



BUSINESS GUIDELINES

FOR SHORT FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS

SMARTCHAIN PROJECT



The aim of SMARTCHAIN project is to foster and accelerate the shift towards **collaborative short food supply chains** (SFSCs) 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.

Using bottom-up, demand-driven research, the SMARTCHAIN consortium (43 partners from 11 European countries) perform a multi-perspective analysis of **18 case studies** (from 9 project partner countries) of short food supply chains in terms of **technological, regulatory, social, economic and environmental** factors, assess the linkages and interactions among all stakeholders involved in short food supply chains and identify the **key parameters** that influence sustainable food production and rural development among different regions in Europe.

Specifically, one of the main objective is to generate a battery of tools as well as **business** and **policy recommendations** to implement **innovative solutions** in short food supply chains, primarily improving the **competitiveness** and **sustainability** of short food supply chains and making them smarter and more equitable, inclusive and sustainable.

Project info & resources:

<https://www.smartchain-h2020.eu>

<https://www.smartchain-platform.eu>



Horizon 2020
European Union Funding
for Research & Innovation

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USER GUIDE

One of the object of SMARTCHAIN project is to generate a battery of **tools** as well as **business and policy recommendations** to implement innovative solutions in short food supply chains, primarily improving the competitiveness and sustainability of short food supply chains and making them smarter and more equitable, inclusive and sustainable.

One of these tools is the **Best practice guide** for improved business performance in SFSCs. This is a guide for the application of reference **exploitation models**, improving business performance in short food supply chains and helping farmers and food producers to capitalise on their distinctive territorial capital to foster sustainable growth and the development in rural areas.

This business guide is aimed at entrepreneurs, farms, aspiring entrepreneurs who want to start or implement a **SFSC activity**, taking into account the various aspects that form and make a business model effective, without neglecting the **environmental** and **social components**. It will be a tool for identifying opportunities and strategies to enable SFSC initiatives.

The guide starts from the business model canvas (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010) and, for each canvas building block, identifies **recommendations** and **suggestions**, based on the input of the **case study** of the Smartchain project, the **project deliverables** and the **literature**. Specific recommendations are then identified for each **reference exploitation models**, crossing with the canvas building blocks. You will find a sticker (explained on the next page) when the tips are addressed to specific reference exploitation models.

The social and environmental business canvas models (Joyce & Paquin, 2016) were also used. For each of their blocks and, when possible and useful, for each reference exploitation model, **recommendations** and **suggestions** were identified to help develop the social and environmental sustainability of the business models.

Enjoy!



COOPERATIVE OF PRODUCERS

A cooperative of producers allows its members, who produce the same or similar products, to cooperatively produce, process, distribute, market and sell the products.



INDIVIDUAL PRODUCERS

Many farms are operated as individually owned businesses. The individually owned business is probably the oldest and most common form. One person, family or small group of people owns, controls and conducts the business.



COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE

The Community Supported Agriculture model has been in place for many farms for some time now. The traditional model placed substantial emphasis on sustainable agriculture, shared production risk, consumer involvement with production activities, and authenticity of local sourcing.



ONLINE AND OFFLINE MARKETPLACE

Marketplaces offer independent producers a platform/market and marketing knowledge to sell goods without the burden of a brick-and-mortar store. Online benefits of selling your local products 24/7 to an increasing group of potential customers who buy online are evident, giving consumers the opportunity to find a wide variety of goods from different manufacturers.

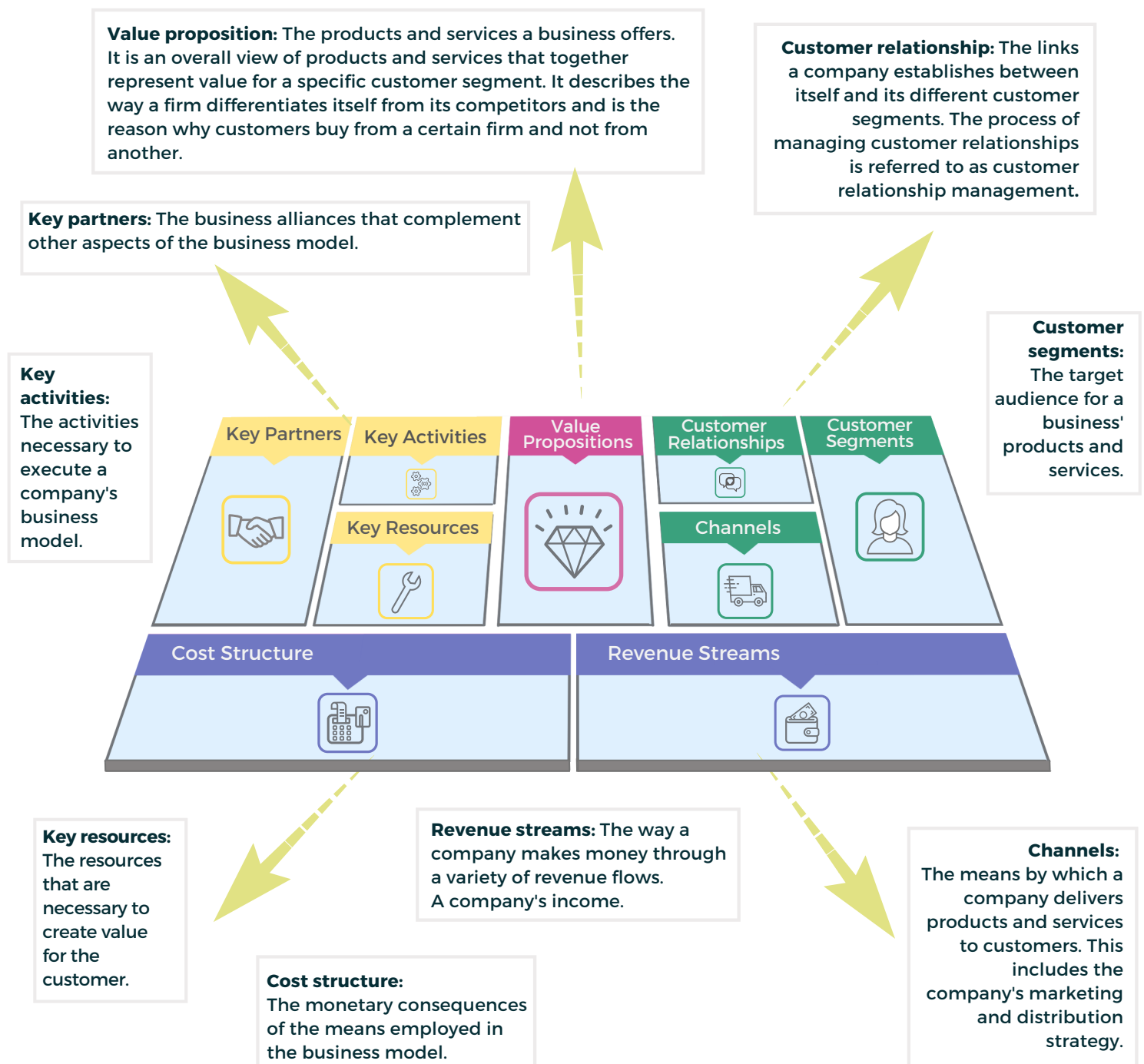


PROMOTION OF ON FARM SELLING

This model has the primary objective to promote/support on farm and online selling of individual producers and to improve the visibility of the farm. This is conducted on local as well as regional and national level.

BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS

The concept of **business model** helps capturing the idea of value creation through its ability to design and analyse the value that a business is producing, offering and delivering. A business model is indeed generally defined as “the rationale of how an organization creates, delivers and captures value” (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010*). For instance, it is an instrument able to **analyse, design, change, align and innovate new businesses**.



BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Business
Model
Canvas

VALUE PROPOSITION, LABELLING AND BRANDING

- Identify the value of the products you are producing in terms of quality.
- Provide information to consumers about the added value of your products and its social and environmental benefits.
- Clearly express your value proposition making it clearly understandable to your consumers and broader potential customers.
- Tell a story about your products.
- Foster the implementation of monitoring systems which take track of both products and markets characteristics and strengths.
- Establish participatory forms of labelling.
- Collaborate with other SFSC initiatives and/or small producers in the achievement of the quality labels/certifications, by sharing its costs.
- Take advantage of novel ICTs technologies: you could add a QR code to your label to be read by smartphone that links to your webpage, your company story, traceability data, culinary recommendations, a video explaining what do you do, etc.



If you are an **on farm seller** know that it is important to communicate the link between the local product and the geographical proximity to the farm as well as the close relationship between producer and consumer which make the purchase convenient even if the price is higher than in a supermarket.



If you are an **online and offline seller**, consider that labelling within markets can be not only a guarantee of the product sold but also a security for the consumer. So, develop a labelling system based on different colours to make recognition and meaning more explicit and easier.



If you are an **Individual producers** or a **cooperative of producers** know that it is important to express the story of the firm in the value proposition, using various tools (online tours or "product museums", video or other tools for storytelling, also adapting it to social networks).

Value
Propositions

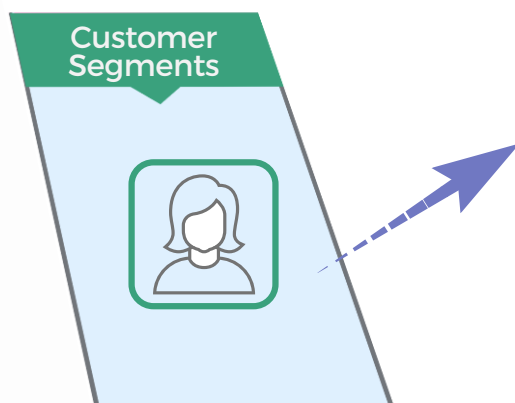


BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Business
Model
Canvas

CUSTOMER SEGMENTS

- *Know your customers through continuous market research in order to define the relevant target groups, their preferences and concerns.*
- *Educate consumers through targeted campaigns and information; Different consumer segments should be targeted differently (e.g. some would care more about transparency, thus should be provided with information about origin, production and processing methods, others may be better engaged with a story telling approach).*
- *Ensure certification and labelling is clearly and easily visible and understandable, in order to address consumers' concerns.*
- *Communicate the social impact of SFSCs to consumers in order to engage them in SFSCs initiatives.*
- *Join effort with other producers of your municipality, collaborate with them to share market research costs or to sell your products together (e.g., same online shop)*
- *Consider exploring new supply channels trying to improve the accessibility of your products and facilitating consumer buying (e.g., selling machines, online marketplaces, etc.)*
- *Increase the involvement of consumers by Participatory Guarantee System (PGS): give the chance to make comments in your web and value your products.*
- *Find out about your consumers using Google Analytics; for example, this is Google's free web analytics service that allows you to analyze in-depth who consults your website.*



If you are an **online and offline seller**, consider that online purchases generally require a minimum of digital skills and in the use of online payment systems and can therefore be specific to some customer segments, perhaps younger and with a propensity for digital. This elements must be taken into account for the definition of the basket of products.

BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Business
Model
Canvas

COMMUNICATION TOOLS; SALES AND PURCHASE CHANNELS

- Foster the organization of efficient and high-quality customer service (for example environmentally-and user-friendly design of home delivery).
- Promote the organisation of door-to-door selling and market fair in order to reach the elderly.
- Create a WhatsApp group or similar: it could be used for making purchases orders, but also for sharing news about SFCSs with your consumers, for directly asking about problems/feedback, etc.
- Expand the point of sales (online and offline) by including new types of selling channels e.g. "pick your own" and making local food more available in restaurants.
- Choose your own auto-systems, vending machines, appropriate cooling/transportation systems and custom home delivery boxes.
- Involve customers as online and offline ambassadors of SFSCs and providing them marketing knowledge as well.
- Focus on the connection between cities with produce, ensuring that citizens can reach 100% local and 100% natural long- term food products



For a **Community supported agriculture**, it is recommended to develop meeting places such as collection points even at the CSA locations themselves, and develop activities within these locations where subscribers are most likely to meet in order to increase the sense of community, engagement and exchange.

If you are an **on farm seller**, consider that direct selling is an opportunity to improve your own reputation, by creating a direct connection with the consumer which can identify a story, behind the product itself. In order to make this working model stronger and more significant, side activities can be included within the agrifood product direct selling scope, such as promotional and tasting initiatives for products.



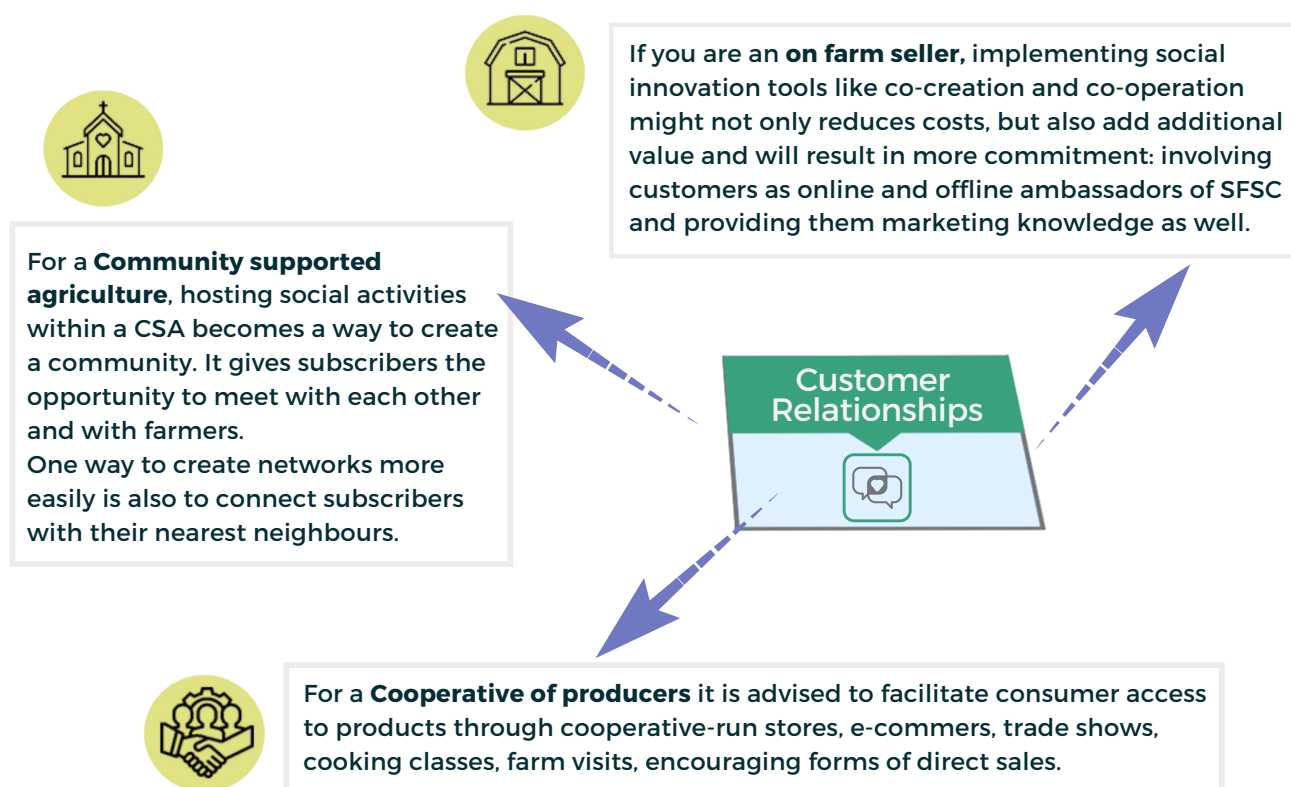
If you are an **online and offline seller**, expanding and applying the knowledge of manufacturers through training courses and workshops is essential to improve the management and efficiency of operations. In the particular case of online and offline marketplaces, it helps to develop skills that can be used to manage the e-commerce service.

BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Business
Model
Canvas

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP

- Foster the organisation of community initiatives, in collaboration with local bodies and administration to strengthen interaction with customers.
- Try to experiment model of direct selling of your products which may promote an alternative networked commercial system that can communicate effectively and reliably values of the food produced.
- Organise side activities within the agrifood product direct selling scope.
- Explore new ways of establishing customer relations by introducing "self-service methods" (such as pick your own & vending machines).
- Take into account consumer feedback because they are a method of quality control of the product and an effective way to correct vendor errors.
- Facilitate consumer access to products through cooperative-run stores, e-commers, trade shows, cooking classes, farm visits, encouraging forms of direct sales.



BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Business
Model
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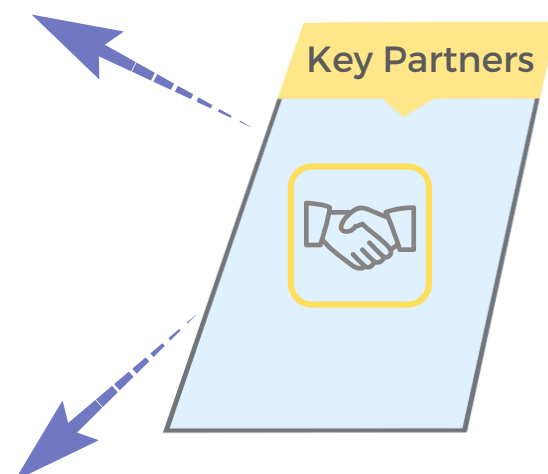
KEY PARTNERS; INSTITUTIONS AND ADMINISTRATIONS

- *Build networks with social, cultural and environmental associations, even if they are not directly related to SFSCs: it can be a good way of empowering some of the dimensions of SFSCs itself.*
- *Explore new ways of establishing cooperation with stakeholders, as it facilitates SFSC innovative processes.*
- *Foster the creation of forms of collaboration and sharing with various entities and sectors.*
- *Facilitate and promote local legislation that fosters the development of SFSC initiatives and strengthens their presence in the local area.*
- *Foster collaboration with various sectors in your local area, such as tourism organizations, bed and breakfasts in order to enhance the promotion of the territory in which the SFSC initiative works and increase their customers.*
- *Try to identify with all the SFSC actors a shared purpose, vision, and principles for your SFSC. Try to share your approach with them, make them a part of it.*



If you are a **Cooperative of producers**, try to involve everyone in the organization. Different ways of seeing the same things can be very useful and will also ensure the participation of the smallholder, in order to get their own point of view, which is very different from the one of big firms, for example.

You should also involve all producers in an equal way. It can be very useful to involve the smallholder participation, in order to get their own point of view, which is very different from the one of big firms, for example. Not involving everyone equally may lead to risk of becoming exposed to unequal relationships with large firms, especially in less structured countries or places.

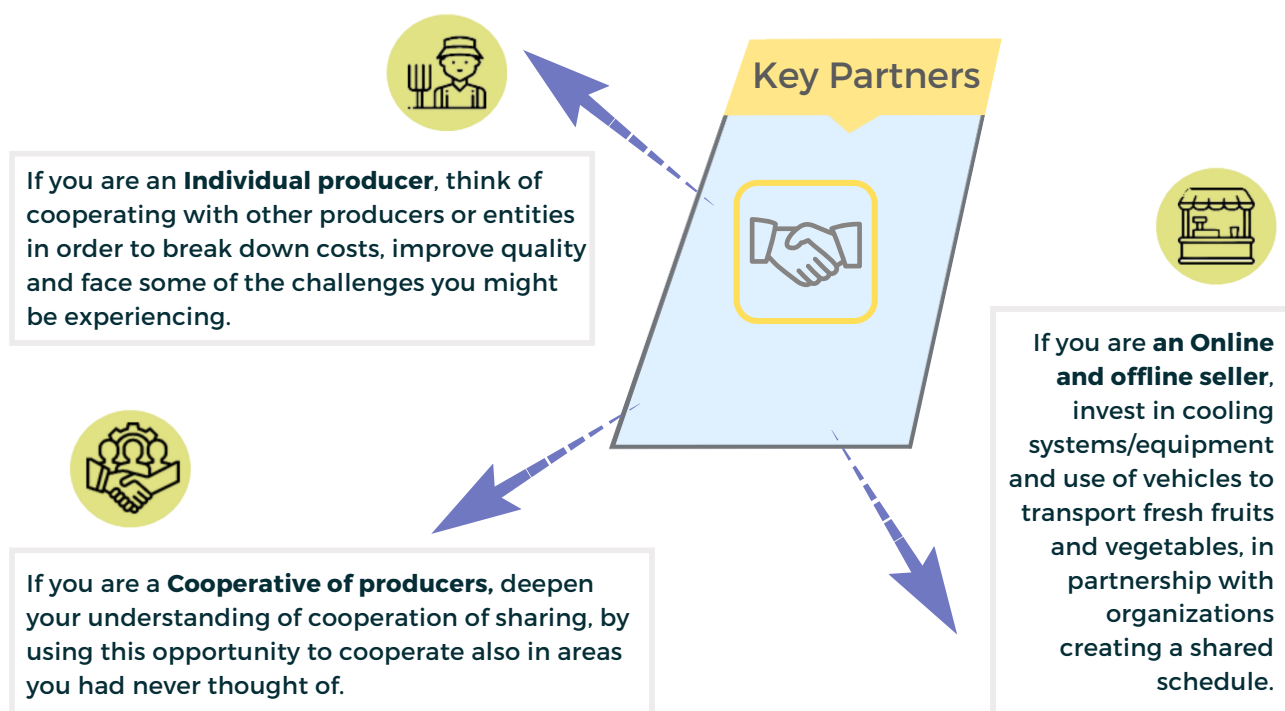


BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS

KNOWLEDGE AND INFRASTRUCTURE SHARING

Business
Model
Canvas

- *Invest your extra resources in knowledge sharing, which is an important part of the activity connected to SFCSs.*
- *Promote and manage local networking initiatives and education programmes: sharing knowledge and experiences, storytelling, tours and visits (online and offline) are important ways for informing consumers.*
- *Pay attention to the generational gap since it is directly linked to the innovativeness, limited ambitious mentality, lack of open-mindedness, and new ideas.*
- *Promote training on the use of the business model canvas and the building of its blocks within your organization for your human resources.*
- *Try to read up about other innovative experiences and best practices to see if they can be replicated in your own activities, in some way.*
- *Cooperate to solve, earlier and better, the lack of knowledge in the use of digital technology and ICT, exchanging skills, purchasing specialist services or equipment and participating in training courses in a cheaper way.*
- *Use innovation as a marketing claim. Also, try to improve current products/services instead of producing new ones. A strong collaboration with other stakeholders can be a good way to innovate, too.*
- *Try to increase your knowledge about specific legislation for SFCSs by networking with other farmers and producers and obtaining support from institutions.*
- *Create Districts aimed at sharing infrastructure.*



BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY RESOURCES, COST AND REVENUES; MONITORING, DATA COLLECTION AND RECORD KEEPING

Business
Model
Canvas

- Foster forms of peer-to-peer learning and transmission of knowledge.
- Improve knowledge and skills in funds' identification and participation in order to improve opportunities of receiving funds and budgets for your SFSC initiatives.
- Apply technological innovations to organize faster and more effective logistics for perishable products. Numerous IT (Internet technology) and now AI (Artificial intelligence) are available for suppliers and manufacturers to secure their logistics problems.
- Invest in achieving certification and labels to enable higher product prices and increase revenue.
- Foster the uptake of new forms of financing other than the traditional routes.
- Invest in the development of a fundraising strategy.
- Establish systems and strategies for collecting consumers' feedback.
- Use innovative methods within decision-making processes such as risk analysis, cost analysis, quick charts to make all decisions understandable.
- Try to conduct a survey of consumer preferences and the criteria that drive the purchase and choice of specific products, in order to better know them.
- Develop an effective information system in order to improve product flow efficiency by building a more effective and data driven communication system.

