

Restoration of degraded forest areas

Demonstrating the multiple benefits of forest regeneration

Forests have been greatly degraded by human activity and by climate change, but by giving them a new lease of life, their countless benefits can be restored. Racines de France is working to protect and promote the value of forests, supporting sustainable and inclusive agriculture and forestry. Their motto is 'Trees are essential to life on earth'. They currently have a pilot project in the Forêt de Brassac in the south of France to test and develop methods for forest regeneration.

The Forêt de Brassac is an 80-hectare formerly enclosed forest area in the Occitanie region. Before the project started, many of the hardwood trees were decaying because the area was difficult to access for maintenance purposes. Heavy rainfall and reduced biodiversity due to climate change had also had an impact.

Racines de France is a French organisation working on projects world-wide related to forest regeneration. With a team of forestry experts, they started a project in the Forêt de Brassac, funded by the Region, to restore it to its original glory and to revive and create new forestry activities.

Yann Fortunato, Racines de France, is leading the project – he is a forester himself. “This restoration project is all about diversity” Yann says, “We wanted to create a forest which contains many different tree species and which could offer multiple and varied benefits. These include production of wood for construction, improvement of soil quality to mitigate damage caused by rain, carbon capture and increasing biodiversity. Another objective was also to maintain the natural beauty of the area.” Through the pilot project they will test and demonstrate innovative management practices, “I hope this forest can become an experimental laboratory for years to come” says Yann.

The restoration of the Forêt de Brassac started in 2016 by creating new roads to enable forestry machinery to access the area. Next, many of the decaying trees were harvested and new ones were planted. Yann explains “We chose trees which are adapted to the local climate and which will be able to withstand further climate change: cedar, larch, Douglas fir, acacia, lime, ash and beech.” However, in zones where the original trees were not too damaged, they decided to protect them and maintain them as natural zones of biodiversity.

An apiary has been created to develop the population of bees in the forest to support pollination of the forest and farming ecosystems as well as to produce honey. Agreements have been made with the local hunting association to control the presence of deer. These wild animals feed on young plants and so it is important to ensure young trees have the opportunity to grow.

The old forest track has now been turned into a signposted walking route and an educational project with local schools is also underway. Yann explains “To ensure long-term change, it is important to raise awareness about the benefits of forests and demonstrate the values of the Forêt de Brassac to people living in the area.”

After 6 years of this pilot project, Racines de France has already seen a difference. The trees are well-established which demonstrates their capacity to capture carbon, local inhabitants enjoy using the footpaths as hiking routes. They are now working on scientific comparisons on carbon storage and biodiversity and they are also disseminating the work done so far on local, national and European level.

Background information

Yann Fortunato presented Forêt de Brassac in the session 'Mitigation of climate change' during the online [EIP-AGRI seminar 'Turning forest innovation into practice'](#) on 24 November 2021.

Project information

Racines de France is a "Société à Mission", combining technology, expertise and know-how. It contributes to inclusive and sustainable global agriculture and forestry. By improving our knowledge of the living world and putting trees at the centre of their work, Racines de France fights global warming, soil erosion and loss of biodiversity to promote food, health and creation of shared values related to forests.

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Project photos

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An apiary has been created to develop the population of bees in the forest to support pollination of the forest and farming ecosystems as well as to produce honey © Racines de France



The restoration of the Forêt de Brassac started in 2016 by creating new roads to enable forestry machinery to access the area. © Racines de France



Yann explains "Many of the decaying trees were harvested and new ones were planted. We chose trees which are adapted to the local climate and which will be able to withstand further climate change: cedar, larch, Douglas fir, acacia, lime, ash and beech." © Racines de France

More information on forestry

EIP-AGRI Seminar 'Turning forest innovation into practice' - 24-25 November 2021

Stories on forest knowledge and social innovation: upscaling and mainstreaming for sustainable forest management and main factor for innovation

