‘LOCAL’ LEVEL ANALYSIS OF FNS PATHWAYS IN BELGIUM

Exploring two case studies: Voedselteams and CSA

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About TRANSMANGO:
TRANSMANGO is an international research project that aims to explore diverse transition pathways to a sustainable and food secure food system. It is funded by the European Commission and runs for four years, from 2014 until 2018. The Transmango consortium consists of 13 partners from nine European countries and Tanzania. For more information, visit our website: http://www.transmango.eu/.

About this Document/Disclaimer:
This report is part of Work Package 6 of TRANSMANGO which is focussed on 'local' level analysis of FNS pathways in Europe. This report is based upon ‘D6.1 Case-study selection and methodological guidelines for local level analysis of FNS Pathways’ (transmango.eu). The guiding research questions for the Work Package 6 ‘local’ level analysis were:

1. To what extent, and how, do the selected FNS practices / pathways reflect novel responses to FNS concerns in specific settings?
2. To what extent are these novel practices / pathways promising and successful?
3. To what extent do involved stakeholders explore up- and out scaling potentials?
4. How do stakeholders characterize their interaction with institutional settings?
5. How relevant is EU level policy making in this interaction with institutional settings?

This report is focussed upon Voedselteams and CSA in Belgium. This report presents the interpretations of the researchers, and does not necessarily reflect the views and nuances of the initiatives and respondents themselves. In total there are nine separate ‘local’ level analysis reports from ten consortium members and they will feed into the ‘D6.4 Syntheses report on FNS pathway-specific drivers, potentials and vulnerabilities’.

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List of abbreviations

AFN Alternative Food Network
CSA Community Supported Agriculture
FASFC Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain
FTE Full Time Equivalent
MLP Multi-Level Perspective
NGO Non-Governmental Organization
NPO Not for Profit Organization
OG Operational Goal
SFSC Short food supply chain
SG Strategic goal
SPT Social Practice Theory
1. INTRODUCTION
In past years, it has become clear that we are dealing with sustainability challenges that need to be addressed in order to meet future needs. In this, it is increasingly argued that incremental changes are insufficient. Instead, systemic changes are indispensable to meet the needs of the future. Yet, no consensus exists on how this systemic change should be fostered, and both individualistic as well as systemic approaches have been put to the fore to induce these changes. In this report, we argue that it is insufficient to take either an individualistic or a systemic approach. Instead, the problems we are dealing with are of a high complexity, finding their roots both in the individual and systemic level. Next to this, it should be recognized that these levels are strongly intertwined with each other.

Within the field of sustainability innovation studies, there has been an increasing attention to two theoretical approaches. Even though both are concerned with systemic changes to sustainability, it has been argued that they are fundamentally different, especially in the ways in which they understand how transitions towards sustainability come about. First, the Multi-Level Perspective (MLP) theory deals with the vertical levels of society and can provide us with clarity on the way in which our food system is organized. In particular, it shows us how different levels (landscape, socio-technical regimes and niches) interact, and how niches and novelties come about as reactions to ruptures and unsustainabilitys in the other two levels. In a later stage, these niches might contribute to a transition in socio-technical regimes and possibly at a landscape level (Geels, 2004; Geels, 2013).

Even though it has been widely used, it has also been argued that this framework is too narrow to look at transitions towards sustainability. Therefore, within this research the MLP will be used in combination with Social Practice Theory (SPT), that instead of dealing with the notion of novelty provides insight into how agency is both enabled and constrained by habits of practices (Hoffman & Loeber, 2015). We argue that the negative implications of the agro-food regime both globally and in Belgium have led to the emergence of Alternative Food Networks (AFNs). AFNs can be seen as:

“food systems that differ from the dominant agro-food system and are created as a reaction to the conventional productivist paradigm. AFNs can designate a wide variety of practices, organizations and institutions. The only common characteristic they have is that they take distance with respect to the dominant market-oriented channels of food. (…) All AFNs share the characteristic that they de-commoditize food provisioning, so that the products offered through these networks are not solely brought on the market in order to fulfill consumers’ needs, but also because other characteristics or values they might fulfill (social, cultural, etc) (Bauler et al., 2011, p. 45).

One particular category of AFNs are Local Food Systems (LFS), which position themselves conceptually and paradigmatically far away from dominant, market oriented, industrial channels of production and distribution of food. They are characterized by close or direct contact between consumers and producers and a limited distance between actors. Furthermore, relations in LFS often stretch over long periods of time (Bauler et al., 2011). In Belgium, many of these initiatives have come up (van Gameren et al., 2015). Examples of these upcoming AFNs in Flanders are Voedselteams, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and Boeren en Buren (Farmers and Neighbours). Each of these initiatives has a different model, and each of them have specific goals to contribute to a more sustainable food system (IPO, 2015). At the focus of this report are two initiatives that can be seen as LFS: Voedselteams (Food Teams) – a specific type of food buying groups - and as a satellite case CSA. Collective food buying groups together with CSA are seen as the most promising social innovations in current attempts to transition to sustainable food systems. This is because of two reasons. First, they provide an economic niche that is attractive to a growing number of consumers. Second, they still allow for experimentation and learning from new ways of producing, consuming and distributing (Dedeurwaerdere et al., 2015).

Food buying groups in general as well as Voedselteams in particular have been researched extensively. Nevertheless, it has become clear that Voedselteams have mainly been looked at from a consumption perspective. This seems like an important omission. In this report, we will therefore analyse the nine marketing functions and how they are performed by Voedselteams as well as its advocacy practice. By
using such a framework and placing it in the light of both current and future developments, the transformative capacity of the initiative can be analysed.

2. **MAIN CASE STUDY REPORT: VOEDSELTEAMS**

2.1 **Research questions**

The following questions are at the centre of this report:

- How does Voedselteams organize the nine marketing functions and its advocacy practice?
  - What shape do these ten practices take?
  - What assemblages of agency, material-functional and socio-cultural structures make up these practices?
  - How are these practices attuned to each other?
  - To what extent, and how, do the practices reflect novel responses to food and nutrition security (FNS) concerns in specific settings?
- In what ways does the dominant agro-food regime inhibit or enable Voedselteams’ practices?
- To what extent do these practices have a transformative capacity towards creating a sustainable and resilient food system?
  - Which elements are transformative and which not?
  - To what extent are these practices promising and successful?
  - To what extent are involved stakeholders searching for up- and out-scaling potentials?

2.2. **Methods**

2.2.1 **Marketing functions**

The Multi-Level Perspective and Social Practice Theory provide tools to answer these questions. Yet, they do not provide a framework for which practices to research. Therefore, we look at the functions of the marketing system as practices. The marketing system aims to bridge producers and consumers and can be divided in nine different functions that are classified in three groups: exchange functions, physical functions and facilitating functions. Each of these functions is meant to overcome a particular barrier towards consumer satisfaction and adds value to the end-product. (Crawford, 2006; Beierlein et al., 2008). The functions are explained in Table 1.

**TABLE 1: THE MARKETING FUNCTIONS EXPLAINED (BEIERLEIN, SCHNEEBERGER, & OSBURN, 2008; CRAWFORD, 2006)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exchange functions</strong></td>
<td>1. Buying: Overcome separation of ownership. The seller offers a product that is wanted by the buyer, and exchanges something in return. In this way, the legal title of the product is transferred from buyer to seller.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Selling: Overcomes separation of ownership. The seller offers a product that is wanted by the buyer, and exchanges something in return. In this way, the legal title of the product is transferred from buyer to seller.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical functions</strong></td>
<td>3. Storing: Overcomes separation of time. As agricultural products are seasonal, storage can balance supply and demand by smoothing supply throughout the year and keeping the produce in good condition between production and final sale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Transportation: Overcomes separation of space. Makes the product available where it is needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Processing: Overcomes value separation. Processing is a form changing activity meant to increase the utility for the consumer and thereby increasing the value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilitating Functions</strong></td>
<td>6. Standardization: Overcomes information separation. Establishes and maintains uniform measurements for quality and quantity. It simplifies buying and selling and reduces marketing costs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Moreover, Voedselteams has both a social enterprise and a social movement component. To also address this component a tenth function, advocacy, was added.

2.2.2 Research methods

Three different methods were used: semi-structured interviews, participatory workshops and participatory observation.

2.2.2.1 Interviews & choice of interviewees

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight key actors internal and external to Voedselteams (coordinators, logistical planner, farmer and external experts). The interviews took between 45 minutes to three hours. All the questions were open-ended. The basis for the questionnaire can be found in Annex 1, however, no interview was the same, as each interview built forth on the previous one. As much knowledge was available, the interviews were held in order to satiate our knowledge. Therefore, not a large number of interviewees was needed.

A mix of snowball sampling and expert sampling was used. To select the interviewees internal to Voedselteams, we started with two interviewees. From there we identified further possible interviewees together with our interviewees. For the expert sampling we identified those interviewees with specific knowledge on particular topics. For each of the interviewees anonymity was guarded, therefore, each interview is referred to with a code. A list with the codes can be found in Annex 2.

Next to this, interviews with team and depot coordinators were held in the context of another project, Food4Sustainability. Some of these interviews were also coded and incorporated in the results of this report.

2.2.2.2 Workshops

Two participatory workshops were organized, to develop sets of actions that could be taken by Voedselteams to contribute to systemic transition towards a sustainable food system in Flanders. These actions were tested in the light of different future scenarios. The elaborate description of both workshops can be found in the workshop report.
Workshop 1
The first workshop was attended by 19 people from diverse backgrounds, (e.g., Voedselteams members, researchers, policy makers, etc.). The goal was to develop challenging and diverse future scenarios that would enable Voedselteams to look in new ways at the strong and weak elements of its strategy.

The development of the local scenarios was based on European scenarios that were developed during the European TRANSMANGO workshop. Participants were asked to re-create these scenarios so that they would be relevant for the Flemish context.

The main deliverable of this first workshop were three different, localized future scenarios for Flanders and the causal maps describing important elements and the causal relationships between them.

Workshop 2
The second workshop was attended by 25 individuals. They consisted of a mix of Food Teamers, policy makers, scientists, producers and high school adolescents. The main goal of this workshop was to test the strategic plan of 2016-2020 of Voedselteams according to the local scenarios that were developed in the first workshop. Moreover, based on this, main points and priorities for the activities of Voedselteams were identified. Suggestions were then produced for Voedselteams to integrate these points in their post-2016 priorities.

2.2.2.3 Participatory observation
Participatory observation was also used. First, we attended the general assembly on the 12th of March, 2016. Attending this event allowed us to grasp more broadly the issues that Voedselteams is coping with. We presented the preliminary results of the research. This allowed members, farmers and coordinators to directly react to the outcomes found until that moment. Moreover, a list was handed out that allowed the attendants to give anonymous and written feedback, providing us with further input for the research.

Second, we became a member of a local food team in order to experience the practical reality of being a Voedselteam member. This experience allowed us to understand more thoroughly the way in which a team works.

2.3 Research findings

2.3.1 Voedselteams: a short history
Voedselteams was started in 1996 in Leuven, by several individuals working in three non-profit organizations: an educational organization (Elcker-Ick), an NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) focusing on food security (Wervel) and an NGO that was concerned with sustainable agriculture in the South (Vredeseilanden). They were concerned about the effects of globalization on agriculture (Hubeau et al. 2015; Crivits & Paredis, 2013). Voedselteams found the inspiration for its model in the Japanese Seikatsu, a group in which consumer teams are central in the organization of food purchase and storage.

In 1996, Voedselteams started a one-year trial period during which consumers sought contact with local farmers and spaces to set up depots, the space where the produce for each of the teams is delivered. The model turned out to be a success. The Belgian food safety crises in 1999 and 2003 led to an increased participation. Nowadays, the organization consists of around 175 teams over five regions. A team consists of at least twelve households. They organize their food purchase and delivery together. Generally, tasks are performed by volunteers. Each team has a general coordinator, a depot coordinator and a financial coordinator (Voedselteams, 2015; Crivits & Paredis, 2013).

1 The regions have however been not decided according to the borders of the provinces. Instead, they are based on geographical and practical reasons. The five regions are: 1) Antwerpen 2) Ieper, Kortrijk, Vlaamse Ardennen en Pajottenland 3) Gent, Waasland, Meetjesland en de Kust 4) Limburg 5) Vlaams-Brabant
In 2001, the organization was formalized as a Not for Profit Organization (NPO). The NPO hires five full-time equivalent (FTE) staff. Furthermore, each of the five Flemish provinces has a regional coordinator(s). Employees are mainly paid with subsidies. These grants are obtained because of the official status of Voedselteams as a social-cultural movement, that the organization has since 2005. This element means that Voedselteams is now also deemed to reach a larger diversity of people and to increase awareness of agricultural and short food chain issues in society. Moreover, the organization has to define their goals and strategies every five years in a separate document. The goals for the period of 2016-2020 can be found in Annex 3 (Voedselteams-1, 2016).

2.3.2 Voedselteams as a social movement and a social enterprise
Voedselteams can on the one hand be characterized as a social enterprise. Social enterprises can be defined as:

“Organisations involved at least to some extent in the market, with a clear social, cultural and/or environmental purpose. Rooted in and serving primarily a community or its members and ideally having a democratic ownership structure (Dedeurwaerdere et al., 2015, p. 7).”

Indeed, Voedselteams clearly is a combination of not-for-profit and for-profit activities, offering services on the one hand, while on the other it has an explicit objective to contribute to societal benefits. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to solely look at the organization as a social enterprise. Instead "in the current situation there is (...) a corpus of routines which are on another level than the strict functional reproduction of the consumer routines. This more „ideological“ level (...) binds the different routines within the practice (Bauler et al., 2011, p. 67)."

