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Farming the Future – Building Rural Networks for Climate-Adaptive Agriculture

The project Farming the Future – Building Rural Networks for Climate-Adaptive Agriculture - FARMLIFE - is co-funded by the LIFE Programme of the European Union under contract number LIFE17CCA/NL/000093

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LIFE 2017

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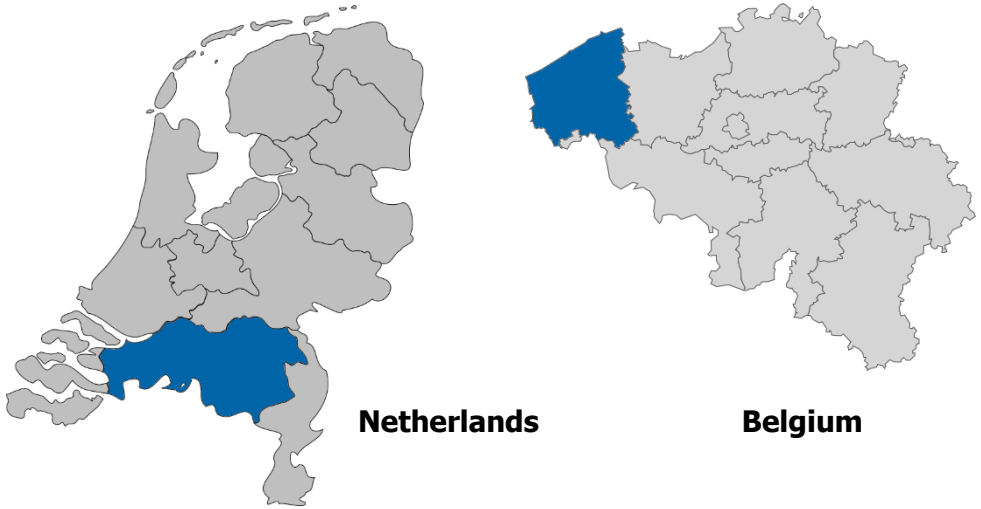
BUDGET INFO:

Total amount: 2,439,287
% EC Co-funding: 1,463,570

DURATION: Start: 01/09/18 - End: 31/08/23



PROJECT'S IMPLEMENTORS:

Coordinating Beneficiary: van hall larenstein university of applied sciences

Associated Beneficiary(ies):

