



EDUCATION INITIATIVE DIVERSIFICATION (New) value creation strategies for multifunctional agriculture

brief description

At the University of Agricultural and Environmental Education in Vienna, an educational initiative for the **increasingly important area of diversification** in Austrian agriculture is being designed and implemented in collaboration with various partners from **within and outside the agricultural sector**. The focus is on **inspiration, networking, support and learning from each other!**

Existing and new forms of diversification in **German-speaking countries** (Germany, Austria, Switzerland and South Tyrol) are being **researched and analysed**, and the **needs for Austria** are being assessed. Based on this, **recommendations for action** will be developed for **educational programmes, advisory structures, agricultural and non-agricultural networks**, and an **educational campaign** for farmers and advisors in collaboration with the chambers of agriculture, rural training institutes and other agricultural and non-agricultural experts.

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Subsequently, ideally in parallel, the specific educational programmes will be implemented via the rural training institutes in the federal states (not part of the grant application). At the same time, work is continuing on the **Diversification Strategy 2028+** and on the strategic possibilities of whether and how a so-called **“Competence Centre Diversification 2028”** could function in Austria.

More pillars bring more stability, crisis resilience and competitiveness, **diversity not only in the field, but also on the farm**, traditional forms of diversification and entirely new forms. The primary goal of the Education Initiative Diversification is to preserve and further develop **small-scale, multifunctional agriculture and forestry in Austria** by **strengthening the economic position of farmers and rural regions through diversification**. To this end, **entrepreneurship and innovation** in education and consulting must be further strengthened so that diversification in Austria can be even more successful.

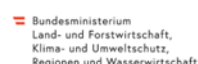
project duration

1 May 2024 to 30 October 2026.

project partner



Mit Unterstützung von Bund, Ländern und Europäischer Union



project objectives

The project naturally pursues the objectives of EU EAFRD measure 78-02 “Knowledge transfer for agricultural and forestry topics”:

- Improving the **professional, personal and entrepreneurial skills** of people working in agriculture so that they can **successfully adapt to change and new challenges**.
- Professional development should **help generate new perspectives for business development**, exploit diversification potential and shape **change processes** in a self-determined manner to remain competitive.

The overall objectives:

- The primary objective of the educational initiative is **to preserve small-scale, multifunctional agriculture by strengthening the economic position of farmers**.
- (Further) development and implementation of **innovative educational and advisory offers** in diversification on Austrian farms.
- Promoting the **regional economy** and **reducing migration** by **securing and creating jobs** through diversification opportunities.
- Increased **awareness within and outside the agricultural sector** to better establish **diversification as an option for action in rural areas**.
- Promoting **cross-system cooperation** between actors in rural areas (municipalities, citizens, agricultural and forestry businesses) and encouraging **interdisciplinary cooperation** (agriculture, business, education and social affairs).
- Promoting **equal opportunities** in rural areas.

The specific objectives of the application:

1. **Literature and practical research**, including opinions from experts in focus groups in **German-speaking countries** on conventional and new educational offerings, educational campaigns, advisory structures, organisational forms and internal and external agricultural networks in the field of diversification.
2. **SWOT analysis** of diversification for Austria.
3. Online presentation of **good practice examples** of diversification in German-speaking countries (learning from the best).
4. **Needs assessment Diversification for Austria** among farmers, advisors in the chambers of agriculture and in the education system, as well as external experts, in order to subsequently develop educational programmes.
5. Listing of the **most important requirements for the design of new Austria-wide diversification training programmes for farmers and advisors** in the chambers of agriculture.
6. Listing of the **most important suggestions for existing diversification offers** based on literature and practical research and the opinions of experts from focus groups in German-speaking countries.
7. Creation of **target plans for the product development** of new diversification training programmes in the federal states and for the **necessary skills of advisors** so that the new forms of diversification can be implemented.
8. Design of an **Austria-wide education campaign** to better embed diversification as an option for action in rural areas, both within and outside agriculture.
9. Establishment and implementation of a **stakeholder forum on diversification**.
10. Mapping of **AKIS actors** involved in diversification in Austria.
11. Creation of a **diversification strategy for 2028+** and development of a roadmap for the possible establishment of a **“competence centre for diversification”**.

target groups

Main target group:

- **Farmers in Austria**

Other target groups:

- Agricultural educational institutions: rural training institutes, agricultural and forestry apprenticeship and specialist training centres, master training, universities, technical colleges and agricultural schools
- Advisors in the respective chambers of agriculture of the federal states
- Decision-makers from the agricultural and forestry sectors
- Cooperation partners in the education, health, social and economic sectors
- Municipalities, regions and federal states, existing municipal and regional developers
- Media representatives
- Additional benefits arise for multipliers throughout the German-speaking world.

project output

The **project output serves as project input for rural training institutes, chambers of agriculture and the education system, strengthening the topic of diversification in education and consulting**. The project contributes to ensuring that diversification on multifunctional farms can be even more successful in the future. The various results are well documented in reports and made available to everyone online.

By mapping **AKIS actors in the field of diversification** in cooperation with the Austrian Chamber of Agriculture and the networking agency 'Netzwerk Zukunftsraum Land', an innovation ecosystem is being created in which the flow of knowledge is strengthened. The relevant actors in the fields of education, consulting, innovation, research, regional development and entrepreneurship are thus actively contributing to the strengthening of rural areas.

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At the end of the project, there are many possible solutions that could help to overcome the difficulties (selection of main difficulties)

- The education sector continues to **focus on agricultural production**. When it comes to combining income streams, the **focus is on traditional diversification options**. There is **little space and few resources for new forms** and the associated new topics (e.g. interface between agriculture and business, trade, organisational development, etc.).
- There is **still a lack of culture for innovation and renewal** in agriculture in some areas.
- Entrepreneurship and innovation are implemented within agriculture through individual projects and initiatives. There is **no connecting 'bracket'** across Austria.
- **Training and further education of advisors** in the chambers of agriculture and in the education, system is a **key prerequisite** for the professional development of diversification projects in practice. To this end, appropriate programmes must be developed, especially for new forms of diversification.
- The **interdisciplinary nature of diversification** programmes and the **necessary transfer of knowledge within and outside the agricultural sector**.

our project partner

The [Chambers of Agriculture](#), the [Austrian Farmers' Association](#) and the [Rural Training Institutes](#) support the Education Initiative Diversification with their expertise and networks and actively contribute to identifying new paths for diversification. In addition, agriculture-related organisations and projects support the initiative and are part of the Stakeholder Forum on Diversification.

contact

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