



**Deliverable 8.3 Communication of the
project via 2 leaflets, press releases,
and 2 articles in Food Today**

Work Package 8

EUFIC



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Executive Summary

This deliverable (D8.3) summarises the communication materials that EUFIC created throughout the duration of the project to maximise the impact of the project's results, and raise awareness about what short food supply chains (hereinafter referred to as "SFSCs") are and what are the benefits of buying from them. The resources target different audience groups, with a focus on the general public and consumers but also reaching practitioners and other key stakeholder groups of the agri-food sector.

More specifically, EUFIC worked closely with other Work Packages (WPs) to publish press releases, leaflets and two articles, inclusive of an infographic, in collaboration with another Horizon 2020 consortium (Stregth2Food) researching relevant topics. EUFIC also coordinated the preparation of additional content, such as, among others, a special feature on a magazine covering EU-funded research, an animated video and a final booklet summarising the main findings and results of the project, which was released on the day of the final conference (6th July 2021), supported by a press release.

All the materials that were developed follow the SMARTCHAIN's visual identity and have been made available on SMARTCHAIN's website (<https://www.smartchain-h2020.eu/>) and Innovation Platform (<https://www.smartchain-platform.eu/en>), and, when suitable for the general public, also on the EUFIC's website. They have also been promoted on social media, always via the SMARTCHAIN's main Twitter and LinkedIn account, and also regularly via the SciFoodHealth account (with over >15,000 followers) as well as included in the SMARTCHAIN's newsletters.

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1. Communication of the project via leaflets

1.1 Leaflet presenting the project

The objective of sub-task 8.3.1.1 was to support UHOH in producing two project leaflets in English. The first one, presenting the project's main elements was created at the beginning of the project (see annex 1) and made available to the public [on the main website](#) on the 2nd July 2019, and also for printing in the restricted area of the website to all partners who wanted to use it during conferences and events. This leaflet gives an overview of the main goals of the projects, including the location of the innovation hubs and a list of all the partners.

1.2 Final booklet

The task in the grant agreement also mentioned a second leaflet to be produced at the end of the project to showcase its main achievements. However, because the project generated a large number of relevant results that would have been impossible to summarise in a leaflet, during SMARTCHAIN's Second Consortium Meeting, on the advice of the coordination team, it was agreed that EUFIC would instead oversee the publication of a digital booklet aimed at an audience of practitioners (e.g., food producers, farmers and other SFSCs actors). The resulting 29-page booklet "Insights & Recommendations to Support Collaborative Short Food Supply Chains", which was released on the Innovation Platform in PDF format (<https://www.smartchain-platform.eu/en/booklet>) on the day of the final event (6th July 2021) and jointly promoted by the partners' media offices through a dedicated press release, alternates the main text with infographics and images, with a visually appealing and colourful layout. It includes actionable information and relevant advice for practitioners, based on the main research carried out throughout the duration of the project, covering different subject areas such as consumer behaviour, social innovation, business recommendations, etc., as well as links to external resources that can be found on the Innovation Platform. The booklet has initially been made available on the SMARTCHAIN Innovation Platform in English and then translated into the other 8 national languages of the project (Dutch, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Serbian, Spanish). Some example pages of the booklet can be found in annex 2. All WP leaders and partners that were engaged in the activities covered by the booklet actively participated in its preparation, translation and revision.

1.3 Additional leaflets

Throughout the project, EUFIC also helped partners produce two other leaflets. The leaflet "[Increasing the sales of products from SFSCs](#)", which was translated into German, was prepared to support the WP4 presentation of the first partial results of SMARTCHAIN's expert stakeholders interviews on the occasion of the EFFoST Conference (see annex 3) on the 13th November 2019. Printed versions were disseminated at the event venue in Rotterdam.

The other leaflet "[SFSC inventories – where to find good ideas for short food supply chains](#)", showing a similar design, was released in March 2020 to support the digital promotion of the Innovation and Initiatives inventories collected on the SMARTCHAIN Platform (see annex 4).

2. Press releases

This section provides an overview of the press work in which EUFIC was involved, which refer to sub-task 8.3.1.3 about a master press release produced by UHOH with the help of COPA and EUFIC, as well as other press releases on the project and its results, written in English and then translated and disseminated via partners' networks to the national and European press.

2.1 Master press release

On the occasion of the launch of the project's website, but also to celebrate the kick-off of the project, a first master press release dated 18th February 2019 (see annex 5) and prepared together with COPA and UHOH was published on [EUFIC's website](#).

Table with the main media outlets and reach for the master press release

Date	Headline	Source	Country	Language	Reach
25-Apr-19	Smart solutions in short food supply chains - The European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) - European Commission	The European Network for Rural Development	Belgium	English	19453
25-Mar-19	SMARTCHAIN to unijna inicjatywa na rzecz krótkich łańcuchów dostaw żywności	Świat Rolnika	Poland	Polish	74109
21-Mar-19	INTELIGENTNIEJSZY, KRÓTSZY, SILNIEJSZY - łańcuch dostaw żywności w Europie	Pierwszy Portal Rolny	Poland	Polish	80102
25-Feb-19	Smartchain, el nuevo plan para optimizar la logística hortofrutícola en Europa	Noticias Logística y Transporte	Spain	Spanish	8721
22-Feb-19	Smartchain, nuevo proyecto para mejorar la cadena de suministro hortofrutícola en Europa	Cadena de Suministro	Spain	Spanish	46909
18-Feb-19	SMARTER, SHORTER, STRONGER – Food supply chain in Europe	EUFIC	Belgium	English	100716
14-Feb-19	Smartchain y el desarrollo de cadenas cortas de suministro de alimentos	Mercacei	Spain	Spanish	9257
12-Feb-19	Copa and Cogeca: Smartchain-Projekt schafft neue europäische Drehscheibe für kurze Lebensmittelketten	Fruchthandel Online	Germany	German	4787
					Total: 344053

2.2 Joint press release for EFFoST

A press release “Engaging Consumers for a Better Food Value Chain” (see annex 6) was made in collaboration with the Strength2Food Horizon 2020 project and the EIT Food TrustTracker® project, and published on 11th December 2019 [on the EFFoST website](#) to celebrate the joint participation of the three EU-funded projects in a dialogue on the sustainability of the current food systems held during the conference. In occasion of the latter, the SMARTCHAIN project was also presented at a stand.



Figure 1. The 33rd EFFoST International Conference exhibition area.

The resulting press release was shared in the EFFoST newsletter, that is sent to subscribers and attendees, which include researchers, scientists, policy makers, professionals and students from multidisciplinary food-related fields.

