

# "Berries of the region" - a System Demonstrator for Intermediate Value Chains

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**This case study explores a holistic innovation approach to explore how an intermediate value chain in the Swedish berry industry can boost a region's resilience, value retention, and competitiveness. The project, facilitated by a local innovation team in Bjurholms municipality, has identified opportunities, developed solutions, and established two new organizations that demonstrate new sustainable, techno-social value offerings.**

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**"Berries of the region" is a system demonstrator that combines technological solutions with social networks to implement sustainable development and innovation in the berry industry.**

## AIM

- Develop an app tool to facilitate berry picking
- Design a new business model focused on an intermediate value chain to retain more value locally
- Test the implementation in Bjurholms municipality together with local stakeholders
- Communicate

## APPROACH

To engage, involve people and set a new direction, the project established a local innovation management team and created a system demonstrator "Berries of the Region," originating in Bjurholm municipality. The objective was to systematically capture ideas, identify opportunities, develop concepts, implement solutions, and create value in Bjurholm. This was done to ensure value-preserving utilization of the resources available in the region, while also aiming to systematically create knowledge and learning to promote sustainable businesses, services, and experiences.

## RESULTS

The system demonstrator "Berries of the Region" has explored and tested relevant ideas, developed solutions, and launched offerings. We recognized the importance of acting swiftly and not waiting for existing industries to make the transition. It was essential to provide concrete examples of how it is possible to act competitively, inspiring others to follow the path

The initiative included the following activities.

- Organizing a local and social berry festival;
- Developing an innovative app to locate areas with high berry yields, encouraging local picking, and demonstrating its effectiveness in real conditions;
- Conduct workshops with invited participants from across the value chain to co-create ideas for testing and implementing the app tool and business model;
- Contributing to LCA incl. environmental, economic and social sustainability;
- Contributing to the establishment of two new organizations that will test new components of an intermediate value chain. These two organizations will serve as a demo or proof-of-concept to validate the feasibility and effectiveness of the desired new system.

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## ISO 56002



Innovation leadership systematically and agilely tests and creates new values to inspire the berry industry as a whole.

## ANALYSIS

The replicability and upscaling of the project are crucial aspects for its long-term impact. By demonstrating success in Bjurholm, the goal is to create a replicable model that can be adapted and implemented in other regions and communities. This will enable the project's innovative approach and sustainable business models to be applied on a larger scale, leading to broader positive impacts on the berry industry and local economies. The innovation team's expertise will play a key role in ensuring that the project's benefits reach a larger audience and have a broader impact on market mechanisms and policies in the future.

## CONCLUSIONS

Further research is needed, focusing on interdisciplinary solutions that address behaviour, business models, and societal economics, not just technological development.

To meet future challenges, innovative thinking and collaboration across boundaries are essential. "Berries of the Region" represents a step towards a more sustainable and prosperous future for the berry industry and society as a whole.

## Current situation

- Only 5-10% of forest berries are harvested.
- Low level of processing within the region.
- Low consumer awareness about added value.
- Negative perception of utilizing foreign labor - a "dull narrative."
- Almost 100% reliance on imported workforce during picking season.
- Nearly 100% of revenues go to agents/berry wholesalers.
- Long value chains with few actors and limited collaboration
- 100-150 million SEK per year in revenue

## Vision

- 15-20% or more of the berries are harvested.
- Increased knowledge and processing within the region.
- Enhanced awareness and an exciting narrative about the local wild berries and their unique values.
- More local picking alongside technological innovations like our app.
- Benefits that also positively impact landowners.
- Intermediate value chain working together, creating shared value, growing businesses, and aiming to become a European leader.
- 1 billion SEK per year in revenue, with a significant portion remaining in the region.

Systematically build new long-term organizations and offerings to achieve the impact goals.