



UNISECO



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# Recommendations for future research needs and actions to enhance agro-ecological transitions

Photo: Carolus

Understanding and Improving the Sustainability of Agro-ecological Farming Systems in the EU

POLICY BRIEF

## *Recommendations for future research within a European R&I partnership on agroecology living labs and research infrastructures*

Based on an improved understanding of socioeconomic and policy barriers of drivers of agro-ecological farming in the EU, the UNISECO project co-constructed strategies for agro-ecological transitions with actors in case studies in 15 European countries. Sustainability impacts of the implementation of agro-ecological practices were assessed at farm and territorial level.

The final project conference took place on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021. The digital event brought together more than 350 attendees from 35 countries to discuss lessons learnt and emerging key issues for supporting agro-ecological transitions, and to identify future research needs and actions to enhance those transitions.

## ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION OF FUTURE RESEARCH NEEDS

The roundtable discussion involved a panel of experts comprising representatives of DG Agri, the FAO, farmer associations, the Strategic Working Group of SCAR-AKIS, the UNISECO project and members of its Scientific Advisory Board, and the ALL-Ready and LIFT projects. Views were exchanged, through a transdisciplinary lens, on the needs for future research for agro-ecological transitions.

In particular, the roundtable discussion identified research needs of relevance to the candidate European R&I partnership on agroecology living labs and research infrastructures.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the principal results of UNISECO and roundtable debate, recommendations have been formulated for future research needs and actions to enhance agro-ecological transitions:

### Research -

- improved understanding of how agro-ecological systems interact with expected climate changes, and how agro-ecological transitions can contribute to climate positive farming,
- improved understanding of how to create viable value chains and markets for agro-ecological farming products that can stimulate the upscaling of agro-ecological transitions,
- combine transdisciplinary and disciplinary research to identify how to minimize losses of yield associated with agro-ecological farming practices,
- improved understanding of the social and political factors relevant to overcoming barriers to the adoption of agro-ecological practices,
- co-learning of experiences, successes and failures of local actors of agro-ecological transitions.

### Actions -

- inform policymakers of the sustainability impacts of different combinations of agro-ecological practices, the contexts in which combinations of practices are effective, and how their implementation can be promoted through policy,
- facilitate fair access for all actors to engage in, and benefit from, research,
- link research on agro-ecological transitions with education, training and citizen focused learning.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

H2020 UNISECO Final Conference: <https://uniseco-project.eu/articles/34/final-conference>

H2020 ALL-Ready project: <https://www.all-ready-project.eu/>

H2020 LIFT project: <https://www.lift-h2020.eu/>

### ABOUT UNISECO:

UNISECO is a European research project aiming to develop innovative approaches to enhance the understanding of socio-economic and policy drivers and barriers for further development and implementation of agro-ecological practices in EU farming systems.

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<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/773901>

<https://zenodo.org/communities/uniseco-h2020/>

UNISECO in the EIP-Agri projects database:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/find-connect/projects/understanding-and-improving-sustainability-agro>

VISIT THE UNISECO AGRO-ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE HUB: <https://uniseco-project.eu>



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