Thuswald commented 24/10/12 14:42
Dear Femke, thank you for this interesting case. To me it’s very interesting to see how differently box schemes - or bag schemes J - can work.
For me the organization of work of De Stroom is very interesting. It sounds like a very interesting concept to have this cooperation with a farm, rent the land from it and exchange labour. I think this concept can be interesting for (young) people that want to start do work in agriculture, but don’t have land and machinery and don’t have the

money to buy some. Are there more box schemes in your region, which have the same concept?

What did the three women do before they set up the project? (The gender aspect is also very interesting! Why is it women that set up such a project?) Is this their full-time job? What legal status do they have? How are they organizing their work? Are they able to earn their living from it (also in winter?).

Who are the volunteers? Are they customers? Are all the customers helping with work, or only some of them? Do they do the work for free?

I think it's ingenious to use a University (and other partners) as a delivery points and to use a student union as an intermediary. Is it only students who use this service or also employees of the University? I guess that the artisanal butcher also profits from this cooperation!? (This is a bit similar to the bar "Papier timbre" that we visited in Rennes).

You write that De Stroom delivers three days a week. Do they deliver once a week to each delivery point or more often?
Do the customers order the box/bag for a certain period in advance or can they cancel every time?
Thank you. I'm looking forward to further exchange.
Monika
PS: Karin is assigned for the peer review, but I'm sharing the tasks with her.
Sandra Karner commented 29/10/12 21:36
hi!... only the early bird catched the worm, right? - there is hardly any chance to add something to monika's all-embracing questions/commens! ;-)
however, there are two questions left which refers to RPP :-) and university students
since the university is the main place for distibution, I am wondering if there have been ideas (either from the initiative or the WEP) about supply for the canteen there too?
in case students are the core group of consumers, I am wondering if times of summer holidays, which are at the same time high season for vegetables, cause problems for the coninuity of sales.
best, sandra
Femke Hoekstra commented 16/11/12 12:18
Hi Monika and Sandra! Thanks for your questions. At this point, I can only answer a few of them.
I don't really know of any other examples of such type of collaboration but I think it happens more often
I know that the woman that joint last, studied soil science at Wageningen UR and got into a more practical training in biodynamic farming afterwards. For her internship she ended up with the Stroom and decided to stay. For the other two women I am not completely sure how they got into this but I found this blog which gives a bit more info: http://future-farmers.net/2012/11/08/tuinderij-de-stroom-growing-strong-trough-collaboration/. An interesting feature also described in this blog is an innovative form of a collaborative insurance scheme
Regarding the volunteers, I think some of them are customers but not all. They work for free (perhaps they get to take some produce home)
I think it is mainly students that make use of this particular service. Employees might pick up their bags elsewhere in Wageningen. I think the continuity of sales during summer is not really an issue since this is only one of their outlets. They also deliver their box schemes to other customers and to several organic shops. Indeed some of

the shops (like the butcher) add a percentage. A while ago I uploaded a document in the library of the RPP CoP which describes the procedure of procurement by our canteen. We just have a new caterer who uses local/regional/organic food but I am not sure where he sources his products.
The delivery takes place on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Each delivery point has its own fixed time.
Regarding the ordering, I think they have trial period of 4 weeks. After that you subscribe but you can cancel the box occasionally (but not sure how flexible they are with this).
Hope that answers at least part of your questions, Femke

18. BioAlpin and its Trade Mark "Bio vom Berg"

In 2002 Bioalpin was formed as a cooperative of producers, processors and retailers in Tyrol, a mountainous region in the Austrian Alps. The idea was to market organic products of Tyrolian origin. A trade mark was created called "Bio vom Berg" meaning "organic from the mountains". Since the whole of Tyrol is classified as a mountain region, also the products from the mountain valleys can be called "from the mountains". The trade mark is very well established in Tyrol.

The cooperative combines app. 600 organic farmers and farmers' cooperatives, 30 organic processors (dairies, butchers, a bakery) and app. 10 retailers. One of the retailers is a local supermarket chain with 175 outlets in Tyrol and Carinthia. The bakery has app. 70 outlets in Tyrol.

The cooperative sells milk, yoghurt, butter, 17 different kinds of cheese, sausages, ham, bacon, eggs, bread, vegetables and fruits, more than 80 products, all organic and from Tyrol. The cooperative has 4 full-time employees for logistics, 2 part-time employees to attend to the supermarket outlets and the head of board who is working voluntarily.

Bioalpin is a cooperative with a board which is elected amongst its members. There is a general assembly once a year and votes are one per head to a maximum of 5 per head. This is to make sure that no one can get too much influence. The cooperative was initiated by the current head of board who is an organic farmer and the founder of a small dairy cooperative as well. He is a very charismatic person with a large social network and good connections to influential people. Without his strong believe in the idea and his tireless work Bioalpin would not have been possible.

