Louvain School of Management

Sustainable Supply Chain: towards implementation of a Sustainable Supply Chain in the Food Retail industry

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Abstract

Today's society is more and more concerned about the concept of sustainability. Every year, new objectives or regulations are put place, and consumers are more and more concerned about the products they consume. As a result, the Food Retail industry is regularly criticized for its non-sustainable practices and is facing increasing pressures from various stakeholders.

Because most Food industry's sustainable issues are located in the upstream part of the Supply Chain, becoming more sustainable required the implementation of a Sustainable Supply Chain Management (SSCM). In this study, we are going to discuss through a literature review the different topics related to the concept of SSCM and exposed the linked challenges. This first analysis will lead us to concentrate our efforts on Retailers' procurement department. Indeed, it is the one that creates the most value for Retailers and maintains close relationships with suppliers. Then, the research question: "how to implement a Sustainable Supply Chain Management in the Food Retail industry?" will be developed by means of a guide developed by the United Nations, called: "*Supply Chain Sustainability: A Practical Guide for Continuous improvement*". It developed four steps that companies who want to implement a SSCM must follow. Then, two interviews with experience buyers have taken place to link the guide and the Food Retail industry.

As a result, various drawbacks towards the implementation of a Sustainable Supply Chain Management are developed. First, an important lack of education. Indeed, the two interviews exposed that Retailers focus mainly on one part of the concept of Sustainability and that the linked benefits are not understood. This required trainings and involvement from the top management to guide the entire Retailers' organization towards more sustainable understanding. Then, the fact that, to compete in the sector, prices are a key element. However, Sustainable products are more expensive than classic ones. This leads to the need of building collaboration among Retailers to increase power while facing national brands. In addition, there is a need to develop private labels to decrease the size of the Supply Chain and increase control.

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1. Introduction

The Food Retail industry is very much concerned about the concept of sustainability. According to Bansal (2010), sustainability is "*the creation of resilient organizations through integrated economic, social, and environmental systems*". The sector includes 310 000 companies that together account for approximately 4,4% of European GDP (Directorate-General for Communication (European Commission), 2014; Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development et al., 2008). In the meantime, the world population is rising, the United Nations (2017) predicted that it will reach about 9,8 billion people in 2050. Also, the whole Food Supply Chain is producing 15 to 28% of the world Greenhouse Gas emissions (Garnett, 2011). The Food Retail industry is facing the challenge to provide food to a larger population, but at the same time, it comes under pressure regarding sustainable development.

This thesis focus on food Retailers. As the last step of the Food Supply Chain, Retailers are often taken responsible for any misconduct that happened in the Supply Chain. However, most sustainable issues are located in the upstream part. It leads to the need of developing a system that enables Retailers, their suppliers, and sub tiers suppliers to achieve more sustainable performances. Going on the path of implementing a Sustainable Supply Chain Management (SSCM), requires Retailers to consider suppliers as part of their operations (Prajogo et al., 2012). Indeed, collaboration must be integrated, and good relationships are required to achieve the implementation of a SSCM (Duffy et al., 2013). To do so, the United Nations (2015) wrote "*Supply Chain Sustainability: A Practical Guide for Continuous Improvement".*

The structure of this thesis is as follows. First, a literature review that aims to provide information and a conceptual background. It includes, information about the Food Retail industry and concepts of Supply Chain Management, Sustainability, and Sustainable Supply Chain Management. The following section is dedicated to the mains drawbacks of achieving sustainability and the most concerned activities. Then, the United Nations' guide is exposed to present the four practical steps that guide companies toward the collaboration with suppliers to achieve sustainable performances. Finally, the guide has been applied to Belgian food Retailers to understand their position on the path to sustainability. It enables us to detect the various drawbacks and the linked solutions to take action towards the implementation of a Sustainable Supply Chain Management in the Food Retail industry.

2. Literature review

2.1. Food Retail Industry:

A. Context :

The Food Retail industry represents the last step of most supply chains. Companies qualified as Retailers are the ones delivering products to final customers. Indeed, Retailers are actors of any supply chain which have the closest contact with customers (Yadav and Singh, 2012). It is a sector that impacts the daily life of an important part of the world population. It "*comprises foods sold at food retailers such as grocery stores, mass merchandisers, drug stores, convenience stores and, foodservice facilities*" (Conway, 2019).

The European food industry includes approximatively 310 thousand companies employing about 48 million people, it represents 8,3% of total employment in Europe. Its contribution to the European economy accounts for about 4,4% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), representing more than 750 billion euros (Directorate-General for Communication (European Commission), 2014; Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development et al., 2008).

As one of the largest sectors, it is responsible for an important part of energy consumption. The sector consumes mainly through its production, preservation (warehousing or in-store) and distribution to deliver the different actors of its supply chain (Roy et al., 2009). In fact, the whole food industry contributes for 15 to 28% of total Greenhouse Gaz (GHG) emissions (Garnett, 2011).

In addition, the Food industry is very much concerned about sustainability due to its quantity and variety of natural resources used, human's needs for basic nutrition, and communities that depend on the food production to survive. For example, the sector consumes approximatively 70% of total available fresh water (Foley et al., 2011).

Improvement of sustainability in the Grocery Retail industry required that all actors, located worldwide, engage in this direction. The purposes are to face the challenge of reaching customers' expectations, working with limited resources, and being in line with international policies (FAO, 2013). In contrast, there is an increasing demand in developed countries for safe and high-quality food, produced with a low environmental impact (Boer, 2002). Indeed, consumers are more and more concerned about sustainability. At the moment of choosing between two products, the ethical and ecological factors play an important role (Andersson et al., 1994). This means that the food retail industry must take the challenge of sustainability seriously to continue existing and keep offering desired products for customers.

B. Sustainability concerns:

As mentioned, the retail sector is very much concerned about sustainability issues along its Supply Chain. Although industrial need to rethink their supply chain, consumers' behavior also needs to change. While looking at the offer, it is difficult for customers to decide regarding sustainability. This is due to the system which does not provide them what is needed to make this kind of choice (Goosens et al., 2016). Concerns about sustainability are rising, and consumers' attitudes are going in this direction (Vermeir and Verbeke, 2006). Particularly western consumers who are becoming more concerned about the impact of food consumption on both a societal and environmental point of view. However, there is a lack of concrete action. Vermeir and Verbeke (2006), studied consumers' attitude regarding sustainability. They found that, people are more and more aware of sustainability issues, but sustainability actions are not concordant with those concerns. According to Meulenberg (2003), the decision process regarding the consumption of sustainable product take into account individual needs and wants but also people's social responsibility. Drivers of consumers' consumption are convenience, habit, value for money, health, and response to social norms. Sustainable initiatives such as organic food, no child labor products, fair-trade products, etc. account for very low market share (MacGillivray, 2000. As cited in Vermeir and Verbeke, 2006). The reason is that price, quality, convenience, and habits factors are more important for consumers than ethical factors (Carrigan and Attalla, 2001; Weatherell et al., 2003).

It is both consumers' and Retailers' fault. On the one hand, retailers do not provide the needed information or even the adequate products at decent price to enable customers consuming more sustainably. On the other hand, even if consumers are aware of the importance of a better consumption, according to Willet Kempton (as cited in Devaux, 2019) there is a problem of consumption because people consume according to the appearance they want other people to see. For example, some people will consume in biggest quantity to be seen as part of the upper class of the population. Which lead to a propensity to consume in big quantity. In addition, it is also a problem of consumers' priorities. Indeed, along decision-process, consumers tend to prioritize factors such as price, convenience, etc.

The retail industry has never been feeling more pressure from stakeholders about sustainability than today. Indeed, the number of customers concerned about sustainability increase and requirements from government, NGOs, etc. are rising. Accordingly, many changes need to take place at various stages of its Supply Chain. Meixell and Luoma (2015) developed different drivers that may influence a supply chain to become sustainable. First, "*stakeholder pressure on sustainability in Supply Chain Management (SCM) may result in sustainability awareness, adoption of sustainability goals, and/or implementation of sustainable practices*." Second, "d*ifferent types of stakeholders have dissimilar influence in sustainable supply chain decision areas*." Third, "*different stakeholders appear to be more or less influential depending on whether the sustainability issue is environmental or social*." These drivers to sustainability represent the fact that Grocery Retailers need to respond to stakeholders' demand and/or requirements, especially customers. Also, there is a need for the sector to be stakeholders centric to understand what matter to them. Stakeholders' requirements may be different, some will focus on the environmental perspective while some other will focus on social and economic aspects.

2.2. Supply Chain Management:

As mentioned earlier, the Food Retail industry's sustainability issues are mainly located in its Supply Chain (SC). To understand what the concept of Supply Chain Management is and its importance for firms, this section analysis its evolution in the literature. This will lead to a clear definition that enables to detect different objectives and characteristics of the concept of Supply Chain Management (SCM).

A. Evolution:

In the 1980s, the concept of Supply Chain Management (SCM) has been introduced to describe various firms' activities (Ahi and Searcy, 2013). At the time, it includes the planning and control of materials, internal and external logistics activities, and information flow (Cooper et al. 1997). It was considered as the management of operational activities with the purpose to cut costs. Over the years, this concept evolved (Burgess et al., 2006) and different studies took place and extended the past focus on the flow of material to additional aspects. These being risk (Colicchia and Strozzi, 2012), performance (Hassini et al., 2012), and integration (Fabbe-Costes and Jahre, 2007). In addition, some authors included elements such as the flow of information, internal and external relationships (Stock et al. 2010), and governance of supply chain networking (Pilbeam et al. 2012). Today, Supply Chain Management is considered as a tool to increase margin (decrease cost and increase turnover), reduce assets and a way to become more sustainable (Jayaraman, Klassen, and Linton, 2007; Ruiz-Benítez, López and Real, 2018).

Evolution of Supply Chain Management has arisen because of the development of the companies' process but also globalization. In the past, companies used to work in what we call a 'Basic Supply Chain.' It means that to deliver a product to final customers, only three actors were involved: supplier, manufacturer and then customers. Then, it has evolved to what we call an 'Extended Supply Chain'. This evolution added two additional actors in the system, sub-suppliers, and retailers. The last evolution leads us to an 'Ultimate Supply Chain'. This system can be described as a network between the different suppliers, sub-suppliers, customers, and sub-customers (**figure 1**).

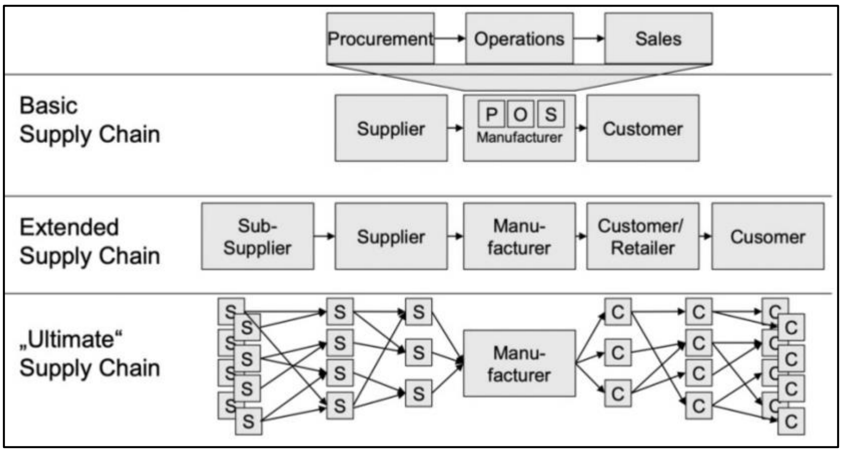


Figure 1. From basic to ultimate supply chain (Reuter, 2019)

There are two reasons for this last evolution to an 'Ultimate Supply Chain'. First, companies are getting more and more specialized. It means that they need to interact with more actors in the production process to have the required material to produce final products. Then, globalization has been playing an important role in the increasing complexity of the supply chain. As a customer, most products we consume have been created with material from different regions across the world. It is a reason why SCM has become more and more complex. This aspect raises companies' awareness that to compete with each other, they need to consider both internal processes and suppliers.

B. Definitions:

The evolution of the concept of SCM leads to the increase interest of researchers and companies in the past years. During this period of time, diverse definitions have been developed. In the *Journal of Cleaner Production*, Ahi and Searcy (2013) wrote “*comparative literature analysis of definitions for green and sustainable supply chain management*.” The authors have been analyzing diverse definitions (**appendix 1**) of SCM present in the literature. The purpose of this study is to better understand SCM. Key points of this analysis are, first, the focus of SCM on the management of flows of materials, services, and information. Second, the need for coordination inside and among firms has been detected as key to managing such activities. Third, the notion of meeting stakeholders’ needs is actively present in the different analyzed definitions.

