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**AGREEN**  
**CROSS-BORDER ALLIANCE FOR CLIMATE-SMART AND GREEN**  
**AGRICULTURE IN THE BLACK SEA BASIN**

Subsidy Contract No. BSB 1135



## BLUEPRINT

FOR A REGIONAL BRAND AND BRANDING STRATEGY

FOR CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN THE BLACK SEA BASIN (BSB)

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*THE BLACK SEA BASIN*

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## 1. Forewords

### Authors:

This document is a product of the joint efforts of 6 project partner implementing the project “CROSS-BORDER ALLIANCE FOR CLIMATE-SMART AND GREEN AGRICULTURE IN THE BLACK SEA BASIN” (AGREEN):

### Project partners:

- ✓ Dobrudzha Agrarian and Business School, BULGARIA
- ✓ Ovidius University of Constanta, ROMANIA
- ✓ Tekirdağ Namık Kemal Üniversitesi, TURKEY
- ✓ Biological Farming Association ELKANA, GEORGIA
- ✓ International Center for Agribusiness Research and Education ICARE Foundation, ARMENIA
- ✓ Development Agency of Eastern Thessaloniki Local Authorities, GREECE

### 1.1 Definitions and Acronyms

CSA - Climate Smart Agriculture

BSB - Black Sea Basin

BS - Black Sea

B2B - Business to Business

B2C - Business to Consumer

### 1.2 Abstract

Regional branding strategies are gaining priority because of increasing market complexities and the rising importance of national and regional competitiveness ranking. The sustainable development of a regional brand, when properly managed, will provide the economic incentive to attract investors, customers, markets, tourists and generate income for local communities (Hassan, S. and Mahrous, A.A., 2019). Therefore, this report aims to focus on delineating the strategic imperatives for sustainable market competitiveness of a national and regional brand for agricultural products.

The blueprint build on the extensive feasibility study of the state of the art and the potential of the climate-smart agriculture in the partners' countries, as well as in the Black Sea Basin in general, that was performed in 2020-2021 by the experts,

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involved in AGREEN project, and take into consideration the relevant findings and conclusions that come from targeted primary and secondary research as well as policy analyses.

The feasibility study revealed many common development challenges, similar difficulties faced by stakeholders and resembling deficiencies in policy-making and strategic planning regarding the Climate-smart agriculture (CSA) in the region. Still to propose adequate to the whole region strategy for a regional BSB brand for agricultural products originating in the BSB, the partnership studied the country specifics regarding the preferences and attitudes of the potential consumers of the CSA-produced goods, as well as the policy and legislation particularities. In addition, the branding strategy blueprint explores the competition and suggests for unique features to be underlined and exploited when branding and marketing foods grown in the BSB using climate-smart practices.

This document is available in English. It can be downloaded from the project website: [www.agreen-project.eu](http://www.agreen-project.eu).

## 2. Mission

### 2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this project is to analyze the trends in what is called Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) and to propose the grounds and principles of developing relevant branding strategy which can benefit both the producers and market agents in the Black Sea region. This is done considering the changes in the consumer perception on the healthy living and healthy, clean food and water, the digitalization of the marketing mix and market structure, especially the combination of e-marketing communications channels and distribution channels. These changes lead to significant increase of the brand as a major factor in the decision-making process in the B2C as well as in B2B markets. The digitalization inflated the role of the brand in the decision-making process as the information search and analyses have been inspired by the search engine options as main source of relevant market information. As a result this gradually transformed the classical marketing mix into e-marketing mix, where the role of brand in the decision making process is decisive.

A lot of work has been done in the countries in the Black sea area to respond to the increasing demand for food and agricultural products that have a specific quality label, in particular with relation to its origin, food safety, environment protection,

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economic development, etc. The Regional Brand and Branding Strategy for Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) products is aimed at providing marketing tools to farmers, agro and food producers and other members of the AGREEN alliance for successful design and promotion of CSA brand on the national, regional, and international market.

## 2.2 Vision

The ongoing changes to increasing the consumer perception for healthier living and healthy, clean food and water, which we define as Climate-Smart Agriculture, in a combination with digitalization of the marketing mix and market structure, especially the e-marketing communications channels and distribution channels, require relevant changes in the marketing platform to raise awareness, gain community support and instigate active response to the climate change impact on the agrarian and food sectors.

Our vision is based on the understanding that in the digital era the role of the brand in the decision-making process will continue to increase. Therefore, necessary changes in the branding process are required to respond to the strengths of the Black sea countries which can further strengthen the marketing value of the local agriculture as Climate-Smart Agriculture, and further increase the market value of the agricultural products as higher quality products with healthier characteristics, providing better and healthier life, as well as opportunities for sustainable development of the Climate-Smart Agriculture agents (farmers and marketing and market intermediaries) in the region.

The future development of markets is tailored with respect to the customer age and education profile, advancement of remote control and access to information and technology, via internet, to mobility scenarios and new online commerce trending. Following the findings from the partners' country-based research, it comes to life that the young adults in the BSB region are more and more aware of the environmental and climate issues, of their need for healthy living and healthy, clean food and water. Also, in spite of the globalization, marketing studies report a constant and strong drive for regional, traditional products, associated with fair production and sustainability of one's own region/ country economy. The general results demonstrate that the consumers in the BSB region are aware about natural resources and environmental issues and supports climate smart agriculture and its products.

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Thus, our vision is focused on raising awareness, gaining community support and instigating active response to the climate change impact on the agrarian and food sectors.

### 2.3 Values

The research of the consumer perception, the opinion of the agricultural producers, and of the market intermediaries in Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Romania and Turkey has shown some changes in the values, which are relevant to our project.

These values include as following:

- taste of organic vs GMO treated products: the organic agricultural products from the particular country have better taste and lead to healthier life compared to the GMO treated agricultural products.
- market demand: the organic agricultural products are preferred by the customers who are ready and willing to pay higher price for them.
- taste similarity of organic agricultural products: The Black sea area organic agricultural products can be promoted as similar in taste and health related characteristics, as they show relevant similarity compared to the products imported from other geographic regions. Deliver maximum value for the end consumers
- sustainability: the locally produced organic agricultural products lead to better market performance, higher profitability and thus - better chances for development of sustainable agricultural business. There is also an obvious trend of alignment to the EU policies and values, regarding the sustainability and environment protection, the respect for other species, the inclusiveness within the human society.
- brands: the digitalization leads to changes in the consumer perception which is now formed on the information from the search engines and social media. From the research, the young and mature urban adult is acquainted with the technology and aware of the digital future of the human society. The brands have special value in that process in the digital era.
- traditions: this trend to support national products is linked to the strong need to preserve one's cultural identity. It also reflects the need for grounding into their own tradition, facing the new digital paradigm from a solid ground of familiar experiences, including food.

These values promote sustainable, green and smart agricultural production adaptive to climate changes and provide opportunities for development of Climate

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Smart and Green Agriculture certification and labeling systems. They will help the countries from the region to develop a sustainable CSA. It will help to preserve biodiversity and improve food security in specific production areas, lead to improved food safety and quality standards and sustainable use of natural resources. In the age of significantly increasing share of the e-food trade the branding will add chances for faster adaptation to the new marketing and market specifics.

Thus, the development of Climate Smart and Green Agriculture certification and labeling systems will help the BSB countries to:

- retain youth in agriculture/remote rural areas of the country;
- preserve biodiversity and improve food security in specific production areas;
- improve food safety and quality standards and sustainable use of natural resources;
- support sustainable and inclusive economic growth;
- involve and build the capacity of local producers' associations to ensure sustainability;
- reach economic sustainability through bringing improvements in producers' incomes and quality of life, and make the entire rural economy more dynamic.

### 3. Brand Position Statement

The role and importance of branding increases substantially in the digital era, when the marketing communication is provided, found and analyzed entirely on the internet-based platforms. More than that, the consumers have developed a search-engine approach in finding and analyzing the information, limiting it to well known and accepted as quality and security guarantee for the considered product. The well-known brand becomes a guarantee for the product and its qualities, including the health-related issues.

In the case of CSA, the brand will inspire sustainability in every step of the agricultural production and provides supreme value for the end consumers by implementing the principles of climate change adaptation, environmental protection, health benefits, social inclusion and enhanced profitability for the local producers. This is especially true for the case of organic GREEN agricultural production, especially when the branding underlines the common history of the geographic region, and the common traditions in raising same products following same or very

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similar traditions in the whole food providing process, with an accent on the taste and health related issues.

From producer's perspective, branding of the Climate Smart and Green Agriculture products can become the pivotal point of a specific-quality virtuous circle within a regional or territorial approach, meaning that its promotion can have positive effects that are reinforced over time, thus allowing preservation of the agrifood system, related social networks and agritourism development, which in turn contributes to economic, sociocultural, and environmental sustainability.

From consumer's perspective branding of the Climate Smart and Green Agriculture products can give them information and assurance over its origin, specific production methods and means, quality, reputation, and ability to differentiate them from uncertified similar products.

The use of country-of-origin or region based (BSB) brand marketing can communicate information and promote agricultural products in a quite attractive and inspiring buying and consumption way. Branding can be a successful marketing tool due to the fact that it communicates more than an image to the consumer. It develops a packing of virtual reality and imagination, which inspires strong feelings in the potential customer and decision maker.

Notorious as they are, the common historical heritage and socio-economic challenges of the BSB, are only the proof that the future should be faced with common instruments, for survival in a world of continuous, irreversible globalization. One of these instruments could be a common approach for promoting local/ regional products, resulted from technologies aligned with the digital progress. This is why, a common brand could bring together the need to preserve traditions, the need to economically survive with production efficiency and quality products.

BSB region has common story among the cultures. There is a great opportunity to develop BSB based brand that accepted by the whole consumer of BSB countries, and it is also creating a market opportunity for neighbored and other European countries. By combining common consumer experiences, a brand image can create and support product differentiation. A brand also empowers BSB origin CSA product's reputation to be owned and thus it can provide strong market power for the BSB brand. Thus AGREEN project proposes a solution to share effort of building a brand under the vault of an unique CSA concept, leading to:

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- building of a joint territorial quality Brand, identifying with the same symbol and obtained by the same procedure, for all territories involved in the project.
- increase of territorial competitiveness, based on shared criteria of quality, environmental conservation and solidarity, in each of the member territories.

As a result, the branding and labeling of Climate Smart Agriculture products would lead consumers to identify and differentiate them from conventional ones and enhance their added value. In 2021 a Bulgarian research has shown that 50,72% of Bulgarian women and 26,53 of Bulgarian men know what bio-product means and how it differs from other (Blagoev, Shustova & Mischenko, 2021, p.131) and 8,7% of Bulgarian women state that they always buy bio-products, even in case of a higher price. In Romania the marketing studies report a constant and strong drive for regional, traditional products, associated with fair production and sustainability of one's own region/ country economy. All these are a solid base for developing much stronger positive attitude and as result - consumer preference of CSA products in case of stronger promoting of CSA branding, especially associated to the BSB region traditions in local cuisine and taste.

In general, an AGREEN BSB CSA product brand should refer to:

- regional visibility in the world/EU, along with a national representation in the region;
- need for preserving and advancing national products, habits and traditions;
- need for local brands stating and stimulating more intensive investment in modern agriculture, offering to the local producers (farmers) a promise for a larger solid, sustainable market.

A CSA regional brand, as well as the local CSA corporate and product brands should aim at bringing health and wealth to regional economies, especially to the rural areas.

### **CSA Brand as an umbrella brand**

We presume that the CSA brand will be an “umbrella brand”, also referred to as “family brand”, representing variety of products from growing number of climate-smart agricultural producers from Black Sea Basin Countries. The products under the brand will have two common characteristics:

- Country of origin, which will be one of the Black Sea basin countries

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- The agricultural technologies used to produce those products will be based on climate smart Agriculture.

As an “umbrella brand” CSA Brand can create good brand equity for an individual brand. “Umbrella branding” can be quite challenging to build and promote. For CSA Brand, the main challenge is that the CSA technologies are not yet well known, neither among the producers nor among consumers, not to mention that these technologies and the need to apply them is still not recognized and reflected properly in the county’s legal and strategic documents. In many countries, such as Armenia, Georgia, Bulgaria, etc., the laws do not consider the climate-smart products. This together with the fact that there are no standards regulating CSA product categories, building the CSA Brand will at the same time mean creating a new product category, developing standards for this product category and creating institutions and system for quality assurance.

When the marketing practice is implemented well, the results can reap significant advantages for the producers under their brand. In particular, if the brand will be promoted well and the quality standards will be in place, for small scale agriculture producers it will be much easier to access international markets as the umbrella brand will ensure trust towards the product, no matter which is the country of origin and producing company. The producers under “umbrella” brand, however, should be aware of the possibility for the so called “market cannibalization” phenomenon, where the products under one brand may compete with each other and take market share from one another. Therefore, the producers under this brand should build their own strong and distinctive branding and marketing strategies and promotion tools in order to position themselves strongly under the “umbrella” CSA brand.

#### 4. Audience Profile

Audience profiling is the process of defining the target customer, by monitoring consumer buying behavior across multiple platforms. By segmenting and profiling customers into groups with similar behaviors, marketing activities can then be tailored to reach the audience most likely to deliver the greatest return on investment. The distinction between “audience” and “customer” should be pinpointed due to the fact that the audience refers to a much bigger group and in many cases decision makers are different than the actual buyers.

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Audience profiling involves four main principles: segmentation, messaging, engagement and measurement.

The first step in audience profiling is collecting information about the target audience. Quantitative and qualitative data can be obtained by both google analytics and producers' CRM (Customer Resource Management). Google analytics offers demographic information about website visitors such as age, gender, location and interests. In addition, a deeper analysis can reveal information about which demographics engage with which segments of the company's or similar websites, at what rate they convert and on which pages. The producers' CRM system, apart from being a tool to manage the customer base, is also a living record of interactions that led up to a sale.

