



Shared values and fair relationships as a basis for a sustainable collaboration in local (organic) value chains

Problem

The small scale and local production of cereals, quinoa and (new) pulses, even when organic, in a region as intensive as Flanders cannot compete with global (incl. European) markets due to high production costs. This has caused the disappearance of these crops from the Flemish landscape.

Solution

Using local value chains can offer added value by filling a growing niche in the market, since a growing number of consumers are looking for local and 'authentic' food. Shared values and an authentic story can justify, within limits, a higher price.

Outcome

(Organic) cereals and pulses for human consumption enrich the local Flemish landscape again and are, through local value chains, connected to local consumers with willingness to pay a fair price for authentic food.

Applicability box

Theme

Organic, Rotation, Value chain, Learning, Actors

Agronomic conditions

Not specified

Application time

Not specified

Required time

A step by step process over years

Period of impact

For as long as actors continue to collaborate

Equipment

N/A

Best in

Value chains with direct interactions between actors and a collaborative mindset.

Practical recommendation

- Be aware of general consumer trends in your region.
- Describe why, as a farmer, you want to grow these cereals, quinoa or pulses, knowing that they are not economically competitive without the added value from local value chains. What is your vision? What are the important values? What are your expectations? What is the position of these crops in your whole farm?
- Having a connection to a local market does not mean you have to do everything on your own. It can be more efficient to gather other actors around you that are already involved in the local market and that can bring in specific facilities (e.g. for processing), competencies (e.g. product development or marketing), access to consumers or motivation and support.
- Explore your network in the local/regional value chain and look for actors/initiatives that give evidence of some shared ideas. Sometimes a specific initiative from a global actor (e.g. a retailer) can have more impact than ideas from a niche-actor.



Picture 1: this quality-moment is considered to be important in the collaboration of the the actors involved. April 2018, © Lieven Delanote



Picture 2: take the time to meet regularly to understand each other's opportunities and constraints. January 2020, © An Jamart, Bioforum

- Take your time starting up your collaboration; before discussing prices decide upon important values and ambitions shared among the value chain actors in the group (picture 1).
- Rather than imposing your own ideas (e.g. regarding a specific crop or variety) look for common ideas/concepts among the actors in the envisaged value chain (picture 2).
- Transparency in the real production costs at the farm was considered to be very important to argue for a 'higher than common market price', i.e., fair price.
- We developed, together with Sytra - UCL - a list of 14 criteria for defining a fair price for new crops and value chains (link available below). A questionnaire helps actors discuss the price level and matters such as value repartition, risk repartition, transparency, etc.
- Be aware that an idea may not be practical in certain contexts.

Further information

Further readings

- Practice abstract 'Tools for defining a fair price and strengthening crop diversification value chains'
- Practice abstract 'Small scale diversification with cereals, quinoa or pulses in local (organic) value chains'
- Kumar, D. and Rahman, Z., 2015. Sustainability adoption through buyer supplier relationship across supply chain: A literature review and conceptual framework. *International Strategic Management Review*, 3(1-2), pp.110-127.

Weblinks

About this practice abstract and DiverIMPACTS

Publisher:
INAGRO

Authors: Lieven Delanote

Permalink: <https://zenodo.org/record/6517062>

This practice abstract was elaborated in the DiverIMPACTS project, based on the EIP AGRI practice abstract format. It is based on the experiences of in three innovative value chains in Belgium (DiverIMPACTS Case Study 18).

DiverIMPACTS: The project is running from June 2017 to May 2022. The overall goal of DiverIMPACTS - Diversification through Rotation, Intercropping, Multiple Cropping, Promoted with Actors and value-Chains towards Sustainability - is to achieve the full potential of diversification of cropping systems for improved productivity, delivery of ecosystem services and resource-efficient and sustainable value chains.

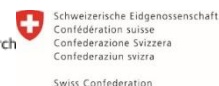
Project website: www.diverimpacts.net

© 2022

The project DiverIMPACTS - "Diversification through Rotation, Intercropping, Multiple Cropping, Promoted with Actors and value-Chains towards Sustainability" is supported by the European Union's HORIZON 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement no 727482 and by the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) under contract number 17.00092. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of the EC and the Swiss government. Neither the European Commission/SERI nor any person acting behalf of the Commission/SERI is responsible for the use which might be made of the information provided in this practice abstract.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 727482 (DiverIMPACTS)



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra
Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,
Education and Research EAER
State Secretariat for Education,
Research and Innovation SERI