

The French National Plan for the Development of Agroforestry

On December 17th 2016, the French Minister of Agriculture Stéphane LE FOLL revealed a National Plan for the Development of Agroforestry in Paris. More than 200 people attended the event, including delegates of farmers unions, research institutes, farming and forestry extensions bodies and education services. All forms of agroforestry are included in this plan : trees inside and around agricultural plots, in cropping and grazing systems, isolated trees, aligned trees, hedges, alley-cropping systems, silvopastoral systems.

The targets of the Plan

The plan aims at stimulating the adoption of Agroforestry practices in France (including overseas provinces). It is structured in 5 axis and 23 actions.

- **Axis 1 – Improve the knowledge about agroforestry systems and their functioning:**
 - 1.1. Increase the resources for the research institutes to monitor agroforestry systems
 - 1.2 Improve the coordination between research institutes, technical institutes, chambers of agriculture, extension bodies and national networks
 - 1.3 Expand the themes of research and extension to new topics
 - 1.4 Assess how agroforestry could be incorporated in the green and blue corridors
 - 1.5 create a network of reference agroforestry farms across France

- **Axis 2 – Improve the regulations about agroforestry and increase the financial support :**
 - 2.1 Suggest new support schemes for agroforestry adoption
 - 2.2 Help the transfer at the Regional level of available toolkits
 - 2.3 Secure the relationship between land owners and land tenants regarding agroforestry systems
 - 2.4 Favor agroforestry practices as environmental compensation measures
 - 2.4 Explore how new incentives for agroforestry systems could result from adaptation of tax paying laws

- **Axis 3 – Stimulate extension services, education in agroforestry and promotion of Agroforestry practices :**
 - 3.1. Bring back trees and hedges into education programs
 - 3.2. Create a network of agroforestry extension officers at the national scale
 - 3.3. Unify the French agroforestry associations
 - 3.4. Produce textbooks and synthesis on agroforestry for education and promotion
 - 3.5. Organize promotion events and campaigns for agroforestry adoption (including hedges)

- **Axis 4 – Improve the added value of agroforestry products :**

- 4.1. Support the agri-food and wood industry to better valorize products and co-products of agroforestry systems
 - 4.2. Take advantage of the “labels of quality” approach in promoting agroforestry products
 - 4.3. Push for Sustainable Management Plans of agroforestry systems and promote the label of “sustainably produced agroforestry wood”
 - 4.4. Develop the « local tree » seedlings production and use strategy
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- **Axis 5 – Promote Agroforestry practices and systems at the international level :**
 - 5.1. Promote Agroforestry at the European level
 - 5.2. Promote agroforestry at the international level
 - 5.3. Develop agroforestry research at the European and International Level
 - 5.4. Develop education exchange at the European and international levels.

Agroforestry is part of the French agro-ecological project. The Minister was keen to present himself the Plan. He indicated that Agroforestry is a key option to achieve the 4 per thousand initiative that was presented at the COP21 (An increase of 4 per thousand and per year of the C content of the soils would compensate for all the current greenhouse gases emissions at the planet scale). He insisted that it is essential that a strategy should be implemented at the National scale by the authorities to promote agroforestry. Producing more with less inputs is the ultimate goal.

Monitoring and auditing the Plan

A Steering committee will be installed during the first semester of 2016. It will be in charge of the management of the Plan. For each action, leaders, partners, practical actions, milestones and deliverables will be detailed. An audit will be ordered in 2020. This plan covers the 2015-2020 period, but is committed to consider the long term in its action.

Note : It was confirmed during the meeting that in France all hedges are now eligible to the first pillar European payment, and that all agroforestry plots with up to 100 trees/ha are also 100% eligible.

Translation by C. Dupraz