

Perceptions of effectiveness in short food supply chain projects

Evaluating Gelderland's subsidy policy for local food

Master's Thesis for the Environment and Society Studies programme

Nijmegen School of Management

Radboud University

August 2020

George Thurley

Colophon

Title: Perceptions of effectiveness in short food supply chain projects. Evaluating Gelderland's subsidy policy for local food

Author: George Thurley

Student number: s102658

Submission date: 1 August 2020

University: Radboud University, Nijmegen

Faculty: Nijmegen School of Management

Supervisor: Dr. Maria Kaufmann

Second Reader: Dr. Mark Wiering

Internship: Gelderland province

Supervisor: Pieter Rijzebol

Radboud University



**provincie
Gelderland**

Preface

This research was completed between February and July 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, a strange context in which to conduct research for many reasons. Social isolation and lockdown sometimes distorted my conception of time, and on occasion the combination of monotonous days and the sometimes seemingly never-ending process of writing a thesis made it hard to muster motivation.

However, I am glad to have been kept occupied during the months of lockdown, and I recognise the privilege of being able to work and research from home. I have been grateful for the chance to connect to others writing their thesis at this time, so that we could share our difficulties and frustrations, both related to writing a thesis and to the context in which we find ourselves. So, thanks to Bella and Eveline, the 'Good Food for All' group, for our collective therapy sessions.

My thanks to Maria, for her support throughout this process, always reminding me that there is never only one way of doing things, but that it is simply a question of justifying my choices. Collective supervision meetings also helped the process to feel more like a shared one, allowing us to learn from and be able to support each other.

I appreciate the chance to have conducted my internship at Gelderland province, and to understand a little better how a government organisation works from the inside. My particular thanks to Pieter for his patience, good advice and flexibility. My interviewees' willingness to make time to speak openly to me about their projects at this time is also greatly appreciated. Thanks to Mum and Dad, my proof-readers, for their sharp eyes and support. Lastly, thanks to Emmie for her attention to detail, and patiently puzzling through transcripts with me, as well as her emotional support and lockdown company.

Summary

Short food supply chains represent an alternative food system model, which emphasises reducing the distance (both socially and geographically) between food production and consumption. Gelderland province provides subsidy support to short food supply chain projects in Gelderland, in order to work towards a more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable agricultural sector. 35 projects have been supported 2016-2019 to advance this goal.

This study evaluates this policy and six selected projects on the basis of participant experiences and perspective. It looks at perceptions of effectiveness of both the policy overall and the selected projects, as well as seeking to identify factors seen as important contributors to effectiveness. This study has been completed as part of an internship at Gelderland province, who wanted to evaluate the policy and project effectiveness to date, in order to improve their efforts to strengthen SFSCs. The research uses qualitative methods, following an inductive grounded theory method, seeking to identify and explain relevant participants' perceptions of policy and project effectiveness. It looks at how that is assessed, and which factors are seen as relevant for effectiveness. The research question is therefore: *What is the perceived effectiveness of Gelderland's SFSC subsidy scheme and selected projects, and which factors influence those perceptions?*

14 people were interviewed in partially structured interviews, mainly producers, consultants and municipal employees. The interviews were supplemented by relevant document analysis and a final valorisation workshop with province employees and several interviewees.

The results identify six main outcomes which participants use to evidence their project's effectiveness, namely: increased collaboration, strengthened producers' position, catalytic effect, creating structures, durability, and increasing knowledge. 10 factors were also identified which were considered to be important contributors to effectiveness: accessibility, commitment, empowerment, structures, institutional support, project coordination, organisational relations, landscape and a local connection.

Overall, although respondents viewed their projects as effective or potentially effective, that did not necessarily translate into a positive evaluation of the overall policy. Perceptions of the policy itself are largely determined by the impact the policy has on the project, enabling or limiting projects' potential effect. The policy was seen as broadly limiting, through onerous administrative processes, inflexibility and lack of support, leading to it being inaccessible for many potential beneficiaries. The results show that participants' understandings of effectiveness are far more multi-faceted than simply considering goal attainment.

To improve policy and projects' effectiveness in promoting and strengthening SFSCs in Gelderland, these results recommend that Gelderland province should fundamentally change its approach to work in partnership with recipients, rather than simply being a neutral distributor, increasing support for applicants throughout the application and implementation process, and ensuring the policy is accessible to the key target groups, mainly primary producers.

Table of contents

Preface.....	3
Summary	4
1 Introduction	7
1.1 Context of research and research problem.....	7
1.2 Research, problem, aim and questions	8
1.3 Scientific and societal relevance	8
2 Literature review and theoretical framework	9
2.1 SFSC literature review.....	9
2.2 (Environmental) policy evaluation literature review.....	10
2.3 Policy evaluation and effectiveness	11
2.4 Factors influencing effectiveness	12
2.6 Concepts in the research	14
3 Methodology.....	15
3.1 Research philosophy.....	15
3.2 Research strategy.....	16
3.3 Embedded case selection	17
3.4 Research methods.....	18
3.5 Validity and reliability	21
4 Results	22
4.1 Embedded case descriptions	22
4.2 Selective coding	25
4.3 Theory.....	39
4.4 Results conclusion.....	41
5 Conclusion and discussion	42
5.1 Conclusion	42
5.2 Comparison to theory and sensitising concepts.	43
5.3 Perceptions of effectiveness.....	45
5.4 Recommendations	47
5.5 Recommendations for further research.....	48
5.6 Reflection and limitations.....	49
Reference list	51
Appendix 1: Overview of applications	56
Appendix 2: Project matrix (listed by head applicant)	56
Appendix 3: Valorisation workshop summary	56
Appendix 4: Project overview	57
Appendix 5: Original Dutch quotes	58

List of Figures

Figure 1: Research process 21
Figure 2: Theoretical framework 40

List of Tables

Table 1: Concepts in the research 15
Table 2: Selected projects| 18
Table 3: Overview of interviewees 18

1 Introduction

1.1 Context of research and research problem

Food systems are an important part of sustainability, covering economic, social and environmental aspects. Food as a whole – including production, processing, transport and consumption – accounts for around a third of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and the climate crisis will have a significant impact on food production (Vermeulen, Campbell & Ingram, 2012). In the Netherlands, food consumption represents 13% of GHG emissions, (PBL, 2019). Current production systems contribute to the destruction of natural habitats with associated impacts for local biodiversity, while 33% of soils worldwide are moderately to highly degraded (De Schutter, 2017).

Socially and economically, food chains in the west are characterised by considerable power imbalances between small producers and large processors and retailers (De Schutter, 2017). This results in many farmers struggling to make enough money to sustain themselves, contributing to discontent at policy changes, as exhibited by the recent farmers' protests in the Netherlands regarding the implementation of EU nitrogen regulations (Van Mersbergen & Van der Storm, 2019). Lastly, some argue that western consumers have become disconnected from nature and methods of food production (Kneafsey et al., 2013), meaning alternatives are sought that can re-establish those connections, and create communities around food production (Abatekassa & Peterson, 2011). In short, it is clear that food production and consumption present highly relevant social, economic and environmental challenges.

In this light, policy, societal and academic actors have increasingly turned their attention to alternative modes of food supply in recent years, covering various models including community supported agriculture (CSA), communal kitchen gardens, urban agriculture, farm shops, veg boxes and pick-your-own schemes (Kneafsey et al., 2013; Van Gameren, Ruwet & Bauler, 2015). Various new models of supply are often grouped under the heading of 'short food supply chains' (SFSCs), or local food systems. SFSCs can be seen as an umbrella term for those focussed on sales in proximity or direct contact between farmer and consumer (Kneafsey et al., 2013).

Within the European Union, support for the promotion of SFSCs comes via the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), part of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Between 2014-2020 this is expected to support 300,000 farmers across Europe to develop SFSCs or local markets or enter quality schemes and producer groups (European Commission, n.d. a). Each EU Member State develops a national plan on this basis, which must be approved by the European Commission. The Netherlands' elaboration of the EAFRD is known as the plattelandsontwikkelingsprogramma (rural development programme) or POP3 for short, as it is currently in its third iteration (RVO, n.d).

This is in turn adapted by the Dutch provinces. Gelderland province is a pioneer on SFSCs in the Netherlands, as the national government did not include SFSCs as a theme in POP3 (RVO, n.d). Gelderland province highlighted SFSCs in its 2015-2019 coalition agreement, noting the important role of innovation in developing a sustainable agricultural sector, (provincie Gelderland, 2015a), as well as ensuring socially and economically vital rural areas (provincie Gelderland, 2019). Other provinces do not currently directly address SFSCs, making it relevant to study Gelderland province as an early forerunner which could provide lessons to regions addressing the theme in the future. Nationally, the Dutch Ministry for Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality has, among others, supported a national taskforce on short chains to help entrepreneurs in the field since 2018 (Taskforce Korte Ketten, 2020).

Gelderland province's aim is to strengthen SFSCs in the province, by enabling municipalities to facilitate networks and knowledge exchange in agriculture. To this end, the initial aim was to establish

a province-wide network (provincie Gelderland, 2015b) and enable each municipality to employ a food coordinator. The former goal has been achieved, in the form of the Gelders Kennisnetwerk Voedsel (GKV, Gelderland Food Knowledge Network) while the latter remains to be attained. A review of SFSCs in Gelderland showed that in 2017 10% of farmers were involved in SFSCs (Van der Schans & Van Wonderen, 2019). The internal ambition is to double that figure by the end of the current term, in 2023.

One tangible mechanism by which Gelderland province aims to accomplish this is their POP3 subsidy regulation for SFSCs (Van der Schans & Van Wonderen, 2019), which has run four application rounds to date, 2016-2019 (provincie Gelderland, 2019) with approximately €2.8m awarded so far. 35 projects have been funded between 2016-2019 made up of 50% funding from Gelderland province providing, and 50% from the EU (provincie Gelderland, 2016a, b, 2017a, b, 2018, 2019c). A quantitative overview of the applications can be found in Appendix 1.

1.2 Research, problem, aim and questions

This research was conducted during an internship at Gelderland province, as part of which I wrote a separate report. The research problem is that Gelderland province has not qualitatively evaluated the projects' outcomes, the factors that are relevant to maximise project and policy effectiveness, or participants' perceptions of effectiveness. The province is particularly interested in the impacts the projects have had on the short chain in Gelderland, and how the policy could further strengthen SFSC activities.

The research aim is to identify and explain relevant actors' perceptions of the effectiveness of the policy and projects, suggest how they assess effectiveness, which factors are seen as important for effectiveness, and the relation between policy and project effectiveness. The research question is: *What is the perceived effectiveness of Gelderland's SFSC subsidy scheme and selected projects, and which factors influence those perceptions?*

- What outcomes are used to assess project and policy effectiveness?
- Which factors influence the perceived effectiveness of the policy and selected projects, and how?
- How are perceptions of policy effectiveness and project effectiveness related to each other?

This is both an explanatory and evaluatory type research problem and question (Van Thiel, 2014) as it attempts both to explain what shapes the perception of effectiveness in this case and evaluate the policy on the basis of that perceived effectiveness. This is therefore an inductive study that investigates participant perceptions of the policy's and projects' effectiveness.

1.3 Scientific and societal relevance

This thesis contributes to existing academic knowledge by investigating sustainable food initiatives and how policy can help to promote these, providing a new empirical case of environmental policy evaluation. Although many techniques exist to evaluate environmental policies (Crabbé & Leroy, 2008) and the benefits of and challenges around scaling up local SFSCs have been investigated (Connelly, 2010; Augère-Granier, 2016; Eriksen & Sundbo, 2016; Mount, 2012), there are no examples of SFSC policies specifically being academically evaluated. Therefore, applying a policy evaluation approach to this specific context expands the knowledge about the suitability of subsidy schemes to promote SFSC initiatives, and what factors participants see as relevant to the effectiveness of project and policy. Studying perceived effectiveness is scientifically relevant, as it can help understand how effectiveness is viewed in a social context (see 3.2).

Further, the research also makes a theoretical contribution by adding to research regarding the effectiveness of environmental collaborative governance regimes, the group characteristics relevant

to that (Carr, Bloschl, & Loucks, 2012; Lubell, 2004; Scott, 2015; Collins, Blackmore, Morris & Watson, 2007) (see more in 2.4.1), and the governance of transitions in the field of sustainable food (Spaargaren, Oosterveer & Loeber, 2012). It also applies that research to this specific empirical case. Lastly, it can provide insight into how project participants perceive effectiveness based on their experience, potentially contrasting with policymakers' view, or academic conceptions of effectiveness.

Regarding societal relevance, this research contributes to solving concrete issues and it has a clear practical application. Regular policy evaluation is crucial to assess the effects of policy, and in this case it is especially relevant, given provincial policymakers lack capacity to do so. Evaluation of this specific policy is particularly relevant as the last European Union multi-annual budget period ended in 2019, meaning there is an opportunity to make broader changes to the scheme or take a new approach during the transition period and/or during the new EU budget period (2021-2027), in order to further SFSCs in the region. The research therefore provides Gelderland province and its policymakers with an insight into the outcomes of funded projects, how they are assessed by participants, and the factors considered relevant for project and policy effectiveness. On that basis, the overall research can contribute to improving the policy and projects, enabling them to better serve stakeholders' needs and achieve greater effects. I make several recommendations in section 5.4 and the separate report, which could be used by the province, municipalities and current and future project teams.

The thesis is also potentially relevant for other Dutch provinces and European regions making use of EAFRD funds. Other provinces have not directly addressed SFSCs using the programme to date, though for example Zuid Holland has a "food family" network which aims to increase innovation in food production, and to achieve a sustainable food chain (Zuid-Hollandse Voedsel families, 2020). The results of this research could be relevant for that network, and other provinces seeking to follow in Gelderland's footsteps.

As outlined in the introduction, sustainable food systems are also relevant for many wider environmental, economic and social challenges like the climate crisis, biodiversity loss and the Nitrogen crisis in the Netherlands, whereby current agricultural practices contribute to excessive nitrogen emissions, especially into protected nature areas (Greenfish, 2019). Hopefully, by helping to streamline the transition towards a more sustainable food supply system in Gelderland, this thesis can make some small contribution to addressing those challenges.

2 Literature review and theoretical framework

In this section the relevant literature on short food supply chains and policy evaluation is presented (2.1 and 2.2) before considering effectiveness (2.3). On this basis I consider factors from the literature that could influence perceived effectiveness (2.4), before presenting sensitising concepts (2.5). Lastly, the relevant concepts for the research are summarised (2.6).

2.1 Short food supply chains

As outlined in the introduction, the turn towards short food supply chains (SFSCs), often linked to local food and equated with fresh and wholesome produce (Morgan, Marsden & Murdoch, 2006) has emerged as part of the response to the environmental, social and economic challenges of modern food production. The conventional system is characterised by productivist tendencies, high environmental impacts, social disconnection between food production and consumption, and power and financial imbalances between small producers and large companies, with supply chains stretched over huge distances (Spaargaren et al., 2012b; Morgan et al., 2006). SFSCs are presented as a solution that can address social, environmental and economic challenges; through improving the economic position of small producers; by reducing transportation and packaging of food (Galli & Brunori, 2013); and

building trust and closer relationships between consumer and producer (Marsden, Banks & Bristow 2000).

Defining short food supply chains is not a simple task as they are highly value-laden (Galli & Brunori, 2013), combining both practical and normative aspects. Marsden et al. (2000) are widely seen as the first to address SFSCs, conceptualising them as being based on a connection between production and consumer, rather than geographical distance or the number of intermediaries. They define three types of SFSC; face-to-face, spatially proximate and spatially extended. The first involves direct contact between farmer and consumer (e.g. farmers markets and shops or community supported agriculture) while spatially proximate products remain in a certain region, and spatially extended SFSCs convey information about the place and processes of production to consumers outside that region (Marsden et al., 2000).

Some focus on the number of links in the chain when defining SFSCs, suggesting intermediaries should be minimal or ideally absent in order for a chain to be defined as short (Kneafsey et al., 2013). Gelderland province itself defines short food supply chains as a supply chain in a given area, with a maximum of one link between the farmer and consumer (provincie Gelderland, 2019). However, large-scale arrangements such as Kipster which deliver directly to supermarkets (Kipster, 2019), would fall under this definition but would likely not be considered SFSCs, due to the norms linked to local food.

The normative associations of SFSCs, i.e. that they should be small-scale, family businesses and cooperatives, which may contribute to building community, must therefore be acknowledged in the understanding of such initiatives. Galli & Brunori (2013) underline the diversity of definition of SFSCs, stating that “*‘short’ can only be fully defined in each particular policy context*” (p9) and arguing that both physical and social distance are relevant. For the purposes of this thesis, SFSCs are understood as chains linking producers and consumers via a minimum of links within a defined geographical region. This therefore allows for products such as milk and meat to be processed into others, such as cheese or ice cream, while still being produced, processed and sold in a defined area. Practically speaking, only projects which fulfilled the province’s requirements to receive a subsidy are considered.

2.2 (Environmental) policy evaluation

There is a substantial body of literature on policy evaluation in general (Clarke, 2011; Brock & Durlauf, 2015) and environmental policy evaluation in particular (EEA, 2005; Vaz, Martin, Wilkinson & Newcombe, 2001; Mostert, 1996). Crabbé and Leroy (2008) define policy evaluation as “*a scientific analysis of a certain policy area, the policies of which are assessed for certain criteria and on the basis of which recommendations are formulated*” (p1). Clarke (2011) stresses that evaluation is applied social research which primarily aims to improve policy. Environmental policy evaluation brings some specific challenges, namely that environmental policy can be particularly complex, and impacts are often subject to a time lag (Crabbé & Leroy, 2008).

Policy evaluation can occur at, or examine, any point throughout the policy cycle, from agenda-setting to outcomes (Crabbé & Leroy, 2008). In this thesis, I primarily seek to identify and explain the perceptions of project and policy outcomes and impacts, rather than looking at the process of applying for the subsidy, or the development of the regulation. I have chosen this focus because outcomes and impacts are considered important parts of effectiveness and will be among those most relevant to participants’ experience. Further, practically speaking Gelderland province regularly evaluates its application processes itself, reducing the value of analysing the process. However, the process of applying and reporting on the project is a major interaction between stakeholders and the province and so is certainly likely to affect their perceptions of the policy’s effectiveness. In asking for

improvements or changes, respondents are also likely to give feedback related to all parts of the policy cycle that they consider relevant to those outcomes.

Subsidy policies also have some particular characteristics relevant to this thesis. They are a soft form of fiscal regulation, used to incentivise the adjustment of behaviour or to stimulate new action (Steurer, 2013; Oteman, Wiering & Helderma, 2014; Kolstad, 2000) and are thereby one lever by which state actors can address market failures (Needham, 2006). Subsidies have direct and indirect effects – one organisation receives the funding, and they remain responsible for how they use it, although many actors are involved, increasing the challenge of objectively proving effectiveness or causality between subsidy and impact. This is another reason to focus on perceptions and experiences, rather than attempt to assess effectiveness objectively.

2.3 Policy evaluation and effectiveness

Returning to Crabbé & Leroy's (2008) definition of policy evaluation: "*a scientific analysis of a certain policy area, the policies of which are assessed for certain criteria and on the basis of which recommendations are formulated*" (p1), it is clear that what policy evaluation is depends on how policy is defined, and on the criteria which are used. This thesis adopts the view of policy as both political interaction and an institutional phenomenon. In these views, policy is not simply a rational response to an identified problem but exists in the context of interactions between various actors, based on their relative power, resources and interests. The institutional view focuses on the wider context of the policy field, acknowledging that policy does not unfold in isolation and instead that institutionalised practices and policy frameworks have a considerable effect on a policy's impact (Crabbé & Leroy, 2008).

