



**EU INNOVATE**

**SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION IN ACTION:  
THE CASE STUDY “SNAPSHOT” SERIES**

**FRoSTA**

Improving Consumer Health Through Additive-Free Food



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## About EU-InnovatE

Between 2014 and 2016, the EU-InnovatE project investigated the potential of citizen innovation and sustainable entrepreneurship to achieve sustainable lifestyles in Europe by 2050. The following is one of a series of case study “snapshots” illustrating how new enterprises are being created by passionate, visionary individuals to benefit society at large.

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### The Case of FRoSTA: Improving Consumer Health Through Additive-Free Sustainable Food

*International frozen food company FRoSTA produces a range of additive-free products from sustainable sources. The company is committed to maintaining fish stocks, ensuring minimal environmental impact from its operations, providing nutrition-education programmes for consumers, and conducting continuous dialogue with customers about its products.*

FRoSTA is based in Germany, where it has three production facilities. It also has a large production site in Poland and sells its products in eight European countries and Russia. It produces a range of frozen foods, including fish and shellfish, vegetables, fruits, and ready meals. FRoSTA emphasises the quality and traceability of the all-natural ingredients that it uses, and the energy-saving and environmentally sensitive approach taken in its operations.

Fish used in its range of dishes is from traceable and sustainable stocks certified by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). FRoSTA was the first German food company to drop additives from its products, such as artificial colourings and chemical preservatives. The policy required recipes for prepared foods to be completely reformulated to include only natural ingredients. An additional sustainable feature was the introduction of packaging materials certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) – in particular cardboard trays for its products, which can be used for cooking prior to recycling.

(NOTE: This case study is based on FRoSTA’s operation in Poland.)

### Collaborative Innovation in Practice

In 2010, FRoSTA in Poland followed the German lead and began a two-year change-over programme to all-natural products to be sold in the country. With the support of company headquarters, recipes and ingredients were changed in the range of products prepared at the company’s Bydgoszcz food factory. Since 2014, all FRoSTA’s fish in Poland has been sourced from sustainable and well-managed fisheries.

The Polish operation carries out a wide-ranging dialogue about its products with end users, including individual customers, food-bloggers, families and restaurateurs. FRoSTA works collaboratively with partners, such as MSC, FSC and the University of Science and Technology (UTP) in Bydgoszcz, in arranging end user interaction programmes. Activities are similarly arranged with a wider constituency of consumers to raise awareness about eating more additive-free food from sustainable sources.

FRoSTA has a number of interactive systems in place, which for example include: smartphone apps enabling customers to trace the origin of fish stocks; food-forum blogs; a presence on Facebook to provide product feedback and an opportunity for the company and its customers to raise and discuss emerging issues and concerns; and an app that gives consumers access to an interactive cookery book and glossary of food additives. Also, an ongoing programme of activities is arranged which include awareness and recipe events in stores, blogger workshops and tastings, and manned exhibition stands. In addition, printed promotional materials are distributed and recipe ideas are printed on food packaging.

Last but not least, UTP staff and students have participated in promoting FRoSTA's sustainable philosophy and practices to the media and public. Academic staff contributed to press presentations, and students prepared displays and met with the public to gather consumer feedback on behalf of the company and its products.

### **Summary of User-Driven Innovation**

- In response to a growing consumer demand, FRoSTA switched its food products to all-natural ingredients and supplies drawn from sustainable sources.
- Responding to consumer demand elsewhere, FRoSTA opened all-natural food production facilities in Poland and extended sales to other European countries.
- Recipes for prepared dishes had to be changed to account for natural ingredients and new sources of supply were found.
- Systems were put in place to familiarise consumers with all-natural foods and involve them in the development of new dishes through, for example, workshops, apps and social media dialogue.

### **Influence on Core Business**

Deciding to offer consumers sustainable additive-free food has required FRoSTA to find natural, traceable, and sustainable ingredients. This has necessitated adjusting its supply chain in key areas, as well as writing and testing a new set of recipes for its dishes. What began in Germany has been rolled-out to Poland and, following promotions and marketing initiatives, its products have gone on sale in eight other EEC countries.

In addition to switching to all-natural ingredients, FRoSTA has facilitated a consumer education programme that raises awareness about eating all-natural foods and fish with MSC certification. It has also provided the means for consumers to trace the origins of fish stocks. By opening up online and face-to-face communication channels, FRoSTA receives 'real time' consumer feedback on its products – including their likes and dislikes, which helps drive the development of further innovations in the product portfolio.

## Cross-Sector Relevance: Top Three Insights

- Increasing consumer awareness of sustainability issues and environmental impact can necessitate organisations fundamentally changing their established operations.
- Involving consumers in programmes of familiarisation, feedback and education can ‘smooth the path’ during an organisation’s period of transition to sustainable operations and products.
- Working in partnership with other commercial and public organisations can share operational responsibilities and validate the strength of commitment to issues of sustainability.

## To Learn More About the Case...

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## Further Information

FRoSTA AG International: [www.frosta.com](http://www.frosta.com)

MSC: [www.msc.org](http://www.msc.org)

FSC: [www.ic.fsc.org/en](http://www.ic.fsc.org/en)

University of Science  
and Technology (UTP): [www.utp.edu.pl/en/](http://www.utp.edu.pl/en/)

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