For a **on farm seller** it is suggested to increase the number of days of opening of direct markets, or even expand the variety of products offered through partnerships with consumer buying groups. This, however, without compromising the primary characteristic of direct sales or the brevity of the supply chain and therefore the savings obtained by the absence of intermediaries



Key Resources



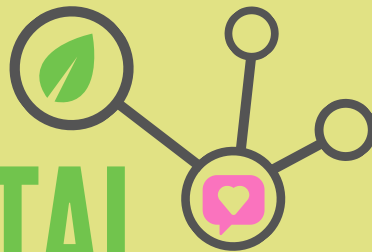
For a **Community supported agriculture**, establish a form of membership so that consumers and the broader community can practically support the values that a CSA represents and the products they produce. Moreover, investing in the development of other funding methodologies such as crowdfunding and fundraising, supported by the target community and the social value of the product might also strengthen the sustainability of the initiative.



A **Cooperative of producers** can diversify the production in order to cover the whole year, always ensuring high quality and traceability, but also a constant presence of the brand.

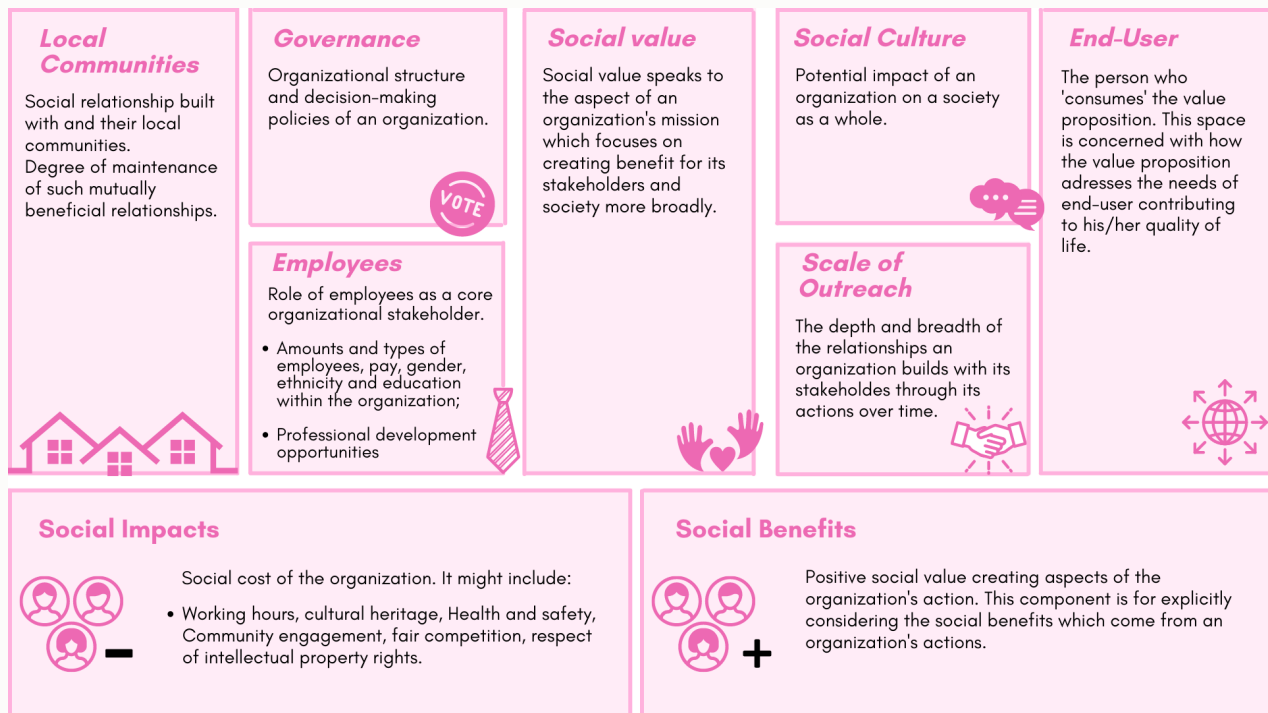
SOCIAL AND **ENVIRONMENTAL** **COMPONENTS**

OF BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS





THE SOCIAL CANVAS



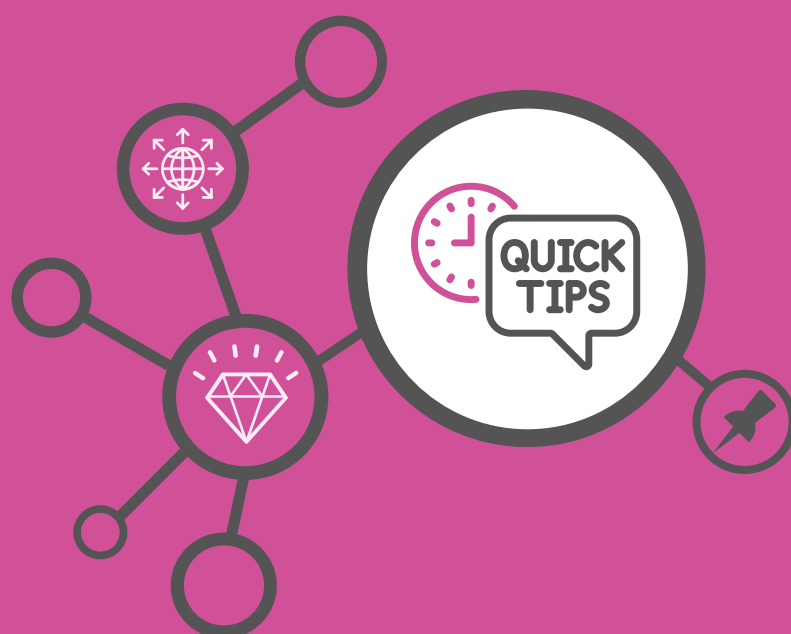
Improve the social components of your business

The **social** and **environmental components** of short food supply chain initiatives need to be clearly expressed in the business model of those who would like to engage in a SFSC initiatives.

The analysis of Smartchain project showed that for what concerns the **social dimension**, initiatives related to **sharing**, **collaboration** and **trust** among supply chain actors are not yet commonplace. However, for items such as **service design** that is centred on the needs of the community, **equal pay** for gender and **redistributive balance**, all the SMARTCHAIN case studies performed well.

A key point of using the social component is to extend the original business model canvas through a **stakeholder management approach** to capture the **mutual influences** between stakeholders and the organization, and the **key social impacts** of the organization that result from these relationships, as well as the **social value creation**.

To improve these social components, we can refer to the **Triple Layer Business Model**, a model developed by **Joyce and Paquin** (Joyce & Paquin, 2016), which shows how the social and environmental aspects can be expressed across the nine building blocks of the business model.



BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS

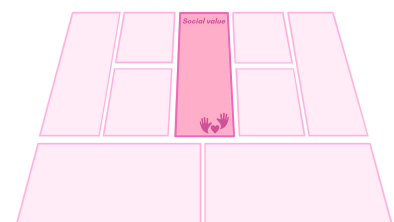
SOCIAL VALUE

Social value speaks to the aspect of an organization's mission which focuses on creating benefit for its stakeholders and society more broadly.

