COREADO
connecting consumers and producers to rebalance farmers' position

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Deliverable 2.3

Three frameworks for selection, evaluation and replicability of innovative initiatives

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Author(s)	Svetla Stoeva (IPS) Petya Slavova (IPS) Dona Pickard (IPS)
Contributor(s)	Fleur Marchand (EV ILVO) Elke Rogge (EV ILVO) Rani Van Gompel (EV ILVO) Lisa Van den Bossche (EV ILVO) Adam Addis Prag (UCPH) Mikelis Grivins (BSC)

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Abbreviations

AC	Award criteria
AFN	Alternative Food Network
AKIS	Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems
B2C	Business to consumer
B2G	Business to government
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CF	Conceptual Framework
CPC	Contract performance clauses
CPV	Community Procurement Vocabulary Codes
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
D	Deliverable
DEGURBA	Eurostat degree of urbanisation
EIP-AGRI	Agricultural European Innovation Partnership
EU	European Union
EV ILVO	Eigen Vermogen van het Instituut voor Landbouw- en Visserijonderzoek
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GPP	Green public procurement
ICT	Information and communication technology
IPS	Institute of Philosophy and Sociology
LAU	Local Administrative Unit
LFS	Local Food System
MAA	Multi actor approach
MS	Milestone
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NOFA	Novel and fair food system
PESTLE	Political, economic, social, technological, legal, environmental
PFP	Public food procurement
PP	Public procurement
PROCURS	Sustainable public food procurement

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RUR	Rural Renaissance
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SFSC	Short Food Supply Chain
SMART	Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time bound
SME	Small and medium enterprises
SPP	Sustainable Public Procurement
SRPP	Socially responsible public procurement
SSC	Supply chain collaboration
SSP	Sustainable public procurement
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats
TED	Tender electronic daily
TFEU	Treaty for the European Union
ToC	Theory of Change
TS	Technical specifications
WP	Work package

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01

1 Introduction

1.1 COCOREADO's objective and approach

The overall objective of the project is to coordinate and support actions to **rebalance the position of farmers in supply chains (in novel and fair food systems) and public procurement and reconnect farmers and consumers**. COCOREADO thereby takes two starting points. First, it collects existing **innovative initiatives across Europe** as the point of departure. These initiatives will be subsequently scrutinised from the perspective of the farmer and translated into **good practices** and **hands-on approaches**. Second, through an **Ambassadors network**, COCOREADO aims to invest in trainings, educational materials and decision support tools complemented with the co-creation of new 'seed' initiatives in practice. An explicit focus of COCOREADO is to foster opportunities for young people in rural areas to co-create innovative solutions that overcome current hurdles for farmers and respond to consumer needs, while simultaneously improving the conditions for sustainable public procurement of local and seasonal food. A key tool for creating such environment is the COCOREADO Ambassador Training Programme.

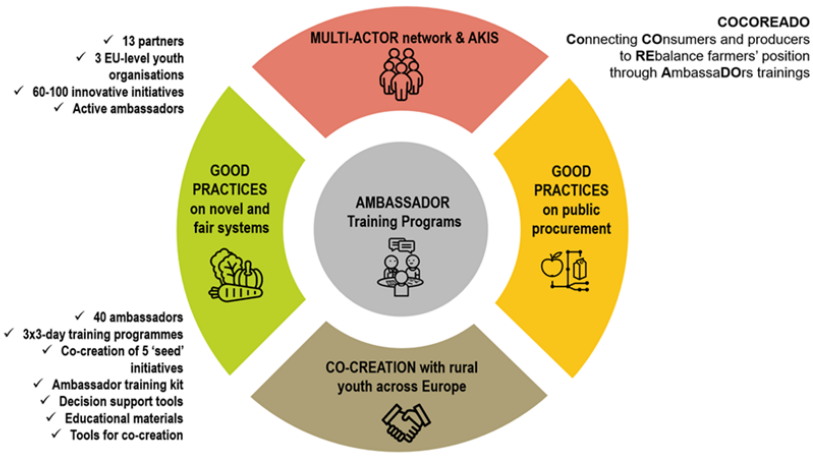

Figure 1 - Overview of COCOREADO'S objective and approach

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1.2 Aim of the report

The aim of this report [1] is to present the process of translating the COCOREADO's conceptual framework (Task 2.2) into three separate frameworks with sound criteria: **1) selection framework** for selecting a set of innovative initiatives, which fed into D2.4; **2) evaluation framework** that will feed into different Tasks from WP3, WP4 and WP5 and **3) replicability framework** for the assessment of their replicability in different contexts that will feed into D3.2.

COCOREADO sets and explores two types of innovative initiatives: **novel and fair food systems** (NOFAs) and **sustainable public procurement of food** (PROCURs) initiatives. For each of these two types of initiatives (NOFAs and PROCURs) separate frameworks for selection, evaluation and replicability assessment were developed.

NOFA and PROCUR's selection frameworks aim to lead to an initial pool of 60-100 innovative initiatives across Europe. It ensures a wide variety of initiatives in a wide diversity of contexts entailing three types of criteria: (1) sector, (2) region and (3) type of collaboration.

NOFA's evaluation framework is based on Cao & Zhang (2011) concept of the seven factors of successful supply chain collaboration (Information sharing, Goal congruence, Decision synchronisation, Incentive alignment, Resource sharing, Collaborative communication, and Joint knowledge creation). It was applied to 14 short-listed NOFAs with the aim to provide insights of the success and failure factors of the initiatives. PROCUR's evaluation framework is based on four main criteria: Value of the public contract; Price-Quality; Clearly described sustainability criteria and Contract management measurement.

NOFA's replicability framework unravels the context into socio-demographic, economic, ecological, and legal/policy factors. It aims to provide lessons learnt that will be confronted with contextual factors to produce context-specific recommendations. PROCUR's replicability framework defines a set of questions of how the good practices that were identified can be replicated, and how replication of bad practices can be avoided.

Figure 2 - Overview of the three frameworks

[1] This report (Deliverable 2.3) is the main result of Task 2.3 and feeds into WP3 and WP4.

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The report also draws implications of how the multi-actor protocol (from Task 2.1.) for co-creation with other multiple stakeholders and project consortia was applied for the selection, evaluation and replicability assessment of NOFA and PROCUR initiatives.

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02

2 Overview of COCOREADO's conceptual framework

2.1 Objective of the conceptual framework

COCOREADO's conceptual framework (CF)[2] aims to create a bridge between empirical work and theoretical assumptions within the project. It sets a mutual understanding and common language between all project partners and relevant actors to minimise confusions during the project. This is necessary for the aimed co-creation throughout the project.

The CF introduces the main approaches that contribute both the mind-set and the tools applied within the project. Firstly, **systems thinking** provides the project with facilitation tools beyond technical analysis and decision tools, necessary in the difficult exercise of rebalancing the farmers' position in the food chain. Next, **the multi-actor approach** aims to bring together different stakeholders for mutual learning. The **Theory of Change** approach is introduced to cover the trajectory of the whole project and is used for a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to occur in a particular context. And lastly, **co-innovation** is introduced as COCOREADO focusses on social, organisational, and economic innovations and not only technological innovative initiatives.

For each of these four approaches, implications for the development of the three frameworks (selection, evaluation, and replicability), are described below.

2.2 Approaches used for developing the three frameworks for innovative initiatives

2.2.1 System thinking approach

Within the COCOREADO project, **system thinking approach** is introduced to structure and improve the understanding of the complexity of food systems. It is not perceived as an approach for simple

[2] The conceptual framework is described in D2.2.

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collection of tools and methods. It rather sets out to view food systems in a holistic manner and provides deeper understanding of the behaviour of systems, acknowledging the relationship between interacting components, and the visions and opinions of the actors within the system.

The systems thinking approach was applied for the selection, evaluation, and replicability assessment of the innovative initiatives in a way that allows deep understanding of:

1) the actors who initiate and lead innovative initiatives: whether these are farmers, or consumers, or a combination of them.
2) the interactions among the actors: whether they are formal, informal or both.
3) the vision, mission, motivation, and strategies they apply for solving specific problems within local food systems and
4) various internal and external contextual factors that impact the innovative initiatives and the good practices they hold.

As system thinking aims to improve the understanding of the food systems, COCOREADO's CF introduces the concept of '**food system**' and sets the boundaries of its application within the selection, evaluation and replicability frameworks. This concept implies, on the one hand, that farmers and farming activities are an important part of the entire food system. However, on the other hand, consumers and other stakeholders are also important components of the system. It consist of all steps from agricultural production, storage, distribution, processing and packaging to retail and marketing, as well as introduces the involvement of farmers, consumers and other actors along the chain.

In line with the CF, the selection, evaluation and replicability frameworks are structured in a way that allows understanding of the farmers activities and their interactions with consumers and other actors along food supply chains.

2.2.2 Theory of change (ToC)

Theory of change approach (ToC) is introduced as a framework for designing and framing the evaluation of interventions in complex settings, such as food systems. It aims to provide understanding of how change in food systems happens. In COCOREADO project the ToC is applied in eight steps[3]. The second step is examining the desired change in the food system, followed by the current situation (step 3) and the domain of change within the food system (step 4). These steps show that for COCOREADO, the desired change entails the aim to reconnect consumers and producers, overcome unfair trading practices to rebalance farmers' position, and to enhance farmers' income and empower both consumers and producers. That means that the focus of COCOREADO's domains of change is twofold: reconnection and rebalancing farmers' position. These domains are implemented in the selection and the evaluation framework as indicators for identifying innovative initiatives and for assessing the good practices they achieve. Step 5 of the ToC sets the boundaries of the strategic priorities of COCOREADO, i.e., innovative initiatives.

[3] A detailed description of the steps is provided in D2.2, p.14.

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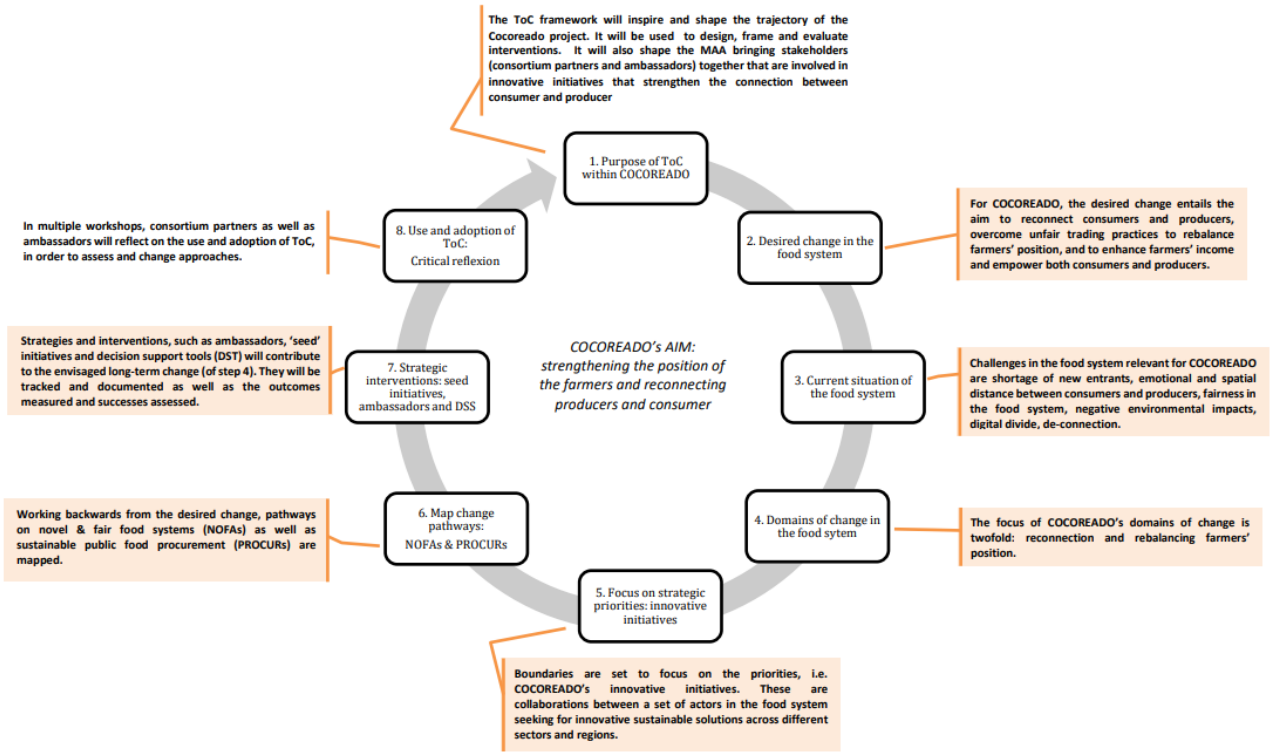

Figure 3 - Theory of Change (ToC) stepwise approach modified from Els et al. (2015)

The ToC approach was also introduced in the CF with the aim to identify the main domains of change in the food systems. The rationale behind stems from the fact that across Europe, one can observe an increase in good and inspiring practices that address this wide range of needs in the food system. For example, short food supply chain collaborations, specific new entry models for farm succession, partnerships and/or asset transfers (e.g., shared farming, farming incubators) which often have been developed at the grass roots level on European farms and offer smart and adapted solutions to overcome resource access barriers.

2.2.3 Concept of 'co-innovation'

COCOREADO's CF introduces the **concept of "co-innovation"** which supplements the one of "collaboration". Co-innovation defines the involvement of two (or more) partners that purposively manage mutual knowledge flows across their organisational boundaries through joint invention and commercialisation activities. In doing so, actors are identifying problems together and co-create solutions through a collective learning process involving knowledge sharing. The CF states that within COCOREADO, collaborations are considered innovative when they improve the farmers' position in the supply chain and shorten the link between producers and consumers in terms of income, independency of the decision making, social learning and knowledge sharing.

COCOREADO's CF conceptualises **innovative initiatives** as "*collaborations between a set of actors in the food system seeking for innovative sustainable solutions across different sectors and regions*". The collaborations meant by COCOREADO focus on two types of initiatives: novel and fair food systems

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(NOFAs) on the one hand and sustainable public procurement of food (PROCURs) initiatives on the other hand (figure 4).

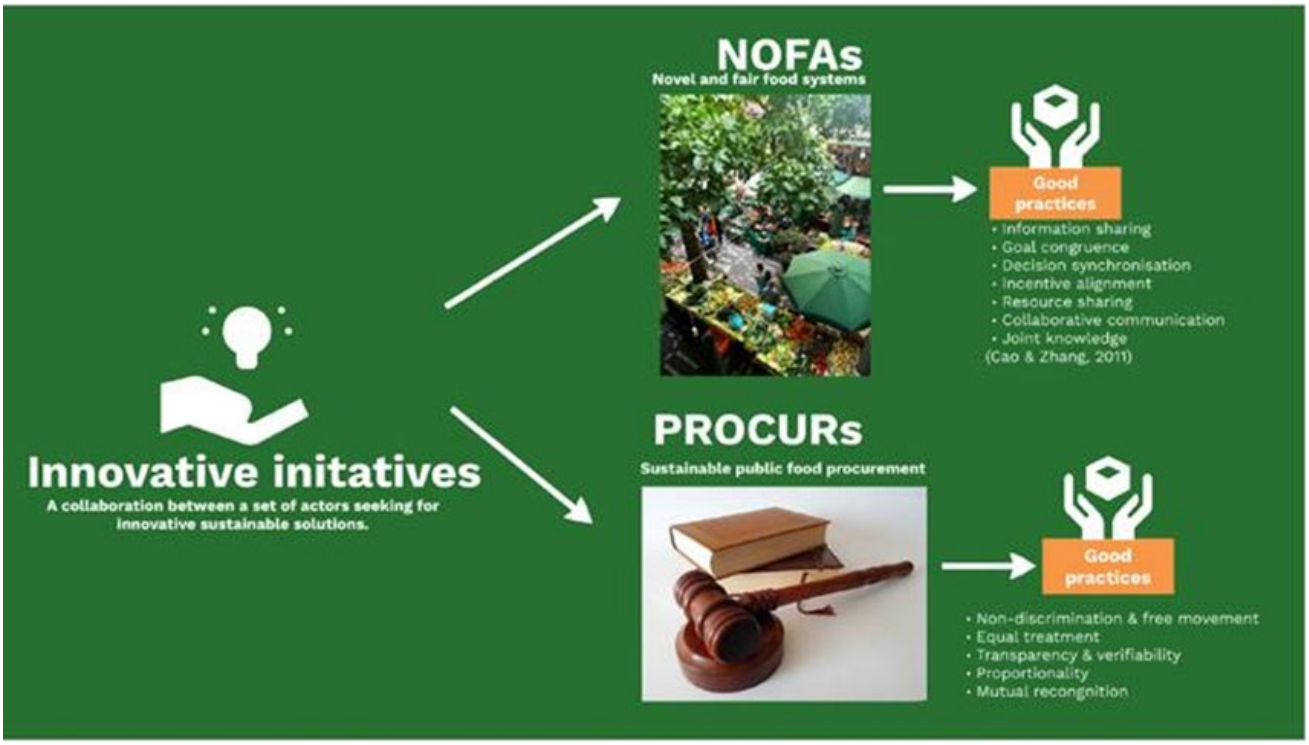

Figure 4 - Overview of COCOREADO's conceptualisation of innovative initiatives

COCOREADO's CF conceptualises **good practices** as "*a set of concrete practices that support the success of innovative initiatives (NOFAs and PROCURs) to reach their goals to strengthen the position of the farmer and connect producers and consumers*". For the NOFAs' evaluation framework, supply chain collaboration (SCC) approach of Cao & Zhang (2011)has been used. Following the CF, PROCURs' evaluation framework introduces four specific criteria for the assessment of good practices, which appear of high importance when it comes to the assessment of whether a procurement tender and contract can be considered relevant as a good case of sustainable public procurement.

2.2.4 Multi actor approach (MAA)

The multi-actor approach [4], presented in the CF, is inspired by the shift from a linear model of knowledge transfer towards a co-innovation model of social learning and knowledge sharing. It focusses on real-life problems or opportunities from 'end-users' (i.e., farmers, foresters or others who need a solution). In COCOREADO the multi-actor approach is applied on two levels: the stakeholder level and the actor level. Both levels are applied within NOFA and PROCUR selection, evaluation, and replicability frameworks, following COCOREADOs multi-actor protocol (D2.1). The protocol proposes 5 scenarios for involving stakeholders and actors (figure 5).

[4] The multi-actor approach applied in COCOREADO is described in D2.1.

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Scenario 1: Engaging and incentivising stakeholders and actors

By demonstrating the relevance and usefulness of COCOREADO's project events and activities to the stakeholders. The overall aim of stakeholder engagement is to contribute to development from which the project, their stakeholders and the wider society can benefit by learning, innovating and performing (Unerman, 2007). Examples on engagement are focus groups, motivation matrix and ice-breakers.

Scenario 2: Interrogating existing knowledge

In this case, the existing knowledge from static sources such as EIP abstracts as well as from experts is interrogated. Examples of engagement are organising a world café, group sketching, journey mapping and knowledge café.

Scenario 3: Creating new ideas and knowledge

In this case, on the one side new creative knowledge is shared and on the other side co-design of actual processes or products with stakeholders. Examples on engagement are prioritising tasks, organising interactive display and organising interactive discussion session.

Scenario 4: Addressing challenges and **problem solving**

In this specific scenario, the stakeholders try to create new solutions, relationships and networks related to the objectives of the project. Examples on engagement are using stakeholder identifications, role playing and tomorrow headlines.

Scenario 5: Applying knowledge

In this case stakeholders are testing specific knowledge in a particular context. Examples on engagement are organising speed dating, story boards, network information and character profiles.

Figure 5 - Scenarios of stakeholder involvement

The NOFAs and PROCURs selection framework set various strategies for identifying and collecting innovative initiatives, following COCOREADO's scenarios described in the multi-actor protocol (D2.1). To illustrate (figure 5), scenario 1 "Engaging and incentivising stakeholders and actors" and scenario 2 "Interrogating existing knowledge", where applied by the project partners, using their local networks. They interacted, with the aim to identify innovative initiatives, with various stakeholders such as farmers' associations and consumers' organizations, local agri-food hubs, business incubators, NGOs with focus on food, national and local authorities, etc. Partners who were already involved in national or EU projects were able to contribute with cases from other project networks. They screened for example RUR06, RUR07 consortium winners (Innovation Action type projects) and already finalised or running national and international projects (examples at EU level are SALSA, Strength2Food, SKIN, FoodSHIFT2030, etc.) for innovative initiatives from their regions (countries).

The development of NOFA and PROCUR's evaluation and replicability frameworks were based on active collaboration between project partners and COCOREADO's ambassadors. During the first Ambassadors' training (March, 2022, Brussels) both partners and ambassadors discussed the good

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practices within NOFAs. Here, in figure 5, they followed scenario 3 "Creating new ideas and knowledge", scenario 1 "interrogate actors' existing knowledge" and scenario 4 "address challenges and problems".

During the second training (October 2022, Pamplona), the project partners and the ambassadors discussed the replicability of good practices on NOFAS, as well as good practices of PROCURS (legal aspects, standards and policy recommendations), following scenario 1 "Engaging and incentivising stakeholders and actors" and scenario 3 "Creating new ideas and knowledge".

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3 Selecting innovative initiatives

Figure 6 - Overview of the three frameworks, with a focus on the selection framework

3.1 NOFA's selection framework

The aim of the selection framework is twofold. Firstly, to set a common understanding of the conceptual approach and secondly, to propose a process for selection of the long list of 60-100 innovative initiatives (Task 2.3). It (1) explains what the main working definitions are and how they will be applied in the selection; (2) sets and explains the inclusion and exclusion criteria for selecting innovative initiatives; (3) provides guidance for the consortium partners on where and how to look for innovative initiatives and (4) introduces the templates to enter data and explains how to fill them in.

The framework also sets a number of attention points. The aim of the attention points is to attract project partners' attention to the need to ensure a diversity of initiatives (cases) for the long-list.

3.1.1 Key working definitions

Key working definitions were provided for four concepts: NOFAs, Innovative initiatives, collaboration, and good practices.

Novel and Fair Food sytems (NOFAs)

According to COCOREADO's CF (D2.1, page 21), NOFAs are (local) food systems with well-connected consumers and producers and a balanced position of the farmer in the food chain. These food systems enable innovative ways of collaborations between farmers and other food system actors. The collaborations entail practices that connect consumers and producers, overcome unfair trading

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practices to rebalance farmers' position, enhance farmers' income and empower both consumers and farmers. Existing concepts in literature that associate with and are examples of NOFAs are alternative food networks (AFNs), local food systems (LFSs) and short food supply chains (SFSCs). However, there is no single definition of what AFNs, LFSs or SFSCs stand for that is applicable to the huge diversity of initiatives across Europe, including within the EU Member States.

