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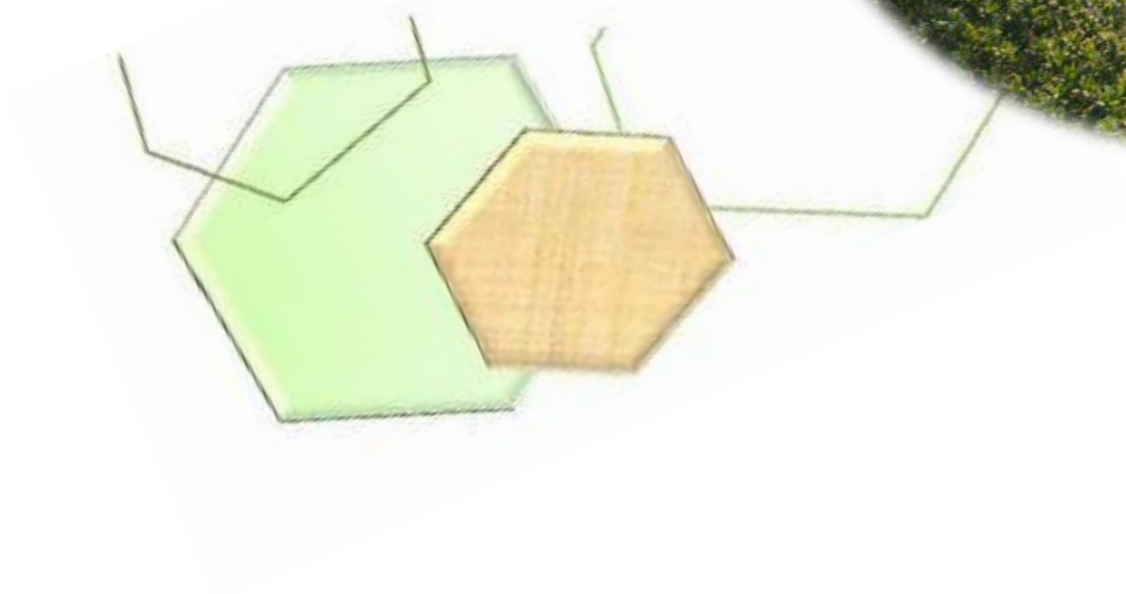
EAGER - Easing Agrophotovoltaics for Europe

Newsletter № 3

February 2025

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What is EAGER

[The EAGER project](#) is a European project funded by the INTERREG Europe Programme that facilitates the adoption of agro-photovoltaic systems across partner regions. By fostering a shared understanding of this technology, identifying best practices, and enhancing policy instruments, this project is paving the way for a greener future.

The expansion of renewable energies aims at meeting the energy demand of the EU while replacing fossil fuels, but it requires large areas of land. At the same time, food security is threatened by the impacts of climate change and a growing world population. **Agrophotovoltaics (APV) can mitigate the conflicting interests between agriculture and open space photovoltaic systems** for viable land, as it allows to produce energy and food at the same time on the same place through a combination of farming and solar generation with a total **land use efficiency of up to 186%**. This is why the EAGER project aims at improving policies **to ease APV in Europe**. It will enable the definition and set-up of favourable policy framework conditions for implementing APV as a praxis-oriented concept for achieving Greener Europe.

In the following pages, you will find interesting materials describing the overall context and objectives of the project as well as information on the latest developments and current events.

Project at a glance

By generating a common understanding of APV concept and contexts, identifying, analysing and transferring good practices, changing behaviour among policy actors of the participating regions towards supporting and expanding APV in their regions, **9 policy instruments** will be improved by 2027. The 14 partners and 3 associated policy responsible authorities are committed to high quality and efficient exchange of experience and policy improvement, acknowledging that the topic of APV is multi-layered and complex. It considers the policy fields of energy, agriculture, spatial development and land use, with impacts on economic development, and has the potential to contribute to sustainability and energy security. Its novelty in the regions encourages out of the box thinking and an innovative interpretation of good practices in the broadest sense.

A few numbers



2,440,007 €
budget



01 Apr 2024-
30 Jun 2028



14 partners

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NEWS FROM BULGARIA

Second Stakeholders Meeting in Bulgaria of the EAGER project

On the 14th of November 2024, the second stakeholder meeting in the frame of the EAGER project: “Easing AGrophotovoltaics for EuRope”, co-funded by the Interreg Europe Programme 2021-2027, took place in Sofia, Bulgaria. The event was organized under the XVIIIth Conference of the Association of Bulgarian Energy Agencies – ABEA. Leading energy agencies from Bulgaria, municipal administrations, NGOs as well as other stakeholders took part in this event. Experts from the Regional Energy Agency of Pazardzhik (REAP), a partner of the EAGER project, also attended the event, where the main focus was on training for the transition to clean energy and renewable energy sources. It was a hybrid event, allowing more people to be involved in both ways – in person and online.



