

English summary – SFC specialist report

Barriers and opportunities for the development of SFC systems for the purposes of the Eat wisely. Know what you Eat! Campaign.

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A Short Food Chain (SFC) system is an organised system of production, processing, distribution and sales of food, which connects food producers from a specified geographical region directly to consumers, who are seeking to buy food of known origin from a specific food producer.

SFC system solutions are receiving more and more interest among public institutions at the local, national and European levels as part of a growing conviction that fundamental changes must take place in the way food systems are currently organised on account of their negative environmental impacts.

In Poland and in other countries, in which there is a significant small farm sector producing mostly for its own needs, SFC systems are of growing interest to politicians. This is related to a need to develop new organizational forms for local agricultural markets, that take into account small farms and small food producers in food supply chains. The need and opportunity is to see small farms as an opportunity for rural development and for reforming the food economy. But perhaps the most significant factor, when it comes to interest in SFC systems, comes not from public policy or its shortcomings in this regard, but from changes taking place on the part of consumers. In recent years, consumers are concerned increasingly with food quality, although cost considerations continue to dominate.

Scaling up SFC systems in terms of the number of participating producers and consumers, the range and diversity of products offered for sale and sales volumes, demands effective partnership action of all the stakeholders participating in the system. How to effectively support and develop appropriate partnering represents the most significant barrier and opportunity for the functioning and development of SFCs not just in Poland. The most significant barriers and opportunities for the development of SFCs requiring partnership action are as follows: (a) forms of financing SFCs; (b) actions aimed at creating new products that meet the needs of consumers, and vice-versa; (c) assuring quality and authenticity, including food safety; (d) gaining market access and competing on them; (e) logistical solutions; and (f) building awareness among consumers that locally-produced food has value.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development should develop public policy and support instruments for joint or collective direct selling by small farms and small food processors who are associated with them and operating also as part of an SFC system. Public support should be directed in particular to small farms (eg. less than 5 ha) in order to help them become actively involved in co-creating an SFC system.

Providing small farms with the opportunity to sell products from their farms can help solve the problem of supporting jobs in traditional agriculture, while at the same time providing consumers with access to high quality food products. This requires an active public policy focused on supporting small and traditional farms

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Realizacja/Implementation: Fundacja Rozwoju Podhala w ramach umowy/agreement no nr KSOW/2/2018/038.



as distinct from public policy targeting larger commercial farms concerned with large-scale agricultural production and international trade.

Responding to the challenge of scaling up SFC systems, it is necessary to focus on for areas of innovation: (a) innovative organizational solutions; (b) innovative IT solutions, especially in relation to intelligent and interactive platforms; (c) innovative financing solutions (financial products and services) and (d) using the existing infrastructure of agri-advising services in new ways.

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