

### Parallel Session 3:

#### “How to facilitate progress towards regional sustainability of agriculture” Session Report

This session aimed to discuss policy actions that can be undertaken at European, national and regional levels in order to enable increased regional sustainability of agriculture in Europe.

The discussion was grounded in the **FarmPath** project results, particularly focussing on policy recommendations deriving from a transdisciplinary and participative research process in the seven study regions.

In this report you will find a brief overview on the session works; the **session results** (tables 1 and 4); **participants' evaluation** (table 2) and the **participants' list** (table 3).

#### Overview on the session

##### I. Work Groups

Participants were randomly distributed in four groups corresponding to the themes issuing from FarmPath Handbook “**Facilitating the Sustainability of Agriculture at Regional Level**”:

1. Innovation in Farming
2. Maintenance or Re-emergence of farming activities
3. New concept of farming, farmers and rural areas
4. Policy and institutional arrangements.

Each group discussed a set of policy recommendations selected both from the above-mentioned Handbook and a Policy Brief: “**Regional Sustainability of Agriculture: Adapting Institutions and Policies to Enable Transition**”<sup>1</sup>. In particular, participants were asked:

- Whether they agree with the recommendation, and therefore:
  - If yes, why (necessity, relevance...)?
  - If not, why/how to change it?
- To which policy level(s) does it pertain?
- Any other recommendations.

See the results of the discussion in Table 4 (*at the end of this report*).

##### II. Plenary and Polling

The group rapporteurs presented the results of the discussion and the reformulation of the recommendations.

Participants were asked to add any further comments to the recommendations, and then to vote on the three recommendations that they considered to be a priority. The total votes are presented in Table 1<sup>2</sup>, illustrating the policy recommendations of highest priority to the participants.

<sup>1</sup> Both documents will soon be available at the FarmPath website: <http://www.farmpath.eu/>.

<sup>2</sup> This table presents the original recommendations. Please check comments and revisions of each recommendation in Table 4.

Table 1: Polling Results

Votes	Policy Recommendation
11	Support <b>integrated regional development policies</b> with long-term planning, reducing conflicting goals and trade-offs between policies, through financing and coordinating mechanisms. Connect, in particular, regional sustainability of agriculture to transversal policies (water management/quality, environment and natural resources, food models, etc.).
7	Support <b>farmer to farmer knowledge exchange</b> and innovation networks (between and across regions).
3	Promotion of <b>campaigns for sustainable food habits</b> , connecting issues such as health and regional farming products; provide funds to agricultural shows and to farm related activities in schools.
3	Support <b>participation of farmers in society and policy management</b> , namely on regional boards.
3	Define and support <b>long-running processes of co-constructed knowledge</b> through sufficient funding.
3	Prioritize <b>rural infrastructure on the basis of actual needs</b> , e.g. roads, water-efficient irrigation infrastructure, power grids, and agricultural waste management.
3	Pay for <b>Public goods</b> .
1	Support initiatives of <b>successful farming</b> leaders through <b>public awards and prizes</b> .
1	Provide <b>timely consultancy on production practices, education and marketing, and administrative duties</b> (accounting procedures, social payments etc.), and to develop the so called “technological calendar” and the “administrative calendar” for each farmer.
1	Decrease the <b>administrative burden on farmers</b> through changes to the organisational setup, e.g. through provision of a “fast track” and set up “one stop shops” for farmers where they may deal with all administrative procedures and receive technical advice.
1	Expand <b>school curricula</b> (e.g., on-farm learning experiences for children and young people) and provide teachers with qualifications in the field of sustainability of agriculture.
1	Improve <b>motivation for migration towards rural areas</b> , for instance through tax relief, instalment plans for tax and other payments, better conditions for credit loans, lower interest rates, etc..
1	Support <b>short supply chains</b> and producer-consumer cooperatives.
1	Give higher <b>priority to agricultural research</b> .
1	Promote <b>new evaluation criteria for research</b> , in which the applicability of the results is valued.

**Table 2: Evaluation**

8 out of the 16 participants provided their evaluation of the session:

	Agree 100%	Agree 75%	Agree 25 %	Disagree
The session corresponded to my expectations.	4	4		
Discussed issues are quite relevant.	5	3		
I am happy with the methodology.	4	4		
I expressed my opinion and it was taken into consideration.	7	1		
I am happy with the session's results.	2	6		
<b>Comments and Suggestions:</b> - Very organized. Time constraint.				

