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**MANAGEMENT TOOLS FOR DEVELOPING
BIODEGRADABLE PACKAGING SPECIFICATIONS
AND INPUT FOR THE DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEMS**

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Abstract

For the development of new biodegradable packaging materials and decision support tools the expectations, requirements and knowledge of the different disciplines represented by the project partners should be harmonized and integrated. A systematic approach was applied for developing the first stage specifications which are the basis of the experimental trials on the development of the biodegradable packaging materials. Different tools can help the first steps of clarifying the necessary information: the packaging development brief is a document which sets the targets for the whole development process. The packaging development brief helps to identify the aspects, for which more detailed technical and consumer surveys are necessary for collecting the basic content of the initial specifications.

First a packaging development brief was developed where the main targeted functions were specified without the detailed technical properties, which need more time and efforts to work out. The technical survey focused on requirements of the project partners related to the biodegradable packaging solutions and covered mostly scientific and technical questions. The consumer survey was focused on the preference of the consumers' and their needs related to the biodegradable packaging materials. This survey was multilingual and was carried out in 4 different countries (some results will be presented) An additional survey was carried out on some aspects of the quality and safety of the model food products and collected the knowledge and data available from the partners. A general template was developed for the packaging specifications. The proposed specifications will be used by the project partners as the starting point for carrying at the research tasks in the project in a harmonized way. Specifications shall prevent the misunderstandings, and provide precise description of all essential properties. The specific values with the defined limits (chemical, microbiological and physical) of the packaging material will enable the project partners to interpret them in a standardized way, to help the identification of the gaps in the information, to allow modification or further improvements where necessary in later phase of the research.

During the further steps of the development the specifications will be developed in more details providing a clear description of the guaranteed properties.