Dedeurwaerdere et al. (2015) argue that the ideological level can be defined as the social movement component of Voedselteams. This social movement aspect, then, transcends the local level at which Voedselteams operates. Instead, it functions on a regional or national scale where it strives to promote a transition towards sustainable agro-food systems. They do this not only by interest-based lobbying, but also by offering non-profit services that are an alternative to mainstream marketing channels. In this way, Voedselteams might either contribute to regime change through a combined impact on the agro-food regime together with other similar initiatives. Moreover, they can impact the regime directly through rather political activities.

2.3.3 FNS practices
In this chapter, we discuss Voedselteams’ general practices, the marketing functions and the advocacy practice. A summarizing table of the practices can be found in annex 4. The descriptions below are as generic as possible. Regional, team or individual differences are named for each of the practices. The descriptions in this section are written in the order of the relative importance of each of the elements of the practice framework. The order in which the different elements are discussed may thus differ for each of the practices.

2.2.3.1 Voedselteams practice: a general overview

Agency
Start up of a team and entering as a consumer
If one is interested to start a new team, it is the new member’s responsibility to find other households that are also interested. This group then organizes a meeting with the regional coordinator, in which the functioning of Voedselteams is explained. Then, if the group is still interested, a second meeting is organized to fulfil the formal aspects of a start-up, like finding the volunteers for the different tasks and choosing the producers.

The way in which a new member joins a team may be either through personal contact with a volunteer or employee, or by sending a message through the website. After this, one is contacted by the regional coordinator, who suggests different teams. On the basis of the location, functioning and availability of free
places of each team, one can make a choice. This is followed by a take-in, during which the way in which the team functions is explained and the final registration is taken care of. The new member then receives a user name and a password to access the web shop and place orders (Voedselteams-1, 2016; Voedselteams-2, 2016; Voedselteams-5, 2016; Participatory observation, 2016).

**Entering as a seller**

Different types of farmers and processors are involved in the selling practice. First, producers can be differentiated according to the products they sell. Second, there are on the one hand small-scale farmers and processors, that sell everything through short food supply chains, and large farmers on the other. Third, Voedselteams is of a different importance for each of its producers. One of the interviewees mentioned that for most farmers, Voedselteams means around 5% of their income. However, some of the farmers earn more than 50% of their income through Voedselteams. Unfortunately, no registered data exist on these figures (Voedselteams-2, 2016).

Depending on whether Voedselteams is well established in a region or not, there is a difference in the way new producers enter into the organization. In a region where Voedselteams is not well established the regional coordinators contact new farmers followed by a farm visit and a screening. Based on this it is decided whether a producer is suitable or not. In regions where Voedselteams is well-established, it is mostly farmers that are looking for marketing alternatives themselves who contact Voedselteams. In this case, a farmer will ask the regional coordinator for permission to sell his produce through Voedselteams. The regional coordinator then consults the other producers from the region. If the producers and regional coordinator agree, the new farmer will go through the procedure of the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS, see standardization). If the farm is approved, it will be fit into the logistical system of the region (Voedselteams-2, 2016; Voedselteams-5, 2016).

The reasons why farmers or processors start selling their produce through Voedselteams are diverse. For example, a producer might already be engaged in different short food chain initiatives, and Voedselteams is an extension of this. Voedselteams may also mean a first step into short food chain initiatives. This might be because farmers really believe in the local character of Voedselteams, to establish a direct contact with consumers, as an attempt to increase income, to gain control over prices or because of a combination of these reasons. At the moment this can be noticed especially in the pig sector as many of the farmers are trying to find their way out of a system that is increasingly squeezing their income (Voedselteams-1, 2016; Voedselteams-2, 2016; Voedselteams-3, 2016; Farmer-1, 2016).

**Material structure**

Voedselteams’ most important tools are its website and web shop. The website is its tool towards the outside world to show the news of the organization and its activities. The web shop is only accessible for members and is used to make weekly orders. Next to this, members receive a weekly newsletter both from the umbrella organization about general issues, as well as from the regional coordinator about regional issues. Moreover, since 2015 the organization has started producing a Voedselteams magazine for its members.

**Overarching sociocultural structure**

During the field work, it seemed that there was a shared Voedselteams socio-cultural structure. Elements that were often mentioned were:

1. Establishing direct contact between producers and consumers;
2. Supporting local farmers and economies;
3. Increasing transparency in the food chain;
4. Creating social cohesion around food production and consumption;
5. Gaining access to healthy, local and fair food.

This is combined with the acceptance of higher prices that are being asked than those in the conventional system. Additionally, there is an underlying consent that food does not have to be available everywhere
and all year round. Actually, the limited and seasonal availability of food is argued to be of an advantage, as it reconnects members to the seasons, and it induces innovation and creativity in cooking practices (Crivits & Paredis, 2013).

For consumers, generally the most important reason to join a food team is to gain access to healthy and local food while the coordinators often emphasized the importance of the social aspect of the teams:

“We decided in our policy plan that we really want to put more emphasis on that, that teamwork (…) And that it is not just ‘I order my stuff and come and pick them up’, because then we should come up with a completely different system (…) (Voedselteams-1, 2016)”

Nevertheless, it was found that in practice, the social cohesion of the teams is not as strong as the organization would like it to be.

Boundary constraints
One of the constraining factors that was often mentioned was the fact that Voedselteams lacks manpower. Currently the organization has 5 full-time equivalents, but the work load is high and ever increasing. Therefore, there is a strong reliance on voluntary work.

Critical points of intersection
Tensions could be found on an individual level between being an agent of change and the need to comply with existing cultural norms. Bauler et al. (2011) call this the commercialist-movement tension. This issue is connected to the image that the outside world has of Voedselteams. This is illustrated by the following quote: “For most people in town, we are still 'strange', they prefer to stay 'normal' (Voedselteams-6, 2015).”

2.2.3.2 Voedselteams as a social enterprise

Exchange functions
Buying & Selling
Within Voedselteams, the processes of buying and selling are strongly entangled. We have therefore taken the two practices together.

Agency
Ordering
The buying and selling process is similar in all the regions. Orders are made on a weekly basis through the web shop before Thursday evening for the consecutive week. The order is delivered on a fixed time and location each week, except for meat, which is delivered approximately once every month. There are differences in terms of continuity and amount of produce that is being bought. Some teams and regions require their members to order a consistent and minimum amount of produce, but most have not set such a requirement.

Paying
Generally, payments for the produce are made weekly after the delivery. The way in which payments are made is different in the various regions. The most common strategy is that each food team has an own bank account to which members transfer their payments (Voedselteams, 2015; Voedselteams-1, 2016). During the participatory observation it was found that members calculate the money due for all produce themselves, except for meat, fish, and missing deliveries based on the confirmation e-mail of each order.

2 Nevertheless, there are strong personal, team and regional differences in the importance that is attributed to each of these aspects. For example, in East-Flanders Voedselteams members are quite strict about their values, while in other regions this is less the case. This strong engagement is explained by a strong presence of short food chains and sustainability initiatives in the cities in this region which provided Voedselteams with a network that it builds further on (Voedselteams-1, 2016; Voedselteams-2, 2016; Voedselteams-3, 2016; Voedselteams-5, 2016).
Payments for meat and fish are made separately because weights may differ from the ordered quantity. The financial responsible of the team then transfers this money to the different producers.

In Limburg, because of the outsourcing of the transport, the logistical company has to own the products at the moment of transportation. Therefore, the intermediary organization buys the products from the individual producers. The individual members of the food teams then pay the logistical company directly, instead of moving through a team account and a financial responsible (Voedselteams-1, 2016; Voedselteams-2, 2016).

**Decision making on supply**

Decisions on the supply of Voedselteams are made on the basis of what can be offered. The most important criteria are whether a product is local and organic. Next to this, for each product group, only one producer can offer his produce. For example, there will only be one farm that offers vegetables, and only one producer of beef. The decision on which producer will deliver to which team is made on a per team basis (Voedselteams-1, 2016; Voedselteams-2, 2016; Voedselteams-3, 2016; Voedselteams-4, 2016).

**Price setting**

Within Voedselteams, farmers are price setters. The price is based on the real costs of products. However, producers are often not aware of their real costs. Therefore:

“In our system, it is not being said, but it is true, you can say that they will look at organic or local prices, instead of looking at actual costs. In theory they are price setters, but in practice they look at the price and they follow (Voedselteams-2, 2016).”

However, price elasticity of demand in Voedselteams is low.

“Voedselteams people will not claim lower prices. They know that farmers get a good price and we should not make our farmers poorer (Voedselteams-3, 2016).”

Therefore, farmers generally receive a higher price than they would at auctions (Voedselteams-3, 2016). Recently, the umbrella organization started making an effort to help farmers create their prices based on a cost and income calculation.

Costs for logistics and commercialization are added to the price that consumers pay. As this system is dependent on the region, the percentage calculated is also different for each of the regions, ranging from 17% in East-Flanders, to 20-25% in Vlaams-Brabant and Limburg. Next to this, 6% of the initial price of the product is calculated as a solidarity payment from the farmers to the organization. However, this cost is often passed on to consumers as many farmers take this into account when calculating their price (Voedselteams-1, 2016; Voedselteams-2, 2016; Voedselteams-5, 2016).

**Material structure**

The buying and selling process happens over the internet. The umbrella organization has a generalized web shop, in which each team has its own unique ordering list (Voedselteams, 2015).

**Boundary constraints**

There is a tension that stems from the seasonality and locality of products. During winter, it is not possible to provide Voedselteams consumers with a varied offer. Moreover, many consumers like to order exotic products like pineapples, chocolate or coffee through Voedselteams. Therefore, international products are offered provided that they are organic and fair trade (Voedselteams-1, 2016; Voedselteams-2, 2016; Voedselteams-3, 2016; Voedselteams-4, 2016; Voedselteams-5, 2016).

Furthermore, because of time-span between order and delivery, buying through Voedselteams asks for thinking ahead. Moreover, the fact that the picking up of the produce happens every week at the same time and same place might especially be a constraint for consumers without flexible agendas (Voedselteams-2, 2016; Voedselteams-3, 2016; Voedselteams-4, 2016).
Another constraint is that in many regions, consumers are not asked to place a minimum order each week. This makes it hard for *Voedselteams* producers to predict how much they will be selling each week. Secondly, there are more farmers that want to offer their produce than consumers to buy it. *Voedselteams* have difficulties in attracting new members and finding new market segments. For example, until now *Voedselteams* has not included many immigrants and members from lower socio-economic classes. Moreover, *Voedselteams* is a Business-to-Consumer organization. This means that it does not deliver to public institutions or restaurants. There have been some attempts to also include restaurants in the consumer base, but until now, this was unsuccessful.

Lastly, the selling process of *Voedselteams* is strongly based on the voluntary engagement of *Voedselteams* consumers. However, it is hard to find volunteers that are willing to engage. This issue will be discussed in further paragraphs (*Voedselteams*-1, 2016; *Voedselteams*-2, 2016; *Voedselteams*-3, 2016; Expert-1, 2016).

**Socio-cultural structure**

The underlying socio-cultural structure of the buying and selling practices within *Voedselteams* is similar to the overarching socio-cultural structure although the importance attributed to each of the elements may differ per region, team and even per individual.

Moreover, for the buying and selling processes specifically, it has been shown that discussions revolve constantly around the boundaries of locality. This discussion was found to be divided in two camps: those who are strongly in favour of the local character of *Voedselteams*, and those who think that international products can or should be offered. A regional difference can be noticed. For example, the strong dynamics that revolve around short food chains in Ghent makes that a certain hostility towards an increasing amount of ‘non-local’ produce can be noticed there:

> “It is a discussion in our team. […] Olive oil, pasta, where does it stop. We are not a shop and I feel like we are moving towards that with our organization (Voedselteams-5, 2016).”

Contrary to this, another regional coordinator mentioned:

> “I am convinced, and many consumers with me, that if there is no local variant, we should be able to open up to import products (Voedselteams-2, 2016).”

**Critical points of intersection**

The buying and selling practices of *Voedselteams* come into contact with regime practices at multiple instances. First, the engagement of *Voedselteams* consumers often seems to go hand in hand with a general distrust in the dominant food system. This effect was enforced during food scares which was illustrated by the rise of *Voedselteams* members during such times (e.g. the 1999 Dioxin crisis) (*Voedselteams*, 2015). Nevertheless, the consumer-movement tension can also be noticed here:

> “The biggest challenge is the fight with large retailers. (…) it is difficult to get your clients in your shop. In supermarkets people have everything and that is tempting (Farmer-1, 2016).”

Second, once a consumer is a member of *Voedselteams*, it is expected that this person engages more strongly in his food buying practices by volunteering, and planning his other activities around the activity of food buying. In this sense, the idea of convenience as it is proposed in the conventional sector is challenged in *Voedselteams*. Moreover, the food buying and selling practices become entangled with each other. An example of this is the fact that consumers calculate the price of their groceries themselves.

Third, *Voedselteams* consumers tend to accept constraints posed by seasonality and locality. Nevertheless, a change can be noticed in this. As the organization has continued to grow, in recent years, the offer of *Voedselteams* has been expanded with non-local and non-seasonal produce. The previous paragraph has shown that opinions on whether this is a good development or not differ.

Fourth, Dedeurwaerdere et al. (2015) notice: “As long as the price of food does not reflect the negative environmental externalities of conventional farming, the growth and further development of the collective food buying groups will continue to depend strongly on the voluntary contributions of citizens and
Consumers that are potentially interested in Voedselteams might thus still choose convenience and the lowest prices available.

Finally, for the selling process in particular, it is especially the farmers that sell both through Voedselteams and through auctions that come into contact with the regime. In case a farmer has a contract with an auction, he is allowed to sell 5% on his farm. The rest should be sold to the auction. Although the auction does not check actively whether this rule is endorsed, it might be a potential risk for those who sell more than 5% of their produce through short food supply chains (Expert-1, 2016; Voedselteams-1, 2016; Voedselteams-2, 2016).