The decision to form a cooperative and not a stock company or another form of enterprise was taken very consciously to ensure that power stays in the hands of the farmers. The head of board names the creation of a trade mark as the most important factor for success. He insists that the management of the trade mark has to stay within the cooperative. The cooperative does not sell its produce unbranded/outside the trade mark. Not all farmers can sell all their produce via the cooperative, though.

There are no sales figures available but Bioalpin is for Austrian standards quite a big enterprise, especially within the organic food sector. Its members are participating in the management of the prices and sales contracts. The cooperative still aims at growth, not in the number of members but in the variety of cheeses produced and the kind of retailers used (more tourist & hotel sector and organic food stores). Currently 60% of its sales are done via the local supermarket chain (reduced from 80% at the beginning). Growth could be faster if more capital was available. But capital is only available outside the cooperative and usually includes the condition of having a say within the cooperative. The cooperative prefers slower growth to non-participating share holders (no producers, no processors, no retailers).

The example shows that short food chains are possible in a scaled up version. The crucial points are the form of organisation which decides power relations within the chain, the management of the trade mark and the personalities of the initiating and leading figures.

www.bioalpin.at

Comments and questions

gianluca brunori commented 08/09/12 09:17

Karin Okonkwo-Klampfer commented 09/09/12 13:12

The remaining 40% are sold via organic and conventional food wholesalers (supplying stores, restaurants and hotels), the bakery and a chocolate manufacturer in Styria (milk). So for some of the 40% the "region" is bigger, the distances longer and ther is one more intermediary between the producer and the final consumer who eats the product.

gianluca brunori commented 11/09/12 11:45

Can we say that the 40% sold through short food supply chains increases the autonomy of producers and diversifies the risk?

Do they want to grow?

Is it premium price products?

Does the cooperative stimulate farmers to get organic?

Do some members of the cooperative selling directly to consumers? Does the cooperative allow direct selling?

Leo Dvortsin commented 07/11/12 12:09

Dear Karin,

Thank you very much for bringing in this case study to the group. I think that it is very illustrative of the advantages of cooperatives as a tool for power brokerage of the farmers and processors. What is also interesting is the fact that retailers are also part of the cooperative.

I was wondering whether you know the reasons for the actual creation of the cooperative in 2002. Was there a specific chain of events that made the Tyrol producers, processors, and retailers to set up this initiative?

Further I was wondering whether you know anything about their marketing initiatives. Are the members trying to work together on a common strategy and how this is done? Do you think it will wise to apply for geographical indications of origin as a tool of product differentiation and growth outside Tyrol region? Or will this conflict with their philosophy of local food and short food supply chains?

And finally I was curious about the possible cultural link with the tourists and hotels. Surely Tyrol is attracting many tourists and the cooperative could also share the Tyrol culture with them. I think that on the website they mention that they kind of promote it through the food. Do you know if in future there are plans to extend the activities beyond food provisioning?

Thank you once again.

19. Case study farmers' market and farm Austria

The farmers’ market in Kutschkergasse of Vienna’s 18th district is an old and well established one. There is a regular open air market with fruit and vegetable traders from Monday to Saturday. The farmers’ market opens only on Saturdays from 8:00-13:00 and brings around 12 farmers or farmers’ groups who sell their produce (fruits and vegetables, honey, chicken meat products, flowers, fish) directly to people living in the area.

One of the stalls belongs to MF, 37 years old and an organic vegetable and fruit farmer for 20 years. Her farm is app. 50km from the market place to the north of Vienna in a slightly hilly and fertile region of the country (Weinviertel). MF owns 17ha of arable land but is currently working only 5,2ha: 0,5ha fruits, 1,5ha vegetables, partly in greenhouses. The rest is rented to a nearby farmer who uses it to grow cereals. MF is buying part of the cereals (only from her fields) to mill it and bake bread and cakes with it for sale on the market.

The wide range of fruits & vegetables, bread, flour, cakes, pasta are sold on the market and in her own farm shop (50%:50%). The shop is open on Thursday evenings and on Friday all day. Recently she is offering lunch on Friday in her farm shop. The market stall has been used by her father before her, the shop started about 8 years ago when she built a new house and farm. Shop and stall are well known despite never spending money on advertisement. All of her marketing is face-to-face.

MF has to buy produce from other farmers to be able to offer a satisfying choice for consumers all year round. She is buying within the region from farmers she knows (max. 100km distance) In one case she is using a trader as an intermediary but never 2 intermediaries. From June to Nov/Dec sales are app. 95% her own produce. March to May there is 60% “foreign” produce in her sales. January and February she closes shop and stall.