In the context of this research, that means recognising that the short chain subsidy programme is shaped by interaction between various actors, including the EU, Dutch National government agencies (particularly the Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland, RVO – Netherlands Enterprise Agency), various provincial departments, including civil servants and elected officials, participating municipalities, consultants, agricultural associations and individual producers etc. Furthermore, it means taking into account that the policy does not exist in isolation, but is part of a broader framework intending to support projects, beyond applying for and receiving funding, such as the subsidieloket (subsidy help desk), the GKV, which also offers advice for projects (Gelders Kennisnetwerk Voedsel, n.d.). Wider still, the programme exists in the context of Dutch agricultural policy, with its focus on intensive production (Morgan et al., 2006), and financial support to agricultural projects in the EU.

Looking at the broader system of EU agricultural subsidies, funding has steadily decreased over time, although many farmers remain dependent on CAP payments (Oosterhuis & Bachus, 2014). Rural development goals, including support for SFSCs, have grown in importance in EU agricultural funding, and now account for a substantial part of CAP funds (Swinbank, 2009). However, different subsidies can work at cross-purposes (Oteman et al., 2014) and EU policies have contradictory effects on the spatial organisation of the Netherlands (Evers & Tennekes, 2016). In this case, the EU funds dedicated to supporting SFSCs represent a very small part of the EAFRD's €100 billion total budget between 2014-2020 (European Commission, n.d. b), much of which supports producers involved in traditional, longer supply chains.

The second important element in evaluation is the criteria used to assess the policy, and the rationality behind this. Crabbé and Leroy (2008) highlight three fundamental rationalities for choosing criteria: juridical, economic-business and political-social. The first focusses on criteria based on concepts like good governance and the rule of law; the second evaluates goal attainment, effectiveness and efficiency, taking inspiration from business management. The third introduces notions of legitimacy, participation and public support. A balanced evaluation should include criteria from more than one

perspective (Crabbé & Leroy, 2008). Juridical criteria do not apply to this evaluation, as they mainly concern whether policy processes have followed the law (Crabbé & Leroy, 2008) which is not in question in this case. Both the economic-business and political-social rationalities are relevant, however.

‘Effectiveness’, the focus of this study, is a particularly thorny issue in policy evaluation. Conventional approaches to effectiveness and policy evaluation in general are based on a positivist standpoint, assuming rational actors and processes and that it is possible to empirically measure the results of a policy. This view is often shared by policymakers (Crabbé and Leroy, 2008; Clarke, 2011). For example, the European Environment Agency (EEA) describes policy effectiveness as principally expressed through the comparison between the objectives of policy and its outcomes (i.e. the effects it has on the target group) and the impacts that result from those outcomes (i.e. what changes result in the environment, society or economy as a result of those outcomes) (Vaz et al., 2001; EEA, 2005). In this view, if a policy’s outcomes and impacts measure up to the initial objectives, it can be judged effective.

However, for researchers with a subjectivist ontology, a simplistic focus on effectiveness may obscure the reality that policy does not act in a vacuum, and rather is created in an environment of social and political interaction, imbued with objective norms. Establishing a causal link between a policy and a certain outcome or impact is therefore not easy, given the many other potentially influential factors beyond the observational or predictive powers of policymakers (Brock & Durlauf, 2015), making it difficult to isolate the impact of an individual policy (Crabbé & Leroy, 2008). Further, it is to be expected that different stakeholders have different perspectives on a policy and its objectives (for example, which is the most important) (Clarke, 2011), meaning that there is no one true view on its effectiveness.

For these reasons, and because this research is interested in participant’s experiences of effectiveness, I do not define effectiveness using specific criteria during the research process or interviews, instead leaving it open to see what respondents considered relevant. I do though measure perceived effectiveness on the basis of the outcomes used to judge project and policy effectiveness (sub-question 1), as well as looking at the factors considered relevant (sub-question 2). This approach fits well with the economic-business and political-social rationalities for choosing criteria, but the way in which perceived effectiveness is evaluated will be based on interviewees’ responses.

In the results, I synthesise the subjective realities of those interviewed into a generalised theory of what contributes to perceived effectiveness in this case. The use of participant perceptions of the policy as a data source is widely accepted in policy evaluation and has a number of benefits (see 3.2). My approach is based on the view that it is not possible to objectively measure the effectiveness of any single policy, but that the perceptions of actors regarding projects’ outcomes and their experiences of policy can indicate factors important for effectiveness and provide recommendations for improving and developing the policy, projects and broader framework to improve such initiatives.

2.4 Factors influencing effectiveness

Beyond policy evaluation or SFSCs, collaborative governance and transition theory can suggest which aspects and factors may be important for effectiveness in this context.

2.4.1 Collaborative governance

Collaborative governance is a group of processes and structures that make policy decisions collaboratively with various partners from public, private, and citizen groups in order to reach a public goal (Emerson, Nabatch & Balogh, 2001). Gelderland province’s POP3 SFSC regulation specifies that at least one municipality and one producer must be involved in each application, although as

many organisations can apply as desired (provincie Gelderland, 2019). More funding is available to projects on the basis of how many municipalities are involved (provincie Gelderland, 2019), which was specified in order to encourage municipal participation, and make use of their structural character. Therefore, the projects funded under the POP3 scheme can be seen as collaborative governance regimes, as (at least) municipalities and private actors are required to cooperate. Collaborative governance literature is thus helpful in suggesting what is important for effective projects in this context.

There is a large body of research on environmental governance, looking at the quality of governance and the related outcomes, which suggests collaborative approaches can improve policy implementation (Carr et al., 2012; Lubell, 2004; Collins et al., 2007). These do not directly look at environmental outcomes and impacts, but Scott (2015) found that collaborative governance approaches contribute to improved environmental outcomes and impacts. He compared collaborative groups' environmental outcomes on the basis of the group's level of responsibility, the range of stakeholders involved and the formality of the group, assuming increased responsibility, diversity and formality would lead to improved environmental impacts.

He defined the level of responsibility as whether groups were primarily coordinating bodies or engaged in management of environmental resources. Range of stakeholders concerned the diversity of representation in the group and formality covered whether groups had a dedicated coordinator or itemized goals (Scott, 2015). He found that the influence of these characteristics on the eventual outcomes was unclear, even for those identified in the literature. Scott's (2015) study therefore suggests there remains a lack of clarity regarding the relationship between identified collaborative characteristics and outcomes.

Sustaining various stakeholders' participation through the whole collaboration, by setting goals and collective reports, has also been identified as an important process for successful collaboration (Biddle & Koontz, 2014). Marsden et al. (2000) highlight the evolution of informal associational interfaces (networks) as both a critical cause and effect of regional SFSC initiatives, and relevant for the durability of activities over time. They also highlight that institutional support from state bodies, coupled with strong networks, can help new supply chains evolve. These points further reinforce the importance of high-quality cooperation for project effectiveness.

The durability of a project, that is, the ability of the established projects to continue their activities after subsidy support ends, is also relevant. Literature notes the tendency for subsidies to persist, as long-time recipients can become entitled (Oosterhuis & Bachus, 2014), with some even referring to "*subsidy addiction*" (De Moor & Van Beers, 2002). Gelderland province's definition of effectiveness used to assess applications for the subsidy also looks at "*the extent to which the cooperation and realisation of the project can be continued after the end of the subsidy*"ⁱ (provincie Gelderland, 2019).

2.4.2 Transition theories

Since Gelderland province's goal is to strengthen SFSCs, transition theories are also potentially relevant. There is much literature concerned with transition management and upscaling of sustainable food initiatives (Mount, 2012; Spaargaren et al., 2012b; Hogendoorn, 2018) and this theoretical perspective also offers relevant factors for the development of the short chain in Gelderland.

According to this group of theories, transitions occur and develop over three levels – landscape, socio-technical regime and technological niches. Through interaction between the three levels, new ideas or technologies are taken up in the more stable mainstream regime (Geels, 2011). In the context of this research, the POP3 SFSC projects can be seen as innovative niches, and the current conventional food system as the regime. The landscape level is outside the direct control of individual parties and

can be seen as the source of large-scale social trends, and unexpected crises, that form the context for daily life. Van Driel and Schot (2005) distinguish 3 types of landscape factors: 1) natural and ecological factors that change (relatively) slowly, like climate change, 2) long-term social changes, such as the intensification of food production, and 3) rapid shocks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Under this theory, a window of opportunity is needed for change to occur: transition happens when there is pressure (from the landscape level) that destabilises the regime, creating opportunities for niche ideas to become part of the regime (Geels, 2011).

2.5 Sensitising concepts

On the basis of the above literature and theoretical review, I have identified six concepts potentially influential for the perceived effectiveness of projects and that of the policy overall. In grounded theory these are known as sensitising concepts (Bowen, 2006). Sensitising concepts are a starting point for analysis – interpretive devices which suggest directions along which to study, rather than prescribe what to see in the data. They are often supplemented or displaced by concepts emerging from the data, but they help to begin analysis (Bowen, 2006; Padgett, 2004). For my study, the sensitising concepts are:

1. durability, referring to the extent to which project activities can continue after the end of subsidy support,
2. landscape factors, referring to broad external factors that enable or limit the projects and policy, but which are outside the direct control of the actors involved,
3. range of stakeholders, covering the diversity of organisation types involved in project groups and coordination,
4. sustaining participation, referring to the extent to which stakeholders and participants remain active throughout projects,
5. developing networks, looking at whether projects develop informal connections between supply chain actors, and,
6. institutional support, covering whether state bodies actively support projects.

Scott's (2015) hypotheses regarding the group level of responsibility and formalisation are not included because the involved projects do not differ considerably on these points, making it hard to isolate their influence. For instance, all groups have comparable levels of responsibility as they are all bounded by the requirements of successfully applying for the subsidy, and then reporting on it – as part of the application process, all had to provide itemised goals. These two points might still be raised by interviewees as relevant but will not be used to guide the research.

Having established the above characteristics as potentially influential, it is important to state that this is an inductive study, and I am also interested in participants' experience of projects and the policy. Therefore, I aimed to create room for interview respondents to raise the outcomes and factors that they consider important for the effectiveness of their project and the policy as a whole – as Wagenaar (2011) says, interviews should create the conditions for surprise.

2.6 Concepts in the research

As I follow an inductive, grounded theory methodology in this research (see section 3) no theoretical framework or operationalisation is presented here. A detailed theoretical model developed based on the data is presented in the results (section 4.) However, it is helpful to briefly clarify some relations between the concepts in my research questions.

What is the perceived effectiveness of Gelderland's SFSC subsidy scheme and selected projects, and which factors influence those perceptions?

- What outcomes are used to assess project and policy effectiveness?

- Which factors influence the perceived effectiveness of the policy and selected projects, and how?
- How are perceptions of policy effectiveness and project effectiveness related to each other?

Perceived effectiveness is a key concept, both of the policy and the project. It is necessarily left open, as it will be informed and defined by the perceptions of participants in the subsidised projects. However, I seek to measure that perception on the basis of outcomes identified by those respondents. The other important concept in my research question is factors, by which I understand characteristics or aspects that respondents see as influencing effectiveness. The above sensitising concepts are not used to measure factors, but to guide analysis of the data on that point. Lastly, the third sub-question addresses the relation between the perceptions of projects and policy, which may also be relevant for the perception of the other i.e. if the project in question is viewed as ineffective, this may impact views of the policy as a whole. This is laid out in table 1.

Table 1: Concepts in the research

Concepts	
Perceived project effectiveness	Measured by perceived outcomes related to perceived policy effectiveness?
Perceived policy effectiveness	Measured by perceived outcomes related to perceived project effectiveness?
Factors	Sensitising concepts

It is also important to note that individual factors can also have a considerable influence in forming perceptions (Schleich & Faure, 2017; Clayton, 2018). Rather than seek to isolate these entirely, which is extremely difficult to do and also a subjective process, I state how widely a perception is shared among respondents in the text when presenting it.

3 Methodology

This section outlines the methods used in this research. The research philosophy and strategy (3.1, 3.2), are discussed before units are selected (3.3). 3.4 outlines the data collection and analysis methods. Lastly, I address the validity and reliability of the study (3.5).

3.1 Research philosophy

Research philosophies, or research paradigms, can be viewed on a continuum from positivism to constructivism (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), differing in terms of their ontology, epistemology and methodology. This research follows a constructivist approach, wherein the assertion is that ontologically there is no one single truth, but that multiple locally and specifically constructed realities exist, dependent on the individual or group who hold them. Epistemologically, constructivists view knowledge as being created in interaction between investigator and the objects of research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This fits with an evaluatory study, as evaluation does not aim for truth or certainty, and many evaluation approaches are based on pluralistic understandings of policy (Clarke, 2011).

Having said this, Gelderland province is not interested in my personal, subjective evaluation of their policy, but rather one which synthesises input from stakeholders and other data sources. That is one reason why this study takes a more inductive approach. However, it is inevitable that I, as the researcher, have an impact on the results, particularly when interacting with interview respondents and determining the questions to ask. The evaluator has an important influence in any policy evaluation (Crabbé & Leroy 2008; Clarke, 2011), and so throughout the research I try to clarify my influence where needed, and to ensure validity and reliability (see section 3.5). However, I am

reassured by the reminder that, following the constructivist paradigm, there is no pure external knowledge that can be tainted by the interviewer's influence (Rapley, 2011), but only that which is constructed between interviewer and respondent.

3.2 Research strategy

A research strategy is the overall procedure followed in a study (Van Thiel, 2014). As previously mentioned, this thesis takes an inductive approach to data collection. Induction involves observing and describing the issue of study, attempting to diagnose its features, causes and relationships. Models can then be built based on the data collected in an iterative process between collecting, ordering and analysing the data (Van Thiel, 2014).

This study draws on grounded theory methodology. Grounded theory is an inductive approach that attempts to generate or discover a theory for a process or action, by engaging participants who have first-hand experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It is characterised by iterative data collection and analysis, memoing (whereby theory and ideas are developed and recorded throughout the research process), and coding processes. There are several variations of grounded theory based on various paradigmatic views. Strauss and Corbin represent a more structured approach, while Charmaz, and Wagenaar follow a constructivist philosophy (Corbin & Strauss, 2012; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Wagenaar, 2011). Grounded theory uses mainly qualitative data, primarily interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018), which are often completely open in structure. However, I follow a somewhat more structured interview approach (see 3.4).

Furthermore, this thesis employs a single case study structure with six embedded units. The single overarching case is Gelderland province's POP3 SFSC policy and wider framework, with the selected projects being the embedded units. Case studies should fulfil a number of criteria, including being bounded and making use of multiple forms of data to facilitate in-depth analysis. This research case is bounded both geographically (Gelderland), and in terms of time (projects funded 2016-18), while the units are also bounded in terms of time, geographically and by those involved.

The conception of embedded units within a larger case study was devised by Yin (2003), who distinguishes between single and multiple, and holistic and embedded case studies. Holistic studies focus on the global nature of the case, whereas embedded studies give attention to units within the case. Yin is a particular advocate for the use of case studies in a policy evaluation context (Crabbé & Leroy, 2008), seeing it as a good way to investigate and assess how and why a policy has worked. Case studies can be seen as a methodology or simply a manner of choosing what is to be studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study the case and units mainly serve to structure the research, rather than as methodology, because the methodology of case study evaluation devised by Yin follows a post-positivist approach, and so is not employed in this study.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) developed an evaluation method based on the constructivist research paradigm. This primarily emphasises the use of participatory processes to involve stakeholders impacted by a policy in its evaluation. Despite the fact the constructivist philosophy of this thesis, I do not follow this method. The methods of constructivist evaluation do not seem appropriate to this case, and have a number of disadvantages such as the fact that many stakeholders and the commissioners of the evaluation may not be familiar with a constructivist approach or willing to participate in the participatory processes that Guba and Lincoln prescribe (Crabbé & Leroy, 2008).

I focus on the views of participants in POP3 projects for a number of reasons. Emphasising participant experiences follows the view of policy as being social interaction. Effectiveness is not sufficient to evaluate policy alone, when viewed in a social context (Crabbé & Leroy, 2008), hence the focus on multiple perceptions of effectiveness. Grounded theory also emphasises the importance of delving

into the experiences of first-hand participants in a process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Mark and Shotland (1985) identify three main benefits to participant-focussed evaluation:

1. it helps to increase societal relevance of the research as it identifies the salient issues for stakeholders, increasing their ownership of the research,
2. it recognises the multiple realities of a policy, emphasising plural perspectives,
3. it enables groups to bring their concerns to policymakers, potentially democratising the decision-making process.

Therefore, this approach fits with my methodology and research philosophy, as well as increasing its societal relevance.

3.3 Embedded case selection

On the basis of the literature, theoretical framework and methodological strategy, I have chosen six units to study from the 26 funded in the period 2016-2018. Projects submitted in 2019 were approved only shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic began, when this research was beginning, making it difficult to judge their effectiveness at such an early stage. For these reasons, this study focusses on projects from the first three years.

I employed a maximum variance sampling strategy, choosing the objects of study to achieve a range of projects. This form of sampling is appropriate in this study as there are only a few units available to study (Van Thiel, 2014), and sampling for relevant diversity can help to build theory inductively (Wagenaar, 2011). Flyvberg (2006) states that selecting cases for maximum variation enables information to be uncovered about the relevance of various circumstances.

I used two main criteria to select the units and ensure a diversity of projects: the funding objective and the year of application. The application year is used as a way to ensure a spread across projects at different stages, and to ensure a range of the objectives, as implementation was only included in 2018. The policy can currently provide funds for three kinds of activities:

1. setting up formal partnerships,
2. developing a project plan and,
3. 70% of the costs for running the project (provincie Gelderland, 2019).

It was also possible to apply for a combination of these. The sensitising concepts, identified in section 2.5, which could impact the perceived effectiveness of various projects, were not used to help select projects principally because it was difficult to evaluate these in projects before interviews began. Documents did not offer much information to distinguish projects in terms of these characteristics. For example, regarding the range of stakeholders involved, it is difficult to glean from project plans and application documents how many parties were engaged through the project beyond the application group, before data collection has started. Thus, I decided to simply see whether these factors would emerge in interviews.

On the basis of these criteria, I selected six projects as units for this study. They are described in more detail in section 4.1. Table 2 shows the selected projects across year and project type. For reference, all funded projects 2016-2018 are mapped in the same matrix in Appendix 2. Implementation is not included separately in the table, as no projects applied solely for that objective but only in combination with other another objective.

Table 2: Selected projects|

	Partnership (A)	Project plan (B)	Combination C = implementation
2016	Project 1	Project 2	
2017			Project 3, A&B Project 4, A&B
2018			Project 5, B&C Project 6 A, B, C

3.4 Research methods

This research is based on qualitative methods, namely partially structured interviews of participants in the selected projects, document analysis, coding and a final expert validation workshop.

3.4.1 Interviews

The interview process began with collecting names of potential interviewees from project documents. Then, I interviewed one representative of the main applicant per project and asked them who else they thought I should interview. In this way, a snowball sample technique was used to confirm the relevance of interviewing those already identified from the documents, and new potentially significant interviewees were identified. A potential bias is that I started by interviewing civil servants and consultants, and began developing my theory on that basis, only later interviewing entrepreneurs or producers. However, my first round of interviews did include a producer, and there was a range of views among the consultants and municipal employees, so this potential bias was mitigated.

