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1. Executive summary

The FAAN project put into practice '**co-operative research**' among five national teams, each comprising an **academic institution** and a **civil society organisation (CSO)**, in order to analyse how current policies and other factors facilitate, hinder or shape the development of **Alternative Agro-Food Systems**. We focused on a specific form - **Local Food Systems (LFS)** - in **Austria, England, Hungary, France and Poland**. Each national team carried out two case studies, results were brought together, and their implications for policy and practice at EU, national and regional levels were assessed.

As an alternative to the conventional food supply system, LFS offer various societal benefits, depending on the specific type of LFS and its underlying motives. As our case studies found out, LFS can go well beyond the food supply itself, due to a commitment to social co-operation, local economic development, and close relations between producers and consumers. LFS depend upon practitioners cooperating to mobilise resources of various kinds - skills, knowledge, labour, etc. They may also depend upon favourable policies, especially funding criteria and regulations.

Although overall policy frameworks rarely recognise LFS, local authorities have some 'champions' who have found ways to develop LFS successfully. Our case studies have found that each policy framework may have various features that both hinder and facilitate LFS. They develop strategies for how to use, strengthen and/or link favourable policies, as well as for how to challenge, accommodate/or bypass unfavourable policies. LFS use support measures which integrate different policies from different sectors. At the same time, EU and national policies influence what can be achieved at a local level. LFS are shaped in ways which respond to all those factors.

The FAAN project provides evidence for recommendations about changes in European, national and local policies that would be necessary to strengthen LFS in the future. These changes include: support for setting up cooperative networks and infrastructure; knowledge exchange; more local sourcing in public procurement; more appropriate funding; and the more flexible adaptation of over-burdensome legal regulations (e.g. distinguishing rules for products for different markets); and ensuring that Leader maintains its bottom-up character, along with a territorial approach linking urban consumers with rural producers. By recognising and valuing LFS for their societal opportunities and benefits, authorities could take responsibility for improving and linking relevant policies.

FAAN served as a 'social experiment' aimed at designing, testing and evaluating a European-level 'co-operative research' (CR) process in practice to reveal potential benefits and limits of this process. CR refers to co-production of knowledge by different actors, implying a different 'framing' of the research by broadening the perspective on the issue through upstream engagement in designing the research. We did so in line with the concept of transdisciplinarity, involving close co-operation between academics and CSOs during the entire project; and also in line with participatory research through the involvement of other relevant stakeholders at certain stages of the project. Based on our experiences, we conclude the CR process needs to establish mutual understanding as a basis for integrated knowledge production.

CR also means engagement with the policy making process, its implicit assumptions, gaps or blind-spots. In the FAAN project, CR has been a useful approach for designing research in ways more relevant to practitioners and policy issues. CSO partners promote the uptake of research findings through their stakeholder networks and thus better reach policy circles.

The project results are available in a booklet which targets people who are already involved in LFS, policy makers, public institutions, and also others who wish to learn more about the development of LFS in Europe.

2. Summary of project context and objectives

The *main objectives* of the FAAN project were

- I. to research specific questions related to a specific topic (Alternative Agro-Food Networks) within a co-operative research process by carrying out participatory action research with civil society partners (CSOs) and to contribute to further research agenda setting by identifying further research needs, and
- II. to design, implement and evaluate participatory research in the context of a co-operative research activity.

I. 'Alternative Agro-Food Networks'

Conventional productivist agriculture is facing a range of complex and interlinked challenges, arising from increasing market liberalisation and globalization, climate change and unsustainable consumption of natural resources. These developments manifest in multiple problems including struggles of peripheral, less favoured rural regions, whose survival is treated by market liberalisation and globalisation; issues related to food security and related public health problems due to a lack of fresh and healthy food; and consumers' distrust in food quality resulting from "food scandals" (e. g. salmonella, bovine spongiform encephalopathy – BSE, dioxine residues, pesticide residues etc.). At the same time public sensitivity to environment- and health related issues, social sustainability, animal welfare and the political and economic implications of a productivist and globalized food system is continuously growing.

Some challenges are already addressed at local and regional levels in ways which redefine people's needs through more sustainable agricultural alternatives. These efforts appropriate local, traditional and new knowledge in promoting alternative forms of agriculture. The since the 1990s developed economic model of "economy of quality" (Levidow & Boschert 2007) rather emphasizes quality than quantity and thereby aims to strengthen ecologic, social and economic sustainability. In contrary to the agri-industrial approach, the model of an "economy of quality" puts more emphasis on quality aspects by strengthening ecological, social and economic sustainability. In recent years, several so called '*Alternative Agro-Food Networks*' (AAFNs) have been established in Europe (and in other parts of the world) as a reaction to the various challenges in conventional productivist agriculture. In contrast to the conventional system, such networks represent different ways to link food production, distribution and consumption. Such initiatives create and connect economic and social spaces, and they create new models that engage public concerns about community, social justice, health issues such as nutrition and food safety and environmental sustainability (Gottlieb & Fisher 1998).

AAFNs are used as a broad embracing term to cover networks that embody alternatives to the industrialized agro-food production system, which include different levels of conceptual and empirical definition and specification. They employ diverse organisational structures, different social constructions and equations with ecology, locality, region, quality convention, and consumer cultures (Renting et al. 2003). Additionally, AAFNs lie at the intersection of many policies – some complementary and some contradictory and their development is influenced by several 'key drivers' of different significance ranging from the general scheme of the European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to the acceptance of genetically modified food in the enlarged EU (cf. Clavero et al. 2004).

To enable agriculture to better cope with the multiple challenges, and to establish an alternative, more sustainable agricultural system, it is essential to re-define policies – both at the European and national level – which could better facilitate such a development.

Furthermore there is an emerging need to prioritise research that focuses on alternative agricultural methods, products, and systems, which requires building a medium to long-term research agenda for European agriculture to face the arising challenges.

FAAN has researched questions related to AAFNs about to what extent diverse forms of such alternative networks can contribute to the solution of agricultural problems, under what conditions

such initiatives can be scaled-up to benefit larger rural areas and which policies are influencing these developments. In particular, research has been carried out in order

- to analyse how current policies (on the European, national and regional levels) facilitate or impede the development of AAFNs, and how policy frameworks could better facilitate them.
- to identify further research needs relevant for AAFNs and thus to inform future research agendas.
- to explore how AAFNs link various types of innovation

To understand AAFNs' overall societal value and how such networks can contribute to a sustainable development of European agriculture, we considered it being necessary to explore the variability of AAFNs and understand their different natures and complex dynamics of interrelations between actors. Taking into account that agriculture in general and AAFNs in particular are complex, multidimensional and inter-sectoral subjects characterised by an intense interaction of various actors (e.g. farmers, consumers, retailers, policy makers, public authorities, etc.), this topic represents an excellent case to try out trans-disciplinary 'co-operative research' in practice.

II. 'Co-operative Research'

Science and research are increasingly under scrutiny to produce knowledge that is more relevant to societal needs, including a broader variety of knowledge. This is a growing demand especially in the context of socially relevant topics, like sustainability research. The integration of new forms of knowledge that are less abstract, less discipline bound and closer to those processes which characterise the diversity and distribution of knowledge production in the wider society might serve this demand.

Innovative research concepts

Innovative research mechanisms, which integrate perspectives from various points of view, can build bridges among different fields of knowledge and different groups of people while developing practical solutions to sustainability problems in agriculture. A broad perspective may help to integrate traditional agricultural disciplines with social sciences and the humanities, ecology and environmental sciences. Research in the context of sustainable agriculture needs collaboration among disciplines, it needs interdisciplinarity. Such research does not only represent a challenge for science but also for policy since it relates to a broad range of societal challenges. Thus, in order to address these various challenges, related research does not only require an interdisciplinary but also a trans-disciplinary research approach.

The idea of co-operative research itself originates from the field of "science governance" within Science and Technology Studies (see e.g. Fuller 2000). As such, it aims at integrating scientific knowledge (presented by experts) with other types of knowledge (that of so called "lay people"). This integration in the process of knowledge production is directed towards establishing reliable knowledge consisting of elements commonly perceived as scientific and non-scientific as well.

As defined in a Report of a European Commission Workshop in 2005 (Stirling 2006), a more democratic governance of science could be realised through '*co-operative research*' (CR), which involves both researchers and non-researchers in close co-operative engagement, aiming at jointly producing knowledge. In contrast to multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary research, CR is characterised by participatory engagement with civil society for exploring the driving aims and purposes, the alternative orientations, and the wider social and environmental implications of research and innovation. Thereby CR represents a "new paradigm" which emphasizes social learning as an important output (Galiay 2006). It is a process where various procedures, situated at different levels, are proposed for engaging divergent social values and interests in participatory processes of science governance.

Involvement of civil society organisations

Public engagement usually aims at specific ‘representatives’ of publics, e.g. average citizens, stakeholder groups, experts and policy makers. The importance of CSOs is thereby growing. Over the last 20 years, an increasing number of CSOs have diversified from service provision into policy advocacy (Kanji et al. 2002). They are being credited to have considerable impacts on global processes ranging from economic development to democracy. CSOs play an increasingly important role in science-society-interaction by actively addressing issues of public interest. Moreover they mediate between the research community and normal citizens. This mediator-role might be particularly important in democratising science governance. CSOs often have the inside knowledge of societal needs, and they have the capacity to generate questions for agenda setting. Still, until recently CSOs have rarely been involved in research policy issues and research activities. The involvement of CSOs mainly aims to facilitate implementation of results from research or political agendas. Despite the fact that the growing role of these organisations is recognised in the literature (Börzel 1997, Greenwood 1997, Levidow 2007), there are very few research activities, taking a bottom up approach¹ by involving CSOs at a very early stage in research, e.g. in agenda setting.

FAAN was a kind of ‘experiment’, which tried to contribute to a stronger democratisation of research by carrying out transdisciplinary ‘co-operative research’ involving civil society organisations bottom-up. In this line, FAAN has been carried out within a consortium of ten partners - five academic partners and five civil society organisations from Austria, Great Britain, Hungary, France and Poland. Each national team comprised one academic and one CSO partner dealing with alternative agriculture, rural development, and issues related to public engagement in research. Further participants representing actors in the context of AAFNs have been involved through participatory activities (e.g. workshops) at certain points of the project.

All FAAN project partners have been engaged in a joint research activity, designing and conducting together participatory research including stakeholders on these research questions:

- What is alternative about AAFNs? How may alternatives be complementary or oppositional to conventional agro-food networks?
- How are AAFNs defined by social, political, commercial and cultural frameworks involving motives beyond direct material interests in practice?
- What is the actual situation in regard to AAFNs in Austria, England, Hungary, Poland and France?
- How do current policies and other factors facilitate or impede the development of AAFNs? Which strategies are enacted in order to use facilitating policies/factors and avoid hindering?
- How do AAFNs link different types of innovation?
- Which research needs emerge in regard to AAFNs?

According to the second main objective of the project, FAAN implemented, tested and evaluated the co-operative research activity in order

- to explore the practical requirements for designing a CR process, and
- to identify the benefits, challenges and limits of co-operative research.

¹ As Felt & Fochler (2008) state, the meaning of participation is in general mostly defined top-down, by (social) scientists and policy makers alike

3. Summary of the FAAN project results

4.1 Design of the co-operative research process

FAAN involved society in different ways in research: **civil society organisations** as partners² in a co-operative way during the whole run of the project, and **further participants** selectively at different stages (see Figure 1).

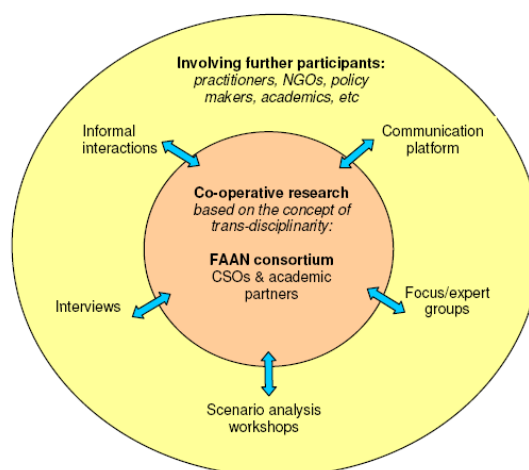


Figure 1: The two different levels of involvement in the FAAN project: co-operative research and participatory framework

Based on a literature review of participatory research methods, the overall co-operative research design of the FAAN project was elaborated along the lines of the concept of **transdisciplinary research (TDR)**; the involvement of further participants was implemented by use of various more ‘traditional’ methods of participation in research.

The decision to carry out co-operative research within FAAN was based on the intention to involve non-academics in a different way than is usually the case in participatory research. The involvement in FAAN was characterised by a strong upstream approach: the partnership has been set up already in the phase of developing the project idea and writing the proposal; moreover, some ideas for the FAAN proposal in fact originally came from a CSO partner, and while elaborating the proposal many partners have contributed considerably. In elaborating the concept for FAAN we tried to systematically address and consider the main features of co-operative research, namely the integration of different kinds of knowledge, a bottom-up engagement and a permanent reference to the policy making process. In addition, we ascribed crucial importance to a step by step process design to be developed and adjusted according to the results from process reflections.

In accordance with the project aim of enhancing public engagement in research and related policy making, the starting point of the project was to elaborate a detailed research design, which allowed for a close co-operation between the CSO and academic partners according to their expectations and needs. For this purpose we adopted the research process as originally planned by considering the expectations and motivations of all partners. The main activities, which have been carried out in this context were:

- to collect inputs from all partners in regard to the CR project design and planning;
- to carry out an extensive literature survey on inter- and trans-disciplinary research, social learning, participatory research methods, participatory reference frameworks in agricultural research, and science and technology studies on science governance;
- to elaborate a scheme for the co-operative process;

² We use the term ‘partner/s’ for the official partners of the FAAN consortium, while we call other persons/groups involved in the project ‘participants’.

- to conduct a discussion and negotiation process between partners in the course of elaborating a more detailed work plan in the early stage of the project;
- to organise ‘exercises’ during the run of the project within national teams and the consortium in order to continuously reflect on the research process;
- to adapt the process design and work plan to improve the co-operative process;
- to evaluate the co-operative research process;
- to draw conclusions based on the experiences gained through FAAN.

3.1.1 Transdisciplinarity as a methodological frame for CR

As a methodological frame for the process design we decided on transdisciplinary research, because it offered useful concepts (e.g. ‘transdisciplinary integration’, ‘communicative action’) for the implementation of CR, and we found several aspects corresponding with the basic ideas of CR: a) actor-oriented strategies/solutions, b) knowledge integration and c) upstream engagement.

a) Actor orientation

In TDR, disciplinary boundaries are softened and the border between the scientific community and other parts of society is opened and crossed. The relationship between academia and practice aims at serving the development and implementation of actor-oriented strategies to solve the problem at stake. This orientation towards the participants’ needs aims to support both, the empowerment and agency of participants involved in research, which is also a key priority in CR. Moreover this was in line with the FAAN partners’ ideas about CR.

b) Integration of different kinds of knowledge

Transdisciplinarity moves further beyond inter-disciplinary combinations of academic disciplines to a different understanding of the relationship of science and society. The ‘transdisciplinary integration concept’ (cf. Klein 2004, Loibl 2005, Pohl & Hirsch Hadorn 2006, Bergmann et al. 2008) epistemologically reflects on the integration of knowledge/expertise from several disciplines and from non-academic fields by transcending and integrating disciplinary paradigms, and the realm of practice related to the research. The outcome is an integrated knowledge production, a kind of hybrid knowledge, which is the result of ‘making sense together’ (Klein 2004). In such a process, academic and non-academic knowledge/understanding, including different cognitive perspectives, rationalities and values is valued in a balanced manner. This is similar to what has been stated for the concept of CR: “co-operative research treats different forms of knowledge and understanding in a symmetrical fashion, and affords equal status to contending social values and interests” (Stirling 2006: 9).

The ideas expressed about the cooperation FAAN partners were also in line with this, e.g. they stated that “CR allows to develop a more holistic understanding of the particular question addressed, both in identifying the problems and possible solutions, by combining trans-disciplinary knowledge and perspectives”, and that it is a “(...) new way of knowledge generation; bringing together action and reflection, theory and practice (...)”, and to “(...) integrate views and experience of non-scientific experts into the research process” is argued to be a strength of CR.

c) Upstream engagement

This aspect refers directly to the issue of framing the research. It emphasises the need to involve “the public” at the very beginning of a research process and let it co-shape the framework of the research process (e.g. by formulating the research questions, research methods). Upstream (or ‘bottom-up’) engagement enables designing the research according to the needs and values of wider groups in society, to set specific goals and to prepare an adequate base for the research, reflecting commonly shared assumptions, understandings and values. Upstream (or ‘bottom-up’) engagement is opposed to the ‘top-down’ approach, where the public plays only a passive role in the policy process. In such situations the issue at stake and the research informed policy-making processes are framed without public participation, which comes only at the very end of the whole procedure. The paradigm of **transdisciplinary integration** requires a continuous process of exchange with society. It cannot be ensured solely at the end of a project, but requires a continuous process of interaction, understanding and mutual learning of project partners (Bergmann et al. 2006). This point makes TDR close to the main principles of CR, which is based on the involvement of actors with various expertises who are introducing different kinds of knowledge, social interests and values from the very early research

stages. According to the literature, “public engagement holds greatest value when it occurs ‘upstream’ – at the earliest stages in the process of research or science-informed policy making” (Stirling 2006: 5), because this is the stage when the framing of research is still flexible and open for being influenced. The ‘upstream engagement’ is relevant when considering the benefits of involving CSO partners in co-shaping the research process and finding the best methods to approach the research domain. This is especially relevant when CSOs are involved in managing very complex ‘real world problems’, as one FAAN partner noted in regard to inter and trans-disciplinary research “*CSOs have to do it by force. Our role is to act on situations that are obviously complex (...) As CSOs we have to compensate the scarce money resources we have by efficient methods*”.

3.1.2 The co-operative research scheme

The FAAN project process scheme (see Figure 2 and detailed in Annex 1) was elaborated based on concepts for the implementation of transdisciplinary research methods (Bergmann et al., 2005; Jahn 2005; Pohl & Hirsch Hadorn 2006). It was a recursive process of interaction between project partners, which proceeded in alternating phases of ‘integration’ and ‘differentiation’. All these phases were characterised by a recursive process. The interaction between project team members and further participants allowed them to express their individual interests and viewpoints and knowledge to be exchanged, discussed and shared. While **differentiation** steps were supposed to make differences explicit, **integration** steps served to identify common grounds and to implement identified differences in a way which created the basis for agreement on the next step in the project.

