




SAI

PLATFORM

PROJECTS

**EUROPEAN SUGAR
BEET PROJECT**



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The Challenge: Harmonising a Sustainable Sugar Beet Supply Chain

The sugar beet industry in Europe – from farmers to producers to grocers – works hard to achieve and maintain stability in the sugar beet supply chain. However, in 2012, despite their efforts there were still many challenges that stakeholders across the supply chain had difficulty in overcoming alone. One particular challenge was the question of how to harmonise sustainability definitions and farming practices in the sugar beet industry. In addition, many SAI Platform members needed support for implementing SAI Platform’s Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA) programme among their many farmers.

To address these challenges, SAI Platform launched the European Sugar Beet Project in 2013. Just five years after its creation, members of the European Sugar Beet Project had achieved their goals in sugar beet sustainability, and were able to announce the project as successfully complete.

“For Südzucker, the European Sugar Beet Project was extremely successful. By implementing the FSA or benchmarked standards like REDcert throughout Europe, the project was able to document sustainability along the whole value chain. This was a great achievement that is highly valued across Europe.”

Dr. Volker Proffen, Manager
Public Affairs & Sustainability, Südzucker



About the European Sugar Beet Project



The Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform launched the European Sugar Beet Project in 2013 as the only industry-driven group, that works in a pre-competitive manner.

The aim was to create a more sustainable sugar beet industry and to become a leader and point of reference for sustainability in the industry.

The uniqueness of the European Sugar Beet Project made it possible for competitors to work together, while simultaneously facilitating a greater working relationship with farmers to address issues involving the harmonisation of sustainability definitions and

practices. The project provided a setting for conducive conversations to be had between competitors that would not have occurred otherwise. Through these conversations, greater collaboration in the sugar beet industry was achieved and members were more easily able to reach their sustainability objectives.

Project members met twice a year to review current best practices, to discuss industry challenges, and to brainstorm ways to improve sustainability in the sugar beet supply chain. Through their efforts, SAI Platform's European Sugar Beet Project contributed to improving sugar beet sustainability standards and de-risking the supply system in Europe.

The Project Members



The Legacy

The European Sugar Beet Project achieved its objective of being the reference for the sugar beet industry on sustainability with use of SAI Platform's Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA) programme as the primary benchmarking, self-assessment, and verification tool. SAI Platform and the European Sugar Beet Project members will now move forward to expand the reach and expertise of this group into other commodities and projects.

Members have already expressed interest in creating other sugar beet projects and sugar cane projects. Moreover, the proven efficiency of the pre-competitive, knowledge sharing model that the European Sugar Beet Project followed can be successfully emulated in future SAI Platform projects focussed on other crops.

Reaching Across One Industry



The European Sugar Beet Project helped establish SAI Platform's Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA) programme as a sustainability benchmark in both sugar beet sustainability and farming sustainability. The FSA was designed by SAI Platform to encourage and improve industry-shared better management practices that lead to enhanced farm performance and increased sustainability.

“The European Sugar Beet Project was a very solid initiative. Whether you are self-assessing or benchmarking, the ability to have the options which the FSA and this project provided were crucial to reducing the audit burden on farms. Moreover, it harmonised everyone's sustainability definitions and practices in the sugar beet industry.”

Katharine Teague, Head of Advocacy, AB Sugar

The FSA 1.0 pilot occurred alongside the European Sugar Beet Project's launch. The evolution of the FSA 1.0 to FSA 2.0 in 2014 strengthened its efficacy as a benchmarking, self-assessment, and verification tool. Subsequently, the advancement of the FSA 2.0 also facilitated greater harmonisation of sustainability practice in the sugar beet industry.

Throughout 2015 and 2016, European Sugar Beet Project members increased the number of farmers and countries involved in the project and use of the FSA.

Members of the European Sugar Beet Project worked closely with their farmers to ensure that farmers were meeting sustainability objectives by using the multi-purpose tool for either benchmarking, self-assessment, and/or verification purposes.

With many sugar beet farmers already practicing sustainable farming techniques, the FSA provided the farmers a way to verify that their practices were indeed sustainable. The FSA also helped farmers prepare for audits.

