



FARM' IN

INCLUSION THROUGH
SOCIAL FARMING



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Lesson 1: Creating a Social Farming Business Model



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In-depth & Analytical Approach

Social farming represents an innovative way of linking agricultural production with social inclusion and solidarity. For it to operate effectively and sustainably, a clear, well-structured, and functional business model is required. This model should define "who we are," "who we serve," "what we offer," "how we remain financially viable," and "how we grow."

1.1 What is a Business Model?

It describes how a business creates, delivers, and captures value. In social farming, the model is hybrid: it combines a social mission with economic operation.

For example, it produces agricultural products while integrating vulnerable groups.

Give me an example of a Business Model

Business Model Canvas – Social Farm “Green Horizons”

 Key Partners Local NGOs, agricultural suppliers, municipality	 Key Activities Organic farming, workshops, therapy programs	 Key Resources Farmland, greenhouse, trained staff, volunteers
 Value Proposition Fresh organic produce + social inclusion programs	 Customer Relationships Direct sales, community events, CSA membership	 Channels Farmers markets, online store, local shops
 Customer Segments Local families, restaurants, schools	 Cost Structure Seeds, labor, equipment maintenance	 Revenue Streams Sale of produce, event fees, funding grants

1.2 Value Proposition

- The value proposition is the cornerstone of a business. It answers the fundamental question: *“Why should someone choose us?”* In social farming, this goes beyond the practical value of a product and includes:
 - **Qualitative value** (the product itself: fresh, organic, local, authentic)
 - **Social value** (e.g., empowerment and employment of vulnerable groups, combating social exclusion)
 - **Environmental awareness** (use of sustainable farming methods, respect for the ecosystem)
- **Example:** Organic products produced by individuals with mental health challenges.
Key Questions: What social change are you aiming for? What emotions do you evoke?

1.3 Customer Segments

- A social farming enterprise, unlike a simple production unit, has a diverse audience. The term “customers” refers not only to product consumers but also to social partners and beneficiaries.
- **Main categories:**
- **Consumers:** Individuals or families who purchase products either for their quality or for their social significance (ethical consumption).
- **Social actors:** Municipalities, NGOs, schools, and social services that collaborate with or fund integration or awareness-raising initiatives.
- **Funders / Investors:** Foundations, companies, and philanthropic entities that support the social mission through grants or donations.
- **Beneficiaries:** The individuals who work or participate in the farm. They are both contributors to production and ultimate "customers" of the social value created.

1.4 Revenue Streams

Social Farming is often not financially sustainable through product sales alone. It requires diversified income sources to withstand challenges—economic, social, environmental, or political.

Possible sources of income:

- **Sales of agricultural products:** Direct sales, partnerships with shops, cooperatives, e-shops, subscription-based produce boxes.
- **Service provision:** Educational programs, agritourism experiences, workshops, space rentals.
- **Donations and sponsorships:** From individuals or companies that support social initiatives.
- **Grants and funding programs:** Such as ESF, LEADER, Erasmus+, social economy schemes, innovation, and environmental initiatives.

Challenge: Avoid overdependence on subsidies. Maintaining a balance between stable sources and occasional funding is crucial.

Strategic direction: Develop a “**blended economic model**” with revenue streams coming from both the market and the social sector.

Practical tools:

1.5 Business Model Canvas (BMC) 1/2

The **Business Model Canvas (BMC)** is a visual design tool that allows you to view your entire business "on a single page."

It helps connect the different components of the business model and understand how value is created and delivered.

- **The 9 Building Blocks of the Business Model Canvas (BMC):**
- **Value Proposition** – What value you offer
- **Customer Segments** – Who your target audiences are
- **Channels** – How you reach your customers
- **Customer Relationships** – How you maintain and grow customer relationships
- **Revenue Streams** – How your business earns income
- **Key Activities** – What you do daily to keep the business running
- **Key Resources** – Human, physical, and financial resources
- **Key Partners** – The network that supports your mission
- **Cost Structure** – Where and why you spend resources



Practical tools:

1.5 Business Model Canvas (BMC) 2/2

Advantages of the BMC:

- Encourages collective thinking and strategic discussion
- Suitable tool for newly formed teams or for evaluating existing plans
- Provides a clear link between social goals and economic operations

Application in Social Farming:

The BMC can effectively capture the complexity of the initiative. For example:

- **Key Partners:** Municipality, social services, cooperatives, volunteers
- **Key Activities:** Cultivation, training, agritourism, awareness campaigns
- **Revenue Streams:** Product sales, participation in EU-funded programs, supporter subscriptions
- **Customer Segments:** Consumers, schools, families, organizations



