

How a risk-based strategy could contribute to a more sustainable Agri-food system

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1/ Introduction & Aim

- When considering **sustainable development**, **food and agriculture** are among the most important challenges
- **Food operators** are therefore facing **significant issues**, as illustrated in figure 1

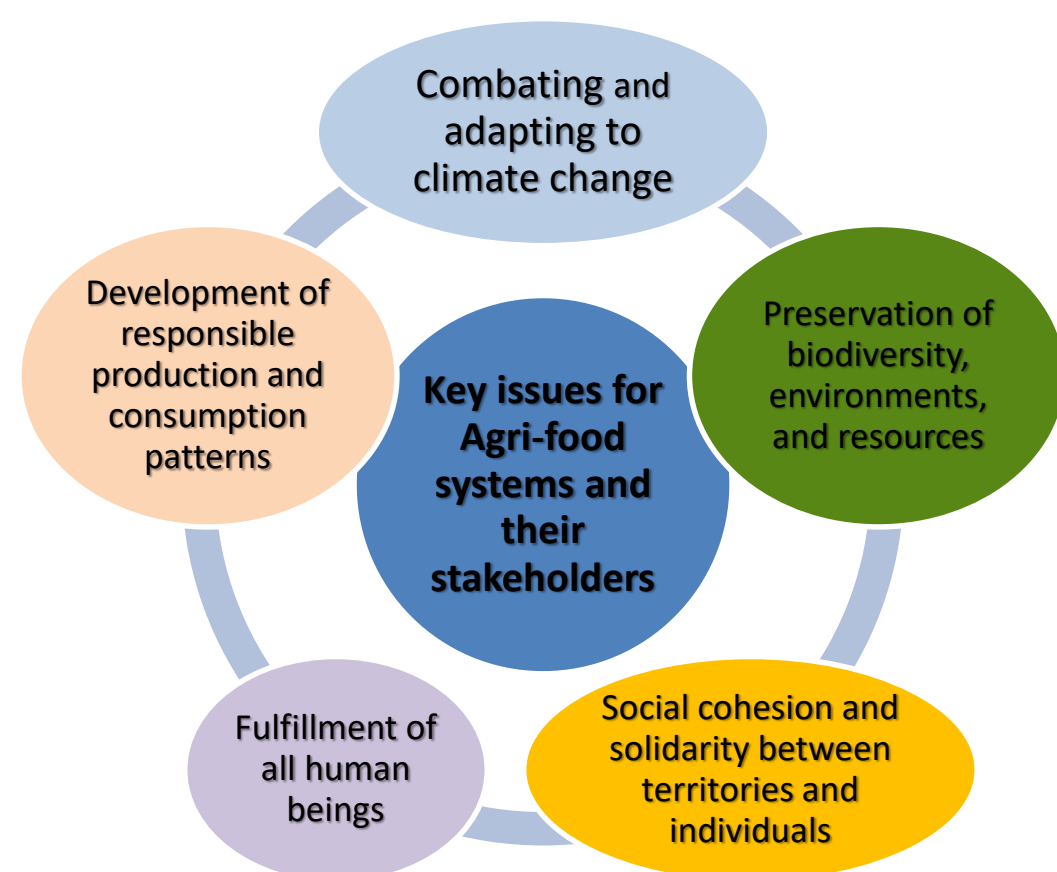


Figure 1 : Key issues for Agri-food systems and their stakeholders

- Their ability to address these issues is crucial for their own **longevity and the sustainability of the Agri-food systems** to which they belong
- They must all adapt to a **changing environment** that is now considered **VUCA** (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous)
- Here, we discuss how **risk management** could help to improve performance and address those challenges more effectively

2/ Sustainability and Agri-food systems

When considering Agri-food systems, the following **key reference tools** are essential for **evaluating** their sustainability:

- The **three pillars** of sustainable development (1987): environmental, social and economic
- The **seven core subjects** of the ISO 26000 standard (2010), as shown in figure 2
- The **17 sustainable development goals** from the UN (2015), as shown in figure 3
- The ISO 26030 standard, which provides recommendations for using ISO 26000 in the **food chain** (2019)

