



AGRIDEMO

Case study reports: Greece CS2



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1. Background

Programme

The Forest Research Institute of Athens (FRIA) is one of the oldest research institutes in Greece. It was established in Athens, Greece, in 1929 as the research arm of the Greek Forest Service. The Institute maintains close ties with operational organisations (Forest Service, Fire Service, General Secretariat for Civil Protection, local authorities) and with the private sector (forest industries, farmers, private citizens, etc.), and has contributed significantly in many aspects of forest management in Greece. It puts emphasis on solving practical problems and on transferring new scientific knowledge and technology to the operational world. FRIA has recently worked to consolidate and employ further demo activities as a learning device under its research initiatives. The specific demo events are developed under its EU Life Project "*FoROpenForest*".

Funding and Governance

Demo initiatives are funded by the research projects which either the institute develops or participates in (such as LIFE). In that sense, the demos are linked to specific local needs, as they are traced by the Institute's researchers who then work to adapt and validate approaches and disseminate good practices in forest management.

Actors and networks

FRIA is part of the network of research institutes of the Hellenic agricultural research organisation ELGO Demeter. Moreover, FRIA works intensively with Greek and European organisation in developing research projects and related activities. Moreover, the institute connects with local stakeholders, public organisations and private agronomists and experts in order to engage them into demo delivery, recruiting of participants and dissemination of demo learnings.

Event Farm and location

The demo event was planned to take place in Mount Oiti, in Central Greece.

Event Date: No demo event was planned within the research time frame

2. Method

In line with the Methodological Guidelines, three main data sources are used: a background document and interviews at Programme and Farm level to analyse structural and functional characteristics, and event tools and surveys to analyse event level participation and learning, as follows:

1. A background document for every case study was completed by the AgriDemo-F2F partner who carried out the case study.
2. Interviews with representatives of programme/networks (level 1) and farm level interviews with demonstrators/hosts (Level 1) to reveal how the functional and structural characteristics enable learning. Analysis of these interviews is reported in Sections 3 and 4. Data is sourced from 1 interview at the Programme Level. The analysis followed 5 themes: (1) Coordinating effective recruitment of host farmers and participants, (2) Developing and coordinating appropriate interaction approaches, (3) Planning, designing and conducting appropriate demonstration processes,(4) Enabling learning appropriate to purpose, audience, context, (5) Follow-up activities.
3. No demo event was planned within the research time frame, thus there are no event tools and surveys (level 3) available for this case study.

Finally, partners reviewed the case study reports to prepare their workshops with different stakeholders related to the case studies. These workshops aimed at validating the data presented in the case study reports and to discuss on key characteristics related to effectiveness of demonstrations.

3. Structural Characteristics

T1: Programme/network level

1. The main organisations involved in the demonstration activities and their roles

The LIFE FoROpenForest programme

In this Case Study demonstration events are organised in the frame of an EU LIFE programme (*FoROpenForest*), which focus on the application and demonstration of project's developed methods on biodiversity conservation and sustainable grassland management. Demonstration topics are mainly steered by the project's objectives adapted to stakeholder's needs. The programme's activities are implemented in the Mount Oiti and Mount Kallidromo, in Central Greece (Region of Sterea Ellada).

Q: How are demonstration topics selected? R: The topics are steered by the programme or network theme/objectives and by the potential participants. (Programme interviewee)

2. The main actors involved in the demonstration activities and their roles

Programme's committee (FRIA & AUTH)

The LIFE *FoROpenForest* programme is managed by a committee made up mainly from research and academic staff of collaborating institutions. More specifically, the main institutions involved are Elgo Demeter-Forest Research Institute of Athens (FRIA) and the Department of Forest Science, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH). This committee is also responsible for the overall demo organisation and management, which intend to demonstrate project's results to local producers and stakeholders.