However, a problem regularly encountered in articles is related to the diversity of definitions existing for Supply Chain Management. Confusion is due to the variety of aspects and direction, included in these definitions, going in different ways. This lack of coherence is due, according to Habid (2014), by the fact that for some, SCM is the management of the flow of information, the flow of materials, the financial flow and products (Waller and Roberts, 2003). Other considered SCM as a management philosophy. As a result, Chicksand et al. (2012) argued that there is no clear definition around the different literature. An analysis of existing definitions has been made (**Appendix 1**) and the definition including most of characteristics is from Stock and Boyer (2009). According to them, Supply Chain Management is:

“The management of a network of relationships within a firm and between interdependent organizations and business units consisting of material suppliers, purchasing, production facilities, logistics, marketing, and related systems that facilitate the forward and reverse flow of materials, services, finances and information from the original producer to the final customer with the benefits of adding value, maximizing profitability through efficiencies, and achieving customer satisfaction.” (Stock and Boyer, 2009)

This definition shows the importance of collaboration between different actors. It means that to implement an efficient Supply Chain Management, collaboration is a major asset. Another aspect is related to customers. Indeed, they are the principal focus of any supply chain. The main reason for a supply chain to be client-oriented is that they are the only sources of revenue.

C. Objectives and characteristics:

Different objectives and characteristics of Supply Chain Management have been detected (Ahi and Searcy, 2013). Regarding the objectives, the different definitions have a common aspect. These are the focus on the creation of value, the improvement of efficiency and general performance. While looking at the characteristics, the following focus are expressed: flows of coordination, stakeholder, relationship, value, efficiency, and performance.

The aggregation of the definition, the different objectives, and characteristics, give us the main objectives of Supply Chain Management. The first being to maximize the overall value created. It can be calculated by the difference between the customer value and the effort companies need to produce products divided by the cost of filing the customer’s request. The second objective is to match supply and demand. It means to fulfill customer demand and at the same time minimize the cost of the supply chain.

D. Impacts and issues

Decisions related to Supply Chain Management can have an impact on the overall firm’s performance (Al-Shboul, 2017). First, waste can be everywhere along the supply chain. It can be due to bad planning, or even natural disaster. Storages facilities cost money and create high inventories. Companies can do everything in a proper way, but if customers are not willing to pay for a product, everything is wasted. Second, SCM has an impact on the balance sheet. The way companies design their supply chain will influence either assets or liabilities. Finally, SCM decisions impact the Return on Investment (ROI).

A common issue of SCM is qualified as the Bullwhip effect. It refers to the increased variability of demand further upstream in the supply chain (Forrester, 1997). Consequences are spread along all the supply chain. It means that customers’ demand is amplified as it passes upstream through different actors. The upstream part with too much or too little utilization of production and the downstream results are warehousing, availability issues, and even loss of sales. It leads to situations in which customers are not satisfied because they do not find what they want. Accordingly, solutions to reduce the impact of the bullwhip effect are such as: improve inventory management, cut ordering delay or make in-store information available to everyone, including suppliers. Those solutions are based on collaboration among actors.

2.3. Sustainability:

Companies are more and more concerned about the need to address the question of sustainability in their daily operations (Ahi and Searcy, 2013). Sustainable development is about "*the utilization of resources to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*" (WCED, 1987). First concerns around sustainability have been focusing on environmental issues. However, it has evolved and today, we tend to focus on a concept of sustainability based on three pillars referred as People, Planet, and Profit. We called it the triple bottom line (Elkington, 1998). This approach means that the concept of sustainability includes an important number of factors and actors which lead too additional complexity.

The question of responsibility needs to be asked regarding sustainability. Do companies need to be responsible for sustainability or other stakeholders? Answers are diverse and depend on the way the people see Business. It exists two ways seeing a business. On the one hand, Friedman (1970) developed the liberal paradigm which claims that "*the generation of profit is the sole legitimate goal of a company*." In other words, Friedman defends the traditional management model based on an input-output model in which the firm's objective is to maximize profit for shareholders. He continued by arguing that adopting a 'responsible' attitude will create drawbacks to compete with competitors who do not. On the other hand, others argued that value creation is broader than Friedman's view and that shareholder's value can be maximized only if other stakeholder's[1] value increase at the same time (Freeman, 1984). This theory is referred to the Stakeholder theory of the firm. It claims that firms are dependent on several stakeholders.

As there are various ways to see enterprises' responsibilities, Business sustainability is defined in multiple ways. According to Bansal (2010), it is "*the creation of resilient organizations through integrated economic, social and environmental systems*." In line with this definition, the United Nations identified seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (**appendix 2**). Those have been developed to 'promote prosperity while protecting the planet' (UN). The objectives are to eradicate hunger and poverty in the world by 2030, protecting the planet and ensuring that all human beings live in peace and prosperity. These goals provide a roadmap and clear targets in line with its priorities and global challenges. 169 targets have been

1 *"all persons or groups with legitimate interests participating in an enterprise do so to obtain benefits and that there is no prima facie priority of one set of interests and benefits over another"* (Freeman, 1984)

defined to achieve these 17 goals. Also, key performance indicators (KPIs) have been added to achieve these targets according to the sectors in which companies operate. Sustainability related KPIs must respect characteristics such as: Specific, quantitative, available, sensitive, usable, and cost-effective (Gardas et al., 2019; Bell and Morse, 2012).

However, achieving SDGs will require governments, the private sector, civil society, and citizens to act (Aerts, 2018). It shows that the business world needs to act according to these challenges by implementing them in their daily operations and management. The different SDGs are used to promote the urge of changes to become more sustainable. Building a strategy around sustainability is about trying to respect SDGs that are in line with the company's sector. Regarding the food Retail industry, the following goals are the ones to be taken into account (Devaux, 2019).

- Goal 2: Zero hunger
- Goal 3: Good health and well-being
- Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
- Goal 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- Goal 10: Reduced inequalities
- Goal 12: Responsible production and consumptions
- Goal 13: Climate Action
- Goal 14: Life below water
- Goal 15: Life on land
- Goal 17: Partnership for the goals

Elkington argued that it can be difficult for companies to measure at the same time environmental and social performances of its supply chain. In fact, measuring these aspects for all members of a supply chain is complex. However, it exists numerous non-profit organizations or associations offering tools helping companies measuring KPIs. These measurements can lead to big advancement in the pursuit of sustainability. In addition, challenges are, according to Hervani, Helms, and Sarkis (2005):

- Lack of understanding of multi-organizational metrics from managers
- Lack of control on inter-organizational metrics from companies
- Different strategies or objective among members of the chain lead to different measurement

- Differences among SC actors for performance measurement
- Information systems are not able to collect non-traditional SC performance information
- Standardization is lacking regarding performance measurement (units, structure, format, etc.)

Sustainability is a major challenge for firms. It is an unclear concept that required firms to innovate and adapt themselves to these challenges. The question is no longer: “is sustainability important?” but rather “how do we approach sustainability most effectively to gain advantages, leverage our capabilities, and reduce future risks?” (BCG, retrieved from C. Reuter, 2019).

2.4. Sustainable Supply Chain Management

Achieving Sustainability, require its implementation in the concept of SCM. This is called Sustainable Supply Chain Management (SSCM). This section aims to define this new concept but also addressing the different challenges companies are facing to implement it in their daily activity and management. Finally, drivers and enablers of SSCM will be exposed to develop their impacts on the Food Retail Industry.

A. Definition:

According to Jain et al. (2009), a supply chain is a dynamic process including materials, financial and informational flows between and within the different actors of the chain. Taking into account that, Supply Chain Management is the management of these flows, from the first step of extracting raw materials until the delivery to end-users. A focus on the supply chain is a step toward the wider adoption and development of sustainability (Ashby et al., 2012).

To link sustainability and supply chain, the most used terms in the literature are ‘Green Supply Chain Management’ (GSCM) and ‘Sustainable Supply Chain Management’ (SSCM) (Ashby et al., 2012). A comparative literature review that analyzes definitions for Green and Sustainable Supply Chain Management has been published in 2013 by Ahi and Searcy. The objective was to referenced existing definitions of these two terms to develop a global definition. The analysis of the different characteristics expressed in the literature enables them to define SSCM as:

"*The creation of coordinated supply chains through the voluntary integration of economic, environmental, and social considerations with key inter-organizational business systems designed to efficiently and effectively manage the material, information, and capital flows associated with the procurement, production, and distribution of products or services in order to meet stakeholder requirements and improve the profitability, competitiveness and resilience of the organization over the short- and long-term*" (Ahi and Searcy, 2013).

According to them, a separate definition of GSCM is not needed because it will be similar excluding economic and social factors. Also, speaking of GSCM is not relevant in this thesis because this concept focuses only on the environmental aspect. Indeed, the implementation of a Sustainable Supply Chain Management is broader than the environmental pillar.

The definition of Sustainable Supply Chain Management developed by Ahi and Searcy, has key characteristics including:

- Creation of coordinated supply chains
- Inter-organizational business systems
- Manage the material, information, and capital flows (in procurement, production, and distribution)
- Meet stakeholders' requirements
- Improve profitability, competitiveness and resilience

It expresses the need to build collaboration and coordination between the different actors of a Supply Chain. Companies' core activities to achieve a SSCM are procurement, production, and distribution. It means that these are the ones who need to adapt themselves. In addition, the need to meet stakeholder's requirements show that companies must think behind their own needs and must be aware of the external environment and factors. Finally, building a SSCM can bring many advantages for firms. It will enable them to improve profitability through costs reduction, taking advantage on competitors and bring short- and long-term resilience.

B. Challenges :

It exists different challenges regarding SSCM. Taking those seriously may be an important value creator for companies. In fact, Sustainable Supply Chain Management is a way to gain a competitive advantage. It can decrease costs, enhance reputation and legitimacy, being future-oriented and lead to innovation (Devaux, 2019).

The first challenge is linked to Stakeholder theory. Accordingly, it exists an important number of actors to whom a company is dependent (government, customers, employees, shareholders, suppliers, competitors, NGOs, etc.). The dependency is mainly related to the impact they can have on the firm. As the Food Retail industry is a highly competitive sector, stakeholders with the biggest impact are customers. While competing in this sector, one of the main objectives for Retailers is to gain market share in value or volume. The predominant manner to expend on the market is to be client-oriented, by the elaboration of a clear strategy, to keep attracting existing customers or attracting new ones. According to some studies, the pressure from NGOs is one major aspect that creates a trigger for corporate action (Argenti, 2004; Sharfman et al., 2009). However, one research about "*Core issues in sustainable supply chain management – a Delphi Study*" claims that in reality, companies are acting according to customer demand (Seuring and Müller, 2007). Today, customers are demanding credible information verified by external parties. In fact, people mistrust corporate sources and have the tendency to trust most external authorities. They also want accurate information covering the entire supply chain. Retailers need to be able to provide information such as: How sustainable are their suppliers? What is the environmental impact of products? What are the ethical policies? All this information needs to cover internal but also first and second-tier suppliers' activities (Reuter, 2019).

The second challenge is related to risks. Sustainable Supply Chain risks are different from classical disruption risks. Ordinary risks may primarily cause disruption that only impact the firm, which means that there is no external party impacted by this kind of risk. Regarding Sustainability Supply Chain risks, it may create stakeholders' reaction that is going to damage the firm. In other words, this category of risk will arm stakeholders and their reaction to this damage will then impact the company.

Thirdly, Retailers are located at the end of a supply chain, which means that they are the closest to customers. The consequence of their position is that they are held responsible by stakeholders (mainly customers) for the upstream chain. In addition, by logic, most sustainable issues are located in the upstream supply chain. Indeed, it is the part of the Food Retail industry's supply chain that involves most people, who produce GHG emissions and consume water the most. Retailers must be aware of this and implement tools to help themselves taking responsibility and manage risks of working with suppliers that do not respect the concept of sustainability. Food Retailers have an important power as they are the ones selling products to customers. It is their duty to push their suppliers towards more responsible ways of working while at the same time not pass on higher purchasing prices to customers.

Finally, the bullwhip effect developed earlier can also be related to the concept of sustainability. Similarly to customer demand, requirements for sustainability are spread to the supply chain at different degrees. It is called the 'Green Bullwhip Effect" (Lee et al. 2014). Observation of the Green Bullwhip effect leads to three propositions. First, "*the stringency of product- and material-based environmental requirements tends to increase as they pass upstream in the supply chain*". The second proposition, "*The timeline for product-based environmental requirement tends to compress with each successive upstream tier in the supply chain*". Finally, "supply *chain responses to the green bullwhip effect vary, as the characteristics of buyer-supplier relationships differ*" (Lee et al., 2014). The Green Bullwhip effect causes different levels of pressure or requirement to companies, depending on their place in the supply chain. It means that all actors are not threatened at an equivalent level.

C. Drivers and barriers to SSCM:

Sustainability along the Supply Chain perspective is multi-layered and multi-faceted. It has implication along the whole life cycle of a product. Starting from the extraction of raw material to the usage by end customers. It exists either external or internal barriers and enablers to SSCM. In their paper "*Corporate Supply Chain Responsibility: Drivers and Barriers for Sustainable Food Retailing*", Chkanikova and Mont (2015) developed the different barriers and enablers to Sustainable Supply Chain Management and their impacts on companies. As external actors, 'Competitors', 'Customers', 'Suppliers', 'Media' and 'Sectoral' has been identified in the literature. Regarding Internal factors, 'People issues', 'Strategic issues' and 'Functional issues' are present in the literature. According to their actions or influence, they can be classified as both barriers and enablers.

