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# CHALLENGES, BEST PRACTICES AND SOLUTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE LOCAL FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS IN LATVIA, LITHUANIA AND SWEDEN

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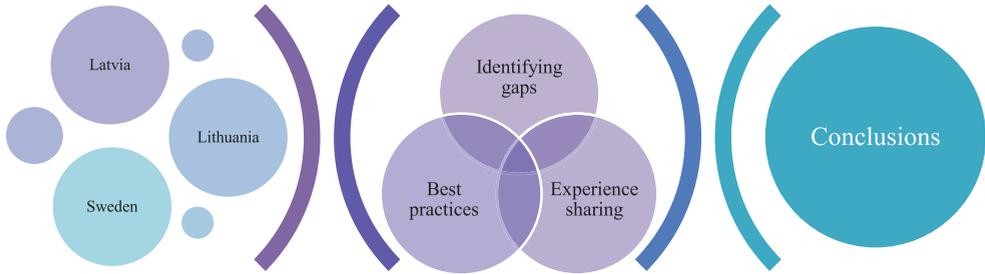
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**Abstract** – Food security requires more than just increased availability, as supply chains face challenges such as climate change, inequality and waste. A sustainable food system provides numerous benefits, aligning with the European Green Deal's Farm to Fork Strategy, which aims to promote sustainable production, ensure food safety, reduce waste, and combat climate change. Additionally, it supports regional economies, preserves cultural identity, enhances food tourism, and helps prevent food fraud. Aim of the research is to analyse challenges, best practices and solutions for sustainable local food supply chains based on stakeholders face to face onsite workshops organized in Latvia, Lithuania and Sweden. Stakeholders interviewed were farmers, local food producers and distributors, local government representatives, as well as researchers from the food, regional development and environmental engineering fields who shared with their experiences and useful information about their experiences of dealing with obstacles. The initial results indicate the following group of obstacles like all the countries analysed. (1) There is no clear definition of the local food supply chain, creating uncertainty and inconsistencies in its interpretation. (2) Local food supply chain stakeholders are eager to collaborate to sell their products wholesale, ensuring the necessary production volumes. While meeting these demands can be challenging for individual producers, cooperation would make it achievable, enabling a more efficient and sustainable supply chain. (3) Local food supply chain stakeholders lack support from local governments, because currently the minimum requirements required by local governments are met, but this affects the ability of local producers to grow. (4) Lack of effective public education on the benefits of local food and its integration into daily life. Improving awareness and understanding would increase demand, support the growth and development of local food producers, and bring economic and social benefits to the community.

**Keywords** – *Farm to Fork strategy; food safety; local food production; supply chain gaps*



Research framework for assessing gaps in local food supply chain.

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