

Meet Johanna Schijvenaars

Embedding sustainability to build long-term value

Sustainability is the foundation of every business. But it often gets ignored until it becomes a risk. As Acomo's Sustainability Manager, Johanna Schijvenaars works to build long-term thinking into daily business decisions. We sat down with her to talk about why she chose a food ingredients company, what drives her work and why small changes matter.

What's your personal drive for working in sustainability?

When I was younger, I wanted to save the turtles. But later on, I realized that nature doesn't have a voice in business decisions. That's what drives me, bringing long-term sustainable thinking into boardrooms and making nature's interests part of daily business.

After studying environmental science and working in consulting, I saw that sustainability is often invisible in decisions, even though businesses depend on nature and stable functioning supply chains. I wanted to help companies act before sustainability becomes a crisis, not after.

Why Acomo? Why food?

I've always been passionate about food and healthy ecosystems. The food sector sits close to that reality as you rely on land, water, climate and supply chains that need to keep working year after year. Companies working in food are one of the best places to make an impact. You can't have healthy food without healthy ecosystems.

Acomo's plant-based ingredients appealed to me, and the global sourcing mix makes the role interesting. Every product has a different origin, supply chain and comes from different ecosystems, so the sustainability topics are varied, from farming practices to traceability and risk.



What does Acom's mission 'Building Routes to Healthier Foods' mean to you?

The word "routes" is crucial. It's not just about the destination. It's about the paths we build to get there. Routes with long-term sustainability built in.

It means producing food in a way that supports both human health and healthy ecosystems. We depend on stable weather patterns, biodiversity, healthy soil and functioning ecosystems. When those systems break down (through climate change, biodiversity loss, or soil degradation) it directly affects our supply chains: quality drops, volumes become unstable, prices become volatile.

The problem is that these risks build up quietly in the background until they can't be ignored anymore and cascade fast. Sometimes in ways that are hard to reverse. My role is making sure we see them coming and build resilience into our supply chains before they become crises.

For me, building the bridge to being a leading partner in sustainability means translating ambition into action. Not just talking about it but building it into how we work every day. That's what we're doing at Acom.

How do you do that in practice?

I focus on embedding sustainability into daily operations, making it part of procurement, risk management, and decision-making, not a separate ideal. In practice, it starts with getting a clear picture of where we are today, understanding the supply chain, making the key risks visible, and then translating that into strategy and actions that fit into daily operations - like procurement and risk management.

One project I'm particularly proud of is our Nature and Biodiversity working group. We're analyzing how our

“

Sustainability is often invisible in decisions, even though businesses depend on nature and stable functioning supply chains

business depends on nature and identifying risks in our supply chains related to ecosystem health.

For a food ingredients company, understanding these dependencies is essential. Where do our ingredients come from? What ecosystems do they rely on? What happens if those ecosystems are under stress? This isn't just good for sustainability. It's smart risk management.

What makes this challenging at Acom?

Acom's multi-product portfolio requires tailored sustainability approaches. We work with diverse ingredients from different ecosystems and origins. One-size-fits-all solutions don't work. That complexity is exactly what makes this interesting. We need differentiated strategies for different supply chains.

The bigger challenge is making sustainability fit into day-to-day priorities. My job is connecting sustainability to what teams already care about and making it practical.

Many people don't yet fully understand how sustainability underpins long-term business stability. Rising weather volatility, biodiversity loss, changing growing conditions; these aren't distant threats. They're already affecting supply security.



What impact do you want to create?

I want ESG thinking embedded in how we work, not as compliance, but as how we reduce risks and steer food systems in a healthier direction.

Honestly? I want to make my job obsolete. I want sustainability so built into people's thinking that they don't need a sustainability manager anymore.

Let's talk about you personally. What sustainable habit do you practice?

Eating plant-based foods. Two things drive this: knowing my environmental impact is lower and feeling more connected to my food.

But you don't have to be perfect to make a difference. Small changes like choosing vegetarian options a few times a week have real impact.

For me, it's about making better choices consistently. Progress over perfection.

If you could get every colleague to change one behaviour, what would it be?

I'd go for reducing meat consumption. Mainly because it's a high-leverage change that's easy to start with. Even small shifts make a difference.

“

**Sustainability isn't
about being perfect.**

**It's about being better,
consistently.**

We've organized lunch sessions in the office that are plant-based to make food choices and their impact more concrete.

Final thought?

Sustainability isn't about being perfect. It's about being better, consistently.

At Acomo, we're en route to translating our sustainability ambition into practical actions, embedding long-term thinking into how we work, building resilient supply chains, and creating routes to healthier foods that last.