Once the target demographics are set, the brand has to identify the needs and pain points of the targeted groups. Acknowledging the problems that potential customers are trying to solve, the pain points they encountered with other solutions and the type of search or queries they completed, can offer valuable information. Another important element of audience profiling is that of psychographic data. Psychographic data includes less quantifiable traits like interests, personality traits, values, critical motivation, hobbies, likes and dislikes that are critical to making a buying decision.

The information gathered from the previous analysis is the basis for developing the appropriate marketing campaign and selecting the most suitable marketing channels to reach potential customers. Measuring the outcomes and results not only determines the success of the marketing strategy but also enables the decisions need to be taken for ongoing approaches.

In the framework of AGREEN Project, participating partners have conducted primary research, surveys and focus group discussions in order to gather valuable information concerning consumer preferences, behaviors and characteristics. Moreover, analysis of the data gathered gives us information about the way consumers perceive the CSA brand and the attributes they expect to locate.

### **Age Distribution**

According to the results presented by Armenia and Romania, there are some differences in the age distribution of the sample, which indicates that different age groups got interested in participating in a survey concerning Climate Smart Agriculture and CSA products.

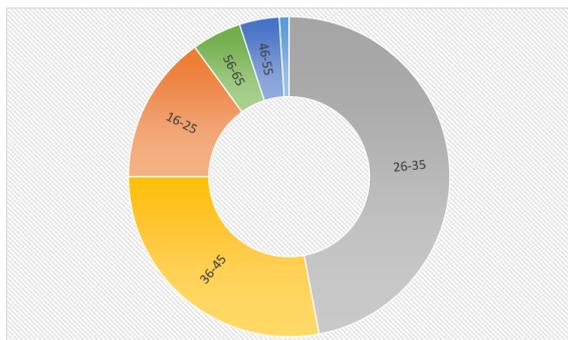
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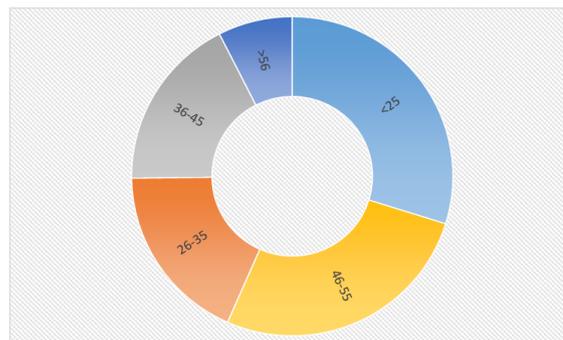
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### Armenia



### Romania



**Figure 1: Respondents' Age Distribution**

The graphs above, put side by side for comparison purposes, show the age distribution of the respondents in both countries. In Armenia, the largest percentage (47%) comes from the 26-35 age group while in Romania from the “over 25” age group (29,8%), showing that in Romania younger people are more interested and even devoted some amount of time to answer the questionnaire. However, Armenia’s results show a clear indication that middle aged citizens (more than 75% belongs in the 26-45 age group) are the most interested in climate matters, with big differences compared with other age groups, whereas in Romania there is a somewhat even distribution between age groups. Moreover, in Romania the interest in CSA seems quite high also in the 46-55 age group, resulting with a significant gap in the 26-45 age group. A safe conclusion would be that in both cases older population and senior citizens (over 56 years of age) are not that interested in CSA and CSA products although we should also take into account PC illiteracy ratios among those ages, considering most surveys were conducted online.

Information gathered in other partner countries including Bulgaria, Georgia and Turkey, indicate that middle aged citizens that belong in the 25-45 age group seem to be far more interested in getting familiar with climate smart agriculture concepts and engage in giving information about their preferences.

Specifying the densest respondents' age group gives a first indication of the characteristics of target groups and potential customers. Assumptions made in this section will provide the basis for choosing the appropriate tools to locate the needs the CSA brand

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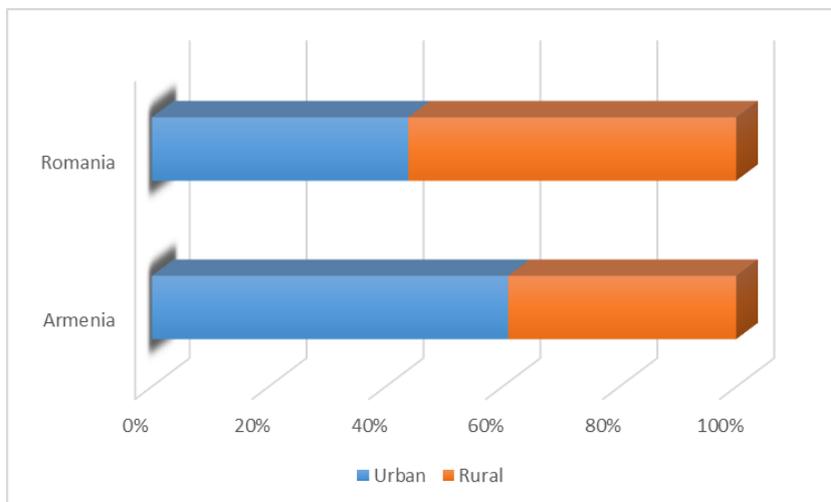


is trying to satisfy / serve as well as the most effective and efficient communication channels and advertising methods.

**Geographical Distribution**

Almost all participating countries indicated that the majority of correspondents, and therefore of people showing interest in CSA, is coming from urban regions. More specifically, Turkey pointed that the vast majority of potential consumers are not only living in large cities of the country but also in the most modern neighborhoods. Bulgaria and Georgia also indicate that potential customers can be found mainly in the countries’ capitals and large cities. Turkey’s focus group projected that CSA products will be highly preferred by customers living in metropolitan cities, mainly due to inaccessibility to fresh, safe, and healthy food products.

The figure below presents the percentage of correspondents, in Romania and Armenia, coming from rural and urban areas. While the results from Armenia follow the same pattern of other participating countries where the largest percentage (61%) comes from urban areas, Romania shows slightly higher participation from the rural population, almost 56% of total.



**Figure 2: Respondents’ Geographical Distribution**

It should be noted that the Armenian research indicated that 70% of the respondents were female as opposed to 30% male, which is rather expected considering that mainly women deal with everyday shopping and meal preparation. Taking into account that most of the participant countries are traditional and place high importance in family ties, it can be inferred that the CSA Brand must be more appealing to the female population.

**Education, Income & Marital Status**

The results from research, surveys, and focus groups in all Partner Countries, pointed that the potential customer of CSA products is more likely to have a middle to high socio-

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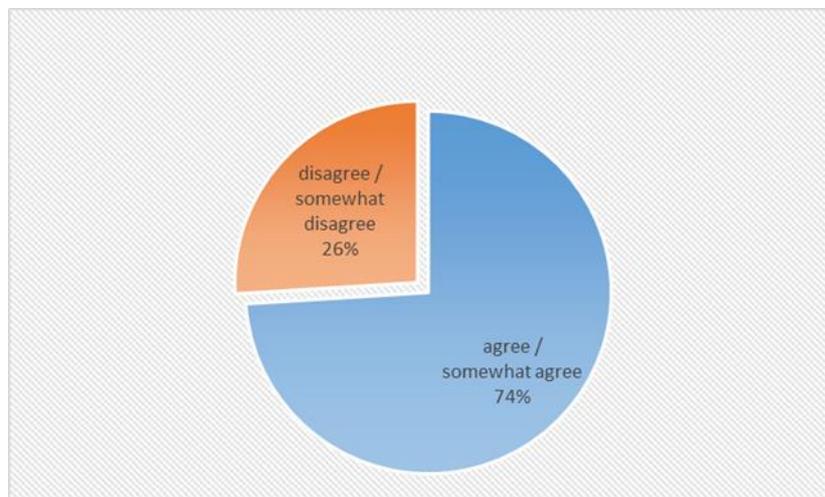


economic status. This means that he/she will most likely have acquired a higher level of education, studied at a university and holds a university degree. Moreover, given the previous attributes, the potential customer is expected to have middle to high income, while a significant market segment will be composed of families with small children that place high importance on food quality and are more willing to spend extra money on consumption.

### **Beliefs, Habits and Preferences**

In order to draw the audience profile, we should define and analyze the potential customer's beliefs, habits and preferences. What are his/her shopping habits? Where does he/she go to find food products? How does he/she select food products? What are the most important characteristics or elements he/she is searching for? What is his/her lifestyle? What does he/she believe about the environment, agricultural production and wellbeing?

According to the Armenian research, the vast majority of people that participated state that they prefer locally produced food products than imported products (figure XX), mainly because they better trust the quality and production methods used by local producers.

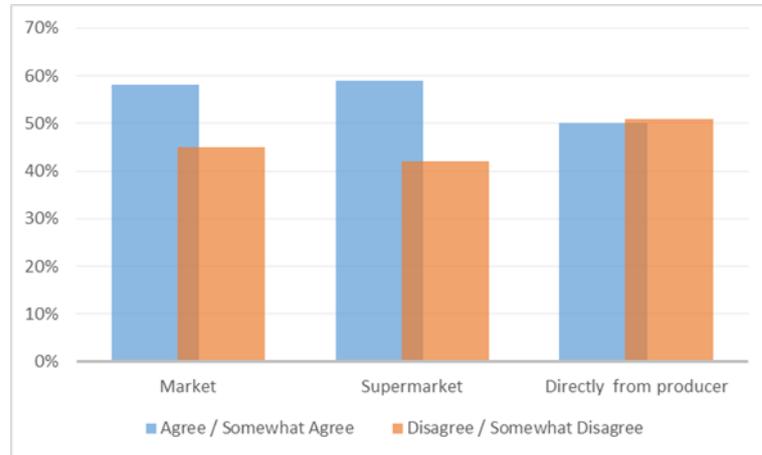


**Figure 3:** Preference of local products vs imported products

However, results show that despite the fact that people are interested in local production, they do not choose to buy directly from the producer and rather they reach out to the market or the supermarket, as shown in the figure below. The reason behind this behavior lies in the residency of the respondents who are mainly living in large cities and metropolitan areas where it is quite hard to find farmers and cultivators. Moreover, most of these people lead busy lives, with long working hours and many responsibilities, not having the opportunity to travel far to find local producers.

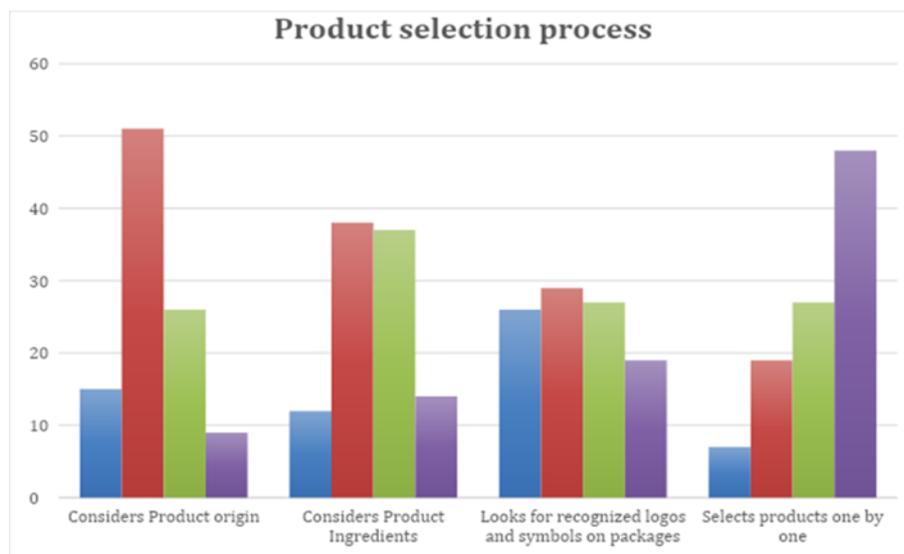


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**Figure 4: Purchase Preferences**

Closely studying the respondents shopping habits and in particular the process they follow in selecting their food products, some patterns can be reflected. Buyers do not really examine or look for the place of origin on prepackaged food products and only 50% of them study the ingredients at the back of the product packaging. Slightly over half of the respondents state that when selecting food products are mainly looking for recognized logos or symbols. As it can be inferred, being familiar or not with CSA, “bio” or “organic” does not matter as long as consumers’ attention is grasped by colorful logos / symbols and catchy brand names. Hopefully, when it comes to fresh agricultural food products, consumers tend to select them one by one reaching for the ones that they think are most healthy.



**Figure 5: Product Selection Process**

Likewise, the Romanian consumer also prefers buying their food products at the market and place high importance in locally or nationally produced products. Respondents stated that are not so price-sensitive as long as the products come directly from the producer and

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cultivating methods show respect to mankind and nature. The vast majority of the respondents (more than 75%) prefers to select products one by one and are interested in knowing the cultivation methods and transportation means used.

Consumers in Romania seem to be more interested in getting information about the place of origin and the ingredients found in their food products. They also search for symbols and graphic signs on food packaging but more than 50% of the respondent didn't know they had the option of buying directly from the producer. They are quite informed and aware of food quality and the impact the production of their food has on the environment and society.

Tradition constitutes a very important element for the Romanian consumer who consider that tradition conservation and promotion should be obtained through food products. 85% of respondents place high importance on the element of affect and national identity, while 70% state that they prefer to be part of a significant, potent region and want to harmonize their lifestyle with people from other regions.

The Georgian consumer is also interested in buying locally produced products that reflect tradition and the Georgian unique taste and local gastronomy. They value domestic products that are healthy and of high quality and choose to prepare a home cooked meal rather than visit a restaurant of a fast-food chain.

According to Turkey's focus group, the potential CSA customer will be a conscious consumer who is sensitive to environment protection and reaches for healthy food options. They are especially interested in knowing what they place on the table and are reaching for natural products. The consumer should be familiar with food security and sustainable agriculture and should be price insensitive as long as they are guaranteed about the quality of the products and the cultivation practices used.

