

COMUNITA' FRIZZANTE

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Comunità Frizzante business started as a circular economy project realized by a social association to valorise by-products. Now Comunità Frizzante is a large reality, significantly relying on its huge network.

Citizen groups, schools, and associations are part of this concept. Comunità Frizzante has no infrastructures, no production facilities, no warehouse, as the production is done by the partners in the network.

We use unique ingredients to co-create a tasty and diverse product with our community



Target Users

- Coffee shops
- Restaurants
- Small local organic stores
- Wholesalers



Market Channels

- Direct contacts



Strengths

- Innovative, and healthy products
- Non-industrial sparkling juices

COLLABORATIONS

The collaboration with the network of partners and customers is key for the success of Comunità Frizzante. Local actors are involved in each phase of the project. They work closely with the different local communities (like farms) but also with international partners (like the fizzy drinks makers from UK). For them, the production of drinks itself is instrumental to engage with people, to cultivate relationships, and to stimulate local knowledge.



Success Factors

- Private institutes for developing new products
- Huge and consolidated network



Obstacles to Overcome

- To search for raw materials that are high quality, available in required quantity and compliant with relevant legal requirements
- To create a network of suppliers and customers that perfectly match with the product concept
- To make the products affordable and competitive for the customers

Our interest is having a direct dialogue with our customers

DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

The small size of the company has required small investments. This makes it flexible in responding to market changes. The flexibility is also achieved by privileging direct contacts with small organisations rather than with supermarkets. This leads also to a certain freedom to operate in the market.



LA CANTINA DEI COLLI RIPANI

cantina  dei colli ripani

La Cantina dei Colli Ripani is a wine cooperative of 330 local producers. Their mission is to create value for the community and its members. Sustainability is a key component in their vision: from a social point of view, this is achieved by offering to their contributing members value in line with the effort they make in the production. From the economic point of view, they offer a consistent remuneration that supports the local community; from the environmental perspective, they adopt eco-friendly practices relying on renewable energy (solar panels) and organic farming.

“ Our goal is to create value for the cooperative and its members ”



Target Users

- Traders/wholesalers
- Private companies
- Restaurants
- Final consumers



Market Channels

- Social media
- On-line shops
- Own sales outlets



Strengths

- Having a wide range of products to meet the needs of different types of customers
- Long-track experiences in the field

COLLABORATIONS

The organic production requires a strong collaboration and trust with their suppliers/members. The continuous dialogue established is particularly beneficial for all actors of the value chain towards the sustainable goals achievement.



Success Factors

- Collaboration with regional entities
- Collaboration with the universities



Obstacles to Overcome

- To convince suppliers to switch to organic production

“ We produce the taste and shape of a territory ”

DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

The effect of the Covid-19 pandemic reflected in the market dynamic required them to acquire the ability to quickly react to market changes. The last years were very useful for them to strengthen their key skill to first foreseen changes and consequently act consistently and timely to any changes in the market.



TENUTA COLLE DEGLI ANGELI



Azienda Agricola Tenuta Colle degli Angeli is a winery located in the Emilia-Romagna region of Italy. They offer an innovative, healthy, and one-size-fits-all product: a special flour obtained from grape extracts.

We believe in love, respect and care for nature and people, to be able to offer our customers the best products



Target Users

- Bakeries
- Pasta makers
- Final consumers



Market Channels

- Direct contact with local bakeries & pasta makers
- Online shops



Strengths

- Organoleptic properties of the grape-based flour
- Products are healthy and well controlled

COLLABORATIONS

The interaction between suppliers and customers is very important to have a high quality final product that meets the customers' expectations.

The direct collaboration and dialogue established with the technology providers is extremely important to make the final product homogeneous, stable, and adapted to different target segments, both in bakery and pasta making.



Success Factors

- Exchanging ideas with technology providers and customers to create a homogeneous and easy-to-use product



Obstacles to Overcome

- To obtain the required quality of the final product
- To find a technology provider to adapt the milling process

Our wines were born to be shared!

DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

If the market changes, they would be ready to respond, also thanks to their attitude to follow the trend (especially trends related to organic and sustainable production).



TERRADIVA



Terradiva is an organic farm producing extra-virgin olive oil and almond-based products. The farm has been existing for generations and made continuous improvements including traceability, labelling, brand development, reduction of pollution and waste. The company offers high-quality and healthy products, characterized by innovative and environmentally sustainable practices.

We have chosen an agriculture that maintains and respects biodiversity



Target Users

- Informed consumers from 35 years old and up, aware of sustainability issues



Market Channels

- Online shops
- Direct contacts with Ho-Re-Ca businesses



Strengths

- The farmers are the first actors working for sustainability goals
- Products are healthy and well controlled

COLLABORATIONS

When TERRADIVA decided to switch to plastic-free packaging, they found on-line new biodegradable packaging suppliers to collaborate with. They took their advice and made several fine-tuning attempts before deciding on what is their current packaging solution.



