



Agricultural and Rural Inspiration Awards 2023

Projects brochure

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of rural areas



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Introduction

The [Agricultural and Rural Inspiration Awards \(ARIA\) 2023](#) celebrated CAP-funded projects that are boosting skills for agriculture and rural areas, supporting lifelong learning and fostering innovation and competitiveness. Expanding on the successes of the previous European Network for Rural Development's [Rural Inspiration Awards](#), this first competition organised by the EU CAP Network was open to projects supported by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) as well as the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF).

[National Networks](#) and National Support Units had the difficult but essential task of selecting and submitting up to eight good practice projects from their respective Member States. They did this with enthusiasm and fair play, topped off with the right amount of combative spirit: you can see all this from the pictures and videos from the [ARIA Awards Ceremony](#), held in Brussels on 4 December 2023.

Overall, 92 projects were submitted from 20 Member States under four thematic categories: Smart & competitive agriculture, Environmental protection, Socio-economic fabric of rural areas, and Rural stakeholders' skills.

This brochure showcases the 24 ARIA finalists and highlights the winner of each category and of the Popular Vote, which this year marked a new record, with 13 481 votes cast in one month.



Figures in this publication have been rounded. For the precise figures, please refer to the full description of each project on the EU CAP Network website.



ARIA WINNER 2023

ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION

€ 47 822

TOTAL BUDGET

€ 7 816

EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 10

Agri-environment-climate

PROJECT PERIOD

2020-2024

COUNTRY

 **Portugal**

The Landscape Farm

Eco-farming as a tool for landscape conservation and local identity.

Over the past 40 years, the region of Santarém, Portugal, turned from a mosaic of centuries-old olive groves, vineyards, fields and orchards into a mix of abandoned fields and super-intensive new olive groves. Landscape architect Jorge Cancela aimed to reverse the situation and show that a small organic farm that cares about people and the landscape can be an alternative to such extremes.

Jorge's Landscape Farm is a small, family-owned operation making organic produce and selling to organic groceries and direct consumers. Since 1991, EAFRD and then CAP funding has enabled Jorge to gradually turn 20 hectares of abandoned fields into productive agroforestry and regenerative landscape agriculture.

The farm adopted a zero-waste approach and best practices in soil and manure management, which in turn enhance soil biodiversity and productivity. It collaborates with local universities, is part of a Portuguese agro-ecological network and is regularly invited as a best practice example at national and international fairs.

The project created eight permanent jobs and more than ten seasonal jobs. Hundreds of people have gained an interest in the concept of landscape agriculture via visits to the farm.

Find out more online:



[eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/
good-practice/landscape-farm](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/landscape-farm)



ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION**HIGHLY COMMENDED****€ 226 193**

TOTAL BUDGET

€ 113 771

EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 07

Basic services and village renewal

PROJECT PERIOD

2021-2023

COUNTRY

🇦🇹 Austria

Farming for Nature

Farmers acting as ambassadors for biodiversity and nature-friendly farming win social acceptance of agroecological methods.

The mainstream approach to modern agriculture often focuses on the increased use of technology or using greater land area or larger farms that can feed more people. Agriculture that both provides an income for the farming family and promotes biodiversity is often presented as impossible.

This Austrian project aimed to highlight the social benefits of innovative, sustainable approaches that can improve the diversity of landscape, while also raising public awareness of these approaches. The initiative promoted the perspectives of 'ambassador' farmers about biodiversity (along with their individual motivations for using this approach) to the public,

in particular to the farming community. Ambassador farmers include young farmers and women farmers, who provide positive role models for underrepresented groups in nature-friendly agriculture.

Through short films, online and in-person events as well as promotion through social and traditional media, the messages of the ambassador farmers reached over 10 000 people. The project activated an extensive network of stakeholders, including NGOs, representatives of agricultural authorities and nature conservation authorities, universities and higher education institutions.



Find out more online:

[eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/
good-practice/farming-nature](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/farming-nature)



ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION

€ 234 670

TOTAL BUDGET

€ 187 736

EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 16

Cooperation

PROJECT PERIOD

2017-2021

COUNTRY

 **Spain**



On-farm growth and application of mycorrhizae

Using natural solutions that are easy to replicate in rural areas, such as mycorrhizae (fungal roots), to boost production, fight climate change and reduce chemical inputs to zero.