**Table 3: List of Participants**

Name	Institution	Country	Email	Group
Maciej Krzysztofowicz	DG AGRI		maciej.krzysztofowicz@ec.europa.eu	1
Lena Wietheger	IFOAM EU		Lena.wietheger@ifoam-eu.org	1
Mariana Draganova	Institute for the Studies and Knowledge – UNWE (FarmPath team)	Bulgaria	meriliny@gmail.com	1
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Otto Schmid	FIBL	Switzerland	Otto.schmid@fibl.org	3
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Pavlin Antonov	Farmer	Bulgaria	bgcattle@gmail.com	4
Marion Diaz	Agrocampus Ouest (FarmPath team)	France	Marion.diaz@agrocampus-ouest.fr	4
Artur Cristóvão	Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro	Portugal	acristov@utad.pt	4
Carla Gonzalez	Universidade de Évora	Portugal	cgonzalez@uevora.pt	Facilitat or G1
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Sarah Peter	Institute for Rural Development Research	Germany	peter@ifrls.de	Facilitat or G3
Annie McKee	James Hutton Institute	UK	annie.mckee@hutton.ac.uk	Facilitat or G4
Teresa Pinto-Correia	Universidade de Évora	Portugal	mtpc@uevora.pt	Session facilitat or



Table 4

Policy recommendations to facilitate sustainability transitions – Workshop comments and revisions



## 1. Innovation in Farming

1.1. Interconnection between farming, policy and research	Comments	Reformulation	Reg.	Nat.	Eur.
Give higher priority to agricultural research.		Give higher priority to agricultural research for sustainable agriculture including organic farming.			X
Define and support long-running processes of co-constructed knowledge through sufficient funding.		Reserve funding for actions which will involve actors in long-term processes beyond funding.	X		
Set up platforms that promote connections between the three sectors, coordinated by a given entity (in charge of securing the functioning of such processes).		Set up platforms that promote connections between the three sectors, coordinated by a clear responsible (in charge of securing the functioning of such processes). Networking at national and EU level.	X		
Promote new evaluation criteria for research, in which applicability of the results is valued.	No changes.			X (national system, assess research)	
Exploring new relations model in order to build trust and construct a common goal.	NEW RECOMMENDATION		X		
1.2. Innovative mind set	Comments	Reformulation	Reg.	Nat.	Eur.
Provide support for innovation-oriented clusters and innovative cooperation models.	Funding to take place at European level; institutionalisation at national level and individualised support at regional level.	Provide support for innovation-oriented clusters and innovative cooperation models by institutionalisation, finance, knowledge and experience from others, but individualised support.	X (indiv.)	X (instit.)	X (finance / funding)
Give priority to extension services in the Rural Development Programmes or through other public funding schemes.	No changes.			X	



Table 4

Policy recommendations to facilitate sustainability transitions – Workshop comments and revisions



Support farmer to farmer knowledge exchange and innovation networks (between and across regions).		Support farmer to farmer knowledge exchange and networking mechanisms.	X		
Improve facilities for education and training covering, for instance, new technologies, environment and business skills; enabling flexible educational schemes and increasing its practice-relevance.		Improve facilities and possibilities for education and training covering, for instance, new technologies, environment and business skills; enabling flexible educational schemes and increasing their practice-relevance.		X	



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Policy recommendations to facilitate sustainability transitions – Workshop comments and revisions