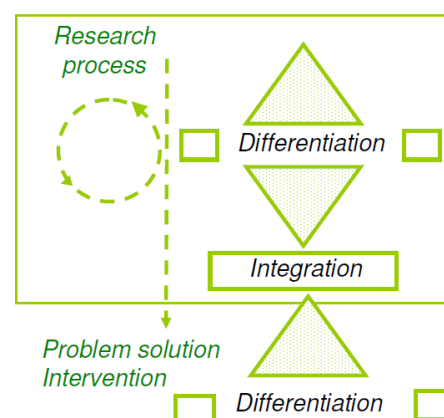


Figure 2: Basic process of TDR

Differentiation

Differentiation steps have been included in the process in order to make different motivations, interests, forms of knowledge/expertise, perspectives, rationalities and aims explicit, because different (groups of) actors with various perspectives on the issue at stake have been engaged at different stages and on different levels in the FAAN project. While some actors participated only in certain activities of the project (e.g. focus groups, workshops), there was a continuous and close engagement of researchers from academic institutes and members from CSOs through ‘equal partnership’ in co-operative research activities. Assuming that on the one hand actors from academia and civil society may not have the same perception of the problem field, on the other hand differences were identified also *within* the group of academics and CSOs. This may be related to different disciplinary backgrounds, expertises, and institutional and personal interests. It is not the fact of existing differences per se that may cause problems for co-operation, it is more about becoming aware of the existing differences and finding a way to handle them (Loibl, 2005). To make this explicit, meta-level information on potential differences was provided. Team members were asked to share information in regard to their motivations for participating in FAAN, their expectations of outcomes, their envisaged roles within the project, the expertise they intended to contribute, and former experiences in similar research activities. As it is not possible to anticipate discussion dynamics and how power relations will play out in a meeting – especially at the consortium’s first meeting, this was done by means of a questionnaire before the first consortium meeting. Thus, all partners had the same ‘space’ to articulate their motivations, expectations, and points of view.

The **expertise** indicated related to four main clusters, each of the partners combining expertise from more than one:

1. expertise in coordination, facilitation and evaluation of the co-operation process.
2. expertise in mediation between research and the field of practice.
3. expertise/knowledge about AAFNs and related topics (e.g. rural development, farming practices, actual developments, etc.)
4. expertise in policy relevant issues: expertise related to provide research data relevant for policy decisions, and to take concrete action in order to influence policies.

Motivations for participating in the FAAN projects and **expected outputs** have been various and concerned on the one hand research interests and related career perspectives; on the other hand they were oriented towards the realm of practice as listed in the table in Annex 1 ‘FAAN partners’ interests, motivation to participate and expectations towards project outputs’).

To grasp the rationale behind participating in FAAN, we distinguished between three perspectives to be considered in the process design: the *normative*, the *substantive*, and the *instrumental* dimension. The *normative* imperative underlines values like equity, inclusion, openness, legitimacy and representativeness, and reflects the effort towards democratisation in science governance by challenging the participatory processes, thereby empowering stakeholders. The *substantive* dimension refers to the process of knowledge production. It relates to the concrete way of producing and integrating diverse types of knowledge; the added value is emphasised on improving outcomes by valorising different ways of knowing, being, and meaning. The instrumental approach is related to challenge prevalent policies and to point out alternatives. Furthermore it could be linked to the effectiveness of participation in realising particular ends, those outcomes particularly favoured and desired. Considering differences in regard to these three dimensions, academic partners’ expectations and motivations to participate in the project related more to the normative and substantive dimensions, while CSO partners indicated interests were more in line with the instrumental dimension of campaigning, lobbying and influencing future policies. Nevertheless, comparing partners’ overall emphasis, the substantive dimension was of highest relevance for all partners in regard to the research and knowledge production process.

Differentiation was important for being able to carry out work in a way that meets the partners’ different interests, expectations towards their role in the project, the research process and project outputs. As a consequence, tasks have been allocated in a way that partners could contribute their specific knowledge and expertise, and the work plan has been designed to meet expectations in regard to the research process and outputs.

Another aspect important to be addressed in regard to expectations towards outputs is related to time: academic partners expected outputs by the end of the project, while CSOs already used intermediary results for their daily work. Aiming at concrete interventions, CSOs’ activities needed to match with certain points of time which allow for intervention. While the scientific community widely tends to disclose preliminary results during the course of a research activity, CSOs are used to distribute new information within and outside their networks in order to induce interventions as soon as possible. Since inquiry is valued in and of itself in the academic context, research might be open-ended, iterative, and ongoing. For the CSO partners, however, inquiry is time-bound and valued only to the extent that it produces results that can be acted upon or put into practice. Thus we tried to take the different expectations of the timeline for the use of outputs into account. While most of the academic partners elaborate on scientific publications now, after the end of the project, CSO partners carried out lots of dissemination activities during the run of the project.

Only the explicit presentation of different perspectives allows using a pluralistic concept in a productive way, which is at the same time the first step for integration.

Integration

Integration may take place on different levels, and it may concern different aspects. Within FAAN, the cognitive, social, and communicative level was relevant, and this is referred to the integration of different knowledge forms and expertise, working cultures, understanding of key concepts aims, language, etc.

Integration is more than becoming aware of the coexistence of pluralistic perspectives within the consortium. It actually aims at an integration of differences in order to carry out co-operative action. Thus in the process engaged actors needed to reflect on the relevance of other perspectives, other forms of knowledge, and other ways of knowledge production; consequently, on different approaches to finding solutions in relation to their own. For this purpose their own perspective has to be relativised, and other viewpoints had to be accepted as potentially relevant.

Within FAAN we applied different strategies in order to achieve integration, e.g. through project management in general, and through reflection activities, rules for communication, negotiation and decision making in particular.

Project management

The main tasks in management were to manage complexity and heterogeneity (taking into account team members came from different professional backgrounds and sometimes had different orientations and interests), achieve integration and enable the definition of a common ground and joint goals.

We aimed to achieve equality of rights, mutual acceptance, trust and openness within our team through facilitating communication, social interaction, mutual learning, and mediation in the event of conflict.

An important aspect was to consider the need for flexibility: On the one hand management needed to be flexible to allow for some dynamic development (in the line with the process design); on the other hand a kind of laissez-faire leadership – assuming at the beginning of the project the team would grow together organically – caused diffidence in decision taking and action. We sought to find a balance by increased process facilitation (e.g. rules for meeting discussions, obligatory reflection exercises, specific knowledge management) and strict project steering. Even if we kept the work plan and the determination of outcomes flexible, consortium meetings were used to formally agree on changes, and the revised, new plan or envisaged outcomes.

Reflection exercises

Reflection activities have been carried out on various levels - from the individual level to group reflection. Each project member got a personal diary book in which to document her/his personal experiences, and to reflect on the process during the whole run of the project. The notes could be on any issues believed to be important to remember for the final evaluation. The FAAN diary was used to reflect on the broader processes within the project, but also on single activities within daily work. Not all team members used this diary in order to write down personal thoughts and reflections, but those who did so considered it being useful – especially in the beginning of the project.

Individual reflections have been useful to gain new insights for oneself, but for integration (and also for reflexive project steering) it was important to share these insights with other team members – with national teams, as well as within the whole consortium. Since cultures of team work have been different for different partners, some were more regularly sitting together for collective reflection than others. To ensure that each team takes time for reflection, team reflection exercises needed to be carried out as obligatory part of the project at different stages.

In order to allow for reflections within the whole consortium also in between the physical meetings, a virtual room on the FAAN Wiki, the ‘FAAN journal’ had been launched. This was a space where consortium members could share their reflections on any issue related to the project by posting a message that any other member of the consortium could comment. This space also allowed for anonymous postings. However, team members were much more in favour of reflections in the context of physical meetings, and this virtual room had not been used by any of the team members.

Communication

The communication process within the project was of central importance, providing coherence between discourse and practice in the course of co-shaping the research process and integration in knowledge production. Through communication we exchanged information and shared perspectives to acquire mutual understanding/learning. In order to create this common ground and a shared vision, communicative action sought to achieve coherence between discourse and practice. Since *de facto* all partners were involved in all project activities, we had decided on high transparency and a mode of decision-making based on consensual agreement. We wanted to achieve a symmetric distribution of knowledge and equal opportunities for all partners to participate in any kind of relevant communicative action. Thus we installed a FAAN Wiki, where any kind of information and all documents were uploaded; and we formed a habit of electronic exchange via a mailing list, which gave all team members the opportunity to join discussions or comment on draft documents.

Negotiation and decision making

Within FAAN one of the highest priorities in regard to the co-operative process was related to acquiring a mutual understanding through communicative action in order to achieve coherence between discourse and practice. Since *de facto* all partners were involved in all activities, we had decided on high transparency and a mode of decision-making based on wide agreement from all. We wanted to achieve a symmetric distribution of knowledge and equal opportunities for all partners to

participate in any kind of relevant communicative action. Thus we installed a FAAN Wiki, where any kind of information and all documents relevant for the project were uploaded. For written communication we formed a habit of electronic exchange via mailing list, which gave all team members the opportunity to join discussions and to comment and give feedback on every working paper and report.

Physical meetings turned out to be the most important forums for discussing, negotiating, and decision making on project relevant issues. Discussions encompassed the work process (e.g. planning work, division of tasks, responsibilities, decision-making, etc.) as well as the content (formulating research questions, defining analytical categories, etc.) of our work. In order to allow for high participation, we introduced a kind of pre-information procedure to ensure the same level of information for all team members when starting the discussion. This procedure has been acknowledged as useful by most consortium members. Still, communication was not only related to the exchange of knowledge and information, even more important was social interaction. Thus we always reserved some time for informal social interactions to get to know each other better, thereby establishing personal relationships and facilitating the team building process. This encouraged emergent networking, knowledge sharing, exchange of knowledge beyond the project activities, and integration at different levels.

3.1.3 Recursive process

The FAAN research process and its individual phases have been characterised by **recursiveness**, so that methods and underlying assumptions could be modified or adjusted to reflect the specific and desired directions of project evolution. Such a recursive design was a meaningful pragmatic way of working with intermediary results, and then further developing them on the basis of critical assessment through reflexive project steering.

To guarantee flexibility in adjusting the process of co-operative research, detailed plans for research and other activities had not been included in the FAAN research proposal. This planning was jointly elaborated as part of the project in order to adjust the different levels of contributing to the proposed project design by different partners. The first step ('first loop' cf. Argyris 1976 after Pohl & Hirsch Hadorn 2006: 80) was a recursive process for reworking and adjusting the proposed work plan based on a review of the problem definition. Some authors emphasize the involvement of social actors in the process of problem definition (e.g. Loibl 2001), while others doubt that practitioners 'automatically' have a better understanding of 'real world' problems than academics, which could compromise the quality of research and even lead into unproductive directions (Bruce et al. 2004). However, since the FAAN project aimed at a strong bottom-up approach, each step of the project – starting with the problem definition - was carried out as a participatory recursive process including expertise from academic partners, CSO partners, and considering inputs from the practical field, which had been gained through interviews, focus groups and workshops.

The problem definition was done on the one hand according to the project partners' interests and expectations; on the other hand according to the problem description in the scientific literature. In addition, it has been reshaped according to how participants from the national case studies have perceived the problem. For the process, the partners' ideas about co-operative research and their views on practical requirements for co-operative research have been reflected upon.

Furthermore, partners were asked to answer specific questions related to the work packages (policy analysis, empirical step 1, 2, 3 and 4; see Annex 1). These had to be planned in more detail after the experience of the first consortium meeting. The answers resulted in a 'map of interests' on the content level, which should facilitate the identification of common ground for the selection of case studies, the definition of concrete research questions, and the choice of methods. This gave all partners the opportunity for inputs to work packages, which are led and conceptualised by other partners (WP leaders or co-leaders). Based on these inputs, proposals were formulated by the work package leaders and presented at the consortium meeting for further discussion.

The discussions and related negotiation processes can be considered as the 'second loop' of reworking the work plan (c.f. Argyris 1976 after Pohl & Hirsch Hadorn 2006: 80). As a third loop of the recursive process, partners were asked to reflect on whether their inputs have been adequately considered. Before fixing the work plan for the activities to be carried out, work package leaders sent

their final suggestions to all partners, who thus got the opportunity to comment and check if their inputs had been taken into account. This procedure has been carried out for all consortium meetings, in each case linked to the next work steps.

This recursive procedure made it possible to evaluate intermediary results from different work steps through the next step, and - if necessary - this allows for an adaptation of the work plan or research questions and methods.

By starting from the academic context with assumptions based on a literature review, including tacit knowledge from the CSO partners, we went ‘into the field’ and gradually figured out the relevance of our assumptions. For the first empirical step this was done by exploratory interviews with relevant actors from practice. Not only results from the literature review, but also the interview partners’ perception of the problem and their definition of relevant aspects served as a basis for the next step, the in-depth interviews. For the analysis phase of the FAAN project, relevant stakeholders were brought together to discuss the intermediary results from the prior work step in focus groups, in scenario analysis workshops, and finally in a European level workshop. By following this step by step procedure, the relevance of the problem definition, analysis and outcomes for different fields – depending on the actors involved (e.g. practitioners, representatives of interest groups, civil servants, policy makers, researchers, etc.) – was continuously monitored and adapted according to the inputs we got. Besides these ‘formal’ inputs from the realm of practice, the CSO partners continuously contributed with specific knowledge due to their embeddedness in the practical field, as the academic partners did so through their involvement in academic discussions.

3.1.4 Evaluation of the co-operative research process

The evaluation of the CR process has been based on reflections carried out during the whole run of the project and referred to a model developed within the ongoing project. This model proposed four categories for analysis: (a) *Context*, (b) *TDR*, (c) *social learning*, and (d) *gender*.

(a) The **context** could be relevant for the macro- (broader context, e.g. research programme), meso- (inter-institutional), or micro- (individual) level. We focused in FAAN on the meso-level, and mainly in the context of the national co-operation between CSO, academic partners and other actors contributing to the project.

Evaluation results revealed that CR is a strongly context-sensitive process, which implies several intervention points. This might be explained by the fact CR links different realms (academia – practice) through a permanent interaction between actors. In addition, the flexibility of the CR process allows for paying attention to the context through adapting the process itself. Moreover, the non-academic process participants especially tended toward lively interactions with the wider context (e.g. policy making), which increased more the relevance of contextual factors.

(b) The relevant factors for the evaluation of **TDR** related to differentiation and integration processes, in particular to an integrated knowledge production process.

We identified that **differentiation** had been taking place in these dimensions: specific motivations and interests; main aims; knowledge production; epistemologies & knowledge referential; defining the concept of alternativeness, terminology & language use; dissemination activities; use of outcomes. **Integrated knowledge production processes** took place in many activities we carried out concerning both the process and the content level. For the process level the integrated knowledge production somehow stayed ‘hidden’ for project participants who had been uninvolved in the process analysis. On the content level it was more obvious and visible for all project participants, who identified integration taking place in all activities carried out more or less co-operatively.

(c) In regard to **social learning** we focussed on aspects relevant for the achievement of common ground, a shared frame of reference, and mutual understanding, which links to the perception of the ‘others’. We defined social learning in the beginning of the project as the meaningful engagement of actors in a specific type of participatory practice by inter-acting, communicating, reflecting, and negotiating on various aspects of the topic of alternative agro-food networks. Moreover, we suggest that social learning goes along with cognitive and social integration, and vice-versa. It was difficult to directly evaluate the social learning process, but empirical evidence could be acquired indirectly through evaluating the integration process, and participants’ satisfaction with interaction,

communication, reflection, and negotiation processes.

(d) The **gender** dimension referred to the question if the CR process as carried out in FAAN had an impact on gender equality and power relations. As parameters we analysed how men and women were represented in the consortium, how resources have been allocated, the involvement in discussions and decision making, and if formalised (e.g. predefined due to institutional hierarchies) how power relations have been reproduced in the CR process. According to our analysis, no considerable power imbalances have been perceived in regard to the issues mentioned above. Where minor imbalances have been noticed, this was generally attributed more to individual character than a lack of opportunities to raise a stronger voice. We conclude with the strong claim for participation of all partners. The intense interaction and communication process, the highly transparent information exchange, the democratic decision making, and the overall hierarchical project management that characterised CR in FAAN all facilitated balanced power relations within the project team.

Conclusions

In regard to the overall FAAN project design, we conclude the concept of **transdisciplinarity** offered useful tools to set a general framework for the CR process. The **engagement** of all partners from the **very beginning** of the project allowed for joint planning of how to carry out the research, and thereby allowed for a participatory **‘framing’ of the research activities** according to project partners and participants’ interests and expectations. In order to reveal existing differences, it is crucial to try and make motivations, interests, viewpoints and expectations of partners as transparent as possible. This enables the team to accurately identify common or divergent interests, serving as a solid basis for agreements or compromises within the team. In case differences exist, at certain points integration is necessary for the implementation of joint action. Thus the project design should involve **differentiation** and **integration** phases. Due to the project’s participatory dimension through (direct or indirect³) engagement of further stakeholders, such a setting demands ongoing reflexive steering during the run of the project to adjust and ‘tune’ the process to emergent inputs. To guarantee flexibility in adjusting the process of co-operative research according to project partners and participants’ interests and expectations, the project has to be planned **step-by-step** based on a **recursive process**.

The evaluation confirmed our main hypothesis, namely that CR makes a difference compared with other types of partnerships, and research processes in regard to (1) integrated knowledge production, (2) social learning and (3) the (expected) impact of the project.

We identified some factors relevant to (1) **integrated knowledge production**: The first basic requirement is the project design, which needs to allow for a certain degree of flexibility in adjusting the process. This is necessary, because integration is a stepwise process. The second is the establishment of a shared reality and a common ground within the team (needs also upstream differentiation). The knowledge production is a relational process, and integration mainly takes place through communicative action, including social interaction. Thus measures facilitating communication and interaction in a way that enhances openness, mutual understanding, respect and a trustful relationship, positively impacting knowledge integration. This is also the case for (2) **social learning**, which is interlinked with knowledge integration, but going beyond the cognitive dimension by including the social and behavioural dimension.