AFNs are often defined as including farmers' markets, farm shops, farm gate sales, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), box delivery schemes, producer and consumer co-operatives, community gardening initiatives, etc. These types of food provisioning systems shorten the distance between producers and consumers and are described in various typologies of SFSCs initiatives as well. In other words, similar organisational structures/forms are described by different concept definitions.

Innovative initiative

As the aim of the framework is to provide guidance for the selection of "innovative initiatives", the following understanding was considered in the process of searching and identifying NOFAs. In this selection framework the collaborations meant are NOFAs.

An innovative initiative is a collaboration between a set of actors seeking for innovative sustainable solutions. The main objective of such a collaboration is either to rebalance the position of farmers in food supply chains and/or to connect consumers and producers.

The concept 'innovative' relates to 'co-innovation' which is elaborated upon in the conceptual framework (D2.1, pages 11-12) profoundly. Nevertheless, we want to emphasize that an initiative can entail common practices for one region but be innovative in another region in Europe.

Collaboration

The concept of collaboration is used to capture the variety of innovative initiatives. The working definition of "collaboration" is consistent with Cao & Zhang (2010) approach of supply chain collaboration (SCC), which will be applied in the evaluation framework to identify good practices in the short-listed pool of innovative initiatives.

The concept of SCC focuses on the collaborative relationships between two or more actors who jointly plan and execute supply chain operations. The collaborative relationships can help actors share risks, access complementary resources, reduce costs and enhance profit performance. Successful supply chain partnerships require that each participant shares gains and losses equitably and the outcomes of the collaboration are mutually beneficial.

Following Cao & Zhang's (2011) interpretation, under "collaboration" we understand the formation of a partnership where two or more food supply chain actors work together and share information, resources, and risks to accomplish mutual objectives and mutual benefits.

Good practice

According to COCOREADO conceptual framework, a good practice is "a set of concrete practices that supports the success of innovative initiatives (NOFAs and PROCURS) to reach their goals to strengthen the position of the farmer and/or connect producers and consumers."

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For the evaluation of NOFAS' good practices[5], the focus is on the end results that the supply chain collaboration (SCC) achieves. To investigate the process and to identify the set of concrete actions and interactions among collaborating actors, the seven factors of successful SCCwill be applied. In other words, how the factors of success (Cao & Zhang 2011) are handled in collaborations among key actors of each NOFA individually will be explored. The focus will be on the process that led to the end results i.e., the set of concrete actions and interactions among the key actors of each NOFA.

3.1.2 Process of selection

Based on domains of change from the ToC, introduced in the CF (D 2.1, page 14) selected NOFAs are related to:

1) **Rebalancing farmer's position in the food supply chain** refers to several "strengths" that farmers can achieve within a supply chain collaboration. It is generally considered that within "long" food supply chains farmers are often put in a situation of informational asymmetry about prices, consumers' demand, etc.
2) **Connectedness between producers and consumers** refers to the relational proximity between producers and consumers, that lead to the construction of knowledge, value and meaning about the product and its provenance, production and consumption, mutual understanding of producers/consumers needs and mutual benefits.

Table 1 shows a list with examples of end-results in view of the twofold aim of COCOREADO.

Table 1 - Examples of end-results related to COCOREADO's objectives

Rebalancing farmer's position	Connecting producers and consumers
• **Market transparency:** regarding the processes in the food chain from agricultural production to consumption (from farm to fork); farmer's gaining better knowledge on prices, and other market related information; less anonymous production. • **Increased participation in decision-making autonomy:** regarding farmer's participation in decisions about what, how and when to produce. • **Increased negotiation power**: in terms of farmer' ability to influence prices and selling conditions. • **Increased farmer's income.** • **Shared risk and resources with other supply chain actors:** sharing logistics infrastructure (vehicles, storage and	• **Direct relations:** establishment of personal (face-to-face) producer-consumer relations. • **Proximate relations**: consumer-producer relations that goes over longer distances in time and space. • **Extended relation**: consumer-producer relation outside the region of production. • **Consumer(s) involvement in harvesting or in other supply chain function** • **Mutual understanding**: farmers are well-informed about consumers' preferences and consumers well-informed about the impact of their food choices on their health, environment, and economy. • **Mutual benefits:** economic (fair price); social (solidarity, social cohesion, increased consumers' awareness about food production); environmental (reduced food

[5] The evaluation was applied to short-listed, up to 15 NOFAs. The process of shortening the long list of innovative initiatives is described in D 3.1. Good practices for innovative value-added approaches at farm level.

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management tools); sharing storage space; shared ownerships on facilities, resources, insurances; shared knowledge and information on consumers' demand, producers' offers and distribution networks.	prints; reduced packing of primary products and food, transportation; reduced food waste)

To select innovative initiatives (NOFAs) both inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied.

Table 2 - Overview of the criteria

Inclusion criteria (what to select)	
Descriptive	**Organisational**
1. Sector 2. Region: 2.1. European regions 2.2. Rural, peri-urban, urban and cross-territorial areas 3. Type of collaboration: 3.1. Horizontal vs. Vertical 3.2. Formal vs Informal 3.3. With vs. Without intermediary 3.4. Farmer, consumer or other supply chain actor driven	1. Ongoing initiatives/collaboration 2. Collaborations on which there is good availability of data/information. 3. Collaborations that have been examined in other projects/research and/or which have never attracted the attention of researchers.
Exclusion criteria (what <u>not</u> to select)	
1. Collaborations that do not correspond to the concept of shortening the distance between the farmer and consumers and enhancing farmer's position. 2. Collaborations with intermediary(ies), that do not foster the connection between production and consumption and do not contribute to rebalancing farmers' position in the supply chain.	1. Collaborations that have already ended. 2. No availability and/or accessibility of data/information.

The criteria aim to ensure the collection of 60-100 innovative initiatives across Europe (Task 2.4) in terms of:

1. Sector they operate in and/or the sectors they collaborate with;
2. The geographic regions and spaces (rural, peri-urban, urban, cross-territorial);
3. The involvement of different actors (farmers, consumer and other supply chain actors) and their type of connection (horizontal and vertical, formal and informal, with or without intermediaries);
4. The initiator of the initiative (who activates and leads the collaborations).

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A detailed describtion of the application of the criteria is provided in Annex 6.1.

3.1.3 Methods and data gathering

Each partner selected 5 (a minimum) to 7 (maximum) NOFAs cases for the long list. For each selected case, a Google form template with general information, following the selection criteria and a fact sheet template with more context specific information about the case was filled in.

The main method to collect data was desktop research of publicly available information. As an optional research method some partners also decided to conduct interviews with key actors .

Before performing the desktop research, partners contacted the initiator of the initiative (or other key informant) to obtain written consent. In compliance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 for General Data Protection (GDPR), obtaining written consent (signed paper or reply on mail) is obligatory.

To search and identify specific cases of NOFAs partners were instructed to follow specific strategies (or combination thereof):

Strategy 1: *Partners can search for information about innovative initiatives published on web-sites, newsletters, social media, on-line forums, blogs, etc. published by different local food supply chain actors within their respective countries. These actors may include National Rural Networks, farmers' associations and consumers' organisations, local agri-food hubs, business incubators, NGOs with focus on food, national and local authorities (municipalities, advisory services, ministry of agriculture), agri-food researcher institutes and universities, etc. In addition to the publicly available information or in case of not enough available information, partners can optionally (not obligatory!) consider directly contacting (through phone, Zoom and Teams video platforms or face-to-face) case-study actors in order to "fill the gaps" of missing data. Since all partners should receive written consent from a key informant before researching a certain initiative more in-depth, while contacting him/her, they can use this as an opportunity to arrange an interview or to ask questions if they already have such (for example if they want to verify that the initiative is eligible for selection). The direct contact could be performed in the form of exploratory (semi-structured) interview, in which case the questions from the google format template and the topics from the fact sheet template can be used by the partners to develop questions. If partners have doubts how to develop questions they can contact the IPS team*.

Strategy 2: *Partners who are already involved in national or EU projects can bring in cases from other projects networks.*

Strategy 3: *Partners can screen other RUR06, RUR07 consortium winners (Innovation Action type projects) and other already finalised or running national and international projects (examples at EU level are SALSA, Strength2Food, SKIN, FoodSHIFT2030, etc.) for innovative initiatives from their regions (countries). Do not select cases from COCOREADO "sister" projects - agroBRIDGES and COACH! This strategy implies to check project descriptions, objectives, deliverables and other publicly available documents in order to identify examples within their respective countries. Again, like in Strategy 1, in addition to the publicly available information or in case of insufficient available information, partners can optionally (not obligatory!!!) consider directly contacting project coordinators, WP or Task leaders in order to "fill the gaps" of missing information.*

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Strategy 4: *Partners can screen national and international scientific articles focused on topics like alternative food systems, local food systems, short food supply chains, (re)connecting farmers and consumers, enhancing farmer position in food supply chain, collaborations between farmers, consumers and other supply chain actors etc. Partners can also consider the EIP-AGRI Brochure Innovation in short food supply chains, where they can find examples of Operational Groups and other innovative projects that illustrate successful ways of collaborations among supply chain actors.*

Strategy 5: *In case partners come across an interesting case, which at first glance seems to be a good example, but there is no publicly available information on it, partners may still consider the option to contact directly actor(s) from the case to collect information and to decide whether to include it in the selection list.*

The Instructions to partners on how to fill out the google form template and the fact sheet template are described in detail in Annex 6.1.

3.1.4 Results

The application of the NOFAs selection framework led to the identification and selection of **61 innovative initiatives across Europe**. The long list of NOFAs represents a diversity of initiatives in terms of sector, region and type of collaboration. The process of selection also resulted in a wide representation of organisational forms, most of which are defined in the scientific literature as typical examples of novel and fair food systems. Many of the initiatives represent cross-sectoral collaborations among supply chain actors. Apart from agriculture, the diversity of sectors that the selected cases penetrate include food industry, forestry, HORECA, agri-toursim, fisheries and aquaculture, collaboration between farmers/food producers and schools or school canteens as well. The selected NOFAs represent three types of collaborations in the agri-food system that have been considered during the selection process: horizontal, vertical and combination of both. In terms of the relationships among actors in the food supply chain, we distinguished between formal contractual agreements and those, driven by informal institutions like trust, shared values, etc. The selection also led to the collection of good samples of initiatives in terms of the variety of actors along the food chain that activate and lead/govern these initiatives.

A detailed analysis of the results of the selection is available in D2.4: Long list of 60-100 innovative initiatives.

3.2 PROCUR's selection framework

The aim of the PROCURs guidelines was to serve as a practical tool to support partners during the selection of Sustainable Food Public Procurement Innovative Initiatives (PROCURS) and to ensure the selection of a wide variety of PROCURS initiatives in a wide diversity of contexts. The development of PROCURS guidelines is part of the implementation of Task 2.3 (Framework for selecting and assessing promising innovative initiatives) and feed also into Task 2.4 (Gathering a long list of innovative initiatives - 'Long list') and deliverables D2.3: Three frameworks for selection, evaluation and replicability of innovative initiatives and D2.4: Long list of 60-100 innovative initiatives.

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3.2.1 Key working definitions

Sustainable public food procurement (PROCURS)
PROCURS is an abbreviation used by COCOREADO for Sustainable Public Food Procurement. See also below the definition of Sustainable Public Food Procurement.

Innovative initiative
According to the Conceptual Framework (CF) an "innovative initiative is a collaboration between a set of actors seeking for innovative sustainable solutions." The main objective of such a collaboration is to rebalance the position of farmers in food supply chains and/or to connect consumers and producers. In the context of the selection, the objective was to find PROCURs initiatives identifying how farmers find solutions to be able to participate in sustainable public food procurement bids and how this offers the opportunity to strengthen their economic position.

Good practice
According to COCOREADO Conceptual Framework, a good practice is "a set of concrete practices that supports the success of innovative initiatives in terms of continuation of the initiative and reaching their goals".

In the context of PROCURs and for the purposes of the selection process this means that we needed to collect initiatives recognised publicly for their **sustainable characteristics** (social, economic, and environmental) and for its **compliance with the law.** Although the EU Commission tries to support as much as possible sustainable food public procurement principles, many contracting authorities in the EU countries privilege only price criteria to select food suppliers. In addition, if one procurement is designed as sustainable it might happen that from legal perspective it is not compliant with the law. The cases we selected correspond with these two criteria: 1) to represent initiatives of sustainable food public procurements and 2) to be compliant with the law.

Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP)
The starting point in the selection process is that we need PROCURs initiatives that correspond with the understanding of **sustainable public procurement (SPP)** as it is defined by the EU commission:

Green PP and Socially responsible PP (SRPP) are considered as specific kinds of SPP.

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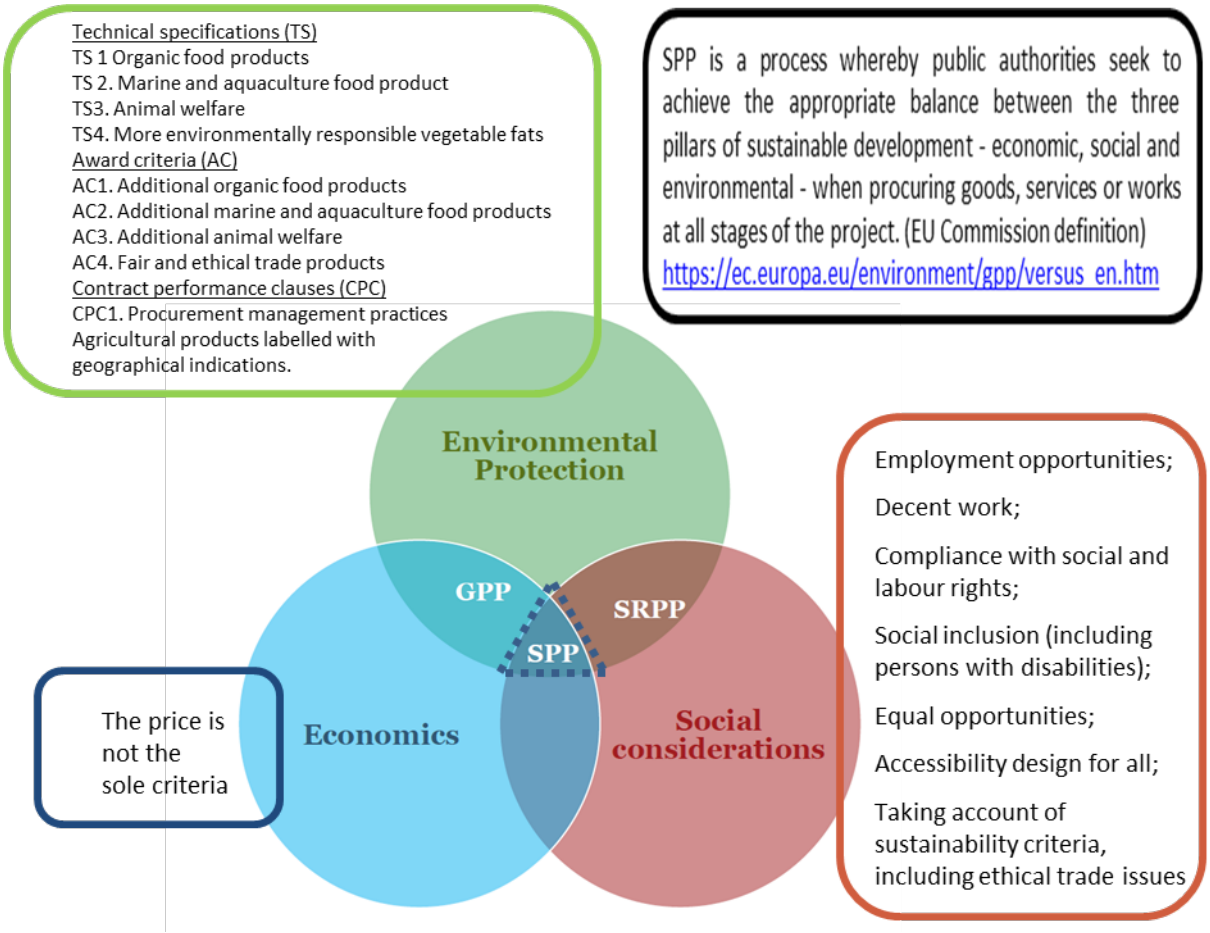

Figure 7 - Sustainable Public Procurement Diagram adapted for Sustainable Food Procurement

Green public procurement (GPP)

Green public procurement (GPP) is built on the concept of so-called 'standard public procurement' (based on the value-for-money principle) but refers to public purchasing of products and services which are less environmentally damaging when taking into account their whole life cycle. With some exceptions, **GPP is not mandatory for public buyers. It is a voluntary instrument.** Examples of GPP are PROCURS cases aiming to limit water use, to use renewable energy or to support products with 'environmental origin' (organic, biodynamic, eco-labelled).

The Staff working document on GPP published by the Commission refers to the following GPP criteria for food procurement (https://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/eu_gpp_criteria_en.htm):

Technical specifications (TS)
- TS1. Organic food products
- TS2. Marine and aquaculture food product
- TS3. Animal welfare
- TS4. More environmentally responsible vegetable fats

Award criteria (AC)
- AC1. Additional organic food products
- AC2. Additional marine and aquaculture food products

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AC3. Additional animal welfare
AC4. Fair and ethical trade products
Contract performance clauses (CPC)
CPC1. Procurement management practices
Agricultural products labelled with geographical indications are included in the GPP criteria.

Figure 8 - Staff working document on GPP criteria

Examples of Green public procurement Good practices, other than those provided in the PROCURs Guide (Section 6) can be found at https://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/case_group_en.htm.

Socially responsible public procurement (SRPP)
Socially responsible public procurement (SRPP) means procurement operations that take into account one or more of the following social considerations: employment opportunities, decent work, compliance with social and labour rights, social inclusion (including persons with disabilities), equal opportunities, accessibility design for all, taking account of sustainability criteria, including ethical trade issues and wider **voluntary** compliance with corporate social responsibility (CSR), while observing the principles enshrined in the Treaty for the European Union (TFEU) and the Procurement Directives." (Buying social. A Guide to taking account of social considerations in public procurement. p. 5)

Examples of Socially responsible Public Procurement Good practices can be found at https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/3498035f-5137-11ea-aece-01aa75ed71a1.

3.2.2 Process of selection

To identify cases of SRPP initiatives partners should explore various publicly available sources such as:

- **Web sites of public contracting authorities** that are central, regional and local administrations and other public organisations like hospitals, schools, nursery centres and the like. On the web sites of public organisations information can be found about their **food policies** and about their engagements with the implementation of national and regional food policies if such exist. This information is needed to fill the section two of the PROCURS template (see section 5 of the Guide) but also can help to identify additional data related to specific food procurement call initiated by public organisations. In some cases on the public organisations web pages, one can also find calls for food procurement and other procurement related documentation needed to fill different sections of the template.
- **Web sites of EU funded/ co-funded projects** represent another valuable source where information about PROCURS initiatives can be found. Strength for food and Supurbfood projects are only two examples among many others.
- **Our personal social and professional networks** represent another important source for transmitting information about sustainable procurement of food. One could ask children, friends, colleagues and relatives what they eat and where and what they know about the food they are eating.
- **Potential Ambassadors to whom the call for Ambassadors is sent** might also be a valuable source of data.

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Partners were able to find examples of initiatives also on the EU commission website and on pages dedicated to SPP of food but it might happen that these examples are already included into the list with pre-selected cases (see section 6.4 of this Guide).

Partners also selected cases, which already have been explored by other projects or are known and popular, only if they are corresponding to the two criteria of Good practices defined in section 2.3. of this Guide.

3.2.3 Methods and data gathering

COCOREADO partners were expected to collect at least one and up to three new and additional initiatives (also referred hereto as 'PROCURS cases') from their respective countries of residence. The main method for data gathering was desktop research focused on official and publicly available data related to specific cases of SPP of food.

Data about all PPs is available in the **national electronic public registers**. EU members states are obliged to publish the call texts and other procurement related documentation on these respective registers. Registers have searching machines allowing to search information when using CPV codes - those are codes indicating the category of goods and services which are subject matter of the procurement.

15800000 Miscellaneous food products
03330000-3 Farm animal products
15100000-9 Animal products, meat and meat products
03311000-2 Fish
03220000-9 Vegetables, fruits and nuts
03142500-3 Eggs
55500000-5 Canteen and catering services
55520000-1 Catering services
15500000-3 Dairy products
03000000-1 Agricultural, farming, fishing, forestry and related products
03100000-2 Agricultural and horticultural products
03140000-4 Animal products and related products
03300000-2 Farming, hunting and fishing products
15000000-8 Food, beverages, tobacco and related products
15500000-3 Dairy products
15510000-6 Milk and cream
15530000-2 Butter
15540000-5 Cheese products

Figure 9 - Sample of CPV codes for Agri-food (goods and services)

Parters received instructions how to use the register and how to search potential PROCURS cases (Figure 9 and Figure 10). In the registers one may search also using various key words related to the subject matter of the bid or searching for specific contracting authority implementing sustainable food policies. **When formulating the key terms to search in the register one may use those ones related to environmental or socially responsible characteristics of the SPP of food (see Diagram 1) like "organic"; "animal welfare"**.

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1. Search in **national language**. Some of the information is available also in English but not the whole information that is needed;
2. In the register are two searching modes - simple and advanced. Select Advanced mode as it provides more opportunities, including to search while using CPV codes related to Food supplies and Catering services. **Select Procurement related to Food supply, and/or Food catering services.**
3. You can search in three big categories: Procurement, Announcements and Contracts. Select Procurement option as there you can find all procurement documentation you need to define if one procurement is sustainable or not. **Select procurement procedures which are on-going or finished (during the last two years).**
4. In the whole set of documents related to one procurement procedure **identify information about technical specifications (TS), award criteria (AC) and contract performance clauses (CPC) relevant to criteria for SPP. See Text box 1 from this Guide to consult GPP criteria for TS, AC and CPC.**
5. Compare the information you find in the Procurement documents about TS, AC and CPC with the information from the examples of good practices available in section 5 of this Guide. Do you find similar features? (e.g. requirements about more environment-friendly transportation, measurement of food waste, requirements about waste disposal or requirements to provide education to end users and staff, or to hire long-term unemployed or people with disabilities, or to include a quota for organic or labelled food, etc.) **In the ideal case, Sustainable public procurement is focused explicitly and simultaneously on the linkages between the three pillars - most economically advantageous tender, environmental practices and social responsibility.** However, very often in the procurement documentation only one of these three pillars prevails, e.g. to establish fixed or progressive quota for organic food. These cases are also considered Sustainable Public Procurement of Food.
6. Select between 1 and 3 cases which are in line with the principles of SPP and with the definition of Good practice provided in the section 1 of this Guide.
7. **Save all procurement documents you have found in respect of the case you have identified as PROCURS case and attach them to the factsheet template.**

Figure 10 - Example of National Public Procurement Electronic Register[6]

TED: Tenders Electronic Daily

TED is a supplement to the Official Journal of the EU where public procurement calls are published when the bids exceed the threshold defined by the EU regulations. The search in TED follows the same logic as in the national/ regional registers.

