



European Network for
Rural Development

EN

PROJECTS BROCHURE

The European Agricultural
Fund for Rural Development

RURAL YOUTH AS LEADERS OF CHANGE

<https://enrd.ec.europa.eu>

Funded by the



European Network for Rural Development

The European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) is the hub that connects rural development stakeholders throughout the European Union (EU). The ENRD contributes to the effective implementation of Member States' Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) by generating and sharing knowledge, as well as through facilitating information exchange and cooperation across rural Europe.

Each Member State has established a National Rural Network (NRN) that brings together the organisations and administrations involved in rural development. At EU level, the ENRD supports the networking of these NRNs, national administrations and European organisations.

Find out more on the *ENRD website* (<https://enrd.ec.europa.eu>).

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

The EAFRD Project Examples brochure forms part of a series of ENRD publications that help encourage information exchange. Each edition of the brochure features different types of projects that have received RDP co-finance from the EAFRD.

Past editions of the EAFRD Projects Brochure can be downloaded from the publications section of the ENRD website ⁽¹⁾. The ENRD collection of good projects and practices ⁽²⁾ contains many additional examples of EAFRD assistance to rural development initiatives.

⁽¹⁾ <https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications/search>

⁽²⁾ https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice_en

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Introduction

Europe needs the vision, engagement and participation of all young people to build a better future that is greener, more inclusive and digital.⁽¹⁾ In the words of the European Commission's President, Ursula von der Leyen, "Our Union needs a soul and a vision [young people] can connect to".⁽²⁾ The EU is striving to give young people more and better opportunities to shape Europe's future and naming 2022 as the European Year of Youth is more than a symbolic step.

Rural youth can provide ideas, inspiration and energy to imagine, create and grasp opportunities for stronger, more connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas. This European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) Projects Brochure will look at how Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) have been accompanying rural youth and supporting their innovative ideas, engagement and participation. Existing initiatives can inspire new actions under the new CAP Strategic Plans.

The EU Youth Strategy 2019–27 wants young people to engage and become active citizens involved in democracy and society.⁽³⁾ The strategy focuses on three core areas of action: Engage, Connect and Empower, and has established 11 European Youth Goals.⁽⁴⁾ Youth Goal #6 is 'Moving Rural Youth Forward': creating conditions which enable young people to fulfil their potential in rural areas and ensuring equality for young people in urban and rural settings.

Specific objectives of this European Youth Goal include ensuring that appropriate infrastructure, sustainable and high-quality jobs and high-quality education opportunities are made available to young people in rural areas; ensuring the decentralisation of activities by, for and with young people in order to support their inclusion and to benefit local communities; and allowing active participation in decision-making processes. Establishing a positive image of rural areas and ensuring the protection of rural traditions are also important objectives.

(1) https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_21_5226

(2) Ibidem

(3) https://europa.eu/youth/strategy_en

(4) <https://youth-goals.eu/ylg6>



These areas mostly coincide with those identified by the ENRD in its previous work on social inclusion,⁽⁵⁾ youth and generational renewal,⁽⁶⁾ ‘vibrant rural areas’⁽⁷⁾ and, more recently, the Vision for rural areas 2040.⁽⁸⁾ Exchanges with stakeholders from rural Europe identified the step changes needed to close existing gaps and to progress towards stronger, more connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas⁽⁹⁾ – at the same time highlighting the role of young people in making those changes happen.

As Commission President von der Leyen stated: “While young people are anxious about the future, they are determined to make it better.”⁽¹⁰⁾ This edition of the EAFRD Projects Brochure features 12 examples of EAFRD-funded projects through which young people in rural areas have been able to make their ideas, dreams and aspirations come true, to transform and improve the places they live in.

Section 1 shows how young farmers and rural entrepreneurs are using their creativity and enthusiasm to develop or innovate economic activities and Section 2 shows how they can combine economic and environmental sustainability. In these projects, young people (most of them young women) take the lead, with rural development policy accompanying them and providing the necessary tools to carry out their initiatives. Section 3 features initiatives that allow for new entrepreneurial ideas to be tested before they are launched on the market and that foster generational renewal in rural economies.

The projects included in this publication are an inspiration to young rural people across Europe and can hopefully stimulate new successful initiatives to be developed with support from the CAP Strategic Plans. More projects led by rural youth can be found in the previous editions of the EAFRD Projects Brochure, especially those on ‘Youth and generational renewal’⁽¹¹⁾ and ‘Vibrant rural areas’.⁽¹²⁾

The ENRD Contact Point Team

- (5) https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/social-inclusion/enrd-resources_en
- (6) https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications/eafrd-projects-brochure-youth-and-generational-renewal_en
- (7) https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications/eafrd-projects-brochure-vibrant-rural-areas_en
- (8) https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/long-term-rural-vision_en
- (9) Challenges, opportunities and step changes are summarised in the Rural Voices report, https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications/rural-voices_en
- (10) https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_21_5226
- (11) https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications/eafrd-projects-brochure-youth-and-generational-renewal_en
- (12) https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications/eafrd-projects-brochure-vibrant-rural-areas_en

1. New business ideas and approaches

Using their creativity and enthusiasm, young people in rural areas can contribute to the ambitions of the Vision for the EU's rural areas by starting new economic activities that create local jobs.

The development of short supply chains contributes towards making agri-food activities more sustainable and resilient, towards diversifying rural economies and towards safeguarding local traditions. Young farmers and rural entrepreneurs are often at the forefront of initiatives that boost and renew traditional land-based activities and RDPs have provided young people in rural areas with the necessary support to transform their entrepreneurial ideas into thriving businesses that support the viability and vitality of rural communities.

On page 5 you can read how a young Hungarian lawyer turned cheesemaking from a hobby into a successful rural business.

On page 6, you can find the story of a young Slovenian accountant who quit her job to take up and strengthen her family's traditional beekeeping activity.

The vitality of rural life is not merely a function of its economic performance but is also shaped by the vibrancy of its cultural activities, its identity, its cohesiveness and its inclusiveness.⁽¹⁾ Thus, the green and digital transitions in rural areas should also be fair and take into account the needs of all rural citizens, including those from disadvantaged groups.⁽²⁾

RDPs have empowered people in challenging situations to take the lead in developing fairer and more inclusive rural businesses that improve individuals' well-being and strengthen rural communities.

A Czech disabled farmer used RDP support to develop an inclusive working and learning environment (page 7).

Closing the gender gap is key for Europe as a whole and requires that several issues are addressed, from increasing the availability of basic services to boosting women's employment. RDPs have offered major opportunities to address the gender gap in employment, which is higher in rural areas compared to urban areas.⁽³⁾

Despite a challenging environment, a young farmer in French Guyana developed her own agri-business, which allowed her to support her family (page 8).