MF has built up a network of helpers/workers on the farm, in the shop and on the market. In total there are 28 people working with her. Her family is not available for assistance on the farm. Of the 28 people only 2 persons have minor employment (8hours and 5 hours a week). She is trying to find individual ways of remuneration for her helpers: some take produce, some get paid as self-employed workers (between 4-8 Euro/h), some work for free, some are paid train tickets or they go on common outings within the group of helpers. All get high quality 3-course –meals while working.

MF herself is working 50-60 hours/week on her farm. Students have once calculated her spring onions: excluding sowing and weeding she was earning 2,80 Euro/h. She is hardly ever doing calculations on her products and very often she is selling produce of other farmers without adding a charge.

The farm receives about 2.000 Euro of public subsidies which are not important for the economic stability of the farm. The farm is economically viable in its current situation. MF can cover production costs and pay back the credit for the new farm house. If all helpers were paid according to minimum wages the situation would look quite differently.

It is very important for MF to cut food miles and use as little resources as possible in production and marketing of her produce. Environmental sustainability is of utmost importance to MF and a guiding principle of her work.

It is due to MF's dedication to organic agriculture & environmental protection, to short food supply chains, her involvement in civil society organizations and solidarity groups, her fierce dedication to cooperate with other farmers and her social skills that make her farm environmentally and economically sustainable.

Comments and questions

Pieter van de Graaf commented 24/10/12 14:35

A very detailed case study but it does raise a couple of questions:

Does MF tell her customers which products are hers and which ones she's simply selling on?

It is stated that her farm is economically sustainable but this presumably is only the case because she doesn't pay some of the workers a proper wage. Does this not mean her farm is socially unsustainable? Would her workers not prefer to be paid properly for the work they do?

Roberto Ruiz commented 26/10/12 13:09

I would also like to make some questions (partially linked to those of Pieter).

I understand that the case study of the MF farm is a clear example of evolution of a SFSC within an alternative social and economy system (or viceversa: a social and economy system around a SFSC).

The physical and social dimensions of the concept of SFSC are also evident. I understand that:

- MF sells directly to final consumers in the farmer's market or in the farm shop. So she does not sell box-schemes, consumers' associations, etc.
- MF sells something through a trader (restaurant, shop?)
- She acts as a trader for other farmers' products. Do other of these farmers also sell her products? Do they exchange?

She makes bakery products from the cereals cropped within her fields (rented to a nearby farmer). Are they also produced through organic farming practices? Is the bread labelled as organic? All the raw materials she uses are organic?

However, I also wonder about the social sustainability of the farm in terms of apparently high labour requirements: MF (working >35-40 h/week) + 2 part-time workers + 26 helpers. In addition to the question of Pieter about fair wages: What might happen without all that voluntary work? Up to what point the system is solid enough or sensitive to hazards regarding labour availability?

Although it is stated that the farm is economically viable (even without subsidies), the economic sustainability is apparently also doubtful: according to the data provided, should we understand that her net profit (after paying production costs, credits, taxes, etc) is 2,8 €/h x 50-60 h/ week = 140-170 € / week? I am sure that it cannot be like that, so there must be some misunderstanding.

Is there any comment about the impacts of regulation on this case study?

Finally, it seems that the sustainability of such a SFSC is absolutely linked to the character, leadership, aims and objectives of the farmer.

As for the open-air market, I have two questions:

- It is bound to be quite cold in winter in Vienna: are there any facilities to make it confortable for sellers and consumers? Which is the role of the City Council in the conservation and promotion of this market?
- I notice that there are not meat (only chicken) or dairy farmers, but a sort of fish-farmer. From aquaculture? Organic?

Karin Okonkwo-Klampfer commented 30/10/12 16:44

MF is not stating which is her own produce and which is traded on the signboards. She tells people if they ask her - quite freely. But I see this a question a bit problematic: many people will not know and never take initiative to ask. Some really romanticise her farm.
MF asks her helpers what kind of remuneration they want. Some take cash, some veg, some nothing, some change between the options. They choose. I think she could not pay everyone a minimum wage. She depends on the help of her workers network and people help her because they want to support her. Some people have been working with her for many years. I don't think her farm is socially unstustainable, but maybe I don't understand the term correctly. Maybe, Pieter, you could explain it?

MF si selling to consumers, no box-schemes. She is buying part of her produce from a trader, not selling. I don't know if other farmers are selling her produce. The baker is organic, the bread is labelled organic, all ingredients are organic.

The calculation was a model calculation on one product (spring onions). I don't know her weekly turn over or income.