[6] *Experience from Bulgaria (*https://app.eop.bg/today/reporting/search) - Every national register has different interface but contains almost the same information.

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1. Partners can search in English but also in other EU languages. However, in most of the cases to have access to the procurement documentation, you will be redirected to national or regional electronic registers of PP where the information is available only in the country official language(s).
2. The TED offers two search modes - Advanced and Expert mode.
   Select Advanced mode. Search for Procurement related to Food supply, and/or Food catering services by using CPV codes or by entering key words describing the subject matter or the name of specific contracting authority.
3. You can search in three big categories:
   TED current issue; Active notices; All notices. **Select All notices**.
4. Review procurement procedures which are on-going or finished (during the last two years prior to the date on which the search is performed).
5. Search by using three main fields:
   Text – here you can add key words related to food and catering supply and services; **Subject matter of the contract** where you can search by CPV code and place of performance. **Date** - Insert dates prior to 2021 to find on-going procedures.
6. Review the results and try to identify the original source where PP documentation is published.
   In some cases, this information is not available for various reasons and you will need to explore additional sources of data.
7. Compare the information you find in the procurement documentation about TS, AC and CPC with the information from the examples of Good practices provided in this Guide.
   Do you find similar to sustainable public procurement features? (e.g. requirements about more environment-friendly transportation, measurement of food waste, requirements about waste disposal or requirements to provide education to end users and staff, or to hire long-term unemployed or people with disabilities, or to include a quota for organic or labelled food, etc.).
8. Select cases which are closer to the examples of Good practices provided in this Guide (section 5) and to the definition of PROCURS Good practices provided in the section 2.3. of this Guide.
9. **Save all documents, you have found about the case and attach them to the factsheet template.**

Figure 11 - How to search in the TED?

After identifying an initiative related to PROCURS, partners described the case using the template for PROCURS factsheet. The PROCURs factsheet is available in Annex 6.2.

3.2.4 Results

The application of the PROCURs selection framework led to the identification and collection of **36 innovative initiatives across Europe**. In the first stage of the selection, twenty-three cases were selected because they were identified as good practice for sustainable food public procurement by the European Commission or had already been researched and identified as good practice by various EU funded projects. WP4 team, based on their expertise on sustainable public procurement collected

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this data from publicly available sources. The second stage of the selection process started with a preliminary analysis of the selected cases to prepare a specific template (PROCURs factsheet) allowing COCOREADO project partners to search for other similar cases in their countries and to record the information available on them, again using data from publicly available sources.

The results of the selection show that some of the registered cases by COCOREADO partners involved public procurement of goods and others involved procurement of services related to food supply. All tenders aim at supplying local products, most of them also seasonal, only some of the contracts aim at supplying food with a quality label. In all the cases recorded, the lowest price is not the sole criterion for selecting a supplier, nor is it the most important one. Three sets of criteria are included in the award criteria of all procurements - price, sustainability and quality, the latter two being used to define the type of products and services organisations need, focusing on different characteristics demonstrating sustainable production, transport, and waste treatment practices. Most of the collected initiatives represent very good exemples on how better connectivity between consumers/end users and producers can be achieved and how the procurement becomes an instrument giving chance to farmers to rebalance their position in the supply chain. Except for some cases where the call was launched by various educational organisations, all other cases were developed on the initiative of city administrations in different cities in Europe. Each procurement is specifically defined as legal procedure and tailored to the local context (market opportunities, sustainability related policies, good governance related practices), in addition to the application of the EU directive (Directive 2014/24/EC).

A detailed analysis of the characteristics of the selected PROCURs is available in D2.4: Long list of 60-100 innovative initiatives.

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04

4 Evaluating Good practices

Figure 12 - Overview of the three frameworks, with a focus on the evaluation framework

4.1 NOFAs evaluation framework

The evaluation framework is the foundation for deeper understanding of collaboration activities in novel and fair food systems (NOFAS) (related to task 2.3 and task 3.1). Figure 13 represents the evaluation framework, structured into four main sections: general characteristics (1), collaboration characteristics (2), impact (3) of the NOFA on economic, social and replicability aspects and the partner's interpretation (4).

The evaluation framework was applied to 14 short listed innovative initiatives (NOFAs) that were selected as most inspiring by both partners and ambassadors.

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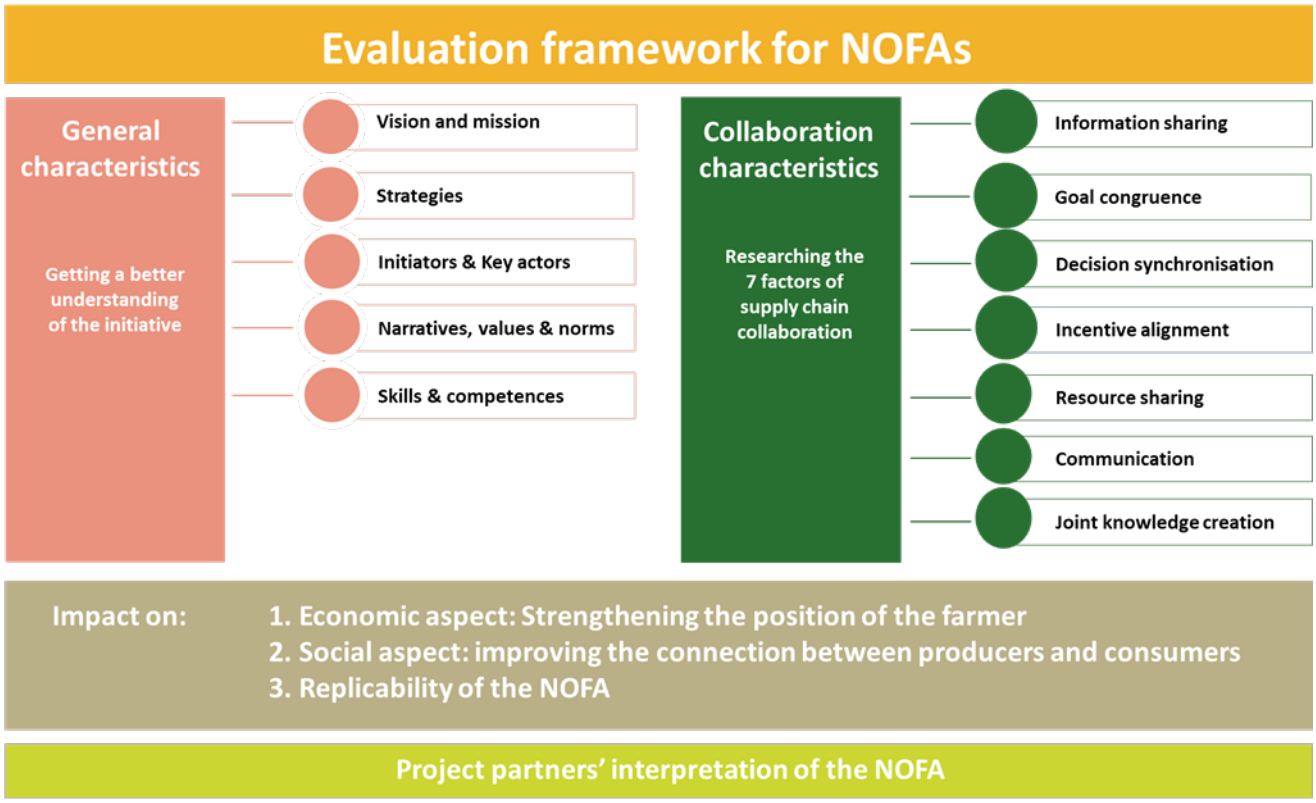

Figure 13 - Representation of characteristics of the evaluation framework

A detailed description of the general and collaborative characteristics of the framework is available in Annex 6.3.

4.1.1 Process of evaluation

To attain information that leads to an insightful understanding of the supply chain collaboration of the NOFA, we focus on recruiting key partners that have insight in the economic and social aspects and factors affecting this.

Recruitment of NOFA's key partners

A good preparation for conducting interviews or focus groups is crucial to achieve valuable results. If the project partners choose to do **interviews**, the recruitment of key partners is done through asking other interviewees or initiators of the NOFA or looking for subjects on the website. This is called snowball sampling, where currently enrolled participants help recruit future subjects. After each interview project partners ask whom they should interview to get a more accurate picture of how the NOFA works? Depending on this, the amount of time needed to find suitable respondents varies according to the size of the NOFA, the accessibility of the key partners and the data availability. It is likely that important key partners are detected during one of the interviews.

If the project partners decided to conduct a **focus groups**, a small number of carefully selected people were invited.

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The idea was not to reach statistical representativeness, but rather to get a thorough understanding of and insight into the supply chain collaboration of the NOFA. Hence, we choose those respondents from which we expect to learn the most (key partners).

There are many differences between the NOFAs, that is why each NOFA was analysed individually using specific template, including also instructions to partners how to conduct the required field work.

Informed consent
An informed consent was provided by all key interviewed partners, to get their *permission* to use the collected data for research purposes

4.1.2 Methods and data gathering

Data gathering was executed by different partners with different experiences and expertises. To ensure that the data collected would be comparable, specific instructions were provided to all partners about: 1) different research methods they can consider (interviews, focus groups, desk top research and others); 2) how to proceed with the collected data; 3) how to transform the data into written analysis. These instructions were not only transmitted via a written document but also presented during a physical partner meeting.

The main objective is to have a better understanding of the general characteristics and the collaboration characteristics of the NOFA, as well as why and how the NOFA is successful (regarding the impact on the economic, social and replicability aspects). After the data is gathered, the reporting template can be filled out, using the information collected previously and during the interviews or focus groups.

Different methods for data gathering can be used, in this case only **interviews, focus groups and phone calls** are considered, which are elaborated below. Partners were requested to make sure that all actors signed the informed consent and were aware of the main objectives. Furthermore, they were asked to record and make notes of the interviews or focus groups, to ensure that they have all the information needed to fill out the reporting template.

Interviews
A qualitative interview is a way of collecting information in which the interviewer inquires one or more respondents based on the research question. In this kind of data collection, the interviewer (= project partner) offers the interviewee the time and space to elaborate in his of her own words. Respondents are offered the opportunity to talk freely about facts that they have experienced themselves. They can talk about their own perceptions, meanings and interpretations with regards to the research subject, and the impact this has on their own lives. The interviewer thereby tries to understand and unravel the living environment of the respondents. For more information, we kindly refer to the presentation of qualitative interviews (on the sharepoint) used during the project meeting in Brussels.

<u>Tips for conducting an interview:</u>

- Listen actively
- Summarize "So if I understand well, then…"
- Questions to get more depth :
    - Search for clarification and completeness in the answers "Can you give an example of…"

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  - Repeat the question or rephrase the question
  - Touch the subject from different angles to let the respondent refresh his/her memory
- Also important:
  - Adapt your language corresponding the interviewee
  - Pay attention to non-verbal behaviour: Silence, pauses, "hmmm" are important.

What best not to do when conducting an interview?

- Putting words in the respondent's mouth or finishing sentences
- Asking questions based on assumptions or ask steering questions
- Judging or giving comments on opinions or experiences
- Offer categories of answers

Focus groups

A focus group is a research technique used to collect data through group interaction. The group comprises a small number of carefully selected people who discuss a given topic, in this case the supply chain collaboration of the NOFA. Focus groups are used to identify and explore how people think and behave, and they throw light on why, what and how questions.

The moderator guides the interviews, while the group discusses the topic. Ideally, a group's discussion takes place with 6 to 12 participants. A smaller group will easily lack opinions, while a larger group might miss cohesion. To provide valid and new information, more than one subgroups can be organised. The duration of the focus group is between 45 to 90 minutes, and in total up to 3 hours. For more information, we kindly refer to the presentation of focus groups (on the sharepoint) used during the project meeting in Brussels.

In-depth phone calls, teams or skype

Using telephones for qualitative interviews has generally been considered an inferior alternative to face-to-face interviews, due to the lack of richness and quality of empirical data and the inability to respond to visual cues compared to face-to-face interviews (Novick, 2008). Still, this method is considered for data-gathering since not all the key partners are able to free up time for interviews or focus groups. If the NOFA were far away or difficult to reach, skype, teams or phone calls are good alternatives.

Using the evalutaion framework every NOFA was transformed in a specific case study and analysed in a single evaluation reporting template. Description of the elements of the reporting template is available in Annex 6.3.

4.1.3 Results

The application of the NOFAs evaluation framework allowed in-depth analysis of the general and collaborative characteristics of 14 short-listed innovative initiatives. It served as an analytical tool for identifying success factors and good practices for supply chain collaboration within novel and fair food systems. Based on the data from the evaluation reports, a list of 10 success factors and 38 good practices associated has been developed[7]. The framework also allowed exploring the extent to which

[7] A detailed description of the NOFAs good practices and seucess factors is available in D3.1 Good practices for innovative value-added approaches at farm level.

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we can consider the NOFA to be successful in terms of strengthening the (economic) position of the farmer and in terms of reconnecting producers and consumers. It provided important insights about the characteristics (general and/or collaboration) which may affect the replicability of the NOFA in other European contexts. These insights formed the base for the development of NOFAs replicability framework.

4.2. PROCUR's evaluation framework

The aim of the PROCURS evaluation framework was to introduce criteria of high importance when it comes to the assessment of whether a procurement tender and contract can be considered relevant as a good case of sustainable public procurement.

The framework also aims to show that a major way COCOREADO, and its ambassadors, can contribute to furthering GPP, is to help raise awareness of the lack of true sustainability measures in procurement tenders, increase the knowledge level on local food chains and develop the ability to recognize a true sustainability-focused tender in a sea of greenwashing. To increase the focus on sustainability in tenders, to ensure experts and farmers have a good basic knowledge of the local food systems, and eventually to change our procurement models to enable small-scale farmers to participate we need to better exlain the importance/ urgence to change existing procurement practices focused in their majority on prices.

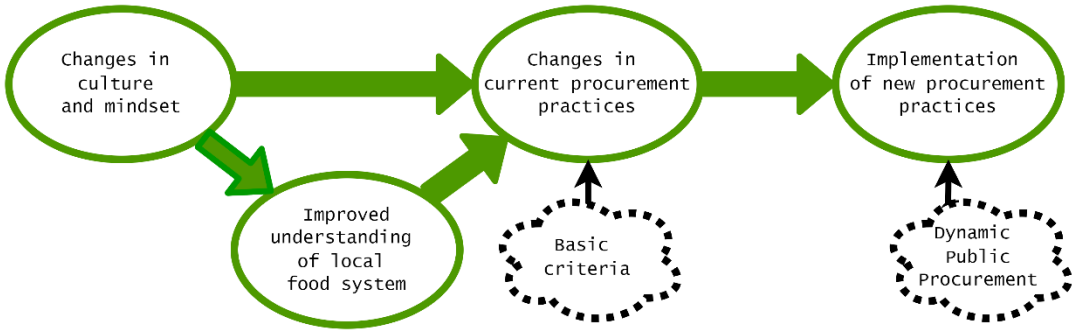

Figure 14 - Changes in public food procurement on the path to not only more sustainable procurement, but sustainable procurement accessible to small-scale farmers.

4.2.1 Process of evaluation

The evaluation framework is built around the assumption that truly good and replicable cases have the following characteristics: i) Sustainability is embedded in an objective and quantifiable manner into the procurement process, documents and contracts; ii) food quality is considered; and iii) the procurement has been carried out in a compliant manner. For evaluation of the cases, we used these four main criteria:

- **Criterion I: Value of the public contract**
- **Criterion II: Price-Quality**
- **Criterion III: Clearly described sustainability criteria**

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- **Criterion IV: Contract management measurement**

Criterion I: The EU public procurement threshold and the value of the public contract

The EU public procurement legal framework applies to public contracts when their value exceeds €500,000. Below this threshold, it is possible to carry out the tender process in a less rigid manner depending on the Member State's national regulations. Establishing a local production/supply requirement is impossible, as it is not compliant with EU public procurement law. The latter has been established with the aim to ensure open competition, equal treatment, and non-discrimination in the internal EU market.

At times, contracting authorities (public buyers) try to bypass the procurement directives by dividing tenders into smaller lots, so each lot falls below the established threshold. While the division of lots is allowed, and even promoted when it comes to promoting the participation of small and medium enterprises in public procurement, this cannot be done with the intent to circumvent existing law and give preferential treatment to the local suppliers. If the latter happens, it is one of the most severe procurement law violations and breaches procurement principles under article 18 Directive 2014/24/EU.

The first point of interest is whether the tender is valued under or above €500,000 and its context. For example, is it a regular repetitive contract that, if multiplied several times and if summed up, would trigger the thresholds and application of the EU procurement law? If so, this would make it an example of a bad practice. Are those procurements under thresholds for some reasons exempt from the application of procurement rules? Or are there objective, compliant reasons why the procurement has been designed in this specific way?

The objective criteria to divide the contract into smaller lots can include educational goals, e.g., that children or students should be exposed to a great variety of cultivars of each crop or be able to contact the producer through presentations, visits, etc., which makes sense for a smaller producer to be interested in, and able to provide, to a larger extent than a large-scale farm and wholesaler.

At the Copenhagen Hospitality College, the procurement tender has been divided into smaller lots for exactly this reason, which are clearly stated in the material. As the college educates chefs and other kitchen staff, the school has chosen to have as objective criteria that the suppliers are able to collaborate with the teachers at the school, provide in-depth knowledge of their goods, and participate in educational sessions, e.g., on cutting fish, seasonality, animal welfare, and agricultural methods, farm trips, etc.

The concrete cases where the value of the tender is low without objective reasons will not be identified, as these can potentially be illegal. Identifying the cases by name could potentially lead to them being challenged in court.

Criterion I: Value of the public contract (service or supply)
The value of a public contract is above € 500,000.
OR
The contract is divided into lots based on objective criteria and respect EU principles such as transparency and open competition.

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Criterion II: The quality of the food or meal

Providing a sustainable healthy meal has a certain cost. To some extent, this is not recognized yet by the contracting authorities and suppliers, who tend to focus solely on buying and supplying the cheapest food possible. The aspect of food quality assessment is often lacking.

Some suppliers will claim that they can provide meals very cheaply while in theory living up to e.g. nutritional recommendations. Often this will be in the form of pre-packaged meals with a long shelf life, resulting in low-quality food. This procedure will of course ensure procurement officers and politicians that the price of meals they are paying is the real price of the food they are provided with. However, it is set at an artificially low level. The traditional service providers will, in our experience, claim that making food from fresh, organic, and local produce will increase the price by 20-25%.

Therefore, when designing and evaluating a service tender for meals, a critical consideration is to focus on the quality of the food in the meals, and if the aim is to encourage the meal provider to buy from local small-scale farmers, the contracting authority must specify e.g., that the food must be freshly prepared (when applicable), organic, seasonal, etc. It is not enough to have intentions of this in the tender, it must be specified clearly so that it influences selection.

E.g., in the case of school meal procurement in Ghent, the contract sum for a service provider is 3,200,000 € for a year, which must cover 940,000 cold line meals with a shelf life of up to 18 days. Without knowing exactly which target group the contract is directed at, a simple calculation shows that each meal has a budget of 3.4 €, which supposedly must include salary for the kitchen staff, rent of the kitchen and machinery, packaging, transportation and revenue for the service provider. This leaves a very small amount for raw produce. A solution would be that a minimum share of the budget is allocated to raw produce in the tender, but we have not been able to locate this. A thorough analysis and access to the complete data would be required to determine how such a contract could be redesigned to focus on fresh produce from small-scale farmers.

Such an analysis might lead to a change in the whole supply chain and concept of food delivery and will need a transition period for implementing the redesign of both kitchens, education, and procurement officers. But in our experience, it will lead to both better meals for the receivers, a better work environment for the kitchen staff and result in real demand for seasonal goods, which small-scale farmers, in general, will be more able to provide.

This is especially important when looking for good cases that introduce produce from small-scale farmers. The kitchens would have to prioritize the extra effort and necessary change in behaviour to trade in products outside the established industrial food system. It would only be possible in kitchens that already make or are considering making food from scratch, understand the price of food, and are ready to value the extra work fresh produce requires.

Criterion II: Price-Quality criterion

It is crucial to focus on food quality in the design and evaluation of the tender. The relationship between the price and quality of food makes it probable that the food will be of an adequate quality.

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Criterion III: Sustainability ambition and quantification

For the tender to result in sustainable procurement it is necessary that the sustainability criteria are clearly described and well defined in the tender documents, and that points are awarded to criteria in the evaluation phase in a way which allows sustainability to truly affect the outcome of the tender. Additionally, the criteria must be defined so that it is possible to measure them. If the tender addresses sustainability through unspecified and loose terms such as 'animal welfare' or 'climate-friendly,' it will be very difficult to measure whether the criteria are fulfilled. This type of wording without backing in concrete selection criteria is therefore assessed as not suitable for sustainable public procurement. At the same time, to fulfil a goal of making public procurement accessible to small-scale farmers, the criteria must be achievable for them: many certifications which are very helpful for the contracting authorities are expensive and bureaucratic for the small-scale farmer to achieve.

In some countries, the experience to apply sustainability criteria is meaningful for farmers in public tenders, but unfortunately not generally applicable at an EU-level. In Denmark for exemple, a fortune of 30 years of labelling organic products, and the national organic label has a very high degree of trust among the consumers. This makes it a very safe investment for farmers to apply for the certification, and invest in the conversion, as they have a high degree of security that they will get the investment back through the price premium on organic produce. Additionally, Denmark has a high degree of public procurement in both direct food procurement and service procurement, which specifies organic certification as a sustainability criterion.

The European organic certification is also valuable, but it does not have the same amount of trust. Trust is necessary for it to work as a functional tool for public procurement.