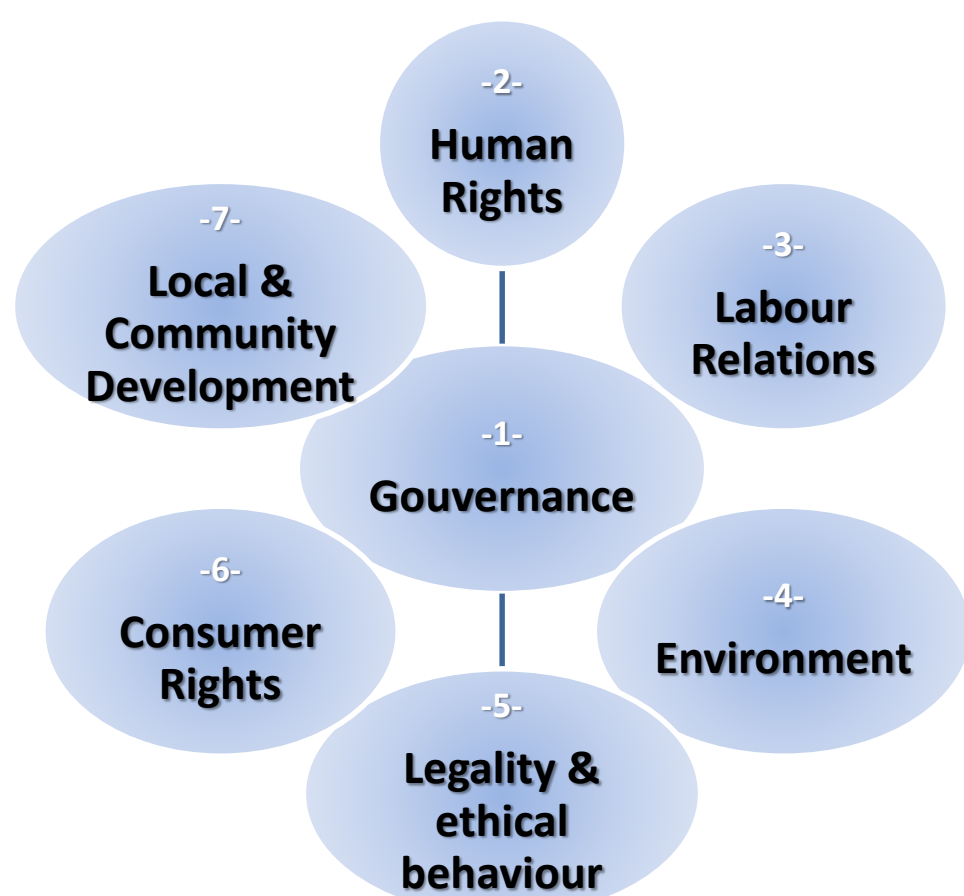


Figure 2 : The 7 core subjects of the ISO 26000 Guidance on social responsibility (Source : <https://www.iso.org>)



Figure 3 : The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Source : <https://www.un.org>)

- These tools enable **food business operators (FBOs)** to better identify their stakeholders and consider their **needs and expectations**

5/ Building a risk-integrated approach

- Once familiar with the **risk management methodology**, FBOs can apply it to any issue, such as food quality, food safety, environmental protection or operator safety, using the global approach proposed in the CSR
- There are **many standards** (public or private) available, including those with specific or mixed criteria, which aim to optimize impacts (both positive and negative) while implementing better practices
- **Examples :**
 - Mandatory aspects : regulations (national / EU) / EU food law
 - Food safety aspects : Codex Alimentarius / Good Hygiene Practices Guides / HACCP
 - Food quality aspects : EU quality schemes (PDO / PGI / TSG)
 - Occupational health and safety aspects : Risk evaluation (mandatory in France)
 - Environmental aspects : energy / waste / biodiversity / animal welfare / water etc.

