

A report presenting best practise
'Creating data and understanding of
current supply and demand'
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Mapping of supply and demand in Groningen

To get a better understanding of the regional food demand and supply in the pilot region of Groningen, many mapping activities have been carried out. The work was made in close cooperation with several schools in the region. The mapping process resulted in interesting results and we learned important lessons.

What can / has been done

Via the chamber of commerce we designed a list with all food related SME's in the region (province of Groningen and the two municipalities of the province of Drenthe: Noordenveld and Tynaarlo). For mapping the production, processing and urban food demand, we developed an app and database together with Stadscoöperatie Rotterdam. We contacted schools in the region for participating in the mapping process. Together with participating schools we designed a questionnaire. Students of Secondary schools, secondary vocational schools and university of applied sciences used the app with the questionnaire to collect the data. However, there were some complications with the app and this resulted in less data than we expected.

Results and important lessons

Despite the complications with the app, after the first mapping phase a huge gap is identified between the volumes produced by primary producers and those of food processors. The regional processing skills and SMEs in the processing industries almost entirely are gone, whereas they are urgently needed to feed the region. Thus, we can now already confirm there is a huge potential for innovating and boosting regional food related SME.

Besides this we reached a lot of people in the region with our message: the current regional food chain is not sustainable for the future and we provide an alternative. We reached the target groups via newspapers, TV, radio, websites, and we reached 100 regional SME's with a congress about the regional food chain.

Lessons learned:

- Schools vary as to cooperation and implementation
- Integrate mapping actions in curricula takes time

All the five schools that participated implemented our project differently. Some really wanted to intergrade it in the curricula, others just did it 'on the side' as something extra to the curricula. Every school needed a custom made approach and this resulted in some of delay of the mapping process.

- Little too demanding for secondary school students
- Interview questions too vague for students and interviewees

The questionnaire in combination with the app and the overall case of the regional food chain was a little too demanding for secondary school students. This was also the feedback of some teachers.

- The app worked not as expected

It proved to be difficult to build a good connection between the questionnaire and the database. This resulted in errors in the app. The fact that it was not easy to update or edit the app, it took most of the time two weeks, made it very difficult as well. This had something to do with the publishing rights with Android and iOS. For instance to edit a website is much easier.

- Not all 5000 SMEs need to be mapped

Even without the mapping results there happens a lot already. Where we first thought the mapping process is a crucial process for further action, we now think it is still important, however, not all 5000 SMEs are needed. We can focus on the more interesting SMEs following the demand from the institutional kitchens. We will begin to focus on specific product chains. For instance the potato chain or pulses chain. The mapping process is a good tool to grow the community of the regional food chain.

- Not a linear process

There is not so much a linear process (as we first thought and what is reflected in the roadmap), but a process in which several actions run parallel and sometimes iterative.

Next steps

Creating in depth understanding of large purchasers' demands and priorities and identifying the most promising regional product chains for further elaboration. We are working on the development of communities in those promising regional product chains. Examples: beef, pork, potatoes, fruit, legumes. Working in these product communities will result in a better understanding of the chains and contribute to the mapping process.

Do you want to learn more?

Welcome to contact

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