#### 4.1 Map the brand category

Brand mapping is the process of filling in the details of the brand, including business goals, brand style and personality, and a content marketing strategy. It includes determining the attributes of the brand in order to categorize it and attract customers as well as discovering direct competitors within the market and brand segment. Scoring the brand's attributes as well as competitors' can help creating a map and positioning the brand at the right spot in the present time as well as defining the place it wants to be in the future.

The CSA brand involves selling several related products under the name of a single brand and therefore can be referred as an "umbrella brand". CSA umbrella brand, also known as family brand, represents a variety of consumer products cultivated by a large number of climate smart agriculture producers from the Black Sea Basin Countries. All these products and producers share two common characteristics: region of origin (BSB) and climate smart agricultural practices (technology used).

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The CSA Brand in order to be fully developed needs to determine its main characteristics including: types of technologies that can be used for production and can be characterized as climate smart, development of legal and strategic national documents reflecting the development of CSA and defining climate smart agricultural products, development of standards regulating the CSA product categories. Therefore, in a certain way, developing the CSA Brand means creating a whole new product category together with creating a backup system of laws and regulations and appropriate assurance institutions.

The uniqueness of the brand, together with the appropriate marketing practices, can attribute CSA producers with great advantages and profitable operations. In particular, the small-scale producers, which is usually the case in all participating countries, will have the opportunity to access international markets based on the brand's quality attributes regardless of the country of origin.

#### 4.1.1 Centrality and Distinctiveness

Brand mapping can be somewhat challenging when the brand should be scored based on their centrality and distinctiveness. The brand needs to be central in its category and at the same time distinct from all other competing brands in order to stand out from the crowd. Maybe these two goals seem contradictory but actually when placed on a matrix, a brand can find the right balance between them that is most profitable.

As mentioned earlier, CSA brand has unique and distinctive characteristics and can be positioned as an unconventional brand, especially taking into account available (or the inexistence) of competitive products. Research has shown that CSA products do not exist or are not recognized in all participating countries. In fact, there is no legal framework in which a CSA product can operate and develop. In that sense, CSA brand will be positioned in a quit high position in the distinctiveness axis on the matrix. The same applies with centrality since CSA brand will be the first to develop products produced through climate smart agriculture.

However, the CSA brand needs to be compared to brands such as “organic”, “green”, “GAP (Good Agricultural Practices)”, “PDO (Protected Designation Origin)”, “PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) in order to position itself in the Centrality and Distinctiveness Matrix, since these brands can be perceived as indirect competition.

#### *Regional Particularities*

All participating countries state that national and regional policies concerning agriculture come from the Ministry of Agriculture. There are not any distinctive rules, regulations and policies for CSA agriculture in particular but there are national strategies that are related to food production and farming as well as the environment impact related to these activities.



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There are National Strategies for the development of agriculture while three of the participating countries that are member-states of the European Union also follow the Common Agricultural Policy agreed by all member countries. In addition, all countries follow international agreements on mitigating climate change and reduce greenhouse gases.

Overall, governments and research institutions make significant efforts to address issues like agricultural adaptation, environment protection, mitigation of greenhouse gases but the work done is scattered and not systematic so that to result in clear cut actions. Moreover, in Environmental Strategies and Adaptation Strategies minimum reference is made to the agricultural sector and national or regional plans do not include specifications, let alone incentives.

The development of the “organic products” market or other forms of environmentally friendly produced products such as “green” or “GAP” products seem to expand vigorously in all participating countries, showing a tendency in consumers’ preferences and sensitivity. Consumers seem to be more and more concerned about the kind of products they buy and want to acquire information about the production process and the impact on the environment. Healthy products almost always are related to organic products or locally produced products in the minds of the consumers. Moreover, consumers tend to go a long way in order to have access to these products and are not so price-sensitive as far as they are assured of the quality offered.

## 4.2 The ideal customer

People are different and therefore they all like, want and need different things and the choices they make are motivated by their personal thoughts and preferences. A brand works the same way. There are certain people who will choose to buy and others that simply don’t see the value of it. It’s for the very same reason that it’s so important to identify the ideal customer. By definition, the ideal customer is someone who gets their exact needs met by what the brand offers. Also, the ideal customer is the one the brand wants to target with marketing and promotional practices.

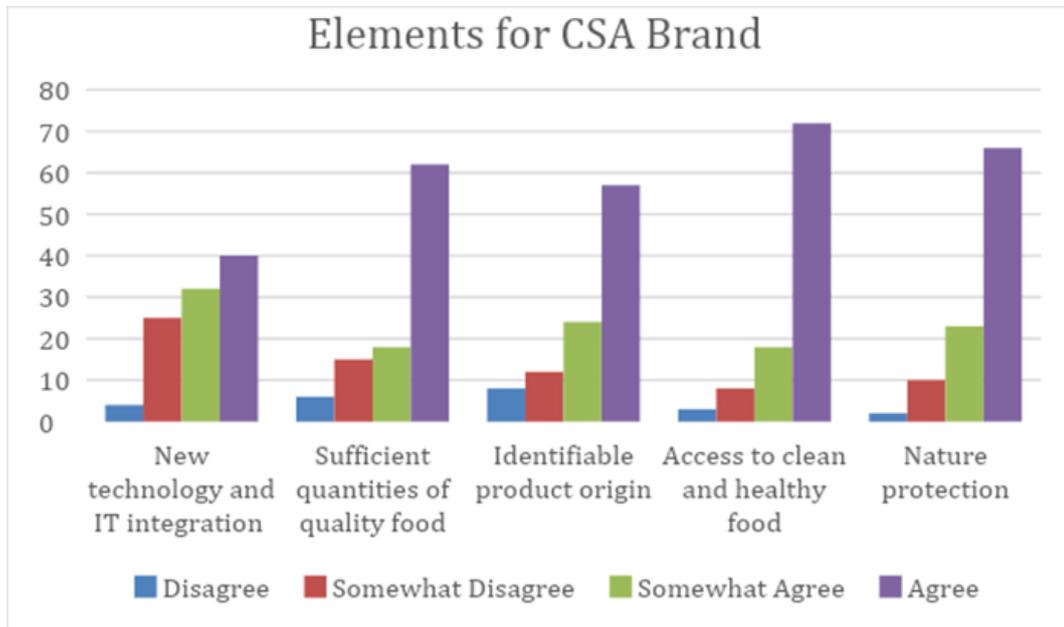
Trying to define the ideal customer for the CSA Brand, a lot of attention should be placed to the values and characteristics of the CSA products. Based on analysis and research conducted in preceding parts of the AGREEN Project, CSA promotes the protection of agricultural production, farmers and the environment, values that should also characterize the ideal customer.

### 4.2.1 If the brand was a person what would their personality be like

The online survey conducted by Armenia revealed the main elements based on which the brand profile can be built.



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**Figure 6: Elements of CSA Brand**

The figure above indicates the elements the participants find more important in the CSA brand. Potential customers give almost equal importance to elements like “access to clean food”, “nature protection” and “availability of sufficient quantities of quality food”. It should be noted that according to consumers (and producers) the incorporation of new technology does not play an important role in the CSA brand.

Armenia has concluded that the brand personality must possess the following characteristics:

- Clean and healthy
- Reliable
- Secure
- Innovative

Moreover, focus group discussion that targeted consumers are mainly people which are really active, follow or want to follow a healthy lifestyle and are concerned with the protection and sustainability of the environment as well as the development of local economies and communities.

Likewise, the Romanian research revealed similar elements that should be reflected in a regional brand. Almost 75% of the participants perceived the following elements of great importance:

- ✓ Idea of performance
- ✓ Efficacy and abundance



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- ✓ Integration of new technology
- ✓ Controlled & guaranteed product quality
  - ✓ Balance between supply and demand in food products
  - ✓ Information about the food source
  - ✓ Protection of the environment

Other important information, helping in determining the ideal customer and the elements expected by CSA brand, come from the Turkish focus group discussion. According to stakeholders' statements, the CSA brand consumers think that they strongly contribute to the development of sustainable agricultural activities and that the CSA products minimize environmental pollution and prevent climate change. CSA brand gives the user the sense of reducing the damage caused by consumption and supporting farmers. The consumer feels more confident in consuming healthier and quality products.

Based on the primary and secondary research conducted by the participating countries and the analysis made above and in previous sections, the main characteristics of the ideal customer include:

| Demographics          |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Age - Sex</b>      | Adult, mainly middle-aged (age group 26-45), Female                    |
| <b>Marital status</b> | Family   |
| <b>Residency</b>      | Resident of large city or urban areas                                  |
| <b>Education</b>      | higher education and university degree                                 |
| <b>Income</b>         | upper middle to high income  |
| Psychographics        |  |
|                       | Highly aware of food quality   |
|                       | Familiar with the impact of agricultural production on the environment |
|                       | Strong feelings on tradition and locality                              |
|                       | Interested in cultivation methods and practices                        |
|                       | High respect for the nature and mankind                                |
|                       | Prefer to buy from the market but want to buy directly from producers  |
|                       | Price insensitive  |
|                       | Follow healthy lifestyle   |
|                       | Interested in the development of local communities                     |
|                       | Prefer cooking at home   |

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### 4.3 The competition

All participating countries state that there is no direct competition for CSA Brand since there are no certified or officially named climate smart agricultural products. However, there are other brands that create indirect competition and share some of the characteristics of the CSA Brand. These brands include “organic”, “bio”, “natural”, “green”, “GAP”, “PGI” and “PDO”. It should be noted that these brands are already operating within a legally approved framework and present widely recognizable and distinctive labels.

Bio and organic brand names both seem to continually develop over the last years gaining bigger market shares and giving the opportunity to small producers and farmers to engage in exports. However, high price levels restrain vast consumption and forces products to specialty and premium stores mainly in metropolitan cities. On the other hand, GAP - PGI - PDO brands are priced at lower levels, feeling the price gap between organic and traditional products. These products have a larger distribution network and a wider customer profile.

Additional competition might arise by other smaller brands mentioned by partners such as labelled “Traditional products” or labelled products indicating the production in predetermined areas or promoting the unique taste of local products.

In order to diversify from competition, the CSA Brand must give priority to awareness raising campaigns so that consumers become fully aware of the distinct characteristics of the brand and the fundamental differences between CSA products and other labelled products. It is of high importance to communicate the specific needs the brand addresses and the technologies it promotes from the point of view both from the producers and consumers. Moreover, the brand must develop a label that will make it stand out from other brands and consumers can relate.

Shown below are the logos / marks of the brands most closely related to the CSA brand that can be perceived as competition.

#### Georgia

Protected Geographical Indication - PGI and Protected Designation of Origin - PDO



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### Mountain Product



### Grass fed



### Hand Made



### Traditional Product



### Georgian Quality



### Forest Fed or Forest Fattened



### Bio - Production



### In-conversion to Organic or In-conversion to Bio



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## Romania

Touristic brand



Touristic brand



Touristic brand



A local development association, elaborated a system of local products, registered marks, in Satu Mare county



“Our pantry” (crave for Romania for large food categories, promot the authentic Romanian taste via important supermarket chain



## Greece

Protected Geographical Indication - PGI



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Protected Designation of Origin - PDO



Βιολογικά Προϊόντα



## 5. Brand Promise

### 5.1 What problem does the brand solve

European regions are in competition for investors and skilled personnel. State governments, business development agencies and others benefit from a more attractive brand profile and better recognition (Kurzahls, 2009). The AGREEN project refers to a regional brand, which should be a common effort and must be built and agreed upon by all the levels of decision making in partner countries. The main argument for such an endeavor is that the regional resource brand is a tool for place branding. The aim of this strategy is the promotion of a Regional Brand, with sufficient attributes to access the most dynamic

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markets, and ability to adapt to changing consumer demands, on the basis of social, environmental and economic criteria (Regional branding throughout Europe, 2011).

The brand identity should strongly relate with the consumers identity, who is supposed to react to a set of distinguishing images that they associate with the name and/or symbol of BS regional CSA agro products. Consumers tend to buy products made in their favorite regions. Nowadays Regional Brands, traditionally content operating in their own comfort zones, are shifting towards a broader target.

BSB region has sufficient common features that can be embedded in a brand for CSA agro products. This will be beneficial for the region development and for the preservation of regional traditions and values. AGREEN project proposes a solution to share effort of building a brand under the vault of an unique CSA concept. The pillars of such an effort are:

- increasing of territorial competitiveness, based on criteria of quality, environmental conservation and solidarity, in each of the territories members;
- building of a joint territorial quality Brand, identifying with the same symbol and obtained by the same procedure, for all territories involved in the project.

The labeling of Climate Smart Agriculture products would lead consumers to identify and differentiate them from conventional ones and enhance their added value. AGREEN team identified that the brand awareness of BSB customer is high.

For example, in both Romania and Bulgaria, in recent years, enhanced interest towards bio, organic and clean/green food production is registered. The consumers are becoming more informed and selective regarding the food they buy and eat. A number of food companies certified by special label (bio, organic or natural) has emerged. Many stores have special isles on which certified foods are sold. Usually they are more expensive than regular foods.

In Bulgaria, at the end of 2016, the total number of organic operators registered in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food was 7,262 - by 1,089 more than in the previous year. In this number, 6,961 are producers, 3 aquaculture producers, 177 organic production processors and 121 traders (importers, exporters, wholesalers and retailers).

The organic production is developing rapidly, with a tendency to increase the number of operators and the output. The motivation of both producers and consumers comes is driven by sustainability and health factors. Organic production in Bulgaria showed an increase of areas where organic production methods (including transition areas and organic areas) were applied, as well as certified ecologically clean areas where wild growing crops like mushrooms, herbs and berries were harvested. More than 90% of the domestic organic produce is exported to EU countries such as Germany, Switzerland, France and the Netherlands.