3/ All involved in the Food Chain

- All FBOs play a **key role in the global sustainability of Agri-food systems**. They must evaluate their **impact** on stakeholders, the environment and future generations, taking **responsibility** for their **activities** and **decisions** (see figure 4)

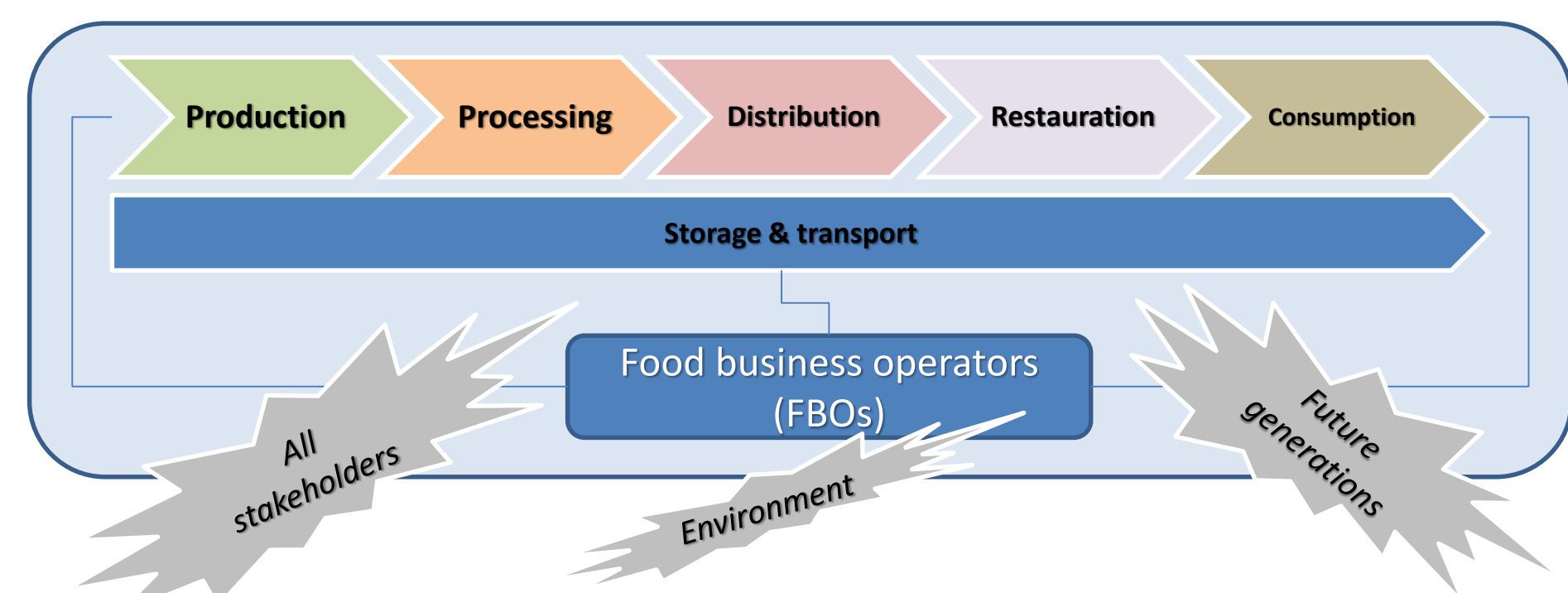


Figure 4 : A few activities for evaluating the contribution of FBOs to sustainability.

- FBOs are often involved in **multiple activities** in the **food chain**, which increases their responsibilities. See **short food supply chains (SFSCs)** as an example

4/ Risk management & continuous improvement

- When considering all their activities, the FBOs must keep in mind to “**do good and do it well**” !
- **Risk management** tools are useful for evaluating **potential impacts** in a preventive manner, enabling FBOs to **anticipate** issues more effectively and maintain **full control** of their activities (see figure 5)