D. Sustainable Supply Chain Management's impact on the Food Retail industry:

The Food Retail Industry has often been an example of industry facing important Supply Chain challenges (Beamon and Balcik, 2008). One of its challenge, is to provide food effectively and at the same time facing increasing pressure from stakeholders for environmental and ethical conduct, but also lower prices.

Sustainable issues appear in the sector while looking at numbers. For example, approximately one third of total food production is wasted along the different steps of its supply chain (Bilska, et al., 2015), this number exclude waste produced at the level of customers, which represent 20% of purchased food in the UK (WRAP, 2009). It shows issues, first on an environmental point of view. The sector is producing too much product by using limited resources. Then, it creates societal issues. In fact, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2019) claims that approximately 820 million people, representing 10,7% of the world population were starving in 2016. Most of them are living in lower- or middle-income countries but 11 million are part of developed countries. However, the Food Retail industry waste food. Finally, on an economical perspective, Retailers spend money to produce goods without creating value because it will be thrown away.

Grocery Retailers are active in a highly competitive sector. It requires them to constantly reduce costs, rethink their processes, work on their brand and reduce environmental impact. One solution is to integrate a Sustainable Supply Chain Management.

3. Implementation of a Sustainable Supply Chain Management

Previous sections have been developing the concept of Supply Chain Management and Sustainability. It brought us to the concept of Sustainable Supply Chain Management. Implementation of SSCM is relevant for Food Retailers for diverse reasons. The first being to avoid various risks but also to take advantage of competitors. Then, the development of Policies and Strategies based on sustainability is a way to reduce energy consumption and waste. It can also enable companies to protect brand reputation by avoiding scandals and negative publicity. Finally, the implementation of such a strategy will create differentiation from competitors, which is key in the Food Retail industry.

On the path of building a Sustainable Supply Chain, various steps and methods have been developed in the literature. The following section developed different areas of interest that required changes or evolution for the integration of a SSCM. The first step is to achieve strategic-fit to build consistency between supply chain capabilities and the firm's strategy. Then, we will focus on core activities that may be impacted by SSCM. Finally, as procurement is one of the departments creating the most value for Food Retailers, we will focus on the concept of Sustainable Procurement.

3.1. Strategic-fit:

According to Presutti and Mawhinney (2007), "*Any discussion of the link between corporate performance and supply chain performance must begin with strategy. Simply put, overall business (or business unit) strategy and supply chain strategy need to be aligned. Only then, can the impact of supply chain activities on corporate performance be effectively measured*". In other words, the fit between Supply Chain strategy/capabilities with the strategy of a firm will determine performance. Reaching strategic fit means that the corporate competitive strategy and the Supply Chain strategy are on the same page regarding the different objectives. **Figure 2** illustrates the different steps required to be managed to achieve strategic-fit.

Figure 2. Steps to achieve Strategic-Fit (Reuter, 2019)

The first step is about understanding supply and demand uncertainty. Managing demand uncertainty is, as previously explained, about understanding the needs of customers the company is targeting. This must be linked with supply uncertainty, which is influenced by factors that may influence how a company produced or deliver its products (capacity, quality, yields, social and environmental misconduct of suppliers, etc).

Once uncertainties have been understood, companies must build their Supply Chain capabilities accordingly (step 2). It means that they must choose between an efficient or responsive supply chain. This decision must be taken according to product characteristics. If the product is qualified as 'functional' the supply chain must be 'efficient' and if it is qualified as 'innovative' the supply chain needs to be 'responsive'. **Figure 3** illustrates different characteristics and strategies related to both types of Supply Chain. It is important to understand that a mix of the two SC capabilities is feasible.

	Efficient Supply Chains	**Responsive Supply Chains**
Primary goal	Supply demand at **lowest cost**	Respond **quickly** to demand
Product design strategy	Maximize performance at a **minimum product cost**	Create **modularity** to allow postponement of product differentiation
Pricing strategy	**Lower gross margins** because price is a prime customer driver	**Higher gross margins** because **price is not** a prime driver of customer choices
Manufacturing strategy	Lower costs through **high asset utilization** and **fix cost degression**	Maintain **capacity flexibility** to buffer against demand / supply uncertainty
Inventory strategy	Minimize inventory to **lower cost**	Maintain **buffer inventory** to deal with demand / supply uncertainty
Lead time strategy	Reduce, but not at the expense of costs	**Reduce aggressively**, even if the costs are significant
Supplier strategy	**Select** based on **cost** and quality	Select based on speed, **flexibility, reliability** and quality

Figure 3. Characteristics of efficient and responsive Supply Chains (Reuter, 2019)

Regarding the Food Retail Industry, as it sells various types of products. According to the characteristics developed in **figure 3**, an efficient Supply Chains is the most logical choice. In addition, the sector is mainly driven by price, which is an important factor for customers.

Finally, Supply Chain performances will be driven by different factors including inventory, transportation, facilities, information, sourcing, and pricing. This thesis will focus on the Sourcing/Procurement. Indeed, it is the first supply chain phase of any Food Retailers. As a result, it is the one impacting most of the other activities of Food Retailers and sustainability-related issues are frequently connected to the purchasing activities.

3.2. Core Activities:

Practices related to SSCM are spread into different functional categories, these being purchasing, product design, internal processes and manufacturing and finally logistics (Golic and Smith, 2013; Sarkis et al., 2011; Ateş et al., 20120). Accordingly, the three main activities of a Food Retailer's supply chain are Sourcing and Procurement, Logistics and Retailing (Devaux, 2019).

A. Sourcing and Procurement:

It is the first supply chain phase of any Retailer. It is related to the action of buying the products they want to sell to customers (national brand[2]) or buying raw material for the production of their own products (private label[3]). At this stage, the main objective is buying the right item, at the right price, and in the right quantity. In addition, products need to be purchased in the right conditions, at the right place, and at the right time. Being able to do so, efficient demand management is needed, to make sure that products are not wasted or being stock to much time. In fact, if a product does not find a customer willing to pay for it, all value that has been created will be lost.

Demand management is an important challenge for workers in the sourcing and procurement departments. Various dimensions can imply demand uncertainty. It is about identifying the needs of the segment Food Retailers target. These needs must be different regarding the period of the year, weather or even promotions. Dimensions affecting demand uncertainty are (Reuter, 2019):

- Quantity of product required by customers
- Response time customers are willing to give
- Variety of product required by customers
- Service level demanded by customers
- Price customers are willing to pay for a product
- Level of innovation desired by customers

2 A product with a particular brand name that is available all over the country, rather than just in one area (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020)

3 Used to describe goods that are sold using the name of the store, etc. that sells them, rather than the name of the manufacturer (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020)

B. Logistics :

Logistics can be viewed in many ways, depending on Retailers. According to the French association for logistics, "*Logistics is the set of activities aimed at putting in place, at the best cost, a quantity of products, where and when a demand exists. It concerns all operations that determine the movement of products, such as the location of plants and warehouses, procurement, physical management of work in progress, packaging, storage, stock management, handling, order preparation, transport and delivery rounds*" (ASLOG, as cited by De Wolf, 2020). These activities are key for Grocery Retailers. Indeed, it is the activity that enables Retailers to deliver their shops with the right product in the right quantity at the right moment.

C. Retailing :

This activity is the key one of any Retailers as their core business is 'Retailing'. It is about selling product in shop. It is the stage in which Grocery Retailers have direct contacts with their customers. Moreover, it is the place where they have the opportunity to influence customers and to know their preferences (Juhl, Kristensen and Ostergaard, 2002). Data collection will drive further performance. Using Information technology can be a good tool (Grewal, Roggeveen and Norfalt, 2017), to better understand customers at this stage. It will have an influence on the whole supply chain. Nevertheless, it is important for Retailers to understand that the activity of Retailing will change in the future with upcoming technology or trend (Accenture, 2019).

3.3. Sustainable procurement:

A. Procurement:

It exists two main reasons to focus on procurement while implementing a Sustainable Supply Chain Management. The first is, according to C. Reuter (2019), sustainability-related issues are frequently connected to purchasing activities, which means that they are linked to purchasing and procurement activities. Managing these issues includes a good understanding of the different purchasing categories, their impact, and the role they have on the organization. In addition, a development about the understanding of alternative sources of supply is required. There is also a need to define objectives and targets, develop supply strategies and targets to monitor progress.

The second reason to focus on the procurement department is, according to Leon-Bavo, et. Al (2017), various authors argued that to succeed on the path to sustainability, Supply Chain collaboration among actors is required. Collaboration referred to the interactions (upstream or downstream) between members of a supply chain for common sustainable goals (Vachon and Klassen, 2008). The establishment of a successful relationship will start with the identification of participants and the desired goals to reach. The challenge is that sustainable objectives or strategies will be different regarding the place in the supply chain or the different tiers (Barratt, 2004). The collaboration will be primarily managed by the procurement department. Indeed, it is the one which communicates with either suppliers (upstream) and point of sales (downstream) in the Food Retail industry but also with the logistics and selling department.

B. Sustainable procurement definitions:

Becoming sustainable for Food Retailers require, as shown earlier, concrete action from the procurement department towards the adoption of a Sustainable Procurement strategy. Sustainable Procurement is defined as:

"*the adoption and integration of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) principles into your procurement processes and decisions while also ensuring, they meet the requirements of your company and its stakeholders*". In addition, "*it integrates requirements, specifications and criteria that are compatible with the protection of the environment and the society. It is not simply about not using child labor or illegal chemicals that can damage the environment and people's health*." (Ecovadis, 2020).

C. Pressures for sustainable procurement:

The Food Retail industry is characterized by intensive competition and endures pressure for cost reduction. To respond to that, Retailers rely on a global supply base (Krause, Pagell and Curkovic, 2001). Recently, authors have explored risks within the field of purchasing, supply management, and global sourcing. These risks derived from suppliers' misconduct for ethical and environmental standards (Reuter et al., 2010). The actual trend for sustainability puts pressure on companies to become more sustainable. It means that companies must become more sustainable, but they also have to make sure that they are working with sustainable company, outside their boundaries. As a result, firms must make sure that their suppliers' operations are sustainable or become more sustainable. As mentioned earlier, the consequences of a suppliers' misconduct can influence the buying firm. According to Carter and Jennings (2004) and Koplin et al. (2007), it can lead to "*adverse publicity, reputational damage and costly legal obligations*" (as cited in Reuter et al., 2010).

Pressures for sustainability are dynamic, which means that stakeholders' interest in environmental and social standards frequently change (Hall, 2000). Being able to respond to pressure variability, required firms to create organizational capabilities. It will enable them to detect changes in corporate responsibilities requirements and to take into account those changes in their sourcing activities (Porter and van der Linde, 1995; Litz, 1996; Hall, 2000). According to Eisenhardt and Martin (2000), building a long-term competitive advantage required to develop and apply capabilities "*sooner, more astutely, or more fortuitously than competitors*". It referred to Dynamic Capabilities view, defined as "*firm's capacity to integrate, build and reconfigure internal and external resources using organizational processes to respond to changes in the competitive environment and to design new value-creating strategies*" (Teece et al., 1997; Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000).

Although there is an increasing pressure for companies to operate in a more sustainable way, people working in the procurement department are facing a dilemma. On the one hand, management asks them to engage in responsible sourcing, respecting the three pillars of sustainability. On the other hand, they get pressure to cut costs to increase margin. Research of Goebel et al. (2018) analyses 'How does this conflict of interest affect the buying behavior of professional purchasers?' and 'Which environmental and social factors influence the purchasers' decision-making?'. Results show that the drivers of the Willingness to Pay for Sustainability are:

- Individual Values
- Individual Characteristics
- Professional Characteristics
- Firm related Characteristics (size, industry sector, position in the SC and ethical culture).

D. Trends:

In the report "*Scaling Up Sustainable Procurement*" (**appendix 3**) published by Ecovadis (2017), buyers' and suppliers' visions for sustainability are expressed. It represents results of a survey regarding the evolution (between 2013 and 2017) of procurement-related function. Respondents are buyers from 150 MNCs/Brands and suppliers spread in more than 100 countries. Responses were spread in different sectors (14% in the manufacturing sector, 13% in the Retail and consumer goods, 12% in services and 9% in ICT/telecommunications). The results of this survey show actual tools in placed regarding sustainability, different perceptions buyers or customers have regarding sustainability, etc. Key findings of this survey show that:

- The main priorities for procurement organizations are Cost savings, Compliance and Risk reduction. However, Value creation and Sustainability & CSR interests increased.
- The main factors driving Sustainable Procurement practices are Brand reputation, Risk mitigation and Compliance. It means that buyers are mainly driven by a defensive mechanism.
- Importance of CSR criteria in the last three years: Social/Labor and Business Ethics are rising. In the past, Environment was the main criteria. The shifting focus shows that buyers are more and more concerned about the three pillars of sustainability.
- Tools implemented to support Sustainable Procurement are Categories/Countries risk evaluation models, Supplier audit program and corrective actions plans, Supplier self-assessment, Suppliers Sustainability databases OR scorecards provided by 3rd parties, Participation in industry initiatives and Total Cost models including sustainable development criteria (Life Cycle Analysis). The weight of the different tools shows that it is still a push approach and that collaboration among actors is lacking.
- Suppliers' perception of CSR requests of their customers: the two dominant opinions are "Sustainability is important to them on paper, but they don't do enough to create real change" and "sustainability is top of mind and they actively partner with us to improve".
- Sustainable procurement goals are "set targets for buyers/category managers on supplier CSR monitoring and/or performance", "targets are defined for suppliers on CSR performance", "Sustainability measures integrated into balanced scorecard approach", and "Long-term goals set for most suppliers".