From Latvia we have received the unfortunate statement that local producers have managed to ensure that GPP references in the regulation basically align the organic with local products (a scheme that has low standards of recognition of a high-quality product). Consequently, actors delivering products or services in GPP can choose to deliver organic *or* local products. Local products can generally be delivered at a cheaper price and because price is still the main selection criteria in most public tenders, the local products are favored over the organic. This stresses the need for a strong, trustworthy certification, so we can be sure that the choice made is truly sustainable.

On the other hand, many small-scale farmers complain that the organic certification requires too much documentation and thus indirectly supports larger farmers who have the means to hire administrative employers. This is a good point, and we encourage that the certifications are designed with this in mind to prevent unnecessary bureaucracy.

Criterion III: Clearly described sustainability criteria

The tender has clearly described sustainability criteria that affect which offer will win the public contract throughout procurement documents including technical specifications, selection and award criteria and contract performance conditions.

Criterion IV: Contract management clauses

After the winning bid is selected, the contract implementation period begins. In this period, the contracting authority must have the ability to evaluate the supplier and enforce the agreed-upon criteria included in the terms and conditions of the awarded public contract. The contract specifies

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how and when the contract performance will be evaluated and what action will be taken if the supplier does not comply with the contract terms. Suppose this is not adequately considered or specified in the tender, the contracting authority will not be able to track the supplier's performance or have any clear legal action to take if the supplier does not live up to the terms.

From the data it has been possible for partners to collect, it is very difficult to assess if this criterion is fulfilled, but our general experience tells us that most often the contracts are not managed and continuously evaluated.

Criterion IV: Contract management measures The tender includes specified contract management measures.

4.2.2 Methods and data gathering

In the data collected by COCOREADO partners this important, illustrative note was received:

"*Public procurement contracts often contain conditions that unreasonably restrict competition, thereby increasing the price of the service or the subject of the contract. The State budget is thus harmed, as the State pays a higher price than the market price. Even if the lowest price criterion ultimately determines who wins the contract, the contracting authority may use the technical specifications to define what it wants, thus limiting the pool of applicants to those who will perform the contract quickly, to a high quality and at the lowest price that is still realistic*."

This tells us that using public procurement as a driver for sustainable products from small-scale farmers is not a quick fix and requires both a cultural change of mindsets as well as an extended understanding of the food system, and the mechanisms within it, to direct public procurement in a sustainable direction. Instead of relying on price and technical specifications, it is possible to create sustainability criteria that are adequately weighted in the selection process. These can allow for the selection of a supplier that not only meets a minimum standard but incentivise competition on sustainability among the bidders, and not only on price. This can lead to suppliers that try to go above and beyond and become invested in sustainability measures instead of consideration them static, basic expectations.

Information required for a full assessment

An extensive amount of information must be gathered to assess whether a specific case is an overall good example of sustainable public procurement. Clear information about the value of the tender, concerning both price and amount of food or meals supplied, must be available, accompanied by information about reasons for dividing it into lots, if applicable. This makes it possible to assess legality and quality. Detailed information on how sustainability criteria are defined in technical specifications, selection, and award criteria, as well as in contract performance conditions and other contract conditions, is crucial to assess whether the tender, in practice, is likely to result in more sustainable procurement or it is rather an example of greenwashing.

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4.2.3 Results

The cases collected under the COCOREADO project provide an interesting and valuable insight into the gap between what is generally considered a good case of sustainable public procurement and what is a good case. It appears that many of the submitted cases focus explicitly on local food, which they can do only because they are (or have been made to be) too small to trigger the EU public procurement laws. It is also a general concern in the collected cases that they are not ambitious when it comes to the sustainability criteria and their specification. Either sustainability is addressed in vague and non-committal ways, such as mentioning them as intentions but not including them in a way that allows the sustainability considerations to truly influence the choice of supplier, or the sustainability terms are inconsequential to the general sustainability of the procurement. Additionally, it appears that the importance of the contract management stage for sustainable public procurement is not generally reflected. This makes it very difficult to assess to which degree a real change has been implemented.

The submitted cases in general are not examples of GPP, but they can in some cases be used as examples of individual good, basic practices. For several of them there are important caveats which must be considered when determining whether the selected good practice is in fact good when viewed within the context of the procurement case. Only one case was relevant for criterion II: The relationship between price and quality. The general picture is procurement where the calculated price per meal is below what can reasonably be expected to lead to sustainable, healthy, and fresh food - in many of the cases the price was less than €1 per meal.

The main takeaways from this exercise that we can use going forward with our work on sustainable public procurement in COCOREADO, including Ambassadors training, is to raise awareness of the relevant aspects of sustainable public procurement. For example, by gathering knowledge on how to design technical specifications, award criteria, and contract performance conditions of a public contract to achieve sustainability in public procurement and share this knowledge and experience with public procurement officers and politicians.

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05

5. Assessing the replicability

Figure 15 - Overview of the three frameworks, with a focus on the replicability framework

5.1. NOFAs replicability framework

This replicability framework aims to provide information about the potential for **replication of NOFAs good practices** in a European context, considering socio-demographic, economic, ecological, political and legal factors that may affect the success (and failure) in the food system. These **good practices** are defined within the COCOREADO project as a set of concrete practices that support the success of innovative initiatives (such as NOFAs[8]) to reach their goals to strengthen the position of the farmer and connect producers and consumers. An example of such a good practice is the use of an online subscription system for customers. This is seen as a good practice, since it brings the consumer and the producers closer together and is also a smoother experience for the initiative and the customer in this digital era. It can also provide the farmer with a more secure income as customers often pay at the beginning of the season. This in its turn can help strengthen the financial position of the farmer.

However, not every good practice is transposable to another country and context. The framework we present here wants to stimulate reflection on the opportunities and pitfalls of trying to replicate a practice that is successful elsewhere in Europe.

[8] NOFAs or Novel and Fair Food Systems are (local) food systems which (re)connect consumers and producers and/or strengthen the position of the farmer in the food chain

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The replicability framework we present in the next paragraphs is based on a combination of literature stemming from business management and agricultural innovation studies. The framework structures a variety of factors that can have an influence on the potential replication of good practices in other parts of Europe. **This framework has the purpose of letting entrepreneurs (farmers and others) think about possible opportunities or bottlenecks they might encounter when they want to adopt good practices in their respective regions.**

There are many factors that might influence the replication of the good practices (Garcia-Almeida & Bolivar-Cruz, 2020; Hove & Tarisai, 2013; Olawale & Garwe, 2010). Based on business management and agricultural innovation literature a diversity of factors that might influence the replicability of a certain good practice were gathered. Subsequently all these factors were structured in an overarching replicability framework. In the project the framework the framework was used to assess the potential replicability of the good practices that were defined based on the in-depth study of 14 novel and fair food systems (or NOFA's) (deliverable 3.1). For each good practice both the ambassadors and partners assessed which factors could potentially inhibit or strengthen the adoption in their regional context. In a later stage, this framework could be used in a more generic way, for other innovative initiatives as well.

In COCOREADO, the focus is on small and medium sized firms (SMEs) in the agribusiness. Mainly because the innovative initiatives in the agrifood chain who reconnect consumers and producers and who strengthen the position of the farmers are highlighted. The initiatives in this niche often create innovations on a small scale. They are often small-scale family run businesses. However, these SMEs are vital for the development and growth of the rural economy all over the world and contribute significantly to local economy.

It's these kinds of smaller, innovative initiatives COCOREADO tries to identify when reflecting on the replicability of the good practices delineated in deliverable 3.1. The dimensions of the business environment were used to structure the different factors that can influence the replicability of the good practices. Firstly, a distinction was made between the internal and external environment of the initiatives. Consecutively the distinction between the micro and macro dimension of the external environment was made. For each of these three dimensions factors that can influence the replicability of the good practice of the innovative initiative in another context were gathered.

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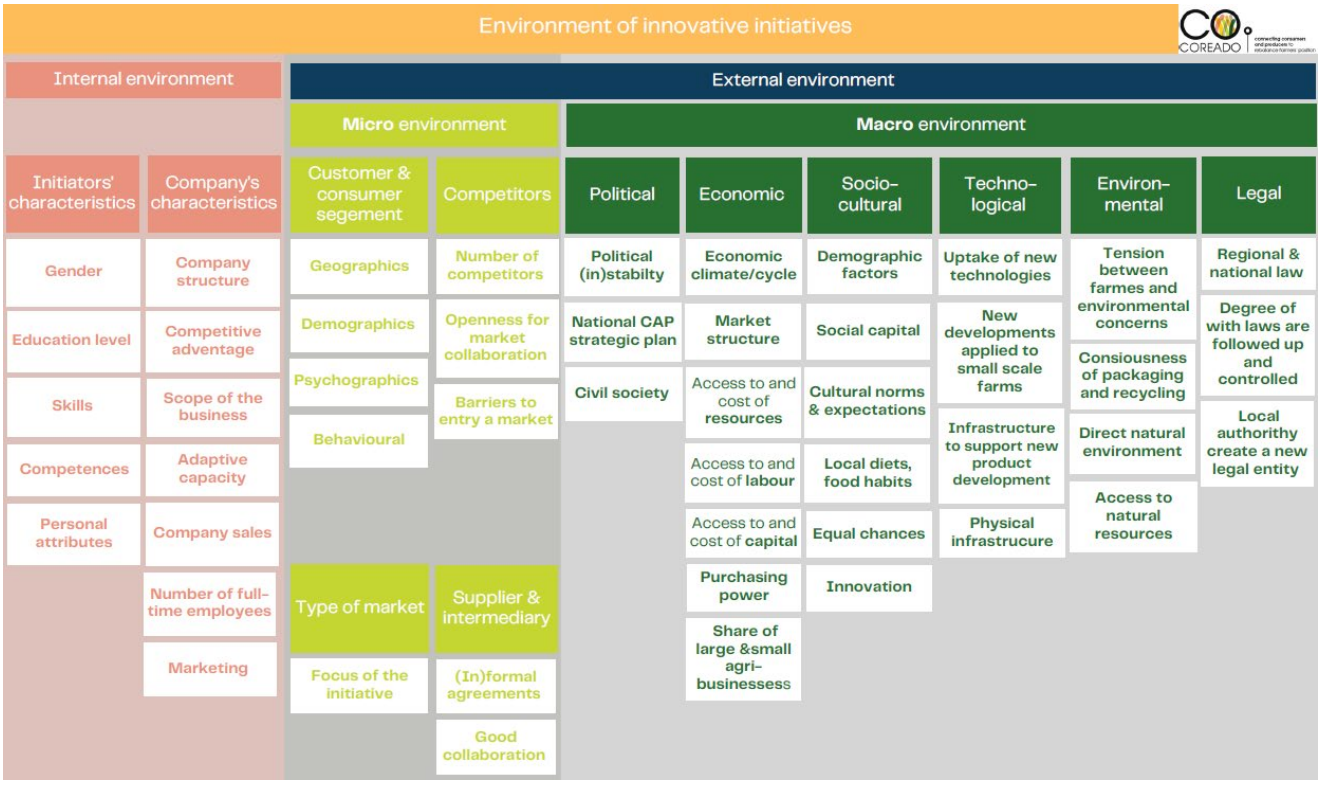

Figure 16 - Replicability framework - The Environment of Innovative Initiatives

5.1.1 Key working definitions

Replicability

Within COCOREADO, we refer to **replicability as the possibility of transferring (parts of) initiatives (i.e., a set of (good) practices) to other contexts.** Replicating good practices means recreating the knowledge of a complex process and considering a variety of the different dimensions, that might influence this replication such as socio-cultural, legal, economic, political, environmental, and technological factors. In general, it is argued that conditions vary widely in various locations, resulting in the differential performance of standardized, transferred assets, creating pressure for innovation as firms and other initiatives attempt to maximize their fit with the local environment. These pressures take the form of basic differences in culture, governmental regulation, labor practices and consumer preferences and needs.

Szulanski & Jensen (2008) described three main assumptions the replicator organisation should consider in a cross-border replication: (1) the local environment is understood adequately, (2) the knowledge contained in the original practice, is equally well understood, and (3) local actors are familiar with the potential interactions between the relevant features of the environment and the new practices. They also conclude that replication is not just a tool for leveraging existing innovations but a method for lowering the risk and effort of innovation by allowing one to master the existing form first (Szulanski & Jensen, 2008). One must also be aware of the need to balance precise replication with adequate learning and change to remain aligned to a changing environment. This is also a point of attention when examining the good practices within an agricultural European context.

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Business environment

A business environment is the **collection of all individuals, entities, and other factors, which may or may not be under the control of the organisation, but can affect its performance, profitability, growth and even survival** (*Business Jargons*, 2022; Worthington Ian & Britton, 2009). A business environment is seen as an open system since it is in constant interaction with its environment. The changes in the environment can cause changes in inputs, in transformation process and in outputs. In turn, this can change the organisation's environment (Worthington Ian & Britton, 2009). In what follows we have interpreted what the different elements of the business environment constitute for the innovative initiatives of the COCOREADO project.

Figure 17 shows that the different parts of the business environment are interrelated and interdependent (and not separate entities). **Internal environmental factors** are the factors which exist in the innovative initiative, imparting strength or causing weakness to the initiative (i.e., the S and W from a SWOT-analysis). **External environmental factors** are related to conditions and events outside the initiative that affect the way it operates. These are also the factors that affect the initiatives willingness and potential to collaborate with other organisations and physical persons. This external environment can further be divided into:

- **Micro-environment factors:** These factors are local, affecting the initiative, but not the rest of the industry and the world (Worthington Ian & Britton, 2009). These are the factors that have a direct impact on the initiative (e.g., demography of an SME's customers).
- **Macro environmental factors:** These are the broader factors that affect the initiative. They comprise demographic, socio-cultural, ecological, political, legal, economic, and technological factors (Worthington Ian & Britton, 2009). To further elaborate on these specific factors, we need a multidimensional perspective which can be found within the PESTLE framework (political, economic, social (i.e., socio-cultural and demographic), technological, environmental, legal). PESTLE is a tool COCOREADO used in the evaluation framework to gain insight into the macro picture of the initiative's environment (Perera, 2017) and is also applied in the replicability framework. It allows to form an impression of the factors that might impact a new initiative developed in another region or context.

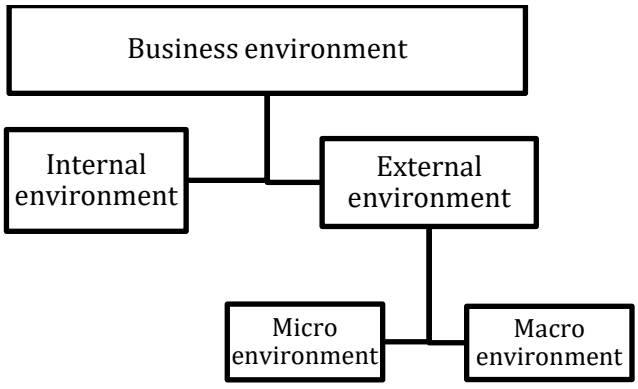

Figure 17 - Business environment

We have used these dimensions of the business environment as a framework to structure the different factors that can influence the replicability of the good practices.

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Innovation

Food system innovations are instrumental to achieve multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Lamprinopoulou et al., 2014). The **innovative capacity** of initiatives is defined in the agricultural innovation literature in multiple ways. This capacity refers to the ability to create or generate innovations. This encompasses both the ability to create an innovative idea and the ability to turn that idea, or someone else's idea, into something that could be implemented. It does not include the actual implementation. We consider this element as particularly important in the initial stages of an innovation process (de Boon et al., 2022).

Within COCOREADO, collaborations are considered innovative when they improve the farmers' position in the supply chain and shorten the link between producers and consumers in terms of income, independency of the decision making, social learning and knowledge sharing. Following COCOREADO's Conceptual framework (CF) the term **"innovative initiative"** refers to: '*A collaboration between a set of actors seeking for innovative sustainable solutions. The main objective of such a collaboration is either to rebalance the position of farmers in food supply chains and/or to connect consumers and producers' (Conceptual framework COCOREADO).*

5.1.2 The process of assessing replicability

The application of the replicability framework is based on the analysis of internal and external characteristics.

Internal environment

We start with the internal environment of the innovative initiative that wants to adopt a new 'good practice'. We here make a distinction between characteristics that **relate to the initiator** on the one hand and characteristics that relate to the initiative on the other hand (Stokes&Wilson, 2006; Worthington Ian & Britton, 2009; Becherer et al., 2001).

Characteristics related to the initiator that we distinguished are:

- **gender, age, and education level,** they can have an influence on the knowledge and skills one possesses, one's vision on agriculture and business management and on the risk they want to take.
- **Skills**, the specific learnt abilities needed for completing a specific task, such as IT-skills, financial awareness, …
- **Competence,** this is the knowledge, behavior and ability that make you successful in a job, such as problem solving and creativity.
- **personal attributes**, that is the quality or characteristic of a person, such as kindness, being honest, being dependable, ...
- **family status and motivation**

Characteristics that **relate to the initiative** that we distinguished are:

- **Company structure**, this is the system outlining how the activities are organised and directed to achieve goals, how decisions are made (jointly taken decisions are important) and the governance structure that supports this.

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- **Competitive advantage,** does the initiative have a unique product or service, a superior customer service or an excellent product mix, operating cost, or price? All these different aspects can give the initiative a competitive advantage towards other initiatives in the area.
- **Scope of the initiative,** on which scale does the good practice apply; local, statewide, regional, national, or international.
- **Adaptive capacity,** this is capacity to adjust to potential damage, to take advantage of opportunities, or to respond to consequences.
- **Sales strategy, price setting and diversification** of the products.
- **Number of full-time employees** and the **marketing strategy** (e.g. focus on storytelling) are important.

Initiators need to reflect on all these aspects when they want to adopt an innovation. Does this innovation fit both with the personality of the initiator as with the characteristics of his or her business model.

External environment

The external environment of the Environment of Innovative Initiatives relates to conditions and events outside an initiative that affect the way it operates and affect the initiative's willingness and potential to collaborate with other organisations and persons. Here one can make a further distinction between the micro and macro environmental factors.

- **Micro environment**
  The micro environmental factors have an immediate impact on the initiative (*Business Jargons*, 2022; Worthington Ian & Britton, 2009). In what follows, we elaborate on the four elements of the micro environment, which provide material to discuss the potential of replicating an initiative in a specific environment.
  - **Customer segment**, this is the process to divide customers based on common characteristics such as age, interests, and spending habits. This will help when looking at the environment of the potential initiative. Are there potential customers for the innovation you want to adopt? For example, Is this an initiative attracting eco-conscious people, how are the surroundings reacting on that?
  - **Competitors**, these are the initiatives who try to sell similar goods and services to people. The initiative should be aware of potential competitors and his own barriers to enter the market. Furthermore, the initiator should reflect on how open they want to be to collaborate with other actors, since being part of a network can ensure competitive advantage.
  - **the type of market,** is important to consider when looking to replicate an initiative. For example, a farmer who wants to sell produce to consumers (B2C) in an own farm shop needs to have a great range of produce, be customer-friendly and have a good marketing strategy by using storytelling. While if a farmers want to sell to governments (B2G), he needs knowledge of public procurement procedures and large quantity of his produce, etc.
  - **Suppliers and intermediaries. Are necessary suppliers and intermediaries present?** A key supplier can be an important part of the initiative and may even attribute to the competitive advantage. Losing important suppliers can interrupt production flow or the competitive edge and prevent the initiative from getting products to the customers (e.g.,

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sharing costs for the logistics (and the last mile) of the produce towards the consumer). The choice of suppliers, negotiation of terms (using informal or formal agreements) and relationship building are important tasks when setting up an initiative.

All these elements that are part of the micro environment will help to look which factors influence the replication of the initiative. shows the elaborates on the four elements affecting the micro-environment.

Table 3 - External micro-environment of the Environment of Innovative Initiatives

Customer segmentation	- Geographics: e.g., city, country, … - Demographics: e.g., age, gender, income, education, social status, … - Psychographics : e.g., lifestyle, values, attitudes, … - Behavioral: e.g., occasion, intent, purchase/usage, …
Competitors	- Number of competitors - Openness for market collaboration - Barriers to entry a market
Type of market	- Focus of the initiative (=B2C, B2B, B2G) and adapt story accordingly
Suppliers and intermediaries	- (In)formal agreements - Good collaboration with the supply chain partners and civil society - Integration in local economy

- **Macro environment**
  Finally, we have the macro environment, which gives an overview of the factors influencing all initiatives at a broader level (*Business Jargons*, 2022; Mihailova, 2020; Perera, 2017; Worthington Ian & Britton, 2009). To further elaborate on these specific factors, we used the multidimensional perspective which can be found within the PESTLE framework (political, economic, social (i.e., socio-cultural and demographic), technological, environmental, legal). This shows that the context or region plays an important role and differs when talking about the macro environmental factors.
  - **Political factors,** include government actions, government legislation, public policies, and acts which affect the operations of an initiative. When looking to replicate, it's important to look at the political (in)stability (e.g., are there upcoming elections in the region or country that could affect the initiative?), how was the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) translated into the local context. A few examples to illustrate the diversity in Europe. Since years the Danish government supports organic agriculture, which has a positive impact on the buying habits of the consumers (= buying organic produce). This is different in Eastern-Europe, where organic agriculture does not receive as much support from the government

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and consumers are not buying as much organic produce. It's not that there must be an immediate cause-and-effect, but there is clear connection between support from the government and buying habits of the consumers. This example shows that there is a diversity in Europe that should be considered when replicating initiatives.

