

MULTAGRI

*Rural development through governance of
multifunctional agricultural land use*

An interdisciplinary collaboration within the RURAGRI ERA-NET (EU/FP7)

MULTAGRI will investigate how governance of agricultural landscapes can promote rural development by harnessing landscape and biological diversity as assets that synergistically promote the production of public goods and sustained intensive agricultural production

How can we locally adapt policies to promote the provision of public goods and farmland ecosystem services to support the development of a globally competitive and sustainable agricultural sector?



Background

A key issue for European agricultural policy is to maintain farmland for conservation of biodiversity and production of public goods while meeting the challenges of an increasingly global food market.

Ecological intensification, i.e., increasing production by promoting supporting and regulating ecosystem services, has been proposed as a sustainable alternative to industrial intensification.

The challenge:

Ecosystem services are often generated at spatial and temporal scales beyond individual farms and generations, and thus affected by *"the tragedy of ecosystem services"*. Promoting ecosystem services thus requires coordinated actions by farmers to manage whole landscapes.

European agricultural policies need to develop beyond current cross-compliance and agri-environmental schemes, taking into account both the landscape perspective and regional variation in farming conditions.



Objectives

- ✓ Determining the spatial scale affecting key farmland ecosystem services;
- ✓ Determining synergies and trade-offs between production of public goods and generation of supporting ecosystem services;
- ✓ Evaluating ecosystem services and public goods produced by typical European farms as a result of ecological intensification;
- ✓ Assessing how payments for public goods and ecosystem services will affect regional agricultural development;
- ✓ Assessing the multi-level governance system under which European farmers operate to understand how and why farmers choose to adopt specific management actions at farm and landscape scales;
- ✓ Evaluating how European agricultural policies can contribute to more sustainable farming through payments for public goods and ecosystem services;
- ✓ Disseminating project results effectively to the scientific community and to stakeholders such as policy-makers, farmers and the general public.

Approach

MULTAGRI uses a strong interdisciplinary approach combining empirical field work, synthesis studies, and ecological-economic modelling and governance analysis at the regional level. Involved scientists come from a variety of fields including ecology, economics, agronomy and social sciences.

To ensure relevance of research questions and efficient dissemination, key stakeholders will be closely involved throughout the project.

This way, MULTAGRI will contribute to the development of European policies to promote multifunctional agricultural landscapes and rural development.





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