The (3) **impact** we expected from the FAAN project was relevant at different levels (within the project team: individual, institutional; concerning further project participants; and beyond the project), and we aimed as well to contribute to the academic discussion by offering findings useful for the realm of everyday practice. – We actually achieved both (for more details see section 4).

Particular attention had been paid to offering something in return to further participants who contributed in the interviews, focus groups and workshops with their knowledge and expertise to the research. CSO partners have been active in making project (intermediary) results accessible for these people (e.g. presentations, flyers, articles, etc.).

At the consortium level, one important aspect related to the added value of the CR partnership. Of specific interest were links with the organisations’ networks, their visibility and the effectiveness in

³ ‘Indirect’ inputs have been given via CSOs, who are continuously interacting with the wider realm of practice.

promoting a change or transformation in relation to the identified “intervention points” or specific research needs in the real world of AAFNs.

The basic difference compared to other projects is rooted in the fact that CSOs were ‘real partners’ with equal resources, which allowed them to participate in all project activities. The utilisation of research results relates how and from whom research demands are formulated, and how information is produced. The final uptake of findings is more dependent on relationships and mutual understanding than on the attributes of the research results. Consequently, we conclude an integrated framing of the research has a high potential for giving an impetus for discourses in academia and practice displaying close co-operation within the research process, and as well through the interactions of partners with academia, practitioners and politics.

4.2 Case studies: exploring AAFNs initiatives in five European countries

FAAN investigated alternative agro-food initiatives in five European countries - Austria, England, Hungary, France, Poland – through qualitative case study research. This included exploratory stakeholder interviews, semi-structured in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, scenario analysis workshops and an open space workshop. Further information sources included websites, documentation, protocols, correspondence about the initiatives, some policy statements, press releases, marketing material, and academic studies.

The data analysis was conducted along analytical categories, which have been defined in reference to the following aspects:

- the situation of AAFNs in the country (socio-ecological conditions, food market trends, consumer trends, reference to policy regime, relevant organizational field).
- profile of the AAFNs in terms of history, personnel, activities, actors of the AAFNs
- alternativeness, relations (relations with conventional chains, development of different (or alternative) knowledge, skills and innovations; reference points in conventional food chains
- un/favourable policies, other hindering/facilitating factors; what changes would be necessary to improve the situation
- success strategies (crucial factors of success, what solutions are invented)

3.2.1 National context of AAFNs

For each country studied, we explored the national context by reference to the prevailing farming and agro-food systems and the broad pattern of AAFNs.

Austria

In Austria, agriculture has always been dominated by small-scale structures and large remote and alpine areas. At the end of the 1970s, growing over-production of food and the decline of product prices led to a gradual move towards rationalised and specialised production. This caused a more concentrated pattern of production, and growing disparity between the incomes of farmers in different regions. New strategies had to be found in order to foster farming in remote regions. This new approach included the launch of projects to promote shorter supply chains through different forms of direct sale, product processing on farms, and co-operation between producers and consumers. These projects aimed to bring higher prices to producers, to build solidarity among producers and consumers, and/or to promote organic farming as an alternative to conventional farming.

To initiate and support such projects, a new system of funding was launched by the Federal Chancellor’s Office, namely the Campaign for the Encouragement of Endogenous Regional Development. The fund was aimed at less favoured regions, supporting cooperative projects to add value to regional resources and potentials. The campaign evolved over the years, and was the beginning of institutionalised regional development policies in Austria. After Austria joined the European Union in 1995, Local Food Systems have attracted EU support through the Leader programmes and the federal Rural Development Programme (RDP).

For these reasons, Austria now hosts a broad range of initiatives in the agro-food sector, including local food systems. However, recent years have seen a decline in direct sales and farmers’ markets, both because they are labour-intensive and complex food regulations imply the need for extra

investment. Moreover, a trend towards professionalisation can be observed, with former associations or cooperatives changing into trading companies or small business enterprises. Supermarkets are offering a growing number of organic and local product brands. These trends are causing problems for recently established LFS networks. However, they also encourage new forms of initiative, for instance farmer-business cooperatives, which are supported through the Austrian RDP and which play an important role in programmes such as 'Regions of culinary delight' (*Genuss Region Österreichs*) whereby regions are marketed through their key regional food products.

England

Since the late 1990s, the agricultural sector in the United Kingdom has undergone significant shifts, including greater opportunities for local food systems. This shift has been driven by concerns over environmental protection, as well as public health and food safety, especially following the outbreak of mad cow disease (BSE) in 1996, the foot-and-mouth epidemic in 2001, and the controversy over genetically modified food. These events have undermined consumers' trust in food. To restore trustworthy sources of food, efforts have been made to reconnect consumers with what they eat, to reconnect the food chain with the countryside, and to reconnect different actors, e.g. producers, consumers, retailers and local communities. Such a changing approach to food culture has been expressed both by public authorities and local citizens, at both the production and consumption level.

Consequently, consumers and producers have increased the pressure for changes towards food re-localisation. It means making locally grown, fresh and healthy food available and affordable to local communities. This is especially relevant for so-called 'food deserts' in cities, where entire communities may lack easy access to good-quality food. Moreover, within the last few years, there has been a rising demand for allotments, which are mainly inner-city, municipally-owned plots of land divided into small blocks to be rented by the public for food production. This development has been prompted by increasing food prices and environmental awareness. It indicates a popular desire to reconnect with food quality and food production.

The promoters of a changing food culture also emphasize the aims of 'sustainable communities' and 'community engagement'. They support a social model of closer links between actors and collective action. Such alternatives seek to counter the domination of supermarket chains over local small-scale entrepreneurs and consumers, while also helping to regenerate local economies.

A further reason for the emergence of Local Food Systems is that food producers face a cost-price squeeze through increased agri-input costs and lower farm-gate prices. To capture more of the market value for their products, farmers explore new methods of production, marketing and selling, such as organic production, permaculture, territorial branding and direct sales. However, local producers of organic food are squeezed by price competition with supermarket chains, which are selling imported organic food at cheaper prices. More recently, some supermarkets even offer 'local food' and box schemes. Consequently, many small farmers attempt to improve their viability through local co-operation with other farmers and direct contact with consumers. For example, farmers' markets have expanded significantly within the last decade in Great Britain.

France

In France, many cultural traditions have survived. Regional foods exist in wide variety, and are now being promoted in greatly diversified short supply chains (*circuits courts alimentaires*: e.g. Maréchal, 2008). This trend is linked to the diverse motives and lifestyles of consumers. Farmers became direct sellers partly because they had limited access to the land, funding, infrastructure, and extension services required for conventional farming, but also in order to gain added value through direct links to the demands of consumers. According to the General Census of Agriculture in 2005, 16.3 % of professional farmers in France have been active in short supply chains. However, this activity is probably even a higher percentage among part-time farmers and small farms, which are not shown separately in the Census. Comparing regions in France, Local Food Systems are more developed in the northern and south-eastern parts of France, while farming in other regions is still dominated by conventional systems.

The Bretons' prevailing farming model has been one of the most sophisticated models for intensification and specialisation in France, especially during the 1960s when agriculture was modernised to allow exporting agricultural products. In recent years, Brittany has seen an increasing

demand from urban people for local, high-quality farm products. The movement in the alternative agro-food sector has its roots in the 1980s when a non-profit organisation became the first organic cooperative shop in Brittany. In the 1990s the first farmers' cooperative shop was opened, followed by box schemes and community supported agriculture (AMAPs - *Association pour le Maintien d'une Agriculture Paysanne*), especially visible after the 2004-05 food safety crisis. Since then, there has been a growing concentration of alternative agro-food initiatives in urban areas, where the number of AMAPs has increased, along with box schemes, open air markets, cooperative farm shops and sales via retailers.

Hungary

In the post-communist countries, some local food cultures and local markets for food survived the communist regime. However, a centralised agro-food system prevails and the food market is dominated by multi-national retailers. In this context, it is not easy for small-scale food producers and processors to maintain local food initiatives. Small family farms have to struggle with the legacy of the former regime, building where they can on the remnants of informal economies. To avoid further marginalisation and depopulation of local communities, farmers have started to cooperate, especially on the local level.

In Hungary, public support for traditional food culture, along with a more recent consensus on rejecting GM food and valorising agro-biodiversity, have combined to inspire interest in local food systems. Strategies follow Western trends of community supported agriculture (CSA) involving buying groups, although they are rudimentary. These efforts face the challenge that Local Food Systems cannot build on any given mode of food provision, relying rather on the fragile achievements of sporadic initiatives. In this context, Local Food Systems are seen by those involved as a means of re-building some form of local autonomy, which can benefit marginal producers.

Poland

Polish agriculture and rural areas have undergone significant changes during the last half-century. The disadvantage of rural areas, and rigid social structures rooted in the historically long tradition of serfdom, had made it difficult for peasants to become farmers. In Poland the socialist modernisation was implemented in a slightly different way than in other Communist countries. Industrial modernisation was introduced only partially, because farmers were very reluctant to join the authoritarian state-forced collectivisation. Thus Polish agriculture was divided into an industrial branch, represented by state-owned cooperatives (PGR), and individual small households that pursued very small-scale farming.

During the 1950s, most agricultural land, nearly 80%, was cultivated by individual farmers. This was exceptional for a Communist country. The lack of efficiency and social legitimisation of PGR, and the very low economic viability of the small individual farms, caused severe problems for Polish rural areas, e.g. food supply shortages, low esteem of agriculture, rural depopulation and consequently a neglect of rural culture and society. Poland's rural development was shaped by top-down policies, and rural communities had minimal opportunities to shape their development. These difficulties generated serious distrust towards any attempt at political change, cooperative activities or ideas of the common good. Moreover, Polish rural areas have suffered from a lack of social and cultural cohesion and local identity, impeding collective actions and networks for new alternatives in agricultural food production. Weak co-operation skills, deep individualism, and distrust towards others make networking activities very difficult.

Since there are not many activities initiated from within civil society, it is mainly the public sector which has tried to facilitate networking in the alternative agro-food sector. Thus the influence of regional and local government is strong. Because of consumers' demands and a strong attachment to traditions, in Poland Local Food Systems mainly focus on local and traditional food, while less importance is attached to ecological criteria, e.g. organic farming. LFS can build upon the 'backwardness' in Polish agriculture – such as small average size of farms, low level of mechanisation and low input of fertilizers – and thereby facilitate a change towards alternative regimes of production.

3.2.2 The concept of ‘alternativeness’

In the run-up to the empirical work on case studies, a literature review was carried out to clarify the concept of AAFNs, which to date has been mainly dealt with in academic discussions. The goal was to flesh out and elaborate a conceptual framework about what to empirically investigate as case studies in the project.

Any ‘alternative’ is to be seen in relation to what is considered being ‘conventional’, and the reference points may vary according to the analytical perspective applied. As the review revealed, AAFNs are conceptualised in the academic literature against the backdrop of various perspectives (*relocalisation perspective, localism (regionalism) perspective, community welfare perspective, social movement perspective, knowledge, innovation and learning perspective*), but there is no general definition.

Given the lack of a general definition within the existing literature, and taking into account the existence of different types of AAFNs in reality, we acknowledged the existing diversity by defining the concept for our purposes broadly. Instead of coming up with a common definition of what can be considered a AAFN for the FAAN project, each national team individually defined which initiatives can be considered as being an *alternative* agro-food network against the background of their national contexts. Consequently, AAFNs of course vary in character between different countries. As a common ground, it was agreed the notion of *alternative* refers to the ways the initiatives make distinctions to the perceived negative characteristics of the conventional food system, which refer to economic, environmental and social aspects.

Thus alternatives can be characterised by multiple levels of differences from the conventional system. Such differences may relate to organisational structures, farming systems, social-territorial settings, food supply chains, policy support, and especially to ‘quality’ – which includes environmental, social, ethical, cultural and economic aspects. The quality dimension encompasses production methods, food characteristics, distribution methods, consumption patterns, etc. These aspects have close inter-relations, thus blurring any boundaries between them.

Alternative networks differ from the conventional system in terms of their organisational structures, farming systems, territorial setting, food supply chains, policy support, and especially their focus on ‘quality’ of food, which may include social, cultural, ethical, economic and environmental aspects. These aspects may be closely inter-related, thus blurring any boundaries between them.

3.2.3 Selection of national case studies

The case studies were chosen according to several criteria: the notion of ‘alternativeness’ in regard to the counties’ prevailing farming and agro-food systems; the relevance of cases within the national context; the access to empirical material (e.g. willingness of initiatives to co-operate and participate in the project); and partners’ interests in specific aspects (e.g. promotion of direct selling activities, re-introduction of rare breeds, etc.). A table giving an overview on the different forms of AAFNs investigated is included in Annex 4 (‘Overview on the forms and alternative dimensions of the FAAN case studies’), and summary descriptions are included in Annex 3 (‘Overview FAAN case studies’).

The *Austrian case studies* were focused on two initiatives in a disadvantaged mountainous region in the province of Styria, and on producer-consumer initiatives based on urban-rural linkages and organic farming in Lower Austria.

The *case studies in England* focused on the north-west region: different initiatives have been investigated in the rural county of Cumbria, and in the urban conurbation of Greater Manchester.

The *French case studies* represented a wide range of local food systems, which focus on short chain supply initiatives in the peri-urban region of Rennes Métropole and in the rural Pays du Centre Ouest Bretagne.

The *Polish case studies* corresponded to two different ways to establish and promote LFS in Poland. The first is a Culinary Heritage Network, initiated by regional government bodies in order to enhance rural tourism by promoting traditional food. The second, in Lower Vistula Valley, is a bottom-up initiative based on local activities, rooted in a deep tradition of informal rural economy.

The *Hungarian case studies* investigated The Alliance for the Living Tisza (Szövet), a rural development organisation with members located along the Tisza River in Eastern Hungary; and an alternative agro-food network in the centre of Budapest, embracing a farmers' market at Hunyadi Ter and a local citizens' group formed to save the market.

3.2.4 Local Food Systems: a specific form of AAFNs

All chosen case studies showed a strong focus on *shortening food chains*. This is a reaction to the long food chains operated by supermarket chains that separate producers from consumers, involve long-distance transport of food and tending to bring low farm-gate prices to producers. Efforts to shorten supply chains can reconnect producers with consumers, bringing producers a larger share of the ultimate market value, reducing 'food miles', and promoting a greater focus on food quality in all the senses described above. Short supply chains can encourage close relations between food producers and consumers. These closer relations are a main basis for *Local Food Systems* (LFS), which represent a specific form of AAFNs seeking to re-localise food production and consumption.

The central idea of such systems is a commitment to social co-operation, local economic development, and close geographical and social relations between producers and consumers.

Our study has shown such processes are varied and experimental, and those involved are constantly learning and creating new ways of working.

In LFS, the word '*local*' can have multiple meanings. It can refer to a specific geographic area, which contains both producers and consumers. It can describe the degree of trust and cooperation between the actors who are working together to create a more sustainable food system. It can describe decentralised models of governance, which encourage local democracy and empowerment, countering the power of the globalised food system. The FAAN case studies showed that cooperation and decentralised governance can be the key basis for closer relationships and commitments going beyond market motives. This cooperative basis has been more feasible in some political cultures, such as Austria or France, than for example in some parts of Eastern Europe.

3.2.5 Performing alternativeness

We found in the case studies that most practitioners rejected the notion of 'alternative', while other notions such as 'sustainable', 'local', or 'community' were preferred and frequently used. Still, these notions point to various alternatives strategies used by the initiatives building on their normative visions. This commitment is a kind of moral economy performed through direct purchasing from local suppliers, developing closer social and spatial relations between producers, the natural environment, retailers and consumers. It also requires an emotional reinvestment in local communities; and a strong political commitment against conventional systems of production-consumption and for environmentally sound forms of agriculture. This kind of revitalised energy and confidence by more sustainable local communities is becoming vital in shaping the emergence of alternative food networks. The longer term quest for better livelihoods, environmental, socio-economic improvements does not overlook strictly economic, practical interests. Initiatives are dependent on bringing in more income, regaining the added value lost when selling to supermarkets. Providing greater societal access to quality, fresh and organic food means consumers are able to obtain products at prices lower than from intermediary retailers. In this way communities revitalise the local economy, and invest in themselves by maintaining their properties.

According to the definitions and descriptions of alternative aspects in the case studies, alternative characteristics may well be very controversial. They can be performed through the following (sometimes) paradoxical strategies:

Rejected notion of alternative

The isolated term 'alternative' is ambivalent as a self-description. As a matter of fact it was in many interviews seen as pejorative, and hence routinely rejected or explicitly avoided. Practitioners such as organic producers refused to be identified as weird or marginal. On the contrary they seek to be seen as mainstream and committed to fast growth.

Alternative is realised through cooperation of diverse stakeholders

To act successfully alternative initiatives develop their strong self-organising capacity. Initiatives usually have strong links to social movements, environmental activism. They enhance democratization and the autonomy of their network by engaging with a broad range of support bodies and establishing interdependencies. Any effort to catalyze change is a collaborative endeavour of various stakeholders. Diverse personal aspirations, motivations and values constitute these alternative networks; and this process shapes new inequalities, creating spaces for the commodification of emerging knowledge.

Alternative as (re)invention of (preindustrial) traditions

Attempts to rethink a long-established local tradition can eventuate in alternative practices where (re)invention appears to be coming up with an invention, deliberately promoting sustainable communities, reconstructing local identity, and enhancing local economy.

Alternatives seek mainstreaming

Alternative initiatives do not want to remain marginal and economically unviable. As a positive vision alternatives aim to expand their network, and become more accessible, mainstream, normal and legally institutionalised. Mainstreaming and professionalization without conventionalisation and losing alternative values is seen as a positive goal. The manifest dangers of mainstreaming are tackled in each case study: relations to conventional chains are opposed or accepted, depending on whether consumers can choose alternatives.

Alternative values in agricultural production system

Alternative agriculture emphasizes ecological and social resilience. The agro-ecological systems (organics, biodynamic, permaculture, etc.) can contribute to more sustainable communities through developing solidarity- and trust-based relationships. Several case studies presented alternatives building on traditional agricultural techniques, ancient tacit knowledge about the landscape, and sustainable agriculture movements - all sharing a worldview built on sustainability values of production systems.

Alternatives performed through territorial branding

Product quality and specific places are combined in labels and regional brands. These are developed as an overarching frame to act as a catalyst of alternative agro-food systems.

