EAGER - Easing Agrophotovoltaics for Europe

Newsletter № 10

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Contents:

EAGER helps policymakers in promoting agrophotovoltaics to foster harmony between agriculture and open-space solar systems.

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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.

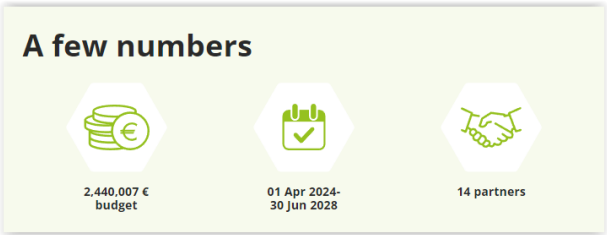
The expansion of renewable energies aims at meeting the energy demand of the EU while replacing fossil fuels, but it requires large areas of land. At the same time, food security is threatened by the impacts of climate change and a growing world population. **Agrophotovoltaics (APV) can mitigate the conflicting interests between agriculture and open space photovoltaic systems** for viable land, as it allows to produce energy and food at the same time in 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.

We shall keep you informed about our progress and key outcomes through the project website, thematic events, and newsletters.

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.



EAGER helps policymakers in promoting agrophotovoltaics to foster harmony between agriculture and open-space solar systems.

NEWS FROM LITHUANIA

EAGER Workshop in Vilnius, Lithuania

On 6 March 2026, a high-level workshop titled "Sustainability in Agriculture: Wheat Supply Chains and Renewable Energy Solutions" took place at Hotel PACAI in Vilnius, Lithuania. The event brought together key stakeholders from across the agricultural, energy, research, and policy sectors to explore pathways for strengthening the environmental, economic, and social sustainability of agri-food systems within the European Union.

Date: 6th March 2026
Location: Vilnius, Lithuania

The workshop agenda was structured into two substantive sessions. The morning session centred on sustainable wheat supply chains, addressing systemic challenges and opportunities for decarbonisation, resilience, and efficiency in cereal crop value chains. Participants discussed ongoing industry efforts, including emerging frameworks for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and integrating regenerative agricultural practices across the wheat value chain, in line with broader European ambitions for sustainable food systems.

The afternoon session focused on renewable energy solutions for agriculture, highlighting the potential of on-farm renewable technologies to enhance energy independence, reduce emissions, and support diversified income streams for farmers. Among the renewable approaches discussed were photovoltaic (PV) systems, agrivoltaics (dual-use solar and crop production), and other decentralized energy solutions tailored for agricultural contexts. The dialogue underscored the need for coordinated policy support and investment to scale renewable energy deployment across European farms, consistent with recent EU policy direction that recognizes the role of solar and renewable energy in agricultural sustainability strategies.

As part of the workshop, the EAGER project was presented to participants. This initiative focuses on reducing barriers to agrivoltaics (APV) in European agriculture by establishing shared criteria for suitable APV models, identifying and exchanging proven practices, and integrating these insights into policy upgrades across

partner regions. The project aims to support the development of low-carbon farming practices and promote the scalability of renewable energy systems in agriculture, in line with EU sustainability goals.

The workshop also featured presentations on the PRUDENT and BEATLES projects, which exemplify collaborative efforts to integrate sustainability into agricultural practices and energy optimisation on farms. These projects align with wider EU objectives under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the Green Deal framework, supporting climate-smart agriculture and reducing environmental impacts across the agri-food sector.

NEWS FROM SPAIN

Fourth Stakeholders' Meeting of the Project EAGER in Spain

On March 5, 2026, the fourth Spanish Stakeholders Meeting of the EAGER project took place at the Palace of the Provincial Council of Palencia, Spain. The event was organized by ITAGRA CT and the Palencia Provincial Council, both partners in the EAGER project, co-funded by the Interreg Europe Programme 2021-2027.

The meeting convened eight participants on-site. During the session, the latest progress of the project was presented, including examples of good practices identified within the region, as well as those observed during the most recent EAGER study visit to Leuven, Belgium, in November. The upcoming study visit to Ruhstorf, Germany, was also introduced, with the aim of encouraging stakeholder participation in this knowledge exchange on agrivoltaics.

