

AUSTRIA

Socially inclusive futures

Location

Vienna

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P6 – Social inclusion & local
development

Measure

M16 - Cooperation

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 1 968 601.85
EAFRD 987 639.00
National/Region. 980 962.85

Project duration

2018 – 2023

Project promoter

Green Care Austria
Association

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Website

www.greencare-oe.at

Green Care projects on family farms offer social services close to home in rural areas. They increase the quality of life for people, secure and create jobs while also helping to preserve small-scale agriculture and forestry.

Summary

The Green Care projects partner agricultural and forestry enterprises with educational, health, social and economic organizations. In cooperation with social agencies and institutions, the farms offer services for the young and old as well as people with physical and mental burdens.



With a focus on interaction between people and nature, Green Care projects give new opportunities to offer diversified services for farmers, social agencies and institutions. The farms are supported during project implementation and a specially developed two-stage certification system guarantees the service quality.

Green Care is supported by national funds and EAFRD under the RDP.

Results

Cooperation between farms, municipalities and key people from the education, health and social sectors leads to new networks and innovative solutions for social challenges in rural areas.

Social services are available where they are needed.

Farmers have new income opportunities helping to preserve small-scale agriculture and forestry.

Jobs are secured and created in rural areas.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ Decentralised services bring multiple benefits. These include diversifying farm income towards non-agricultural activities, securing and creating jobs in rural areas including for people with disabilities, shortening travel distances and reusing existing infrastructure.
- ❑ Combining space indoors and out, direct contact with animals and plants and highlighting high-quality food production promotes well-being and healthy nutrition.
- ❑ Networks and cooperation are central to the project.
- ❑ Offering health and social services for citizens in rural areas while increasing opportunities and employment on farms meets objectives of multiple European policies including the European Green Deal.

Context

Rural communities and family farms face significant challenges. To keep people in the region and attract new citizens, solutions are needed including care close to home for children as well as services for the young and older people.

Smaller agricultural and forestry enterprises are looking for new perspectives, as they must continually develop to survive economically. Diversified services play an increasingly important role.

The Green Care project was established to help farms offer social services and realise new sources of income while contributing to social and economic development in rural areas. Farms have enormous potential for this. Whether they have orchards, vineyards, arable land, livestock or forestry, they combine space indoors and out, direct contact with animals and plants along with high-quality food production. Farmers can use this potential as well as their educational and social qualifications to join forces with social organisations, institutions and municipalities and offer innovative Green Care services.

Objectives

The Green Care - Where people flourish project aims to:

- Support and preserve small-scale agriculture and forestry;
- Create high-quality social services;
- Assure quality through an external certification system;
- Preserve and create jobs on farms and in the region;
- Improve the quality of life and compatibility of family and work for rural citizens through improved social infrastructure;
- Impart knowledge about agriculture and forestry as well as sustainable and regional food production.

Activities

Green Care - Where people flourish was launched in 2011 by the Vienna Chamber of Agriculture and quickly expanded across Austria. In 2014, ARGE Green Care Austria was founded as a network of 23 stakeholders from the agricultural, educational, health, social and economic sectors. It includes representatives from Federal Ministries, the Public Employment Service and social economy institutions. ARGE aims to anchor Green Care at the political level and strengthen cooperation between stakeholders.



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The project consistently implements the ten goals of the Green Care strategy: raising awareness, high-quality products and services, legal framework conditions, quality assurance (certification), a platform for all stakeholders, financing models, Austria-wide cooperation, education and training programmes, intervention and impact research, and collaboration at the European level.

In 2015, the Green Care Austria association was founded as a nationwide network for all nine Chambers of Agriculture. The association accompanies and supports farmers, social agencies, institutions, and municipalities in developing and implementing Green Care services.

The main components of the project are:

- Raising awareness and building networking and cooperation structures within and outside agriculture, e.g. via ARGE Green Care Austria, information events, cooperation talks, press, the website and Facebook.
- Development and implementation of new Green Care services from agricultural and forestry enterprises for target groups. This includes clarifying legal basics, ensuring qualifications in cooperation with rural training institutes, forging partnerships, implementing marketing and developing quality criteria.
- Supporting family farms and their cooperation partners in implementing services. This includes initial project idea, implementation, certification and further development.
- Establishing cooperation to integrate Green Care into regional development processes through networking with stakeholders including the Association of Municipalities, LEADER and Familie & Beruf GmbH, along with targeted awareness-raising activities/events.

- Promoting and supervising studies to further develop the Green Care topic and provide empirical confirmation of Green Care project benefits and effects on farms.
- Developing and implementing a two-stage certification system for Quality Assurance. Stage 1: internal certification by Green Care Austria, Stage 2: accreditation by an external body.

A separate funding application is available via each component and is structured according to set goals and priorities with indicators defined for each step. The progress against the indicators is reported annually to the stakeholders in a concise activity report which is available in the 'About us' section of the Green Care website.

Main Results

Green Care has become firmly established in Austria as a diversification option for agricultural and forestry enterprises. As of November 2020, there were 113 certified Green Care farms. So far, twelve Green Care services have been developed for education, health and social services on farms, from kindergartens and day centres for people with dementia to health promotion.

Existing infrastructure is often put to new use, avoiding new buildings and conserving resources.

Decentralised services shorten travel distances (e.g. a day centre for older people on a farm vs a retirement home in a town).

Regional food production along with healthy and sustainable nutrition is promoted in Green Care educational projects.

Green Care promotes productivity through diversification and innovation, creates rural employment and provides meaningful employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

There is cooperation with the Chambers of Agriculture in Schleswig-Holstein, North Rhine-Westphalia and Bavaria in Germany, which are also working on the development of Green Care projects. There is also networking with the German Working Group for Social Agriculture.

Furthermore, Switzerland (carefarming.ch) may adopt the Austrian system of quality assurance. The www.greencare-oe.at website will also be adapted for Japan in the future.



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'Three out of four Austrian farms are convinced by Green Care.' - Market Institut Agrarstudie 2019

Key lessons

Networks and cooperation are central to the project.

Green Care is an innovative form of diversification towards non-agricultural activities.

Offering health and social services for citizens in rural areas while increasing opportunities and employment on farms meets multiple objectives under the European Green Deal, Agenda 2030, European Common Agricultural Policy, European Employment Strategy and European Disability Strategy 2010-2020.

'It's great that Green Care exists, especially for young people who might want to continue running the farm differently than the previous generation' - farm from the WIFO study 2020

'The certification gives our guests a certain security for a great quality offering!' - operation from the WIFO study 2020

Additional sources of information

www.fb.me/greencareoe

www.youtube.com/watch?v=NB3NyYQplcs

*This project has been categorised under 'Socially inclusive futures' by the nominating National Rural Network