Physical functions

Storing

Material structure
Since its foundation, Voedselteams is characterized by its depot system. When a food team is started up, it has to look for a suitable place. This can be a garage, church, school, shop, or any other location that can fulfil the role of a storage place. The umbrella organization supports this, but the main engagement comes from the team members. When the members find a suitable depot, the organization will check whether the depots comply with the standards, e.g. the depot has to be easy to reach by consumers and transporters. Also, there needs to be electricity for a freezer and a fridge.

Agency
Normally, farmers bundle their orders per team. From the farmer, the produce is transported to the transporter. There the packages are prepared for each of the teams. The produce for the consumers is then divided in the depot by a volunteer.

The way in which the depots are managed differs. Some depots work with turns. In this way, all team members take on some of the volunteering responsibility. Other depots do not have a control system. This can lead to problems when a mistake is made in the delivery. The transporters control whether depots are being managed correctly or not. Problems (e.g., non-compliance with the cooling of products) are reported to the organization (Voedselteams-1, 2016; Voedselteams-2, 2016; Voedselteams-4, 2016; Voedselteams-5, 2016).

Socio-cultural structure
The social function of the depots differs strongly. Some teams see the depots as a social place where they meet on a weekly basis. The organization also tends to put emphasis on this function. However, many consumers and coordinators acknowledged that by many the depot is merely seen as a pick-up point:

“I think most people don’t actually see each other (…). they (…) take their package, sign and leave and they just meet a few times per year. [...] we should also be honest in that (Voedselteams-4, 2016).”

Boundary constraints
The storing practice requires voluntary engagement. This may be a boundary to join Voedselteams or to more strongly engage. Also, because of the relatively narrow time span that a depot is open, members may have to adapt their schedule to pick up their produce (Voedselteams-1, 2016; Voedselteams-2, 2016; Voedselteams-3, 2016; Voedselteams-4, 2016). Moreover, the professionalism of the depots can also be a barrier as in some depots regulations around food safety are not always followed up (Expert-1, 2016).

Critical points of intersection
In a food team the storing practice is taken up by consumers whereas storing practices in the regime are highly specialized and professionalized. Moreover while supermarkets and retailers are rather standardized and sterile, Voedselteams depots can take many shapes and sizes. Ambiguity exists on whether this might become constraining in the future. Until now, the depots have fallen under a private
and non-trade status, and therefore have escaped from constraints that would apply under strict readings of law (van Gameren, 2015). However as an expert mentioned:

“One can notice that they [FASFC - Federal Agency for Safety of the Food Chain] want more and more control over all those side forms of food provisioning that are not within the rules [...] it will not be so strict but it will push them for sure in a certain shape (Expert-1, 2016).”

An expert from the FASFC mentioned however:

“It is something that we follow, because we now have a legal framework in which we try to fit existing initiatives, and then often we need to circulate clarifications, because the legal framework does not clarify how it should be applied to these new initiatives. So I don’t know if it will be adapted or not. Anyway, our mission will remain to protect the consumer and guard food safety. Now, there is also a trend to support small producers, so I rather see it positively, I do not think we will become much stricter (...) but it is hard to predict (...) we adapt our policies to societal trends. If we see that something is a growing initiative that we have little control over, we do need to take our responsibilities and adapt the rules so that we have more control or security that the consumer is protected and is offered safe food (Expert-2, 2016).”

Registering a depot would mean that it would have to keep up with the administration of the FASFC, have a control visit every four years, and pay an annual fee to the FASFC. It is highly likely that in this case the depot system would not keep on existing in the way it does today.

Moreover, this would mean that the length of the supply chain would officially increase, as the depot would then be seen as a link in the food chain. Since the food safety risk in food chains is determined by its length, this would mean that the perceived risk of Voedselteams would increase. Farmers might then be assessed as more risky and they might have to live up to stricter rules and regulations:

“And the longer the food chain is, the higher the producer is in the chain, the more people he will reach and thus the higher the risk and we will want to put more control on that. So if the chain becomes longer for the producer, for example because if Voedselteams is an intermediary, then the producer can be subjected to stricter rules and that could lead to certain producers quitting and saying they don’t want to participate in that (Expert-2, 2016).”

Transportation Agency
In its starting years Voedselteams was a small initiative. Therefore, farmers and consumers were taking up the responsibility of transporting and distributing the produce. As Voedselteams has grown, transportation methods have professionalized. This process has been different in each region, but largely there are three different systems:

1. In some regions, transportation has been outsourced to an external firm. This company puts together all orders in the region, picks them up from the farmers, and sorts everything by the usage of a pick-ordering system per food team. After that, the produce is transported to the teams. This is mostly done by companies from the social economy, as they are significantly cheaper compared to professional logistical companies. Routes are organized based on a combination of efficiency and depot opening hours by a professional planner (Voedselteams-1, 2016; Voedselteams-2, 2016; Voedselteams-4, 2016).
2. In other regions, the transportation system is organized through collaborations between farmers. At the start, these arrangements were informal and farmers received a fixed price per team. However, in time, many of them have been professionalized, and farmers are being paid on a per hour basis. The routes in these regions are organized by the regional coordinator and volunteers (Voedselteams-1, 2016; Voedselteams-5, 2016).
3. In a few regions, a system is still in place in which farmers drive around the produce themselves. The organization, however, realizes that in such a system unnecessary
kilometers are driven. Therefore, they are in the process of organizing a similar system as in the regions described in point two (Voedselteams-1, 2016).

**MATERIAL STRUCTURE**

Because of the highly diversified nature of this practice, the material and socio-cultural structure are also different for each of the regions. The efficiency of the transportation system is dependent on some material factors like the centrality of the transportation facility and the density of the teams.

**BOUNDARY CONSTRAINTS**

Mistakes in deliveries are made quite regularly. It was often mentioned that this puts a large pressure on employees and volunteers, as these procedures take up a lot of their time, inhibiting them from engaging in other (political) activities (Voedselteams-2, 2016).

**SOCIO-CULTURAL STRUCTURE**

Because of the diversity of the transportation systems, socio-cultural structure differs in the regions. In most interviews with coordinators emphasis was placed on the superiority of systems in which farmers work together. It was, however, also acknowledged that organizing such a collaboration is not easy: "It has been a difficult process, also among organic farmers, because it is about a small piece of their market. So someone delivers a service to someone else. (...) when it becomes structural or more serious the costs are calculated and then it becomes sensitive (Voedselteams-2, 2016)."

In terms of attitudes towards mistakes, two different types of opinions could be distinguished. On the one hand, there was a certain acceptance:

"I think it does have charm as well. Sometimes it happens that something stays in the depot and then others buy it. And it makes you eat something you would normally never order, so you discover things by accident (Voedselteams-5, 2016)."

On the other hand, some do not accept the mistakes and therefore quit their Voedselteams-membership. In the management of the organization these two different standpoints could also be distinguished. On the one hand, a coordinator mentioned:

"They remain consumers. So like, “I pay for this and I want it to be good, and if I get a rotten pumpkin I am not happy”. And I think that the pioneers of back in the days thought it was ok, if the farmer could explain and if he gave something in return the next time. That has stopped, that is a serious change I think (Voedselteams-1, 2016)."

On the contrary, another coordinator mentioned:

"Distribution, logistics and commercialization need to be as good as conventional retail, because you cannot make mistakes, because people will leave and they are right. And conventional retail is so well organized, so we don’t manage to have that professionalism, but we should (Voedselteams-3, 2016)."

**CRITICAL POINTS OF INTERSECTION**

As was explained before, an evolution can be noticed in the way in which transport has been organized. While in the beginning transportation was organized by producers and consumers, the expansion of the organization has led to professionalization of the transportation system. This has thus led to a stronger specialization within the division of labor of Voedselteams. Next to this, it has led to an increasing amount of rules and regulations that apply to the transportation system. Nevertheless, as the transportation is organized differently per region, rules also differ.

**Processing Agency**

Increasingly, processed products are offered through food teams. Some farmers have chosen to (partly) process their own products, like dairy and meat. Fruits and vegetables are mostly processed in social care facilities (e.g. soups, quiches and sauces). Consequently, the processing function is highly diversified.
In general, whether a processed product is offered through Voedselteams or not is mostly decided upon the same basis as the process that was described in the selling practice framework. The rule of thumb is thus that a product should be local and organic if possible. However, increasingly processed products are offered that contain one or more non-local ingredients, are that have even been processed outside of Belgium.

**Boundary constraints**

However, we have seen that these criteria are not necessarily strictly applied, as other needs are also taken into account. There are thus cases in which products are offered where the materials of a product do not originate from the region (e.g., seitan and tofu) or are even organic (e.g., meat in Flemish-Brabant). In this case the processor needs to be able to point where the inputs came from and how these inputs were produced (Voedselteams-1, 2016; Voedselteams-2, 2016; Voedselteams-3, 2016; Voedselteams-4, 2016; Voedselteams-5, 2016).

**Material structure**

Especially the material structure of processing is highly dependent on actors and products.

**Socio-cultural structure**

An interesting and recurrent issue is connected to the products that are being offered through food teams. On the one hand, there is a group that has a strong preference for local and unprocessed products:

“Our members also feel that we are pushing our limits. There are more and more producers that offer processed products, like jams, apple liquor and now there are quiches. And we should guard that, because it is all coming towards them, and I feel resistance. There are also teams that definitely do not want products from Oxfam shops. Those are not the values that Voedselteams represents (Voedselteams-5, 2016)”.

On the other hand, there are members that do accept products from outside of Europe being offered if there is no alternative:

“I believe, and many members together with me, that if there is no local variant, we should open up to imports, especially to stimulate people (...) because I believe that sustainable behavior will only happen if it is made easy (Voedselteams-2, 2016)”

**Critical points of intersection**

In this practice we see a similar fluctuation in the division of tasks as in the transportation process. In the starting years, most processing was done by consumers (except for meat and dairy). This contrary to the regime, in which most value added is obtained from processed products. In recent years, however, as food teams became more popular and attracted a wider range of people, convenience was increasingly valued. This has led to an increased amount of processed products (Voedselteams-2, 2016; Voedselteams-5, 2016).

**Facilitating functions**

**Standardization**

The organic label is an important criterion. Yet, it is seen as a reference, but not as a necessity. To be able to make a more founded choice a Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) has been put in place since 2015 for all regions. The PGS is a system in which farmers, and the way they comply with sustainability standards are assessed by Voedselteams members and farmers. It is a system that is based on deliberation rather than control. The PGS has emerged from the idea that farmers should be selected according to Voedselteams standards, but that these standards were not yet set. PGS is supposed to fill this gap by showing the criteria on the basis of which one is allowed to enter as a Voedselteams producer.
local level analysis of FNS pathways in Belgium

Agency
Each farm visit is done with at least two Voedselteams employees, two consumers and a farmer. During the visits, the participants discuss a list of questions. These questions foster a discussion during which the farmer explains how he manages his farm. Through a process of deliberation, areas are sought in which the farmer can make improvements towards sustainability. After the procedure a portrait of the farm is made that can be placed on the website. Next to this, a database of all farm visits is made on the basis of which minimum standards for Voedselteams farmers will be set.

Socio-cultural structure
The PGS shows the choice of Voedselteams not to rate its farmers according to strict specifications. Instead, it is a system that is based on trust and deliberation. Farmers can explain why they work the way they do and are constantly encouraged to move towards a more sustainable system. Moreover, contrary to organic specifications, criteria for social and economic sustainability are also addressed. The PGS is also hoped to increase interaction between consumers and producers and transparency on the way in which the organization functions (Voedselteams-1, 2016; Voedselteams-2, 2016; Voedselteams-3, 2016; Voedselteams-5, 2016).

Boundary constraints
Because of the personalized approach based on trust, and a small capacity of finances and manpower it is impossible to check foreign producers. Therefore, foreign products are allowed provided that they are organically certified and fair trade (Voedselteams-1, 2016; Voedselteams-2, 2016; Voedselteams-5, 2016).

Critical points of intersection
Contrary to the regime, Voedselteams standardization is based on trust, transparency and direct contact between producers and consumers. Also, products in Voedselteams are not standardized according to shape, size or color. There is a heightened acceptance from Voedselteams’ consumers towards this.

Financing & Risk-bearing
Agency
The practices of financing and risk bearing are strongly intertwined. Therefore, they have been put together.

By allowing farmers to set their own prices, Voedselteams offers its farmers a stable price, and therefore decreases market risks. This is a significant benefit as price fluctuation is one of the most important risks for farmers (Voedselteams-3, 2016). Market risks are also decreased because of a small number of links between producers and consumers, which makes that information flows more easily, and the market is less influenced by global or even national factors.

Farmers have a production peak in summer, while orders decrease significantly during this time. To counter the risks that this poses for farmers, the project of Solid Food was developed. In this project, contracts were made between teams and farmers, in which consumers engaged to order a minimum amount of produce throughout the year. In practice, this was a difficult concept. As a coordinator mentioned:

“it is not so easy to put together farmers and consumers to make contracts in which they say how much they will buy per year. (…) I am already happy if farmers and consumers come together once per year let alone that they organize themselves in a project. It is also a difficult formula to bring together farmers and consumers around an excel sheet, (…) we just communicated a theoretical concept to teams that did not really see the necessity, and the farmers themselves neither (Voedselteams-2, 2016).”

A project that has been successful in dealing with this issue has been set up in West-Flanders:

“I do think that it [Voedselteams not engaging in financing and risk management] is a problem. Especially towards our vegetable farmers. […) They said they did not want to wait for the web shop to
improve, so I introduced the concept that our members inscribe in December for a complete year for a membership that will stay the whole year. And it is only possible for the whole year, so that the gap in the summer is filled up. [...] and it works because the farmers are happy with it (Voedselteams-3, 2016)."

