



European Network for  
Rural Development

# Thematic Group on Resource Efficient Rural Economy

## Workstrand 3: Good practice examples

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# Overview of Workstrand 3

*“...there are already many great examples of good practice out there that we could learn from...” TG2*

1. See what projects we already have information on?
2. Summarise this information and gather new examples.
3. Follow up on interesting projects in more detail to address:
  1. 3 Thematic and 3 Cross cutting themes

*“...even where good practice examples and case studies exist, they often do not contain the level of detail or specificity necessary to understand why and how initiatives developed and worked in practice.” TG2*

# EU project databases

## ENRD

# LIFE

**SOIL-Montana - Agroecosystems health cards: conservation of soil and vegetal diversity in mountain and bottom valley grazing areas**  
LIFE16 NAT/ES/000579

PROJECT DESCRIPTION ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES BENEFICIARIES (BY VERSION) ADMINISTRATIVE DATA READ MORE PRINT

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION:  
BACKGROUND

MOJA of the Basque Country is considered as "disturbed and mountain agriculture areas" according to European Directive 79/409/EEC. In these mountain areas, the primary activity has been conditioned to the strict limitations of the physical environment. The economy is closely related to very traditional farming activities based on transhumance: the movement of livestock to higher pastures in summer and to lower valleys in winter. The socio-economic importance of the grazing areas is enhanced by the inclusion of many of these habitats, including meadow grasslands, Alpine and subalpine calcareous grasslands and European dry heath. In Natura 2000 network, too, the management of these habitats has been mainly based on traditional approaches using local knowledge, especially levels and types of vegetation. However, this is not the best way to manage for the optimal conservation of soil biodiversity. New methodologies for more efficient management of mountainous areas in terms of soil

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the SOIL-Montana project was to demonstrate the viability of an innovative methodology for the conservation of biodiversity in the soil biota and surface vegetation of mountain and bottom valley grazing areas, based on the application of Agroecosystems Health Cards, in addition to national physico-chemical indicators of soil quality. These also included macrobiological indicators to provide reference values in terms of soil diversity for the rest time, to obtain an integral diagnosis of the health of grazing agroecosystems.

RESULTS

The SOIL-Montana project demonstrated the feasibility of an innovative methodology for the conservation of biodiversity in the soil biota and surface vegetation of mountain and valley bottom pastures, in the Gurebieta Natural Park and its surroundings. This involved the application of a system of Agroecosystem Health Cards. Within the project framework, considering secondary legislation (Natura 2000), the soil microbial diversity of the species levels of the forest grasslands of the Berain Peninsula, a pioneering study developed through phylogenetic analysis. Other activities were achieved through close collaboration between INIA/ENEA and the other project partners: Basque Government and Provincial Council of Bizkaia, the Larra Cooperative, and farmer associations in Orreaga and Zeanuri.



SWEDEN

### Implementing Local Development Strategies

Location  
Gotland, Sweden

Programming period  
2007 - 2013

Aid / Priority  
Axis 4 - LEADER

Measure  
M412 - 412 Environment / land management

Funding (EUR)  
Total budget: 154 554  
EAFRD: 88 096

Project duration  
2011 - 2013

Project promoter  
Economic Association Jordgumman

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Additional information  
[www.lantbruk.com/antbruk/in-til-olje-antbruker-og-antbruk-lick-mec-sveta](http://www.lantbruk.com/antbruk/in-til-olje-antbruker-og-antbruk-lick-mec-sveta)  
[www.kvutube.com/health2vsl](http://www.kvutube.com/health2vsl)

### Water preservation project 'AQUABRAVA'

EAFRD-funded projects

This LEADER-funded project created several small wetlands and helped raise awareness of and interest in water protection among landowners. It also contributed to increasing the amount of available water in the island of Gotland.

#### Summary

Since the 1990's, access to ground water has been declining in the island of Gotland, Sweden. Private dug wells have been drying out, which is problematic especially for livestock farmers who have been obliged to tap water from a municipal water catchment. Drilling new wells had not brought a solution since the newly drilled wells produced either brackish or gassy water, or often there was high drilling cost for no water found.



In 2009, a study on the water system circle started to investigate the factors that had a crucial effect on the water access in the area and would increase the water resource for their wells. At first, three ponds and wetlands were created to test the effectiveness of the method which proved to be far better than expected. The 'AQUABRAVA' project supported the creation of an additional eight wetlands and ponds with a total area of 10 ha. The project further set up a monitoring system, including metrics, methods and templates, and applied it in the year following the construction of the wetlands to document changes. Finally, a series of lectures and meetings were conducted to raise awareness and promote the construction or restoration of wetlands among landowners.

#### Results

The efficiency of the wetland system was proven when the autumn rain filled all wetlands and increased water levels in wells closest to the system within a week. A subsequent measurement showed increased water levels in wells located further away from the wetland system. The creation of wetlands and ponds noticeably increased access to water in the area even during periods of drought.

The method has proved to be cost-efficient as the costs are limited to construction and maintenance.

