



WP6 – Enabling conditions for small farms and small food businesses

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Deliverable 6.3.

Policy brief with policy lessons and recommendations that are relevant for EU policy development as well as the EU strategy for international cooperation in research and innovation, paying particular attention to the Europe-Africa dialogue

Coldiretti, Highclere Consulting and FAO

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SALSA Deliverable 6.3 is described in the project Description of Action (DoA) as a single Policy Brief but has been delivered as a set of five documents. These consist of:

- A general policy brief providing an overview of the SALSA project and its results. This document is intended to accompany the other four policy briefs;
- Three macro-regional Policy Briefs with WP6 policy recommendations tailored to the specificities of small farms in Eastern, Southern and Northern Europe, and;
- One macro-regional Policy Brief addressing the policy-related lessons learnt from implementing WP6 in the African context.



Policy Brief Overview

March 2020

The important role that small farms play in supporting rural livelihoods, conserving biodiversity and maintaining traditional landscapes, rural traditions and cultural heritage is widely accepted. Nevertheless, they are often under the radar of the agriculture policy mechanisms, which tend to focus on the very large farms and globally driven food chains.

The EU-funded SALSA project set out to examine a potentially important role of small farms – their contribution to food security. SALSA recognises the tremendous diversity of small farms and food systems in Europe and Africa, and pays particular attention to their vulnerability and resilience. Aiming to provide effective tools to guide decision-makers, SALSA uses a food systems perspective to go beyond production capacity and look at food security in terms food availability, access and control, utilisation, and stability.

Research was conducted in 30 regions (NUTS3 level) of 19 countries in Europe and Africa. The number of small farms varies from country to country, but in all the analysed regions, they were found to be strategic players in their regional food systems.

KEY POLICY MESSAGES

In the 30 regions studied by the SALSA project small farms are found to contribute to a large share of the overall regional production.

Policy interventions should be more territorially-based and take into account both the **characteristics of regional food systems** and the **different types of small farms** identified in the SALSA small farm typology.

Two over-riding policy recommendations of relevance to all regions/contexts studied are:

- Introduce appropriate combinations/ mixes of policy interventions to **help small farms add value to their produce** since they are more productive and profitable when they specialize in quality produce and processing. This may include support to some small farms that are mainly self-provisioning, but who have the **ambition to commercialise**. Small farms produce a great diversity of products and often produce different products for the market than for self-provisioning – both make important contributions to regional food security.
- Foster and facilitate **cooperation as the most enabling and empowering form of governance** for small farms and small food businesses. This includes the introduction of appropriate frameworks for value chain strategies/contracts that promote greater co-ordination and the more equitable distribution of power and financial benefit between small farmers and other supply chain actors.

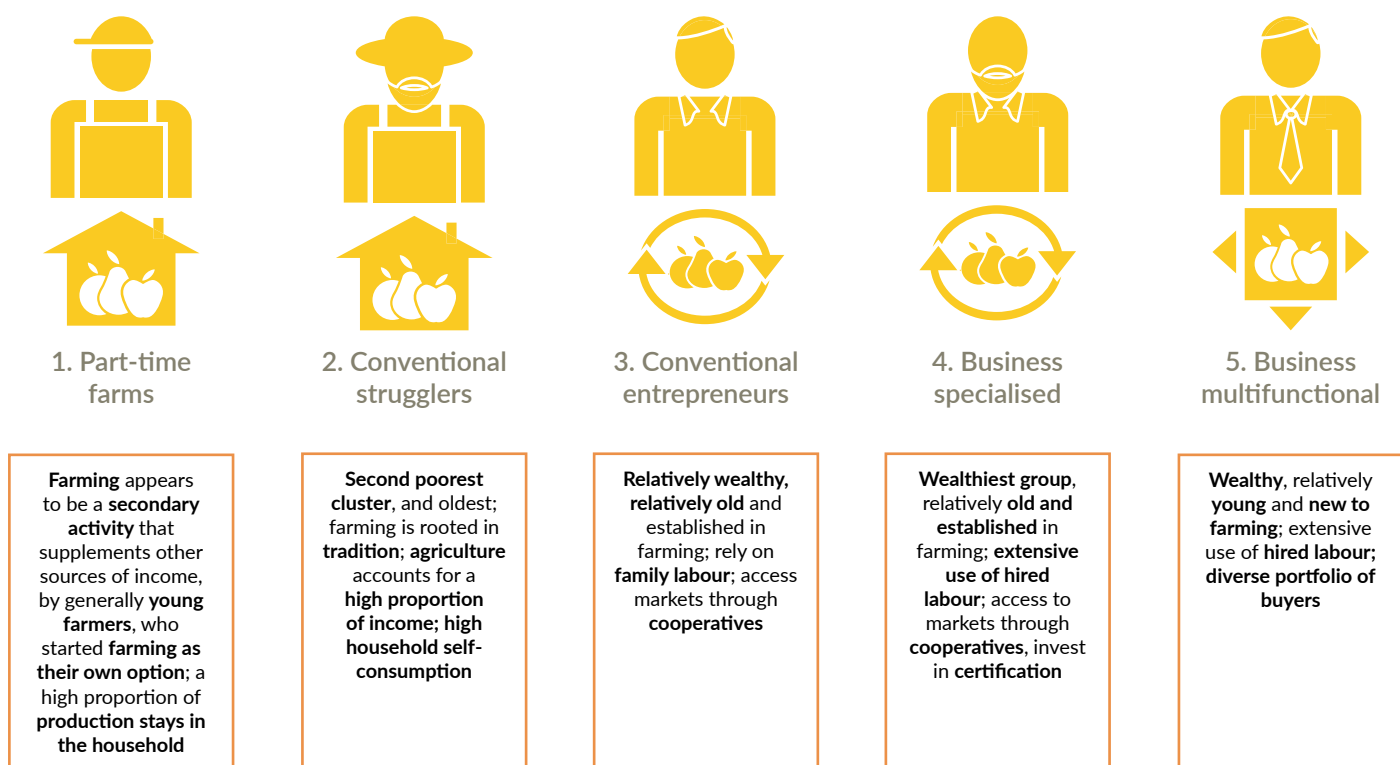
SALSA is an EU Horizon 2020 project that set out to assess the current and future role of **small farms and related small food businesses** (suppliers, processors, distributors) in achieving sustainable Food and Nutrition Security (FNS). One important part of the project was identifying the necessary **enabling conditions** for small farms to help meet the growing demand for food in an increasingly populated and resource-constrained world.

SALSA studied small farms in **30 reference regions in 19 countries** - 25 regions (at the so-called NUTS3 level) in Europe and 5 regions in Africa.

The project focused on small farms with **up to 5 hectares of land** and an economic size of **up to 8 Economic Size Units** (equivalent to €9,600 of standard gross margin). The SALSA researchers also took account of the specific relationship between small farms and the associated farming family/ household, notably the importance of **self-provisioning**.

In each region investigated by SALSA a **food system study** of two to four selected products was conducted. By identifying the characteristics of each **regional food system** for a range of **selected key products** the SALSA project: a) highlighted the **different ways** that small farms and small food businesses can contribute to **food provision, food availability** and **food access** (the three key elements of FNS) in contrasting food regional systems, and; b) developed better understanding of the overall functioning of these food systems.

SALSA typology of small farms

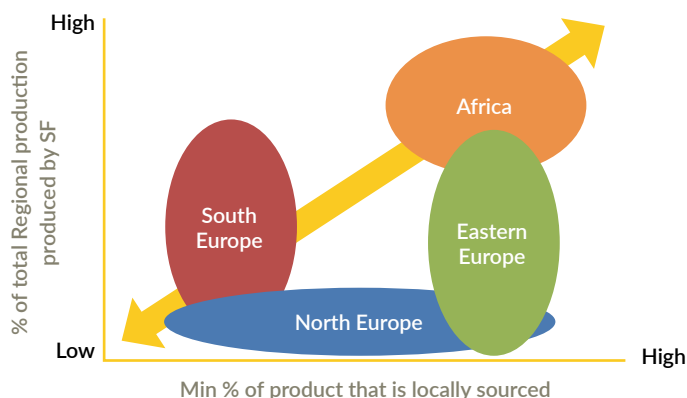


CAN SMALL FARMS AND SMALL FOOD BUSINESSES GUARANTEE SUSTAINABLE FOOD SECURITY IN THE EUROPEAN AND AFRICAN REGIONS STUDIED BY SALSA?

According to the SALSA findings, small farms and small food businesses **play a key role in filling the gaps** that exist in 'industrialized' food supply chains in terms of land use, local varieties and local market channels. It is clear they also contribute to the **alleviation of rural poverty** (through income provision for small farm households), whilst also delivering environmental and social benefits.

Small farms contribute to the three main dimensions of FNS (noted above) as follows:

- Firstly, they contribute to the **regional availability** of food. This is to varying extents depending on the regional food system's integration into global food trade patterns.
- Secondly, small farms contribute to **access to fresh nutritious food** for their households and communities. In doing so, they help safeguard food traditions thereby reproducing a food-based local social fabric through which the **stability, diversity and resilience** of food systems are enhanced.



The SALSA project estimates that in just under half (44%) of the food systems studied – notably in African, Southern and Eastern European regions – the production from small farms **could cover 100% of the regional food demand** and in some cases even generate surplus.

Land use typology (based on EUROSTAT data) of regions in Europe according to the relative importance of agriculture and the distribution of small farms

Predominantly agricultural regions

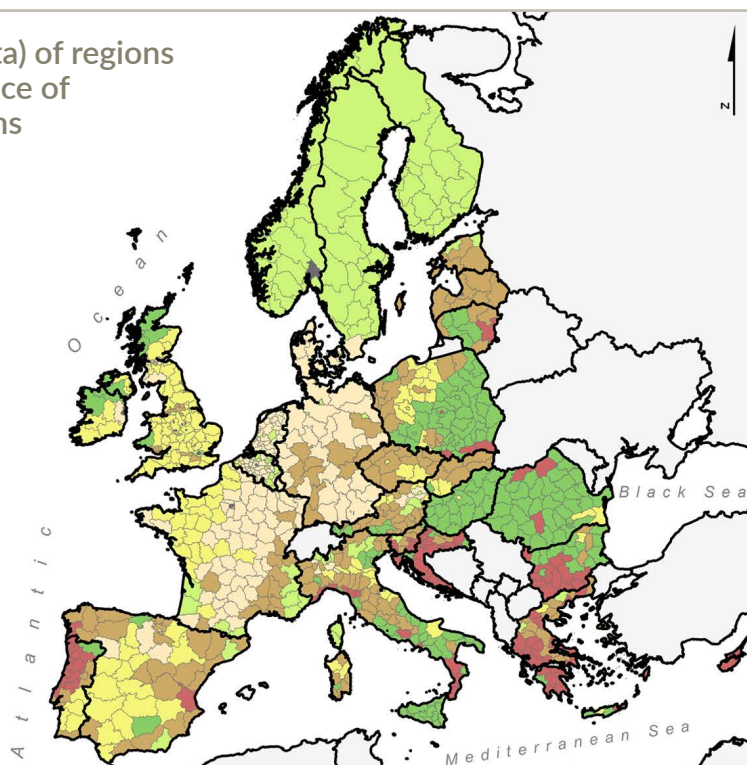
- 1. Small farms are in extremely high number and have very low income.
- 2. Regions with low rates of small farms, being these relatively small and with medium income.
- 3. Regions with low proportion of small farms. The small farms are relatively large and with high income.

Regions with a balanced distribution between agriculture and other land uses

- 4. Regions with low proportion of small farms, but they are relatively small and with low income.

Regions with low share of agricultural area

- 5. Small farms are in large numbers, with relatively small size and low income.
- 6. Small parts of the region are occupied by small farms, which are relatively large and with medium income.



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The level of small farms' contribution to regional FNS is found to **depend on the nature of their connection with the regional food system**.

Small farms in African (AFR) and Eastern European (EE) regions contribute more to regional food availability via **self-provisioning** and **local sales** (both formal and informal). In Northern (NE) and Southern Europe (SE), small farms do not contribute a significant amount to the total amount produced regionally either due to their **low numbers** (NE) or because they **export their produce outside of the region** without consuming much within the household (SE).

Despite these positive estimates, the continued contribution of small farms to regional FNS is **not assured**. The rural areas of Southern and Eastern Europe, for example, lost 1.4 million small farms between 2010-2016 alone and this trend is likely to continue in parallel to the **on-going risk of rural depopulation** in many countries.

