



Guidelines for the establishment of Social Farming networks

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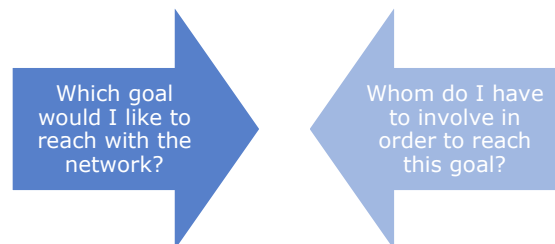


1. Introduction

The following expose presents a set of flexible guidelines for the establishment of Social Farming territorial networks. These networks focus on the support of the professional and personal empowerment of students with disabilities and special needs¹ through Social Farming.

The guidelines are embedded within the PROFARM-project: The overall goal is to achieve professional and personal empowerment through education. The project will elaborate and test a model that can contribute to the well-being, professional/personal growth and the social integration of VET students with a disability or special needs in agriculture and all the companies within the green sector like landscaping, gardening etc. The final aim is to reshape horizontal integration through individuals with disabilities, their families, schools, social-health services and private partnerships, in order to facilitate the employment and social inclusion of young disabled persons through Social Farming (SF). Social farming is the combination of agricultural and social/pedagogical work. More in detail, the project will focus on identifying cross-policy synergies and multi-professional partnerships to ensure integrated services in favor of the user/student as a person. Social Farming will be used as a milestone: Through creating an appropriate environment within which young people with disabilities or special needs will be able to live out and gain competences through a work-based educational approach, PROFARM wants to link the education system with the labor system. This is going to take place in cooperation with sheltered workshops in the green sector, farms and other initiatives which take care of students with disabilities or special needs. PROFARM will develop a work based learning pathway which enables the person with disabilities or special needs present himself/herself at the first labor market.

To achieve these important objectives, PROFARM intends to test and implement a personalised/case management approach to the professional and personal empowerment of VET students with disabilities. Its intention will be to identify the responses and the relevance to each student's situation, to develop their capacity to receive them and to create links with relevant services, including social and employment services.



The project actions will implement a synergic and horizontal network among VET staff, health and social workers, enterprises of the green sector and communities for a more inclusive society. The synergetic approach wants to make sure that the focus is on the act of cooperation, using each others abilities for the common vision. This shall guarantee a multi-organic context for the disadvantaged integration and generate consequent awareness-raising actions and involvement of the whole community.

The networking approach of the PROFARM-project will implement an important structure in order to reach the defined goals in an efficient and sustainable way. The process and the methodology for the creation of local networks in all the territories where the experimentation will take place aims at ensuring that these networks will operate and persist even after the conclusion of the project, drawing on the results and outputs achieved by PROFARM to strengthen social inclusion in the local context. By ensuring the widest publicity and sharing of the network's members and related responsibilities, and by favouring an open and democratic