Alternative knowledge creation

AAFN practitioners draw upon various knowledge backgrounds, mobilise and appropriate local-lay, traditional, lost, hidden knowledge, and integrate these with expert knowledge (codified knowledge regarding rural development, organic practices, marketing skills). Alternative characteristics are shaped by new combinations of traditional, tacit and codified scientific expert knowledge which facilitate the revitalisation of local knowledge.

Alternatives developed via (new) intermediaries

Various regulatory and commercial obstacles call for intermediaries. Visionary and pragmatist managers or champions act in collaboration with local stakeholders, developing professional skills for handling regulations, obtaining grants, working on translation between the production and consumption side, interfacing with consumers, and using alternative marketing methods for reaching consumers. Intermediaries provide food, linking producers with consumers. They become real facilitators in the expansion of local food networks, especially by going beyond farmers' capacity for direct sales.

4.3 Exploring the political context of AAFNs

3.3.1 Theoretical outline on national and EU-level policies

As a basis for the analysis of policies hindering or facilitating the development of AAFNs, a theoretical outline of national and EU-level policies was carried out at an early stage of the project. Each national team co-operatively provided reports on their national policies and/or the national implementation of EU policies, to identify and describe the political context which is of potential relevance for AAFNs in the participating countries. The analysis was based on the following documents/sources:

- government legislation and policies, including any relevance to rural development, alternative-quality agricultures and AAFNs;
- stakeholder organisation statements (available on websites) about how policies facilitate, shape or limit AAFNs;
- academic or policy analyses of those issues (if available).

CAP 1st, CAP 2nd pillar (including Leader), hygiene regulations, and trading laws have been identified as being the most relevant policy frameworks for all countries. In addition, other policies, like **public procurement, territorial/quality branding, GM-free zones**, have been considered relevant for some countries.

The analysis revealed that policies in relation to AAFNs are complex, and many different policies somehow affect AAFNs. Some of these are more obviously related (e.g. trading rules), others less (e.g. regional policies). Each country has policies (or different aspects of the same policy) which potentially facilitate or hinder AAFNs, as listed in Annex 5 ('Policy frameworks that may have tensions between aspects hindering or facilitating AAFNs'). As an extra intuition, policies have a role which depends partly upon their interpretation by regional authorities, though within the constraints of national frameworks.

3.3.2 Linking policy frameworks to case studies

This synthesis was aimed to link the empirical results from case studies carried out in the participating countries with the policy frameworks identified in the scope of the theoretical outline. We evaluated how existing large-scale policies match the day-to-day need of the AAFNs we investigated.

We identified some links to the question of favouring/hindering policies and favouring/hindering other factors. This question can be directly connected to the different frames (or ideological background): a measure can be evaluated by some as favouring the stakeholders, and by others as hindering, depending on their respective goals and ideas. In other words, a conflict about any political choice (or policies) can be directly connected to the divergence of frames. For this reason, it appeared necessary to carry out this analytical work prior to beginning evaluation of facilitating and hindering factors for AAFNs.

The analysis showed evidence of an occasional strong disparity of frames between the main EU large-scale policies potentially influencing AAFNs (e.g. RDPs) and how AAFNs – in our cases in particular Local Food Systems – define the frame.

In addition to the policies listed in Annex 5, we identified several points of great relevance for the development of AAFNs that are not directly related to large-scale policies, but which still can be influenced through 'public policies'. Thus we included these factors as well in the analysis of hindering and facilitating policies (see below 4.4). It seemed useful to consider them because they open the possibility to propose some new political measures (either to reinforce favouring factors, or to limit hindering ones, and thereby representing an adequate frame for AAFNs). This set of factors was helpful to show what measures could be useful or needed to support the development of AAFNs, and to propose effective and meaningful policy changes.

4.4 Factors facilitating or hindering the development of AAFNs

One of the core research questions for the case studies were: **How do policies and other factors hinder, facilitate or shape AAFNs?** In our case studies we focussed in particular on Local Food Systems which represent a specific form of AAFNs. – Thus we also relate our conclusions about facilitating and/or policies to this specific mode:

LFS depend upon practitioners cooperating to mobilise resources of various kinds – skills, knowledge, labour (paid and unpaid), capital, buildings etc. – within the locality. They may also depend upon external factors, in terms of favourable policies, funding, regulations and the like. Our case studies provide many examples of how resources may be secured or withheld, and of how external factors may indeed be favourable or may represent significant obstacles. Practitioners may need to find ways to use, strengthen and/or link favourable policies, and to challenge, accommodate/or bypass unfavourable policies.

There are several reasons why Local Food Systems are very nearly invisible at both the EU and national policy levels,. Administrative units and prevalent policy language have no such category as a basis for taking responsibility. Commission policy discussions take for granted large-scale agri-food systems as the foundation for food supply chains, ignoring LFS (CEC 2009a) even though these have been highlighted by a report to the European Parliament (Bové 2009).

LFS may depend upon support measures using and integrating many policy frameworks; this role has been more feasible at the regional or local level. Yet even there policies are rarely purposively designed or implemented in order to facilitate LFS, especially the requisite social cooperation and solidarity. Normally, government officials tend to have no responsibility for their promotion. The quest for direct sales typically must confront rigid and/or inconsistent criteria from various regulatory requirements and agencies.

However there are some key ‘champions’, especially within regional authorities, who seek to change and link various policies along favourable lines. They combine funding sources with other assistance to help enterprises meet regulatory requirements. They use the flexibility of EC rules and link various policies in ways favouring LFS. Amidst a generally hostile policy context, such efforts are exceptions, providing exemplary practices which could be taken up more widely.

Funding schemes

Various funding schemes are meant to support environmental, economic and/or social aims relevant to LFS. Some of these schemes have benefited LFS, but many have been difficult to access.

In *urban settings*, food initiatives have drawn upon a variety of funding sources. These include urban regeneration, social cohesion and charitable foundations. Some metropolitan authorities have supported peri-urban agriculture and direct sales in cities, especially by limiting urban expansion to preserve ‘green’ areas, as in Brittany. In some places such as England small businesses have received funding to help them start-up, but without continuing funds – in contrast to social enterprises that may be eligible for continued funding. In the new EU member states, funds are available to support participatory processes in urban planning, though some local authorities have used these in fairly superficial ways, for example in Hungary. Access to land has been a problem, especially for allotments in urban areas (e.g. Manchester, England) and peri-urban regions (e.g. Rennes Métropole, France).

For LFS in more rural settings, the most significant source of support is the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), the second pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy. The EAFRD aims to promote ‘the sustainable development of rural areas’, through the medium of the Rural Development Programmes prepared by each Member State or (in some countries) by regional authorities. The EAFRD Regulation emphasises the need for productive efficiency: ‘Improvements in the processing and marketing of primary agricultural and forestry products should be encouraged by means of support for investments aimed at improving efficiency’ (EC 2005). A key term is ‘modernisation’, which generally means new techniques or technologies to increase productivity. Alternatively, modernisation can mean on-farm equipment for processing primary products into high-quality ones, as a different basis for producers to add more value.

Likewise, there are diverse meanings of economic, environmental and social sustainability, as well as diverse means to link them. Governments have great flexibility in allocating funds to match formal sustainability criteria. They often focus on supporting more efficient production for economic competitiveness, while removing the least productive land from cultivation. Such policies even prevail in some countries which claim to promote alternative agricultures, thus further marginalising LFS. Generally the minimum grant or investment is high, as is the requirement for co-financing: this favours large-scale farmers or food processors and thus conventional agri-food chains, where the ingredients may be imported long-distance from the cheapest source. In some countries, such as Hungary, the eligibility criterion of a specific viability threshold (expressed in European Size Units) excludes small farmers from even the possibility of submitting applications for certain funds.

Alternatively, sustainability can mean agrarian-based rural development through producer cooperation, producers' skills, infrastructure for farmers' markets, conversion to organic methods (e.g. England, France, Poland), promotion of specialty branded products (e.g. France, Poland) and links with agri-tourism (e.g. Austria, England, France). RDP funds have been combined with Structural Funds to promote LFS for regional development. Successful access depends on a low minimum grant or investment. The European Social Fund has also been used to support cooperation among food producers and with their consumers.

A special role has been played by **Leader** (*Liaison Entre Actions pour le Développement de L'Economie Rurale*), which is a local method of rural development introduced in the early 1990s as a European Community initiative. Leader emphasises the role of local communities in taking decisions about strategic choices for the future of their area, and provides for the creation of local partnerships to deliver rural development programmes. The 'pilot' phases of Leader I, Leader II and Leader+ were considered a success. In the current period 2007-2013, Leader has been mainstreamed as a mandatory component of all Rural Development Programmes. The geographic and thematic scope of what is delivered through the local partnerships varies considerably across the Member States; these partnerships also vary in the strength of their bottom-up character, independence and capacity.

Our case studies show the Leader approach has great relevance for Local Food Systems. Leader emphasises the value of innovation, which may involve alternative food networks and distribution chains. Decentralised delivery through Local Action Groups encourages support for projects considered valuable at the local level, even when they are not universally recognised by national policies: LFS can be precisely such projects. Leader promotes the idea of adding value to local resources, and building cooperation between diverse stakeholders. This can strengthen links between producers and consumers and/or improve cooperation between producers from different regions.

Local Food Systems have received support from Leader in many of the national case studies, such as those in Austria, England and Poland. This support has been a decisive factor for the development of local food markets in some cases, e.g. the Polish Lower Vistula. Leader can provide substantial grassroots approaches to rural development, by targeting community links and local needs with a small yet influential budget. Such support can be crucial in more marginal rural areas, as in Austria, Hungary and Poland.

In England, Leader has given financial support to various local food processing and marketing activities, including very small-scale projects, collective marketing techniques, and farmers' markets. Most importantly, it has promoted cooperation among food producers, especially to establish new intermediaries that shorten supply chains, enabling producers to gain more of the value that they have added.

In Austria, direct sales initiatives are often embedded in regional development strategies. Many regional projects are established with the support of Leader. The long-established ALMO initiative used Leader support to extend its network and infrastructures and to professionalise marketing by linking with local gastronomy and tourism enterprises. The collective farmers marketing initiative *Almenland Bauernspezialitäten* in Styria was supported by the local Leader Group. Since the mainstreaming of Leader, support is available for product development, for farmer-to-consumer direct marketing, establishment of new shops, and large-scale cooperative projects such as cheese production.

In France, Leader is more limited in scope, but it can support activities relevant to LFS. For example, the purchase of infrastructure for Bon Repos Market. However, most producers engage in direct sale without Leader grants.

In Poland, many of the Leader groups support the promotion and marketing of local food products. The Lower Vistula initiative was supported by the Leader Group and by the Rural Women's Association.

Hungarian initiatives have had little access to Leader funds. Szövet members did submit an application, but none of the farmers received any funding. In this region there seems to have been inadequate or unclear information disseminated through the Local Action Groups. More funding would be needed to foster farmers' teaming up in creating cooperatives.

Hygiene regulations

EC food hygiene regulations have anticipated the most hazardous contexts of agri-industrial processes, in response to serious epidemics and food scares over the past two decades. Regulations impose more stringent criteria upon food of animal origin than upon food in general (EC 2004a, 2004b, 2004c). In order to comply with these regulations, small-scale enterprises face proportionately higher costs, relative to their size and income.

EC law on food hygiene allows flexible interpretation – e.g. exemptions for primary products in direct sales, and lighter rules for traditional products – thus potentially facilitating LFS. However, member states have only used some of the flexible possibilities, according to an official report (CEC 2009b: 8). That being said, the fact remains such flexibility appears limited in scale and scope. Exemptions are narrowly defined, or remain ambiguous and thus in a 'grey' zone of legal uncertainty. These difficulties can deter or limit new entrants to LFS. For example, in Austria some LFS focus on vegetable products in order to bypass the more stringent requirements for meat products. In some places, there are lighter rules for individual vendors – but not for collective sales, thus disfavours LFS (e.g. in France). Meat hygiene rules have imposed a large financial burden irrespective of size, thus leading many slaughterhouses to close down (e.g. in England, Hungary and Poland): this decline forces longer-distance transport, limiting local capacity for direct sales.

Even where national rules offer flexibility in their wording, the interpretation remains uncertain. In practice it depends upon regional authorities, incoherent regulation from different ministries (e.g. Hungary) or even upon judgements made by individual inspectors (e.g. France). Producers must inform themselves about the law in order to argue for maximum flexibility, and so be prepared to defend their practices as legally compliant (e.g. France).

Moreover, accession countries have recently adapted to EC regulations in ways which create greater or uncertain burdens for small-scale producers. For example, in Hungary, the flexibility in EC law is denied by government authorities, thus shifting and avoiding responsibility. In the Hungarian rules on exemptions for small quantities of products in direct sales, the phrase 'direct sales' is defined to exclude processed products, either of plant or animal origin, sold to shops or institutions. In order to ease this; imposing constraint, civil society organisations are negotiating with the Ministry of Agriculture for a new decree on food processing and direct marketing by smallholders. In Poland, there are no lighter rules for small scale producers, and even no permission for some products produced with traditional methods.

In France, the hygiene rules applied to cooperative shops run by farmers are as strict as those applying to retail shops. Since 2006 a network of cooperative shops has been negotiating with the Ministry of Agriculture to ensure that cooperative shops are considered an extension of farms, and hence to be points of direct marketing rather than intermediaries. New legislation recognising the new status of cooperative shops may be adopted during 2010.

Trading rules

Trading rules impose proportionately higher costs upon small-scale operations than upon large ones. Costs arise from regulations related to tax, commerce, social insurance etc. Those different regulations often lack coherence. Each may have its own exemptions, whose criteria may vary even within the same country, with different definitions used by different agencies or regional authorities. The criteria may include distinctions between 'agricultural' and 'commercial' production, 'primary' and

‘processed’ products, ‘sideline’ and ‘main’ businesses; and definitions of what is meant by ‘direct sales’, ‘box schemes’ etc.

Direct sales are rarely treated as a specific category, so the relevant rules involve several different laws: producers thus frequently may lack absolute clarity on what is and what is not permitted. Direct sales may have lighter rules and lower tax than indirect sales, as in Poland. But collective-marketing income may count as profit, imposing greater tax burdens on producers, as in France.

Public procurement

For procurement contracts of public agencies (e.g. schools, hospitals, prisons, local authorities), EC regulations have mandated that agencies must accept ‘the lowest price’ or ‘the most economically advantageous’ tender. In the 1990s the criteria could include only ‘external’ costs born directly by the purchasing authority: this rule prevented them from taking account of wider social and environmental costs. More recent regulations allow broader criteria for defining what products are economically advantageous (EC 2004d). EC guidance on *Buying Green* mentions environmental performance within a scientifically sound ‘life-cycle costing approach’ (CEC 2004). Public authorities may reduce environmental impact through seasonal purchasing, i.e. by buying only those fruit and vegetable varieties at the time locally in season.

These EC regulations are interpreted by public authorities in different ways, both across and within member states. In many places, local procurement officials remain cautious about favouring local food, especially if it is more expensive. ‘Economically advantageous’ is generally taken to mean the lowest cost, regardless of external costs to the environment, resource usage etc., which of course benefits larger suppliers. By contrast, some authorities adjust the rules to favour local small-scale suppliers.

Such a contrast can be seen within England. For public procurement in general, government policy mandates ‘aggregated purchasing’ as a means to obtain the lowest possible cost. Yet some local authorities impose environmental criteria in ways that can favour local suppliers. Moreover, a local authority can split up contracts according to product and locality.

Some authorities have policies on diet improvement, especially for schoolchildren. This policy may emphasise nutritional and safety criteria, in ways which benefit conventional food chains (e.g. England, France). By contrast, the relevant criteria can emphasise agri-food quality, e.g. organic, as in Austria. Wherever a contract specifies ‘organic’ food, however, local shortages can mean that imports increase to fulfil such criteria, rather than favouring local suppliers.

Territorial and quality branding

Under EC regulations, Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) or Geographical Indication (PGI) labels depend on claims about unique territorial characteristics. They convey such reputations in distant markets, mainly via conventional agri-food chains, so the economic benefits go elsewhere. Nevertheless, PDO/PGI products sometimes help to create synergies at the local level between agri-food and other rural sectors, e.g. through agri-eco-tourism.

Many more food products depend on non-statutory territorial branding, which promotes an entire region and its services. Consumer recognition depends upon wider efforts to promote to a distant audience quality meanings, often linked with public goods. In our case studies, local food projects build upon existing brands or develop new ones, rarely dependent upon legal protection. A territorial brand can denote production in a specific farm, town or region. Such brands use special labels recognised and trusted by consumers. For example, the ‘Genussregionen’ brand in Austria, or the ‘Distinctly Cumbrian’ label in England highlights numerous specialty products. Introducing flexible labels involving minimal financial costs and administrative burden, such as the ‘Living Tisza’ label in Hungary, can make quality branding far more accessible to small farmers with very limited resources. There is a tension between supermarket chains incorporating territorial brands and producers maintaining their independence through closer links with consumers.

Case studies in Poland illustrate those different roles of territorial branding vis à vis LFS. One label, the Warmia Region Culinary Heritage Trail, includes large-scale industrial processors and thus loses public credibility. In contrast, in the Lower Vistula Valley another label promoting small-scale traditional quality production from plums (with funds from the Leader programme and support from

the Rural Women's Association) has maintained a quality reputation. The latter success emerged from a long conflict over democratic control over the network.

Quality branding strategies are widely used by LFS in France. Organic farmers of Brin d'Herbe differentiated themselves from non-organic vendors by use of a simple green stamp. Some producers experiment with a non-GMO sticker promoted by the Region Bretagne.

Social co-operation and trust

Social co-operation and trust constitute key elements in the success of LFS. Regional Development Funds, Leader programmes and other funding schemes have played an important role in supporting the development of regional resource management and cooperation. Exemplary cases are the Almenland Bauernspezialitäten and ALMO in Austria, and Cumbrian projects in England.

Support from official bodies at the regional and local level has also contributed to local cooperation. Leader programmes have facilitated cooperation among small-scale producers. Enabling them to collectively sell their products either directly to consumers, or in bulk to large purchasers via local hubs. In this way, producers can gain more of the value that they add, especially for quality products, as shown in Cumbria. In France, the support Rennes Métropole provides to the Brin d'Herbe group is an example of how city councils can give strategic help to short supply chains in peri-urban agriculture.