MF is trying to keep regulation impact as far off as possible. Of course her kitchen (for baking) and shop and stall fulfill the necessary food safety requirements. But as long as it is no milk or meat, investment costs are not so high.

And YES: the farm as such is built on and depends on her character!

About the market: is is cold in winter and there are no special provisions for that. It is sometimes very uncomfortable for the sellers (the consumer don't spend buy and leave quickly if it is cold). The city council does not even provide electricity and water for the sellers. Some get electrity from the nearby houses on private initiatives and often there are long term relationships for that. The council is clearing away the cars and the snow if necessary and publish opening times on their website. From time to time there are advertisements for "Visit the Viennese Markets" in papers and on boards in public spaces. Many new markest are springing up, initiated by local communities. The council is reacting to demand, not taking initiative by itself.

The fish is from aquaculture, one organic, one conventional. There is a butchery which has organic beef, veal and pork nearby. There is one cheese trader but organic milk and yoghurt is sold in supermarkets and I think it wouldn't pay to bring only that to the market.

I hope I aswered all questions, if not, please say so.
Roberto Ruiz commented 16/11/12 12:15
Dear Karin,

Many thanks for the answers. I think that they are really clear. I find very interesting the issue of organic aquaculture (not yet around here).

Regarding the social sustainability, in this case I basically wonder about the (un)balance between labour resources available at the farm and the labour requirements: would she be able to manage the farm without that sort of collaborations? What do you think it could happen if she did not have that voluntary work?

Regards

20. Case study La Ruche Qui Dit Oui (the yes saying beehive)

Introduction

The *Ruche Qui Dit Oui* (RQDO) is a french based private company which utilises web 2.0 tools to connect local food producers with consumers through :

- a local structure which is the point of delivery ;
- an e-commerce platform which allows individuals to take their orders and related bills.

The company was created in 2010 after the meeting beetween Guilhem Cheron, a former industrial designer with a 15 years' experience in multiples food jobs, and Marc-David Choukran, a self-taught person, web and TIC fanatic[1]. As the RQDO founders acknowledge : « if you want to develop effective and performing tools, then you can't be satisfied to make a rough bricolage : all this requires a great investment in time and in money ». So, the actual internet site has been constructed after more than a year of work. The first RQDO opened in France, on 21/09/2011, nearby Toulouse.

In the end of 2012 the RQDO « headquarters » in Paris hosted about a dozen of members, 2/3 mens and 1/3 women, for an average age around 30. Unsurprisingly, the RQDO is young, as the majority of social networkers, bloggers and users of web 2.0 instruments.

The headquarters managing board is busy to develop the web site, to encrease the notoriety of the RQDO and his values through different media, giving answers to public questions, controlling producers' certifications (labels, HACCP and others hygiene regulations), managing payments and bills and, above all, to support producers and consumers of local *Ruches*.

Characteristics of La Ruche qui dit Oui.

The RQDO couldn't exist without internet. In facts, RQDO is a networking company articulated beetween a local level, community based, and an upper level, central board based, functioning as follow :

1 - a person, an association or a firm decides to open a *Ruche* in a public place (square, cultural center, school, etc.) or in one's own home, garden or garage ; this actor is the « queen bee » ;
2 - the person takes contact with small scale food producers and craftsmen in a radius of 200 km (125 miles). It usually concerns fresh products and transformed too, organic if available, exceptionally it's about non-food products ;

3 - in the same time the RQDO responsible-to-be, spreads the concept locally, looking for new recruits in the neighbourhoods, through his/her friends, family and so on ; all these recruits are the « bees » ;

4 - as a little group of producers is formed (min. 4 or 5), and about 40-50 customers are enregistered on the local web site, the responsible of the *Ruche* has the go ahead (from the headquarters) to open sales ;

5 - every week, the responsible suggests an offer of goods from local producers to all the community, through the web page of the local *Ruche*. Previously, every producer has fixed a minimum quota of orders from wich he thinks to be ready to supply the Ruche. The means is to prevent unnecessary transports, notably when there are very little amounts of goods. It also comes to the producer to decide the price of the products, in function of the production costs and the distance from the *Ruche* ;
6 - customers have 5 days to order on the web site, simply by clicking on the products they want. Orders are possible up to 48 hours before the day of sell. There's no need to subscription, it only takes to be enregistered on the local *Ruche*'s web site. When the total amount of orders matches with the minimum quota proposed by the producers, then the Ruche said : « *oui* », and the trade will be effective ;
7 - as the orders are closed, there are two options : if the producer has reached the quota pre-established, then the trade will take place normally. If he doesn't reach the quota, then he will not deliver the food (but he can also decide to do it anyway). The day before the sell, every member of the RQDO receive the complet list of the purchases and a purchase order which indicates the amount of the credit transfer. The cash transaction will be realized the following days through the bank transfer. Thus, credit card is a necessary condition to be in the RQDO system.

