

# Community-supported agriculture

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**Project acronym:** Smart Food Supply Chains

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**Internal template:**

**Pilot description on NTIs**

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**WP leader:** CBHU

**Work package title:** Technological and non-technological innovations

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<b>Dissemination Level</b>		
<b>PU</b>	<b>Public</b>	
<b>PP</b>	<b>Restricted to other program participants</b>	
<b>RE</b>	<b>Restricted to a group specified by the consortium</b>	
<b>CO</b>	<b>Confidential, only for members of the consortium</b>	

**1. Title of the case description**

Community-supported agriculture (Solidarische Landwirtschaft)

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

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

**3. Indicate the region (if applicable):** world-wide

#### 4. WP2 Cross-reference table

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

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

**1: Farming**

**2: Primary production**

**3: Transport**

**4: Processing and packaging**

**5: Storage**

**6: Logistics**

**7: Sale**

**8: Product integrity, authenticity, transparency**

**9: Marketing concepts**

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

**11: Business modelling**

**12: Policy environment**

**13: Legal requirements**

**14: Labelling**

## 5. Short description of the innovative solution

- **Describe the specific need or problem being addressed by the case and please explain what is the novelty of this innovative solution**
  - Regional and especially organic products are relatively expensive compared to conventionally grown food.
  - Small regional farmers are economically inferior to large mass producers. Consequently, they are not in a position to compete with the prices of the large companies.
  - In addition, consumers are losing the connection to food production due to the mass production of food.

A group of consumers and a farmer form a community. The consumers pay the farmer a fixed amount, in the amount of which is needed to operate the farm and earn his/her living. CSAs create direct connections between producers and consumers through alternative markets and the members and farmers share the risk of farming. The goals of the first CSA model were to have the producer and consumer to come into the market as equals and make an exchange with fair prices and fair wages.

- **Describe the enabling function(s) and the practical benefit(s) - (e.g. for which types of problems and opportunities is used and can it be used, and how)**
  - Enables communities to take control of their food supply by providing their members with a variety of local, often organically produced food from vegetables and meat, to milk, bread and honey.
  - Creating an understanding of what real food is and the value of its production.
  - Enables transparency in the food system and provides a logical step for consumers towards reclaiming sovereignty over the way their food is grown, processed and traded.
  - Helping people to develop and share skills.
  - Local employment is boosted with CSAs.

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

The concept of Community-supported agriculture “CSA” includes that risk is distributed between the farmer and the consumers. The consumers support the farms financially. Therefore, the consumers as community are self-empowered and influence the agricultural production. This strengthens the community and solidarity.

They decide together which production and products they will focus on. This is a great opportunity to also grow products which are not grown on conventional farms because of reasons of economy. Thus, economic efficiency is not necessarily the criterion that determines the production.

The members can decide on new branches of industry. The members can bring in their competences and workforce into the daily work at the farm. The consumer turns into a prosumer (consumer + producer). Thus, farmer and consumer are able to interact together and feel a sense of community.

# What is CSA?

Community - Supported - Agriculture



The infographic is a vertical flowchart with a blue border. It starts with a woman holding a question mark, followed by a bowl of vegetables, and a farmer with a pitchfork. The text boxes describe the benefits: easy way to feed family, fresh and tasty food, and local farmer variety. The next row shows a tractor, a handshake, and a smartphone, with text about fresh harvest, seasonal shares, and signing up. The final row shows a shopping basket, two people with a box, and a farmer with a hat, with text about weekly shares, door delivery, and healthy lifestyle. At the bottom, it says 'brought to you by:' followed by a logo for 'FOURTH FARM CSA' and an illustration of a person on a bicycle.

**You want an easy way** to feed your family

food that is **fresh and tastes great.**

Your **local** CSA farmer grows a variety of fruits and vegetables

The food is **harvested fresh** from the field

You purchase a share at the start of the season.

Contact the farm to **sign up** for a CSA program

and packed into **once a week farm shares**

that are **delivered to your door.**

You eat well, support local agriculture, and foster a **healthy lifestyle**

brought to you by:

FOURTH FARM CSA

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

There are around 196 existing businesses (104 foundation phase) in Germany, around 2000 in France. The communities have a group size of 50-80 persons (in beginning to be economically viable) up to 800 persons. Most frequent are sizes around 300 members.

Members of CSA are mainly small-scale farms with max. 280 ha. In bigger farms the communication within the community is getting complex. An option could be to split different branches to several CSA or one choose one branch to join the CSA concept.

The interested persons are forming member groups and are searching for a farmer in their proximity. The CSA is acting as a mediator in this process. The motivation of farmers to choose this concept is often a financial one. But there are innovative thinking farmers and managers, too. Often are less attractive sites chosen. Sometimes several producers join forces and form a co-operative CSA.