WHO ARE THE SMALL FARMS IN SALSA'S REGIONS?

In order to address the great variety of contexts in which small farms were found in the regions studied, **SALSA produced a novel typology of small farms for Europe and Africa**. It is based on three main distinguishing characteristics:



- (1) the degree of orientation to the market;
- (2) the use of certification, and;
- (3) the degree of reliance on cooperatives.

These variables can be **used to differentiate** between those small farms and associated households who seem to struggle and may be close to poverty from those who are wealthier, specialized, organized in cooperatives and/or integrated into the market in diverse ways.

When small farms' main connection to the market is **direct selling or self-consumption**, then the related regional food system is more likely to be oriented towards local markets and other local outlets. When the first connection that small farms



THE GENDER ISSUE

In both Africa and Europe, small-scale farms are most commonly led by family units, comprising both men and women.



Female-led farms are quite common in some parts of Europe (e.g. 45% of Latvian farms and around 30% of Polish, Portuguese and Italian farms are led by women). Female-led farms are much less common than male-led farms in Africa.

Female-led farms are more likely to be located on marginal land and more likely to be focused on self-provisioning than male-led farms.

In Africa, women leading farms also tend to be less educated than male-leads. Here female-led farms are identified as less productive than male-led farms, owing to lower access to inputs, equipment and labour.

What can policy-makers do?

1. Support women-only organization or incentivizing women leadership of mainstream farming organization.
2. Enable access to key resources (capital and land) for both men and women.
3. Address the traditional cultural and legal barriers that prevent farm succession for daughters.
4. Enable access to childcare to allow women to work on farms.
5. Support direct marketing and value-added processing initiatives where women are more involved and recognized as contributing more to positive impact, especially in Africa.
6. Collect more gender-disaggregated data to increase the visibility of women in agriculture.

have to the market is **predominantly cooperatives or processors**, then the associated food systems tend to be **specialized and export oriented**. The more specialized and export oriented the food system is, then the less important is self-provisioning and consumption of home-produced food within the household.

WHAT ARE THE NEEDS OF SMALL FARMS IN SALSA'S EUROPEAN AND AFRICAN REGIONS?

If small farms are to continue making a contribution to the societal challenge of meeting the growing demand for food, they will need a favourable “enabling environment” (policies and other mechanisms) that addresses their specific needs.

The results of the analysis undertaken in the 25 European and 5 African regions studied by the SALSA project indicate that while macro-regional and regional variations exist (and must be taken into account) a **number of broad needs related to the enabling environment for small farms emerges**.

In order to continue delivering FNS and other public goods, small farmers need to be enabled with more **alternative, higher value added supply chains that directly involve consumers**. In the European context this can be achieved through policy support for short supply chains, niche products, local produce labels and other types of branding. In the African context support for **more structured supply chains** is also needed.

It is widely acknowledged that small farms in Europe have been **greatly disadvantaged** in recent years by the trend towards the privatisation of national/ regional farm advisory services. A lack of advisory services is also a problem in a many regions of Africa. **Publically-funded farm advisory systems** – together with associated mechanisms for **facilitating knowledge exchange** and **fostering innovation** - are essential for building the capacity of small farms to enhance their productivity and profitability; to connect better with markets, and; to adapt to the challenges of climate change and other external risks. A key element of future advisory support for small farms will inevitably be the increasing availability of **digital tools**, but attention must be given to ensuring that these are both **accessible and affordable** for smaller scale producers.

Last but not least, all of the above cannot be achieved without small farmers being **enabled and encouraged to remain in rural areas**, including increased access to land and innovative social arrangements for new entrants and youth. For depopulating communities, investments in roads, rural services, utilities and internet infrastructures are especially needed.

Technological and leadership education is also key for ensuring that small farmers adapt and thrive in the **rapidly changing context** that the societal challenges of the next 20-30 years will inevitably create.

HOW CAN POLICY ENABLE SMALL FARMS IN SALSA'S EUROPEAN AND AFRICAN REGIONS?

For small farmers to thrive and contribute to FNS **three types of enabling conditions** need to be present – those to **Exist**, to **Produce** and to **Market**. The following policy recommendations outline relevant policy interventions for these categories of enabling conditions.

Enabling Conditions to Exist/Produce

Access to Land

An essential precondition for maintaining and enhancing the contribution of small farms to FNS is **improved access to land for new entrants** and greater **security of land tenure**.

National/regional authorities can address both issues by **intervening** on land regulations, taxation, inheritance laws or territorial planning. The **development and promotion of innovative approaches** is also encouraged, including:

- 'land banks' that hold land in perpetuity specifically for providing new entrants with a stepping stone into viable small-scale production;
- 'succession partnerships' that link older farmers without successors to new entrants, and;
- a range of other 'land mobility schemes' designed to overcome specific factors limiting the supply of land for sale or rent at local/regional level. There are many successful examples of such schemes in Europe and Africa.

Access to Finance

Access to finance is a **perennial problem for small-scale producers**, but many examples of well-designed finance schemes exist – especially for attracting young farmers and facilitating business development in rural areas. It must be accepted, however, that the criteria for such funding is often **demanding**. In order to contribute to sustainable FNS small farm businesses must be able to demonstrate significant commercial orientation, high levels of potential viability, good environmental performance – plus in many cases, the ability to create new jobs. That said there is **significant scope for simplifying** eligibility criteria and application procedures which are excessively bureaucratic and create **unnecessary barriers** to the uptake of available funding.

Finance for small farms can also be phased and eligibility for grants or loans linked with **capacity building** such as training in business planning and management.



Climate Adaptation

Small farms are **highly vulnerable to climate change** and need targeted support via **farm advisory providers and appropriate knowledge exchange activities** (e.g. demonstration farms and facilitated peer-to-peer learning) at **local level** to develop the necessary skills and capacities to endure and adapt to the risks and negative impacts arising from climate change. In many cases this will involve **major changes to existing production systems**, ranging from the diversification of crop rotations to transitioning towards organic agriculture and other forms of agro-ecology. All of which can be facilitated/accelerated by well-established policy interventions, such as certification.

Climate-change adaptation plans are a very useful tool at national and regional level and should include more specific actions for enhancing the role of small farms in reducing the vulnerability/increasing the resilience of regional food systems.

Enhanced Productivity (Africa)

In Africa specifically, there is a pressing need for **enhanced productivity**. Methods include early maturing crop varieties, developing infrastructures that can help bring regular year-long production for small farms, providing access to inputs, and enforcement of seed laws for non-counterfeit products. Although market integration matters are also important, solving the productivity issues at a farm level is seen in many regions as being an essential first step in order to be able to work towards that vision.



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Enabling Conditions to Market

Products, Markets and Marketing

Small farms and small food business can only contribute to regional food security if they have **reliable access to markets**. It is recommended that national and/or regional authorities take a **strategic approach** to facilitating this.

Local/regional food system strategies are a useful policy tool, especially when developed through **meaningful consultation** with all relevant stakeholders. This implies:

- **Engagement with the full diversity** of business models, networks and governance arrangements that are appropriate for enabling small farms to find their appropriate niche in local food systems;
- Exploring ways to **blend support** for more traditional markets with more innovative approaches, such as new virtual food networks or short supply chains, and;
- Ensuring the **involvement of consumers**, especially in countries/regions (notably in Europe) where there is **good awareness** of the role of small farms in supporting seasonal cuisine, maintaining traditional varieties, reducing food transportation (“zero kilometres”) etc. In situations where consumer awareness of these issues is low then some form of **information/promotional campaign** may be needed.

The SALSA project findings indicate that **cooperation** (in the broader sense of the word) is an essential component for the future of both small farms and related food businesses.

Cooperation can take place in the form of cooperatives, but also in groups of producers, associations, federations, joint selling platforms, exchange networks of experiences and knowledge, and multi-actor projects. Public support should focus on **fostering new and innovative cooperation models**. In the African regions studied by SALSA this includes the need for new approaches to regulate the influence of ‘middlemen’ in the value chain.



One of the most important priorities for small farms to increase their future viability is the need to **gain better prices through 'added value' products**. In some cases, small farms can upgrade by means of developing on-farm processing, processing, distribution or direct selling, so they would become a small food business. In others, the cooperation of independent small farms and small food businesses would be a way to generate synergies.

In all cases there is an urgent need for **tailored hygiene regulatory standards** for small farms and small food businesses for both African and European regions.

In most European regions, the future of small farms and small food businesses is regarded by SALSA stakeholders to be linked to the **recovery of traditional local food products and practices** based upon new knowledge and technological developments. This revalorization of traditions becomes a key contribution of both small farms and small food businesses to the preservation of regional identities and environmental conservation and can be supported by **better small farmer local brands** and **simplifying and promoting the use of EU Quality Schemes**.

Cross-Cutting Objective

Knowledge exchange and innovation support

In order to support small farms and ensure their viability in an ever more complex and challenging market and environment, small farms require **greater access to information and training** as well as **support for all forms of relevant innovation**. This means stronger and more integrated systems of knowledge exchange and innovation support with increased numbers of well-trained advisers/extension officers; education and training facilities for small farmers; facilitation of peer-to-peer mentoring; networking for knowledge exchange; developing 'size-appropriate' agricultural research agendas etc.

Small farms are as keen as any other farmers to **learn about new technologies and techniques** that help them align their businesses towards the increasing uncertainties of market prices or the weather. There is a need for **building softer skills** (e.g. leadership, business management and digital skills) among young and old farmers, whether as individuals or when working collectively. Much of this knowledge exchange could be facilitated via the **networking of old and young farmers**, especially in those rural areas with larger numbers of new entrants such as in the countries of Southern and Northern Europe.

CONCLUSIONS

In Europe the most important changes needed to facilitate the development of small farms are **adapting both the regulatory and direct support measures offered through the EU Common Agricultural Policy to the particular needs of small farms**, while in an SALSA's African regions recommendations have more to do with paying **greater attention to the process of policy implementation rather than policy formulation**.

For the European context, cooperation measures remain the most important form of direct support for small farms, both through short supply chain measures and through broader collaboration opportunities provided through community-led local development type programmes. Such programmes should pay attention to the role of consumers and seek to position small farms on the traditional niche products market. Other important measures are the Young Farmers measures (which should be extended towards supporting new entrants) and better implementation of climate adaptation plans at regional and sub-regional levels to the benefit of small farms.

EU-AFR STRATEGY FOR COOPERATION IN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Future research projects funded under Horizon Europe should include a more balanced representation of EU and AFR partners, develop language based or regional cooperation projects (Portuguese speaking countries, or Mediterranean based projects) and also offer more flexibility with regards to the conditions of grant agreements.

Considering that both European and African contexts face challenges in developing effective subsidy mechanisms for small farms, as well as tackle climate issues in arid areas, EU-AFR mechanisms and cooperation programs could help cross fertilize experiences on these topics.



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**SALSA Final Conference: March 2020 at the 14th IFSA 2020 Conference
Évora, Portugal**



Can small farms and small food businesses of Eastern European Countries contribute to sustainable Food and Nutrition Security (FNS)?

During the past 10 years, between 2010-2019, SALSA's Eastern European (EE) countries lost an estimated 1.1 million small farms (23%). This is the equivalent of 350 small farms disappearing each day (based on EUROSTAT 2016 data).

EASTERN EUROPE AT A GLANCE



Montana (BULGARIA) - Varaždinska (CROATIA) - Jihočeský Kraj (CZECH REPUBLIC) - Latgale, Pierīga (LATVIA) - Vilniaus Apskritis (LITHUANIA) - Rzeszowski, Nowosadecki, Nowotarski (POLAND) - Bistrița-Nasaud, Giurgiu (ROMANIA)

4.4 MILLION SMALL FARMS



76% out of total farms
(Eurostat, 2016)



Occupy ca. 36% of total area in these 11 regions (Eurostat, 2017)



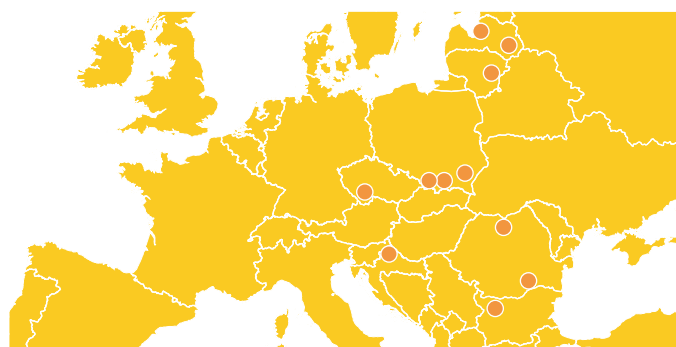
Occupy ca. 26.4% of the Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA) in these 11 regions (Eurostat, 2017)

Small farms in Eastern Europe contribute to a large extent to overall regional production. In 43% of the food systems, their produce is also consumed locally, enhancing food access for their households and communities. However, the food systems in which Eastern European (EE) small farms are embedded are evolving. Almost a third of food systems are showing a balanced pattern of regional and extra-regional consumption, and another third are oriented towards inter-regional trade.