Agricultural soils show an increasing loss of fertility and biological functionality, mainly due to intensive cultivation and the abuse of chemicals. The 'Mycorrhizae Innovation Team' was created to find innovative, sustainable ways to reverse this situation.

This Spanish EIP-AGRI Operational Group tested the effect on crops and soil quality of incorporating native laboratory-grown mycorrhizae (fungal roots) into the soil. The team hoped to find a natural way to improve the quality of agricultural soils and the health status of plants, increasing crop productivity, lowering economic costs by reducing and/or eliminating agricultural inputs, and producing food more sustainably.

The use of mycorrhizae proved a sustainable way to provide plants with a nutritional balance, increasing resistance to stresses such as drought and pests, reducing the need for chemical inputs and providing a better soil structure. Carbon sequestration in soil increased (from 2.8% to 8.5%) and so did yields (+20% for lettuce, +40% for peas) and biodiversity.

The project reached over 6 000 people via workshops, conferences, talks, school visits, fairs and a website and 15 people have attended mycorrhizae courses since 2018.



Find out more online:



eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/on-farm-growth-and-application-of-mycorrhizae

ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION**€ 35 000**
TOTAL BUDGET**€ 14 700**
EAFRD FUNDING

RDP MEASURE 19

LEADER/CLLD

PROJECT PERIOD

2018-2019

COUNTRY

+ Finland

FabPatch

Innovative design makes repairing textiles easy, affordable, and - most of all - highly fashionable.

The story of FabPatch began in 2017 when two Finnish mothers had an idea about how to solve the common challenge of fixing holes in the knees of trousers and ripped jacket seams. FabPatches offer an easy, sustainable and beautiful way to patch or decorate textiles even for people who do not know how to sew, thus removing barriers to mending clothes.

Thanks to CAP co-funding, FabPatch Ltd was established in 2019 to develop the company's product, brand and production chain, create an online store and prepare for sales and distribution. It is now a thriving company that employs six people on a permanent basis, with an annual turnover of €579 000.

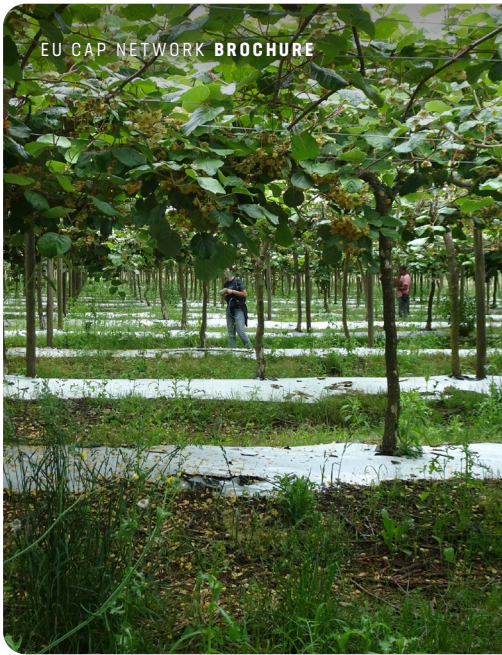
Over one million FabPatches have already been sold to repair clothing, shoes, furniture and other textiles, thus reducing waste and environmental impact.

The company has developed joint, customised collections and product partnerships with prominent stakeholders. It networks to promote sustainability and the circular economy in the Finnish Textile & Fashion's influence group, comprising dozens of textile and clothing companies, including industry leaders.

Find out more online:



[eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/
good-practice/fabpatch](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/fabpatch)



ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION

€ 417 410
TOTAL BUDGET

€ 281 297
EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 16

Cooperation

PROJECT PERIOD

2017-2021

COUNTRY

 **Portugal**



Making the kiwifruit industry more sustainable while creating a value-added product.

Kiwifruit production is a significant global economic activity, particularly in Portugal where it is the fastest-growing agri-food sector.

The EIP-AGRI Operational Group i9Kiwi had three main objectives: studying diseases associated with production and innovative solutions against PSA (*Pseudomonas syringae* pathovar *actinidia*) bacteria; improving pollination; and monitoring biotic and abiotic factors impacting kiwi production.