Date: 14th November 2024

Location: Sofia, Bulgaria

During the conference, a panel session on the topic “Energy efficiency and renewable energy sources” was carried out. Participating in this session, the team of [REAP](#) presented the [EAGER Project](#): “Agro photovoltaics as an opportunity for sustainable agriculture and renewable energy production” to all attending representatives – these were mainly local and regional administrations from Bulgaria, energy and environmental agencies, SMEs association, and Strelcha Municipality. The project’s main objectives and the upcoming activities were presented and what the agro-photovoltaic (APV) system means was clarified. The [REAP](#) experts explained that the main goal of the [EAGER project](#) is to facilitate the adoption of agro-photovoltaic systems across partner regions by fostering a shared understanding of this technology, identifying best practices, and enhancing policy instruments, this project will pave the way for a greener future. Then some good practices identified during the first stage of the project were presented.

A public debate followed the EAGER presentation on the topic of “How local and regional legislation can be changed in order to foster the larger deployment of agro-photovoltaic concept in rural areas with a well-developed agricultural sector”. Participants of the event got informed on the topic, and they were inspired by the examples of double production of agriculture and energy from solar panels that were showcased by the representatives from [REAP](#), as some good examples have been mentioned by them (small-scale projects in Bulgarian rural regions) during the round-table discussion.

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The afternoon session also included a workshop on engaging citizens in the energy transition through energy communities and integrated service centers.

The event concluded with a discussion and review of future initiatives for sustainable development in the energy sector.

NEWS FROM BELGIUM

Workshop on the legal framework of agrivoltaics in Flanders

A stakeholder meeting with researchers, farmers, and policymakers at regional and province levels, as well as a farmer organisation, was organised at the first large-scale agrivoltaics system installed in Flanders at Halberry.



Date: 29th November 2024
Location: Flanders, Belgium

The stakeholder meeting consisted of two parts. The first part included a visit to the recently installed 7,000-square-meter

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agrivoltaics set-up over blueberries. The owner of the facility told the full story from design and obtaining the necessary permits to the actual building of the system.

The second part consisted of a workshop on the legislative framework of agrivoltaics in Flanders. First, a presentation was given by KU Leuven on the legislative framework of agrivoltaics in some other European countries (Germany, France and Italy). This was followed by an interactive discussion among all stakeholders present. Several discussion topics were presented using a poll system after which the different topics were verbally discussed in more detail.

Some examples of the topics that were discussed:

- What role should the farmer play in the agrivoltaics project?
- What type of agrivoltaics systems do we want to allow in Flanders?
- What types of agriculture do we want to allow in combination with agrivoltaics?
- What requirements must a PV system meet to be considered agrivoltaics?

With the participation of farmers, a farmer organization, policymakers, and researchers, a wide range of perspectives came together in one room, fostering lively and engaging discussions. These insights and perspectives will be of high value in the ongoing development of the policy instrument within the EAGER project.

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Webtool for Stakeholders in the Agrophotovoltaics Sector

The Catholic University of Leuven from Belgium, partner in EAGER project - “Easing AGrophotovoltaics for EuRope”, co-funded by the Interreg Europe Programme 2021-2027 presents within the framework of the Project to European stakeholders a useful agrivoltaics webtool, which can for example be used by:

Farmers: A farmer can independently compare different agrivoltaics systems in terms of the amount and homogeneity of light still going to crops, potential energy yield and theoretically expected crop yield. The farmer can then use the knowledge and experience gained from using this tool to consult with a project developer to discuss the financial and technical side in more detail.

Date: 5th December 2024

Location: Leuven, Belgium

Project developers: A project developer often has a lot of knowledge about the technical and economic side of the PV installation, but the impact of this installation on the underlying crops is often less known to them. This tool can

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be used to achieve a better design for the crops limiting the light reduction as much as possible.

Policymakers: Another possible application of this tool is its use as a policy instrument. For example, the government or the licensing authority can stipulate certain requirements in terms of light quantity and light distribution in order to get a permit, which can then easily be checked with this tool. The tool's public availability allows project developers to continuously consider this during their design phase of the agrivoltaic system.