The
Social
Canvas



- *Express how social impact is produced and how participating to SFSC initiatives contribute to creating benefits and social impact at the community level and beyond.*
- *In order to increase consumer purchase of SFSCs, the marketing and communication strategies should indicate the social impact of food production at the local level to increase the sense of personal relevance for the consumers. It should also address consumer expectations regarding the food range and seasonality of the products.*



BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS

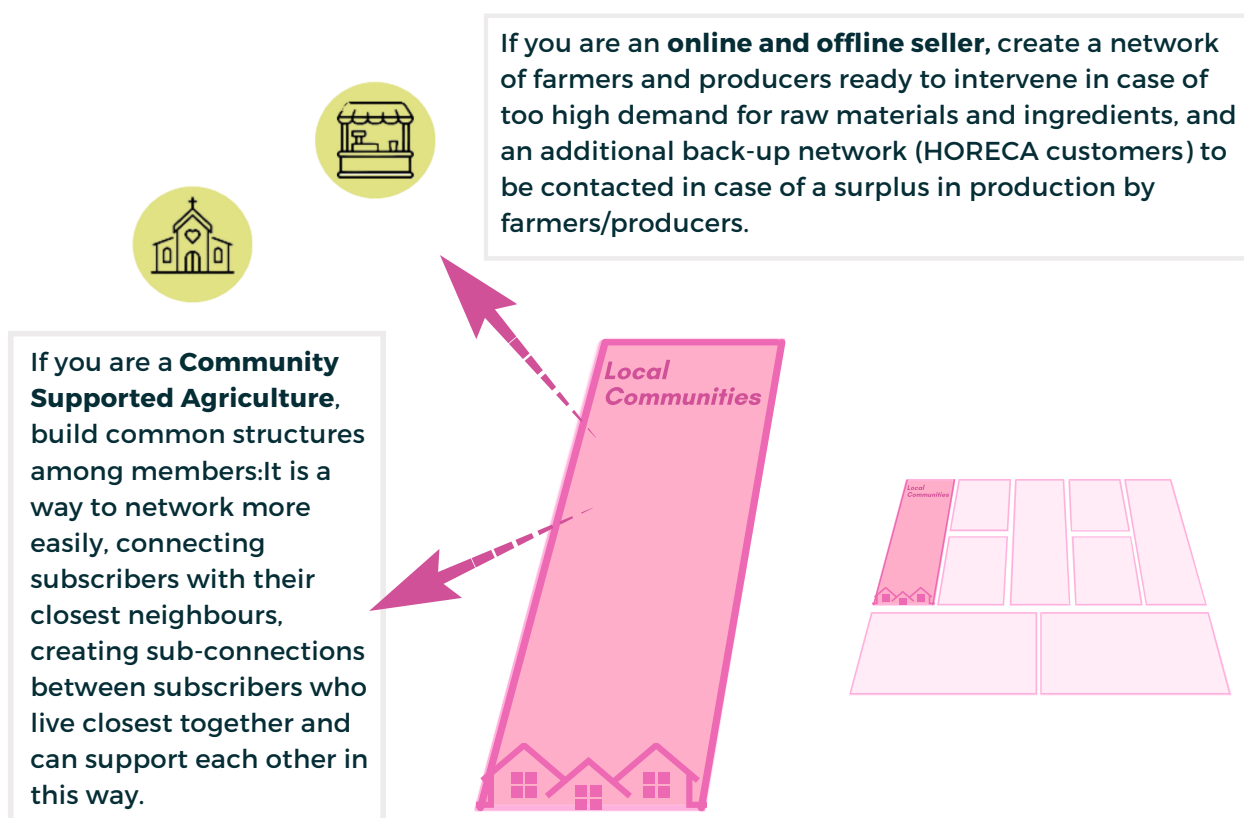
LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Social relationship built with and their local communities.
Degree of maintenance of such mutually beneficial relationships.

The
Social
Canvas



- *Strengthen cooperation and networks among diverse actors within the community in order to establish new services at the community level.*
- *Foster the creation of mutually beneficial relationships with local administration and institutions.*
- *Invest in the implementation of new activities, in order to improve the value proposition and engage the community.*
- *Involve the whole community in asking about their needs and ideas on food and SFSC transparency (labs, focus group, activity co-design, short courses, peer to peer educational experiences...).*



BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS

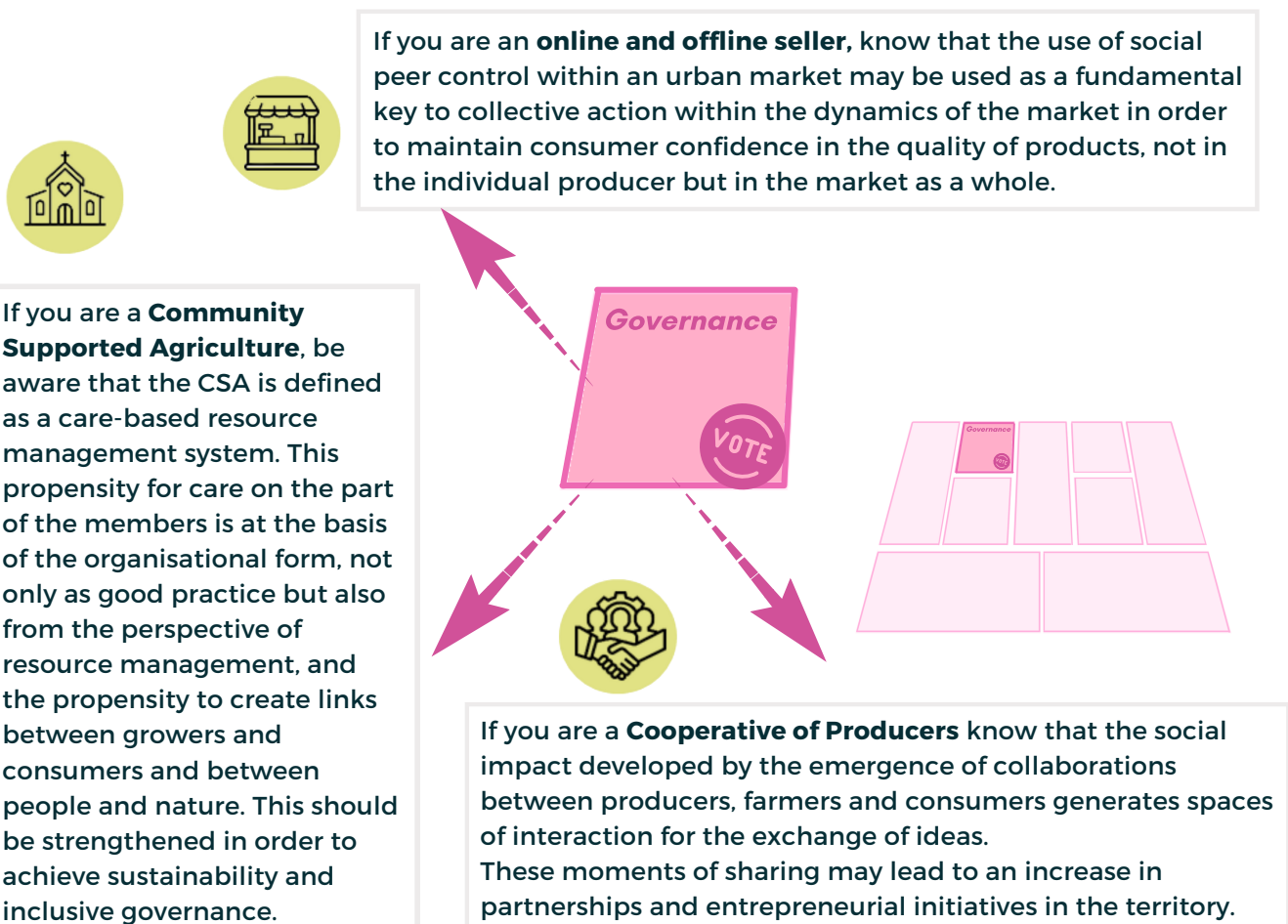
GOVERNANCE

Organizational structure and decision-making policies of an organization.

