

IALB¹ innovation story to AgriSPIN: CECRA

Summary:

CECRA, the Certificate for European Consultants in Rural Areas is a qualification and competence development system for consulting personnel in the rural areas of Europe. Since 2009, CECRA offers a European wide certificate for agricultural and rural advisors who want to improve their consulting skills. www.cecra.net

The advisors' network IALB is the owner of CECRA. CECRA was developed in an international cooperation of initially six rural training institutions in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and South Tyrol. This cooperation allows IALB to award a European certificate (CECRA) to graduates. Currently, the CECRA system expands to further non German speaking countries in Europe.

The innovative points:

- To deal professionally with innovation in agriculture, rural advisory services have to adjust to rising requirements in the qualification of their staff, especially regarding the personal, methodological and communicative competences of their advisors. CECRA offers a quality standard for advisors.
- The cooperative, international approach is unique in the sector.
- The dynamic expansion of the CECRA system all over Europe is an exciting innovation process itself.

The driving forces:

- If an advisor wants to support a farmer or a farmer's family effectively, she/he needs training in advisor methods. Particularly advisory services in Central and Eastern European Regions show great interest in CECRA and formulate a need for competence development of consulting personnel which generally shows good technical qualification but however largely lacks competences in the methodical and social field.
- Today, innovations often require a cooperative strategy. Rural advisory services automatically find themselves in situations where they have to facilitate and steer cooperative learning processes, where interests of different partners have to be mediated and handling social learning, conflict management, organizational development and negotiation professionally become important tasks.
- The Foundation of the Rural Advisor Services' Network EUFRAS in 2013 canalized and catalyzed the CECRA expansion process.
- New EU EAFRD funding option for advisory work requires qualification concept.

Activities and results:

- Cooperation and Usage Agreement between IALB and EUFRAS on CECRA (June 2015)
- Five new CECRA Partners in Europe (by March 2016)
- Development of a Train the Trainer Concept (realization 2017)

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