Farmers in some areas, such as those in the ALMO group in Austria, have created strong coalitions in order to better influence prices and general conditions with retailers. Cooperation may also be translated into a collective ethic and vision about various sustainability issues, as in France. Consumers may take an active role in cooperation and sharing responsibility with farmers, as in the AMAP schemes in France.

The former socialist regimes had low social cohesion within rural communities, with great distrust among farmers. This legacy has hindered the development of LFS based on cooperation in Poland and Hungary. At the same time, CSOs and citizen based organisations are stepping in to foster social cooperation, as in 'Our Treasure – The Market' and the Alliance for the Living Tisza, both in Hungary.

Operational challenges

LFS face many operational challenges – handling regulations, obtaining grants, organising the work of producing, processing and marketing.

In some cases, local authorities (such as Cumbria in England) help small-scale food producers bear the burden of compliance with hygiene regulations by providing the necessary infrastructure – e.g. commercially equipped kitchens, refrigeration, storage etc.

The lack of professional skills, especially in marketing, can be an obstacle. In some cases (such as ALMO in Austria), the interface with consumers is transferred to intermediaries who are entrepreneurs (butchers, tourism and high quality gastronomy) and carry out the professional marketing on behalf of farmers. In other cases (such as Manchester in England, Alliance for the Living Tisza in Hungary, Organic Food Cooperative in Austria), marketing activities are taken over by the non-profit sector and volunteers engaged by the LFS. However, the heavy workload falling on volunteers can lead to rapid overwork, burnout and socially unsustainable initiatives.

Skills and knowledge needed

LFS practitioners draw upon various knowledge backgrounds. They may appropriate the traditional, lost or hidden knowledge of lay people, and integrate this with codified expert knowledge regarding rural development, organic practices, marketing skills etc. Creating the essential combination of skills and knowledge is a key factor in the success of LFS.

In some cases, local authorities and organisations – such as Cumbria Organics, Distinctly Cumbrian, and Cumbria Community Foundation in England – provide training for small businesses on how to tender for large public procurement orders.

LFS may also mobilise legal expertise in order to make alternative proposals to ease regulations hindering food processing and direct marketing by small farmers, as in the Alliance for the Living Tisza in Hungary.

The development by ALMO in Austria of higher-quality cross-breeds, through cooperation between farmers and a consultant hired by a meat processing company, is an example of how an LFS can draw on the skills of different people.

Consumer support and recognition

LFS depend upon consumers recognising that LFS have wider societal value, translated into a diversity of interests, including the environment, tradition and health.

Recurrent food scares and growing consumer demand for high-quality products fostered the development of LFS based on organic farming practices and products. In Austria, EVI and BERSTA are the champions of the organic movement, while the organic food cooperative based in Vienna also buys organic products directly from the producers. In England, many Cumbrian farmers use organic and biodynamic methods, and many producer-consumers in Manchester favour permaculture for urban agriculture. LFS in Poland (Lower Vistula Region, Warminsko-Mazurska Culinary Heritage Network) and Hungary (Alliance for the Living Tisza) emphasise low-input, traditional farming methods rather than certified organic ones.

Attachment to tradition is reflected in the choice of some LFS to keep and market traditional rare breeds (e.g. MANTURO in Austria) and local varieties (e.g. Alliance for the Living Tisza in Hungary).

The urban community gardens in Manchester, England, play an important role in alleviating poverty, social exclusion and health problems (dietary and obesity problems, mental health).

LFS can attract strong support from consumers based on other values. These include the freshness and better taste of products, as well as closer relations with producers. In some cases, such as Brin d'Herbe in France, longer opening hours accommodate the needs of consumers who can buy their food on the way home after work. Experience in Poland, however, suggests that the price sensitivity of consumers can be a hindering factor to 'quality' food, often perceived as a niche market for wealthier people.

4.5 Success strategies of alternative initiatives

Although in general policy frameworks rarely recognise AAFNs respectively Local Food Systems, local authorities have some 'champions' who have found ways to successfully develop Local Food Systems. As addressed above, our case studies have found that each policy framework may have various features that both hinder and facilitate alternatives. They develop strategies about how to use, strengthen and/or link favourable policies, as well as how to challenge, accommodate/or bypass unfavourable policies. Local Food Systems use support measures which integrate different policies from different sectors. At the same time, European and national policies influence what can be achieved at a local level. LFS are shaped in ways which respond to all these factors. They create new ways and rejuvenate older methods of local food production and distribution, and build various strategies to be successful:

Building networks

The success of LFS is dependent on cooperative networks linking (even integrating) diverse food initiatives, at least on a regional level. Such linkages depend upon a broader vision of a regional food system. Without those networks and their visions, specific initiatives may remain weak or even fail.

However, the case studies show that the potential of these initiatives to expand, and bring meaningful change in the agro-food system, depends upon four main factors:

- They must professionalise their skills, with help from specialist intermediaries.
- They must build and maintain consumer loyalty, especially as supermarket chains sell more products labelled 'quality', even 'local'.
- They must constantly learn in order to keep up with changing circumstances and remain competitive in the market.
- They need the continued dedicated effort and innovation of leaders or 'champions', people that can link diverse stakeholders and policy-makers around the constantly evolving idea of LFS.

Our case studies provide examples of successful LFS networks. In some cases, their creation was prompted by problems and difficulties. In Hungary, ‘The Market: Our Treasure’ group formed to prevent the closure of the Hunyadi market in Budapest, an asset that had provided good quality local food for customers and an income for producers. In Cumbria, Hadrian Organics producers joined together to create a collective brand, as well as to share the workload of attending farmers’ markets and thus directly increase their sales. In response to the economic hardship of the Almenland region of Austria, ALMO was formed 20 years ago and now has a membership of 550 farmers, 2 smaller butchers and a large processor and distributor of meat delicacies: they work together to produce high-quality alp oxen meat.

These networks are often crucial in creating the practical structures that make Local Food Systems work. For example, a market like the one at Hunyadi Ter, Budapest needs many traders to attract customers, while a shop like Brin d’Herbe in Rennes is more attractive because it sells a wider range of produce. Marketing, if done collectively, can both reduce costs and improve ‘brand recognition’ among consumers. However, the function of networks is much more than simple practicality. By working together, producers and consumer learn from each other, providing practical support and encouragement.

More broadly, networks create a sense of something bigger taking place. Rather than one consumer wishing to purchase local food and one producer wishing to earn a better living, a collective identity is created, with the idea of a broader social change taking place.

Our case studies show the crucial role played by individuals who are variously called *pioneers or champions*. They act as charismatic leaders who promote a vision and inspire others into action to turn that vision into reality, as in the case of the lower Vistula Region in Poland. If they work within an official government authority, they allocate resources and link policies which facilitate LFS. They lead by example, creating successes that stimulate others into action. Some champions volunteer huge amounts of time and effort. Rather than wait until they are offered support or training to realise their dreams, they simply go forge ahead with what needs to be done. Whilst the financial viability of the LFS is important for these champions, personal financial gain is not the primary driver.

Societal attitudes

For all the case studies in this project, LFS are about much more than practitioners’ own personal survival, though this was a strong motivation for many. LFS are also about changing societal attitudes to food, farming and environment.

Many of the stakeholders in the case studies felt consumer awareness and willingness has played a vital role in the success of LFS. Conventional supermarket-based food systems provide people with apparent convenience, cheap food and powerful brand recognition through advertising of both the supermarkets and the products they sell. In the face of that dominant advertising, consumers must have special reasons to provide ongoing support for LFS.

Education about food and food systems was thought to be very important in this respect. Consumers may have concerns about the conventional model e.g. health issues, food miles and ecological impacts of farming. Their support for local food may also be driven by more positive reasons - such as support for local farmers and traders, and desire to eat high-quality traditional products that may not be found in supermarkets. But they may need information for these concerns to be turned into sustained support for local food initiatives. If consumers understand the overall costs of production (both to the farmer but also subsidy costs from taxes, clean up of environmental pollution etc) and understand how little is paid to the producer in conventional systems, they may be more willing to pay a higher price directly to the producer.

Education on these matters can be provided in a great number of ways. For example, the campaigning and awareness raising of ‘The Market: Our Treasure’ group in Hungary enables people to learn what is of value in LFS. In Cumbria one farmer has organised visits from school children, letting them see food production at first hand.

Food tourism is a tool mainly designed for marketing, but can also enable people to connect the food they eat with the place that they visit. ‘Made in Cumbria’ (England), Warminsko-Mazurska Culinary Heritage Network in Poland, and Szövet in Hungary are all examples where tourism is being used to stimulate the local economy, while enabling consumers to better understand how food is produced.

Perhaps for LFS, the most important method of education is the direct links between the producer and the consumer. If consumers buy directly from the farm or at a farmers' market or collective shop, they gain a greater understanding of the day-to-day process of production. They can be told why a certain product is not available or why another is in great abundance.

The current trend of increasingly large supermarkets does not serve all sectors of society well. Many people living in inner cities lack access to fresh, healthy and affordable food. In Manchester, England, LFS are now being supported by an alliance between the City Council and the National Health Service. Through a variety of projects, people are being encouraged to become more involved in food production because of the benefits in physical and mental well-being. These projects also increase and improve the wildlife and green spaces within the city, thus contributing to overall sustainability.

Creative marketing

LFS cannot, and do not seek to, compete with supermarkets in providing convenient access to a wide variety of cheap food under one roof. Instead, they are pioneering many innovative ways to bring benefits to the consumer, some of which are becoming commonplace and are integral to LFS. For example, box schemes deliver fresh seasonal local vegetables directly to people's homes for a fixed weekly fee.

During the FAAN project, we noted several particularly innovative or interesting examples.

- In Cumbria, England, a dairy farm has created a farm shop with an upstairs café affording customers a panoramic view into the milking parlour below: the cows are milked here twice a day, and so customers are brought closer to the production processes.
- In Manchester, many people do not have access to cheap fresh vegetables. The Herbie Van takes such food to these areas and sells directly to the consumer. The van has become a social meeting point where recipes are swapped and people learn more about healthy diets.
- In Austria, 'Shop in Shop' systems offer farmers a shelf in the local shop to sell their products. Farmers organise the delivery to the store and quantities of products individually. The price is set by the farmers, and the store adds a percentage to cover costs. This system creates mutual benefits for farmers and the shop owner. The wider range of products offered, plus the store's open hours, make farmers' products more easily available compared with on-farm sales. The store benefits by providing authentic regional products.

Innovation

As our case studies show, Local Food Systems depend upon innovation. Farmers, entrepreneurs and others demonstrate the capacity to innovate, find new forms that can promote sustainable communities, reconstruct local identity and enhance the local economy by building on local traditions.

- In Lower Vistula Region (Poland), the revitalisation of regional, traditional fruit production and processing was realised through rural community development, linking local activists, governments, and consumers to the landscape and natural environment through an association called 'Vistula Valley Friends'.
- Szövet (Hungary) has developed a brand connected to management practices of floodplain orchards, and modernised artisan production methods in the Tisza region.
- In Cumbria (England), entrepreneurs are re-vitalising traditional knowledge and skills, and creating new regional brands to add value to local food products.
- In Brittany (France), new open air markets have been created around Rennes that are open in the evening to serve consumers on their way home from work. This change to reflect modern urban 9to5 lifestyles has obliged farmers to adapt their long-established practice of being at market in the morning and on the farm in the afternoon.

4.6 Policy recommendations

Finally, the project team (involving all FAAN partners) elaborated policy recommendations based on the ten case studies. Beyond these findings, we took into account previous research and policy reports in this area, as well as inputs from project participants – mainly gained in the scope of a stakeholder workshop, where we presented our preliminary results. Some recommendations concern specific institutions and/or propose specific regulatory changes. Others are recommendations to all policy makers. We found evidence Local Food Systems greatly depend for their success upon cooperative networks, skill sharing, knowledge exchange etc. Thus many of our recommendations are about providing facilitation, funding and infrastructure at the local level. At the same time, policies set by national governments and the European Union influence what can be achieved and what is supported at a local level.

FAAN recommendations:

Policy makers at EU, national, regional and local levels should:

- Recognise the existence and growth of LFS, which bring a wide range of societal benefits in many policy areas.
- Build recognition of LFS into multiple policy areas – including health, environment, rural development and agriculture – noting that they can deliver solutions to many cross-departmental policy challenges, especially at a local level.
- Ensure there is increased funding for projects which have been initiated by local communities, in partnership and taking innovative approaches.
- Increase the funding to Leader, maintain its bottom-up character as mainstreamed to more axes of the EAFRD, and encourage a territorial approach linking rural producers with urban consumers (rather than one promoting ‘global competitiveness’ of territories). Likewise, integrate rural development and regional development funds in ways that facilitate LFS.

The European Commission and European Parliament should:

- Create an inter-DG task force for local food systems: this would promote on-going, detailed examination of policy options for LFS as a development which spans several policy issues.
- Facilitate a Europe-wide structure for information exchange among and about LFS.
- Broaden the policy initiative on food supply chains (CEC, 2009a), by investigating the forces that lengthen food supply chains and devising measures to help shorten those chains. The optimal goal is for producers to be able to gain more of the value they add (e.g. Bové 2009).
- Facilitate more local sourcing in public procurement. Investigate why so many procurement agencies opt for the lower price, at the expense of those public goods. Collect data on experience of local sourcing through quality and environmental criteria, and how it sometimes justifies higher prices.
- Communicate more effectively about the environmental scope in EC guidance on *Buying Green*, and evaluate why that scope is not being used more widely.
- Evaluate why national and local practices so rarely make use of the flexibility of EC rules as a means to remove unnecessary hindrances to LFS, such as over-burdensome interpretations of hygiene regulations (CEC, 2009b).

National governments should review the impact of their trading laws (tax, national insurance, etc.) on small enterprises in local food systems.

Local Authorities should learn from successful strategies at the local level, and better use local planning to facilitate LFS.

4.7 Further research needs

Results from our research carried out within FAAN allows for universal statements only with limited scope to be generalised for Local Food Systems. Still, the richness of distinct cases allowed for exemplarily highlighting the differences from conventional commodity supply; this afforded valuable insights into the different strategies the initiatives follow given their motivations, their visions and the challenges they face. Each case evidences a different performance in terms of the different aspects of sustainability – and in regard to its broader impact. This includes regional/local development, social cohesion in local communities, and potential to connect people, organisations, and policies through different models of governance through re-localisation.

The investigation of Local Food Systems across the spectrum of FAAN case studies tackles many different topics which are highly interlinked. Both the different modes of existing LFS and the different stages of their development challenge comparative studies. In particular, research that aims at non-academic impact requires in-depth investigations with integrative approaches, considering the perspectives of persons, institutions, and policies connected to Local Food Systems. Transdisciplinary and participatory research are appropriate tools for integrated approaches in researching further questions about sustainable developments in agricultural systems. Research thereby can contribute to bringing together these actors not only for the purpose of gaining information, but also by initiating networking activities to exchange experiences and catalyze mutual understanding through interaction. One single project may possibly have only a limited capability of solving ‘real world problems’, but in the field of ongoing participatory research the potential impact may go far beyond solely the project activities, in the main through the continuous interaction between the different realms – research, policy and practice.

During the run of the FAAN project we faced numerous situations where further questions for research were raised. At other points we would have welcomed the possibility to analyse the issues at stake in more detail, and/or to engage further, specific expertise and perspectives.

To better understand AAFNs, and to provide further evidence for their benefits and limits in comparison to conventional food chains, more in-depth case studies should be carried out to grasp their complexity, development and performance, and by adopting a territorial approach.

Beyond the need for new research, we also would like to stress the need for exchange of already existing knowledge. Knowledge transfer within and between research, policy-making and practice could considerably enhance the utilization of research findings, and foster the development of evidence-based solutions in the context of making food systems more sustainable.

4. The potential impact, main dissemination activities, and exploitation of results

4.8 Impact of the FAAN project an exploitation of results

Realisation of participation of CSOs and citizens in research and science policy making

FAAN carried out research activities by involving five civil society organisations as real partners, and by engaging more than 300 actors from practice and policy through focus groups, workshops and interviews. Thereby the project contributed to a more democratic knowledge system, considering and valuing different forms of knowledge and expertise within a concrete research project. On the strengths of a broad spectrum of dissemination activities (see section 4.9) during the whole run of the project, an even much higher number of citizens concerned about the issue of AAFNs and LFS, along with people interested in co-operative research as an innovative form of research, have been informed about the project activities and its outcomes. Research has been enriched through deeper insights into the issue at stake from *different perspectives*, the multiplicity of which was supposed to make its outcomes more socially relevant. CSOs brought in complementary expertise as a basis to strengthen the research in terms of relevance for practice, and translating results into the context of application. The involvement of further relevant actors was facilitated through CSOs, who made use of their networks and contacts. The issue of trust was relevant, as were expectations towards research outcomes and who might be a beneficiary. CSOs had an important role in keeping the process of interventions from the ‘world outside’ into the project and vice versa running. This openness can be ascribed to their embeddedness into relevant social movements, and the way they carry out their daily work. Their way of interaction with society is different from the scientific community because they consider themselves being part of it. Thereby research gained better insights into what non-researchers (sometimes they are even the “subjects of research”) expect from participating in research. We were able to adapt the research design to better meet these expectations and needs, which made it more attractive for people to participate in our research activities.

Since our research questions focussed on their practical concerns, research outputs became more relevant for concrete utilisation and implementation “outside of academia”.

Moreover, results have been taken up in CSOs’ campaign activities (see below).

The project’s contribution in regard to science policy making can be justified by the fact the involvement of CSOs (and other actors from society) through co-operative research has been tested in practice, and this social experiment has proved successful. In this context the definition of success relates to the following aspects:

- the realisation of a bottom-up approach, which considers society’s view of research needs early in the stage of the problem definition;
- the production of new, integrated knowledge, which is of relevance for both, academia and practice (including policy-making);
- the utilisation of research outcomes & enhancement of research impact;
- capacity building of CSOs for participating in research;
- capacity building of research institutes for involving non-researchers in a research partnership;
- mutual understanding of each others’ realities, needs and perspectives as a solid basis for further joint research activities.

Within the projects’ empirical research activities (discussion groups and workshops) FAAN brought together CSO representatives, public researchers and policy makers. The related discussions and interaction processes raised awareness for different perceptions of the issue at stake, but also for different forms of expertise. This will allow for a far better recognition of the practical value of different forms of knowledge.

