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## Sagiter – Agroecological knowledge and territorial ingenuity

### Second intermediate evaluation, halfway point: May 2014 - May 2015 of the SAGITER project (November 2013 - November 2016)

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Further to my participation in three Sagiter project seminars: – Florac (France-November 2013) – Marburg (Germany-May 2014) – Ljubljana (Slovenia-October 2014) –, and ongoing exchange with the coordinators and leaders of the transnational partnership, I present a second *partial evaluation* addressed to all the partners for distribution at the Cluj seminar in Romania (June 2015). This document is designed to be a "critical look" and contains proposals that will hopefully nourish your work and thoughts during this halfway point seminar.

The field of my observations has given rise to my questions, which I present to you herein. The first partial evaluation was given in June 2014 (available since 1<sup>st</sup> June 2014 in French and English on the SAGITER site) and the review looks at the progress made based on 8 interrogative themes addressed and/or treated by the partners since November 2013.

- 1 – What is agroecology?
- 2 – Agroecology and knowledge?
- 3 – How to maintain a diversity of approaches (cultural, design, practical) while moving forward together?
- 4 – The posture of participants on the recognition of their own knowledge and practices on this subject: a widened bibliography and precise examples of elements produced?
- 5 – The heterogeneous levels of understanding and use of collaborative tools?
- 6 – Productions/progress made between meetings and how these are shared?
- 7 – Transversal knowledge/mobilisation of the project registered by all the partners?
- 8 – The co-inter-pluri-animation of meetings for a deeper inter-cultural approach to agroecology, knowledge and training?

Today, one year later, certain questions are still valid, some of which should be viewed in another form though, in the light of your progress and lessons learned. Similarly, this evaluation should contribute to your work so the feedback from progress made and questions raised is an interesting point to look at by all project partners and coordinators (SupAgro Florac), during the June 2015 seminar in Cluj, Romania. The aim being to review the work to date in order to take an updated view of the work still to be carried out.

#### **a) Contribution from local Groups and Partners?**

The French Group has 4 partners, whereas the other countries each have one Partner. Making a total of **ten partners for the SAGITER project**. Moreover, some partners were only able to send one representative to the seminars, instead of the two representatives initially planned, which caused a certain imbalance with regards to the inter-cultural and collective aspects of the project. All the more so given that SupAgro-Florac / France is the project coordinator.

But even certain French partners were not especially involved in the collective work: meetings and inter-meeting discussions. This caused some of the skills targeted by the project and partnership not be available at the right time with regards to the group's ongoing progress and questions. For example, one of the French partners (SF&D = Localeco: marketing an agroecology training course: is this truly an agroecology issue? Is this really in line with the aims and spirit of the SAGITER project?), suggested for the June 2015 seminar to work on video techniques, a tool which is very much called upon by the whole group as a support for carrying field surveys. The skills offered are acknowledged but wouldn't it be preferable that this partner be more present during the different meetings and operations held since November 2013? In fact, the above proposal came at a time when the group was moving to a phase just beyond data collection. A review of this tool (technical and anthropological) would have been very useful in the previous weeks or Hangout meetings of the Scientific and Technical Committee and would have made a significant contribution.

What has become of the **local groups** and who are they exactly?

They are *a priori* the guarantors that what is being carried out is actually a research-action: both source and target of changes made and the production of training knowledge for agroecology. This is not often referred to during seminars and inter-seminar meetings. The "communication" of this work and the training courses developed, requires a strong territorial base with agroecology actors, this being one of the keys to its extended impact beyond 2016.

Information on the progress of work carried out by each of the partners with regards to local groups between seminars is not particularly visible and often appears to be a cut & paste from one session to another. This is how the presentation looks in any case. Don't forget that this is where your material is for co-constructing your agroecology training base, you need to have a concrete, real base otherwise the work will be considered as approximate.