Combining field activities, laboratory work and workshops for producers, i9Kiwi promoted plant protection practices that allowed for a significant reduction in the use of phytopharmaceuticals. It also prompted the use of monitoring and sensors that helped optimise pesticide and fertiliser use, reducing water and energy consumption and costs.

Growers received advice on the most suitable varieties of kiwi plants, techniques and processes for climate change adaptation. Dissemination activities helped raise awareness and promote resilience, biodiversity, agroecological and more sustainable practices, as well as the sector's digital literacy.



Find out more online:



eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/i9kiwi



ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION

EU CAP NETWORK **BROCHURE**

€ 217 059
TOTAL BUDGET

€ 134 779
EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 19

LEADER/CLLD

PROJECT PERIOD

2020-2022

COUNTRY



Slovenia

The network of waterways in the Kamnik-Savinja Alps

Raising awareness about water conservation and fostering rural development through the preservation of natural resources.

The water route around the Kamnik-Savinja Alps (KSA) is a new hiking trail spanning 190 kilometres between Slovenia and Austria. The waterway passes four rivers, three lakes, over 100 springs and 100 streams and several waterfalls. It is included in the hiking application of the Mountaineering Association of Slovenia and on the Kamnik-Savinjske Alpe website.

The projects analysed 54 springs in the KSA area and 15 springs in the area of LAG Heart of Slovenia, studying the quality of the springs and highlighting their biotic and landscape diversity.

The project used a variety of approaches to raise awareness about the importance of water resources and their considerable vulnerability. Activities included ten drinking water festivals throughout the KSA area, two contests for local elementary school students and training for water-testers, as well as exchanges of experience and transfers of good practices, workshops and round tables.

Events, outdoors activities and communication material helped diversify the local tourist activities and engage a variety of stakeholders.

Find out more online:



[eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/
good-practice/network-
waterways-kamnik-savinja-alps](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/network-waterways-kamnik-savinja-alps)





ARIA WINNER 2023

RURAL STAKEHOLDERS'
SKILLS

€ 83 688
TOTAL BUDGET

€ 75 000
EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 16

Cooperation

PROJECT PERIOD

2021-2023

COUNTRY

 **Belgium**

Local energy for farmers and citizens

Farmers and citizens create an energy cooperative and accelerate renewable energy uptake.

In the rural village of Hal, in Belgium, 22 farmers and 40 citizens seized the opportunities offered by the 'Clean energy for all Europeans Package', which fosters the production and sale of electricity between citizens and SMEs.

The village started a cooperative called Halnet c.v. with the aim of (co)investing in, and generating income from, local renewable energy projects and attaining the status of a renewable energy community. Through an EIP-Operational Group, farmers and citizens learnt about the relevant legal, organisational and technical aspects, gained the necessary knowledge and skills, and identified a suitable revenue model for their cooperative. Finally, an innovative energy management system was set up to monitor and control the supply and demand of the local energy market.

The farms involved in the project cut their GHG emissions by 5-10 %, while revenues increased (minimum 4% per year) through their shares in the cooperative. Overall, the project empowered the community with new skills, more collaborations and better resilience in case of energy crises.

The project is being replicated in three other rural municipalities in Belgium.

Find out more online:



eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/local-energy-farmers-and-citizens



RURAL STAKEHOLDERS'
SKILLS

€ 377 683

TOTAL BUDGET

€ 149 241

EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 01

**Knowledge transfer
& information actions**

PROJECT PERIOD

2023-2024

COUNTRY

 **Austria**

ZAMm on the move

An educational project advancing gender equality, empowering women and promoting innovation and competitiveness in rural Austria.

ZAMm on the move aimed to promote gender equality in Austrian agriculture and forestry. Project activities included educational products such as courses on the capacity to act in political processes and agricultural organisations, special programmes for young female farmers, visits to political institutions and networking meetings.

Participants developed a variety of skills, including stress resilience, negotiation, empathy, listening, legal awareness, financial literacy and increased economic self-reliance and resilience. Over 1 000 women graduated from training courses organised within the project, covering important topics related to professional development and political participation.