The realisation of the benefits linked to the involvement of CSOs in research also caused interest and involvement in science governance discussions aiming improve the framework conditions for co-

operative research. For example, not only academic partners who have been more active in communicating issues related to CR as a new research paradigm, but also CSO partners have been involved in a European workshop discussing science governance issues. One CSO team member had even been evaluating research proposals submitted to the FP7 SiS programme. The partnership between CSOs and academic institutions was not only an opportunity to exchange views and experience on societal relevant science related questions, but also to set up long-run research co-operations for the future – as the French team already had established before they joined the FAAN project). Partners explored further funding opportunities for co-operative/transdisciplinary research, and some started lobbying on the national level in order to get future co-operative research activities funded. Three of the FAAN national teams have started joint follow-up (research) activities, and have further applications in the pipeline (AT/FR/HU); one national team (PL) has applied for a project, which had been refused – but a new proposal is in the pipeline; and one team (UK) had been involved in a proposal, since abandoned – and further activities are a work-in-progress.

All the aspects addressed above can be considered a contribution to bringing social concerns closer to research, thereby enhancing the societal relevance of research and promoting public engagement discussion in the context of science governance.

Impact for CSOs

CSO partners not only got the opportunity to participate in research, but FAAN also raised CSOs' awareness concerning their own role in research and expertise. Through participating in FAAN they gained advanced insights into the European funding system and research agendas (projects, programmes), and developed skills to manage the administrative protocols for carrying out a proper European project. All the way through they enhanced competencies needed to participate in a research project. Each CSO - partner is a node in numerous large networks comprised of national and local organisations directly linked to each other through websites, newsletters, e-mail lists, common campaigns and actions, working groups and annual assembly meetings. The international dimension of the project was assessed as very important, because CSOs got into contact with other organisations and could strengthen international networking.

A strong if not pervasive impact of CSOs was related to the legitimacy of arguments: the research provided sound arguments for their lobbying work. It was presupposed academic partners were a guarantee for the performance of sound research, conducted on the basis of formal expertise, and thereby giving the project findings more legitimacy if and when used for interventions in policy discussions.

FAAN partners have distributed information about their participation in the research project within their networks. This could encourage other CSOs to likewise engage in joint research activities and set up partnerships with research institutions.

Impact for researchers

The close interactions with the non-researcher actors offered valuable insights into CSOs reality, their needs and expectations towards research, and offered the opportunity to experience alternative forms of knowledge production. All academic FAAN partners clearly pointed out the enrichment of research that was gained from civil society engagement, as well on the content as on the process level. Moreover, they acknowledged the fact that FAAN research had been framed in terms of bringing its focus closer to actual real world needs, and they appreciated the immediate uptake of research results (see below). Through participation in FAAN researchers strengthened competencies needed to engage with civil society – on the personal as well as on the institutional level – including skills in giving support to CSOs for the administrative handling of research project.

By interacting with researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds they also built capacities for interdisciplinary work.

Through dissemination activities within the scientific community (see section 4.9), researchers beyond the FAAN group have been addressed: awareness has been raised about participatory and transdisciplinary research, and the genuine possibility of carrying out co-operative projects with CSOs.

Impact for policy makers

Not only researchers and non-researchers but policy makers as well, especially from the local, regional, and national level, have been involved at certain stages of the project. AAFNs constitute a very innovative sector within agriculture, and especially at the local and regional level there is an increasing will from some policy makers to build specific tools to support these developments. On the other hand, there are policy makers who are hardly aware of these developments. For both of these groups the interaction with practitioners poses good opportunities to learn more about these alternative developments (either in order to learn about what support would be helpful, or simply to become aware about recent developments in this field). In addition FAAN offers suggestions for political action.

Policy makers could learn about the possibility to engage CSOs in research, which might change their perception about the role of CSOs in policy making and their expertise in the long term (changes in this direction cannot be proven at present). Since policy decisions are often based on expert advice, a changed perception of CSOs expertise might make future decisions more enriched. This would encourage inputs from civil society actors who act for public interests and concerns. Such a development could have a significant impact by gaining more legitimacy and greater support from citizens for political decisions.

In certain cases the relationship between CSOs and policy is somehow deadlocked – often due to previous controversies. A setting for interactions between policy makers and CSOs embedded in a real world co-operative research project might well help the redefining of roles, thereby improving relationships to achieve a better mutual understanding as a basis for more constructive discussions.

Exploitation of experiences in CR

FAAN was an experiment, which gave valuable insights into how to implement co-operative research in practice. The original design, which was refined and elaborated during this project, and the related reflections on and the evaluation of the unfolding process, comprise a wealth of valuable insights into the practice of implementing CR. Through exchange of experiences with similar projects (e.g. in the scope of conferences and workshops – see 4.9) comparative lessons have been learned for future efforts. Through the dissemination of related information within the wider community, we stimulated further actors to engage in similar activities - within the scientific community as well as within civil society. Results from work on the CR process have already been integrated in planning future research activities of FAAN partners.

Our extensive literature review at the beginning of the project revealed that hardly anyone had published accounts about their experiences in the practical implementation of co-operative research, and there are not many publications dealing with transdisciplinarity on the level of practical implementation. Thus FAAN results on the CR process - the elaborated concept, our experiences, and reflections on the process – fill a distinct void -- in the scholarly discussion about methods for the engagement of CSOs in research.

Moreover, the conceptual design elaborated within FAAN has been integrated in the teaching of courses on transdisciplinary research for students introducing ‘other forms of research’; these students are the young generation of (future) researchers from the Technical University Graz, University of Graz, and from the University of Klagenfurt.

Exploitation and impact of results on AAFNs

General exploration of case studies and the national contexts

The compilation of databases for mapping the kinds of current AAFNs in the participating countries was especially useful in Poland and Hungary. It showed the actual state of the art in these countries, supplying a summary overview heretofore unavailable. The mapping provides a basic resource for further research on AAFNs there. Moreover, the research conducted within FAAN was the first attempt to introduce the notion of AAFNs into the Polish social science discourse.

The compilation of good practices, including the analysis of potential benefits and strategies to foster and support the development of AAFNs, provides effective information for other initiatives and groups who wish to support and lobby for AAFNs; it is also useful for awareness-raising activities. For example, in Hungary VPFH launched an awareness-raising campaign based on the FAAN

findings. It is still running, aiming to popularize local farmers' markets and to draw attention to several important issues: the difference between farmers and traders and the origin of products, that markets are spaces where specific quality products can be found (for instance, local fruit and vegetable varieties, traces of local agro-biodiversity), and that direct sale of local products confers added-value to markets compared to conventional stores and supermarkets. These awareness-raising activities are carried out in collaboration with other CSOs, local communities and the Hungarian academic partner – contacts have been established inter alia in the context of empirical work for FAAN.

Due to the involvement of different actors interested in the issue of AAFNs over the course of our empirical work, a kind of positive 'side effect' has been achieved. The project supported networking through bringing people together, and this also supported discussion processes, which might lead to a better mutual understanding of needs and concerns of the alternative field. The focus group in Austria, for instance, brought together people from well established consumer-producer initiatives with people from a very young initiative; subsequently discussion faced challenges the long-running initiative had found solutions for long ago, and information based on many years of experience was transmitted to the newcomers. Moreover, focus group participants used the meeting for networking between their initiatives, which previously did not know about each others before. In Hungary focus groups have been used to bring together policy makers and CSO representatives lobbying for AAFNs; these juxtapositions served as a starting point for more spontaneous ongoing discussions between these actors. This was not unlike what happened in Poland.

The comprehensive review of AAFNs' in France carried out within FAAN, has been used – inter alia – for a book (see 3.9.2), which has been the first book in France on short food chains which considers them as complex networks.

Findings from the analysis of how current policies facilitate, hinder or shape the development of Alternative Agro-Food Systems

The FAAN project provided evidence for recommendations about changes in European, national and local policies that would be necessary to strengthen AAFNs in the future. These changes include: support for setting up cooperative networks and infrastructure; greater knowledge exchange; more local sourcing in public procurement; more appropriate funding; and the more flexible adaptation of over-burdensome legal regulations (e.g. distinguishing rules for products for different markets); and ensuring that Leader maintains its bottom-up character, along with a territorial approach linking urban consumers with rural producers. By recognising and valuing AAFNs for their societal opportunities and benefits, authorities could take responsibility for improving and linking relevant policies.

Our overall research findings and the policy recommendations can be considered as a contribution to the discussion of AAFNs and LFS and related policies in Europe on different levels. Due to many dissemination activities and channels, preliminary and final project findings have been distributed broadly. On the one hand, this provided groups who wish to foster the development of AAFNs with persuasive arguments for their interactions with policy makers; on the other hand, we also expect our findings will stimulate politicians and decision makers to critically reflect on the given policy frameworks and their timely implementation (especially on the national, regional, and local level). The timing of the dissemination of our final project results coincides with the current ongoing discussions about the reform of Europe's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), to be implemented in 2013.

It is significant that CSO partners started to use findings during the run of the project for their lobbying and policy intervention activities; the exploitation of results had already started before the end of the project.

Let's turn to a few examples to illustrate how FAAN outcomes have been used in the context of policy discussions so far:

In Hungary, lobbying and dissemination work has been carried out demanding modification of the smallholder decree. In the meantime the decree was actually finally modified in May, 2010. The new decree integrates several demands made by CSOs, namely an increase in the volume ceiling of certain products marketed by small farmers, and expanded venue opportunities (i.e. shops, restaurants, public procurement, home delivery) for marketing processed products of small farmers.

In addition, the Hungarian team has managed to communicate demands, linked to the management of agricultural biodiversity and its place in local food systems, to decision-makers in the Hungarian

Parliament. Although these demands have not yet been considered in practice, the open day in the Hungarian Parliament constituted an important forum. This is a step forward to clearly communicate biodiversity concerns and push for more progressive legislation on seeds and local varieties.

In Austria preliminary project findings and final results have been taken up by a working group on direct selling established by the VCA together with other NGOs/CSOs. This working group seeks to adjust legal regulations, making rules for direct selling activities in Austria less restrictive; FAAN results served as a basis for arguments made in the discussion with public authorities.

In Poland FAAN initiated a discussion between policy makers and farmers groups about the potential benefits of AAFNs for the development of Polish agriculture, and what measures might support these initiatives.

On the European level, FAAN results have been – *inter alia* – considered for the ‘Krakow declaration on sustainable urban-rural linkages’, launched in May 2010. Moreover, FAAN team members are involved in online discussions about the CAP reform through the ARC2020 platform (<http://www.arc2020.eu>); our policy recommendations have been posted there for the discussion group on local food systems. FAAN suggestions have also been considered relevant for the ARC communication document on the CAP reform that will be submitted to relevant EU bodies.

FAAN has been invited to an event of the Flemish Symposium on Local Food Systems set for late October 2010 in order to participate in discussions about possible support from the Flemish government for local food systems.

Finally, a mediation exercise between a policy officer from DG Agriculture (L1 Unit) and two FAAN team members occurred in summer, 2010 which aimed to develop a concept note on Local Food systems. The idea for this exercise derived from the FAAN Open Space Workshop which took place in February 2010.

4.9 Overview dissemination activities carried out in FAAN

Overall, a considerable number of people all over Europe have been informed through various dissemination activities and channels about the current development of AAFNs in the five participating countries, and about issues related to the specific way research had been carried out within FAAN.

An exceptional feature of our project was the degree the uptake of project results was due to the participation of CSO partners in FAAN. In addition to normal research project dissemination activities, they have continuously attempted to link dissemination activities to ongoing real-world policy discussion (e.g. through lobbying activities). Through specific activities CSO partners promoted the uptake of research findings through their stakeholder networks; thereby our results better reach policy circles in order to contribute to actual discussions. CSOs fed information generated within the project into broader public discussions linked to sustainable agriculture and food consumption (e.g. through awareness-raising campaigns). This considerably contributed to the exploitation of project findings, and to achieving concrete social and political impact.

Another impact, which already has become effective, derives from the fact FAAN partners’ expertise – in particular on Local Food Systems, but also related to their experiences in co-operative research – became more visible through dissemination activities. Nearly all FAAN partners have been approached with invitations for giving speeches, lectures, participating in discussions, joining networking activities, and joining the launch of new projects. Several follow-up activities are being seriously contemplated, while some partners have already started follow-up projects. The expertise and experiences gained by all FAAN partners in this project will be a resource for people in all 5 countries involved, and beyond.

FAAN project peer reviewed PUBLICATIONS:

Title: *Networking agriculture: Alternative Agro-Food Networks in Poland (orig.: Rolnictwo w sieci – alternatywne sieci produkcji i dystrybucji żywności)*

Status: submitted

Main authors: Wojciech Goszczyński, Wojciech Knieć

Title of the periodic: Wieś i Rolnictwo (Village and Agriculture)

Publisher: Polish Academy of Science

Place: Warsaw

Date of publication: no 2, 2010

Open source: no

Publication after positive review and will be published in June

Title: Alternative Agro-Food Networks looking for a model for Poland (orig.: Alternatywne Sieci Produkcji i Dystrybucji Żywności: w poszukiwaniu modelu dla Polski)

Status: submitted

Main authors: Wojciech Goszczyński, Wojciech Knieć

Title of the book: New Direction of research in Polish rural sociology

Publisher: Warsaw University of Life Science

Place: Warsaw

Date of Publication: 2010

Open Source: no

Publication after positive review and will be published in September

Title: Building sustainable food networks in unsustainable environment: lessons from post-transition countries

Status: accepted

Main author: Wojciech Goszczyński

Title of periodic: Eastern European Countryside

Publisher: Nicolaus Copernicus Univeristy

Place: Toruń

Date of publication: no 17, 2011

Open source: no, but Eastern European Countryside is available online on www.versita.com , <http://www.soc.uni.torun.pl/eec/> (homepage)

Title: Manchester: urban agriculture as community engagement

Status: under revision

Title of the periodic: Urban Agriculture Magazine

Main authors: Les Levidow, Becky Price, Katerina Psarikidou, Bron Szerszynski, Helen Wallace

Publisher: RUAF Foundation

Place: Amsterdam

Date of publication: Special Issue, no 43, 2010

Open source: yes

Title: The implementation of ‘Co-operative Research’ – reflections on a social experiment and its potential for interventions.

Status: in preparation

Title of the periodic: Innovation - The European Jopurnal of Social Science Reserach

Main authors: Sandra Karner, Nicoleta Chioncel, Sonja Petrovics, Irmi Salzer

Publisher: Routledge

Place: Amsterdam

Open source: no

Title: Food re-localisation in Cumbria

Status: in preparation

Title of the periodic: British Food Journal

Main authors: Les Levidow, Katerina Psarikidou

Publisher: Emerald

3.9.1 Presentations at conferences, meetings, public discussions, exhibitions, films:

Title of the contribution submitted/ presented	Title of the conference/event (Website)	Date and place of the event
General presentation of FAAN	Open Space for European Research – Eine Joint Venture Konferenz mit dem Österreichischen Forschungsdialog zu europäischer Forschung, Technologie und Innovation www.ffg.at/openspace	2 April 2008, Vienna, Austria
Collective short food chains in Brittany	Encouraging Collective Farmers' Marketing Initiatives – Insights into the Strategies and Impacts of Farmers' Collective Action Final Conference, http://www.cofami.org/	8 May 2008, Brussels, Belgium
CSOs' participation in co-operative research on Alternative Agro-Food Networks: a perspective on Transdisciplinarity and Social Learning	Sustainable Consumption and Alternative-Agri_Food Systems, http://www.suscons.ulg.ac.be/	27 - 30 May Arlon, Belgium
Workshop	Mozaik Colloquium 2008 Eco social farms in Pomurje: A proper device to keep social integration of (rural) community during rapid social change? (http://www.ifz.tugraz.at/index_en.php/article/articleview/1547/1/74)	12 June 2008, Region Prekmurje, Slovenia
Short food supply chains	Consultation for the FAO regional conference http://www.csa-be.org/spip.php?article125	23-24 June 2008, Innsbruck, Austria
Transactions vivrières informelles en Pologne et système agro-alimentaires alternatifs occidentaux: perspectives <i>«Unformal food transactions in Poland and occidental alternative agri-food systems: perspectives.</i>	Congrès de l'association internationale des Sociologies de langue française - Congress of the international association of the French-speaking sociologists http://congres2008.aislf.org/	7-11 July 2008, Istanbul, Turkey
Co-operative Research on Alternative Agro-Food Networks in the Context of Sustainable Agriculture	5th BMBF Forum for Sustainability http://www.fona.de/en/6063	23 - 25 September 2008, Berlin, Germany