For companies, the FSA facilitated achieving sustainability objectives as well as saving time and resources.

Growing Awareness



“The involvement in the European Sugar Beet Project has been a great impetus for us to understand and implement the FSA framework in all our production countries. The ambition of the project – to implement FSA across the full beet sugar supply chain in Europe – has helped develop the FSA framework into something that works in practice!”

Iver Drabaek, Head of Sustainability, Nordzucker

Consumers are becoming increasingly aware of sustainable products and many are increasingly showing a preference for products that can be demonstrated to be made sustainably. A 2015 Nielsen survey found that two-thirds of respondents would pay more for a product which had been made through positive environmental or social change. Another survey found that 88% of respondents would be more loyal to a company if it committed to environmental and social issues.

Moreover, companies around the world are increasingly developing or creating departments focussed on increasing sustainability. Many companies are also aligning their sustainability goals with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.



Achieving Sustainable Development Goals



The OECD claims the private sector to be the missing piece of the “SDG puzzle.” The more companies that are willing to commit to sustainability projects such as SAI Platform’s European Sugar Beet Project, the closer the planet comes to achieving the UN’s SDGs.

The European Sugar Beet Project was committed to contributing to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and improving economic, environmental, and social sustainability in the beet sugar supply chain.

The SDGs that the European Sugar Beet Project were directly contributing to are:



Through the collaborative effort of members across the sugar beet supply chain, SAI Platform is confident that the efforts from members in the European Sugar Beet Project have successfully contributed to these SDGs being achieved.



SDG Spotlight: 17. Partnerships for the Goals

Members of SAI Platform’s European Sugar Beet Project worked closely together in achieving their objectives and maintaining high standards for sustainability in the sugar beet industry. By working together in a pre-competitive way, rather than each company “going at it alone”, they were able to achieve greater results for themselves and for the industry.



SDG Spotlight: 10. Reduced Inequalities

The European Sugar Beet Project contributed to reduced inequalities by empowering farmers to implement and verify the best practices in sugar beet sustainability. By implementing best practices, farmers are able to ensure the long-term economic viability of sugar beet and their farm.



Collaboration: A Model to Success

SAI Platform's European Sugar Beet Project demonstrated the value of the pre-competitive collaborative model that allows competitors and members across the value chain to work together in a conducive manner. Through the vehicle that SAI Platform offered, members were able to achieve more for themselves and for the industry rather than going at it alone to achieve their sustainability objectives. SAI Platform is now looking to implement this model of pre-competitive collaboration in future projects, as it has similarly with its SAIRISI Sustainable Italian Rice Project and Doñana Berry Project.

The model of pre-competitive collaboration that the European Sugar Beet Project enacted also empowered sugar beet farmers across Europe by providing them with the support and training to use the FSA to verify their sustainable farming practices. This model also provided members of the European Sugar Beet Project to work more closely with their farmers in assessing and verifying the sustainability of their farming practices and observing where improvements in their farming practices could be made.



Mission Accomplished

Within 5 years, SAI Platform's European Sugar Beet Project accomplished its objectives and the challenges it needed to address. With its objectives achieved, SAI Platform and SAI Platform members are exploring new possibilities to address sustainability challenges involving sugar (both sugar beet and sugar cane), as well as new project possibilities for other crops that can similarly implement this tested model of pre-competitive collaboration.

How We Changed the Industry



1

Achieving a critical mass of farmers and members in the industry



2

Establishing the FSA as a benchmarking, self-assessment, and verification standard in the sugar beet industry



3

Building closer relationships across the supply chain that facilitate the cooperation in collaborative and individual objectives



4

Assisting farmers by verifying their sustainable farming practices



5

Improving sugar beet sustainability in Europe



6

Increasing transparency across the sugar beet supply chain



7

Having sugar suppliers make public claims of FSA performance levels for their sugar beet tonnage



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The Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform

SAI Platform is the global food and drink industry platform for developing sustainable agriculture solutions through member-driven pre-competitive collaboration. SAI Platform works with its members and external stakeholders to catalyse change and establish sustainable agriculture as a pre-requisite for doing business throughout the food and drink industry supply chain.



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