Beyond labelling –
the role of digitalization in consumer communication

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Consumers' information needs

- Fish market very diverse and complex from a consumers' point of view
- Consumers need information in order to make decisions in line with their preferences
- Different options: e.g., labels on products, online provided information
Aim

Analysis of...

• consumers’ information needs about sustainability in seafood
• the importance of sustainability labels
• the use of online sources related to fish
• the content consumers are looking for online

Recommendations for online communication of (sustainable) seafood
What we have done

• 19 focus groups in 6 European countries (France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Poland, UK)

• Online survey in 8 European countries (Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Spain, UK) with 4100 fish consumers

• Face-to-face interviews with fish consumers in Germany focusing on the use of two fish information websites (one state-run website and one hosted by stakeholders of the fish sector)
Focus groups - Consumers’ information needs

- Italy and France: General need to improve information provision
- Germany and UK: No need for additional information at the point of sale → information overload
- Iceland: Low use of additional information
- Poland: High price sensitivity → less expressed information needs
Focus groups – Perception of sustainability labels

- Generally appreciated
- But label skepticism in all countries, particularly in Poland
- Icelanders had no need for sustainability labels on domestic seafood
Focus groups – Perception of online offers

• Generally appreciated

• Doubts of actual use in shopping situation

• In Iceland, Italy and Germany particularly appreciated by younger consumers

• Germans expected web offers for each sustainability standard
Which of the following are the most important sources of information to you with respect to fish?
And for which kind of information are you mainly looking for in the internet?
Survey - Preferences for different online sources – by country

Please tick the online information sources you use the most.

- consumer organizations
- NGOs
- producers
- government and EU
- producers in social media

Offers of...

DE  ES  FI  FR  IR  IT  PL  UK
Interviews - Important topics and design

• Topics:
  • Practical advise – recipes
  • Information about existing labelling schemes
  • Complex information also welcomed

• Design:
  • Search tool
  • Videos and pictures → story telling
Lessons to learn for consumer communication

• In most countries web offers of producers are one of the most used sources

➢ Even though information is not always used it has to be present on the product and online

➢ Web offers become a must-have
Content of online communication

- Practical advise – in particular recipes are appreciated by consumers in all countries
- Sustainability topics addressed should consider cultural differences
  - E.g., DE, IT and PL higher interest in animal welfare issues
- Complex and in-depth information should be available
- Visual content very important → story telling through videos and pictures can increase trust
Thanks!

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Survey: Information search

Are you sometimes looking for information about fish when you are not shopping?

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- **UK**: [Bar chart showing percentage]
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- **DE**: [Bar chart showing percentage]
Survey: Preferred information sources about fish

Which of the following are the most important sources of information to you with respect to fish?

- Internet
- Labels
- Cookbooks
- Staff at POS
- TV
- Consumer associations
- Print media
- Brochures/flyers
- Posters/Banners
- Others

Which of the following are the most important sources of information to you with respect to fish?
Topics of interest

And for which kind of information are you mainly looking for in the internet?
Preferences for different online sources

Offers of...

- Consumer organizations
- Producers
- NGOs
- Government and EU
- Producers in social media
- Others

Please tick the online information sources you use the most.