



Multi-actor design of low-waste food value chains through the demonstration of innovative solutions to reduce food loss and waste

LOWINFOOD

PRACTICE ABSTRACT No: 20

Socioeconomic impact evaluation

The aim of socioeconomic impact evaluation is to assess the value created by individual innovations and by the overall project for different stakeholder groups such as the organizations demonstrating the innovations, the individuals taking part in the demonstrations, non-research partners of the LOWINFOOD consortium, and the wider society. The socio-economic impact assessment framework was developed as a resource for future innovation action projects as prospective users and applied for conducting the evaluation in the LOWINFOOD project.

The purpose and design of innovations matters when considering and comparing their socio-economic outcomes. The generic economic indicators included in the framework can be captured best for technological innovations with immediate affects. The innovations were found to improve the food waste related awareness and intentions of those taking part in their demonstration. Most non-research partners of the consortium stated that they had a positive experience from their participation in the LOWINFOOD consortium, and referred to aspects such as network creation, business expansion, and knowledge exchange resulting. The assessment concluded that jobs were created, not through the demonstration of the innovations but through the LOWINFOOD funding provided to innovative start-up partners.

For future analysis, we recommend improving the data sharing agreements with business partners to ensure better disclosure, and automatizing the data collection procedure, as much as possible, to reduce its burden for test locations and improve the quality of the data used in assessment.

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Additional information

While the innovation literature is extensive, the resources for evaluating the socio-economic outcome of individual innovations are few and limited. Additionally, the impact of European research funding to its non-research organization recipients has not been systematically explored so far. The socio-economic impact assessment framework constructed in this project represents a replicable and systematic method for future projects. Such comprehensive assessment enables accounting for innovation performance and wider outcomes of public funding, both of which go unaccounted in the current impact evaluation practice.

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ABOUT LOWINFOOD

The LOWINFOOD project, launched in 2020 and coordinated by the University of Tuscia, Italy, is working to deploy and improve a set of 14 innovative solutions to the food waste problem, by demonstrating their effectiveness and market potential. The core activities of the project are all focused on the evaluation of the efficacy of these innovations in reducing food losses and waste, in terms of the amount of food waste avoided as well as their environmental and socio-economic impact.

CONSORTIUM



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