



WildFood

WildFood Project

Eating the wild: Improving the value-chain of Mediterranean Wild Food Products (WFP)

Innovation network designed

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Executive summary

Innovation network was set as one of key elements of WildFood project to actively involve relevant stakeholders in long term. The aim of this is to establish a continuous dialogue between the project consortium and stakeholder that can play an advisory role in terms of providing suggestions, critical feedback, and media to further disseminate information and “know-how” developed within the project. Stakeholders are to cover all segments of the WFP value-chain so that they can provide information on all relevant steps of WFP production, processing, and sale. This will be valuable for all work packages of the project, but especially for work package 4, which will tackle the potential of introducing innovation within current business models of the WFP sector and for sure needs to involve stakeholders “from the field” to give the innovation aspects a firm and realistic frame. Innovation network will this play a crucial role in transferring new information into practice.

This document reports on the first step of designing an innovation network that will cover partnering countries in WildFood. Two elements are key, mapping of stakeholder in order to know who are the most relevant and organizing events (workshops and interviews) to actively involve stakeholders, give them information on the project activities and highlight importance of their participation. It is expected that those attending the events will continue to be available as a part of the innovation network.

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1. Innovation networks

The innovation network is defined as interconnected structure of individual stakeholders and organizations sharing common goals related to research and/or development of new technologies/products. In the context of WildFood project this relates to wild food products (WFPs) and individuals/organizations working within the WFP sector.

2. Designing networks within WildFood

Designing an innovation network is a part of the first task of WP4 – T4.1 Creation of virtual sites for connecting actors. The goal is to establish an interregional connection among stakeholders from all parts of the WFP value chain that would act as a tool for exchanging information, discussing know-hows, and elaborating on possible innovations, which could potentially be implemented in business models of WFP sector. Moreover, the network would ideally accommodate longer-term partnerships among stakeholders and between stakeholders and project partners as well.

The initial step in designing the innovation network was to hold national-level events, that would kick-start interaction among project partners and stakeholders. Six workshops (and individual interviews in case of Slovenia) were organized in all partnering countries but Algeria:

- one workshop in Italy (truffles),
- one workshop in Tunisia (pine nuts & Rosemary & Myrtle),
- one workshop in Portugal (acorns & Pennyroyal & pine nuts),
- two workshops in Spain (one related to pine nuts & one related to truffles) and
- personal interviews in Slovenia (truffles).

Each workshop followed a pre-defined line of topics, as events were designed to accommodate goals not only of T4.1, but T3.1 as well. Two elements of the workshops were specifically related to innovation network:

- mapping of stakeholders (attending the workshop and in some cases also those who did not, but were considered as relevant),
- discussion on the relevance, benefits, and ways of maintaining the network.

Mapping of stakeholders

The mapping exercise was set by defining the stakeholder's position within the WFP value chain and 6 additional indicators, which are to assess how relevant / suitable is specific stakeholder to be included in the innovation network. The 6 indicators are:

1. stakeholder's attitude towards business model innovation,
2. stakeholder's influence – how strong is connection between the stakeholders and WildFood,
3. stakeholder's interest in business model innovation,
4. stakeholder's power to implement innovation in business models,
5. stakeholder's proximity to the project activities,
6. stakeholder's receptiveness to being involved in project activities.

Ideally, each workshop attendee was assigned with assessments for all 6 mapping indicators and characterized by one or more roles (positions) in the value chain. This enabled having a comprehensive ‘map’ of stakeholders, which transparently shows their distribution along the gradient of each mapping indicator and also helps in identifying potential groupings of stakeholders within specific combinations (values) of two or more indicators. Having this information aids project partners to highlight stakeholders which are of strong focus for the consortium to effectively carry out several project activities. Those are stakeholders with particularly high sum of all mapping indicators’ values. Those with lower score can also be important, just not as highly as those with high sum. Some partners did the mapping exercise prior to the workshop so to invite those stakeholders with higher relevancy for WildFood project.