In Romania, the young adults are more and more aware of the environmental and climate issues, of their need for healthy living and healthy, clean food and water. Also, in

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spite of the globalization, marketing studies report a constant and strong drive for regional, traditional products, associated with fair production and sustainability of one's own region/ country economy. Romania has a strong branding potential in bio and organic food.

AGREEN team found that the story behind a BSB CSA products brand should be built on strong personality and authenticity. Consumers need to become aware of the BSB qualities, pioneering spirit, innovation, sustainable agricultural practices and the unexplored potential of the region.

An AGREEN BSB CSA product brand should refer to:

- The need for a national representation in the region, the regional visibility in the world/ EU,
- The need for preserving and advancing national products, habits and traditions,
- The need for a brand that boosts the consensus of the producers and stimulate their investment in modern agriculture, offering them a promise for solid, constant, large market,
- The need to solve the food safety issues and be transparent at the farming, processing, packaging and transportation levels.

The main problem the brand addresses is the scarce visibility of existing regional products (mainly organic, bio products), otherwise notorious for their quality-taste. The second is the challenging low level of development of some areas in the region, mainly focused on agriculture, alongside to and in spite of hot points of intense tourism activities.

A CSA regional brand should aim at bringing health and wealth to regional economies, especially to the rural areas.

## 5.2 What does the brand make the customers feel?

AGREEN proposes a Brand with the mission to protect and promote the region's unique heritage and potential, by promoting and developing sustainable CSA products from BSB, understanding local preferences and continuously innovating to better address needs of consumers.

The objectives of such a brand are:

- To recognize the inherent economic value of BSB remarkable agricultural potential,
- To encourage greater use of BSB's environmental and agricultural potential as business assets,
- To promote distinctive high quality products rooted in the region and tradition,
- To link producers to market opportunities and to each other, and to guide consumer choice,
- To support small business development and reward sustainable business practices,
- To empower communities and enable the choice to stay regional.



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Bottom line, a Brand addressing BSB CSA products is envisaged to offer a unique experience of quality and taste, for products obtained with modern and responsible technologies.

The AGREEN team researched the most important brand components and elements in all partner countries. The results are, not surprisingly, coherent with the common traces of the regional consumer described in chapter 4. In all regions, the important brand elements superpose with the needs described by the potential customers.

In Greece the expectations for this brand are that it will inform the consumers that the product they are buying is grown in environmentally friendly ways and supports a sustainable life style. The purchase of such products are expected to strengthen local markets and products, while consumers feel safe about the food they are consuming.

In Bulgaria, for the purpose of this study, a questionnaire was designed and distributed among potential consumers of foods and agricultural products in order to assess their preferences and attitudes towards a future CSA brand (Feasibility study for CSA branded food products-Bulgaria, 2021). The questionnaire was distributed on-line via e-mails to a broad and diverse contact group within the region of the BSB eligible territory in Bulgaria. In Bulgaria, the successful CSA brand should have the following most important elements as per the respondents' opinion (Fig. 7):

- To show that the product is green/sustainable (72,5%)
- To show that the product is contributing to the local economy (70%)
- To show the origin of the product (65%)
- To demonstrate a high quality of the product (52,5%)
- To show that the product was produced in a natural way (50%)
- To show that the product is certified by a controlling institution (50%)
- To show that the product is preserving and enhancing the local traditions (47,5%)
- To show that the product is economically effective (40%)
- To show the use of new technologies in the production process (17,5%)

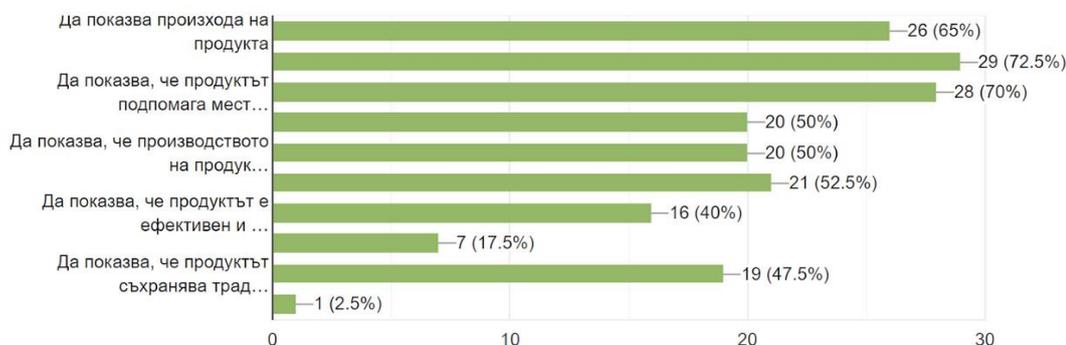


Figure 1. Brand most important elements, as per Bulgarian the respondents' opinion

81% of respondents have indicated strong positive attitude towards buying goods branded as CSA products. 19% are indecisive and there is 0% of negative responses (people



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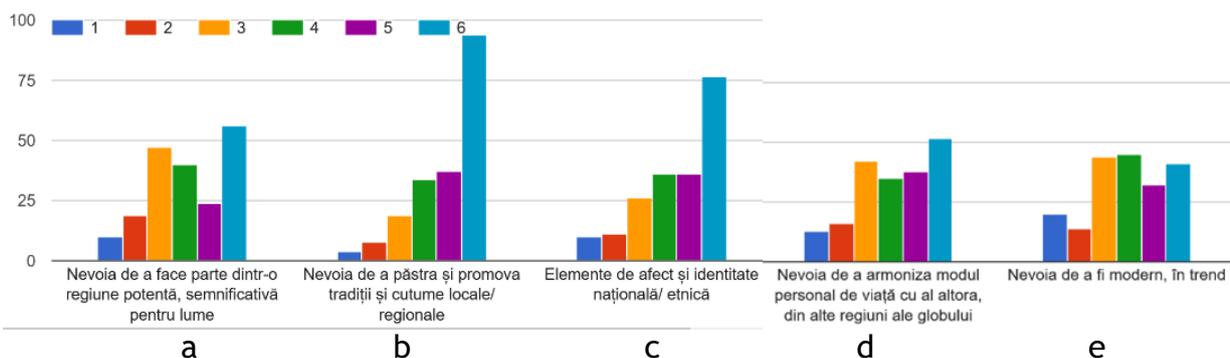


who would rather not buy CSA products). The respondents claim that the CSA products should not be more expensive than the regular (non-branded) products (47,5% vs. 22,5%). 30% are inconclusive.

There is a huge potential for adopting a new CSA brand on the Bulgarian market. The consumers are in general eager to know the origin of the products they buy and the methods of production, which aligns perfectly with the CSA core benefits. They are interested in consuming clean, natural products raised or grown locally with proven health benefits. The support of the local producer is another great incentive. The consumers are prioritizing the quality over the price. CSA could be another instrument for quality control and monitoring which they would trust if endorsed by a recognized certifying authority.

In Romania, the AGREEN team applied a survey with 4 items and 23 questions + 1 open invitation to communicate free opinions, in order to detect the Romanian customer preferences and needs. The respondents were offered a (1-6) Likert intensity scale for the answers. The following needs were identified, linked with a BSB CSA products brand, upon 198 answers (Fig. 8) (Study for CSA branded food products-Romania, 2021):

- a) The need to be part of a significant, potent region
- b) The need to preserve and promote traditions and traditional products
- c) Element of affect and national identity
- d) The need to harmonize one's lifestyle with other people, from other regions
- e) The need to be modern, trendy



**Figure 8.** Romanian customer preferences and needs, linked with a BSB CSA products brand, intensity scale

The AGREEN team extracted the following elements that should be reflected in a regional brand for agricultural products originating in the Black Sea Basin and produced in a climate-smart way, as reflected by the Romanian respondents (Fig. 3):

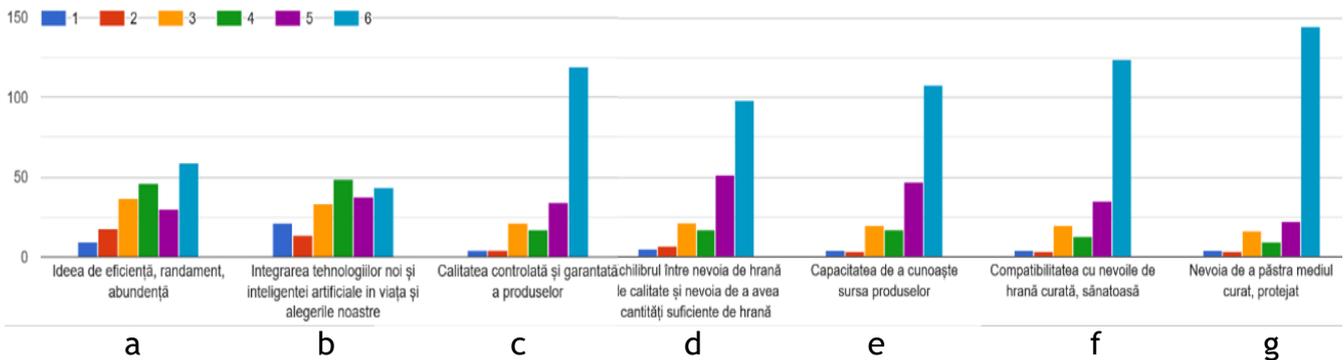
- a) Idea of performance, efficacy and abundance
- b) Integration of the new technologies and the AI in our lives
- c) Controlled and guaranteed quality of the products



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- d) The balance between the need to have quality food and the need for sufficient amounts of food
- e) The capacity to know the food source
- f) The need for clean and healthy food
- g) The need to protect the environment



**Figure 9.** Elements that should be reflected in a regional brand for agricultural products originating in the Black Sea Basin, based on Romanian respondents, intensity scale

For the Turkish consumer (Study for CSA branded food products - Turkey, 2021), the AGREEN team identified that a successful CSA brand shows that the product is green/sustainable, shows that the product is contributing to the local economy, shows the origin of the product, demonstrates a high quality of the product, shows that the product was produced in a natural way, shows that the product is certified by a controlling institution, shows that the product is preserving and enhancing the local farming traditions. The Turkish consumer need to feel:

- Safe - they get clean, healthy food
- Proud - they see their traditions and efforts visible and promoted.
- Trustful - they know the brand ensures products that do not harm them, their habits and traditions, the environment.
- Hopeful - they hope for better life, better integration in an extremely dynamic world, preserving the comfort of the tradition, taste and customs.

For the consumer in the BSB region, the brand should assure a certified, healthy, quality product that is beneficial for the local community and the environment.

### 5.3 Why do the customers should trust this brand?

The AGREEN team emphasizes that a paramount feature of a BSB CSA brand is the product authenticity. Today’s consumer has a plethora of options, in a world full of digital and social upheaval. The trust in the brand has an increased importance, as customer loyalty is strongly influenced (up to 30%) by it (Mitchell Vanessa, 2018). The



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brand will be trusted if it delivers good and stable quality products. Therefore, the certification at national and cross-regional level is the fundament for building a resilient, trustful regional brand.

The brand should be agreed and certified within the national countries regulations and under the EU regulation regarding geographic indicatives for food products and quality. The clients should know the products were obtained with means and measures integrated, accepted and assimilated in their own (national) belief/ value system.

In Turkey such a brand will be trusted because it is envisaged a certification by a recognized organization, especially authorized by the Agriculture and Forestry Minister.

## 6. Brand Messaging

### 6.1 Brand Essence (Personality, Voice, Tone)

The essential value of a BSB CSA brand is a critical element of the branding strategy, because clearly transmits what the brand stands for. The AGREEN team identified the following brand traces, descriptors which defines the guiding vision of the brand:

**Personality:** playful, joyful, trustful, rooted in tradition.

**Colors:** shades of green (ochre) and blue.

**Shapes:** curvy, ascendant. Packaging with traditional, recognizable patterns.

**Tone:** self-possessed, reassuring, feminine, lower pitch.

### 6.2 Value Proposition

The Value proposition for a Brand for CSA BSB products is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The Value Proposition Matrix

| Product   |   | Customer  |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Benefits:</b><br>Abundant, accessible products, that promote and boost the local and regional agriculture. | <b>Experience:</b><br>Offers quality certified products with familiar taste and recognizable packaging and labeling, marked with familiar | <b>Wants</b><br>( <i>emotional drivers</i> )<br>Health;<br>Clean food;<br>Clean environment;<br>Security and protection;<br>Satisfaction - taste and quality; | <b>Needs</b><br>( <i>rational drivers</i> )<br>Quality products at accessible/ reasonable price.<br>To be correctly informed about the product;<br>To contribute to environment protection; | <b>Fears</b><br>( <i>undesired outcomes</i> )<br>To be deceived with false or incorrect information about the product origin, |



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|   |   |  |   |   |
|---|---|--|---|---|
|   | symbols, associated with tradition and responsible and efficient production technologies. | Stability - Familiar and recognizable experience. Inclusiveness. To be noticed, appreciated for one's choices (tradition and crafts, habits, customs) Recognition. | To make use of the technology advancements; To contribute to one's national welfare, advancement and national identity promotion; | farming, quality.<br><br>Spend additional financial resources and trust on not worthy products. |
| <b>Features:</b><br>Labeled;<br>Certified<br>Quality; Tasty<br>Familiar, Esthet |   | <b>Substitutes:</b> Local/ regional bio and organic products, certified or not at national or regional levels.   |   |   |

The Blueprint for a Brand for CSA BSB products identified common identity benchmarks in common nature integration in countries symbols, day-by-day life, history, common traditions in cuisine, common traditions in farming. These can form the platform for a transnational brand experience, for credible, tangible product features as *clean, familiar and friendly, clean, tasty products*. Basically, people in BSB region are respondent to tradition and taste, enveloped by smart technologies, in friendly, recognizable and familiar designed package, at affordable price, and this is the Brand proposition value.

### 6.3 Tagline

AGREEN team identified three areas for a brand tagline (Table 1). The messaging Pillars of a BSB CSA product Brand, as were identified by the AGREEN team, are the verbal and visual guidelines.

