

Methodological procedure:

How to Make a Slow Food/SReST Business?

Becoming an SReST business does not mean changing the entire business overnight. Rather, it is a well-thought-out process in which the business gradually connects its offer with local food, local heritage, fair relations, sustainable operation and community. The principles of Slow Food are based on a simple idea: food should be good, clean and fair. Good means high-quality, tasty and culturally appropriate. Clean means friendly to nature and local resources. Fair means fair to producers, workers and consumers.

Try to go through this methodical procedure, which will guide you through the basic steps.

Step 1: Know your place

The first step is to look at your own region as a source of business value. A business should ask simple questions:

- Which local ingredients are available in our area?
- Which producers, farmers, winemakers, bakers, beekeepers, craftsmen or processors operate in the region?
- What traditional recipes, products, varieties, breeds or crafts are typical of our place?
- What stories, customs, landscape features or events can be part of the experience?
- Who could we work with?

The aim is to answer the question: What is so unique in our area that it can be part of our offer?

The output of this step can be a simple list of local sources: producers, products, traditions, stories, partners and places to get involved in the business.

Step 2: Choose Your SReST Topic

Not every business has to do everything. A restaurant, guesthouse, farm, guide, shop or travel agency can find their own way. It is important to choose one main theme that the company can develop authentically.

Examples of topics:

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| • local breakfast, | • cooking course, |
| • seasonal menu, | • gastronomic walk, |
| • farm-to-table dinner, | • weekend stay with local food, |
| • traditional recipe in a modern form, | • workshop for children or families, |
| • tasting with the producer, | • community event, |
| | • an inclusive gastronomic experience. |

A good SReST topic should meet three conditions: it comes from the region, it is understandable to the customer, and the company can realistically provide it. It is not advisable to start with a project that is too big. It is better to create one quality product that can be developed gradually.

Step 3: Connect with local producers and partners

SReST business is not based on just one company. It is based on cooperation. The company should gradually create a network of partners who together create value for the visitor and the region. These may include:

- farmers,
- food producers,
- craftsmen,
- schools,
- municipalities,
- tourist organisations,
- guides,
- cultural institutions,
- social enterprises,
- community organizations.

When working with producers, it is important to set fair rules. The company should know what the producer delivers, in what quality, in what season, at what price and how he will be presented in communication with the customer. The output of this step can be a short "partner map": who our suppliers are, what we take from them, how often we work together and how we present them to customers.

Step 4: Create a Specific Product or Experience

Only in this step are the principles transformed into a concrete offer. The business should say: *What exactly do we offer the customer?* It can be:

- a new dish on the menu,
- seasonal offer,
- local breakfast package,
- tasting menu,
- product package,
- a visit to the farm,
- workshop,
- themed weekend,
- gastronomic route,
- an experience connected to the story of the producer.

When creating a product, it is important that it is not just a "local decoration". It is not enough to write that the food is traditional or local. A business should be able to explain why a product is important, where it comes from, who is behind it and how it contributes to the region.

Step 5: Add a story

SReST product should have a story. The story helps the customer understand the value of what they are buying. If the customer knows that the cheese comes from a specific producer, vegetables from a nearby farm and the recipe is related to the local tradition, they perceive the offer differently. He no longer buys only food, but also experience, relationship and knowledge. A business can prepare a short answer to five questions for each product:

- Where does the product or raw material come from?
- Who grew it, made it or prepared it?
- Why is it typical for our region?
- What story, tradition or custom is related to it?
- How does the customer support the local community by buying it?

The story doesn't have to be long. It can take the form of a short text in the menu, a photo of the producer, a speech from the staff, a video on the website, a post on social networks or a

short explanation during the experience. It is important that it is true, specific and understandable.

Step 6: Set up responsible business operations

SReST business should not only focus on what it sells, but also on how it operates. Acting responsibly can start with small steps:

- reduction of food waste,
- Better planning of purchases,
- seasonal offer,
- limiting single-use packaging,
- use of whole raw materials,
- waste sorting and composting,
- saving water and energy,
- fair communication with the customer,
- cooperation with the community,
- accessibility of services for different groups of visitors.

Not everything has to be implemented at once. A business can choose two or three measures that are realistic and measurable. It is important that responsibility is not just a marketing slogan. It should be reflected in everyday decisions.

Step 7: Engage the community

The SReST approach is socially responsible. This means that the business notices the people around it and looks for ways in which it can benefit the place in which it operates. It doesn't have to be about large social programs. Even small activities can make a difference. For example, a business can:

- cooperate with the school,
- offer traineeships to young people,
- involve seniors in talking about traditional recipes,
- cooperate with people with disabilities,
- create space for local producers,
- organize community tastings,
- to engage migrants or new communities through their gastronomic heritage,
- support local events.

Step 8: Communicate clearly and without greenwashing

If a business is doing good things, it should talk about them. However, the customer needs specific and trustworthy information. Instead of general statements such as "we are ecological" or "we use local ingredients", it is better to say:

- "Our eggs come from a farm 12 km away."
- "We prepare this seasonal menu only during the fall."
- "We collect the herbs in this dish in cooperation with a local grower."
- "With this product, we use the whole animal or the whole raw material to reduce waste."

- "We are preparing part of the program with the students of the local school."

The result should be a simple action plan for the next 12 months. It doesn't have to be long. Three specific objectives are enough, for example: to find two new local producers; create one seasonal menu; prepare one community or experiential product.

Step 9: Measure progress and improve

The last step is regular evaluation. Once every six months or once a year, a business may ask itself several questions:

- How many local suppliers do we have?
 - Has the share of local or seasonal ingredients increased?
 - Have we created a new SReST product or experience?
 - Have we reduced waste?
 - Have we engaged a new community partner?
 - Have we received feedback from customers?
 - Can we better explain the story of our offer?
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