SHERPA - Rural Science-Society-Policy Interfaces







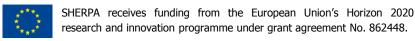
Understanding and Improving the Sustainability of Agroecological Farming Systems in the EU

Gerald Schwarz, Thünen Institute of Farm Economics

31 January 2022

SHERPA Annual Conference









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 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 agroecological 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

Contact: Gerald Schwarz, Thünen Institute of Farm Economics Email: gerald.schwarz@thuenen.de

