

Title

Organic (eco) farming

Short description

The Institute for Sustainable Development is a private, not-for-profit institution that specifically works in the field of organic/eco farming. It prepared the first standards for eco/organic farming in 1996 and was the initiator of the first association of organic farmers in Slovenia in 1997. It was initiated to offer a system of sustainable farming, while at the same time being considerate to the environment by reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants, offering high-quality locally produced food. It also acted proactively to help develop rural parts of country by expanding farms and offering new jobs, including opportunities for socially and economically vulnerable groups. Academia curricula at the undergraduate and postgraduate level were established, transfer of knowledge and experiences and harmonization with EU legislation considering organic farming were also provided. Farmers were motivated to convert from conventional to organic farming, as some funding from EC was also available. The number of farms and total area of organic farming have gradually increased through the years, as well as the amount of organic food products; greenhouse gas and other pollutant emissions were reduced; and expansion of farms with new working places opening was accomplished. Consumers were also satisfied as they could purchase locally grown food, often directly from the farms where they were grown.

Topic

Living – Green spaces

Living – Energy efficient housing

Consuming – food

Characteristics (type, level)

National intervention; public, private

Country/Countries of implementation

Slovenia

Aims and Objectives

Aim: To offer a system of sustainable farming, preserving environment and offering opportunities for development of rural areas.

Objectives: To increase the number of farms and area growing organic food; to offer locally produced organic food to locals, especially to kindergartens and schools; to decrease emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants; to offer job opportunities, including vulnerable groups.

Target Group

Directly targeted were all farms in Slovenia (74 500), so they would adopt changes and reorganize into eco-farms. Indirectly targeted were inhabitants living in close vicinity of farms, as well as whole public in general, especially children and youth, in terms of raising awareness about eco-farming and eco-products, increased uptake and consumption of such produced products, possibilities for new employment opportunities within the farms. Local municipalities were also targeted.

Status

Ongoing

Start and Completion dates

1992 – Present day

Lifestyle and Behavior Change

Eco/organic farming has a positive impact on the development of rural areas, as it generates more jobs than conventional farming for the purposes of production, as well as supplementary activities on farms, particularly in the food processing, marketing and tourism. It has also contributed, especially in economically developed countries, to the revival of interest in locally grown food and direct contact between producers and consumers, thus shortening the food supply chain.

Effects on:

<p>Health and Wellbeing</p>	<p>There are studies claiming organic/eco food is superior to conventional, at least in some aspects but still, the total benefits of organic/eco food remains unclear. However, the significance of locally produced food offered to markets, kindergartens, schools remains major driver for people’s perception of beneficial role locally produced organic/eco food has.</p>
<p>Vulnerable populations</p>	<p>By generating more job possibilities, socially and economically deprived groups, especially those living in rural areas, are encouraged to seek and find suitable job. Also, farms are becoming open to vulnerable groups, such as people with physical or mental disabilities, illicit drug addicts on rehabilitation, who can get a job on these farms as a positive work therapy while being paid for their contribution. Jobs for those hard-to-get employed persons enable them the opportunity to satisfy their financial needs, thus increasing their social inclusion on one side, and lowering expenses for the governmental social programs, on the other side.</p>
<p>Environment</p>	<p>The supply of organic food from its’ own resources, at the time of turmoil in the heavily oil-dependent global supply systems, in the near future become the key to survival, while at the same time helping to preserve the strategic importance of more even population density of the national territory and regional cohesion.</p>

	<p>Sustainable local supply is an effective mechanism for reducing transport and energy wastefulness in processes of production and consumption of food. At the same time, it is an important contribution to the conservation of biodiversity, which, together with the prevention of pollution, are an important measure to prevent climate change and adaptation, and the basis of food sovereignty. Finally, the promotion of ecological production of high quality food, in which the market shows increased interest with constantly growing added value, are an effective mechanism for the protection of agricultural land.</p>
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Initiated and/or implemented by

The Institute for sustainable development (Inštitut za trajnostni razvoj), a private, not-forprofit institution that specifically works in the field of organic/eco farming, has prepared first standards for eco/organic farming in 1996 and was the initiator of the first association of organic farmers in Slovenia in 1997. It was initiated to offer a system of sustainable farming, in which food production is based on the utmost closed circuit of nutrients and energy, as well as balance in the system soil-plant-animal-man (protection of the environment); it was also intended to offer control from farm to fork (guarantee for consumers and protection for the farmers).

Stakeholders and sectors involved

Institute for sustainable development as a initiator for the intervention; Faculty of agriculture and life sciences in Maribor, as the only academic institution in Slovenia offering course in Organic farming and also performing scientific and research projects; Slovenian Ministry of environmental protection as a carrier of the “Slovenia lowers CO2“project; European commission and European parliament who offered funds for conversion to organic farming.

Financial support

European commission and European parliament provided some funds for conversion towards organic farming; farmers also invested their own funds.

Evidence-base

N/A

Main activities

Conversion plans for first organic farms; establishment of organic market in Ljubljana; implementation of various numerous projects, such as “School organic field”; establishment of undergraduate and postgraduate academic courses in organic farming; international summer schools for organic farming; assessment of preparation allowed by EC; support for local farms in conversion process.

Evaluation

Routine statistical data analysis; interviews with farmers that converted their production.

Main results

The area of organic farming has increased from 26830 ha in 2006 to 41237 ha in 2014; estimation of value of Slovenian organic market has increased from 34.3 million € in 2009 to 48.6 million € in 2013; 20% of organic products on market from Slovenian origin; the greenhouse gas emission were reduced by 15% from 1986 to 2014; 2682 organic farms (of total 74500 farms in Slovenia) offered 3084 FTEs, and in best case scenario if all farms went organic, they could offer up to 85000 FTEs; increasing the size and production of farms, with generally positive experiences; establishment of farms, like Eco-social farm Korenika, where all employees are socially and economically vulnerable.

Key success factors and barriers

Successful stories are inspiring and assuring that radical changes on the way to a low-carbon society are not only possible, but also bring on series of synergistic effects: they generate savings and create new green workplaces; they offer innovative solutions and development opportunities; they protect the environment and human health, they carry opportunities to reduce government costs and increase revenues, increase quality of life and are inspirational.

Barriers: Acquiring new knowledge and practices about organic farming; placement of products with major chain stores; advertizing and familiarizing of potential clients.

INHERIT Perspective

This project has been chosen for inclusion because it may lead to direct environmental benefits by lowering of CO₂ and other pollutants emissions and indirectly to improving of health and well-being of population. By reducing environmental pollution, it leads to positive changes in the environment and on the long run, to eco-systems. It has positive influence on social state, by offering jobs to vulnerable subsets of population, and also eco farming products may have greater health benefits than conventional farming. It also has clear emphasis on changing behavior.

More information

<http://www.slovenija-co2.si/index.php/dobre-prakse/ekolosko-kmetovanje>

<http://www.itr.si/>

http://www.arhiv.zelenadelovnamesta.ukom.gov.si/upload/Zelena_delovna_mesta_analiza_mala.pdf

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