I conducted at least two interviews per project and interviewed two people with direct experience of four of the six projects, along with several outside the sample, thus giving them considerable experience of the overall programme. The interviewees can be split into 4 categories: municipal civil servants, producers or representatives of producer groups, consultants, and entrepreneurs. The interviewees are summarised below in table 3.

Table 3: Overview of interviewees

Project	Total interviews	Interviewees
1	2	1 civil servant, 1 entrepreneur
2	3	1 external project leader, 1 producer, 1 consultant
3	3	1 civil servant, 1 representative of a producer group, 1 external project leader
4	2	1 external project leader, 1 producer
5	3	1 civil servant, 1 producer, 1 external project leader
6	3	2 representatives of a producer group, 1 external consultant.

Trust is crucial to interviewing, especially in an evaluative study (Clarke, 2011), where respondents may be concerned about how their responses are understood. Wagenaar (2011) highlights that how you are introduced to interviewees impacts their perception of you. Therefore, although I emailed potential respondents through my province email address in order to establish my legitimacy, I made sure to stress my independence from the organisation, and the anonymity of the data in the introduction to the interview to reassure respondents that they could speak freely.

All qualitative interviews can be placed on a spectrum between the ideal types of unstructured to semi-structured (Bryman, 2004). Unstructured interviews are completely open-ended and can be based on as little as an aide-mémoire or single question (Clarke, 2011; Bryman, 2004) while semi-structured interviews have a list of topics to cover. Grounded theory primarily uses unstructured interviews, but I chose to follow a hybrid approach. Having clearly worded questions in both Dutch and English prepared beforehand enabled me to minimise language issues and feel more comfortable in my role as an interviewer. My first interview guide included a few open-ended questions, leaving a lot of space to explore the perception of interviewees, the reasons why they held those perceptions, alongside several more specific questions which could be used to prompt the respondent and follow-up on certain points, as required.

The initial interview guide was used for the first six interviews without major changes, though each interview developed in its own way. For the second round of interviews which focussed on producers and entrepreneurs, some prompting questions were added based on the emergent concepts and attempting to draw out their particular perspectives. The main overarching questions remained the same. From early on, I used stories and points made by other respondents in order to elicit a reaction and stimulate the interviewee to consider a particular concept or viewpoint and compare their experiences.

Seven of the interviews were conducted in English and six in Dutch, although most included a mix of both. This inevitably had consequences for the fluency of communication but being flexible enabled several interviewees to take part in the research who would not have been able to, had all interviews been conducted in English. In order to ensure that I did not misinterpret the data provided in Dutch, transcripts in Dutch were checked by a native speaker to help me understand (or hear) the subtleties and some particular turns of phrase. During interviews conducted in English, I encouraged respondents to use Dutch words or phrases as needed, particularly related to technical terms (e.g. ‘penvoerder’) or phrases (e.g. ‘de kar trekken’).

Lastly, all the interviews for this thesis were conducted online during the COVID-19 pandemic. James and Busher (2009) note a number of advantages of online interviewing, such as the ability to question over longer periods of time and saving travel time. There are also several disadvantages such as a potential lack of non-verbal communication (e.g. body language), which may affect or limit the data, and it being a potential barrier for those without extensive technological knowledge. I sought to address these drawbacks by initiating introductory small talk before the interview began, by following the respondent’s technological preferences, and by making use of video mediums, rather than relying on audio alone. Nevertheless, online interviews did pose, principally technical, challenges, which did sometimes hamper the building of rapport. Overall, though, the interviews were successful, but required flexibility to adapt to breaks in connection and off-screen interruptions.

3.4.2 Transcription

Transcription is often assumed to be a technical task, while it in fact involves making interpretative decisions about the level of detail required, and how data is interpreted and represented. Therefore, it can be seen as the first step in analysing data, and the approach should be adapted based on the methodology and aims of the study (Bailey, 2008). Grounded theory favours rich data (Corbin & Strauss, 2012), and so I included detail if it helped to illuminate interviewees’ views on concepts – for example by indicating stress on certain words or phrases or long pauses.

Further, to address potential misunderstandings, I developed a summary to send to the interviewee if they had requested it. This was particularly relevant for interviews conducted in Dutch as this enabled me to fill in any gaps and ask follow-up questions as necessary. All quotes are provided in the thesis

main text in English. I speak Dutch to a high C2 level, but translation is of course an act of interpretation. Therefore, I have included original Dutch quotes in appendix 5.

3.4.3 Coding

In a qualitative inductive approach, coding is key in structuring the data collected and developing theoretical propositions (axioms) (Van Thiel, 2014). Many coding methods exist, associated with various research paradigms. Corbin and Strauss prescribe a detailed procedure of coding and categorisation, while Charmaz suggests an emergent, flexible approach based on the constructivist paradigm (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In inductive research, the process normally begins with an empty codebook as the codes are gradually developed and refined throughout the course of data collection, known as open coding (Flick, 2002).

The initial open codes are added to, ideally until no new codes emerge. Concurrently, they are gradually refined in the iterative process between data collection and analysis, increasing the level of abstraction in order to address theoretical questions. This is referred to as axial coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994, Creswell & Poth, 2018). Following Strauss and Corbin (2012), selective coding is the next step, where a storyline is created to interrelate (some of) the propositions and categories. Charmaz (2014) states that it may be impossible to reduce the data to a single story given the multiple realities and associated complexities.

I followed a relatively structured approach, beginning with open coding of relevant policy documents for each project. Those documents specifically included project plans submitted as part of the application, progress reports and final evaluation documents (where available), and other documents such as requests to change the original plan, or outputs from the projects (where applicable).

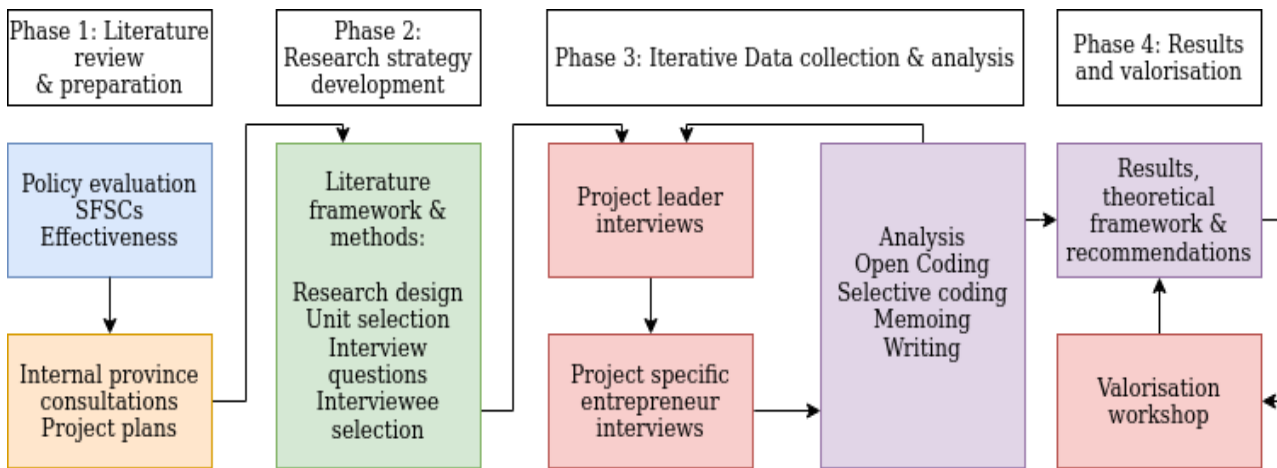
After each interview, I coded the transcript using Atlas.ti to identify the principal themes. At this stage, the sensitising concepts identified above were borne in mind, but I took care to avoid selectivity by coding systematically (Wagenaar, 2011). After the first six interviews, I had developed 180 codes, which I then refined – merging, clarifying and categorising – to result in 122 axial codes. I initially categorised them into several large groups; policy outcomes, project outcomes, factors (affecting both project and policy effectiveness), policy factors, project factors, and recommendations.

Concepts which emerged during interviews were tested in later interviews, to assess their wider applicability and how they were perceived by different types of participants. The iterative process between coding and interviews continued throughout the rest of the interviews, until all were completed when I reviewed the codes once more. I also developed two networks to further my analytical thinking about the relation between various factors, and outcomes. After all documents and transcripts were coded, I had 122 axial codes and 82 open codes. After the second review of the codes, I reduced this to 154 axial codes. After this, work began on selective coding to develop the main story of the research (see section 4). Throughout the process, I recorded my choices in memos and/or my logbook. It is important to state that writing the results is also a part of my analysis process, which helped me to structure the data and identify relations between concepts.

3.4.4 Valorisation workshop

After all interviews were completed, the theory developed and a draft of both this thesis and the separate province report were completed, a final valorisation workshop was organised. This enabled me to present the results to experts from the province and several of my interviewees, for them to provide feedback on the developed theory, and how it matches their experience. Grounded theory often includes conducting follow-up interviews with respondents, in order to test and refine concepts and the theory itself, as analysis proceeds (Corbin & Strauss, 2012). However, given the time constraints of a master's thesis, it was not possible to organise such subsequent interviews. Therefore, this workshop was used to achieve similar aims (see appendix 3 for more detail). Figure 1 summarises the overall research process.

Figure 1: Research process



3.5 Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability can be hard to define in a qualitative study (Van Thiel, 2014) and this is even more complicated in a constructivist approach, as both are traditionally based on positivist concepts. In this approach, validity is measured through generalisability, and reliability by accuracy and consistency of measurement (Van Thiel, 2014). Regarding inductive studies, there are two major criticisms – firstly that true induction would require the researcher to study all possible situations before drawing any conclusions, and secondly that they can lead to selectivity as the researcher focusses on observations that confirm their expectations (Popper, 2002). Similar criticisms are made of case studies – that they are not generalisable and can lead to verification of the researcher's hypotheses (Flyvberg, 2006). These criticisms regard the validity and reliability of the research respectively. First, I will address generalisability and validity, before turning to selectivity and reliability.

Validity can be divided into internal and external validity. The former refers to whether the study addresses what it intended to, while the latter principally regards the extent to which it can be generalised. Regarding internal validity, the use of multiple data sources – namely interviews, an expert workshop, and document analysis – help to triangulate the results, and coding choices were recorded in my logbook as the research proceeded.

External validity is more difficult to ensure, as results of case study evaluation are usually not generalisable (Crabbé & Leroy, 2008) meaning the results of this study are specific to the case of Gelderland. That said, the use of multiple units helps to improve external validity, as more points of study are included, making the results less unit-specific. Regarding generalisability to other settings, other Dutch provinces also receive and distribute POP3 funding for similar projects, meaning that this study is also relevant to them. Further, the research design could be applied to comparable policies

to achieve a similar type of results. The broader theoretical principles identified by the research regarding the relationships between concepts may also be applicable to other settings, though this would have to be tested empirically.

Selectivity can be minimised by ensuring transparent and understandable analysis and drawing plausible conclusions. I have outlined the methodological processes I have followed, and the reasons for making certain choices above. The explicit coding strategy, for instance, along with the recording of decisions and developments such as the development of a code, help towards this. To that end, throughout this research I kept a logbook, as suggested by Van Thiel (2014), in order to record such developments during the research process, covering changes to the theoretical framework, research questions, research design, coding and other analysis, and the reasoning behind these changes.

Another issue for reliability associated with embedded case study designs, is that the study can fail to address the overall case, instead focussing solely on the details of the units, thus making the original object of study the context, rather than the target (Yin, 2003). To avoid this problem, care was taken to examine the projects principally in terms of how they reflect on the overall perceived effectiveness of the main case, Gelderland province's policy. Snowball sampling could also be a threat to reliability, as such a technique cannot claim to produce a statistically representative sample, since it relies upon social contacts between individuals to trace additional respondents. However, I limited the influence of this on the study by first gathering names of potential interviewees from documents, and then asking interviewees to get their input as a way to confirm the relevance of these names individuals, rather than being entirely led by their suggestions.

4 Results

In this section each unit is briefly described (4.1), before the selective coding process is presented (4.2). In 4.3 the theoretical framework derived on that basis is presented, before a brief conclusion (4.4).

4.1 Embedded case descriptions

Here I outline the six selected units covering the main goal/activity, initiation, project group structure, governance, outputs, and outcomes/impacts. The projects are summarised in appendix 4.

4.1.1 Project 1

This project principally researched the possibilities for selling local products in the city centre, particularly investigating the possibility of setting up a market hall in a recently vacated building. The project was initiated by a streekproducten work group (a group of entrepreneurs and environmentalists linked to the municipality interested in local products) and the municipality itself. A consultancy helped prepare the application and report on it. Project governance was smooth, though it was necessary for both municipality and the work group members to adapt to each other, with the municipality providing the structure for the project. The main output, a published report, included an overview of local food producers, processors, shops and restaurants in the Achterhoek (a region east of the IJssel and Old IJssel rivers, bordering Germany), and conducted a needs analysis among participants. The research concluded that a market hall in the planned form would not be possible for reasons of time investment and commitment. However, both interviewees saw this project as important for laying the longer-term basis for later applications and developments, including establishing a foundation to promote local food and a café/shop.

4.1.2 Project 2

This project targeted three groups: producers, municipalities and consumers in order to explore the potential for SFSCs in separate groups and all together. The project was initiated via the local rural

governance platform [gebiedscommissie], the secretary of which was also the project coordinator. They contacted several producers already active or interested in SFSCs in order to begin developing the plan. The implementation group consisted of three consultancies, with the regional municipalities, the local food organisation, the local department of the Land en Tuinbouw Organisatie (LTO, Dutch Farmers' Union), and an individual farmer in the wider project group. The project ran smoothly with a committed and diverse project group and strong structural support.

Concrete outputs included several meetings, and a set of workshops for producers. The “*cherry on the cake*” was a cooking festival using local ingredients bringing together grandparents and grandchildren to cook together, learning from professionals. In the closing event, results were presented, and participants looked forward to a new local food organisation, and subsequent POP3 project. Both interviewees saw the project as crucial in bringing groups together and particularly creating a committed, cohesive group of producers as the basis for the second phase.

4.1.3 Project 3

This project investigates the possibilities for a developing the local producers association into a cooperative, along with seeking to develop other outputs such as a communications plan. It was initiated by the project coordinator, a consultancy, approaching the lead applicant, a municipality, with the opportunity to apply for the subsidy. The project group is large, though day-to-day implementation is conducted by the project coordinator, along with an independent advisor, the existing producers association and the local tourist board. The municipalities take a back-seat role as they are not directly implicated in the project, but also because they lack the resources to work on food policy.

There was a conflict between the partners early on, linked to a lack of two-sided communication, meaning that the expectations of each party were not made clear. Relations between the various parties, particularly the producers association and the consultancy seem to be coloured by broader organisational relations (see 4.2.2.8). The producers association resented what they saw as being excluded from the process of writing the project, and so insisting on changes to the project plan and bringing in another advisor to do so, was their way of exercising their influence. Despite the initial conflict, or perhaps thanks to it, all parties said it has since developed into an effective and promising project.

As the project did not start until early 2019, outputs and outcomes remain unclear. Research has been completed, parties approached to join or work with the producers association, and logistics have been researched. Members of the producers association have considered over several sessions the role they envisage for the organisation and how to present their collective story. They plan to further develop concepts and make use of a connected organisation.

4.1.4 Project 4

This project aims to establish which producers are interested in selling via short chains, to equip them to do so via a masterclass training programme and to link producers with sales parties. The project has also created a regional brand, to boost the visibility of local products and link SFSCs to tourism via the tourism board. Two consultants coordinate the project, one of whom is also a local farmer and councillor, with four municipalities and an active local producer on the wider project group. Municipalities were not felt to be sufficiently involved, or to have the capacity to coordinate such a project. Project governance appears to be smooth apart from this.

Outputs include the masterclass meetings, region brand and over 300 matches made between producers and sales parties. There have been many positive outcomes, including that the group of masterclass producers are enthused and plan to meet independently going forward. From a low-level

of activity, local government and regional organisations have started to pick up the issue of food, and short chains, particularly in making the link to tourism which is key for the region. The theme is now “*buzzing*”, and the region brand offers a durable structure going forward.

4.1.5 Project 5

This project builds on the previous establishment of a local sustainable food platform by implementing three pilot projects:

- streekplein, a shared market stall for local producers under the platform banner, or separate stalls grouped together.
- streektas, a collective food bag/box for the local University
- foodfiets, cycling between local farms, enjoying meals there, in collaboration with local restaurants.

I heard mainly about the streekplein, due to those I interviewed. The project was initiated by the municipality, along with one producer per pilot. A consultancy helps with the application, administration and facilitating platform meetings. Although the three pilots are the focus of the POP3 project, the platform is also active more widely to promote collaboration.

Regarding outcomes, collaboration has increased, and the visibility of local producers at markets has led to other opportunities. The project has reinforced the platform, and participants are currently exploring whether to formalise it as a legal entity. The streekplein pilot has also enabled producers to be present at more markets than would ordinarily be possible or desirable. Impacts are hard to measure as the project is not yet completed, but it was felt that the streekplein activity will continue.

4.1.6 Project 6

This project aims to develop local bread, grown through a sustainable system, using local grains, by making links between local farmers, bakers and consumers. It also aims to grow a recently founded citizen supported agriculture cooperative, attracting both more farmers and citizen members, and developing other relevant infrastructure, such as a website to sell products.

This is the only selected project initiated and led by a producer organisation. It is also the only project which did not have a consultant involved in writing the application and conducting the administration. Three municipalities are minimally involved, beyond providing funding for the project to begin, and discussing progress. They were principally included because it was required by the policy. The application was devised in combination with another application for a nature-inclusive agriculture POP3 project led by another producer organisation. As this was unsuccessful, the project had to be rewritten after the subsidy was granted, when implementation had already started. A consultant joined for a short time to organise the administration and finances, and their involvement has since stopped again. Since the province does not provide pre-financing (i.e. money is only paid when the project is granted/the activities are completed), and the cooperative lacks its own finances, the freelance director has been taking financial risks upon himself personally in order to conduct the project.

Regarding outputs, links have already been laid between bakers, and a tool for analysing farm sustainability (modelled on Kate Raworth’s (2012) doughnut economics model) has been promoted and picked up by local educational institutions. Outcomes are still emerging due to the challenges of administering the project, a delayed start and COVID-19 limiting the ability to gather (the project has been extended to December 2021), but all interviewed were positive about the potential for good effects.

4.2 Selective coding

After my initial rounds of open and axial coding, and after all interviews were concluded, I identified a number of important codes in order to build a theory, grouping 154 codes under several main groups. This resulted in 21 code groups, across 4 main categories. Those categories are:

- outcomes, addressing whether and how projects were judged to be effective (sub-question 1),
- factors, addressing what participants mentioned as influencing both project and policy effectiveness (sub-question 2),
- the relationship between policy and project effectiveness (sub-question 3), and
- recommendations (addressed in section 5)

These categories overlap and some codes are included in several categories, highlighting the relationships between the groups. I return to these links in the sections 4.3 and 5.