[Link to the agrivoltaics webtool](#)

NEWS FROM UKRAINE

Stakeholders meeting in Ukraine under the EAGER project

During the first stakeholder meeting, ZRDA presented brief information about the Interreg Europe program, project EAGER, shared information about the 1st study visit in Vilnius, results of the joint regional study, and the general context of agrophotovoltaic in Europe.

The ZRDA highlighted the need for active participation of all stakeholders in the preparation of next steps plans in order to reach the objectives and project progress properly. Representatives of NGOs emphasized the importance of involving key stakeholders, including farmers and farmers' associations operating in the Zakarpattia region, as well as representatives of energy providers in the next meeting. This is essential for thoroughly

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understanding their needs and opportunities for implementing agro-photovoltaic systems in the region.



Date: 15th November 2024
Location: Uzhhorod, Ukraine

Among the priority tasks is the development of model solutions for farmers, taking into account the experience of project partners regarding various types of photovoltaic systems and their application in agriculture. In particular, the focus is on conceptual projects for installing solar power plants on agricultural lands, greenhouses, warehouse roofs, or processing facilities. This will include preliminary calculations of the investment component and the development of a roadmap addressing legal issues.

Scientists from Uzhhorod National University have proposed utilizing reclaimed (ameliorated) lands as sites for installing photovoltaic systems. However, considering that these lands are designated for agricultural use, the issue arises of unresolved legal regulations regarding their dual-purpose utilization. Additionally, participants discussed the issues related to the construction of solar power plants, particularly the complexity of technical requirements. The design and



installation of solar power plants must comply with state building standards (DBN and DSTU), which are extremely complex. Furthermore, urban planning conditions may affect the location of solar power plants, especially in terms of height restrictions, panel placement, and requirements for their aesthetic integration into the landscape. Participants noted also the high cost of connecting farm households to the grid, which is significantly higher than for residential connections. All of this may hinder the development of agro-photovoltaics and requires more thorough examination to implement specific steps to overcome these obstacles, such as new programmes of support for agri-business and requests for state authorities to simplify particular procedures. In conclusion, stakeholders and the Agency identified further steps and plans to be implemented in 2025 and selected additional target groups to work with.

NEWS FROM ITALY

Second Stakeholders meeting in Italy of the EAGER Project

Highlights of the discussion:

Cultural Shift: Stakeholders emphasized the need to educate farmers about the ethical and practical benefits of agrivoltaics, such as improved crop protection, dual land use, and energy generation. It was highlighted the importance of fostering a positive cultural perception among farmers and local communities.

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Date: 29th November 2024

Location: Imola, Italy

Regulatory and Technical Challenges: Critical issues were identified, including the lengthy timelines for connecting installations to the grid due to primary station saturation. It was outlined the importance of navigating authorization processes efficiently and aligning with existing guidelines to overcome these barriers.

Case Studies: Successful models like the Local Energy Community and projects from igreensystem and Cooperativa Mirasole were presented as examples of integrating renewable energy with agricultural practices. These case studies demonstrated the feasibility of creating renewable energy communities.

Planning for Future Activities:

The meeting concluded with a structured plan to advance the promotion of agrivoltaics through a series of events:

Public Event (by the first months of 2025): This session will introduce farmers and stakeholders to the agrivoltaic framework, including the technical and economic advantages, regulatory landscape, and available funding opportunities. Case studies will play a central role in illustrating practical applications.

Thematic Tables: Following the public event, thematic tables will be organized to address specific challenges such as financing, regulatory procedures, and community energy integration. These tables aim to engage smaller groups of stakeholders for in-depth discussions and actionable outcomes.

This stakeholder meeting marked an important step toward creating a collaborative roadmap for the successful implementation of agrivoltaics in the region.

NEWS FROM GERMANY

Second Stakeholder Meeting in Germany of the EAGER project

An initial meeting with the "Integrated Rural Development ILE at Rott & Inn" cooperation, comprising eleven municipalities from the southern Passau district, marked a significant milestone for the Interreg Europe Project

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EAGER. The project is designed to engage local stakeholders in promoting agrivoltaics (Agri-PV) in the region, fostering a balance between agriculture and ground-mounted solar systems.



Date: 8th January 2025

Location: Tettenweis, Germany

Setting the Stage

Agnes Frank, Project Manager at TZE, outlined the overarching goals of the EAGER initiative. Her presentation provided participants with a clear understanding of the interregional project's objectives, emphasizing the value of international collaboration and the exchange of best practices to inform local policy improvements.

Methodical Support for Policy Development

Agnes Frank highlighted the methodical support offered by the project, as well as the multi-level co-coaching partnerships spanning local, provincial, regional, and national levels. During her presentation, she outlined a policy instrument for land-use planning that should be improved in the EAGER project and explained how it should be improved.