ZAMm on the move also raised society's awareness about gender equality issues and contributed to the sustainable development of agriculture. Its charter for partnership-based representation of interests in agriculture and forestry has already been signed by over 60 partners.

The project served as a model for other initiatives and cross-sector best practices for promoting gender equality, as well as the social inclusion of women from minority communities.

Find out more online:



[eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/
good-practice/zamm-on-the-
move](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/zamm-on-the-move)





RURAL STAKEHOLDERS'
SKILLS

€ 7 800 000
TOTAL BUDGET

€ 6 240 000
EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 16

Cooperation

PROJECT PERIOD

2016-2023

COUNTRY

 **Germany**

Creating transparency - from producer to shop counter

Fostering the farm education skills of rural stakeholders while strengthening and creating networks in rural areas.

The project supported a farm education network in Lower Saxony and Bremen (Germany), with the aim of encouraging farmers to offer agriculture-related learning events on their farms and to give young people the opportunity to learn about agriculture, food production, nutrition and related issues of sustainable development.

A central coordinating officer promoted the entire project and provided advice to regional coordinators, who in turn could carry out networking activities and training and developed innovative teaching methods.

The regional coordinators, which increased from 43 in 2016 to 55 by 2023, organised a local network of extra-curricular learning places such as farms, related facilities (e.g. processors and retailers) and educational institutions.

The network grew considerably on all levels, with some 80 000 people a year taking part in the educational programmes. Many farmers and other actors generated additional income and gained new farm educational skills, while thousands of young people gained on-site experience of today's agriculture and food production and learned about sustainable nutrition choices.

Find out more online:



[eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/
good-practice/creating-
transparency](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/creating-transparency)





RURAL STAKEHOLDERS'
SKILLS

€ 849 400

TOTAL BUDGET

€ 285 398

EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 16

Cooperation

PROJECT PERIOD

2018-2022

COUNTRY

+ Finland

Aikaa On (Plenty of Time)

A model for discussion groups to support agricultural entrepreneurs' work planning and wellbeing at work.

Agricultural entrepreneurs often face long working days, with workload and weekly working hours exceeding the limits that are considered appropriate in terms of wellbeing. Their time to gain new skills is also limited and so are opportunities for peer exchanges.

The project developed a model for discussion groups through which agricultural entrepreneurs could connect with each other and with experts, gaining new insights into their own working practices and better understanding of alternative approaches. The project aimed to enhance skills, collaboration and profitability in agriculture.

The project involved 593 entrepreneurs from a wide range of production sectors, including cattle farmers, vegetable producers and berry farmers, as well as pig and poultry farmers. The initiative fostered sector-specific teamwork and leadership growth, resulting in improved farm productivity and better yields. It also led the participants to understand their own situation better, identify the right work processes and avoid unnecessary work, saving working time (up to 20 hours per week for some participants) and increasing leisure time and wellbeing.



Find out more online:



[eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/
good-practice/aikaa-plenty-
time](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/aikaa-plenty-time)



RURAL STAKEHOLDERS'
SKILLS

€ 113 014
TOTAL BUDGET

€ 23 917
EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 20

Technical assistance

PROJECT PERIOD

2022-2023

COUNTRY



Pastoral School for Young Shepherds

An innovative training method with a strong emphasis on networking empowers young people and local communities.

The School for Young Shepherds is an action research project targeted at young people in rural areas in Italy. This pilot project took place in northern Italy and involved 15 young people (60% women). Through hands-on experiences, the participants gained skills in rational grazing, animal management, animal welfare, biodiversity conservation, meat processing, dairy production, business development and networking.

The project combines training and networking involving local farmers, researchers and other stakeholders, with the aim of enhancing the training experience and creating new, lasting connections for all those involved. Through active participation in rural and social innovation, the initiative seeks to generate community empowerment.

Special project features include working in an integrated and systemic way, linking training to territorial specificities to maximise opportunities, peer education, mentoring and coaching. This serves to build relationships and give students a broader view of the reality in which they want to operate.



Find out more online:



[eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/
good-practice/pastoral-school-
young-shepherds](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/pastoral-school-young-shepherds)

RURAL STAKEHOLDERS'
SKILLS**€ 145 598**

TOTAL BUDGET

€ 74 255

EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 19

LEADER/CLLD

PROJECT PERIOD

2018-2020

COUNTRY

 **Luxembourg**

Fro de Bauer (Ask the farmer)

Bringing farmers and kids together to teach the role and importance of agriculture through interaction and farm visits.