In order to enable their continued contribution to the vitality of rural areas, the needs of small farmers need to be addressed in four main areas:

- Better infrastructure and connectivity
- Products, markets and marketing
- Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems
- Natural resources and climate

The policy brief provides a range of responses to these needs and clearly highlights priority actions by national and regional authorities, notably those responsible for the programming of EU post-2020 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) funds.

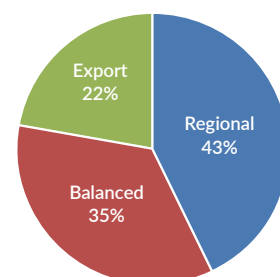


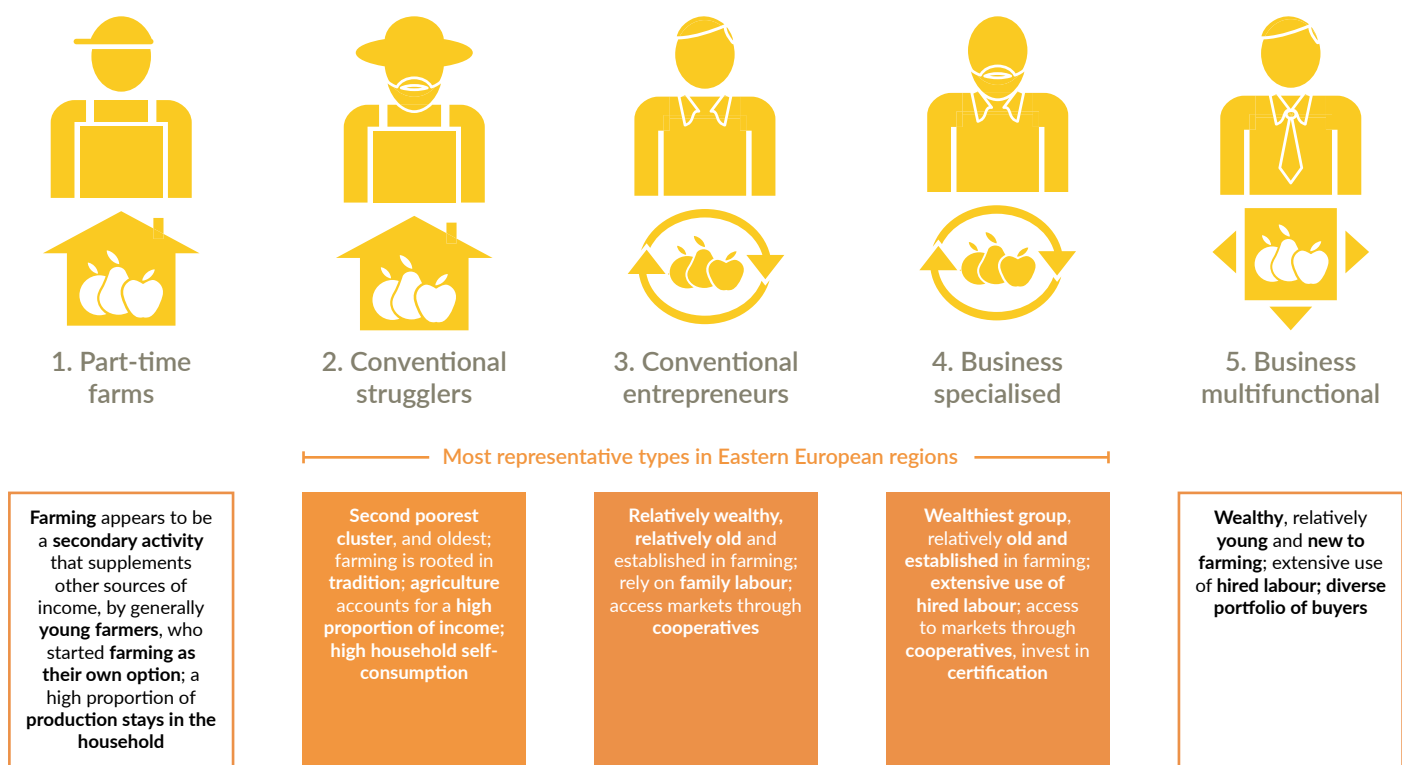
Source: EU - adapted by SALSA

The EU-funded SALSA project set out to examine a potentially very important role of small farms – their contribution to food security.

Research was conducted in 11 Eastern European (EE) regions (NUTS3 level) of 7 EE countries – Romania (RO), Poland (PL), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Bulgaria (BG), Croatia (HR) and Czech Republic (CZ). Small farms in Eastern Europe are an important part of the agricultural structure in their countries. They represent between 37% of the agricultural holdings (in LV) and 90% (in RO).

SALSA findings indicate that, in 43% of the food systems studied, EE small farms produce 80-100% of the key products consumed in their region, and therefore contribute significantly to regional *availability*. In these regions, small farms also contribute to *access to food* for their households and communities. The Eastern European food systems studied by SALSA seem however to be undergoing change. One third (34%) show balanced patterns of regional consumption and export, while another 22% of food systems contribute to FNS outside their regions.





For many small farms in Eastern Europe, agriculture are rooted in their heritage. Their continued existence in rural area assures the preservation of rural culture. Besides maintaining diversity in rural economies, they preserve regional recipes and food diversity, and their farming practices still involve traditional techniques that conserve the environment.

The most encountered small farm type was the “Conventional Struggler”, which is usually older, characterised by having a weaker market orientation, reduced access to credit and the lowest incomes of all types. However, this particular type contributes most to food access for rural households and communities, especially in times of crisis.



WHO ARE THE SMALL FARMERS IN SALSA'S EASTERN EUROPEAN REGIONS?

According to the classification of small farms elaborated in SALSA, all five typologies of small farms are present in Eastern Europe, however, the **most representative types are Conventional Strugglers, Conventional Entrepreneurs and Business Specialized.**

Conventional Strugglers keep a large portion of their production for household consumption. The diversity of types found in the macro-region indicates however that small farms are evolving alongside the food systems they are part of. As part of their strive to increase their incomes through various market strategies, EE small farms are increasingly opting for specialization and/or certification.

SALSA estimates approximately a third of the production of small farms is consumed directly in the household, 18% sold to processors and 15% to proximity consumers. Cooperatives also represent a key actor connecting small and larger farms, for example in the food systems of potato in Varaždinska (HR), dairy in Nowosadecki (PL) and vegetables in Giurgiu (RO).

WHAT ARE THE NEEDS OF SMALL FARMS IN SALSA'S EASTERN EUROPEAN REGIONS?

The results of the analysis undertaken in the seven EE countries studied by the SALSA project indicate that the needs of small farms in Eastern Europe consistently fall into four main areas:

Infrastructure, as well as investments in **People and Communities** are among the top conditions that small farms have in order to remain in rural areas. Better **road connections** are essential for small farms to have an easier and quicker connection to regional markets. Other basic infrastructures include **internet** connections, but also regional village hubs that can help educate older farmers about digitization, for example. Small farm communities also demand better **rural public services** in order to encourage younger people to remain in rural areas; secondly they need opportunities for building strong **community leaders**, especially within cooperatives. Such soft skill investments are particularly important for inspiring small farmer communities towards a virtuous trend, and equally important for retaining young people in rural areas as harder investments.

Another priority need is for **Added-value products, Market access, and Marketing**, which mainly refers to the development of **new food supply chains** that can pave the road for innovative food products. This will likely require **raising the awareness of consumers** regarding regional and low millage diets, in the hope that

they could become allies and participate in alternative and short food chains. In order to facilitate this, improved **legislation for direct sales** from small farms is needed, alongside better training on marketing.

Under **Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System**, comprehensive and publically funded Farm Advisory Systems are needed, ones tailored to the needs of small farms. As part of such a reform, services should be diversified to respond to the growing information needs of small farms regarding business development (including cooperative structures), new production systems and technologies, climate change and agroecology.

Formal professional education should also be upgraded to allow small farms to efficiently manage their businesses and face markets challenges.

Regarding **Natural resources and climate**, two priority needs were identified. Firstly, small farmers need advice and training on how to adapt to climate change, and secondly, regarding organic farming and agro-ecology. Although traditional farming practices in the macro-region were more likely to protect the soil and other natural resources, with the opening of the markets to agrochemicals and a lack of formal education, these are increasingly lost. Farmers therefore require professional programs that can help guide them towards knowledge intensive farming systems such as agroecology.



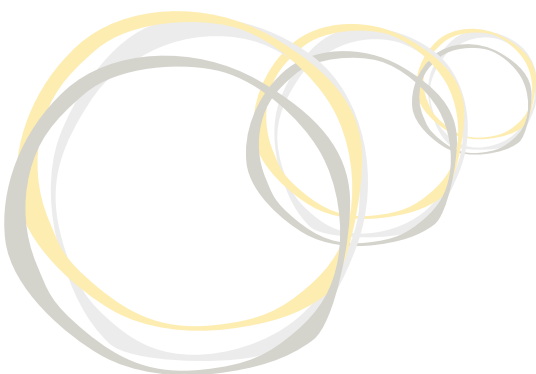


HOW CAN POLICY ENABLE SMALL FARMS IN SALSA'S EASTERN EUROPEAN REGIONS?

Policies are rarely implemented in isolation, but usually as a **'mix' of complementary measures**. The following policy recommendations for addressing the needs of small farms identified above are therefore formulated with reference to the three main types of policy intervention:

- **Regulation**
- **Financial Support**
- **Advisory and Innovation Support**

Where relevant some new tools and good practices are also mentioned.



Better Infrastructure, Connectivity, support for People and Communities

Financial Support

SALSA's research indicates that continued investment in rural infrastructures through National Strategic Plan measures (including improving the quality of rural roads and rural-urban public transport systems, as well as rural public services, such as clean drinking water, sewage but also education and e-services) is still an important need and enabling condition for EE countries. Investments in rural roads however is rarely covered by other types of structural funds (such as ERDF), which often focus on financing European and National-level roads and infrastructure projects.

Besides investments in hard infrastructures, rural communities also need the continuation of generational renewal measures such as **Young Farmers' support**. **The eligibility criteria for these require simplification and adaptation in order to allow small farms to be competitive when applying for such calls.**

Advisory and Innovation Support

Programs such as LEADER Cooperation measures, youth projects financed under the Erasmus+ program and potentially other National Educational Programs can be used for youth in rural areas for encouraging the **development of soft skills in rural areas, such as leadership, cooperation and trust, especially among youth and cooperative leaders**, in order to drive change in less dynamic and open communities.

Products, Markets and Marketing

Regulation

National and regional authorities need to offer more **flexibility, clear communication and lenient/gradual non-compliance strategies when applying the Hygiene Regulation package** on small farms' production systems. Small farms could benefit from the same leniency in terms of **fiscal measures**.

Financial Support

Regarding CAP funding, stakeholders encourage CAP managing authorities to provide stronger support for small farms seeking to **develop short supply chains through cooperation measures during the post-2020 programming period**. The budget allocation for educational promotion towards consumers and social media promotion of smaller brand products should be increased. Eligible set-ups should include consumer-driven initiatives, direct buying groups, 'pick-your-own' farm visits, physical and online shops, mobile applications and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) initiatives. NGOs, LEADER Local Action Groups (LAGs), Foundations, as well as tourist HORECA points (as a distinctly helpful actor in this configuration) should still be eligible to apply under such arrangements.

Local authorities could also play a role in maintaining the diversity of agrifood supply chains by **maintaining and increasing the number of local farmer markets and craft markets** each weekend in attractive and well-circulated city squares.

Innovation Support

Advisory support could focus on **promoting successful short supply chain types of initiatives and regional good practices among small farms** as a form of market education. Secondly, small farms also require **more training regarding storytelling-based branding and marketing**, in order to develop better labeling and promotional activities, attract consumers and obtain added value for their produce.