**Table 2.** Areas for a brand tagline

| Area                      | Tagline   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Smart, technology related | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Smart products from the cradle of Europe/ history</li> <li>● Trust the smart</li> <li>● “Sea” smart, eat smart</li> <li>● “Sea” the taste of SMART agriculture</li> <li>● Smart people consume smart agriculture products</li> </ul> |
| History, tradition        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Taste of tradition</li> </ul>  |



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|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Sea” the taste within tradition</li> <li>• Traditional heritage, produced smart and green</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Experience<br/>Responsibility<br/>Reward</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience/ Feel the taste of smart</li> <li>• Go smart and green</li> <li>• Buy green, feel green</li> <li>• Save our food and agricultural sources with ecologically friend smart agricultural products</li> </ul> |

#### 6.4 Verbal guidelines

Keywords as branding guidelines were grouped in the same three areas, as the taglines (Table 2). They strongly relate with the needs and expectations of the consumers, as identified by AGREEN team.

**Table 3.** Verbal guidelines

| Areas                                  | Verbal guidelines  |
|--|--|
| Smart, technology related              | Smart, technology, sustainable agriculture, sustainable food for future, efficient technology, performance                     |
| History, tradition                     | Tradition  |
| Experience<br>Responsibility<br>Reward | Clean, healthy, safe, taste, green, bio, protected environment, efficacy and abundance, environmentally friendly, food safety. |

#### 6.5 Visual guidelines

A brand identity is a way to communicate with the world, thus crafting a strong brand identity is mandatory. AGREEN proposes a comprehensive visual language for the brand identity that translates across mediums and that can be applied to the websites, packaging and promotion materials. Brand visuals are meant to support the brand strategy, capturing what brand’s customers want to engage with. In order to step out in the landscape, the AGREEN project propose brand visuals that are driven by the *differentiation*, *relevance*, and *uniqueness* of the BSB CSA product.

As identified by the Bulgarian AGREEN team, the brand’s slogan and content should focus on origin, sustainability, quality, health and support for the local economy. The brand visuals preferences are for graphic symbols related to nature/land and sea with colors ranging from green/brown and yellow to blue, teal and azure. An explicit text “Climate Smart Agriculture” should be presented rather than the “CSA” abbreviation.



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The brand visual elements were defined by the potential consumer, in Bulgaria, as follows:

- Preferences were given to nature and agriculture related symbols (55%) such as fruit, wheat, tree and nature; 25% asserts that the brand should also contain Black sea graphics elements
- 55% claims that the brand should contain national symbols or other graphic elements associated with the country's origin
- 45% of the respondents agree on “earth” colors (green, brown, yellow) as a main color for the visual brand while 32,5% prefer a color combination between earth and sea colors
- 37,5% prefer mild (pastel) over strong (bright) tones and shades
- 25% are for symbols that convey high quality, while another 25% would like to see graphic visuals depicting support for the local population
- Nearly 28% think that the wording should include the whole name of the brand (example: “Product of Climate Smart Agriculture) rather than an abbreviation such as “CSA”

In Romania, the customers highlighted the following visuals for the brand: curvy lines, green-blue, ascending trend, some sea and vegetable suggestions (Fig. 4).

In Turkey the customers highlighted the following visuals for the brand: Mix of green, white and blue colors, contemporary graphics including nature and region, environmentally friend looking package, authorization label graphics, vertical package for marketing communication



Figure 10. BSB CSA Brand logo proposal

## 7. Go-to-the-market strategy

First of all, considering to ask the right questions and in the right order, to form a successful go-to-market strategy for Black Sea Basin's Climate Smart Agricultural products. A well-planned strategy will have focus on connecting with customers and make it clear:

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- Purchasing behavior of related and competitor products
- Motives that affect purchasing
- Price level, willingness to pay CSA products
- Testing the package alternatives
- Measuring BSB brand impulse/attractiveness
- Estimate market size
- Decide product line
- Decide promotional activities
- Decide distribution channels
- Decide market segment
- Positioning the products

Go-to-market strategy is the approach to succeed in the market and ensure your product is as successful as possible in long-term. Purpose of the go-to-market strategy is a winning total customer experience (Friedman, 2002). It starts from market analysis to customer acquisition.



Source: 280 Group LLC.

The aim of go-to-market strategy should be improving fundamental business outcomes. For this purpose, BSB branded CSA products should align to the ever-evolving needs of potential customers. To achieve this task, would be need to develop a successful strategy, create a detailed go-to-market strategy plan with the following elements;

### 7.1 What are the BSB branded CSA products target markets?

When the feasibility studies are examined, the target market of the BSB branded CSA products is primarily the countries in the region. In the second place, we can consider the

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near European countries and other EU countries. There is a need to be positioned in these target markets, it should be decided how to segment the market.

Market segmentation is look for common characteristics such as shared needs, common interests, similar lifestyles, or even similar demographic profiles. Segmentation is the process of dividing the audience to reflect specific characteristics that may influence purchasing decisions. Segmentation helps develop the strategies that will target customers based on their needs, values and behavioral characteristics. Factors to segment customers by include:

- **Demographic factors:** Preliminary studies have shown that the most important indicators for potential customers to be included in the target market of BSB branded CSA products are; age, income, and education.
- **Location factors:** Feasibility report indicates that potential customers to be included in the target market of BSB branded CSA products are living in the urban areas, especially residential areas.
- **Behavioural characteristics:** The greater driving force for the future customer of BSB branded CSA products is they tend to purchase greener and ecological products. Currently, living in harmony with nature attracts more attention from consumers. Therefore, our target market will consist of these types of consumers.
- **Psychographic factors:** Level of motivation a consumer has for a certain product is the major psychological factor. Perceived quality, reference groups' pressure, learning and beliefs, and emotions are triggered the purchasing process. BSB branded CSA products should be motive the consumers and emphasize ecological-environment friendly living. Informing the consumers about the cultivation methods of Climate Smart Agriculture with the aim of getting acquainted with the products.

After the identify characteristics of market segments, it would be determining how we would target and communicate to segment. *Priority* – Focus on the audience segment whose behavior will be the easiest to change and accepts BSB branded CSA products. *Ease of reach* – Consider the target segment that is the easiest to reach in the shortest amount of time. For that reason, local BSB markets in each partner countries are appropriate for enter the market. *Level of business impact* – The size of the forecasted segment will accomplish the whole investment cost.

To ensure take an advantage to market, we will create a competitor profile and gather prolific data as we could. First of all, we need to reveal the product lines and brands that



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may be our competitors in the market and their market dynamics. Thus, we need recorded data such as published reports, articles, sales figures. Moreover, it should be supported by the report of marketing research companies which recorded retail sales continuously. And the other step is conducting interviews with different partners, suppliers, middlemen, and retailers. After gathering the data it's important to understand how we will compete. Porter's five forces will help to assess this (Porter, 1979).

**1. Threat of new entrants:** New entrants put pressure on current organizations within an industry through their desire to gain market share. This in turn puts pressure on prices, costs and the rate of investment needed to sustain a business within the industry. The threat of new entrants is particularly intense if they are diversifying from another market as they can leverage existing expertise, cash flow and brand identity as it puts a strain on existing company's profitability (Porter, 2008). Considering the BSB branded CSA products, they would not affect to conventionally produced agricultural products. But in contrast, good agricultural practices labeled and organic agricultural products would have been affected. Because BSB brand targeted to market segment between good agricultural practices labeled agricultural products and organic agricultural products. Barriers to entry restrict the threat of new entrants. If the barriers are high, the threat of new entrants is reduced and conversely if the barriers are low, the risk of new companies venturing into a given market is high (Han Ping, 2014). It should be accurately calculated start-up costs of BSB branded CSA products which is the higher barrier for entering the market.

**2. The threat of substitutes:** A substitute product uses a different technology to try to solve the same economic need. Especially if the substitute product is cheaper. BSB branded CSA products would not be affected from conventionally produced agricultural products. Due to the BSB brand located to price level of GAP products so that brand loyalty is an important factor to get over this threat.

**3. Supplier bargaining power:** If a supplier has the buyer power, then they can drive up the prices, reducing overall profit. Due to the BSB branded CSA products are planned to be produced in a wider area, they could minimize costs by performing a vertical integration with suppliers.

**4. Bargaining power of customers:** Such as income levels or price sensitivity. The bargaining power of customers is the ability of customers to put the firm under pressure, which also affects the customer's sensitivity to price changes. BSB brand products should offer acceptable prices to target customers.

**5. Competitive rivalry:** Understanding the competition circumstances in the market is a major part of a successful go-to-market strategy plan. BSB brand must be aware of its competitors' marketing strategies and pricing and also be reactive to any changes made.



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When launching BSB branded CSA products as a new product or entering a new market, a go-to-market plan will be crucial to marketing success. While a marketing plan is that aligns marketing initiatives to the company's high-level business goals and objectives, a go-to-market plan is more niche, focused, and developed for a specific product or market.

## 7.2 What are the BSB branded CSA products target customers?

First of all, BSB brand should understand the customer. New products as CSA products are born every day and they also fail every day. Creation of certification bodies for the products and their promotion to the consumers, in order to develop the consumers' trust towards the climate-smart products and what these represent. A go-to-market plan can help avoid these problems if it includes certain elements of research and action. Feasibility researches which conducted by all the partner countries indicated that BSB branded CSA products target customer groups are living in urban areas, middle age, higher income groups and highly interested to green products. When it will decide to product line of BSB branded products, it would be necessary to conduct a detailed marketing research to measure target customers' behavior and attitudes. In addition to this work, market trend research should also be made. It would be predicted the market that the BSB brand is entering into a stable or growing market and how saturated the market is. The last phase of research is how to flexible to coordinate new product development occurrences. Particular CSA products should be testing on the market. Determining a specific profile of BSB branded CSA products' early adopters, uncovering the reasons why they would buy the product and, more importantly, why they would choose it over a rivals' offering.

Particular major questions should be answered from the basis of potential customer:

- Which needs of customers will fulfilled and which problems will solve by the BSB branded CSA products?
  - What would customers willing to pay for the BSB branded CSA product?
  - What are the current purchasing trends for targeted customer of BSB branded CSA product? Is target market segment growing, decreasing or stagnating?
  - Why would customers purchase BSB branded CSA products with respect to competitors' products?
  - Regarding the market segment, is competition valid for the target customer?

The closer we can get to the customer and gather direct feedback, the more likely it is that BSB branded CSA new products finds success.



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### 7.3 BSB brand positioning

A brand's positioning is designed to develop a sustainable competitive advantage on product attributes in the consumer's mind (Gwin and Gwin, 2003). Such a regional brand success relies on building a long-term relationship with a customer. Positioning is critical for new product as BSB brand CSA products. When consider a BSB brand positioning below questions should be answered.

- What products are BSB brand offering?
- What is BSB brand unique value to offer to each target customer group?
- How will BSB brand connect with their target customers?
- What are the BSB brand abilities to demonstrate or communicate this difference to the target market.
- How the CSA products is different or better than competitors?

Marketing literature indicated that a few methods for evaluating a brand's current or potential positioning. The methods are: multidimensional scaling, factor analysis, discriminant analysis, and conjoint analysis. Before enter the market, marketing research should be conducted and reveals the gap in the market segment for BSB brand positioning.

### 7.4 What are BSB brand offering?

The current agricultural product market for end users divided mainly three segments. These are; conventionally produced agricultural products, controlled and labelled agricultural products and organic certificated products. Last decade global consumer trend is environment friendly sustainable produced "green" products. Researches find that green new product introductions can indeed improve brand attitude and that both the brand and category's positioning influence the introduction of green new products (Olsen et.al, 2014). Therefore, BSB branded CSA products should highlight the agricultural products they produce in a sustainable and environmentally friendly manner. It should be support by labelling, packaging and commercials. Packaging that will indicate the difference of these products from the rest not only in terms of cultivation methods, but also the philosophy of these products for the protection of the environment, e.g. packaging from recycled materials, less packaging when the product allows, promoting the reuse of packaging.

### 7.5 Which channels will use by BSB brand?

The channel strategy is sell BSB branded CSA products in places where potential target customers want to purchase their products. It is very important to the first step is to find the right channels for the new product. We should decide to primary distribution channel for BSB brand. Firstly, currently available channels should be determined. Due to map



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out the best channels for the BSB branded CSA products, forming a channel strategy requires answer a number of questions:

- **Where do the target customers make purchases?** Food retail stores, premium food chains, groceries, or e-store.
- **Does the product appropriate the channel?** Can BSB branded CSA products be successful at each retail outlet?
  - **What level of interaction is needed for target customers to make the purchase decision?** Do customers require a high level of information to decide BSB brand, or a quick checkout? Is a BSB brand products best sold online or in a store?
  - **Would customers purchase through a partner?** If BSB brand will planned to sold online, arrange a third-party agreement with known e-stores. Experiences about electronic marketing is indicated that special foods sales have been increasing by the years.

Another important action is managing and controlling the channel performance. Develop better relationships with channel partners and working together to achieve a shared goal. A framework for forming successful partnerships and business ecosystems to help drive channel performance with partners listed below:

- **Identify potential obstacles with partners.** When select a partner it's because their business is well suited to sell BSB products. The go-to-market strategy plan should review the potential obstacles in the channel partners may face when working with prospects and customers.
- **Encourage the channel partners.** Aligning specific incentives directly to different phases of the customer experiences, makes it easier for partners to get involved at these stages and becoming part of the buying process. Some tactics should be included such as campaigns, discounts, and indoor activities.
- **Channel partners as a real partner.** If BSB brand work with channel partner treated as partners, they will be more cooperative. Increased cooperation gets greater channel performance and reliable sales. Moreover, BSB brand should reward the channel partners with key performance indicators level to maintain loyalty.
- **Knowing change channel partners and transition to new ones.** Based on the agreed key performance indicators, BSB brand should evaluate the partner. If their performance is low, consider the exit and find better channel.