Les circuits courts alimentaires réflexions sur le développement durable dans les territoires	“Le développement des circuits courts Une plus-value pour les producteurs et les territoires ?” http://www.parcs-naturels-regionaux.tm.fr/	30 September, Paris, France
Alternative agri-food networks in Hungary	Sustainable Consumption in Hungary http://web.ceu.hu/envsci/Sustainable_consumption	8 October 2008, Budapest, Hungary
Circuits courts et « fragilisation » : quelles autres approches en France ? quelles spécificités du projet CROC ?	Journée d’échange et de débat autour du projet Equal CROC http://www.equal-croc.eu/spip.php?article111&var_recherche=Gilles%20Marecal	10 Octobre 2008, Montpellier, France
Systèmes Alimentaires Territorialisés : les circuits courts comme vecteurs de développement territorial	Congreso ALFATER2008; IV ^e Colloque international du réseau SYAL : Food, family agriculture and territory, http://gis-syal.agropolis.fr/	27 - 31 October 2008 Mar del Plata, Argentina
The marketing of seeds of landraces in Hungary in the light of the EC Directive 62/2008 on the marketing of seeds of conservation varieties	Workshop organised by Vedegety and SZIU	February 26, 2009 at Corvinus University of Economic Sciences, Budapest Hungary
Les circuits courts alimentaires. Etat des connaissances en Bretagne	General assembly of the Purple network How can regions and towns support peri-urban agriculture? http://www.purple-eu.org/PageFiles/241/cv_final.pdf	2. April 2009, Lille, France
Farmers organisations need public territorial strategies on short chains	Internal seminar of the INRA on AAFNs	4. April 2009, Lyon, France
Local marketing opportunities for local varieties and farmers’ rights to seeds	Workshop organised by Vedegety and SZIU	Ministry of Environment, Budapest, Hungary, April 16, 2009
Dynamiser les débouchés locaux pour les produits agricoles	de la journée de conférence du 02/04 lors de l’assemblée générale du réseau PURPLE	2. -3. April 2009, France
AAFNs, new trends for agriculture and alimentation	Lecture for students	21. May 2009, Piracicaba Brazil
AAFNs, new trends for agriculture and alimentation	Open debate for CSOs and students	21. May 2009, Piracicaba Brazil
AAFNs in Europe, research and practical questions	Lecture and debate for the USP professors and researchers	22. May 2009, Piracicaba Brazil
Presentation at the Open Day on Biodiversity in the Hungarian Parliament on the policy and institutional changes required for facilitating the spread of local	Speech and video http://www.vedegyet.hu/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=1042	22. May 2009, Budapest, Hungary

varieties in local food systems in Hungary	Photos: http://www.essrg.hu/parlament/fototar/index.html	
AAFNs and the development of organic products	Lecture for the ministry of agriculture, launching the week of organic product	28. May 2009, Rio de Janeiro
Poster presentation: 'ALMO': a bottom-up approach in agricultural innovation	EurSafe Conference 2009: Ethical Futures: Bioscience and Food Horizons European Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics http://www.eursafe.org/conferences/index.html	2.-4. July 2009, Nottingham, UK
Building Alternative Agro-Food Systems in Hungary	Sustainable Consumption Conference 2009, http://www.sustainable.consumption.uni-corvinus.hu	September 2009. Budapest, Hungary
Alternative Agro-Food networks, looking for a model of Eastern Europe	ESA 9 th Conference of the European Sociological Association, RN 12 – Food Chains and Network, http://www.esa9thconference.com	September 2009, Lisbon, Portugal
Building Alternative Agro-Food Systems in Hungary,	ESA 9 th Conference of the European Sociological Association, RN 12 – Food Chains and Network, http://www.esa9thconference.com	September 2009, Lisbon, Portugal
Let's Prepare Together for the 2011 Hungarian EU Presidency! – The Priorities of the Presidential Troika («Készüljünk együtt a 2011-es magyar EU-elnökségre! – A trió elnökség prioritásai»)	Presentation on problematic areas with the smallholders' decree at the consultation section with CSOs at the Conference	Hungarian Parliament, January 20, 2010
'Wild shoot branching of KBE: Alternative agro-food networks'.	Presentation at the Workshop: 'The knowledge based economy - a critical perspective'	5.-6. February 2009. Graz, Austria
Engaging stakeholders in exploring possible pathways for alternative agricultural practices	Presentation at the 8th Annual IAS-STS conference 2009 "Critical Issues in Science and Technology Studies" http://www.ifz.tugraz.at/index_en.php/article/articleview/191/1/61/	4th- 5th May 2009 Graz, Austria.
Wpływ polityki żywnościowej na produkcję i sprzedaż produktów lokalnych (Policy influence on production and sale of local products)	National Meeting of Rural Organisations	15.-16. May 2009, Maroz, Poland
Food re-localisation in Northwest England: Alternative practices with mainstream aspirations	XXIII ESRS Congress, European Society for Rural Sociology, http://www.esrs2009.fi/	17-21 August 2009, Vaasa, Finland
Alternative Agro-Food Networks in Poland	XXIII ESRS Congress, European Society for Rural Sociology, http://www.esrs2009.fi/	17-21 August 2009, Vaasa, Finland

Food re-localisation: Alternative practices with mainstream aspirations	XXIII ESRS Congress, European Society for Rural Sociology, http://www.esrs2009.fi/	17-21 August 2009, Vaasa, Finland
Presentation of the Hungarian context and initiatives, factors influencing the creation of AAFNs by young farmers, including access to land, access to seeds of local varieties, etc.	Workshop on local food systems at Reclaim the Fields – European Camp, organised by Reclaim the Fields! (linked to Via Campesina)	September 30-October 4, 2009, Bois Bas, Minerve, France
The potential for intervention through ‘Co-operative Research’	The Future of Social Sciences and Humanities Final Conference http://www.iccr-international.org/ssh-futures/events.html	22th-23th October 2009. Brussels.
Los circuitos cortos alimentarios en Francia	Seminario CIALCO	12. November 2009, Quito, Ecuador
Los circuitos cortos en el mundo	Seminario CIALCO	12. November 2009, Quito, Ecuador
Comprendre la diversité des représentations des circuits courts pour en favoriser le développement et l’accompagnement	Ladyss, Observatoire Rural – Urbain http://www.ladyss.com/quatre_pages.php	12. November 2009, Paris-Nanterre, France
Presentation carried out on the situation of agricultural biodiversity in Hungary	Public debate: Eine andere Welt ist pflanzbar! (Another World is Plantable!), organised by Via Campesina Austria in cooperation with Arche Noah (Austria). (main actors involved, factors and policies influencing local varieties and local products based on local varieties in Hungary)	November 18, 2009, Graz, Austria
Vissza a földekre! (Reclaim the Fields!)	Public debate organised by Vedegylet and Reclaim the Fields- Hungary on the prospects of community-based agriculture in Europe and Hungary, factors influencing the start-up of new initiatives,	November 26, 2009, Budapest, Hungary.
Alternative Agro-Food Networks in Poland, looking for a proper model of development	Conference “New direction of research in Polish Rural Sociology”	28. February 2010, Warsaw, Poland
Presentation at Let’s Liberate Diversity! the international conference on agrobiodiversity, organised by Via Campesina Austria and Arche Noah	www.liberate-diversity-graz2010.org/ , Photos: http://picasaweb.google.hu/korzanna/GRAZ_2527032010_Annakorzenszky?authkey=Gv1sRgCNrUieaMwLDufQ#	25-27 March, 2010, Graz, Austria
Presentation of FAAN project results	Seminar on FAAN Project results for PRF members and research participants	29. March 2010, Warsaw, Poland

Researchers and activists - a 'social experiment'	9th Annual IAS-STS conference 2009 “Critical Issues in Science and Technology Studies” http://www.ifz.tugraz.at/index_en.php/article/articleview/191/1/61/	3th- 4th May 2010 Graz, Austria.
Mieux connaître les circuits courts pour mieux les soutenir politiquement	Séminaire filières courtes alimentaires http://www.versailles-grignon.inra.fr/sadapt/accueil/actualites/seminaire_national_de_syntheses_filiere_courtes_alimentaires_5_et_6_mai_2010	5.-6. May 2010, Paris, France
Artistic exhibition on Farmers’ Markets (including photos made during the FAAN project),.	The exhibition’s poster, photos of opening and activities, documentation: www.kincsunkapiac.blog.hu	May 7-18, 2010, Gödör Klub, Budapest
The potential of Local Food Systems for connecting social actors towards a more sustainable development	SURE - Sustainable Urban and Rural Europe – Conference	20-21 May 2010, Kraków, Poland
Organic plus – repolitisation of the food sector?	9th European IFSA Symposium http://ifsa.boku.ac.at/cms/index.php?id=5&L=0	4th-7th July 2010. Vienna.
‘Co-operative research’: an integrated approach through transdisciplinarity	9th European IFSA Symposium http://ifsa.boku.ac.at/cms/index.php?id=5&L=0	4th-7th July 2010. Vienna.
Revitalisation strategies of local food initiatives in Hungary	ISA conference RC40: World agriculture and food in search of new paradigms http://www.isa-sociology.org/congress2010/	11-17 July 2010, Gothenburg, Sweden
Local embeddedness of alternative food initiatives in Hungary	ISEE 2010 Conference, Advancing Sustainability in a Time of Crisis, http://www.isee2010.org	22 - 25 August 2010, Oldenburg & Bremen, Germany
Cooperative Research with CSOs: reflecting on experience	Final workshop CREPE project	September 2010, Brussels
Forthcoming activities		
Building Alternative Agro-Food Networks: looking for a pattern	Presentation at the Conference of Polish Sociological Association	13.-14. October 2010, Warsaw, Poland
Making local food sustainable in Manchester	Presentation at the European Sustainable Food Planning Conference	29-30 October 2010, Brighton
Practices of Local Food Systems in Europe	Presentation at the Symposium Korte Ketten Initiatieven in Vlaanderen: kansen en beleid	22. October 2010, Leuven, Belgium

3.9.2 Publications, articles in journals, books, popular press; films:

Title	Medium/Type of Publication	Website (if available)
Alternative Agrar-Lebensmittel Netzwerke – eine ernst zu nehmende Alternative?	UNISONO, February 2008	http://www.uni-klu.ac.at/unisonoonline/
“De l’agriculteur au consommateur” – “From producers to consumers”	Special issue on L’info Métropole, March 2008, Journal of the Rennes Métropole community	http://www.rennes-metropole.fr
“Farms near to the consumer” Special issue “Sustainable development”	L’Express n° 2961 April 2008	
“Le bonheur d’acheter en direct”	Supplement of Ouest France, 6 April 2008	
“Guide de l’ élu local” (Guide for elected representatives) Article on local food	Ouest France May 2008	http://www.aric.asso.fr
Article, Forschungsprojekt FAAN’	Bäuerliche Zukunft Edition 305 October 08	www.viacampesina.at
FAAN project description for report ‘Lebensform Landwirtschaft’ (BABF, conducted by Elisabeth Loibl)	Report, Lebensform Landwirtschaft’ not yet published October 08	www.berggebiete.eu
Background interview with Lengyel Zoltán, editor of the magazine Small Producers	press contact	http://www.magyarmezogazdasag.hu/kistern.php
"Co-operative research" Ein neuer Weg zur Einbindung von Gesellschaft in die Forschung	SOZIALE TECHNIK 1/09	http://www.ifz.tugraz.at/index.php/article/articleview/40/1/32
Background interview with Bujdosóné Kertész Judit, Agri-marketing Centre	press contact	http://www.amc.hu/hu
<i>Nowa Gospodyni</i> Magazine for rural women	FAAN info	www.nowagospodyni.pl
Polish Rural Forum Bulletin	FAAN info	www.faow.org.pl
'Co-operative Research' - Ein neuer Weg zur Einbindung von Gesellschaft in die Forschung ('Co-operative Research' - A new way for engaging society in research).	Soziale Technik 1/2009	http://www.ifz.tugraz.at/index.php/article/articleview/1913/1/6
“Together for Local Food Systems - Civil Cooperation for the Modification of the Smallholders’ Decree”	Policy brief with non-academic language summarising findings and implications of the policy analysis	electronic version available at http://vedegylet.hu/doc/kistermelok.pdf

Photography documentation of specific AAFNs in Hungary.	Flyer	
Polityka wobec produkcji i sprzedaży produktów lokalnych (Policy for production and sale of local products)	Polish Rural Forum Bulletin, September 2009	www.faow.org.pl
FAAN - BAUERNMARKT & CO "Entwicklungswege der Direktvermarktung" Ein Szenarioanalyse-Workshop (FAAN- farmers' markets & Co: Future paths for direct selling, a scenario analysis workshop).	Unisono Plus 3/09 (University Klagenfurt) September 2009	http://www.uni-klu.ac.at/unisonoonline
Five films about Alternative Agro Food Networks in Hungary	5 Films	Nepszabadsag Online (http://nol.hu) and Védegylet website (http://nol.hu)
A Social Learning Viewpoint on 'Co-operative Research'.	Soziale Technik 4/2009	http://www.ifz.tugraz.at/index.php/article/articleview/1913/1/6
Agriculture and development - from global problems to local alternatives:	Book chapter in Globalization and Development – Alternative Views of Civil Society in Hungary and Czech Republic (Collection of Essays) (49-63), Ed.: Ondřej Kopečný, (Prague : Global Policy Institute, December 2009), 49-63.	
Statt faden Definitionen (Instead of boring definitions). AAFNs in Hungary.	Wege einer bäuerlichen Zukunft Nr. 310; 5/2009	
Article about the proposal handed in by civil society organisations: "A miniszterek előtt a kistermelői javaslat"	Article online	http://www.vedegylet.hu/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=1045
Press statement about the approval of the new small holders' decree based on the demands made by Hungarian CSOs: "Rendeletté vált a kistermelői javaslatunk"	Press statement	http://www.vedegylet.hu/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=1188
'ALMO': a bottom-up approach in agricultural innovation.	In: Millar, K., Hobson West, P., Nerlic, B.[Hg.]: Ethical futures: bioscience and food horizons. Wageningen Academic Publishers, The Netherlands, 2009, p. 222-225.	

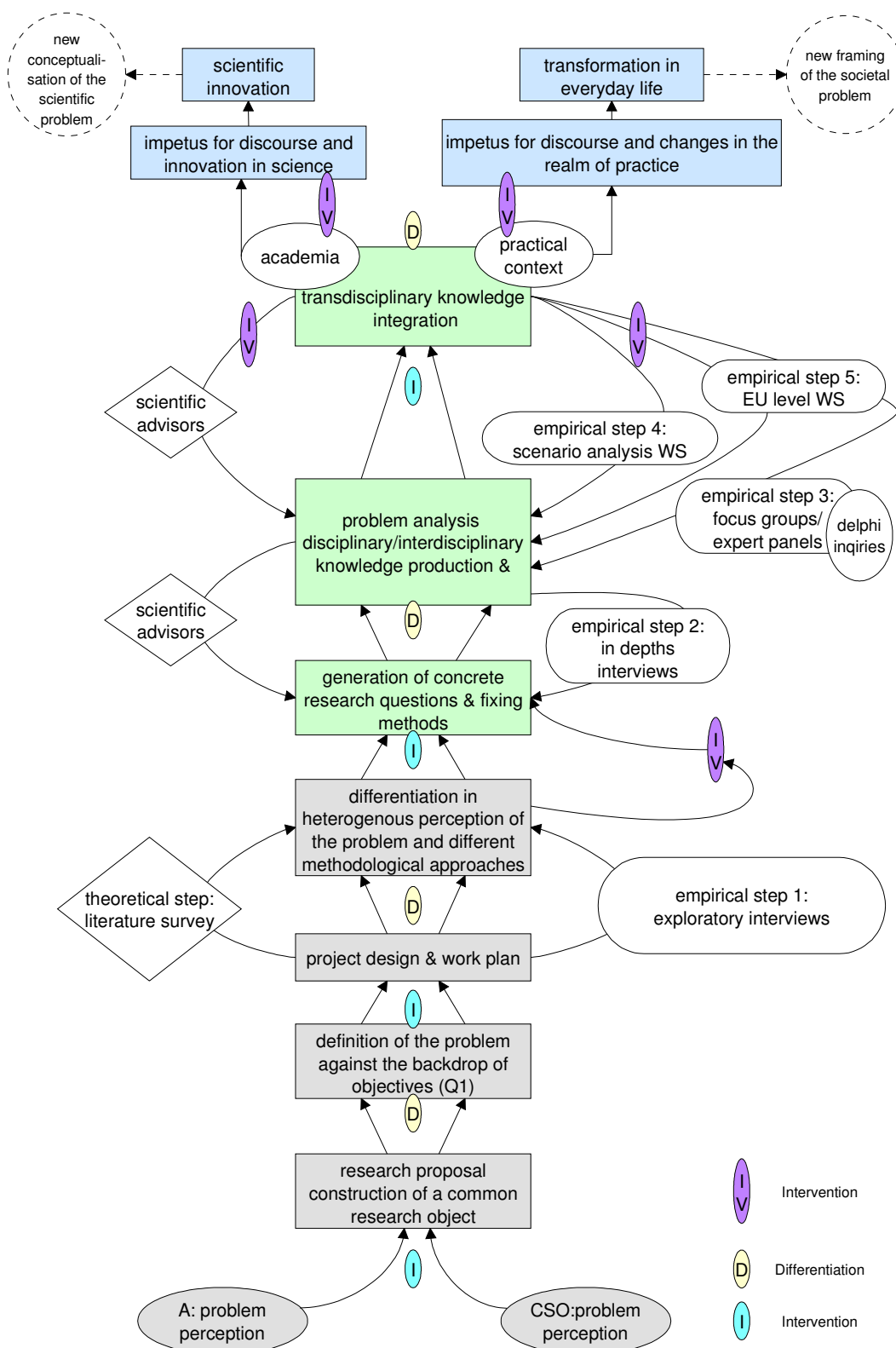
'Selbsterkämpfte Handlungsmöglichkeiten' 30 Jahre ErzeugerInnen-VerbraucherInnen Netzwerke in Österreich	zoll+ Österreichische Schriftenreihe für Landschaft und Freiraum 14/2009	http://www.foruml.at/zoll
Projekt FAAN: Stärkung alternativer landwirtschaftlicher Lebensmittelnetzwerke	Folder summarizing FAAN project results in German	http://www.faanweb.eu
'Co-operative research' on Alternative Agro-food Networks: an example for bottom-up participation.	In: Bammé A., Getzinger G., Wieser B. [Hg.]: Yearbook 2009 of the Institute for Advanced Studies on Science, Technology and Society. Profil Verlag München/Wien 2010	
Organic plus – (re)politisation of the food sector? Reflections on two case studies.	Building sustainable rural futures - The added value of systems approaches in times of change and uncertainty (Proceedings of the IFSA-Symposium 2010). BOKU 2010, Vienna.	http://ifsa.boku.ac.at/cms/index.php?id=107
'Co-operative research': an integrated approach through transdisciplinarity.	Building sustainable rural futures - The added value of systems approaches in times of change and uncertainty (Proceedings of the IFSA-Symposium 2010). BOKU 2010, Vienna.	http://ifsa.boku.ac.at/cms/index.php?id=107
Local Food Systems in Europe: Case studies from five countries and what they imply for policy and practice	FAAN booklet, published by IFZ, ISBN 978-3-9502678-2-2	http://www.faanweb.eu

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ANNEX 1: General scheme for the co-operative research design for the FAAN project



ANNEX 2: FAAN partners' interests, motivation to participate and expectations towards project outputs