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Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems

Regulation

SALSA stakeholders have advised national agricultural ministries to **develop regulation for aligning the activity of private agrochemical advisors** with national and regional strategies, targets and objectives.

Financial Support

There are numerous and diverse expectations from SALSA policy regarding Farm Advisory Services (FAS) in EE member states. **National FAS should provide free, publically-funded services for small farms, but should also increase the level of training of staff, diversify services beyond informing about basic CAP conditionalities. Small farms need more education about regional good practices for small farms.** Small farms also require training programs regarding agroecology, organic farming and cooperation projects.

National AKIS strategies should pay particular attention to **incentivizing universities to cooperate with small farms and their organizations**. The *curricula* of professional agricultural high schools should also be improved in order to make farming more attractive for youth.

Last but not least, national/regional CAP managing authorities could make Local Action Groups (LAG) under LEADER eligible as **farm advisors**.

Natural Resources and Climate

Regulation

In order to assure the effectiveness of environmental objectives, authorities **should improve the implementation and controls for the Environmental regulation package**, as well as related conditionalities. Secondly, **national and regional water irrigation strategies should be expanded and adapted to the needs of small farms**, including by financing water storage facilities in drought areas.



Financial Support

Agri-environment, as well as agro- and eco-tourism businesses measures from the 2014-2020 programming period **should be continued through the post-2020 Strategic Plans** in order to continue diversifying the range of economic activities available for small farms who maintain High Natural Value landscapes in mountainous areas. Furthermore, Cooperation measures from the post-2020 CAP, such as Short Supply Chains, could be used to promote the environmental benefits of local food.

Lastly, in order to continue supporting the transition of small farms towards more **environmentally friendly production means** (including solar panels, fuel-efficient tractors), modernization investment measures should continue recognizing them as a eligible category during the post 2020 CAP.

Innovation Support

National Agricultural Ministries and CAP managing agencies should encourage LAGs and NGOs to provide support measures for building capacity on Agri-environment measures. SALSA stakeholders proposed this as the contribution of these groups to assuring the success of such measures during the 2014-2020 programming period was positive.



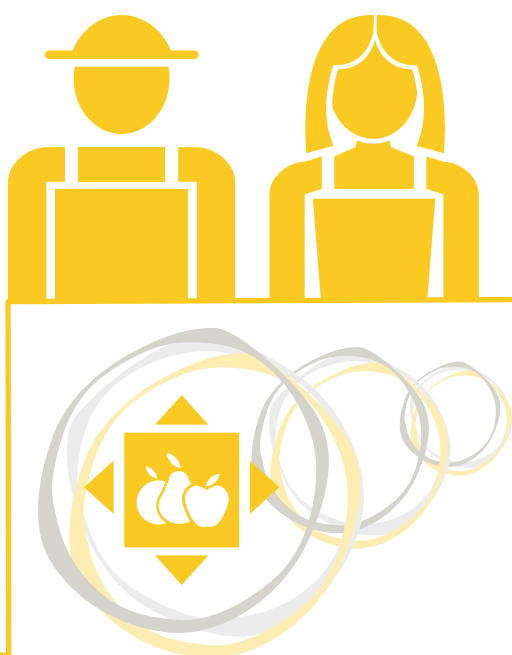
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CONCLUSIONS

For the small farms in SALSA's Eastern European regions, investments in road infrastructure and services in rural areas, as well as generational renewal measures remain important. Short Supply Chain measures should continue building bridges between small farms and urban consumers. Agri-environment measures and ones meant to diversify the range of activities in High Natural Value rural areas can also diversify the range of income sources from small farms and help them promote their unique assets.

To this aim, it is necessary to plan an efficient policy mix. It is good to consider not only support schemes for both CAP pillars, but also the integration and harmonization of different mechanisms from various programs, funds and regulations available at EU level. Small farmers support should be addressed at both national or regional level. This seems to be particularly important for the measures focused on community development.

However the ability of rural measures to actually target and reach small farms depends on the organization and involvement of small farms and their representatives in the development the new CAP Strategic Plans, as well as the simplification of eligibility criteria and legislative requirements affecting them (including hygiene, direct sales and taxation). Currently these are almost the same for all farms – whether they are small, medium or large - which diminishes the chances of small farms of benefitting from them.





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SALSA Final Conference: March 2020 at the 14th IFSA 2020 Conference, Évora, Portugal



Can small farms and small food businesses in SALSA's Southern European countries contribute to sustainable food security?

It is estimated that the total number of small farms in Southern European (SE) countries has decreased by 33% between 2010 and 2019. This loss is despite the widespread acknowledgement and appreciation of the important role that small farms play in supporting rural livelihoods, conserving biodiversity and maintaining traditional landscapes, rural traditions and cultural heritage. Can we really afford to lose any more?

SOUTHERN EUROPE AT A GLANCE



Vaucluse (FRANCE) - Imathia, Larisa, Ileia (GREECE) - Lucca, Pisa (ITALY) - Alentejo Central, Oeste (PORTUGAL) - Castellón, Córdoba (SPAIN)

1 884 390 SMALL FARMS



62% out of total farms
(Eurostat, 2016)



Occupy ca. 38.8% of total area
in these 10 regions (Eurostat, 2017)



Occupy ca. 17.4% of the Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA)
in these 10 regions (Eurostat, 2017)

KEY POLICY MESSAGES

Small farms in Southern Europe contribute to a large share of the overall regional production. However, their contribution to the regional food security is generally low because their **commercialization pathways are mostly export-oriented.**

Nonetheless, there is **good potential for them to contribute much more to local markets and regional food security.** The findings of the SALSA project indicate that for the products studied, Southern European small farms could potentially cover 100% of the regional demand and generate surplus in 44% of the regional food systems analysed.

In order to enable this, the **needs of small farmers** need to be addressed in **four main areas:**

- Products, markets and marketing;
- Natural resources and climate;
- Generational renewal and new entrants;
- Knowledge and innovation.

This policy brief proposes a **range of policy responses** to these needs and clearly highlights **priority actions by national and regional authorities**, notably those responsible for the programming of EU post-2020 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) funds.



Source: EU - adapted by SALSA

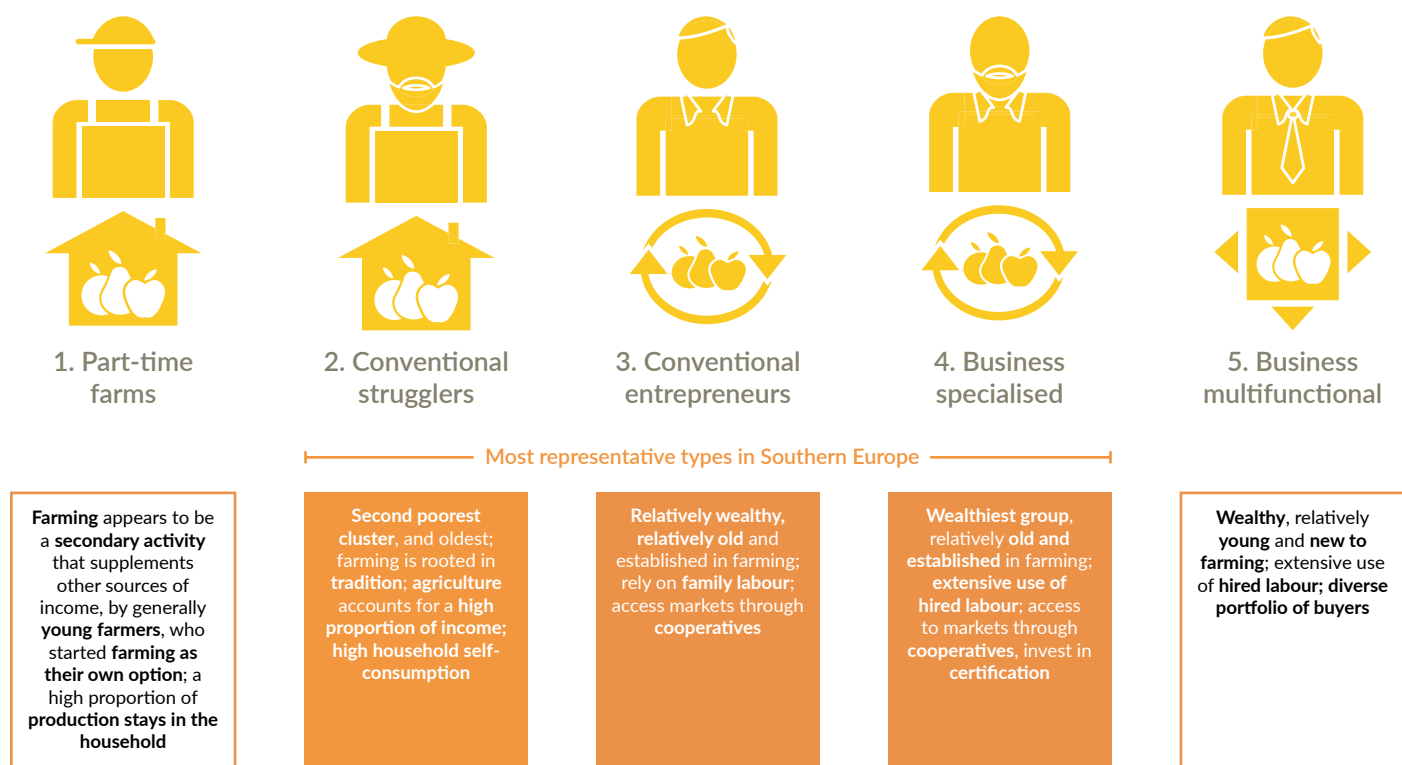
SALSA is an EU Horizon 2020 project that set out to assess the current and future role of small farms and related small food businesses (suppliers, processors, distributors) in achieving sustainable Food and Nutrition Security (FNS).

SALSA studied small farms in 30 reference regions in 20 countries - 25 regions (at the so-called NUTS3 administrative level) in Europe and 5 regions in Africa.

Research was conducted in 10 regions (NUTS3 level) of 5 Southern European (SE) countries – France, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Greece. The number of small farms varies from country-to-country, but throughout Southern Europe they are consistently found to be strategic players in the regional food systems studied by the SALSA project.

Small farms in SE countries tend to be 'export-oriented'. In other words, although they produce a large proportion of the studied food items at regional level, a great share of this production is often not consumed within the region but is exported outside of the region. Not surprisingly, small farms in Southern Europe are especially important as producers of fruits, vegetables and olive oil for the European market and they rely heavily upon formal cooperative structures to facilitate access to these markets.

Although small farms are mainly export-oriented, for some products the total production from small farms at regional level is so large and diverse that if it were to stay in the region it has the potential to totally supply the regional demand for food.



WHO ARE SMALL FARMERS IN SOUTHERN EUROPE?

According to the **Typology of Small Farms** developed by the SALSA project, the most common types of small farm found in the SE countries are **'Conventional Entrepreneurs'** and **'Business Specialized'** (see the graphic for more explanation).



Furthermore, according to the **SALSA Typology of Regional Food Systems** in many of the NUTS3 regions studied in SE countries the food system of selected products are characterised by **specialized production for export**, thereby further reinforcing the tendency of the small farms found within these regions to contribute less to regional food security and more to exports.

'Conventional Strugglers' are also found in the SE countries, but national/regional authorities will have to assess whether they are policy responsive and which is the most appropriate development path to encourage them to adopt.

As this Policy Brief highlights, there is **considerable potential** to use available policy instruments to help these small businesses develop further and **consolidate their existing position** within their regional food systems – both as exporters, but also as potential suppliers to their local/regional markets.

WHAT ARE THE NEEDS OF SMALL FARMS IN SOUTHERN EUROPE?

The results of the analysis undertaken in the five SE countries studied by the SALSA project indicate that the **needs of small farmers** in Southern Europe consistently fall into **four main areas**:

1) Products, Markets and Marketing

There is a clear need for much greater attention to the challenges of **increasing and strengthening the integration** of small farmers into both **new and existing value chains** for their products. Whilst it is clearly understood that many small farms in SE countries are strongly focussed on exports of specialised products, there is also the need for targeted actions to foster the development of more **short supply chains** that open-up **greater access to local markets** for small farms.

Other specific needs identified in association with this include a) **local value chain strategies** that promote greater **co-ordination** between small farmers and value chain actors, as well as more **cooperation** between farmers; b) the **development and promotion** of more products, food labels and brands **targeted at regional markets**, and; c) **consumer awareness-raising campaigns** about the full range of benefits of buying products from local small farms.

