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Multifarm_EU: Spreading Multifunctionality in the European Union

Final Report

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Executive Summary

The MULTIFARM_EU Project builds on the previous Agri-multifunctionality II project in order to further disseminate training to Young European Farmers on multifunctional agriculture. The objective of the Project was to provide Young European Farmers with the necessary information and tools to implement multifunctional 'best practices' to ensure sustainable food production and to contribute to the revitalization of rural areas and increased prosperity in the rural economy. Four project aims were devised to train and inform farmers on why and how to implement multifunctional techniques on their own farms.

In order to achieve the objective and aims of the Project, seven work packages were devised. Activities within the work packages included disseminating information via mailing lists and via the Project's own Facebook page, and CEJA's social media channels including Facebook page, Twitter, Vimeo and Youtube. Two case study videos were also created, and training materials were further disseminated via USB-sticks, as well as at public fairs and meetings. CEJA took sole responsibility of the Project after Granaforma S.L. – the lead partner - left the Project consortium.

The Project activities led to successful outcomes and results, which can be divided into three categories: social media and editorial tasks, active implementation and events, and evaluation and dissemination. First, in terms of social media and editorial tasks, a press conference, press releases to the CEJA and MULTIFARM networks, and five newsletters to a mailing list of 1000 contacts were organized and carried out. Information was also disseminated through the newly-created Project website (available in English and Polish), the Multifarm_EU Facebook page and CEJA's dissemination channels to maximize impact, such as two videos in English with Polish subtitles. Electronic and hard copy leaflets available in English and Polish were also provided at public events. Additionally, the Agri-multifunctionality II project products in English and Polish were distributed on USB-sticks. These Project products were specifically made available in Polish so that they may be transferred to a broader audience within the European farming community, which was one of the main aims of the Multifarm_EU Project. Regarding the active implementation and events, meetings were conducted between CEJA and policymakers and public bodies at local, national and European levels. Agreements were also signed with national young farmer associations, and four specific project dissemination events were organized in Poland, Belgium, Spain and Italy. The previous Agri-multifunctionality II project website and products were also made available in Polish, and the Project results were disseminated at fairs in Italy and Poland and at the 4 conferences mentioned above. Finally, the evaluation and dissemination activities included CEJA managing the 'Monitoring and Evaluation Committee', staying in contact with the external evaluator, and preparing the tools needed for external evaluation of the Project. Additionally, a list, including rural development groups from all Member States, was created to disseminate the Project outcomes and results, and the European Commission and European

Parliament were also contacted and informed of the Project outcomes. Furthermore, a final summary report from the Project was created.

Following the completion of the Project, CEJA will continue to reach more than 1.5 million European young farmers in 24 EU countries through its CEJA Member Organization network. CEJA is committed to the sustainability of the dissemination of the Project results. In the long term, by providing young farmers with the Agri-Multifunctionality II products as a training tool, young farmers will have the possibility of knowing what best practices in multifunctional agriculture other European 'colleagues' are successfully doing, which may lead them to implement an aspect of multifunctional agriculture on their own farm. This will foster entrepreneurship, and act as a source of employment in rural areas, stimulating job creation and economic growth, and therefore increasing the viability of rural areas. Through this multiplier effect, the Project aims are also guaranteed through the increase of multifunctional farms within the EU. Additionally, the Project will improve the sustainability of European agriculture by providing information to farmers on how to stay successful in agriculture by adapting multifunctional practices. This merges the priorities of the EU economic and education areas by proposing solutions which will benefit society in the broad sense. These long term impacts of the sustainable dissemination of the Project signify the importance of supporting young farmers in agriculture and their contribution to the multifunctional aspects of European agriculture that the European Commission and the Member States constantly highlight under the rural development initiatives of the common agricultural policy's (CAP) second pillar.