- CSR data and indicators integration: most information is used only for allocating the contract in the beginning.
- Depth of supply chain visibility regarding CSR/Sustainability: buyers get good visibility of tier-one supplier but when going further visibility decrease.

This multisectoral survey shows that sustainable concerns increase during the analyzed period. Moreover, the integration of the three pillars of sustainability increase, in the past the focus was mainly on the environment. However, buyers perceive sustainability as a defensive tool. In addition, suppliers do not perceive significant action from buyers toward sustainability. Indeed, data collection about sustainability is mainly use at the beginning of collaboration between a buyer and a supplier. It leads to a lack of collaboration and concrete actions.

This study shows a lack of understanding and education about sustainability. Companies must understand the advantages related to SSCM. Engagement in sustainable procurement enables business to include core values that are going to be integrated along its Supply Chain but also the entire life cycle of its products. The best way to prove long term engagement towards sustainability is to implement sustainable policies that are going to be shared outside firms' boundaries (Ecovadis, 2020).

4. Sustainable Supply Chain Management in practice

Achieving corporate sustainability in the Food Retail Industry, require firms to build Sustainable Supply Chain Management program. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, most sustainable issues are located among the Supply Chain, most specifically in the upstream part. Responsibility to manage this particular part is taken by the procurement department, composed in the Food Retail industry by Buyers. The implementation of programs related to SSCM engage Retailers with direct suppliers, sub-tier suppliers, and raw material extractors to achieve a maximization of social, environmental, and ethical impact (United Nations, 2015). Indeed, according to Duffy et al. (2013), Suppliers are important actors that companies need to take into consideration to complete sustainability through collaboration. A successful implementation and execution of sustainable operations need to be built on collaborative relationships among the Supply Chain to create shared value between a focal firm[4] and its

4 Companies governing over the supply chains, providing direct contact to end customers, and having bargain power over other actors in the supply chain (Christiansen, 2015).

suppliers. The creation of shared value pushes suppliers to change their process by using new technologies and reduce costs of research and development (Handfield and Nichols, 2002 as cited in Berning and Venter 2015). It leads to the amelioration of the suppliers' sustainability but also for the entire supply chain. But, achieving value maximization implies buyers to build long-term relationships with key suppliers (Porter and Kramer, 2011).

Supply Chain collaboration suggests that organizations work together to achieve common goals and solve common issues (Ramanathan et al., 2014; Barratt, 2004; Cao and Zhang, 2011). However, various authors identify the complexity of building collaboration. The difficulty aims from the fact that, it requires to choose the right partner at the right time. In addition, it is necessary to think about the reasons and the way to collaborate (Barratt, 2004).

Barratt (2004), developed two kinds of supply chain collaboration. On the one hand, vertical collaboration with upstream and/or downstream actors. On the other hand, horizontal collaboration with external parties such as organization and/or competitors. In addition, because it required important investment, he advised to focus on a few strong relationships and not trying to build collaboration with all stakeholders.

To help companies developing collaborations, the United Nations (2015) wrote a guide called "*Supply Chain Sustainability: A Practical Guide for Continuous Improvement"*. It developed four steps, based on the 10 principles of the UN Global Compact into strategies and operations (**appendix 4**), that companies must complete to achieve SSCM. The four identified phases are (1) Commitment, (2) Assess, (3) Define and Implement, and (4) Measure and Communicate. These are not linear and must be considered as minimal actions to which many other tools can be added. The guide is based on three key principles of SSCM, that need to be present at every step. Those are governance, transparency, and engagement. In addition, it focuses on the upstream part of the SC. It means that a focus has been made on the relation firms have with their suppliers and tiers suppliers.

The purpose of the guide is not to advice buyers on what they may or may not buy but rather from whom and how they buy products, raw material, inputs, etc. It can be used to know the level of collaboration between firms and its suppliers. Moreover, it also guides and advises managers with a clear procedure they need to follow to accomplish SSCM program.

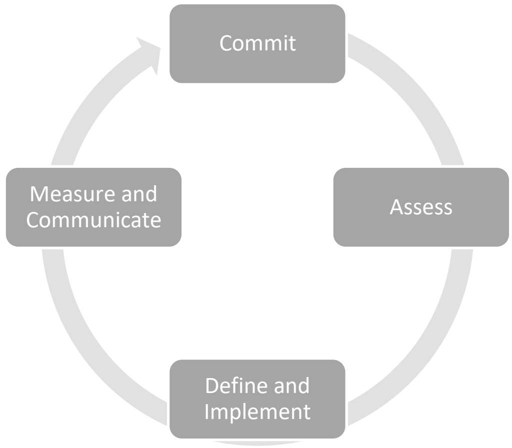


Figure 4. Four steps companies must complete to achieve SSCM (United Nations, 2015)

4.1. Commitment:

The first step on the path of developing SSCM program is about understanding the environment, determine vision and objectives, and set expectations for the Supply Chain. This phase is primordial to help companies detect risks that can happen in their SC, evaluate those risks and detect opportunities. In addition, it is necessary that companies put in place internal capabilities to manage further steps. The Commitment phase has to take into account the firm but also elements that can influence the different actors of its Supply Chain. This step is divided in three sub section: Business case, vision and objectives, and expectations.

A. Business case :

The development of Business Cases helps to build internal resources for achieving SSCM objectives. Indeed, it create awareness of the different risks that companies can meet but also, detect drivers for SSCM. The most common drivers and risks are exposed in **figure 5.**

Sustainability-related risks	Sustainability-driven productivity	Sustainability-advantaged growth
- Maintain social license to operate - Meet existing and emerging legal and reporting requirement - Minimize business disruption from environmental, social and economic impacts Protect company's reputation and brand value; meet investors' and stakeholders' expectations	- Reduce cost of material inputs, energy, transportation - Increase labour productivity - Create efficiency across supply chains	- Meet evolving customer and business partner requirements - Innovate for changing market

Figure 5. Most common drivers and risks for Sustainable Supply Chain Management (United Nations, 2015)

The development of Business Case is about analyzing the landscape, through the use of due diligence. It aims at understanding internal and external elements such as peers' actions towards sustainability and collaboration opportunities. It enables companies to understand existing processes in place within the industry, the region, the operational context in which they operate but also detect risks. To guide this due diligence process, at least few questions need to be answered:

- What are companies' sourcing and from where?
- What are the key products and services? What are their risks and impacts?
- Is the company sourcing directly or indirectly (by using third parties)? Number and size of third parties?
- In which sector or region take place the company's operations? What are the risks and impacts on people, environmental, and governance in this area?
- What is the visibility of the firm beyond direct suppliers?

In addition, companies must understand stakeholders' expectations. Investors and customers are the main drivers for the implementation of SSCM program. However, many other stakeholders must be taken into consideration. Indeed, societal, environmental, and economic issues are often detected earlier by Stakeholders than from business actors. Good communication with stakeholders enables firms to detect sooner than competitors sustainability issues and give them the opportunity to build an action plan before others.

B. Vision and objectives :

The previous analysis offered companies a better understanding of the environment in which they operate but also a better understanding of what stakeholders expect. Based on these observations, companies need to define a vision and objectives to obtain a clear direction to follow when building SSCM program. This vision must be decided in consultancy of different parts of the business e.g. marketing, supply chain, logistics, procurement, human resources, finance, etc. Some question to guide building a vision are:

- What the company wants to achieve with a SSCM program?
- What are the results the company wants in long term?
- How SSCM will support the overall business strategy?

As a result, the vision must be aligned with the value and ethics of the company. In addition, the minimum requirements are to respect international prerequisites of environmental, social and labor rights.

C. Expectations :

Companies need to elaborate guidelines to give suppliers and employees clear direction to achieve their vision of SSCM. A minimum set of expectations are to respect laws and avoid environmental and social harm. By implementing expectations to suppliers, companies make sure that products, operations and services provided by their suppliers will not affect their own business because of any misconduct.

In practice, expectations towards suppliers have to be written in the form of a Supplier Code of Conduct. It will enable both parties to make better informed decisions in the future. The UN Global Compact Ten principles developed different areas that need to be developed in a Supplier Code of Conduct. These are Human Rights and Labour, Environment, and Anti-corruption. Each topic that need to be covered are developed in **appendix 5.** However, this list is not exhaustive because each element will depend on the industry companies operate in.

The elaboration of a Supplier Code of Conduct includes the following steps:

1. Involvement of top management
2. Discussions with stakeholders
3. Building the code based on international requirements

4. Creating a draft in collaboration with multiple departments' managers (marketing, logistics, quality, procurement, legal, etc)
5. Sharing the code with different teams and most specifically with supply chain-related function
6. Spreading the code along the whole Supply Chain. Thus, suppliers need to apply similar expectations to their own suppliers.
7. Consult external sources
8. Set clear expectations for claims and for informed workplaces

After the creation of a Code of Conduct, its usage needs to be implemented. Good usage of it enables companies to achieve desired goals. To do so, it must be used as a base for setting internal and external requirements and as a tool to build relationships with suppliers and other stakeholders. First, it needs to be communicated internally to generate awareness for all employees. Indeed, employees are the ones that are going to apply it to external organizations. They need to be familiar with it to properly communicate the code to suppliers and to be able to explain what requirements they must meet. Various ways to communicate a Supplier Code of Conduct are developed in the guide:

- Once communication at the creation or changes of the code
- Present the code when starting a relationship with a supplier
- Add the code in specific contracts clauses
- Regular meetings to review the code
- Yearly confirmation from suppliers that they meet requirements stated in the code

4.2. Assess :

The second phase is the assessment and more specifically the scope definition of the SSCM program. Supply Chain Management is a complex topic involving multiple areas of business and actors. Accordingly, companies need to detect areas of its Supply Chain that can be the most impacted by sustainability issues. As mentioned, authors advice to concentrate on a few collaborations rather than trying to collaborate with everyone. This phase helps companies to choose among its suppliers the ones to collaborate with. At this level, it is important that companies have deep knowledge about their entire supply chain and identify where are the sustainability issues.

Acquiring knowledge about its supply chain require the creation of a mapping including all actors of the 'Ultimate Supply Chain', including their location. As mention earlier, Supply Chain has become more and more complex. Mapping an 'Ultimate SC' require many information coming from all actors. Firms must share with and ask information to their suppliers to be able to complete this task. The final result must give a clear picture of where and how raw material, products and services that a company buy are coming from.

Then, companies must concentrate on areas that carry the most risks. Analyzing all areas enable firms to identify the places where risks are mainly located regarding the three pillars of Sustainability. By doing so, companies will be able to build actions plan to manage these risks. Assessing risks through a risk matrix (**figure 6**) will give a clear image of all the risks that may impact the supply chain and enables managers to implement program to avoid most important risks.

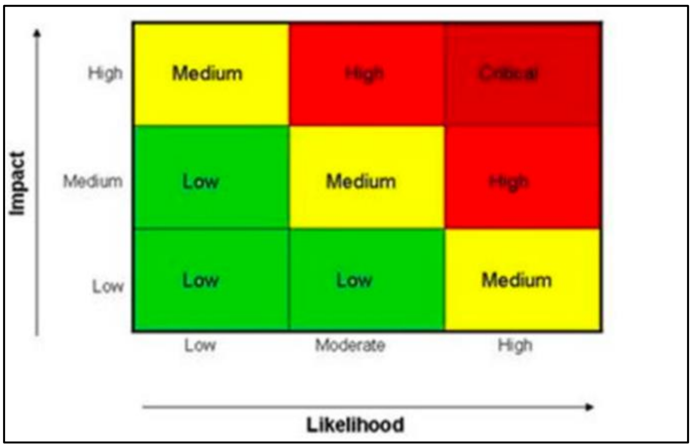


Figure 6. Sample Risk Matrix (Desmet, 2019)

4.3. Define and Implement:

At this level, the two previous steps must be completed to enable companies developing their relationships with suppliers. Previous steps gave the opportunity to detect key areas for action. Accordingly, after the identification, it is time for action and start collaboration with suppliers. At this level, companies need to engage with suppliers, achieve strategic-fit and communicate requirement, and finally build partnership and collaboration with stakeholders.

A. Engagement

The purpose of this phase is to create common ideas of sustainability issues, to create suppliers' awareness of their own sustainability, but also to create "*supplier's ownership of their sustainability vision, strategy, and performance*". Engaging on the path to SSCM with suppliers requires various steps **(figure 7)**. It is a process that required continuous engagement and improvement to attain the goals.