Success Factors

- Collaboration with packaging suppliers to obtain a biodegradable and durable packaging
- Relationship with suppliers based on mutual trust



Obstacles to Overcome

- To find appropriate suppliers delivering effective packaging suitable for their products

DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

Being a small business can be an advantage for being flexible. As an example, during Covid-19 pandemic, the company re-organized its business to provide products to small customers rather than supplying restaurants.

We'll be able to cope well with changes as we are versatile and flexible



AGRICOLT BRANDONI



Agricolt Brandoni is an agricultural company producing cereals and vegetables for the food industry. They developed a patent on micro-grafting process on seedlings. This innovation was awarded by Confagricoltura (The General Confederation of Italian Agriculture).

We consider the development of agriculture important for the benefit of the community, the environment and our territory



Target Users

- Farmers and producers' organisations



Market Channels

- Direct contacts



Strengths

- Huge network of farmers

COLLABORATIONS

Agricolt Brandoni changed the collaborative approach with their suppliers from standardized to customized production. Additionally, the acquired patent positively affected their brand since it lead to an increased reputation and a well established recognition.



Success Factors

- The different collaboration approaches with suppliers generated benefits for both parties
- The reputation of the organization



Obstacles to Overcome

- To create the right communication strategy to make their products well-known
- To switch the "old" ideas of farmers to new concepts

Together we work, celebrate, fight, laugh, study, think, have new ideas and the doors of our company are always open

DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

Their philosophy is to observe reality, so they are ready and able to anticipate market changes. Playing ahead of time made them properly act and continue their growth.



DEHESA DE AUTOR



Dehesa De Autor is an acorn producing company. Acorn is the fruit of the Quercus tree. It was traditionally used for human nutrition, but now it is mainly used to feed animals. Recently, new acorn-based products such as flour or drinks are being developed, as healthy and powerful alternatives for the human diet. The innovations concern both the transformation processes, which is patent protected, and the grafting techniques for resilient plant varieties to adapt to climate change. The acorn value chain has a potential for increasing socioeconomic and environmental sustainability.

The acorn value chain is able to empower farmers of southern regions



Target Users

- Farmers of southern regions, where acorns, holm oaks and cork oaks are key for rural economies



Market Channels

- Multiple traditional offline and online marketing channels



Strengths

- Healthy and community product

COLLABORATIONS

Partners' commitment to southern ecosystems preservation brought them together around different innovative solutions to increase socioeconomic and environmental sustainability. The connection started thanks to different dissemination activities of research results carried out by the Ministry of Ecological Transition (Research Centre El Serranillo), about biotech solutions for the adaptability of Quercus and their improved production of acorns, which inspired this business model. Each partner specializes in one stage of the value chain and makes decisions in its area of expertise.



Success Factors

- Having previously worked with partners
- Having complementary knowledge and skills
- Keeping face-to-face interaction with partners



Obstacles to Overcome

- To cope with lack of trust/ lack of credibility regarding the achievement of results by farmers
- To overcome the lack of productive continuity which has prevented a regular supply of acorn-based products to the customers
- To deal with public administrations, specifically bureaucracy and slowness

Our product is considered a "common good" and it is intended that no partner should be able to take individual possession of the product

DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

The key is to "listen to the customers" and know how to "translate their needs". Most new business ideas come from the customers. Key actions are attendance, especially in academic and commercial forums, at conferences, training events, and trying to maintain direct contact with public R&D centres.



LIÁ CULTIVATORS



Liá Cultivators is a family farm started in 1976 with 19 Koroneiki olive trees in Filiatra, Messinia and a large olive grove of 2500 trees. They used to produce extra virgin olive oil sold in bulk, but they decided to change their business and marketing plan, by combining traditional methods of cultivation with modern techniques with aim to respect the sustainability of the ecosystem and differentiated their products. They focus on the current trend in healthy and organic food, and they segment their consumers based on it. In addition, due to their long history of owning the family farm, their strategy to win the market is focusing on the authenticity of their product.

“Roots that go back in time. Branches reaching out for the sun. The pure, fertile land. Our past and present on both sides of the silver-green leaf”



Target Users

- Young generation from 25 to 45 years old who wants to change their culinary habits and looking for more healthy products



Market Channels

- Social network, with online and offline presence
- Sales in Greece, England, Switzerland, Benelux, Germany, Singapore, and USA



Strengths

- New airport and new roads that bring more tourists to the area is a key to develop their brand
- Tasting tours and awareness campaigns about their place of origin
- Cost of shipment decreases due to facilitation in transportation

COLLABORATIONS

Despite stabilised market rules for many years, Liá Cultivators re-organised the relationships with their suppliers and customers to educate them about the natural aspects of their products, and renegotiate based on new specifications and quality indicators (e.g., taste and colour). This organization initiates collaborations only if the other partner is a sustainable business. Environmental considerations, recycling, employees' condition like salary and insurance and fair trade processing are of importance for initiation of collaboration.



