

## PEGASUS key messages and recommendations

Using the evidence gathered over 3 years of research, this article presents a summary of the key messages and recommendations about ways to enhance the provision of environmental and social benefits by EU agriculture and forestry in the future.



- Current regulations and CAP funded incentives provide an essential foundation for the provision of environmental and social benefits by agriculture and forestry in the EU. However, they have not been used so far in a way that delivers the wide-ranging, long-lasting changes that are required to meet EU objectives and the growing societal demand for a more sustainable approach.
- There is a **need for a step change in policy** to deliver more environmental and social benefits. The **new approach should bring the social dimension – people – to the centre stage**. Incentive schemes need to minimise the use of a narrow, mainly transactional, approach to the provision of environmental and social benefits and put greater emphasis on working with the interests and motivations of the people best placed to take action.
- There is therefore a strong need to better understand the structure and dynamics of related local **social processes, as they are critical** for securing increased and more widespread provision of environmentally and socially positive outcomes. Policies offering incentives and support are only effective if people can respond to them.
- **Multi-actor approaches** were found to have a lot of potential in terms of consolidating these social processes and building a greater commitment by key actors (e.g. better identification of synergies and trade-offs locally, greater sense of ownership, etc.). They can also increase the scale of impact. Policies should seek to encourage the engagement of more and a more diversified range of actors so that individual efforts are less isolated, but more often are part of a concerted effort at territorial level and/or between business partners along a supply chain.
- As part of a multi-actor approach, **strengthening the links with the supply chain** was found to have significant potential in many conditions. It can lead to potentially more sustained actions and more robust business models, while more environmental and social benefits can be provided if they are internalised within the value chain.
- **Institutions responsible for agricultural and broader rural land management need to build trust**, by embedding dialogue with stakeholders at all stages of the policy cycle, and creating a safe

environment in which local actors feel empowered to take action collectively.

- **More innovative and locally tailored policy mixes could produce better results.** One aspect of this is more flexibility, less constraints imposed by complex EU rules that can inhibit a real focus on results rather than compliance. The aim should be for different measures to be used more easily together – matching diverse needs on the ground more readily.
- More vigorous and larger scale action on the ground with more group involvement needs to be married to publicly determined priorities, at different levels - from the local to the EU. More precise data and associated maps can help in this respect. Under the project, **new maps of agricultural and forestry systems and patterns of ecosystem services provision** have been produced at a sufficient resolution to establish patterns and potential associations at EU and Member State levels. These could be developed further with the benefit of more detailed datasets, that are often available at regional/local levels.
- **Support for facilitation and capacity building should play a more central role in policies aiming at better environmental and social outcomes in rural areas.** This implies that more funding is allocated to measures such as knowledge exchange, training, demonstration projects, and in particular facilitation and advice to farmers and foresters on the ground to assist the development and operation of multi-actor initiatives, innovative and pilot projects, results-based schemes, etc. This is relevant today and will be even **more relevant if the CAP is to become more flexible and more based on performance in the future**, as the European Commission is currently proposing.

#### The PEGASUS policy recommendations in summary ....

- ▶ Bring people to the centre stage, building on their interests and motivations.
- ▶ Promote cooperative ways of working (i.e. through more multi-actor groups, or ‘collective’ action) to increase engagement and commitment of farmers and foresters.
- ▶ Build trust with local actors by embedding dialogue with stakeholders at all stages of the policy cycle.
- ▶ Allow for a more flexible and joined up use of the policy mix, better adapted to local needs.
- ▶ Make more of market related opportunities, including greater interaction between public and private initiatives.
- ▶ Mainstream the combined use of facilitation and capacity building with other measures so that it becomes the norm rather than the exception.