Inspiring Good Practices

The meeting encouraged out-of-the-box thinking to maximize land-use benefits while fostering acceptance of Agri-PV solutions. Agnes Frank showcased good practice examples from both Germany and other countries, generating keen interest among participants. She introduced several examples of innovative Agri-PV projects. A local example from Deutenkofen, Germany, showcases the integration of solar energy generation with fruit cultivation, demonstrating how renewable energy can coexist with agriculture. Similarly, the Fungisolar project in Spain combines photovoltaic systems with the cultivation of edible mushrooms, highlighting the versatility of Agri-PV applications across different agricultural practices. She also introduced a user-friendly online tool developed by KU Leuven for farmers, project developers, and policymakers to assess the suitability of Agri-PV projects, which has been instrumental in increasing acceptance and understanding of these systems. Additional examples discussed included Agrosolar and Greening of Greenhouses, offering diverse perspectives on how Agri-PV can drive sustainable development and energy transition.



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Local Engagement

The meeting highlighted the critical role of community engagement in advancing Agri-PV solutions. Agnes Frank cited a successful example of Bavaria's Energy Day in fostering innovation and collaboration in the energy transition.

Additionally, ILE introduced an excellent local engagement practice from the Öko-Modellregionen. A speed-dating format used by Öko-Modellregionen facilitates connections between regional producers, processors, marketers, and hosts (such as hoteliers, holiday apartment owners, and private landlords) within the districts. This innovative approach enables stakeholders to connect and collaborate more effectively. When applied to the EAGER project, such a platform could similarly build bridges between the energy production and agriculture sectors, enhancing cooperation and mutual understanding.

By bringing together local stakeholders and sharing actionable insights during this meeting, the EAGER project took an important step toward fostering collaboration and advancing practical solutions for integrating agriculture with renewable energy in the region.

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UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Second Study Visit to Spain, 26-27 February, 2025

The second Study Visit within the EAGER project will be organized on 26th and 27th of February, 2025 in Palencia, Spain.

Host will be the Agricultural and Agri-Food Technology Centre ([ITAGRA](#)), and this time partners and stakeholders from the participating regions will get familiar with agrophotovoltaics good practices from the rural region of Palencia, Spain.

Preliminary Agenda of the event can be found [HERE](#).

For more information of the event, you may contact the event organizer, PhD Environmental Engineer Iosody Silva Castro from ITAGRA at isilva@itagra.com.



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EAGER Partnerships and Communication Channels

The project includes a well-balanced mixture of partners coming from several main sectors: public authorities (local, regional and national), research institutions, regional development agencies, agriculture representatives, NGOs and energy agencies. Together we represent varied views across a range of stakeholders and interests providing competent knowledge and experience in the field of energy efficiency, renewable energy sources and policy design. The partnership is characterized by a strong transnational character, covering nine nations within the Interreg Europe Program area, thus ensuring a good geographical and cultural coverage and relevant attention to the issues and needs of a wide range of institutional settings and establishments from European Countries.

University of Applied Sciences
Landshut (TZE) - **Lead partner**,
Germany



<https://www.haw-landshut.de>

Public Institution Lithuanian
Innovation Centre (LIC),
Lithuania



<https://www.lic.lt>

Rzeszow Regional Development
Agency (RARR), Poland



<https://rarr.rzeszow.pl>

Agricultural and Agrifood
Technological Center (ITAGRA),
Spain



<https://www.itagra.com>

Palencia Provincial Council
(PALENCIA), Spain



<https://www.diputaciondepalencia.es>

National Paying Agency under
the Ministry of Agriculture of
the Republic of Lithuania (NPA),
Lithuania



<https://nma.lrv.lt>

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Nuovo Circondario Imolese
(NCI), Italy



<https://www.nuovocircondarioimolese.it>

Regional Energy Agency of
Pazardjik (REAP), Bulgaria



<https://reap-bg.eu>

Municipality of Strelcha
(STRELCHA), Bulgaria



<https://strelcha.bg>

Catholic University of Leuven
(KU Leuven), Belgium



<https://www.kuleuven.be>

Municipality of Ruhstorf an der
Rott (RUHSTORF), Germany



<https://www.ruhstorf.de>

Provincial Development Agency
(POM) Flemish Brabant, Belgium



<https://pomvlaamsbrabant.be>

Municipality of Bačka Palanka
(MBP), Serbia



<https://backapalanka.rs>

Institution "Zakarpattia Regional
Development Agency" (ZRDA),
Ukraine



<https://zakarpattia.agency>

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