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1. Project Objectives

This project builds on the previous Agri-multifunctionality II project which is a training system made for Young European Farmers who would like to start different multifunctional activities on their farms, in a bid to disseminate the tool further afield. Ultimately, the objective of the MULTIFARM_EU Project is to provide European young farmers with the information and tools necessary (including the Agri-multifunctionality II teaching guide and training system) to foster increased multifunctionality in agriculture. This will therefore respond to the requests of society in this area, and contribute to the revitalisation of rural areas and increased prosperity in the rural economy. In order to achieve this main objective, the project partners agreed that young farmers would need information about implementing multifunctional best practices in the field. Consequently, the project endeavours to train and inform farmers on why and how to implement multifunctionality techniques on their own farms.

The aims of the project are:

1. Further dissemination of the Agri-Multifunctionality II training project;
2. Increased awareness of the concept of agri-multifunctionality among European young farmers;
3. Procure evidence that these practices improve prosperity in the rural economy;
4. To help young farmers to become “greener” in line with Europe 2020 priorities by applying the concept of multifunctionality to their farms.

These aims, in turn, contribute to a variety of broader Project objectives. These include facilitating the social and economic sustainability of rural areas, reversing the ageing trend within them, limiting the rural exodus of youth to urban areas, and helping the integration of ICT tools in VET systems in rural areas.

Throughout the Project, these four aims and set of wider Project objectives informed the Project procedures, methodology and outcomes. At the conclusion of the Project the four Project aims were successfully achieved, and as a result, the wider set of objectives of the Project mentioned above, were also realized. Into the future, beyond the lifetime of the Project, the Project products will continue to contribute to achieving the variety of broader Project objectives.

2. Project Approach

In order to inform young farmers of the benefits of multifunctional agriculture and how to implement multifunctional activities, the Project aimed to disseminate information via mailing lists, the Project's own social media channels such as Facebook, and CEJA's dissemination channels, including Twitter, Vimeo and Youtube. The Project created two case study videos featuring experts, policymakers and young farmers explaining the benefits of multifunctionality and farmers' particular approaches to multifunctionality on their respective holdings. As well as this, dissemination material included copies of the original project products on USB-sticks and in electronic format available both in Polish and English. These products were disseminated at public agricultural fairs and at conferences.

These activities were split into seven work packages:

WP1. Management and coordination

WP2. Dissemination through ICTs

WP3. Mainstreaming

WP4. Dissemination events

WP5. Monitoring and evaluation

WP6. Dissemination

WP7. Exploitation

CEJA became solely responsible for the project from September 2014, and therefore took over all project aspects, both financial/administrative and operative. The Project started with the kick-off meeting in Brussels in January 2014 to plan in detail project development and activities. Then, the second coordination meeting was planned for June 2014, however due to the Granaforma bankruptcy it was cancelled. Next, Granaforma left the project consortium in July 2014 and from September 2014 CEJA took sole responsibility for the Multifarm_EU Project.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

The successful project activities led to a number of outcomes and results which can be split into three categories.

In terms of social media and editorial tasks, a press conference was organised at the beginning of the project and several MULTIFARM_EU press releases were disseminated at every big milestone of the project development throughout the project lifetime. These press releases were sent out to the CEJA network and the MULTIFARM_EU Project network. A specific mailing list was compiled for the project newsletters of which there were 5, updating recipients on project activities and developments and also including theoretical and analytical information on multifunctionality in agriculture. The mailing list was made up of 1000 contacts. Information was also disseminated through the Project website – a completely new website was created and can be found here in both Polish and English: <http://multifarmeuproject.eu/>. As well as this, a Multifarm_EU Facebook page was created, and Project information was also disseminated on the CEJA channels including Facebook page, Twitter, Vimeo and YouTube to maximise impact. CEJA created two videos in English with Polish subtitles, and these videos were disseminated on the channels mentioned above. Project leaflets were created, both in English and Polish, explaining the Project and the advantages of multifunctionality. These were available electronically and handed out at 2 agricultural fairs, 4 project dissemination conferences, CEJA meetings and other CEJA public events. Finally, the Agri-multifunctionality II project products were made available in Polish and in English, and distributed on USB sticks.

