

Job Description

Rural Resilience Project Coordinator

A) JOB TITLE: Rural Resilience Project Coordinator (Coordinateur.ice du projet Nos Campagnes en Résilience)

B) CONTRACT: Full time (35 hours/week) or Part-time (24 hours/week) - job share also will be considered

C) DURATION OF CONTRACT: March 2023 - December 2024 (start date depending on availability of chosen candidate); contract may be extended pending availability of funding

D) LOCATION: Based in France or Belgium (with travel for events and meetings in France, Brussels and the wider Europe). Option of remote working and/or ARC2020 office in Brussels.

E) CANDIDATE PROFILE:

Essential competencies

1. Excellent command of French and English
2. Ability to write articles in English and French
3. At least 3-5 years of experience in rural development, agriculture, food systems, capacity building and/or networking
4. Ability to lead the project and work both collectively and autonomously
5. Flexibility to dive into topics emerging as priorities for partners on the ground, while keeping the project focused and results-oriented
6. Ability to connect, communicate, and scale-up the lessons learned in France and other countries to other European contexts
7. Experience in project management, with proven ability to lead a small team located remotely

Desired competencies

8. Strong interest in, and familiarity with, the European rural policy framework, at least:

- CAP Strategic Plan Regulation and the relevant legislation and interventions
- Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas, including the Rural Pact, Rural Pact Community, Rural Action Plan

Proven working experience and knowledge in any other European or national legislations related to rural issues will be considered an asset (e.g. cooperatives or company legal status, carbon farming and land access, water management, labour arrangements).

9. Knowledge and experience of European and local rural governance, specifically:

At National, regional, local level:

- In-depth knowledge and experience on governance structures and actors at local, regional, and national levels are an asset (e.g. local NGOs, active farmers, municipalities, schools).

- CAP Managing Authorities and Monitoring Committees at national and regional levels;
- LEADER/CLLD local action groups

At European level:

- AGRIFISH Council, European Parliament, European Commission - DG AGRI (including its expert group)
- CAP networks and rural related Horizon-2020 research projects funded and supervised by the European Commission;
- Members of the Civil Society Organisations (ELARD, European Rural Parliament, PREPARE network);

F) OVERALL MISSION: To oversee and manage the Rural Resilience project (“Nos Campagnes en Résilience”), and ensure the project delivers on its key objectives:

- To provide an honest, constructive and timely critique of EU rural policy developments
- To offer bottom-up rural resilience alternatives to business as usual policies and actions, based on research on the ground and a broad network of rural practitioners

The mission includes the following three main tasks:

1. Overall project coordination

- Designing and implementing a detailed work plan for the project
- Strategically steering the project to ensure a timely response to policy developments
- Communication with funders
- Ensuring the achievement of the promised deliverables (tasks, outputs, events)
- Internal communication with ARC staff and board
- Drawing up a two-year budget for the project with the support of ARC staff
- Additional fundraising where necessary to complement existing funding, with the support of ARC staff
- Administration of the project and the budget of the project

2. Networking on the ground

- Networking with established ARC partners in France, and developing relationships with new partner organisations in at least another EU country, to understand their key thematic needs and help them in their rural resilience actions (e.g. bottlenecks, opportunities, policy or expertise demands)
- Participate in – and, as needed, assist with the organisation of – thematic working meetings to build synergies, alliances, strategising capacity, and create a forum for conversations
- Help with the organisation of an annual rural gathering together with partners (location TBD), to build and bridge on the experiences in France and other places, projects, and people committed to rural resilience

3. Policy Analysis and networking

- Coordinate the review of policy documents
- Reporting on key working meetings relevant for the thematic areas selected in consultation with partners on the ground (e.g. access to land, diversification, local food and farming policy).

G) APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Applications are open until 15 January 2023. Please send us your updated CV, 1 page cover letter, and, if relevant, two examples of your published work, in EN or FR to contact@arc2020.eu (subject: Rural Resilience Project Coordinator - YOUR NAME). Graphic or artistic outputs of your work are also welcome.