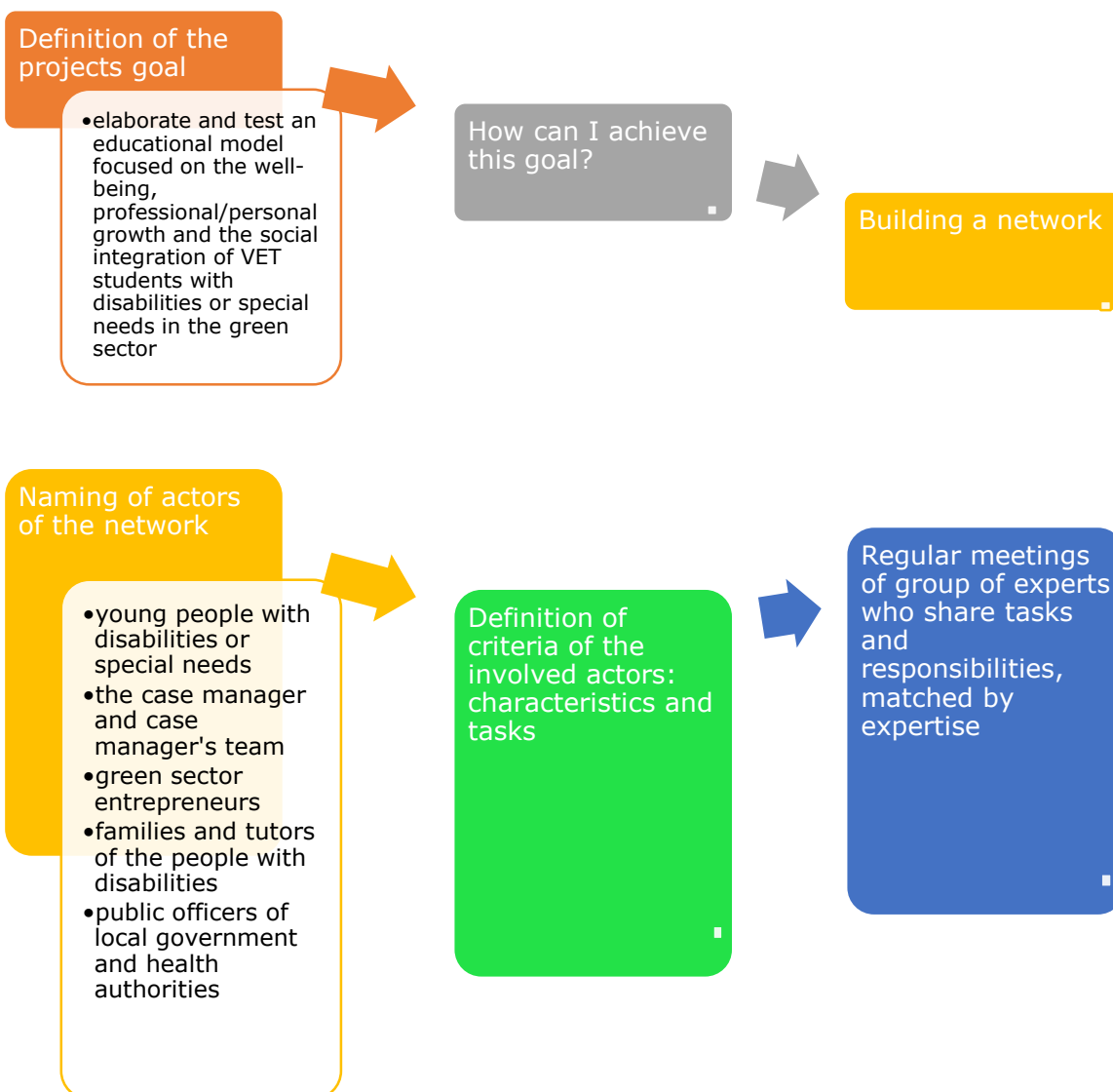
¹ The use of the terms "people with disabilities" and "special needs" throughout the document refers to the definition of the UN convention



access to various public and private entities, it becomes possible to include the local community and, at the same time, to involve it in the network's activities and initiatives.

Networking provides space for partners to connect, to share experiences and ideas and furthermore to develop cooperation between the actors. Within the network, all partners must be able to contribute from their individual perspectives to the cooperation to the overall network in order to reach the common goal of supporting the inclusive student's training approach. Organization and coordination are important factors for an attractive network-system (Payer 2008)².

2. Method of procedure



² Quelle: Payer, H. (2008): Netzwerk, Kooperation, Organisation – Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschiede. In: Bauer-Wolf, S., Payer, H., Scheer, G. (Hrsg.) (2008): Erfolgreich durch Netzwerkkompetenz. Handbuch für Regionalentwicklung. SpringerWienNewYork



3. The target group

Within the PROFARM project with its cooperative approach there are different target groups involved. The primary target group are young people with disabilities or special needs aged between 15 and 30 years, who are following a vocational education path in one of the project's partner countries.

Please note that the following description of the target group gives a basis for the ongoing work within the project and can be adapted throughout the process.

Other direct target groups that will be actively involved in the PROFARM training approach are:

- ⇒ Teachers, support teachers and headmasters, who, together with social worker, public social services, labor offices and local health agencies will be trained to assume the role of the Case Manager
- ⇒ agricultural entrepreneurs of already existing and potential social farms, who at first will be sensitized and informed about the diversification strategy in order to become active members who are involved and evaluated during the work placements
- ⇒ other work places which can offer work based learning pathways within the green sector
- ⇒ families and tutors of the primary target group invited to the co-planning meetings and exploited as a mean of internal monitoring of the experimental activities
- ⇒ public officers of local/regional government and health authorities, also participating at the co-planning meeting and beneficiaries of the capacity building actions for ensuring the sustainability and the scale-up of the PROFARM model

1st target group

- young people with disabilities or special needs aged 15-30 years, who are following a vocational education path