Another advantage of the wetland system is that it is largely located on pasture land, thus providing the cattle with constant access to water; a highly valued asset by the farmers in the area. The system has also reduced the amount of water provided by other parts of the Gotland island.

Additionally, the wetland system provides a buffer zone reducing the eutrophication of the Baltic Sea as wetlands have now become stable ecosystems with high biodiversity in the wetland area. Species include different types of water plants and insects.

Finally, the wetland system provides social benefits - it has become a recreational area for strolls in the summer time and for ice-skating in the winter.

#### Lessons & Recommendations

- It is advisable to monitor the wetland system and water level increases beyond the duration of the project in order to obtain better and more scientifically valid

# EIP-AGRI

European Commission > EIP-AGRI > COVER CROP MANAGEMENT FOR IMPROVED SOIL BIOLOGY

Search Funding Opportunities  
Search Needs for research from practice  
Search People  
Online resources  
Search Interesting Projects

## Cover crop management for improved soil biology

Geographical location: England United Kingdom

Keywords: wetlands, soil management, functionality, ecosystem, agroecology, farming practice

Agricultural sectors: Crop (general), Livestock (general)

Main funding source: Rural development (2014-2020) for Operational Groups in the sense of Art 58 of Reg. 1303/2013

Project type: Operational group

Starting date: 2015

Project status: ongoing

Title (in English): Cover Crop Management for improved soil biology

Language: English

Objective of the project (native language):  
It is recognised that different cover crop management strategies could have different impacts on soil biology, both positive and negative. The operational group is seeking to compare the impact of different methods of cover crop management on soil biology. The outcome will be the better information on how to best manage cover crops for improving soil biology. This is the first time this approach and solution has been explored in England.

Description of activities (native language):  
Different management of cover crops on 3 sites on 3 soil types, monitoring of impact on soil biology of different management of cover crops. Soil Biological assessments: Soil Biology community DNA profiling, Economic analysis of management options. Outputs for farmer decision making generated and disseminated to include and stakeholders.

Total budget: €122,000

EU contribution: 100%

Project coordinator:  
Stephen Blyth



# Progress in collating examples

## Soil Nutrients

- 31 projects / 12 MS
- 2007 – 2015
- €36,000 - €7,000,000

## Soil carbon

- 15 projects / 6 MS
- 2007 – 2014
- €460,000 - €3,500,000

## Water availability

- 42 projects / 16 MS
- 2007 – 2012
- €23,000 - €23,000,000

## Multiple objectives

- 18 projects / 7 MS
- 2007 – 2012
- €38,000 - €3,500,000

# Activities

Advisory programmes

Valorising wastes

Preserving fragile ecosystems

Capacity building

Cooperation

New infrastructure and  
reconstruction

Green tools for climate  
adaptation

Adapting to Water Framework  
Directive

Modernisation for resource  
efficiency

Managing wastes

Reducing environmental  
impact of nutrients

Managing aquifers

# Thematic focus

## Soil nutrients

Valorising wastes

Managing wastes

Reducing environmental  
impact of nutrients

## Soil Carbon

Green tools for climate  
adaptation

Preserving fragile ecosystems

## Water availability

New infrastructure and  
reconstruction

Modernisation for resource  
efficiency

Adapting to Water Framework  
Directive

Managing aquifers

## Multiple objectives

Advisory programmes

Capacity building

Cooperation

# Cross cutting

## Motivation gap

Advisory programmes

Cooperation

Capacity building

## Policy gap

Green tools for climate  
adaptation

Adapting to Water Framework  
Directive

## Knowledge gap

New infrastructure and  
reconstruction

Modernisation for resource  
efficiency

Reducing environmental  
impact of nutrients

Managing aquifers

Valorising wastes

Preserving fragile ecosystems

Managing wastes



# Next steps

- Interrogate the EIP-AGRI project database
- Analyse projects by cross cutting themes
- Identify interesting examples to follow up
- Identify new examples from the TG
- Presentation of synthesis at TG4 in May
- Develop outputs





## THE EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT (ENRD)

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## Resource Efficiency in practice

Examples of resource efficient use and management of soils and water supported through European funds

myENRD



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## Soil nutrients

- An advisory programme on reducing nutrient pollution, implemented at county level, helps minimise the impact of agriculture on the environment. ([EAFRD](#))
- A farmers association provided support on planning and facilitation of land stewardship, with particular focus on grazing in Sønderup river valley. ([EAFRD](#))
- Development of tools for improved soil management regarding soil erosion, organic matter decline, salinisation, contamination and sealing. ([LIFE07 ENV/GR/000278](#))

## Water availability

- Farmers in France's Auvergne region used EAFRD support to preserve peatland and wet meadows in two Natura 2000 areas where over a hundred farmers raise cattle. ([EAFRD](#))
- Integrated systems to enhance sequestration of carbon, producing energy crops by using organic residues. ([LIFE06 ENV/IT/000266](#))
- Demonstration of medium and long-term water resources modelling tools for planning and adaptation to climate change. Application to the Llobregat Basin. ([LIFE07 ENV/E/000845](#))

TOOLS