## 7.6 Marketing mix strategy for BSB Brand



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Go-to-market plan must be included marketing mix strategy. It will reduce the time to get to the market, lowers risk and the cost that may be associated with failed launches, delivers the best experience for the customer and invests on the right path with better direction for internal sources and external partners. Marketing mix forming with four factors.

**Product strategy:** To differentiate the new BSB brand offering from those of competitors, helping build sales messaging. The product strategy will need to capture the product's reason for existence, reaffirming how it will solve a problem for the long term. In order to develop the product strategy, the product development team need to collaborate cross-functionally across the department to develop the product roadmap. Product strategy should provide product vision expanding. Future needs and want of BSB brand customers' products life getting longer. Product strategy gets better collaboration cross-functionality with partners so the BSB brand market success easier in the long run.

**Pricing strategy:** BSB branded CSA products' price should determine before the launch to market. For the reliable pricing strategy, detailed information should be gathered from buyers and the marketplace. Then, decide to pricing strategies as follows:

**Premium pricing strategy:** If BSB brand products' perceived value are higher than competitor, this strategy should be implemented. BSB brand packaging, marketing efforts, and content created to support that product positioning.

**Initial low pricing for market penetration:** If the goal is to enter the market to take attention for BSB brand, this strategy should be implemented. Despite the challenge of making less money in the short-run, the increase in awareness could result in greater profits in the long run. As a regional characteristic, young adults are very sensible to the price issue.

**Constant low pricing:** This pricing strategy used by companies with large sales volumes, such as the big food chain stores in the world. BSB brand concept is not fit that pricing strategy.

**Price skimming:** Charging the highest initial price at launch and then eventually lowering the cost to attract other potential buyers. It might be used by BSB brand.

**Psychological pricing:** Creating an emotional purchase decision with the customer, such as an impulse action. The idea behind psychological pricing is that customers will read the slightly lowered price and treat it lower than the price actually is. It might be used by BSB brand, because of the food retailer use this strategy extensively.

**Promotion strategy:** Every new product launch needs to consider promotions and the ways they can capture the customers with an introductory offer. These are: sample



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product, coupon offer and promotional offer. Especially, bundled into a package of products that they already know and like, a promotional offer is a great way to attract food consumer.

**Communication strategy:** The go-to-market plan needs to map out communication at launch and beyond to keep audiences interested and engaged. Firstly, BSB brand would start with official release announcement. Using commercials and advertorials are the best starting point. Commercial not only used conventional media but also use social media platforms. Moreover, BSB brand should use digital and social media platforms to share the story and BSB launch promotions. After the launch, keep customers engaged to share interesting stories for BSB brand CSA product experiences. Commercials should be continuing to use to remind the BSB brand.

## 8. Communication channels

Marketing a brand or a product constitutes a vital procedure of a business or an organization, concerning both digital and traditional marketing. Nowadays, the vast majority of the population interacts with the internet completing everyday transactions while there is a considerable percentage of people not even knowing how to use a computer or the internet. Therefore, selecting marketing strategies and communication channels is somewhat triggering and requires the development of a satisfactory marketing mix that reaches out to all target groups. Both digital and traditional marketing offer advantages and disadvantages that should be taken into consideration when selecting communication channels and developing a marketing strategy.

Traditional marketing including newspapers, radio, TV, brochures, magazines and billboards has been on the agenda for over a century mainly because it was the only method available for promoting new brands and products. People are used to this method and feel comfortable and familiar with advertisements on TV or in magazines. However, traditional marketing is rather costly, does not offer easily countable results and is considered quite static not giving the opportunity for interaction with the target audience.

On the other hand, digital marketing is characterized as a form of an “incoming” marketing where potential customers are looking for the company and not the other way round. The more people watching the company (website, posts, references) the more accustomed they become and the more likely it is to develop a relationship of trust and interaction. Digital marketing can become more focused on specific target audience, is less invasive giving the audience the ability to choose the way to be informed (by reading a post or watching a video) and gives the opportunity to interact. Moreover, the cost is considerably lower and the results can be recorded and measured. However, digital marketing campaigns can be easily copied, keeping track of results is quite time consuming, does not apply to everyone and always requires updates and alterations.

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Statistics show that (Digitale, 2020):

- ✓ More than 80% of buyers do their research on the internet before they buy a product or a service.
- ✓ Almost 60% of adults use Facebook every day.
- ✓ 94% of Business to Business (B2B) companies actively use LinkedIn to marketing purposes.
- ✓ 90% of Business to Customer (B2C) companies refer to social media as the most effective content marketing channel.

Overall, there are companies that thrive through printed media or tv commercials and, as evidence shows, the bigger the company or the organization the better the brand recognition through traditional marketing. Nonetheless, if a company needs to reach a specific segment of the target group, it needs to use digital marketing. Summing up, digital marketing offers a better Return on Investment (ROI) of the capital used and therefore brands should invest significantly on digital marketing, granting however some budget for traditional marketing.

## Ranking Communication Channels

### A. Digital Marketing Channels

#### i. Content Marketing

Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience - and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action. (Content Marketing Institute)

This type of marketing constitutes the most effective way of creating a relationship of trust and interaction with potential customers. The most popular types of content marketing include:

- Brand's Website is the most important marketing channel and one of the first things customers see online when seeking information. In addition, all other channels are used to attract users to the website so that they become paying customers.
- Video is the most commonly used format in content marketing due to fact that people tend to like watching videos. It is predicted that by 2022, 82% of website traffic will come from video. The most common types are brand storytelling and promotional videos.
- Blogs are one of the three main forms of content produced. Businesses tend to spend up to 46% of their budget on content creation. Blogging better enforces the profile and image of a company and constitutes a trustworthy way of communicating with the customers offering solutions and addressing needs. Blogs can increase the company's website traffic and empower brand awareness.

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- Podcasts are expected to grow exponentially over the next few years. They are used to establish authority in the field, interview experts and market the business. It is considered one of the best platforms to raise awareness, talk about important topics and entertain the audience.

Research has shown that almost 70% of marketers invest in content strategy while 77% of companies have a content marketing strategy. (Rodriguez, 2021)

## ii. Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

SEO is by far the best method of promoting a company's website on international level and is considered one of the best methods of attracting new customers. Search engines are mainly used by companies to acquire attention while internet users consider them the primary sources of discovery for new products and services. 61% of people accessing a company's website come from SEO as compared to other marketing channels. However, SEO requires a lot of time to be developed and bring results, requires methodical and careful steps as well as continual effort.

## iii. Social Media

Social Media constitute the best and most widely used communication channels appealing to the vast majority of the population. It is estimated that 3.6 billion people were using social media in 2020 while this number is predicted to reach 4.41 billion by 2025 (Chi, 2021). Therefore, there is a pretty big chance that targeted customers are already using social media to get informed. A large number of social media platforms may make it a daunting channel to leverage but the benefit of it relies on the fact that each platform offers different and unique audiences to interact. The most popular platforms include:

- Facebook which is the social media leader and especially beneficial for businesses since 1.6 billion of people are connected to a small business on Facebook while 80 million of small businesses use its tools. In addition, Facebook is the top content distributor and addresses a diverse audience.
- Instagram is considered a must for all businesses. It provides the best Return on Investment (ROI) for brands while its projected numbers by 2023 reach 120 million active users. Instagram centers around visual content and brands use it to promote images and video.
- YouTube, Twitter and LinkedIn

## iv. E-mail Marketing

E-mail marketing constitutes one of the most common selling technique used during the last years. An e-mail that gives information about the products and services offered is



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a substantial way of the company getting in touch with potential customers and encouraging a buy. E-mail marketing aims at:

- Informing potential and existing customers about new products / services
- Informing about sales and offers, latest news and stories
- Promoting specific advertisement to the public
- Sending personalized messages to specific targeted audiences

Mobile - friendly emails should also be taken into considerations since more than 40% of people over 18 open emails on their phones.

#### v. Paid Advertising

Paid advertising refers to the payments for ad space in exchange for use of that space in the web. It is considered to be one of the most effective way to expose a brand to a large audience. These types of advertisements are usually displayed to users on the sides, tops or bottoms of web pages while the cost increases along with the popularity of the web page. The different categories of paid ads include pay-per-click (PPC), pay-per-impression (PPI) and display ads.

Paid advertising, recommended by more than 68% of marketers, gives a brand the opportunity to have fast results at affordable prices and extract measurable results. Moreover, paid targeting can be very specific and allows reaching relevant visitors that are interested in the brand and fit the demographics of the sales personas.

#### B. Traditional Marketing Channels

Traditional marketing often refers to any type of marketing that isn't online. This means print, broadcast, direct mail, phone and outdoor advertising like billboards. This type of marketing is mainly used to reach older audiences that are unfamiliar with technology and are unlikely to get information online.

Since the brand refers to consumer products and appeals to different age groups, some types of traditional marketing should be taken into consideration. Especially, when it comes to awareness raising for the special characteristics of the products, its advantages as compared to competitive products and environmental and health issues, it takes a lot more than web presence.

A marketing strategy for the specific brand must include, apart from printed informative material (brochures), events and in-store promotion. Event marketing is frequently used to raise awareness and grow a brands credibility. Partners and potential customers get a chance to interact with the brand in person and find it more trustworthy. Events constitute an excellent opportunity to boost customer loyalty and at the same time create a positive experience and correlation between the brand and the customer. In-store promotion is used for awareness raising and informative purposes. It is highly used by consumer products and



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include offers, sales, coupons, live tasting and presentations. In-store marketing can create extra value for the product and create the desired trend.

### C. Other Marketing Channels

#### i. Word-of-Mouth

Word of Mouth Marketing (WOMM), also called word of mouth advertising, is the social media era's version of simple word of mouth. WOMM can occur a) traditionally: spreading from one person to another based on recommendation, or b) modern: targeted efforts and naturally occurring instances where users share satisfaction with a brand.

Many best practices and marketing tactics encourage natural word of mouth, but campaigns - particularly on social media - can have the explicit aim of promoting a brand's social exposure. Research has shown that 92% of people trust recommendations from friends and family over any other type of advertising. In addition, 88% of people trust online reviews as much as they trust recommendations from personal contacts while 74% of consumers identify word of mouth as a key influencer in their purchasing decisions. (Glover, 2021)

#### ii. Influencers

Influencer marketing is when a brand cooperates with a relevant, popular creator in their industry to put out ads or specific pieces of content. Leveraging influencers to meet marketing goals can be beneficial in terms of generating brand awareness as well as increasing social proof.

Nowadays, consumers show less trust in marketers and more trust in influencers due to fact that they see them as a person who shares the same interests. The content that influencers create is a form of user generated content like word-of-mouth marketing. Research has shown that 93% of marketers are already using influencer marketing while 71% of them state that the quality generated from this type of marketing is better than other ad formats. (Chi, 2021)

## 9. Labelling standards

### 9.1 Introduction

According to the American Marketing Association, a brand is “a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition”<sup>1</sup>

Labeling is a part of the branding and enables product identification. It gives detailed information to the consumers about the essence, origin, quality characteristics, etc., and usage instructions of the product. Labeling also has legal aspects and should comply with



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the existing national and international regulations of the country where the final product is sold.

Labeling as a part of the product development and communication tool in marketing may have two aspects:

- The legal - refers to the national regulations that aim to protect consumer's rights on the provision of information on food products;
- The private - refers to the company production rules that may have a certain quality mark category, storytelling, or other.

Based on the information received from partner countries, we can say that BSB brand products are food products that fall in the same food quality trademark category as BIO, GI, Fair Trade, Rainforest Alliance, Global GAP, etc.

Therefore, in this chapter, we will discuss the legal regulations and requirements of the partner countries regarding the labeling standards used in food production.

## 9.2 Regulatory framework related to food product labelling in partner countries

The Governments are responsible for protecting and well-being of their citizens and for that, develop different regulatory frameworks including regulations for consumer protection. Regulations for food product labeling differ depending on the country, but in general, they aim to protect the consumer and promote fair competition on the market. Therefore, labeling of the product placed on the market should comply with the regulations of the country where it will be sold, otherwise, the product may be removed from the market.

The labeling rules for the food products in the EU countries are set in Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:02011R1169-20180101>), so the food producers/business operators that the labeling of the products complies with the following requirements:

1. Indication of the product name/category, usage instructions, and last consumption date
2. Indication of the producer/manufacturer and contact information
3. Indication of allergens and nutritional information of processed food
4. Indication of production place, date, and a lot of the product for traceability

Both Turkish and Georgian regulations are developed under the EU regulatory framework and share the same principles. Turkish Food Codex Regulation is in force since 2017 (<http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/tur171239.pdf>) and Georgian regulation on providing information to the consumers since 2019 (<https://matsne.gov.ge/document/view/3328780?publication=0>) and are aiming at achieving a high level of health protection for consumers and guaranteeing their right to information.



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Armenia uses the Technical Regulation of the Customs Union on Food Products in Terms of Labelling for the countries of Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) (<https://www.alba-translating.ru/eng/tr-ts-022-2011/eaeu/tr-ts-022-2011.html>).

As the CSA products fall into the category of the quality marking, are not addressed to it and must be applied by the food producers willing to place their product on the market.

### 9.3 Regulatory Framework related to quality marking practices in partner countries

The world's food market is overloaded and the competition between brands in reaching their consumers and increasing their market share is gradually becoming more and more complex. Besides consumers have less time for shopping and have become more knowledgeable about the issues related to food safety and quality standards and their demands related to food consumption and buying habits change in time. For brands it makes more and more complicated to interest consumers with the product and assure its guaranteed quality and persuade to purchase it.