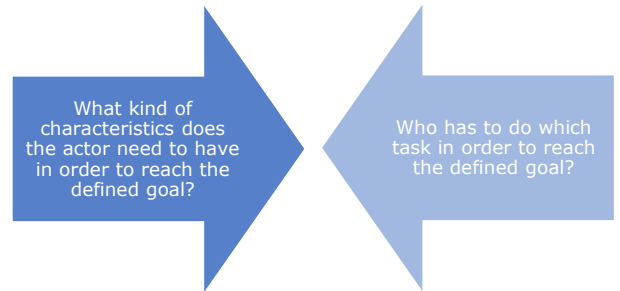
2nd target group

- teachers, support teachers and headmasters, social workers, public social services, labour offices and local health agencies -> CASE MANAGER
- agricultural entrepreneurs of already existing and potential social farms + other work places within the green sector
- families and tutors of the primary target group
- public officers of local/regional government and health authorities



4. Requirements and characteristics

In the following script the requirements and characteristics of the target groups will be described. It is important to note that these only give a structure within the PROFARM-project and can be adapted throughout the process.



Young people with disabilities or special needs

The requirements of the primary target group of young people with disabilities or special needs are the defined age (15-30 years old) and the connection to a social farm within the network of the partner or to a work place with the capacity to offer a work based learning pathway within the green sector. The person must have a recognized condition of motor, mental or intellectual disability, furthermore he or she must be working within the minimum working requirements in Social Farming. Only young persons with a specific and strong motivation to work in the green sector could be involved actively in this experimentation project.

In order to implement the training concept there will be 90 users directly involved in the first phases of the model’s experimentation, while at least 30 of them shall complete the full process for their final work placement.

Young people with disabilities or special needs	
characteristics	tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • age span: 15-30 years old • working within the minimum requirements in social farming • recognized condition of motor, mental or intellectual disability • specific and strong motivation to work on social farms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to take part in the selection process of the PROFARM project • to follow a vocational education path in social farming • to agree to the requirements of the PROFARM model implementation • willing to share and interact with the case manager and other target groups





Case manager

There are several actors who will be trained to assume the role of the Case Manager: Teachers, support teachers and headmasters, together with social workers, public social services, labour offices and local health agencies. Being focused on a reformed, integrated and person-centred social service, Case Management is a key and strategic aspect for the sustainability of the PROFARM proposed policy innovation. The partnership will explore the features of a multidisciplinary team, which, on the basis of access service of the user (the student with disability), will be able to democratically assign the role of the case manager to one of the members. His or her task will be to ensure the coordination between the other team members and the user. The final outcome will be a "Profile of the Case Manager for the work placement of disabled young people on social farms" based on the assumption that case management is not a specific health-care or social profession, but rather an advanced practice within the various professions that serve as a foundation for the case management itself. Therefore, the standards that will be described will not be intended to be a structured recipe for the delivery of case management interventions. They will describe a detailed range of core functions, roles, responsibilities, competencies and relationships that has to be endorsed and considered by the Case Manager.

Case Management - key for the sustainability of the PROFARM proposed policy innovation

Creation of a "profile of the case manager for the work placement of disabled young people on social farms"

In order to ensure a correct implementation of the activities and to avoid an overbooking in relation to the available resources, an entry test will be prepared for the self-assessment on the Case Management core competencies.

Entry test: Self-assessment on the Case Management core competencies

A blended course for the training on case management will be promoted among the PROFARM social networks and it will be open to interested learners from the following professional fields: VET schools, health-care agencies, social cooperatives, public social services, labour offices. A case management team of 5-7 members will be created.

Furthermore, the case manager will need to identify the suitability of the students together with a first draft of a related work-based learning project. The Case Managers will meet for a first operational meeting in M19 for the agreement on the 30 most appropriate cases to be further assessed (for a total of 90) and will initiate the co-planning of the projects for social inclusion through Social Farming.

Operational meeting of Case Managers: Agreement on the 30 most appropriate cases for the vocational training

The case manager will have to have certain competencies in order to take over the role of the case manager in the PROFARM projects context. He needs to know about different types of disabilities and their proficiency, he or she should be able to identify possibilities. Furthermore the case manager needs a professional background in social work and education as well as in agriculture. At the same time he or she should know about the contents of the curriculum of the work based learning pathway as well as being able to design individual training concepts for the clients. He or she must be able to speak the language of all partners included and must mediate between the farmer and the client. Characteristic are empathy, patience, respect, a calm and open mind as well as being a good judge in emergency situations. Furthermore the case manager should know about the legal and financial situation of SF.