Success Factors

- To have complementary knowledge and skills with their partners
- To use written contracts
- To use standardized sustainability indicators



Obstacles to Overcome

- To face gender discrimination or other stereotypes
- To establish collaboration with universities

“The design of our bottle is useful to preserve the quality of our product”

DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

SMEs might not always tolerate big changes and adapt to new conditions. However, the change identification is done by following mainstream forums and being engaged in collaboration with other sustainable businesses.



VICASOL



Vicasol was established in 1979 as a transformation agrarian society, becoming a cooperative society later. It is an Andalusian cooperative society dedicated to the cultivation and marketing of fruit & vegetables from the province of Almería (Andalusia, Spain), based in Puebla de V́icar. Vicasol's strategy is to be considered a cooperative company of family production that produces fruits and vegetables of "proximity" throughout Europe. Proximity" is understood as fluid communication with the final consumer (transcending the intermediary) so that they know the efforts made by family farmers to improve the sustainability and taste of their products.

We are a family of more than 3000 people, counting farmer partners and employees



Target Users

- Members and workers of the cooperative,
- including field employees in the greenhouses
- Other persons in the area



Market Channels

- Traditional retail shops
- Traditional export channels
- Wholesalers and traders



Strengths

- Vicasol combines a cooperative vision oriented to the family production of fruits and vegetables "de primor", sold through traditional export channels, with another OWN system of local sales
- Vicasol guarantees the same quality, wholesomeness and flavour for all its consumers, whether local, national or international

COLLABORATIONS

VICASOL shows total transparency in all decisions taken with their internal and external partners. This project is framed and publicised within their annual Corporate Social Responsibility report. It is known and valued by all interested parties. This Business Model is part of Vicasol's general strategy of becoming a local and international proximity supplier while maintaining the same quality standards, regardless of where its product is sold.



Success Factors

- The establishment of a network of local suppliers (cheese, wine, preserves, etc.), which can benefit in the future from VICASOL's international sales network
- Increased sense of belonging among employees



Obstacles to Overcome

- To negotiate stable funding lines with the members.
- To regularly communicate with the members (training, interviews, presentation of results) to make them see the convenience of the project

Our company has four manipulation centres and one of them is exclusively dedicated to ecological products

DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

The cooperative's own management promotes communication channels with members/employees, customers, and other stakeholders so that they, in their sphere of action, report on current market trends. These mechanisms ensure that new innovations are quickly transferable to the cooperative.



The project is included in Vicasol's Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives. This mechanism frees up the partner's financial resources and thus avoids problems. It also facilitates the transfer (publicity) to society, and even to traditional customers (large European distributors).

ÖKOKISTE



Verband Ökokiste e.V. (founded 1996) gathers about 45 enterprises that deliver 100% organic products within a radius of about 30-60 kilometres around each enterprise. They deliver eco-box through online platforms, and they are scattered all over Germany. All members are committed to topics such as animal and environmental protection, social production conditions, and local organic farms' support. Each member of Verband Ökokiste has voluntarily committed to a high-level independent process of certification.

We deliver fruits, vegetables, and future



Target Users

- Private persons and families
- Enterprises
- Schools and kindergartens



Market Channels

- Each member of Ökokiste has its own website with a shop system



Strengths

- The doors are open, the clients are regularly invited to visit the farm, to be part of so-called "Solawis" (Solidarische Landwirtschaft: solidary agriculture) or engage politically

COLLABORATIONS

Ökokiste members have fixed cooperation agreements with their regional customers, which gives both sides a reliable basis for planning. Their values are defined as follows: "100% organic, diverse & transparent, local & sustainable, fair & social, regional & seasonal." They have a clear guideline for their daily actions.



Success Factors

- Maintaining frequent face-to-face interactions and having common expectations with partners about the innovation outputs are very important factors for success in collaboration



Obstacles to Overcome

- To have clear insight into the production conditions of the farmers and ensure the needed amount of fruits and vegetables
- To connect with marketing consultants that are experts in the specific field

Because organic is not enough for us

DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

They address especially the young generation by continuously developing, establishing, and improving convenient apps for the ordering process. "Nowadays, where newcomers like Knuspr & Co. are urging the market, we refer to our basic values to make the difference clear. These values are: 100% organic, diverse & transparent, local & sustainable, fair & social, regional & seasonal."



ESPIGOLADORS



ESPIGOLADORS is a Spanish organisation that valorises leftovers of fruit and vegetables production. After regular harvesting, they do a "second harvesting" to collect imperfect or ugly pieces of fruits and vegetables which do not enter the commercial market due to their (un)aesthetic characteristics. Gleaned fresh products with the help of volunteers are donated to social organisations. Moreover, part of fresh products purchased from farmers goes to the central kitchen to manufacture different preserves: jams, creams, sauces & pâtés. Additionally, the central kitchen allows hiring people at risk of social exclusion (young people and women over 45 years) to find a job opportunity in an organisation that empowers them and increases their self-esteem. "Es im-perfect®" is the commercial brand of their canned products. The price of the products may be higher than similar products in the market.

