

Spain – innovation example 1

PLAN 42 – INTEGRATED PROGRAMME TO REDUCE FIRE RISK THROUGH SUPPORT FOR EXTENSIVE GRAZING

Fundación Entretantos

www.entretantos.org

- **Location:** Castilla y León, Spain
- **HNV system:** Extensive grazing, mainly beef cattle on rough upland pastures
- **Scale of operation:** 42 administrative districts, 1,300 holdings and 250,000 ha of grazing land
- **Timespan:** Operated for approx. 10 years from 2002, ended due to lack of funding, no longer running
- **Keys to success:** government commitment and funding, local project officers, dialogue with graziers, integrated approach, use of RDP funds for incentive payments to graziers

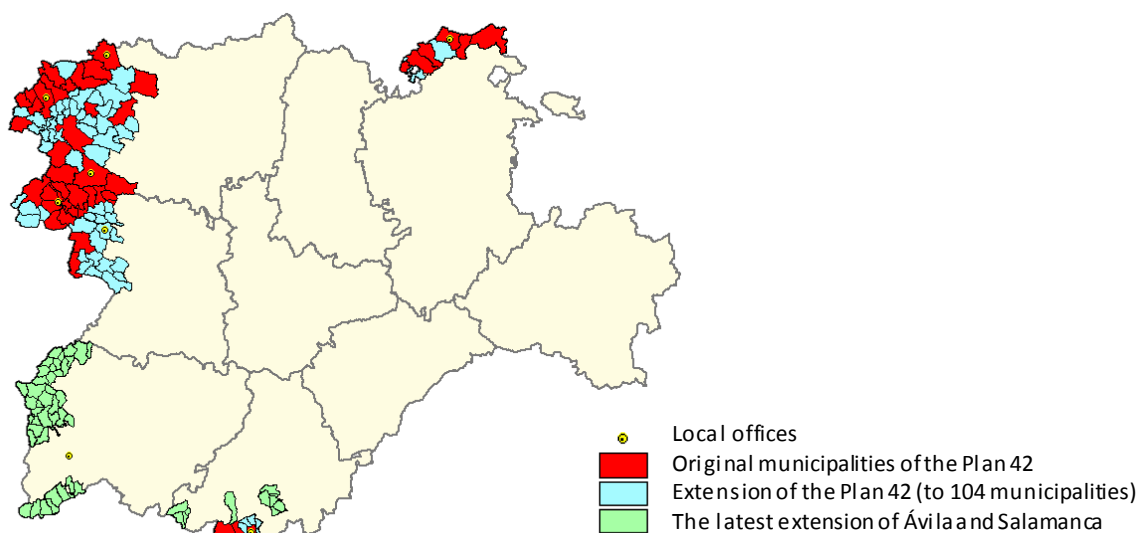


Figure1

Problems addressed by this example

Increasing incidence of wild-fires, high prevalence of farming-related wildfires, difficulty of engaging graziers in efforts to stop use of fire as pasture regeneration tool, decline of grazing and pastoral farming, scrub encroachment, loss of pastures and poor valorisation of livestock products. The programme targeted the 42 districts with the highest incidence of wild-fires, and was later extended to more municipalities.

Story in a nutshell

This was an integrated programme for fire prevention, set up and run by the regional environment authority. The programme approach was focused on social aspects of wildfires. A key action was trying to build an alliance with graziers through dialogue and by helping to address their problems, in order to get cooperation from the graziers in reducing fire risks.

The programme worked directly with graziers through local project officers, with the incentive of RDP aids for mechanical scrub clearance and pasture improvement, as a substitute for traditional use of fire as a management tool, and as part of locally-developed pastoral planning. It included marketing initiatives (direct sales, funding for a shop), and organisation of graziers' access to land owned by absentee owners.

What does Plan 42 achieve for HNV farming?

- Impact on 1,300 holdings and 250,000 ha of grazing land.
- Reduced incidence of wildfires in the target districts (see graph).
- Greatly improved level of dialogue and understanding between the authorities and farmers.
- A more positive and optimistic vision of the future



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

Achievements

- In the period 2002-12, the action targeted 42 administrative districts (later extended to more) and had an impact on 1,300 holdings and 250,000 ha of grazing land.
- Plan 42 helped to start innovation and development initiatives related to extensive farming and community-based natural resources.
- At least 5 farmers' associations and a federation integrating all of them were promoted by Plan 42.