Finally, it was noticed that some teams order very small and non-consistent amounts of produce. Therefore, the organization is now putting in place a minimum order per week per team in most of the regions:

“We have to move somewhere and help the producers. They (the farmers) asked to please start with a minimum order, because they have to spend as much time on an order of 3 euros as an order of 30 euros (Voedselteams-4, 2016).”

Socio-cultural structure
Underlying the fact that Voedselteams engages in the risk bearing of the market prices of farmers is the fact that one of the goals of the organization and its members is to support local farmers and local economies. Voedselteams members are willing to pay higher prices than they would in the conventional sector.

Nevertheless, the importance that members attribute to the financing and risk bearing of farmers differs. Some members viewed the fact that Voedselteams does not engage to a large extent in financing and risk-bearing as a serious problem, while others did not consider it a necessity to engage in this.

Boundary constraints
There is not enough capacity of the employees to engage in this practice. Instead, some of the other practices have gained priority at the moment, like the development of the web shop and the professionalization of the commercial aspects and logistics (Voedselteams-1, 2016; Voedselteams-2, 2016; Voedselteams-3, 2016; Voedselteams-4, 2016).

Marketing intelligence
Agency
External communication and promotion occurs through the website and web shop. Sporadically events are being organized or media are approached to promote Voedselteams. In practice, however, most promotion happens through mouth to mouth communication.

Information about external developments and wishes of consumers is not gathered. Neither is information gathered on the wishes of current consumers, although these are able to ventilate their opinions during team meetings and general assemblies.

Also, information about prices, the way in which prices are built up are not circulated. Besides, information on Voedselteams produce and its prices is only accessible for Voedselteams members.

Material structure
The main tools for the marketing intelligence practices of Voedselteams are its website and web shop. The web shop is only accessible for Voedselteams members. Members that might want to join cannot access the web shop. Therefore, they do not have any information on prices and types of products before entering in a food team.

Socio-cultural structure
The fact that Voedselteams does not strongly engage in the marketing intelligence practice may be due to the fact that it focuses more strongly on producer than on consumer well-being. Moreover, instead of focusing on market developments and the developing wishes of consumers, the organization is focused on the raising of awareness on the issues it defends in society.

Boundary constraints
Although it is an explicit goal of Voedselteams to include a large diversity of people, until now, Voedselteams has not managed to include categories of people like immigrants and people from a lower
socio-economic class. This has to do with the fact that information about these categories is not sought, and thus the organization does not know about the wishes and demands of these people (Voedselteams-3, 2016).

Moreover, similar to the other practices described above, Voedselteams lacks the manpower and skills to strongly engage in this practice, as the focus right now is on the professionalization of the logistics and commercialization of the organization.

CRITICAL POINTS OF INTERSECTION
Communication strategies in Voedselteams are different from those in the regime. First, they are less organized due to low budgets and manpower. Previously, this was not a problem as Voedselteams was one of the only initiatives available for consumers wanting to gain access to local and seasonal produce and communication was rather direct due to the small size of the organization. The Flemish foodscape has, however, recently strongly started changing, with many similar initiatives coming up. This increasing interest for short food chains has not gone unnoticed by large market players. Therefore, these have also started marketing local, fresh and seasonal produce. Obviously, they have larger budgets to engage in the marketing of their produce, and they are more focused on the wishes and demands for convenience of consumers:

“In terms of bringing producers closer to consumers, I do not think we cannot match up to the current possibilities. For example supermarkets like Colruyt and Carrefour have large budgets for story-telling to bring producers closer to consumers in their minds. We try that too (…) but they are at a much higher level than we could ever make it to (Voedselteams-2, 2016).”

2.2.3.3 Voedselteams as a social movement

AGENCY
Voedselteams develops a strategic plan every five years to state its goals and visions for the coming years. This document is needed in order to receive subsidies (annex 3).

Political engagement has remained relatively small until now, although there is a wish to enlarge this engagement. One of the political activities is the organization of the Boerenforum (Farmers’ forum), that Voedselteams organizes since 2014 together with Wervel, an organization that focuses on the right to healthy and fair agriculture (Wervel, 2016). The goal of this forum is to provide farmers who are not members of one of the mainstream farmers’ unions with a voice (Voedselteams-1, 2016; Voedselteams-2, 2016; Voedselteams-3, 2016). Moreover, Voedselteams inspired the strategic plan on short food chains of the Flemish Government. Nevertheless, this plan has in practice had little impact due to a lack of funds and a limited involvement from the government (Voedselteams-1, 2016).

From the members’ side there has been a demand to increase participation through a general assembly, that has been organized for the first time in March 2016. Through these developments the organization hopes to increase the diversity of the organization, to have members think along about new and interesting developments, and to create more support for these developments (Voedselteams-3, 2016).

Next to this, since 2015, the organization has started supporting its teams in organizing activities for its members around food, by offering them a myriad of different activities that are possibly political. This can range from discussion evenings on books, movie nights, education, but also cooking activities or farm visits (Voedselteams-2, 2016).

BOUNDARY CONSTRAINTS
Member engagement in the advocacy practice was found to be rather small. The coordinators of the association have different visions on why this is the case:

“We are trying to get them to work along, but it is not always easy to engage people. I would say that a large part of our people are just a member because they want to buy food from local farmers, (…) And that they think it is ok what we are doing, but that engagement is still very minimal (Voedselteams-1, 2016).”
On the other hand, the potential for a stronger engagement within the organization was acknowledged:

“Yes that (the engagement) is very limited indeed. But that is also because we do not stimulate that (...) But I think it is latently there, it just needs to be woken up. Someone should be involved permanently to cultivate an active engagement” (Voedselteams-3, 2016).

This thus means that most advocacy practices, in as far as there are any, are performed by Voedselteams’ employees, adding to their already heavy workload.

**Socio-cultural structure**

The socio-cultural structure of the advocacy framework of Voedselteams is similar to those of the previous frameworks, namely:

1. Direct connection & contact between producers and consumers
2. Short distance between producers and consumers & transparency in the food chain
3. Supporting local farmers and economies
4. Control of farmer over prices, production methods, outlets and products
5. Increasing transparency in the food chain
6. Create social cohesion around food production and consumption

The main goal within this practice is to raise awareness around these issues and to encourage people to change their behavior. The importance dedicated to each of these elements may differ. For example, for the organization, creating social cohesion around food is thought to be one of the most important pillars of the socio-cultural structure. Nevertheless, for consumers often the main driver to be part of a food team is to obtain healthy and local food while most of them are less interested in the social movement aspects of the organization.

**Critical points of intersection**

Voedselteams tries to actively change the food system by offering an alternative to the conventional regime. Interactions with the regime on a political level are relatively few and collaborations that were there mainly described as difficult. This has led to frustration, and therefore engagement has even decreased further (Voedselteams-1, 2016; Voedselteams-2, 2016; Voedselteams-3, 2016).

At the same time as trying to change the regime, Voedselteams is also dependent on the regime through the subsidies it receives, which makes the organization dependent on governmental developments (Expert-1, 2016).

### 2.2.4 Discussion and conclusion

#### 2.2.4.1 Practices

The information above shows that no homogeneous Voedselteams practice exists. Some of the functions are performed more or less homogeneously (like buying and selling), while other practices are strongly differentiated per team, individual, farmer or region (like financing and processing). This is also the case for the different socio-cultural structures of the practices. Even though it was found that an overarching socio-cultural structure of Voedselteams does exist, different social dynamics characterize each of the regions, and teams. The socio-cultural structure of practices might have an influence on the way in which certain practices are performed. For example, in East-Flanders, there are strong dynamics around short and alternative food chains. This, then, influences the agency of the individuals operating in the food team, leading to a stronger dynamic in the teams than in some of the other regions.

#### 2.2.4.2 Voedselteams model

At the moment, the model that Voedselteams offers is relatively strict. It is hoped that through this model, social cohesion will be accomplished. Nevertheless, this is not the case in many teams. There thus seems to be a discrepancy between the goals of the organization, and the reasons that many of the consumers join a team. In fact, this model might inhibit people from joining a food team, as the threshold of joining is high due to the image towards the outside world and (perceived) higher prices: “The word
‘Local’ level analysis of FNS pathways in Belgium

‘team’ suggests a social engagement which does not appeal to everybody, since they don’t feel like it or lack time (Voedselteams-6, 2015)"

It was found that the willingness to engage from consumers is rather limited. Although opinions differed on whether this should be a part of the social movement element of Voedselteams or not, all interviewees agreed that at the moment the voluntary labor is posing major problems to the existence of Voedselteams:

“At the moment I have a problem with the volunteers, which is that they are all quitting one by one. They are sick of their tasks, it is always the same thing. Always having to tell the same story. It is dependent on the task, but the financial responsible is often so sick of the fact that it does not run smoothly that he says “let someone else do it”. And if someone is that sick of it, it is also really hard to find someone else that wants to engage in it. So that means you have to find someone who is really motivated (Voedselteams-2, 2016).”

The process of facilitating volunteers’ tasks through changing and upgrading the web shop has been slow, which has further aggravated the irritation of the volunteers. In this way, we see how the material structure of an organization can influence the motivation and agency of the individual members.

2.2.4.3 Rupture social movement and social enterprise components

The paragraph above is strongly connected to the focus that we have adopted earlier in this report, namely that Voedselteams has both a social movement and a social enterprise component. By taking an approach towards the nine marketing functions through a social practice framework it has become clear that in practice, these elements are not in balance with each other. Thus, on the one hand, Voedselteams is strongly aiming for the creation of social structures around the topic of food:

“We don’t want purely consuming individuals. We want to work with communities (Voedselteams-1, 2016)"

On the other hand, many of the consumers join Voedselteams in order to gain access to local, seasonal and healthy food, without wanting to become part of a social movement.

“It is not because you are a part of Voedselteams that you are part of a lobby or that you should be interested in a better world. Of course there are always people that find that interesting (…) But some are just part so that they don’t have to go and drive around themselves to get food from local producers, get healthy food and just pay the bill for that (Voedselteams-4, 2016).”

Within the organization different views exist on how this should be coped with. On the one hand, some coordinators aim for a stronger engagement of their members:

“There is a long way to go still (…) honestly, sometimes it is really hard work to every now and then give the members a shot and say like, people, do not behave like pure consumers for once, with all of your expectations and demands. Because come on, this is a different circuit. There is constantly work in that (Voedselteams-1, 2016).”

On the other hand, some coordinators do not see this as a problem and think Voedselteams should include a wide range of people and their different convictions.

Connected to this is the fact that because the social enterprise element is not organized efficiently all resources are directed to this component to make the model work. This leaves Voedselteams’ employees with no time to dedicate to the social movement activities. Thus:

“At this moment we already have so much problems to organize our regular model, to keep up with that and to make it professional. Because that is the priority of course, if it goes wrong there, it is over. (…) when that is ok we need to generate extra capacity to innovate. If by that time we have not become redundant, because of course things will happen without us, so there are now commercial initiatives
2.2.4.4 Critical points of intersection

Specialization and regulation
A move away from convenience towards a stronger agency of Voedselteams members was found. In the payment system for example, responsibility has been transferred to volunteers and consumers. A fluctuation was noticed, however. In the starting days, most of the tasks were rearranged in such a way that they were taken up by producers and consumers, thereby eliminating all middlemen. However, as Voedselteams started to grow, this has changed. The transportation system, for example, has been taken over by professionals in many of the regions. This shows how in its starting days Voedselteams strongly moved away from the regime. However, through its own growth and development it has been forced to re-adopt some ‘regime’ elements e.g. by specializing.

Prices and the regime
In the regime, prices are kept low by economies of scale and by externalizing negative environmental impacts. In Voedselteams scale is generally smaller and externalities are included. Therefore, prices are higher than in the conventional regime. This keeps Voedselteams dependent on voluntary labor and subsidies and may exclude people from lower socio-economic classes.

Commercialist-movement tension
The consumer-movement tension describes the phenomenon of the way in which Voedselteams consumers form part of both the niche and the regime. On the one hand, they act as an agent of change, while on the other hand, they look for the convenience of the regime, or want to comply with existing cultural norms.

This process, however, is countered by what Bauler et al. (2011) call a ‘field of sustainability’, in which consumers start changing their perspective on what they see as convenient. Thus, those elements of being part of food team that previously might have been seen as constraining might later be perceived as convenient. Bauler et al. argue that the longer that a member is part of a team, the bigger the chance will be that the members enter this field of sustainability.

2.2.5 Foresight Workshop & Reassemblages
During the workshops, actions were developed that would enable Voedselteams to increase its transformative capacity. A table with these propositions can be found in Annex 5. These pathways were further elaborated with the input from interviews and the General Assembly. The examples below propose a reshuffling of the different elements of the practices in order to increase sustainability and the transformative capacity of Voedselteams.

2.2.5.1 Voedselteams Model
A prominent issue was the need to rethink the Voedselteams model. Since its foundation, the basis of the system has remained the same. In the following paragraphs, we discuss the propositions to increase the transformative capacity of Voedselteams through its business model.

Depot system
Voedselteams is characterized by its depot system. However, generally the goals of increasing social cohesion and providing farmers with a higher income are often not attained, because of the small and inconsistent quantities that are delivered to the depots. Besides, the depot system is possibly not the only and most suitable model for reaching these goals. We here report on three concrete proposals.

- Larger depots - The first proposal was to create larger, more central depots with an extended amount of functions. These depots would be accessible to many people as membership would not be necessary. Moreover, the longer opening hours would make these depots more suitable
for consumers with flexible agendas. One of the coordinators expressed the need of such a system: “I believe that sustainable behavior will only start when it is easy to reach it (...) so I think that simplifying the system (...) is the priority, to open it up and lower the threshold for an increasing amount of members. (...) We should work with the concept of big depots (...) that is the future. (...) Especially in urban areas, that is really something where people ask for more flexibility (Voedselteams-2, 2016).” Through the organization of activities like movie nights, seminars and cooking classes, etc. social cohesion might still be created.