We fight for a better food usage



Target Users

- Local people who care about environmental and social problems, looking for sustainable, local and fair-trade products



Market Channels

- Social entities local stores
- Big supermarkets
- Restaurants and hotels



Strengths

- Direct and constant communication with all stakeholders to make sure people are happy and having agreement with them when needed
- ESPIGOLADORS measures the social impact of their activities annually with the help of the research and action team. They implement pilot studies before initiation of an innovative idea



COLLABORATIONS

Due to farmers and farmers unions agreement, none of the gleaned products are allowed to enter a central kitchen production line. So, they have divided their commercial business activities in the central kitchen and officially signed a none-compete agreement to avoid selling gleaned fruits and vegetables or using them in canned products. In the beginning, they delivered gleaned products to the social entities directly, but now social entities come directly to the farm to collect the gleaned products. The initiation of collaborations was usually started as a pilot, and after the successful experience, they signed the agreements with stakeholders.

Success Factors



- Having a personal relationship with their partners located in the same region
- Being culturally close with their partners
- Having complementary knowledge and skills
- Maintaining face to face interaction with them

Obstacles to Overcome



- To cope with the regional administration law restrictions (in Andalucia and Extremadura) that prohibit gleaning activities.
- To constantly negotiate with local authorities to reach agreement for gleaning activities
- To maintain collaboration with new farmers (this is overcome by pilot practices and sharing the results of successful experiences with them)

In ESPIGOLADORS we give second opportunities to ugly and imperfect fruits and vegetables and to beautiful people

DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

The entrepreneurial spirit of the founder of ESPIGOLADORS and her persistence, resilience, and network help them benefit the most from the opportunities/threats in the market. For instance, during the pandemic lockdown, all activities of the central kitchen were stopped. So vulnerable employees of the central kitchen were under pressure. Thus, they launched a crowdfunding campaign to maintain the employees in the central kitchen.



Additionally, during the pandemic, there was an increase in the number of people going to the food bank, so transferring donated food to social entities could not be stopped at the time of need. With the campaign's help, people working in schools could help in gleaning activities providing needed food for social entities.

SZIMBIOZIS



Szimbiozis is a social enterprise, working for improving the conditions and providing livelihood to people with special needs, the homeless, and ex-prisoners by employing them on the social farm. To operate and develop the social activities, Szimbiozis produces, and sells products and services. This organisation produces jam, syrup, and goat cheese using a traditional and craft system using organic fruits (local ecotypes and ancient varieties) and goat milk.

Eat good and do good



Target Users

- Consumers (families)
- Retailers and small grocery shops
- Ho-Re-Ca (elite hotels and restaurants)



Market Channels

- Sales outlets and local markets
- On-line shop
- Workshops within the social farms and national food events
- Food delivery
- B2B (retailers, small shops, tour information offices, hotels and restaurants)



Strengths

- Training activities on social farming
- Agreements based on fair prices and short-term payment
- Improving the inclusion and life conditions of workers with special needs

COLLABORATIONS

There is an exchange of ideas and knowledge with farmers or farmers' organizations and retailers. Szimbiozis has worked with different universities and research institutes. These public organisations support the social enterprise in i) improving the inclusion of people with special needs, ii) improving the communication with the customers/ institutions, ii) developing tourism initiatives which allow to acquire many consumers and visitors.



Success Factors

- Direct contact with the consumers that allows to understand and collect their needs/expectations/ behaviour towards each product
- Research institutes and universities support



Obstacles to Overcome

- To cope with the lack of trust among VC actors that makes the collaboration very difficult

The diversification of the business allows it to be more flexible to market needs

DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

Szimbiozis is a quite flexible organisation, and they can quickly get along with any kind of changes in the market. The diversification of the business activities and the simple structure allows Szimbiozis to be more flexible to market changes.



Kozárová Family Farm Pumpkin Value Chain



Kozárová farm is a Slovakian family business that manages an entire value chain for production of healthy food products from pumpkin seeds (oil and healthy snacks). The family has implemented innovations from farm to fork (agricultural production, added value processing and direct sale to consumers via their own shops). They are always seeking for new ideas and improvement on how to be technologically effective, as well as environmentally and socially responsible.

Family collaboration is our key strategy for sustainable success



Target Users

- Consumers who are sensitive to healthy diets and lifestyles
- Healthy food shops and restaurants
- Resellers for shops, bakeries and other entities



Market Channels

- Local farm shop in Malý Cetín (Slovakia)
- Own online shop
- Sale contractors - mainly small shops/stands of local and regional products in the shopping centres



Strengths

- Value-added products
- Own food processing plant
- Various market channels
- Nice packaging of products
- Environmentally friendly production processes by socially responsible farmers

COLLABORATIONS

While good relations between family members are a key element in the business model, collaboration with other entities is also essential for Kozárová farm. Two key collaborations were developed: firstly, they collaborated with neighbouring farmers to access land, ensure an adequate crop rotation for growing pumpkins, and share machinery; secondly, they collaborated with a processing company who was providing them high-quality seeds and buying the production of pumpkins in return. This later collaboration is becoming less important as Kozárová farm has been developing its own processing lines.