2.3 Final press release

Lastly, EUFIC and UHOH coordinated the launch of the final press release on the 6th July 2021, to celebrate and maximise the impact of SMARTCHAIN’s final event, as well as the release of the booklet summarising its main results. The main press release (see annex 7) was first prepared in English and then translated into the other 8 national project languages ([Dutch](#), [French](#), [German](#), [Greek](#), [Hungarian](#), [Italian](#), [Serbian](#) and [Spanish](#)) with the help of partners. It was then disseminated via their media offices. As a result of this joint effort, between the 6th and the 14th of July, it has been reported that a total of 20 articles in food specialized, trade and health magazines mentioned the SMARTCHAIN project and its results. The main countries in which these articles were published are Spain, the United Kingdom, Hungary and Italy. The total estimated reach of all articles combined has been of 2.3 million.

Table with the main media outlets and reach for the final press release

Date	Headline	Source	Country	Language	Reach
13-Jul-21	SHORT FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS OFFER 'SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS' FOR FARMERS AND CONSUMERS	NICETRIP	United States	English	Not available

09-Jul-21	Short food supply chains offer 'socio-economic benefits' for farmers and consumers	Food Navigator	United Kingdom	English	213209
09-Jul-21	Short food supply chains offer 'socio-economic benefits' for farmers and consumers	dearJulius.com	United States	English	11858
09-Jul-21	Le filiere corte forniscono "benefici sociali ed economici" ad agricoltori e consumatori	BuzzNews	Italy	Italian	29651
09-Jul-21	Entregan recomendaciones para optimizar la competitividad de las cadenas cortas de suministro de alimentos	Red Agrícola	Chile	Spanish	90170
08-Jul-21	SMARTCHAIN identifica los factores esenciales para mejorar la sostenibilidad de las cadenas cortas de suministro de alimentos	Interempresas	Spain	Spanish	1130089
07-Jul-21	Smartchain: ecco i risultati del progetto Ue	Myfruit	Italy	Italian	20596
07-Jul-21	El proyecto europeo SMARTCHAIN identifica los factores esenciales para mejorar la sostenibilidad de las cadenas cortas de suministro de alim	Asociaciones Fundaciones Andaluzas	Spain	Spanish	1994
07-Jul-21	Hacia una mayor sostenibilidad de las cadenas cortas de suministro de alimentos	Diario de Gastronomía	Spain	Spanish	119213
07-Jul-21	Smartchain identifica los factores esenciales para mejorar la sostenibilidad de las cadenas cortas de suministro de alimentos	Infoagro.com	Spain	Spanish	466431
07-Jul-21	Növekszik a hazai termékek aránya a közétkeztetésben	Agro Napló	Hungary	Hungarian	61730
06-Jul-21	El proyecto europeo SMARTCHAIN identifica los factores esenciales para mejorar la sostenibilidad de las cadenas cortas de suministro de alimentos	Murcia.com	Spain	Spanish	115635

06-Jul-21	EU-funded Smartchain reveals key steps to improve sustainability of short food supply chains	INDUSTRIAL NEWS	United Kingdom	English	943
06-Jul-21	EU-funded SmartchainT Food and Drink Technology	Food and Drink Technology	United Kingdom	English	8153
06-Jul-21	Smartchain, la sostenibilità nelle filiere corte	ITALIAFRUIT	Italy	Italian	89355
06-Jul-21	Short Food Supply Chains in focus as COVID-19 accelerates potential shift in how food is grown, distributed and consumed	The World of Food Ingredients	Netherlands	English	47472
06-Jul-21	El proyecto europeo SMARTCHAIN identifica los factores esenciales para mejorar la sostenibilidad de las cadenas cortas de suministro de alimentos	Murcia.com	Spain	Spanish	7018
06-Jul-21	Short food supply chain – creating a shift in the way we grow, distribute and consume	Agriland	Ireland	English	200806
					Total: 2,3 million

3. EUFIC Food Today articles

As required by sub-task 8.3.1.2, EUFIC also produced two articles on its website specifically aimed at consumers, but also health professionals, educators, opinion leaders/regulators, the media and the food industry. These groups represent the main audiences of EUFIC’s website, which is visited annually by over 4 million users (data from 2020). The articles have been translated into EUFIC’s 5 languages (English, French, Spanish, Italian and German), promoted on social media on LinkedIn and Twitter, via the project’s official account and SciFoodHealth. The articles were written in collaboration with another multi-actor Horizon 2020 project, Strength2Food, that was often involved in common communications activities since 2020.



Figure 2. Examples of social media posts on SMARTCHAIN’s articles

3.1 First article

The first article “[Short food supply chains: reconnecting producers and consumers](#)” (see annex 8) focuses on explaining what SFSCs and their benefits for consumers and producers are, drawing from both the results of SMARTCHAIN’s WP4 and the Strength2Food study exploring the motivations, attitudes and practices of consumers, producers and retailers across 12 different SFSC initiatives.

3.2 Second article

A second article, also resulting from joint effort between Strength2Food and SMARTCHAIN, revolves around “[The benefits and sustainability of short food supply chains](#)” (see annex 9) and is based on the WP5 results as well on a report published by Strength2Food on the economic, social and environmental impacts of SFSCs. This topic is also the main focus of the infographic that is showcased on that very article (see annex 9.1), and that has also been made [available on SMARTCHAIN’s Innovation Platform](#). Both article and infographic will be further promoted in winter 2022 and with its 41,000 newsletter subscribers on the occasion of the EUFIC’s campaign on sustainability.

3.3 EUFIC website section & animated video

As mentioned in sub-task 8.3.1.5, EUFIC has also made available a [section on its website dedicated to the project](#) and coordinated the production of the [2-minute animated video](#) “SMARTCHAIN Smart Solutions in Short Food Supply Chains” with a creative and appealing design, which is also embedded in the previously mentioned section. As indicated by sub-task 8.3.1.9, through this video the project aims to reach a lay audience through a creative and appealing design. For its creation, EUFIC could count on the support of all WP leaders

and relevant partners, from content production to story-lining and translations. As a result, subtitles are available in the 8 languages of the consortium and a version [with the voice-over of a famous Hungarian actor](#), Koncz Gábor, has been produced too.



Figure 3. Examples from the animated video

The video was uploaded on YouTube, where it received > 1,800 views for the original version and > 500 in Hungarian, and on different social media pages (see examples below).