The list of all stakeholders and mapping assessments are in the annex of this report, however a general summarization for all indicators (overall and country level averages of estimates) are presented as well – Tables 2-7.

In two cases (Tunisia and Italy) mapping exercise was not implemented, in additional two the mapping was done on two stakeholders only (Slovenia and Spain in case of pine nuts value chain), while in the remaining two cases 12 stakeholders (Spain in case of truffle value chain) and 15 stakeholders (Portugal in cases of acorn, pennyroyal and pine nuts) respectively mapping was done.

Out of 49 stakeholders mapped more than half (28) were identified as producers only, 3 as processors, 3 as middlemen and the rest were assigned with a combination of roles (Table 1). Two were not labelled with any of the roles.

Table 1: The distribution of stakeholders attending workshops or interviews within WFP value chain

Role in the WFP value chain	Total number of stakeholders	Portugal	Slovenia	Spain	Italy
Producer	28	4	1	10	13
Processor	3	1	0	0	2
Middlemen	3	3	0	0	0
Producer&middlemen&processor	1	0	0	1	0
Producer&middlemen&processor&retailer	2	1	1	0	0
Producer&middlemen&retailer	1	0	0	1	0
Producer&processor	2	2	0	0	0
Producer&retailer	1	0	0	1	0
Middlemen&processor	1	1	0	0	0
Middlemen&retailer	1	1	0	0	0
Processor&retailer	4	3	0	1	0
No role	2	2	0	0	0
Total	49	15	2	14	18

Obviously, there is a strong overrepresentation of producers, while the rest of the profiles have several times less cases. This might be due to actual abundance of producers in the WFP sector. There is no indication of producers being more *receptive* to project involvement as average grade of receptiveness is 3.5 and is neither at the highest average value of 4.0 nor at the lowest value of 3.0 that (Table 2).

Table 2: Average values of estimated **receptiveness** of stakeholders attending workshops or interviews (4-stakeholder is fully responsive and/or easy to communicate to, 3-moderately responsive and/or easy to communicate to, 2-rather unresponsive and/or hard to communicate to, 1-completely unresponsive and/or impossible to communicate to)

Role in the WFP value chain	Overall average	Portugal	Slovenia	Spain
Producer	3.5	3.5	4.0	3.4
Processor				
Middlemen	4.0	4.0		
Producer&middlemen&processor	4.0			4.0
Producer&middlemen&processor&retailer	4.0	4.0	4.0	
Producer&middlemen&retailer	4.0			4.0
Producer&processor	3.5	3.5		
Producer&retailer	3.0			3.0
Middlemen&processor	4.0	4.0		
Middlemen&retailer	3.0	3.0		
Processor&retailer	3.3	3.3		3.0
No role	4.0	4.0		
Total	3.5	3.6	4.0	3.4

Taking the overall average, value 4.0 in the case of *stakeholder's attitude towards business model innovation* if the highest of all mapping indicators. It is high for Portugal as well as Spain, while it is slightly lower in case of Slovenia (however, the latter case has only two stakeholders). Middlemen in case of Portugal has very low value, which indicate low support for BM innovation.

Table 3: Average values of estimated **attitude** of stakeholders towards business model innovation (5-strong support, 4-moderate support, 3-undecided, 2-moderate opposition, 1-strong opposition)

Role in the WFP value chain	Overall average	Portugal	Slovenia	Spain
Producer	3.8	4.3	4.0	3.6
Processor				
Middlemen	2.0	2.0		
Producer&middlemen&processor	5.0			5.0
Producer&middlemen&processor&retailer	4.0	5.0	3.0	
Producer&middlemen&retailer	5.0			5.0
Producer&processor	3.5	3.5		
Producer&retailer	5.0			5.0
Middlemen&processor	5.0	5.0		
Middlemen&retailer	4.0	4.0		
Processor&retailer	4.8	4.7		5.0
No role	4.0	4.0		
Total	4.0	4.1	3.5	4.0

If support for BM innovation is relatively high, the *actual interest* is somehow lower. It is averaging at 3.2. Those with sole role of producers seem to have least interest (2.9), however only slightly higher values were calculated for several other profiles.