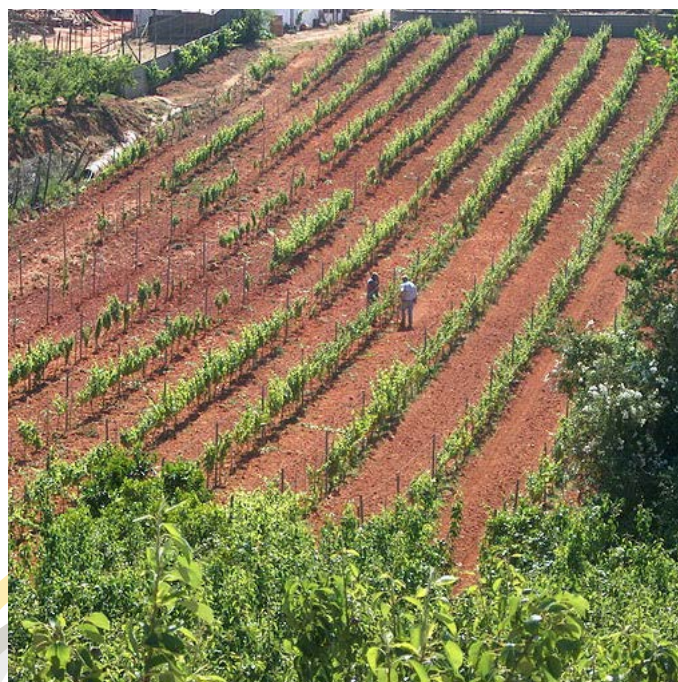
All these activities also imply the need for a solid foundation of appropriate **food hygiene/safety rules** for smaller producers, as well as **reduced bureaucracy**. Small farms **cannot be expected** to compete with larger producers according to the same demanding standards. This is particularly important for encouraging (if considered appropriate) the **market integration of the less-commercially oriented** 'Conventional Strugglers' that are found in the SE countries.

2) Natural Resources and Climate

All SE countries are facing the **negative impacts of climate change** upon agriculture. These include prolonged water shortage; extreme weather events; wildfires; the emergence of new pests (e.g. Asian bug and *Drosophila suzukii*) and diseases, and; the soil degradation processes (e.g. soil erosion) associated with desertification.

Small farms are especially vulnerable to these impacts and there is a clear need to support them more fully and effectively in the **uptake of appropriate adaptation measures**.

A major need for adaptation identified by the SALSA project is the **diversification/restructuring of production systems to enhance their resilience** to the negative impacts of climate change. This includes the need for more drought resistant crop rotations that integrate new/traditional crops, varieties and cultivars; the increased uptake of organic farming and other forms of agro-ecology; plus the introduction of new technologies, such as minimum tillage and smart irrigation.



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3) Generational Renewal and New Entrants

Generational renewal and the **encouragement of new entrants** in agriculture are key issues in SE countries. At a general level these challenges are symptomatic of the broad range of factors, such as the **lack of basic services** and **poor connectivity** that make rural areas across Europe relatively unattractive places to live and work. But there is also the need to address specific issues, such as **lack of access to land** for new entrants; the **inability to pay competitive wages** for labour when setting-up new businesses, and; the **lack of vocational training and advisory services** for young farmers.

4) Knowledge and Innovation

Many countries in Southern Europe (e.g. Greece and Portugal) suffer from very **weak and fragmented** Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKISs). This is a complex issue with **many factors** contributing to a poor connection between research and practice; lack of well-trained advisers; decline in agricultural training etc. Whatever the balance of factors, small farms are inevitably the most vulnerable because they **cannot afford to pay** for alternative sources of information, knowledge and advice.

A critical need exists for **publically-funded knowledge exchange and innovation support systems** for small farmers, including services that go well beyond simple administrative support for CAP payments etc. This is a **major cross-cutting need** that influences all other needs above.



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HOW CAN POLICY ENABLE SMALL FARMS IN SOUTHERN EUROPE?

Policies are rarely implemented in isolation, but usually as a **'mix' of complementary measures**. The following policy recommendations for addressing the needs of small farms identified above are therefore formulated with reference to the three main types of policy intervention:

- **Regulation**
- **Financial Support**
- **Advisory and Innovation Support**

Where relevant some new tools and good practices are also mentioned.

Products, Markets and Marketing

Regulation

Numerous regulations impact upon the competitive environment within which small farmers operate.

Compliance with food safety and hygiene standards are a **constant source of pressure** upon small farms and there is potential at national level for further **flexibility in their interpretation and implementation**. But at the same time, **minimum standards must be maintained** as the cornerstone of greater market integration for small farms.

Other potential regulatory interventions by **national authorities** include:

- The **legal definition of agri-food supply chain agreements** that require all actors along the value chain to collaborate and rebalance power in the food chain, including more bargaining power for small farmers;
- The **legal definition of short supply chains**, including the establishment of specific rules for the branding and control of products within the supply chain. Italy's [Campagna Amica](#) (see box on the last page) is a very good example of this approach that could be replicated in other countries;
- More **flexible public procurement rules** that enable public caterers, such as schools and hospitals, to favour the purchase of produce from local small farms.

At **EU level**, it is **crucial to establish trade agreements** that define legal conditions and production standards that do not subject small farmers to unfair competition. In this respect there is also scope to **enhance the functioning** of the EU Quality Package to ensure it works more in favour of small-scale producers.

The **regulation of minimum prices**, such as in the “Milk Package”, is very beneficial for small farmers and could be extended to other sectors characterised by small-scale production.

Financial Support

There is great potential in the SE countries to continue **investing in the creation of a “culture of cooperation”** via financial support for the establishment of short supply chains based upon **clearly defined and functional local partnerships**. The cooperation measure (Measure 16) was **very popular and effective** during the 2014-2020 programming period of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) with much potential to enhance it further in the post-2020 CAP. For example, by connecting it with greater funding for **product innovation; branding** (e.g. by linking with traditional landscapes or nature conservation); **collective marketing**, and; **consumer awareness**.

Natural Resources and Climate

Financial Support

EU Member States will continue to be obliged to dedicate a significant proportion (minimum of 30%) of their post-2020 CAP rural development budgets to interventions for the environment and climate action. The proposed new ‘green architecture’ of the CAP offers the flexibility to develop **new and innovative ‘eco-schemes’ targeted at small farms** (e.g. promoting Integrated Pest Management) and encourages alternative/enhanced approaches for voluntary agri-environment-climate (AECM) schemes, notably via adoption of the results-based approach and/or **collective approach** (which is of particular value for enabling small farms to benefit from AECM payments).

As a general point, investments in irrigation infrastructures financed through national programmes may facilitate greater access to water for many farmers, but strategic investment is also needed for **building the resilience and adaptive capacity** of those small farms without the means or resources to secure regular access to water.

National authorities should also consider the development of **specific risk management tools** to help small farmers deal with the risks associated





with climate change. There are inspiring examples available from the international development community.

Advisory and Innovation Support

As already noted, significant improvements are needed in the knowledge exchange and innovation support systems provided for small farmers. This is especially important regarding natural resource management and climate action, but is of course also relevant to improving their economic and social performance.

National authorities are recommended to consider:

- The targeted use of public funding to provide **more strategic advisory support for small farms on key issues** such as eco-conditionality and adaptation to climate change. In some SE countries this needs to begin with **basic issues such as increased spending on local advisory offices and the better training of advisers**. But it also extends to **more funding for research of relevance to small farms** and greater co-ordination/communication between small-scale farmers, advisers and researchers;
- The **development of innovative new advisory approaches for small farms**, such as knowledge exchange networks, discussion groups and specialist demonstrations farms. This may involve the **more flexible interpretation of eligibility criteria** to allow a more diverse range of actors to access post-2020 rural development funding;
- The development of mechanisms to **better co-ordinate public and private advisers** in order to ensure more efficient and complementarity knowledge exchange activities benefiting small farmers;
- Controlling the market entry and operation of private advisers **in certain specific domains** (e.g. agrochemicals).



Existing EU support for interactive innovation **should be continued** and national authorities are encouraged to **foster and facilitate much greater uptake of post-2020 CAP funding** for EIP-AGRI Operational Groups that aim specifically to address the needs of small farmers.

Generational Renewal and New Entrants

National authorities must put much **greater emphasis upon fostering generational renewal and new entrants** in the small farm sector. Again there are multiple dimensions to this issue and the **national authorities of individual countries are best placed to assess how to intervene** on specific issues such as land price regulation, taxation, laws on inheritance or territorial planning.

Financial Support

Whilst young farmers must continue to be targeted as a specific beneficiary for various forms of CAP support, it is also recommended to **recognize new entrants (with clearly defined eligibility criteria) as a distinct category deserving similar direct support**, but having slightly different requirements and expectations. New entrants into small farming can also receive direct financial support from local/regional authorities and there are examples of such existing schemes in other European countries.

Drawing on the Spanish experience, **land banks** are also a good practice to promote in order to improve the access of farmers who want to enter farming and/or develop existing small-holdings.



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Advisory and Innovation Support

One of the key resources often overlooked in discussions about generational renewal and new entrants is the **knowledge and experience embedded in older generations of farmers**. There are numerous opportunities within the post-2020 CAP rural development funds (including LEADER) for the development of **support measures for rural networking, demonstration farms and general knowledge transfer between old and young farmers**.



GOOD PRACTICES

THE ITALIAN NETWORK SHORT SUPPLY CHAIN BY CAMPAGNA AMICA, THE FOUNDATION PROMOTED BY COLDIRETTI

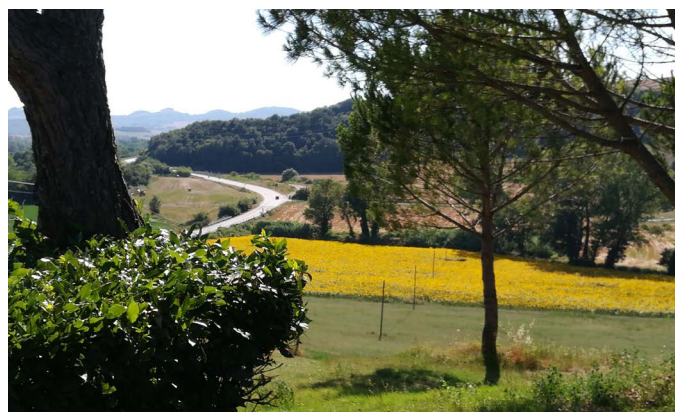
The **Campagna Amica** network is managed according to a common set of rules. These refer to branding, colours, behaviour, environmental ethical code, and control systems regarding the origin and quality of food product. Each point of sales is managed by farmers. Campagna Amica provides support as training activities, common promotion and communication about the initiative, advisory services on legal framework.

FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN AGREEMENTS DEVELOPED BY BY THE ITALIAN AGRICULTURE MINISTRY

They require to the actors along a sectorial food chain to collaborate, defining the minimum priced paid to the farmers and the minimum quantity that farmers should guarantee.

COLDIRETTI'S "INNOVATION ADVISORS"

The training courses developed by Coldiretti under Measure 16 of the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programs with the aim of creating a national network of Innovation Advisors were well received and praised also by European policy makers. These facilitate the introduction of innovation within farms, even small ones.



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**SALSA Final Conference: March 2020 at the 14th IFSA 2020 Conference
Évora, Portugal**



Can small farms and small food businesses in Northern Europe contribute to sustainable food security?

There is widespread acknowledgement and appreciation in Northern Europe of the important role that small farms play in supporting rural livelihoods, conserving biodiversity, and maintaining traditional landscapes, rural traditions and cultural heritage. The EU-funded SALSA project set out to examine another potentially important role of small farms – their contribution to food security.

NORTHERN EUROPE AT A GLANCE



Ile-et-Vilaine (FRANCE) - Perth and Kinross, and Stirling; Lochaber, Skye and Lochalsh, Arran and Cumbrae, Argyll and Bute (UNITED KINGDOM) - Hedmark (NORWAY)

211,000 SMALL FARMS



18% out of total farms
(Eurostat, 2016)



Occupy ca. 56.4% of total area in these 4 regions (Eurostat, 2017)



Occupy ca. 0.10% of the Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA) in these 4 regions (Eurostat, 2017)

KEY POLICY MESSAGES

Small farms in the regions of Northern Europe studied by the SALSA project only contribute to a limited extent to regional food availability as they produce only a small portion of the total food production in the region, but they play an essential role in keeping rural areas alive. They are also a vehicle for a lifestyle where values such as simple life, clean and safe food, animal welfare, environmental protection and closeness to nature are predominant.

