

Dutch Testing Ground Community Supported Agriculture and Local Value Chains

Location

This Testing Ground is located in the Netherlands and is organised around a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm.

Goal

To combine soil health, farm economic viability, and citizen involvement. The model aims to build a sustainable form of agriculture while ensuring a stable income for farmers.

Innovation

It reorganises access to land, capital, and agricultural production by combining agroecological practices, citizen involvement, and local value chains. Citizens contribute as consumers, volunteers, and investors, notably through the land organisation Land van Ons.

Soil Health Challenge

land managers generally have little incentive to invest in healthy soils, as they cannot sufficiently capture the value generated by these ecosystem services



SHBM Description

It is organised around a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm, where consumers directly support local agricultural production by purchasing products or contributing financially.

The farm sells its products directly while developing local partnerships to process and add value to its production. This model allows risk-sharing, strengthens links between producers and citizens, and supports sustainable agriculture.

Actor Network

- Core farm team
- Citizens (customers, volunteers, and investors)
- Land van Ons
- Neighbouring farmers
- Processors
- Agrarian nature organisations
- Project and research partners

The model also depends on non-human factors such as soil conditions, agroforestry systems, municipal regulations, and land ownership arrangements.



Value Creation Mechanism

The SHBM creates value by improving soil health through diversified crop rotations, minimum tillage, agroforestry, and other agroecological practices.

Citizens directly support the model by contributing to the CSA and purchasing farm products, helping to secure farmers' incomes.

The model also generates environmental and social benefits by promoting biodiversity, water regulation, and the involvement of the local citizens.



Dominant Value Rationales



Green

Promoting soil health and environmental sustainability through agroecological practices, including diversified crop rotations, agroforestry, and biodiversity-friendly farming.



Market

Citizens actively contribute as customers, volunteers, and land supporters, helping to strengthen community involvement and social connections around the farm.



Civic

The model seeks economic viability through processing, direct sales, and subsidies

Main Results

It demonstrates that soil-friendly agriculture can be supported through citizen involvement, local value chains, and innovative land access arrangements. The model generates environmental, social, and economic benefits that reinforce one another.



Barriers and Challenges

The development of new value chains remains challenging due to the lack of local infrastructure, administrative constraints, and the limited time available to develop new activities.

The low returns of soil-friendly practices also represents a challenge.

Lessons Learnt

- Building trust-based relationships with citizens, local authorities, and other local actors is essential to the success of the model.
- The existence of established infrastructure and partners greatly facilitates the development of new value chains. Competition from conventional supply chains with lower prices also represents a barrier to this model.



Learn More



Funded by
the European Union

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Watch the Testing Ground in action