(1) European Network for Rural Development, Rural Voices report, https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications/rural-voices_en

(2) European Commission, EU Rural Action Plan, https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/long-term-vision-rural-areas_en#eururalactionplan

(3) European Commission, EU rural areas in numbers, https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/long-term-vision-rural-areas/eu-rural-areas-numbers_en



Establishing a cheese workshop in rural Hungary

Thanks to EAFRD support and to her own tenacity, a young farmer turned her hobby into a viable and competitive rural business.

© Nóra Székely



The Pipitér Cheese Workshop, set up through EAFRD funding, produces natural yogurts, butter, sour cream, various desserts and more than 15 types of cheese.

Lawyer Nóra Székely used to make cheese as a hobby by using the milk from her cow. As her family and friends appreciated and gave her praise for her products, she identified a potential market opportunity in her small hometown, Orosháza (south-east Hungary), and looked into the possibility of RDP support to turn her passion into a business.

In 2018, Nóra received support for farm and business development under Measure 6 of the Hungarian RDP to set up as a young farmer. This allowed her to modernise an old farm building that she was renting from her husband's family and where she had built a cheese-making facility using her own funds.

Works included the installation of a photovoltaic system through which the farm can cover 50% of its electricity needs in a sustainable way. Funding also covered livestock purchase and breeding as well as the purchase of equipment for the cheese-making facility.

Thus, the Pipitér Cheese Workshop was born, with Nóra being the first artisan dairy producer in Orosháza.

In 2019, Nóra successfully applied for further RDP funding for investments in physical assets (Measure 4). This allowed her to set up a cold room and to purchase further equipment for the production and sale of cheese, including a 1 000-litre milk cooler, a compactor, two cheese vats, a 300-litre solar water heater and fridges.

Apart from producing milk, Nóra also started fattening bulls and breeding goats and pigs, obtaining organic certification for the latter. The number of animals has been growing steadily through purchases and breeding.

The farm currently produces and processes 2 500 litres of its own milk every week and would be able to double its capacity without further investments in machinery should demand increase. Recently, Nóra bought a 1 000-litre milk transport tank as well.

The Pipitér Cheese Workshop produces natural yogurts, butter, sour cream, various desserts and more than 15 types of cheese. Its products are in high demand locally and are sold directly on site and in a small local shop. Local catering businesses have started to buy products from the farm on a regular basis.

Currently, the Pipitér Cheese Workshop employs six people: Nóra as the head of the company, one member of administrative staff, one member of sales staff, one cheese production worker, one animal caretaker and a part-time cleaner.

One of Nóra's family members is studying to be a food engineer and has started working in the family business, taking responsibility for sales. This family business could provide a livelihood for several generations.

"Quality food for a quality life!"

Nóra Székely, project holder



© Nóra Székely

The Pipitér Cheese Workshop currently employs six people.



© Nóra Székely

Pipitér's products are sold directly on site and in a small local shop. Local catering businesses buy products from the farm on a regular basis.

Project Name	Establishment of a cheese workshop
Type of beneficiary	Young farmer
Period	2019–2021
Funding	Measure 4: • Total budget: €40 983 • EAFRD contribution: €32 000 • National/regional contribution: €8 000 • Private/own contribution: €983 Measure 6: • Total budget: €118 441 • EAFRD contribution: €47 376 • National/regional contribution: €11 844 • Private/own contribution: €59 221
RDP Measure	M04 – Investments in physical assets M06 – Farm & business development
Further info	https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/establishment-cheese-workshop_en
Contact	szekelynora@outlook.hu

A young Slovenian farmer investing in beekeeping

A young farmer used rural development support to expand and diversify the range of products and services offered by her family's beekeeping holding.

Darja Šolar's family has specialised in beekeeping for over 35 years. The Šolar Farm ensures that the bees live in a pristine natural environment, which in turn enables the farm to produce a wide range of high-quality bee products. The farm is one of the few beekeeping farms in the country producing traditional gingerbread.

Darja was always passionate about bees and fascinated by their diligence, persistence and strength. In 2018, after 12 years working as an accountant, Darja decided to quit her job and take over the family farm in Laško in eastern Slovenia.

Darja sought to improve the economic performance and competitiveness of the business by improving product quality and enhancing service provision.

Support to farm and business development from Measure 6 of the Slovenian RDP allowed her to purchase new beekeeping equipment, including a beeswax cooker and a larger honey extractor. Darja used her own funds to purchase new beehives and restore the room where the honey is extracted and stored. She also set up an insulated apiary and purchased ICT equipment.



EAFRD funding helped the project owner realise her dream - take over the family beekeeping farm and improve the business performance.

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When Darja took over the farm, its 62 beehives produced three varieties of honey in three locations. Today, the farm has 130 beehives in seven locations and produces five varieties of honey. Production levels have increased from about 600kg to about two tonnes per year.

Gingerbread production has increased from 150 kg to 450kg and 'Ema's honey cake' – as the gingerbread is named after Darja's first daughter – has been awarded two national quality marks.

The farm expanded its range of bee and honey-based products and offers a range of activities, including observing the bees while resting in a massage chair and inhaling from an aerosol from the beehive. The green surroundings have a positive and calming effect on the visitors. The farm organises workshops for all age groups, such as pouring wax candles, producing soaps and making traditional gingerbread. A new farm shop welcomes customers in a friendly environment.

The number of monthly visits to the farm increased from five to 25 and on-farm activities are expected to increase revenues further in the coming years. An online shop is planned, enabling an increased customer base from Slovenia and elsewhere.

Darja keeps engaging in further training, including as a honey taster and a master beekeeper. She regularly participates in fairs and local events and is developing connections with local tourism

and culture organisations and the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association as part of her efforts to develop a stronger offer of services and products which can attract more visitors to Laško.

Project Name	Darja Šolar – A young farmer investing in beekeeping
Type of beneficiary	Young farmer
Period	2016–2020
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total budget: €45 000 • EAFRD contribution: €33 750 • National/regional contribution: €11 250
RDP Measure	M06 – Farm & business development
Further info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/darja-solar-young-farmer-investing-beekeeping_en • https://www.facebook.com/cebelarstvosolar/
Contact	darja.solar@gmail.com

Lavandia – a socially-engaged business in rural Czechia

A young farmer used EAFRD funding to develop his lavender organic farm and provide employment opportunities for disabled people.

Farmer Stanislav Bíza is the owner of Lavandia, a farm located in the picturesque wine-growing region of South Moravia, in Czechia. The farm has been active since 2014 and is specialised in growing and processing lavender. Most of the work (including hoeing and weeding) was performed manually or with an old tractor.