- **Cooperative depots** – During past years, the dream has existed to establish a cooperative of which farmers and consumers would form a part. There have been several trials, but nothing has come out of the trials yet. Nevertheless, a cooperative might have several benefits: “I really believe that the key for more impact is there. (...) that farmers can choose in what projects and initiatives they engage and they will have more collective bargaining power towards initiatives like Colruyt Cru, and that it really stays bottom-up. And that we as Voedselteams really strengthen and broaden at the consumer side by simplifying the model, so that there is not much engagement needed in the end anymore (Voedselteams-2, 2016).” A cooperative might also tap into the entrepreneurial potential that is latently present in Voedselteams and increase transparency. It is not clear yet whether this cooperative should be regionally or nationally based. Nevertheless, the added value of the cooperative would have to become clear for the farmers. As one farmer mentioned: “But what is the added value for the farmer? Farmers don’t want to continue being in meetings all the time they just want to have a farm (Farmer-1, 2016).”

- **Further proofing of the depots** - In the depots, at the moment, food safety standards are often below the level. Some interviewees proposed to provide each team with a timer for their cooling facilities, so that refrigerators are at the right temperature at the moment produce is delivered.

In SFSCs, the transportation system is often a weak element. Larger depots might be a solution as they would allow routes to be planned more efficiently.

**Volunteers**

Although no consensus exists on whether Voedselteams should rely on voluntary labor, it is clear that currently voluntary engagement is a major problem. Participants of the workshop and interviewees argued for a different volunteering system. In this, it was argued that in a first place the tasks of depot holder and financial volunteer should be compensated:

“I do not believe in systems that are dependent on voluntary work and subsidies, because I am afraid that those things will stop in the long term. While if it is economically viable […] people will quit less easily (Expert-1, 2016).

In terms of the voluntary engagement, the following statement was made:

“It is a general misconception that you should give volunteers less work to do. Instead, they should get to do more, but you should put them on projects, so that the volunteers can create something big together, something they are proud of (participant workshop 2).”

Such a system would thus on the one hand decrease the reliance on volunteers for the survival of a food team, and on the other hand allow volunteers with a larger capacity to innovate and be creative.

Moreover, it was argued that motivation could be increased by offering gadgets to volunteers, like Voedselteams T-shirts, buttons, bags, etc. At the same time, this might increase the visibility of the organization. It was also argued that volunteers could be compensated through alternative economy principles. For example, volunteers could be offered free goods or services in exchange for their engagement.
Financial sustainability
The inefficiencies connected to the model of Voedselteams make that the model is not financially sustainable. Therefore, Voedselteams has remained dependent on governmental subsidies. This can, however, pose significant risks. In all the scenarios of the workshops, subsidies would stop at a certain moment. This, would mean the end of Voedselteams.

Moreover, the economic significance of Voedselteams for its farmers was found to be rather low. It is thus important that the organization becomes more economically significant. The adapted depot system that was proposed in the first paragraph of this chapter could contribute to this.

In some of the regions, a system has been set up in which each team is supposed to order a minimum amount of money per team per week. This system has proven itself to be efficient in increasing the orders in a region.

Also, in the region of Western Flanders a membership system has been put in place, in which a continuous order is placed for a full year. This system has three advantages. First, it assures farmers of an income throughout the year and makes it possible for farmers to calculate in advance the approximate amount of boxes that will be ordered. Second, it keeps orders during summer stable. Third, as the payments are made ahead it would eliminate delayed payments and decreases financial risks for farmers. Nevertheless, it is to be kept in mind that this system might also scare some of the less committed consumers.

Include a wider range of groups from society
It was also recommended to attract a broader range of people as consumers to Voedselteams. This would not only provide its farmers with a larger income but also would be in line with the goal of inclusiveness. In most teams lower socio-economic classes and immigrants are not included. The reasons for this are unknown. Some recommendations can be made, however, to increase the inclusiveness of the organization:

- It would be wise to organize focus groups or a study to find out what these specific groups are looking for, and which barriers are holding them back to join Voedselteams. In order to do this, it would be possible to join forces with other organizations that are working on similar topics (e.g., RISO).
- The communication is not accessible for many people. For example, the offer and prices are not clear before entering a food team, at the same time there is a strong idea that Voedselteams remains significantly more expensive than supermarkets. For those operating on small budgets, this makes the threshold to join a team extremely high. Moreover, the information needs to be available there where it reaches the target groups.
- Especially for immigrant groups, it was found that the produce that is being offered might be a large threshold, as the diet might differ from the produce that is offered. Similarly, Voedselteams is only an option for those consumers who know how to cook well with primary products. Thus, in order to attract these groups, eating patterns should be addressed by paying attention to food preparation skills or the offer should be expanded.

Change types of markets
There is ample opportunity for Voedselteams to expand the types of markets it delivers to. For example, until now the organization has worked together relatively little with existing networks like sports organization, schools and libraries. These actors could serve both as a potential team as well as participate by organizing events and making Voedselteams more known. Moreover, Voedselteams is a business-to-consumer organization. This means that it does not deliver to public institutions or restaurants. Selling business-to-business might significantly increase sales.

In order to include as many people as possible, Voedselteams should look at the different market segments and adapt the system in such a way that it is not a one size fits all. For example, for
professional markets it is recommended to provide more convenience as restaurant holders may not be willing to participate more strongly in the marketing functions or deal with mistakes in deliveries.

2.2.5.2 External communication
The fact that the markets of Voedselteams are momentarily rather narrow and not expanding has to do with the external communication strategy. Currently, much of the communication is mouth to mouth. During the workshop concrete recommendations were given to improve this. It is important that the communication strategy becomes more modern, attractive, accessible and visible. Some concrete actions of how this can be done were proposed.

Voedselteams should reinvent its website, as at the moment it is not accessible nor attractive for those that are not a part of the organization. Moreover, at the moment, the web shop is only accessible for members. This decreases transparency on the offer and prices of Voedselteams. Moreover, even for members, it is not clear how prices are built. For the sake of trust and transparency it was recommended that this would become clearer in the web shop. Moreover, it was proposed to make the web shop more attractive by inserting pictures of produce.

Also, it is important that the advantages of the PGS are more clearly communicated both to members and the outside world. For example short movies about the farm visits could be made.

Voedselteams can be made more visible in society by increasing its presence on social media and festivals and events with promotion materials. Another innovative idea was to buy a Voedselteams truck that would drive to different festivals and events. By selling dishes made with local produce, the visibility of Voedselteams would be increased in a fun, tasty and accessible way.

2.2.5.3 Social movement activities
Due to inefficiencies in the social enterprise activities, social movement activities are often not performed. It is therefore important that the organization first makes sure the business model runs smoothly. To improve the social movement activities the following propositions were made:

First, the Farmers’ forum was mentioned as a strength of the organization. This forum could in a first place increase the bargaining power of small scale farmers towards the conventional regime. Moreover, the Farmers’ forum could function as a network to increase trust and social cohesion between farmers, and to exchange information and knowledge between them.

Second, propositions were made to increase collaborations between Voedselteams and Flemish organizations involved in similar topics, namely: Broederlijk Delen, Vredeseilanden, VELT, Wervel and Natuurpunt. These collaborations could revolve around the sharing of knowledge, but they could also serve to together work on an external communication strategy. This could strengthen the position of these organizations in political spaces and the public debate. Concretely, it was proposed to point out a spokes(wo)man for short food chains.

2.2.5.4 Education
It was recommended over all scenarios to focus more strongly on the issue of education. Concrete propositions that were made were to educate people on the processing of primary products, healthy eating patterns and sustainability. This type of education could be included in school programs, but could also be aimed at adults.

Moreover, the need for Voedselteams to take up an active role in the safeguarding of artisanal knowledge was mentioned. This could be done in farming and cooking schools, but also by organizing several workshops or information events.

Last, the need for a stronger sharing of knowledge between teams was brought to the fore. At the moment some teams are struggling with certain issues of how to keep the team going efficiently. This is especially an issue for new volunteers. By fostering exchanges between teams, these struggles could be solved.
2.3 Summary and Reflection on Transformative Capacity

In this chapter we assess the transformative capacity of **Voedselteams**. External pressures on the agro-food regime may create windows of opportunity for niches to emerge. Internal factors determine whether an organization has the capacity to respond and smartly connect to these windows of opportunity (Verbong & Geels, 2010). Therefore both in- and external aspects are taken into account.

This chapter is divided in three parts. First, we discuss the transformations that **Voedselteams** has contributed and continues to contribute to. Moreover, we discuss where the activities of **Voedselteams** have hampered transformation. We do this by discussing the impact it has had on the food chain, farmers, consumer demand, society and sustainability. Second, we discuss the internal factors that influence the potential transformative capacity. Third, we discuss developments external to the organization that might create windows of opportunity or, that might inhibit transformative capacity.

### 2.3.1 Contribution to change

#### 2.3.1.1 Food chain

Being one of the first short food chain initiatives in Belgium, **Voedselteams** has grown to be an important element in the food-scape. The organization was one of the forerunners showing the importance of local food and SFSCs. Recently, new initiatives have arisen that offer similar services. Also, conventional players are starting to offer local and organic food.

It could be argued that this development is partly due to **Voedselteams**:

“*They [Voedselteams] are at the basis of that hype (…) they partly participated in establishing that trend of today* (Expert-1, 2016).”

Moreover, **Voedselteams** has increased transparency in the food system and increases social cohesion around food by reducing the number of links in its food chain and reconnecting consumers and producers. Through the PGS **Voedselteams** can keep contributing to an increase in transparency in the future. In the long run, this might inspire the conventional system.

Although most **Voedselteam**-producers are small-scale, some teams receive produce from large scale farmers. This might increase the impact and credibility of the organization. Nevertheless, large scale farmers that have a contract with auctions have an obligation to deliver all of their produce through the auction, with an exception of 5% home sales. Until now, auctions have allowed their farmers to also deliver to food teams:

“*Voedselteams is not a risk for the auction, I don’t know anyone who was turned down, because the volumes are so little that they are unimportant* (Expert-1, 2016).”

This, then, might be an indication of low transformative capacity on conventional food chains.

#### 2.3.1.2 Farmers

Some of the farmers gain the largest part of their income through **Voedselteams**. Yet, there are large differences in the importance of **Voedselteams** for its farmers. Generally, the share of income of farmers gained through **Voedselteams** is 5%. Moreover, only 200 farmers out of 25,000 in the whole of Flanders deliver to **Voedselteams**:

“*So the net result is very small. If we then say that we are changing agriculture through local food chains I think it is pretentious* (Voedselteams-2, 2016).”

Yet, **Voedselteams** does have a strong transformative capacity by bringing together farmers around shared issues and contributing to a learning process of farmers. In this perspective, the Farmers’ Forum that is organized by **Voedselteams** and Wervel is an important opportunity to increase the learning opportunities among farmers. Moreover, this engagement may also increase the power of small-scale
farmers towards the conventional chain as farmers that do not get a voice in the large syndicates in Belgium can now express their needs and ideas.

2.3.1.3 Demand
Due to the decreasing incomes in agriculture in the past years, an increasing number of farmers is looking for other marketing outlets, of which **Voedselteams** is one. Yet, demand is not keeping up with the increasing offer. Instead, demand through **Voedselteams** is stagnating in some regions and may fluctuate strongly between seasons. This makes it hard for farmers to rely on their output through food teams.

2.3.1.4 Society
**Voedselteams** has a small impact on society in general. Approximately 2000 families order through each week. This is negligible compared to consumption through the conventional system. Yet, **Voedselteams** may have contributed to an increased interest in society in the issues it defends

Also, the organization is registered as a social movement and subsequently receives subsidies. However, in practice, due to inefficiencies in the business model, only a small part of these budgets is allocated to the social movement activities. As one coordinator mentioned:

“We do that [creating change] through our business model and until now only through our business model. So in that sense we are a movement because we offer the possibility for people to buy things, but I think that is a really narrow understanding of being a movement (Voedselteams-2, 2016).”

Moreover, **Voedselteams** has until now failed to include ethnic minorities and lower socio-economic classes. On this, team responsibles mentioned:

“In terms of realizing inclusiveness. We can’t. How can you do something like that. Cost is a real threshold. And also makes initiatives like Voedselteams elitist (Voedselteams-7)”

and

“Voedselteams is way too expensive for people with a limited income. Voedselteams only works for a small group in society (Voedselteams-8)”.

2.3.1.5 Sustainability
Through farm visits and the PGS a dialogue is fostered between producers and consumers in which producers are encouraged to increase their efforts towards more sustainable production. Also, people that join a food team may enter, a field of sustainability in which ever increasing efforts of consumers and producers are made towards more sustainable practices.

In other areas, however, the transformative capacity in terms of sustainability may be questioned. An example of this is the transport system of short food chains in general, as they are generally planned less efficiently than in conventional food chains.

2.3.2 Internal elements

2.3.2.1 Depot-system
The basis of the business model has remained the same since the foundation of **Voedselteams**. Yet, the goals of social cohesion and an increased income for farmers are not accomplished. The depot system may actually hamper the ability of **Voedselteams** to be a viable alternative for farmers. This is due to two reasons. First, the system might inherently be unable to provide farmers with a viable alternative:

“We think too little about the fact that if the depot is not big enough it will not help the farmer, because of the time every depot takes for preparing and transporting the produce. When farmers start calculating, they often don’t earn much, unless the depot is really big (Expert-1, 2016).”

Second, this system might inhibit possible consumers from joining **Voedselteams**:
“The word 'team' suggests a social engagement which does not appeal to everybody, since they don't feel like it or lack time (Voedselteams-9).”

2.3.2.2 Transportation
As a result of the depot-system, it is difficult to efficiently plan the logistical system of Voedselteams. As one of the interviewees put it:

“The story of logistics of SFSCs is the worst that exists today (...) logistically it is very difficult, unless you reach a very large volume in a very small region (Expert-1, 2016).”