The
Social
Canvas



- *Strengthen consumer's engagement in the governance of the SFSC initiative and create practices of co-creation and co-responsibility.*
- *Give evidence of how community involvement in activities brings an important economic and social impact for the whole community and not only for the SFSCs.*
- *Foster a culture of discussion, collaboration and team spirit among organizational members by structuring informal conversations about current and future activity plans.*
- *Provide hands-on and non-practical training programs, both individual and group, focused on implementing innovative solutions.*
- *Use innovative methods within decision making processes such as risk analysis, cost analysis, quick charts to make all decisions understandable.*



BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS

EMPLOYEES

Role of employees as a core organizational stakeholder; amounts and types of employees, pay, gender, education within the organization. Professional development opportunities.

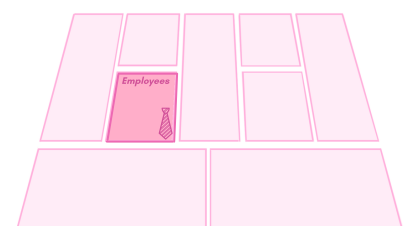
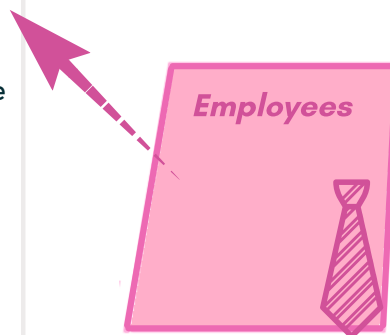
The
Social
Canvas



- *Foster the participation of young people and entrepreneurs in short food supply chain initiatives. Young farmers might be able to help in responding to new opportunities and market changes.*
- *Foster the investment in peer-to-peer learning and transmission of knowledge opportunities.*
- *Ensure that equity in terms of gender, payments and working conditions is ensured among all stakeholders.*
- *Foster the creation of associations, or regularised trade unions in order to collect the interests of workers operating in SFSCs. This might, indeed, strengthen the inclusion of workers and defend their interests.*
- *Strengthen staff capacity by organizing seminars, workshops, meetings on negotiating power, joint use of resources, product development, broader use of information technology, social media, advertising campaigns, etc.*



If you are an **online and offline seller**, consider that a market management committee should monitor products, in order to ensure that they are seasonal and coming from low-input agriculture and non-industrial production methods. This aspect cannot be only based on the direct link with producers, which is not always a sufficient guarantee.



BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS

SOCIAL CULTURE

Potential impact of an organization on a society as a whole.

The
Social
Canvas

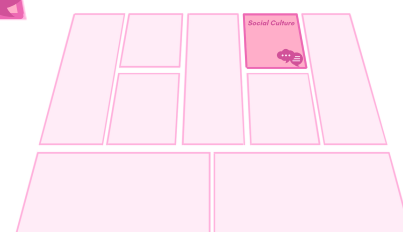
- *Foster the organisation of educational activities and learning activities for children and the broader community.*
- *Partner with the tourism sectors in order to foster the organisation of cultural events and foster the link between traditions, food and heritage.*
- *Create places to educate the younger generation, to learn from nature, agriculture, food production. For example, cooperating with professionals who have expertise in educating children and can introduce them to the farm environment.*
- *Engage the younger generation in the work by inspiring them and applying the added value of their innovative ideas. Through: Open tours of farms; Tasting tours of local products.*
- *Activate a shared management of processes, such as community composting on the territory between citizens, administrations, and agriculture, because it can have an important social value.*



If you are an **on farm seller** know that direct selling can reconfigure the relationships between producers and consumers, taking on a feature of social justice that allows the farmer to enhance the value of his production and pass on his knowledge and his link with the territory.



Social Culture



BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS

END USER

The person who 'consumes' the value proposition.

This space is concerned with how the value proposition addresses the needs of end-user contributing to his/her quality of life.

The
Social
Canvas



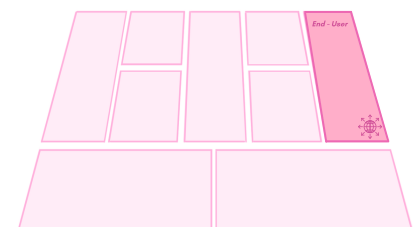
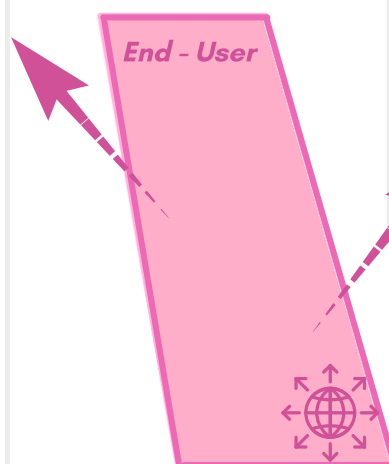
- Foster the identification of customer segments and develop strategies aimed at targeting each specific consumer group.
- Communicate to customers that by buying locally produced products they are supporting local farmers, economies, and communities. The price of the product is indeed not the only determining factor, but also the perception of the community is very important.
- Keep the information about SFSCs very simple in order to engage the end users as much as possible. The easier the concept is for them to understand, the greater is their awareness.
- Be clear and design labels that contain readable and understandable information, that allow anyone to save time as usually consumers don't want to waste it reading labels that are difficult to understand.



If you are an **on farm seller** think about installing a vending machine for products so that customers can access them when they prefer and in a convenient location. Farmers have a new way to sell fresh food products direct to the public without having to deal with customers, especially if they do not have much time to spend on buying products. It can be applied to a high variety of products and it is also very recommended in this Pandemic period to avoid direct contacts with people.



For the introduction of new products, typically market research should be carried out, but a large-scale market research study can be very expensive. If you are a **cooperative of producers** you can use the lead user approach which is a cheaper alternative for collecting information on new market trends. Lead users are consumers which are able to identify needs today that will play an important role in the mass market in the future. It allows to create innovative foods based on consumers' needs and ideas.



BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS

SCALE OF OUTREACH

The depth and breadth of the relationships an organization builds with its stakeholders through its actions over time.

The
Social
Canvas



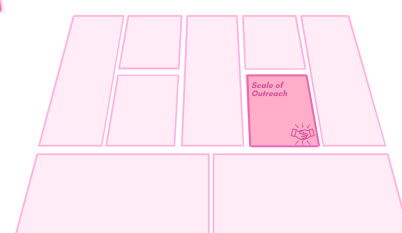
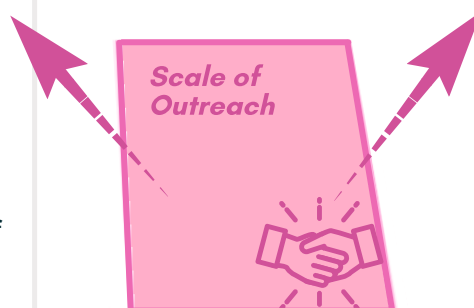
- Organise promotional and tasting initiatives for products and promote products in restaurants, hotels and cafes in the local area.
- Involve families with younger children to foster overall family awareness on the importance of good nutrition.
- Use new channels to inform about SFSC and its positive social and environmental impact.
- Develop an information hub through which people with common interests can exchange information, facilitate learning and develop cooperation.



If you are an **on farm seller** try to reach and involve other different and unusual, target groups: for example, promote farms and members especially in the most popular places frequented by tourists, so that they are aware of nearby opportunities such as local specialty stores. A good idea could be offer them tasting tours involving the products of collaborating partners, leisure activity programs, and corporate tours through the creation of collaborations with hotels, tourist offices, and restaurants in the region.