In order to continue providing these benefits small farmers in Northern Europe need:

- Support with the labelling and marketing of regional produce;
- Mechanisms to get more involved with community development;
- Targeted financial support in less favoured areas;
- A system of redistributive payments (where relevant);
- A broad range of cooperation mechanisms;
- More arrangements and facilities to ensure access to land, and;
- Well-functioning agricultural knowledge and innovation systems that address the specific needs of small farms.



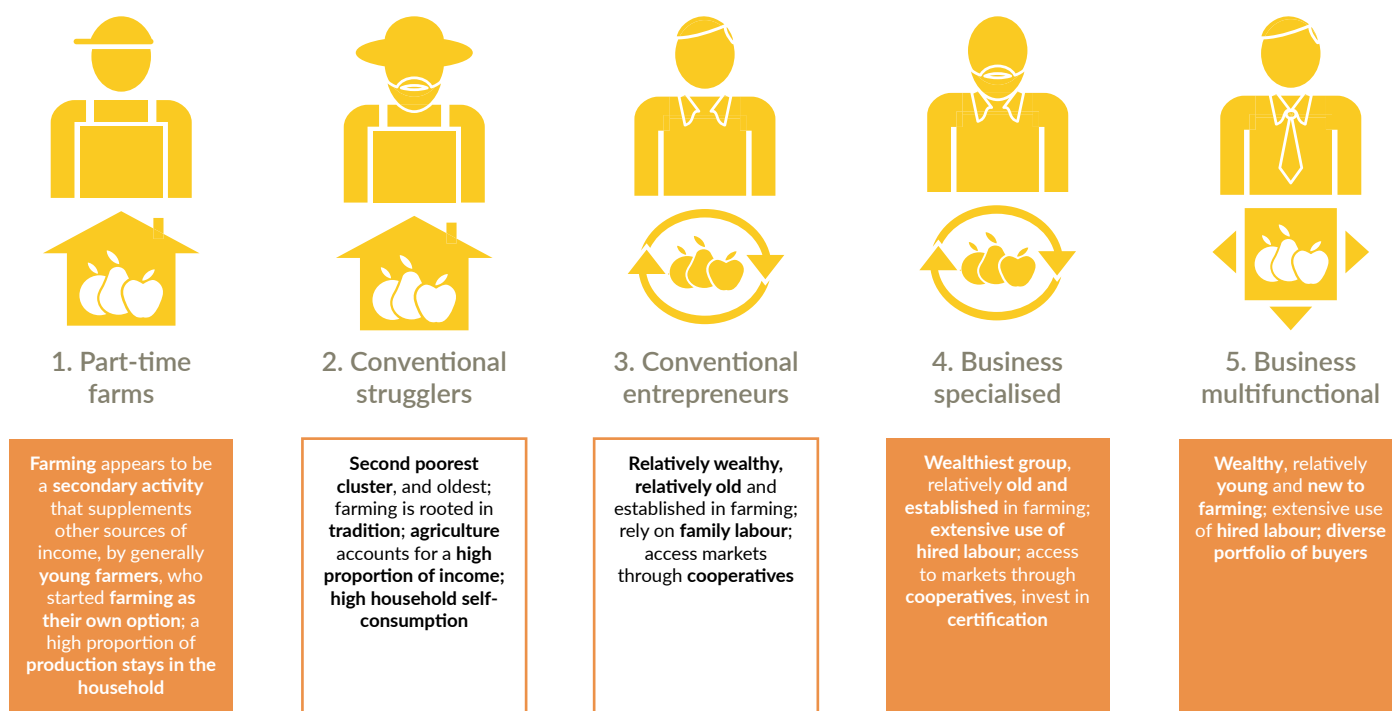
Source: EU - adapted by SALSA

Small farms in Northern Europe are found alongside some of the largest - and in some cases, most industrialised - farms in the whole of Europe.

The SALSA project conducted research in **four regions** (at the so-called NUTS3 level) of three countries in Northern Europe – UK, France and Norway. As a proportion of the total number of agricultural holdings, small farms range from 10% in Norway and 19% in Northern France to 45% in the west of Scotland.

In the regions of Hedmark (NO), Ile-et-Vilaine (FR), East and West Scotland (UK) that were studied by SALSA, small farms only **contribute to a limited extent to regional food availability** since they produce only a small portion of the total food produced in the region.

Nevertheless, they do still play an important role in these regional food systems regarding those products (e.g. from horticulture) of which a large proportion **grown in the region is also consumed in the region**. In the case of these specific products, small farms tend to **connect directly with consumers** and provide a range of “alternative pathways” for local consumers to buy more locally-produced food.



 = Most representative types in Northern European regions analysed by SALSA

Small farms in Northern Europe are also commonly **linked to lifestyle choices** where values such as simple life, clean and safe food, animal welfare, environmental protection and closeness to nature are important. This is probably why many small farms have **diversified into small businesses** focused on agro-tourism or educational activities – a trend observed especially in the regions studied by SALSA in Norway and Scotland, which benefit from a busy flow of tourists during the summer growing season.

Other key characteristics of the small farm sector in Northern Europe are:

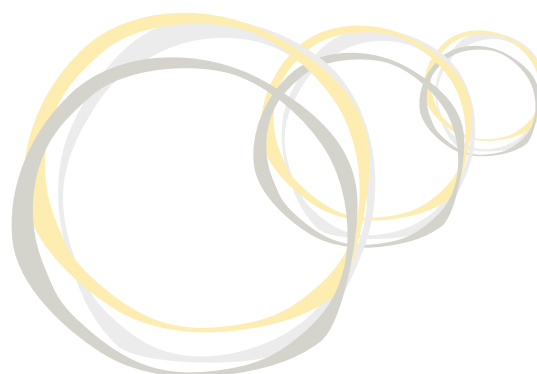
- An interest in business models for small farming based on innovative economic strategies;
- high added-value products (e.g. the increasing prevalence of niche markets for speciality products from small farms was observed in Ile-et-Vilaine, France), and;
- the development of various new marketing channels linked to the concept of short food supply chains.

WHO ARE SMALL FARMERS IN NORTHERN EUROPE?



According to the typology of small farms developed by the SALSA project, the most common types of small farm found in the countries of Northern Europe studied by SALSA are **'Business specialized'**, **'Business multifunctional'** and **'Part-time farms'** (see the graphic for more explanation).

One specific characteristic of the small farms found in Northern Europe is their **high level of involvement** in “alternative” approaches to environmental management, supply chain development, community engagement and business organisation.





WHAT ARE THE NEEDS OF SMALL FARMS IN NORTHERN EUROPE?

The results of the analysis conducted on the four regions studied by SALSA in Northern Europe led to the consistent identification of certain specific needs in each country.

Scotland (UK)

Two priority policy themes were identified in the transitional (post-Brexit) context of Scotland, namely:

Access to Land – a specific need was identified for land reform on the West coast of Scotland to enable greater access to affordable land for small-holdings to expand in size.

Market Integration – a broad range of needs related to the development and supply of local markets for locally produced food, including the branding of more local food products of defined local provenance. Increased cooperation/partnership between farmers, small food businesses and other value chain actors is

needed with much potential for various forms of start-up and social innovation to play a role in building stronger market linkages and a durable customer base for small-scale producers and processors.

Northern France

Similar needs were identified in Northern France:

Access to Land - with specific emphasis upon access to land for new entrants (especially young people) interested in more innovative, collaborative and diversified approaches to small-scale food production. There is a particular need for greater access to land in the peri-urban areas that are closest to the largest concentrations of consumers interested in local food.

Collaboration - local, small-scale, collaborative actions are needed to empower and enable small farmers in many aspects of their day-to-day transactions ranging from cooperative marketing to sharing farm machinery.



Norway

For Norway, the context was slightly different and three key needs were identified:

Connectivity and Infrastructure - where the priority need was to increase investments in connectivity, infrastructure (better roads/reducing travel time) and avoiding centralizing public services in order to maintain rural areas alive.

Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) - where stakeholders felt that measures should be coupled with capital or investment programs to allow small farms to acquire new technologies.

Natural Resources and Climate - the priority intervention identified was increasing investments in climate-smart technologies.

Access to land seems to be a common and severe issue across both Scottish and North France regions, and a major barrier preventing farmers to contribute more to regional food availability. In both Scottish and Norwegian regions the issue of the **lack of capital** of small farms was raised under different priority policy themes (Market Integration and AKIS), which disadvantages them either in relation to the latest technological interventions available to large farms (Norway), or simply for assuring their own processing through abattoirs (Scotland). For the rest, small farms in SALSA's Northern European regions face **similar sectorial concerns as in the rest of Europe**.



HOW CAN POLICY ENABLE SMALL FARMS IN NORTHERN EUROPE?

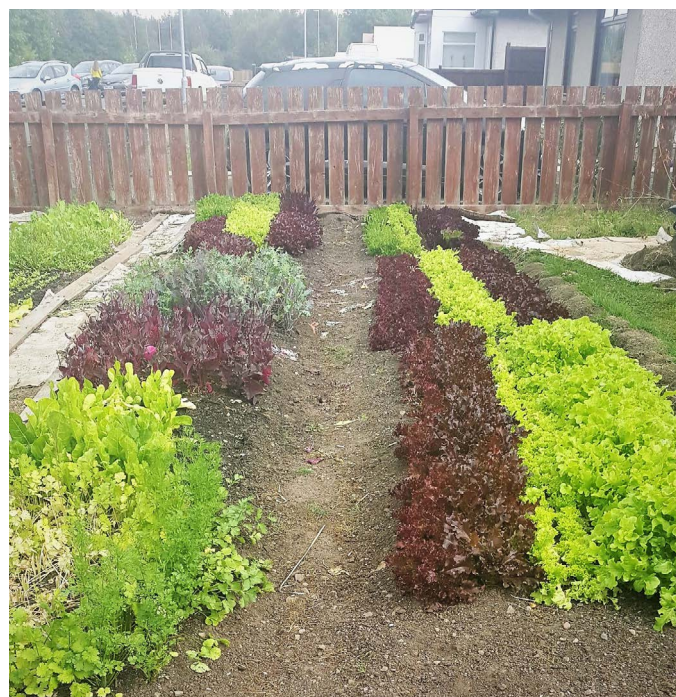
Consultation with stakeholders in the Northern European regions studied by SALSA identified some **common recommendations** for supporting small farms in the contrasting policy domains governing each of the three countries and regional contexts. These recommendations refer to **generic types of measures**, leaving it to decision makers to consider how their specific policy context and available policy tools can accommodate these measures.

Small farmer and regional produce labelling and visibility

Participants felt that produce from small farms entering the local food chain through short supply chain type measures, or similar, should benefit from appropriate labelling, validating and promoting their contribution to regional food security for key products.

Mechanisms for small farmer involvement in community development

In recognition of the **mutual dependency** between small-scale farms (in the retention of community facilities schools, shops and recreational facilities) and the community (for purchasing produce and supporting various markets), small farmers should be **actively encouraged and supported** as both the initiators and beneficiaries of Community-led Local Development (CLLD), LEADER and Smart Village type initiatives in rural areas. Possible projects under such initiatives could include opportunities to integrate new entrants, train them in agricultural techniques and therefore increase the stability of regional food systems.



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Less Favoured Areas (LFAs)

Financial support and other mechanisms to support small farms from Less Favoured Areas should be continued in Northern Europe as many small farmers are **located in marginal areas with limited opportunities for increased productivity and profitability**.

Climate change

Small farms are highly vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change and need targeted support via **farm advice providers** and **appropriate knowledge exchange activities** to encourage adaptation. Climate change adaptation frameworks should also consider financing mechanisms to support the transition of small farms towards more sustainable technologies and production systems.

It is also important not to overlook the role that small farms can play in **climate change mitigation** by encouraging local food consumption, the diversification of production, educating consumers and better organising local food chains. National/ regional climate change mitigation strategies should take account of this contribution and **target small farms accordingly**.



Redistributive payments

Stakeholders in the Northern European regions studied by SALSA support the idea of **redistributing area-based support payments** from larger farms towards smaller farms in order to redress current discrepancies and recognize their contribution to delivering a range of public goods, including food security.

Cooperation

Policy makers should seek to develop a **broad range of cooperation measures** to enable cross-sectorial collaboration, communication and improving support for cooperation in the marketing and distribution of produce from small farms. This does **not need to be limited to food security alone**, collaboration with small farms can also involve other policy sectors such as education and social welfare. Where relevant policy measures exist this type of collaboration can be advanced via CLLD/LEADER and Smart Village type initiatives.

