



ERIAFF NETWORK NEWSLETTER

Thursday 10th April, 2026

01_2026



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UPCOMING EVENTS

15/4 CC ERIAFF members, WG leaders and guests (hybrid meeting)

11-12-13/5 annual ERIAFF conference (Amsterdam, the Netherlands)



GETTING READY FOR THE 12TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN AMSTERDAM !

We want to invite you to the coming **annual ERIAFF conference**, that takes place on the **11-13th of May 2026**, in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. In April 2025 we came together in Spain to discuss about *Transformative Innovation*. It was a great pleasure to see everyone and exchange knowledge.

In this 12th annual conference, we will explore the theme of *Regional Agri-Food & Forestry Systems*: balancing the economic, ecologic, environmental and social innovations. Our ambition is to make ERIAFF the vehicle for **European agricultural policy**. We have embraced this ambition based on the EU's Agri & Food vision, focusing on four pillars to develop practical solutions for our European regions. These are the future of new farmers, true pricing, strengthening product and process quality for competitive advantage and nature-friendly farming.

This includes the restoration and development of **biodiversity** and **territorial resilience** through the recovery of ancient agroforestry systems, the creation or maintenance of forest micromosaics in strategic areas, the sustainable and balanced management of forests close to crops and balancing vibrant cities with thriving rural communities. We have structured the **program** around these themes and will also address effective collaboration and the need to establish an EU food strategy.



AMSTERDAM 2026: FIELD VISITS

The **field visits** paint a comprehensive picture of the innovation taking place across the Dutch agri-food system, ranging from high-tech horticulture to agroforestry, precision farming, circular urban agriculture and protein transition.

- In South Holland, the **World Horti Center** showcases the power of collaboration within the horticultural cluster, where companies, researchers, governments and educators jointly develop innovations in areas such as robotics, AI, plant-based compounds, energy and value chains.
- In North Holland, the focus lies on seed breeding and sustainable mixed farming, with a visit to an innovative plant nursery in **Seed Valley** followed by a tour of a dairy-arable farm located in the UNESCO landscape of the **Beemster polder**.
- Flevoland highlights future-oriented agriculture through agroforestry experiments at **Saalland Farm** and the cutting-edge work at Wageningen University's **Farm of the Future**, where biodiversity, soil quality and productivity are integrated in experimental field systems.



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AMSTERDAM 2026: FIELD VISITS



(Copyrights: FoodValley)

- In Gelderland/Overijssel, the visit centers on the protein transition and the upcycling of food side streams, featuring innovation hubs on Wageningen Campus such as **OnePlanet** and **Foodvalley NL**, and start-ups working on sustainable food solutions.



(Copyrights: Noordoogst)

- The excursion to **Noordoogst** in Amsterdam demonstrates how urban and peri-urban agriculture contribute to circularity, short supply chains and community-driven food systems, combining a food forest, CSA, and circular entrepreneurs in a regenerating city district.



(Copyrights: Amsterdam Forest)

- As the Netherlands has relatively little forest area and high population density, there is strong pressure on the limited natural areas. As such, we will explore ways in which people from the **Amsterdam Forest** (*Amsterdamse Bos*) integrate different pressures on the forest and how they connect parks and forests close to urban areas.



(Copyrights: VDBorne Campus)

- Finally, the visit to **VDBorne Campus** (Brabant) offers an in-depth look at precision agriculture, including water-efficient farming, on-farm experimentation and digital tools showcased during an interactive tour of the **"Field of the Future"**.

Visit the [event site](#) for more information and registration.



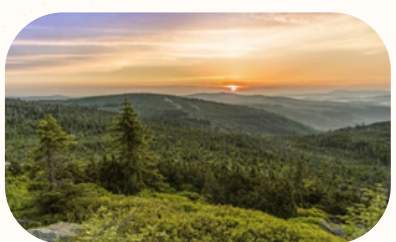
LATEST NEWS



VTskills: An Erasmus+ Project for Sustainable Viticulture in the Mediterranean

VTskills is an Erasmus+ project promoting sustainable viticulture through a multilingual e-learning platform and SPV training.

It also offers a certified course with micro-credentials in April 2026 for wine sector professionals.



ERIAFF Working Group of Forested Regions Joins Forest Europe as Observer

The ERIAFF Working Group of Forested Regions has been accepted as an observer in Forest Europe, enabling members to engage in European forest policies, share expertise, and support sustainable forest management and regional green initiatives.