Example: Social Farm “Land of Solidarity”

- **Location:** Peloponnese
- **Model:** Social enterprise in organic farming
- **Goal:** Social inclusion of vulnerable groups (unemployed 50+, people with mental health conditions)
- **Products:** Organic vegetables, aromatic herbs
- **Services:** Training, agritourism, collaboration with schools



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Business Model Canvas – Land of Solidarity

1. **Value Proposition:** Organic products + social inclusion
2. **Customer Segments:** Local consumers, schools, tourists
3. **Channels:** E-shop, local markets, community events
4. **Customer Relationships:** Education, subscriptions, events
5. **Revenue Streams:** Sales, subscriptions, donations, grants
6. **Key Activities:** Cultivation, distribution, education
7. **Key Resources:** Land, staff, greenhouses
8. **Key Partners:** Municipality, Social Cooperative Enterprise (Koin.S.Ep.), NGOs, cooperatives
9. **Cost Structure:** Salaries, cultivation, packaging, marketing



European Statistics on Social Farming

Social farming is rapidly expanding across Europe, offering both social and economic value:

- **Netherlands: From €11.3 million (2011) to €88.6 million (2018)**
- **Estimated sector value: Approximately €250 million overall**
- **Average income per farm: Around €200,000**





Measuring Social Impact (Social Return Metrics)

To evaluate social impact, various tools are used, such as:

- **SROI (Social Return on Investment)**
- **SWOT, AHP, and the Business Model Canvas**
- **A combination of quantitative and qualitative data**





Greek Reality

Social farming in Greece is mainly supported by family farms:

- **80%** of agricultural production comes from family-run farms
- **1 in 3 farms** is owned by women
- **High development potential** through **ESPA** and **LEADER** funding programs





Application Examples

Indicative Examples of Social Farming:

- **Cultivation by individuals with disabilities or mental health conditions**
- **Partnerships with schools and municipalities** for educational projects
- **Agritourism & experience farms** that engage local communities





FARM'IN PROGRAM

Erasmus+ European Project on Social Farming (2020–2022):

- Development of **training tools** for social farming
- Focus on **three key roles**:
 - **Social Farm Tutor**
 - **Manager**
 - **Educator**
- Promotion of **inclusion for people with disabilities**
- Participating countries: **Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Austria, Turkey**



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Examples of Good Practices

Social Farms in Europe:

- **Kerry Social Farming (Ireland):**
14 farms, 22 farmers involved in the inclusion of people with disabilities
- **FarmElder:**
Programs designed for elderly people in rural areas, promoting active aging and social connection
- **GermSocialFarm (Germany):**
Integration of specific vulnerable populations, funded by the **EAFRD** (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development)





Tools for Evaluating Social Impact

- **Combined Use of Tools for Impact Measurement:**
- **SROI – Social Return on Investment**
- **SWOT – Analysis of Strengths and Risks**
- **BMC – Business Model Canvas**
- **AHP – Analytic Hierarchy Process**
- **Applied in: Italy**



SWOT Analysis for Social Farming in Greece

- **Strengths:** High level of **social acceptance**, strong **local community support**, established **family-based farm structures**
- **Weaknesses:** **Limited training and education** in social farming practices, **dependency on subsidies** for financial sustainability
- **Opportunities:** Availability of **EU funding programs** (e.g., ESPA), support through the **Green Transition** and environmental initiatives, growth potential in **agritourism** and experiential farming
- **Threats:** Persistent **economic uncertainty**, **climate change** impacting agricultural stability and productivity

Roadmap for Implementing a Social Farm

Steps to Create a Sustainable Model:

1. Analysis of local needs & mission planning
2. Development of a business model (BMC)
3. Securing funding (ESPA, LEADER, Social Cooperative Enterprises)
4. Staff training – Building partnerships
5. Pilot implementation & evaluation (SROI, SWOT)
6. Dissemination & networking (NGOs, Municipalities, Schools)

Visual Representation of the Business Model Canvas

The 9 Core Elements of the Business Model Canvas with Examples for a Social Farm:

1.Value Proposition:

Organic products + social inclusion

2.Customer Segments:

Consumers, municipalities, schools

3.Channels:

Local markets, e-shop

4.Customer Relationships:

Educational programs, subscriptions

5.Revenue Streams:

Product sales, donations, grants

6.Key Activities:

Cultivation, education, distribution

7.Key Resources:

Staff, land/facilities, partnerships

8.Key Partners:

Municipalities, social cooperatives (Koin.S.Ep.), NGOs

9.Cost Structure:

Salaries, supplies, promotion/marketing



Key funding instruments for social farming in Greece (2025)

Funding Sources for Social Farms:

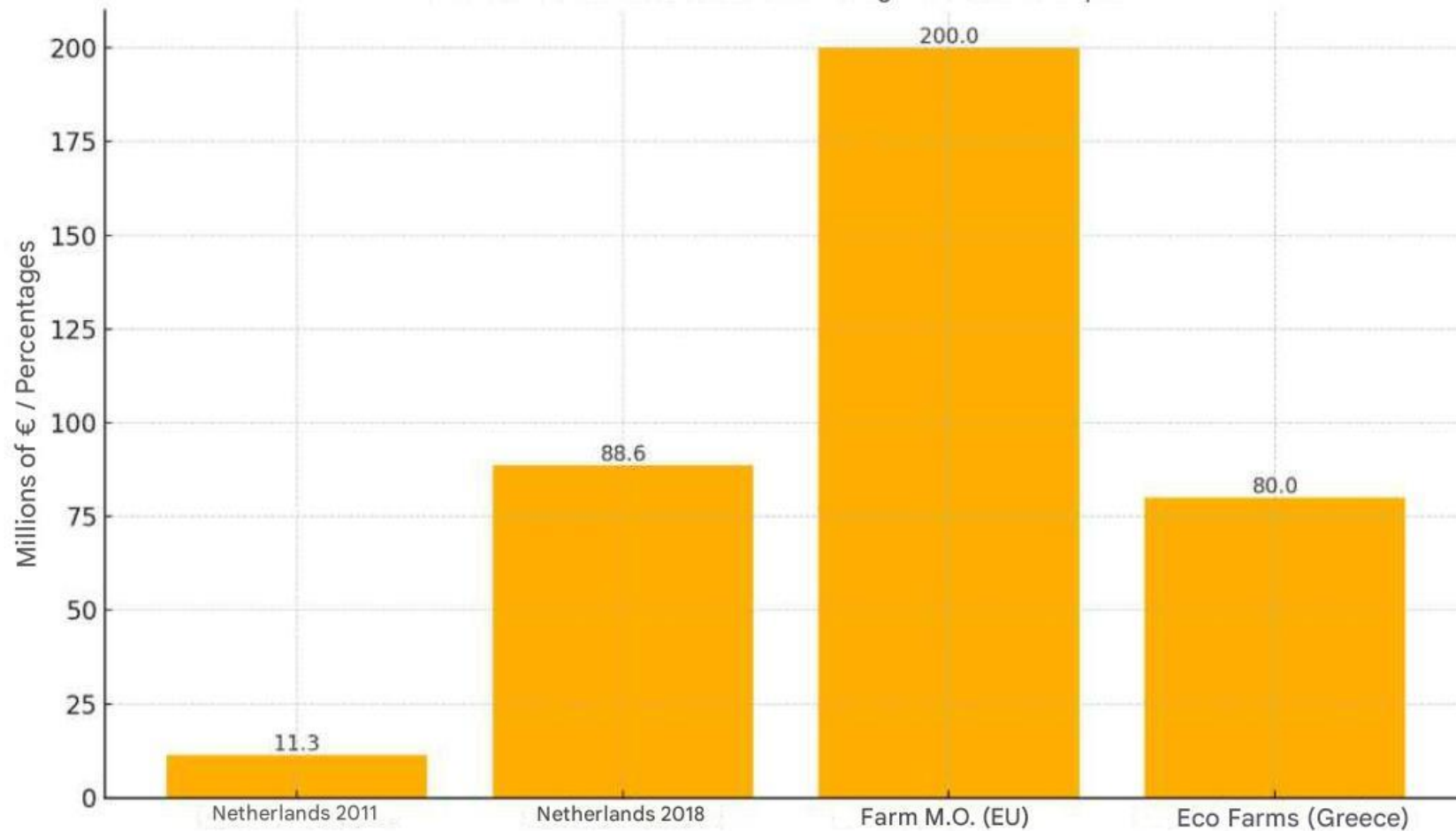
- **ESPA 2021–2027:** Green Transition, Social Economy
- **LEADER:** Local development through Local Action Groups (LAGs)
- **Green Fund:** Environmental projects and sustainability initiatives
- **European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)**
- **Crowdfunding platforms & Social Cooperative Enterprises (Koin.S.Ep.)**