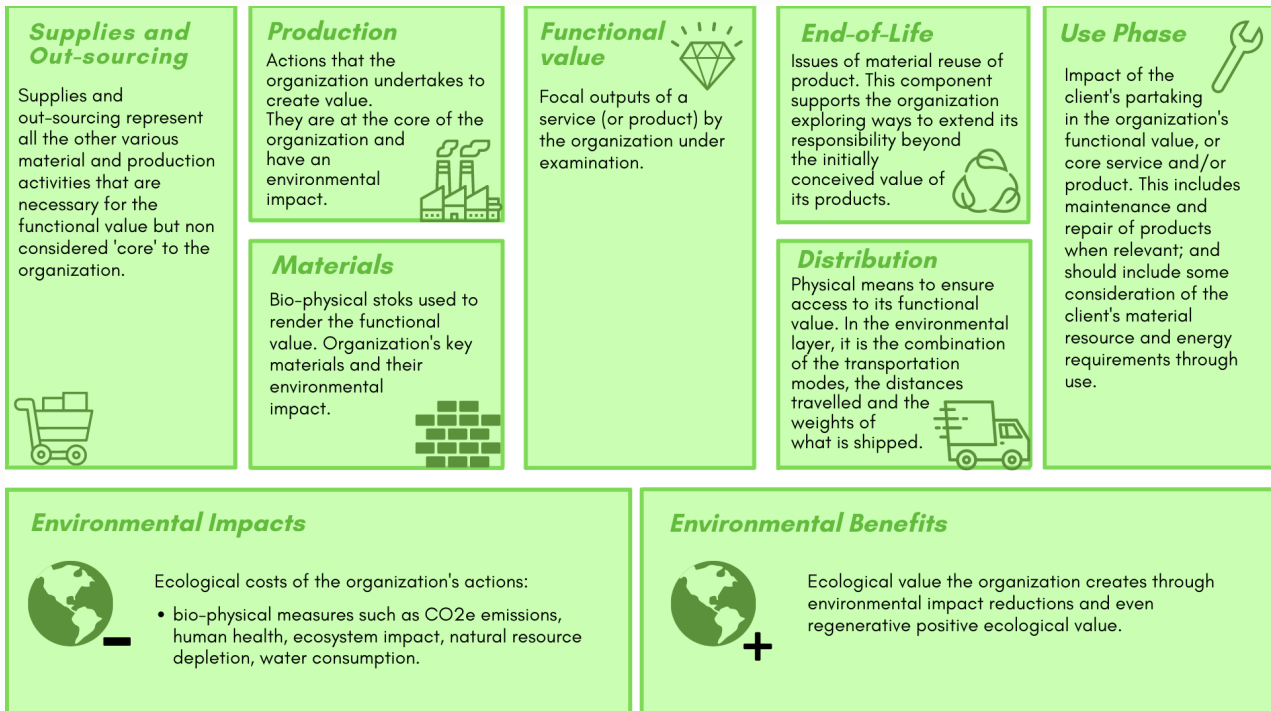


If you are a **cooperative of producers** make products accessible not only within the region but throughout the country through participation in organized events, workshops, exhibits, and educational seminars. For example through the creation of a regional corner in the supermarket and point of sale, collaborations with agritourism chains, use of collaborative platforms.





THE ENVIRONMENTAL CANVAS



Improve the social components of your business

The **social** and **environmental components** of short food supply chain initiatives need to be clearly expressed in the business model of those who would like to engage in a SFSC initiatives.

For the **environmental dimension**, the analysis of Smartchain project has confirmed a positive trend, for some production sectors, towards socio-environmental issues seen as **strategic** and placed at the centre of the **value proposition**.

The main objective of the environmental component is to assess how the organization generates **more environmental benefits** than **environmental impacts**. This allows users to better understand where the organization's greatest environmental impacts lie within the business model and to provide insight into where the organization can focus its attention when creating **environmentally oriented innovations**.

To improve these environmental components, we can refer to the **Triple Layer Business Model**, a model developed by **Joyce and Paquin** (Joyce & Paquin, 2016), which shows how the social and environmental aspects can be expressed across the nine building blocks of the business model.



BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS

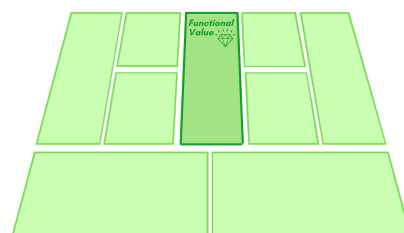
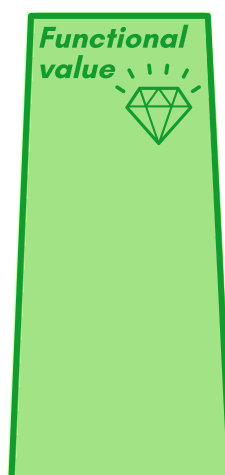
FUNCTIONAL VALUE

Focal outputs of a service (or product) by the organization under examination.

The
Environmental
Canvas



- *Collect data, measure, promote the eco-rating as a tool to recognize the value of a company's environmental commitment.*
- *Clearly express how SFSC products are contributing to environmental sustainability and how this may affect the environment.*
- *Clearly provide information about how SFSC products bring a positive environmental impact (refer to CO2 emission, water consumption, human health).*
- *In order to monitor the value of environmental sustainability of farms we recommend the use of ecorating, which is a tool to measure and quantify the biocapacity of the planet saved.*



BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS

SUPPLIES AND OUTSOURCING

Supplies and out-sourcing represent all the other various material and production activities that are necessary for the functional value but non considered 'core' to the organization.

The
Environmental
Canvas



- *Foster the creation of collaborations with other entities in order to strengthen your environmental impact and face challenges.*
- *Collaborate with local authorities, such as national parks, or organized fairs are of great importance in order to create a network of environmental and social collaborations that must always be taken care of and increased.*
- *Implement composting activities to be used by the municipality and ensure correct management of the composting process and correct use of the compost obtained, guaranteeing the closure of the zero kilometer cycle.*
- *Eliminate chemical amendments: local products can be obtained from organic farming fertilized exclusively with organic amendments, obtained from their own organic waste, which come back to new life as compost.*



BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS

PRODUCTION

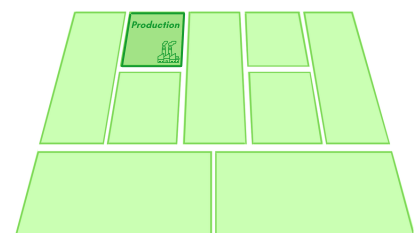
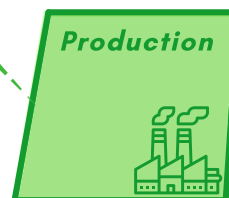
Actions that the organization undertakes to create value. They are at the core of the organization and have an environmental impact.

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- *Highlight that your production is free of chemicals, has low carbon footprint and uses a compostable packaging.*
- *Use specific labels to remark the quality of your main activities.*
- *Invest in research to better understand how production can be managed in several ways.*
- *Stimulate the practice of integrated or eco-compatible agriculture.*
- *Bring improvements such as digitization or geolocation in SFSC, which means allowing those who work the land to achieve maximum precision regarding the use of substances and resources based on the type of land.*
- *Invest in smart water use, for example by choosing crops with low water demand or using drip system for irrigation.*

Individual producers should consider that building clear differentiation from other organic products through the use of local and certified production requirements can help organic, local and sustainable products to reach a new market/target. This can be done by using an internal control system, PDO and PGI certification, or transparency supported by digital tools, through the creation of small warehouses for customized supply of perishable foods.



BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS

MATERIALS

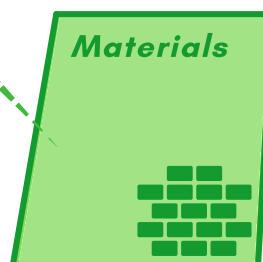
Bio-physical stoks used to render the functional value.
Organization's key materials and their environmental impact.