The RQDO is a firm and consequently has some costs related to his functioning. That's why the purchasing price is increased by 20%. A part of this « surplus price » (7,9%) is taken out to pay the responsible of the local Ruche. The rest is shared for the payment of the Value Added Tax (5,5%), bank charges (2,1%) and the informatic services developed and managed by the parisian staff, which permit the whole functioning (5,5% of the final price).

This 20% gross margin is a matter of suspicions among consumers, which somtimes see in this applied margin an unjustified form of rent appropriation, particularly in reference to the headquarters in Paris. The creators of the start-up have to answer several times to the consumers who publicly raise questions and critics against them through social networks. As a significative exemple, the management board is directly intervened in a forum**[2]** :
« this margin is accepted and understood by our producers, considering that the RQDO relieves them from a number of tasks (invoicing in particular) and offers them a true service. In addition, it's smaller than margins of classical large-scale distributors (which can reach up to 250%). Moreover, we never tried to conceal our operating mode. The existence of this margin is stated quite clearly in black and white on the web site at the moment of the registration and it also appears in the FAQ, which is the traditional informations place for the members, and almost all the press articles mention about it. However, it's probably true that this information is not sufficiently visible by the non-members, we will see how we can show it clearly to the people who are not enregistered yet**[3]**».
Thus, if it's possible to have access to the price-related informations by the web site (**http://www.the-ruche.com**/), some key points are still unclear. In relation to the capital, the 30*Ruches* operating in january 2012 have generated a monthly turnover of 40 000 €, which is 4 000 € for the Paris headquarters. As we know that the number of *Ruches* at the end of 2012 has grown till 150 (with other 400 in construction), we can estimate that the monthly turnover for the Paris managing board is now around

20 000 €. These numbers don't seem to endorse the hypothesis of a predatory belief by the firm. However, it is questionable to what extent the central board can face bank fees, VAT, and wages of the twelve members of the start-up in Paris.
As a matter of fact, to find a starting capital at the end of 2010, the founders Guilhem Cheron and Marc-David Choukroun have turned themselves to some « *business angels* »[4]. Thanks to the intervention of Marc Simoncini, the Kima Venture fund and Christophe Duhamel (former founder of the famous recipes web site : marmiton.org), it has been possible to have a capital injection of about 115 000 €, which helped to launch the web site and his first development. The progressive growing dynamics of the RQDO did the rest, thus the founders have succeeded in retaining the attention of new investment funds in november 2012. There were among more then 30 business angels and the the RQDO founders finally have chosen the XAnge Private Equity fund, a subsidiary of La Banque Postale (postal bank), and the SOLID fund by Siparex group[5]. The first fund injected 1 million €, the latter 500 000 €. This capital injection will permits « to further development of the platform, to strengthen the territorial network, the guidance and support of the Ruches responsibles and local producers, and to enhance the logistics, cornerstone of short supply chains »[6].

Problems rising that match issues addressed in the Evidence Document.

1. What is meant by "short" in this case?

As indicated by the RQDO web site, the main criteria for selecting the products is a radius of 200 km (125 miles) around the local *Ruche*. Note that distances from producers to the local *Ruche* are indicated in the web site. Secondly, the respect of the environment is another criteria, but here there's no dogmatism about this, notably if it's difficult to find the necessary production quota to satisfy the consumers involved. By the way, interactions, conviviality, and the mutual commitment of the members enhance the trust and can be seen as a form of labelling reduction.
As in other case-studies (I. e. Francesca Galli - Zolle), consumer-producer relations are mediated by a group of professionals, young entrepreneurs. This is a crucial issue because they take care about logistics, marketing and information and communication services, which are activities often neglected by the farmers themselves (notably the olders). Here we have two intermediaries : the local person who find producers and host the products, and the central managing board in Paris. So the system is materially short (the supply chain), but virtually long (banking operations and money transfer and the information and communication services).

2. Sustainability and health aspects of SFSC

Health: products are fresh and do not remain stored for longer than a morning, or a day at least, after which everything is delivered.

Environment: the radius-of-200-km-principle sounds like « food miles » and « locavore » friendly, but these concepts (food miles in particular) have raised some criticisms. However, the beehive says yes only if there is a sufficient amount of orders ; if there are little amounts of orders the producer doesn't deliver the *Ruche*.
As we saw before the productions practices aren't necessarily organic but producers consider the environmental impact of activities.

The main advantages of the RQDO are :

- to make local commerce more efficient ;
- to increase the farmers' income ;
- to reduce the price of local and organic products ;
- to create an additional income for the responsible of the *Ruche*.