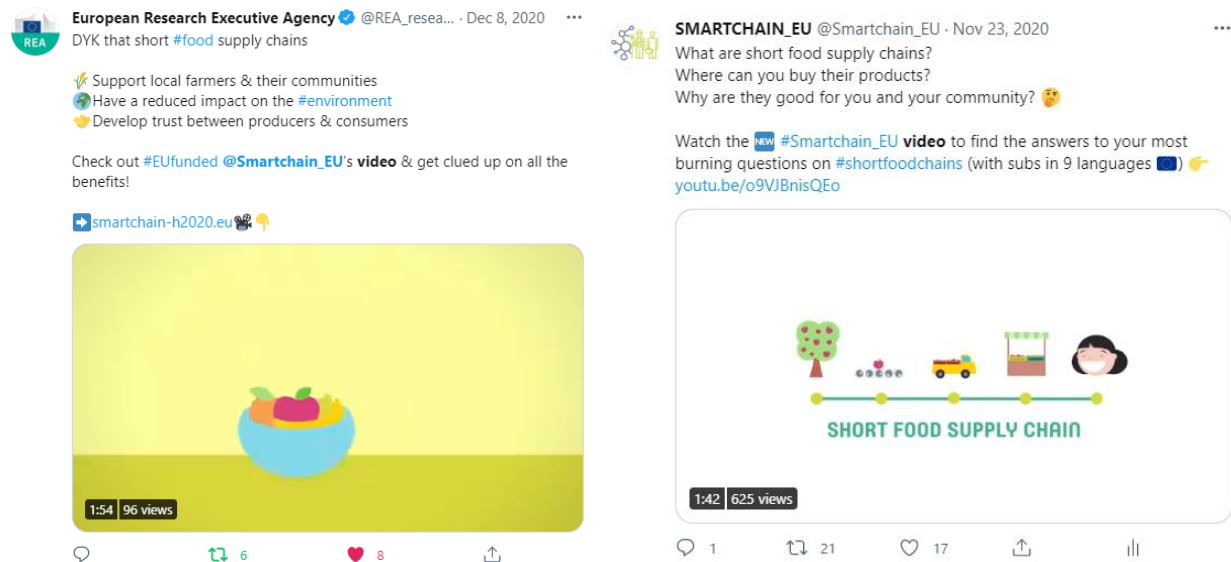


Figure 4. Examples of social media posts on the SMARTCHAIN's video

3.4 Project Repository Journal

Lastly, in collaboration with UHOH, EUFIC prepared an [article](#) for the [7th issue of the Project Repository Journal](#) which has a monthly audience of about 100,000 professionals and stakeholders across Europe. The piece was published in October 2020 and presented an overview of the main achievements of the project after two years from its beginning and how it can support collaborative SFSCs.

Towards innovation-driven and smart solutions in short food supply chains

Susanne Braun, University of Hohenheim
 Dr. F^o Javier Casado Hebrard, University of Hohenheim
 Dr. Dimitrios Argyropoulos, University College Dublin

The agri-food industry is of particular strategic interest in Europe, being essential for rural development as it provides jobs and incomes in many remote regions. However, a more sustainable and competitive European agri-food industry is urgently needed, addressing its impacts on the environment, health and climate. A major transformation of the whole sector is required to respond to these challenges, with important changes in both production and consumption of agricultural products.

In recent times, short food supply chains (SFSCs) and local productions (e.g. farmers' markets, farm shops, community supported agriculture, direct sales and delivery schemes) have flourished in all European countries, both in rural and urban areas. They represent a constructive alternative to conventional longer food chains where farmers or small cooperatives often have little bargaining power, and the consumers cannot trace their food back to a known producer or local area. Such food systems are of considerable interest, responding to a number of needs and opportunities, both of farmers and consumers.

The current COVID-19 crisis has brought to light the need to explore the development of collaborative SFSCs further, stressing the need to adopt a number of sustainable, innovative solutions to practical problems faced by farmers and food producers. The effective implementation of collaborative SFSCs—bringing together farmers, farm cooperatives, food producers, consumers and other stakeholders for their mutual benefits may offer an additional

mechanism in coping with food availability issues as local productions are less affected by international restrictions. This will help create a richer ecosystem of foods in the territory, closer to consumers.

Given the complexity of the European food system—with many different involved actors and several interrelated factors (e.g. the socio-economic and political context, the scarcity of natural resources)—all its challenges cannot be met by individual

actions. A multi-stakeholder perspective and coordinated initiatives are required along the entire value chain—from farmer to consumer.

Supporting collaborative SFSCs in Europe

By bringing together 43 partners from 11 countries across Europe, of a distinctly multi-factor risk, and including key stakeholders from the SFSC domain,



Figure 1: SMARTCHAIN consortium at the first annual meeting in Utrecht.



Figure 5. Screenshot of SMARTCHAIN feature on the Project Repository Journal

Annexes

1. SMARTCHAIN introductory leaflet




KEY FACTS

- 3 years, 2018-2021
- 40+ partners from 11 European countries
- 9 Innovation Hubs
- Joint Stakeholder Platform
- 18 case studies of short food supply chains

SMARTCHAIN aims to foster and accelerate the shift towards collaborative short food supply chains by linking scientists with practitioners and stakeholders in the sector. Through specific actions and recommendations, SMARTCHAIN will introduce new robust business models and innovative practical solutions that enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of the European agri-food system.

[@Smartchain_EU](#) [#smartchain_eu](#)
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Short food supply chains, which involve very few intermediaries, represent an alternative to conventional longer food chains where small farmers or cooperatives often have little bargaining power and the people cannot trace the food to a known producer or local area. Advantages of short supply routes include reduction of carbon footprint, access to locally produced food of known origin, and sustainable small farms and businesses.

Concept

SMARTCHAIN will stimulate demand-driven innovation in short food supply chains to improve competitiveness and foster rural development using a multi-actor approach. This method puts into practice the "interactive innovation model" where all actors involved in the project are working together to make best use of scientific and practical knowledge for the co-creation and diffusion of novel solutions ready to solve practical problems. SMARTCHAIN –Building more resilient and efficient short supply food chains in Europe



Community

The SMARTCHAIN consortium strongly believes that many issues blocking the transition of short food supply chains from a niche to a larger market share could be (at least partially) solved by building an international community of short food supply chains (e.g. to share concerns/ experiences/best practices, to discuss, to collaborate together).

SMARTCHAIN will use its networks to create this international community of short food supply chains that can grow and pollinate on local, regional, national and European level, creating cross sectoral connections between stakeholders and consumers. This community will represent a force of unprecedented size.

18 short food supply chains

The project will assess the barriers, bottlenecks, success factors, and potentials of innovations along short food supply chains in different countries of Europe. The selected case studies cover all types of short food supply chains i.e. whether this is amongst producers, or between producers and consumers, or between producers, consumers and local institutions and the most commonly consumed food in Europe, (e.g. fruit and vegetables, meat, dairy and bakery products) from both organic and conventional sectors.