- **Economic factors**, affect consumer buying power and spending patterns. It includes the level of income of the population, economic resources, trade cycles, distribution of income and wealth as well as the access and cost for the initiative to resources, labour and capital. As an example, in some countries, such as Belgium, there is a shortage of land close to urban territories for the establishment of initiatives such as CSA farms (community supported agriculture). In Bulgaria small farmers often lack sufficient market orientation, lack of skills and knowledge for market research and lack of integration between agriculture and the processing sector. At the same time there is a growing demand for consumption of local products and clean, quality food, which provided opportunities for cooperation among farmers.
- **Socio-cultural factors**, represent the demographic characteristics, norms, customs, and values of the population within which the organisation operates. To illustrate, in countries such as Bulgaria and Czech Republic, people tend to be sceptic towards cooperatives. The notion of cooperations still has a negative connotation that could be explained with the socialist legacy. However, in the South of Europe (e.g., Portugal and Spain) cooperations are an interesting and popular business model for farmers and consumers.
- **Technological factors**, refer to different technology incentives. Is there an uptake of technology (e.g. applications) among the population of a specific region? Is their infrastructure to support new product development? In Belgium, there is a government supported 'hub' where SMEs and other actors from the agri-food business can test and receive support on new products. In Albania, the farmers don't have this kind of 'hub' to receive support. Another example is in Bulgaria 86% of the farmers, especially small ones, have limited ICT knowledge and skills and do not use digital technology in their farms. These factors may influence decisions to enter or not enter certain industries.
- **Environmental factors**, represent the growing awareness of the potential impacts of environmental threats such as climate change or the loss of biodiversity that can affect how initiatives operate and can affect the products they offer. In some regions there may be tension between farmers and eco-conscious people. Also, parts of the population may be conscious about the packaging and recycling and want to avoid single use packaging. Another environmental factor is the access to natural resources, such as water, weather conditions. This can have a significant effect on the agriculture in the region, e.g., 20 years ago we couldn't find any vineyards in Belgium, whereas today this segment is growing, and Belgian wine can be found in the different Belgian supermarkets.
- **Legal factors**, may have some overlap with the political factors, they include specific regional or national laws such as taxation policy, spatial planning, …) and the degree on which these laws are controlled by a formal institution. As an example, since 2016, already 9 European countries decided to introduce deposits on small plastic bottles: Lithuania, Slovakia, Latvia, Malta, The Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Luxembourg, and Ireland (Recycling Network, 2022). In The Netherlands, the deposit on small plastic bottles, was introduced since July 2021. This was an agreement between the State Secretary and the

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packaging industry. The goal is that this measure would lead to much less plastic litter. Another example, in Bulgaria, national policies limit the amount that small farmers can sell directly to final customers. Thus, the legislation prevents small farmers from expanding their networks of individual customers while it enables large processors and producers to set farm gate prices and keep them low. The examples of these legal factors show again the complexity that initiatives face when trying to replicate. That's why it is important to understand the context wherein the initiatives want to replicate, so they can thrive.

Table 4 gives an overview of the different PESTLE factors (on macro level) with specific examples that innovative initiatives (in the agri-food business) should consider when looking to replicate.

Table 4 - External macro-environment of the Environment of Innovative Initiatives

Political factors	- Political (in)stability: level of corruption, elections, ... - National CAP strategic plan: local translation of the CAP - Civil society: farmers' union, trade union, …
Economic factors	- Economic climate/cycle - Market structure - Access to and cost of resources - Access to and cost of labor - Access to and cost of capital - Purchasing power - Share of large and small agricultural business
Socio-cultural factors	- Demographic - Social capital - Cultural norms and expectations - Local diets, food habits - Equal chances - Innovation
Technological factors	- Uptake of new technologies - New developments applied to small farms - Infrastructure to support new product development - Physical infrastructure
Environmental factors	- Tension between farmers and environmental concerns - Consciousness of packaging and recycling - Direct natural environment - Access to resources
Legal factors	- Regional and national law - Local authority creates a new legal entity - Degree in wich laws are followed up and controlled

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5.1.3 Methods and data gathering

The NOFAs replicability framework will be implemented within Task 3.2: Replication in sites throughout Europe, which is in a process of application by the time of writing this report. Within this Task, the framework will be used to develop Replicability Road Maps for each of the evaluated NOFAs. The Road Maps will be based on the analysis of NOFAs internal and external environmental characteristics. Part of the analysis will be based on the information already gathered with the evaluation reporting templates. Partners will be expected to provide further knowledge on the PESTLE factors using desktop research.

5.1.4 Results

The results of the application of the NOFAs replicability framework are expected as part of the implementation of Task 3.2: Replication in sites throughout Europe (M20-29). The main outcomes will be described in D3.2: Replicability of innovative approaches within different EU regions (M31).

5.2 PROCUR's replicability framework

The aim of this framework is to guide the process of replicating the identified good practices and how replication of bad practices can be avoided. It will also illustrate the conditions under which replication is realistic and feasible. The framework assumes that even though public procurement across Europe is governed by common EU-level law and regulation, the specifics of the procurement landscape vary from region to region and country to country. A major concern and barrier in one area of Europe, or in one procurement situation, can be irrelevant in another. For this reason, replication of good practices is primarily an exercise in being investigative and creative, in asking questions and becoming aware of all the various pitfalls that might exist in the unique and specific situation of the work on a single tender in a single country and holding all of this up against the sustainability goal(s) of the tender.

5.2.1 The process of replication

When using this framework, it is important that sustainability targets for the food procurement tender in question are decided and what constitutes success is clearly defined. What does sustainability mean in the context of this tender? What are the most important factors associated with the term in the organisation? Words such as "sustainable", "local" or "green" are ill-defined terms that translate poorly into action unless clearly specified by those using them.

Procurement officers will not be able to create and implement a tender for sustainable public food procurement without support and the involvement of the entire organisation. Realising this is a first necessary step when considering ambitious changes that can facilitate the inclusion of small-scale farmers into sustainable public procurements of food. For this reason, it is crucial to:

Realise that the bid preparation is a development task and needs time and effort to be performed. It is not just a small change in administrative and legislative procedures, but a new way of implementing political strategies, being in dialogue with both sides of the market (the suppliers and the receivers), and handling tenders and contract management.

Share knowledge outside the organisation: Seek advice and sparring with other procurement officers and advisors in your area, region and/or country who are also interested in sustainable public food

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procurement. It can be beneficial to establish a group that you can use throughout for sparring and sharing knowledge.

Sharing knowledge within the organisation: If you are planning a tender for procurement of goods, involve your entire organisation from top to bottom in the work, from political decision-makers to individual kitchen staff, and everyone in between. It is important that every level understands the mission and supports it; otherwise, the risk of failure increases. Examples exist of ambitious approaches failing because the kitchen staff were not consulted and involved. If you are planning a tender for procurement of a catering service, you should help facilitate knowledge sharing and inspiration with other institutions.

Accept that it is rarely possible to translate an approach - let alone specific sustainability criteria - to your situation, unless you, through extensive research, have been able to identify that the two situations are indeed sufficiently similar. For this reason, it is never possible to simply copy an existing tender successful in another context and assume that it will succeed in your situation as well. A lot of research and dialogue is required, and this framework will guide you through some of the most important questions to ask at the outset. Most likely, many of these questions will not lead to simple answers, but rather to a lot more questions that will need to be discussed with everyone involved before a decision can be made.

Implementing sustainability targets in service contracts is generally simpler than in contracts for the procurement of goods. Simply put, in service contracts, the responsibility for living up to the decided sustainability targets can to a larger degree be made the responsibility of the caterer and will then be a question of contract management. The advice in this framework is therefore centered on goods contracts, but much of the information is of course also usable for service contracts.

5.2.2 Methods and data gathering

This framework is developed as an open-ended and questions-based replicability approach because the differences between procurement situations within Europe became very apparent on the evaluation stage. That is why to identify the conditions that make possible the replication of good practices requires to ask questions and gather data on several important topics.

The current organisation of public procurement

The first step is to be aware of the basic structure of food procurement in your organisation to ensure you have the necessary basic information that enables you to proceed in the guide:

- What is the current organisational level responsible for the food procurement in your situation (individual kitchen level, city, or even whole country or region level)?
- What level is the contract resulting from the current tender intended to cover?
- What is the typical monetary size of the previous tenders in your organisation? Does it like the current tender?

Quality does not come cheap

A highly influential factor important for the choices possible to make, and the actual impact of the tender on procurement and the food system it is part of, is whether the kitchens in question have the resources, skills, time and tools to cook food from scratch. If the kitchens currently do not cook but only heat up pre-packaged and frozen food, they will not be able to receive raw vegetables from a

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local farmer and cook a good, healthy meal from them. In some cases, "kitchens" do not even come equipped with knives and tables for cutting, but only with scissors, a freezer, and a space for opening bags:

- How are the current kitchen facilities operating? Do they have the tools, space, skills and time to cook from scratch?

This is a major point in transitioning towards more sustainable food procurement inclusive to small-scale farmers, and it is the most important point to investigate under the quality point. It is worth putting down a significant amount of time trying to resolve this and push for change. If the kitchen is not able to cook it is not possible to include small-scale farmers and certain sustainability criteria might also be difficult, such as various interpretations of the often sought locally produced food (see section 2.3). Other important aspects of food quality to be investigated include:

- What is the budget and legal boundaries that govern the cost of the monetary framework for the tender?
- What has the price per meal been in previous contracts? (Calculate and discuss with advisors or network of procurement officers whether this is adequate for ensuring quality in your region.)
- Is it feasible in your situation to adjust the meal composition towards less meat, to free up funds for buying more fresh produce? (Leading to co-benefits between health and sustainability).

Often sustainability targets tend to be selected based on what can easily be measured or counted, e.g. nutritional goals or reduction of food waste. Obviously, being able to measure something does not automatically mean that this is the most important; it is simply easier to frame an objective target around. Arguably, for small-scale farmers, local production, quality and taste parameters can be more important, but they are not as easy to quantify (and, in the case of local, not legal to include under EU-law.) For this reason, it is important to research good and important targets relevant in the individual case, and to not lose the focus on which factors are most significant regardless of whether they are easy to measure or not.

It can be beneficial to use the SMART targets method to define the relevant criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Time bound).

- Which aspects of sustainability have the highest impact in your region? (Typically, the production of the food itself is significantly more important than transport, packaging etc.)
- Are there concrete and measurable indicators or proxies for these factors that allow for bidders to compete on them?
- If not: Can they be created?
- Is the inclusion of criteria that address the most important factors feasible in this tender in your current situation (e.g. acceptability of reduction in amount of meat among decision-makers and end consumers)?
- What can be done to make it more feasible?
- Which certificates and labels for aspects of sustainability exist in your area?
- Are they generally recognised, well known and trusted?
- Which rules and regulations govern them and their use? (E.g. when can a meal be called organic?)

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- Which of your sustainability targets are covered by labels, and is there a generic way to require such a label in your tender? (It is not legal to require a specific label, but legal to require a category of certification, e.g. organic food.)
- Are there potential negative effects of requiring certification conflicting with other sustainability goals? (E.g. certifications can be difficult and expensive to obtain, potentially barring some bidders from competing.)
- Is it feasible, in your organisation, to construct a tender where bidders compete more on sustainability than price? (Weighing sustainability criteria higher than price in the assessment.)
- Is local food production a priority in your situation? If so, what is the important aspect of the concept in your case? (E.g. short supply chains, taste, varieties, education and knowledge about food culture etc.) Identify and translate local into a legal, measurable criteria.

Management and follow up throughout the contract period

When quality and sustainability criteria have been defined, it is important that mechanisms ensuring that winning supplier lives up to what they have promised are included in the tender. Contract management spells out how and when the contract performance will be assessed throughout the contract period, and which actions will be taken if the supplier does not perform as agreed to. Important questions to ask when preparing this section include:

- What kind of follow up has been done in previous contracting periods? (Frequency, requirements for documentation etc.)
- Has the previous supplier delivered the goods as agreed? Have the kitchens experienced a lot of replacements?
- Were there problems or conflicts during the contract period?
- How could they have been avoided?
- What kind of follow up would be relevant and necessary in your case to ensure that the supplier fulfills the agreement on the new sustainability criteria throughout the entire contract period?

Specifics about inclusion of small-scale farmers

Inclusion of local food from small-scale farmers is a common goal in food procurement tenders, but it is not legal under EU law to ask specifically for local, or to indirectly ask for it through e.g. asking for food to only be transported a certain distance. This can make it challenging to make a tender accessible for small-scale farmers, which can be tackled in various ways:

- Dividing a large tender into smaller lots can make public food procurement more accessible to small scale farmers, but are there in your case legally sound reasons that support this? Consider the additional value small-scale farmers provide (e.g. the potential for educational synergies in school kitchens) and identify whether these can be legal reasons for dividing the contract.
- A divided tender has to be implemented in many places, and feedback on numerous contracts has to be established in order to check if the strategic goal is fulfilled.
- A large, centralised contract can provide opportunities for small-scale farmers through novel and more ambitious ways of procuring food.
- Which current logistics in the kitchens is the kitchen staff used to (delivery times and frequency, ease of ordering, time between ordering and delivery etc.)?

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- Facilities: Do the kitchens have cooling space, and room for vegetables that might still have dirt on? Do they have adequate tools for peeling, cutting etc.? And resources to do so?
- How flexible is the kitchen staff and how heavy do they perceive their current workload to be?
- In many cases, small-scale farmers will not be able to deliver as frequently and on as short a notice as wholesalers, and changes require motivation: What is the current attitude among the kitchen staff towards more sustainable food procurement and are they willing to change practices?
- Are there funds available for education of the kitchen staff? And funds for rebuilding, in case new equipment is needed?

Considering more ambitious transformations

It is worth considering whether entirely new forms of food procurement are relevant that can better deliver on sustainability and inclusion of small-scale farmers. One such approach is Dynamic Purchasing Systems. This way of thinking about and organising food procurement offers an approach new to food, but currently used in other sectors. Essentially it consists of an online platform similar to a web shop, that functions as a centralising factor for many small-scale producers. From the platform the kitchen staff can order the food they need, without having to order it from individual, small farmers. The system then distributes the orders to participating farmers through a set of mini-competitions. Farmers can be asked to live up to specific sustainability criteria to become suppliers to the platform. This system can be highly relevant, as it offers possibilities to open the market for a broader spectrum of suppliers.

To investigate whether this is a feasible approach in an individual case, the following should be investigated:

- Make an analysis of the kitchens and meals. How many kitchens provide how many meals to whom, and under which administrative frameworks do the kitchen operate? What are the budgets to procure food, and who are in charge of these budgets?
- How is the existing procurement organised, and can this organisation manage the running of a dynamic system? Should it be more centralised or less centralised? Insourcing or outsourcing?

Service contracts

For service contracts, you are leaving the responsibility for the procurement of goods to a catering operator, which is usually a private company. These companies are not regulated under EU procurement law - but the contract between the public institution and the catering service is. This means that:

- You can ask for sustainability criteria for the meals provided.
- You can ask for documentation throughout the contract period as part of a thoroughly contract management.

As in goods contracts, it is important that demands and criteria are carefully described and possible to measure and checked in order for the purchaser to control the service-provider. Very often it is seen that the catering service acts like it is an expert in what budgets are possible and which kind of changes can be implemented. This is not always correct, and it can be helpful to have an independent counselor to assess the contract and the possibilities for more sustainability.

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5.2.3 Results

The implementation of the PROCURs replicability framework shows that some initiatives are using very broad criteria such as 'as sustainable as possible' and hereby de facto leave it to suppliers or catering services to define sustainability targets. This is not a good practice as it does not develop market opportunities and does not lead the process towards more sustainability. In addition when contracting authorities leave to suppliers to define what is sustainable, makes it difficult to manage, measure and verify sustainability criteria during a contract period.

Additionally, asking for local food is not legal within EU procurement law. For this reason, when using the question-based approach and asking about the replicability potential of the initiatives, it is necessary to not take a generally accepted meaning of words. Attempting to create sustainable procurement simply through a strategy backed by no or too little specificity can result in a situation that looks uncomfortably like greenwashing: a tender that appears to promote sustainability through its choice of words and framing but fails to deliver any real change on what is being procured and how it has been produced. In other words: sustainability must be translated into objective, clear and measurable criteria, which clarifies for the winner of the tender how to act and what the success criteria are. This also makes it possible to report back to the political level of the organisation that goals are being achieved.

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6. ANNEX

In this annex more detailed information can be found for each framework.

6.1 NOFAs selection framework

Selection of the long list: Criteria for partner

6.1.1 Selection of the NOFAs long list

To select an initiative for the long list we must focus on rebalancing farmer's position and/or connecting producers and consumers.

In the selection stage (for the long list), we **focus on the end results** of the initiatives to determine whether the collaboration is successful. **Successful collaborations** related to COCOREADO's aim, **could be found in various forms.** These can be both on and off farm activities: farm shops, roadside sales, pick-your-own, farmers' markets, farmers' corners at supermarkets, food festivals/ tourism events, consumer co-operatives/ buying groups, internet sales, collaboration with retailers, with HORECA and food industry sectors that source from (local) farmers and who make clear the identity of the farms/farmers to their customers. At the same time, successful collaborations might differ in **type of connection** between actors and the **type of actors** involved. All these aspects are reflected in the criteria.

Applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria aims to ensure the collection of 60-100 innovative initiatives across Europe (Task 2.4) in terms of:

1. Sector they operate in and/or the sectors they collaborate with;
2. The geographic regions and spaces (rural, peri-urban, urban, cross-territorial);
3. The involvement of different actors (famers, consumer and other supply chain actors) and their type of connection (horizontal and vertical, formal and informal, with or without intermediaries);
4. The initiator of the initiative (who activates and lead the collaborations).

To collect the information for selection, we have defined both **descriptive and organisational criteria**. The *descriptive criteria* reflect on sector, region and type of collaboration. The *organizational criteria* refer to the partners' ability to pool examples of cases (initiatives) and to find reliable information (available and accessible data). These criteria are elaborated in the next section (3.2) and are in line

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with the conceptual framework and the reflections from COCOREADO kick-off session on NOFAs. Furthermore, they refer to publicly available information that can be gathered through desktop research.

Point of attention: Try to select different examples of collaborations in terms of (1) type of connection and (2) type of actors involved.

In the ideal case, each of the selected collaborations should have different characteristics in terms of the descriptive and organisational criteria. We are not only looking for farmers' markets, formal (for example project based) collaborations, collaborations without intermediary(ies) or only farmers' driven ones.

We should try to bring together as much diversity as possible!

6.1.2 How many cases?

Each partner is expected to select **between 5 (a minimum) and 7 (maximum) NOFAs cases** to be included in the long list.

Point of attention: We set a golden rule for the selection framework: "Quality over Quantity!". That means that we aim to select cases (innovative initiatives) with good quality of information, which will later allow their evaluation for good practices and replicability.

For each selected case, a **google form template** with general information, following the selection criteria and a **fact sheet template** with more context specific information about the case must be filled in.

The main method to collect data will be **desktop research of publicly available information**. Direct contact (interview) with key actors from the cases can be used as an optional research strategy (*see section "Where to look for cases"*).

6.1.3 How to apply the selection criteria?

The selection criteria are supposed to be used as certain "filters" while searching for information about innovative initiatives. The description of each of the criteria below is meant to give insights about their application.

6.1.4 Organisational criteria

The organisational criteria refer to the status of collaborations (ongoing and already researched or not) and the quality of data (availability and accessibility) about the cases.

- **Status of collaborations:**

Partners should select **ongoing initiatives**. Following the COCOREADO working definition on innovative initiatives as those "*seeking for **sustainable** solutions*", we should exclude those who have ended/finished as proven to be unsustainable. The rationale behind this is that if some collaborations do not exist anymore, that means that there was something wrong, something that did not work well or the actors did not get on well together.

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Point of attention: Consider the three pillars of sustainability (social, economic, environmental), as they are equally important.

As the aim of the selection is to end up with the long list with a diversity of collaborations existing across Europe, the partners should select both cases that have not yet been explored (original cases) or have already been studied in another projects/research. The former can be relevant for replicability to other regions, the latter - to find highly innovative practices. **To ensure a good balance of cases, at least 3 of the initiatives should be original (not studied before).**

- **Quality of data:**

Partners should try to look for collaborations on which there is **available and accessible data.** Availability and accessibility of data are two different elements of the desktop research. Availability refers to the existence of information (data) "out there", while accessibility refers to the extent to which the researcher can reach and use the data. For example, we may know that there is available information about a case in certain documents/reports/deliverables of research projects. However, due to the nature of the documents – not published/ not publicly disseminated/confidential we may not reach (access) and use them.

That means that within the desktop research, partners should pay attention to the quality of the data of the cases they select for the long list. They should not include cases for which they cannot find enough information and cannot ensure access to information (even through a direct contact with a key actor/respondent) to fill the templates.

6.1.5 Descriptive criteria

- **Sector:**

To the selection, the term "sector" refers to certain area of economic activities. This broad working definition reflects the fact that NOFAs usually penetrate in various economic sectors and often represent cross-sectoral collaborations among supply chain actors. Given this NOFAs characteristics, we should not "lock" the possibility of finding collaborations in a limited number of sectors. Instead, we should try to find examples from various sectors/areas. The sectors where NOFAs most often appeared are listed below. This description, based on state-of-the-art review of research on NOFAs, should be considered as an illustration where innovative initiatives could be searched for and why exactly there. The listed sectors should not restrict partners to search for innovative initiatives in other sectors as well.

The **agricultural sector** provides various opportunities to connect producers to consumers such as on-farm and online selling, farmers' markets, box schemes, etc.

Point of attention: Ensure a diversity of farming systems, when selecting the 5 to 7 NOFA cases. We are not looking for cases around organic products only.

Collaborations around both types of land-based (use of agricultural land for cropping) and non land-based farming practices (such as vertical farming) are eligible for selection. Collaborations around

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various farming systems (subsistence, conventional, organic, bio-intensive, integrated, etc.[9]) are eligible for selection.

As the forest value chains are part of sustainable agriculture and food systems as well, collaborations from the **forestry sector** (farming of non-wood forest products such as mushrooms, berries, herbs, etc.) can also be included in the long list.

The fishery and aquaculture sectors often provide opportunities for collaborations sourcing directly from producers. For example, a fish box scheme is a new innovative way of fish distribution, aimed at supporting local fishers and a more sustainable management of the local fisheries, giving them the opportunity to sell directly to consumers, but also use intermediaries like cooperative shops, specialist shops, supermarkets.

The inclusion of innovative initiatives from the **food industry** could reveal the role of intermediaries in fair pricing for farmers, increasing the diversity of products and introducing quality, freshness, and proximity to customers. The food sector is important as there we may find various examples of collaborations between farmers and food processors/retailers/distributors. Throughout Europe there are many examples of supermarkets buying directly primary production from local farms and retailing locally sourced foods through farmers' corners or through their own brands of local products. Large-scale retail chains make agreements (collaboration schemes) with farmers' markets by offering them space to hold their own events periodically and thus provide visibility to products of local origin. The food industry may also provide smart logistics solutions to connect producers and consumers.

The **HORECA (hotels, restaurants and catering) sector** often uses authentic local food as a way of enhancing their commercial channels and attracting tourists, and thus can unfold its potential to reconnect producers and consumers. For example, restaurants and hotels may source directly from local farmers. The "localness" of food and storytelling, together with local recipes is frequently used, as it may represent a factor of distinction, and therefore attraction of tourists and commercial success.

As food becomes more integrated in other sectors, this trend concerns **the agri-tourism (rural tourism)** as well**.** Agri-tourism, which represents a specific type of direct on-farm consumption, provides additional direct marketing opportunities for producers selling fresh agricultural products and offering services linked to farm products, such as tasting and meals provision, wine tasting, etc. The inclusion of agri-tourism as a selection option enables us to cover agri-rural innovative initiatives to connect rural producers with urban customers.