Case	More information	Country	Recording from the seminar
• Adaptation to climate change - Lídia Guitart Xarpell	LIFE MixForChange	EU	video
• Circular bioeconomy - Uwe Kies	ROSEWOOD4.0	EU	video
• Monitoring in forest management - Ilaria Mazzoli	OG Talking Chestnuts	Italy	video
• Forest biodiversity - Serena Corezzola	LIFE GoProFor	Italy	video
• Managing for ecosystem services - Francesco Benesperi	OG ForLEAVES:	Italy	video
• Organisational innovations - Guido Milazzo	Forest Sharing:	Italy	video
• Multifunctional forest management - Pádraig Dolan, LEADER LAG Silver River Parklands		Ireland	
• New ways of developing silviculture and technologies in forest management - Hara Koutalou, Forest & Free Grazing Animal monitoring with Small Flying Objects		Greece	video
• New forms of cooperation among forest owners or along the value chains - Benjamin Chapelet	Centre National de la Propriété Forestière (CNPF)	France	video
• New business models and marketing approaches - Silvio Schüler	ValoFor: Small Forests - Big Players	Austria, Germany, Sweden, Finland and Slovenia.	video
• New ways of institutional support or founding new associations Fabio Boscaleri	ERIAFF Forest Innovation Workshop	Italy	video
• New ways of institutional support or founding new associations - Aleksandar Damjanovic	Standing Working Group (SWG) for	Southeast Europe	video

	<u>Regional Rural Development in Southeast Europe</u>		
Social engagement, participatory management and social enterprise: Nike Krajnc	<u>Interreg Fem4Forest (Forests in women's hands)</u>	Austria, Slovenia, Germany	<u>video</u>
Social engagement, participatory management and social enterprise: Carla Barlagne & Arsène Vinglassalon	<u>H2020 SIMRA and VALAB project</u>	France	<u>video</u>

Previous EIP-AGRI networking activities on forestry

- **EIP-AGRI Workshop "Small is smart" - Innovative solutions for small agricultural and forestry holdings** 29-30 October 2019
- **EIP-AGRI Workshop 'New value chains from multifunctional forests'** – 10-11 November 2016
- **EIP-AGRI Workshop 'Opportunities for Agriculture and Forestry in the Circular Economy'** 28-29 October 2015
- **EIP-AGRI Focus Group Agroforestry: introducing woody vegetation into specialised crop and livestock systems**
- **EIP-AGRI Focus Group Sustainable mobilisation of forest biomass**
- **EIP-AGRI Focus Group New forest practices and tools for adaptation and mitigation of climate change**

EIP-AGRI publications

- **EIP-AGRI Brochure Innovation for European forestry**
- **EIP-AGRI Brochure on Creating diverse forests with multiple benefits**

Forestry in the EIP-AGRI spotlight

- A social media campaign on Twitter and LinkedIn December 2020, highlighted important EIP-AGRI activities on forestry. **Follow #EIPagriForest.**
- The **EIP-AGRI Newsletter from December 2020** was dedicated to forestry.
- The **EIP-AGRI Youtube channel playlist on forestry** collects videos on forestry created by EIP-AGRI network members.
- Forestry has been the theme for many EIP-AGRI Service Point and network activities and actions. Read a summary at the **EIP-AGRI website.**

EU forestry explained

Find out more on how the European Union supports forestry, in particular through the common agricultural policy at the European Commission website:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/forestry/forestry-explained_en

New EU forestry strategy for 2030

The new EU forest strategy for 2030 sets out how to protect and restore forests in the European Union, to ensure they continue to deliver their many services on which society depends. The Commission published a biodiversity strategy for 2030 as part of the European Green Deal, with the aim to put EU biodiversity on the path to recovery by 2030. The new EU forest strategy builds upon this. **More information**

EIP-AGRI inspirational examples on forestry topics

Below you can find a list of topics that have been covered in one of the EIP-AGRI publications.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Social innovation for sustainable forest management, Operational Groups find ways to spread solutions and best practices for active forest management</u> 	France, Italy, Slovenia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Setting up short wood supply chains using hedgerows</u> 	France
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Trees as an asset in mountain livestock systems</u> 	France
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Improving forestry value chains in Finland</u> 	Finland
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Birch sap tapping in Finland</u> 	Finland
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Agroforestry- a win-win for nature and the farmer</u> 	Germany
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Agreegreen: Models for managing woody biomass</u> 	Italy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Preventing forest fires in Portugal</u> 	Portugal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Forests for wood, water, food and fun</u> 	Spain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Forest monitoring for sustainable management</u> 	Spain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Spruce needle juice - A product with health benefits which also adds value to the forest</u> 	Spain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Cork for 3D printing</u> 	Spain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Forests for food - Ecosystems for biodiversity, soil health and food</u> 	UK

EIP-AGRI projects on forestry

Operational Groups

There are [117 EIP-AGRI Operational Group projects](#) available in the EIP-AGRI Operational Groups database (update 17 January 2022)

- [Austria](#): 1
- [Belgium](#): 1
- [France](#): 12
- [Germany](#): 3
- [Hungary](#): 1
- [Ireland](#): 1
- [Italy](#): 27
- [Latvia](#): 3
- [The Netherlands](#): 3
- [Portugal](#): 23
- [Slovenia](#): 5
- [Spain](#): 32
- [UK](#): 5