Joint Stakeholder Platform (Virtual Innovation Platform)

SMARTCHAIN will create and implement a Joint Stakeholder Platform (Virtual Innovation Platform) that facilitates knowledge, innovative practical solutions and know-how transfer.

- Generate, share and utilize information on suitable innovations;
- Engage stakeholders in the short food supply chain sector;
- Disseminate events related to innovation and cooperation in the short food supply chain domain;
- Organize training activities and generating training materials on best practices in innovation;
- Build an international community of short food supply chains through a gamification study.

9 Innovation Hubs

To strengthen co-creation and collaboration between partners and ensure double-directional flow of information between research and practice within the SMARTCHAIN consortium, 9 Innovation and Collaboration Hubs will be established from the very beginning of the project. The hubs will lead to a permanent association of stakeholders at national level, working on the improvement of short food supply efficiency and the economic growth of the sector for the benefits of European farmers and citizens.



Partners



2. Example pages of the booklet "Insights & Recommendations to Support Collaborative Short Food Supply Chains"



FOREWORD

In the last decades, the European agri-food system has become more and more complex, facing several important challenges, among others, feeding a growing population, improving food market transparency and reducing the environmental impact of the food production and distribution. Therefore, we need an innovative re-organisation of the food supply chains to establish a more competitive and sustainable agri-food industry in Europe.

In recent times, Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) and local food markets, where local farmers and food producers sell their produce directly to consumers or through a very limited number of intermediaries, have flourished in Europe, both in rural and urban areas. They represent an alternative to conventional longer food chains where small farmers or cooperatives often have little bargaining power and the people cannot trace the food to a known producer or local area. Advantages of short supply routes include reduction of carbon footprint, access to locally produced food of known origin, and sustainable small farms and businesses. Such food systems have the potential to respond to a number of needs and opportunities of farmers, food producers and consumers.

Based on the sale channel of choice, SFSCs initiatives can take different forms such as farm shops (e.g. on-farm selling), online or offline marketplaces (e.g. farmers' markets, vending machines), box schemes, roadside sales, pick-your-own and community supported agriculture.

The development of SFSCs is one of the approaches of the Common Agricultural Policy, in an effort to increase resilience and promote a more favourable framework for sustainable, healthy, local and ethically produced food. In addition, given the extreme uncertainty around the duration and intensity of the current global crisis, it is essential to strengthen the research activities to improve technical and non-technical solutions aimed to improve collaboration in SFSCs and local food production.



BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS


- Clearly express your value proposition. Tell a story about your products!
- Implement social Innovation tools like co-creation and co-operation
- Promote your products in restaurants, hotels and cafes in the local area
- Think about your customers. Consumers should be the cornerstone of your business. Promote networking and social initiatives to improve the relations with them and foster their engagement. Understand their needs and expectations, for example by producing foods that are aligned with their necessities, facilitating the purchases, etc.
- Explore new selling channels. Online marketplaces have more benefits than own online shops

THESE RECOMMENDATIONS ARE BASED ON THE AVERAGE CHARACTERISTICS SFSCs CASE STUDIES:

-  Small-medium companies < 10 ME, < 50 people that commonly share resources with other farmers and producers.
-  Selling at a province/regional level (1,000 - 10,000 km²) through of a variety of channels (specialty retailers, own shops, door-to-door deliveries, local markets & restaurants).
-  Using quality labels like organic production, DOP, PGI, regional labels, etc.
-  Limited Investments of resources in marketing and Innovation.
-  Customers are mainly located in urban areas.

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BASED ON THE SAME 18 SFSCs, FIVE EXPLOITATION MODELS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED:

 Cooperative of producers	 Individual producers	 Community supported agriculture
<p>Where producers of the same or similar products manufacture, distribute, market and sell the products in co-operation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When combining marketing and selling, producers can develop more and different sales channels. Chosen when production and processing is relatively expensive and can be difficult to source as an individual. 	<p>One person, family or small group of people owns, controls and conducts the business.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relatively simple (inexpensive) processing or distribution required. Usually sell online or through onsite farm shop. Besides farming, additional and educational activities involving the underprivileged or people with disability lead to more engagement from the social community and to new revenue streams. 	<p>The traditional model emphasises sustainable agriculture, shared production risk, consumer involvement with production activities, and authenticity of local sourcing. Over the years, other types of CSA have evolved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subscription model (subscription-based contract). Shareholder model (purchase of shares and produce from the land). Community model (invest and operate farm/land and share the produce with the community).

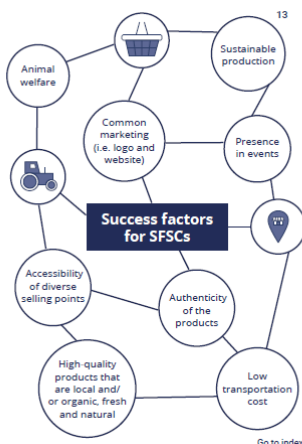
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This method was applied to the 18 SMARTCHAIN case studies and recommendations were developed for each organisation to improve their performance through the application of technological and non-technological innovations (activities, methods, tools, and solutions) that enhance success factors and/or eliminate bottlenecks.

The method is based on these steps:

- Identify your current value proposition
- Analyse your situation (potentially by SWOT-analysis) and identify the success factors and bottlenecks
- Identify applicable innovations, necessary activities, tools, and methods to develop your business innovations
- Upgrade your value propositions and added value
- Identification of the strategy (or strategies) and preparation of the action plan

You can find the method explained in the Guide to the Implementation of the method for Improving the competitiveness of Short Food Supply Chains through the application of Innovations.



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SMARTCHAIN also identified some of the hindering factors that explain why producers and consumers do not embrace SFSCs:

- Limited and unpredictable product volumes
 - Perishability of products
 - Limited access to resources (material, infrastructure, technology, financial)
 - Limited availability of labour
 - High cost of logistics/products
 - Poor direct access/links to consumers & low consumer awareness
 - Lack of trust among the chain actors
 - Low negotiating power with retailers, large service providers, large customers, intermediaries, municipal government
 - Low adaptability to price competition resulting in high prices of products
 - Lack of information and knowledge of product development skills, advanced technologies, marketing, awareness of public funding opportunities, understanding of and compliance to legal requirements.
 - Lack of collaboration with peers and other SFSCs members
- These elements can be counteracted by applying diverse technological and non-technological solutions, that have been collected in an [Inventory of Innovations](#), available on the SMARTCHAIN platform.