In this sense, the environmental and financial transformative capacity of the logistical system of Voedselteams is rather low. Nevertheless, the system does have other positive effects. For example, in the region of Western Flanders, the transport system is organized through a cooperation of farmers. This provides one or two farmers in the region with an extra income. Moreover, the cooperation fosters interaction between farmers and between farmers and consumers, and increases the ownership of farmers over the food chain. Also, in the regions where the organization works together with the social economy, the logistical system of the organization may offer an opportunity to people that have less chances in their lives to work and learn.

2.3.2.3 Employees & volunteers
Voedselteams has five FTE employees of which most time is dedicated to practical issues connected to the business model. This decreases the space and capacity to develop knowledge, initiate innovative projects or engage in political activities.

Moreover, the business model of Voedselteams requires a lot of labor. The organization therefore relies heavily on the engagement of volunteers. Next to this, a stronger engagement in the marketing functions is asked from members than in the conventional regime. The payment system as it was described in the previous chapter is an example of this. This reliance on the one hand has the potential to increase the engagement and involvement of consumers in the food system. On the other hand, it might inhibit people from joining Voedselteams. Also, it is increasingly difficult to find volunteers. In some cases, not being able to find someone means the end of a team. This system thus may be a barrier for the further up- and outscaling of Voedselteams.

2.3.2.4 External communication
The attractiveness, accessibility and visibility of the external communication strategy of Voedselteams was often pointed out as one of its weakest points. E.g., the fact that the web shop is only accessible for members makes the organization creates a threshold for new members. Moreover, the visibility of Voedselteams in public spaces is low. This then may inhibit the growth of the organization.

2.3.3 External elements

2.3.3.1 Crises
Due to the ever increasing pressure that environmental, social and economic crises put on the agro-food regime, windows of opportunity for niches like Voedselteams to develop innovative solutions arise. For example, because of the on-going economic crisis in agriculture farmers are increasingly driven into poverty. As a consequence, many farmers are looking for new and innovative marketing outlets.

Also, these crises raise awareness in society that innovative solutions are needed. This is illustrated by an increased interested in short food supply chains. However, until now, demand for Voedselteams products has not grown in the same pace as the potential offer.

2.3.3.2 The rise of new initiatives
The rise of new SFSC initiatives creates opportunities and threats for Voedselteams as on the one hand, it makes the issues and values that Voedselteams stands for more visible. In this way, it may increase public awareness on these issues and augment the validity of these arguments:

“All these initiatives only contribute to the raising of awareness around fair agriculture and sustainable production. Then people really see: if even Colruyt is doing that, then something of it should be true (Voedselteams-2, 2016).”

On the other hand, these initiatives may pose a threat to the activities of Voedselteams, as they may offer similar services through a more attractive or convenient model:

“Of course things happen without us. So at this moment there are many other commercial initiatives (…) and the difference with Voedselteams is not so big anymore. So Voedselteams pretends to also be a social movement but in practice that is so weak that we cannot make that true (…) so I think the potential of Voedselteams is big, maybe even bigger than the others, but there is a big challenge ahead of us whether we can live up to that potential (Voedselteams-3, 2016).

2.3.3.3 Regime developments
Voedselteams has had an influence on developments in the agro-food regime. These developments can be seen as one of the successes of Voedselteams. Yet, the conventional regime can also pose threats to Voedselteams.

First, products in the regime are generally offered against lower prices than in Voedselteams. Moreover, the regime offers more convenience. This can inhibit many consumers that have relatively low budgets, or that are not willing to give up their convenience to join a food team.

Second Voedselteams is dependent on governmental subsidies that are renewed every five years. This makes Voedselteams strongly dependent on governmental developments.

Third, until now Voedselteams has been moving in the grey zone of food safety regulations. Due to a growing number of SFSCs, the interest of the Belgian Food Safety Agency in the food safety of these SFSCs has started to grow. Being registered as an operator in the food chain might have far reaching effects to the further existence of the organization. Similarly, until now Voedselteams has not been seen as threat by auctions. If auctions would start enforcing their 100% rule, this might have far reaching effects for Voedselteams.

Last, the fact that Voedselteams is organizing the farmers’ forum together with Wervel potentially increases the bargaining power of both organizations and small-holder farmers towards the larger market players.
3. SATELLITE CASE STUDY REPORT: CSA

3.1 Research questions
As a satellite case, we investigate Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). This choice was based on the following statement:

“Community supported agriculture seems a very promising social innovation for contributing to the transition to a more sustainable agro-food system by offering an economic niche that has proven to be attractive to a growing number of consumers, while allowing experimenting and learning from new production, consumption and distribution patterns in a way that is relevant for other actors and initiatives within the food chain (Dedeurwaerdere et al., 2015, p. 6)”

The following questions are at the centre of this case study:

- How does CSA organize the nine marketing functions and its production practice?
  - What shape do the nine marketing functions and the production practice take within the current CSA practice?
    - How are practices attuned to each other?
    - To what extent, and how, do the practices reflect novel responses to FNS concerns in specific settings?
- To what extent do these practices have a transformative capacity towards creating a sustainable and resilient food system?
  - Which elements in the CSA practice are transformative and which not?
  - To what extent are these novel practices promising and successful?
  - To what extent are involved stakeholders searching for up- and out scaling potentials?

3.2 Methods
We investigated the current CSA practice as consisting of the nine marketing functions that were described in chapter 2.2. Moreover, it was hypothesized that CSA farms also adopt different farming methods than in the conventional agro-food regime. Therefore, we investigated the production practice. In order to do this, first literature research was conducted. Additionally, semi-structured interviews with four selected CSA farms were held to investigate the marketing practices of these farms. The farms were selected in such a way that they would cover a wide range of possible characteristics of CSA farms. The selection criteria were: whether or not the farm was connected to the CSA network in Flanders, the distribution model of the farm, its location and the time of foundation. In annex 6 a table can be found with the characteristics of each of the selected farms. The questionnaire of the interviews can be found in Annex 7. The interviews varied from 25 minutes to circa one hour and were audio recorded and transcribed. A table with the coding of the interviews can be found in Annex 8.

3.3 Research findings

3.2.1 CSA around the world
Although a clear cut definition does not yet exist, the European CSA research group (2016) defines CSA as follows:

“CSA is a direct partnership between a group of consumers and producer(s) whereby the risks, responsibilities and rewards of farming activities are shared through long-term agreements. Generally operating on a small and local scale, CSA aims at providing quality food produced in an agro-ecological way (p. 8).”

The concept of CSA was developed in Japan in the 1960s by a group of women that was concerned about the rise of imported food, an increased use of pesticides and a decrease in the local farm population. In the beginning of the 1970s, European farmers and consumers of Switzerland, Denmark and Germany started to apply the model as well. The first American CSA farms originate from the mid
80’s (Brown & Miller, 2008; Henderson & Van En, 2007). Some of the main reasons why CSA developed worldwide were the increasing interest to live healthily and an increasing awareness of environmental problems (Schlicht, Volz, Weckenbroeck, & Le Gallic, 2012; Vlaamse Overheid, 2015).

Today, most CSAs share basic, underlying principles:

- Mutual assistance and solidarity – direct connections and shared risk between farmers and consumers
- Agro-ecological farming methods
- Biodiversity and no Genetically Modified Organisms
- High quality, safe food that is accessible to as many people as possible with prices that are fair to producer and consumer
- Popular education about the realities of farming
- Continual improvement
- Smallholder farms

CSA should not be seen as a fixed concept, but rather as an idea or a continuum of new consumer-farmer connections, and an alternative system of distribution based on community values and solidarity (European CSA Research Group, 2016).

### 3.2.2 CSA in Flanders

The first CSA in Flanders, Het Open Veld, was established in 2007 in Leuven. After two years, in 2009 the second CSA farm was founded. Gradually, the CSA model gained more attention from the public, the media, farmer unions and governmental authorities, as these first farms demonstrated that it was possible to have an economically viable farm on a small cultivation area (CSA-network, 2016; European CSA Research Group, 2016). In 2011, the CSA network was established to optimize collaborations between the different farms and to further develop the concept of Community Supported Agriculture. A strong growth in the following years could be observed. In 2012, there were 12 CSA farms in Flanders. Two years later there were 19. In 2016, 36 farms were connected to the CSA network. Moreover, also CSA farms were established that were not connected to the network, although no data exist on these numbers (CSA-network, 2016).

On average, each Flemish CSA has 176 members. It is estimated that in total, 7,500 members form part of a CSA. The average size of a CSA farm in Flanders is 2.08 ha, with a range between 1 and 5 ha. Of all CSA farms, 46% are renting the land, while 28% own it. The rest was based on cooperation with local authorities, or a cooperation with the land trust organization de Landgenoten (See paragraph 3.2.3) (European CSA Research Group, 2016).

CSAs can provide different products for their consumers. In Flanders, most CSAs produce vegetables and fruits. These products are mainly distributed through two dominant forms:

- Packaging system: the farmer harvests the products and they are distributed equally among the members via packages
- Self-harvest system: every member harvests his/her own share (CSA-network, 2016).

In Flanders, self-harvesting is clearly the dominant model as it is applied by 85% of the CSA farms (European CSA Research Group, 2016).

### 3.2.3 FNS Practices

#### 3.2.3.1 CSA in general

**Starting up a farm**

Around 75% of the CSA farms is initiated by the farmer. Other farms may be created by a cooperation between the farmer and the community (8.5%) or by the community members (11.4%) (European CSA...
Research Group, 2016). There may be many different reasons to start a CSA farm. For example, CSA allows a farmer to start farming with relatively low investment costs and risks and will provide a farmer with a steady income because of the pre-financing system. Also, farmers might choose for the CSA model because of its sustainability aspect, or the community and social aspects.

In order to start, the farmer has to find suitable land. This is often difficult as pressure on land in Flanders is high due to urbanization and large-scale agriculture. The land trust organization *de Landgenoten*, that was mentioned above, can assist in this as the trust buys farm land and rents it to organic farmers (CSA-network, 2016; De Landgenoten, 2016). Moreover, the CSA network supports farmers in the starting up of a farm by offering personal counseling, helping with the development of financial plans, etc. (CSA-network, 2016).

**Becoming a member**
Consumers can gain access to a CSA by looking up the specific location of a CSA in their neighborhood and becoming a member. The main reason for a consumer to become a member is to gain access to healthy and local food. Possible other reasons may be the quality of the produce, a growing environmental consciousness, reconnecting with nature, or providing farmers with a fair and consistent income. Moreover, by eliminating middle-men it is argued that consumers pay less, while farmers still get a decent price for their produce (European CSA Research Group, 2016).

### 3.2.3.2 Marketing functions

**Buying and selling**
Normally, consumers pay an annual membership fee and in return receive a weekly harvest share (Podmaniczky & Zsolnai, 2010). Farmers generally can choose between two ways to sell their produce: self-harvesting or packaging (explained in paragraph 3.2.2) (CSA-network, 2016).

The farmer decides which products are offered, but normally tries to offer as much variation as possible. However, there is a much larger variety during summer than in winter (CSA-1, 2016). The offer may be expanded through cooperation with other farmers. For example, a vegetable farmer can choose to cooperate with an arable farmer to add cabbages to the packages. Also, farmers may agree to cooperate to compose packages with different product groups, like meat, dairy, flowers, vegetables and fruits. Moreover, those farmers that apply the packaging system may add products obtained from the auction in winter in order to add variety to the offer (CSA-2, 2016; Troonbeeckx et al., 2012).

In terms of picking up the produce, the self-harvest system gives members the freedom to harvest when they choose to do so. The exchange in the package system happens on a fixed day and time and is therefore more constraining in terms of time (CSA-1, 2016; CSA-2, 2016; CSA-3, 2016; CSA-4, 2016; Troonbeeckx et al., 2012).

The price of the offer consists of a sum of money that is paid at the start of the year. This sum can be calculated in different ways. For a self-harvest system two principles are important

1. The farmer can make a calculation based on his costs, including his salary, and divides this by the maximum number of members;
2. The farmer bases his price on the price of other CSA farmers.

For farmers that work with the package system, a third method can be used:

3. The farmer will calculate the amount of products that he/she will deliver in the packages, and compares to what this would cost in the ‘conventional’ organic market.

Generally, different prices are asked to adults and children. Moreover, some farmers work with variable prices. In this system, a price range is set, and members can choose the amount they will pay within that range. This system allows members with different financial capabilities to be part of the CSA (Troonbeeckx et al., 2012).
The quantity of produce that members receive is not dependent on the price but instead is the result of the total production distributed over all members. The quantity received per member can thus differ per season and per year. Information on what can be harvested in the self-harvest system is thus of paramount importance for a fair distribution (CSA-1, 2016; CSA-2, 2016; CSA-3, 2016; CSA-4, 2016; Troonbeeckx et al., 2012).

Storage and packaging
In CSA farmers and members only harvest the needed quantity of food at the desired moment. Generally, there is thus no need for storage or packing facilities. However, CSA farms using the packaging system need to have sufficient short-term storage combined with a cleaning and packaging area, where the packages can be prepared (CSA-2, 2016).

In self-harvesting CSA farms some products are occasionally harvested by the farmer. This may be because the product may be difficult to harvest without machinery (e.g., potatoes), or because of large surpluses in high season (e.g., zucchini in summer). In these cases, short-term storage is needed.

Generally unpackaged products are thus offered. This function is therefore generally taken up by the consumers themselves (CSA-1, 2016; CSA-3, 2016; CSA-4, 2016; Troonbeeckx et al., 2012).

Transportation
In the self-harvest system consumers take up the task of transportation as they come to pick up the produce themselves. Most members of self-harvest CSA farms live within a short radius and take the goods for immediate use. Members that are coming by bike or by car, often combine this with other transport needs like work-home transport or school-home transport (CSA-1, 2016; CSA-3, 2016; CSA-4, 2016).