Date: 5th March 2026
Location: Palencia, Spain

Furthermore, the preliminary results of the social study on perceptions of agrivoltaics within the province were presented. To date, approximately fifteen in-depth interviews have been conducted with a diverse range of stakeholders, including representatives of public administration at local, regional, and national levels; representatives of agricultural and rural development associations; experts in APV, such as researchers from universities across Spain; and energy companies operating in the territory.

The analysis conducted thus far reveals a significant gap in general knowledge and awareness of APV—its definition, benefits, and potential applications—even among key stakeholders such as farmers and photovoltaic (PV) developers. It is also noteworthy that Spain currently lacks a specific legal framework for agrivoltaics. Although certain aspects are addressed within the Common Agricultural

Policy and at the regional level, no comprehensive regulation exists at the national level.

Additional barriers identified include the higher costs associated with APV projects compared to conventional PV systems, as well as the limited scope of existing funding schemes, which predominantly support medium- to large-scale installations. Other operational and perception-related barriers have also been identified and will be subject to further analysis.

The next phase of the process will focus on the development of a cognitive map of these barriers, alongside the organization of a stakeholder meeting scheduled for the end of April. This meeting will bring together all interviewees with the objective of jointly analyzing the identified barriers and formulating appropriate solutions.

NEWS FROM BULGARIA

Fourth stakeholders meeting in Strelcha, Bulgaria

On the 20th of March 2026, the Fourth Bulgarian stakeholders meeting took place in Strelcha, Bulgaria. The event was organized by the Regional Energy Agency of Pazardzhik (REAP) and the Municipality of Strelcha, partners in the EAGER project. The event was attended by various stakeholders representing public administrations, NGOs, energy agencies, agri-producers, and SMEs.

Date: 20th March 2026
Location: Strelcha, Bulgaria

The project's main objectives and the upcoming activities were presented and what the agro-photovoltaic (APV) system means was clarified. 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.

The meeting continued with some examples of good practices coming from different partner regions. The installation of solar panels on agricultural land has a dual function: on the one hand, to produce energy, and on the other, to provide shade for some specific types of plants, protecting them from excessive sunlight and high temperatures. In addition to agricultural production, dual use of land can also include livestock farming.

These integrated approaches lead to high energy efficiency, reduced greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants, and savings in energy consumption costs.

The event concluded with a discussion of topics related to existing funding schemes and opportunities for financing environmental projects in the field of local agriculture in the municipality of Strelcha, as well as the upcoming Study visit in Ruhstorf, Germany in April. Participants shared their opinion on the Bulgarian study visit which would be organized in September 2026 – potential best practices and study visits in the region of Strelcha and Pazardzhik.

Presentation of the event

Participation of EAGER project in a third-party event

Policy Learning Webinar on Renewable Energy and Land-Use: Key learnings

Date: 19th March 2026
Location: Online

On 19 March 2026, the Interreg Europe Programme hosted a Policy Learning webinar on the topic “Renewable energy and land-use”.

During this event, good practices focused on agrophotovoltaics, balancing renewable energy development with sustainable land use, were highlighted. The main challenges related to the rural territories were identified. The projects EAGER, BiodIvErSe and REMOTE that are developed in this field were presented to the participants.

Ying Huang from the University of Applied Sciences Landshut, Germany, presented key

insights on opportunities and challenges in agricultural land. Another EAGER partner, Audrius Pravdzinskas from the National Paying Agency under the Ministry of Agriculture, demonstrated some good practices from Lithuania related to dual land use, subsidy schemes and PV installation without risking biodiversity in rural areas.

This webinar showcased how regions can utilise land in various ways to support an environmentally sustainable agricultural system while ensuring the necessary energy from renewable sources.

The meeting concluded with a discussion on how to increase awareness raising and knowledge about dual use in agricultural lands.