The case manager and the case managers team

characteristics	tasks
<p>team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• multidisciplinary team of recognized teachers, support teachers and headmasters, social worker, public social services, labour offices and local health agencies <p>case manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• knowledge on different types of disabilities• professional background in social work, education and agriculture• good communication skills• empathy, respect, patience, calm and open mind• good judge in emergency situations• knowledge on legal and financial situation of SF	<p>team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• focus on reformed, integrated and person-centred social service• democratically assign the role of the case manager to one of its members <p>case manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ensuring the coordination between the other team members and the client• take part in entry test for the self-assessment on Case Management core competencies• take part in the blended course for the training on case management• will identify the suitability of the students together with a first draft of related work-based learning project• will decide on the 30 most appropriate clients to take part in the implementation of the PROFARM model during an operational meeting in M19 of all case manager in each country• needs to identify proficiencies of the clients and identify possibilities• should know about the contents of the curriculum of the work based learning pathway• design individual training concepts for the clients• speak language of all partners and mediate between farmer and client



Agricultural entrepreneurs of already existing and potential social farms

Another key actor are the social farms as they provide the working field of the vocational training for the people with disabilities.

The fitting partner-farms for this project will have to be detected through a self-assessment form, which needs to be spread through the network of Social Farms in the respective countries. Through this specific classification of the farms, the successful implementation of the experimentation will be assured (see attached form). The farms have to be already connected to a social farming system: They will need to already have structures within which people with disabilities or special needs are working on the farm and are cared for to the extension they need. The farms will have to be connected to social services.

Either the farm is already connected to a network concerning social farming or has to be open to do so. Ideally, there are already structures, which support the founding of a network concerning the PROFARM-project, for example, a working group of supervisors of the surrounding farms.

Agricultural entrepreneurs	
characteristics	tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • connected to a social farming system • fulfil the requirements of a social farm (see attached form: assessment of social farms) • connected to social services • has to be open to connect to a PROFARM-network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responsible for giving structures on the farm to ensure the implementation of the PROFARM model • to create a fitting work environment for the vocational training • to interact with all other actors of the target groups

Other work places within the green sector

The project would like to focus not only on farms but furthermore on workplaces of the green sector that are able to offer structures for a work based learning pathway for young students with disabilities or special needs. Work based learning in combination with social work could be at a productive farm, but also enterprises engaged in landscaping and gardening, nature restoration, horse keeping or a zoo.

Families and tutors of the primary target group

These actors play an important part in the test phase of the project as they will share their knowledge on the internal monitoring of the experimental activities and participate at the co-planning meetings.





Public officers of local/regional government and health authorities

The officers and authorities will be part of the co-planning meetings and through their position they will ensure the sustainability and the scale-up of the PROFARM model.

5. Setting up a network – A Bavarian example

In the German federal state Bavaria the network of social farming is quite advanced compared to the situation in other regions in Germany. In Northern Bavaria has been the first regional social farming network set up in Germany by the retired social scientist Alfons Limbrunner. This regional network has informed about their activities, elaborated a nice brochure about social farms in this region and initiated some nice documentary films about their activities. After two years a lady from the Bavarian minis-try of agriculture became interested under the aspect of creating a surplus value for farmers by integrating social activities. She supported the financing of a study about the status quo of social farming in Bavaria and managed to support the activities of advisors for social farming at three regional departments of agriculture. These local working groups set up a lot of activities, like meetings, advice, public relations work etc. The whole state of the art of the Bavarian activities was investigated by a master student this year, using methods of qualitative social research (open interviews with different actors of the networks). Franziska Distler has summarized her results in a swot analysis about strengths and weaknesses of social farming networking in Bavaria (results will be published in 2017) .

In the following chart important steps for the building of the Bavarian network are presented, reaching from the first steps to the founding and tasks of the network and ends with the presentation of the public relations.

Steps before the network-founding:

- ⇒ Find target groups: research in the internet; building up personal contacts; use of multipliers (associations, departments); enquiries to social sponsors
- ⇒ Needed information; capture of regional contact persons and the interest in exchange of experiences
- ⇒ Arrange 1st event in order to get a picture on the overall interest:
- ⇒ Building of little working groups: content and actions of the network; expectations of the participants (involvement in the planning process)

Founding and tasks of the network:

- ⇒ 2nd meeting should take place soon to sustain the interest → founding of the network and naming of tasks: f. ex. building of working groups (focus either on subjects or on interest-groups)
- ⇒ Distribution and takeover of tasks by the participants
- ⇒ Dedicated activity by several participants responsible for organization and coordination
- ⇒ Naming of goal sections (establish "milestones")
- ⇒ Presentation of small successes and sharing of progress reports
- ⇒ Discussion of objectives and naming of directions of the work
- ⇒ Crucial: the motivation of some actors needs to be intrinsically
- ⇒ Main actors who initiate projects -> implementation through participants
- ⇒ Giving space for personal exchange: encourages trust of the partners and strengthens the network
- ⇒ Events including practical examples (farm tours) + professional input through external experts
- ⇒ Benefit for the participants: gaining of knowledge, development of cooperations
- ⇒ Building up and using personal contact to farms and organizations
- ⇒ Changing places for meetings of the network