## 2. MAINTENANCE OR RE-EMERGENCE OF FARMING ACTIVITIES

2.1. Economic viability of farming activities	Comments	Reformulation	Reg.	Nat.	Eur.
Expand the spectrum of subjects eligible for funding in order to facilitate farm business start-ups, like initial investments related to administrative fees.	Is this measure going to change the economic system, which doesn't allow economic viability of farming? Is this targeted at everyone? <b>Plenary added:</b> 1) But accept that many will fail. 2) New farmers is different from new people involved in farming. Should be clarified who is "young farmer" and "new entrant".	Targeted funding, for viable activities.	X	X	
Set up an institutional framework stimulating farmer cooperation – e.g. Cooperative enterprises – and ensure adequate implementation processes through facilitators and training on cooperative management and governance issues.	"Institutional framework" sounds like there is only one framework. It should be open to all sorts of institutional frameworks.	Ensure adequate implementation processes through facilitators and training on cooperative management and governance issues.	X	X	
Give incentives for the creation of a regional identity through a Local Quality Convention for products and services; or through the creation of regional trademarks and networks.	Incentives as such already exist. Maybe the problem is lack of awareness.	Support the creation of local brands.	X	X	
Support small farms held by young farmers and any type of new entrant, through payment schemes that increasing farm income.	Such measures may create dependency.	Improve the existing YF payment scheme; should increase YF entrepreneurship.		X	
Promote knowledge and experiences exchange. (transversal)	NEW RECOMMENDATION				
Pay for public goods generated by farming.	NEW RECOMMENDATION			X	X
2.2. Land availability and farming succession	Comments	Reformulation	Reg.	Nat.	Eur.
Create legal support for new forms of land management like land sharing and make it eligible for agriculture support schemes.		Create legal support for new forms of sustainable land management like land sharing and make it eligible for		X	



Table 4

Policy recommendations to facilitate sustainability transitions – Workshop comments and revisions



		agriculture support schemes.			
Promote land transfer from non-productive farmers to productive ones for instance through the set up of "land banks" or land trusts.	Clarify what "non-productive" famers means.	Promote land transfer of idle / abandoned land, through the set up of "land banks" or land trusts.		X	
Promote long-term campaigns aiming at changing attitudes and creating openness towards increasing acceptance of alternative (extra-family) models of farm succession.	No changes.			x	
2.3. Farming infrastructures and services	Comments	Reformulation	Reg.	Nat.	Eur.
Facilitate, or directly support within the Rural Development Programmes, the creation of mobile processing infrastructures like slaughterhouses.	No changes.				
Prioritize rural infrastructure on the basis of actual needs, e.g. roads, water-efficient irrigation infrastructure, power grids, and agricultural waste management.		Prioritize rural infrastructure on the basis of actual needs, e.g. roads, water-efficient irrigation infrastructures, sustainable and smart grids, and agricultural waste management.			



Table 4  
Policy recommendations to facilitate sustainability transitions – Workshop comments and revisions



### 3. NEW CONCEPT OF FARMING, FARMERS AND RURAL AREAS

3.1. Farming and society	Comments	Reformulation	Reg.	Nat.	Eur.
Promotion of campaigns for sustainable food habits, connecting issues such as health and regional farming products; provide funds to agricultural shows and to farm related activities in schools.	'Nutrition' and 'sustainable consumption' should be differentiated. There is too much content in this recommendation (health being a separate sector), therefore it should be split up.	Promotion of campaigns for creating awareness for sustainable food consumption in the specific regional cultural context. Include neighbouring rural areas in urban centre planning, especially for food system, environmental services.	Local / city level (implementation)		X
Support initiatives of successful farming leaders through public awards and prizes.	Relevance of positive examples. But who decides about "success" criteria? "Greenwashing risk"! Prices/awards shouldn't promote only certain types of farming, but cover the diversity of different agricultural models, such as organic/conventional, and different size scales.	Support initiatives that improve the image of farming.	X	X	
Support participation of farmers in society and policy management, namely on regional boards.		Support multi-actor participatory processes. Governance mechanisms needed, for which learning regarding organisation is a precondition	X (plus local)	X	X
Expand school curricula (e.g., on-farm learning experience for children and youths or nutrition education) and provide teachers with qualifications in the field of sustainability of agriculture.	Nutrition education is a separate issue!	Expand school curricula (e.g., on-farm learning experiences for children and young people) and provide teachers with qualification in the field of sustainability of agriculture. Additionally, facilitation of education process is needed.	Local / city level		
3.2. Attractiveness of rural areas	Comments	Reformulation	Reg.	Nat.	Eur.
Improve motivation for migration towards rural areas, for instance through tax relief, instalment plans for tax and other payments, better conditions for credit loans, lower interest rates, etc..	Very financially focused. Expensive solution! More dimensions beyond the economic one are relevant.	Secure attractiveness of rural areas by improving social services. (depending on type of rural area: intensive agriculture; remote; peri-urban).	X	X	X



