



Governance models promoting this integration with citizens and local areas as well with the downstream and consumers



AGRI Innovation summit 2019



H2020 Multiactor Project

UNISECO - Understanding and improving the sustainability of agro-ecological farming systems in the EU

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Practical problem

How to produce public goods whilst having viable production of private goods, securing economic and social sustainability at farm level?



Partners

TI, CREA, JHI, FiBL, LUKE, GAN, UZEI, WWF-DCP (all RI), AUA, BOKU, UNIABDN, ISARA, SLU (all HEI), BEF LV, BEF LT, ELO (all NGO), GEO, BIOINST (all SME).



Calendar

Start: 01/05/2018
End: 30/04/2021



Budget

Total amount:
€4,924,771

Objectives of the project

The ambition of UNISECO is to tackle the challenges of producing public and private goods using agro-ecological approaches. Using multi-actor platforms, it aims to strengthen the sustainability of EU farming systems through co-constructing practice-validated strategies and incentives for promoting agro-ecological approaches. It will enhance the understanding of socio-economic and policy drivers and barriers for the development and implementation of agro-ecological approaches, taking account of roles of different types of actors. Its methodological toolkit will enable assessments of environmental, economic and social impacts of innovative strategies and incentives at farm and territorial levels.

Main activities

Project objectives will be achieved by a transdisciplinary approach towards: a) setting up knowledge sharing platforms, b) analysing and understanding drivers and barriers for agro-ecological approaches through consultation and co-learning, c) empirical data collection in participatory case studies, co-learning and co-construction of innovative management strategies and incentives, d) territorial modelling and application of practice-relevant indicators for assessing sustainability of farming systems, e) developing a toolkit of methods enabling actors to assess impacts of management strategies, market incentives and policy instruments promoting agro-ecological farming in Europe.

Expected results

UNISECO contributes to achieving Sustainable Development Goals – SDGs 2 & 15, working across science-policy-society interfaces to enhance the salience of outputs and their credibility to stakeholders and end-users as outcomes of a transdisciplinary process. Expected impacts are: a) Improved methods to assess farming system sustainability, b) Enhanced capacity to develop viable long term strategies for agro-ecological farming systems (AEFS), c) Co-constructed market mechanisms and policy instruments for delivering public goods from economically viable AEFS, d) Improved knowledge base of agro-ecological farming in the EU for use by farmers, value chain actors, consumers and policy-makers.

Results so far/first lessons

Cultural and economic barriers, such as the age and education of farmers, their attitude and experience with agro-ecological approaches, hinder their adoption at a farm level. Research, knowledge, training and advisory systems are shown to have major roles in the development and uptake of agro-ecological approaches. There is a wide range of instruments supporting agro-ecological farming and food in the EU. A provisional typology of agro-ecological farming systems has been developed, to be refined with actors using evidence from case studies, to understand links between agro-ecological practices and EU farming systems and roles of market and policy instruments.

Who will benefit

Group-learning and multi-actor processes and tools (e.g. knowledge hub), with integration of practical and theoretical knowledge, will benefit stakeholders, end-users and scientists through improved understanding on how to strengthen the sustainability of EU farming systems. Benefits are targeted at: farmers, from enhanced natural assets alongside viable economic performance; advisory services from enhanced knowledge and tools; Member State policy teams developing national CAP Strategic Plans; EU-level policy teams requiring to monitor returns on public goods from public investment through targeted policies; and communities from greater social cohesion in areas of agro-ecological uptake.

Supported by:



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