4.2.1 Outcomes

This category includes six code groups indicating the project outcomes that respondents used to assess and evidence project and policy effectiveness. These codes address the first sub-question: *What outcomes are used to assess project and policy effectiveness?*

Participants from all six projects find that their projects were, are, or will be, effective. Four of the six projects are not yet finished, meaning that the outputs and impacts are not yet completely known. Four of the six have also been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, delaying their plans. The outcomes of the projects can be split into the following categories:

- 4.2.1.1 Increased collaboration
- 4.2.1.2 Strengthened producers' position
- 4.2.1.3 Catalytic effect
- 4.2.1.4 Durability
- 4.2.1.5 Creating structures
- 4.2.1.6 Knowledge

4.2.1.1 Increased collaboration

The most commonly cited positive effect of the projects and policy is an increase in cooperation between various parties, both between different groups (for example between producers and restaurants) and between producers among themselves. This includes a 'softer' side, namely that by meeting and working with each other, parties can build relationships and networks that create more cohesion and mutual understanding, in turn leading to more chances and a greater desire for cooperation, including beyond the project.

Often the groups formed during the project later became active independent of the project. For instance, in the sequel project to project 2, the group formed in the original project communicated about the new project on social media, *"they were connecting with each other, they were reaching their consumers, and that is what we achieved[...] because it was the start of the project, so those were the achievements of the first project."* Another consultant described a WhatsApp group of producers that drove her *"crazy"* they were so active.

An important aspect contributing to collaboration, especially in masterclass groups, is the diverse experience of producers with SFSCs. Having some producers with no experience at all, while others already have their own shop and are very active in SFSCs, gives the possibility for them to learn from each other, rather than only the course leaders. According to one participant the *"very mixed group [... was] honestly the best part, because this means you have really special conversations, you can learn a lot from each other."*ⁱⁱⁱ This also leads to concrete interpersonal collaboration, with one inexperienced producer in a masterclass benefiting from her more experienced colleagues: *"she*

learned a lot from the others that were much further in how to do your marketing, how should your product look like [...] she could test [her product] in the shops from the other participants, they would promote it for her, and so she got a very quick feedback loop, and is very successful as of today.”

Working more collectively is also seen as bringing specific benefits, specifically that individual parties can save time and still reap benefits. One producer involved in project 5's streekplein scheme outlined the benefits in that case: *“other producers are also really happy that they don't have to be personally at every market but they can also join in a communal market stall [...] because there's so many markets that people are asked to be at and all these producers are really busy [...] and you can't possibly be every weekend at a market [...] that's not what they started their business for. And it's fun to do you know two, three times a year but not every weekend it's just too much. So, it's a good concept.”*

4.2.1.2 Strengthened producers' position

This group of codes covers the various ways in which producers benefit from the projects and are supported to work in SFSCs. Collective working, as outlined above, is one way in which their position is strengthened, enabling them to bundle products together. The clearest way in which entrepreneurs were strengthened through the projects is commercial outcomes – projects help to create new relations between sale and production, either by creating a sales point, or by ‘matchmaking’ meetings, such as in project 4 (see 4.1.4). In this way, more is sold and more money is made through SFSCs, motivating others to work through short chains, although many farmers continue to also trade through traditional chains. Such practical outcomes are also important for the commitment of parties, and therefore the course of the project.

Interviewees also highlighted that projects increased individual producers' confidence and enthusiasm to work in SFSCs, with masterclasses particularly important for this. Multiple examples were presented during the interviews, one highlighted a masterclass participant who began very uncertainly, but *“in the end she developed a brilliant pear syrup[...] she did so fantastically well.”*ⁱⁱⁱ In another project, a project group member described the pleasant feeling when *“someone is growing in front of you, and bit by bit, believes in their own abilities and their own way of thinking.”*^{iv} One interviewee also saw the decision by certain farmers not to get involved in SFSCs as an effective outcome as it helps to clarify their situation, although it may not be the desired effect of the policy.

4.2.1.3 Catalytic effect

This group covers codes which point to the catalytic effect that projects can have for SFSC activities and initiatives in the region. Projects help to stimulate “spin-offs” that were not planned nor expected as part of the project itself, but that which occur thanks to the locus of energy and activity they create. For instance in project 5, through their visible presence at local markets under, local producers and participants in the project were approached to be present at a local food truck festival, and to supply their products to a local Plus supermarket, which was not planned at all but occurred as a by-product of the project. Ideas generated in one project can also develop into subsequent POP3 applications, such as the idea for a local food truck proposed by a local Tourism board. The projects also have an effect of stimulating other activities by creating time for entrepreneurs to implement existing but never realised ideas. For example, one dairy producer spoke about their decision to produce ice cream in collaboration with a local ice cream maker: *“you have an idea, you think great, but Monday the cows have to be milked again [...] and then it's five weeks later again and you speak with someone and think ‘oh yeah that was a good idea, we should do that some time.’ [...] and I talked about that ice cream like that for two years! [...] In such a project you actually get to reserve time to work on it [...] otherwise it just hangs around, I see that a lot has emerged in this way”.*^v

Also, in this code group fall the wider effects of the projects on local policy and municipalities, for example by linking SFSCs to other policy areas, or by changing local policy. In project 4 the theme is now much more actively taken up by municipalities and other regional organisation adding SFSCs to their new ambition document and linking it to tourism. The project coordinator said: *“governments are now more making it something where they can put it in integral in all their parts and it's a subject that now more wethouders [councillors] are mentioning and seeing and promoting so that's a plus.”* This increased policy attention for SFSCs was seen as a positive outcome of the policy and projects in the valorisation workshop. However, many interviewees still felt that the municipalities were insufficiently involved.

One last effect is that projects can improve the relationships between government organisations and entrepreneurs, as working together and having a common goal develops mutual understanding. One interviewee highlighted that their project enabled municipalities to approach parties with *“a really positive story [...] so you really say, ‘can we help you making more money out of what you're doing right now, how can we help you?’ And this is really interesting because beforehand it was more like you have to go by the rules, and now it's like ‘how can we help you?’”*

4.2.1.4 Durability

Durability, one of the sensitising concepts, and part of the province's own view of effectiveness, also clearly came through in interviews and is seen as self-evidently important. To be considered effective projects should have – or have the potential to have – long-term effects beyond the end of the subsidy funding. Otherwise effectiveness is inherently limited. Durability can be secured through structures, empowerment and good project coordination (see section 4.2.2). One interviewee described observing the effects of their project *“after the project was finished [...] you see that you are in a cycle, in a circle that cannot get back any more, that has got a movement and that [...] isn't going to stop any more. I think that's effective.”* One interviewee described it as the *“ultimate wish”*^{vi} that the project be able to step back and for the actors in the field to continue on their own.

Some linked this also to empowerment (see 4.2.2.3), as giving producers and other actors the lead creates more lasting effects and outcomes that are useful for them. One interviewee described a previous project in which *“when the subsidy was gone the project was gone so it [...] didn't last [...] what we think is very important [is] that it will last [...] so in the end the farmers should be able to sort of help themselves [...] And that's why we [...] try to listen more to the farmers and not to ourselves.”* Some interviewees did fear that activity would an abrupt end: *“the disadvantage of those subsidy pots is that when the subsidy is there, and a project leader is very active, then everything happens, but as soon as the pot is empty then it stops.”*^{vii} This shows the importance of durability to participants' perception and experience of project and policy effectiveness, and this was confirmed during the valorisation workshop.

4.2.1.5 Creating structures

This code group covers the various organisations and structures that participants mentioned as outcomes of the project. This covers a wide range of structures – for example in project 1, the initial streekproducten group that helped to apply for and implement the first project laid the basis for the creation of a foundation to help further the goal of bringing local products first to the city, and later to the whole Achterhoek. This kind of effect was seen as particularly effective as it helps to boost durability.

Unlike other projects, project 4 did not generate a platform or forum to enable continued cooperation, apart from the creation of a new regional brand. This has been placed under the responsibility of the local tourism board, to ensure that it is made use of on an ongoing basis. It has also created digital structures, enabling producers to be more visible, and to share with each other. However, this can

more be seen as ensuring visibility and a form of identity, than a structure to enable initiatives and collaborations to emerge.

One interviewee was afraid, partly for this reason, that activity would dwindle or stop entirely after the end of funding, while one of the project coordinators stated that they had deliberately chosen not to establish a new platform, because creating a new structure for the sake of the project would not be sustainable, as so many groups already exist. They chose to focus on building informal networks, allowing each producer to go to whichever group they most identify with. Making use of structures is also identified as a factor boosting effectiveness (see 4.2.2.4). For example, in project 2, no new overarching structure was created, but the project did make use of existing groups, and brought them together under the umbrella of the project.

4.2.1.6 Knowledge

Lastly, this group covers the knowledge generated and spread through projects, about how to work in SFSCs for all kinds of actors including producers and consumers, restaurants and caterers, shopkeepers and municipalities. The most important source of knowledge spreading was masterclass courses, which are highly significant for participants. The masterclasses in project 2 were described as *“really hands-on and I like that they are learning how to promote themselves, how to put their produce to market [...] to reach the general public with their products, how to work together to optimize the logistics [...] it's very applied.”*

Some projects also conduct or commission research, such as project 1 which researched whether a market hall for local products would be feasible in the city centre. Although the research found that the market was not feasible in the imagined form, it did reveal other options, laying the basis for future projects and SFSC activities: *“the food hall has now evolved into a shop in [the city] centre but its foundation is actually in that research.”*^{viii}

Other practical knowledge acquired helped to advance SFSCs, including an insight into the actors active in the region, and their potential interest in working in SFSCs. For example, in project 1 the research had an extra result; *“an insight into everything that is produced locally in the Achterhoek, and we were able to publicise that. There were in the end a bit less than 120 producers, and some of those were visible through various associations, but there was no complete overview.”*^{ix} This provided *“fertile soil”* for later projects, as well as enabling links to be made between various groups of farmers, such as between organic and other producers.

This section has outlined the six main categories which were used to evidence the effectiveness of the SFSC projects: boosting collaboration between and within various actor groups, strengthening producers as individuals and as a group, durability, creating organisations and structures for continued collaboration, boosting knowledge and various unplanned outcomes that can be seen as spin-offs from the narrowly-defined project itself. These outcomes suggest that assessing effectiveness for most participants is more complex than simply comparing the outputs and outcomes to the goals but has to do with individuals and personal relationships being reinforced, and energy catalysing new initiatives and reviving existing ones.

4.2.2 Factors

Factors are what respondents identified as helping both the projects and policy to be effective, answering the second sub-question: *“Which factors influence the perceived effectiveness of the policy and selected projects, and how?”*

There are 10 factor code groups, namely:

4.2.2.1 Accessibility

- 4.2.2.2 Commitment
- 4.2.2.3 Empowerment
- 4.2.2.4 Structures
- 4.2.2.5 Visibility
- 4.2.2.6 Government support
- 4.2.2.7 Project coordination
- 4.2.2.8 Organisational relations
- 4.2.2.9 Landscape
- 4.2.2.10 Local connection

4.2.2.1 Accessibility

Accessibility includes codes highlighting how easy – or difficult – it is for various actors, particularly primary producers, to take part in POP3 projects and to apply for the subsidy. This includes ideas about inclusive processes within the projects themselves and ensuring that barriers to participation – financial or in terms of time investment – are as small as possible. For example, one producer described the barrier that charging to join a masterclass training course represents:

“it cost five hundred euros I think [...] entrepreneurs have to work quite hard for their product [...] many fruit growers for example, if you know that a kilo of apples of course only gets you a few cents, then you have to sell quite a lot of apples before you have earned that five hundred euros back.”^x

The fee amounted to less than the costs of paying the masterclass teachers, but certainly still acts as a barrier. Timing of meetings and events is also relevant for project accessibility as it is important to suit producers’ schedules, both through the day, and the year. The masterclass sessions in the above example took place during the day, for the majority of the day, which can be a challenge for farmers who have tasks to carry out on a daily basis. This kind of accessibility can easily be increased by including producers in the planning and development process. Accessibility is clearly linked to the concepts of commitment and empowerment (see below). Organisational relations are also relevant here (see 4.2.2.8) as one interview considered that the low take-up of the masterclass was caused by farmers’ laziness, caution or over-confidence, ignoring the barriers that may have prevented or discouraged their participation. Accessibility was recognised as a key challenge for both project and policy effectiveness in the valorisation workshop. The accessibility of the policy is discussed in section 4.2.3.2.

4.2.2.2 Commitment

Although the importance of accessibility is clear, interviewees were also of the view that effective projects were dependent on enthusiastic participants who were committed to the project. This group covers the difficulty of engaging actors, including producers, municipalities and hospitality and retail entrepreneurs. One project coordinator summed it up as: *“it's now up to the farmers and up to the suppliers that want to be in the supply chain to make a business out of it.”* Many explanations for this difficulty are based on perceptions of other actor groups, particularly producers (see 4.2.2.8).

This code group also includes several ways in which commitment can be gained and maintained. One is maintaining momentum – one entrepreneur described it as having to keep the ‘vliegwiel’ [flywheel] turning and the difficulty of restarting it when project flow is interrupted. In that case, farmers lost motivation while waiting to hear whether the subsidy application was successful, which took much longer than expected. Another method is to target the achievement of concrete outcomes to show parties the benefits of joining the project. For example, one municipality employee said that in order to ensure effectiveness: *“it always helps to [focus on] organising low-hanging fruit, so short, quick actions because otherwise people drop out [...] if you start with low-hanging fruit then you can also*

pick them quicker."^{xi} In this case, the focus was on generating increased sales for participants from early on, helping to reinforce commitment.

4.2.2.3 Empowerment

The idea that each project and the policy as a whole is primarily about enabling and empowering agricultural parties, especially primary producers, was expressed in different many ways during interviews: working with – not for – farmers; working bottom-up; avoiding going *'over de hoofden'* [over the heads] of producers; it's their project, not ours. In this view, projects are most effective if the project group does not dictate the project content and goals, but instead facilitates and enables participants to benefit themselves, giving them the structure and space in which to do so. This approach was seen to lead to the greatest and most durable effect.

For example, one project manager said that if the project is not based on participants ideas, *"the problem might be that you lose the people and it's their project, not my project."* Another project coordinator said that they had learned to approach projects in this way to increase their effectiveness: *"I need to step back in the sense, okay 'we have process money and what do you want?' Instead of 'I have a really great idea and I think you can fit in this kind of idea because it will bring you a lot of dot dot dot' [...] What helps, if they do nothing then also nothing happens, so that's this great thing because we do it together."*

It also relates to accessibility – if the project belongs to the participants, then of course it has to be accessible to them, or it has no value. In this view, accessibility is not an afterthought, but is central to the effectiveness of each project, and the policy overall. The antithesis of this is when parties are not included, as in project 3 (4.1.3) where, as described, the producer group claims to have been excluded from the plan writing process: *"they withdrew the whole writing and submitting of the project from our knowledge"*.^{xii} This led to conflict and the potential end of the project: *"there were times that I thought 'well, maybe I have to call the province and say, sorry we got the subsidy but we have no project anymore"* when the producers reacted negatively to the project plan they felt they had been excluded from. Therefore, empowering producers to achieve their own goals within projects is an important factor for effectiveness emerging from the data.

Empowering producers ideally leads to them taking the initiative during the projects. One example comes from project 5 where based on the collective market stall(s) pilot, producers decided to also organise a collective presence at local Christmas markets. This kind of empowerment can also translate into outcomes of increased confidence and spin-off projects, as discussed above.

4.2.2.4 Structures

This code group covers how organisations, structures or platforms are seen as helpful in promoting project effectiveness, whether they bring together various relevant parties, or are for specific groups, like a producer interest group. Many projects made use of existing organisations in order to improve the running of projects and to reach and attract more participants. For example, project 3 included the local association of short chain producers. Through the association, many producers are accessibly involved in the project – 45 members have been able to hear the results of research, and give their input on the course of action in a number of meetings, while the daily work and implementation is carried out by two committee members. This allows them to be involved without having to invest much of their time or resources, thanks to the representation of their committee, boosting accessibility. This code group relates to the point on project coordination (4.2.2.7), as structures often reinforce this.

Organisations also help to establish projects. For instance, the existing rural development network in project 2, which brings together the local municipalities, water boards and other relevant partners

including the association on local food products), was important in establishing their project. The project coordinator (also the rural development network secretary) explained how the initiative for the project came both from local producers and from councillors active in the platform, who suggested applying for the subsidy. In this way, the existing organisations helped to start and support the project. This was also the case in project 1 as the existence of the municipality-supported streekproducten work group was crucial for the start of the project.

Helpful structure can also be provided by a previous POP3 project. For example, in project 5, a first project established the sustainable food platform, which was the centre of the subsequent application, giving a structural forum in which producers and other parties could meet and develop collaborations. Both interviewees active in the platform said it was hard to separate the platform from the projects, and that projects are dependent on the platform giving structure and a way for people to meet and combine, allowing the catalytic effect of such projects to be maximised.

4.2.2.5 Visibility

The visibility of participants active within the short chain was also identified as an important factor. Visibility can increase producers' chances of success, as consumers need to be able to recognise and look for their product. Research from project 1 demonstrated this: *“there's just no knowledge or awareness [among consumers] of what's available from the area, but that there is interest. So, we have to bridge that gap”^{xiii}* and have therefore focussed on that in later projects. One producer explained the impact that winning a prize had on their business' visibility. After the prize *“there were two thousand people at our open day and from that moment on the shop was just packed because people knew where to find us.”^{xiv}*

Increased visibility during projects also helps to increase the catalytic effect (see above), as in project 5 where presence at markets has led to unplanned opportunities, and a supportive councillor attracts local media to platform and project events. Visibility does not come only from one-off events but is reliant on buyers and consumers being exposed to local products and producers over the long-term. The regional brand from project 4 is an example of increased visibility as an outcome. However, one interviewee was at pains to emphasise that the brand's existence was not enough but that *“you have to show it constantly [...] otherwise nothing happens” “[consumers] must be constantly confronted with it”, “so that the whole [region] or maybe the entire Netherlands is bombarded with ‘these are the wonderful products from the [region].”^{xv}*

The POP3 policy can also affect visibility. Some respondents highlighted the issue of not being able to report hours for communications/promotion work in 2016 projects, which limited their ability to address visibility (see 4.2.3.2). This was addressed in later regulations.

4.2.2.6 Government support

Government or institutional support for projects – highlighted as a sensitising concept – also emerged strongly in interviews. Support from both the province and municipalities involved was viewed as positive for the running and effectiveness of projects. Municipalities' role is seen as helping to empower participants, providing structure, contributing to keeping thresholds low, and adjusting policy to facilitate SFSC activities. Interviewees – both entrepreneurs and municipality employees – saw municipalities' active involvement in projects as important for effectiveness. Even in projects where institutional support was felt to be lacking, it was highlighted as a desirable factor.

Some municipalities were crucial in the establishment of projects. For example, thanks to the support of the two councillors involved in the network in project 2, the project was launched with significant buy-in from municipal actors. As part of that project, the local municipalities produced a joint food

covenant, in which they laid out how they would put food on their agendas, and securely anchor the issue in their structures.

Participants considered that municipalities can increase effectiveness by helping to coordinate and keep things moving. In this context, the Dutch phrase ‘de kar te trekken’ was used, meaning literally to pull the cart. This is necessary because farmers are often busy and active coordination helps to stimulate entrepreneurs and producers beyond their everyday work: *“you always need somebody to pull the cart and most producers are just too busy to take up that role, so I’m really glad that [municipality employee] does that [...] I think it’s good to have somebody who kind of spurs you on a little bit, every once in a while, to take the initiative.”* Other parties look for a proactive stance from municipalities to help improve effectiveness: *“I want the local government to be more than facilitating [...] I want to be their co-workers and the same level of co-working as the other parties [...] facilitating sounds often so easy, facilitating can mean ‘we are waiting until people are asking us to facilitate.’ I ask from the councillors but also of the management [...] think with us what local food can be of worth for you.”*

Support can include financial help, such as the municipality in project 1 providing co-financing for the research. The municipality in project 5 is one of the few municipalities with a dedicated budget for food policy, a councillor responsible for the issue, and two employees working on it, enabling them to actively facilitate the sustainable food platform, and support the pilot projects, for instance by paying the fees for the streekplein stalls to join local markets in the early stages. The support being embedded in municipal structures is a clear example of what can be achieved when municipalities are committed to the issue. Government support for such platforms can help to increase the effectiveness of projects and ensure that SFSCs remain strong after the end of the project, by having a structural connection between parties.