Table 4: Average values of estimated **interest** of stakeholders in business model innovation (4-strong active* interest, 3-moderate active interest, 2-moderate passive* interest, 1-no interest; *active means there is interest to get actively involved in innovation, whereas passive means that only information/knowledge is of interest)

Role in the WFP value chain	Overall average	Portugal	Slovenia	Spain
Producer	2.9	3.3	2.0	2.8
Processor				
Middlemen	4.0	4.0		
Producer&middlemen&processor	4.0			4.0
Producer&middlemen&processor&retailer	3.0	4.0	2.0	
Producer&middlemen&retailer	4.0			4.0
Producer&processor	4.0	4.0		
Producer&retailer	3.0			3.0
Middlemen&processor	4.0	4.0		
Middlemen&retailer	3.0	3.0		
Processor&retailer	3.3	3.3		3.0
No role	4.0	4.0		
Total	3.2	3.6	2.0	3.0

Overall average assessment of *power to implement innovation* is similar to the actual interest. In this case producers do not have the lowest power, but middlemen do. The highest power to implement innovation was assigned to combined profiles of stakeholders with more than one role in the value chain.

Table 5: Average values of estimated **power** of stakeholders to implement innovation in business models (4-significant* power, 3-moderate power, 2-low power, 1-no power; *significant means one is able to fully implement innovation of business models; moderate means that one needs to consult others to implement innovation; low means one can implement only fractions of innovation upon consulting others)

Role in the WFP value chain	Overall average	Portugal	Slovenia	Spain
Producer	2.9	2.8	4.0	2.8
Processor				
Middlemen	2.0	2.0		
Producer&middlemen&processor	4.0			4.0
Producer&middlemen&processor&retailer	3.5	3.0	4.0	
Producer&middlemen&retailer	4.0			4.0
Producer&processor	4.0	4.0		
Producer&retailer	4.0			4.0
Middlemen&processor	4.0	4.0		
Middlemen&retailer	3.0	3.0		
Processor&retailer	3.8	3.3		5.0
No role	2.5	2.5		
Total	3.2	3.1	4.0	3.3

There are a few cases of strong connection between stakeholders and WildFood project that indicates a potential influence of a stakeholder on the project activities, however there are cases with low influence as well.

Table 6: Average values of estimated **influence** of stakeholders – how strong is the connection between the stakeholder and the WildFood project (4-strong connection, 3-moderate connection, 2-low connection, 1-no connection)

Role in the WFP value chain	Overall average	Portugal	Slovenia	Spain
Producer	2.9	3.0	2.0	3.0
Processor				
Middlemen	4.0	4.0		
Producer&middlemen&processor	4.0			4.0
Producer&middlemen&processor&retailer	3.5	4.0	3.0	
Producer&middlemen&retailer	4.0			4.0
Producer&processor	3.0	3.0		
Producer&retailer	2.0			2.0
Middlemen&processor	1.0	1.0		
Middlemen&retailer	1.0	1.0		
Processor&retailer	1.5	1.0		3.0
No role	3.0	3.0		
Total	2.7	2.5	2.5	3.1

Proximity of stakeholders to the WildFood project has a relatively low grade as well, which is not an issue per se, but can be if communication between the consortium and stakeholders will not address the fact that information flow from the project to stakeholders needs to be continuous. This means that stakeholders are generally not a part of the consortium, and various channels need to be active to reach all stakeholders.

