



# Low-Input Farming and Territories

Integrating knowledge for improving ecosystem-based farming

**LIFT 2nd Annual Newsletter**

January 2020

From 1 January 2020, the coordinating partner of LIFT - INRA, has merged with IRSTEA to become INRAE, the *French National Institute for Research on Agriculture, Food, and the Environment*. The LIFT managing partner, INRA Transfert, has become INRAE Transfert.

## PROJECT'S ACHIEVEMENTS

**LIFT project goal:** to identify and understand how socio-economic and policy drivers impact on the development of ecological approaches to farming and assess the performance and sustainability of such approaches, taking into account different farming systems at farm, farm-group and territorial scales.

**Research consortium:** 17 partners from 12 EU countries.

**Duration:** 48 months, from May 1, 2018 till April 30, 2022.

As the LIFT project is undergoing its second year (May 2019 - April 2020), the work in all workpackages is progressing and several scientific deliverables have been published.

### **Deliverable D2.1. Drivers of farmers' up-take of ecological approaches – a conceptual framework with a behavioural focus.**

The report presents **the conceptual framework on farmers' uptake of ecological approaches across the supply chain**. The framework combines behavioural theories on individual decision-making with drivers and methodological considerations related to economic decision-making. It presents a systematic map of previous literature related to farmers' uptake of ecological approaches and is to guide data collection through the LIFT large-scale survey to farmers and interview studies in the project.

The framework distinguishes between endogenous factors (e.g. motivational factors, farmers' self-identity, farm characteristics) and exogenous factors (e.g. supply-chain characteristics, institutional conditions, consumers' preferences and demands). Factors serve to identify the main drivers of farmers' uptake of ecological approaches, and to enable comparison of different dimensions of uptake across territories. The decision to implement the up-take of ecological approaches is approached across four different dimensions, namely timing, intensity/extensity, size of change, and type of practices adopted.

These dimensions are important since the factors that affect the decision to adopt have been found to differ across them. The deliverable continues by presenting a systematic map of previous literature related to farmers' uptake of ecological approaches. **Two methodological approaches for understanding the drivers of farmers' uptake of ecological approaches are suggested:** psychometric methodology and qualitative interviews, using the means-end chain and laddering approach.

The report has been prepared by the LIFT partners: SLU (Sweden) - lead, SRUC (United Kingdom), KU Leuven (Belgium).



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement No 770747



## **Deliverable D2.2. LIFT large-scale farmer survey questionnaire.**

This report brings to the public **the complete questionnaire for the large-scale survey to farmers to be carried out in the LIFT project, to at least 1,500 farmers across the European Union (EU)** in the LIFT case study areas.

The LIFT large-scale farmer survey represents a key task that provides value added to the LIFT project and informs EU policy analysis as a whole. It is innovative because it collects primary qualitative and quantitative data at the farm level, and because data will be comparable across a large geographical area, across different production sectors, as well as across different farming practices/systems. **The survey aims to collect information that is not available in existing data sources**, and these data will be used in the analyses of the project.

For each of the farms in the survey, the intention is to collect information on the: structural and economic characteristics, detailed labour requirements, and exhaustive production practices. In addition, information is collected on the drivers behind the adoption of certain practices and farmers' opinions on future policies.

The report has been prepared by the LIFT partners: DEMETER (Greece) - lead, INRAE (France), UNIKENT (United Kingdom), SRUC (United Kingdom), VetAgro Sup (France), BOKU (Austria), JRC (Italy).

## **Deliverable D6.1. Legislation and political discourse about ecological farming.**

This study aims at exploring **the dominant discourses used in six EU member states' Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) and other agricultural policy documents to investigate how the policy discourse incorporates ecological approaches in these countries**. In so doing, this study highlights similarities and differences in the dominant discourses that emerge from policy documents.

Agricultural policy measures function as a means for society to communicate desirable future evolution of farms and as a way of incentivising desirable behaviour. In this study, an assumption has been that differences at societal level in attitudes, understanding and problematising of various positive and negative impacts of agricultural production and consumption of agricultural products determine choices of policy measures, and the way in which they are promoted and justified. Furthermore, this is assumed to explain positive and negative externalities and/or what kind of public good components are associated with the type of farming in focus for policy.

This study makes two explicit contributions. First, this is one of the first attempts to explore how ecological approaches are discussed in individual member states' RDPs and in related agricultural policy documents. By applying discourse analysis to those documents, we were able to clarify how such practices are discussed and to demonstrate the usefulness of these methods to map the discourse used when referring to ecological approaches. To do so, an integrated model containing both Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and rural development socio-economic discourses was developed. Second, this study is a rare attempt to contrast the dominant discourses in a set of different EU countries.