de KOEKOEK NATUURLIJK WEIDE- EN AKKERDOMEIN

KWAALBURGSE HOEVE

BOECKEL BOSBOUW

Boeckx CREATIVE FOOD STUDIO PITTIG ÉN KROKANT

ILVO Instituut voor Landbouw-, Visserij- en Voedingsonderzoek

FSG

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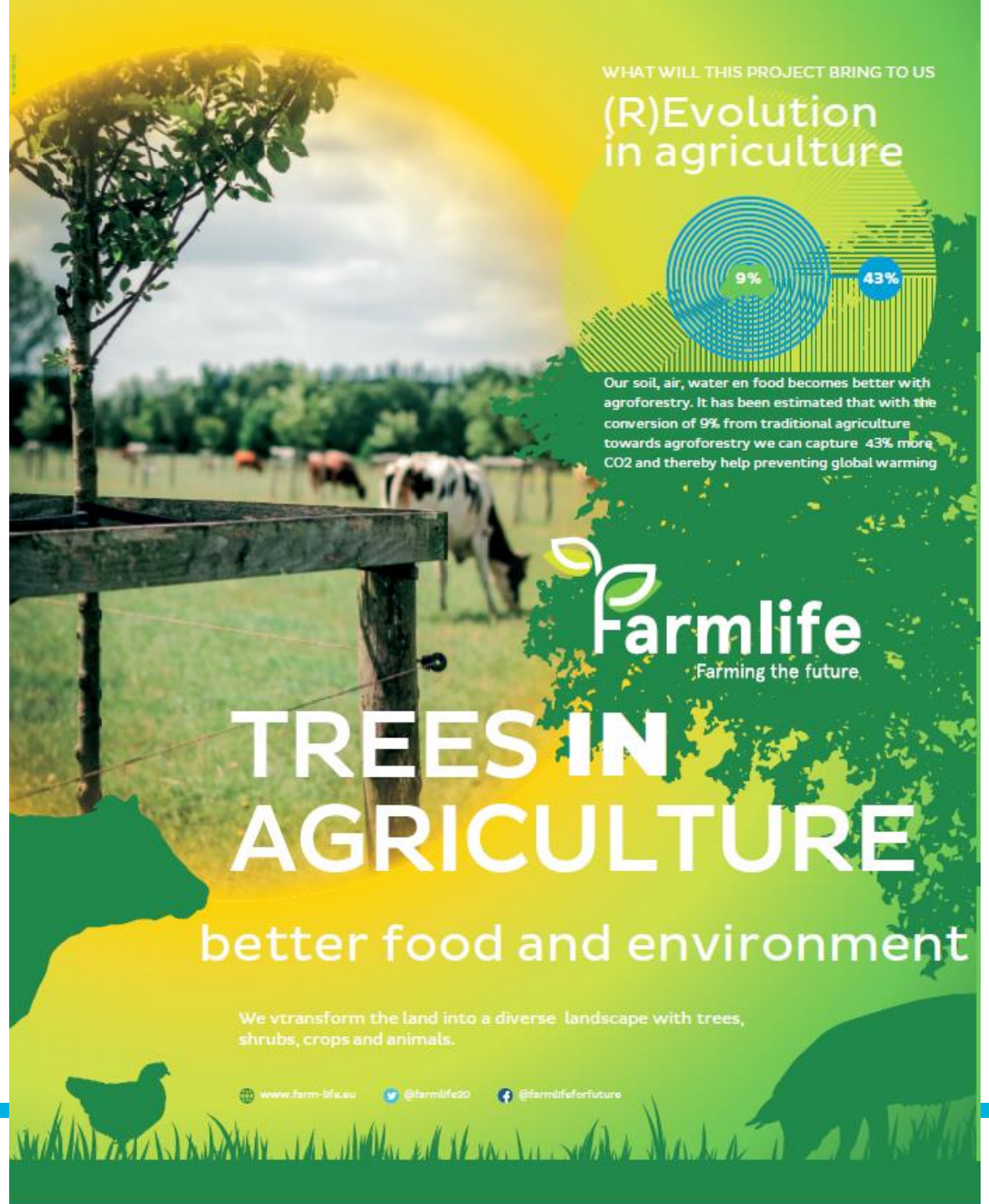

Farm Life project contributes to a climate-resilient Europe by developing and demonstrating innovative adaptation technologies and approaches for the transition of conventional agriculture towards climate resilient agroforestry.

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Adaptive Farm Plans.

We develop adaptive farm plans that farmers can use to develop profitable agroforestry business models that can be contextualized to their own conditions.

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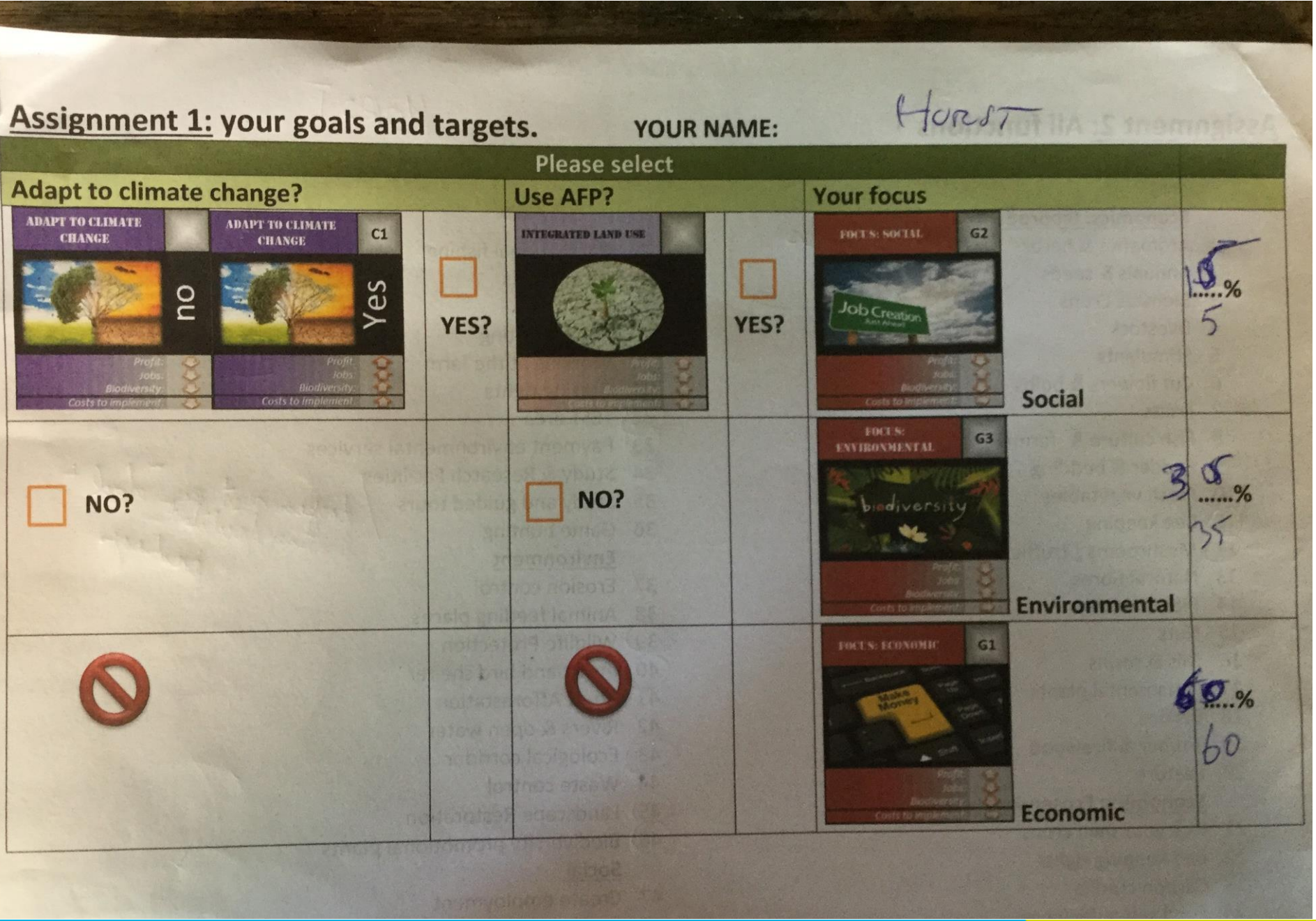