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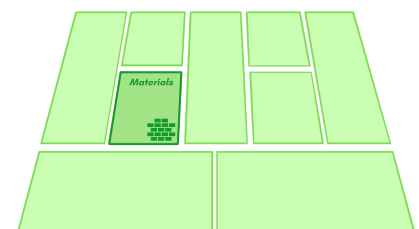


- *Use packaging only for products that need it.*
- *Invest in new packaging methods (such as biodegradable packaging with smart technologies) which make longer shelf live possible and less waste.*
- *Ensure that packaging includes accurate and informative labelling and nutritional information.*
- *Prefer bio sheet for active mulching of soils in recycled paper.*
- *Use compostable seeds instead of polystyrene: even if polystyrene is better cut, it is practically impossible not to disperse it in the environment, cellulose-based materials are functional.*
- *Integrate innovative technological systems that are part of Industry 4.0 such as IoT (Internet of Things).The use of these new technologies reduces expenses and increases the percentage of production at the same time.*

In the case of **online selling**, foster the use of airtight containers that would ensure products good conditions for consumption after delivery.



If you are a **Community Supported Agriculture**, organise groups of collectors who might collect, wash and rearrange packaging.



BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS

USE PHASE

Impact of the client's partaking in the organization's functional value, or core service and/or product. This includes maintenance and repair of products when relevant; and should include some consideration of the client's material resource and energy requirements through use.

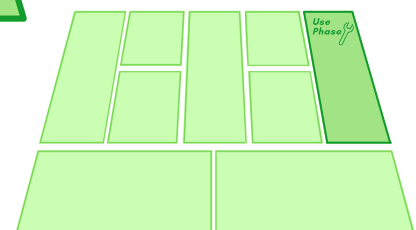
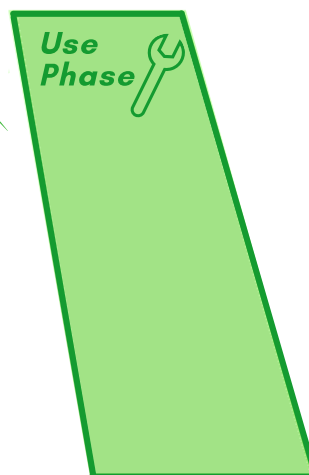
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- Communicate to customers not only the nutritional impact of what they are buying but also its environmental one, in different ways such as: easy-to-read information on CO2 emission, water waste, etc, on social media channels or on the packaging of the products.



If you are a Community Supported Agriculture know that raising awareness and communicating the nutritional impacts due to healthier eating, to consumers, is your goal. Thanks to the participation of CSAs, people are eating more vegetables that are fresher and more varied. It is important to guarantee the most informed and environmentally and socially aware consumer a positive environmental impact, food security, and a service to the community provided by the farming community, for example through food donations.



BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS

END OF LIFE

Issues of material reuse of product. This component supports the organization exploring ways to extend its responsibility beyond the initially conceived value of its products.

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- *Promote small composting chains in which farmers and producers can manage the process of composting close to their firms.*
- *Selling SFSC products means being able to understand your potential customers and use all the information you gather about them to convince them that you are offering a quality product with a particular value. You have to know exactly who you are dealing with: it means knowing their fears but also how they want to improve their lives thanks to the product you are selling.*
- *Try to improve your performance in SFSCs by extending the shelf life and expiry date of the products, for example. Remember that innovation must lead to a change; it is not only directly related to an invention.*

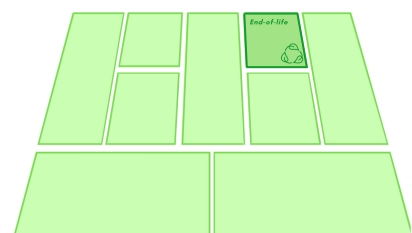
If you are a **Cooperative of Producers**, you can manage the process of composting at the cooperative location itself, making it available to all members.



If you are an **online seller**, try to use online communities to gather information from customers and inform them about how they can improve their lives thanks to the product offered.



End-of-Life



BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS

DISTRIBUTION

Physical means to ensure access to its functional value.
It is the combination of the transportation modes, the distances travelled and the weights of what is shipped.

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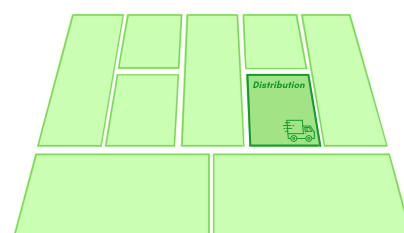
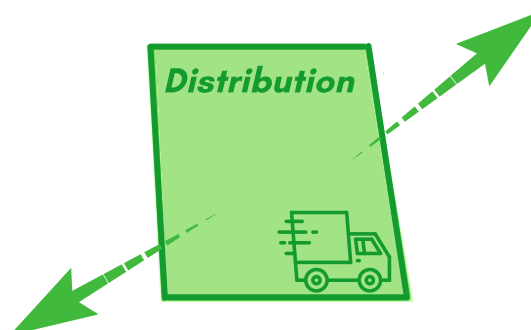
- *Guarantee sustainable pick-up from collection points.*
Establish specific zones for regional deliveries.
- *Organise home delivery especially for those who would benefit the most from it, such as the elderly.*
- *Organise few trips between the producer and the consumer, but with large quantities each time, such as in a truck.*
- *Prefer eco-sustainable means of transport: the ideal condition would be an electric vehicle powered by a panel in the company.*
- *it is advisable not only to use sustainable means of transport but also to make their supply low environmental impact.*

If you are a **Community Supported Agriculture** know that the distribution of food at collection points and its subsequent collection by subscribers aims to reduce the number of kilometers traveled by food, both from the point of view of kilometer 0 and from the point of view of environmental sustainability and community building.

It is important to strengthen the presence of these collection points in the territory as they become meeting places between producers and consumers and between consumers who, by building a network, can be encouraged to collaborate with each other by collecting the boxes of others, to further reduce the miles traveled by food.



If you are an **on farm Seller** consider that direct sales allow consumers to obtain fresh, healthy food at more reasonable prices and promote ecological sustainability, represented by reduced food miles and carbon emissions. Fewer food miles can translate into a lower level of environmental pressure due to the reduction of key factors such as air and soil pollution, loss of biodiversity and noise pollution.





SFSC AND COVID-19

BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS

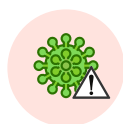
The **COVID-19 pandemic** and the containment measures government applied worldwide, **have profoundly impacted food supply chain**, from producers to consumers.

The pandemic has contributed to the development of a **new form of awareness** about the **importance of being resilient**, of having **knowledge of local farms** and developing both **social and environmental responsibility**.

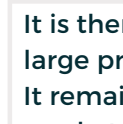
It is therefore crucial to strengthen **our research base** and **understanding of SFSC initiatives** in order to improve their performances.

Moreover, since the start of COVID-19 the **hygiene and safety** part of food became more relevant and showed how there is also a growing awareness among customers and members of SFSC of the social and environmental impact SFSC could make; SFSC indeed are a great place to educate and engage the community about **healthy food and the environment**.

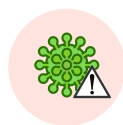
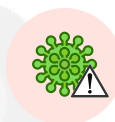
Another key aspect that became relevant during the pandemic was the increase in importance of doing **business online**.



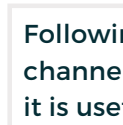
Due to Coronavirus pandemic situation, online shopping has strongly increased in the last year. In this new scenario, producers in SFSC should maintain contact and relationship with the local customers and community by using online tools, among which social networks.



It is therefore very important to have online sales channels, not only for large producers and retailers, but also for small local producers. It remains relevant to choose and define the model of the proper marketplace, make sure to organize the best home-delivery and carefully choose the packaging; the latter represents, in home-delivery, an important form of communication and customer care.



Introduce measures to reduce the risk of SARS-CoV-2 contamination through an assessment of the risk of consumer infection with SARS-CoV-2 during purchase in different types of SFSCs.



Following the increase in the use of online promotion and sales channels, due to consumer behaviour for the prevention of coronavirus, it is useful - and probably easier - to create more education and storytelling materials and activities, with the participation of various entities at the local level. This could help fostering SFSC's accessibility while making it more attractive for careful and well-informed consumers.