With the application of the appropriate innovations, the image, products and services of the short chain organisations can become more appealing for the consumers, supporting their choice of fresh, healthy and nutritious local products.

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3. Leaflet “Increasing the sales of products from short food supply chains (SFSC)”

Increasing the sales of products from short food supply chains (SFSC)

@Smartchain_EU
#smartchain_eu
www.smartchain-h2020.eu

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Why should we?	Why is this not happening?
Short food supply chains (SFSC) are able to support rural communities, offer fairer prices to farmers, provide access to fresh, local and seasonal produce, and have less environmental impact.	Although consumers value food from SFSC, they are discouraged by its higher cost and lower availability, compared to food from longer supply chains.
What can the different actors do?	
Farmers & cooperatives Industry & HoReCa Policymakers Consumer associations	
Increase supply	Justify the price
Form cooperatives. Consumers like buying all their food from one place. By teaming up, producers can increase efficiency and supply a range of products at larger volume.	Increase access to land. Small farmers have limited access to land due to strict ownership regulations and high prices. Changes in policy and local initiatives can improve the situation.
Engage distributors. Small producers who do not have the resources to make deliveries can engage with distributors to have access to more retail channels (e.g. supermarkets, HoReCa).	Divide public tenders into lots or aggregate suppliers. Public procurement can thus support SFSC producers who individually cannot supply the range of products required.
Set up regional processing plants. Producers can then share processing plants to transform their raw produce locally and increase sales opportunities.	Choose a budget model for public tenders. SFSC producers cannot compete in a system that awards tenders based on the lowest price. Allowing them to meet a set budget instead increases their chances of securing a tender.
	Decrease VAT on SFSC products. A lower price for SFSC products would help make them more appealing to consumers.
	Implement certification and monitoring systems. By imposing standards against fraud, the added value of SFSC will be reinforced, thereby increasing consumers' trust in SFSC products.
	Communicate value to consumers. We can all raise awareness on the health, social, economic and environmental benefits of SFSC through targeted campaigns, education programmes, workshops, on-site events and/or agritourism.

SMART SOLUTIONS IN SHORT FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS

These recommendations are derived from interviews with 32 expert stakeholders at national level (in DE, NL, HU, CH, EL, ES) and at the EU-level. They represent the views of consumers, producers, policymakers, and associates (e.g. HoReCa, agritourism, certifiers).

4. Leaflet “Short Food Supply Chain Inventories”

Short Food Supply Chain Inventories
Where to find the good ideas for short food supply chains

@Smartchain_EU
#smartchain_eu
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This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 772763

What is a short food supply chain (SFSC)?	Where are the examples of successful short food supply chains and their related innovations?
An SFSC is characterized by short distance or few intermediaries between producers and consumers. These chains support rural communities; offer fairer prices to farmers; provide access to fresh, local and seasonal produce; and have less environmental impact than conventional food supply chains.	All SFSC stakeholders - consumers, farmers & cooperatives, large/SME industry & retail, policy makers, technology providers - want to know what is available for the SFSC.
Farmers & cooperatives Large/SME industry & retail Technology providers	Policymakers Consumers
Initiatives	Innovation
The SMARTCHAIN Platform, has a growing inventory of 50+ successful short food supply chain initiatives throughout Europe. These range from Apps to Visions, from local to Europe-wide, and are geared towards many or specific stakeholders. The initiative inventory may be browsed or searched.	The SMARTCHAIN Platform, has a growing database of innovations in short food supply chains. Photos and descriptions of the innovations include instructions for use and potential end users. Links to relevant documents and websites are included as well as contact information for the producer.
Use the SMARTCHAIN Platform Initiative Inventory to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase your visibility by adding your SFSC to this inventory. Get inspired by learning about a wide variety of successful initiatives. 	Use the SMARTCHAIN Platform Innovation Inventory to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicize your SFSC innovation by adding it to this inventory Find innovations that will add value to your SFSC business

SMART SOLUTIONS IN SHORT FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS

5. Press release “SMARTER, SHORTER, STRONGER – Food supply chain in Europe” – 18 February 2019

EU funded SMARTCHAIN project goes [live](#) creating a new European hub for short food supply chains.

Today, partners of the European project SMARTCHAIN announced the launch of the web platform where all interested parties will be able to find information on the initiative aiming at fostering and accelerating the shift towards collaborative short food supply chains.

The project kicked off in September 2018 under the Horizon 2020 framework bringing together 43 partner organisations with complementary types of knowledge from 11 countries. A demand-driven approach with the active involvement of end-users i.e., short food supply chain practitioners, farmers and small food businesses, agricultural cooperatives, farmer and consumer associations etc. is deeply embedded in the project. The project partners were met last October at the University of Hohenheim in Stuttgart (picture below).



During its implementation in the next 3 years, the SMARTCHAIN project will provide innovative solutions to practical problems that short food supply practitioners are faced with food production & processing, product development, access to markets, logistics and distribution. The project will also generate concrete actions for knowledge transfer through the organisation of innovation workshops and training activities for farmers and short food supply chain entrepreneurs across Europe. Under the SMARTCHAIN project, 9 national innovation communities exclusively working on short food supply chains will be established in France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Serbia, Spain and Switzerland. Those physical hubs will be backed up by a virtual innovation hub in order to facilitate stakeholder engagement.

For Ms Susanne Braun SMARTCHAIN project coordinator “*All participants to the SMARTCHAIN initiative are convinced that the short food supply chain model can be realised at a larger scale in an economically feasible, sustainable and environmentally friendly way. The outcomes of this project will aim at proving it.*”

The central SMARTCHAIN web platform released on November 26th will gather all relevant information related to the latest project developments. Interested stakeholders could also follow all consortium activities via the [#SMARTCHAIN_EU](#) hashtag on Twitter.

For further information, please contact: Susanne Braun & Dr. Dimitrios Argyropoulos - University of Hohenheim - Project Coordinator - Phone : +49 711 459 23698

Ksenija Simovic - Copa & Cogeca - Communications Officer - Mobile: +32(0) 473 66 30 71

6. Press release “Engaging Consumers For A Better Food Value Chain” for EFFOST – 11 December 2019



A dialogue on the sustainability of the current food systems was held at EFFOST2019 based on the results of 3 EU research projects. New ways to build trust among food chain actors and empower consumers to take an active role in the development of future food supply systems were discussed.

This special session was organised by EUFIC to stimulate a dialogue on the sustainability of the current food systems.