Stanislav, who is a wheelchair user, wanted to make his business more efficient whilst creating new working and training opportunities for other disabled people.

Thanks to funding from Measure 6 – Farm and business development of the Czech RDP, Stanislav was able to purchase machinery and equipment to process lavender, including a tractor and a lavender oil distillation unit to obtain lavender oil, a valuable raw material which can be further processed on site and is Lavandia's key product.

The machinery and equipment purchased made the work less physically demanding and opened up new possibilities and job opportunities, including for disabled employees.

The lavender oil produced by the farm is processed on site to produce food (such as syrups), cosmetics and fabric products, including bags, cushions and heating pads. Thanks to the high quality of the lavender oil, Stanislav has been able to establish successful business partnerships with other organic farmers in the region, as well as the organic tea brand Sonnentor, the chocolate maker Herúfek and Coffeespot coffee roaster.

The key values of Lavandia are respect for the landscape, traditions and a sense of belonging to nature and the region. During the summer the lavender blossom attracts lots of visitors to the farm to appreciate the natural settings, where they can also buy various products. The farm also organises and hosts various events such as weddings, excursions and workshops and has become a very popular local tourism destination. It is a very successful example of social farming in Czechia.



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The project owner, who is a wheelchair user, used EAFRD funding to make his business more efficient whilst creating new working and training opportunities for other disabled people.

Stanislav is always looking to innovate. For example, in 2020 he started to produce fuel pellets made from by-products (herbal dust). New products are being developed and the team is expected to grow.

EAFRD funding has enabled the farm business to develop faster than it could have ever done with private funds alone. Business turnover has almost doubled each year, allowing Stanislav to invest in the business and increase the physical accessibility of the farm premises. Lavandia now employs ten workers, of which five are disabled.

Stanislav strongly believes in social entrepreneurship as creating value for the community. However, he considers that the customers should be motivated by the high quality of the products.

"I am really happy that we have managed to successfully add value to our produce and diversify the business whilst employing disabled people. It is not always easy and I do appreciate that the EU projects make it easier for us."

Stanislav Bıza,
founder of Lavandia

Project Name	Lavender and Herb Farm/ Employment of Disabled Persons
Type of beneficiary	Young farmer
Period	2017–2019
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total budget: €90 070 • EAFRD contribution: €22 275 • National/regional contribution: €22 725 • Private/own contribution: €45 070
RDP Measure	M06 – Farm & business development
Further info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/lavender-and-herb-farm-creates-employment-people-disabilities_en • https://www.levandulezmoravy.cz/
Contact	biza@hands.cz

Young farmer start-up in French Guiana

Rural development support has enabled a young farmer to develop a farm business in a challenging context.

French Guiana is dominated by over 85 000 km² of woodlands, with only 4 % of land dedicated to agriculture.⁽¹⁾ The State owns 90 % of the land and, since the turn of the century, the government has been implementing a strategy to increase agricultural land use that incentivises small-scale farming projects including biomass and energy-efficient techniques.

Farmer Solenn Baron studied as an agronomist and, since 2012, had a part-time job at the Association de producteurs en faveur de la promotion de l'agriculture et des produits agricoles de Guyane (APAPAG), a farmers' advisory service. In 2013, at the age of 29, she decided to develop her own farming activity

so that it could provide sufficient income for her family. Becoming a full-time farmer gave Solenn the opportunity to experiment with innovative agro-ecological approaches and establish a production method that reflected her values and principles.

Solenn used support from Measure 4 – Investments in physical assets of the French Guiana RDP to establish fruit and vegetable production in open fields and construct around 11 hectares of greenhouses, with a sand-clay soil. The funding was also used to buy rootstock, purchase equipment for clearing fields and install distribution ramps for irrigation.

(1) <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/2018784?sommaire=2018790#:~:text=La%20Guyane%2C%20territoire%20%3%A0%20dominante,d%3%A9di%3%A9es%20%3%A0%20la%20petite%20agriculture>

Solenn had to face several challenges in order to convert a small area of forests into agricultural plots, in line with the government's strategy to increase agricultural land in a sustainable way. Activities included tree removal, construction of access roads as well as setting up water supply networks and irrigation systems. Big work engines such as excavators proved difficult to operate in such a context, so even the normal construction works (building greenhouses and farm buildings, installing electricity) were slower and more costly.

During the implementation of the project, Solenn did not live locally and had to commute every day, which added to the complexity of project management. Once set up, the farm experienced various setbacks, including robbery of equipment and damage. Solenn also had to install a costly satellite phone system to ensure that the farm had communications.

Despite all these challenges, the farm started to produce several types of vegetables, pepper plants and fruit, as well as cupuaçu (related to cacao). Most of the produce went to a wholesaler while the rest was sold to small local agro-processors and neighbourhood stores. In 2016, Solenn was able to hire a part-time employee (20 hours/week) through a subsidised employment contract.

Several unfortunate natural events (pests, extreme weather) in recent years significantly increased business costs and impacted cashflow. Unfortunately,

the financial situation meant that Solenn's own funds were not enough to continue with the business, resulting in her deciding to sell the agricultural holding in 2021. The business is now under new ownership and continues as an enduring legacy of Solenn's commitment to developing innovative agro-ecological approaches to production in French Guiana.

"All administrative levels showed great understanding and helped me find the administrative solutions to the difficulties I faced."

Solenn Baron,
project holder

Project Name	Young farmer start-up in French Guyana
Type of beneficiary	Young farmer
Period	2013–2017
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total budget: € 126 478 • EAFRD contribution: € 71 908 • National/regional contribution: € 23 969 • Private/own contribution: € 30 601
RDP Measure	M04 – Investments in physical assets
Further info	https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/young-farmer-start-french-guyana_en
Contact	solennbaron@gmail.com



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This EAFRD-funded project fostered innovative agro-ecological approaches to agricultural production in a very challenging environment.

2. New approaches to environmental sustainability

Young people are often very sensitive to environmental and climate issues and have a deep sense of responsibility towards the planet. Across Europe, young farmers and rural entrepreneurs are developing successful activities which combine economic and environmental sustainability.

The European Green Deal aims to transform the EU into a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy. It also provides support to deal with issues resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.⁽¹⁾ For its ambitious targets to be achieved, action must be taken by all sectors.

Land managers and others in rural communities are adopting and developing circular, low-carbon and sustainable practices and the EAFRD is providing invaluable support. A wide range of practices has been collected by the ENRD through its project database,⁽²⁾ thematic work⁽³⁾ and publications.⁽⁴⁾

Organic farming plays an essential role in contributing to sustainable food systems within the EU as it promotes the production of high-quality food with a low environmental impact. The European Green Deal has set a target of 25 % of land to be used for organic farming by 2030, an ambitious goal to be pursued through the Organic Action Plan.⁽⁵⁾

RDPs can support farmers in the take-up of, or transition to, this form of production, helping cover the associated costs and reducing the potential risks.