Point of attention: Collaborations that have origins in any sectors or economic area can be selected, if these collaborations are consistent with the concept of connecting producers and consumers and rebalancing farmers' position in the food supply chain.

- **Region:**

This criterion should be applied in a two-fold manner. First, the region reflects **different geographic locations throughout Europe**. As the selection of innovative initiatives (collaborations) aims to select cases from various European geographical contexts, the following regions where different countries

[9] In case more information on the different farming system is needed, please see Cocoreado Conceptional Framework.

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are represented by project partners, are formulated: Northern European region, Central European region, Eastern European region, Southern European region and Baltic European region.

Point of attention: All partners should screen for cases from the countries they represent.

RYEurope, MIJARC Europe and CEJA will select cases from countries in regions that are not presented by project partners.

Secondly, this criterion should be also applied in a way that reflects an important component of the food supply chain collaboration, namely the **diversity of areas/spaces – rural, urban and, peri-urban - within Europe**. To capture the diversity of spaces, we shall apply Eurostat's degree of urbanisation (DEGURBA)[10]. DEGURBA is a classification based on a combination of criteria of geographical contiguity and the share of local population living in urban clusters and in urban centres.
It classifies Local Administrative Units (LAUs) into three types of area[11]:

- **Cities** (*densely populated areas*): LAU level territorial units where at least 50% of the population lives in 'urban centres. Densely populated is an area with a density of at least 1500 inh./km² and a minimum of 50 000 inhabitants (equivalent of urban center).
- **Towns and suburbs** (*intermediate density areas*): LAU level territorial units where less than 50% of the population lives in 'urban centres' and less than 50% of the population lives in 'rural grid cells'. Intermediate densely populated is an area with a density of at least 300 inhabitants per km2, a minimum population of 5 000 and a maximum of 50 000 (equivalent of urban cluster).
- **Rural areas** (*thinly populated areas*): LAU level territorial units where more than 50% of the population lives in 'rural grid cells' (grid cells that are not identified as urban centres or as urban clusters). Level 2 of the classification splits the rural areas into three subcategories: villages, dispersed rural areas and mostly uninhabited areas. For convenience, we shall **focus on the village sub-category** as a territorial unit with a minimum population of 500 and a maximum of 5 000[12].

If CEJA, MIJARC and Rural Youth Europe select examples from non EU member states, they should use the current national territorial classification of the respective country/ies.

Point of attention: Try to select cases representing supply chain collaborations from at least 2 different areas: city and town/suburb, city and village, village and town/suburb, etc.

[10] See more at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/degree-of-urbanisation/background
[11] Partners should easily access such information as according to Regulation (EU) 2017/2391, article 2, within the first six months of each year, Member States shall transmit to the Commission (Eurostat), with reference to 31 December of the previous year, the list of LAU indicating any changes and the NUTS 3 region to which they belong, following common electronic data format requested by the Commission (Eurostat).
[12] You may also check the Methodological manual to define cities, towns and rural areas for international comparisons 2020, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/10186/11395216/DEGURBA-manual.pdf/3a6bab6a-3fb1-4261-ad5b-e604cb67dc0d

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This will allow the identification of good practices on how collaborations between producers and consumers could pass over different special boundaries, connecting producers and consumers and enhancing farmers' position in the food supply chain.

- **Type of collaboration**

The application of this criterion is intended to capture the diversity of relational strategies that farmers and consumers use to connect to each other and to see how these strategies enhance the position of the farmer within food supply chains. Specific sub-criteria are introduced in order to facilitate the selection of collaborations representing: (1) different types of coordination mechanisms of the relationships between farmers, customers and other supply chain actors: horizontal/ vertical, formal/informal/, with/without intermediaries and (2) a variety of actors who activate and lead/govern these initiatives: farmer-driven, consumer-driven and other supply chain actors-driven.

Sub-criterion: Horizontal and vertical collaborations

Two main types of supply chain coordination, respectively two types of collaborations among actors in the agri-food system should be considered: **horizontal, vertical and combination of both**.

- **Horizontal collaboration** takes place between chain actors (including between competitors) at the same stage of the chain as well as with external to the chain stakeholders such as governmental organizations, NGOs, associations, universities. As horizontal collaborations may take different organizational forms such as farmers' markets, farmers' cooperatives, association among farmers' organizations, consumers' purchasing groups, etc., the selection of initiatives should try to cover examples of these. One of the most typical examples are farmers who most often informally join forces - to sell directly to customers or traders.
- **Vertical collaboration** requires coordination between actors from upstream to downstream along the supply chain, from production through to consumption. It may engage farmers, farm input service providers, processors, wholesalers, retailers, exporters, and consumers who are involved with the supply chain collaboration. Examples exist in various forms of on-farm (pick-your-own, cut-your-own) and off-farm selling initiatives which involve direct connection of farmers with customers (box schemes, Community Support Agriculture - CSA and Solidarity Purchasing Groups - SPG).
- **Combinations of both** are also eligible for selection. Examples include a horizontal cooperation between farmers who also vertically collaborate with processors and/or distributors; or farmers' cooperatives which also collaborate with a supermarket to secure the sale of their produce, etc.

Point of attention: Given the diversity of collaborations, partners should try to select examples of the three types: horizontal, vertical and combination of both one.

Sub-criterion: Formal and informal collaborations

Relationships among actors in the food supply chain can be established by a formal contractual agreement or be rather informal without any written arrangements, but driven by informal institutions like trust, shared values, etc. The latter is especially relevant to short food-supply chain collaborations, which are most often based on informal agreements between producers and consumers rather than having binding contracts.

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Point of attention: Selected NOFAs initiatives should represent both informal collaborations/networks and formal, contract-based initiatives, including privately or publicly funded by national or international programmes/organizations.

Sub-criterion: Collaborations with and without intermediaries

Production and consumption are the two extremes of the agri-food supply chain. If we try to answer the question of what is "*in the middle*" between these two extremes, we should look for how producers and consumers connect to each other. There are two main types of connections between producers and consumers: **direct and indirect (intermediate) connections.**

The direct connection means that producers connect personally, face-to-face with consumers. **The indirect connection** refers to a situation where there are one or more actors (intermediaries) which help the primary production reach end users (customers).

Generally, the more intermediary steps between production and consumption, the higher the level of disconnection between producers and customers. However, sometimes farmers simply do not have the capacity to perform some activities (functions) like marketing or logistics and in such cases, they need an intermediary. Intermediate actors could play an important role in shortening the chains, to meet new consumers' expectation and attitudes and to raise awareness about quality or local agricultural products. That is why what is important in terms of farmers' position that the food/products which reaches consumers through intermediaries should be traceable to the producer(s). The role of an intermediary can be played by various actors such as small retailers, wholesalers, supermarkets, restaurants, hotels, specialized gourmet shops, often dealing with local food retailers, NGOs, even national, regional, or local authorities. For example, public sector authorities often appeared to be a source of information for the small-scale producers likely to become involved in the development of local food systems and short supply chain initiatives. Collaborations can be also led by local authorities (for example municipalities), which have improved access to land for farmers, facilitated the development of local food networks and developed opportunities for the use of local products in public sector collective catering.

Point of attention: Consider the quality of the relation between the intermediary, the producers, and consumers. In other words, include collaborations where the intermediary(ies) connects producers and consumers and through its activities enhances (rebalances) the position of farmer(s).

Sub-criterion: Farmer-driven, consumer-driven, and other supply chain actors - driven collaborations

NOFAs can be activated and led by various actors along the supply chain. To ensure a diversity of initiatives for the long list, we should try to find examples of collaborations driven by farmers, consumers and/or other supply chain actors. Applying this criterion will require the identification of a specific activator (initiator) and/ or actor(s) who lead the collaboration as in some cases they might not coincide.

For example, some farmers' markets or farmers-consumers collaborations might be activated by public institutions (national/regional/local authorities, research institutes, municipalities, etc.) or

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NGOs and should be also considered. That will allow us to debate on the specific drivers that enable collaborations, the actors which initiate and/or lead them and the specific role of the farmers (key or not) in these collaborations in terms of decision making on what, how and when to produce, where and how to reach consumers.

Point of attention: Do not select examples of collaborations where there are no farmer/farmers' organisations.

Where to look for cases?

The application of the selection criteria will be based (mainly) on **desktop research of publicly available information** about innovative initiatives (examples of successful collaborations).

Before performing the desktop research, partners should contact the initiator of the initiative (or other key informant) to obtain written consent. In compliance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 for General Data Protection (GDPR), **obtaining written consent** (signed paper or reply on mail) **is obligatory**.

To search and identify such information the following strategies (or combination thereof) can be applied:

Strategy 1: *Partners can search for information about innovative initiatives published on web-sites, newsletters, social media, on-line forums, blogs, etc. published by different local food supply chain actors within their respective countries. These actors may include National Rural Networks, farmers' associations and consumers' organizations, local agri-food hubs, business incubators, NGOs with focus on food, national and local authorities (municipalities, advisory services, ministry of agriculture), agri-food researcher institutes and universities, etc. In addition to the publicly available information or in case of not enough available information, partners can* ***optionally (not obligatory!) consider directly contacting (through phone, Zoom and Teams video platforms or face-to-face) case-study actors in order to "fill the gaps" of missing data****. Since all partners should receive written consent from a key informant before researching a certain initiative more in-depth, while contacting him/her, they can use this as opportunity to arrange an interview or to ask questions if they already have such (for example if they want to verify that the initiative is eligible for selection). The direct contact could be performed in the form of exploratory (semi-structured) interview, in which case the questions from the google format template and the topics from the fact sheet template can be used by the partners to develop questions. If partners have doubts how to develop questions they can contact the IPS (ISSK) team.*

Strategy 2: *Partners who are already involved in national or EU projects can bring in cases from other projects networks.*

Strategy 3: *Partners can screen other RUR06, RUR07 consortium winners (Innovation Action type projects) and other already finalised or running national and international projects (examples at EU level are SALSA, Strength2Food, SKIN, FoodSHIFT2030, etc.) for innovative initiatives from their regions (countries).* ***Do not select cases from Cocoreado "sister" projects – Agrobridges and Coach! Annex 2 contains a list of the cases that Coach project is working with.***

This strategy implies to check project descriptions, objectives, deliverables and other publicly available documents in order to identify examples within their respective countries. Again, like in Strategy 1, in addition to the publicly available information or in case of insufficient available information, partners

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can optionally (not obligatory!!!) consider directly contacting project coordinators, WP or Task leaders in order to "fill the gaps" of missing information.

Strategy 4: *Partners can screen national and international scientific articles focused on topics like alternative food systems, local food systems, short food supply chains, (re)connecting farmers and consumers, enhancing farmer position in food supply chain, collaborations between farmers, consumers and other supply chain actors etc. Partners can also consider the EIP-AGRI Brochure Innovation in short food supply chains, where they can find examples of Operational Groups and other innovative projects that illustrate successful ways of collaborations among supply chain actors.*

Strategy 5: *In case partners come across an interesting case, which at first glance seems to be a good example, but there is no publicly available information on it, partners may still consider the option to directly contact actor(s) from the case to collect information and to decide whether to include it in the selection list.*

6.1.6 How to get started?

To select an initiative for the long list we must focus on rebalancing farmer's position and/or connecting producers and consumers. The information below shows 6 guiding points to help partners to identify initiatives.

1. Identify an example of supply chain collaboration and make initial research to get preliminary insights whether it represents a success story. Contact the initiator of the initiative (or another key informant) and **ask for consent to continue** collecting publicly available information.

Be aware that not every type of collaboration, including those within SFSCs and local food systems, necessarily improves farmers' incomes, connect producers and consumers and bring mutual benefits (EIP-AGRI 2015).

2. While collecting publicly available information not only on more general characteristics as location, type of collaboration (horizontal/vertical/both, formal/informal, etc.), geographical and space location, but also **on the end results it achieves**. When contacting the initiator of the initiative – personal, via phone or e-mail - to obtain written consent, you may consider the opportunity to collect first-hand information regarding the end-results, but also to understand better who the other actors in the collaboration are, around what functional area they are collaborating (such as logistics, production, management and marketing) or concerning the sustainable aspects of the collaboration.

Supply chain collaborations involve a wide range of actors (such as producers, processors, retailers wholesalers, consumers). They can "connect" each other through personal relations (face-to-face), throughout the region of production, with or without intermediaries or outside the region of production where they cannot exchange personally, but the products reach consumers embedded with value-laden information. Geographical distance between producers and consumers may be long, but the consumers could be still aware of the identity of the producers and of the products. How? Usually, the product related information becomes visible and traceable through various labelling, printed on packaging or communicated at the point of retail. This enables the consumer to

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make connections with the place/space of production and, potentially, with the values of the people involved and production methods employed.

3. During the direct contact with the initiator of the initiative, you may try to collect information on whether the collaborating actors have a good understanding of consumers' needs.

For example, you can elaborate on what's their consumers' target groups? Do the actors in the collaboration share information among each other, whether they do a kind of research to capture consumers' feedback or if there is another partner in the collaboration who collects such feedback. What such feedback is used for; for example for diversifying product range, for developing new product, for entering into new market niche, etc. You can also try to collect information on are consumers well informed about producers' work, how it is produced and its associated characteristics (e.g. organic), what's their willingness (motivation) to pay for certain products? You can also check whether the producers have specific channels to provide information and educational materials to consumers through social media, blogs, through the organization of on-farm food events, festivals, degustation, and cooking workshops, etc. Quite often box schemes provide information about the producers and the primary products together with recipes of how to prepare them, how to experiment with cooking techniques, what are the benefits of consuming certain products, what are their quality and healthy aspects, etc.

4. Be aware of the link between the chosen initiative and the objectives of COCOREADO. There might be examples where the farmers/food producers may be simultaneously involved into several functions (at the same time being producers/processors/retailers). In such cases, you will have to identify what benefits these multiple "roles" bring in terms of strengthening farmers' position and/or connecting producers and consumers.

5. Decide on how the collaboration activities among the actors in the initiative enhance the position of the farmers involved.

Consider findings from other research indicating that collaborative activities between farmers and other supply chain actors might have a direct input on price, may increase farmers' income and allow them to regain control over decisions about what and how to produce. Such activities may improve farmers' product range as well. The product range can be also diversified so that more producers can be involved, and more jobs can be created through retaining the added value in each territory. Developing new products through collaborative short food supply chains offers opportunities for agri-food producers to optimize processes and tap into new markets. Also consider findings, showing that the success of supply chain collaborations depends on practices like shared resources and risks and joint knowledge creation. For example, sharing knowledge and information on consumers' demand, producers' offers and distribution networks could be important regarding the marketing of primary products and food. Practices of sharing of resources and risks could also provide benefits to farmers and to strengthen their position in the food supply chain as they can improve costs and margins. Often, within farmers' cooperative, farmers co-brand products and share marketing costs to collectively improve their market position in the supply chain.

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6. Decide on whether the collaboration entails mutual benefits for the actors involved.

For example, economic benefit such as fair prices for farmers and consumers or negotiated quality standards for primary products and food. Environmental and social benefits such as fostering solidarity and social cohesion among actors as well as building trust-based relations between producers and consumers. Increasing consumers' awareness about food production methods and the environmental footprints these methods may have (e.g. reducing packing of primary products and food, transportation and food waste).

6.1.7 How to fill in the templates?

After finding a suitable case for the NOFAs long-list, you must fill out two templates: a google form and a fact sheet. In the following section this is further explained.

The Google form template

The template aims to collect general information about the selected innovative initiatives, following the criteria described above. Partners should be aware that they do not need registration in Google to fill the online template.

The template is organized around 16 multi-choice questions, which the partners must answer for each of the initiatives they select. The questions provide several options to choose from. In case of "other", there is a section where partners can specify their answer. The template contains enough sections for a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 7 NOFAs per partner.

The table below presents the 16 questions with instructions for partners about what information to consider when answering.

Table 5 - Google form questions with instructions for partners

Google form Questions	Instructions to partners
Name of your organisation	Please indicate partner's organisation
Country (and place) of the initiative:	Please specify the country and the city/village where the initiative is taking place (e.g. Spain, Almeria).
Specify the context in which this NOFA was researched (Interreg project, H2020 project, scientific article, etc.)	If it is an original NOFA (not studies before), write "original".
Region of the initiative:	Region refers to one of the fifth European regions (Northern European, South European, Central European, Eastern European and Baltic European) where the project partners were assigned to at a prior stage. Keeping the regional approach is important for the replicability framework and the organization of regional workshops as part of the evaluation framework. When selecting initiatives from countries that are not presented by

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	project partners, CEJA, MIJARC and Rural Youth Europe should contact IPS for further instructions.
Area of the initiative:	This question requires to specify where the initiative takes place in terms of (1) the location of the farming practice and (2) exchange between farmer(s) and consumer(s). For example, we may have cases where the farmer(s) is in a village, however he/she connects with consumer(s) in cities or in towns/suburbs. In this case, the initiative will be later classified as cross-territorial.
Start of the initiative regarding the first exchange between farmer/producer and consumer:	Specify both (1) when the initiative was formed and (2) when the exchange between farmer(s) and producer(s) started. For example, we may have cases of a farmer establishing a farm in 2015, but starting to sell and connecting with consumers in 2018.
Sector of the initiative:	Please, indicate the economic area where the initiative takes place. In case it collaborates with actors from other sectors, explain this in the "Other" section. In case the initiative operates in a sector not included in the list of options, please specify this in the "Other" section.
Form of collaboration:	Please indicate the organizational form of the initiative. In case the initiative takes a form that is not included in the list of options, describe it in the "Other" section.
Type of collaboration:	Please specify whether the collaboration is horizontal, vertical or a combination of both. *Horizontal combination* refers to partnerships between actors at the same level of the food supply chain: e.g. among farmers/farmers' organizations or among farmers/farmers' organizations and other external to the chain stakeholders as NGOs, researchers, institutes, local authorities, etc. *Vertical collaborations* refer to partnerships among actors all along the food supply chain; e.g. among farmers and consumers; among farmers' organizations and consumers' organizations; among farmers and retailers or wholesalers, etc. *A combination of both horizontal and vertical collaboration* refers to cases where we may find a partnership among farmers (horizontal relation) who however jointly deliver produce to a supermarket (vertical relation).
The collaboration between the actors in the initiative is:	Please indicate whether the collaboration within the initiative is formal - based on contractual agreement(s) between the actors – or informal – based on family, friendship relations or based on oral (not written)

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	agreement(s) between the actors. In case that the initiative entails both types of connection between the actors, check both.
The farmer-consumer relation is:	Please indicate whether the collaboration is facilitated by an intermediary. The role of an intermediary could be played by restaurants, retailers, NGOs, supermarkets, etc.
The collaboration is driven by:	Please specify who is the initiator of the collaboration by indicating whether it is farmer/farmers' organization-driven, consumer / consumers' organization driven, or other supply chain actor (intermediary) driven. In case of other actor driven, specify what type of actor (organization) is the intermediary in the "Other" section.
Which actors are involved:	Please select all actors involved from the list with options. In case of an actor not included in the list, specify it in the "Other" section.
End results achieved by the collaboration when connecting farmers/food producers and consumers:	Here, partners should focus of the way that connectedness is achieved focusing on the relational proximity that construct value and meaning, the mutual understanding between farmers/food producers and consumers of each other needs as well as the mutual benefits that the collaboration provides for both farmers/food producers and consumers. To determine the specific end-results, the following descriptions and examples could be considered. If you identify end-results that are not listed, please specify this in the "Other" section. ***Direct relations***: establishment of personal (face-to-face) producers-consumers relations. This type of connectedness is usually achieved in the region of production, where farmers/producers and consumers can personally exchange, but sometimes also outside the region. The most important outcome here is whether products reach consumers embedded with value-laden information. This type of relations often coincides with direct sales, that happen on roadside sales, through `pick your own' schemes, in farmers markets, or farmshops. Apart from individual farms, box schemes, mail order, at home, online trading and e-commerce deliveries may also offer possibilities for such interactions among producers and consumers. ***Proximate relations***: consumer-producers relations that goes over longer distances in time and space. An example

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could be the cooperation between producers, who widen their product range by exchanging products between farm shops or by combining individual products under a regional quality brand. The proximate relation may also entail practices whereby products are sold in the region or place of production, and consumers (for example, tourists) are made aware of the `local' nature of the product at the point of retail. Proximity relations often include intermediary actors, whereby these may take over the role of guaranteeing product authenticity. Examples are local shops and restaurants (for regional products), but also specialised retailers like `wholefood' and dietetic shops which play an important role in the marketing of organic products.

Extended relation: Within the extended relations products are sold to consumers outside the region of production so the consumer may have no personal experience of that locality. There might be cases where products are exported from the region to national and even global markets. Such extended practices are in compliance with the notion of SFSCs, because it is not the distance over which a product is transported that is critical, but the fact that it is embedded with value-laden information when it reaches the consumer, for example, printed on packaging or communicated at the point of retail. This enables the consumer to make connections with the place/space of production and, potentially, with the values of the people involved and production methods employed. Usually, in the extended short food supply chains, although geographical distances between producers and consumers may be long, consumers could still be aware of the identity of the producers and of the products (such as in the case of fair trade and protected denominations of origin).