Co-creation.

We construct a roadmap to effectively implement the agricultural transition, together with entrepreneurs, knowledge institutes, government, and societal partners.

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Transition toolkit.

We build a transition toolkit that can be used by farmers, policy makers and societal partners.

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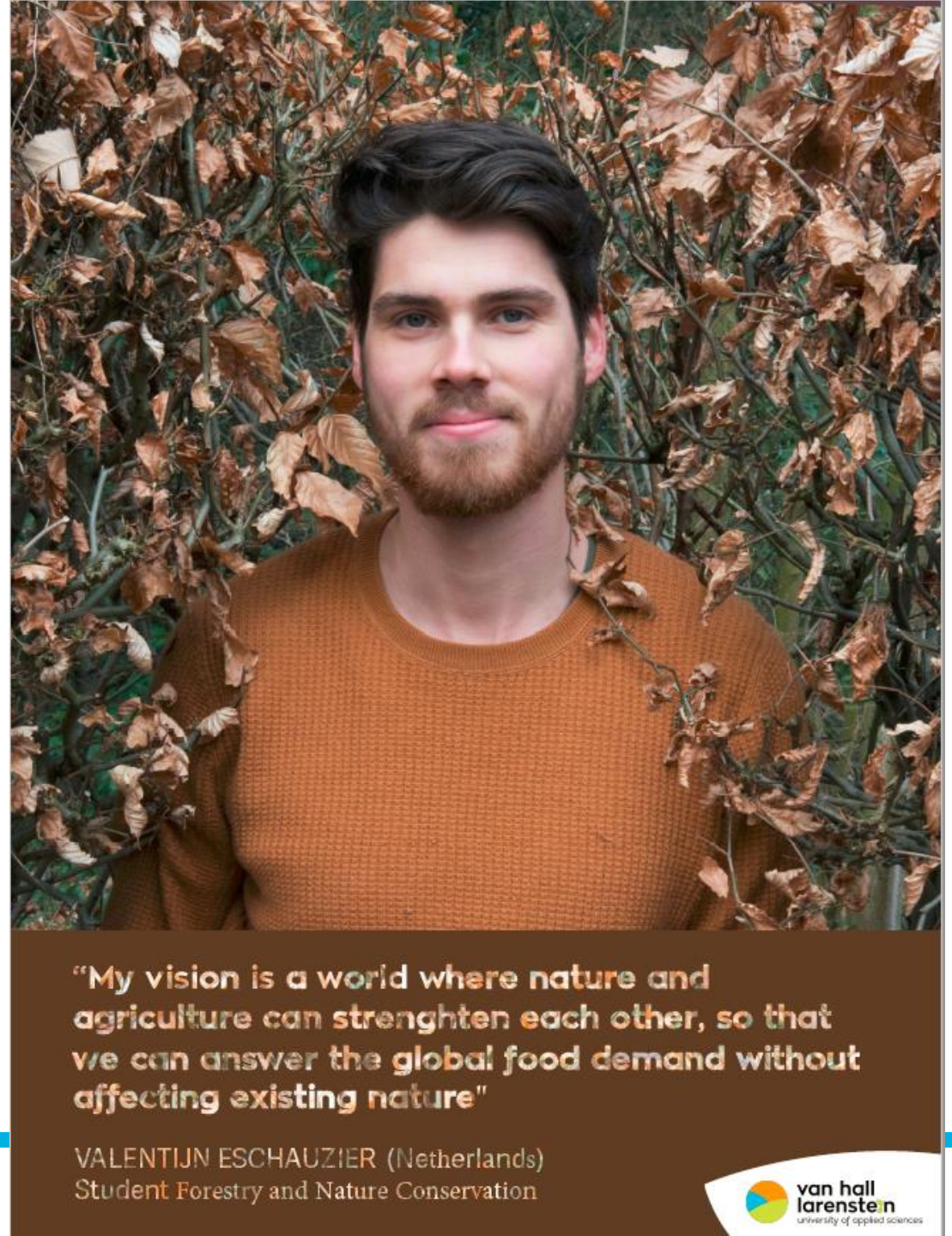

