

GrAins

Greening Agrifood
in Social Economy



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How certification of eco packaging - unpacking helps to the transition in the SME agrifood



Context and Challenges

- Over-reliance on single-use plastics contributes to pollution and climate change.
- SMEs often face limited resources for adopting sustainable practices.
- Consumers increasingly demand eco-friendly packaging solutions.
- Infrastructure for recycling and composting remains inconsistent across regions.



What is Eco-Packaging Certification?

- Certification ensures packaging meets environmental standards (e.g., minimal waste, recyclability).
- Examples: FSC (Forest Stewardship Council), Cradle-to-Cradle certification,
- Certification boosts credibility and opens access to green-conscious markets.
- Key criteria include life cycle assessment, biodegradability, and energy-efficient production.



Benefits of Eco-Packaging Certification

- **Environmental:** Reduces pollution, promotes recycling, and supports biodiversity.
- **Economic:** Access to premium markets, lower long-term costs, and enhanced brand value.
- **Social:** Builds community trust, aligns with global sustainability goals, and educates stakeholders.
- **Case Example:** A small bakery adopting eco-certification increased customer loyalty by 30%.



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1. Eco-Certification Goals:

1. The bakery committed to reducing its carbon footprint by sourcing organic ingredients, using sustainable packaging, and minimizing waste in production processes.
2. Eco-certification audits helped them identify actionable steps to meet these goals.

2. Customer Engagement:

1. The bakery engaged its customers by sharing progress updates on their sustainability journey through social media and in-store displays.
2. They implemented a customer loyalty program linked to sustainability, rewarding customers who reused packaging or opted for eco-friendly options.

3. Marketing and Visibility:

1. Targeted marketing campaigns highlighted the benefits of their eco-certification, emphasizing their commitment to environmental and community well-being.
2. They used social media to showcase their sustainable practices, often collaborating with local influencers to reach a broader audience.

4. Partnerships and Support:

1. Partnerships with eco-focused organizations and access to small business grants for sustainability projects supported their transformation financially and logistically.



Unpacking: A Sustainable Alternative

- Encourages bulk buying, reusable containers, and minimal packaging.
- Reduces transportation costs and waste at every stage of the supply chain.
- Examples: Farmer's markets, zero-waste stores, and refill stations.
- Benefits: Lowers operational expenses and appeals to environmentally conscious consumers.



Transition Pathways for SMEs

- Step 1: Conduct an initial sustainability assessment.
- Step 2: Identify certifications and standards relevant to the business.
- Step 3: Partner with eco-friendly suppliers and organizations.
- Step 4: Train staff and integrate sustainable practices into operations.



Contribution to the Social Economy

- Empowers SMEs to align with ethical and environmental values.
- Supports job creation in green industries.
- Encourages community-based recycling and waste reduction initiatives.
- Enhances resilience of local economies against global market pressures.



Challenges and Solutions

- Challenges: High initial costs, lack of awareness, regulatory hurdles.
- Solutions:
 - Financial incentives such as grants and subsidies.
 - Educational campaigns to raise awareness among SMEs and consumers.
 - Collaboration with industry networks to share resources and expertise



Call to Action

- SMEs: Start small by adopting basic sustainable practices.
- Policymakers: Provide clear regulations and support for eco-certification.
- Consumers: Advocate for eco-packaged products and support local producers.
- Together, we can accelerate the transition toward a sustainable social economy.



Partners



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Thank you !

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