Interreg North-West Europe
ICARE4FARMS

10 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

To promote the deployment and uptake of next generation Solar Thermal Energy (STE) systems in agriculture in North-West Europe

1. Providing funding and financial incentives

- Introduce **tailored financial instruments** for STE and **financial incentives** to encourage farmers to adopt STE systems.
- These **includes**: green bonds, guarantees, tax credits, grants, subsidies, loan schemes and reduced rates on energy products.
- Increase funding for STE **pilot projects** and support for actors involved in their roll-out.

2. Ensuring coordination in funding mechanisms

- Coordinate funding efforts across **different agencies** and levels of government.
- Ensure **equitable access to funding**.
- Provide **clear information** about available funding opportunities.

3. Investing in research and development (R&D)

- STE can cut costs and benefit the environment, but **further R&D is necessary** (e.g. using STE for **different types of farms** or developing new materials for **energy storage**).
- Public funding and incentives for research innovation are crucial to make STE technology **more attractive than fossil fuels** and encourage its **wider adoption across Europe**.

4. Providing continuous training and technical assistance

- Prioritise **capacity building** through comprehensive **training programs** and **technical assistance.**
- Training programs should target technical personnel, agricultural advisors and **students** as they need to have the necessary **knowledge and skills** for successful implementation of sustainable technology.
- **Access to documentation** and **dissemination of information** is also essential for **a wider adoption**.

5. Fostering partnerships at a local or regional level

- Encourage **collaborative innovation** which help to speed-up the development and roll-out of sustainable technology solutions in agriculture.
- **Build partnerships** and cooperation among diverse stakeholders at local or regional level.
- **Innovation hubs** can serve as a platform to share knowledge, expertise and technology.
- Promoting **cooperation across different sectors.**

6. Standardising certification processes

- **Certification and labelling** for sustainable technology in agriculture.
- Ensure **consistency** across the European Union (EU).
- **Clarify criteria** for certification on the basis of **quality and environmental efficiency**.
- Create a **list of recognised certifications** in each EU country to simplify the certification process.

7. Simplifying administrative procedures

- Administrative procedures for STE installations should be modernised and simplified.
- Streamline regulations and ease administrative burdens (e.g. access to planning permits).
- **Common criteria** and a **modernised certification process** at the European level to ensure proper certification and testing of the entire system.

8. Promoting incubators and accelerators

- Enhance **support towards start-ups** and entrepreneurs in the agriculture technology sector.
- Foster the **emergence of new companies** in the sector and **partner** with existing incubators.
- Create a **map** of incubators.

9. Initiating educational programs and awareness campaigns

- Inform stakeholders about the **advantages of STE systems.**
- Keep farm advisors informed about the **latest technologies** and **funding schemes**.
- Contribute to **awareness-raising** at local and regional level through site visits, regional events, existing clusters and networks.
- **Stronger connections** between innovators, companies and educational institutions can raise awareness about STE through various means, like **field visits and student projects**.

10. Connecting borders

- Foster a **culture of collaboration and knowledge sharing** between different stakeholders in the agriculture-technology sector at a European and international level.
- Possible **initiatives**: open data platforms, innovation contests, promotional events, joint R&D projects and partnerships with universities and embassies abroad.
- **EU** can ensure **consistent support** services across countries.

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CONCLUSIONS

The ICare4Farms project has demonstrated the **potential of next-generation STE systems** for a sustainable future in agriculture, but **further advancements** are needed for its full potential to be unlocked. This requires **investment in R&D** and **public funding** to make STE technology **more attractive than fossil fuels** and encourage its adoption across Europe. **Coordination and coherence** between policy measures and a **culture of collaboration** and **knowledge sharing** between different stakeholders are key to scale up the initiative and ensure its long-term success and sustainability, leading to a **brighter and more sustainable future** for Europe.