Access to land

The lack of access to land was deemed to be one of the **biggest barriers** to small scale food production across all four regions studied by the SALSA project in Northern Europe.

Land Reform policy in Scotland¹ is designed to improve Scotland's system of land ownership so that land may "contribute to a fair and just society while balancing public and private interests" and support more people productively using land. This is an significant step, and has enabled the development of community owned land in remote regions. It is important to implement it carefully, as it can have unintended consequences for small-scale farms, such as reducing land available for tenancy or rental.

In other regions it was believed that opportunities and support for individuals to purchase/rent small areas of farmland for small-scale production should be implemented. Numerous good examples exist for encouraging new entrants into small-scale farming, including the **networking of younger and older farmers** in areas where generational renewal is most needed.



1 <https://www.gov.scot/policies/land-reform/>

AKIS

For small farms to succeed using innovative marketing methods, the underlying support needs to exist. This refers not just to subsidies, but to marketing initiatives, advice, training and innovation support. A **well-functioning farm advisory system** at local level is therefore essential.



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GOOD PRACTICES

CROFTING

In Scotland the historical 'crofting' system has helped preserve small farming systems, particularly on the West coast. Crofts are common working communities or 'townships' typically consisting of small individually-owned plots of marginal land which share poor quality hill ground used for grazing.

Crofts enjoy certain rights under the Crofter Scotland Act not given to other small farms in Scotland. While current Scottish Crofting legislation should be updated to allow for more flexibility, this particular regulatory practice was seen by participants from other Northern European regions to be a potential good practice that could help small farms protect their farming systems and develop a solution for one of their most pressing issues, namely access to land.



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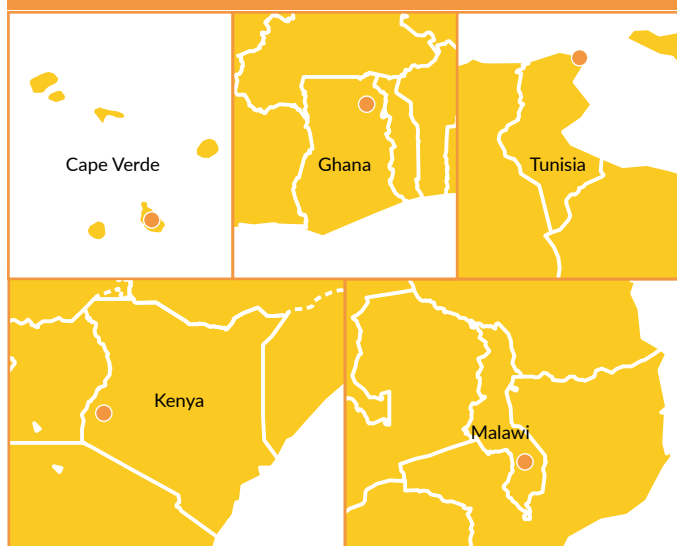
Policy Brief Lessons from Africa

March 2020

The main challenge for African food systems in the future will be to provide food for a rapidly growing population with changing diets and food preferences. Whilst the population of Europe is decreasing, with consumers demanding food that is produced in an environmentally and socially responsible way, Africa's population will more than double between 2020 and 2050, with food demand increasing even more as a result of dietary changes.

AFRICAN REGIONS ANALYSED BY SALSA

Santiago Island (CAPE VERDE) - Gushegu (GHANA),
Ugunja (KENYA) - Balaka (MALAWI) - Haouaria (TUNISIA)



Source: UN - adapted by SALSA

The project focused on small farms with **up to 5 hectares of land** and an economic size of **up to 8 Economic Size Units** (equivalent to €9,600 of standard gross margin). The SALSA researchers also took account of the specific relationship between small farms and the associated farming family/ household, notably the importance of **self-provisioning**.

In each region investigated by SALSA a **food system study** of two to four selected products was conducted. By identifying the characteristics of each **regional food system** for a range of **selected key products** the SALSA project: a) highlighted the **different ways** that small farms and small food businesses can contribute to **food provision, food availability** and **food access** (the three key elements of FNS) in different food regional systems, and; b) developed better understanding of the overall functioning of these food systems.

SALSA is an EU Horizon 2020 project that set out to assess the current and future role of **small farms and related small food businesses** (suppliers, processors, distributors) in achieving sustainable Food and Nutrition Security (FNS). One important part of the project was identifying the necessary **enabling conditions** for small farms to meet the growing demand for food in an increasingly populated and resource-constrained world.

SALSA studied small farms in **30 reference regions in 20 countries** - 25 regions (at the so-called NUTS3 administrative level) in Europe and 5 regions in Africa. In Africa, these reference regions were equivalent to a district (Ghana and Malawi), sub-county (Kenya), commune (Tunisia) or island (Cape Verde).

WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE OF SMALL FARMS IN AFRICA?

Africa has the world's **fastest growing population** in the 21st century. It is projected to reach 2.5 billion in 2050 with the majority of the population estimated to remain rural until the 2040s. Although no consolidated data exist for all countries in Africa about the number of farms, FAO estimates that 60 million agricultural holdings provide labour for 220 million agricultural workers.

Small farms in Africa are estimated to undertake more than **70% of the agricultural activities on the continent**, thereby helping ensure food, employment and rural livelihoods. Available data however indicate that there remain **severe challenges** related to food insecurity and nutrition. Producing enough food in Africa in an environmentally and socially sustainable

manner will therefore require **sustainable increases in productivity** for all farm types.

According to the EU Task Force on Rural Africa (2019), 52% of African farmers cultivate less than 1 hectare of land and 76% have less than 2 hectares. These farmers are normally family farmers producing food for home consumption and sale. Farmers managing small farms often struggle to access markets and normally consume a high proportion of their produce – issues that make the African regions analysed by the SALSA project **similar to those studied in Eastern Europe**.



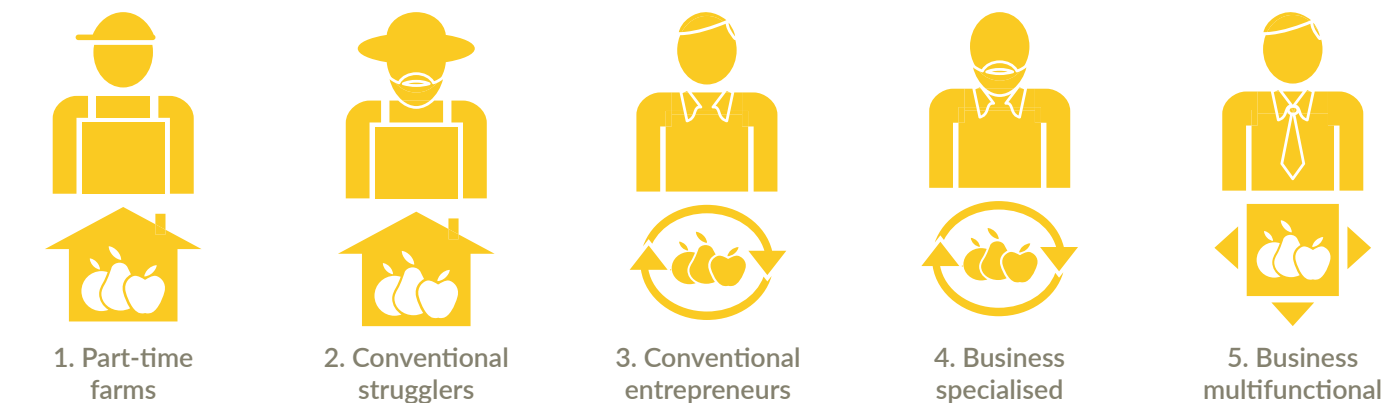
WHO ARE THE SMALL FARMS IN SALSA'S AFRICAN REGIONS?

In order to address the great variety of contexts in which small farms were found in the regions studied, SALSA produced a **novel typology of small farms** for Europe and Africa.

It is based on three main distinguishing characteristics: 1) the **degree of orientation to the market**; 2) the **use of certification**, and; 3) the **degree of reliance on cooperatives**. These variables permit differentiation between the level of farm income generated by agricultural activities thereby highlighting differences between farms who seem to struggle and may be close to poverty, from those that are wealthier, specialised, organised in cooperatives, and integrated to the market in diverse ways.

In the African reference regions studied by SALSA, the most common small farm types were 'Part-time' and 'Conventional Strugglers'. Both types **consume a large proportion of what they produce** leaving only a smaller percentage for sale to proximity consumers, included regional markets or wholesalers. For this reason, they are **less market integrated** than the other three types of small farms identified by SALSA. Furthermore, processors, small retailers and cooperatives are rarely among the sales points that small farms access. The **more specialised and export-oriented** the food system is, the **smaller the proportion** of small farm produce that is consumed within the household.

SALSA typology of small farms



Most representative types in Africa

<p>Farming appears to be a secondary activity that supplements other sources of income, by generally young farmers, who started farming as their own option; a high proportion of production stays in the household</p>	<p>Second poorest cluster, and oldest; farming is rooted in tradition; agriculture accounts for a high proportion of income; high household self-consumption</p>	<p>Relatively wealthy, relatively old and established in farming; rely on family labour; access markets through cooperatives</p>	<p>Wealthiest group, relatively old and established in farming; extensive use of hired labour; access to markets through cooperatives, invest in certification</p>	<p>Wealthy, relatively young and new to farming; extensive use of hired labour; diverse portfolio of buyers</p>
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The main distinguishing characteristics between 'Part-time' and 'Conventional Strugglers' are the fact that the former are younger and have other sources of income besides farming. 'Conventional Strugglers' are older, more traditional and have the lowest incomes out of all five types. They were found in many of the regions studied by the SALSA project but are **most prevalent** in the regions of Africa and Eastern Europe.

HOW DO SMALL FARMERS IN SALSA'S AFRICAN REGIONS CONTRIBUTE TO REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS?

In order to understand the different contributions of small farms to regional food systems, the SALSA project also developed a **typology of regional food systems** for Europe and Africa. This is based on the percentage of small farms' produce to food systems, as well as the percentage of food that is consumed within the region or exported.

The three types of food systems resulting are: 1) '**regional**' (where a significant proportion is consumed locally); 2) '**export-oriented**' (where a significant proportion exported outside of the region), and; 3) '**balanced**' (between the above). The results of this analysis reveal that in the African Reference Regions studied by SALSA **small farms contribute**

significantly to the regional food system, producing 60-100% of the total regional production for the key products studied.

In 15 (89%) of the 17 African food product food systems studied, the **commodity produced was also consumed in the region** thereby contributing substantially to regional food availability. Only in two food systems (from Gushegu district in Ghana) the product is exported outside of the region, indicating **more balance** between regional consumption and greater market integration.

WHAT ARE THE NEEDS AND ENABLING CONDITIONS FOR SMALL FARMS IN SALSA'S AFRICAN REGIONS?

Because of the high proportion of small farmer types with weaker market integration in Africa, policy makers seeking to develop appropriate interventions for them should firstly assess the **motivations** and **level of policy responsiveness** of the specific types of farmer they aim to support. This is particularly true for the 'Conventional Strugglers' type of farmers, who seem to be older, while **part-time farmers** might be more **responsive to the diversification of rural businesses** and the **provision of rural services** that can help them remain in rural areas.



Whilst recognising that informal markets will continue to be an important outlet for small farms, one very **important condition for increasing/strengthening the integration** of small farms into local, regional and export markets is the development and promotion of appropriate food safety standards. The uptake of such standards also requires **training and other forms of support** (e.g. small-scale investment funds) in order to assist farmers with the adoption of standards and the creation of the necessary production/processing facilities.

Cooperatives were identified as an important structure in the regional food systems studied by SALSA and allow small farms to **aggregate their produce and overcome their structural limitations** in terms of size. More attention needs to be paid to **successful models of small farm aggregation** in order to increase/strengthen their integration with national, macro-regional and continental trade networks.

An analysis of the structure of national agricultural programmes in the African countries studied by SALSA indicates that national governments may want to consider focusing on softer measures for supporting market integration, such as the **integrated packages of support for short food supply chains** that is available to farmers and associated food businesses in the European Union. This recommendation is also in line with the conclusions of the report of the EU's Task Force on Rural Africa, which encourages **more urban-rural linkages** as part of a territorial approach to food systems.

In addition to the above recommendations, stakeholders from **multiple levels of governance** in the African regions studied by SALSA **prioritized 5 areas of needs** of small farmers and suggested

some **general common solutions** that could help address those needs.