A case in point is the story of a young Italian farmer who decided to acquire organic certification for her father's farm (page 11).

Agri-environment support from RDPs can contribute to agriculture becoming more environmentally friendly, which can also increase the farm's profitability – a win-win situation.

On page 12, read how a young Spanish farmer adopted more sustainable farming practices, which in turn reduced their production costs.

Rural areas typically offer a wealth of local natural resources, including by-products from agriculture and forests. Here, the creative ideas of young entrepreneurs with a 'green' mind can flourish, reviving local traditions or pioneering innovation.

A young entrepreneur living in rural Poland used LEADER support to set up an innovative fashion company, producing fashion accessories from wood and bio-based materials from agriculture (page 13).

In rural Slovenia, a former athlete turned farmer and set up a business model combining environmental protection, employment creation and education services (page 14).

(1) https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

(2) https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice_en

(3) https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/greening-rural-economy_en

(4) Check in particular the EAFRD Projects Brochures on 'Bioeconomy', 'Resource-efficient rural economies' and the Rural Inspiration Awards 2020, https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications/search_en?f%5B0%5D=im_field_enrd_publication_type%3A20484

(5) https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/farming/organic-farming/organic-action-plan_en



A young Italian farmer ‘going organic’

A young farmer used rural development support to acquire organic certification for her family farm and help her start a full-time career as a farmer.



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EAFRD funding helped a young Italian farmer transition to organic production, with very good economic results.

Elisa Mattioli is a young farmer living 5 km outside Modena, a well-known historical town in central Italy. The proximity of the farm to an urban centre provides her with an opportunity to sell fresh fruit and vegetables to a large market.

Elisa's father had specialised in pear cultivation. He was interested in organic farming principles but had not formally certified the farm as organic. Elisa decided to diversify what was produced on her father's farm, growing a variety of fruit such as cherries, apples, strawberries as well as vegetables in greenhouses covering 4 000 m². In addition, she started bottling fresh fruit juice and producing local red and white wine.

In 2016 Elisa decided to certify the farm as organic, taking her father's interest one step further, to ensure the land continued to be managed sustainably and to help demonstrate to consumers the environmental credentials of her products.

She applied for funding using the support for organic farming – Measure 11 – from the Emilia-Romagna RDP. This support helped Elisa become a full-time farmer and cover all the costs for certifying her farm as organic for both her fresh and processed products.

Organic standards do not permit the use of synthetic chemicals and require a focus on fostering natural soil fertility and managing water resources in the most sustainable way.

The farm achieved very good economic results: revenues increased by approximately 30 % before the COVID-19 pandemic, although now Elisa is having to cope with the rising price of most farm materials.

Elisa regularly sells her fruit and vegetables to four different consumer groups,⁽¹⁾ as well as on her farm premises. In addition, she sells at three different weekly farmers' markets in the cities of Modena and Bologna.

Elisa has already started to expand the farm business. In 2018, she successfully applied for further EAFRD funding under Measure 4 – Investments in physical assets – of the Emilia-Romagna RDP. This allowed her to buy specialised equipment for pest treatments and for cooling the air in greenhouses.

Elisa acknowledges the importance of her father's advice and experience in managing an organic farm. EAFRD support, together with the assistance of the local farmers' association, made the transition of the farm to organic and the expansion of the business much easier and less risky than it might have been.

“I love this land and I want my son to inherit it at its best.”

Elisa Mattioli,
project holder

Project Name	Supporting young farmers' entrepreneurship
Type of beneficiary	Young farmer
Period	2016–2020
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total budget: € 19 151 • EAFRD contribution: € 8 258 • National/regional contribution: € 10 893
RDP Measure	M11 – Organic farming
Further info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/supporting-young-farmers-entrepreneurship_en • http://www.amabio.it
Contact	info@amabio.it

(1) Groups of citizens who come together to purchase products

Agri-environment support for a young Spanish farmer

EAFRD support helped a young Spanish farmer adopt more sustainable agricultural practices while improving his farm's profitability.

In 2016, Francisco José Marín Martínez took over the family farm from his father, who had decided to retire. The farm is located in Caravaca de la Cruz, Murcia (southern Spain), a mountainous area with 90% of production taking place on non-irrigated land and the remaining 10% used for horticulture. Rain is not frequent in the area but, when it does fall, it is often torrential.

The farm is made up of several plots ranging from 1.5 to five hectares and mostly grows cereals and almonds, both of which are rain-fed crops, grown without any irrigation.

Francisco decided to embrace a new environmentally friendly approach while also improving the production and profitability of the farm. Key to this was his aim to reduce the use of phytosanitary products to control pests alongside putting in place sustainable agricultural techniques.

© Francisco Marín Martínez



Multi-annual support from the EAFRD allowed the project owner to embrace an environmentally friendly approach while also improving the production and profitability of his farm.

Thanks to multi-annual support from the agri-environment-climate measure – Measure 10 – from the Murcia RDP, obtained in 2016, the young farmer was able to adopt an environmentally friendly approach to the way he dealt with pests on the farm.

Traps were set up on the farm to count moths and butterflies. Only when the numbers of these insects exceeds a reference figure established by technicians and experts are phytosanitary products used, with site-specific, targeted applications. Reducing the use of phytosanitary products cut production costs by around 10%, while maintaining the same yields.

Buffer strips were also established and located to be most effective in relation to the slope and cultivation of the fields. These strips helped reduce water run-off and helped minimise the loss of water, soil and nutrients. Due to the buffer strips, rainfall events now create fewer gullies in the soil and the amount of water available for crops has increased. These positive effects were already visible after one year of the buffer strips being established and the results keep improving.

Francisco also used the same RDP support to grow cereal crops that provide valuable cover and foraging areas for steppe birds in this unique and endangered habitat. According to the support agreement, the harvesting of these crops can start only after mid-July, to ensure enough vegetation is available on the ground to serve as protection for the nests and chicks in the early months of their life. In addition, 10% of the crops must be left in the ground to serve as cover and food for wildlife, and stubble from the harvested crops must remain in place until January to increase the area available to provide nesting and feeding areas for the steppe birds. The number of steppe birds in the area slightly increased in the first 12–18 months and is now stable.

“Everything is moving towards a healthier cropping system, we young people think that we cannot continue to apply so many nitrates or pesticides, we have a different way of seeing things. We are moving towards organic farming, which is the way of the future.”

Francisco José Marín Martínez,
project holder

Over the years, the reduction in the use of pesticides has helped mitigate the economic losses caused by the volatility of input and output prices.