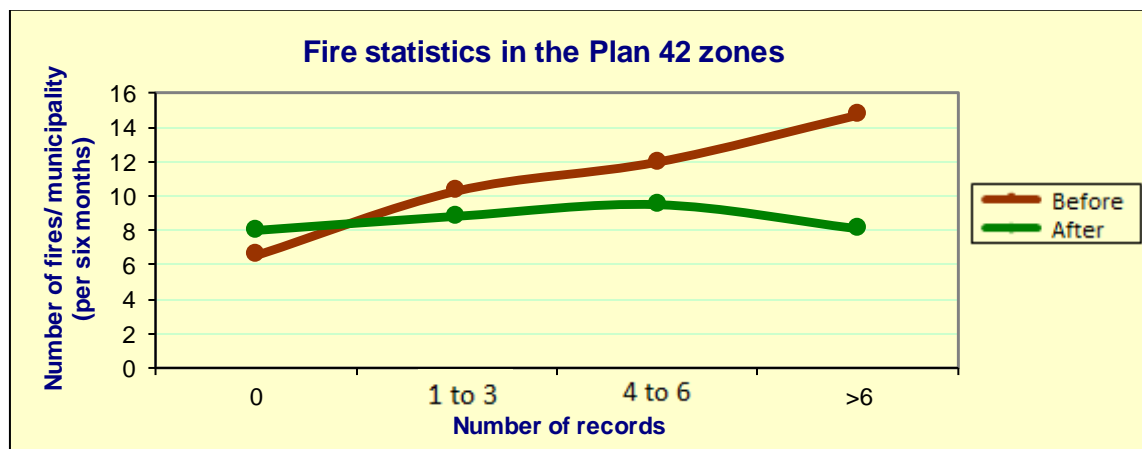


Figure 5

Economics of HNV farming

Data is not available on the economic impact of the programme for HNV farms.

Maintaining or improving HNV values

The programme was not designed to achieve specifically HNV or conservation objectives, but probably had benefits as a result of maintaining extensive grazing systems and reducing scrub encroachment.

The main landscapes targeted belong to Natura 2000 sites, contributing to preserve them from damaging wildfires. Potentially the programme could have been adapted to give it a more explicit HNV focus, for example, with greater involvement of the nature-conservation authorities.

How does Plan 42 respond to the HNV LINK innovation themes?

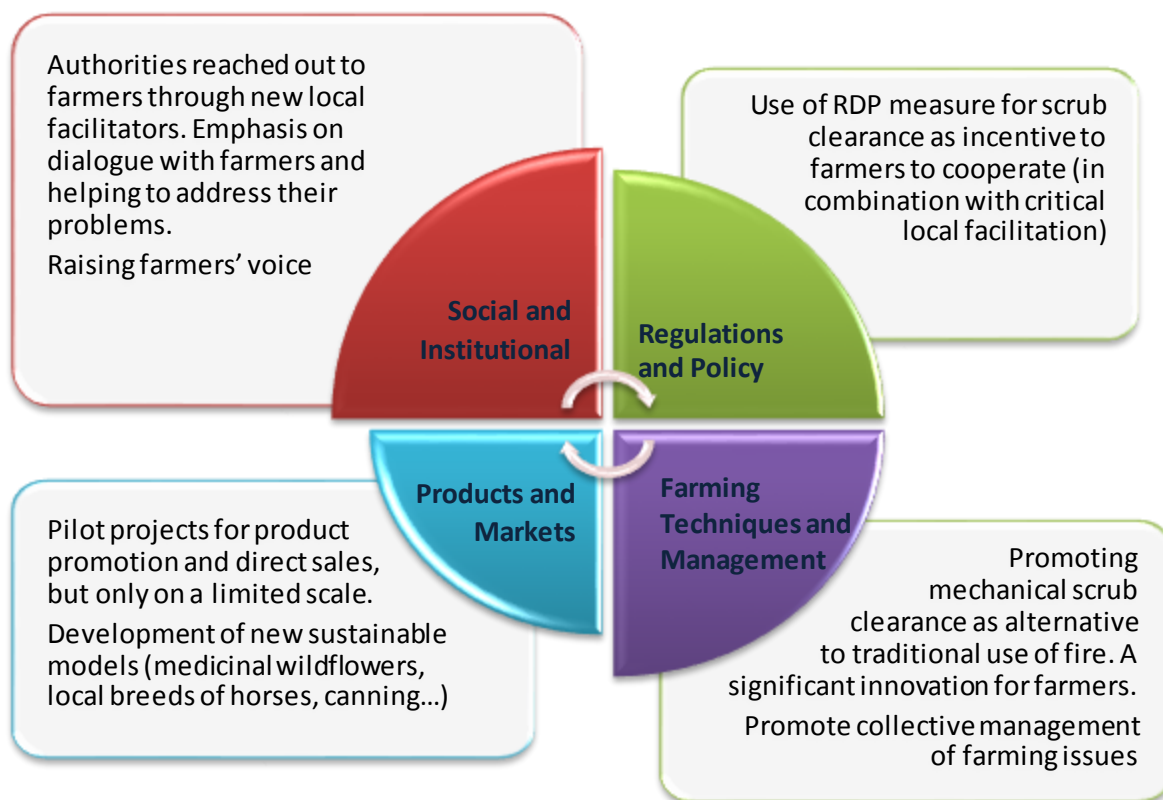


Figure 6 The framework HNV-Link used for evaluating innovations for high nature value farming.

