

GrAins

Greening Agrifood
in Social Economy



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How certification helps to the transition in the SME agrifood



PREMISE:

Certifications can play a crucial role in helping small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the agrifood sector transition toward more sustainable, competitive, and market-accessible operations. Here's how certifications help with this transition:



1. Market Access and Competitiveness

- **Access to New Markets:** Certification to recognized standards (like organic, Fair Trade, GlobalGAP, or ISO 22000 for food safety) can open doors to international markets. Many retailers and distributors require certification as a prerequisite for doing business, particularly in Europe and North America.



- ***Competitive Edge:*** Certified Products are often perceived as higher quality, safer, or more sustainable, giving SMEs an advantage over uncertified competitors.

2. Consumer Trust and Demand

- **Increased Consumer Confidence:** Certification provides assurance to consumers that the products meet certain quality, safety, or sustainability standards. This is especially important as consumers become more conscious of food safety, sustainability, and ethical production.



3. Meeting Demand for Transparency:

- Certifications often *require transparency in sourcing*, production, and labor practices, which can be appealing to consumers looking for ethical and traceable food products

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4. Improved Operational Efficiency

- **Adoption of Best Practices:** Certification processes often require SMEs to adopt industry best practices related to production, quality control, environmental management, and food safety. This can improve operational efficiency and product quality.



- ***Waste Reduction and Sustainability:*** Environmental certifications (e.g., organic or Rainforest Alliance) encourage sustainable practices like reducing chemical inputs or minimizing waste, which can lead to long-term cost savings.



5. Compliance with Regulations

- Meeting Regulatory Requirements: Certification helps SMEs comply with international regulations on food safety and quality, particularly for exports. This can prevent costly delays or rejections at international borders.



- **Simplified Documentation:** Some certifications can streamline compliance with complex international regulations, reducing the administrative burden for SMEs.



- **Grants and Subsidies:** Many government and non-government organizations offer financial incentives, grants, or subsidies to help SMEs in the agrifood sector achieve certain certifications, recognizing their role in fostering sustainable development and food security.



6. Access to Funding and Investment

- **Attracting Investors:** Certified agrifood SMEs often attract more investment because certifications can act as a third-party verification of good business practices, reducing the perceived risk for investors.



7. Supply Chain Integration

- Partnerships with Larger Corporations: Many larger agrifood companies and retailers prioritize certified suppliers in their supply chains. Certification can enable SMEs to integrate into larger, more lucrative supply chains.



Traceability and Food Safety: Certification often requires better tracking and documentation of inputs and processes, which enhances the traceability of products throughout the supply chain, improving food safety and quality control.



8. Risk Management

- **Minimizing Risks:** Certifications related to food safety (e.g., HACCP or ISO 22000) help SMEs identify, assess, and manage risks in the production process, preventing costly food recalls or reputational damage.



- **Crisis Preparedness:** Implementing the systems required for certification can help SMEs be better prepared for crises, whether related to food safety, environmental regulations, or market disruptions.



9. Enhanced Reputation and Brand Value

Building a Responsible Brand: Certifications can enhance the reputation of an SME by aligning it with ethical, sustainable, and responsible business practices. This reputation can translate into stronger customer loyalty and brand equity.



- **Recognition and Differentiation:** Certifications differentiate an SME from competitors who may not have the same level of verified commitment to quality, sustainability, or social responsibility.



In summary:

Certifications can significantly aid SMEs in the agrifood sector by providing access to new markets, improving operational efficiency, ensuring compliance with regulations, enhancing brand reputation, and attracting investment. They serve as tools for growth and transformation, especially as the *agrifood sector* becomes more globalized and consumer demands shift toward sustainability and transparency.



Partners



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