Despite the benefits, many municipalities are not active because SFSCs does not fit neatly within their structures – is it an agricultural, economic, or environmental issue? – both at the level of councillors and civil servants. One interviewee used the phrase *“je kan het niet in een hokje stoppen”* [you cannot put it in a corner] to indicate the difficulty of categorising short chains. Therefore, it is often internally split across multiple different areas and officials, making it complicated for municipalities to approach the issue, if they address it explicitly at all. However, participants felt that the cross-cutting nature of SFSCs offers opportunities to make links to other areas such as economics, tourism or health. Disruptions such as fusions or elections can also affect the extent of institutional support, disrupting the flow of a project, particularly when it is necessary to justify the relevance of the project all over again. So, it is clear from interviews that institutional support is an important factor for successful SFSC projects, but that the support must be active and reflected in structures.

Regarding provincial support for the projects through the policy, the province can be seen as a partner in each project, even if it is more distanced from daily project activity. Many interviewees considered that more support from the province would increase project effectiveness, and therefore the policy. This is discussed further in section 4.2.3.

4.2.2.7 Project coordination

This group of codes addresses several elements of good project management which help to maximise their effectiveness as internal processes are key for the invested inputs to be turned into useful outcomes and lasting impacts. A key aspect is the preparation before the application is submitted: one interviewee estimated that preparations should begin around one year before submission, in order to give enough time to bring relevant parties together, agree a vision and develop a plan on that basis, due to the complexity of the task and particularly the application process.

Active coordination from the project group or coordinator during the project is key to stimulate active participation, and to know what needs to be done and ensure that it happens. Project coordination can boost accessibility, by keeping barriers to participation as low as possible. As one interviewee put it, regarding accessibility *“we had no threshold. So, the threshold was do you have an idea, do you have no idea, but you want to do something with short chains? If you want to discover it, then join in.”*^{xvi} The project group can also help ensure commitment, by chasing participants if needed, until this is self-sustaining. A good example comes from the project 2 where the project group kept individual producers active by providing clear information and communicating well, *“but at a certain point you just have to say, ‘hey we expect you there at this time.’ Full stop. And we phoned them if they weren’t there: ‘where are you?’ And you just need a project group for that.”*^{xvii}

This code group also includes the importance of clear communication in a project, between the project group members and from the project group outwards. This includes getting input from all parties, preventing misunderstandings and making all parties’ expectations clear. Project 3 shows the importance of transparent communication within the project group, as the lack of it contributed to the conflict (4.1.3, 4.2.2.3). Luckily, the conflict brought matters to a head, forcing better communication: *“I think it was really good that it clashed in the beginning of the project because in that sense it became clear what kind of goals everyone had with what they really wanted out of the project, and also what kind of expectations people have when they start with a subsidy”* enabling the project to continue and achieve positive results.

Lastly this group also includes the concept of risk and responsibility in the project. Under the province policy, the project lead applicant (penvoerder) is held legally responsible for the project, and for reporting to the province on the subsidy. Which actor takes on this role can be significant for the effectiveness of a project and the accessibility of the policy, as this party then has to ensure that the project is appropriately accounted for. In five of the six projects selected, this role is filled by a municipality, who outsource the tasks of administration to a consultancy while in project 6, the freelance director took on this role, and assumed considerable personal risk, as mentioned (see 4.2.2.3).

4.2.2.8 Organisational relations

Underlying the discussion of project effectiveness and the relevant factors were often a set of – sometimes implicit, sometimes explicit – preconceptions about the other (types of) actors involved which influenced perceived effectiveness. Looking at the three main groups – governments, producers, and consultants – some common themes emerged.

Governments

Governments and government employees, including the province, were frequently described, especially by producers and entrepreneurs, as rigidly stuck in their ways and overly concerned with processes instead of action. One entrepreneur gave an example from another ongoing project: *“because of the corona crisis the world has completely changed. But all the budgets are already fixed, so we have to carry on in the same way, although everything has changed”*^{xviii} displaying the inflexibility of government structures.

There is also a view that they can be disingenuous and inconsistent, as they declare the importance of short chains and farming in general, while doing little to back this up. For example, one producer expressed their frustration:

“we had these pitches, and there were various people from the municipality there, and then they’re always really enthusiastic [...but] then you don’t see them any more [...] maybe that’s a bit part of their job that if something’s being launched then it’s great, fantastic [...] there are lots more important

things, I think than just that, but everyone says that it's high on their priority list, but we see very little of it^{xxix}

Many respondents expressed the importance of showing consistency between word and action in order to win the trust of entrepreneurs, for instance by providing local products in their canteens and as gifts, and building personal contacts with producers, visiting their businesses. Such attitudes towards governments were often wrapped up with the larger political landscape, as frustrations at national and European policy manifested in this context. One interviewee explained that *“the anger about bad or badly implemented policy is just really big, they [producers] barely know where they stand.”*^{xxx}

Even where there were no overt issues based on such organisational perceptions, they were raised in interviews. For example, one interviewee from project 4 emphasised the need for municipalities to show interest in the project, and producers, beyond just the public events, and rhetorical support. This was also tied up with perceptions of the national agriculture minister, which despite not being active in the project itself, clearly influences how governments at all levels are seen. This shows that such issues need to be managed and mitigated through good project coordination and empowering of producers and other parties.

Producers

Producers are frequently depicted as stubbornly independent (*‘eigenwijs’* in Dutch) and cautious. The figure of speech *‘de kat uit de boom kijken’* was used on several occasions to describe the supposed tendency of farmers to cautiously wait until there are clear results before joining (*‘seeing which way the wind blows’* is the closest English equivalent), explaining the difficulty of engaging them in projects. Less frequently they were painted as disinterested, ignorant of the rules and (implicitly) too lazy to invest the required effort to gain the knowledge. Regarding the subsidy, one interviewee stated, *“a lot of entrepreneurs think there is [...] a bag of money and that you give it to them, and that they can do what they want with it.”* Entrepreneurs were also viewed as hasty to get to concrete action: *“entrepreneurs and inhabitants, they just want to get on with it, they want an answer tomorrow, while [governments] sometimes have to go back and report on the activities.”*^{xxxi} Several entrepreneurs acknowledged this in themselves.

Consultants

Consultants were not perceived in a particular way, but their financial remuneration within projects did cause tension, particularly among producers and entrepreneurs, although this was not always explicitly stated. Several interviewees highlighted that although producers and chain parties are the intended beneficiaries of the policy and projects (although this is not explicitly stated in the policy), a large part of the subsidy goes to consultants as project managers and administrators. This meant that some producers view consultants as getting (unfairly) rich from the programme while producers do the real work: *“that project leader, they get rich from it, they get a load of money, and entrepreneurs they still have to do it all themselves.”*^{xxvii}

This certainly seems to be at the root of the previously described conflict – the consultants viewed producer organisations as simply interested in the money, while one of the producer group’s concerns with the original project plan was that the consultants would take too many of the project hours. This was not explicitly framed in financial terms, but rather in terms of the organisation’s limited resources, and lack of specialised knowledge limiting their ability to carry out research for instance. A municipal employee involved did say that the consultants were initially unhappy at the change of plan because it reduced their remuneration. This perception of resources being unfairly, or inappropriately, assigned could also discourage some from getting involved in projects.

These perceptions did not lead to explicit issues in most projects, but they were mentioned by interviewees involved in four of the six projects, emphasising the need to be aware of such issues, in order to manage them. It is not possible to solve these wider cultural divides within a project, but interviewees did emphasise that good communication is necessary to help bridge them within projects themselves. Explaining procedures and the work of the project group can help shed light on the value project leaders bring to projects and reduce these tensions. Further, all parties, including the province, being willing to adapt to others' ways of working, rather than sticking rigidly to organisational styles, was seen as important. Personal contact is also felt to be beneficial to improving mutual understanding.

4.2.2.9 Landscape

This group of codes refers to contextual factors outside the direct control of the actors working on the projects, using the language of transition theory. The COVID-19 pandemic was named most often, as four projects are still running, while other interviewees' subsequent projects have been affected by the pandemic. The crisis has had both positive and negative effects on short chains, and the projects – many projects have had to cancel or postpone meetings and activities, while several respondents reported that the attention for local food and support for local businesses has increased rapidly. This rapid increase was confirmed in the valorisation workshop.

Another contextual factor that can motivate parties to be active in the short chain is pressure on agriculture, related to the cost of land, the nitrogen problem, balance with nature and other challenges. One interviewee argued that because of these factors: *“everyone is thinking about how it could be done differently, how can I respond to the new situation in a few years to be able to stay a farmer; what does society expect of me? So farmers are actually ready, they want to take steps [...] the climate is there to change and to take steps, so out of the certainty that society is changing and that farmers have to change too, they join [such projects].”^{xxiii}*

The food movement was also highlighted. *“There's attention for food [...] It's been a few years that food has been hip of course [...] The whole “foodies” movement on Instagram and so on”^{xxiv}* meaning that there is demand for local food, and people are interested in the origin of their food. This gives producers and processors an opportunity to tell their story and increase their visibility. These broader environmental factors therefore form a window of opportunity which enables SFSCs to be more effective than would otherwise be possible, although these landscape factors are not sufficient on their own to cause effectiveness. Arguably the organisational relations and perceptions discussed above are also shaped by landscape factors, although this was not explicitly stated by participants.

4.2.2.10 Local connection

This group refers to issues related to the local context, and how projects need to connect to that context in order to be effective. For example, project 4's coordinator described their region in contrast to Gelderland's larger cities:

“we are a farming region; we are not like Arnhem or Nijmegen with a lot of big main corporate offices or something. We are good in making fruit [laughs], logistics [...] and we have a very nice landscape. So we should use those advantages and those things are in tourism and in agriculture and this topic is exactly on the crossing of that, so that's where I think the very biggest gain in this project has been, that our tourist office is really promoting all the local produce.”

In this case then, the largest gain was shaped by connecting to the local context. The local context is also important in terms of the level of SFSC activity before the project. Project 4 was a first for that region, making the effect of the project relatively greater, due to the lack of activity beforehand. By contrast, in the region of project 5 awareness of food sustainability issues is already high due to the

particular focus of the local university on these topics contributing to high awareness among producers and the local population. One interviewee there said that producers would likely have become active in the short chain even without the existence of the platform or project, suggesting that the relative effect of the project is comparatively small, due to the other influences in promoting SFSCs.

Having a local connection was also perceived as relevant for project coordinators. Several interviewees said that projects were more effective because project coordinators were locally based, due to the importance of having a personal network relevant for the project. For example, in project 2, through being based in the area the project coordinator was able to link structures to the group of producers they knew who were already interested in the issue. The local connection is connected to landscape factors, but cannot be entirely subsumed within it, as it also points to the relevance of picking project partners and considering their local connections in doing this.

So, these 10 factors emerging from the data indicate what is perceived as influencing the effectiveness of projects, ranging from organisational relations to local connection and landscape factors, accessibility and empowerment of stakeholders. Specific individuals and their relevant qualities were also frequently highlighted as a factor contributing to good project coordination, and effectiveness. This is difficult to account for in a broader theory, but the qualities seen as effective match well with the above points – that individuals should have a good (local) network, enthusiasm, openness and strong communication skills.

4.2.3 How policy relates to projects

This category consists of just two groups: policy enabling and policy limiting. Interviewees saw that the policy had both enabling and limiting impacts on project effectiveness, as Giddens (1984) argues is the case for all structures. These codes address the third sub-question: *How are perceptions of policy effectiveness and project effectiveness related to each other?*

Generally, the enabling aspects often seemed to be taken as read or were simply not regarded as important as the limiting factors. Believing that their own project was or would be effective did not mean that they described the policy as effective, even though the results of projects are also – although perhaps less directly – results of policy. Of course, the caveats regarding the difficulty of proving causal links between subsidy and output remain. However, there is no real alternative with which to judge the effectiveness of the overall policy than by looking at the effectiveness of the projects themselves.

4.2.3.1 Policy Enabling

This group covers how the policy enabled projects to be effective, such as fundamentally enabling them to take place at all. One municipal official told me: *“we wouldn't have started it if there wasn't money from the province. I know that very well because in [municipality] we don't have our own policy about farming or korte ketens [short chains] [...] we don't have a food policy.”* Therefore, the policy fundamentally enables many projects, as it stimulates municipalities to take up the theme and enable other parties to advance their interests in the short chain.

Further the policy was seen as shaping projects in several useful ways, giving structure to and improving the quality of applications. One highlighted that it forces applicants *“to think really well and to define which activities lead to which goal”^{xxv}* and to create a timeline of activities for the duration of the project, while innovators' tendency might be to proceed directly to action without sufficient initial preparation. One interviewee also saw the clarity of the application as being helpful in the relationship between municipalities and other parties: *“you have a POP project application, in which it says what you want to achieve together as you've established it, that you can completely*

commit to that for two years, and you don't have to keep going back and forth”^{xxvi} to agree decisions at a municipal level. This structuring influence was seen as a positive result in the valorisation workshop. The policy's focus on concrete outcomes was also appreciated by many as it was seen as putting the money to good use. The requirement that at least one producer should be involved in the applying group was also appreciated.

4.2.3.2 Policy Limiting

This group covers codes indicating the ways in which participants felt that the policy limited the effectiveness of their project, despite or regardless of the benefits the policy may have brought. Many problems were highlighted, which is perhaps unsurprising given most people are not fond of administration. However, serious issues were also pointed out which can be improved upon.

Administration and accessibility

All interviewees found that there is too much administration and reporting for the policy. Consultants with experience of multiple projects said that the administration is more complicated for the POP3 programme than for other comparable programmes, and also that it has increased in complexity over time. The complicated nature of the POP3 was also recognised by province employees during the valorisation workshop, but they considered that this had improved over time.

One example of the administrative burden is that project groups are required to report and categorise the hours each party spends on the project. In projects which include implementation, all participants involved also have to record their hours, which can be a barrier for those who lack experience or patience for such administration: *“the regular advisor or executive party in a project cannot manage but especially the municipalities and farmers, it takes them weeks [...] it's just too hard.”* Due to the administration therefore, project groups have less time and money to dedicate to project outcomes and impacts, reducing project effectiveness.

A number of financial and administrative procedures mean entrepreneurs or smaller organisations cannot easily run a project, or account for it, while such innovative producers are precisely the intended target group. One interviewee explained that: *“small-scale producers are not able to actually be a beneficiary in the sense that they cannot pay themselves [...] if you are one of the applicants, and that means that all the producers have to be at the meetings and at the different activities to develop the projects, and to implement the projects for free [...] then they have to hire someone to work for them on their land.”* The fact that participating producers cannot receive any of the subsidy seems a clear barrier to accessibility, and likely to result in perceptions of injustice.

Project 6 represents a particularly negative experience of applying and accounting for the POP3 subsidy, but it is representative of wider issues. The project shows the administration processes are not simply inconvenient but that they reduce the accessibility of the policy to those innovative farmers' organisations which should be benefiting from provincial and EU funds for rural development. The lack of pre-financing was a particular issue for the cooperative but has also been raised by members of Gelderland's Provincial Parliament (Gedeputeerde Staten van Gelderland, 2020a & 2020b). Under POP3, Gelderland province only distributes money for costs that have already been incurred, rather than advancing funds. It was for this reason that the project lead had to apply for a loan from one of the participating municipalities in order to be able to begin the project activities. Small organisations may therefore simply not be able to apply for the POP3 due to their lack of resource.

The barriers in the application process are partially intentional, as they are seen as helping to ensure good quality projects, and this was echoed in the valorisation workshop. However, project 6 shows this is not fool proof, as their application succeeded, while they have since struggled to achieve their

goals or prove they have achieved them. Since they lacked full knowledge of the rules, they have run into problems in the implementation and justification of their project, which the project coordinator described as like swimming into a “*fuik*” [a fishing trap] as they have paid parties and have to complete the project adequately, in order to prevent any financial losses. It could be argued the producer organisations involved were naïve in applying, but it shows that the policy is not accessible for many in the sector, and that simply including producers in the application group – or even as leading applicant – does not ensure accessibility. The project coordinator said that were they to apply again they would apply with a municipality as lead applicant, so that they could assume the official responsibility and risk, leaving the producer cooperative to determine the content.

Specialised knowledge required

The problems experienced in project 6 could be overcome by making use of external expertise. In fact, the intricacy of the POP3 regulations makes the inclusion of a specialised consultant in the project team practically indispensable. The other five projects studied in this research included such a consultant from the beginning, and project 6 was compelled to bring one in to help address the problems encountered once the project had started. This is not always possible for small entrepreneurs with limited resources and can even be a challenge for some municipalities. Beyond the financial question, several municipality employees said they would not be able to apply for the subsidy without support. One consultant recognised this: “*the province [...] think [...] just some municipality worker sits down, writes a plan. Well no, it costs them €10,000 to hire a bureau to write the plan because they don't have the skills and the time to do this.*”

The practical obligation to include a consultant, combined with the underlying organisational perceptions, can exacerbate the risks of splits within the project group as we have seen. The province can be seen as complicit in this, as the complicated rules only benefit those with the knowledge of them. Two consultants explained:

“lucky for us we have the skills to do it, so we get hired to write the plan, but we get paid for that [...] [one municipality] has two projects they have spent about €15,000 in order to get €100,000. And then from this 100,000 they get, 20 or 30,000 goes to project management and administration and of course this is the kind of work we do, so we basically get better by means of the complexity of the POP3 [...] the effectiveness could be greater if the kind of little bumps could be straightened out. Yeah, it would cost us a lot of work though, but that's a good thing.”

Inflexibility

The policy is also widely experienced as inflexible because: “*you can only very slightly deviate from what you submitted as the original project plan [...] Along the way when working on a project it may very well be that it's actually not that interesting to go left, it would be better to go right. Yes, that's not possible in such a project.*”^{xxvii} Such flexibility is seen as particularly important in these projects since they focus on innovation. Obliging projects to achieve the initial goals regardless of their relevance for the parties was therefore seen as reducing effectiveness.

The inflexibility is exacerbated by the delay between writing the project plan and implementing it – often a year or more. The speed of the process is also a problem because momentum is important to keep entrepreneurs' interest. Long periods between the submission of an application or a request to change and the decision can be “*deadly for the progress*”^{xxviii} of a project, as having gained the enthusiasm and participation of the necessary partners, it can be hard to generate that interest and commitment again, as previously mentioned with the image of the vliegwiél. This perceived lack of flexibility from the province was seen as reducing innovation and effectiveness.