Horizon 2020 multi-actor projects

- AGRIFORVALOR - Bringing added value to agriculture and forest sectors by closing the research and innovation divide to valorize and exploit sidestream biomass resources from agriculture and forestry: [website](#) - [CORDIS](#) (Thematic Network – 03/2016-08/2018)
- HOMED - HOListic Management of Emerging forest pests and Diseases: [CORDIS](#) (10/2018-09/2022)
- ALTERFOR - Alternative models and robust decision-making for future forest management: [website](#) - [CORDIS](#) (04/2016-09/2020)
- InnoForEST - Smart information, governance and business innovations for sustainable supply and payment mechanisms for forest ecosystem services: [website](#) - [CORDIS](#) (11/2017-10/2020)
- SINCERE - Spurring INnovations for Forest ECosystem SERvices in Europe: [website](#) - [CORDIS](#) (01/2018-12/2021)
- **CONSOLE** - CONtract SOLutions for Effective and lasting delivery of agri-environmental-climate public goods by EU agriculture and forestry: [website](#) - [CORDIS](#) (05/2019-04/2022)
- ROSEWOOD4.0 - EU Network of Regions on sustainable wood mobilisation ready for digitalisation: [website](#) - [CORDIS](#) (Thematic Network – 01/2020 – 06/2022)
- DIABOLO - Distributed, integrated and harmonised forest information for bioeconomy outlooks <http://diabolo-project.eu/> [CORDIS](#)
- BRANCHES - Boosting Rural Bioeconomy Networks following multi-actor approaches – Thematic network – [website](#) - [CORDIS](#)
- I2CONNECT - Connecting advisers to boost interactive innovation in agriculture and forestry: [website](#) - [CORDIS](#)

The CAP of the Future

The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (for 2023-2027) has been formally approved end November 2021. Find [all information on the new CAP on the European Commission website](#).

Innovation & knowledge exchange | EIP-AGRI

The European Innovation Partnership 'Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability' (EIP-AGRI) has been launched in 2013 by the European Commission in a bid to promote rapid modernisation of the sectors concerned, by stepping up innovation efforts. The EIP-AGRI aims to foster innovation in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas by bringing research and practice closer together – in research and innovation projects as well as via the EIP-AGRI network. Also grassroots ideas from farmers get developed into innovations through the so-called Operational Group innovation projects. The EIP-AGRI aims to streamline, simplify and better coordinate existing instruments and initiatives, and complement them with actions where necessary. More information at the '[About section](#)' of the EIP-AGRI website.

EIP-AGRI Operational Groups

- 98 Rural Development Programmes provide support to innovative EIP Operational Group projects *
- Over 3200 Operational Groups are planned to be established under the approved RDPs (2014 – 2020)
- More than 2000 Operational Groups projects have been selected for funding and are currently ongoing (or already finished)*. Member States will still start more Operational Group projects which may run until 2025 (under current transitional rules for EU rural development programmes). [Find information on all of them in the EIP-AGRI database](#).

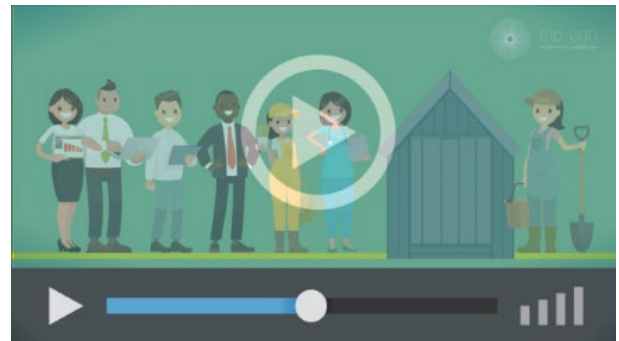
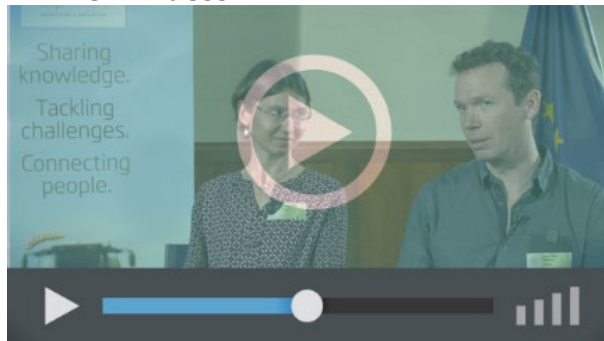
* Information officially submitted to the European Commission by RDP Managing Authorities (November 2020)

