MobileFarmerapp

Early and gradual introduction of new mobile phone app improves accessibility for CAP beneficiaries and subsidy control for Paying Agency.

EAFRD-funded projects

Location: Nationwide, Hungary
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Priority: n/a
Focus Area: n/a
Measures: M20 - Technical Assistances
Funding: Total budget 364 000.00 (EUR)
  EAFRD 291 200.00 (EUR)
  National/Regional 72 800.00 (EUR)
Timeframe: 2019 to 2020
Project promoter: Hungarian State Treasury
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Summary

MobileFARMER is a mobile phone app of the Hungarian CAP Paying Agency that facilitates the communication between EAFRD beneficiaries when implementing agricultural and rural development subsidies.

The new mobile app has been available since April 2020 following its development and pilot test run. While users need to register, the app is available for free at Google Play and App Store digital content providers.

The main objectives of the initiative were to comply with EC legislation and to replace expensive on-site inspections by faster and more cost-effective means of inspection via the mobile app.

Supported project activities focused on the development and testing of the mobile phone app, commissioning the first public version, and connecting the app with the IT systems of the Hungarian State Treasury to allow beneficiaries access data and information about their funding application.

Project results

The main results are:

> Improved administrative capacity for CAP beneficiaries and the Paying Agency.

> A fully developed mobile app available for free on both Android and IOS devices.

> The registration of around 16 000 users since the start-up.

> Implementation of 11 updates and improvements since its launch.

> Development of a Facebook page.

> Publication of 9 videos about MobileFARMER on its own YouTube channel.

> A good up-take of each video by 500-3 000 people per video depending on topic.

Lessons & Recommendations

When seeking to introduce a new technology successfully, a gradual introduction is important. Thus, the Hungarian State Treasury started the development of the mobile app in good time. This allowed for sufficient time for testing the first versions and for increasing the number of user accounts in a step-by-step manner. The process can now be smoothly extended to all partners by 2025.

Context

In Hungary, the CAP Paying Agency had been communicating through several channels with its beneficiaries, but less so through new technologies such as mobile devices and apps which had not yet been exploited effectively.

With the new programming period and its digital transformation agenda, the European Commission legally obliges all Member States to implement and encourage the use of mobile phone devices to improve certain functions of the application and subsidy control processes by 2025.

Prompted by the new technological opportunities and contractual obligations, it was the aim of the Hungarian State Treasure to start early with the task of developing the mobileFARMER app to facilitate an effective two-way communication process with farmers and other partners. Following its development and pilot test run, the new mobile phone app has been available since April 2020.

Objectives

The main objectives of the initiative included the:

> Development and introduction of the mobileFARMER app.

> Facilitation of two-way communication between the Hungarian CAP Paying Agency and the farmers who submit applications.

> Achievement of compliance with European Community legislation (i.e. the introduction of the mandatory application of certain functions by 2025).

> › Replacement of expensive on-site inspections by introducing faster and more cost-effective means of inspection via the mobile app thereby avoiding travel to the site

Activities

Stage 1: Developing technical description: Farmers and other partners were consulted about the possible functions of the new mobile phone app. On this basis, a set of key functions was developed and a detailed technical description was produced (functions, menu structure, etc.).

Stage 2: Based on the technical description, CAP support focused on the following activities:

> › Developing the mobile phone app in alignment with the technical description.
>
> › Creating a test version and running pilot tests.
>
> › Commissioning of the first public version.
>
> › Establishing a connection with the IT systems of the Hungarian Paying Agency, so that registered customers can access their previous data and information about their funding application.

Following this, the new app was and is continuously developed to introduce additional functions. For example, the app currently includes: customer service functions (appointment reservation, receipt request, question-answer interface); information functions (news, calendar); access to general data about the customer's application and support; geo-referenced photo taking and transmission to the Paying Agency; maintenance of customer registration data; display of agricultural parcel data; area measurement function; and submission of certain electronic documents.

Paying Agency staff were trained in the app's use.

A communication campaign was implemented at all suitable events possible (agricultural forums, trade shows, fairs, etc.) to inform customers about the app. A range of social media channels promote the new app. This includes the production of user-friendly videos, the creation of a new YouTube channel, and a Facebook page to further strengthen communication.

The project activities included actions supported without CAP funding.

mobileFARMER app
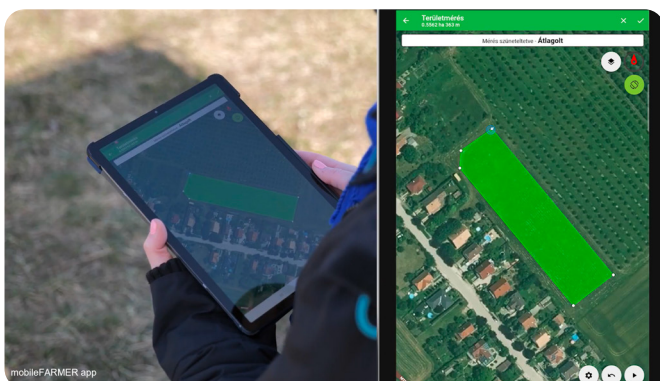
Main results

The use of the app currently remains optional and the project's main results include:

> › The process of controlling CAP funds has become more cost-effective, more flexible, and faster including with the aid of georeferenced evidence.
>
> › A fully developed mobile app, available for free on both Android and IOS devices when launched in April 2020.
>
> › The registration of around 16 000 users since the start-up.
>
> › Ongoing improvement and expansion of the app to accommodate as many support measures as possible. Since its launch, 11 updates have been implemented (correcting errors and/or introducing new functions).
>
> › Development of a Facebook page, which has more than 8 800 «likes» and more than 10 000 followers.
>
> › Publication of nine videos about MobileFARMER on its own YouTube channel.
>
> › A good up-take of each video by 500 to 3 000 people per video depending on topic

The Paying Agency received a lot of very positive feedback on the mobile app specifically for the area measurement function which effectively supports the process of applying for agricultural land-based subsidies. Compared to all previous methods, the app provides easier handling and more accurate data.

Some of the functions are also available in offline mode. This facilitates the useability of the app in the field and allows the user to upload the collected data at a later point when an internet connection is available.

Key lessons

When seeking to introduce a new technology successfully, it is important to introduce it gradually. Thus, the Hungarian Paying Agency started the development of the mobile app in good time. This allowed for sufficient time for testing the first versions and for increasing the number of user accounts in a step-by-step manner. The process can now be smoothly extended to all partners by 2025.

Additional informartion:

www.facebook.com/mobilgazda

www.youtube.com/@mobilgazda8075

Funded by
the European Union