#### **b) Remarks on the updates of links / partners on the SAGITER site**

Some updates have not been made:

On 2015/24/05, on the "partners" page at <http://sagiter.eu/wakka.php?wiki=PartnerS&lang=en>. If I click on the links in the order of the headings, this gives (I only talk about the links that work):

For Fumeterre - [Fumeterre, consultancy, expertise, monitoring, engineering in agroecology](#) : problems of transfers to sites other than theirs: – a banner: 404 – article not found, then a proposed link.... <http://www.geobiologie-ecologie.fr/index.php/qui-nous-sommes-experts-en-geobiologie/10-association-fumeterre> and then <http://www.geobiologie-ecologie.fr/index.php>

The problem is the titles and the link to a site which proposes 'consumables' for slightly inappropriate training courses. You are on a European project on Agroecology. And even if these pages represent an internal working tool, they appear to bring confusion or a very/too personal vision on what agroecology is. It is neither the place nor the time for this. (*Ditto for the Etherpad title "P.Rabhi", be careful with the choices made, names are protect by common law... but it is true that I am not a fan of excessive and sometimes uncontrolled use of the internet*). Any confusion of subjects is not welcome on these pages with regards to the work of the group and its participants. Don't forget that this work is later destined to a wide public of trainers, farmers, consultants and training bodies. You are in a research-action process for training courses which will produce knowledge and consequently, your 'visions' of the world should remain values to be shared and not dogma to be ostensibly imposed or diffused.

For the - [Federation of family agrarian schools in Galicia \(ES\): vocational training](#): no page found.

For - [USAMV Cluj Napoca \(Ro\)](#), management of the rural environment: no page found

**c) The 'Surveys' work group which became the Scientific and Technical Committee in November 2014:**

- The name was changed for a wider-reaching title, without redefining its functions and responsibilities with regards to research-action. Consequently, many meetings and reports duplicate the work of the Scientific Committee. Is this also because there were sometimes few, even no participants. (cf. summary table of meetings and comments)
- The time spent on survey tools does not always appear to have been optimised. This is a phase of the research-action which although necessary seems to have been very time consuming (two telephone meetings per month) and paradoxically, in spite of high demand, not well attended (or sparsely on the field between seminars). Now it is important to extract the elements validated by your collective body (not heading for the middle ground, quite the contrary) as pertinent elements related to selected situations and their progression. From this material you can begin to formalise innovative training tools, applied to agroecology. Otherwise, without this attachment to specifying the multiple, complex and changing reality of agroecology in Europe, you will have trouble in fundamentally modifying processes and positions applied by trainers and apprentices towards a European-wide collective project, which is one of your main hypotheses.

**d) Agroecology remains an unclear concept through your manner of approaching it collectively and inter-culturally (the interest of the SAGITER project)?**

Whereas on this point you should have made progress: agroecology is an 'old' concept from the 1930s (world recession) which is based on three levels and classically as both: a *science*; a *philosophy*; a *practices*, to which today one can add, a *political dimension* (drive) on a European level. How have you identified these four elements, notably the latter as it has been mentioned on several occasions that this concept did not exist in certain countries? What is there to say? The how and why of each partner's contribution in the project today? The progress made in your questioning from the work from the first 18 months and your visions reviewed in the light of the context in your country(ies)?

**e) Agroecology and how does this influence the method of teaching/informing?**

How to handle the questions of initial and continued education from an agroecology angle and how this influences the way we teach and inform?

How this requires taking into account knowledge in all of its forms: skills / behaviour?

We need to consider what teaching methods are to be applied for active farmers and for future farmers who may be reticent and sceptic? The different combinations of recipients for the different partners: teachers-students / consultants-farmers / rural-city dwellers / individual- collective / country / Europe, etc.?

**f) An innovative section in your project is "awareness" and training actors in the farming world on agroecological issues.**

You attempt to break down the barriers which are often artificially erected, between agriculture-environment-society. Although ERE (Education Relative to the Environment) has existed since the 1970s (1987 / UN; 1992 Rio Summit), it is not or little reinvested into training courses designed for the agricultural world. A farmer is not just a worker on the land, he/she also represents a personal and social point of view. Farmers (consultants, trainers) do not define themselves within 'social groups', they are individuals present in a situation which is moving and not fixed. They are always in a moving environment, as are the 'apprentices' that you will encounter. This is why it is important to ensure a solid teaching base but with 'presence': human and non-human, in tangible contexts based on real time situations.

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