

Sustainability Management in the Food Industry



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➤ Introduction

SMEs have been identified to be the home of original and innovative solutions when it comes to sustainable product design and service provision. They are a key preoccupation in EU policy agenda with their role in terms of employment policy and job creation receiving strong recognition in recent times. With a focus on Food SMEs within Germany, this research work takes a closer look at the engagement of Food SMEs in the move towards sustainable development. It seeks to understand how Food SMEs see and address sustainability issues.

➤ Objectives

- Understand how food SMEs are sustainable in the execution of their business strategy
- Determine what sustainability assessment tools and guidelines are used by food SMEs
- Determine how food SMEs communicate their sustainability performance to stakeholders

➤ Methods / Procedures

Phases	Milestones	Sources	Methods
1	Gathering Information	Literatures & SMART Expert	Secondary Research & Interview (Telephone)
2	Questionnaire Design	Literatures & Interviews	
3	Creation of SME data base	SME Directory	Online Research & Interviews
4	Questionnaire Pre-Test	Survey Expert	Consultations
5	Creation of Online Survey		
6	Dissemination of Survey links	EFS Survey	Email Dissemination
7	Survey Monitoring		Email Reminders & Online Monitoring
8	Result Analysis	Survey Expert & Literatures	Direct Comparison

• SMEs as defined in EU recommendation 2003/361

• Sectors: Dairy, Bakery, Retail and Meat

• Workforce of 9-250 employees

➤ Constraints

Contact Approach

One on one Introduction Vs "SMEs in Netherlands" Vs Email Introduction Vs "SMEs in Germany"

Contact Detail Generation

Web Business Directory Vs Personal Contact

Questionnaire Creation

- Type Vs Length of Questionnaire
- Type of questions Vs Result Analysis
- Completeness Vs Materiality
- Online Creation of Questionnaire

EFS - Enterprise Feedback Suite

Survey Creation Vs Result Analysis

Pre-test Approach

Pre-test via Expert Vs Pre-test via Company

Time Management

Timeline Management



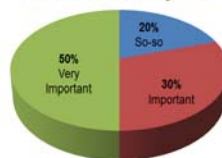
➤ Results

Surveys Response Rate → 6.25%

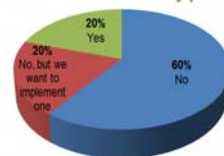
Database (Total SME's)	Final database (Excluding no contact information)	Total Participation (Excluding Refusals)
200	194	183

Other Contacts	Total Participation	Responses
4 (NL)	4	2

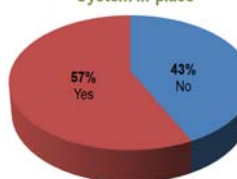
Rate Sustainability Plan



Formal Sustainability plan



Sustainability Management System in place



Tools or approaches used

- LCA and other assessment tools provided by Soil & More

Guidelines followed

- Netherlands
 - ✓ GRI
 - ✓ Apply product labels such as RSPO (palm oil), Organic, Milieukeur (dutch fruits and vegetables), MSC + ASC (fish)
- Germany
 - ✓ IFS, QS & HACCP
 - ✓ ISO

➤ Conclusions

None of the companies which took part in the survey maintained a holistic approach to sustainability. Their understanding of the concept of sustainability is the platform on which their sustainability strategies were built. They also do not consider formal assessment and reporting of sustainability performance as overtly important. SMART expert says it's because they are small and are in close contacts with their stakeholders and as such do not see the need to assess themselves in a comparable way.

References

- The American Association for Public Opinion Research (2016). Standard Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates for Surveys. 9th edition. AAPOR.
- Food and Agriculture Organization (2014). Sustainability Assessment of Food and Agriculture systems Guidelines, version 3.