Success Factors

- Effective division of work and complementarity of skills between family members from different generations
- Ability to adapt quickly to the changing market conditions thanks to family business governance
- Good reputation and experience with external local partners



Obstacles to Overcome

- To reach agreements about land leasing with the lessors
- To be subjected to the price fluctuation of the products
- To cope with a not well-functioning packaging line
- To deal with unstable policies including policies for young farmers



The more opinions, the better solution - stakeholders' and consumers' opinion counts

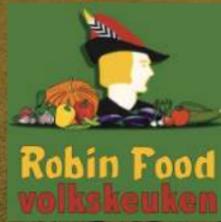
DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

The ability to adapt to any production challenges and market conditions is an important asset for Kozárová farm. Even the recent decline in their land leasing agreement has led the business to search for further opportunities. Therefore, they diversified their agricultural products-ready-to-cook potatoes.



The proximity with consumers through their own farm shop and their focus on the consumer's feedback is key for understanding consumers expectations, and trends evolution. Participation in fairs (such as Expo 2020 in Dubai) is also a way of finding inspiration on how to improve their work, products and impact on the society and the environment.

ROBIN FOOD



Robin food originally started from the idea to have a solution against two main issues: i) food waste; ii) people who are in need of healthy, sustainable and affordable food. Experimenting with these two problems and finding ways to encounter it, was the reason why Robin food came to existence. The company has the triple win mission: a) impact on food waste, b) impact on companies, employing vulnerable in business, and c) impact on healthy meals for children.

Robin Food is run by volunteers keeping prices low and making food about getting together



Target Users

- Regular supermarkets
- HoReCa
- NGOs or social enterprises with similar missions



Market Channels

- Direct contacts
- Online contacts



Strengths

- Robin food's uniqueness compared with other initiatives is its name, as it echoes the message quickly and efficiently. The communication channel succeeded in creating this strong link with Robin food customers

COLLABORATIONS

Robin Food stays very committed to their mission and vision when selecting collaborating partners. They believe the value alignment among collaborating partners is the first step of establishing partnership. In addition, Robin Food transparently communicates their triple win strategy to the potential collaborators to prepare a fruitful collaboration basis. If there will be attractive investors following the same vision which is fighting the food waste, Robin Food allows flexibility in the Business model.



Success Factors

- Support of parent organisations
- Strong network with other social enterprises
- Reputation with collaboration with strong actors like supermarkets



Obstacles to Overcome

- To deal with legal aspects when establishing formal agreements with supermarkets
- To cope with idea protection mechanisms that are weak at the starting phase
- To deal with different organisational culture between non-profit and for-profit organisations and adapting to that change
- To overcome value misalignment between the non-profit and for profits organisations

Learning by doing is our main way to grow in our mission and overcome challenges

DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

If you and your business model are not flexible enough, you will never survive the change. The entrepreneurial mindset at Robin food allows for flexibility and change. Also, the company has the capacity to take risk and perform on a trial and error to adapt to new market conditions.



After successfully operating for two years, they are planning to dedicate 2% of their profit to similar projects. For example, in Belgium 1 out of 5 children go to school without a healthy meal. They plan to donate 2% of their profit to these types of initiatives for healthier dietary patterns.

PARA TI



Para Ti is a merchandising shop, where everything happens automatically, so the shop can be open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. However, their products are either exempt from transformation processes such as fruit, vegetables and eggs, or have undergone a slight process such as bread, spreads, meats, dairy products. The shop stocks fruit & vegetables, dairy products, baked goods, beer and much more from 90 local suppliers.

Currently, there is a trend where the neighbourhood shops are increasingly disappearing. Local food is quite dispersed, so people go to different places to find all they need. So that's why we combined community and technology in our solution



Target Users

- Middle to upper class customers
- Working people who commute from work to home



Market Channels

- Word of mouth
- Limited marketing activities



Strengths

- Making local food accessible to the neighbours is the winning strategy of Para Ti. The technology that Para Ti uses for the food distribution to customers is unique and makes them competitive in the market. They sell locally produced products at a lower price compared to supermarkets.

COLLABORATIONS

Exchanging knowledge and ideas with producers, farmers, and customers. Para Ti established a flow of knowledge and information exchange with producers and farmers. Para Ti plays a significant role as a value chain orchestrator and act as a bridge between producers and customers. Customers' needs are at the core of their business model and reason for their high level of flexibility.