3. Impacts of regulation on SFSCs

Number of regulations are involved with the RQDO.

Concerning the products, organic labelling is welcome by the RQDO, as other certifications as *Label Rouge* (i. e. for bread, eggs, some local meats, etc.), or Geographical Indications. More important are HACCP or the veterinary certifications delivered by local authorities to the farmers, specially in the case of eggs ; as a matter of fact these are necessary preconditions to introduce products in the market.
Other rules concern the treatment of personal informations on the web site, the bank operations (there is a tax on the money transfers) and the sales, which all have required a law professional in the central board. VAT is also another regulation, applied at the local level (the responsible of the local Ruche) and at the central level too. As we noted above, all these issues have some consequences on the consumers, who are often surprised by the margin of 20%.

Key questions emerging from the case study analyzed

- This experience has spread all across France in a few months ; this was possible thanks to injections of capital from the so called business angels : at what extent people can accepte it? Is people aware about it? These are important questions as the RQDO has recently injected the enormous amount of 1,5 million € and wants to develop beyond french frontiers in other european countries.
- The RQDO formula is a virtuous one, besides the capital injection, there are real advantages compared to other supply chains (as supermarkets and other retailers). The success of such an initiative will give us important signs concerning consumers motivations. But today it’s a little too early and may we have to wait… (we noted that some consumers organize themselves without such mediators, as « Ruches without Ruches »...).
- RQDO is strictly Internet dependent, but not all the people (in the producers world as in the consumers world) are so : in my point of view this is at the same time a source of strength and a weakness point. I can’t be affirmative but it seems to me that the main RQDO public is urban more than rural ; but how could it be otherwise?

[1] Guilhem Cheron has been a designer for a veggy restaurant in Cuba, an organizer of cooking workshops for disabled people or children in social institutions, a responsible of dining experiences in a teenagers psychological center, a manager of art of cooking performances in many museums, and he's also the owner of a patent for a « sensory spoon » (to give back sensations to people eating only mixed foods !). Marc-David Choukran started work at the age of 21 in a communication company ; he creates his own business 3 years later, after many experiences in web sites mangement, marketing strategies and innovation consulting.

[2] **http://www.rue89.com/rue89-planete/2012/01/28/marre-du-supermarche-bienvenue-dans-la-ruche-qui-dit-oui-228815**. 124 comments on 15/01/2013.

[3] *« Cette marge est acceptée et comprise par nos producteurs étant donné que La Ruche qui dit Oui les décharge d'un certain nombre de tâches (notamment toute la facturation) et leur offre un véritable service. De plus, elle reste minime par rapport aux marges dégagées dans la distribution classique (pouvant aller jusqu'à 250%). Par ailleurs, nous n'avons jamais cherché à cacher notre mode de fonctionnement. Sur le site, l'existence de cette marge est précisée noir sur blanc lors de l'inscription et figure également dans la FAQ, qui est le lieu traditionnel d'information pour les membres, et la quasi-totalité des articles de presse la mentionnent. Cependant, c'est vrai que cette information n'est peut-être pas suffisamment visible pour les non-membres, nous allons voir comment nous pouvons la présenter de façon plus claire aux personnes qui ne sont pas encore inscrites ».* Cf. previous note.

[4] Following Wikipedia, a business angel (or informal investor) is an affluent individual who provides capital for a business start-up, usually in exchange for convertible debt or ownership equity. Angel investments bear extremely high risk and are usually subject to dilution from future investment rounds. As such, they require a very high return on investment. Angels typically invest their own funds, unlike venture capitalists, who manage the pooled money of others in a professionally-managed fund. Although typically reflecting the investment judgment of an individual, the actual entity that provides the funding may be a trust, business, limited liability company, investment fund, or other vehicle. Angel investors are often retired entrepreneurs or executives, who may be interested in angel investing for reasons that go beyond pure monetary return. These include wanting to keep abreast of current developments in a particular business arena, mentoring another generation of entrepreneurs, and making use of their experience and networks on a less than full-time basis. Thus, in addition to funds, angel investors can often provide valuable management advice and important contacts.

[5] **http://www.affiches-parisiennes.com/la-ruche-qui-dit-oui-leve-15-millions-deuros-755.html**

[6] *« poursuivre le développement de sa plateforme, de renforcer le maillage territorial, l'animation et l'accompagnement des responsables de Ruches et des producteurs locaux et enfin d'améliorer la logistique, clé de voûte des circuits courts* » Cf. **http://www.xange.fr/actualites/200-xange-et-solid-disent-oui-a-la-ruche-**

Case study 21. UAGALUR (Spain): Food from the land

General Information

UAGALUR is a joint commercialisation initiative born within UAGA, the Farmers' Union of the province of Alava, in 2007. It meant a substantial change from the traditional guidelines followed within UAGA until then, and in fact it was a personal bet of the former president of the Union (by the way, she was the first female president of the Union).