TrustTracker®

Malou Reipurth from EUFIC presented the results of the first wave of data collected by the EIT Food TrustTracker® in five European countries (Germany, Spain, France, Poland, and the United Kingdom) in 2018. The TrustTracker® maps European consumers’ trust in the food value chain and its actors. According to these results, and despite specific country variations, European consumers trust farmers the most, followed by retailers and have the lowest trust in government authorities. Consumers are most confident in the taste and safety of their food but don’t show particular confidence in their sustainability. Meanwhile, European consumers are slightly more concerned about sustainable living than the healthiness of their diet. “With this first round of results from the TrustTracker®”, says Malou, “we have been able to demonstrate how the *openness* of food system actors, in terms of their transparency and honesty, is of primary importance in establishing consumer trust and getting consumers on board with innovations. This is very useful information, especially for stakeholders who wish to increase consumers’ trust in them and their brand.”

SMARTCHAIN

Dr Betty Chang, from EUFIC, explained her research for the SMARTCHAIN project on how we can strengthen short food supply chains (SFSCs). She presented the results of 32 expert stakeholder interviews conducted in Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Greece, Spain, Hungary, Belgium and at the EU level. The results suggest that the sales of local products can be increased by justifying their higher prices, and increasing convenience by making SFSC products more available, and emphasising what consumers care about when communicating to them. For example, the health and environmental benefits, the fact that these products support the local community or their ‘naturalness’. On the other hand, she highlighted that more consumer engagement activities (e.g. agritourism, inviting schools to farms) are needed to attract and educate consumers. “Price and inconvenience are the main barriers to buy SFSCs’ products.” says Betty, “The price of SFSC products can be justified through selective taxation, certification, and by explaining the benefits of

SFSC to consumers. Inconvenience can be decreased by having a wider range of SFSC products in one place and setting up more points of sale, particularly at supermarkets.”

Strength2Food

Dr. Gunnar Vittersø from the Oslo Metropolitan University and Prof Edward Majewski from the Warsaw University of Life Sciences talked about the sustainability of short food supply chains. As part of the Strength2Food project analysis in six European countries (FR, HU, IT, NO, PL and the UK) to assess the practices of multiple supply chain actors, and a quantitative analysis to compare the impacts of SFSCs to that of mainstream ‘longer’ retail alternatives. The qualitative findings suggest that consumers’ motivation to purchase foods from SFSCs derives from a perceived higher quality of food and their support of local production. It also highlights that SFSCs can provide important social benefits for all types of actors, e.g. strengthen local identity, support for the local economy, reciprocity and mutual trust among supply chain actors. However, participants had mixed views regarding the economic and environmental benefits. “The strength of SFSCs is the closeness (social and/or geographical) between production and consumption”, says Gunnar Vittersø, “It provides better transparency and consequently increased trust between the various participants in the food chain.”

The quantitative results confirmed that producers participate simultaneously in several short and long supply chains and that participation in SFSCs offers better economic advantages by capturing a larger proportion of margin otherwise absorbed by different intermediaries. The evidence appeared less clear-cut regarding environmental impacts. This is because SFCS can incur a large number of journeys by individual consumers who transport relatively small quantities of food at a time. Regardless, the social (consumers) and economic (farmers) benefits are strong incentives to search for new market niches and innovative supply and communication solutions within short food supply chains.

On 13 November, EUFIC participated in the 33rd EFFoST Conference in Rotterdam by holding the project session ‘Engaging consumers for a better food value chain’ and presenting the results from three research projects funded by the EU.

For more information, contact [Davide Carrino](#) from the European Food Information Council (EUFIC), tel +32 483 673198

7. Press release “EU-funded SMARTCHAIN reveals key steps to improve sustainability of short food supply chains” – 6 July 2021



Brussels, 6 July 2021 - The EU-funded project SMARTCHAIN hosts today its closing event, showcasing its main findings and recommendations to support collaborative Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) in Europe. The 3-year long project brought together a wide range of policymakers, practitioners and researchers interested in learning more on collaborative SFSCs and how to support their growth. SFSCs are food systems with a potential to create a shift in the way we grow, distribute and consume food, responding to the needs of farmers, food producers and consumers.

SMARTCHAIN's new booklet "[*Insights & recommendations to support collaborative Short Food Supply Chains*](#)" will spur further initiatives aimed at changing the European food supply chain model.

A thorough analysis of different types of SFSCs across Europe, such as on-farm direct sales, farmers' markets, community supported agriculture and cooperatives, and their regulatory frameworks, led to the formulation of **policy and business recommendations** in the agri-food sector.

Dr. F. Javier Casado Hebrard from the University of Hohenheim, SMARTCHAIN project manager, said:

*"During 3 years of intense work, SMARTCHAIN analysed 18 Short Food Supply Chains from 9 different countries to understand the factors that play a role in their success, but also to identify their main needs, barriers and bottlenecks, with a focus on the **consumer's perspective**. In the SMARTCHAIN booklet, farmers, food producers and other SFSCs practitioners can find **applicable solutions, recommendations and useful tips to improve business performance while increasing sustainability**. We also developed a series of actionable policy recommendations for decision-makers to support SFSCs and their competitiveness".*

Thanks to the identification of the key parameters that influence sustainable food production and rural development in the different European regions, SMARTCHAIN laid out the crucial factors that play an essential role for SFSCs businesses, leading to the identification of the **main success factors and also bottlenecks** for their development and exploitation. These solutions can enhance competitiveness in the form of economic growth, logistic improvements and the creation of new sales channels.

Social innovation at the core of the SFSCs' shift

The SMARTCHAIN guide also features a focus on **social innovations** for SFSCs and an **assessment of their sustainability** from an [economic, environmental and social perspective](#). Additionally, it presents the results from an analysis on the **value perception** and [attitudes](#) of consumers towards SFSCs and provides suggestions on how to reach greater acceptance of this type of supply chain.

SMARTCHAIN partners **launched an [Innovation Platform](#)** to facilitate knowledge, innovative solutions and know-how transfer among leading actors with the common goal of making a difference in the SFSCs' game. The SMARTCHAIN booklet will also be soon available on the Platform in nine languages: Dutch, French, English, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Serbian and Spanish.

ENDS

About SMARTCHAIN

SFSCs are food systems with a potential to respond to some of the main needs and opportunities of farmers, food producers and consumers. They can bring many advantages compared to conventional longer food chains, for example the short distance between production and consumption, the access to locally produced food of known origin, and the support of the local economy.

SMARTCHAIN's 43 partners coming from 11 European countries worked for 3 years to support the shift towards collaborative SFSCs by linking scientists with practitioners and different actors in the sector. SMARTCHAIN project "Towards Innovation - driven and smart solutions in short food supply chains" was coordinated by the University of Hohenheim and received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and Innovation programme under grant agreement No. 773785.

What's next?

