

Virtual market platform for farmers

innovative solutions for Short Food Supply Chains

Campden BRI Hungary

December 2019



Project code: 773785

Project acronym: Smart Food Supply Chains

Internal template:

Template for good practice cases

Work package number: T2

WP leader: CBHU

Work package title: Technological and non-technological innovations

Document issued by:

Delivery month:

Version:

Document language: ENG

Dissemination Level		
PU	Public	
PP	Restricted to other programme participants	
RE	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium	
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium	

1. Title of the case description

Virtual market platform for farmers

2. Indicate your role in the Smart Food Supply Chain:

- individual member of the chain:
- chain operator:
- network operator:
- association:
- technical, scientific, or management expert:
- advisor:
- policy maker:
- other:

3. Indicate the region (if applicable):

4. WP2 Cross-reference table

Please indicate with an X in the relevant box of the matrix for which needs and the steps / functions of the supply chain the described innovative solution is applicable

		Individual steps of the SFSC							Short food supply chain as whole						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Needs of the consumers (citizens)	food safety	X	X					X		X	X		X		
	food quality	X	X					X		X	X		X		
	trust	X	X					X		X	X	X	X		
	ethical aspects	X	X					X		X	X	X	X		
	accessibility														
Needs of the chain actors	fair price	X	X					X		X	X	X	X		
	increased negotiating power										X				
	shared use of available resources	X	X					X		X	X		X		
	product development support														
	access to markets and consumers	X	X					X		X	X		X		
	access to infrastructure														

1: Farming

2: Primary production

3: Transport

4: Processing and packaging

5: Storage

6: Logistics

7: Sale

8: Product integrity, authenticity, transparency

9: Marketing concepts

10: Food chain management and networking for enhancing cooperation among chain actors

11: Business modelling

12: Policy environment

13: Legal requirements

14: Labelling

5. Short description of the innovative solution

- **Describe the specific need or problem being addressed by the case and please explain what is the novelty of this innovative solution**

Millions of rural smallholder farmers struggle for access to local and national markets that could lift them out of hunger and poverty. VFM is a bold new WFP innovation project that leverages the digital communications boom to increase market access and improve livelihoods for smallholder farmers for good.

- **Describe the enabling function(s) and the practical benefit(s)-(e.g. for which types of problems and opportunities is used and can it be used, and how)**

Virtual Farmers' Market (VFM) is an app-based e-commerce platform where farmers' surplus and buyers' demand for crops are advertised and traded. VFM provides a transparent, open and trustworthy space for smallholder farmers and buyers to negotiate fair prices and deals.

- **Describe the method/procedure/technology/solution implemented. (Please explain, whether the innovative method is a product / service / process / marketing or organisational / management innovation) After completing the description, please indicate, whether this innovation is a technological or non-technological one.**

VFM builds on Purchase for Progress (P4P), WFP's flagship programme connecting smallholder farmers to markets. Using our reputation as a reliable buyer of quality crops, VFM creates a virtual, app based network that allows farmers to interact with traders and other buyers.

The app supports the emergence of a sustainable and fair marketplace, thereby increasing smallholder farmers' bargaining power and potential profits by providing them with real-time information about what their crops are worth on different markets. It also enables cooperation and knowledge sharing, and boosts farmers' productivity by ensuring their market access.

Together, this creates a virtual marketplace where the purchase and sale of produce is initiated and closed electronically after due diligence or face-to-face meeting. As well as giving farmers a broader market to sell their produce, the platform allows farmers to connect with a broad community of peers.

To achieve sustainability, VFM aims to levy a nominal transaction fee on the buyer for each purchase, and at the same time, ensure free access for smallholder farmers.

technological

non-technological

- **Describe the business, which implemented the innovated solution (size, country, region, location, type of food)**

In July 2016, the WFP Innovation Accelerator provided seed funding to prototype and pilot the VFM platform with farmers from rural areas in three districts in Zambia. The Maano - Virtual Farmers Market app was launched in May 2017. The Maano app, launched in May, is targeting 2,500 Zambian farmers during the 2017 season. They will be engaged in the pilot through 50 'Maano ambassadors' aggregating on behalf of their communities. Some 70 national and international buyers expressed interest in purchasing crops through Maano. The first transaction of 40 bags (2mt) of cowpeas was made through the Maano app in the first week of June.