Findings indicate that over the period 2000 to 2020, ecological approaches are related with the multifunctionality discourse through two dominant sub-discourses: (i) agri-ruralism in Sweden; (ii) nature conservation in the other studied EU member states - France, Germany (Bavaria), Hungary, Poland and Romania. **The neomercantilist discourse (aiming at productivity, increased exports and food security) becomes increasingly prominent over time**, appearing in third position in the two last CAP periods 2007-2013 and 2014-2020. Agroecology, biodiversity-based and organic agriculture are among the most frequently mentioned types of farming system in the policy documents.

The report has been prepared by the LIFT partners: SLU (Sweden) - lead, ECOZEPT (Germany), MTA KRTK (Hungary), IAE-AR (Romania), INRAE (France), IRWiR PAN (Poland).



## NEW DISSEMINATION TOOL

The LIFT project has launched its page on [ResearchGate](#), which is a social networking platform for scientists and researchers aimed at active exchanging and discussing research approaches and results of achieved results and igniting scientific discussion. This will help pursue excellence in research and spread the generated knowledge.



ResearchGate

## INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS

During the first year, the LIFT project has successfully achieved 25 workshops with local stakeholders in selected LIFT case study areas in the EU, reaching over 370 people (representing various circles of interest related to ecological approaches in farming). The second year workshops are currently in progress.

In these workshops, some key issues discussed with the local stakeholders relate to the relevance of existing typologies classifying farms according to the extent of ecological practices, or to the identification of optimal indicators of farm performance, or to the best incentives to increase farmers' uptake of ecological practices.

## JOINT ACTIVITIES WITH OTHER PROJECTS



### UNISECO project

The goal of UNISECO project is the development of innovative approaches to enhance the understanding of socio-economic and policy drivers and barriers for further development and implementation of agro-ecological practices in EU farming systems.

Cooperation of LIFT with UNISECO has resulted in 7 joint events in 2019; due to similarities in research topics, the exchange of ideas and research results is beneficial for both projects and leads to the creation of synergies. One of these events was a joint session at the annual meeting of the American Association of Geographers in Washington D.C. (U.S.A.) in April 2019, where the LIFT partner JRC presented deliverable D1.1 on existing farm typology frameworks.

### LANDSUPPORT project

The project aims at developing a web-based, open-access geospatial decision support system devoted to: supporting sustainable agriculture and forestry, evaluating trade-off between land uses, and contributing to the development and implementation of land use policies in Europe. On this basis, LANDSUPPORT is promoting an integrated approach towards rural development policies, by linking science and practice and exploring the vast potential of e-science in agriculture.



LIFT partner BOKU (in cooperation with INRAE and UNIKENT) participated in the LANDSUPPORT workshop “Reconciling agriculture, land-use, environment, sustainability in the 21st century: challenges and requirements for Decision Support systems” in Brussels (Belgium) on 30 January 2020, where participants from various research projects and policy-makers shared experience, ideas and expectations about such decision support systems.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Looking forward to forthcoming events, where LIFT research results are planned to be presented:

- **Annual Meeting of the Austrian Economic Association (NOeG)** in Vienna (Austria) on 24-25 February 2020, with focus on evidence-based economic policy making.
- **14<sup>th</sup> European Farming Systems Conference** in Évora (Portugal) on 20-26 March 2020, aimed at issues of farming systems facing climate change and resource challenges.
- **Annual Conference of the Agricultural Economics Society** in Leuven (Belgium) on 15-17 April 2020. Among others, sessions cover topics such as environmental economics and policy, supply chain analysis, food demand and policy, behavioural economics, structural adjustment of agriculture, technology adoption.
- **9<sup>th</sup> International Conference "Agriculture for Life, Life for Agriculture"** in Bucharest (Romania) on 4-6 June 2020.
- **XVI Congress of the European Association of Agricultural Economists (EAAE)** in Prague (Czech Republic) on 25-28 August 2020. The theme of the congress is "Raising the Impact of Agricultural Economics: Multidisciplinarity, Stakeholder Engagement and Novel Approaches", where LIFT plans to present its findings together with the partnering **UNISECO** project.
- **60<sup>th</sup> European Regional Science Association (ERSA) Congress** in Bolzano (Italy) on 25-28 August 2020 with the main theme of "Territorial Futures - Visions and scenarios to cope with megatrends in a changing Europe".
- **20<sup>th</sup> Organic World Congress (OWC)** in Rennes (France) on 21-27 September 2020. With its motto "From its Roots, Organic Inspires Life" it will aim to gather stakeholders working toward sustainable agriculture, value chains, and consumption to exchange their knowledge, innovations, and experiences.

## LEARN MORE ABOUT LIFT!



To stay up to date with the latest news, research results and planned workshops for stakeholders in your area or to sign up in order to receive LIFT newsletters and updates, please visit our website: [www.lift-h2020.eu](http://www.lift-h2020.eu), check out our social media accounts or contact the LIFT project representatives through the website's contact page.

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