Mutual understanding: Refers to situations where farmers are well-informed about consumers' preferences as well as consumers that are well-informed about the impact of their food choices on their health, environment and economy. In other words, at one hand, partners nave to elaborate on the producers' understanding of consumers' needs and their willingness to pay for certain products. In order to determine whether the producers are well informed about consumers' needs partners can reflect on whether producers or another partner in the collaboration collect consumers' feedback. Partners can even go further and search for information whether

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	producers have diversified the products range or the farming techniques or introduced new products based on the consumers' feedback that they receive. On the other hand, partners can look for information whether the consumers are well informed about producers' work, about where the food comes from, how it is produced and its associated characteristics (e.g. organic). Such information can be collected looking at what the producers (or other supply chain actors in the collaboration) are doing to provide food literacy to consumers. For example, you can see whether the producers have specific channels to provide information and educational materials through social media, blogs, through the organization of on-farm food events, festivals, degustation and cooking workshops, etc. Quite often box schemes provide information about the producers and the primary products together with recipes of how to prepare them, how to experiment with cooking techniques, what are the benefits of consuming certain products, what are their quality and healthy aspects, etc. ***Consumer(s) involvement:*** important aspect of the connectedness between farmers/food producers and consumers. It refers to situations when consumers get actively involved in harvesting production or in other functions. For example, consumers could take part in production decisions (what, when, and how to produce), that is typical characteristic of the Solidarity Purchasing Groups). Another example could be the so-called solidarity actions, typical for CSA initiatives and pick-your-own schemes where consumers take part in the harvesting of the production. ***Mutual benefits:*** The benefits obtained by the actors in the supply chain collaboration could be economical ones such as fair prices for producers and consumers, or negotiated quality standards for primary products and food. Another benefit may relate to cases where consumers get product and food from a reliable source, whereas farmers can rely on a calculable and regular income. Fair prices are often generated through non conventional market exchange. A typical example is the Community Support Agriculture (CSA) whereby producers and consumers share some of the risks of production. Usually the CSA members pay in advance the products and may even volunteer to work on the farm, which reduces the price for products and food paid by the

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	consumer. Consumers, who can access fresh, high quality produce at on balanced, relatively low prices are at the same time re-establishing social relationships with farmers. The benefits can also go beyond the economic area and to be related with environmental and social ones such as fostering solidarity and social cohesion among actors as well as building trust based relations between producers and consumers. Another benefit might result in increasing consumers' awareness about food production methods and the different environmental footprints these methods may have. Reducing packing of primary products and food, transportation and food waste are also environmentally friendly outcomes that bring benefits for both producers and consumers. Quite often the pre-orders, typical for box schemes and the so-called RECO-rings (encountered mainly in Nordic countries) for example, avoid return of unsold products and thus introduce minimal or even zero food waste and decreased carbon footprints.
End results achieved by the collaboration when rebalancing farmers' position:	***Market transparency***: partners have to determine whether the collaboration provides information on the processes in the food chain from agricultural production to consumption (from farm to fork) and whether the information provided makes the characteristics of the food less anonymous. In other words, partners has to determine the degree of shared understanding of product related information and the access to such information, provided by the actors in the collaboration. Examples here could be information about the origins of the products, the farms where the produce comes from, farmers, the method of production (the farming practices), quality attributes (traditional and local products, freshness) and other information related to the visibility and traceability of the products. Partners can also check whether the collaboration introduces some quality schemes like designations of origin (PDO), protected geographical indications (PGI) and geographical indication (GI), voluntary certification schemes at national level, guaranty schemes, etc. Such schemes are considered to improve farmers' income as they provide opportunities for better marketing of products, but also enables consumers to trust and distinguish quality products and allow them to make a better choice on the base of clear information about the origin of the products. ***Increased participation in decision-making:*** partner should determine whether the collaborative activities

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	allows the farmer (s) to take part into decisions about what, where and how to produce or who to collaborate with, what information to be communicated through the labelling and the brand, etc. For example farmers' market often introduce specific rules (abiding by national laws and regulations) on what products can be exchanged (organic, conventional, etc.), how they could be promoted and what producers can take part in. Usually, within SFSCs there is a level of interdependence among the actors (for example between farmers/producers and consumers). What is important here is whether farmers/producers are active participants in the decision-making process. ***Increased negotiation power:*** partner should elaborate on farmer(s) ability to influence prices, selling conditions, management, etc. Collaborative initiatives usually require some degree of organization between the actors and thus decisions have to be taken jointly depending on the specific features of the initiative. What is important here is what is the level of the negation power of the farmer(s)/food producers involved in the collaboration – whether they achieve to gain fair conditions for what they contribute to within the collaboration. ***Increased farmer's income:*** partner have to determine whether the collaboration lead to increasing farmer(s) income and decrease the costs (for example for logistic and transportation) ***Sharing risks and resources with other supply chain actors:*** Practices of sharing of resources and risks provide benefits to farmers and strengthen their position in the food supply chain as they can improve costs and margins. Examples here could be sharing logistics infrastructure (vehicles, storage and management tools), sharing storage space, sharing transportation and distribution (e.g. sharing a vehicle under-exploited with other producers). For example, within farmers' cooperative, farmers often co-brand products and share marketing costs to collectively improve their market position in the supply chain. Sharing risks usually refers to practices of shared ownerships between producers (and other supply chain actors) on facilities, resources, insurances; practices like CSA where consumers share the risk with farmers related to farming (poor harvest, crop damage, etc). Sharing knowledge and information on consumers' demand, producers' offers and distribution networks could be important regarding the marketing of primary

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	products and food. Information about consumers' demands could stimulate practices of diversification of the product range and/or the development of new products and/or entering into new market niches. The sharing of information on the distribution network (customers, orders, frequency of deliveries, etc.) allows better visibility of logistics flows and facilitates logistics collaboration between local food system's stakeholders. If you identify end-results that are not listed, please specify them in the "Other" section.

The fact sheet template

Apart from covering general information, the fact sheet aims to collect more context-based descriptive information about the cases (innovative initiatives). This information will be used for the implementation of different tasks within Cocoreado project: (1) to select short-listed (10-15) cases and (2) to serve as a base for evaluating the short-listed cases for good practices. Given the constraints of the desktop research method, partners might experience some challenges to fill all the required information, even if they have applied the criteria for availability and accessibility of data. One of the options for "filling the gap" is to consider a direct contact with a key actor from the collaboration under study to gain the information needed. In case the partners have no opportunity for a direct contact at this stage, they are encouraged to provide their subjective interpretation based on the desktop research and their overall impression of the case.

The template (see 6.1.8) provides instructions for partners on how to fill it.

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6.1.8 NOFAs factsheet for the long list

NOFAs fact sheet

Passport data	
Name of the initiative:	*If it has no name, give it one or describe it as short as possible.*
Logo or picture of initiative:	*Optional.*
Website	*If there is no website, please provide a link with any kind of publicly available online information like article, blog, etc.*
Contact person:	*Include name, e-mail, and telephone. The contact person may be the initiator of the initiative, manager, intermediator, project coordinator, etc*

Objective of the initiative (Max. 200 words):

Please describe what it aims to achieve? What was the driver of the collaboration behind the initiative and what solutions to problems/challenges/opportunities it identifies? This could be a problem related to the need for fairer prices for farmers/food producers and/or consumer;, a need to reduce costs; a need to introduce a logistical or organizational innovation, to provide visibility of local products, the identification of marketing opportunities for producers to sell (fresh) agricultural products; opportunity to diversity commercial channels, opportunity to attract young people or to deliver services to young people, etc.

Actors involved (Max. 200 words):

Please describe the actors involved in the collaborative activities: whether they are individual actors or organizations, how many. If during the desktop research or when contacting key informant you find information about actors' age, their occupational and educational background, please provide it here. Information about the gender composition of the actors is also highly relevant. If possible, describe whether the farmers are hereditary farmers (successors) or newcomers (without previous experience in farming and/or food).

Relation between the actors (Max. 200 words):

Please describe the role of each actor (including the intermediary, if any) within the initiative: who is doing what. You can elaborate on the role of the actors in terms of setting objectives and concrete operations (tasks they perform) and within the decision-making process. Describe what are the areas of collaboration:

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production, processing, logistics, marketing, management, etc. You may also include more detailed information on the formal/informal relations between the actors.

Sustainable aspects of the collaboration (Max. 200 words):

Please describe for each P (people, planet, profit) what are the sustainable impacts of the case: whether, for example it introduces less intensive farming techniques, water management, re-use of production waste, promotes renewable energies, ensures the preservation or even the improvement of natural resources, etc. (environmental impact); enhances cohesion in more depopulated areas, provides employment, especially to young people, enables the population to consume fresh and quality products, empowers local communities, etc. (social impact); generates increased income at producers level, valorisation of local production, fair trade practices within the supply chain, etc. (economic impact).

People:

Planet:

Profit:

Partner's insights on good practices related to the position of the farmer (Max. 200 words):

Please describe what concrete actions led to the end results achieved by the collaboration (the end results that you have selected in the google form): how for example provides information on the processes in the food chain to make it more transparent and the food less anonymous; or how farmers share knowledge and information on consumers' demand, producers' offers and information about the distribution network; or how farmers get market related information; or how the risks are shared – e.g. through long-tern formal/informal agreement among farmers and producers; or how fair price for producers is achieved. This information will facilitate the selection of short-listed initiatives and will provide insights about possible good practices that will be further explored within each of the selected 10-15 cases.

Partner's insights on good practices related to the connectedness between farmer(s) and consumer(s) (Max. 200 words):

Please describe whether and how farmers get opinions and suggestions from customers: do they apply specific tools to receive consumers' feedback and what exactly. Describe whether farmers offer some educational techniques to consumers and what exactly. Explain how consumers get information about farmers, products, farming methods, etc. You can also elaborate on how producers and consumers work together towards achieving a common goal and how they co-create knowledge or share risks. In case there are consumers involved in harvesting primary products or participating in other collaborative activities, you can describe this here. This information will facilitate the selection of short-listed initiatives and will provide insights about possible good practices that will be further explored within each of the selected 10-15 cases.

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Other important information:

Partner can provide information that they consider important regarding the initiative under study, not included in the sections above.

References:

Enlist all the publicly available sources that you have used for the desktop research. In case you performed an interview with a key informant, describe who was the informant, how did you take the interview (face-To-face, through telephone, using video platforms), what was the duration.

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6.2 PROCURs selection framework

6.2.1 Where to search for information about initiatives of SPP of food?

We can identify cases of SFPP initiatives when exploring various publicly available sources such as:

- **Web sites of public contracting authorities** that are central, regional and local administrations and other public organisations like hospitals, schools, nursery centres and the like. On the web sites of public organisations we can found information about their **food policies** and about their engagements with the implementation of national and regional food policies if such exist. This information is needed to fill the section two of the PROCURS template (see section 5 of the Guide) but also can help us to identify additional data related to specific food procurement call initiated by public organisations. In some cases on the public organisations web pages, we can also find calls for food procurement and other procurement related documentation needed to fill different sections of the template.
- **Web sites of EU funded/ co-funded projects** represent another valuable source where an information about PROCURS initiatives can be found. Strength for food and Supurbfood projects are only two examples among many others.
- **Our personal social and professional networks** represent another important sources transmitting information about sustainable procurement of food. Ask your children, friends, colleagues and relatives what they eat and where and what they know about the food they are eating.
- **Potential Ambassadors to whom you send the call for Ambassadors** might also be a valuable source of data.

We can find examples of initiatives also on the EU commission website and on pages dedicated to SPP of food but it might happen that these examples are already included into the list with pre-selected cases (see section 6.4 of this Guide). Please send an e-mail to consult your idea, to avoid double work (Line Rise Nielsen line@changingfood.dk and Petya Slavova pslavova@phls.uni-sofia.bg).

We can select cases, which already have been explored by other projects or are known and popular, only if they are corresponding to the two criteria of Good practices defined in the section 2.3. of this Guide.

6.2.2. Where to find data about initiatives of SPP of food?

National/ regional electronic registers of public procurement

While in the previous section the general sources where we can identify **information about SPP of food** were discussed, this section is dedicated to sources where we can find official and publicly available **data related to specific case of SPP of food** we identified. Data about all PPs is available in the national electronic public registers. EU members states are obliged to publish the call texts and other procurement related documentation on these respective registers. Registers have searching machines allowing to search information when using CPV codes – those are codes indicating the category of goods and services which are subject matter of the procurement.

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Text Box 2: Sample of CPV codes for Agri-food (goods and services)

15800000 Miscellaneous food products
03330000-3 Farm animal products
15100000-9 Animal products, meat and meat products
03311000-2 Fish
03220000-9 Vegetables, fruits and nuts
03142500-3 Eggs
55500000-5 Canteen and catering services
55520000-1 Catering services
15500000-3 Dairy products
03000000-1 Agricultural, farming, fishing, forestry and related products
03100000-2 Agricultural and horticultural products
03140000-4 Animal products and related products
03300000-2 Farming, hunting and fishing products
15000000-8 Food, beverages, tobacco and related products
15500000-3 Dairy products
15510000-6 Milk and cream
15530000-2 Butter
15540000-5 Cheese products

In the registers we may search also using various key words related to the subject matter of the bid or searching for specific contracting authority implementing sustainable food policies. **When formulating the key terms to search in the register we may use those ones related to environmental or socially responsible characteristics of the SPP of food (see Diagram 1) like "organic"; "animal welfare"**;.

Text box 3: Example of National Public Procurement Electronic Register: Experience from Bulgaria[13]: https://app.eop.bg/today/reporting/search

8. Search in **national language**. Some of the information is available also in English but not the whole information we need;
9. In the register you have two searching modes – simple and advanced. Select Advanced mode as it provides more opportunities, including to search while using CPV codes related to Food supplies and Catering services. **Select Procurement related to Food supply, and/or Food catering services.**
10. You can search in three big categories: Procurement, Announcements and Contracts. Select Procurement option as there you can find all procurement documentation you need to define if one procurement is sustainable or not. **Select procurement procedures which are on-going or finished (during the last two years).**
11. In the whole set of documents related to one procurement procedure **identify information about technical specifications (TS), award criteria (AC) and contract performance clauses**

[13] Every national register has different interface but contains almost the same information.

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(CPC) relevant to criteria for SPP. See Text box 1 from this Guide to consult GPP criteria for TS, AC and CPC.

12. Compare the information you find in the Procurement documents about TS, AC and CPC with the information from the examples of good practices available in the section 5 of this Guide. Do you find similar features? (e.g. requirements about more environment-friendly transportation, measurement of food waste, requirements about waste disposal or requirements to provide education to end users and staff, or to hire long-term unemployed or people with disabilities, or to include a quota for organic or labelled food, etc.) **In the ideal case, Sustainable public procurement is focused explicitly and simultaneously on the linkages between the three pillars – most economically advantageous tender, environmental practices and social responsibility.** However, very often in the procurement documentation only one of these three pillars prevails, e.g. to establish fixed or progressive quota for organic food. These cases are also considered Sustainable Public Procurement of Food.
13. Select between 1 and 3 cases which are in line with the principles of SPP and with the definition of Good practice provided in the section 1 of this Guide.
14. **Save all procurement documents you have found in respect of the case you have identified as PROCURS case and attach them to the factsheet template.**

TED: Tenders Electronic Daily

TED is a supplement to the Official Journal of the EU where public procurement calls are published when the bids exceed the threshold defined by the EU regulations . The search in TED follows the same logic as in the national/ regional registers.

Text Box 4: How to search in the TED?

10. Partners can search in English but also in other EU languages.

However, in most of the cases to have access to the procurement documentation, you will be redirected to national or regional electronic registers of PP where the information is available only in the country official language(s).

11. The TED offers two search modes – Advanced and Expert mode.

Select Advanced mode. Search for Procurement related to Food supply, and/or Food catering services by using CPV codes or by entering key words describing the subject matter or the name of specific contracting authority.

12. You can search in three big categories:

TED current issue; Active notices; All notices. **Select All notices**.

13. Review procurement procedures which are on-going or finished (during the last two years prior to the date on which the search is performed.).
14. Search by using three main fields:

Text – here you can add key words related to food and catering supply and services; **Subject matter of the contract** where you can search by CPV code and place of performance. **Date** - Insert dates prior to 2021 to find on-going procedures.

15. Review the results and try to identify the original source where PP documentation is published.

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In some cases, this information is not available for various reasons and you will need to explore additional sources of data.

16. Compare the information you find in the procurement documentation about TS, AC and CPC with the information from the examples of Good practices provided in this Guide.

Do you find similar to sustainable public procurement features? (e.g. requirements about more environment-friendly transportation, measurement of food waste, requirements about waste disposal or requirements to provide education to end users and staff, or to hire long-term unemployed or people with disabilities, or to include a quota for organic or labelled food, etc.).

17. Select cases which are closer to the examples of Good practices provided in this Guide (section 5) and to the definition of PROCURS Good practices provided in the section 2.3. of this Guide.

18. **Save all documents, you have found about the case and attach them to the factsheet template.**

Before you start your PROCURS search, please read carefully the Factsheet template provided in section 5 of this Guide. This is the document where you should code/ fill the data and which will instruct you on what data to select from the documents you find in the registers.

6.2.3 PROCURS factsheet template

Partners are kindly asked after identifying an, initiative related to PROCURS to describe this case using the template for PROCURS factsheet. **It is expected that every partner will select <u>at least one and up to three initiatives.</u> For every PROCURS case identified, a separate factsheet template should be prepared.**

The factsheet contains four sections.

1. The first one refers to the general characteristics of the case described in the public procurement documentation.
2. The second is about the availability of policies in support of SPP in the respective country;
3. The third part refers to the availability of deliberative instruments or bodies linking suppliers and service providers with end users;
4. The fourth and last part refers to the available additional information relevant to SPP topic.

To fill the last three sections, partners are asked to perform additional research about the availability in the respective country/ region/ town/ organisation of specific policies. As well as deliberative structures in support of SPP for food. Ideally, all data required can be provided through **desktop research** (data found in the registers and information identified on projects and public authorities websites). **An interview can be used as an additional method** and we can use it only to clarify some questions. For example the question about the existence of a deliberative body monitoring food public procurement process. If you need/decide to conduct an interview, you do not need to record and transcript it. This should be a short conversation with a person responsible for public procurement from the respective contracting authority aiming to confirm the information from publicly available data you found through desktop research and to complete it. Information and data about Public

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Procurement should be available and accessible for larger public, except elements protected by the GDPR and the competition law.

Before you send the factsheet template, please be sure that:

1) the name of the file has the following structure: **country abreviation_PROCURS_number of the case (at least 1 and up to 3)_type of contracting authority_ subject matter of the bid. Ex: BG_PROCURS_1_school_bio honey;**

2) You prepared a folder containing at least two files/ documents: the **factsheet template and the call text for the bid.** However, we expect to find in the folder all documents you find which are relevant to the specific case described in the factsheet template and to the food policies in the respective country/ region/ town and/ or specific for the public authority initiating the call.

Additional information on necessary data for the last three sections is provided in the template.

1. General information (up to 2 pages)

Country:
Region:
City:
Subject matter of the contract (goods/ services):
Contracting authority: (name and website)
End users:
Compliance of the PP with SPP principles: Why this case can be considered as sustainable public food procurement? (free interpretation provided by partners)
Type of the procedure: (e.g. open, restricted or other)
Period of the contract:
Number of end users (if available to be calculated, e.g. # of meals, # of days, # of schools):
Does this PROCURS receive support from a specific project, programme, or initiative: Yes/ No. If yes, please provide the name of the project, programme, initiative
Procurement criteria:
Selection criteria:
Technical specifications:
Award criteria:
Contract performance clauses:
Results: what is known about the procedure and are there tangible and intangible indicators to measure the results achieved.

2. Policy support (up to 2 pages)

Partners are asked to find information about the existence in their country/ region/ town of a specific policy(ies) and relevant strategies, programmes, initiatives, funding designed specifically to support SPP. If such policies are identified, partners are asked to provide the following information:
(Example from France: Egalim law (2018) and National Nutrition Plan)

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Availability of policies and relevant regulations, strategies, programmes, initiatives, etc. supporting SPP in the country/ region/ town:
Yes/ No. If Yes:
Name the policy supporting SPP:
Policy level:
national, regional, town
Time period addressed by the policy:
Documents implementing the policy: (regulations, strategies, programmes..)
Please provide the titles of all relevant documents identified in both native and English languages.
Funding available to implement the policy:
Yes/ No (If the amount is known, please specify)
Difficulties in implementing the policy:
During your research in publicly available sources about the availability of specific policies in support of SPP, did you find data about any difficulties related to the implementation of the policy? Yes/ No. If Yes, please specify which type of difficulties you have found data about.
Please provide your own understanding/ opinion based on your research about how efficient the policy implementation is.

3. **Deliberative bodies linking suppliers and service providers with end users (up to 1 page)**

Is the sustainable public food procurement supported, facilitated or monitored by a deliberative body? Does it bring together different stakeholders who discuss and exchange information about public food procurement? In different countries and towns, such bodies usually exist but they are known under different names: school-parents councils, regular meetings between state/ municipal and producer organisations, 'consumers-suppliers breakfasts'.
The name of the body:
Purpose of the body:
Key stakeholders (by type of actors, e.g. public body, parent councils, consumer groups, private companies, producer organisations, etc.) taking part in this body:

4. Additional information (up to ½ page)

Partners are asked about additional information they have found about the case that is relevant to SPP principles (definition of SPP) and procedures (regulatory framework) but also to ***farmers' participation in the SPP in the respective case****. Please add any reference you found during your research that is relevant to the topic of SPP.*

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6.3 NOFA's Evaluation framework

6.3.1 General charactersitics

A deeper and general understanding of your NOFA is obtained in this first part. The research question is **what *is the general impression of the NOFA?*** To answer this, the general characteristics (**Error! Reference source not found.**) are categorized into five aspects: vision, mission, strategy, key actors, narratives, values, norms, skills, & competences. In the following sections, we define these different concepts.

A deeper and general understanding of your NOFA is obtained in this first part. The research question is **what *is the general impression of the NOFA?*** To answer this, the general characteristics (**Error! Reference source not found.**) are categorized into five aspects: vision, mission, strategy, key actors, narratives, values, norms, skills, & competences. In the following sections, we define these different concepts.

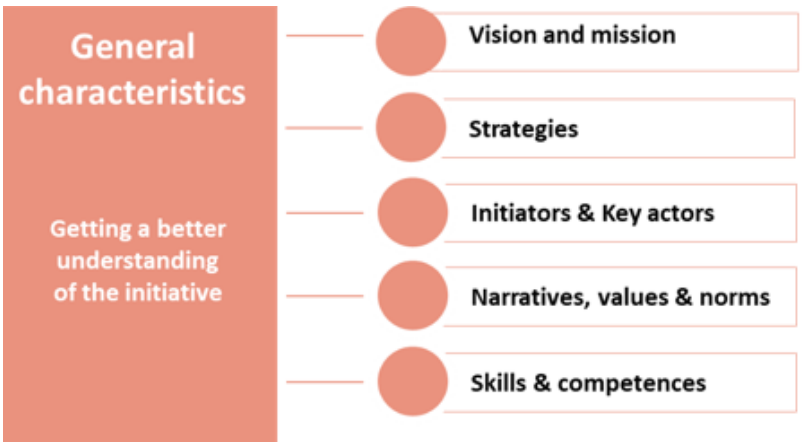

Figure 18 - General characteristics

• Vision and mission

The vision and mission are considered to be of great importance for the efficient and effective operation of the initiative. In that sense, the **vision is** the high-level intention of a project. It answers the question of 'why' the initiative was started. It's a vivid **mental image, based on the goals and aspirations**, of what the initiators want the initiative to be at some point in the future. Having a vision will give the initiative a clear focus.

The **mission statement** is the practical translation of the vision. Many research papers identify the mission statement as a tool for strategic planning and starting point in building an initiative's identity. It is also associated with business performance and survival (Leuthesser and Kohli, 1997). At a minimum, the mission statement should define who the primary customers are, identify the products and services that are produced, and describe the geographical location in which the initiators operate. It answers the questions of 'How is the vision realised?' The mission statement is used to tell the public

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about the business, production or societal goals and plans for reaching both short-term and long-term goals.