	Interests/Motivations	Expected outputs
Research interest		
I) contribution to the academic discussion	<p><i>"(...) test and evaluate co-operative research (...) experiment new form of research process (...) understand, explore and report the dynamics of generating new knowledge (...)"</i> (A3, Q1:I.1)</p> <p><i>"valorise our former field research on similar topics"</i> (A5, Q1:I.1)</p> <p><i>"doing applied research"</i> (A4, Q1:I.1)</p> <p><i>"cultural analysis of the alternative agricultural initiatives mapping policy context (...) international comparison"</i> (A4, Q1:I.1)</p>	<p><i>"(...) methodological framework of CR (...) evaluation and assessment of CR (...) overview of the current policies (...) identifying future research needs (...) visibility of results [on AAFNs] within the scientific community (...)"</i> (A3, Q1:I.2)</p> <p><i>"build a common analysis (method and results)"</i> (A5, Q1:I.2)</p> <p><i>"(...) role of local policies as a research agenda"</i> (A5, RE1:6)</p> <p><i>"complete database of AAFN (...) first national level analysis (...) analysing policymakers perspective"</i> (A2, Q1:I.2)</p> <p><i>"(...) experience on an 'emerging' research design (...)"</i> (A4, Q1:I.2)</p>
II) career perspectives	<p><i>"(...) join a new research field (...)"</i> (A3, Q1:I.1)</p> <p><i>"extending my academic skills in theory and research on a new topic"</i> (A1, Q1:I.2)</p>	
Practical orientation		
I) towards practitioners (actors of AAFNs)	<p><i>"targeting silenced AAFNs and establish communicative spaces for them"</i> (A4, Q1:I.1)</p> <p><i>"(...) such activity can help us with our work"</i> (C2, Q1:I.1)</p> <p><i>"(...) strengthen knowledge base and understanding of AAFNs (...) for an effective lobbying work and awareness raising carried out for the promotion of alternative agriculture and food systems (...) promotion of a citizen perspective and participation in social issues, including agriculture"</i> (C4, Q1:I.1)</p>	<p><i>"(...) concrete solutions for farmers (...)"</i> (C3, Q1:I.2)</p> <p><i>"(...) visibility of (...) results [on AAFNs] at the level of practitioners (...)"</i> A3 (Q1:I.2)</p> <p><i>'[r]esults, which can be used for the farmers themselves'</i> (C3, Q1:I.2)</p> <p><i>"reinforcing of AAFN stakeholders (...)"</i> (A2, Q1:I.2)</p> <p><i>"developing practical knowledge and finding solutions (...) giving voice to silenced and disadvantaged networks"</i> (A4, Q1:I.2)</p> <p><i>"(...) supporting rural organisations"</i> (C2, Q1:I.1)</p> <p><i>"(...) clarify more effective ways how to facilitate AAFNs"</i> (A1, Q1:I.2)</p> <p><i>"(...) <u>practical guide</u> (italic in original) on farmers' rights and possibly another one for citizens' groups wishing to launch alternative agro-food networks, direct marketing groups or community supported agriculture groups (...)"</i> (C4, Q1:I.2)</p>

	Interests/Motivations	Expected outputs
Practical orientation (continued from previous page)		
II) towards local and regional policies	<i>"(...) convince local authorities on the basis of a firm scientific settlement of our questions and ideas (...) identify new ways for rural development."</i> (C5, Q1:I.1)	
III) towards European policies	<i>"get to known to alternative networks/alternative groups working (...) against the mainstream of CAP"</i> (C3, Q1:I.1)	<i>"overview how EU policies especially regarding farmers (...) are implemented (...) "</i> (C3, Q1:I.3) <i>"transmit analysis to DG VI represent[ives]"</i> (A5 Q1:I.2) <i>"identify a leaway for introducing agricultural policies that facilitate the development of AAFNs"</i> (C4, Q1:I.2)
IV) towards policy in general	<i>"develop knowledge about directions of changes to foresee results of future policy interventions (...) "</i> (A2, Q1:I.1)	<i>"For us it is quite important to get results which can be used for our political work (...) "</i> C3 (Q1:I.2) <i>"(...) arguments to propose and defend innovative projects (...) "</i> (C5, Q1:I.2) <i>"(...) visibility of results [on AAFNs] at the policy level (...) "</i> (A3, Q1:I.2) <i>"reasonable arguments for policy changes"</i> (C3,Q1:I.2)
Co-operation		
	<i>"International cooperation to get in contact with organisations working in other countries on AAFNs in other EU-countries (...) share experiences with involved partners (...) working closely together with scientists"</i> (C3, Q1:I.1) <i>"Interest for link between civil society and research at the international level (...) "</i> (A5, Q1:I.1) <i>"strengthen abilities of cooperation between NGOs and scientific institutions"</i> (A2, Q1:I.1) <i>"learning how to better work with CSOs"</i> (A1, Q1:I.1) <i>"extending my academic skills in theory and research on a new topic, in ways that might be helpful for all partners, regardless of their standpoints"</i> (A1, Q1:I.2)	<i>"(...) efficient tool for co-operation."</i> (C5, Q1:I.2.) <i>"establish a network between organisations working for an alternative European agriculture."</i> C3 (Q1:I.2) <i>"get new contacts and develop further work in supporting rural organizations also working within AAFNs"</i> C2 (Q1:I.2) <i>"(...) experience of working at an EU level with both CSO and academic partners"</i> C1(Q1:I.2) <i>"(...) construction of a co-operative network linking researchers and civil society, locally and throughout Europe, with efficient tools for co-operation"</i> (C5, Q1:I.1)
	Interests/Motivations	Expected outputs
General knowledge production		
	<i>"explore what those policies [focused on environmental and social sustainability] may be and how alternatives to an industrial agricultural system are operating in practice."</i> (C1, Q1:I.1) <i>"work within a more academic structure"</i> (C1, Q1:I.1)	<i>"learn more on AAFNs (...) learn how to carry out participatory research"</i> (C2, Q1:I.2) <i>"overview about AAFNs in Europe"</i> (C3, Q1:I.2)" <i>"overview about women's participation AAFNs"</i> (C3, Q1:I.2) <i>"understanding of factors that encourage or hinder AAFNs"</i> (C1, Q1:I.2)

ANNEX 3: Overview FAAN case studies

Poland	<i>Warminsko-Mazurska Culinary Heritage Networks</i>	<p>Top-down and expert led initiative created in 2004 by the regional government to develop small business and rural tourism encompassing broad range of actors (restaurants and inns, 4 farm shops, 50 producers and processors, including: bakeries, dairy processing plants, butchers, honey producers, fish farms, vegetable and fruit processing plants) and diversified distribution network but low level of social cohesion or engagement of local communities</p>
Austria	<p><i>Lower Vistula Region</i></p> <p><i>direct sales initiatives:</i></p> <p>consumer-producer cooperation: <i>BERSTA, EVI</i></p>	<p>The bottom up initiative of farmers and business partners with local associations and authorities attempts to enhance the local food (especially fruit) production based on regional traditions under a common brand. Distribution channels are underdeveloped</p> <p>Founded in 1980 as an organic cooperative BERSTA gained support from Mountain Area Action Fund as well as the Federal Institute for Less Favoured and Mountainous Areas. In 1983 BERSTA's total turnover was already about 30,000 € with 240 members, 50 of them producers and 3 stores in Vienna. The consumer-producer coop gradually turned into a producer coop, then to a non-profit association outsourcing the commerce and delivery to Sieger & Zottl OHG (wholesale trading company) supplying to about 200 organic food stores bread, pastries, dairy products (goat and sheep cheese) and arable products.</p>
	<p>collective consumer initiative: <i>organic food coop</i></p>	<p>Founded in 1980 the producer-consumer initiative EVI also started as non-profit association opening organic shops in St.Pölten, Zwettl (Waldviertel) and Krems (Wachau). After the association's dissolution in 2003 EVI Krems and EVI St.Pölten stayed as organic stores with vegetarian buffet.</p> <p>Organic food-coop was founded in 2007 as a non-profit association to collectively buy organic food directly from producers and for a monthly fee make organic food available around 40 members in a 'store' in Vienna. Members manage their shopping account by purchasing from 12-15 producers and an organic wholesale trading company.</p>
	<p>cooperative farmers' initiative: Almenland Bauernspezialitäten <i>farmers-business-co-operations:</i></p> <p><i>ALMO</i></p>	<p>Almenland Bauernspezialitäten (ALB) is a cooperative farmers' initiative in the eastern part of Styria founded in 1997 as a non-profit association of eight farmers in the eastern part of Styria supported by the local LEADER management. It includes 40 direct selling farms in the region in a collective farmers marketing.</p>
	<i>MANTURO</i>	<p>ALMO - was founded in 1988 to refocus on traditional alpine pasture farming and quality beef production. The cooperation was established with four farmers, the local small butcher, and the veterinary. Meanwhile the initiative has grown up to 550 farmers and three business partners (2 small butchers and a large meat processor and distributor) and alp oxen beef has been established as high quality (culinary, environmental and animal friendly) speciality product with a registered brand owned by the farmers. The initiative is strongly embedded in the regional development concept, and got support from LEADER II (upgrade of infrastructure) and LEADER+ (marketing activities).</p> <p>Established by an organic pig farming pioneer in Styria the 'MANTURO Netzwerk NatURassen' association was founded in 2003 to commercialise traditional Rare Breed Pigs (MANgalitza and TUOpolje = MANTURO). Pork was marketed with the unique wine variety of Schilcher winegrowers and also established collaborations with family run-businesses of butchers. Following the failure of the collaboration with the Schilcher wine growers the initiative refocused on marketing supported by LEADER+ and Genuss Region Österreichs programme promoting Turopolje pigs within the 'Genussregion Weststeirisches Turopoljeschwein' and MANTURO, whereas Mangalitza products under the MANTURO brand only.</p>

Hungary	<i>Alliance for the Living Tisza - Szövet</i>	<p>The Alliance was established in 2006 as a complex rural development organisation of farmers with several sustainability aims at the basin of Tisza River's tributaries. It aims at improving the livelihood of local farmers through direct sales collective infrastructure, "Living Tisza" certification-label and publicity for individual farmers marketing their own products in the same place. Szövet is supported by municipal authorities and (mainly) individual consumers but it lacks the wider embeddedness in local society.</p>
	<i>Farmers' Market and "The Market: Our Treasure" citizens' group on Hunyadi Square</i>	<p>The last outdoor traditional farmers' market in downtown Budapest was opened in the 1950ies and still acts as the district "pantry", providing fresh produce of 75 contracted farmers from approximately a 60 km range around Budapest at an affordable price. To save from a corrupted urban revitalisation project a citizens' movement 'Our Treasure: the Market' was formed in 2007 to reclaim the traditional farmers' market, gain influence on determining urban planning and the future of the market.</p>
UK	<i>Cumbria</i>	<p>A diversity of farmer based initiatives (Box schemes, farmers markets, farm shops, collective selling, consumer/tourist interaction with production, fair trade) in a rural, mountainous and partially protected area promotes local organic or biodynamic food. In an attempt to develop a sustainable local economy their network creates new bodies to re-localise the agro-food system, while re-connecting producers and consumers.</p>
	<i>Greater Manchester</i>	<p>Large conurbation with a population of 2.6 million, where various initiatives include: allotments, permaculture, charity, co-op, food projects and community partnerships, urban agricultural schemes, box-schemes. The sustainability aims of the City Council and central governmental bodies activate a broader Sustainability Strategy Agenda, where food plays a central role and provides social inclusion of marginalized groups.</p>
France	<i>Rennes Metropole</i>	<p>Peri-urban locality with 400 thousand inhabitants developing a network of 34 open markets , 3 cooperative farm shop (included Brin d'Herbe), 14 box scheme, organic procurement, organic cooperative. Farmers led initiatives include Brin d'Herbe cooperative farm shop that was established by Via Campesina farmers to directly sell locally-produced vegetables, meat, dairy products, bread, beverages and reconnect with producers.</p>
	<i>Centre Ouest Brittany</i>	<p>The rural context of Pays du Centre Ouest Brittany is encompassing strongly intensified and industrialized, concentrated agriculture with 130 on farm sale points, 16 open markets, 7 box schemes, 8 local food retailers, 2 cooperative farm shop with seasonal touristic activities. In a touristic place, Bon Repos open market is organised by producers themselves.</p>

ANNEX 4: Overview on the forms and alternative dimensions of the FAAN case studies

Relinking	Normative visions ➔	Societal			Environmental			Economic		
Case studies	Forms ⬇	personal interaction and solidarity	bring consumers closer to the origin of food	build organisational forms	preserving the landscapes	ecologically desirable agriculture	maintain biodiversity	gaining an increased added value	going beyond economic viability	more autonomy
Poland										
Warminko-Mazurska Culinary Heritage Networks	cooperation of producers, processors, and restaurants farmers and business cooperation under local authorities	o	oooo	oo	ooooo	ooo	ooo	ooo	ooo	ooo
Lower Vistula Region		ooooo	oooo	oo	ooooo	ooo	ooooo	oooo	ooooo	ooo
Austria ⁴										
BERSTA	Cooperation between direct sellers and organic wholesale trader	oooo (ooooo)	ooo (ooooo)	oo (ooooo)	oo	ooooo	ooo	oooo	ooooo	ooo
EVI	Organic store	oooo	ooo	o	oo	ooooo	oo	ooo	ooo	oo
Organic Food Coop	Group of collective buyers	ooooo	oooo	oo	oo	ooooo	o	ooooo	ooo	ooooo
Almenland Bauernspezialitäten	association of direct selling farms	o	oooo	oo	ooo	oo	ooo	ooooo	oo	oo
ALMO	Farmers business cooperation	oo	oooo	ooo	oooo	oooo	ooo	ooooo	oooo	ooo
MANTURO	Farmers business cooperation	oo	oo	ooo	o	ooooo	ooooo	ooooo	o	oo
Hungary										
Alliance for the Living Tisza - Szövet	rural development organisation of farmers	oo	ooooo	ooo	ooooo	oo	oooo	oooo	ooo	ooo
Hunyadi Square market and “The market: our Treasure”	Farmers market and citizen’s group	oo	ooo	ooo	oo	o	ooo	oo	oo	oo
UK										
Cumbria	Farmer based initiatives	ooooo	oooo	ooooo	oooo	ooooo	ooooo	ooo	ooo	oooo
Greater Manchester	conurbation with food initiatives	ooooo	oooo	ooooo	o	oo	oo	ooo	ooo	oo
France										
Rennes Metropole	territorial system of farmers led initiatives	ooooo	oooo	ooooo	ooo	ooo	ooo	ooooo	ooo	oooo
Centre Ouest Brittany	territorial system organised by producers	ooooo	oooo	ooooo	ooo	ooo	ooo	ooooo	ooo	oooo

⁴ For the Austrian initiatives/case studies: in case of long established initiatives the numbers in brackets indicate the original emphasis.

ANNEX 5: Policy frameworks that may have tensions between aspects hindering or facilitating AAFNs

	Hindering (or not helping)	Facilitating
CAP pillar 1: basis for payments	Historic basis reinforces earlier drive for productivity (AT, FR).	Area basis opens up broader options, especially for new entrants to farming (HU, PL, England – which has its own CAP rules).
CAP pillar 2 (RDP, including Leader)	<p>‘Modernisation’ & efficiency measures for standard agri-products to compete better in distant markets (all five countries).</p> <p>Environmental protection mainly beyond agriculture, e.g. by withdrawing less productive farmland (all).</p> <p>Each grant or investment has a high minimum level (and/or a co-funding requirement), thus benefiting large processors.</p>	<p>Leader programmes facilitate cooperative networks among producers and with retailers.</p> <p>Infrastructure for local processing and marketing (AT, England), e.g. for specialty branded products (FR, PL Lower Vistula).</p> <p>Agri-food-tourism links (AT, England, FR)</p> <p>Agri-ecological cultivation methods, e.g. low-input, organic conversion (England, FR, PL)</p> <p>Environmental protection via extensification of agricultural methods.</p> <p>Small grants are available (England).</p>
Hygiene regulations	Strict rules presume industrial contexts and methods. For example, govt inspectors must be present whenever animals are killed (England).	Flexibility in rules according to production method and sales context.
Hygiene regulations: exemptions for small quantities of primary products in direct sales	<p>Exemptions are narrowly defined – or remain ambiguous and so in a legal ‘grey’ zone (AT).</p> <p>‘Direct sales’ exclude collective marketing (FR) and exclude processed products, both of plant and animal origin, sold to shops or institutions (HU).</p>	<p>Exemptions or lighter rules are broadly, clearly defined (rare).</p> <p>Lighter rules for direct marketing of some primary products (AT).</p> <p>Lighter rules for individual merchants – but not for collective sales (FR).</p>
Hygiene regulations: lighter rules for traditional products	<p>No lighter rules – or even no permission – for some traditional methods (PL).</p> <p>No lighter rules for many animal products (AT).</p>	<p>Exemption for speciality products (PL).</p> <p>Lighter rules for on-farm processing.</p> <p>Flexibility for small, marginal, local products derived from crops (England).</p>
Trading laws	<p>Inconsistent criteria across various laws (all)</p> <p>Invoices are required for every sale (HU).</p> <p>Collective-marketing income counts as profit and so imposes greater tax burdens on producers (FR).</p> <p>No exemptions for small business (England).</p> <p>No tax benefits linked to certain types of agro-tourism activities (HU).</p>	<p>Direct sales have lighter rules and lower tax (PL).</p> <p>Farm activity and employment have some exemptions from tax (FR).</p> <p>Box schemes are exempt from rules on labelling specific products (England).</p> <p>Tax benefits for ‘primary’ producers below a certain annual income receive tax benefits (HU).</p>

	Hindering (or not helping)	Facilitating
Public procurement <i>(restauration collective)</i>	<p>‘Economically advantageous’ criteria favouring the lowest price and larger producers.</p> <p>‘Best value’ through aggregated purchasing to minimise the price, without clear criteria to justify a higher price (England).</p> <p>Diet improvement emphasises nutritional and safety criteria (England, FR).</p>	<p>‘Economically advantageous’ criteria justifying a higher price – e.g., for quality, freshness, life-cycle analysis, economic development, etc.</p> <p>Contracts are split up by locality and product to favour local suppliers (Cumbria, England).</p> <p>Diet improvement emphasises agri-food quality, e.g. freshly harvested or organic food (AT), but organic can mean more imports rather than local sources.</p>
Territorial branding	<p>PDO or PGIs to be marketed anywhere, bypassing local economies.</p> <p>Label includes large-scale industrial processors (Warmia Region, PL).</p>	<p>Brands promoting a general territorial identity of food and economic development.</p> <p>Label promotes small-scale, quality production with Leader funds (Lower Vistula, PL).</p>