- Small/local networks: short distances to meetings for participants
- Strengthening of cohesion: inter-sessional meetings, outings, farm-events, collective support
- Strengthening of exchange: list of competencies and addresses (also outside network), round of introduction at network meetings, maintenance of e-mail contacts, regular newsletter
- Intense exchange between the network-coordinators: learning from each other, giving feedback

Public relations:

- From beginning on focus on press work (building up personal contacts to journalists)
- Improvement of public perception: newsletter articles, brochures (presentation of projects/partners in the network), possibly shoot a film
- Answering of questions: Why building up an interest in people for contributing in a network? What positive effects does the contribution to the network involve for the people? (personal recruitment)
- Building up contacts to public and non-public institutions: politics, associations, agricultural departments
- Inviting decision maker and inspire them for Social Farming
- Bundled occurrence before decision makers (naming of precise demands)
- Publishing of network-meetings and activities through the DASoL-newsletter, the webpage www.soziale-landwirtschaft.de and local newsletters and the Bavarian weekly press on agriculture

6. Perspectives of the PROFARM-network

There are several goals which the PROFARM-project is intending to manifest within the working network of all actors.

First there will have to be a common vision manifested between all different actors of the network. It will be derived from the goals set by every country involved in the project through the policy influence plan. Within this vision, the focus is on the integrated socio-economical development of the area. It will be one of the tasks of the network-members to clarify in which way this development can be created, focusing on the social and economical inclusion of young people with disabilities or special needs in the civil society through their active participation.

In order to create a common vision with the named focus, several questions have to be answered:

- What is the political situation of Social Farming in Europe/in my country?
- In which political area can I implement the PROFARM model and which structures are already given?
- How do the given structures have to be changed in order to reach the defined goal?
- Which existing tools do I need to reach the defined goal? Which tools do I need to invent?
- Whom do I have to involve in order to reach the defined goal?

While manifesting visions and organizing their implementation, the communication structures within the networking group play a significant role. There have to be apparent tasks and responsibilities distributed between all actors within their professional field, based on clearly defined processes. The network should establish a virtuous method of generative communication in order to mind internal and external point of views. Also it has to have a development character in terms of expertise with the relevant responsibilities and all following processes (INCLUFAR 2015). It will have to be respected within the group that the different



actors of the network will go through a process of learning, developing their knowledge while working towards the common vision.

Within the INCLUFAR handbook the "dynamic delegation" is presented, giving an instrument to structure responsibilities within a group. It is based on 7 steps which control the legitimation for taking on tasks via clearly defined processes: 1. Definition of the problem, 2. Examination and clarification of the bases, 3. Process of questioning and searching for a solution by specifying tasks and people who can take them on, 4. Decision making, 5. Implementation of the decision, 6. Systematic reflection 7. Sign off or new retention (INCLUFAR 2015). The use of review, report and sign off structures ensure a regular reassessment of the tasks and their performance.

General responsibilities should be shared within the network: coordination, organization, setting aims and direction (within the given frame of the PROFARM project). Furthermore there are responsibilities for actions: implementation, development and leadership. For creating a meaningful structure for tasks and responsibilities within a group, the following questions can be used (INCLUFAR 2015):

- ➔ Which task and responsibility structure (organizational system) is suited to the network's goal and stage of development?
 - Is the responsibility structure clearly stated and its meaning communicated to the members of the network?
- ➔ What major issues and obstacles do you expect to encounter in the process of setting up the network?
 - Which prevention/intervention strategies would you adopt to cope with them?
- ➔ In terms of the responsibility structure, in what direction concerning the PROFARM project do the active members of the network wish to develop?
 - How and in what rhythms (structures and time frame) is this to be implemented?
- ➔ In which responsibility structure (f. ex. education plan) can those who carry responsibility exercise their guidance and management functions?
 - What needs to be developed?
 - How, by whom?
- ➔ Which areas (f. ex. education) of responsibility can the members of the network take on?
 - What evidence is there to support this?
 - What needs to be developed?
- ➔ How are those in need of care incorporated into the responsibility and decision-making structures of the network focusing on the learning outcomes of the vocational training of the PROFARM project?
 - How is this participatory process organized, documented and evaluated?
 - What indicators have been identified for the assessment of the quality of the vocational training?