Link to the recording and key learnings from the webinar: https://tinyurl.com/ye2744s8

GOOD PRACTICES

Dual land use - possibility to use agricultural land for both food and solar power production

The Lithuanian agricultural sector faces challenges related to rising energy prices and the effects of climate change. Traditional energy sources in rural areas are not only expensive, but also reduce sustainability. To reduce energy costs and promote organic farming, a practice has been introduced whereby farmers who invest in solar power plants can receive CAP subsidy if the land plot is used for dual purpose – solar power plants are installed, but land plot is used for agriculture activity – grazing or mowing of grasslands. This practice not only encourages the introduction of renewable energy sources, but also contributes to the sustainable development of agriculture in Lithuania.

Practice is implemented under Lithuanian 2023-2027 Agriculture Strategic plan to fulfill Lithuania's obligations under the European Green Course and the European Union's Climate

Strategy. The dual land use principle supports both economic benefits from solar power plants and ecological goals aligned with EU environmental policies.

Changing these rules aligns with Lithuania's efforts to achieve the European Green Deal goals, encourage sustainable land use, and help farmers diversify their income while reducing dependence on traditional agricultural practices.

The main participants were the Ministry of Agriculture of Lithuania, National (CAP) Paying Agency, independent consultants, and the community of farmers themselves.

Additional Priority scores for CAP farm projects that foresee investments in solar power plants

Problem and context: The Lithuanian agricultural sector faces challenges related to rising energy prices and the effects of climate change. Traditional energy sources in rural areas are not only expensive, but also reduce sustainability. To reduce energy costs and promote organic farming, a practice has been introduced whereby farmers who invest in solar power plants under their CAP farm investment projects are given priority points. This practice not only encourages the introduction of renewable energy sources, but also contributes to the sustainable development of agriculture in Lithuania.

Achievement and implementation of goals: Practice is implemented under Lithuanian 2023-2027 Agriculture Strategic plan to fulfill Lithuania's obligations under the European Green Course and the European Union's Climate Strategy. In addition, it contributes to climate change mitigation goals and the renewal of the agricultural sector.

Important participants and users: The main participants were the Ministry of Agriculture of Lithuania, National (CAP) Paying Agency, independent consultants and the community of farmers themselves. These entities provided both financial support and practical assistance needed for the implementation of solar power projects. The beneficiaries were farmers, who were helped by this practice to reduce energy costs and contribute to the country's sustainability goals.

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	TZ ENERGIE	https://www.haw-landshut.de
Public Institution Lithuanian Innovation Centre (LIC), Lithuana	LIC LITHUANIAN INNOVATION CENTRE	https://www.lic.lt
Rzeszow Regional Development Agency (RARR), Poland	RARR RZESZOWSKA AGENCJA ROZWOJU REGIONALNEGO	https://rarr.rzeszow.pl
Agricultural and Agrifood Technological Center (ITAGRA), Spain	itagra.ct CENTRO TECNOLÓGICO AGRARIO Y AGROALIMENTARIO	https://www.itagra.com
Palencia Provincial Council (PALENCIA), Spain	Diputación DE PALENCIA	https://www.diputaciondepalencia.es
National Paying Agency under the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania (NPA), Lithuania	NPA NATIONAL PAYING AGENCY	https://nma.lrv.lt

Nuovo Circondario Imolese (NCI), Italy	NUOVO CIRCONDARIO IMOLESE	https://www.nuovocircondarioimolese.it
Regional Energy Agency of Pazardjik (REAP), Bulgaria	REGIONAL ENERGY AGENCY - PAZARDJIK	https://reap-bg.eu
Municipality of Strelcha (STRELCHA), Bulgaria	СТРЕЛЧА	https://strelcha.bg
Catholic University of Leuven (KU Leuven), Belgium	KU LEUVEN	https://www.kuleuven.be
Municipality of Ruhstorf an der Rott (RUHSTORF), Germany		https://www.ruhstorf.de
Provincial Development Agency (POM) Flemish Brabant, Belgium	POM VLAAMS-BRABANT	https://pomvlaamsbrabant.be
Municipality of Bačka Palanka (MBP), Serbia		https://backapalanka.rs
Institution "Zakarpattia Regional Development Agency" (ZRDA), Ukraine	ZAKARPATTIA REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY	https://zakarpattia.agency

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EDITORIAL

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