

Spain

Soil erosion & soil management

Location

Ibiza

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P4 – Ecosystems
management

Measure

M04 – Investments in
physical capital

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 23 652.10
EAFRD 5 818.42
National/Regional 8 372.84
Private 9 460.84

Project duration

2016 – 2016

Project promoter

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Website

n/a

A young farmer received RDP support to build stone wall terraces, helping him to improve the farm's productivity, while protecting its soil from erosion.

Summary

The Mediterranean area is particularly affected by soil erosion. Deforestation of mountains, the pattern of rainfall and human actions result in significant soil loss.



In this context, the effort to promote the rehabilitation of terraces, masonry walls, etc. are key to maintaining the traditional landscape and avoiding rainwater run-off, erosion and consequently soil loss. A young farmer took over his family's abandoned farm and used several strands of RDP support to revitalise the agricultural activity. He received support for young farmers and for the modernisation of agricultural holdings, but he also applied for support to build dry stone walls. This non-productive investment helped him to increase the area suitable for cultivation, while protecting the soil on his farm.

Results

Fundamental benefits of this type of non-productive investments are the maintenance of the landscape and prevention of erosion or loss of soil, which slow down the desertification of the area.

Overall, thanks to RDP support the beneficiary managed to restore his family's farm and secure an income that allows him to stay in the area.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ Without aid, especially without support for young farmers, it would not have been possible for the young entrepreneur to return full-time to agriculture. Perhaps it would have happened more slowly, as a secondary activity. Overall, it is difficult for a young individual to become a full-time farmer without financial support.
- ❑ The beneficiary indicates that, if he had to apply for funding again, he would do some things differently. Instead of applying for the M4.4 funds through one single application, which requires significant capital, he would instead have applied multiple times for a number of smaller projects, in order to reduce the high volume of own funds required.

Context

In the Mediterranean area, one of the main environmental problems faced is soil erosion. Deforestation of mountains, the pattern of rainfall and human actions result in significant soil loss, which are clearly unsustainable and must be prevented. In addition, the scarcity of water resources in the Balearic Islands requires actions aimed at preventing water runoff. For these reasons, the protection of the environment and the preservation of the landscape must be considered when defining regional development policies. It is important to develop policies that favour the development of practices that cause minimum disturbance to the environment and stop the continuous degradation of the resources that make up part of the intrinsic richness of the Balearic landscape.

In this context, promoting the rehabilitation of terraces, masonry walls, other ethnological elements, etc. are key to maintaining the traditional landscape and avoiding environmental risks, such as erosion, rainwater run-off and, consequently, soil loss.

Objectives

The overarching objective of this project was to maintain the agricultural activity in the region, especially on marginal farms, by combining profitability with environmental sustainability.

Activities

The owner of the beneficiary farm, Antonio, is originally from Ibiza. His family had some farmland there which was not in use. He thought of starting the agricultural activity part-time, combining it with another job, but in the end, he decided to take over the farm full-time. At first, he grew vegetables on 2 ha and then added another 3 ha of almond trees. In 2018, his partner Irina, joined him as owner of another 2 ha of vegetables. Between the two of them, they are now managing 4 ha of vegetables, 3 ha of almond trees, 2000 m² of saffron and have 100 hens, and are both now full-time employed in agriculture. Before they got involved, their farms were used to cultivate cereal, carob trees and some almond trees, but no income was obtained from them.

The Casa-Corrat farm, owned by Antonio, is on a hillside and has terraces that go right up to the top. For the most

difficult areas, the farmer applied for financing to construct additional dry-stone walls.

The stones were taken from the farm itself, as it is in a very stony area. The stones were extracted almost from the surface of the ground. Relocating the stones made it possible to plant deeper in the soil and Antonio took advantage of this by planting more almond trees.

There was a pre-inspection by the authorities to check that the walls did not exist already and another inspection when the walls were completed. RDP support payments were made after the walls were completed, based on the actual meters built.

Main results

Fundamental benefits of this type of structure are the maintenance of the landscape and prevention of erosion or loss of soil, which slow down the desertification of the area.

Overall, thanks to RDP support Antonio has managed to restore the family farm. The new terraces have allowed him to plant more almond trees, which has secured an income allowing him to stay in the area.

Key lessons

Without aid, especially without support for young farmers, it would not have been possible for Antonio to return to agriculture. Perhaps it would have happened more slowly, as a secondary activity. Overall, for a young individual it is difficult to become a full-time farmer without financial support.

Antonio indicates that, if he had to apply for funding again, he would do some things differently. Instead of applying for the M4.4 funds through one single application, which requires significant capital, he would do it little by little. It was a significant expenditure to make all at once and it was difficult to obtain the material, as a lot of stone was needed. If he had to apply for funds again, he would apply multiple times for a number of smaller projects.

Overall, he would recommend applying for this type of non-productive investment support, especially for professional farmers because the eligible amounts are higher.

Additional sources of information

n/a