Innovative Activities on agri-safety: Test Area Initiative in Tuscany

Located at the demo farm “Tenuta di Cesa”, managed by Ente Terre Regionali Toscane (ETRT), the initiative represents a first step towards the establishment of a Regional Centre for Safety in Agriculture.



New HuMUS Soil Steward Training Course available online

The HuMUS Project announces 14 brand-new resources, now available as videos on the HuMUS Project’s Soil Steward Training Course – free to enroll! Videos showcase the inspiring work happening across EUROPE through the 14 HuMUS Consortium Pilots.



Discussion at Bioeconomy Innovation Day in Catalonia

The third edition of the Bioeconomy Innovation Day showcased innovative bio-based solutions for high-impact sectors such as construction, interior design, furniture, cosmetics, manufacturing, automotive, and renewable energy.



VTskills: AN ERASMUS+ PROJECT FOR SUSTAINABLE VITICULTURE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN



VTskills, a project funded by the Erasmus+ program, sees an international consortium dedicated to promoting sustainable practices in the Mediterranean wine sector. The initiative, aligned with the strategies of the Green Deal, CAP, Farm to Fork, and Biodiversity, brings together 4 universities, 3 vocational education and training (VET) institutes, and 7 labor market actors, including the Tuscany Region.

The project introduces **Sustainable Precision Viticulture (SPV)**, which combines precision agriculture and organic methods to optimize technology use without harming the environment. The goal is to train students, professionals, consultants, managers, technicians, and farmers in digital, green, and resilience skills related to SPV.

VTskills has developed an **e-learning platform** accessible to all levels of technological proficiency, available in 5 languages (English, French, Greek, Italian, and Spanish). The platform, accessible at www.evtskills.eu, offers two training paths:

- Course for university students (HEI)
- Course for VET students, consultants, managers, technicians, and farmers

Both courses are organized into **4 thematic areas**: Overview of SPV, Resilience skills, Green skills and Digital skills. Each course includes 12 modules and 23 topics, totaling 25 hours of training. Participants can follow interactive lessons and receive certificates of completion, which are downloadable at the end of the course.

The course organized by the University of Seville is now underway, offering participants the opportunity to earn 3 training credits in the form of micro-credentials. The programme runs until April 30, 2026.

- Project video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWj0TKjbUg4>
- Course video: <https://youtube.com/watch?si=KTm91xQPZZrQ56GF&v=ek-SLumekRw>



ERIAFF WORKING GROUP OF FORESTED REGIONS JOINS FOREST EUROPE AS OBSERVER



We are pleased to announce that the **ERIAFF Working Group of Forested Regions** has been formally accepted as an observer to **Forest Europe**. This important achievement represents a significant milestone for our network and offers a valuable opportunity to further strengthen cooperation on sustainable forest management across Europe.

Forest Europe serves as the **pan-European high-level policy platform** dedicated to forests and sustainable forest management. Since 1990, its aim has been to develop common strategies among its 45 signatories on how to protect and sustainably manage forests. It brings together countries, regions, and a wide range of stakeholders to advance the protection, sustainable use, and economic development of Europe's forests. The organization, the Liaison Unit and secretariat, is based in Sweden due to Sweden's current chairmanship of Forest Europe. The chairmanship regularly alters between member states. **Observer status** enables our Working Group to participate in meetings, contribute expertise, and engage more closely with ongoing European policy discussions and initiatives in the forest sector.

This new role within Forest Europe marks an important step forward for our network, reaffirming our dedication to **sustainable forest management** and strengthening regional cooperation across Europe.

"Our status as observers in Forest Europe will provide a great opportunity to strengthen connections between forested regions of Europe with the ministerial level of more than 40 countries. We hope that increased exchange of views and knowledge from our different levels and geographies can help policy making in challenging times for many of Europe's forests" said Alvaro Picardo.



INNOVATIVE ACTIVITIES ON AGRI-SAFETY: TEST AREA INITIATIVE IN TUSCANY

At the ERIAFF Coordination Committee meeting held in February, members were introduced to an innovative test area for the safe operation of agricultural and forestry machinery in Tuscany. The project was presented by Elena Biagiotti on behalf of **Ente Terre Regionali Toscane**.