There is a widening knowledge gap in society regarding agricultural production systems, which leads, among other things, to a dwindling appreciation for foodstuffs. Societal change is needed to raise awareness about today's regional production systems.

To answer this need, the project 'Fro de Bauer' ('Ask the Farmer') developed a unique and innovative approach to bringing agriculture closer to pre-teen kids in Luxembourg.

Pupils worked together to complement their agricultural knowledge and then enjoyed the opportunity to get to know a specific agricultural sector and visit a farm. The target group was specifically chosen to train future decision-makers and consumers of agricultural products about the specificities of agriculture.

The project was implemented by the association of young farmers, which is an important player in the agricultural sector due to its size and age of its members (average age well below 40). It involved 20 primary schools in three LEADER regions (i.e. 13% of all Luxembourg primary schools) and 1 300 pupils.

Find out more online:



[eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/
good-practice/fro-de-bauer-
ask-farmer](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/fro-de-bauer-ask-farmer)





ARIA WINNER 2023

SMART AND COMPETITIVE
AGRICULTURE

€ 299 618

TOTAL BUDGET

€ 125 840

EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 16

Cooperation

RDP MEASURE 07

Basic services & village renewal

PROJECT PERIOD

2020-2021

COUNTRY

+ Finland



KoroKausi: safeguarding seasonal work forces during the pandemic

Effective action to tackle the shortage of foreign seasonal workers during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The KoroKausi project was able to help agricultural enterprises recruit seasonal workers when the Covid-19-related public health restrictions prevented them from hiring the workers they normally use on their farms.

There was a real threat of a wave of farm bankruptcies without sufficient seasonal labour, which would have jeopardised seed production into the future. The project used charter flights to arrange safe access to Finland for around 3 000 seasonal workers, including from Ukraine. Information resources were published online on the web portal set up by the project, which helped agricultural enterprises to recruit workers and the jobseekers to find employment in rural areas, also after the project period.

A social media campaign reached 960 000 people through Facebook and Instagram. Eventually, the project contributed to filling all seasonal vacancies (around 16 000 in 2020) in rural areas across the whole country. Thanks to KoroKausi, no farms went bankrupt due to labour shortages during the pandemic.

In addition, the project played a key role in creating a better understanding of seasonal labour needs and raised awareness of the importance of agriculture and rural development for society as a whole.

Find out more online:



[eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/
good-practice/korokausi](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/korokausi)

SMART AND COMPETITIVE
AGRICULTURE**€ 404 749**

TOTAL BUDGET

€ 131 543

EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 19

LEADER/CLLD

PROJECT PERIOD

2020-2023

COUNTRY

 **Belgium**

Treated wastewater for subirrigation

A successful pilot project reusing treated wastewater to combat drought and improve groundwater levels.

Since 2016, farmers in Flanders (Belgium) have experienced very dry summers. As groundwater levels have been declining for years, the capacity of the soil to buffer the crop water demand in dry periods has declined. However, many fields have a subsurface drainage system, and on many locations high quality treated wastewater streams are available. Using this treated wastewater can reduce or eliminate the need for surface irrigation by raising the groundwater table and restoring the capillary rise of groundwater to the root zone of the crops.

The project tested this approach. During an extremely dry summer (2022), the subirrigation system totally eliminated the need for surface irrigation. Ground-

water levels on the field and in the area around the field improved, resulting in higher yields. The area looked like a veritable 'green oasis' during that dry summer, raising other farmers' interest in the approach.

The project shows a lot of potential to combat drought and replenish the depleted groundwater stocks in the region. Other stakeholders are researching a similar system using surface water on an area of more than 160 hectares, an unprecedented scale in Belgium.

Find out more online:



[eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/
good-practice/treated-
wastewater-subirrigation](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/treated-wastewater-subirrigation)



SMART AND COMPETITIVE AGRICULTURE

€ 536 931
TOTAL BUDGET

€ 390 495
EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 16

Cooperation

PROJECT PERIOD

2015-2023

COUNTRY

 **Estonia**



Fibes: get your daily dose of gut-friendly fruit puree

A circular economy approach upcycles a brewery by-product (pomace) into a nutritious new product: a gut-friendly fruit puree.