In the packaging system transport can either be split up between the farmer and members or be done by an external transport service provider. Generally, there are three different pick-up points. First, the members can collect the packages on the farm. Second, farmers can leave the packages at pick-up points or depots spread through a certain area. Third, some farms deliver packages at home at an extra cost (CSA-2, 2016).

Processing
Members generally receive unprocessed produce. Nevertheless, processing happens in a few rare occasions. First, farmers may choose to process harvest surpluses in order to optimize preservation possibilities (e.g., making soup out of tomatoes). Second, processing may happen during a social activity with the CSA members (e.g., teaching members how to make jam). Third, processing may happen more professionally if it is in cooperation with another marketing model (e.g., farm shop).

However, generally, the products remain unprocessed, as CSA farmers generally are time-constrained. Moreover, installing proper processing facilities would mean large extra financial investments. Therefore, processing mostly is done by the consumers (CSA-1, 2016; CSA-2, 2016; CSA-3, 2016; CSA-4, 2016).

Standardization
Standardization is concerned with the establishment and maintenance of uniform measurements. Moreover, it informs the buyer about quality and quantity standards. Farms need to apply to general food safety standards in Belgium (VAC, 2015). Moreover, CSA farms mostly apply sustainable or agro-ecological production methods. Generally they are organically certified. In 2016, 68% of the CSAs in Flanders were organically certified while an additional 17% was in the process of becoming certified (European CSA Research Group, 2016). Besides, it was often argued that the close relationship between farmers and members also constitutes a form of control. This then, in some cases eliminated the need of organic certification (CSA-1, 2016; CSA-2, 2016; CSA-3, 2016; CSA-4, 2016).
Financing
In most farming models, an important time lag exists between the purchase of inputs and sales of the harvest. Contrary to this, the CSA model transfers the income of the farmer to the beginning of the season because members pay an annual membership fee in advance. This way of working reduces the need for loans, its corresponding costs and eliminates the farmer’s insecurity about his total annual income.

Risk Bearing
One of the most striking characteristics of the CSA model is the fact that risks are shared between consumers and producers. In fact, since consumers pay an annual membership fee at the beginning of the season, harvest and price risks are completely shifted to the members. Yet, members will also benefit when harvests are abundant. In theory, however, the shared risk is short-term as members may leave at the end of season. Nevertheless, in reality, this is rarely the case (CSA-1, 2016; CSA-2, 2016; CSA-3, 2016; CSA-4, 2016; Troonbeeckx et al., 2012).

Marketing intelligence
The CSA model is based on a farmer-consumer relationship in which communication is very important. Most communication occurs directly on the farm or pick-up point. Other forms of communication are news-letters, websites, signs in the field, meetings or open farm days.

The kind of information that is exchanged between farmers and members is diverse. The farmer can indicate which products are harvest ready, how the products should be harvested, how much produce can be taken home, whether there are any extra activities that are organized, etcetera. Also, promotion and advertising can be used to attract new members. However, in most cases active promotion is not needed, as the farms generally have long waiting lists.

Once a year all members are invited to a more structured meeting to exchange information about the previous season and to plan and agree on the new season with extra attention on the annual membership fee.

Consumers can ventilate their opinions either through direct contacts or at meetings. Moreover, typical for the self-harvesting system is the automatic feedback of the buyer due to the fact that members only take the products they like to eat. The selection and quantity of the harvested products can be used as an indicator by the farmer to adapt his cultivation plan for the next season (CSA-1, 2016; CSA-2, 2016; CSA-3, 2016; CSA-4, 2016; Troonbeeckx et al., 2012).

3.2.3.3 Production
In addition to the marketing functions, we describe the production practice of CSA according to the used methods, the different inputs, and labor.

Methods
Most CSA farms offer a wide range of vegetables, small fruits and herbs. In some occasions even edible flowers, dairy products, eggs and meat are produced. The diversity in production requests an extensive knowledge of different production methods (Vlaamse Overheid, 2015). Most methods used are organic or agro-ecological and they are generally labor intensive.

Inputs
Generally, CSA farms use organic matter as fertilizer. Often, this fertilizer is obtained by cooperating with animal farms. For example, farmers can choose to obtain manure from a local sheep or goat farm in exchange for growing clover for feed. Seeds are generally bought from outside of the farm but are mostly organically certified (CSA-2, 2016).
Labor
In self-harvest systems, a part of the labor is transferred to the members as they perform most of the harvesting. Some products are occasionally harvested by the farmer. In the packaging system, harvesting, cleaning and packaging is done by the farmer. This system is thus more demanding in terms of time and labor for the farmer. In busy periods, CSA farms often organize assisting days where members can work on the fields together with the farmer (CSA-1, 2016; CSA-2, 2016; CSA-3, 2016; CSA-4, 2016).

3.4 Summary and reflection on transformative capacity
In the paragraphs above we described the general functioning of CSAs in Flanders. There are many differences between the farms. CSA should thus rather be seen as a continuum than a static business model. Moreover, the model is also constantly evolving through a co-creation between farmers and consumers. CSA, is thus indeed a niche in which many innovations take place. Moreover, the model is a significant niche in which experimentation and innovation with sustainable production methods may happen. In this sense, the model has the capacity to contribute to a sustainable transformation.

The nine marketing functions and production practice are almost completely performed by the members of the CSA. In this way, middlemen and specialists are completely erased from the model. This may significantly decrease costs, which increases the accessibility of the initiative for lower socio-economic classes. In this sense, the inclusiveness of the initiative might be increased. Nevertheless, the fact that a lot of engagement is asked from the consumers that are a part of a CSA may create large thresholds for less concerned consumers to also join and become as engaged and active in their own food production.

The fact that many CSAs have long waiting lists however shows that there is a strong capacity for further out scaling of the model. Also, every year an increasing amount of farmers is trying to start a CSA. Because the model can be viable on a small piece of land and is financially rather accessible. In this sense, the model is an innovative solution for those that did not inherit their agricultural land. In this way, the model might be a solution for the decreasing amount of farmers in Belgium. CSA might thus provide a viable alternative for an increasing amount of people that want to start an agricultural career.

Nevertheless, access to land remains a large barrier for further out scaling of the model. It might in a first place inhibit farmers from starting up a CSA. Second, not having the security of access to land significantly decreases the resilience of a CSA farm.

The model of CSA has the capacity to bring people together around common issues, like food, health and sustainability. It may also reconnect people to nature and to the land and increase knowledge of food production, and agricultural systems. Moreover, it may increase social cohesion around these issues. Until now, however, the model has mainly been successful in urban areas. In rural areas it would remain to be seen how the model could be successful, as in that case distances would be larger, which would bring the issue of transportation back to the fore.

Lastly, the CSA network may contribute to the transformative capacity of CSA by bringing together producers and consumers, supporting new start-ups and assembling and spreading knowledge, and providing farmers with support where they need it. In this way the network may foster the further spread of the model and further innovation.
4. SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

In this report, the cases of Voedselteams and Community Supported Agriculture were taken as specific cases of Alternative Food Networks that have come up as niches in the Flemish food scape. Both initiatives have similar aims, as they target among others for a direct contact between producers and consumers, the creation of a community around the topic of food, an increasingly sustainable food system, agro-ecological farming methods, and a (re-)localization of the food system.

In the first part of the report it was discussed how Voedselteams is both a social enterprise as well as a social movement. In this sense, it on the one hand tries to change the regime both by offering an alternative to the dominant system as well as organizing political activities. CSA on the other hand, does not have an explicit political limb and therefore may only foster change by offering an alternative to the conventional system.

The marketing practices of both initiatives were described with the help of the framework of the nine marketing functions. Afterwards, the transformative capacity of these practices was discussed. This approach has shown us how in both cases middlemen have been largely eliminated from the marking practices. Instead, in both initiatives the marketing functions are performed by the consumers and the producers. In this way engagement of consumers in the food system is increased and ownership of farmers is increased. These practices, then, ask for a completely different set of skills in comparison with the conventional agro-food system. On the one hand this may foster change, e.g. by raising awareness and pushing towards increasingly sustainable lifestyles. On the other hand, those that are not willing or able to engage to such a large extent may be excluded in this way. Moreover, especially in Voedselteams prices generally tend to be higher than in the conventional system. This may create barriers for lower socio-economic classes to be able to become a part of these initiatives. In this sense, the danger exists in these initiatives that they remain only accessible for a small group in society.

Connected to this, it was found that Voedselteams is coping with a stagnating demand, while due to several crises offer continues to rise. Contrary to this, CSAs, especially those in urban areas tend to have long waiting lists. This shows that both organizations are coping with different challenges for the future in order to increase their transformative capacity and scale up and out.

In both cases it was shown not to be possible to provide consumers with the whole consumption basket. Consumers of these niches are therefore never solely part the niche, but also keep on operating in the regime. Nevertheless, these initiatives give consumers and producers partly the chance to operate outside of the regime and therefore stay away from some of its unsustainable elements.

The marketing functions approach also shows that in a more mature, or up scaled initiative like Voedselteams, some regime elements may be taken back up in the marketing functions by middlemen. The transportation system is an example of this. This then, may mean that a larger segment of society is reached. However, it also means that the small scale and the direct contact between producers and consumers is compromised. Transformative capacity is increased as more people are reached. However, it is decreased by the fact that social cohesion is decreased.

Using the marketing functions to describe the practices of both initiatives also helps to point out strong and weak or blind spots in both of the marketing models. As they organize their marketing system in a different way, both models can learn from the way in which the other assembles, skills, materials and social structures. In this way, transformative capacity of both initiatives may be increased. For example, a strong point of the CSA model is the way in which it organizes its financing and risk bearing and thereby creates a stable and secure income for the farmer. Financing and risk bearing are issues that largely remain unaddressed in Voedselteams. Being inspired by the way in which CSA fulfills these practices may increase its transformative capacity.

In sum, both CSA and Voedselteams provide inspiring alternatives to the regime. This may also foster change the regime itself. It could be argued that this change is already taking place as conventional players also offer organic and sustainable products. However, whether this change will continue and be incremental or radical remains to be seen.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank all the interviewees that agreed on donating their time to this project. We also thank all the attendants of the participatory workshops. Moreover, we like to thank the interviewees that agreed on an interview in the context of FOOD4SUSTAINABILITY. This research was funded by the Belgian Science Policy, under the project FOOD4SUSTAINABILITY (contract BR/121/A5), and co-funded by the European Commission, under the project GENCOMMONS (ERC grant agreement 284).

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Websites

Interviews
ANNEXES

Annex 1: Basis interview Voedselteams
Every interview consisted of several types of question. First, questions on the way in which practices are performed were asked. Second, more subjective questions were asked in order to grasp the socio-cultural dimension of each of the practices. These questions were generally formulated as follows:

- What is your opinion on the way [this function] is being organized?
- Is the way in which [this function] is organized best according to you?
  - Why did you choose to do it this way?
  - What are the advantages and disadvantages of such a system?
  - Which improvements would you propose?
  - What alternatives are possible according to you?

Third, the questionnaires also contained an element in which connections with the conventional regime were explored. The goal of these questions were two-fold. First, they were meant to identify the critical points of intersection between niche and regime practices. Second, they, too, helped identifying socio-cultural elements of the niche practices. Questions in this category were generally formulated as follows:

- According to you, is [this function] being performed differently than in the conventional system? If yes, in what way?
- Are there interactions with the dominant food system for [this function]?
  - If yes, what do these interactions look like?
  - Do they enable or inhibit Voedselteams to perform [this practice]?
- Do you think that the way in which Voedselteams performs this practice is a solution for unsustainable elements of the dominant food system?

Last, in preparation of the two participatory workshops, questions on the future of Voedselteams were posed:

- Do you think that the way in which Voedselteams performs [this practice] can contribute to a more sustainable/robust/resilient food system in Belgium? If yes, in what way?
- What changes should be made in the way in which Voedselteams performs this practice?
- Where should Voedselteams be in ten years?
### Annex 2: Codes interviews Voedselteams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function interviewee</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>13-01-2016</td>
<td>2h</td>
<td>Voedselteams-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>18-01-2016</td>
<td>2h</td>
<td>Voedselteams-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>08-02-2016</td>
<td>1,5h</td>
<td>Voedselteams-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinator and member</td>
<td>01-03-2016</td>
<td>2h</td>
<td>Voedselteams-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Coordinator</td>
<td>01-03-2016</td>
<td>1,5h</td>
<td>Voedselteams-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team responsible and depot holder</td>
<td>20-03-2015</td>
<td>1h</td>
<td>Voedselteams-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team responsible</td>
<td>14-03-2015</td>
<td>1h</td>
<td>Voedselteams-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team responsible</td>
<td>02-04-2015</td>
<td>1h</td>
<td>Voedselteams-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team responsible</td>
<td>14-04-2015</td>
<td>1h</td>
<td>Voedselteams-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert SFSCs</td>
<td>02-03-2016</td>
<td>1h</td>
<td>Expert-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>03-03-2016</td>
<td>3h</td>
<td>Farmer-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert food safety in SFSCs FASFC</td>
<td>27-04-2016</td>
<td>45 min</td>
<td>Expert-2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Annex 3: Strategic goals Voedselteams 2016-2020

