

First meeting of the ProjectSTEP- group

March, 13th 2020

The first meeting with the ProjectSTEP-group was meant to take place at the University of Oslo, but needed to be organized virtually due to the corona virus. Because of that, only three of the group members could participate, and there was unanimity from the project team at there should be some follow-up for the remaining members either individually or collectively.

Below we present the most important insights we have received from the ProjectSTEP- group. We have systematized the insights according to topics. It is necessary to point out that this is a collection of individual views and should not be considered as a group opinion. Contradictory views also appear in the group. The insights have been used by the project team for discussion about necessary clarifications and inputs for our further work.

About “framing”:

- Global unequal distribution of food resources was mentioned in the framing of the project but is not visible in the work packages. How can it be included in the project?
- Consider the subject of the global coronavirus situation – stockpiling (‘hamstering’) of food and how this affects waste. What are the cultural and biological reasons for food waste? Globally, it is a big experiment of what is happening. Nationally it has been asked for responsibility just yesterday (to limit stockpiling/panic-buying), but Norwegians still stockpile food. This can lead to less food waste at the supermarkets but more at the consumer side.
- In 2015 the food waste discussion concentrated around wasting, but now the climate aspects is higher on the agenda. This should be included in the framing of the project.
- Would you consider the anthropological side of food waste closer in the project?

Project team’s response: Global distribution of resources will be partly covered in work package 1 (country case studies) and in work package 3 where we work with the consumer’s site. But even in work package 2 will it be among the subjects as this should be included in the triple effect of food waste (economic, social and environmental).

Coronavirus stockpiling was difficult to predict when we wrote the application, but it will be natural to address this in our work with the companies and consumers. Here there are interesting differences between fresh and other products. ‘Hamstering’ is also related to the other strategies at the market, for example 3-for-2 offers.

Various actors emphasize different dimensions of avoid food waste. This will be included in our research. It is clear that climate arguments are strong for both authorities and companies (work package 2), and the importance of this aspect should be taken in the consumer work in work package 3.

The anthropological side will be a subject in work package 3, for example in the planned research of blog sites.

Methods, perspectives and research questions

- Companies will in all likelihood not use the concept of RRI, but rather sustainability or social responsibility. It is interesting to bring together the concepts of RRI and CSR and see how the interplay. It is important that the companies don’t use CSR for greenwashing, but take it in

their core strategy (but here it is necessary to consider a possible difference of terminology use between the researcher and companies).

- It is important to have a good basis to develop scenarios for the company workshops. Maybe it could be possible to use the policies identified in work package 1 to structure the scenarios?
- It might be useful to use Herzberg's two-factor theory with motivators and hygiene factors to interpret the companies food waste strategies. In the ForMat project that Matvett and ØF concluded in 2015 it was observed that companies that were active in food waste did that for internal reasons. Later we observed that Q-meieriene went ahead and used it in marketing. It will be interesting to study what companies think about it now.
- It will be interesting to see who is taking the responsibility among those working with food (not just producers, but also wholesalers etc.). All have the responsibility because they use global resources. But we need to be careful and avoid consumers with even more shaming (climate shame for disposing bread).
- Should the project give some insights between eating healthy and food waste (sustainable diet)?
- In the consensus process it will be interesting to see where are the conflicts and why there are different practices. From the industry agreement work, we know about a bunch of dilemmas, especially linked to the food waste definition (is annihilating of egg laying hens food waste or part of the production system?) and methods for measurements of the goal accomplishments. In the Nordic countries there is now a coordination work of food waste definitions and methods for measurements. We know some of this, so this is something that the BREAD project should not focus too much, even though it will naturally come up in the consensus process.
- In the app that should be developed/ tested, it is not necessary to let people compete with the others but maybe with themselves? And important to think what the prizes can be.
- It is important to have self-reflection among the researchers. What is happening to us, individuals, in this learning process, what is going on with the team? What do we learn from the cooperation?

Project team's response:

We will consider interpreting the relation between CSR and RRI to assure understanding of both concepts and avoid greenwashing. We can raise this in the workshop and interviews with the companies. When we talk to the companies, should we explain in concretely and easily what we mean. For example how do the companies look at food waste in relation to their sustainability strategies (if they have specific targets, etc.) and what do they do in this area (innovation, donation, cooperation in the value chain, internal production, etc.).

Due to the timing of research in work package 1 and 2, it will be very difficult to conduct enough work at the policy level to provide scenario development for workshops in work package 2. But maybe it will be more realistic to use this in the second workshop.

Referring to the framework developed by Herzberg, we can link that to the previous research about the consumers of tomorrow expecting this. We also want to shed some light into greenwashing from the survey conducted in 2020, by asking about actual actions and not just plans.

"Climate shame" and consumer perception of responsibility and accountability will be thematized in work package 3. We will get a better understanding of companies' vision of their responsibility in

work package 2. This also turns about to tackle resource withdrawals and craftsmanship from farm to table, to shape a better awareness in the society.

Sustainable diet will partly be a subject in work package 3 (consumers). Also for companies innovation strategies in work package 2 is sustainable diet related f.e. to smaller portion sizes, alternatives for meat etc.

In the Consensus Conference will we try to achieve consensus but dissent will also appear in that process and we can research this. It is important to focus on subjects where there is no consensus yet (like sustainability targets), but focus on subjects where there is a potential to achieve learning, concrete action and positive changes.

We all agree that the app design should be well deliberated. We will evaluate if this could be looked up in connection to the Matvinn families that compete in food waste reduction in the Oslo municipality (with Ducky-tools).

When it comes to the effects of our own reflections this is a subject for work package 4.

Other inputs and comments

- Prevention of food waste is a win-win situation for both the companies and the society. For companies it can have a positive effect on profitability and reputation. But it can be challenging that some perspectives (reputation for companies, better resource use for the society etc.) lead to situations where some aspects become dominant, for example “cheap food for consumers”?
- There are some that asked the question if food redistribution can contribute to cementing poverty. When companies are very good in food donation, this can be a “sleep pillow” for the authorities regarding poverty alleviation. There is also a dilemma between donating food and selling at reduced price rates.
- More projects are starting and some are already accomplished. It is important that we relate to them (among others FUSIONS, REFRESH – unfortunately without Norwegian participation, SCALE 12.3. Remember also to find synergies with parallel projects as “Nature in your face” where there are possibilities for cooperation, EU projects, a project in Viken about climate friendly diets. Østfoldforskning has done commissioned research for Matvett for more than 10 years on the consumers, for example through the ForMat project, which sheds some light into who throws wastes food and why. It can also be wise to establish some contacts with other app-oriented citizen research projects.
- Transformative CSR (Wisser) and Per Espen Stoknes’ perspectives for prioritizing the simple things first, are useful.
- You need to be sensitive with going to the companies now because of the new coronavirus situation. We need to be open for adjustments and changes in the project future progress.

Project team’s response: Those are good comments, advice and tips that we take with us further in the project, but don’t comment for now.