Due to the different policy domains governing each country, as well as international cooperation arrangements, the recommendations related to these solutions refer to **generic types of good practices** from each country and leave it to decision makers to consider how their own **specific national policy context** could support these measures.

1) Youth engagement in agriculture

Engaging young people in agriculture is an important priority for the continuity of rural communities, however it is evident that a **poor match exists between youth education and the practical needs** of the farming sector. Furthermore, numerous other specific barriers prevent young people from becoming successful farmers, including:

- difficulty in accessing land and credit;
- limited opportunities for young people to participate in policy design, and;
- lack of attractive opportunities, such as the use of modern technology in farming or support for innovative agriculture.

Agriculture is simply not promoted to young people as a skilled and potentially lucrative enterprise!

Improvements are needed in particular in relation to policy development, technology transfer and innovation. Young people rarely have the opportunity to be involved in the design of agricultural policies that affect them resulting in policies that **do not respond** to their needs. Rural youth organisations should ideally be **engaged with the design** of new agricultural programmes.

Young people tend to be attracted to technical and social innovation in agriculture, but there is not enough support for youth innovation and entrepreneurship. Agricultural research especially does not address the needs and interests of young farmers.

More funding is needed in order to support youth innovation and entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector in order to identify and make use of the **business opportunities for small farmers**, particularly



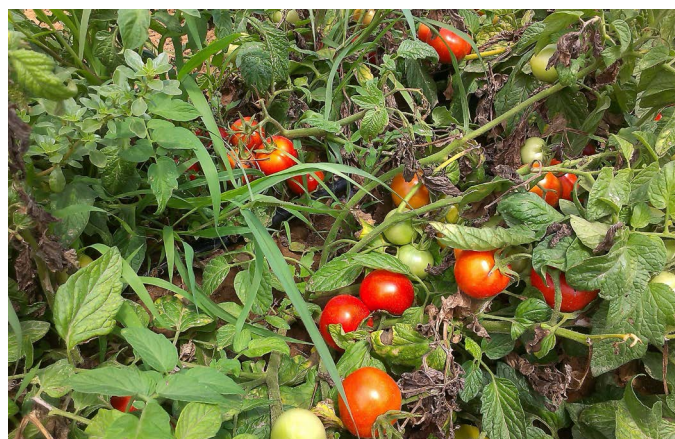
in linking urban and rural areas. Furthermore, innovation stemming out of youth agri-entrepreneurship should be re-incorporated into local food systems to assure the success of such businesses on the local market.

A few **examples of the favourable policies and programmes** noted by stakeholders from the African regions studied by SALSA are described below.

- In **Kenya**, there are a number of innovative **initiatives and policies supporting youths** (training, apprenticeships, funding, etc.), many of which aim to make farming more attractive to young people and to develop their practical/business skills through appropriate training and experiences (e.g. via incubation centres);
- **The Kenyan National Youth Development Policy (2018)** aims to empower young people to productively contribute to sustainable development, including by “transforming agriculture and agri-business to make it attractive to the youth”. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) internships are available for young people in Kenya and via Agricultural Colleges and Farm Institutes in Ghana, and;
- In **Ghana** the **National Youth Council** is responsible for promoting youth issues, but has not been able to engage the whole youth population. There are also **youth programmes in agriculture**, but mainly run by NGOs (e.g. UWEZO fund, Kenya; Planting for Food and Jobs in Ghana).

2) Access to affordable credit

Small farms in SALSA's African regions face difficulties in accessing **appropriate and affordable agricultural credit** for agricultural inputs, tools, machinery and other investments. Existing financial institutions do not normally prioritise the credit needs of small farms. They also **do not have access** to crop insurance in case of crop failure, despite being highly vulnerable to climate change induced risks.



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In most of African countries studied by SALSA, the **removal of social barriers** to accessing credit, such as age and gender, would help small farms greatly. ICT and mobile-enabled credit schemes have been noted by SALSA's stakeholders from African regions as having had a positive effect for small farmers in rural areas – even though there are also **concerns about them contributing to indebtedness**.

Several SALSA African countries (**Ghana, Malawi and Tunisia**), offer **input subsidies**. However, such programmes encourage high external input farming practices rather than support agro-ecology and sustainable intensification. Consequently, there is increasing concern about their negative environmental impacts. Decisions about this type of support should therefore be **carefully reviewed** taking account of available evidence and independently from any political motivations.

3) Natural resources and climate

Three **priority interventions** were identified by SALSA stakeholders regarding natural resources and climate in Africa:

- Agricultural extension services are paramount for educating farmers and local government about climate change risks and adaptation strategies;
- Micro-irrigation systems can help farmers overcome drought, and;
- Special programmes are required to reduce the felling of trees for firewood.

In both Ghana and Kenya important **legal changes now enable women to own and inherit land**. In the long term, this is believed to support sustainable land management practices.

Kenya has also established a number of other successful programmes and interventions that supported sustainable natural resource management and climate change adaptation, such as the **devolved climate finance system**. Other successful examples include the introduction of **climate smart agriculture**, conservation agriculture and agroforestry in Ghana.

Despite many successful examples of well-targeted and effective interventions there is **much scope for improvement**. Three main issues to address are:

- General shortage of funding for natural resource management and climate change;
- Dependency on donor-funded or non-state actor supported projects and programmes with limited coverage and time scale, and;
- Lack of evidence-based programme design.

SALSA stakeholders in Kenya specifically identified that some policies and programmes tackling sustainable natural resource management and conservation agriculture are **not sufficiently considering the needs of small farms**, such as their labour practices. A more detailed understanding of the economics of small farms through **facilitated needs assessment workshops**, as well as more inclusion of small farmer organizations in programme design is needed in order to ensure **better targeting and effectiveness** of interventions.

As most programmes addressing natural resource management and climate change are funded by sources from outside Kenya (notably international development agencies, bilateral donors and NGOs) there is a risk of discontinuity. Whilst these programmes have often established successful pilots, they have **generally struggled to scale-up their success** by covering larger geographic areas/ more farms and to achieve sustainability by becoming self-supporting. Such programmes **need to build in 'exit strategies'** and ensure that government agencies have the financial and technical capacity, as well as political will, to implement these strategies.

4) Products, Markets and Marketing

Priority policy interventions identified by SALSA stakeholders in Africa were to develop a) **processing and storage facilities** for adding value to produce from small farms, and b) more **structured demand systems** (based e.g. on multi-stakeholder platforms and price control systems), especially for younger, more entrepreneurial farmers.

A positive development in recent years has been the **increased availability of market information** (depending on national context) through various media channels. These initiatives have good impact by helping farmers **better understand their market positioning** and should be maintained and enhanced.

Other relevant issues noted by stakeholders from the African regions studied by SALSA are:

- Many agricultural inputs that small farmers buy in Kenya are counterfeit. The development and implementation of **legislation for the regulation/ control of fertiliser and pesticide products** should be a high priority for the government.
- Stakeholders from Kenya and Malawi reported the good level of household food consumption achieved by many small farmers, but noted that **low productivity was preventing integration into regional markets**. Policy makers are urged to pay greater attention to the limitations on small farm productivity. The **increased availability of good quality agricultural inputs** (mentioned above) would help greatly, especially if also accompanied by more Agricultural Extension Officers to **promote the efficient use of these inputs**.
- The **lack of functional cooperatives** in some regions and for some crops was highlighted for Kenya and Malawi. This is highly context specific, but where the situation exists it is a **major obstacle** to the entry of small farms into regional and export markets. In many cases, regulations already exist for supporting the development of collective forms of small farmer organization, but they are **not properly implemented** at local/ regional level.

Better understanding is also needed about a) the numerous reasons why established cooperatives stop functioning effectively and b) what actions can be taken to avoid this. For example, it is suggested that **specific incentives are needed** to

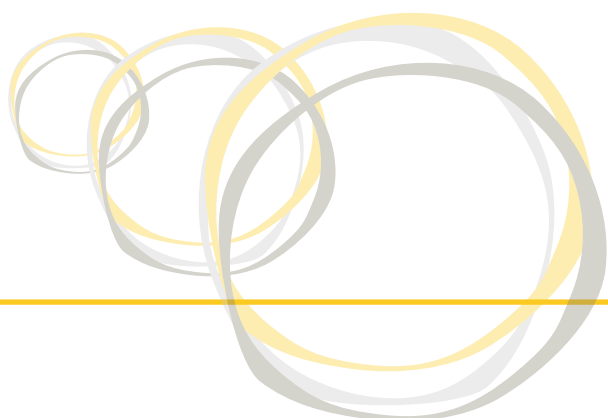
ensure the transition of younger, more entrepreneurial farmers into the leadership of cooperatives.

- Although it was noted that many small farms benefit from more liberalised markets with a broad choice and the high demand for produce from small farmers (for food, but especially for cash crops such as tea, coffee, cocoa), some stakeholders mentioned that there should be **more structured markets that would allow for contract farming**. This would help provide more predictability and reduce risks for small farms. A better understanding of who the regional 'aggregators' are and the roles they play in each district would also benefit small farms.

5) Better Infrastructure and Connectivity

In terms of improving connectivity and infrastructure, the priority policy interventions identified were:

- The undertaking of **proper needs assessments** of rural areas. Basic issues such as reliable access to low cost electricity must not be overlooked;
- Construction and maintenance of **good quality rural roads** to improve access to and connectivity with markets;
- Provision of **faster, more stable and affordable mobile phone and internet connections**. Good mobile phone coverage in rural areas enables agricultural messages sent to farmers through SMS and voice in local languages. This can usefully supplement local FM radio and TV stations broadcasting market information for farmers in local languages;
- Appropriate **irrigation infrastructure**. Large-scale infrastructure is often government-run and can be poorly maintained because of challenges at the procurement stage. Smaller irrigation schemes, in addition to the large ones, are important for small farms.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EU-AFR DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION PROGRAMS

Equitable partnerships

Future research programs funded under Horizon Europe should seek to include a balanced representation of EU and AFR partners, in order to assure that both sides can have similar levels of responsibilities in all aspects of the project (including in particular research design).

Continue supporting inter-continental research

The SALSA project experience demonstrates that agricultural and food systems research across continents, with research sites in both Europe and Africa, can result in valuable insights and learning in both directions. Lessons from Europe are valuable to African partners, as their countries are developing rapidly. An understanding of strengths and weaknesses of European agricultural policies (and their impacts on small farms) can improve decision making. European partners can learn from Africa about informal and community-based approaches to support food and nutrition security. Hence funding such trans-continental research through equitable research partnerships should be a priority.

Supporting sub-regional research and development cooperation

SALSA partners and stakeholders emphasised the need for support to language-based cooperation initiatives for research and innovation (e.g. Portuguese, French or English-speaking countries in Africa), as well as regional initiatives across continents (e.g. Southern Europe and Northern Africa). Thematic platforms/fora developed along these lines could help boost networking among African and European researchers.

Flexibility of grant agreements

More flexibility in the terms and conditions of the grant agreements under the Horizon 2020 program, to take into account differences in organisational and legal frameworks in partner countries, would facilitate the application of the same methodology in different contexts and reduce transaction costs in cross-continental partnerships.

Finally, further reconciling the research topics in which AFR research partners are included with the 'Roadmap towards a jointly funded EU-AFR Research and Innovation Partnership on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture' could help ensure further coherence of research work for all partners involved.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS SUPPORTING THEIR AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD SECURITY POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

Explicitly acknowledge the diversity of small farms and food businesses in agricultural and food policies

Whilst the CAADP process enables countries to adapt CAADP principles to national contexts, the agricultural and food policies of most African countries do not systematically differentiate between different farm types. But the needs (in terms of services and support actions) of farms of different sizes and market integration are different, and this should be reflected in all policies and interventions. An evidence-based national typology of farms could be useful for this.

Acknowledge that part time farming can be a viable option that requires specific support

Whilst part-time farming is a reality for small-scale farms both in Africa and Europe, there is no or limited acknowledgement of this strategy and virtually no targeted support. Donor frameworks such as DFID's Conceptual Framework on Agriculture envisage just three options for farmers: 'Stepping up' (agricultural intensification and market integration), 'Stepping out' (leaving agriculture for non-farm employment) or 'Hanging in' (unsustainable coping strategy). However, supporting small-scale part-time farming for its contribution to local and regional food and nutrition security, alongside the development of rural non-farm employment, may be a valid strategy deserving specific targeted support to small farms.



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