

How to support cooperation in SFSCS?

Overview

Cooperation and communication within SFSCs are important factors and should be encouraged among SFSC actors. This can help lead to more efficient business activities and in the long run would improve the success of SFSC. The project has collected several good examples of cooperation in SFSCs that could be helpful in overcoming the problems and bottlenecks identified.

Challenges

Through the focus group organised as part of WP 7, it emerged that many of the actors, producers and stakeholders of SFSCs are not generally connected to each other.

This stems from a number of reasons such as, lack of established network, negative connotations towards cooperatives and cooperation, and lack of regulatory framework to support cooperation amongst SFSCs practitioners.

Key Recommendations

- Promote the benefits cooperation amongst SFSC actors
- Develop support networks to facilitate cooperation
- Creation of capacity building programmes
- Reduce regulatory burdens and bureaucracy

Main Findings

The successful application of cooperation amongst SFSC actors can lead to a number of opportunities and improved market situation for those involved. Due to the nature of SFSCs, they are often in a weaker position when it comes to negotiations than those within conventional supply chains such as supermarkets. However, these obstacles can be easily overcome by networks' creation and cooperation. This enables SFSC actors to come together to not only have a stronger voice in negotiations, but they can also share their potentials, both in terms of equipment and knowledge.

Cooperatives of producers present several strengths, that can lead to easier access to innovations, such as smart technologies and digitalisation, and a better recognition by the consumers. Operating in a network allows producers to obtain, process, distribute, market and sell the products cooperatively. This has the added benefit of reducing costs, when production and processing are relatively expensive and can be difficult to source as an individual. Further cooperation can lead to a collective labelling following EU Quality Schemes, which require common intent and interest in specific territories and/or traditions. Supporting measures tailored to the aggregation, the cooperation, and the valorisation of the foodstuff from SFSCs will partially overcome bottlenecks and obstacles. Supporting the creation of recognised networks of SFSC actors, by funding or by creating specific innovation hubs in which farmers can share facilities, can help to empower the SFSCs

Recommendations

- **Create innovation hubs**

The high cost to small business is often a bottleneck in SFSCs, their Innovation hubs provide a space for farmers to share facilities and to process their products. Alternatively it can also build a knowledge network.

- **Facilitate SFSC support networks**

To overcome the lack of cooperation and low level of networking, the creation of a register of SFSCs, could support network creation among the different actors.

- **Support measures that favour cooperation and aggregation of SFSC.**

A successful example of cooperation comes in the form of cooperatives, that enables a network of producers to obtain, process, distribute, market and sell the products cooperatively. Support for these measures assist in enhancing the exploitation of the distinguished value of the products from SFSCs.

- **Increase focus on Advisory Services**

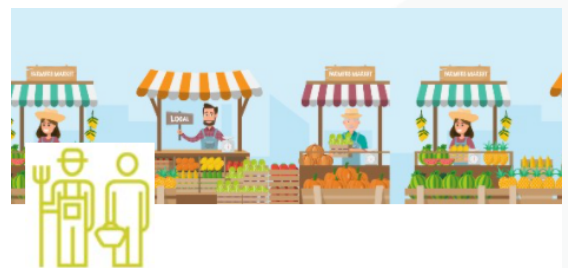
Whilst support is provided through rural development programme for advisory services. It is important for there to be focus on the tools and solutions specialised towards SFSCs.

- **Guidelines for Member States in the CAP.**

In addition to improved focus of the Advisory system, improved measures to support SFSCs within the Common Agriculture Policy, along with guidelines on how to apply for funding would be providing benefit to SFSC actors like farmers.

Example: GAIN MODEL

- Enabling collaboration between actors and stakeholders on the local, regional, national and EU levels
- A network of hundreds of e-commerce platforms for local products, stakeholders that work together on added value models, by way of Data, Money, Authority, Tools, Expertise and Reach
- Boost of social engagement and empowerment of networks to re-establish the connection between consumers and farmers;



Short Food Chain EU Community


- Application of blockchain technology for value-based business models guided by SDGs (water collection, carbon capture, food as medicine, etc.)
- Community empowered campaign strategy to transition from 'early adopter' to 'early majority' by creating demand driven markets.

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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