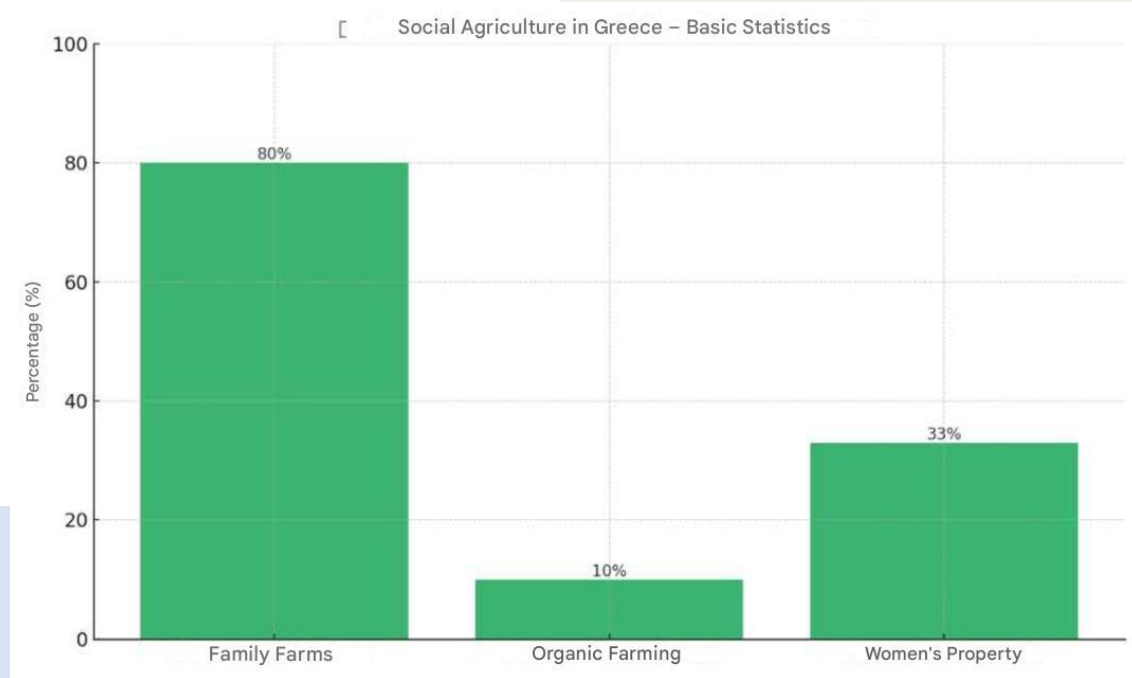
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– Evolution & Indicators of Social Agriculture in Europe



Statistic	Percentage	Year	Source
Family farms	~80%	2020	Eurostat / FABLE Consortium
Organic farming	~10%	2021	FoodTank / URGENCI
Owned by women farmers	~33%	2019	SAGE Journals



Useful Links



1. Social Farmin: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkm8EBcxZDY>
2. Network Building for Social farming
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6nZA1uALhAU>
3. Regenerative Farming in Greece
 - https://youtu.be/_oIF6zUzcQA
4. Networks for Regenerative Farming Greece
 - <https://youtu.be/xnxq7lC0Lnw>
5. Piraeus
 - <https://www.youtube.com/@piraeusbank/videos>
- 5.1 Επ. 1, 2ος κύκλος: ΒΙΩΣΙΜΗ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΑ, ΒΙΩΣΙΜΟΣ ΠΛΑΝΗΤΗΣ | Νερό: Ο θησαυρός που πρέπει να σώσουμε
 - https://youtu.be/0zYnOjE_HPc?si=1kKl48ZABLSBo0Vz



Useful Links

- The common agricultural policy supports farmers and ensures Europe's food security : https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/cap-overview/cap-glance_en?prefLang=en
- Κοινωνική γεωργία | Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή : https://ec.europa.eu/enrd/enrd-static/themes/social-aspects/social-farming/gr/social-farming_gr.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- Farms and farmland in the European Union – statistics: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Farms and farmland in the European Union - statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Farms_and_farmland_in_the_European_Union_statistics)
- Agriculture statistics - family farming in the EU: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Agriculture statistics - family farming in the EU](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Agriculture_statistics_family_farming_in_the_EU)
- CASE STUDY: Kerry Social Farming : [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/project-result-content/df7fd33e-76eb-4b28-b6c0-6c97bce18c7a/COFARM Ireland%20All%20Case%20Studies.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/project-result-content/df7fd33e-76eb-4b28-b6c0-6c97bce18c7a/COFARM_Ireland%20All%20Case%20Studies.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com)



Conslusions

- **The need for balance between social mission and economic operation.**
- The BMC provides a clear overview and enhances strategic thinking.
- Understanding customers and revenue streams is critical for resilience.