When answering this question in the reporting template, you can refer to the initiative's existing vision and mission statement. Note, that this information can sometimes be found on the website of the initiative.

• Strategies

Based on the vision and mission statements for the initiative, a **strategy** is created. **A clear set of short- and long-term goals and objectives on how the vision and mission will be achieved.** It outlines how an initiative will compete in a particular market, or markets, with a product or number of products or services. The **objectives** describe the desired results of the NOFA and are defined by a strategy to attain an identified goal that the key actors want to achieve with the initiative. An initiative can have one or more strategies to achieve its objectives.

Note that vision, mission and strategy are concepts that are often mixed up and used interchangeably.

• Initiators & key actors

In a broad sense, a **supply chain** consists of two or more legally separated organizations that are linked by material, information and financial flows. The food supply chain consists of four main blocks: food production system and input (1), storage and distribution (2), processing and packaging (3), retail and marketing (4) (Fanzo et al., 2020). To leverage resources and knowledge, businesses strive towards an efficient supply chain collaboration. **Supply chain collaboration** is defined as two or more autonomous firms working jointly to plan and execute supply chain operations (Simatupang and Sridharan, 2002). It can deliver substantial benefits and advantages to its partners (Mentzer et al., 2000). These collaborative relationships can help to share risks, access complementary resource, reduce transaction costs and enhance productivity (Cao & Zhang, 2011).

In the case of the NOFAs, when referring to the key actors, this needs to be interpreted rather broadly. As an example, figure 1 shows that for a CSA, a school or another farm can be key actors as well and not only the direct supply chain partners. As inspiration, t**Error! Reference source not found.** gives an overview of potential groups to which these key partners can belong.

Table 6 - Typology when searching for the main initiators and key actors

Potentially important actors	**Description**
Actors working in the food production and input supply	Farmers, this can be the farm include in the NOFA but also (nearby) farmers with whom the farmer collaborates
Actors working in storage and distribution	Person working in warehousing and transport companies.

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Actors working in processing and packaging	Person working in large or small food manufacturers
Actors working in retail and marketing	Person in large or small shops that sell directly to consumers, can be on farm or more centrally located
(Potential) future successor	Person who is assigned/expected to take over the NOFA in the near future
Consultants and/or advisors	Professional advisor who assists in the (financial) management of the farm and/or assists in organizational and administrative procedures amongst others related to take-over, permits, etc. Depending on the NOFA, this category could comprise bankers, accountancy and tax consultants, accountants, advisors from farmers' organisations, government advisors, agronomists…
Public sector	Governments and local authorities
Hired labour	Employee (specific function/general on-farm assistance)
Family and friends	
Community and/or volunteers (stakeholders)	Every natural person or institution that is in any way involved or impacted by the initiative. For example, local schools, nursing homes or other facilities.
Customers	B2B or B2C entities that buy the end products

When answering this question in the reporting template, focus on the main initiator(s) and key partner(s). The initiator(s) are people who initially started the initiative. Key partner(s) are people who collaborate in the initiative and have a mutual benefit in taking part.

• Narratives, values & norms

Narratives are broadly defined as the stories actors tell about events and encounters. It allows social groups to construct shared understandings such as shared values, attitudes, and beliefs, as well as shared goals, purpose, and vision. These create a sense of belonging and solidarity that is linked to trust and that facilitates a collective action. The actors exchange stories with each other to learn, to share understanding, and to share or ask for interpretations and explanations (Bruner, 1991; Czarniawska, 2000; Ingram et al., 2014; Wirth, 1996).

Values refer to criteria of desirability such as preferences, wants, likes, desires, moral obligations, goals of a person in a community. These are the individual beliefs that motivate people to act one way or another. It reflects how individuals assess things (e.g., experiences, behaviours, goods, other people, etc.) as good or bad, appropriate or inappropriate, desirable or undesirable, right or wrong. They serve as a motivation for action. Examples are courage, kindness and fairness. Most organizations have organizational values that are the guiding principles that provide the organization with purpose and direction. It is interesting to probe whether the OFA has defined its own organizational values. **Norms** on the other had can be considered as 'the rules of the game'. They are more concrete than values and refer to *"specific obligatory demands, claims, expectations or rules" (Williams, 1979: 15).* Examples are covering your mouth and nose when sneezing or shaking hands when you meet

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someone. Values and norms are tightly knit together; most norms refer to and are justified by underlying values or emerge out of values.

When answering this question in the reporting template, be attentive of the formal and informal agreements among the key actors (i.e., are these norms and values written down? Are they codified in a code of conduct, or are the norms rather unspoken and informal)

• Skills & competences

Skills are specific learnt abilities needed for completing a specific task. As an entrepreneur building a new skill set is important. Examples of skills are **IT skills, such as computer programming**, **(farmer) and management skills. In the context of the NOFA's financial awareness can be considered to be an important skill. This** indicates whether actors has a good understanding of the main financial drivers of the business and take them into account when carrying out the activities. In addition, **marketing-related skills**, such as making the switch from product-driven to story-driven communication of the initiative, is an important set of skills for actors in a NOFA. Because sales of products can increase when they have a clearer meaning for the consumer, are aimed more at target groups, and set up through the right marketing channels. Given the importance of social media (mainly Facebook and Instagram) as a communication channel for the short food supply chain, an affinity with these tools is also an important skill for NOFA actors

Competencies are knowledge, behaviour and abilities that make you successful in a job. Examples are creativity, problem solving, strategic planning, a sense of initiative and financial and technological knowledge.

6.3.2 Collaboration charactersitics

After having a better understanding of the NOFA, the focus lies on the collaboration characteristics of the NOFAs. The research question here is ***what factors affect the supply chain collaboration of the NOFA?*** To answer this, we relate to seven factors of supply chain collaboration of Cao & Zhang (2011). The different aspects of supply chain collaboration (SCC) are defined to gain insights in the important success factors and barriers of the initiative.

Figure 19 - Collaboration characteristics

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• Information sharing

Information sharing describes the exchange of data between various businesses, people or technology. It refers to the extent and willingness with which actors share relevant, accurate, complete and confidential information in a timely manner with the other supply chain partners and interest groups (table 2) (Cao & Zhang, 2011). There are different types of information sharing, such as information shared by businesses or information shared between software. This can be short term operational data such as inventory levels, sales promotions and sales forecasts. It can also be more strategic long-term information like marketing and sales strategies. Sharing information requires trust and a common interpretation of this data.

When answering the questions in the reporting template, pay attention to the mechanisms of information sharing. In some cases, there is a dedicated data-sharing platform, in other cases mailing, phone calls or physical meetings might be the major information sharing mechanism.

• Goal congruence

Goal congruence is achieved when the goals of different interest groups (table 2) in the supply chain match. When accomplishing the (supply chain) objectives, the different groups perceive their own objectives are satisfied. The actors may have agreements on goals in the supply chain and work together towards achieving a common goal. This common goal gives a group a shared purpose and encourages them to work together as a team and achieve an end-result. E al

When answering the questions in the reporting template, provide an insight in the process of how these common goals are reached.

• Decision synchronization

Decision synchronization bridges the gap between supply chain operations. It refers to the process by which supply chain partners (and other interest groups of the initiative) make decisions in (supply chain) planning and operations that optimize the supply chain benefits (Simatupang and Sridharan, 2005). The process involves decisions on how much to produce, which inputs need to be purchased, how to distribute the goods, how to adapt to changes in demand and supply. Digitizing has a lot of opportunities to synchronise the decisions throughout the supply chain. It helps to improve the supply chain efficiency and flexibility and enable complete visibility and transparency. One of the main benefits is the ability to decrease costs by improving the inventory, adaption according to customer requirements, stabilizing relationships with distributors and vendors.

In addition, when working together with different actors, conflicts are inevitable. **Conflicts** are defined as 'difference in opinion or disagreement between two or more actors' and need to be resolved effectively. Striking a balance between resolving a conflict to find the decision and maintaining the emotional wellbeing of people involved, is critical to successful conflict management.

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When answering this question in the reporting template, be considerate about the procedure by which the decisions (planning and operations) are taken and how problems are resolved. Try to highlight the different perspectives of the key actors in the reporting template.

• Incentive alignment

This is the process focused on the more economical aspects among supply chain partners, including determination of **shared costs, benefits and risks** (Simatupang and Sridharan, 2005). We elaborate on aspects related to costs, benefits and risks.

Firstly, **two types of costs** need to be considered:

1. Capital expenses (CAPEX): These are funds used by a business to acquire, upgrade or maintain physical assets such as buildings, technology or equipment. These are purchases of significant goods or services used to improve a business' performance in the future. An example of CAPEX for a CSA, is buying additional land to expand their business so that they can add more participants to their CSA.

2. Operational expenses (OPEX): These are the costs a business accumulates for running its day-to-day operations, such as wages, salaries, and utilities (e.g.: seed, fertilizer, and packaging material). These are the short-term expenses and are paid weekly, monthly or annually. An example of OPEX for a CSA is buying the seeds that are planted on the land.

When looking at costs, different mechanisms may be at play among the different key partners of the initiative, both for investments (CAPEX) and operational costs (OPEX)-:

- Costs may be shared horizontally. For example, when certain equipment is shared among farmers, one needs to take into account the rules related to sharing this equipment.
- Costs may be shared vertically. For example, the farmer pays a transport company to pick up and deliver fruit boxes to its customers.

Another type of costs that need to be considered are the opportunity costs (for 'own capital' or for 'labour used'). The opportunity cost represents the potential benefits that a business misses out when choosing one alternative over another. An example of opportunity costs for 'labour used' for a CSA is: the farmers invest their time in educational visits for children, while they are not investing this time in planting seeds. This is a missed opportunity. The farmers could have invested their money and time in other projects, this is the opportunity cost. If the NOFA is very time and/or capital intensive this is important to take into account.

Secondly, there are different types of **benefits** resulting from the initiative, the most important ones are the revenues. **Revenues** for a conventional farmer is price multiplied by output, in which price is usually the spot market price, i.e. the price at the time of sales in a given market. Typically, for short food supply chains, revenues are (repeated) transactions (e.g., incentive schemes between supply chain partners) and thus linked to a relational dimension. There are however also non-financial benefits to be expected from the NOFAs which will be described in 6.3.2.

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Lastly, every business has **certain risks** and it is important to understand the major risks linked to each NOFA. Some typical risks related to food production are: weather conditions, pest and diseases influencing the harvest, a mismatch between what is produced and what customers demand, the mental and physical well-being of the farmer, a major increase of input costs (such as diesel, seeds and fertilizer), problems to obtain or keep the required permissions and comply with regulatory demands, etc.. Sharing risks with key partners involves sharing logistics infrastructure (vehicles, storage and management tools); sharing storage space; shared ownerships on facilities, resources, insurances; shared knowledge and information on consumers' demand, producers' offers and distribution networks.

When answering the questions in the reporting template, it is important to understand the different economic mechanisms (for cost, benefits and risks) of the NOFA. It is important that you're persistent when questioning, because ultimately we want to gain insight into the economic position of the farmer.

• Resource sharing

Resource sharing refers to the extent to which resources are shared among supply chain partners (and other interest groups) to make the process more efficient and effective. The key partners leverage capabilities and invest in assets together with supply chain partners. Resources include physical resources, such as manufacturing equipment, facility (storage space), technology and joint purchase (Harland et al., 2004). A difference is made between the short term, such as sharing equipment and the long-term strategic resource sharing for the strategy planning (e.g., do we buy additional land?) or procurement decisions.

When answering this question in the reporting template, ask specifically about the agreements when equipment and/or resources are shared. Try to highlight the differences in the perspectives of the key actors in the reporting template.

• Communication

This factor is twofold, we distinguish both **collaborative communication** between the (key) actors and **external communication**. Collaborative communication relates to the contact between key actors in terms of frequency, direction, mode, and influence strategy. Open, frequent, balanced, two-way, multilevel communication is generally an indication of close inter-organizational relationships (Goffin et al., 2006; Tuten and Urban, 2001).

Secondly, the **external communication**, relates to the communication with the end-consumers and the marketing strategy of the initiative. A **marketing strategy** is the plan of reaching prospective consumers and turning them into customers of your initiative. To align a marketing strategy to customers, an initiative should know about the customer segment they are serving. There are four main market segmentations: demographic (age, sex, income, occupation), behavioural (shopping habits, actions taken on website, benefits sought), geographical (market is split up based on

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customers' location) and psychographic (focus on mental and emotional such as environmentally conscious, value community).

When answering the questions in the reporting template, indicate the difference between the collaborative and external communication.

• Joint knowledge creation

This refers to the extent to which supply chain partners develop a better understanding of and response to the market and competitive environment by working together (Malhotra et al., 2005). There are two kinds of **knowledge creation activities:** knowledge exploration i.e., jointly searching and acquiring new and relevant knowledge and **knowledge exploitation** i.e., assimilating and applying relevant knowledge (Bhatt and Grover, 2005).

When answering the questions in the reporting template, indicate the difference between the knowledge creation activities and the knowledge exploitation.

6.3.3 Impact

In this third aspect of the framework (Figure 2) we explore the extent to which we can consider the NOFA to be successful in terms of strengthening the (economic) position of the farmer and in terms of reconnecting producers and consumers.

On economic aspect: strengthening the position of farmer

Rebalancing the farmer's position in the food supply chain refers to improving the economic position of the farmer as a result of collaboration across the supply chain. It is generally considered that within food supply chains farmers are rather price takers then price setters. Besides, farmers are put in a situation of informational asymmetry about prices and consumers' demand.

Whether a NOFA is regarded as economically successful depends on whether the NOFA has resulted in an increased income for the farmer(s) involved. From a farmers' perspective, this is achieved when a certain reference income is obtained, e.g. expressed as income per hour. Note that a farmer can be involved in several NOFAs at the same time (on-farm selling, box scheme, delivery to food hub or retailer, etc.). It is important to know **whether** the reference income has been achieved as well as **how** this has been done.

Ideally we would like to do a whole farm income calculation. If this is available (via an accounting agency for example) and the farmer is willing to share this information, this is the preferred option. If this is not available, we recommend to ask the farmer to assess their costs and revenues related to the NOFA as best as possible. To do this it is important to understand the mechanics of the business model and determine the focus of the NOFA's cost-benefit analysis.

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''A business model is a concise representation of how an interrelated set of decision variables in the areas of venture strategy, architecture, and economics are addressed to create sustainable competitive advantage in defined markets'' (Morris et al., 2005).

NOFAs can be organized in different ways, it can imply the entire farm or only part of the farm. The NOFA can be independent or it can be part of a cooperation. Depending on how the NOFA is set up the focus of the cost-benefit analysis is different.

- The NOFA could simply serve as a way to sell part of the existing harvest. In that case production costs remain the same and we can limit our cost assessment to costs that are made specifically for the NOFA, for example distribution costs.
- The NOFA might also imply new products or services next to the existing farm operations. New investments and production costs will be generated and it is important to make a cost-benefit analysis of the specific investment without taking into account the rest of the farm.
- If the NOFA has impact on the production costs of the whole farm, then you need to focus on the income and costs of the full farm.
- If the NOFA serves as a cooperation sometimes the cooperants need to pay a fee. For example, sometimes the farmers need to pay X% for the logistics or marketing of the products.

Once you determined the business model and the focus of your cost-benefit analysis, try to unravel how the NOFA influences costs and revenues. It is not important to have exact numbers but rather to understand why costs and revenues increased/decreased and whether the end result is satisfactory or not.

Apart from costs and benefits we expect that NOFA's will also have an influence on other economic factors influencing the position of the farmer in the total supply chain:

- **Market transparency:** regarding the processes in the food chain from agricultural production to consumption (from farm to fork); farmer's gaining better knowledge on prices, and other market related information; less anonymous production.
- **Increased participation in decision-making autonomy:** regarding farmer's participation in decisions about what, how and how much to produce.
- **Increased negotiation power**: in terms of farmer' ability to influence prices and selling conditions.
- **Sharing risks with key partners**: there are different kind of risks that farmers need to cope with, such as production risks, market risks, financial risks. Sharing this risks is a well-known management strategy by which farmers can share risks with others.

On social aspect: improving the connection between producers and consumers

Connectedness between producers and consumers refers to the relational proximity between producers and consumers. This leads to the construction of knowledge, value and meaning about the product and its provenance, production and consumption as well as mutual understanding about producers and consumer's needs and mutual benefits. We distinguish the following aspects of improvement in this social dimension:

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- **Relations: Direct relation (1)** is an establishment of personal (face-to-face) producers-consumers relations (e.g. consumer buys milk at the dairy farm). **Proximate relation (2)** is a consumer-producers' relations that goes over longer distances in time and space (e.g.: Belgian consumer buys Italian olive oil at the food market). **Extended relation (3)** is a consumer-producers relation outside the region of production (e.g.: consumer buys fair trade products in the supermarket).
- **Consumer(s) involvement in harvesting or in other supply chain function**
- **Mutual understanding**: farmers are well-informed about consumers' preferences and consumers well-informed about the impact of their food choices on their health, environment and economy.
- **Mutual benefits:** economic (fair price); social (solidarity, social cohesion, increased consumers' awareness about food production); environmental (reduced food prints; reduced packing of primary products and food, transportation; reduced food waste)

Try to understand what the different key partners value most in this new type of relationship and how this has helped to make the NOFA a success. Did the NOFA succeed in improving the relationship between consumers and producers?

On replicability of the NOFA

In this third aspect related to impact, we explore which characteristics (general and/or collaboration) affect the replicability of the NOFA in other European contexts. Note that the different characteristics can either have a **positive impact as well as a negative impact** on the replicability. There are two different ways to look at replicability, focusing on the reproducing or scaling up a specific initiative.

The PESTEL-analysis is used to have an overview of five factors influencing the NOFA: Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal aspects (figure 5). This tool is used to analyse and monitor the macro-environmental factors that have a profound impact on the organisation, in our case the NOFAs. It's important to highlight that a good practice of a NOFA, can be considered as a solution in one region, but is not necessarily a success story in another region or different context, since each innovative initiative (with its specific good practices) is unique and the environment in which it operates is crucial in the success or failure of a certain innovation. That's why a PESTEL-analysis is an interesting tool to further investigate the replicability of good practices of the NOFAs.

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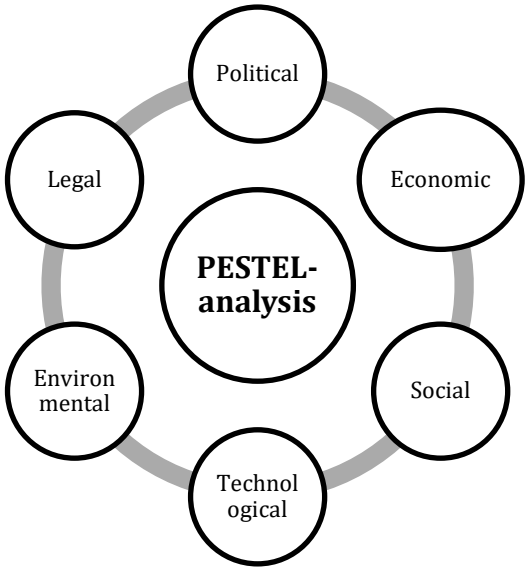

Figure 20 - PESTLE-analysis

Below, the different aspect are elaborated.

Political	These factors are all about how and to what degree a government intervenes in the economy or a certain industry. This can include government policy, political stability or instability, corruption, foreign trade policy, tax policy, labour law, environmental law and trade restrictions. Furthermore, the government may have a profound impact on a nation's education system, infrastructure and health regulations. These are all factors that need to be taken into account when assessing the attractiveness of a potential market.
Economic	These are determinants of a certain economy's performance. Factors include economic growth, exchange rates, inflation rates, interest rates, disposable income of consumers and unemployment rates. These factors may have a direct or indirect long term impact on a company, since it affects the purchasing power of consumers and could possibly change demand/supply models in the economy. Consequently it also affects the way companies price their products and services.
Social	This dimension represents the demographic characteristics, norms, customs and values of the population within which the organization operates. This includes population trends such as the population growth rate, age distribution, income distribution, career attitudes, safety emphasis, health consciousness, lifestyle attitudes, diets, consumer's preferences, and cultural barriers. These factors are especially important for marketers when targeting certain customers. In addition, it also says something about the local workforce and its willingness to work under certain conditions.

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Technological	This dimension refers to technology incentives, the level of innovation, automation, research and development (R&D) activity, technological change and the amount of technological awareness that a market possesses. These factors may influence decisions to enter or not enter certain industries, to launch or not launch certain products or to outsource production activities abroad. By knowing what is going on technology-wise, you may be able to prevent your company from spending a lot of money on developing a technology that would become obsolete very soon due to disruptive technological changes elsewhere.
Environmental	This dimension has become important due to the increasing scarcity of raw materials, pollution targets and carbon footprint targets set by governments. These factors include ecological and environmental aspects such as weather, climate, environmental offsets and climate change which may especially affect industries such as tourism, farming, agriculture and insurance. Furthermore, growing awareness of the potential impacts of climate change is affecting how companies operate and the products they offer. This has led to many companies getting more and more involved in practices such as corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability.
Legal	Although these factors may have some overlap with the political factors, they include more specific laws such as discrimination laws, antitrust laws, employment laws, consumer protection laws, copyright and patent laws, and health and safety laws. It is clear that companies need to know what is and what is not legal in order to trade successfully and ethically. If an organisation trades globally this becomes especially tricky since each country has its own set of rules and regulations. In addition, you want to be aware of any potential changes in legislation and the impact it may have on your business in the future. Recommended is to have a legal advisor or attorney to help you with these kind of things

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6.3.4 Project partner's interpretation and first analyses of the NOFA

In this last section of the reporting template, the project partners are asked about **their own interpretation of the NOFA**, such as the most striking findings when you conducted interviews with the key actors and your opinion of th**e most important success and failure factors** related to the collaboration between the different actors in the NOFA.

The success factors on which these good practices are build, lead to successful collaboration and are the basis of a sustainable food system. The collaborations considered are those, which improve the farmers' position in the supply chain in terms of income, independence of the decision-making and access to information, and by shortening the link between producer and consumer and de-anonymising their relationships.

When answering this question in the reporting template, explore good practices of this initiative. These are defined as a set of concrete practices that support the success of innovative initiatives (NOFAs and PROCURs) to reach their goals to strengthen the position of the farmer and connect producers and consumers.

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connecting consumers and producers to rebalance farmers' position

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