Success Factors

- Trust in their partners
- Value alignment of all partners
- Informal agreements and networks



Obstacles to Overcome

- To face the mentality misalignment among different actors
- To support the technology adoption by older customers

Our flexibility of including what customers want in the business model is our strength.

DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

Being flexible and responsive to change is what Para Ti aims for entrepreneurial mindset. In addition, their ability to take risks is a major force for identifying opportunities. Young entrepreneurs are very aware of the company's competitive advantage and weaknesses, thus allowing tackling change when it is required.



DE NIEUWE MELKBOER (DNMB - THE NEW MILK MAN)



De Nieuwe Melkboer (DNMB) is a business run by two brothers – Bart and Tom Grobben – who jointly own a farm with crops and dairy cows. DNMB is producing soy-based dairy products. DNMB was established in 2019, in the Netherlands. DNMB produces the soybeans, processing the beans into soy milk and other soy-based dairy products.

When I lived in Amsterdam I realised that there is a huge market potential for plant-based dairy products



Target Users

- Customers that demand healthier and plant-based products



Market Channels

- Online food platforms (such as online supermarkets (CRISP))
- Traditional channels, like coffee shops, restaurants, food wholesalers
- Speed delivery companies



Strengths

- The local soy-based dairy products gained a great environmental image because it is based on soybeans grown in The Netherlands. It entails a lower environmental footprint (mainly CO2 reduction and less energy used) than soy drinks based on imported soybeans. This is in line with the trend for market demand for food products that are regionally produced and with a lower environmental footprint.

COLLABORATIONS

Recently, a strategic alliance has been signed with Agrifirm, a large feed and arable crop inputs cooperative. Agrifirm is experimenting with new crops for Dutch agriculture (including soybean) and is dedicated to supporting Dutch farmers in making the transition towards more sustainable farming. Originally, Agrifirm was focussing on large-scale soybean production in the Netherlands, but they now focuses on small-scale innovation initiatives. Currently, Agrifirm and DNMB experiment with new soybean varieties (focusing also on taste and ease of processing, not just yield), and they jointly explore scaling up of drying, cleaning and storing of soybeans.



Success Factors

- DNMB is highly capable of developing and commercialising plant-based dairy products. Agrifirm has a good reputation of supporting innovation in Dutch agriculture, as outstandingly done with DNMB initiatives, now going to be replicated to other farmers



Obstacles to Overcome

- To properly manage formal agreements with large partners that require (costly) legal advice
- To focus efforts on brand establishment and communication, especially with new partners to demonstrate the company reliability

We had the resources (land and facilities) to start a plant-based dairy company

DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

We strongly believe that society should make the transition to more sustainable food systems, which includes a (partial) shift from animal to plant-based proteins. We both studied at Wageningen University, and we have worked in various organisations and companies.



Somogyi Helyi Termék Egyesület



Somogyi Helyi Termék Egyesület is an association operating in the Somogyi area in Hungary, since December 2015. Somogyi aims at organising outreach opportunities for small food producers, primary producers and artisans living in the county area. That initiative and organised events come up with the establishment of the association (founded in December 2018) of 14 small and local producers and craftsmen (honey, jam, syrup, pickles, chutney, cheese, jewellery) and 5 other supporting members (which include the Chamber of Agriculture, the National Development Agency and IT experts).

From lake Balaton to the southern border, together for a better future



Target Users

- Final consumers (residents and tourists)
- Restaurants (that dare to break with the mass-produced products and want to work with real, fresh ingredients)



Market Channels

- Ho-Re-Ca
- Tasting events



Strengths

- Alignment between producers and buyers (high-quality product at a fair price)

COLLABORATIONS

The association started from a grassroots movement, a single farmer started to engage producers and the university supported this movement by offering free venues, tools, and advertising. The organization facilitates i) the communication and decision-making among producers (they discuss the place and pricing policies) and ii) the exchange between producers and customers (events' organisers and restaurants). Moreover, the association helps the producers in finding new market channels and customers.



Success Factors

- Collaboration with the universities in organising joint events, for promoting the product and ensuring producers' visibility



Obstacles to Overcome

- To deal with long bureaucratic processes
- To cope with limited availability of funding resources
- To overcome some limitations due the COVID-19 pandemic

Local products for local people

DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

The legislative environment, the consumer needs and new trends must always be monitored (through social media) even at their early stage. This allows them to promptly react to changes. As a plan for the future the organisation foresees a collaboration with reliable and authentic influencers.



GRAPOILA



GRAPOILA (Virgin Oil Press Kft.) is a Hungarian company, created by Marianna Pinczés in 2009. Their core activity is the production of cold-pressed seed oils based on a zero waste concept. Thanks to innovations in processing technologies and product development, the company utilises by-products of other food industries, notably pomace from the wineries and rosehip seeds from tea and jam makers. They produce high-quality gourmet food products and natural cosmetics, such as seed oils, flours, cosmetic oil muds, lip balms and soaps. Besides the grape seeds and rosehip seeds, GRAPOILA utilises 20 other types of oily seeds, such as pumpkin seeds, linseed and poppy seeds.