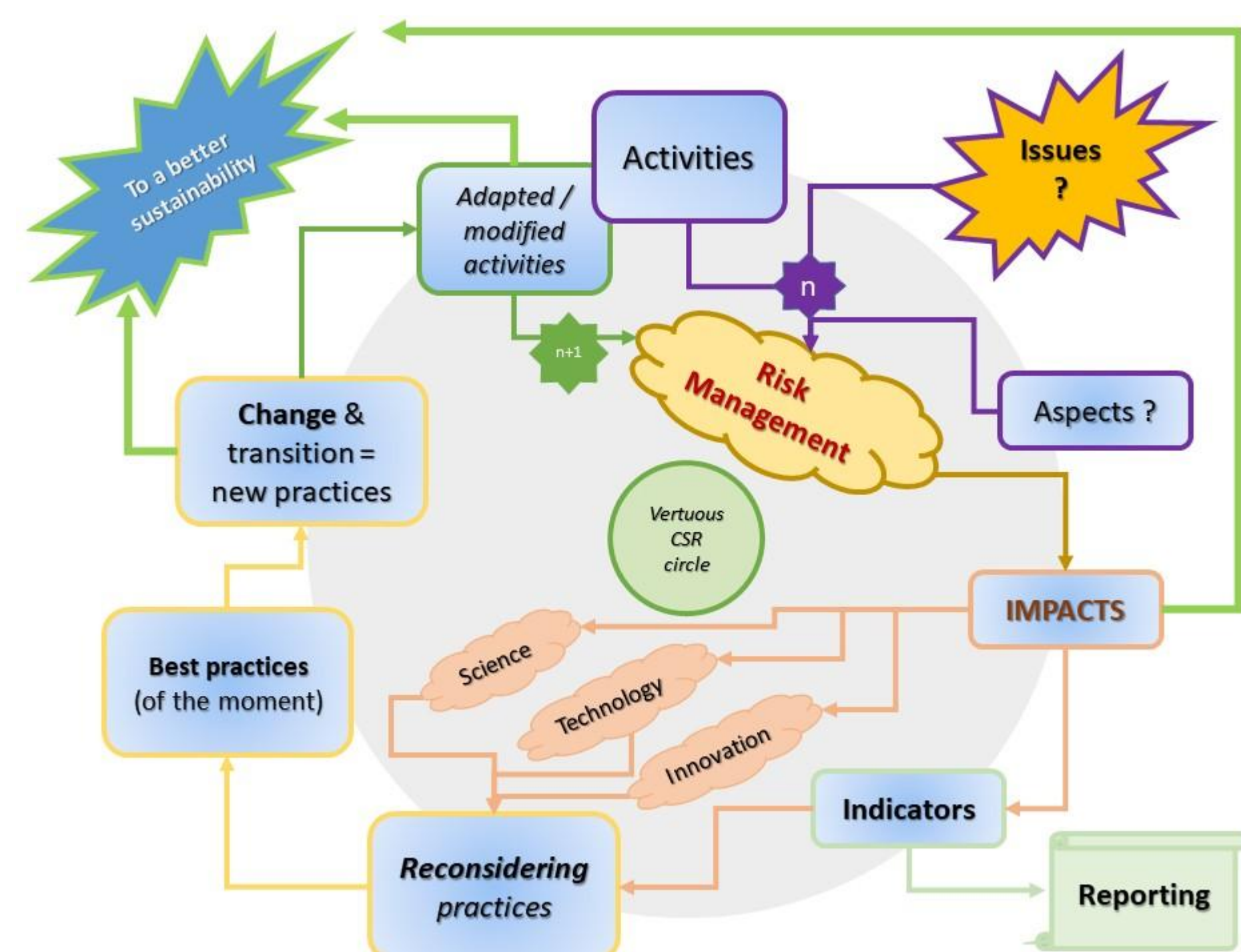


Figure 5 : To a virtuous CSR circle based on risk management

6/ Conclusions & Perspectives

- The FBOs are able to improve their **overall performance and viability** based on a risk management strategy and a good knowledge of their context
- It is useful to support the implementation of tools within the food chain, especially within the SFSCs, in order to implement and promote a **shared risk culture**

Resources

EU and national regulations (food law) / Codex standards / ISO Standards : ISO 31000 – ISO 22000 – ISO 14001 – ISO 45001 – ISO 26000 / Quality standards dedicated to food & agriculture