**Strategic Goal 1: Food Teams will be an attractive platform and a dynamic movement for community building around agriculture and food**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>O.G. 1.1</th>
<th>Strengthening of the forming of communities within Voedselteams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O.G. 1.2</td>
<td>Develop new methods in function of community development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.G. 1.3</td>
<td>Stimulate interactions within teams;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.G. 1.4</td>
<td>Improve the communication to supporters of Food Teams;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.G. 1.5</td>
<td>Develop voice/participation in the development of organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Strategic Goal 2: A growing number of producers is connected to Voedselteams and contributes to sustainable agriculture and food in Flanders**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>O.G. 2.1</th>
<th>Apply Participatory guarantee system:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O.G. 2.2</td>
<td>Expand Boerenforum (farmers forum):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.G. 2.3</td>
<td>Take care of support for producers within Voedselteams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.G. 2.4</td>
<td>Expanding communication methods with producers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.G. 2.5</td>
<td>Widen and rejuvenate the group of producers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Strategic Goal 3: Voedselteams inspires the public debate around sustainable agriculture and food**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>O.G. 3.1</th>
<th>External communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O.G. 3.2</td>
<td>Set up a network of voedselteam reporters (bloggers. Tweeters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.G. 3.3</td>
<td>Grounded and Justified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Strategic Goal 4: Voedselteams is strongly organized and is attractive for employees and volunteers**

| O.G. 4.1 | Team dynamics, Volunteering and Good Governance |

**Strategic Goal 5: Voedselteams offers important and stable perspectives for a growing number of producers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>O.G. 5.1</th>
<th>Make it easier for producers and farmers to enter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O.G. 5.2</td>
<td>Realise economic growth and more societal impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.G. 5.3</td>
<td>Stimulate bottom-up innovation of the logistical model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.G. 5.4</td>
<td>Build a multifunctional and working webplatform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.G. 5.5</td>
<td>Prepare an adapted legal structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.G. 5.6</td>
<td>Look for new target groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Annex 4: Summary of FNS practices, Voedselteams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Material structure</th>
<th>Socio-cultural structure</th>
<th>Other elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Member's responsibility to start new team</td>
<td></td>
<td>● Lack of man power → reliance on volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Meeting with the regional coordinator for the start-up</td>
<td></td>
<td>● Commercialist-movement tension</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● New member joins through personal contact or through the website.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Take-in: explanation of team and final registration</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Farmers differentiated according to products, scale, importance of VT</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Decision of entering based on farm visit and screening</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Different motivations to join for farmers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Website</td>
<td>● Establishing direct contact between producers and consumers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Webshop</td>
<td>● Supporting local farmers and economies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Newsletter</td>
<td>● Increasing transparency in the food chain</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Magazine</td>
<td>● Creating social cohesion around food</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Office</td>
<td>● Gaining access to healthy, local and fair food</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Acceptance of higher prices than in conventional system</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Food does not have to be available everywhere all year round</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Buying and selling</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Weekly orders</td>
<td>● Discussions on boundaries of locality</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Weekly delivery on fixed time and location</td>
<td>● Local character vs. international sourcing if product is not available</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Differentiation in continuity and amount of produce bought per team</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Weekly payments after deliver payments</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Way of making payment differentiated according to the region</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● General: Team has bank account. Member calculates</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Internet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Webshop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Ordering list</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Bank account</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Local level analysis of FNS pathways in Belgium

#### Decision on supply based on offer. Criteria: local and organic (if possible) and one producer per product group per team

- Farmers are price setters. Price = real costs + costs logistics and commercialization + 6% solidarity payment

#### Difficulties attracting new members
- Strongly based on voluntary labor.
- Difficulties finding volunteers
- Consumer-movement tension
- Strong responsibility for consumers and producers but moving towards partial specialization
- Low prices in the regime are disadvantage

### Storing

- Members look for suitable depot
- Farmers bundle orders per team.
- Produce is transported to the transporter.
- Transporter prepares packages per team
- Depot volunteer prepares packages per consumer
- Transporters control management of depot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depot</th>
<th>Electricity</th>
<th>Freezer</th>
<th>Refrigerator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| social function of the depots differs strongly: social place vs. pick up point
| Strong voluntary engagement required
| Narrow opening hours
| Consumer takes up storing practice (vs. very standardized practice in regime )
| Possible changes in regulations in the future might become inhibiting factor

### Transportation

- Outsourcing to external firm in social economy
- Transportation through collaborations between farmers
- Farmers drive produce around themselves

| Diversified because of diversified practice
| Centrality of transportatio n facility
| Density of
| coordinators emphasise superiority of systems in which farmers work together
| Two attitudes towards mistakes: Mistakes as
| Regular mistakes in deliveries put pressure on employees and volunteers
| Evolution in organization transport: expansion led to professionalization and thus specialization in division of labor

### ‘Local’ level analysis of FNS pathways in Belgium

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Processing</th>
<th>teams</th>
<th>charming element vs. no acceptance towards mistakes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Increasing offer of processed products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Diversified practice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rule of thumb for choosing products: local and organic if possible</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Material structure dependent on actors and products.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Preference for primary local products vs. acceptance of foreign products if no alternative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Not everything available locally → offer of international and non-organic products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standardization</th>
<th>Question list</th>
<th>System based on trust, transparency, deliberation and case-specific characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Organic label is reference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introduction of Participatory Guarantee System</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Farm visits with two employees, two consumers and a farmer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• List of questions to foster discussion on sustainable farm management &amp; move towards sustainability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No standardization of shape, size or color</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support local farmers and local economies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Willingness to pay higher prices to decrease market risk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Differences in importance attributed to further engagement in financing and risk management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Impossible to check foreign producers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Contrary to regime standardization based on trust, transparency and direct contact between producers and consumers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financing and risk bearing</th>
<th>Question list</th>
<th>System based on trust, transparency, deliberation and case-specific characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Farmers are price setters → stable prices → decreased market risk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Small n° of links → decreased market risk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Decreased demand in summer but peak production increases risks for farmers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• West Flanders: vegetable membership to decrease this risk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some regions: minimum order</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Willingness to pay higher prices to decrease market risk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Differences in importance attributed to further engagement in financing and risk management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Low capacity to further engage in this practice</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marketing</th>
<th>Question list</th>
<th>System based on trust, transparency, deliberation and case-specific characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Most communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Web site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stronger focus on</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Difficulties including</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<th>Stronger focus on</th>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Difficulties including</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Intelligence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>through website and web shop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Sporadic organization of events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sporadic approach of media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Most promotion through mouth to mouth communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No gathering of external developments or wishes of consumers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No gathering of wishes of current consumers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consumers can ventilate opinion in general assemblies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No circulation of prices and way prices are built up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Web shop (only accessible for members)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• producer well-being than on consumer well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stronger focus on awareness raising than on meeting wishes of consumers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Advocacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Every five years develop strategic plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Co-founders of <em>Boerenforum</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Worked along on the strategic plan on short food chains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased member participation through general assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Offering 'movement' or political activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Website Strategic plans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Direct connection between producers and consumers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transparency in the food chain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supporting local farmers and economies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Control of farmer over prices, production methods, outlets and products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Create social cohesion around food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Raise awareness and encourage behavioural change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lower socio-economic classes and immigrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• No information sought about these groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack in man-power and skills to engage in this practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased amount of initiatives and increased engagement of regime are potential threat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Small member engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Therefore most advocacy done by employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Little interactions and collaborations with regime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dependency on regime through subsidies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 5: Recommendations workshop Voedselteams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SG 1: Food Teams will be an attractive platform and a dynamic movement for community building around agriculture and food</th>
<th>SG 2: A growing number of producers is connected to Voedselteams and contributes to sustainable agriculture and food in Flanders</th>
<th>SG4: Voedselteams is strongly organized and is attractive for employees and volunteers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Appeal to more diverse groups**<br>Focus on external communication in order to increase visibility (especially important now with the growth of similar activities)<br>a. More trendy activities<br>b. More hip, attractive and accessible<br>c. Be present on festivals and in the media<br>d. Bumper stickers, t-shirts, Voedselteams shopping bag<br>e. Strong presence on social media<br>f. Remake the website<br>g. Open up the web shop for non-members<br>h. Price transparency: visible for each product in web shop<br>i. Point out a spokesman for the short food chain with other organizations | **Facilitate entrance of young farmers**<br>- Help to access land<br>- Crowd funding<br>- Invest from cooperation<br>- Looking for organizations that can support in this<br>- Create more demand! | **Put volunteers on projects instead of practical tasks. Together create something that people are proud of**<br>**Increase involvement through:**<br>- Communication: make sure people feel addressed, and open the news letters<br>- Presence, accessibility and availability of regional coordinators | **Focus on eating patterns and health. Not just appeal to people that are already aware and that can cook very well**<br>**Focus on safeguarding knowledge**<br>a. Increase presence in schools. We can learn from the Scandinavian model, where cooking is part of the exams<br>b. Education (on sustainability)<br>c. Sharing of knowledge among members and farmers | **Focus on financial independence**<br>**Focus on safeguarding knowledge**<br>a. Increase presence in schools. We can learn from the Scandinavian model, where cooking is part of the exams<br>b. Education (on sustainability)<br>c. Sharing of knowledge among members and farmers | **Focus on financial independence**

- **Focus on eating patterns and health. Not just appeal to people that are already aware and that can cook very well**
- **Focus on safeguarding knowledge**
  - Increase presence in schools. We can learn from the Scandinavian model, where cooking is part of the exams
  - Education (on sustainability)
  - Sharing of knowledge among members and farmers
- **Focus on financial independence**
### 'Local' level analysis of FNS pathways in Belgium

- Work together with similar organizations (Broederlijk Delen, Vredeseilanden, VELT, WERVEL, Natuurpunt, …) on:
  - Sharing of knowledge
  - External communication
  - Lobby in Brussel, more presence in public debates
- Work along in existing networks (libraries, sport associations, schools, etcetera)
- Broaden consumer groups (real community = accessibility for all):
  - Lower socio-economic classes: Price and offer! Also cook together, process fresh produce, social restaurants, etc.
  - Barter trade/alternative economy as an option within Voedselteams
- Broaden the model to give space to diversity

### Conventional markets (like supermarkets e.g.)
- Strongly focus on *boerenforum* for trust, social cohesion, knowledge exchange and bargaining power
- Strongly focus on education on the guarding of knowledge and crafting
- Focus on decrease in demand in summer, risk and financing
  -通过合作
  -通过会员系统
- Logistics: is the current transportation system still up to date?

### Specifically focused on younger generations:
- Take up *Voedselteams* subjects in the curriculum.
- Visit schools (at least agricultural schools)
- Organize summer activities for younger generations: work on farms, volunteer in the organization
- Provide scouting camps with *Voedselteams* products. Price can be kept low by voluntary engagement of scouts
- Offer work experience vacancies for young people in order to build their CV
### Annex 6: Characteristics farms CSA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Farm 1</th>
<th>Farm 2</th>
<th>Farm 3</th>
<th>Farm 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connection to CSA network</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distribution method</strong></td>
<td>Self-harvest</td>
<td>Self-harvest</td>
<td>Packaging</td>
<td>Self-harvest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td>Proximity of city</td>
<td>Proximity of city</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 7: Questionnaire CSA

- Why did you start with a CSA farm in Flanders? How did you come up with the idea?
- General questions that apply for all the marketing functions:
  - Did you think about alternatives for organizing this function?
  - Do you think it is the best way to organize this function?
  - Why did you choose to do it this way? What can be improved?
- Buying
  - How is the buying function organized in CSA?
  - How much % of your members doesn’t renew their contract?
  - Is there a lot of change every year or do your members stay for many years?
  - What is the difference in benefits that members get for their annual membership fee?
  - Is the membership fee for everyone the same? If not, why are there differences?
  - Is the basket sized as such that the complete consumption is covered?
  - Is there any control done on self-harvest? (For example: that not one member takes all the vegetables and gives/sells it to other people)
- Selling
  - Do CSA farmers promote and advertise their farm?
  - Can customers choose place and time to pick up their share?
  - How are the products that are sold being decided on?
  - Are other products being added to the basket?
  - How does the farmer communicate when it is time to harvest?
  - Do you produce all year-round?
- Storage and packaging
  - Are there storage rooms available in CSA farms?
  - Are vegetables cleaned before packaging?
  - What is done with the surplus?
  - What happens with the products during summer vacations when a lot of people or on vacation?
  - Could the storage of products be a solution to extend the offer period?
- Transportation
  - What is the average distance that members live from the farm or pick-up points?
  - What is the most used transport? (by car, bycicle, on foot, etc.)
  - Does the farmer also offer part of his production somewhere else or only on the farm?
- Processing
  - Is there any form of processing done in CSA farms?
  - Consumer needs are constantly changing, is there room to improve the process?
- Standardization
  - Is there any form of standardization in CSA farms?
  - Are there safety requirements for CSA farms?
  - Are they controlled by FASFC? Is CSA based on trust or labeling? (Should they have an organic label or not?)
  - Why does not everyone produce organic? Is the certificate to expensive?
  - Do you have to get a certificate of organic farming if you join the CSA-netwerk vzw?
- Financing
  - How is the financing function organized in CSA?
o How is the annual membership fee determined?
o Is CSA approachable for everyone or only the middle class? Do you think it’s necessary to do something about this?
o Can it be interesting for a farmer to combine the CSA model (as a fix income) with other marketing models to be more profitable?
o How did you finance your land and equipment?
• Risk Bearing
  o In which way does CSA deal with risks?
  o Which type of business entity do you use?
• Market intelligence
  o Is information about consumers collected?
  o How is knowledge and information shared between different CSA farmers?
• Production
  o Where does the organic matter comes from?
  o Do you produce it yourself or do you have to buy it?
  o What are the most used tools and machines?
  o Which farming methods do you apply?
  o Do you cooperate with other farmers?
• Future
  o How do you see CSA develop in the future? Do you think it has a lot of potential to grow
## Annex 8: Coding interviews CSA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function interviewee</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSA farmer</td>
<td>24-03-2016</td>
<td>25 min.</td>
<td>CSA-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSA farmer</td>
<td>25-03-2016</td>
<td>1,1h</td>
<td>CSA-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSA farmer</td>
<td>05-04-2016</td>
<td>40 min.</td>
<td>CSA-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSA farmer</td>
<td>11-04-2016</td>
<td>35 min.</td>
<td>CSA-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>