

More sustainable, resilient, and competitive food systems through the development of intermediate food value chains



PRACTICE ABSTRACT No: 47

Strategic Sustainability Guide: Extending Impact Beyond the Project Life

What?

Traditionally, sustainability assessments of innovations, especially within the framework of EU projects, compare the baseline scenario (without the innovation) to the end-of-project scenario (with the innovation). However, this approach often overlooks the fact that the true impact of many innovations unfolds well beyond the project's conclusion. Sustainability outcomes can vary significantly depending on the pathways chosen by stakeholders after the project ends. The FAIRCHAIN project recognized this limitation and implemented a more strategic approach by integrating Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) to evaluate not just immediate impacts but also potential long-term scenarios.

How?

The approach involves defining and scoring multiple potential future scenarios beyond the project's lifecycle. Instead of focusing solely on the end-point of the project, the FAIRCHAIN methodology assessed how different pathways could influence the impact of innovations on sustainability in the long term. By evaluating scenarios based on key indicators such as energy consumption, market stability, and fair trading practices, the project provided stakeholders with a strategic guidance on the steps necessary to achieve the desired sustainability outcomes.

For example, in the Belgian case study, different packaging machine scenarios were evaluated, including small-scale individual ownership, cooperative models, and mobile packaging solutions. Each scenario was scored based on various sustainability indicators, allowing stakeholders to understand which pathways would be most effective in maximizing the impact of innovation on sustainability.

Why?

This extended sustainability assessment model serves as a strategic tool for industry stakeholders and other relevant actors, guiding them in making informed decisions that extend the benefits of innovations well beyond the project lifecycle. By considering multiple future scenarios and their implications for sustainability, stakeholders can better anticipate and manage the long-term impacts of their innovations, ensuring that they achieve their full potential in fostering sustainable growth and development.

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End Users

Industry stakeholders and
decision-makers

Country

Worldwide



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ABOUT FAIRCHAIN

The FAIRCHAIN project launched in 2020 and coordinated by INRAE, is developing intermediate food value chains in the fruits and vegetable and dairy sectors. Through technological, organizational and social innovations and by developing business models FAIRCHAIN will enable small and mid-size stakeholders to scale up to supply fresh, sustainable and high-quality food products to consumers at a regional level.

FAIRCHAIN PARTNERS



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