Lack of support

All of this is compounded by the widespread feeling that the province neglects to provide adequate support to applicants and project leaders under the POP3. The province's current role is limited to receiving and assessing applications, disbursing subsidies, and receiving and checking reports. The Agri-Food team is involved in assessing projects to see which will receive funding, and through supporting the GKV. The subsidy department at the province tries to remain impartial, avoiding giving advice to applicants/recipients, and many respondents said they were sometimes unresponsive, unhelpful or evasive. In general, the experience was that the province *"really thinking along in how the effectiveness can be increased or maintained, that is entirely absent."*^{xxxix} This essentially reduces the relationship participants have with the province, and can give the impression of disinterest. Others said they would like to see province employees attend their meetings and events as *"that indicates more that the province isn't only the money-giver but also really interested in the outcomes."*^{xxx}

In project 6, the administrative burden and stress could have been alleviated by better support. Two interviewees with knowledge of multiple projects saw the lack of support provided in that case, as reflecting a lack of responsibility from the province. When asked about ways the policy could be improved, many interviewees called for more support from the province both on the process of applying and to help improve the content of projects, indicating that they wanted a change in attitude from the province, from an accountant to a partner. In short, the experience of the 'policy' for most involved in the project group is mainly applying and reporting on the project, while the relationship could be much more than that. If the province's goal is to strengthen SFSCs in Gelderland, and to invest the subsidy in projects to leverage that change, then the current impartial assessor approach is not the most effective.

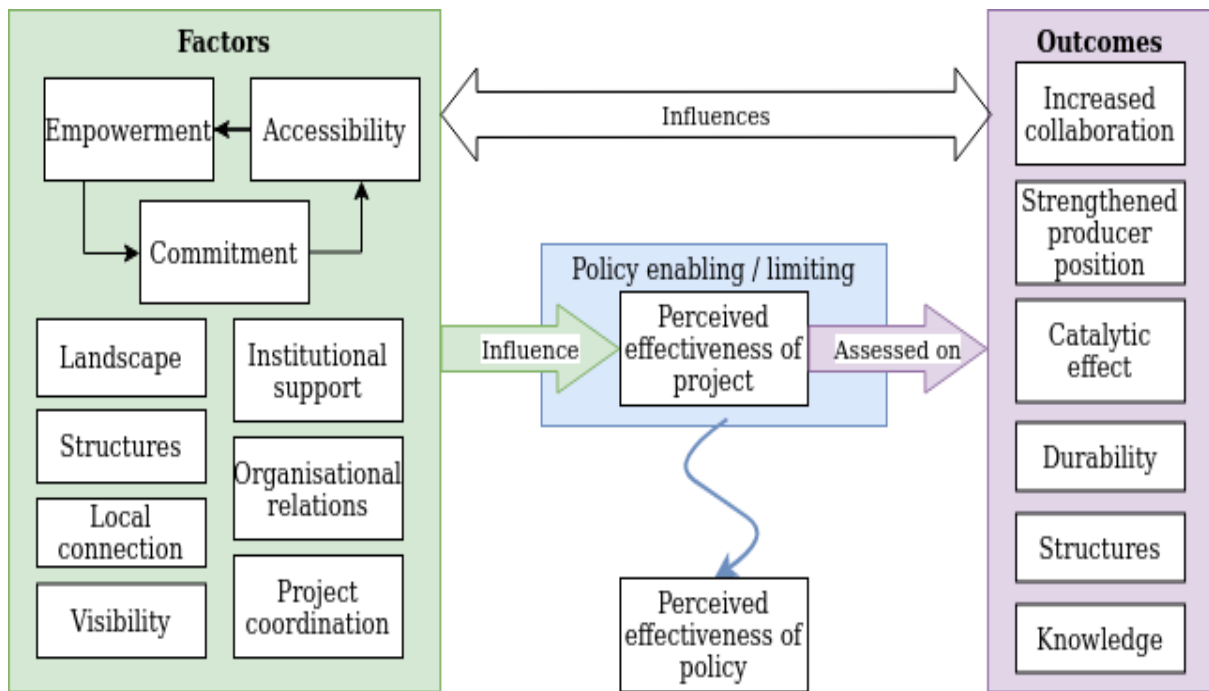
Discouragement

As a result of these issues, several interviewees said that they themselves, or people they know, would never again apply for such a provincial subsidy. If the experience of the policy is so discouraging to those participating, then its potential long-term effect is limited. Linked to this is the observation from many interviewees that projects are often dependent on producers who are already particularly active in and committed to SFSCs or other rural development projects. This suggests that many others are not joining, though the reasons for this are unclear.

4.3 Theory

On the basis of the above selective coding, I have developed a theoretical framework to map the relations between the various categories, and to answer the overarching research question: *What is the perceived effectiveness of Gelderland's SFSC subsidy scheme and selected projects, and which factors influence those perceptions?*

Figure 2: Theoretical framework



The theoretical framework (figure 3) shows the outcomes on which basis the effectiveness of projects is assessed (on the right). The factors seen as influencing the eventual effectiveness of projects are shown on the left-hand side. In the figure, the limiting and enabling impacts of the policy are placed around the perceived effectiveness of the project to visualise the platform it provides for projects to exist, but also how it shapes and limits their effectiveness. A two-way arrow is included between factors and outcomes, as many factors can contribute to specific outcomes, while outcomes can also help to boost factors (see below).

Lastly, the enabling and limiting aspects of the policy are linked to its perceived effectiveness as the perceived effectiveness of the policy seems to be largely determined by the extent to which it is seen as enabling or limiting the projects. However, the precise relationship remains unclear, indicated by the wavy arrow. Therefore, the policy is viewed largely in the context of how it relates to the projects. By contrast, projects can be perceived as effective on the basis of their outcomes and presence of relevant factors – at least by those involved in the projects – regardless of how much projects are seen to be limited by the policy.

Although it might be assumed that project outcomes would also be used to assess the effectiveness of the policy, this direct link was not always made by interviewees, who generally credited the policy for helping projects to start, and for giving structure in some cases, while emphasising its limiting nature. The province is however likely to see successful projects and project outcomes as a (largely) positive policy evaluation. In short, the projects can be perceived as effective despite the limiting nature of the policy, although the policy was often seen as reducing the total potential effectiveness.

Accessibility is an important factor in the perceived effectiveness of both project and policy – more accessible projects and policy are seen as more effective. Accessibility is also closely related to both commitment and empowerment in a tight-knit cycle – accessibility and empowerment are mutually reinforcing of each other. Empowerment can help to increase commitment as can accessibility, though accessibility is also dependent on commitment from those taking part. For example, whether parties have the time to invest in the project can be a question of both accessibility and of commitment. Accessibility and empowerment are dependent on each other – if the aim of the policy is to enable

producers to develop their own projects, then accessibility must be central, rather than an afterthought. Accessibility is also limited by the current process of applying for and reporting on the subsidy, as it can discourage future applications, prevent producers' organisations from applying at all, and be seen as creating unjust outcomes for participating parties.

The outcomes of the project – increased collaboration, strengthened producer position, knowledge, catalytic effect, structures and durability – are important ways in which the perceived effectiveness of projects is expressed and evidenced, but far from the only ones. The outcomes are also influenced by the factors seen as important for project and policy effectiveness. Although factors and outcomes are divided in this thesis and framework, the division is not always so clear, and some factors seen as important in contributing to effectiveness of the projects and policy, were also seen as their outcomes – evidence of effectiveness – suggesting a kind of circularity. For instance, structures are both outcome, evidence of project effectiveness, and factor, one way to help increase it. Clearly, there is a strong feedback loop between outcomes and factors.

Many other relations exist between various factors and outcomes, which are not included in the figure for the sake of clarity. Other relevant relations are:

- Structures can increase accessibility, by organising collective participation and representation. Structures can also boost collaboration and catalytic outcomes.
- Institutional support can reinforce or create durable structures.
- Institutional support is also relevant for the effectiveness of the policy and refers to the wider provincial policy framework of support (or lack of), including the GKN and neutral approach of the province.
- Institutional support relates to organisational relations, as the level and type of support desired from governments is influenced by perceptions of government organisations and their appropriate role.
- Empowerment is linked to organisational relations – as parties in the field being empowered is to some extent dependent on the relations between organisations and whether this is viewed as possible or desirable.
- Commitment can be decreased by poor organisational relations or project coordination, and the limiting factors of the policy.
- Commitment can be increased through concrete outcomes (collaboration and commercial outcomes) and contribute to strengthening producers' position.
- Project coordination is improved by institutional support as active municipalities play their role in advancing and supporting the project.
- Visibility can also be an outcome of projects, as well as influencing effectiveness by boosting outcomes, such as the catalytic effect and strengthened producer position.
- Accessibility helps increase the potential for collaboration and knowledge sharing among participants of various experience levels.
- Empowered and committed participants are more likely to be motivated to develop spin-off initiatives from the project itself, contributing to the catalytic effect

4.4 Results conclusion

On the basis of the six embedded units I developed a theory to explain the perceived effectiveness of Gelderland province's POP3 SFSC subsidy programme, the SFSC projects themselves, and what is considered relevant to that. This theory illustrates that policy effectiveness is based largely on how it is seen to enable or limit project effectiveness, while projects are judged on the basis of their outcomes, and the presence of identified factors. The data collected in order to form that theory comes from six very different units, with different goals, members and approaches, facing different challenges. Despite their variety, it is possible to draw out the key outcomes used to assess project

effectiveness, namely increased collaboration, strengthened producer position, catalytic effects, durability, knowledge and structures. Several factors were also seen as important for effectiveness: namely accessibility, empowerment, commitment, institutional support, landscape factors, local connection and project coordination, supported by structures and organisational relations.

5 Conclusion and discussion

This section presents conclusions (5.1) before the results are discussed in relation to the identified sensitising concepts (5.2). Then I highlight several broader points about how effectiveness is understood and explained by participants in such projects (5.3), before putting forward some recommendations to key parties (5.4). Lastly, I highlight some opportunities for further research (5.5) and reflect on the research (5.6).

5.1 Conclusion

To conclude, it helps to return to the research question and sub-questions.

What is the perceived effectiveness of Gelderland's SFSC subsidy scheme and selected projects, and which factors influence those perceptions?

In short, the six projects are seen as effective, but despite this, the policy was viewed more negatively. The policy was on the whole perceived as having an overall limiting effect on the projects, meaning its perceived effectiveness is comparatively low among participants. The wider support framework (or lack thereof) was also relevant for this perception, showing the relevance of policy as an institutional phenomenon. Perceived effectiveness of projects is assessed based on the six kinds of outcomes and influenced by the ten identified factors, outlined below.

What outcomes are used to assess project and policy effectiveness?

Projects' effectiveness was largely judged on the basis of six types of outcomes: increased collaboration, strengthened producers' position, catalytic effect, creating structures, durability, and increasing knowledge. Increased collaboration was named most often, and often comes through the structures employed or created in the projects, such as foundations, platforms and interest groups. The strengthened position of producers as the main beneficiaries of the projects, was also important, and concerns both an individual and collective level. That strengthened position can be linked to being empowered by the project.

Contrary to positivist understandings of effectiveness, it was not only planned goals that respondents saw as contributing to the effectiveness, but unexpected spin-off initiatives emerging from the energy, visibility and increased collaboration of the projects. Some projects also created structures, and several, especially those focussed on masterclass training courses, developed and spread knowledge to participants. Durability is an important way of assessing the effectiveness of projects, as impacts must be long-lasting in order to ensure maximum effectiveness.

The policy effectiveness is largely assessed through how it impacts the projects both in enabling and limiting ways, and not explicitly on outcomes. Enabling, by helping to establish the projects at all, and through the rigorous application process providing clarity and structure for the projects. But also limiting, through the onerous administration, inflexibility, delays and lack of support leading to an inaccessible project for many potential beneficiaries. The policy was also seen as fundamentally inaccessible to some organisations, with the high bar of administration and justification as well as financial rules meaning that applicants must be well-prepared – including paying for specialised knowledge – and resourced. The policy was also seen as exhibiting a lack of one key attribute, flexibility, ironic for a policy intended to promote innovation.

Which factors influence the perceived effectiveness of the policy and selected projects, and how?

Ten main factors have been identified as influencing the perceived effectiveness of the policy and projects. These are: accessibility, commitment and empowerment, structures, institutional support, project coordination, organisational relations, landscape and local connection. Outcomes of projects were seen as being based on good project coordination, which is boosted by structures and institutional support. Empowerment, accessibility and commitment form a self-reinforcing cycle that goes a long way to informing perceptions – in order to be effective, the projects must be open to and empower those they are intended to benefit, which in turn along with outcomes, generates commitment. Landscape and the local connection provide the context which shapes precisely just what will be effective in that given context, as well as having the potential to motivate participants, and boost demand for local products. Particularly important for the effectiveness of the policy are institutional support from the province and accessibility, as these have substantial limiting effects in the current situation, but if addressed could lead to much more effective projects.

How are perceptions of policy effectiveness and project effectiveness related to each other?

I had assumed before beginning data collection that the relationship between perceptions of policy and project effectiveness would be fairly close – i.e. that if projects were viewed as effective then the policy would be too, that the former would contribute to the latter. However, that assumption was roundly debunked, showing the benefits of taking an inductive approach.

As previously mentioned, policy effectiveness is principally explained through the policy's impact on project effectiveness – if the policy is seen to enable projects to be effective, then it is an effective policy. However, although some respondents noted the importance of subsidy funding for starting their projects, a positive view of project effectiveness could be combined with a highly negative experience of the policy, and hence a negative view on its effectiveness – such as for project 6. In some cases, this could be due to a negativity bias, wherein participants tend to emphasise critical points over positives, which are taken for granted. However, the policy was not explicitly linked to project outcomes in interviews.

There are (at least) two possible explanations for the disconnect between perceptions of project and policy effectiveness in this research. Firstly, it could simply be that respondents are likely to assess their own project's effectiveness positively, especially if they feel pressure to demonstrate the positive effects to the province (which they could have associated me with, despite my stressing my independence). Secondly, the research could suggest that the institutional structures and stipulations given by the policy and wider framework are simply not as influential for the perceived effectiveness of a project as I previously expected, and as policymakers might assume. There could be other reasons of course, though more research would be required to uncover those possibilities and test these relationships further.

5.2 Comparison to theory and sensitising concepts

In section 2.5, a number of sensitising concepts were identified. Here they are compared to the results to see which have indeed emerged, and which have been superseded.

5.2.1 Durability

This comes through clearly as an important factor when assessing the effectiveness of projects and policy – if effects are not durable then effectiveness is inherently limited. This confirms that participants see the role of subsidy funding as initiating and stabilising a project, with the aim that activities should be able to continue on their own steam in the long-term, just as the province expects. The results also suggest some factors in a project that can help to increase durability, namely the creation or use of structures, and institutional support.

5.2.2 Landscape factors

Interviewees' discussion of effectiveness did stretch to include landscape factors, such as agricultural policy trends and challenges in the Netherlands and the EU, and changes in food culture. These were seen as demonstrating the need to change, and the advantages of cooperating in short chains. They also were seen as creating a conducive context (window of opportunity) for SFSC projects to succeed. However, such factors were only explicitly mentioned by two interviewees, meaning that they were not considered by most interviewees. Further, these factors are not sufficient in themselves to create an effective policy or projects, but they do increase the chances of effectiveness.

This thesis has also highlighted the relevance of landscape factors in terms of how they influence organisational perceptions – as frustrations or feelings with European or national level politicians or policy can also impact the experience of effectiveness within the projects themselves, and at the provincial level.

5.2.3 Range of stakeholders involved

The quantitative diversity of stakeholders was not highlighted as important for effectiveness, although some respondents did state the need to find the right parties with relevant knowledge and skills as part of good project preparation and coordination. Which parties are relevant varies per project – some focus mostly on producers, and others on multiple groups. For example, the platform linked to project 5 consists of producers and sales entrepreneurs currently and will later expand to include consumers and other actors. Diversity within groups (e.g. types of producers) was seen as important, in contrast to Scott's (2015) focus on different actor types, adding another layer to diversity. The results show that accessibility and empowerment of stakeholders are more important than range in and of itself. Accessibility highlights how projects can boost effectiveness by ensuring the appropriate stakeholders are able to be involved, and make a meaningful contribution, rather than simply ensuring their presence for its own sake.

Regarding the policy, including all types of stakeholders in discussions and platforms such as the GKV, was raised as important, linking again to accessibility. Therefore, the range of stakeholders involved is not in itself vital for perceived effectiveness of the policy or project – more important is including the relevant stakeholders, ensuring accessibility, and empowering them to enact change through the project.

5.2.4 Sustaining participation

Sustaining participation morphed into commitment in the terms of this research. Commitment covers not only sustaining participation but also attracting people to participate in the first place. This research suggests some ways in which that commitment can be attained, sustained, and increased – achieving (rather than necessarily setting) concrete goals, empowerment, maintaining momentum and creating structures. Empowering the relevant target groups within the project was also seen as a crucial way to boost and maintain their commitment. Again, this sensitising concept is not relevant to the policy itself, as the goal there is specifically that initiatives should be able to run independently of subsidy support as soon as possible.

5.2.5 Developing networks

The results also seem to confirm Marsden et al.'s (2000) points about the importance of informal networks, as well as formal structures. However, networks need not necessarily be developed by the project themselves in order to be useful – some projects have used existing or parallel networks to attract and involve various parties. Networks and structures are particularly important after the end of projects to ensure durability, but also during the project in order to give a structural forum in which collaborations can be created and maintained, boosting accessibility. This is more relevant for the project than for the policy.

5.2.6 Institutional support

Lastly, this study confirms the importance for perceived effectiveness of institutional support from local government and the subsidy-granting organisation. Governments should help by providing structure, coordinating and facilitating action, ensuring accessibility for target groups, and seeking to align their actions with their rhetoric. However, projects may be considered effective without adequate support from governments, mirroring Marsden et al.'s (2000) point that many developments have occurred without significant institutional support. Although it is not critical, it can certainly bring many benefits. Regarding the policy, institutional support seems to be more crucial for the perception of its effectiveness – as the interaction with the province is quite limited, the lack of personable contact and support has a considerable influence on the perception.

Therefore, this research suggests that the collaborative group characteristics and outputs identified by literature also apply in this context and fit with the experience of participants in such projects. Several of the sensitising concepts are expanded and developed, putting the emphasis more on normative concepts, such as empowerment and accessibility, than much collaborative governance literature does.

5.2.7 Wider theory

Beyond the sensitising concepts, some points from the literature can be addressed here. The delay in effects highlighted by Crabbé and Leroy (2008) was also noted by participants, suggesting the difficulty of accurately assessing effectiveness in the short term, since impacts can take far longer to manifest, or be proved durable.

Looking at the governance of transitions in sustainable food, it is clear that collaborative governance is an effective way to achieve change, dependent on the quality of the cooperation, and the highlighted factors. However, the heavy weighting of the regime and landscape towards traditional supply chains and intensive production (see 2.1) suggests that the projects and policy can only be effective within the limits defined by the wider context. This was not highlighted by individuals however, who were optimistic that the context would boost projects and drive change. Perhaps the limited potential of SFSCs was not acknowledged as many farmers involved in such projects continue to sell via both systems, rather than fully transitioning to local short chains.

5.3 Perceptions of effectiveness

This research also provides insight into how participants in such subsidised projects assess and speak about effectiveness of both policy and projects, in contrast to policymakers. Simply put, achieving the stated goals is far from the only aspect, running counter to more positivist views of effectiveness and evaluation, which are often, perhaps understandably, preferred by policymakers (Crabbé & Leroy, 2008). This research shows that effectiveness is assessed very broadly, and in many ways more resembles efficiency – i.e. participants do not just assess whether the desired effect has been achieved but consider whether a greater effect could have been achieved in other circumstances. In short, their analysis is qualitative, rather than quantitative, drawing on rich experience, feelings and landscape and contextual factors sometimes far beyond the scope of the project or policy itself.