The [SMARTCHAIN Innovation Platform](#), one of the main outcomes of the project, will remain accessible thanks to the decision of 5 new Horizon 2020 projects to keep using and updating it in the coming years. An overview of the content and materials SMARTCHAIN partners shared on the platform is also available in the booklet.

Website: www.smartchain-h2020.eu

SMARTCHAIN Innovation Platform: <https://www.smartchain-platform.eu/>

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8. EUFIC article “Short food supply chains: reconnecting producers and consumers”

Recent developments in the food market show a renaissance of traditional, direct ways of delivering food, coupled with an emergence of more innovative types of distribution systems which provide direct links between producers and consumers. These numerous types of short food distribution channels, commonly named short food supply chains, now coexist with longer, more ‘conventional’ channels of (mass) food distribution.

What are short food supply chains?

A short food supply chain (SFSC), as defined by the EU, is a supply chain involving a limited number of economic operators, committed to cooperation, local economic development, and maintaining close geographical and social relations between food producers, processors and consumers.¹

SFSCs were defined for the first time in the EU’s rural development policy for 2014-2020. The policy encourages European producers to become involved in SFSC initiatives with the possibility of co-financing from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. As a result, urban and rural farmers who sell their produce directly to consumers, with minimum intermediaries, have increased in number in recent years.²

There are several different forms of SFSCs. One of the simplest is direct sales from the farmer to the end-consumer (on-farm, farmers’ markets, internet deliveries). Other forms include box delivery schemes, ‘pick your own’ and community-supported agriculture (CSA), where consumers financially support local growers by purchasing a ‘subscription’ to their fresh produce for a particular growing season. The main products typically traded in a SFSC are fresh seasonal fruit and vegetables, followed by animal products (mainly meat, fresh and prepared) and dairy products as well as beverages.³

To a large extent, the growth in SFSCs can be linked to a shift in consumer behaviour, which has shown an increased appreciation of local food and related attributes such as the place of origin, traditional production methods and processing techniques. Moreover, a 2016 survey carried out across the EU found that four out of five European citizens consider that strengthening the farmer’s role in the food chain is either fairly or very important.⁴ In keeping with this trend, the European Commission is supporting multi-actor projects in which researchers and agri-food practitioners (such as farmers’ groups, trade bodies, advisers and small enterprises) actively cooperate throughout the duration of these projects. STRENGTH2FOOD and SMARTCHAIN are two such projects, which share a specific interest in the topic of SFSCs and their impact on the local region. SFSCs are viewed by the European Commission as an important topic because of their potential for encouraging sustainable rural and urban development.

The Strength2Food Project

[Strength2Food](#) is a 5-year (2016–2021) H2020 EU-funded project aiming to improve the effectiveness of EU food quality schemes, public sector food procurement policies and to stimulate SFSCs through research, innovation, and demonstration activities.⁵

Strength2Food researchers and practitioners have been working alongside each other to provide a better understanding of the sustainability of SFSCs, by assessing their economic, social and environmental impacts across Europe. The project has delivered two extensive reports on the key success factors and limitations of

SFSCs, with important lessons for transferability, by looking at different types of initiatives across six European countries: France, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Poland and the UK.

SFSCs – what are the benefits and challenges for consumers and producers?

The first Strength2Food report explored the motivations, attitudes and practices of consumers, producers and retailers across 12 different SFSC initiatives (e.g. farmers markets, local fish shops etc).⁷ The researchers collected data using interviews and consumer surveys, providing important insights across the whole food chain. The report highlights that SFSCs can provide important benefits to the general public. The increased face-to-face interaction with consumers typically results in higher levels of consumer trust. Consumers also appreciate the increased transparency and traceability associated with SFSCs, in providing information about where the food comes from, how it is produced and its associated characteristics (e.g. organic). Producers not only enjoy economic benefits but also greater autonomy and better utilisation of resources.

The research also highlights that different SFSCs use different types of communication strategies to share information about products between producers and consumers, and face specific challenges in this respect. They also play different roles in consumers' daily food purchasing habits, as well as in local community building. For example, traditional SFSCs, such as farmers' markets in Eastern and Southern European countries, were found to be important suppliers of fresh, seasonal and affordable food for many consumers. They are, however, challenged by the larger supermarkets on price and convenience. Other types of SFSCs distinguish themselves from conventional food retailers by offering local speciality products. As they often attract more affluent customers, they may exclude those with less spending power. Due to this complexity, a single measure, such as a certification or a common labelling system for SFSCs, to strengthen transparency and avoid fraud, will not be enough to address different needs and challenges faced by different SFSCs. Measures have to be developed in accordance with the local context.

Read [here](#) about the second Strength2Food report which looked at the economic, social and environmental impacts of SFSCs and their sustainability.

The SMARTCHAIN Project

The EU-funded H2020 project [SMARTCHAIN](#) was launched in September 2018 with the goal to accelerate the shift towards collaborative SFSCs, introducing new business models and practical solutions that improve the competitiveness and sustainability of the European agri-food system.⁶ The project has also established a [virtual platform](#) including novel interactive tools to share knowledge and [innovative practical solutions](#) relevant to SFSCs.

Understanding how and why consumers buy from short food supply chains

The SMARTCHAIN project investigated consumer perceptions and behaviour regarding SFSCs through focus groups and online surveys in Germany, Greece, Hungary and Spain. Researchers also carried out interviews with experts from organisations across the EU representing consumers, producers, government bodies and policy makers, the catering industry and food certifiers. Results show that when shopping for food, consumers consider freshness, taste, quality, low prices and convenience to be most important. Most of them report buying from SFSCs at least sometimes (especially vegetables, fruit, eggs, honey, and bread) with farmers markets being the preferred channel. Consumers buy from SFSCs to support local producers, to know where the food comes from, because they feel the products are more natural (e.g. using less pesticides), [better for the environment](#) and higher quality than those from conventional long food chains.

Producers may choose SFSCs mainly to maintain a closer control on their product along the value chain and to create a direct relationship with consumers, as well as to be paid a more attractive price, to diversify their source of income and to get involved in the local community and economy.

Inconvenience and price were singled out as the main barriers to purchases from SFSCs, which are considered as expensive, hard to reach, not well promoted or readily available. As consumers tend to prefer to buy a wide variety of food from one place, having a wider range of SFSC products in one place would make them more convenient (e.g. farmers markets, farm shops, cooperatives or online platforms combining multiple producers). Interestingly, a considerable proportion of consumers in the survey showed positive attitudes towards SFSCs, but did not tend to buy from SFSC because of concerns about their high prices. This implies that reducing the cost of food from SFSC or justifying it (e.g. explaining production processes and benefits for consumers, the environment, and the producer/local community) would be more likely to encourage uptake compared to promoting the benefits of SFSCs and their products.