Table 7: Average values of estimated **proximity** of stakeholders to the WildFood project (4-stakeholder is a part of the project consortium, 3-stakeholder is in very close contact with the consort., 2-stakeholder has occasional contacts with consort., 1-one has neither contacts nor knowledge of the project)

Role in the WFP value chain	Overall average	Portugal	Slovenia	Spain
Producer	2.3	2.3	2.0	2.3
Processor				
Middlemen	1.0	1.0		
Producer&middlemen&processor	3.0			3.0
Producer&middlemen&processor&retailer	3.0	4.0	2.0	
Producer&middlemen&retailer	3.0			3.0
Producer&processor	3.0	3.0		
Producer&retailer	3.0			3.0
Middlemen&processor	4.0	4.0		
Middlemen&retailer	2.0	2.0		
Processor&retailer	2.0	1.7		3.0
No role	4.0	4.0		
Total	2.5	2.6	2.0	2.5

Mapping stakeholders and innovation network

There are several aspects of mapping that can act as inputs for designing innovation network. Those are highlighted in the following section.

1. Attitude, interest, and power

Stakeholders with supportive attitude towards innovation, strong interest in innovations of BM and significant power to implement potential innovation are those WildFood needs to target. Those are characterized as “influential active backers” (Bourne 2009). Theoretically, those present a cluster of stakeholders who need to be kept close to the project as they can act as an important momentum in innovation, not only in designing innovation but also in the phase of implementation. Three cases of mixed profiles stand out: producer&middlemen&processor, producer&middlemen&retailer, and middlemen&processor. However, this refers to only one person per profile, which decreases the possibility to generalize results.

Producers, who present most of our stakeholder sample perform relatively bad in this aspect as all three indicators report low values. There is also the case of middlemen, albeit only 3 persons (Portugal), who were assigned with even more opposing attitude and lower power but with higher interest in innovation, which might be a bit odd. We might conclude that those with only one role in the value chain are those who's attitude towards innovation WildFood can alter in a positive direction. Supportive attitude would increase the chances of implementation of innovations in BM.

2. Interest, power, and proximity

Combination of those three aspects highlights a potential to implement innovation within BM as they support it, have the power to implement it, and are also close to the project so that “know-how” transfer can be quick and effective. Actually, the same three cases loom as in the previous point: producer&middlemen&processor, producer&middlemen&retailer, and middlemen&processor. Again, generalization is risky due to low number of actual cases.

3. Influential active blockers

Those with high interest, significant power but are opposing innovation might (potentially) act as influential active blockers. Theoretically, they could block project activities and jeopardize its success. Fortunately, there are no clear indications of such stakeholders being involved in project events.

It is expected that at least a majority of those participating in workshops/interviews will remain receptive for future collaboration in project activities.

3. Maintaining the innovation network

Two events also covered the question on how to keep the innovation network active – workshop in Portugal and interviews. Stakeholders from the workshop in Portugal listed “creating the innovation network” as one of innovative solutions WildFood needs to focus on, however WP4 leader contacted PP from Portugal to further discuss this issue. PP from Portugal expressed moderate concern on how to maintain the networks as its future participation of stakeholders was not completely guaranteed. Some were reserved to be involved in the project as this means they would need to allocate additional time. Still, Portugal PP are relatively confident they may maintain part of the network active throughout the project.

Both interviewees in Slovenia discussed the potential of having more stakeholder involved in the project. The initial problems with motivating stakeholder to attend the joint event were confirmed by both as something WildFood needs to consider as a fact when dealing with truffles-related community in Slovenia. None of the two interviewees was willing to share their contacts, which indicates that widening the network will be difficult.

WildFood consortium will focus on maintaining the current network of stakeholders as active as possible, buy keeping them close to the project (continuous information flow, regular contacts, and occasional joint event) and concentrating the efforts on stakeholders that were assessed with high stakeholders' mapping indicators.

4. References

Bourne, L. (2009). Stakeholder relationship management: A Maturity Model for Organisational Implementation, Routledge.





The Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area will devise new R&I approaches to improve water availability and sustainable agriculture production in a region heavily distressed by climate change, urbanisation and population growth.



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