Located at the demo farm **Tenuta di Cesa**, the initiative represents a first step towards the establishment of a Regional Centre for Safety in Agriculture. The facility includes **12 practical exercises** simulating real operating conditions and aims to strengthen training and accident prevention in the sector.

To support knowledge exchange across regions, a short survey has been launched to map similar initiatives in Europe and explore opportunities for cooperation. We invite everyone to contribute by completing the survey at the following [link](#).

Presentation video: [here](#)





HUMUS SOIL STEWARD TRAINING COURSE AVAILABLE ONLINE



The **HuMUS project** has made available the experiences of the 34 project pilots that carried out participatory processes on soil health at the local level, now accessible as videos in the project **Soil Steward Training Programme** (free to enrol). Below, we present a selection of videos from the 14 internal pilots of the HuMUS consortium, showcasing inspiring work carried out across Europe:

- Fiesole (Tuscany - IT)
- Calenzano (Tuscany - IT)
- Sierra Nevada (Andalusia - ES)
- South Tyrol (IT)
- Prespa Region (MKD)
- Stuttgart (Baden-Württemberg - DE)
- Podravje Region (SI)
- Province of Cuneo and Turin (IT)
- Angers Loire Métropole (Pays de la Loire - FR)
- Altiplano de Granada y Almería (ES)
- Central Stara Planina Region (BG)
- Cáceres and Badajoz (Extremadura - ES)
- Ooststellingwerf (Friesland - NL)
- North Rhine-Westphalia Region (DE)

These pilots highlight practical, community-driven approaches to **healthy soil management**, offering valuable lessons for regions and municipalities across Europe.

Take advantage of this unique training to help make healthy soils in your region or municipality a concrete reality. Further communications will follow on the 20 external pilots of the project, as well as on the lessons learned over its three-year duration.

The HuMUS consortium remains available to provide further information and to engage with regions, territories and local actors interested in testing and implementing the project methodology and **Territorial Management Agreements** (TMAs) in their local context.

For further information, please contact: info@humus-project.eu



DISCUSSION AT BIOECONOMY INNOVATION DAY IN CATALONIA



The Bioeconomy Innovation Day, held on 25 November 2025 in Lleida (Catalonia, Spain), brought together start-ups, industry leaders, investors, and public institutions to explore innovative bio-based solutions for high-impact sectors such as construction, interior design, furniture, cosmetics, manufacturing, automotive, and renewable energy.

Held within the framework of the **AgroBioTech Forum**, the event served as a bridge between bio-based innovation and industrial demand, attracting an international audience. Participants exchanged ideas, learn from pioneering start-ups, and contributed to discussion on advancing the circular bioeconomy through sustainable, bio-based materials and technologies.

The Bioeconomy Innovation Day 2025 was co-organised by the Government of Catalonia, Congr s BIT, the European Forest Institute, and the Bioregions Facility, in collaboration with CTFC, Cl ster MAV, and the Agrobiotech Innovation Forum.

The factsheets on the bio-based innovations presented at the event are available here: <https://bioregions.efi.int/bioeconomy-innovation-day-2025/>

About ERIAFF

The Network of European Regions for Innovation in Agriculture, Food and Forestry (ERIAFF) is an informal association of **regional Authorities** that was established in 2012 in Florence (Tuscany, Italy). The Network is currently participated by 53 member Regions and 39 observers from 21 European countries. ERIAFF allows its members to work on **themes** of common interest and has established a number of thematic **working groups** which are coordinated by the most committed members. The participation to the Network and its Working Groups is free and based on a **voluntary commitment**. ERIAFF accepts as member any Regional Authority (or a delegated Public organization) that commits to the objectives of the ERIAFF Joint Statement (2012) and Declaration (2013). Regional Authorities may also be accepted as observers. Visit our [website](#) for more information.

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Member and Observer
Regions

21

European
Countries

14

Year since
establishment



ERIAFF network

European Regions for Innovation
in Agriculture, Food and Forestry

Get in touch with us!

Liaison office with European Institutions
Rond Point Schuman, 14 1040 – Bruxelles
Tel: +32 22868522
Email: info@eriaff.com

Communication WG contacts:
communication.eriaff@regione.toscana.it
elisabetta.cecchi@regione.toscana.it
concha.civantos@fundecyt-pctex.es