In addition to being environmentally friendly, our other main motivation is to create good quality products that are very tasty



Target Users

- Individual consumers looking for tasty and healthy natural products
- Partner companies in the food and cosmetic industry



Market Channels

- Own brand products sold to individual consumers on their company's website
- B2B with food and cosmetics companies, who use the products as base materials or marketing them under their own brand's names
- GRAPOILA's sales mostly concern Europe, although the USA, Taiwan and Japan are also among its trading locations



Strengths

- Zero waste concept that utilises all by-products
- Cold-pressing technology that preserves oil taste, composition and properties
- Locally sourced raw materials
- Natural alternative for cosmetic ingredients
- Engagement in urban development and agri-food sustainability educational programs

COLLABORATIONS

GRAPOILA has established various collaborations. Firstly, they collaborated with a private company and also relied on personal contacts with engineering expertise to innovate its cold-pressing technologies. Today, they have their own R&D department. Secondly, they established collaborations with farmers, wineries, tea and jam makers to secure the quantity and quality of the raw materials. Thirdly, they collaborate on various topics with an NGO 'Responsible dining' that works with Hungarian restaurants to make them more sustainable.



Success Factors

- Having a common vision and mutual interests with partners is key for starting a collaboration
- Despite the use of contractual arrangements, trust is crucial for a long-lasting business relationship, which entails maintaining frequent face-to-face interactions



Obstacles to Overcome

- To deal with the yield variability of certain crops due to climate change
- To cope with the unpredictability of crop market prices
- To adapt to the fluctuation in the Hungarian agricultural labour market



In every collaboration trust is the most important thing



DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

Research and development is considered as a key factor for adapting to external changes and to be ahead of the market. An open-minded spirit and continuous experimentation on the technological processes, the product development and marketing is at the core of the GRAPOILA philosophy. Visits to fairs and food expositions (for example Gulfood or the World Expo 2020) are also part of the routine to meet new customers and to be aware of developing trends.



AGROKRUH



AGROKRUH follows the idea of Ecology Zone, introduced more than 10 years ago by farmers and led to the creation of a cooperative with 8 members and 3 prototype farms.

AGROKRUH sells fresh organic vegetables through a Community Supported Agriculture scheme and FreshBox pick-up points. The concept includes all the relevant technologies, training, and advisory services as a package, for supporting farms in optimising their practices concerning soil quality and the environment. Currently, AGROKRUH operates only in Slovakia, but it has a promising worldwide potential in agriculture.

High-quality soil, healthy food and strong relationships are the main pillars of AGROKRUH's Ecology Zone concept



Target Users

- Young nature-oriented families with access to 2-3 ha of land
- Protagonists of healthy lifestyle and sustainability
- Cities (in a smaller concept)



Market Channels

- Promotion activities with early adopters, such as agricultural secondary schools and regional authorities



Strengths

- Expertise in agriculture turned into a promising concept with a long-term perspective
- Environmentally friendly and socially responsible approach
- Innovative circular technologies, including digital ones
- Reduced costs for farmers, including labour costs
- Easy operation and repairing of the mechanical technology

COLLABORATIONS

Collaboration has always been a key element for the development of the Ecology Zone. Internally, the relationship between members that have different competencies and professional backgrounds is prosperous. Even though AGROKRUH has not benefited yet from any subsidy, they have developed their own R&D activities on technological innovations, sustainability, and social responsibility. In addition, several collaborations with external stakeholders have been developed, including technology providers, research institutes, universities, government agencies, innovation brokers, and consumers. The cooperation with agri-oriented secondary schools is based on providing complete AGROKRUH technology, including teaching materials.



Success Factors

- The diversity of competencies of the cooperative members
- The engagement for building long term relationships with external stakeholders



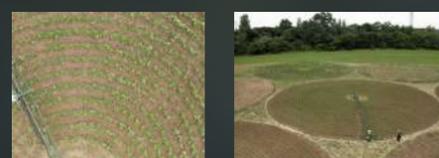
Obstacles to Overcome

- To complete the technology certification process initiated with a technology developer, so that the Ecology zone concept can be commercialised
- To convince old-fashioned farmers that are reluctant to new approaches
- To access funding since several investors are seeking quick return on investment while the technological development requires a lot of tests
- To operate in an unstable political environment with frequent changes at the top-level positions

Enthusiasm, knowledge, experience, and voluntary contributions of the cooperative members are the most essential resources to turn our idea into a practical concept

DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

The concept of Ecology Zone is itself very flexible to environmental and market changes since it can be adapted to various contexts. AGROKRUH is continuously progressing to find different alternatives. For instance, the existing technology is fully mechanical, and therefore is very easy to operate and repair if needed; but AGROKRUH has also been developing a digital version of the technology. They are very active in innovative agricultural networks such as living labs and demonstration farms.