This project shows that efforts to protect the environment can result in improvements in the profitability and efficiency of agricultural production, including through reducing costs. The project has made this agricultural business more profitable and is helping preserve a traditional agricultural activity in a mountainous area. Francisco plans to continue with environmentally friendly activities, including further reducing pesticide use and moving to organic production.

© Francisco Marin Martínez



The project has made this agricultural business more profitable and is helping preserve a traditional agricultural activity in a mountainous area.

Project Name	Agri-environmental measures delivering environmental and economic win-win situations
Type of beneficiary	Young farmer
Period	2016–2021
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total budget: €6 500 000 • EAFRD contribution: €3 300 000 • Private/own contribution: €3 200 000
RDP Measure	M10 – Agri-environment-climate
Further info	https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/agri-environmental-measures-environmental-economic-win-win_en
Contact	jcojosemama@gmail.com

Sustainable fashion boosts rural Poland

A young rural entrepreneur used LEADER support to start an innovative, sustainable fashion business.

The Local Action Group (LAG) Brama Mazurskiej Krainy in Nidzica (northern Poland) promotes innovative solutions in tourism, entrepreneurship and social activities and supports the development of innovative, specialist companies in its region. One outstanding example is that of Ewa Sumiła and her fashion brand, Lerymond.

In 2016, Ewa, who had always had an interest in fashion, came up with the idea of creating fashion accessories using natural products such as wood. Awareness about environmental issues is increasingly driving consumers towards high-quality, environmentally friendly fashion products.

Ewa first gained practical experience by working at a local company producing kitchen furniture. Here she learnt about woodworking, coating techniques and methods and techniques for natural wood colouring using natural products (e.g. beetroot, carrot, blueberry or cherry juice, fresh walnut shells, onion skins and grasses). She also attended trade fairs to learn about the machinery and equipment that she would need for her company.

LEADER funding under Measure 19 of the Polish RDP enabled Ewa to purchase the machinery and equipment that she needed to produce fashionable products out of wood, cork and straw. The project also involved setting up the company's website and online store. Ewa used her own finances to purchase the raw materials from local farms as well as to rent a workspace in which to set up her workshop.



© LAG Warmiński Zakątek

Since 2017, Ewa's company has been producing high quality fashion and jewellery items from wood and local agricultural products, using modern technologies.

Ewa's business approach aims to produce fashion items that stand out because of their unique design and high quality. In addition, these niche products attract customers who associate them with a healthy and eco-friendly lifestyle.

"Our brand replaces artificial materials used in mass production with accessories made of natural materials."

Ewa Sumiła,
project holder

Since 2017, Ewa's company has been producing bow ties, cufflinks, women's handbags and high-quality biodegradable jewellery from wood and local agricultural products, using modern technologies. The business has been growing steadily and Ewa works on a full-time basis.

Ewa has been proactive in promoting her business, establishing contacts with fashion bloggers, specialist magazines and shops promoting Polish products and placing targeted adverts. She investigated what was currently on offer in relation to ecological fashion as well as current and future trends and carried out marketing surveys. She has established contacts with local agricultural producers and non-governmental organisations, including social cooperatives, from whom Ewa can purchase the materials she needs.

Ewa keeps learning, creating and strengthening her business. She plans to establish her brand as a solid, reliable company whose values are nature, quality, environment and tradition. The business is expanding its portfolio into a range of new tourism,

recreation and environmental protection activities as well as children's workshops to raise community awareness about the use of natural products.

Project Name	Innovative use of wood for producing fashion items
Type of beneficiary	Private company
Period	2017–2018
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total budget: €15 000 • EAFRD contribution: €9 545 • National/regional contribution: €5 455
RDP Measure	M19 – LEADER/CLLD
Further info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/innovative-use-wood-producing-fashion-items_en • https://lerymond.eu/
Contact	ewasumila@lerymond.eu

Advancing biodynamic farming in Slovenia

Thanks to rural development support, a former sportswoman created a new business model that combines environmental and social responsibility.

Katja Temnik is a former professional athlete. Travelling extensively around the world for years, she realised that rural Slovenia offers opportunities for a high-quality lifestyle and working environment with good access to nature and healthy food.

Katja considered anthroposophy⁽¹⁾ and biodynamic farming as valuable alternatives to intensive farming, as well as the cornerstones for a better way of life and work. Thus, she decided to engage with biodynamic farming as a business and personal development experience. Inspired by the experience of her mum, Majda, for whom biodynamic farming had been a hobby for several years, she bought an abandoned farm of five hectares.

Katja set up as a young farmer in 2017 using advice and funding received under Measure 4 – Investments in physical assets of the Slovenian RDP. Since the beginning, almost all the farm's disused land was planted with permanent crops using organic methods.

Financial support from multiple RDP Measures (see table page 15) funded the planting of hazelnuts

(1.4 ha), herbs (2.1 ha) and orchard trees (0.7 ha), as well as the purchase of machinery for stripping, cutting and packing herbs, and a hammer mill.

In 2020, the farm started the Demeter biodynamic farming certification process and rented additional herb gardens at the nearby Žiče Charterhouse, which is an extraordinary cultural heritage site and a monument of national importance.

Katja has now launched the Majnika brand, expanding the range of farm products to include herb kitchen salt, herbal teas and other products inspired by her mum Majda. Local cooperatives and producer organisations helped with product placement and dissemination.

Advisory support was received on the preparation of tenders to request RDP funding and on the cultivation of permanent crops from expert institutions, including IHPS Žalec, Inštitut za promocijo varovanja okolja (Institute for the Promotion of Environmental Protection), Ajda Štajerska Arnika (a Czech environmental NGO) and the Society of Slovenian Producers and Processors of Medicinal Plants.

(1) Anthroposophy is a philosophical approach established by Rudolf Steiner in the 20th century that seeks to optimise physical and mental health and well-being through natural means. Biodynamic agriculture is based on anthroposophy.

The farm offers guided tours of the herb garden, natural science days for children as well as lectures and workshops on herbs, biodynamics, healthy food and other topics.

The farm also organises community activities for vulnerable groups. The farm cooperates with a primary school for children with special educational needs and disabilities and the Slovenske Konjice Occupational Activity Centre. It is also a partner in a project for the inclusion of long-term unemployed people. Indeed, thanks to her lengthy experience in sport, Katja believes that recognising the human potential and establishing respectful relationships can lead to successful actions in the local community, the environment and beyond. Thus, involving her local community has been a priority from the outset.

“A human being is the best medicine for a human being, while a farm is the best employer.”