In food production, for underling to the consumers, the product's specific quality and value, companies use a different type of Quality Trademarks (e.g. Organic, Rainforest Alliance, HACCP, GI, etc.), which assure, that the product is produced in compliance with the specific quality standard the indication stands for and has the relevant certification. They help consumers to easily identify the products of their specific interest and save shopping time. In addition to it, helps companies in reaching new markets and increasing the number of its customers. for example, indication - BIO, Organic (logo) gives consumer insight that this product is produced without use of chemicals, is healthy, GMO free, etc.; or GI - makes emphasis on tradition and cultural heritage; or Rainforest Alliance - combing good agricultural practices with environmental and social issues.

These quality standards are set by the industry or the government, are voluntary and include production, certification and labeling rules for the different range of food products to serve following purposes:

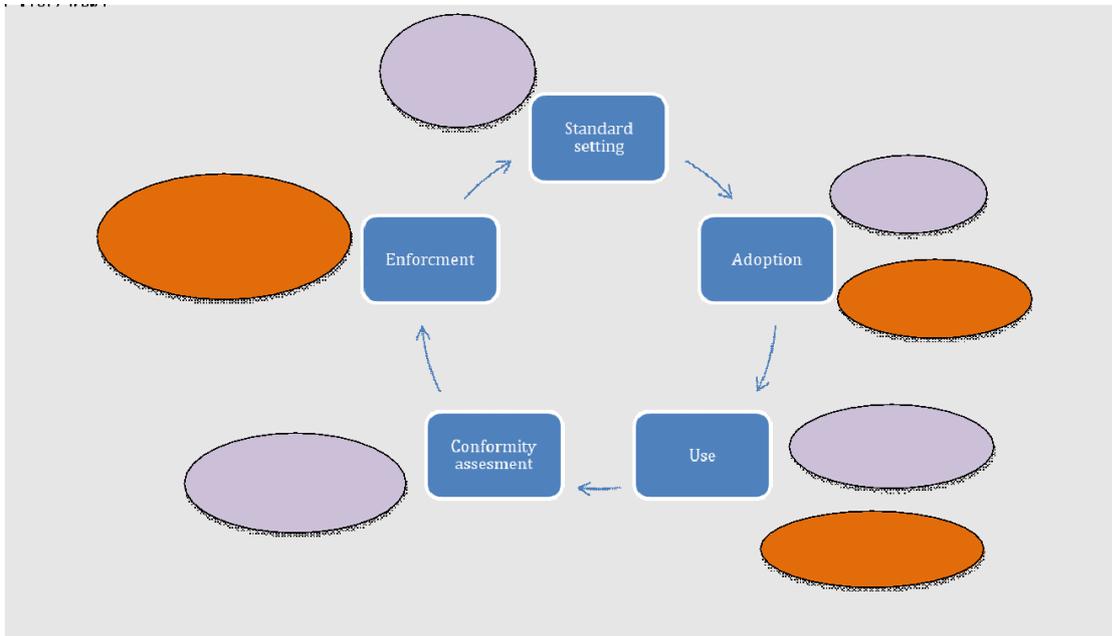
- maintain consumer confidence in the specific market by updating and specifying rules for production and product labelling;
- establish a fair competition among operators to better identify and promote their products and increase income;
- create public goods such as a clean environment, good working conditions, animal welfare, enhanced rural development, etc.

In Figure 11 see the five steps that are related to the functioning of a voluntary standards and the actions related public and private sectors.

Figure 11. Colors for **public** **private** action

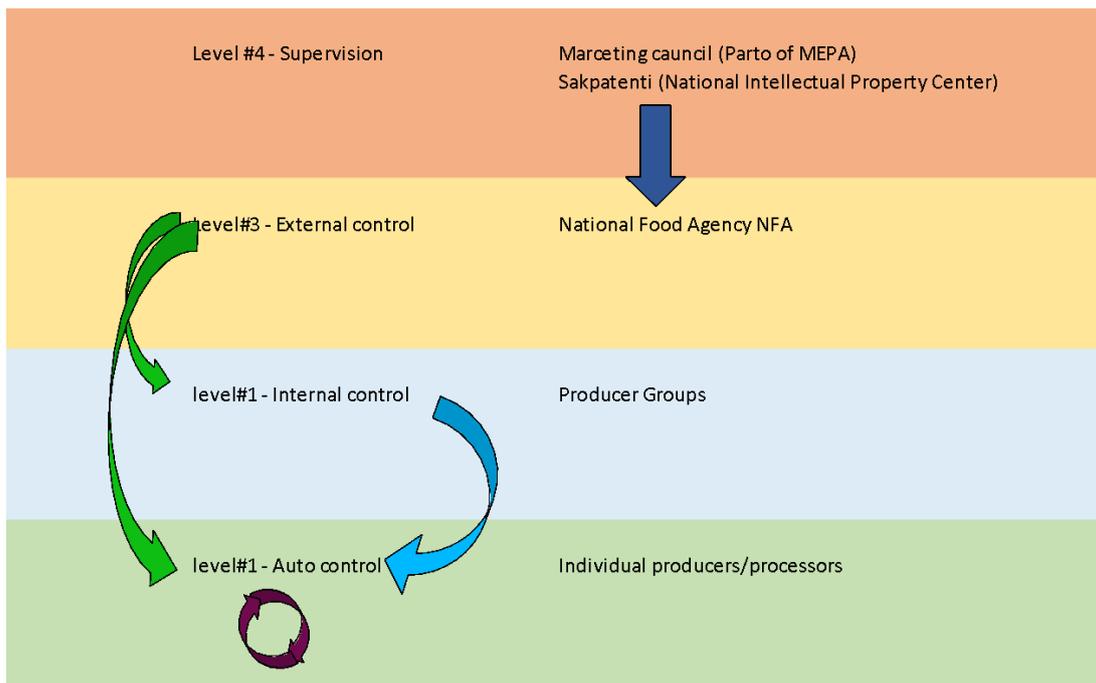


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As the value of such products are based on the consumers trust, to be credible it should be accompanied by effective verification and control systems, which can be diverse depending on the standard (in Figure No. 12 see verification and control system of GI products in Georgia).

Figure 12.



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The label of Climate Smart Agriculture products should be the same for all countries, and should include mandatory information described in part 9.2, plus:

- indication (logo) of the quality mark;
- reference on the certification/control body that issued certificate
- reference to the method of production

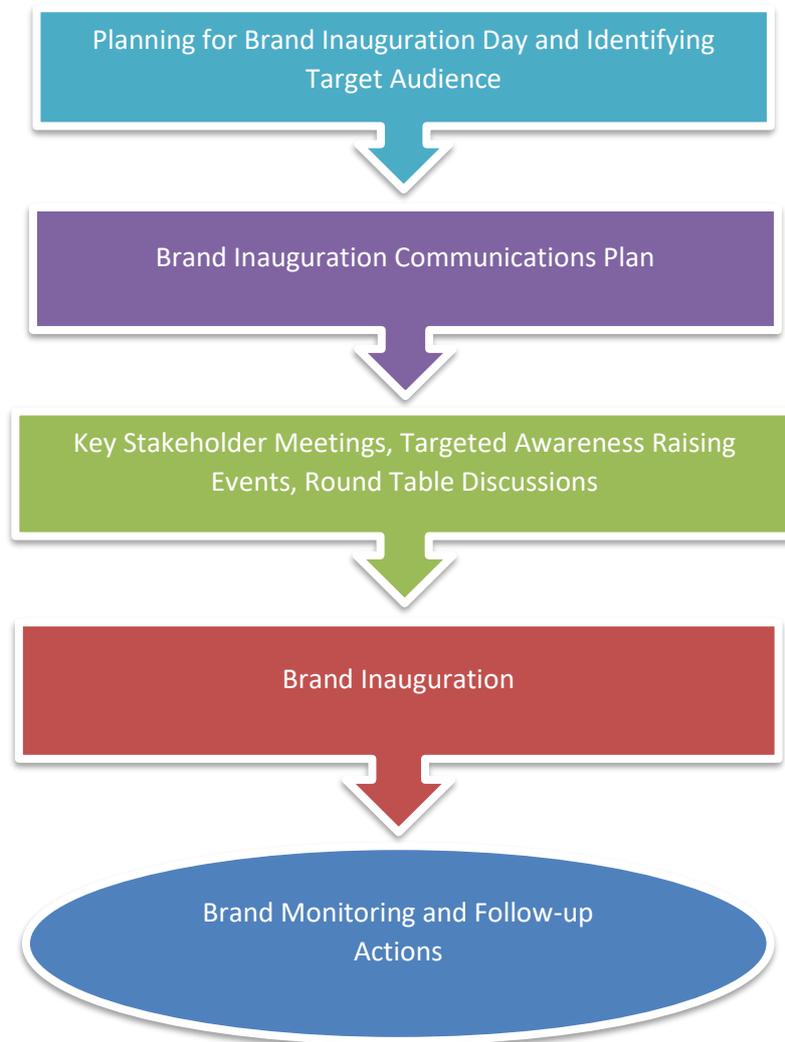
## 10. Brand inauguration strategy

Brand inauguration should be organized in all involved BSB countries simultaneously. The chart below presents the sequence of steps for Brand Inauguration.

**Figure 13.** Brand Inauguration Phases



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### 10.1 Planning: Identification of Key Stakeholders

Brand inauguration should be planned well in advance. Usually at this stage, the targetted consumer groups, their needs which can be met by the new brand should be defined well in advance in order to be able to plan for the right tool package for the new brand inauguration. CSA Brand inauguration assumes introducing a new "product category", therefore for this Brand it is important to idnetify the stakeholder groups beyond the consumers and buyers. These stakeholder groups may include but not limited to state agencies, academic insititutions, investors, producers and processors, retailers, collection centers for agriculture production, NGOs specialized in agriculture, environment and healthcare, medical and yoga centers and at last but not least Influencers and Media representatives.



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The CSA Brand inauguration should be positioned as a part of a larger concept which explains the background of changes in BSB societies that triggered the need for introducing this new product category under the CSA umbrella brand.

In general there are 3 main objectives for introducing CSA in any country:

1. Sustainable growth of productivity and income of producers;
2. Adaptation of agriculture practices to climate change;
3. Contributing to reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

These are the very objectives, which form the basis of the BSB CSA Brand Concept.

Unlike other Product Brands, the BSB CSA family brand has 3 key stakeholders to whom the BSB CSA Brand should make its promise:

1. Governments of BSB countries
2. Agriculture Producers and Processors of BSB Countries
3. Consumers in BSB countries and worldwide

The CSA, being a family brand, may only gain increasingly more recognition, if in parallel with the growth in consumer base, the number of producers selling under this brand also increases. Another determining factor is that the Governments of the producing countries recognize the significance of CSA brand for the country's well-being enough to encourage increasing involvement of the producers through tax incentives and consumers through education and awareness raising.

Not to undermine the role of other stakeholders, such as media, NGOs, academia etc., it should be noted that the BSB CSA family brand will be in their center of attention as long as it delivers or fails to deliver its „promises” towards the abovementioned 3 key stakeholders. ***Therefore further when preparing the Brand communication and promotion plan, as well as when monitoring the Brand performance, all the strategies should be built around the above mentioned 3 stakeholders.***

For the Brand Inauguration, however all the stakeholders should be involved and invited to play their role in brand promotion. It is through the involvement of all stakeholder groups, that is possible to efficiently and rapidly introduce the essence and values of this new product category to the targeted main three stakeholder groups, promote and firmly position the new CSA Brand in the target markets.

It is obvious that consumers and buyers obviously are the main target audience for any brand inauguration and promotion strategy. As stated in the sections above, however, this umbrella CSA brand however has various "tasks" to complete. The brand should be attractive for the producers, retailers and other value chain players to get engaged. The more producers from BSB countries will be willing to produce under this umbrella brand the more successful and popular the brand will get. Investors, state agencies, NGOs,



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certification service providers, field professionals, Media can be invaluable ambassadors of the brand, helping to spread a positive and influential messages on it.

Stakeholders like state agencies and NGOs also can play a big role in promoting and positioning the brand. For example, if the CSA will appear in the strategic priority list of the Government then it can promote implementation of CSA technologies through tax and other incentives. At the same time the Government can initiate changes in the education sector, involving the topic in the curriculum of academia, university, various institutions. NGOs can provide vocational trainings and carry out various awareness raising events targeted both to the producers and consumers. Media can become real ambassadors of the new Product Category, spreading information about the CSA technologies and products and their importance for various stakeholder groups, raise awareness on BSB CSA brand, etc.

## 10.2 Preparing Communications Plan for Brand Inauguration - Brand Promise and key messages

Once the Brand audience/stakeholder groups are defined for each BSB country, the Communications plan segmented by audience can be developed. ***There should be one common communications plan including the key messaging for the CSA brand to be used in all BSB countries. But the countries can define the target audience individually and make a plan of whom what to communicate and with what channels.***

Because the products under this brand will be produced by numerous producers in different countries and may include literally all types of agriculture primary and processed products, there are very few common specifics of these products on which the key messaging of brand inauguration and promotion can be built. These common specifics are:

1. Country of origin being one of the BSB countries
2. Climate Smart and Green technologies used in production.

Therefore, the focus of the key messaging including the developed slogan should be the idea behind the brand itself and not a single product or a service. In other words, verbal communication should concentrate on the vision and values of CSA as a concept and should cover all of its components - the need for adaptation, innovation, green technologies, “do not harm” approach, etc.