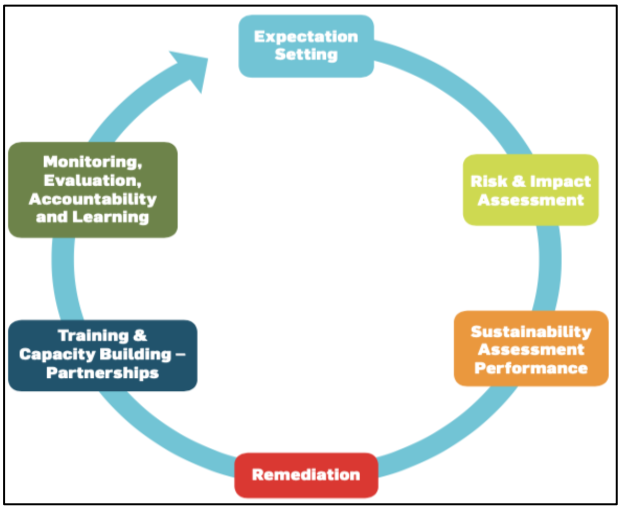


Figure 7. Supplier engagement and continuous improvement (United Nations, 2015)

1. Expectation setting: transmission of sustainable requirement to suppliers, acceptance of the supplier code of conduct from suppliers, and incorporate it into specific contract clauses.
2. Risk and impact assessment: choosing the supply chain areas in which there are the greatest risks of misconduct regarding the three pillars of sustainable development.
3. Sustainability assessment performance: measure suppliers' sustainable performance by using technics such as audit, self-assessment, surveys, …
4. Remediation: build collaboration with suppliers to improve performance
5. Training and capacity building/partnerships: collaborate with suppliers to enable them to improve their performances
6. Monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning: analyzing results of the program in place to make sure it has a real impact on the three pillars of sustainable development and most specifically on the goals set earlier

B. Alignment and Follow-up

It is crucial that SSCM strategy and business strategy have aligned goals. This referred to Strategic-Fit developed in section 3.1 of this thesis. Indeed, misaligned goals or strategy inside a company can negatively impact internal and supplier's performances. For example, if there is a last-minute change in order size because of a miss strategic-fit, the supplier will need for example to ask workers working over hours, impacting their wellbeing. When companies put in place a SSCM program, all functions and suppliers need to be aligned with the sustainable strategy. Accordingly, requirements have to be feasible so that suppliers will still meet expected performance level.

As mentioned, the department with the closest contact with suppliers is the procurement department. That implies that buyers will have the responsibility to communicate requirements to suppliers and make sure they respect these. Buyers dispose of four tools to push the Supply Chain a step further on the path to sustainability:

1. Select new suppliers based on their sustainability practices
2. Develop current suppliers to improve their performances
3. Take sustainability aspects while working on the range of products and negotiates contracts
4. Incentivize suppliers to proactively manage their own SSCM

C. Collaboration and Partnerships :

Some issues related to sustainability are difficult to manage for a single company. In this sense, the guide recommends building industry collaboration and creating partnerships with various stakeholders. Collaboration and Partnerships can help the overall supply chain to become more sustainable by increasing the overall performance and efficiency by joining resources, decrease duplication, and creating common messages.

It exists many ways to collaborate in an industry. The most common collaborations are "Best practices sharing" and "Joint standards and Implementation". The first being about sharing existing knowledges that have been successful in another SSCM program. The second is about the creation of common standards inside an industry (e.g. common Supplier code of conduct, common audit, etc.). It is particularly important in sectors in which suppliers are working with multiple clients which are part of the same industry (e.g. Food retail industry). Collaboration has great benefits but can also have multiple risks (**figure 8).**

Benefits	Risks
- Leverage with suppliers - Credibility with stakeholders - Resources sharing	- Internal commitment - Resources draining - Unwillingness to change course - antitrust

Figure 8. Benefits and Risks in collaboration (United Nations, 2015)

The creation of partnerships with multiple stakeholders can also be a good tool for companies. Indeed, it can help companies having a better understanding of sustainable issues, help them to get feedbacks about possible actions, help companies having multiple sources of information, but also increase power. In addition, a partnership may also help authorities to build regulations and give them advice regarding challenges professionals encounter in their daily activities.

4.4. Measure and Communicate :

The previous steps created a clear understanding of what to do while building SSCM program and the actors that must be taken into account. Assuring that the program is efficient and that suppliers are acting accordingly, is key to achieve long term sustainable goals. This step is about measuring performances and communicate about achievements and future challenges.

The evaluation of performances required firms to collect data over time. These data need to be collected on suppliers but also on buyers to see evolution and achievement of the program. This step can be challenging, particularly in the collection of information from the suppliers' side. Firms must start by analyzing existing metrics to make sure those are given the needed information. Indeed, these metrics need to be clear to enable efficient interpretation and a good overview of the evolution. Then, a standardization of the collected data must be done. Indeed, it will be difficult for firms to analyze data with a common purpose that are built on different metrics. That will enable firm gathering information from different part of its own business and supplier and then aggregate these together.

Finally, sustainable performance and progress must be communicated with stakeholders. The creation of such report will incentivize all actors of the SC towards sustainability and transparency. According to the Guide "S*upply Chain Sustainability: A Practical Guide for Continuous Improvement",* Sustainable reporting is*" the practice of measuring and disclosing and being accountable to internal and external stakeholders for organizational performance towards the goal of sustainable development"*.

5. Sustainable Supply Chain Management in the Food Retail industry:

The implementation of a Sustainable Supply Chain required the steps exposed in section 4. The focus of this thesis is on the Food Retail industry. To match this industry and the steps above, two interviews have been made with buyers from two different companies (A and B) (**Appendix 6**). The purpose is to analyze where Food Retailers stand on the path of the implementation of a Sustainable Supply Chain and most specifically regarding the UN guide "*Supply Chain Sustainability: A Practical Guide for Continuous Improvement"*.

5.1. Commitment:

The analysis made in prior sections of this thesis, as well as both interviews, revealed that the Food Retail industry is such a highly competitive industry. This push Retailers to collect abundant data about the market, customers, and competitors. That means that, the development of Business cases is deeply ingrained in Retailers' way of working. Indeed, both buyers claim to have good knowledge of the competition and more specifically about what is done on the market regarding sustainable actions. However, there is a lack of structure and consistency regarding due diligence process. Indeed, buyer from company B claims that they normally do not need information about sub tiers suppliers, despite when quality issues or doubt occur about a product. This proves the point mention earlier that the implementation of a Sustainable Supply Chain is often a defensive comportment. Indeed, the due diligence process is done after an issue occurred, which is too late. A due diligence has the objective to prevent risks by early detection. In the case of Food Retailers, it seems that this tool is used after an issue has occurred.

Regarding the vision and direction that need to be settled, firm A and B have different ways to set a direction for a SSCM program. On the one hand, company A has clear objectives mainly on environmental aspects and develop new concepts. Indeed, they aim to provide new products that are environmentally friendly. On the other hand, company B gets no specific direction. According to buyer B: "*We follow the market, if we see a demand or that competitors' sales increase for a biological product for example, we will try to offer Biological products. But if there is no demand, we will not change anything".* An explanation of this difference can be that both companies have different commercial concepts and that their sizes are different. Indeed, firm A is one of the top Belgian Retailers, while firm B is a challenger even though its market share skyrocketed in the past three years.

When coming to the subject of setting expectations through a Supplier Code of Conduct, both firms explained that there is no such document that suppliers must respect. However, they use specific clauses in the contract that link them with Suppliers. According to buyer A, the objective is to work with suppliers that have at least the same values and Corporate Social Responsibility than the company. However, these requirements are the minimum required by law, no more.

These elements show that Food Retailers are not completing the first step of the *Supply Chain Sustainability: A Practical Guide for Continuous Improvement.* Even if it exists an analysis of Business cases, there is a lack of recurrence. In the past years, Retailers developed their commercial strategies and integrated more responsible products. But they are mainly focusing on the environmental pillar. However, social and economic pillars must be integrated to complete sustainability. Regarding expectations, there is no supplier code of conduct. Retailers ask their suppliers to respect the law, but do not push it any further. It is a defensive attitude to make sure they are not liable for any misconduct when sustainability issues occur.

An improvement regarding the first step seems required in the Food Retail industry. It includes a systematic due diligence, the inclusion of the three pillars while developing vision and objective. But also, the development of a Supplier Code of Conduct to communicate and set expectations clearly to suppliers.

5.2. Assess:

Mapping food Retailers' Supply Chain is an important step to get a clear image of where and how raw material, product, and services are coming from. It is primordial for firm to detect areas in which risk is the most present. However, both buyers assert to know their national brands' direct suppliers but, in most cases, they do not attempt to go behind and include sub tiers suppliers. In the case of private label, they developed a broader view of all products' components. Indeed, according to buyer A "*we work on our private labels to develop healthier and less chemical recipes, and to develop more environmentally friendly packaging*". The issue is that national brands are the most present in most Retailers' shop.

The detection of the riskier areas of the supply chain is key in this phase to detect and concentrate effort where it is the most needed. The main issues concerning Food Retailers is that they do not have a clear image of all their Supply Chain. The decomposition of the procurement department in the Food Retail industry is made regarding the type of product. Some buyers will focus for example on snaking, others on shower gel. The product range of each category is composed of national brands for which they do not get all the needed information to create a mapping, and of private label for which they manage most part of the supply chain. However, as buyer B mention, there is an opportunity to collect such information: "*if we ask a question about the origin of a product, suppliers normally give us the information, unless it is confidential*".

Even though it is feasible for Retailers to map their supply chain, buyers do not collect this kind of information, especially for national brands. Collecting these informations will enable them the detect where risks are. It is not because they work with a national and reputed brand that there are no risks. For example, it happens that a famous chocolate brand claims to forbid child labor. However, one of its sub tiers supplier located in Romania employed kids. There is an important need for retailers to collect more information about their Supply Chain to push suppliers being more careful about any misconduct.

5.3. Define and implement:

Engaging with suppliers is critical on the path of building a Sustainable Supply Chain. As previous steps are not entirely completed by the food retail industry, it is complex for Retailers to complete this phase. However, few elements are already in place but are not totally linked to sustainability. Indeed, while looking at the steps needed to engage with suppliers, Retailers proceed most of them but are focusing mainly on commercial aspects. The expectations that are settled about sustainability are the minimum required by the law. The purpose of the engagement is to collaborate and increase performance. However, there is a lack of sustainability concerned regarding relationships between Retailers and Suppliers. Buyer B says: "*We work with an external party to evaluate suppliers and our suppliers evaluate us. But this evaluation is about our commercial relationship and products. There is nothing about sustainability*".

As mentioned in the previous section, one of the key elements in building SSCM is achieving strategic-fit. This is one of the main drawbacks for Food Retailers because of their commercial concepts. Indeed, the competition in the sector is intense, and Retailers must have a clear concept to differentiate themselves from competitors. The most common way to compete is to play on prices. There are Retailers called Hard Discounter, offering very low prices and others that offer products at a higher price and intend to offer better quality. However, one of the main criteria for customers is the price (Buyers A and B). According to buyer B, it is a drawback in the implementation of a Sustainable Supply Chain because the price of sustainable products is higher than the regular one. It creates complexity for food Retailers, that offer products at low prices to their customers, to include those types of products. This shows a lack of education of the concept of Sustainability in the sector. First, because as mentioned earlier, being sustainable is not only about offering sustainable products. Second, achieving the implementation of a Sustainable Supply Chain has many advantages including cost reduction. It means that by being more sustainable, Retailers should still have the opportunity to offer products at low prices because sustainability creates costs reduction in a different area of their business.

Both interviews revealed that collaboration with suppliers is feasible and sometimes even implemented regarding own brands. However, there is an important issue regarding national brands. Indeed, buyer B says: "*We need to offer national brands in our shops. Imposing requirements to these brands about sustainability is very difficult*". This pint out the need to build collaboration among food Retailers to increase their power while negotiating with national brands. It already exists a procurement collaboration composed by few Retailers but the purpose of it is to buy in bigger quantity to decrease purchasing prices and then increase margin.

The main lack of this step is the collaboration to improve overall performances. Retailers developed there owns brands by building collaboration with small suppliers. However, the biggest part of their revenues is coming from national brands with whom they collaborate only on commercial objectives.

5.4. Measure and Communicate:

Performance measurement is the final step of the process of implementing a sustainable Supply Chain. To properly implementing it, prior steps need to be done. As the Food Retailers do not complete previous steps, they are not able to measure sustainable performance properly. It exists monitoring systems, but these are based on commercial and technicalities. The completion of the implementation of a SSCM requires the food Retail industry to create a homogenous measurement system between all stakeholders.

Regarding communication, most Retailers publish a Sustainability report on a regular basis. However, these documents are focusing on minimum requirements settled by law and most specifically on the environmental pillar. In addition, these reports often concerned the new type of stores that are developed. Indeed, there is an increasing number of new concept store that focus on Biological products or freshness. These concepts took the environmental pillar into consideration but do not expand to the social and economic ones. Finally, the lack of homogeneity in the measurement system creates difficulty to build and understand those reports.

6. Discussion

The implementation of a Sustainable Supply Chain requires to follow the steps exposed in the guide "*Supply Chain Sustainability: A Practical Guide for Continuous Improvement*". However, Food Retailers are only partially completing these steps and claim themselves to not even completed entirely the first phase. The literature review and the two interviews have enabled us to detect two main reasons for this drawback. On the one hand, there is a lack of education about sustainability. On the other hand, there is a mismatch between the corporate strategy and the supply chain strategy. Food Retailers feel pressure coming from suppliers with higher purchasing prices and from customers that want low prices.