Q: How is the programme/network managed? R: We have a committee made up of different people coming mainly from research and academic institutions (dept of forest science, AUTH). (Programme interviewee)

Q: Who are the main people involved in the demonstration activities and what are their roles? R: The main people involved in the demonstration activities are researchers and scientific staff who implement these activities in the Mount Oiti and Kallidromo of Sterea Ellada. Farmers are also involved, although marginally, on specific roles during demonstration (to use equipment, repeat actions, etc.). (Programme interviewee)

Farmers/participants

Farmers are not involved in the overall programme development. Moreover, they seem to be marginally involved in the individual/organised events as during demos they usually have a role in equipment use or repeat actions, etc. Sometimes, local farmers are involved in the preparation phase of individual demos, although only under researchers/advisers guidance. This interaction between local farmers and researchers, allows for the adaptation of demo topics to participants needs and interests. The intended audience of the demonstrations are mainly farmers, stockbreeders, beekeepers and other producers. In this programme there are no host farmers/farms involved due to the nature of the topic and related activities (forestry, grasslands etc.).

Q: Who is your intended audience? R: Farmers, stockbreeders, beekeepers and other producers. (Programme interviewee)

Q: Who are the main people involved in the demonstration activities and what are their roles? R: The main people involved in the demonstration activities are researchers and scientific staff who implement these activities in the Mount Oiti and Kallidromo of Sterea Ellada. Farmers are also

involved, although marginally, on specific roles during demonstration (to use equipment, repeat actions, etc.). (Programme interviewee)

Q: How do you target farmers to host demonstrations? R: We target farmers active in the study area. However they are mainly involved in the preparation phase and because of the nature of the activities they are not asked to “host” demonstrations. (Programme interviewee)

Q: How do you identify/select relevant topics that will interest farmers? R: The selection of relevant topics is done during the preparation phase based on the issues of interest to farmers. This impacts on the duration of the preparation phase of course but we see that it increases the effectiveness of activities. (Programme interviewee)

Q: Are host farmers involved in the development of the individual demonstration activities? R: Sometimes the farmers help in the development of individual demonstration activities according to the advices of researchers/advisers. (Programme interviewee)

Q: Are host farmers involved in the development of the overall demonstration programme? R: Never. (Programme interviewee)

Private and public agronomists

Local public and private agronomists contribute to the effective recruitment of participants as they use their networks to publicise events and send invitations.

Q: In your experience, what is the most effective way of attracting participants and advertising events? R: a) Sending invitations (using local private and public agronomists); b) Social networks. (Programme interviewee)

3. Networks

The demo programme is part of the educational and dissemination activities designed under the LIFE *FoROpenForest* programme. The programme itself and the demo activities included are not connected to other programmes or networks.

Q: To what extent is the network/programme connected to other networks/programmes in your country or even internationally? R: The programme is not connected to other programmes/networks in the country or internationally. (Programme interviewee)

4. Resources, finances and incentives

Demonstration activities are funded by the Life project. The programme’s initial duration was 3 years but an extension of 2 additional years has been granted.

Q: What are the funding arrangements for your demo activities? How do these impact on the lifespan of the farm demo? R: Activities are funded under a Life project. Its initial duration was 3 years but an extension of 2 additional years has been already granted. Thus, the lifespan of the programme is connected to the lifetime of the project. (Programme interviewee)

5. Goals and objectives

The overall objective of the Life project is the implementation of long-term biodiversity conservation and sustainability on Mt. Oiti and Mt. Kallidromo. Organised demos aim to showcase/disseminate good forest

management practices and to train farmers in alternative methods on sustainable grassland management, and through that to the wider application of methods developed under the project.

Q: What are the overall goals/objectives of the demo farm? R: This action includes education and training of stakeholders (producers) in sustainable grassland management in accordance to the aims and the results of the LIFE FoROpenForest. This action is necessary because it will provide to the stakeholders the skills required for the implementation of long-term conservation of the target species and habitats on Mt. Oiti and Mt. Kallidromo, as well as in other sites. Moreover, it will train farmers in the local communities in alternative methods of management which will be in line with the objectives of biodiversity conservation. Thus, the action will contribute to the long-term sustainability of the project results and also to the wider application of the methods developed. (Programme interviewee)

T2: Farm (event) level

No demo event was planned within the research time frame.

4. Functional characteristics

T1: Coordinating effective recruitment of host farmers and participants

1. Incentives

The Life project was initially funded for a three year period. An additional two years of funding was then granted, allowing to lifespan of the programme to be extended. Farmers are not paid or incentivised for taking part.