Lastly, SFSCs are a promising avenue for supporting sustainable food systems and increasing their resilience against shocks such as the COVID-19 outbreak. According to the surveys, the pandemic saw a slight increase in consumer awareness about SFSCs, and an increased intention to purchase from SFSCs and to support local producers.

Way forward

While previous studies indicate that conditions in the EU are currently favourable for the development of SFSCs, some important barriers persist. One of the main concerns is that production volumes within these chains can be limited and that they cannot always meet the demand for larger purchasers such as hospitals, universities, schools.³ SFSCs may also struggle to up-scale due to capacity constraints and higher costs of production, processing and transport.³ In addition, they often have limited resources for communication and marketing, even if they benefit from institutional support.³

A further obstacle is the limited range and volume of produce, given that many SFSCs are seasonal and highly localised. This can restrict individual farmers' competitiveness compared to other conventional actors in the food chain and limit their ability to take part in public procurement.² Consumers, in general, also feel that local and organic food products, are not always easy to recognise and access. This may be due to insufficient information on their benefits, and increased price, compared to more conventional products.⁷ Research addressing these issues will help further strengthen the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of SFSCs and overcome these barriers.

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7. [Vittersø G. et al. \(2019\) Short Food Supply Chains and their Contributions to Sustainability: Participants' Views and Perceptions from 12 European Cases. Sustainability 2019, 11\(17\), 4800.](#)

9. EUFIC article “The benefits and sustainability of short food supply chains”

More direct models of food distribution and consumption known as Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) are attracting interest for their potential to bring about social, economic and environmental benefits in comparison to more conventional practices. SFSCs may indeed offer mutual benefits to both [farmers and consumers](#), help deliver a more sustainable food system while addressing some of the most pressing environmental challenges and social issues. They might act as model to increase transparency, trust, equity and growth throughout the agri-food chain, and contribute to an improved competitiveness and overall sustainability of the European agri-food system.

The following infographic has been produced jointly by the [SMARTCHAIN](#) and [Strength2Food](#) projects to provide an overview of how and in which context SFSCs can be beneficial. Below you will find more insights on the projects’ research underpinning these benefits.^{1,2}

Download the printable version [here](#).

Assessing the sustainability and impact of short food supply chains – S2F

Strength2Food project produced a report looking at the economic, social and environmental impacts of SFSCs and their sustainability.^{3,4} This research was based on observations from 208 food businesses, involved in 486 market chains, from 6 European countries (France, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Poland and the UK) as well as Vietnam.

The study suggests that SFSCs allow producers to benefit financially by capturing a large proportion of margin otherwise absorbed by different intermediaries in longer chains (e.g. wholesalers, distributors or retailers). Producers also perceive greater bargaining power when selling via SFSCs. Important associated benefits include job creation and promotion of gender balance, due to greater employment opportunities for women in logistics and trading activities compared to longer chains. Although the labour resources needed for sales processes differ across chains, overall, SFSCs appear more labour intensive when compared to longer chains for a variety of reasons. For instance, in addition to the time spent by the producer on transportation and selling via farmers’ markets or similar activities, packaging may be at the expense of the producer rather than the retailer, requiring considerably more time for preparation for bulk delivery. Interestingly, the study also found that actors involved in SFSCs are also typically simultaneously involved in conventional supply chains. This helps them offset the risks and shortcomings of the short-chains (such as limited demand) while continuing to enjoy the benefits associated with direct sale.

Regarding the environmental impacts of SFSCs, the evidence appears less clear cut. In fact, SFSCs can be associated with higher food miles and larger carbon footprints. This is because participants of these chains, especially consumers, can accumulate a large number of journeys transporting relatively small quantities of food at a time. However, the carbon footprints of different types of SFSCs is not uniform and can differ largely across regions and market scales.

Environmental and socio-economic impact assessment of SFSCs - SMARTCHAIN

Through a combination of life cycle assessments and a study on the perceptions of food producers about the benefits of short food supply chains, the SMARTCHAIN project evaluated SFSC innovations from six selected and representative European case studies from an environmental, social and economic perspective in comparison to conventional food chain practices.

Overall, SFSCs seem to allow a higher share of added value to be retained locally, with positive effects on maintaining local employment, particularly in rural areas. Beyond the socioeconomic reasons, social integration and empowerment have a great importance when food producers choose SFSCs, which show better social impacts, with less gender discrimination, less corruption, fair competition and appropriate working time. Direct connection with consumers, the control of the product along the value chain and the integration in the local community were mentioned as the most important advantages to be involved in SFSCs. In particular, the relationships within professionals along the value chain and with consumers is more convivial and there is more solidarity and cooperation. Lastly, the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on SFSC businesses varied a lot according to the country and the type of products, with animal-based food producers reporting a significantly more positive impact than others.

The main environmental impacts of agricultural products across all different kinds of supply chains are related to primary production, especially the application of fertilizers and plant protection products and land use. Because of the large variety of types of SFSCs, no general conclusions regarding environmental impacts of SFSCs logistics could be drawn. Consumer transport can be very inefficient since core parameters are the distance driven by car per kg of produce, the range of produce and the buying habits (bulk or small portions). Packaging instead, although important along the supply chain, is not a major contributor. This depends on the raw material (glass is usually more impactful than plastics), and on whether and how it is disposed of or re-used. Depending on the case, packaging actually shows positive environmental effects like extending shelf-life and reducing food waste.

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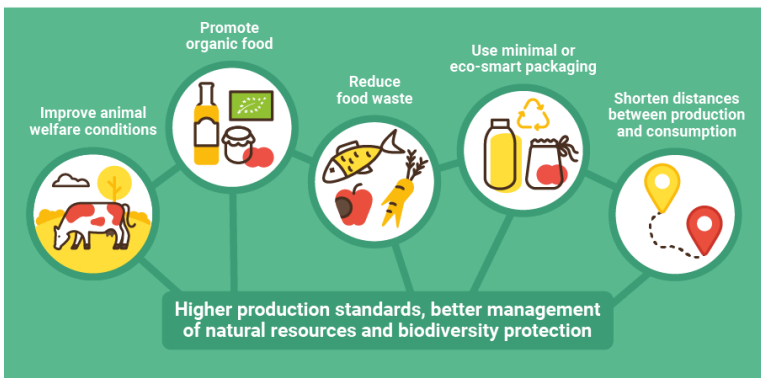
9.1 Infographic “What are the benefits of SFSCs?”

What are the benefits of short food supply chains?

Social benefits



Environmental benefits



Economic benefits

