



# Understanding and Improving the Sustainability of Agroecological Farming Systems in the EU

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**SHERPA**



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@ruralinterfaces



# Project Introduction

Type of project: RIA

Start & end date: 01/05/2018 – 30/04/2021

Coordinator & number of partners: Thünen Institute with 17 partners  
(Multi-Actor Approach)



**UNISECO**



The UNISECO project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement N° 773901.



# UNISECO Project in a Nutshell

## Main objective:

- To strengthen the **sustainability of European farming systems**, through co-constructing **strategies and incentives for agroecological transitions**.

**Status quo** - Current sustainability performance of farming systems

**Barriers and drivers of agro-ecological transitions** – Understanding “failure and success”

- **Case studies: Local context and systems level**
- **Initiating and enhancing transitions**
- **Multi-actor platforms: Capacity building and cooperation of actors**

**Sustainability implications of the strategies** at farm and territorial level context of different future scenarios

**Strategies for agroecological transitions** – Developing solutions who can do which actions

**Practice and policy recommendations at local, national and EU level**

- **Enhancing knowledge: social capital and trust**
- **Generation of added value: cooperation**
- **Effective policy design: role of local actors**
- **Changes in consumer preferences and diets**



# Key Lessons from Case Studies Across Europe



- Improving farmer **knowledge** on the benefits of agroecological practices and economic opportunities is a key aspect for successful agroecological transitions
- Central **role of AKIS actors** as networking and knowledge champions highlighted
- Need for strengthened collaborative actions and collective institutions to increase negotiating power within the **value-chain**.
- **Role of public sector** initiatives to raise awareness and demand
- Agroecology can help to mitigate climate change and adapt to its impacts, but transformational change requires strategic pathways addressing the **whole food system (farm to fork)**



# Addressing Key Issues of the LTVRA

- *Transition to organic and agroecological farming: Supporting cooperation in short supply chains, local processing, enhancing producer-consumer linkages*
- *Bio-districts: Support for development of local farmer network, regional coordination center for AKIS*
- *Needs of small and medium sized farmers, attracting young, new and female farmers: Facilitating access to land and advisory service, including agroecology in school curricula*
- *Important role of education and life-long learning: Young generation, continuing professional development, and citizen focused learning*
- *Just transitions: Ensuring rights and responsibilities of all actors in just transitions to farming systems*
- **Rural Pact: Opportunity to foster food system transformation**





# Further Information

**Agro-ecological Knowledge Hub:** <https://uniseco-project.eu>

**Researchgate:** [UNISECO H2020 Project](#)

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

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