First of all, most measures taken by food retailers towards sustainability are linked to the environmental pillar. It appears that one of the main drawbacks of completing the guide is related to a lack of education about the concept of sustainability along the whole Supply Chain. Indeed, buyers claim to know a bit of the concept but are mostly acting in a sustainable way on a personal matter. The issue is that sustainability is often not rotted into food Retailers' DNA and that they act mostly on the environmental perspective without integrating the two other pillars of sustainability. The United Nations (2003) emphasizing that "*education is an indispensable element for achieving sustainable development*". In this matter, UNESCO (2005) developed four ways to educate the subject of sustainability. The first two are about rethinking the actual education system and providing access to quality information to a larger number of people. Then to create awareness of sustainability for all stakeholders. And finally, to train and develop Retailers' employees. Implementation of a Sustainable Supply Chain required employees to be aware of the concept of sustainability, developed in section two of this thesis. A better education will create awareness of the topics and will lead to a better integration of the three pillars into the food Retail industry. This integration must take place at an organizational level. At the moment, individuals' values are dominant regarding the willingness to pay for sustainability (Goebel et al., 2018). Food Retailers may include it into their DNA to embrace action toward the implementation of a SSCM at a corporate level. Education can be implemented in various ways. It is important that employees feel that the top management is willing to act towards sustainability, clear communication and involvement from them should incentivize employees to act in this direction. In addition, building a training program for all employees is a key element to have the entire organization involved on the path of building a SSCM. The purposes of such a program are to provide deep knowledge of the subject, link regulations and laws with Food Retailers' operations, and develop a sense of ownership from all employees of the taken measures (Desmet, 2019).

Then, the implementation of a Sustainable Supply Chain in the food Retail industry encounters a drawback because of the intense competition on the market. The main weapons to fight in the sector are the price and the range of products. On the one hand, the prices of sustainable products are higher than the regular ones. This is an important drawback for Retailers that may be careful at products' prices offer to customers. Indeed, prices are one of the most important criteria for customers. On the other hand, the range of product is composed of two types of products, private labels and national brands. As the implementation of a SSCM require collaboration, it can be very difficult to collaborate or set strict requirement to national brands. Indeed, these are responsible for an important part of Retailers' turnover. It is difficult to consider taking the risk to not proposed these products because customers are willing to purchase them. A solution to counter this issue is to develop private brands and increase their place in the product range. Indeed, it is easier for food Retailers to control the Supply Chain of product that they produce themselves. The reasons are that these Supply Chains and suppliers are smaller, so it is easier to set strict expectations and to collaborate with them towards the implementation of a Sustainable Supply Chain. However, this should take a long time because the buying behavior must change. Indeed, customers are deeply attracted by national brands. In addition, as it is difficult for Food Retailers to consider removing national brands, they must collaborate together to push their common suppliers to take more sustainable actions. It already exists a Retailers buying corporation called 'Agecore'. However, the main purpose of this alliance is to negotiate on prices. Developing similar collaboration that will push suppliers to integrate the concept of Sustainable Supply Chain would have a significant impact. Indeed, by gathering their efforts, Food Retailers would have a substantial power on suppliers to impose them requirements based on sustainability. In addition, this type of collaboration will be a great opportunity regarding the UN guide. Indeed, one important challenge is related to the variety of measurement systems and requirements suppliers are facing. Such collaboration between Retailers will enable one measurement system and a common set of requirements.

7. Conclusion :

The aim of this thesis was to analyze how the Food Retail industry could implement a Sustainable Supply Chain Management. Various tools are available for companies to take action toward sustainability. However, the literature review guides this analysis to focus on procurement activities. Indeed, most sustainable issues occurred in the upstream part of the Supply Chain. This requires Food Retailers to build strong relationships with their suppliers. Engaging with suppliers and sub tiers suppliers requires Retailers to follow various steps exposed in the UN guide called "*Supply Chain Sustainability: A Practical Guide for Continuous Improvement*".

The application of the UN's guide on Belgian Food Retailers has been analyzed by means of two interviews with experienced buyers. It showed the presence of important drawbacks on the path of implementing a Sustainable Supply Chain Management in the Food Retail industry.

Firstly, there is an important lack of education. Indeed, buyers do not have deep enough knowledge related to the concept of sustainability. Also, Food Retailers do not include the entire topics of sustainability. Most taken measures are concerned with the environmental pillar and do not include the economic and social ones. The lack of education has been exposed also by the fact that both buyers claim that there is an obstacle to becoming more sustainable because of the prices. However, it exists various advantages of sustainable development, including cost reduction.

Secondly, achieving strategic fit is a key element to collaborate efficiently with suppliers. However, there is an important miss-match between Retailers' strategy and their Supply Chain strategy. To compete in the sector, prices and the product range are key elements. The main issue comes from the fact that an important percentage of products offer to customers are produced by national brands. This leads to an ultimate supply chain involving multiple actors. Managing such an important number of suppliers and sub tiers suppliers increase the complexity of implementing a SSCM.

Various solutions have been identified. First, providing trainings to buyer about the concept of sustainability. It will increase interest for the subject and lead the whole organization and the entire Supply Chain to implement such program. Second, Food Retailers have to increase their power while facing national brands' producers and developed their own brand to reduce the size of the Supply Chain. It will enable them to have more control over the different steps and prevent risks of misconduct. Third, both interviewed reviled that buyers do not have clear sustainability related instructions. It is important that Food Retailers' senior management get involved and set clear guidelines to buyers. Last but not least, most Food Retailers counts common national brands in their suppliers data base. The creation of a Retailers' committee with representatives from all Retailers working towards a common sustainability program would be a key advancement for the sector.

This thesis brought a clear image of the main issues Food Retailers faced while building SSCM and applied a practical guide that helps to implement a SSCM. However, different aspects must be studied in the future.

First, the education of sustainability in the Food Retail industry. It exists studies that developed the importance of education to achieve sustainability, but none are focusing on the Food Retail industry and on practical tools that would help Food Retailers.

Second, a common trend is to focus on smaller Food Supply Chain and the consumption of local products. The globalization creates international sources of procurement for national brands. The question is how Food Retailers can continue offering these kinds of products by more local sourcing?
Third, this study exposed the importance of collaboration on the path to sustainability. As a highly competitive sector, it is very difficult to build collaboration between Retailers. A study of the existing collaborations would be interesting to detect future collaboration that can be built in the Food Retail industry.
Fourth, it exists national brands that managed to achieve a high score regarding sustainable performance (Be Corporation certification). It would be interesting to study to implementation of such certification on Food Retailers.

The limits of this thesis are link to the fact that there is no clear definition or model to implement a Sustainable Supply Chain. It creates a variety of possibilities regarding the practical part. In addition, the Food Retail industry encounters many sustainable issues (waste, CO_2 emissions, plastic consumption, etc.). Those can be analyzed separately to entirely covering all topics. In addition, sustainable issues are diverse regarding the geographical area. This thesis focuses on Belgian Retailers, but they are not facing the same challenges as Americans or Asian ones. Finally, due to the covid-19 situation, most contacted Food Retailers and Supply Chain experts decline the invitation for interviews. As a result, only two interviews have taken place. To take this study a step further, interviews with experts in both sector (Food Retail and Supply Chain) should be interesting.

8. Appendices:

Appendix 1 : Representative definitions of supply chain management

Representative definitions of supply chain management.

Definition source	Definition	Characteristics exhibited[a]						
		Flow focus[b]	Coordination focus[c]	Stakeholder focus[d]	Relationship focus[e]	Value focus[f]	Efficiency focus[g]	Performance focus[h]
Lambert et al., 1998, p. 1	The integration of key business processes from end-user through original suppliers that provide products, services, and information that add value for customers and other stakeholders.	■	■	■		■		
Larson and Rogers, 1998, p. 2	The coordination of activities, within and between vertically linked firms, for the purpose of serving end customers at a profit.		■	■		■		
Walters and Lancaster, 2000, p. 160	The management of the interface relationships among key stakeholders and enterprise functions that occur in the maximization of value creation which is driven by customer needs satisfaction and facilitated by efficient logistics management.			■	■	■	■	
Mentzer et al., 2001, p. 18	The systemic, strategic coordination of the traditional business functions and the tactics across these business functions within a particular company and across businesses within the supply chain, for the purposes of improving the long-term performance of the individual companies and the supply chain as a whole.		■	■				■
Lummus et al., 2001, p. 428	All the activities involved in delivering a product from raw material through to the customer, including sourcing raw materials and parts, manufacturing and assembly, warehousing and inventory tracking, order entry and order management, distribution across all channels, delivery to the customer, and the information systems necessary to monitor all of these activities.	■	■	■				■
Gibson et al., 2005, p. 22	Encompassing the planning and management of all activities involved in sourcing and procurement, conversion, demand creation and fulfillment, and all logistic management activities.	■	■					
Eng, 2005, p. 4	Managing the inputs of goods or services including a range of activities not only within a single department in an organization but also from different departments and outside the organization, for final users from procurement of raw materials through to the end of the products' useful life.	■	■	■	■			
Stock and Boyer, 2009, p.706	The management of a network of relationships within a firm and between interdependent organizations and business units consisting of material suppliers, purchasing, production facilities, logistics, marketing, and related systems that facilitate the forward and reverse flow of materials, services, finances and information from the original producer to final customer with the benefits of adding value, maximizing profitability through efficiencies, and achieving customer satisfaction.	■	■	■	■	■	■	

[a] The identification of the "characteristics exhibited" was inspired by the approach in Stock and Boyer (2009).
[b] *Flow focus*: The definition includes language related to the flows of materials, services, or information. Reference to the supply chain was considered to implicitly refer to this focus area.
[c] *Coordination focus*: The definition includes reference to coordination within the organization or between organizations. Reference to the supply chain, the product life cycle, or activities across channels was considered to implicitly refer to this focus area.
[d] *Stakeholder focus*: The definition includes explicit reference to stakeholders, including (but not limited to) customers, consumers, and suppliers.
[e] *Relationship focus*: The definition includes reference to the networks of internal and external relationships. This includes mentioning the coordination of inter-organizational business processes.
[f] *Value focus*: The definition includes reference to value creation, including increasing profit or market share and converting resources into usable products.
[g] *Efficiency focus*: The definition includes reference to efficiency, including a reduction in inputs.
[h] *Performance focus*: The definition includes reference to performance, including applying performance measures, improving performance, improving competitive capacity, monitoring, and achieving goals.

Source: Ahi and Searcy (2013)

Appendix 2: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

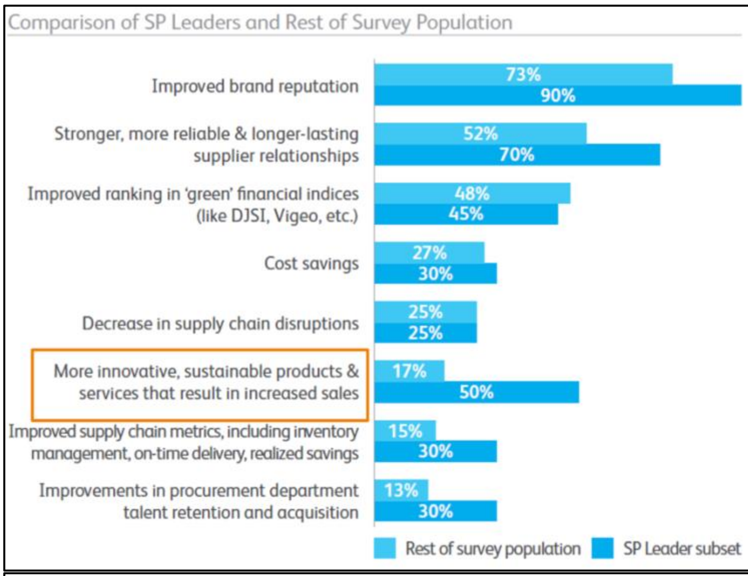
Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

* Acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.

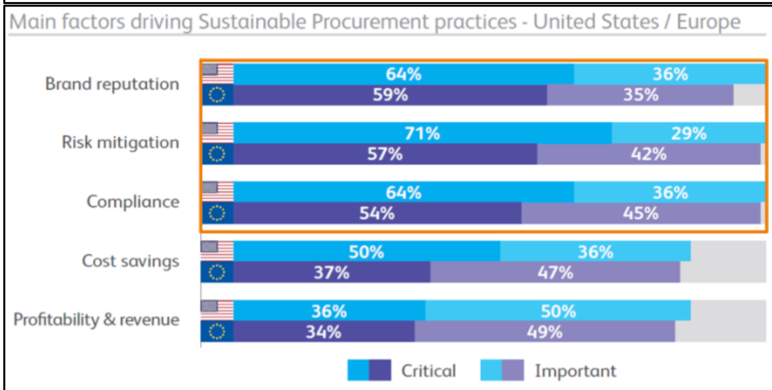
Source: United Nations. (n.d.).