- **Describe the distribution channels of the product(s)**

- **Describe what makes the innovation work.**

Tech disruption has touched nearly every corner of the global economy; and for smallholder farmers offers radical opportunities to grow their agricultural output, gain access to new markets and improve profit margins. VFM closely follows the same 'three-way handshake' (escrow payment) modalities used by successful online businesses like Airbnb, Uber and Alibaba. The model promotes flexibility and empowers farmers, traders and grass roots entrepreneurs in ways that could lift vulnerable communities out of hunger and poverty - for good.

- **Describe the specific prerequisites for the business related to the implementation of the method and/or related to the location, method, procedure, solution**

a: List the relevant necessary resources (including the estimated cost) for the specific innovation.

Please list the relevant ones only (list is annexed)

- human: labour force: size, knowledge & skills (production, technical, marketing, managerial, ICT, financial, etc.)
- technology: patents, know-how, trademarks, copyrights, trade secrets
- infrastructure, equipment, facilities, - size, minimum volume of production/sales, IT infrastructure
- information, reputation, brand, trust

b: List the relevant necessary capabilities for the specific innovation.

Please list the relevant ones only (list is annexed)

- **trust:**
 - ability to ensure product integrity, authenticity and transparent information for the consumers (including systems, tools);
 - ability to access external trust enhancers (third party certification, internal certification system, participatory guarantee systems);
 - application of the labelling rules and branding (mandatory and voluntary);
 - ability to meet third party certification requirements
- **ethical aspects**
 - ability to understand consumer needs for ethical behaviour related to the specific product(s) of the SFSCs;
 - culture for ethical food production and supply;
 - ability to implement necessary measures to ensure ethical food production and supply;
 - ability to access the consumer willingness to pay for products meeting ethical aspects
- **accessibility to consumers:**
 - ability to organize logistics efficiently and to exploit innovative solutions and distribution channels;
 - efficient, innovative sales methods;
 - ability to develop and implement new business models for ensuring access of consumers to products and augmented services;
- **fair price:**
 - collecting marketing information;
 - ability to enhance and maintain cooperation among chain actors including the combined use of available complementary resources, capabilities, competences of SFSCs actors, networking, understanding the principles of food value chain management;

- ability to define, develop or maintain unique quality of products and augmented services;
 - ability to develop and implement new business models;
 - ability to access the consumer willingness to pay for fair price
- **increased negotiation power:**
 - collecting marketing information;
 - ability to enhance and maintain cooperation among chain actors including the combined use of available complementary resources, capabilities, competences of SFSCs actors, networking, understanding the principles of food value chain management, cooperation culture;
 - ability to define, develop or maintain unique quality of products and augmented services;
 - ability to develop and implement new business models;
- **shared use of available resources:**
 - ability to enhance and maintain cooperation among chain actors including the shared and combined use of available complementary resources, capabilities, competences of SFSCs actors, networking, understanding the principles of food value chain management, cooperation culture;
 - the level of value chain management culture;
 - ability to access the consumer willingness to pay for food with reduced environmental impacts

6. Describe the results, achievements and typical failures

7. Summarize what makes the case to a good practice for the members of the SFSCs (e.g. lessons learned)

8. Aspects, methods for transfer of methods for other SFSC members

9. Recommendations for members of other SFSCs for further applications

.....
10. More information is available at (web), if it is relevant

<http://www.fao.org/e-agriculture/news/virtual-market-platform-farmers>

<https://innovation.wfp.org/project/virtual-farmers-market>

Annex

1. Checklist for necessary resources (tangible and non-tangible):

- materials (access to: raw materials/ ingredients - including volume, land – including size, packaging materials)
- human: labour force: size, knowledge & skills (production, technical, marketing, managerial, ICT, financial, etc.)
- technology: patents, know-how, trademarks, copyrights, trade secrets
- infrastructure, equipment, facilities, - size, minimum volume of production/sales, IT infrastructure
- information, reputation, brand, trust
- financial*

*: estimated cost:

0 - 10 000 Eur
10 001 - 50 000 Eur
50 001 - 100 000 Eur
100 001 - 300 000 Eur
300 001 – 1 000 000 Eur
1 000 000 Eur above –