The Kodas brewery in southern Estonia is a modern factory making high-quality and innovative food and beverage products and providing good employment opportunities in a rural area. They aimed to develop a new product line by upcycling pomace, a by-product of juice pressing. They engaged in laboratory testing, scientific and market research, and eventually succeeded in developing a new product: Fibes, a gut-friendly fruit puree made of pomace.

This project is the result of a circular economy approach applied to day-to-day operations. It led to an increase in resource efficiency in production of approximately 15%, while resulting in a healthy product with significant global marketing potential.

The brand recognition of Kodas as a manufacturer of products that can generate changes in people's awareness and consumption habits has grown significantly. The company is now a leading example of innovation and circular economy for other companies, both at home and abroad.

Find out more online:



[eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/
good-practice/fibes](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/fibes)



SMART AND COMPETITIVE
AGRICULTURE**€ 613 807**

TOTAL BUDGET

€ 479 846

EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 16

Cooperation

PROJECT PERIOD

2018-2020

COUNTRY

 **Spain**

GOPHYTOVID

Using technology to reduce inputs for vineyards and commercial wineries.

More stringent regulation of crop protection activities is being implemented at EU level, in line with the Farm to Fork strategy's aim to reduce the use and risk of plant protection products (PPP) by 50%. Stakeholders have different tools available to achieve these ambitious objectives, including training, adoption of new technologies and digitalisation.

GOPHYTOVID developed a structured approach to achieve PPP reduction in viticulture in Spain. Taking advantage of already existing technological developments, this EIP-AGRI Operational Group project adopted a Variable Rate Application method (VRA) based on canopy maps generated through multi-spectral cameras, which allowed rationalisation of PPP application.

After two years of collaborative work, five commercial wineries from different regions in Spain achieved a PPP reduction ranging from 15% to 35%. Additionally, new technologies have been adopted and training opportunities have improved thanks to developments and products generated by the project.



Find out more online:



[eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/
good-practice/gophytovid](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/gophytovid)



SMART AND COMPETITIVE
AGRICULTURE

€ 673 067

TOTAL BUDGET

€ 146 916

EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 04

Investments in physical assets

RDP MEASURE 06

Farm & business development

PROJECT PERIOD

2016-2022

COUNTRY

 **Italy**



From field to glass: a brewery building rural resilience

A Sardinian farmhouse brewery scaled up and diversified production in a closed and circular supply chain.

Farmhouse beer is a rare type of beer brewed with malts made from raw materials of predominantly farmhouse origin. Two young Italian farmers saw the opportunity for a niche product and created an agricultural brewery with a closed and circular supply chain.

The beer is a high-quality product, marketed through farm outlets. The project funding has enabled the company to grow and diversify operations, which now include livestock and traditional, artisanal processing of meat, cereal products and extra virgin olive oil. This results in a range of products made entirely on the farm.

A small herd of cattle are fed with by-products, and a sheep pasture keeps the weeds of the hops under control without the use of herbicides. This sets up a closed supply chain and an excellent circular economy model.

The results have been very encouraging. The company won a national award in 2019 as the most sustainable company in Sardinia and is regarded as among the most promising in its sector regionally, with growth potential to reach national markets.



Find out more online:



[eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/
good-practice/field-glass](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/field-glass)



SMART AND COMPETITIVE AGRICULTURE

€ 377 222

TOTAL BUDGET

€ 84 268

EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 04

Investments in physical assets

PROJECT PERIOD

2017-2023

COUNTRY

Portugal

Pepe Aromas: producing organic prickly pears

Introducing a climate-adapted crop combined with new products and tourist activities to regenerate a traditional farm.

The project focuses on diversifying the agricultural activity of a company that the project promoters inherited from their grandfather. It is located in Vale do Pereiro, a village in southern Portugal. The project aimed at revitalising production by cultivating 20 hectares of certified organic prickly pear, a profitable crop adapted to climate change.

With low water requirements, the prickly pear can grow in very poor soils. Inspired by the principles of the circular economy, the project reuses all waste generated on the farm to develop new products and business opportunities.