- Social and institutional:** Developing farmers' associations and building their capacity, promoting social linkages between stakeholders. While using a large set of classic measures for fire prevention - such as firebreaks, infrastructure and preventive silviculture – Plan 42 was focused on the use of social tools as instruments of change. They introduced new approaches to intervene on rural areas, including the proximity between technicians and population, restoring effective links between people and their environment, networking and a long-term focus and on local active agents. The participatory work with local people typified by Plan 42 allowed a wildfire prevention approach that focused on governance, development and sustainability. Those factors showed to be inseparable from the social context where wildfires spread. As a result of these works a great number of people's proposals were gathered from participatory activities. Participatory works with people in Plan 42 were formerly started by technicians trying to mobilize local population into fire prevention. Coordinators of the programme started to hire a cluster of small companies with experience in mediation and facilitation of participatory processes. The collaborative work between participation professionals and local technicians was successful in terms of social involvement, developing some new ideas.
- Regulations and policy:** The measure for scrub clearance is not innovative in itself, but the way it was integrated with local facilitation and the other social aspects of the project created an innovative synergy.
- Products and markets:** Other initiatives included developing new markets for horse meat (training local restaurants and butchers on meat preparation, promoting trademarks, communicating their HNV advantages), promoting conversion to organic farming.

- **Farming techniques and management:** Also developing farmers' animal health associations (ADL), developing training with specialists (reproduction, parasitism...); developing participatory plans for scrub clearing and grazing-maintained clear-cuts around villages.

The process that made it happen and critical factors for success

- It emerged from a small group of people in the regional environment administration, championed by the Director General and his advisor. It was set up by this administration, with its own staff and funds
- The strong social focus grew from involvement of individuals with a background in environmental education and public participation.
- Staff living on the ground in the targeted districts created a participatory framework to regain control of land, and rebuild social fabric and relationships among farmers and other stakeholders.
- Collaboration between civil servants, project staff and external consultants, and improving coordination between local and regional authorities, led to agreements on land management.

The key for success was betting on professionals living in the local areas, specifically trained to develop this project, supported by external consultants and inserted in the local networks. The implementation of participatory frameworks allowed farmers and other stakeholders to be directly involved on decision-making. The participation of extensive farmers was a first for these areas, and established new paths of dialogue. The creation of farmers' networks was another great success of the project, farmers started to visit other farmers, share their problems and strategies and plan a new model of representation.

The locally-based action of technicians and professionals and the specifically designed training for them in group dynamics, participatory processes and communication helped to boost the project's outcomes. At the peak there were 8 technical staff living in the targeted communities and 4 consultants developing specific tasks (participatory planning, training, supporting activities). Workgroups with farmers were pivotal to develop most demonstration and pilot projects, some of the farmers' association created by the project are still running. The use of participatory tools led to a better understanding between technicians and herders. When they began to meet, graziers scoped a more active role in fire prevention and technicians developed a better understanding of the herders' background. An unexpected benefit of Plan 42 was its influence in the organization of extensive livestock farmers. Early in the participatory processes some groups of extensive livestock farmers started to ask for separate meetings and social organization among them emerged.

The support of the regional government was key for the relationships with municipalities, starting new collaboration processes that eventually engaged other actors.



Lessons learnt from this innovation example, and its potential replication

- The coming together of certain people in the “right place at the right time” is a key factor.
- Commitment from the administration is essential, as is coordination among government levels.
- The social approach is a cheap and effective approach to wildfire prevention
- Local population can take back control of their territory, establishing alliances with key stakeholders to maintain its values and services. The role of graziers is central in this scheme
- Extensive farmers and shepherds play a star role in land management and wildfire prevention, as they can intervene in broad sections of land and move among them

The overall lesson of Plan42 was that social approach to prevent wildfires was cheaper, more effective and successful than conventional lines of work. The involvement of farmers and stakeholders led directly to reduce the incidence of wildfires. The implementation of participatory strategies, developed collaboratively with local population and stakeholders, could be developed as the main tool for preventing wildfires.

The role of graziers was fundamental in both wildfire prevention and land management. Early diagnostics already defined their main role in the current situation, but also the declining of their activity, improving sustainable livestock extensive farming (making it more profitable, more sustainable and more land-based) produced immediate benefits in wildfire prevention and consequently in HNV conservation

This kind of innovation is highly replicable, as the participatory framework adapts solution implemented in each territory to their own characteristics. To replicate this kind of solution you need, at least, stability and long-term vision, local people involved from the very beginning, technical capacity on participation and land management and a minimum of resources to develop the main agreements

The main threat for Plan 42 was always the lack of political vision from the regional government, once the main promoter was separated from the Directorate General, the project started to decline and eventually ended with the financial crisis.

Another question that hindered the process was the lack of understanding of timing and needs: participatory processes in such abandoned areas, with small populations and very conservative, way and individualistic take a long time to form and stabilise. The pressure for short term results, the lack of confidence and eventually the government not keeping its commitment gave the project a bitter end.

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