Specifically, as highlighted by the results, when talking about project and policy effectiveness, interviewees also took into consideration:

- How the project is organised (project coordination, 4.2.2.7) – as this not only affects the quality or magnitude of the effect that can be reached, but also the experience of the project.
- Whether it reaches as many people as possible, meaning that accessibility (4.2.2.1) is core to maximising effectiveness, as if a project or policy is inaccessible to those it is intended to benefit then the effect will always be limited.

- The wider, unplanned catalytic effect(s) (4.2.1.3) that projects have, including launching other projects, changing policy, incubating ideas, and creating energy and activity around the issue.

Further, as mentioned above some factors contributing to effectiveness were also seen as evidence of effectiveness, in circular, rather than linear, relation to each other. Points such as visibility and durability were seen as outcomes of projects, by which they are assessed, as well as contributing to project effectiveness in the first place. Similarly, (increased) institutional support was an outcome in some cases, while also being an important factor for project effectiveness. I attempted to distinguish factors and outcomes comprehensibly in presenting the results to prevent confusion, but the circular relations are evident, and certainly complicated the process of creating a clear theoretical framework. This shows that the outcomes of a project are inherently tied up with the quality of the project, but also that outputs and outcomes do not only occur at the end of a project but can also affect the project during its course. Marsden et al. (2000) hint at this when they note that networks are both critical cause and effect of SFSC initiatives.

The results also demonstrate the difficulty of disentangling the effects of one specific project – respondents often found it hard to separate the project in question from the context of earlier and later projects, seeing certain actions as laying the necessary foundations and enabling later successes, without them being an explicit part of the project. Each project is part of a greater whole, as is its perceived effectiveness. Not everything was seen in context, however. For example, the fact that many were able to see their project as effective without seeing the policy as such. Another example was that although several interviewees said that the projects tended to attract those already highly active in voluntary work, this did not reduce their perception of project effectiveness.

It is worth noting that participants' responses echoed parts of the provincial policy, even if they were not aware of this. For example, part of the provincial criteria of effectiveness, used to assess applications, is whether the project group shares a common vision. This was highlighted by interviewees as part of preparing beforehand, but not acknowledged as a good point of the policy. Further, the benefits of having an overview of the relevant parties in the region is also one of the criteria for judging applications, as well as being highlighted as useful for project effectiveness. This shows that the province criteria are already well attuned to some aspects that participants consider important for effectiveness. The number of producers and municipalities reached is also included as part of the effectiveness criterium, but this does not consider why they might not be 'reached', and how that might be improved (i.e. accessibility).

Similarly, there was confusion over the source of the issues with Gelderland province's POP3 regulation. Several participants opined that the complex rules originated at EU level, while another said he understood most of the rules came from the province, and others said they knew that other provinces approached POP3 projects differently. In the valorisation workshop, the strict rules were attributed to the EU. This points to some difficulties of assessing effectiveness on the basis of non-expert perspectives, as while they can share their experience, they cannot always suggest the root of the problem. On the other hand, it does suggest the need for better communication on the part of the province(s) and the EU.

As mentioned in section 2, there is a particular challenge when discussing the effectiveness of a subsidy policy, due to the distance between the source (in this case the EU/province) of the funding, and the effects thereof. Many more actors and factors intervene to alter the effectiveness between these end points, increasing the challenge of objectively proving effectiveness or causality between subsidy and impact. This perhaps explains why the focus – including from myself – was often on the project's effectiveness, rather than that of the policy, as it is more tangible and present. Many interviewees also had limited experience of the policy or the province as an actor, mainly because of

the province's decision to act primarily as a distributor and administrator of funds, rather than as an active partner.

Lastly, the emphasis on individual roles in project and policy effectiveness suggests that agency is more important for forming perceptions of effectiveness than structures. For example, respondents suggested that more personal contact and support from province staff would help improve policy effectiveness. Alternatively, it could be that in the absence of adequate structures, individual agents are expected to fill in the gaps. More research would be required to investigate this. In general, these observations reinforce the relevance of seeing policy not as a rational response to an isolated problem, but as part of wider political interactions and institutional frameworks. Interactions between various parties, and their power in those interactions, along with the wider policy context were certainly highly relevant for participants' perception of effectiveness.

5.4 Recommendations

As policy evaluation is fundamentally oriented towards improving policy by helping to increase understanding of it, its effects and how it is experienced, it is appropriate to make a number of recommendations on the basis of this research. In the valorisation workshop, province officials discussed how this research will feed into plans for future policy, both in the transition period and once the new EU budget has been approved, showing the clear societal relevance of the research. Here, I present several recommendations for each main actor group – Gelderland province (5.4.1), project groups (5.4.2) and municipalities (5.4.3).

5.4.1 Gelderland province

First, the province can help shape projects to be more effective by focussing the application and reporting process on several important principles, including accessibility, flexibility and institutional support. Accessibility to the target groups could simply be added as one of the assessment criteria for applications, forcing project groups and the province, to explicitly consider this. It would also clarify the importance of accessibility (and to whom projects should be accessible) if the intended target groups of the funding were explicitly stated in the policy. The policy should also focus less on measurable quantitative outcomes, but more on qualitative changes like increased cooperation, the development of organisations and structures and growth of visibility. These are key outcomes, even if they are not always possible to measure simply.

The province should consider ways it could simplify the process of making changes during the project, for instance by reducing the administration of submitting an alteration request, the response time or by enabling changes to simply be justified at the end of the project. It could also reduce the barrier to subsequent applications which build on a previous POP3 project. Regarding institutional support, the application could specifically ask after the role of municipalities within projects – what their role will be, what resources they will commit and how SFSCs are included in their structures (or how they will include the theme).

The province should also consider shifting their approach to distributing subsidies based on partnership, rather than simply disbursing funds. Establishing multiple ways to support projects or applying organisations depending on their needs would help this, such as making use of direct contract relationships rather than subsidy or tender processes. Ways to improve support to projects should be considered, such as assigning an account manager to each project to help develop the application and provide support during the project run. This would require a fundamental change in philosophy – from neutral distributor, to invested partner. However, if Gelderland province's goal is to strengthen SFSCs and to support as many (quality) initiatives as possible in order to do so, then it is also worth investing more to help projects and the policy reach the maximum effect. The current approach of

maintaining independence between the province and applicants does not seem conducive to achieving the province's over-arching goal.

The province should also explore providing (some) pre-financing for organisations and making it possible for applicants to be reimbursed for the time invested in a project. The framework around the subsidy policy itself can also help to make the subsidy more accessible, and consulting with all parties in the field – including those not always included in policy contexts such as producers and processors – is crucial in the development of policy and decision-making. On that note, the Gelders Kennisnetwerk Voedsel should also be made open for all interested parties, including producers, processors and so on.

5.4.2 Project groups

Project groups should prioritise accessibility, keeping thresholds to participation low by using project resources to make the project as accessible as possible. Ensuring that the process of developing project content is open and accessible is also key and will help to increase commitment by ensuring ownership in the project. It will help to prevent misunderstandings and to make the expectations of all parties clear. This is especially important in the context of the preconceptions that actor groups have of each other. The project group should focus on facilitating the goals and visions of participants, and plan how it will elicit and maintain their commitment. Involving various different stakeholders in the project coordination is a good way to make the work of a project group transparent.

In preparing, project groups should make sure to allow enough time, and reflect on any relevant landscape factors – the broader and local context, and what opportunities and risks it presents – as well as reflecting on what will be needed (structures/organisational capacity) among actors in order for cooperation to continue sustainably, and how the project itself contributes to that.

In sum, project groups should seek to maximise accessibility and empower participants to develop the project in the most relevant way for them, and their work.

5.4.3 Municipalities

Municipalities should provide structure by offering coordination and support for local food platforms and organisations, and anchoring the theme in their structures. This could be, for instance, by creating a specific food policy, budget, employing staff to work on food, and/or including it in a councillor's portfolio. In the context of a project, municipalities can enable parties to focus on project content by dealing with the administrative and reporting processes, if desired by the other parties. Municipalities contribute to accessibility by reducing financial barriers, providing pre-financing, or removing policy barriers to working in short chains. Fundamentally, actors are looking for consistency, proactivity and flexibility from local governments, which means supporting local producers by using their products, staying in touch with them, and actively contributing to projects. Working between themes can increase benefits – for instance linking SFSCs to other priorities like tourism, economy or health. In short, municipalities should walk the walk as well as talking the talk, providing support for projects and structures, anchoring the theme in their structures, and being a proactive partner.

5.5 Recommendations for further research

There are several areas where further research would be beneficial. Firstly, investigating why other actors do not join such SFSC projects would further illuminate issues around accessibility. This research found that many of the producers who are currently involved are serial volunteers, already active in various projects beyond their daily work, suggesting they are particularly motivated, aware of and able to make use of such projects, while many others may not be able or want to. Speaking to producers who have not been involved with a POP3 project would be illuminating in this regard. Secondly, research into how the ways of working at the province could be altered to help improve effectiveness of its projects would also be relevant. More research would be needed in order to test

whether the outcomes and factors identified here result in improved quantitative environmental indicators, as Scott (2015) investigated. The relative importance of agency and structural factors for perceived effectiveness could also be a topic of interest. Lastly, as mentioned, further research could investigate why there appears to be a disconnect between perceptions of a subsidy policy's effectiveness and that of the projects it funds.

5.6 Reflection and limitations

Writing a master's thesis is difficult in any circumstances, but there have been some particular challenges in the current crisis. Due to COVID-19 the experience of writing my thesis has been quite different from how it would otherwise have been, and I found it difficult to stay connected to my internship while working from home during lockdown, especially because my research was quite separate from my colleagues' everyday work.

The experience of interning at the province and evaluating their policy – with which many there have far more familiarity than I could ever amass – was also an interesting experience, as I tried to maintain my impartiality and offer criticism where needed. Another important and challenging balancing act was mediating between the parallel worlds of policymaking and objectives on one hand, and academic methods and research on the other, which was difficult at times. I think it is for this reason that my report to the province and this thesis are quite distinct. Although they overlap considerably and share the same source material, they present it differently. I am glad the results of my research will feed into review processes at the province.

One limitation of this research is that I did not speak stakeholders who haven't been active in a project, who would be able to give some insight into why, including whether or why it might not be helpful or important for them. Further, only a few sorts of short chain initiatives are represented. The selected projects focus principally on working with producers to increase local sales, apart from project 6 which is aiming to build a direct relation between farmers and citizens. SFSC types such as shared gardens, urban agriculture, food forests and pick-your-own schemes (Kneafsey et al., 2013) are not included, and so other factors and outcomes might be relevant there.

Regarding my personal influence on the research, I affected the results through the research design – which projects to select, who to interview, which questions to ask, and what to prioritise in the analysis – but my choices have been explained and justified. I can say that accessibility is a principle that I find to be important and which fits with my political views. I made the choice to draw it out in subsequent interviews after it emerged early on, but the relevance of the concept was confirmed both by those later interviews and the valorisation workshop, suggesting it was far from being only my creation.

The time constraints of completing a thesis on time have also had a considerable impact. I underestimated the time required for a thorough grounded theory process, particularly that required to conduct analysis, and to achieve concept saturation. Hardened grounded theorists would likely have interviewed many times more people than I was able to. This was a particular challenge given the complexity and breadth of the subject, and the number of units. Were I to start this research again with the knowledge I have now, I would pick fewer projects and try to interview more people per project, to go more into depth.

Another change I would make were I to start this research again, would be to focus on and evaluate a more narrow aspect of the policy and the projects, rather than simply leaving 'effectiveness' open to the varied interpretation of respondents. Though of course the broad way in which effectiveness is interpreted could not necessarily have been predicted beforehand, it would have been good to have a clearer focus, and again, gain more depth in doing so. Lastly, it was sometimes difficult to ensure that

the focus remained on assessing the province subsidy policy and surrounding framework, and avoid the pitfall, highlighted by Yin (2003), of focussing on the units rather than the case. This was particularly tricky with a subsidy policy, the effects of which are largely inextricable from those of the projects, hence the unclear relation between them.

I have appreciated the tangible, applied nature of evaluation as a research method, and have enjoyed being able to study such concrete initiatives. It has been a shame not to be able to visit the projects in person though; I hope to be able to tour Gelderland's many corners soon.

Reference list

- Abatekassa, G., & Peterson, H. C. (2011). Market access for local food through the conventional food supply chain. *International Food and Agribusiness Management Review*, 14(1), 41-60. Retrieved from: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/6429813.pdf>
- Augère-Granier, L-M. (2016) *Short Food Supply Chains and Local Food Systems in the EU*. Brussels, Belgium: European Parliamentary Research Service, EPRS.
- Bailey, J. (2008) First steps in qualitative data analysis: transcribing. *Family Practice* 25(2), 127–131, <https://doi.org/10.1093/fampra/cmn003>
- Biddle, J.C. & Koontz, T.M. (2014) Goal specificity: a proxy measure for improvements in environmental outcomes in collaborative governance. *Journal of Environmental Management* 145: 268-276. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2014.06.029>
- Bowen, G.A. (2006) Grounded theory and sensitising concepts. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 5(3): 12-23. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F160940690600500304>
- Brock, W.A. & Durlauf, S.N. (2015) On Sturdy Policy Evaluation. *The Journal of Legal Studies*, 44(2), 447-473. Retrieved from: <http://home.uchicago.edu/sdurlauf/includes/pdf/Brock%20Durlauf%20-%20On%20Sturdy%20Policy%20Evaluation.pdf>
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods (4th edition)*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.
- Carr, G., Blöschl, G., & Loucks, D. P. (2012). Evaluating participation in water resource management: A review. *Water Resources Research*, 48, W11401, doi:10.1029/2011WR011662
- Charmaz, K. (2014) *Constructing Grounded Theory. A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. (2nd ed.) London: Sage.
- Clarke, A. (2011) *Evaluation Research*. London: Sage.
- Clayton, S. (2018) The role of perceived justice, political ideology and individual or collective framing in support for environmental policies. *Soc Just Res* 31: 219-237. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11211-018-0303-z>
- Collins, K., Blackmore, C., Morris, D., & Watson, D. (2007). A systemic approach to managing multiple perspectives and stakeholding in water catchments: Some findings from three UK case studies. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 10(6), 564–574. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2006.12.005>
- Connelly, S. (2010). *Scaling Up Local Food*. Canadian Centre for Community Renewal. Retrieved from: <https://auspace.athabascau.ca/bitstream/handle/2149/2897/Connelly%20-%20Scaling%20Up%20Local%20Food.pdf>
- Corbin, J. & Strauss, A. (2012) *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* (3rd Ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781452230153>
- Crabbé, A and Leroy, P. (2008) *The Handbook of Environmental Policy Evaluation*. London: Earthscan.
- Creswell, J.W. and Poth, C.N. (2018) *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design. Choosing Among Five Approaches*. (4th Ed.). London: Sage.
- De Schutter, O. (2017). The political economy of food systems reform. *European Review of Agricultural Economics* 44(4): 705-731. doi:10.1093/erae/jbx009
- Driel, H., van, and Schot, J. (2005). Radical Innovation as a Multilevel Process: Introducing Floating Grain Elevators in the Port of Rotterdam. *Technology and Culture*. 46. 51-76. 10.1353/tech.2005.0011.
- Emerson, K., Nabatchi, T., Balogh, S. (2011) an integrative framework for collaborative governance. *Journal of public administration research and theory* 22: 1-29. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mur011>

- Eriksen, S. N., and Sundbo, J. (2016). Drivers and barriers to the development of local food networks in rural Denmark. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 23(4), 750-764. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0969776414567971>
- European Commission (n.d. a) *The Common Agricultural Policy: Investing in Rural Europe*. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/food-farming-fisheries/key_policies/documents/rdp-2014-20-factsheet_en.pdf
- European Commission (n.d. b) *Rural development*. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development_en
- European Environment Agency (2005) *Effectiveness of packaging waste management systems in selected countries: an EEA pilot study*. Retrieved from: https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/eea_report_2005_3
- Evers, D. and Tennekes, J. (2016) Europe exposed: mapping the impacts of EU policies on spatial planning in the Netherlands, *European Planning Studies*, 24:10, 1747-1765, DOI: 10.1080/09654313.2016.1183593
- Flick, U. (2002, 2nd ed.). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.
- Flyvberg, B. (2006) Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research. *Qualitative Inquiry* 12: 219-245. DOI: 10.1177/1077800405284363
- Galli, F. and Brunori, G (eds.) (2013) *Short Food Supply Chains as drivers of sustainable development. Evidence Document*. Document developed in the framework of the FP7 project FOODLINKS (GA No. 265287). Laboratorio di studi rurali Sismondi, ISBN 978-88-90896-01-9.
- Gameren, V., van, Ruwet, C., and Bauler, T. (2015). Towards a governance of sustainable consumption transitions: how institutional factors influence emerging local food systems in Belgium. *Local Environment*, 20(8), 874-891. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13549839.2013.872090>
- Gedeputeerde Staten van Gelderland (2020a) *Antwoord op Statenvragen PS 2020-96*. Retrieved from: [https:// gelderland.stateninformatie.nl/document/8552942/1/Antwoord%20op%20Statenvragen%20over%20POP3%20subsidieregeling%20van%20F.%20Rebel%20\(ChristenUnie\)%20en%20A.%20Tolkamp%20\(CDA\)%20\(PS2020-96\)](https:// gelderland.stateninformatie.nl/document/8552942/1/Antwoord%20op%20Statenvragen%20over%20POP3%20subsidieregeling%20van%20F.%20Rebel%20(ChristenUnie)%20en%20A.%20Tolkamp%20(CDA)%20(PS2020-96))
- Gedeputeerde Staten van Gelderland (2020b) *Antwoord op Statenvragen POP3 financiering (PS2020-327)*. Retrieved from: https:// gelderland.stateninformatie.nl/document/8880412/1/Antwoord%20op%20Statenvragen%20over%20POP3%20financiering%20van%20F_%20Rebel%20%28ChristenUnie%29%20%28PS2020-327%29
- Geels, F.W. (2011) The multi-level perspective on sustainability transitions: responses to 7 criticisms. *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions* 1: 24-40. doi:10.1016/j.eist.2011.02.002
- Gelders Kennisnetwerk Voedsel (n.d.) *POP3 Gelderland Korte Voorzieningsketens*. Retrieved from: https://www.voedselbijgeldersegemeenten.nl/POP3_Korte_voorzieningsketens
- Giddens, A. (1984), 'Elements of the Theory of Structuration' in *The Constitution of Society: Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1-28.
- Greenfish (2019) *The Dutch Nitrogen Crisis*. Retrieved from: <https://www.greenfish.eu/the-dutch-nitrogen-crisis/>
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105-117). Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Harrison, H., Birks, M., Franklin, R. and Mills, J. (2017). Case study research: Foundations and methodological orientations. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 18(1), Art. 19. Retrieved from: <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/2655>