Prickly pear is a highly sustainable and zero-waste crop, and the cultivation is based on good agricultural practices and respect for the environment and biodiversity, including reuse of irrigation water, use of renewable energies, reuse of consumables and waste.

The project inspired other farmers and attracted attention from academia to further investigate the potential of this crop.

Find out more online:



eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/pepe-aromas





ARIA WINNER 2023

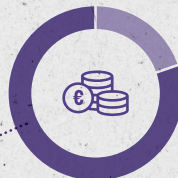
SOCIO ECONOMIC FABRIC
OF RURAL AREAS

€ 545 366

TOTAL BUDGET

€ 436 293

EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 19

LEADER/CLLD

PROJECT PERIOD

2018-2021

COUNTRY

 **Spain**



Regional cooperation project + Business + Employment

Eleven LAGs joined forces to improve access to employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.

This collaborative project developed a joint strategy across the region of Castilla y León (Spain) to tackle the needs of jobseekers and businesses, mostly in the primary sector (agri-food) and the service sector.

The project designed a new mechanism to bring the job market closer to those looking for jobs, aiming to retain people in the rural area and thereby reduce unemployment. It developed a comprehensive employment web platform which harmonised access to information, guidance and training across the participating territories, to improve the take-up of existing employment and self-employment opportunities. Social inclusion, equal opportunities and socio-economic sustainability were key principles of the project.

The platform integrates over 5 000 registered job seekers and over 10 000 companies, managing more than 1 500 job offers. The beneficiaries (companies, job seekers, and service providers) connect directly with each other and receive important information about job opportunities and related activities. The project also supported the digital transformation of around 700 local companies and the skills development of over 300 (mostly young) people who benefitted from 'Learning Spaces'.

Find out more online:



eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/regional-cooperation-project-business-employment



SOCIO ECONOMIC FABRIC
OF RURAL AREAS**ARIA WINNER 2023**

POPULAR VOTE

€ 180 000
TOTAL BUDGET**€ 120 000**
EAFRD FUNDING

RDP MEASURE 19

LEADER/CLLD

PROJECT PERIOD

2020-2023

COUNTRY

 **the Netherlands**

Urban farm Doetinchem

Creating a meeting place that offers affordable meals and activities to promote social inclusion.

The project 'Stadsboerin' aimed at connecting people from different backgrounds to food and nature in their own city. An empty lot of three acres of land with a boarded-up barn turned into a lively green meeting place based on urban agriculture. Here people can, on a daily basis, participate in informal events, buy food and eat in the catering area, which creates community spirit and fosters social inclusion.

The target groups include people from very different backgrounds: the elderly, young people, residents, migrants and refugees who participate in the kitchen, garden or social activities. This enables people to find peace, space and understanding and to share experiences.

Key activities include selling food in the on-farm store, organising vegetable baskets for families, city hospitality, catering and meals. In addition, a variety of workshops and classes are conducted for city residents and schools, including 20 internships for young migrants and a 'green education' programme for local schools. The project also fostered the social re-integration of ten Dutch nationals. It has created 3.5 full-time equivalent jobs and involves 50 volunteers.

Find out more online:



[eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/
good-practice/doetinchem-
city-project](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/doetinchem-city-project)





SOCIO ECONOMIC FABRIC
OF RURAL AREAS



HIGHLY COMMENDED

€ 515 293
TOTAL BUDGET

€ 167 470
EAFRD FUNDING

RDP MEASURE 16

Cooperation

PROJECT PERIOD

2018-2021

COUNTRY

 **Belgium**



Food Act 13

An innovative regional circular food distribution platform fostering employment and poverty reduction.

The welfare association W13 developed the project 'Food Act 13' with the aim of providing an innovative and efficient logistics system for local food distribution centres in South-West Flanders (Belgium). At the same time, the project sought to 'activate' long-term unemployed people and prepare them to re-enter the job market through training and temporary work experiences as administrative employees, drivers or co-drivers and warehouse workers.

Since 2018, the project has collected over 1 000 tonnes of fresh food (worth €6.4 million) from retailers and farms and supplies the food to 60 local organisations, reaching 5 000 families in poverty.