Environmental and social responsibility is a key motive of AGROKRUH, and the Ecology Zone concept already complies with the European Green Deal, therefore they can provide an innovative solution with a worldwide potential in agriculture.

ALGREEN



Algreen is a company founded in 2015 in Wageningen, in the Netherlands, working all over Europe. It helps microalgae producers in all aspects of their business: from production to downstream, regulation and certification. The company combines hands-on experience with scientific knowledge and skills to co-develop the algae production system tailored to any needs. Algreen strongly believes in the potential of algae to become a large-scale commodity, replacing many traditional products, thanks to their unique properties and their sustainable and scalable production methods.

Unlocking the power of microalgae



Target Users

- Agricultural companies (innovation seekers)
- Food industry
- Pharmaceutical industry
- Biotechnological industry



Market Channels

- Fairs and food exhibitions



Strengths

- Extensive knowledge and expertise in the sector (innovation seekers)
- Enhancing the value for the short-chain farmers within the chain and increasing their profit margins
- Producing high-value nutritional food products (healthy) locally High investment in R&D activities
- Being part of Microalgae Associations audit at European level (responsible for organic certification)

COLLABORATIONS

Consolidated R&D activities with i) producers ii) food industries, ii) public organisations, research institutes and universities that help in designing a new process from scratch, industrialising R&D lab scale processes, or working on the optimization of an established process. The company is a member of the COMBIO of AISAM, the working group of the Italian microalgae association on organic standards. Since 2021 Algreen is part of the Standard Committee of Algae and algae products.



Success Factors

- Build a consolidated network including all the actors of VCs and stakeholders (algae associations, research institution, public institution, university, food control audit). This collaboration enables to accelerate the organisational learning processes (with external stakeholders) and therefore improving market trends knowledge and capabilities useful to design long-term strategies



Obstacles to Overcome

- To fill the gap between the production and clients. Currently, the number of companies active in this business (companies who buy and sell spirulina without producing) is very limited
- To cope with the lack of medium-skilled employees. The company needs to train their employees (which requires extra time and costs) to make them operative in the plant
- To deal with no standardised process for algae production

We tried to take an active role to move forward

DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

Considering the size of the company, Algreen spends quite a good deal of money in being part of the association, following the latest innovation and market intel at different level (research, fair, commercial levels, on the web, in Algreen lab) to monitor who is launching a new product, new trends, changes in the regulation. The company tried to anticipate the trends, and to adjust the R&D.



STADERA



STADERA Società Cooperativa is an Italian food cooperative created by Enrico De Sanso in 2020, in Ravenna. The cooperative has more than 300 members that are both the owners and the customers of the shop. The aim of STADERA is to deliver sustainable (food and non-food) products at affordable prices, but also to create a real social network of consumers. By giving 3 hours of their spare time to help in managing the activities of the shop, the members contribute to reduce the operational costs and to create a community awareness about agrifood chains. The shop comprises mostly organic, local and handmade products (80%). The members are people from the Emilia-Romagna region, families or individuals of all ages and professions. STADERA is open to every type of consumer willing to join the cooperative since it is still at its early stage and has potential for development and growth.

More than a supermarket,
we are a participatory consumer network



Target Users

- Every type of consumers



Market Channels

- Own shop in Ravenna



Strengths

- A community of motivated consumers
- Affordable access to food with reduced mark-up on suppliers' price.
- Mostly local and organic products

COLLABORATIONS

STADERA is involved in different types of collaborations. Firstly, the collaboration between 300 members of the cooperative is strategic to ensure the proper functioning of the cooperative. The governance involves some thematic groups of active members, a team who coordinates the operational aspects with the board, and frequent general assemblies. Secondly, STADERA initiated some collaborations with other community-based groups of customers to develop a purchase platform, for optimising the sales and the logistic costs. Thirdly, they also started to collaborate with some universities, technological institutes and municipalities for studying and promoting the environmental benefits of selling bulk products.



Success Factors

- A good governance within the cooperative is key for the success of the project. This involves:
- To meet frequently, listen, exchange, and adapt continuously
- To build on the different competencies and motivations of the members
- To create a community culture going beyond the retailing activities



Obstacles to Overcome

- To start their activities during COVID-19 pandemic and adapt to social distancing measures, while social interaction is at the core of the STADERA business model
- To access to funding, since STADERA relies exclusively on the financial contribution of its members

Exchange with members and
transparency in choices is our way to
overcome any difficulty

DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

The diversity of the consumer community is an asset to analyse the environment, propose new solutions, and implement them. As said by the founder Enrico De Sanso, "we are a very large community: 305 members mean 610 ears and eyes". All these individuals are welcome to share their ideas and are directly involved in the decision process, notably during general assemblies or within working groups. There is always room for changes or adaptations of the model.



Managing these discussion times,
and this deliberative power is key
for the success of the project.