Future transition managers.

We prepare the future agricultural transition managers by developing an innovative professional Master programme.

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FARM LIFE: protecting farms from floods

FARM LIFE, which started in September 2018, is a LIFE project led by Van Hall Larenstein, University of Applied Sciences, in the Netherlands. The country's Noord-Brabant province has been particularly affected by warmer and wetter weather in recent decades, leading to a loss of biodiversity and an increased risk of flooding. Some of the farmers participating in the project will be using agroforestry to protect their livelihoods from floods and other climate change impacts.

Euridice Leyequién, a professor of forested landscapes, is the project manager for FARM LIFE. "Resilient agroforestry systems provide different mechanisms that can enhance the use of available water more effectively than monocultures and thus increase agro-ecosystem resilience against, for example, droughts and heatwaves," she says. "They contribute to water recycling and encourage changes to the farm micro-climate that reduce the evaporative demand and make more water available for transpiration."

Annual crops benefit from the presence of trees that have the ability to retain off-season rainfall and residual soil water after the cropping period. "Extending the possibility of soil moisture uptake makes soil resource utilisation more efficient than in pure monocultures," says Professor Leyequién. "The shading effects of trees can buffer temperature and reduce exposure to supra-optimal temperatures, under which physiological and developmental processes and yield become increasingly vulnerable," she adds.

"By changing land management, resilient agroforestry systems should also help prevent soil and nutrient loss and create new habitats to improve biodiversity." Numbers of some indicator species, including pollinating insects, are expected to increase by up to one-third on the FARM LIFE pilot plots.

FARMING THE FUTURE

"The project is developing inclusive sustainable rural networks in which farmers and relevant stakeholders can learn together how to transition from a landscape with conventional monoculture systems to a climate-resilient landscape with diversified agricultural production systems, i.e. agroforestry," explains Professor Leyequién.

These stakeholders include farmers' associations, entrepreneurs, knowledge institutes, government ministries, and social partners. The FARM LIFE strategy is to encourage them "to self-organise in resilient networks that can last beyond the project timeframe," she adds.

Outcomes of the project will include:

- knowledge-sharing (massive open online courses – MOOCs – and a Master's curriculum);
- farmer-driven business networks along sustainable agricultural value chains;
- tools for value creation and to make agroforestry food products more competitive; and
- tools for the development of adaptive farm plans that can be contextualised into different conditions.

"FARM LIFE is building a transition toolkit that will enable farmers, policymakers and societal partners to effectively implement the agricultural transition towards climate adaptive agroforestry," says Professor Leyequién.

She believes that the project can contribute to the successful upscaling of agroforestry in the Netherlands, Belgium and other European countries, by creating an environment in which the relevant stakeholders can "exchange practical knowledge and tools that can directly facilitate the transition from conventional monocultures to climate-resilient agroforestry."

Find out more
Website: http://farm-life.eu/

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Knowledge sharing.

All the knowledge and information developed and assembled in Farm Life will be made available to everyone who is interested in the subject. We will connect to other European Union projects, and develop a training tools, for example a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC).

Making Farmers in charge again.

We build farmer-driven business networks by supporting farmers to self-organize in resilient networks, such as the traditional farmers' cooperative.

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Value creation and competitiveness.

We develop innovative agroforestry food products and branding strategies.

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Transition into politics.

We connect to politics by bringing results under political attention at the European Union, Dutch and Belgium contexts, and regional levels.

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