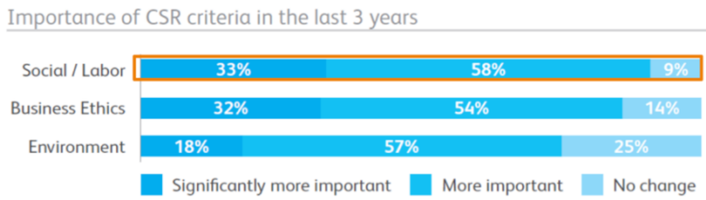
Appendix 3: Scaling Up Sustainable Procurement A New Phase of Expansion Must Begin



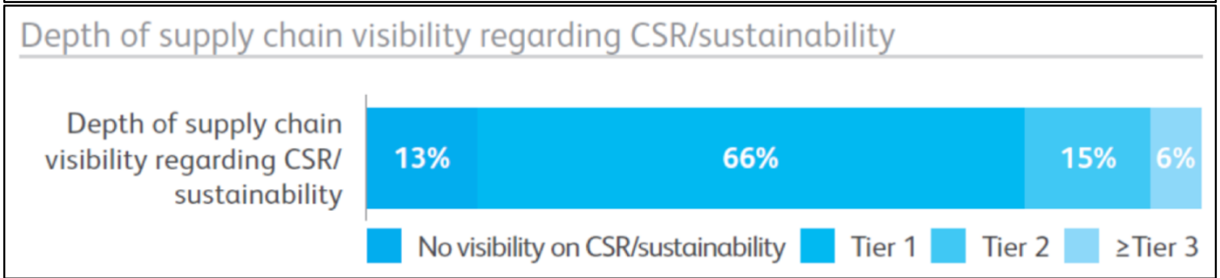
" I do believe in the **correlation between sustainability and innovation.** When a supplier demonstrates their commitment to CSR, they are demonstrating their ability to look forward - that they have **a long-term vision**. I think this is fundamental to the capacity for innovation."

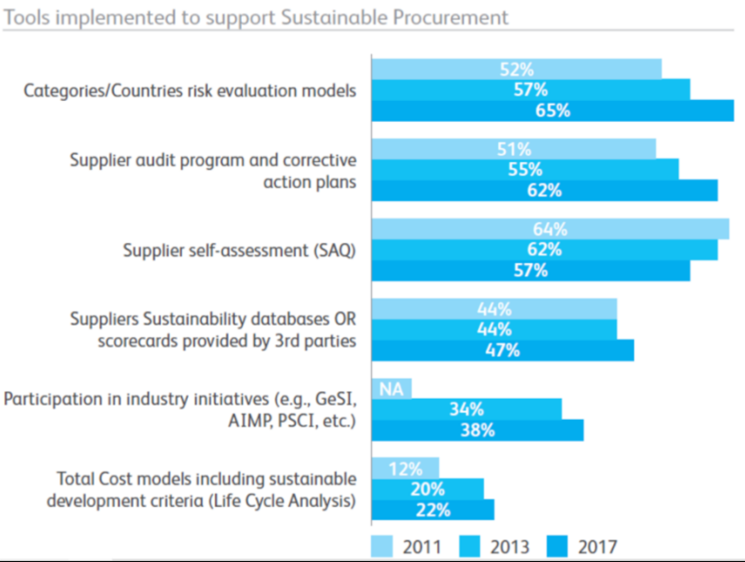
Top 5 Beverages Company





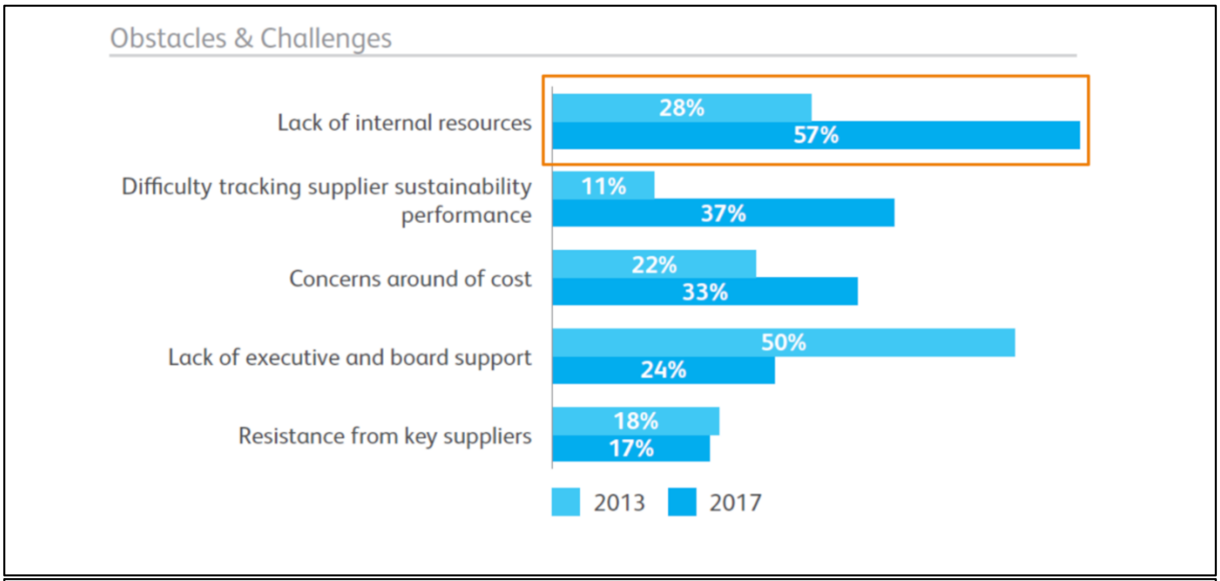
When comparing to our 2013 study, this year we see a **convergence between the US and Europe** on the same top three drivers and priorities for SP programs: **Brand Reputation, Risk Mitigation, and Compliance.**

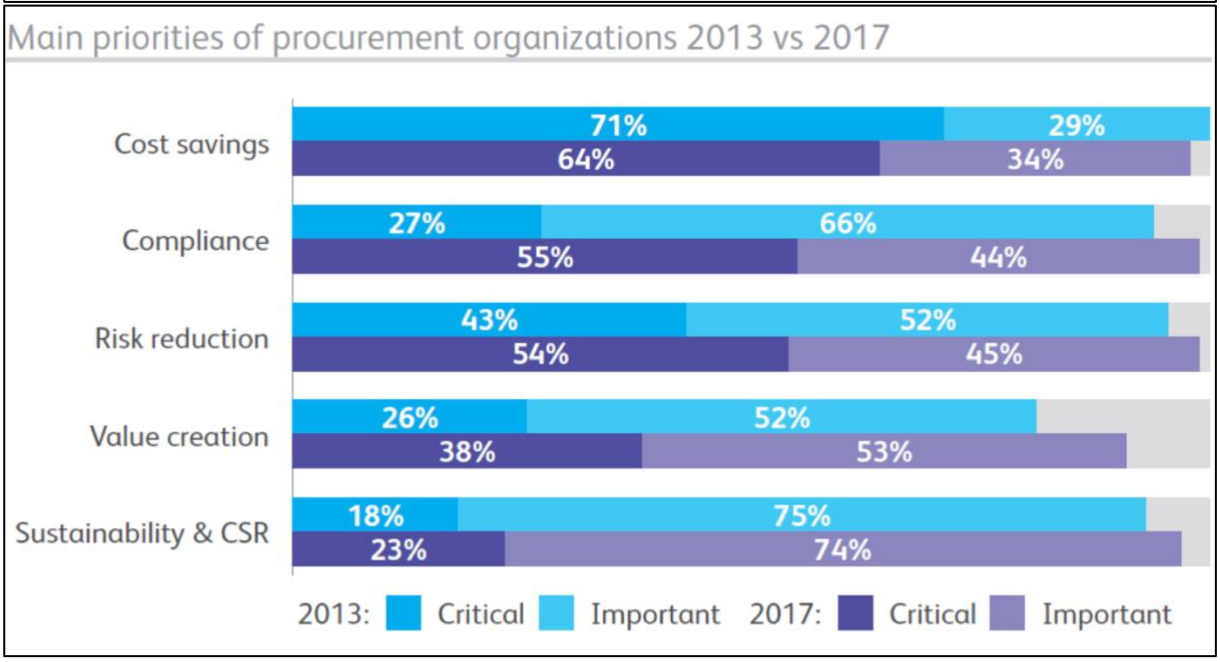




" **Auditing and SAQs have created fatigue**. Furthermore, these exercises are not producing our desired results. We are decreasing the volume and **optimizing the quality** of our audit program."

Top 20 Industrial Conglomerate Company





<u>Source :</u> Ecovadis. (2020, mars 27).

Appendix 4: The ten principles of the UN global compact

Human Rights Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and Principle 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.
Labour Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour; Principle 5: the effective abolition of child labour; and Principle 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.
Environment Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges; Principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and Principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.
Anti-Corruption Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

Source: The Ten Principles | UN Global Compact. (2020, April 10)

Appendix 6. Topics and references to consider in a Supplier Code of Conduct

SAMPLE POLICY AREAS THAT ALIGN WITH THE UN GLOBAL COMPACT TEN PRINCIPLES		POTENTIAL SOURCES TO REFERENCE:
Human Rights and Labour **1.** Forced labour **2.** Child labour **3.** Working hours **4.** Wages and benefits **5.** Humane treatment **6.** Nondiscrimination and equality **7.** Freedom of association and collective bargaining **8.** Occupational health and safety **9.** Emergency preparedness **10.** Occupational injury and illness **11.** Fire safety **12.** Building structure and integrity **13.** Industrial hygiene **14.** Leave entitlements **15.** Freedom of speech **16.** Human trafficking **17.** Privacy **18.** Minority rights **19.** Rights of specific stakeholder groups: indigenous people, women, children, older workers, workers with disabilities, migrant workers	**Environment** **20.** Material toxicity and chemicals **21.** Raw material use **22.** Recyclability and end of life of products **23.** Greenhouse gas emissions **24.** Energy use **25.** Water use and waste water treatment **26.** Air pollution **27.** Biodiversity **28.** Deforestation **Anti-Corruption** **29.** Conflict of interest **30.** Gifts, meals and entertainment **31.** Bribery and kickbacks **32.** Accounting and business records **33.** Protecting information **34.** Fair competition **35.** Reporting misconduct	*United Nations Global Compact* *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* *UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* *ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work* *ILO Tripartite declaration of principles concerning multinational enaterprises and social policy (ILO MNE Declaration)* *ILO International Labour Standards on Occupational Safety and Health* *Women's Empowerment Principles* *Children's Rights and Business Principles* *OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises* *The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* *United Nations Convention Against Corruption* *ISO 14001* *ISO 26000* *SA8000* *OHSAS 18001*

Source: United Nations, 2015

Appendix 6. Interviews:

Interview: company A.

1. In your opinion, what is the concept of sustainability? What is the means for Food Retailer?

Sustainability is an ethical dimension, a value that is integrated into company policy.
In my case, in the context of my function as a buyer, it is an integral part of the commercial and social relationship with my suppliers.
Whether in terms of legality, competition rules, corruption, etc., it is an integral part of the commercial and social relationship with my suppliers.
But also, in terms of society, in terms of the prohibition of forced labor, of underage labor, of the right to respect and freedom of the worker etc.

2. What do you see as the risks concerning the sustainability of your company?

In the first place, sustainability has an impact on company policy and therefore on the involvement of staff within the company itself. There must be a match between the values of the staff and those of the company. There is therefore a risk of losing staff involvement.

Secondly, a company is an actor in the economy of a country, of the world. It has a role to play in order to move forward, towards progress and respect for others. It must therefore be part of the evolution of society. It has a significant weight in its own market. The risk is therefore to slow down positive development and to be out of step with today's world.

Finally, in a more centrist and practical way to my situation, we are a more public company in relation to our suppliers. We work with many companies that are not known to the general public.
So it may be that the slightest problem with a product will first tarnish our image, before that of the original company. We have a responsibility towards our end customers. We, therefore, insist that all our suppliers respect the same values as our own.

3. What are you putting in place within your company regarding Sustainability?

Internationally, we have a unique ethical and societal charter that frames our commercial relations and the products we offer to consumers.

On a national level, our company is involved in numerous initiatives for our own brands.
One of the axes is local anchoring: as much on collaboration with local producers, as on helping to finance producers to move towards organic, as on developing products that respect very specific charters that are more specific and for which a follow-up is very important, as on working on private label products to review healthier recipes, more adapted, less chemical, more ecological in terms of packaging, more local, less energy-consuming, etc.
Many axes are undertaken each year in order to work hand in hand with our local suppliers or a little further afield on the offer that we propose to customers.
Mass distribution is far from being static. It evolves with the help of its producers, suppliers, bio-engineers, Product Managers, etc. But most effort is towards our own brand because it is

hard to change the way of working of national brands, even if some of them perform well regarding sustainability.

4. Are you aware of the concept of sustainability as buyers? If so, by whom (consumers, suppliers, managers, associations)?

Yes. I am aware of sustainability policies as a buyer. Mainly from my own personal values. My product choices remain my own.
The origin, the compositions, the packaging, the supplier etc. I can choose. However, there is of course a strategy to follow.

My latitude is constrained when we talk about "large" suppliers such as Coca-Cola, Danone, Nestlé, Unilever, L'Oréal etc. Nevertheless, I think that due to public awareness, all these suppliers are also modifying their sustainability policy, each with its own scope.

