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Key Action 5



**SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE
FISHERIES AND FORESTRY - Update**
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RESEARCH AREAS

5.1. New and sustainable systems of production

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5.2. Integrated production and exploitation of biological materials

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OLIVERO

The Future of Olive Plantation Systems on Sloping and Mountainous Land; Scenarios for Production and Natural Resource Conservation

References

Project ID: QLRT-2001-01841

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The Project

Area	5.5
Start date	2003/01/01
Duration (months)	36
Total cost	1795000 €
Total EC contribution	1500000 €
Status	Ongoing

Abstract

The project will devote itself to the future of olive plantation systems on sloping and mountainous land in southern Europe. These systems have been affected by emigration of local populations and fierce competition from low land plantations and from non-EU countries, and are currently neither productive nor sustainable. The project will undertake a thorough analysis of production, ecological and socio-economic aspects of actual production systems and of alternative future scenarios for these systems, with the ultimate aim of improving the quality of life of the rural population and the utilisation of natural resources in these areas. The project has six workpackages focusing on inventory, land and water resources, improved production systems, socio-economics and policies, scenarios and end-user recommendations. The research will concentrate on four research areas (one in each of the four main European olive producer countries).

Objectives

The project will contribute to an improvement in the quality of life of the rural population and the utilisation of the natural resources (land and water) in those sloping and mountainous areas of Southern Europe currently used for olive orchards. Since Roman times, the olive orchards in these areas have formed a major source of income and employment, with the production systems being economically and environmentally sustainable. This situation has now been disturbed by factors such as by migration, competition from intensive lowland production and from non-EU countries. The project wants to develop the future scenarios for these olive production systems on sloping and mountainous land (SMOPS) with end-users, and achieve clear recommendations for land users and policy-makers.

Progress to Date

The project will first undertake an inventory and screening of olive orchards on sloping land. Actual production, ecological and socio-economic functions of olive orchards will be assessed and a classification system will be proposed. On the basis of this screening, four representative research areas will be selected, one in each of the major southern European olive producer countries. Within these research areas, a detailed analysis will be made of the present state of the natural resources, in particular land and water. Attention will be devoted to the analysis of, and on-farm participative research, on alternative crop management (including integrated past management), organic matter management, land husbandry and soil and water conservation measures. Recommendations will be given for different types of olive orchards on sloping land (e.g. conventional, integrated, ecological), and attention will also be paid to alternative land use, e.g. in case of abandonment of plantations. At the same time, an assessment will be made of the social and economic situation of olive farmers, olive oil marketing and the olive sector organisation, and of the cost of production under different conditions and with different practices. Subsequently, the link between social and economic aspects and the political context will be analysed, and feasibility studies will be made for possible interventions and off-farm employment. And, an analysis will be made of actual and alternative future policies. On the basis of these research activities, and in collaboration with end-users, global development pathways and detailed scenarios will be developed for sloping and mountainous land presently under olive orchards. Finally, a synthesis will be provided, with focus placed on communicating the project research findings to end-users. This will entail detailed recommendations for appropriate land husbandry for farmers and recommendations for accompanying support policies for policy-makers.

Results

Month 1: Kick-off meeting. Month 12: Classification of SMOPS according to their functions (production, ecological, socio-economic). Month 24: Evaluation of erosion and water balance studies. Month 24: Mid-term review to define scenarios. Month 30: Crop

management, land husbandry and SWC recommendations to land users. Month 30: Overview of marketing and processing; results of agro-socio-economic survey. Month 30: Analysis of actual policies and recommendations for support policies for different farm types. Month 33: Scenarios for the SMOPS that remain and those that will be abandoned. Month 36: Final seminar and project publication, with recommendations for end-users.

**Web address
of the project**

<http://www.olivero.info>

The partners

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