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Activate rural employment, for instance by establishing grants for the employment and training of young people on farms.	Not discussed due to time constraint.				
3.3. Going local	Comments	Reformulation	Reg.	Nat.	Eur.
Support short supply chains and producer-consumer cooperatives.	Social inclusion (poverty): this refers to the notion that persons with little income aren't aware of the opportunities of alternative marketing channels.	Support short supply chains and producer-consumer cooperatives, accounting for social inclusion (poverty) and including actors from the entire food system (not only producers and consumers). Creative ways to promote local food in public procurement.			
3.4. Multifunctional rural areas and farming	Comments	Reformulation	Reg.	Nat.	Eur.
Create special legislation for those farmers who want to invest in multifunctionality regarding for instance permits for different activities.	Not discussed due to time constraint.				



Table 4

Policy recommendations to facilitate sustainability transitions – Workshop comments and revisions



## 4. OVERALL POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

4.1. Coherent policy-making	Comments	Reformulation	Reg.	Nat.	Eur.
Support integrated regional development policies with long-term planning, reducing conflicting goals and trade-offs between policies, through financing and coordinating mechanisms. Connect, in particular, regional sustainability of agriculture to transversal policies (water, quality, landscape, food models etc.).	Must be conscious of conflict when implementing policies; must have room for manoeuvre at local and regional scale. Examples: public goods want from agriculture; integration of environment aspects into agriculture; public and private policy coordinated.  Policy sectors should be treated together; but some have different linkages (some policies are more connected than others; depends also on national framework). Policy coordination should be grouped.	Support integrated regional development policies with long-term planning, reducing conflicting goals and trade-offs between policies, through financing and coordinating mechanisms. Connect, in particular, regional sustainability of agriculture to transversal policies (water management, quality, environment and natural resources, food models etc.).		Flexible framework at EU (targeted priorities for policy plus funding); national level + regional emphasis.	
Ensure prior assessment of all social, economic and environmental effects of closing educational and medical facilities and consider its rearrangement to fit local people needs.	Make link to regional sustainability of agriculture more explicit.	Ensure prior assessment of all social, economic and environmental effects of closing rural services plus infrastructures, e.g., medical services, schools, etc. and consider its rearrangement and creative solutions to fit local people needs.	Assessment	X	
4.2. Regulation	Comments	Reformulation	Reg.	Nat.	Eur.
Eligibility criteria (of public policies) should be more flexible towards the specific regional characteristics and economic activities.	Current framework might not allow this (depends on MS). Eligibility criteria to involve regional stakeholders. Flexibility in policy design but limits defined and maintained during implementation. Two levels of influence: top (EU) + bottom (regional).	Eligibility criteria and rules (of public policies) should be more flexible towards the specific regional characteristics and economic activities.		MS have to choose the flexibility they want.	



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4.4. Institutions	Comments	Reformulation	Reg.	Nat.	Eur.
Organise training days on a regular basis for national and local administrative staff on various types of farming to discuss issues such as hygiene regulation or the use of common pastures.	How important are the examples – to make more explicit? Keep more general. Very relevant; those in administration often are not involved in farming. Good for farmers and administration.	Organise training days on a regular basis for administrative staff at different levels on various types of farming to discuss issues such as hygiene regulation or the use of common pastures.	Depends on MS. Maybe national, to implement at regional level (often less informed)		
Provide timely consultancy on production practices and administrative duties (accounting procedures, social payments etc.), developing the so called “technological calendar” and “administrative calendar” for each farmer.	Second part needs clarification or to add an example.	Provide timely consultancy on production practices, education and marketing, and administrative duties (accounting procedures, social payments etc.), and to develop the coherence of the “technological calendar” (i.e. calendar of farm tasks) and the “administrative calendar” (i.e. policy and funding timescales) for each farmer.	X		
Implementation of Customer codes.	Did not know what is this.				
Decrease the administrative burden on farmers through changes to the organisational setup, e.g. through provision of a ‘fast track’ and set up ‘one stop shops’ for farmers where they may deal with all administrative procedures and receive technical advice.	Qualification of shop managers is important.		Implementation at regional and local level	National policy design priority	