The objectives of UAGALUR are to: i) foster SFSC and narrow the gap between rural and urban population; ii) Add value to local products. Iii) Support collaborations between farmers and consumers in order to share the risks and benefits of producing nutritive, healthy, genuine, tasteful and safe food; iv) keep rural areas alive by means of sustainable farming systems (agro-ecological, profitable, environmentally friendly and socially fair and sensitive); v) encourage entrepreneurship and labour within rural areas.

This initiative pretends to arise the interest of local farmers for SFSC, so they start considering SFSC as a real option for their activities, and then to receive training, etc. It is not expected that most of their production is commercialised throught the joint shop. Therefore, when a farmer starts working in this project he/she will probably sell most of his/her production through the conventional way, and a very small percentage through the shop. But later (or at the same time), he/she should go adding new SFSC (direct sales to consumers, farmers markets, restaurants, etc.).

Key words: Local products, seasonal and healthy food, fair prices, social justice, diversification, food sovereignty.

1. **Type of short supply chain addressed:** UAGAlur has a shop where their products are sold directly to the consumers. There is also a website for internet sales. They also attend to other events such as open-air local markets held in the city or in the villages. They take part in a public food procurement programme through the canteen of the Campus of Arkaute, and have started to work with some small food shops, bars and restaurants of Vitoria-Gasteiz to introduce local products.
2. **Area and Territory:** Farmers can be placed anywhere within the province of Alava, which has an extension of 3.037,50 km² and a population of 319,227 inhabitants. Vitoria-Gasteiz, with 243,298 people, is placed in the center of the province.

3. **Number of actors/producers/farmers involved:** According to the website,there are 47 farmers taking part in the project.

4. **Type of products delivered:** seasonalvegetables and fruits, potatoes, legumes, meat (beef, lamb and horse), dairy products (cattle and sheep milk and cheese), wine (Rioja and Txakoli), olive oil from Rioja Alavesa. The quality and origin of some products are certified by PDO (Idiazabal cheese, Rioja, Txakoli) and some by quality labels (i.e. Kalitatea: beans, potatoes, olive oil). To make the offer more interesting and attractive, they also sell certain products not produced by farmers of UAGA, such as the salt produced in a village of Alava (Sal de Añana), local crafts, fair trade foreign food products (coffee and chocolate). In some cases, there can be some "invited" products: food that do not exist yet in the province of Alava (i.e. some conserves, marmalades, jams, etc.) will eventually come from the closest place possible (and following some basic rules) until that product is available locally.

5. **Qualify the actors and/or the farmers involved:** They are basically full-time farmers affiliated to UAGA, the local Farmers' Union. Initially two types could be differentiated: i) farmers with expertise in direct sales (Idiazabal PDO cheese makers, and Rioja wine producers), and ii) farmers lacking expertise in direct sales, but who believed in the potential of SFSC for their farm (ie: some vegetables producers). The former president of UAGA (and the directive team) played a key role. There is a person for the coordination and dynamization of the project.

6. **Indicate the time length of the initiative:** This project started in 2007.

7. **Actors directly or indirectly involved:** the main actors involved are the farmers, as well as the former president (and her team) of the Farmer's Union, who proposed, planned and fostered the initiative. There is also one person contracted to dinamize the project. Every farmer has to devote regularly some time working in the shop.

The participation of consumers (who buy in the shop) is basically limited to purchasing the products. But since they have access to knowing personally the farmers, some of them may go later into a more direct sort of relationship.

In relation to the Evidence Document

Section 1: Characteristics of SFSCs

What is meant by "short" in this case?

UAGALUR refers either to direct sales or short food supply chains. In this case, short has clearly both a social and a physical meaning. First, the project tries to make the farmer more present to the consumer. In fact, there is some basic info and photographs of every farmer in the website. Moreover, there are no intermediaries when food is purchased in the shop, local markets or at the farm, and there will be one intermediary when these products are sold in certain small food shops that collaborate with the initiative.

At the same time, since Vitoria is placed in the center of the province of Alava, the longest distance from the farm to UAGALUR is less than 50 kms. Then, the physical distance is much shorter than most of the food purchased at conventional shops, markets and supermarkets.

Section 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSCs

Health & wellbeing: products are presented as local, seasonal, nutritional, traditional, safe, healthy, produced by natural methods. It seems that the consumer is supposed to trustfarmers regarding the production system. However, some consumers (especially those closer to organic food) might demand more information about the production methods. Only few of them are certified as organic.