Besides this positive impact on reducing food waste and the associated carbon emissions, the project has trained and empowered 130 long-term unemployed and people on a living wage (mostly young people) across different cultural backgrounds and genders. Approximately 80% of the participants find regular work after their participation in the project.

Food Act 13 has built a unique private-public partnership and bridges different policy areas: social economy, environmental sustainability and welfare. The project inspired 11 other similar initiatives in Belgium.

Find out more online:



[eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/
good-practice/food-act-13](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/food-act-13)





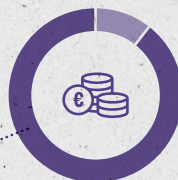
SOCIO ECONOMIC FABRIC
OF RURAL AREAS

€ 119 784

TOTAL BUDGET

€ 106 991

EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 19

LEADER/CLLD

PROJECT PERIOD

2019-2023

COUNTRY

 **Romania**

Caiaac SMile

Turning disabilities into abilities - an innovative vision for social inclusion and overcoming social barriers.

The Sport Club Caiaac SMile association aimed to add value to the community in the Someş-Codru LAG area (Romania) by establishing a new and innovative service for young people with disabilities. In partnership with an accredited provider of social services, the project promotes the development of independent life skills, counselling and support for vulnerable young people and their families.

The project implemented an innovative activity programme called 'Kayak - nautical sports activity for all'. Thanks to CAP funding, a new centre was equipped for adaptive sports and is now fully operational, in line with the requirements of the target groups. The centre offers young people in care institutions the opportunity to participate in interactive

and inclusive sports activities in a safe environment, thereby improving their skills, attitudes and confidence levels, helping their social inclusion.

In 2022, over 60 children with visual impairments learned how to kayak. The camps also hosted over 80 refugee children from Ukraine. The programme has been expanded and now operates on five lakes in Romania.

Find out more online:



[eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/
good-practice/caiaac-smile](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/caiaac-smile)





SOCIO ECONOMIC FABRIC
OF RURAL AREAS

€ 73 164
TOTAL BUDGET

€ 42 000
EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 19
LEADER/CLLD

PROJECT PERIOD COUNTRY
2016-2017  **Germany**

Mensch-Biene-Bildung (People-Bees-Education)

Beekeeping creates opportunities for social inclusion, equality and regional networking.

Promoted by the LAG Bad Kissingen in Germany, this project regenerated a historic orchard and developed activities related to beekeeping that foster the social inclusion of people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

An orchard meadow was regenerated in harmony with its historical landscape development, connecting cultural values, traditional food production, education and social inclusion activities. The project adopted an innovative approach to inclusion, training 12 people with intellectual disabilities as bee-shepherds and visitor guides.

The regenerated meadow and its newly opened educational facilities became an interactive space for both people with disability and non-disabled people, many of them young. It hosts an extensive programme of events for the audience and has become a tourism and leisure destination, welcoming 600 visitors yearly.

Ten bee swarms are maintained in the garden and around 100 kg of honey are produced and sold every year. The project received recognition as a teaching apiary by the Bavarian Beekeepers' Association.



Find out more online:



eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/mensch-biene-bildung-people-bees-education



SOCIO ECONOMIC FABRIC
OF RURAL AREAS

€ 56 498
TOTAL BUDGET

€ 37 804
EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 19
LEADER/CLLD

PROJECT PERIOD COUNTRY
2021-2023  **Slovenia**

The lore

3D and augmented reality technologies to promote awareness of local heritage and knowledge transfer between generations.

The project was developed to preserve the heritage of the local area of Brkini and Karst, Slovenia. The main objective was to create an online platform that would tell the story of the local environment and its people – a story with tremendous potential to connect traditions with modern community.

The project aimed to transfer skills and knowledge in the cultural heritage sector by using modern promotional and marketing tools and to present heritage products using 3D and augmented reality to inspire younger generations. An online platform was established and includes ten documentaries, interactive games and an online shop where 20 local producers present their products.

The project also developed an innovative digital marketing and promotion plan, three packages of support services for local providers and new learning material for schools about local heritage.

The long-term ambition is to strengthen the visibility and added value of heritage crafts, services and products in a modern entrepreneurial context, and to support the digital presence of local producers on the global market.

Find out more online:



[eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/
good-practice/lore](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/lore)



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