Katja Temnik,
founder of the Majnika farm

The farm is part of the international project by the International Farm Youth Exchange (IFYE), which organises rural youth exchanges. Each summer, young people from Austria, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Switzerland and the USA spend one to three weeks on the farm as part of a seven-week programme to learn about farmers’ daily lives.

The project created two permanent job positions on the farm as well as opportunities for part-time work. Product sales have increased by at least 30%.

Using no fertilisers or other chemical inputs reduced the costs for the farm and helped increase biodiversity, including in the surrounding area. In addition, this increased the recognition of organic and biodynamic farming in a very traditional intensive farming environment.

Distinguished awards attest to the fact that the Majnika Farm is on the right track with its work and attitude to people, animals and plants. Awards include the Agrobiznis 2020 award for the best entrepreneur in agriculture (granted by the Finance Newspaper in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food and other partners) and the Innovative Young Farmer 2019 award by the Slovenian Rural Youth Association (ZSPM), which Katja received from the President of the Republic of Slovenia at the presidential palace. In addition, in 2020, Katja Temnik was the ambassador for the Rogla-Pohorje tourist destination and she received the Bronze Coat of Arms from the Municipality of Slovenske Konjice for her dedication to promoting organic farming and the local environment.

The Majnika products have also received recognition: in 2018 the Tourist Association of Slovenia (TZS) ranked Majnika herb kitchen salt as one of the top



© Majnika herb garden and farm

A combination of RDP Measures allowed the project holder to create a new business model that combines environmental and social responsibility.

20 culinary and gastronomic souvenirs in the Alpine region. In the same year, a special committee awarded three Majnika products (organic herb tea, premium herb kitchen salt with Chinese yam and herb kitchen salt) with the Taste Rogla 2018 quality label.

Project Name	The 'MAJNIKA' herb garden and farm, Slovenia
Type of beneficiary	Young farmer
Period	2017–2020
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total budget: €96 248 • EAFRD contribution: €38 511 • National/regional contribution: €10 737 • Private/own contribution: €47 000
RDP Measure	M04 – Investments in physical assets M06 – Farm & business development M11 – Organic farming M13 – Areas with natural constraints
Further info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/majnika-herb-garden-and-farm-slovenia_en • http://majnika.si
Contact	zeliscni.vrt.majnika@gmail.com

3. New generation(s)

Across rural Europe, RDPs have been used to promote initiatives that foster generational renewal in sectors that are vital for rural economies – from the agri-food sector to tourism.

Rural and remote areas have the lowest shares of the EU's population in age groups below 50 years⁽¹⁾ and enhancing generational renewal is key to vibrant, prosperous and resilient rural areas. Reducing the urban-rural divide in terms of services, infrastructure, high-quality job and education opportunities is key to reverse depopulation trends. This can stimulate young people to stay in their areas or to return after study and work elsewhere while also attracting newcomers, including young talent.

EAFRD support has helped promote generational renewal in agriculture. RDPs have been used to accompany and encourage young rural entrepreneurs to test new business ideas in land-based activities (and beyond) before launching them on the market, reducing the associated risks. They have also helped create meaningful connections, which is particularly helpful for new entrants.

The French project featured on page 17 supports new entrants in agriculture through financing, training, networking and business support.

The Spanish Operational Group on page 19 established a network of farm incubators in Spain to support young farmers with no previous family connections or a background in farming.

European rural areas can become more prosperous by diversifying into new economic activities, with positive effects on employment and improving the value added of farming and agri-food activities.⁽²⁾ Rural tourism can offer useful diversification opportunities for driving rural economic development, including by adding value to regional culture, local products and landscapes.⁽³⁾ Rural tourism is another sector where generational renewal is crucial.

The German project on page 21 funded advisory and support services as well as tools to facilitate succession in its region's hospitality sector.

The EU Rural Action Plan's aims include attracting innovative businesses to rural areas, providing access to quality jobs, promoting new and improved skills and optimising the role of diversified economic activities.⁽⁴⁾ RDPs have been supporting projects that empower rural youth, help them discover and develop their skills and find their place in the community.

A LEADER project in Luxembourg finances 'micro-projects' which have helped to empower young local people by offering them career coaching and employment training (page 22).

(1) European Commission, EU rural areas in numbers, https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/long-term-vision-rural-areas/eu-rural-areas-numbers_en

(2) European Commission, A long-term vision for the EU's rural areas, https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/long-term-vision-rural-areas_en#avisionforruralareastowards2040

(3) Rural Voices

(4) European Commission, EU Rural Action Plan, https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/long-term-vision-rural-areas_en#eururalactionplan



A 'happy' entrance into French farming

Thanks to rural development support, a French cooperative improved its capacity to support new entrants into agriculture through financing, training, networking and business support.

Since 2012, the CIAP cooperative (Coopérative d'Installation en Agriculture Paysanne) has dealt with the challenge of generational renewal in agriculture in the Grand Est area, in western France. CIAP's core activities include: training new farmers, who are also put in contact with experienced farmers, local producers and markets; a 'farm incubator' programme, offering financial and administrative support for new farmers in the early stages of their activities; and a testing space for organic agriculture projects.

To meet the increasing demand for support in the Pays de la Loire region, CIAP used funding for technical assistance under Measure 20 of the Pays de la Loire RDP to develop the 'Happyterr' project.

'Happyterr' identified family or social support structures that contribute to the sustainability of new farms during their initial years of activity, analysed alternative support structures (e.g. cooperatives or participative initiatives) and mapped existing assistance. A survey among new entrants looked at issues such as work-life balance and gender

equality. Recommendations were developed for monitoring new farms, considering specific problems encountered by new farmers with no farming background and/or local connections.

"Building a methodology to identify new entrants to farming and the factors affecting their farms' sustainability was a huge step forward in understanding how these mechanisms work and how to strengthen the support tools."

Happyterr

The project carried out further research on the existing legal framework for cooperative and participatory associations, identifying challenges and developments. It also raised awareness among farmers about different economic and legal practices through a simulation game. Overall, this research activity aimed to improve the transferability of good practices, promote equal rights for new farmers and limit the use of debt financing by developing own funding schemes.



© Pierre Mycop

EAFRD funding helped a French cooperative improve its capacity to support new entrants into agriculture through financing, training, networking and business support.

The project tools and results were collected on a website, which also includes testimonials by the project developers and an inventory of territorial initiatives supporting new farmers to access land and financing. Events were organised to promote the participation and valorisation of the knowledge gained.

The experience with the ‘Happyterr’ project improved CIAP’s knowledge of the needs of new entrants into agriculture, the challenges they face and the possible resources on the ground. This in turn increased CIAP’s capacity to support new entrants in agriculture. To date, through all its activities, the cooperative has already supported 462 new farms in different regions of France, of which 240 are collective projects, 360 are short supply chain projects and 425 focus on organic agriculture.