- **Describe the distribution channels of the product(s)**
  - Direct collection from the producer
  - Home delivery (the distribution of the products is often done by the members)
  - Collection from a central warehouse
  - Sometimes, there may be several pick-up points
- **Describe what makes the innovation work.**
  - The core group of members (~5) must develop very fast
  - The farmer should focus on the actual farm work
  - Outsourcing of expertise, for example, the distribution of products

- **Describe the specific prerequisites for the business related to the implementation of the method and/or related to the location, method, procedure, solution**
- a: List the relevant necessary resources (including the estimated cost) for the specific innovation.  
Please list the relevant ones only (list is annexed)**

**MATERIALS:**

- Fresh processed local food from farmers

**HUMAN:**

- Farmers, consumers

**FINANCIAL**

- Estimated cost:
  - On the average each member is paying around 90 – 120 € per month

- b: List the relevant necessary capabilities for the specific innovation.  
Please list the relevant ones only (list is annexed)**

Food safety:

Mainly certified organic farms e.g. Demeter, Organic

Trust:

Collaboration between the local farmers and consumers

Accessibility to consumers:

Ability to implement a socioeconomic model

Fair price:

CSAs are not based on increasing profit, but on the actual needs of the people and land involved in an enterprise

- **The method/technology was established by**
- NAME: Community-supported agriculture (SOLIDARISCHE LANDWIRTSCHAFT)  
ADDRESS: Bahnhofstraße 5, 14806 Bad Belzig, Germany  
PROVIDES SOLUTION FOR:  
Farmers, consumer

**6. Describe the results, achievements and typical failures**

- Many CSA farmers can capitalize on a closer relationship between customers and their food, since some customers will pay more if they know where it is coming from, who is involved, and have special access to it
- Support of the local producers
- Members pay around 30% less than they would spend buying the same products in an organic grocery store
- There is a member fluctuation of around 20% per year

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

Community-supported agriculture is a system that connects the producer and consumers within the food system more closely by allowing the consumer to subscribe to the harvest of a certain farm or group of farms. It is an alternative socioeconomic model of agriculture and food distribution that allows the producer and consumer to share the risks of farming.

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

The socioeconomic model could be transferred to other SFSC members.

**9. Recommendations for members of other SFSCs for further applications**

The model could be of interest to all producers who are facing increasing international competitive pressure.

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

<https://www.solidarische-landwirtschaft.org/startseite/>  
<https://communitysupportedagriculture.org.uk/what-is-csa/>

## Annex

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

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

\*: estimated cost:

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

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

## 2. Checklist for the necessary capabilities

- **food safety:**
  - basic skills to comply with the EU food safety regulations
  - ability to understand what makes the product safe (the key controls, which ensure the safety of the product – biological, chemical and physical hazards, providing the safety shelf life of perishable products)
  - food safety culture (motivation, responsibility for food safety) and basic skills for the implementation of HACCP
  
- **food quality:**
  - ability to define the target segments of consumers for SFSCs
  - ability to define the product characteristics which are (tacit) basic requirements for the target segment(s) of consumers;
  - ability to define which product attributes/levels and augmented services represent an added value for the target segments of consumers;
  - food quality culture (motivation, responsibility for food quality);
  - production experiences which help to provide the expected quality reliably, uniformly;
  - ability to provide distinguishable quality which meets the needs of the targeted consumer segment;
  - meeting (local) legal requirements, application of the labelling rules;
  - ability to access the consumer willingness to pay for specific products of SFSCs.
  
- **trust:**
  - ability to ensure product integrity, authenticity and transparent information for the consumers (including systems, tools);
  - ability to access external trust enhancers (third party certification, internal certification system, participatory guarantee systems);
  - application of the labelling rules and branding (mandatory and voluntary);
  - ability to meet third party certification requirements
  
- **ethical aspects**
  - ability to understand consumer needs for ethical behaviour related to the specific product(s) of the SFSCs;
  - culture for ethical food production and supply;
  - ability to implement necessary measures to ensure ethical food production and supply;
  - ability to access the consumer willingness to pay for products meeting ethical aspects
  
- **accessibility to consumers:**
  - ability to organize logistics efficiently and to exploit innovative solutions and distribution channels;
  - efficient, innovative sales methods;

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

- **input for R+D:**
  - ability to monitor, research, evaluate, and understand the needs and wants of customers and consumers;
  - ability to develop new products, processes, packaging, preservation techniques, systems and access to new markets, including in other categories;
  - access to innovative technologies; distribution and marketing solutions and methods. management systems;
  - access to local input for R+D covered by other aspects
  
- **access to markets: and market success**
  - effective promotion, customer service, efficient and innovative sales methods;
  - ability to understand consumer's needs;
  - ability to organise logistics efficiently and to exploit innovative solutions and distribution channels,
  - unique value propositions;
  - ability to develop and implement new business models for ensuring access of consumers to products and augmented services, develop the market accessibility for the suppliers.
  - stock control;
  - ability to access to required raw materials within a restricted geographical area
  
- **access to infrastructure:**
  - ability to use existing own infrastructure in a focused way to serve consumer needs or to combine it with complementary infrastructures of other SFSC actors, cooperation culture;
  
- **management:**
  - to implement management systems for vision, planning, implementing), coordinating, controlling, monitoring, continuously;
  - improving; ability to motivate, authorize staff;
  
- **production, processing:**
  - management system, production experience, specific controlling, monitoring, continuously;
  - willingness to consider and ability to evaluate the adoption of TECI and NTI in the current production processes;
  - any additional specific resources necessary for the application of the specific innovation.