On the active implementation of the Project deliverables, CEJA conducted several meetings with policymakers and public bodies at local, national and European levels. 16 informal agreements were signed with national young farmer associations from 16 EU Member States. Additionally, four specific project dissemination events were organised in Poland, Belgium, Spain and Italy. Case studies of the Agri-multifunctionality II project were also carried out, and CEJA visited these case study farms in order to shoot two videos of young farmers practising multifunctionality. The videos also included experts and policymakers on the subject of agricultural multifunctionality. The Agri-multifunctionality II project results were made available in Polish, enabling CEJA to target many more young farmers with the Project tools. Finally, the Project results were disseminated at fairs related to agriculture and rural development in Poland and Italy. At each fair there were at least 100 visitors to the MULTIFARM_EU stand and at each seminar at least 50 people were in attendance.

Finally, the evaluation and dissemination activities involved CEJA managing the 'Monitoring and Evaluation Committee', staying in contact with the external evaluator and preparing the tools for questionnaires and interview schemes. CEJA additionally disseminated the Project products, results and outcomes to CEJA's EU National Rural Networks mailing list, which included organisations and associations from the European Network for Rural Development. This ensured further dissemination of the Project by the CEJA Member Organisations to their local and regional members throughout their whole country. Furthermore, as the main stakeholders in the relevant policy process, the European Commission and the

European Parliament were contacted and informed of the Project outcomes to raise awareness of the possibilities offered by multifunctionality in farming, and to integrate the results of the Agri-multifunctionality II project into wider practices and programmes. Four informal agreements were secured with the European Commission and the European Parliament, so that the Project results would be further disseminated on many possible occasions relevant to their work. Finally, the Project summary report was created in the form of a booklet.

4. Partnerships

CEJA began the Project in partnership with Granaforma S.L. However, after their bankruptcy, Granaforma left the project in the summer of 2014. CEJA then submitted an amendment to the European Commission to take full responsibility for the project which was approved. From September 2014 CEJA was therefore the only partner in the Project, and the Project was extended till end of June 2015.

5. Plans for the Future

The outcomes of the Project will continue to be disseminated by CEJA in order to ensure a long-term impact of the Project activities. In particular, the two videos will continue to be disseminated through both the MULTIFARM_EU Project channels and CEJA channels. They are also expected to be used over several years by the agricultural schools as they are informative teaching materials. The new MULTIFARM_EU website and Facebook page will continue to operate and be updated by CEJA for at least 4 years after the Project's end, and will be a central provider of information for those researching multifunctional agricultural activities. Consequently, the results will be available on all these platforms for many years to come.

As well as this, due to the agreements signed with national young farmer associations, the use and exploitation of the Agri-multifunctionality II products will be guaranteed through their use in training activities involving European young farmers beyond the Project lifetime.

6. Contribution to EU policies

The MULTIFARM_EU project outcomes are particularly relevant to the current EU policy context, which encourages diversification of European farms and outreach into increased multifunctional activities on farms. This will provide farmers, and especially young farmers, with more security and economic sustainability in their entrepreneurial activities. The training system developed by the previous project, Agri-multifunctionality II, covered many key areas such as agritourism, biodynamic farming, biomass production, direct marketing, organic farming, renewable energy sources, short value chains and many more. These are all areas related to initiatives relevant to the current EU policy framework to agriculture, and beyond.

In the context of the new European Commission priorities, fostering multifunctional activities among European young farmers is particularly important for the EU agricultural sector's contribution to increased jobs and growth. Multifunctionality in agriculture results in increased activities on farms. This in turn leads to the revitalisation of the rural economy through job creation and increased investment and visitor attraction. In this context, the contribution of the MULTIFARM_EU Project to current EU policies is substantial. As well as this, the MULTIFARM_EU Project additionally contributes to many of the CAP's objectives.