‘Happyterr’ also promoted small-sized farms as an asset in enhancing short supply chains, promoting environmentally friendly agriculture and contributing to climate change adaptation at the territorial level.

Building on the results of the ‘Happyterr’ project, the #Happyterr# network is further implementing similar support actions across other French regions (Centre-Loire Valley, Normandy and New Aquitaine).

Project Name	HAPPYTERR – Innovative and Territorial Farmers’ Alliance for the Successful Renewal of Agriculture
Type of beneficiary	Cooperative
Period	2018–2020
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total budget: € 713 159 • EAFRD contribution: € 302 382 • National/regional contribution: € 268 145 • Private/own contribution: € 142 632
RDP Measure	M20 – Technical assistance
Further info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/happyterr-innovative-and-territorial-farmers-alliance-successful-renewal_en • http://ciap-pdl.fr/
Contact	contact@ciap-pdl.fr



© Pierre Myop

To date, through all its activities (including this EAFRD-funded project), the CIAP cooperative has already supported 462 new farms in different regions of France, of which 240 are collective projects, 360 are short supply chain projects and 425 focus on organic agriculture.

Setting up a network of farm incubators in Spain

An EIP-AGRI Operational Group defined an innovative methodology to create farm incubators in Spain, providing public-private support to new entrants into farming.



© ARCA

The farm incubators developed by this project offer users not only a testing ground for new entrants into farming, but also advice and counselling services with the help of a network of experts in various related areas.

Farm incubators can help facilitate the progressive integration of new entrants into farming, particularly those with neither family connections nor experience in farming. The European Innovation Partnership 'Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability' (EIP-AGRI) Focus Group 'New Entrants to Farming: lessons to foster innovation and entrepreneurship' (2015–16) highlighted the need to foster farm incubators and test pilot models adapted to specific national or regional contexts. Based on the findings and recommendations from the Focus Group, in 2019 ARCA – the regional network of LAGs in Catalonia – joined forces with other organisations to set up the EIP-AGRI Operational Group (OG) RETA – Network of farm incubators, using funding from Measure 16 – Cooperation of the Catalonia RDP.

The OG also involved the regional network of LAGs of Extremadura (REDEX), the School of Shepherds of Catalonia (Associació Rurbans) and of Extremadura (Cooprado), the University of Extremadura, the Network of land stewardship of Catalonia, LAG TAGUS and a local association to prevent wildfires (ADF).

RETA developed a methodology to implement farm incubators in Spain, inspired by the French network of farm incubators, the Réseau National des Espaces-Test Agricoles (RENETA), and adapting that model to the Spanish legal and social context.

The project created a guide and other support materials for public and private actors who want to create a farm incubator. All the information and materials produced were disseminated through the project's and the OG members' websites and social media channels. The OG offered technical support as well and transferred the methodology to 12 actors – selected via open calls – who were interested in creating a farm incubator in Catalonia.

The farm incubators developed by RETA offer users not only a testing ground for new entrants into farming, but also advice and counselling services with the help of a network of experts on farming, business and commercial aspects, as well as other skills.

A Support Centre was created to assist new farm entrepreneurs and this was tested with six new entrants in Catalonia and Extremadura.

In parallel, the project team created the basis for a Network of Farm Business Incubators in Spain, defining its mission, objectives and future activities based on four core principles: learn together, lobby, cooperate to innovate, and offer technical assistance. It also implemented a dissemination plan for the network, which included the creation of a website, social networks and information material. The team organised a public event about farm incubators in Spain, which attracted 274 participants from all over the country.

The project created the first two pilot farm incubators in Spain, in Casar de Caceres (Extremadura) and Gandesa (Catalonia). Both focus on livestock.

The project is assisting the creation of new farm incubators, with ten more expected to be set up in the next two years around the country.

“Ensuring the successful entrance of new farmers into the sector means working also for the future of agriculture, food production, repopulation and the sustainability of the rural environment.”

RETA spokesperson

Project Name	RETA – Network of Farm Incubators
Type of beneficiary	Non-governmental organisation
Period	2019–2020
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total budget: € 567 500 • EAFRD contribution: € 383 600 • National/regional contribution: € 95 900 • Private/own contribution: € 88 000
RDP Measure	M16 – Cooperation
Further info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/reta-network-farm-incubators_en • http://www.espaciostestagrarios.org
Contact	coordinacio@arca-dr.cat



© ARCA

The project created the first two pilot farm incubators in Spain, both focused on livestock. Ten more new farm incubators are expected to be set up in the next two years around the country.

Rejuvenating the hospitality sector in rural Germany

An EAFRD co-financed initiative provides counselling and support for hoteliers to manage the complex process of business succession effectively, while also providing new job opportunities for local youth.



© Apart Fotodesign – Alexander Pallmer

This EAFRD-funded project raises business owners' awareness of the importance of preparing their succession. At the same time, it prepares young entrepreneurs to accept the challenge to take over a rural business in the hospitality sector.

Demographic change can have a strong impact on the hospitality sector. Hotel and restaurant owners tend to look for successors much too late, when they are about to retire, and are often surprised at how much time and complex effort the succession process requires. The owner's children often move away and are therefore not taking over their parent's businesses, which need 'generational renewal', including to keep up with changing customers' habits. Overall, these elements can endanger the businesses and the related jobs.

Addressing such challenges, the district of Euskirchen, in the Northern Eifel region (western Germany), joined forces with the Nordeifel Tourismus GmbH to develop a project that could raise business owners' awareness while at the same time prepare young entrepreneurs to accept the challenge to take over a business.

The partners applied for LEADER funds from the LAG Eifel, which has developed a wider strategic approach to youth employment in the tourism sector together with the local economic development agency. The project targeted hotels, guesthouses, restaurants and local shops in the region.

Tourism plays a vital role in the local economy of the Northern Eifel region, where figures have increased significantly in recent years (+89% day-tourists between 2011 and 2017, +31% overnight stays). Tourism is also likely to play a key role in the post-COVID recovery.

The project office identifies companies in the region where a generation change is due to take place and gets in touch with the owners, offering counselling and support. A specially developed guide is used during on-site appointments to take stock and analyse strengths and weaknesses of the candidates. Support is also offered to create a company-specific handover schedule and contact potential successors. This makes the complex process of succession more effective and legally safe.

The project's website lists businesses for which investors and operators are needed. The project produced a brochure to present the Northern Eifel region as an attractive hotel location and tourist destination to local and international investors.

Several ‘business succession days’ for the hospitality industry were organised through the project and attracted over 120 business owners and potential successors. Participants learned about key aspects of company handovers, including locally specific issues such as the protection and maintenance of (historical) buildings within the tourism and gastronomic industry. Further events are planned in 2022.

