

What are the key elements for the success of SFSCs ?

Overview

During the SMARTCHAIN H2020 project, new methods for making SFSC more sustainable and competitive were explored and resulted in solutions for eliminating the bottlenecks present in food chains, and heighten the success factors for the sustainable operation of the SFSC practitioners, and the SFSCs as a whole. On the SMARTCHAIN Innovation platform, a number of technological and non-technological innovations identified for SFSC can be found. Several bottlenecks identified by the case studies, can be related to the problems associated with food safety, food quality, marketing, product development, and business skills.

Bottlenecks & Challenges

- Rural development policy does not operate as a supporting system for SFSC actors
- Lack of freely available financial resources at EU and national level: barriers to investments and the use of innovative methods
- Lack of tailored legislation for SFSC
- Different interpretations of the relevant legislation at the EU level
- Complex regulations on food hygiene, food information and various products
- Farmers and producers are not able to meet the requirements of the regulations without the help of national and EU institutions
- Operating food quality systems is costly for small-scale producers
- Lack of national regulations for quality in some countries

- Limited and unpredictable product volumes
- Perishability of products
- Limited availability of labour
- High cost of logistics for minimum products
- Poor direct access and/or links to consumers and low consumer awareness
- Lack of trust among the chain actors
- Low negotiating power with retailers, large service providers, large customers, intermediaries, municipal governments
- 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

Examples of success factors for SFSCs

- Authentic, local, traditional, and quality products
- Sustainable production, including organic production
- Strong communication and online presence.
- Common marketing and visibility
- Strong common brand of the (local) producers
- Following food hypes
- Food chain management and networking
- Employment of disabled and handicapped people.
- Interaction with different partners: e.g. agritourism of SFSCs with customer demand

- Exploiting, combining fragmented and complementary resources: to achieve strategic objectives
- Operating a uniform quality assurance system
- Close communication with members
- Strategic collaboration with different institutions
- Solitary participation of producers and consumers
- Sharing economic responsibility
- Experience and education, shared learning, and innovation acknowledged in the local community
- Acting as an interface for matching supply offer of SFSCs with customer demand

Recommendations for policy makers

- **Good practices on the application of the flexibility principles**

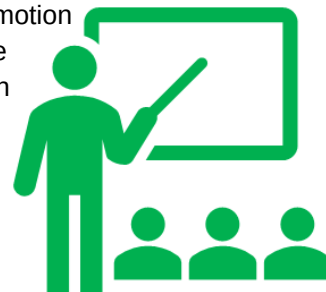
There is a need to increase the awareness of the farmers, small food processors and food control officers; which will significantly assist the operational success of the short food chains and enhance the production and supply of local foods

- **Facilitate training for SFSC Actors**

Information and training to SFSC actors can help improve the efficiency of the transfer of knowledge by the food control officers and advisors to the small producers in the short food chains.

- **Development of Training Material**

There is a lack of knowledge within SFSCs, and a need for specific training materials to address a number of topics such as labelling, nutrition, recycling, and food safety. In addition there needs to be an improved promotion of the training available and the implementation of innovations in practice.



Good Practice for innovation and cooperation between SFSC actors



Collaborate with others



Common marketing



Low cost innovations



Work together to reach strategic objectives



Seek innovations that work in other similar regions/countries/sectors



Open and transparent communication



Prioritise the innovations that add value to your products and services



Integration with local community



Think like consumers



Fair income for farmers



Take advantage of innovation for marketing



Employment of people with disabilities

More Info

The central objective of SMARTCHAIN is to foster and accelerate the shift towards collaborative short food supply chains and, through specific actions and recommendations, to introduce new robust business models and innovative practical solutions that enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of the European agri-food system



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**Horizon 2020
European Union Funding
for Research & Innovation**

SMARTCHAIN project has received funding from the European Union Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 773788