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AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS

Multi-Actor Platforms for Studying Agro-Ecological Farming Systems in the EU



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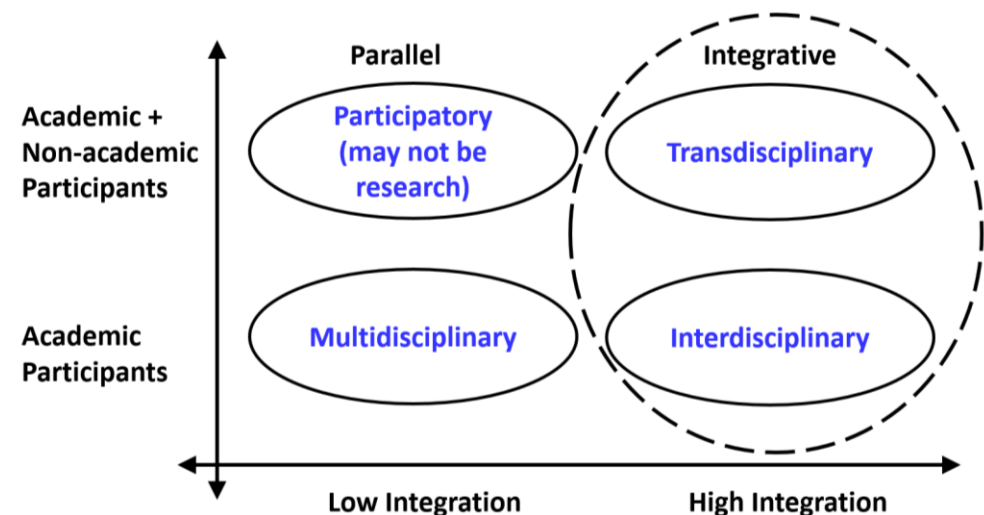
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Abstract Understanding and Improving the Sustainability of Agro-Ecological Farming Systems in the EU is an H2020 project aiming to strengthen sustainability of European farming systems. A transdisciplinary Multi-Actor Approach is used to co-construct practice-validated strategies and incentives for promoting agro-ecological approaches. Evaluation of Multi-actor Platforms shows how ethical processes, monitoring and operational refinements contribute to creating impacts in policy and practice.

Project Description Creating transdisciplinary Multi-Actor Platforms requires setting criteria for membership, principles and processes of operation that account for methods, equitability, rights of participation, and purpose, including contemporary ethical issues. Operationally they are: a) enabling two-way exchange of ideas for co-learning and co-creation of knowledge of agro-ecological farming systems; b) analysing drivers and barriers to agro-ecological approaches; c) reviewing empirical data in participatory case studies and co-constructing innovative management strategies and incentives; d) using practice-relevant indicators to assess farming system sustainability; e) assessing impacts of management strategies, market incentives and policy instruments; f) validating recommendations for EU and national policy and practice.

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Degrees of integration and stakeholder involvement in integrative and non-integrative translation of research into practice (Source: Tress *et al.*, 2004).

Key observations from evaluation of the Multi-Actor Platforms

- Take time to identify and recruit actors to the Platforms ensure 'no surprises', and ethics processes followed
- Co-develop the concept and implementation of multi-actor platforms with their members, with 'rules of engagement' that are sensitive to national and international contexts
- Evolve the membership of the Platforms in response to their evaluation, and to reflect changes in themes and timing of issues
- Encourage recognition amongst MAP members of the shared increase in capabilities

Reference: Tress, B., Tress, G. and Fry, G. (2004). Clarifying integrative research concepts in landscape ecology, *Landscape Ecology*, 10.1007/s10980-004-3290-4



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