- other specific necessary resources for the application of the specific innovation

2. Checklist for the necessary capabilities

- **food safety:**
 - basic skills to comply with the EU food safety regulations
 - ability to understand what makes the product safe (the key controls, which ensure the safety of the product – biological, chemical and physical hazards, providing the safety shelf life of perishable products)
 - food safety culture (motivation, responsibility for food safety) and basic skills for the implementation of HACCP

- **food quality:**
 - ability to define the target segments of consumers for SFSCs
 - ability to define the product characteristics which are (tacit) basic requirements for the target segment(s) of consumers;
 - ability to define which product attributes/levels and augmented services represent an added value for the target segments of consumers;
 - food quality culture (motivation, responsibility for food quality);
 - production experiences which help to provide the expected quality reliably, uniformly;
 - ability to provide distinguishable quality which meets the needs of the targeted consumer segment;
 - meeting (local) legal requirements, application of the labelling rules;
 - ability to access the consumer willingness to pay for specific products of SFSCs.

- **trust:**
 - ability to ensure product integrity, authenticity and transparent information for the consumers (including systems, tools);
 - ability to access external trust enhancers (third party certification, internal certification system, participatory guarantee systems);
 - application of the labelling rules and branding (mandatory and voluntary);
 - ability to meet third party certification requirements

- **ethical aspects**
 - ability to understand consumer needs for ethical behaviour related to the specific product(s) of the SFSCs;
 - culture for ethical food production and supply;
 - ability to implement necessary measures to ensure ethical food production and supply;
 - ability to access the consumer willingness to pay for products meeting ethical aspects

- **accessibility to consumers:**
 - ability to organize logistics efficiently and to exploit innovative solutions and distribution channels;
 - efficient, innovative sales methods;

- ability to develop and implement new business models for ensuring access of consumers to products and augmented services;
- **fair price:**
 - collecting marketing information;
 - ability to enhance and maintain cooperation among chain actors including the combined use of available complementary resources, capabilities, competences of SFSCs actors, networking, understanding the principles of food value chain management;
 - ability to define, develop or maintain unique quality of products and augmented services;
 - ability to develop and implement new business models;
 - ability to access the consumer willingness to pay for fair price
- **increased negotiation power:**
 - collecting marketing information;
 - ability to enhance and maintain cooperation among chain actors including the combined use of available complementary resources, capabilities, competences of SFSCs actors, networking, understanding the principles of food value chain management, cooperation culture;
 - ability to define, develop or maintain unique quality of products and augmented services;
 - ability to develop and implement new business models;
- **shared use of available resources:**
 - ability to enhance and maintain cooperation among chain actors including the shared and combined use of available complementary resources, capabilities, competences of SFSCs actors, networking, understanding the principles of food value chain management, cooperation culture;
 - the level of value chain management culture;
 - ability to access the consumer willingness to pay for food with reduced environmental impacts

- **input for R+D:**
 - ability to monitor, research, evaluate, and understand the needs and wants of customers and consumers;
 - ability to develop new products, processes, packaging, preservation techniques, systems and access to new markets, including in other categories;
 - access to innovative technologies; distribution and marketing solutions and methods. management systems;
 - access to local input for R+D covered by other aspects

- **access to markets: and market success**
 - effective promotion, customer service, efficient and innovative sales methods;
 - ability to understand consumer's needs;
 - ability to organise logistics efficiently and to exploit innovative solutions and distribution channels,
 - unique value propositions;
 - ability to develop and implement new business models for ensuring access of consumers to products and augmented services, develop the market accessibility for the suppliers.
 - stock control;
 - ability to access to required raw materials within a restricted geographical area

- **access to infrastructure:**
 - ability to use existing own infrastructure in a focused way to serve consumer needs or to combine it with complementary infrastructures of other SFSC actors, cooperation culture;

- **management:**
 - to implement management systems for vision, planning, implementing), coordinating, controlling, monitoring, continuously;
 - improving; ability to motivate, authorize staff;

- **production, processing:**
 - management system, production experience, specific controlling, monitoring, continuously;
 - willingness to consider and ability to evaluate the adoption of TECI and NTI in the current production processes;
 - any additional specific resources necessary for the application of the specific innovation.