Environment: Although the project mentions the objective of increasing biodiversity and agro-ecology, there is little information about the production methods, which are basically conventional and some can be "integrated". Only organic farmers can be certified. They try to foster organic and agroecological farming systems.

Whenever possible, the utilisation of local varieties or breeds (spotted bean of Alava, Latxa sheep, Terreña beef cattle, mountain horse of Alava, etc.) is usually mentioned, although this is hardly understandable by the consumer as a guarantee of the farming system and the practices carried out.

Social and economic: the reason for starting this initiative was to help to sustain the family farms existing in Alava by means of profitable farming activities and adding value to local food products. Therefore, farmers should get a significant higher margin when selling through this chain. In the case of milk they get around 1 €/l. (taking into account that they have the cost of pasteurisation and some other costs) when dairy industry pays around 0,5 €/l.; For beef meat, farmers get around 12-12.5 €/kg (from this price as well some costs should be discounted) vs. 3.5-4.2 €/kg of carcass that the butchers pay to the farmers

UAGALUR also tries to promote alliances between farmers, as well as between farmers and consumers. But at the same time, it attempts to bring the rural into the urban (and vice-versa, such as the program of children visits to farms carried out with any school interested on it), so the population starts to value better local food and farming.

The project also mentions "social sensitivity", and the meaning can be quite wide. On the one hand, it pays special attention to training and education activities either for the farmers participating in the initiative or to the consumers. Farmers willing to join the project will have to attend two basic courses: one about marketing and commercialisation and another about general management of the farm (computers, etc.). These courses are free and compulsory.

It also promotes entrepreneurship and diversification activities within the farms, so as to create labour. At the same time, the presence of women is more evident, so the project tries to show to society the important labour that women has traditionally played and even today do in our farms.

Regarding the price of food products, some consumers would expect much cheaper prices for food products purchased within this SFSC. UAGALUR tries to educate consumers, show how actual food prices are not fair for the local sector, how their prices are established, and make consumers more conscious about this issue.

Finally, the initiative tries to improve the self-steem of the farmers by means of the increasing presence and importance of their products. This project helps farmers to change their opinion about their activity into a much better impression, as a result of training, higher capabilities and better self-esteem from the direct contact with consumers.

Section 3: Impacts of regulation on SFSCs

As the project was born from the Farmers' Union, it complains about the current hygienic and sanitary regulatory framework, which: i) do not make the difference between production methods, ii) confounds volume with public health, iii) favours industrial food chains to artisan and local food. They also claim that there is no abattoir or slaughterhouse available in the province of Alava for livestock or poultry. Finally, they also say that artisan food is usually not linked to the origin of food.

Section 4: Growth and development of SFSCs

Since it is a joint commercialisation initiative, it is also a way to upscale food products and to reach better other options such as PFP in work places, restaurants, etc.

Otto Schmid commented 07/11/12 09:01

Comments and questions Otto Schmid

Interesting case: social sensitivity creation with training of farmers and educating consumers.

Questions in General:

- What share do producer deliver to the initiative, is the initiative the the main costumer for the farmers?
- Do farmers get a significant higher price than in other market channels?
- What criteria for sustainability does the initiative?
- How are the consumers involved?

Questions related to the Evidence Document

Did the initiative get public support, which helped to growth?

Roberto Ruiz commented 09/11/12 08:19

Dear Otto,

In fact, the initiative pretends to arise the interest of local farmers for SFSC, so they start considering SFSC as a real option for their activities, and then to receive training, etc. They do not pretend that most of their production is commercialised throught the joint shop. Therefore, when a farmer starts working in this project he/she will probably sell most of his/her production through the conventional way, and a very small percentage through the shop. But later (or at the same time), he/she should go adding new SFSC (direct sales to consumers, farmers markets, restaurants, etc.).

I do not have many data, but I would say that for sure farmers get a significant higher margin when selling through this chain. In the case of milk they get around 1 €/l. (taking into account that they have the cost of pasteurisation and some other costs which I do not know) when dairy industry pay around 0,5 €/l.; For beef meat, they get around 12-12.5 €/l. (from this price here as well some costs should be discounted) vs. 3.5-4.2 €/kg of carcass that the butchers pay to the farmers.

Regarding sustainability, in addition to higher prices (incomes, and net margins), farmers change their opinion about their activivity into a much better impresion: better training, higher self-steem from the direct contact to consumers.

The participation of consumers (who buy in the shop) is basically limited to purchasing the products. But since they have access to knowing personally the farmers, some of them may go later into a more direct sort of relationship.

Hope everything is clearer. Otherwise let me know. Regards.

Roberto