UNISECO Project

European Regions for Smart Communities
Future Lab session
05th May 2021

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Thünen Institute of Farm Economics

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• Project introduction
• Background and objectives
• Key elements of the UNISECO approach
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• Key lessons and Horizon Europe
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<td>Consiglio per la Ricerca in Agricoltura e l'Analisi dell'Economia Agraria (CREA)</td>
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<td>Agricultural University Athens (AUA)</td>
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<td>The University Court of the University of Aberdeen (UA)</td>
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<td>Institut Superior D'Agriculture Rhone Alpes (ISARA)</td>
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➢ Transdisciplinary consortium with 18 partners across 16 countries
Key dilemma to be addressed:
How to produce sufficient amount of public goods from agriculture while having viable production of private goods securing economic and social sustainability on farm level, which is not too dependent on public funds?
How to produce environmentally sustainable and be profitable at the same time?

Overarching objectives:
➢ To strengthen the sustainability of European farming systems, through co-constructing improved strategies and incentives agro-ecological approaches.
➢ To improve the knowledge base of agro-ecological farming in the EU to inform future policies at European, national and regional levels.
Importance of the European diversity and local context for agro-ecological transitions, for example:

- Agro-ecological farming systems in Northern Spain
- Small-scale farming in Transylvania
- More crops for human consumption, Sweden
- Arable farming systems in Lower Saxony
- Agro-ecological farming systems in Northern Spain
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- More crops for human consumption, Sweden
- Promoting agro-ecological transitions, Biodistrict Chianti
- Agro-ecological farming systems in Northern Spain
To address the key dilemma in these specific local contexts, there is a need for:

➢ Systems-based approach to understand barriers & drivers
➢ Multi-actor engagement with farmers, advisors, value chain actors, consumers, and policy makers
➢ Range of tools / methods for co-learning and assessment
Overview of Main Elements

- Setting-up, managing & monitoring **multi-actor platforms** to foster engagement and cooperation of key actors of agro-ecological farming systems (AEFS)
- Adapted **Social-ecological Systems (SES) framework** and **typology** for assessing transition pathways to agro-ecological farming systems
- Empirical data collection in **participatory case studies** and **co-construction** of knowledge, transition strategies and **market and policy incentives**
  - Understanding of barriers and drivers of transitions
  - Assessing sustainability performance and trade-offs
  - Lessons learnt for practice and policy
- **Biophysical and socio-economic modelling** and scenario development for assessing sustainability of AEFS at **territorial level**
- Development of a **UNISECO agro-ecological knowledge hub**
Main outputs and impacts

➢ Improved understanding of the sustainability issues across main farming systems
➢ Performance and trade-off assessments of agro-ecological practices at farm level
➢ Territorial level impacts of agro-ecological transitions in the context of different future scenarios
➢ Strategies of agro-ecological transitions with co-constructed solutions to address key barriers in different local contexts
➢ Innovative market incentives and policy instruments that have the potential to successfully promote agro-ecological transitions
➢ Local and EU-level Multi-Actor Platforms to engage key actors and stakeholders in group learning processes, integrating practical and theoretical knowledge
➢ Agro-ecological knowledge hub with different functions and targeted at different audiences
• Improving farmer **knowledge** on the benefits of agro-ecological practices and economic opportunities is a key aspect for successful agro-ecological transitions.

• Important role of education - focus on **young generation and school programmes**.

• Horizontal and vertical **collaboration in the value chain** are of crucial importance to address key barriers.

• Tailored policy support to increase the capacity of local actors to create **agro-ecological networks and territories**.

• Transformational change requires several interlinked strategic pathways addressing the **whole food system (farm to fork)**.
Horizon Europe:

• Governance and sustainability of agro-ecological transitions
• Circular economy and externalities of agri-food production
• Linkages between Horizon Europe and EU-level partnerships
• Role of Multi-actor Platforms – involving the young generation
Thank you for your attention.

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Zenodo: https://zenodo.org/communities/uniseco-h2020/?page=1&size=20
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