- Hogendoorn, M. (2018) *Governing transitions in local food. Exploring the role of local actors in scaling-up short food supply chains*. (Master's thesis). Retrieved from: https://theses.ubn.ru.nl/bitstream/handle/123456789/5924/Hogendoorn%2C_Merel_1.pdf?sequence=1
- James, N., & Busher, H. (2009). *Online interviewing*. London: Sage. doi: 10.4135/9780857024503
- Kipster (2019) Homepage. <https://www.kipster.nl/>
- Kneafsey, M., Venn, L., Schmutz, U., Balazs, B., Trenchard, L., Eyden-Wood, T., Bos, E., Sutton, G. and Blackett, M. (2013) Short Food Supply Chains and Local food systems in the EU. A state of Play of their Socio-Economic Characteristics. *Joint Research Centre Scientific and Policy reports*. <https://doi.org/10.2791/88784>
- Kolstad, C.D. (2000) *Environmental Economics*. (2nd Ed.) Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lincoln, Y. S., and Guba, E. G. (1985) *Naturalistic Inquiry*. London: Sage.
- Lubell, M. (2004). Collaborative watershed management: A view from the grassroots. *Policy Studies Journal*, 32, 341–361. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0072.2004.00069.x>
- Mark, M.M. and Shotland, R.L. (1985) Stakeholder-based evaluation and value judgements, *Evaluation Review*, 9(5): 605–26. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0193841X8500900504>
- Marsden, T., Banks, J., & Bristow, G. (2000). Food supply chain approaches: exploring their role in rural development. *Sociologia ruralis*, 40(4), 424-438. ISSN 0038–0199
- Mersbergen, C. van, and van der Storm, L. (2019) *Provincies zwichten voor boerenprotest: stikstofregels worden versoepeld*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ad.nl/politiek/provincies-zwichten-voor-boerenprotest-stikstofregels-worden-versoepeld~af36b72bc/>
- Miles, M.B., & Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*. (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Moor, A., de, and van Beers, C. (2002). The perversity of government subsidies for energy and water, in P. Clinch, K. Schlegelmilch, R.U. Sprenger and U. Triebswetter (Eds.), *Greening the Budget. Budgetary Policies for Environmental Improvement*, (pp. 24–44). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Morgan, K, Marsden, T. and Murdoch, J. (2006) *Worlds of food: place, power and provenance in the food chain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mostert, E. (1996) Subjective Environmental Impact Assessment: Causes, Problems, Solutions. *Impact Assessment*, 14:2, 191-213, DOI: 10.1080/07349165.1996.9725896
- Mount, P. (2012) Growing local food: scale and local food systems governance. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 29(1), 107-121. DOI: 10.1007/s10460-011-9331-0
- Needham, B. (2006). *Planning, Law and Economics: An Investigation of the Rules We Make for Using Land*. New York: Routledge.
- Oosterhuis, F. and Bachus, K. (2014) Agriculture, food and water. In Oosterhuis, F. and ten Brink, P. (Eds.) *Paying the Polluter. Environmentally Harmful subsidies and their reform*. London: Edward Elgar.
- Oosterhuis, F. and ten Brink, P. (2014) Introduction: high hopes and down-to-earth realism. In Oosterhuis, F. and ten Brink, P. (Eds.) *Paying the Polluter. Environmentally Harmful subsidies and their reform*. London: Edward Elgar.
- Oteman, M., Wiering, M. and Helderma, J. (2014). The institutional space of community initiatives for renewable energy: a comparative case study of the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark. *Energy, Sustainability and Society 4:11*. <https://doi.org/10.1186/2192-0567-4-11>
- Padgett, D. K. (2004). Coming of age: Theoretical thinking, social responsibility, and a global perspective in qualitative research. In D. K. Padgett (Ed.), *The qualitative research experience* (pp. 297-315). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002) *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. (3rd Ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- PBL (2019) *Dagelijkse kost – hoe overheden, bedrijven en consumenten kunnen bijdragen aan een duurzaam voedselsysteem*. Den Haag: Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving. Retrieved from: <https://www.pbl.nl/sites/default/files/downloads/PBL-2019-dagelijkse-kost-bijdragen-aan-duurzaam-voedselsysteem-2638.pdf>
- Popper, K.R. (2002 [1953]). *Conjectures and Refutations* (pp. 43–78). London: Routledge.
- Provincie Gelderland (2015a) *Coalitieakkoord Ruimte voor Gelderland*. Retrieved from: [https://gelderland.stateninformatie.nl/document/2059730/1](https:// gelderland.stateninformatie.nl/document/2059730/1)
- Provincie Gelderland (2015b) *Koersdocument Innovatie Land – en Tuinbouw*. Retrieved from: <https://www.commissierner.nl/projectdocumenten/00001016.pdf?documenttitle=Statenbrief%20Koersdocument%20Land-%20en%20Tuinbouw%2024%20jun.pdf>
- Provincie Gelderland (2019) *Openstellingsbesluit Korte Voorzieningsketens Gelderland*. Retrieved from: <https://decentrale.regelgeving.overheid.nl/cvdr/xhtmloutput/Actueel/Gelderland/CVDR623700.html>
- Rapley, T. (2011) Interviews. In Seale, C., Gobo, G, Gubrium, J.F. and Silverman, D. (Eds.) *Qualitative Research Practice*. (pp. 13-34) London: Sage. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781848608191>
- Raworth, K. (2012) *A safe and just space for humanity – can we live within the doughnut?* London, OXFAM. Retrieved from: https://www-cdn.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file_attachments/dp-a-safe-and-just-space-for-humanity-130212-en_5.pdf
- Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland (RVO) (n.d.) *Plattelandsontwikkelingsprogramma (POP3) – wegwijzer*. Retrieved from: <https://www.rvo.nl/onderwerpen/agrarisch-ondernemen/glb/plattelandsontwikkelingsprogramma-pop3-wegwijzer>
- Schans J.W., van der, and van Wonderen, D. (2019). *Korte Ketens in Gelderland*. Wageningen: Wageningen Economic Research, Nota 2019-072. Retrieved from: <https://research.wur.nl/en/publications/korte-ketens-in-gelderland>
- Schleich, J. & Faure, C. (2017) Explaining citizens' perceptions of international climate-policy relevance. *Energy Policy* 103: 62-71. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2017.01.014>
- Scott, T. (2015) Does collaboration make any difference? Linking Collaborative Governance to environmental outcomes. *Journal of policy Analysis and management* 34: 3 537-566.
- Spaargaren, G., Oosterveer, P. and Loeber, A. (Eds.) (2012) *Food practices in transition. Changing Food Consumption, Retail and Production in the Age of Reflexive Modernity*. London: Routledge.
- Steurer, R. (2013) Disentangling Governance: A synoptic view of regulation by government, business and civil society. *Policy Sciences*, 46:4, 387-410. <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs11077-013-9177-y#page-2>
- Swinbank, A. (2009) The reform of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy, in Meléndez-Ortiz, R., Bellmann, C. and Hepburn, J. (Eds.) *Agricultural Subsidies in the WTO Green Box* (pp. 70-85) New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Taskforce Korte Ketens (2020) *Over de Taskforce*. Retrieved from: <https://taskforcekorteketen.nl/over/>
- Thiel, S, van. (2014). *Research Methods in Public Administration and Public Management. An Introduction*. Routledge.
- Vaz, S.G., Martin, J., Wilkinson, D. and Newcombe, J. (2001) Reporting on environmental measures: are we being effective? Copenhagen: EEA. Retrieved from: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/rem/issue25.pdf>
- Vermeulen, S.J., Campbell, B.M. and Ingram, J.S.I. (2012) Climate Change and Food systems. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 2012 37:1, 195-222. Retrieved from: <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev-environ-020411-130608>
- Wagenaar, H. (2011) *Meaning in Action: Interpretation and dialogue in Policy Analysis*. London: M. E. Sharpe

Yin, R. (2003) *Case study research: design and methods*. London: Sage.
Zuid-Hollandse Voedsel Families (2020) *Homepage*. Retrieved from:
<https://www.voedselamilies.nl>

Internal Documents

Provincie Gelderland (2016a) 2016 Korte voorzieningsketens Tranche 2016.
Provincie Gelderland (2016b) 2016 Overzicht aanvragen Korte ketens 2016.
Provincie Gelderland (2017a) 2017 Overzicht 2e tranche POP3 Korte keten.
Provincie Gelderland (2017b) 2017 Overzicht beoordeling POP3 Korte Ketens.
Provincie Gelderland (2018) Verslag openstelling Korte Ketens 2018 7 maart 2019.
Provincie Gelderland (2019c) Aanvragen Korte voorzieningsketens 2019.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Overview of applications

Tranche	No. of applications	No. Funded	Amount available (€)	Amount awarded (€)
2016	14	8	630,000	405,377
2017	9	8	810,000	674,964
2018	11	10	800,000	853,298
2019	13	9	980,000	878,717
Total:	47	35	3,220,000	2,812,356

Appendix 2: Project matrix (listed by head applicant)

	Partnership (A)	Project plan (B)	Combination C = implementation
2016	Arnhem Doetinchem Lochem Wageningen	Barneveld Ede Wijchen Zevenaar	none
2017	Brummen Berg en Dal	Ede	Doetinchem A&B, Epe A&B Lochem A&B Stichting Hoeve Klein Mariëndaal A&B Tiel A&B
2018	none	Brummen Park Lingezenen Humphrey's Beheer	Wageningen B&C Ede B&C Epe A, B, C Burgerboerderijen A, B, C Doetinchem A&C Zeveanaar A&B CropEye A&B

Appendix 3: Valorisation workshop summary

The workshop was conducted online in Dutch with nine participants: members of the Agri-Food and subsidy teams at the province, several consultants, and a producer. Unfortunately, no municipality employee who I had interviewed was able to attend. I presented my research and results, including the outcomes, factors, important relations and recommendations. At the end I posed a few discussion points to receive their feedback. These were:

- Are these results what you expected? Or is there something surprising?
- What do you think about the relations?
- Are they more widely applicable?
- Dilemma: How can the province balance neutrality with providing more support? Or are they too different?

After the presentation, all participants were given a chance to react to the presentation and discussion points, and I responded to their points and questions. In general, the results were recognisable to participants. Some wondered what was specific about the administrative burden of the policy – all subsidy processes have associated administration, which is generally not seen positively. I responded that what I had heard was that the POP3 was specifically more complicated than other policies and had got worse in recent years. Other methods of being supported were not seen or described in the same way as the POP3. This was confirmed by those from Gelderland province’s subsidy department, that the difficulty of the POP3 was well known, and recognised, and work was being done to address it.

The producer participating said that they had not been involved in the administration and had only benefited from the positives of the policy. They did highlight the importance of durability, confirming that they saw the continuation of activities after the end of funding as a very important factor. Accessibility was accepted as a very important challenge, both for the application process and during implementation, and was confirmed in the experience of one consultant as a significant bottleneck for effectiveness. Province staff acknowledged the point that the policy is not terribly accessible, and the need for clear communication and explanation to overcome this. However, it was considered that the results showed the demands of the application process did result in high quality projects.

The nature of the collaboration resulting from projects was also questioned, and I clarified that it covered not only the building of personal relations and networks, but also profitable collaborations. COVID-19 was compared to the policy in terms of the relative impact, in a short period of time, showing that no matter how effective the policy, an outside factor can have a much quicker and more dramatic effect. The impact of the policy in terms of raising the issue of SFSCs at all, particularly with municipalities was also highlighted as a sign of the policy’s effectiveness.

In the discussion, plans for future policy at the province and suggestions for improvement were discussed. The plan is indeed to shift the approach when the rules allow, as more flexibility has not been possible under the current POP structures. The research will be used as part of the input to future discussions regarding the writing of the opening decision for the next round of applications, and the new policy in the new period of the EU budget.

Appendix 4: Project overview

Project, application year, project period	Project group/ applicants:	Output (s):	Outcome/ Impact(s):
Project 1 2016, 2017	Municipality Streekproducten work group Consultancy	Published research “Market exploration for regional products in [city]”	No market hall in the proposed form but laid the basis for a current cafe + shop, later applications, and a new organisation to promote local foods.
Project 2, 2016, 2017-2018	3/4 municipalities LTO local department Local producers association Milk producer 3 consultancies	Various events linking three main target groups	Bringing groups together, forming a group of enthusiastic producers, laying the basis for phase 2
Project 3, 2017, 2019-present	3 municipalities Independent producer,	Research into possibilities for a cooperative	Different form of producers association,

	City Management of local city Local producers' association 1 consultancy 1 independent advisor Tourism board	producers association, or other potential forms, and small-scale logistics	more integrated network.
Project 4, 2017, 2018-present	4 municipalities Dairy farmer 2 consultants	Regional brand established, masterclass course created, over 300 matches.	Independent enthused group of masterclass producers, increased attention for the theme from local governments.
Project 5, 2018, 2019-present	Municipality 3 local producers Consultancy	Organisation to be collectively present at markets, reinforcing platform.	Increased collaboration, increased visibility, unplanned spin-off initiatives
Project 6, 2018, 2019-present	2 producers organisations 3 municipalities Consultancy (temporarily)	Adapted doughnut model picked up by educational institutions, bakers linked to farmers	Increased collaboration, knowledge spreading.

Appendix 5: Original Dutch quotes

All other quotes (those without an endnote) were originally in English, and so are not translated.

ⁱ “De mate waarin het samenwerkingsverband en realisatie van het innovatieproject na afloop van de subsidie kan worden voortgezet.”

ⁱⁱ “Een heel gemêleerd gezelschap [...] eigenlijk het mooiste wat er was, want je krijgt daar hele bijzondere gesprekken door, je kan heel veel van elkaar leren.”

ⁱⁱⁱ “Uiteindelijk heeft zij een prachtige perenstroop ontwikkeld [...] ze zo fantastisch geweldig deed.”

^{iv} “Dat iemand daar voor je groeit, en stukje bij beetje gelooft in zijn eigen kunnen en zijn eigen denkpatroon.”

^v “Je hebt een idee, je denkt leuk, maar maandag moeten de kooien gewoon weer gemolken worden [...] En dan is het weer vijf weken verder en dan spreek je met iemand en denk je oh ja dat was wel een leuk idee, ja moeten we een keer doen, moeten we een keer doen, en zo praat ik twee jaar over dat ijs! [...] in zo'n project dat je daadwerkelijk tijd reserveert bij jezelf[...]voor dat je er ook wat meer gaan doen, anders blijft het gewoon hangen, en ja ik zie dat bij een heleboel van ons op die manier is het tot stand gekomen”

^{vi} “Ultieme wens”

^{vii} “Het nadeel van die subsidiepotjes op het moment dat die subsidie daar is en dan een projectleider heel actief is dan gebeurt er van alles, maar zodra die pot leeg is dan stopt het”

^{viii} “De food hal is nu geëvolueerd naar een eten winkel in de binnenstad van [stad] en haar fundament vindt zich wel in dit onderzoek”

^{ix} “Een inzicht eigenlijk in wat er allemaal lokaal wordt geproduceerd in de Achterhoek en dat ook naar buiten hebben kunnen brengen, zeg maar, middels communicatie. Het waren uiteindelijk

samen op een kleine 120 producenten en een aantal daarvan zijn wel zichtbaar via verschillende verenigingen waar er was geen totaaloverzicht.”

^x “Het kostte vijfhonderd euro volgens mij [...] Ondernemers moeten best hard werken, voor hun product, veel fruittelers bijvoorbeeld, nou ja als je weet dat een kilo appels natuur natuurlijk maar een paar centen opbreng, ja dan moet je heel wat appeltjes verkopen voor dat je die vijfhonderd euro terug gediend hebben”

^{xi} “Het altijd helpt om laaghangend fruit, dus korte acties, snelle acties, gewoon echt samenwerken ook te organiseren want anders haken mensen af [...] als je al start met laaghangend fruit [...] dan kun je ook sneller plukken.”

^{xii} Dat hele plan schrijven en indienen dat hebben ze een klein beetje aan onze kennisneming onttrokken

^{xiii} “Er gewoon geen kennis of bewustzijn is over wat er in het achterland te krijgen is, maar dat er wel interesse is. Dus dat gat moeten we zien te overbruggen.”

^{xiv} “Toen dus zijn er twee duizend mensen op die open dag geweest en vanaf dat moment werd die winkel gewoon keidruk omdat mensen ons konden vinden”

^{xv} “Moet je wel constant laten zien anders gebeurt er niks” “ze moeten wij gewoon constant mee geconfronteerd worden” “zodat heel [regio] of misschien heel Nederland gebombardeerd wordt met ‘dit zijn de prachtige producten uit de [regio]’”

^{xvi} “We hadden geen drempel. Dus de drempel was heb je een idee, heb je nog geen idee, maar wil je iets met de korte keten. Wil je dat ontdekken, stap dan in”

^{xvii} “Maar je moet ook op een gegeven moment zeggen joh, we verwachten jullie gewoon dan en dan daar. Punt. En er werd ook gewoon na gebeld als iemand er niet was: ‘Waar ben je?’ En daar heb je gewoon wel een projectgroep voor nodig.”

^{xviii} “Door de corona crisis is de wereld gewoon heel anders geworden. Maar alle budgetten zijn al vastgesteld, dus dan moet je eigenlijk dezelfde gang verder, terwijl alles daar anders uitziet.”

^{xix} “We hebben natuurlijk met de pitches, zijn er verschillende mensen van de gemeente bij aanwezig geweest en dan zijn ze altijd heel enthousiast [...] vervolgens dan zie je ze gewoon niet meer [...] dat is misschien ook een beetje deel van hun functie als er [...] wordt iets gelanceerd, dan is het geweldig fantastisch [...] Er zijn veel belangrijkere dingen, denk ik, als alleen dit, maar iedereen roept dat het hoog op hun lijstje staat [...] maar wij zien er heel weinig van.”

^{xx} “Woede over verkeerd beleid of verkeerd aangevlogen beleid gewoon heel groot, ze weten bijna niet meer waar ze aan toe zijn”

^{xxi} “Ondernemers en inwoners, die willen gewoon gas geven, die willen morgen een antwoord hebben, terwijl [overheden] soms terug even verantwoording moeten afleggen”

^{xxii} “Die projectleider, die worden daar rijk van, die krijg een hoop geld en de ondernemers die moeten toch wel allemaal zelf gaan doen”

^{xxiii} “Iedereen aan het nadenken is van hoe kan het anders, hoe kan ik inspelen op wat de nieuwe situatie is over een aantal jaren om een boer te kunnen blijven, wat verwacht de samenleving van mij? Dus boeren zijn er eigenlijk klaar voor, die willen stappen zetten [...] klimaat is ernaar om te veranderen en om stappen te zetten, dus vanuit de zekerheid dat de maatschappij verandert dat een boer dus ook moet veranderen haken ze aan”

^{xxiv} “Daar is aandacht voor eten, [...] Het is natuurlijk al een paar jaar gewoon dat voedsel hip is hé? De hele "foodies" beweging op Instagram en weet ik het allemaal.”

^{xxv} “Je wordt gedwongen om heel goed na te denken en te omschrijven welke stappen tot welk doel leiden.”

^{xxvi} “Je een soort van Popproject aanvraag hebt, waarin staat wat je wil bereiken samen zoals je dat eenmaal hebt vastgesteld en daar je ook voor twee jaar aan lang kan committeren met de kop en een de staart, en dat je niet continu terug hoeft”

^{xxvii} “Je maar heel weinig mag afwijken van wat je als oorspronkelijk projectplan hebt ingediend [...] Gaandeweg als je met een project bezig bent dan zou het wel eens kunnen dat het is eigenlijk toch

niet zo interessant om links af te gaan, we zouden beter rechts afgaan. Ja, dat kan binnen zo'n project niet"

^{xxviii} "Dodelijk voor de vooruitgang"

^{xxix} "Het werkelijk meedenken in hoe de effectiviteit vergroot kan worden of aanwezig blijft, die is helemaal weg"

^{xxx} "Het geeft meer aan dat je als provincie niet alleen maar de geldgever bent maar ook wel echt geïnteresseerd bent in de uitkomsten"