Thus, ***the common key messaging*** in all BSB countries should be built around the ***shared vision and values of the BSB CSA Brand.***

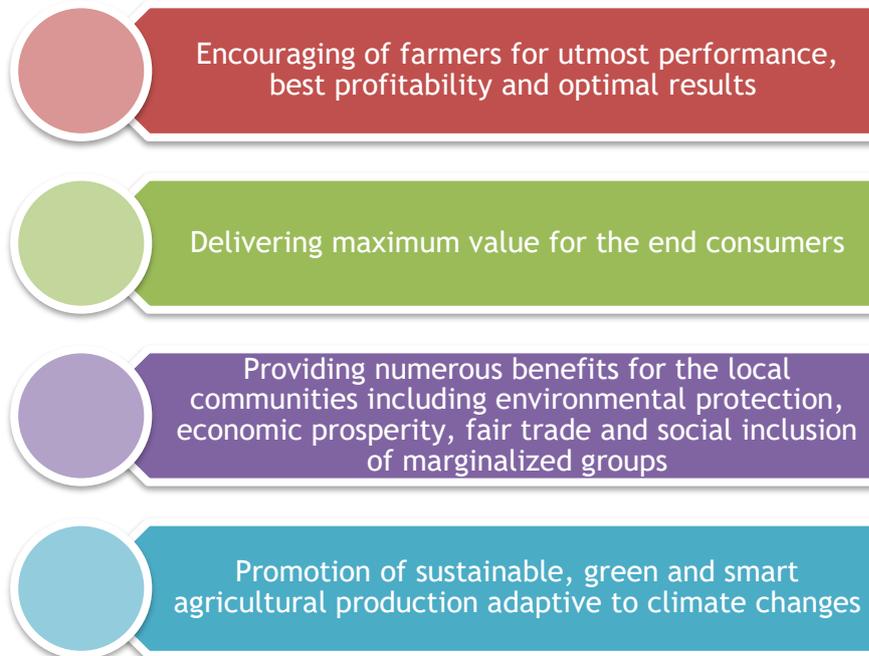
***CSA Brand Vision*** is defined as follows: Raising awareness, gaining community support and instigating active response to the climate change impact on the agrarian and food sectors.



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The values of CSA Brand for defined by BSB countries are listed below:

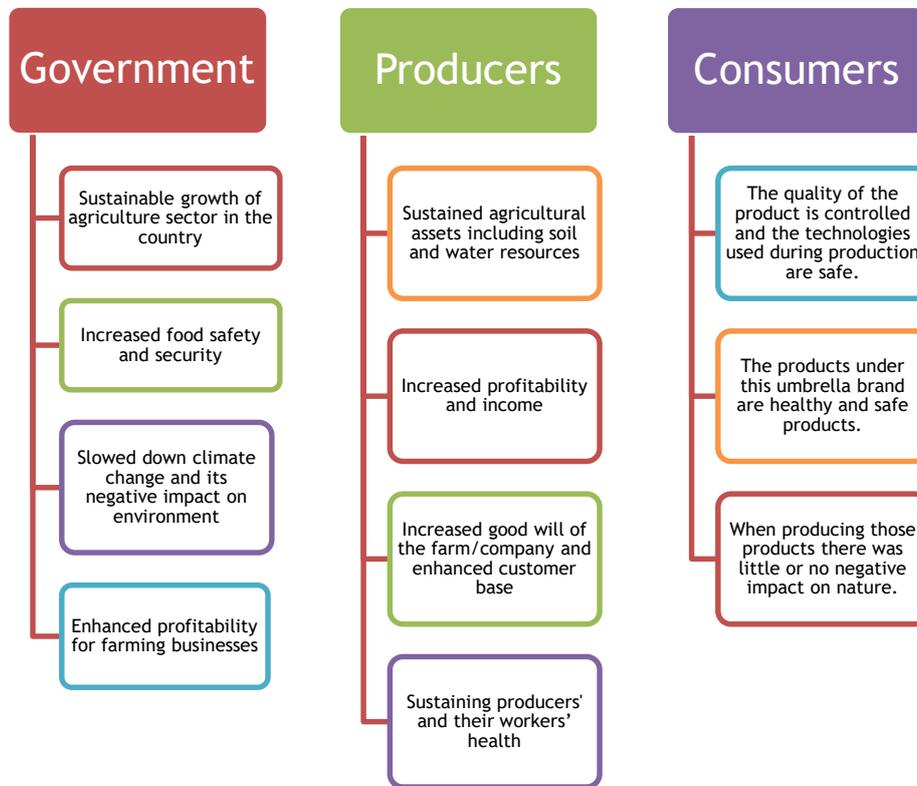


The Communication plan for Brand Inauguration and promotion is to be prepared based on the **Brand Promise** per identified key stakeholders. The **Brand Promise** per each of the 3 key stakeholders identified for Armenia are summarized in the chart below.

Figure 14. CSA Brand Promise to the 3 Key Stakeholders



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The survey revealed that people in Armenia associate CSA mainly with the words **organic, green, eco and clean**. Very few mention about smart agriculture and the need to adapt the crop selection processes and production technologies to the new climate conditions, or about the need to adopt agriculture practices that may slow down the process of climate change. This means that the verbal communication that will be the base of brand and marketing strategy should be **informative** and **educational** rather than emotional.

The focus group discussion on branding of CSA products as well as the survey results showed that CSA products and practices are highly associates with the following words and expressions which only partly communicate the essence of CSA.

- “Healthy product”
- “ECO and green”
- “profitability and productivity”
- “No harm to nature”
- “Healthy economy”
- “Healthy Nature”
- “local or national produce”

In order to ensure that the complete essence of the CSA practices is captured and well communicated additional words and expressions should be considered under the tagline, such as:



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- “Protecting mother nature, saving future of generations”
- “Sustainability and Safety”
- “Efficient and effective natural resource management today”
- “Stopping Pollution”
- “Opportunity for small producers”
- Other relevant informative words and expressions.

### 10.3 Communication Steps, Tools and Channels

Communication for brand inauguration should be carried out in 2 steps. During the first step the Series of awareness raising efforts and negotiations should be carried out to prepare the target audience for the expected outcomes of Brand Inauguration. This stage should be planned and implemented by each BSB individually with their defined stakeholders, but the key messaging and the timeframes should be the same.

The second step is the Brand Inauguration Event, where the representatives of all key stakeholders should be invited. This event can be organized by each BSB country separately in one set date, or even it can be an international event in one of the BSB countries which is most advanced in the CSA.

#### *Step 1: Awareness raising and negotiation stage*

Because the BSB CSA Brand products in most of the BSB countries are considered a new product category and there is not much awareness on its essence and values the chances are that with organizing just one event for brand will not be enough for communicating even the key messages to the defined target audience. The period before the inauguration event is very important in order to prepare the key stakeholder for the event through introductory meeting and sessions.

Communication Tools and Channels should be defined per stakeholder for the inauguration day as well as for the period right before the inauguration event. This period can start one month before the inauguration event. For this 1-month period, each country should define and carry out series of introductory activities, to include but not limited to individual meetings, events, info sessions, round table discussions, etc., with the purpose of introducing each key stakeholder in each BSB country the core messaging of the Brand.

When deciding the communication tools and channels with key stakeholders during the event it is important to keep in mind not only the defined key messaging of the CSA brand, but also the role of each targetted stakeholders in promoting the Brand and enhancing the performance of companies producing under this brand. If this roles will not be recognized well the communication plan cannot be build efficiently. Below table presents the purpose for communication per key stakeholder before the inauguration event.

**Figure 15.** Purpose of communication per key stakeholder

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|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Government</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Negotiate for the possible government incentives for the producers under this brand</li> </ul>                |
| <b>Investors and Producers</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Motivate to produce under the umbrella brand</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Consumers and buyers</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Raise awareness on the CSA Brand product advantages over their rivals</li> </ul>                              |
| <b>Media</b>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Raise awareness on the CSA Brand among various media channels and make them real ambassadors of it</li> </ul> |

**Government and Media Representatives as well as larger investors** in each of the BSB country may deserve a *personalized introduction* to the brand ideology as a pre-launch event. It is even worth to engage some of them in the event as guest speakers or facilitators during the series of events for Brand inauguration. **For small and medium producers and investors**, initiation of *B2B format events, round table discussions* with the involvement of field experts will be sufficient.

Because the survey showed that population in BSB countries mostly get information on related topics from *Internet and Social media and TV programs*, to reach large number of consumers in the given short period of time, it will be efficient to use this channels for awareness raising during the month before the inauguration day. The awareness raising tools for this target group can vary from expert interviews on famous TV programs in each country to infographics on social media.

**Step 2: Brand Inauguration Event**

By this date the countries already should have at least several BSB branded products and some level of awareness around them. The idea is to promote the BSB CSA Brand by this special celebration event and build a hype around the products produced under this brand. The more stakeholders will talk about the event and the products presented during this event, the more popular and successful the Brand and the products produced under the Brand can get.

**1. Brand monitoring and follow-up**

It is important to consider that the successful Inauguration of the brand is the beginning of journey. The Brand inauguration has to become the basis of further marketing campaigns, advertising initiatives etc. The awareness and interesnt of the stakeholders created around the BSB CSA brand, however, may easily decrease if the Brand performance



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will not be measured constantly and actions to sustain and enhance its positions in the market will not be undertaken on time.

The countries will need to monitor, measure and optimize the branding initiatives, on an ongoing basis, to make sure that it is performing powerfully. A number of indicators may be used to measure the CSA Brand performance starting from a single company level ending with country or international levels. These indicators may include but are not limited to:

1. Awareness on CSA products is increased in BSB societies.
2. No. of farmers using CSA technologies are increasing in BSB countries
3. No. of companies willing to operate under the CSA brand are increasing in BSB countries
4. Market share of CSA Branded products is increasing in each of the BSB country
5. No. of agriculture product varieties produced under CSA Brand is increasing in BSB countries;
6. No. of companies having increased turnover and income after starting to operate under the CSA family brand;
7. No. of consumers and buyers of CSA branded products are increasing
8. No. of returning/loyal customers of CSA branded products are increasing
9. Investments in CSA technologies are increasing
10. Area under CSA cultivation technologies are increasing in BSB countries
11. Other indicators which will be defined by the monitoring team

Some of the indicators will take significant resources and efforts to be measured. E.g. measuring awareness level on CSA products in BSB countries or the market share of CSA Branded products in the BSB countries will need to be measured through survey. Most of the indicators, however, it is relatively cheap and easy to measure. E.g. the No. of companies willing to operate under CSA brand, can easily be measured at each moment of time based on the No. of applications received by the company authorizing businesses to operate under the CSA brand; or the No. of companies which report increase in turnover and sales as a result of operating under the CSA Brand, can be easily measured through a reporting system to be set for the companies which will operate under the Brand.

Once the Product Brand is inaugurated/launched, each BSB country expert should prepare the brand monitoring plan where the indicators, their baseline values and targets should be defined in a time-bound manner. Pool of indicators can also be developed for individual companies, which will be operating under the CSA brand to enable them measuring the impact of Brand on the company's performance.

## 11. Conclusions

Here are presented the researchers' conclusions respecting the countries particularities and specifics:

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## Armenia

From the analysis of the survey results and focus group discussions the following can be concluded:

1. The CSA products in Armenia is highly associated with organic products;
2. Both Armenian customers and producers prefer brand that use national identity elements;
3. Due to the vague understanding of CSA concept in the country, the brand and marketing strategy of the CSA products should be built on informative rather than emotional communication means;
4. The products under the brand should be certified by an international and licensed certifier which brings forward the need for developing CSA standards and establishment of certification system for relevant products;
5. The visual communication should symbolize national identity elements, symbols of life, abundance, fertility and nature to include like *leaf, wheat, sun, bee*, etc.; all within *green, blue, apricot color and yellow colors*.
6. The main information source for CSA products or any other consumers' goods is *internet and social media*. The least popular information source are booklets and other printed materials. This fact should be considered in the brand design and development of branding and marketing tools.

## Bulgaria

There is a huge potential for adopting a new CSA brand on the Bulgarian market. The consumers are in general eager to know the origin of the products they buy and the methods of production, which aligns perfectly with the CSA core benefits. They are interested in consuming clean, natural products raised or grown locally with proven health benefits. The support of the local producer is another great incentive. The consumers are prioritizing the quality over the price. CSA could be another instrument for quality control and monitoring which they would trust if endorsed by a recognized certifying authority.

The brand's slogan and content should focus on origin, sustainability, quality, health and support for the local economy.

The brand visuals preferences are for graphic symbols related to nature/land and sea with colors ranging from green/brown and yellow to blue, teal and azure. An explicit text "Climate Smart Agriculture" should be presented rather than the "CSA" abbreviation.

The brand promotion should be nation-wide and should include a range of communication channels such as media, on-line resources, printed materials and awareness events.

The products should be placed via diverse channels of distribution ranging from general grocery stores to specialized trading centers and markets.



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## Greece

The development of a market for climate-smart products will find fertile ground for growth in Greece. Taking into account the shift of consumers to better quality food, their awareness of environmental issues and the growing consumption, the production and sale of CSA products is expected to acquire a pretty good position in the market from early on.

## Turkey

Turkish customer profile is more interested to transparency of agricultural and food products. Recently, consumer researches indicates that environmental and health conscious purchasing increases in Turkey (Erciş et.al, 2020; İçli et.al., 2016). They tend to consume more natural, environmentally friend, less chemical and fertilizer used products. They also search the origin of products. If they convinced the clarity of products, they accept to pay more. Due to the organic labeled agricultural food products price is higher in Turkey, only higher socio-economic status group members purchase them. At this point, locally and controlled produced our green products would compensate the market gap. Also, the study indicates that (Konuk, 2018) emphasizing the fundamental role of trust in maintaining relationships between consumers and organic food producers. CSA brand has a great potential to maintain relationship among the consumers.

## Romania

European regions are in competition for investors and skilled personnel. State governments, business development agencies and others benefit from a more attractive brand profile and better recognition (Kurzahls, 2009). The AGREEN project refers to a regional brand, which should be a common effort and must be built and agreed upon by all the levels of decision making in partner countries. The main argument for such an endeavor is that the regional resource brand is a tool for place branding.

The brand identity should strongly relate with the consumers identity, who is supposed to react to a set of distinguishing images that they associate with the name and/or symbol of BS regional CSA agro products. Consumers tend to buy products made in their favorite regions.

BS region has sufficient common features that can be embedded in a brand for CSA agro products. This will be beneficial for the region development and for the preservation of regional traditions and values.

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