

Co-creation of solutions for climate smart and resilient agriculture

Networking between Finnish researchers and farmers builds capacity for climate smart agroecology.

EAFRD-funded projects

Location: Helsinki, Finland

Programming period: 2014-2020

Priority: P1 - Knowledge transfer and innovation

Focus Area: Innovation and cooperation

Measures: M01 - Knowledge transfer & information actions

Funding:

Total budget	358 545 (EUR)
EAFRD	150 589 (EUR)
National/Regional	207 956 (EUR)

Timeframe: 01/01/2022 - 31/12/2024

Project promoter: Natural Resources Institute Finland

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Summary

Climate smart agrifood systems are the goal of this innovation project from Finland. Farmers, advisors, students, teachers and other rural actors benefitted. The knowledge networking project improved understanding among farmers and other climate stakeholders about adaptive capacity, resilience and climate smart agrifood systems. Communication channels (e.g. workshops, webinars, lectures, magazine articles, blogs and social media) and campaigns shared information about the climate strengths of local systems and common solutions to regional structural problems. Events and materials were produced to help farmers adapt to climate change and increase competitiveness.

Project results

- The project helped capacity building for a more resilient and climate smart agriculture sector in Finland. Project actions served as a bridge between scientists and farmers, providing up-to-date information from science to farmers and helping researchers understand the practical factors of farming.



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- Project information was designed to create immediate results for agricultural practices and take advantage of new opportunities to help mitigate the negative impacts of climate change.

Key lessons and recommendations

- A positive, solutions-oriented narrative is needed to advance climate smart farming practices.
- Soil management is a core issue and soil emissions are very important.

Context

Agriculture and food systems are facing many changes and disturbances, such as extreme weather events, supply chain interruptions, price volatility, conflicts and changes in trade agreements, animal diseases, pests, failures in power grids, cybersecurity threats and changes in consumer preferences. To cope with these challenges, farmers, advisors, educators, developers and researchers need up-to-date information about risks and potential solutions. Joint platforms can be used to exchange experience and ideas on enhancing resilience and adaptive capacity.



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In Finland, food systems' resilience could improve by increasing the self-sufficiency of protein crops, improving nutrient recycling and enhancing the availability of local renewable energy. Co-creation of solutions is needed to develop useful and practical solutions for these challenges because no one has ready-made answers.

Objectives

The project sought to fill information gaps and raise awareness to scale up best practices. It also aimed to:

- Enhance the resilience and adaptation capacity of Finnish farms and the food system.
- Advance the sustainability of Finnish farms and food systems.
- Transfer research-based knowledge of climate smart farming practices for farmers and advisors.
- Enhance interaction between farmers, advisors and researchers.
- Support agroecology students and teachers to develop future skills and share knowledge about resilience and climate smart agriculture.
- Increase public understanding of agricultural ecosystem services.

Activities

Promoted themes included soil fertility, soil health law, soil food web, plant health protection, and developing a resilient food system involving vegetable production, legume production, silage production, resilience in dairy farming and occupational health issues.

This project used its CAP funding to organise:

- Ten workshops all over Finland on different themes. Participants included farmers, advisors, agroecology teachers and agroecology students.
- There were 19 webinars open to everyone. Participants included farmers, advisors, agroecology teachers and students. The recordings are on the projects' website and are available for everyone.
- One webinar for advisors about plant health.
- Two webinars for agroecology teachers on biodiversity, food security and climate change actions and economy). Recordings are on the website and available for everyone.
- Six agriculture theme days in elementary schools aimed to make farming more familiar for pupils and teachers and to inform them about future work connected to the agricultural sector. Theme days were organised with the national Natural Resources Institute and included workshops, field trips to farms and an agricultural research station
- Twelve lectures connected to resilience and climate smart practices in other organisations' events,
- Magazine articles in agrifood media.
- Participation at six farming exhibitions in Finland, networking with contacts.
- Key actions centred around the project's communication activities, like sharing information through websites and email newsletters.

Main results

- The project results have helped build capacity for a more resilient and climate smart agriculture sector in Finland. Project actions served as a bridge between scientists and farmers, providing up-to-date information that helped researchers understand the practical factors of farming.
- Project information was designed to create immediate results for agricultural practices and take advantage of new opportunities to help mitigate the negative impacts of climate change.
- Webinar results helped increase equality because virtually anyone can participate in webinar events from anywhere. Using multiple communication channels, such as events, newsletters, webpages, and social media, ensured a broad reach of messages.

This resulted in the following engagement:

- 330 persons participated in face-to-face or hybrid workshops.
- 1 470 participants in webinars.
- Six elementary schools participated in agriculture theme days.
- Viewing of recordings of projects, workshops, and webinars on YouTube (by August 2024).

Key lessons and recommendations

- A positive, solutions-oriented narrative is needed to advance climate smart farming practices.
- Many farmers are interested in climate smart farming, and even more would be if it were economically feasible.
- Using local respected agricultural advisors as communicators increases the acceptance of messages.
- Climate change solutions for agriculture need to be created from the farmers' perspective.
- Soil management is the core issue, soil emissions are most important. Taking care of soil health is at the heart of farming.
- Capacity building should focus on practical skills.
- Many farmers are interested in experiments with new crop plants or improving farming practices.
- Build a strong multidisciplinary team which allows a full understanding of technical and human aspects of communicating climate change and resilience. Partners from local organisations can help with implementing events in different locations. Also, a mix of communication methods helps reach different target groups. Opportunities for two-way communication and possibilities to discuss, ask questions and give feedback promote understanding and trust between actors and enable cooperation.

Quote

“The webinar about livestock farm biodiversity truly opened the eyes about new development paths for farms and rural areas. The event gave lots of motivation for farming and improving farming methods”.

Feedback from the webinar about biodiversity on animal farms (17.4.2024)

Additional information:

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/ilmastoviisas

Event webpage:

www.ilmastoviisas.fi