5. Do you feel an increase in purchase prices or do you increase the selling prices of sustainable goods?
   E.g.: If a brand makes certain elements of one of its products more sustainable (less plastic, less CO2 emissions, less water consumption), do you feel a price increase?

Yes, it affects the price. The use of recycled plastic, for example in the production of water bottles, impacts the final consumer price. The price will decrease when this kind of technology becomes the norm.
Yes, the local is more expensive due to its limited volumes.
Yes, cardboard is more expensive than plastic.
But the gaps are narrowing as the volumes of these new practices increase.

6. How do you choose to work with a supplier (selection)? Do you have certain criteria and how do you weight these? Do you use environmental, social, or economic criteria?

When a new supplier comes to me, my first interest will be to listen to what he offers me: the product.
Do I need it? Does the market need it?
The composition has its importance and the origin.
At the moment, for example, I am in the process of redesigning the assortment of organic stores. When I am looking for a supplier, in addition to its organic certification and its product, my choice also has to consider the origin of the product, of the company. I am putting more emphasis on Belgian SMEs. This builds the relationship more, the flexibility in terms of delivery, and above all it directly benefits the country's economy (economically and socially).
However, many customers are demanding for well-known products. This is very challenging to balance the product range between own products, small brands and national brands.

7. Do you evaluate your suppliers? If so, how? What criteria do you use? What are the consequences for a supplier if he does not expect a good result?

No, I don't think there's a rating on its CSR policy.
When a new supplier wants to work with our brand, he will have to sign our ethical and social charter. This is an important point.
But also, we're going to have to make sure they're solvent. As far as I know, this is the only point on which a scale will be set.

8. Do you carry out audits on your suppliers? Do you use external organizations to carry out supplier audits? Do you use internal expertise?

Yes, there is an internal quality department that analyses the suppliers' certificates (FASFC Respect, BIO label, charter, label).
I don't have that under control. Nevertheless, I know that we have a very efficient and meticulous QUALITY department.
Our QUALITY department is responsible for checking compliance with the FASFC standards, the organic certificates, checking the composition of our own brand products, etc.
External audits are also carried out in order to verify all the work carried out.
Internally, we will also focus on auditing the supply chains of our own products. We have our own label for fresh products, the "A Quality Chain", which is monitored together with the producer in order to maintain product continuity.

9. Do you collaborate with certain suppliers to improve their Sustainability or your joint sustainability performance?

That depends.
We will rather give our opinion on products in relation to their packaging for example (go for recycled, cardboard, avoid individual packaging).
And sometimes, we will work on a file hand in hand, but the scale of the file is not common.
However, within our company we have more fundamental projects with certain producers. We're talking more about fresh food here. For example, we have projects to convert Belgian farms to organic farming. In this case, we are working with them on all the basic aspects of their production. We work on our private labels to develop healthier and less chemical recipes, and to develop more environmentally friendly packaging

10. Do you have a code of conduct as a buyer? If so, do you talk to your suppliers about it? How do you communicate?

Of course, we sign a code of conduct as a buyer in order to avoid any risk of corruption.
We also need to be aware of the weight of our volumes within a supplier, to avoid over dependence.
But this is dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

11. Do you work differently with large or small suppliers?

The requirements and flexibility are indeed not the same.
Large suppliers have the teams and structures to constantly evolve.
Smaller suppliers are multi-tasking. We are therefore more likely to be open-minded and collaborative to understand the issues.

There is also a difference in customers' demand. In fact, it is difficult to delete a famous brand because of a misconduct because customers are asking for them.

12. Do you consider that you collaborate in a transparent manner with your suppliers?

We remain in a business relationship with our suppliers. We share market situations, issues, etc. with them. We will be transparent while it comes to commercial information that can be beneficial from both of us. It is important to keep in mind that we need to keep pressure point for negotiation. So it is not conceivable to be 100% transparent.

13. Do you give importance to labels? Do you use them (own or external)?

Personally, I don't.
Professionally, I still have to take an interest in them because it can be a criterion for the end customer.
Own or external labels are very much in demand in fresh products.
In my sector, the growing labels are BIO or Vegan for sparkling wine. But once again, it will be more because we see a demand from customers than our own decision.

14. Do you collaborate with your suppliers regarding delivery to your warehouse or store? Logistics road, empty trucks?

Yes, there are projects underway to work on logistics routes. However, it is very complex due to the internationalization of purchasing. A French lorry returning from a delivery to our Belgian depots leaves empty.
This is also a reason why we try to work with more local suppliers for our own brand.

15. Do you have transparent information from your suppliers (on how to produce, where their raw materials come from, etc.)?

When making a decision to work with a supplier, we ask him/her to sign an ethical and social charter as an appendix to the business conditions. The aim is to work with suppliers who have at least the same values and policies. However, in most cases, we do not ask them precise information about the origin of their raw material for example. We will ask this type of information if there is an issue.

16. In their report entitled "United Nations Global Compact Supplier Engagement Continuum", the United Nations develops the different steps and tools necessary for collaboration towards CSR, between the different actors of the supply chain. These steps are:
    1. Set expectations: communicate your CSR expectations to suppliers, include expectations and a code of conduct in contracts.
    2. Monitoring and auditing: asking suppliers to self-assess their CSR performance
    3. Sanitation and capacity building: Asking suppliers to address issues of poor performance. Provide training, resources and support to improve sustainability management and performance.
    4. Collaborate: Supporting supplier ownership to address the root causes of poor sustainability performance
    What stage do you think you're at?

Between 1 and 2. Expectations are the minimum required by law, so we are almost sure that this step is completed.

Interview: company B.

1. In your opinion, what is the concept of sustainability? What is the means for Food Retailer?

To give our consumers the opportunity to consume better by offering them products that are both better for the environment and for themselves. Mainly an environmental aspect.

2. What do you see as the risks concerning the sustainability of your company?

In my opinion, the risks are minimal from a purchasing point of view. We can probably expect a price increase that will have an impact on the purchase price of the final consumer (even if the trade is well done) but even if the main challenge for companies is to sell at the lowest price, I think that the consumer will always have the possibility to choose between the better quality / more expensive product and another cheaper product. After I am convinced that in the future, there is a lot of chance that we will have a majority of responsible products and this will democratize the costs necessarily with the competition and all that ...
Reputational risk = poor communication and image. Difficult to rebuild that. So loss of turn over.

3. What are you putting in place within your company regarding Sustainability?

For my part, working for the perfumery and hygiene departments, we try to follow this "responsible" trend because all the big players in the FMCG industry are offering this alternative at the moment. In perfumery, we're going for more organic/vegan/cruelty-free products. So organic for the container and vegan for the packaging. As an anecdote, when the first vegan shampoo came out, I was wondering what kind of animal "matter" was at the base, but it's actually mainly about the packaging, like the glue used for the label, for example...

As far as hygiene is concerned, it is mainly the packaging that is affected. Since last year we have gradually had our various suppliers offering us packs made of recycled and/or recyclable paper. The problem with hygiene is that when we offer the product even if it is recycled and/or recyclable, it alters the efficiency in my opinion, we are on paper that will crumble faster, less absorbent afterward.

B follows the trend given by its suppliers. We are not going to push suppliers to produce better etc.
We notice a trend from the suppliers but also from the consumers. Some store managers/responsible persons have requests from consumers and therefore ask to look for more responsible products.
B follows the market trend. What is most important is the low prices for the company.

4. Are you aware of the concept of sustainability as buyers? If so, by whom (consumers, suppliers, managers, associations)?

Absolutely, first of all, by myself, I feel that it is important for me and for the planet to pay attention to what we put inside and outside of our bodies. Then by the suppliers, since it is a trend that we cannot deny, they all offer us these kinds of products. Also by consumers, because we simply see that these kinds of products work for us (in my sectors we are still at the "start-up" stage for all this, so little by little. And finally, we also have requests directly from our members to integrate this kind of product.

5. Do you feel an increase in purchase prices or do you increase the selling prices of sustainable goods?
   E.g.: If a brand makes certain elements of one of its products more sustainable (less plastic, less CO2 emissions, less water consumption), do you feel a price increase?

Yes, prices are clearly on the rise for this type of product, sometimes a little too much. But I think that's partly justified when you know what it costs to be able to write ORGANIC on a package and the regulations that this implies. Afterward, there will always be actors who will propose cheaper products, but globally the prices are higher.
Suppliers justify the price increase in relation to the way it works, logistics, etc.
Selling prices will increase for consumers, the aim is not to lose out by selling ORGANIC products. So we need to increase our selling price.

6. How do you choose to work with a supplier (selection)? Do you have certain criteria and how do you weight these? Do you use environmental, social, or economic criteria?

As far as B is concerned, we mainly work with the largest players/suppliers in the distribution sector. We have no particular criteria. If we need a specific product, we ask for an offer from our current suppliers. We follow the market, if we see a demand or that competitors' sales increase for a more biological product for example, we will try to offer Biological products. But if there is no demand, we will not change anything
However, I am often approached by new/small suppliers who are in a niche market (i.e. who only offer organic and specific products). I don't hide the fact that I would like to be able to put these products on our shelves because, in my opinion, some of them would benefit from being known, but I am often held back by the price of these products. So let's say we'll choose a supplier based on price.
B wants to work with large suppliers, they want to offer the basic products that customers are looking for.
B's commercial concept is a bit of a hindrance. In mass distribution, the players try to offer the lowest possible prices.

7. Do you evaluate your suppliers? If so, how? What criteria do you use? What are the consequences for a supplier if he does not expect a good result?

We work with an external party to evaluate suppliers and our suppliers evaluate us. But this evaluation is about our commercial relationship and products. There is nothing about sustainability

8. Do you carry out audits on your suppliers? Do you use external organizations to carry out supplier audits? Do you use internal expertise?

There are checks on products by the quality department (labels, product content, etc.) to see if they comply with European regulations. But, no more. We need to offer national brands in our shops. Imposing requirements to these brands about sustainability is very difficult

9. Do you collaborate with certain suppliers to improve their Sustainability or your joint sustainability performance?

Not especially. It'll be more of a quality. We'll check the EU standards and if they're not met, the suppliers will have to make sure they change, or we will go elsewhere.

10. Do you have a code of conduct as a buyer? If so, do you talk to your suppliers about it? How do you communicate?

No. We're being asked to act as a “good family father”. We don't have a specific code of conduct. Of course, we have internal rules about gifts from suppliers to make sure we're not more inclined to put on one product or another. It is all about personal ethics.

11. Do you work differently with large or small suppliers?

From a purely purchasing point of view, yes, the way of working is not quite the same because there are simply turnovers that are very different, so the stakes are also different. With the big suppliers, they are going to bring in more on the table. For example, big brands will pay us 10,000 to be present in a certain number of folders, etc. The small ones will give 2,000, but we cannot offer them a lot for that price.

12. Do you consider that you collaborate in a transparent manner with your suppliers?

Relatively. But I think that the purchasing world is just trying to hide certain information, for example, the very significant price increase that we had last year on paper, some companies asked us for 20% increases and others much less, so I sincerely think that not everything is 100% transparent but I think that in business nothing is ever really transparent.
From a business point of view, you can't be 100% transparent. However, we try to work as much as possible in a transparent way, if we ask a question about the origin of a product, suppliers normally give us the information, unless it is confidential. Negotiations are important and everyone wants to keep their weapons.

13. Do you give importance to labels? Do you use them (own or external)?

Personally (in my personal life) for food I am quite careful, mainly for vegetables and fruits I prefer to buy organic in order to avoid pesticides. As far as perfumery is concerned, yes and no. For example, for make-up removers, shower gel, cotton buds, ... Yes, but for shampoos or creams that must provide a particular result, no. Because organic cosmetics generally don't smell very good (face cream) and for shampoos, removing the sulphate or silicone gives a completely different look to the hair I don't like.
We are going to work on our own brands so that they can have organic, Fairtrade, etc., but there is a problem with the prices. For my subsidiary, there's a problem with the effectiveness of organic, Fairtrade, etc.

14. Do you collaborate with your suppliers regarding delivery to your warehouse or store? Logistics road, empty trucks?

No, it is pre-organize in our entire organization regarding product types. It is not feasible at the moment to change it because we depend on the French entity.

15. Do you have transparent information from your suppliers (on how to produce, where their raw materials come from, etc.)?

They are never against giving us this kind of information when we ask them to.
If we want, we could create a mapping of the SC, but we do we need all these information…

16. In their report entitled "United Nations Global Compact Supplier Engagement Continuum", the United Nations develops the different steps and tools necessary for collaboration towards CSR, between the different actors of the supply chain. These steps are:
 1. Set expectations: communicate your CSR expectations to suppliers, include expectations and a code of conduct in contracts.
 2. Monitoring and auditing: asking suppliers to self-assess their CSR performance
 3. Sanitation and capacity building: Asking suppliers to address issues of poor performance. Provide training, resources and support to improve sustainability management and performance.
 4. Collaborate: Supporting supplier ownership to address the root causes of poor sustainability performance
 What stage do you think you're at?

I think that in this particular case we are more dependent on the suppliers than the opposite. We follow the trend, but we will not impose that they only make us offers with a societal stake. Afterwards they have a stricter charter than ours.

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