Over 30 companies have already made use of the consulting service developed by the project and 20 entrepreneurs, including young people, showed their interest in taking over a business. Between 2017 and 2019, ten successful business successions took place.

The project also assisted some ‘old-style’ businesses, which used the consulting service and the project material to help modernise their offer and improve customer services.

Due to the high demand for these consulting services, the district of Euskirchen decided, through its local economy development agency, to continue the project with own funding. Despite the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and severe floods in part of the district in summer 2021, the project is now back on track, with many activities planned. It is expected to continue to provide its support over the coming years.

Besides helping ensure the continuation of businesses, thus maintaining the related jobs, the project creates opportunities for practical training and apprenticeships in the regional tourism sector, which match with other regional initiatives to improve the situation of youth employment and to keep young people in the area.

“Young entrepreneurs appreciate the opportunities given by the project’s counselling services. Most of them are very well prepared and full of promising and innovative ideas.”

Damian Meiswinkel,
project coordinator, District of Euskirchen

Project Name	Company succession in the hotel and hospitality sector in the Northern Eifel region
Type of beneficiary	Local authority
Period	2017–2019
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total budget: €40 334 • EAFRD contribution: €26 217 • Private/own contribution: €14 117
RDP Measure	M19 – LEADER/CLLD
Further info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/company-succession-hotel-and-hospitality-sector-northern-eifel-region_en • https://www.nachfolge-gastgewerbe-eifel.de • https://www.leader-eifel.de/de/aktuelle_projekte/Leitprojekt-Unternehmensnachfolge-in-Hotel--und-Gastgewerbe.html
Contact	gath@naturpark-eifel.de (LAG manager, LAG Eifel) Damian.Meiswinkel@kreis-euskirchen.de (District of Euskirchen, Economic development office)

Empowering young people in rural Luxembourg via LEADER

A LEADER project empowered young people at risk of social exclusion and fostered employment in rural Luxembourg.

Youth & Work is a social enterprise company based in western Luxembourg’s Atert-Wark LEADER area. It is specialised in counselling and coaching unemployed youth (aged 16 to 29). Approximately 2 300 young people have already participated in their coaching programme since 2012, with a 75 % success rate.

The company wanted to improve its outreach and success rate to contribute to tackling youth unemployment, an important social topic in Luxembourg, where it reached a record high of 26.9 % in June 2020.

The company used opportunities offered by the ‘umbrella project’ Sozialwerkstat from the Atert-Wark Local Action group (LAG). Through this umbrella project, the LAG supports mini-projects initiated by local organisations (such as NGOs, charities and volunteer associations) that tackle social cohesion, climate change or cultural development. These mini-projects can benefit from grants of up to €3 000 through a simplified funding system, which reduces their administrative burden. At the same time, the umbrella project improves the LAG’s outreach across this rural region.



© Adobe Stock

This EAFRD-funded project shows the importance of tailor-made, future-oriented coaching for disadvantaged youth and aims to raise awareness among companies about how to deal with youth unemployment, creating new possibilities.

Youth & Work cooperated with the Äerdschëff, a hub for social diversity and the transition to a low-impact world. They developed a project focused on coaching to improve the participants' social and communication skills, their sense of responsibility and capacity for personal commitment. These key elements are especially important for school drop-outs and youth with a disadvantaged background.

The project targeted 13 young people already in contact with Youth & Work, under 30 years of age and interested in voluntary community work.

Through a learning-by-doing format, the participants worked at the Äerdschëff premises, forming teams and learning how to manage and implement projects. They received free group and individual coaching, working in parallel on personal and professional development. They also benefitted from a one-year follow-up until November 2021.

The participants could acknowledge and develop their hard and soft skills, achieving measurable change in their attitudes and capacities, sometimes exceeding the organisers' expectations. They reported an increased feeling of independence and improved overall well-being.

“The team experience has given me so much energy. I feel valuable again and know I can do it.”

“I have learned to take responsibility even in difficult situations and to look for solutions.”

Remarks by two young participants

Thanks to the intensive coaching, the dynamics of the group, the creation of new relationships

and the growing proactivity of the participants, three of them found a job during the project and another one was able to go back to studying. Two participants left before the end of the course. The other seven participants ended the course with a clear professional orientation and are actively applying for jobs and being invited to job interviews.

The project shows the importance of tailor-made, future-oriented coaching for disadvantaged youth and aims to raise awareness among companies about how to deal with youth unemployment, stimulating them to take more responsibility and create new opportunities.

Project Name	Empower young people – micro-project within the LEADER umbrella project ‘Sozialwerkstat’
Type of beneficiary	Private company
Period	2014–2020
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total budget: € 24 950 • EAFRD contribution: € 1 770 • National/regional contribution: € 1 180 • Private/own contribution: € 22 000
RDP Measure	M19 – LEADER/CLLD
Further info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/empowering-young-people-micro-project-under-leader-umbrella-project_en • https://www.youth-and-work.lu/de/
Contact	ariane.toepfer@youth-and-work.lu paule.pletgen@youth-and-work.lu

PREVIOUS EAFRD PROJECTS BROCHURES

Further inspiring examples of EAFRD-supported rural development projects can be found in previous editions of the EAFRD Projects Brochure. Each edition highlights successful project examples on a particular rural development theme.

These are available on the Publications section of the ENRD website at <https://enrd.ec.europa.eu>

Rural Inspiration Awards 2021



Rural Inspiration Awards 2020



Vibrant Rural Areas



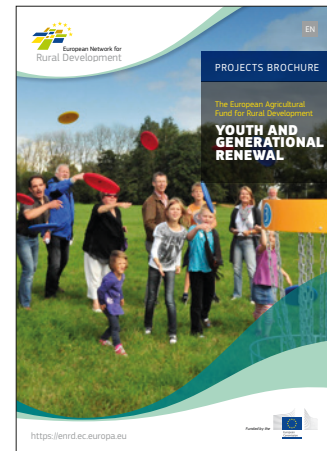
Rural Inspiration Awards 2019



Bioeconomy



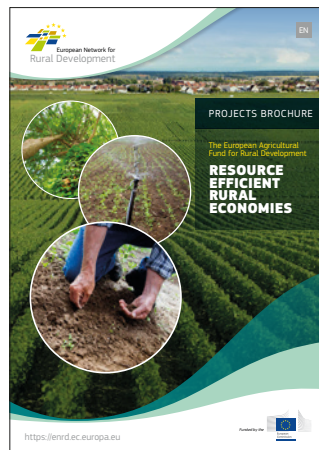
Youth and Generational Renewal



Digital and Social Innovation in Rural Services



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