Activities are funded under a Life project. Its initial duration was 3 years but an extension of 2 additional years has been already granted. Thus, the lifespan of the programme is connected to the lifetime of the project. (Programme interviewee)

No incentives are offered to hosts. (Programme interviewee)

2. Motivations for participants/farmers

As indicated earlier, due to the nature of the activities/topics developed under the Life project there are not host farmers involved. For farmers-attendees, participation in the programme was an opportunity to implement new forestry management techniques to conserve biodiversity. The Programme interviewee suggested that this had economic benefits to farmers as well as its environmental significance.

The main reason is to implement management in forests and forest openings for the conservation of biodiversity at species, habitat, and landscape level. Thus mainly economic benefits as well as environmental conservation. (Programme interviewee)

Participants were motivated to attend demos by their personal interest in sustainable management of the area.

The interest in the sustainable management of Mount Oiti and Kallidromo. (Programme interviewee)

3. Target audience

The target audience included farmers, stockbreeders and beekeepers, as well as other producers.

4. Advertising and recruitment

Events were advertised using social networks as well as sending out invitations. The Programme Interviewee observed that it was easy to attract people to the demonstration as it was a new type of event in the area, so farmers' curiosity was high.

Sending invitations (using local private and public agronomists); Social networks. (Programme interviewee)

It is the first time that demonstrations are held in that area and topic. In that sense it was not difficult as no farmer has ever attended a demo before. (Programme interviewee)

T2: Appropriate demonstration and interaction approaches

1. The nature of interaction

The Programme Interviewee described the nature of interaction as 'mostly bottom-up', with farmers contributing to the selection of demo topics. Farmers offered the issues of interest to them, and topics for the events were based on these. It was considered that this approach helped to provide more effective activities.

The selection of relevant topics is done during the preparation phase based on the issues of interest to farmers. This impacts on the duration of the preparation phase of course but we see that it increases the effectiveness of activities. (Programme interviewee)

Because this approach is more associated with the topic and the needs and interests of farmers. (Programme interviewee)

2. Involving farmers in the learning process and the demonstration programme

Farmers were not involved in the network programme; however they were sometimes able to help the researchers and advisers to develop individual demonstrations.

Sometimes the farmers help in the development of individual demonstration activities according to the advices of researchers/advisers. (Programme Interviewee)

3. Focus

The Programme Interviewee described the network as operating 'in between' a whole farm and a single focus approach.

4. Design

The Programme Interviewee described the network as 'a mixture' between experimental and exemplary; this was considered the best approach as in was in accordance with the farmers' preferences and interests.

5. Ideal group size

Demonstration events are for the first time introduced as an element/activity under the Life projects implemented by the collaborating institutions. Due to their limited experience they did not comment on what they would suggest as the most appropriate group size of demo participants.

T3: Enabling learning appropriate to purpose, audience, context

1. Facilitating interaction and learning: structure, content and techniques

The most effective demonstration days took place in the field and consisted of a short presentation to cover the theory, followed by practical activities for participants to observe and partake in.

For me the most effective way is to bring flipcharts in the field. Start with a short theoretical/technical presentation and then go into practical demonstration activities. At the end ask participants to do what they have seen. (Programme interviewee)

A balance between a talk/lecture and practical activities. (Programme interviewee)

The Programme Interviewee cited 'Good quality expert advice & technical presentations' as the most important factor in delivering effective demos, but gave no additional comment as to why.

2. Taking into account variation in learning

The programme did not take in consideration variations in learning when developing demonstration events.

T4: Effective follow-up activities

1. Follow-up activities and materials

Continued engagement after the event was offered to participants under the Life Project work plan. The programme continued conversation regarding participants' problems, and helped to find solutions. Leaflets detailing the programme were provided at the end of the event, also as a way of continuing engagement.

2. Assessing impact

The programme made an effort to gauge the impact of the event amongst participants by providing a questionnaire and a follow-up phone call after the end of the event. This was not the case for the wider farming community; no assessment of impact was made in this regard, although the Programme Interviewee was keen to adopt this element in the future.

This sounds as a very good idea. We will try to introduce such an element in our future activities. (Programme interviewee)

5. Event analysis: effective peer learning characteristics

No demo event was planned within the research time frame