EIP-AGRI Operational Groups **are groups of people who work together in an innovation project funded by Rural Development Programmes (RDPs)**. They bring together partners with complementary knowledge. The composition of the group will vary according to the theme and specific objectives of each project. Farmers, advisers, scientists, businesses or other relevant partners work together to find practical solutions for specific problems or opportunities for European farmers and foresters. Farmers and foresters need to cooperate throughout the project to ensure that the innovative solutions are practical and likely to be quickly applied in the field. Read the [basic principles](#). [Innovation support services](#) (including advisers with a focus on innovation), and in particular innovation brokering, can therefore play a crucial role in getting worthwhile projects off the ground by facilitating contacts.

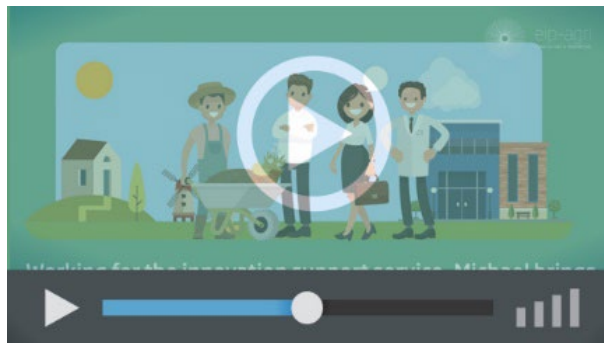
Check out the section on the EIP-AGRI website dedicated to '[Operational Groups](#)', including:

- more than 2000 Operational Groups available in the database
- detailed information on how to set up Operational Groups, on supporting networks and relevant EIP-AGRI seminars and workshops
- links to results and contact details of ongoing Operational Groups in the [EIP-AGRI database](#)
- a [list of all RDP Managing Authorities](#)

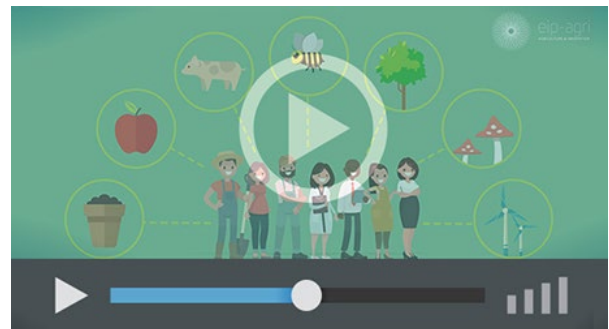
EIP-AGRI videos



[Operational Groups – first experiences](#)

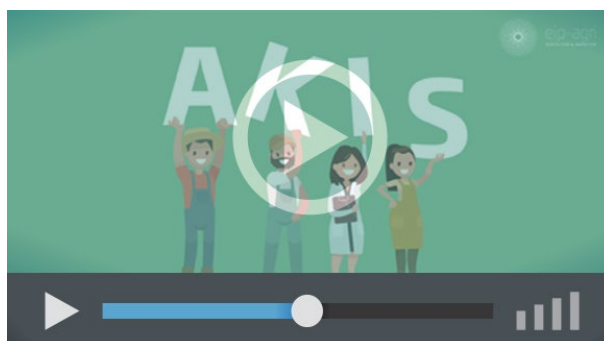


[Operational Groups – collaborate to innovate](#)



[Innovation Support Services, supporting innovation in EU farming and forestry](#)

[EIP-AGRI Focus Groups, sharing knowledge to inspire innovation](#)

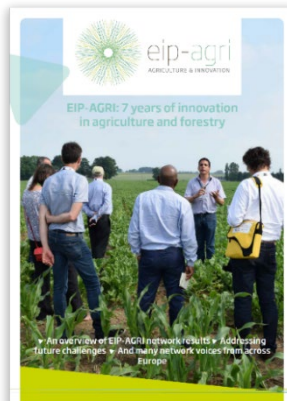


AKIS: building effective knowledge flows across Europe

EIP-AGRI, 7 years of innovation



The enthusiasm of the EIP-AGRI network members is essential to the success of the EIP-AGRI, and in ensuring that everyone can benefit. [Watch this EIP-AGRI video](#) to hear researchers, farmers, advisers, Managing Authorities and National Rural Networks explain how the EIP-AGRI has helped them over the past 7 years.



Since 2013, the EIP-AGRI has been promoting interactive innovation to make EU agriculture and forestry more sustainable, productive, and fit for the future. This report shows how the EIP-AGRI network has grown into a thriving network. [Read the report](#)