Project Background

The resilience of European rural areas requires constant learning and adaptation to face the ongoing changes from technological innovations to policy reforms, international trade agreements, and climate change. In our first two years of our Rural Resilience project (“Nos Campagnes en Résilience” 2020-2022), we have engaged with inspiring bottom-up initiatives in the French countryside. Spearheading cooperative and collective approaches, socially oriented, agroecological farmers are insisting on wellbeing in their work and for their communities. We have better understood that this resilience can come from the actors and their own bottom-up actions, as well as by an enabling framework that stimulates joint learning, experimenting, and integration of people, policies, and places. This is where we want to continue to put our efforts at the level of policies and actions on the ground.

In terms of multi-tiered rural policies, actors on the ground need to be empowered to grasp the major reforms of EU rural development policy post-2022, whose outcomes and details at regional level are still uncertain and need critical scrutiny. In 2022, the Rural Development Regulation became officially integrated with the first pillar (agri) of the CAP under the CAP Strategic Plan Regulation 2023-2027. Opportunities in terms of integrating agriculture and rural policy include having CAP Strategic Plans that are committed to decentralising public governance capacities, tailoring agri-rural interventions, and empowering regions. However, these reforms will most probably not establish much needed measures to support more resilient farming practices, improved rural infrastructure, small scale farming and rural enterprises including local food, if regions receive lower funds and political power, while the counting in of voluntary work, and continued depopulation in rural areas, remain. Without proper oversight, business as usual can mean leaving rural areas behind and discontent of rural citizens rising. At the same time, it is worth noting that the EU rural policy post-2022 has been integrated in the same regulation of the agricultural pillar of CAP, but separated from the EU Cohesion Policy, which used to regulate rural funds together with other European structural and investment funds for territorial development under one single Common Provision Regulation. This might bring in new challenges or opportunities for a regional and integrated development of agriculture, food, forestry, and rural areas.

Furthermore, the European Commission’s Communication for the [Long-term vision for Rural Areas](#) (LTVRA) until 2040, together with the [Rural Pact](#) – a new framework for cooperation among authorities and stakeholders at the European, national, regional and local level – deserves both large support from the civil society organisations interested in designing policies through the rural lenses, but also critical analyses to avoid this policy initiative becoming tokenistic or instrumental to business-as-usual productivist agricultural policies (i.e. rural washing). With perma-crises there is no time to waste. The time is ripe to call out rural, food and agricultural policy where it does not serve the interests of Europe’s citizens on the ground. Instead, we can co-construct proposals substantiated by realities in the territories. ARC2020 is in a unique position to broker the bridges between agriculture, environmental and food related ecosystem of civil society organisations around EU policies. We see this project as filling a thematic gap and providing a “rural added value or perspective” to the actions of ally organisations like the Good Food Good Farming, the European Food Policy Coalition, the national CAP platforms, and other specific umbrella organisations (e.g., Agroecology Europe, PAN Europe) that are specifically working on food, environment, and sustainable agriculture related topics.

In terms of actions on the ground, rural actors show an astonishing ability to adapt to these many crises, and bring forth a wealth of solutions. In our work over the past 11 years, ARC2020 has championed the opportunities opened up by rural resilience. More recently, with our Rural Resilience project, “Nos Campagnes en Résilience” 2020-2022, we have engaged with inspiring bottom-up initiatives in the French countryside. Spearheading cooperative and

collective approaches, socially oriented, agroecological farmers are insisting on wellbeing in their work and for their communities. Now, policy changes enacted at European level threaten to hamper the capacity of these actors to effect change at local level.

These changemakers need support in their experiments, and recognition of their experience and place-based knowledge. However, they are being let down by policy at national and EU level. For example, for three of the 40 farmers participating in our project, the CAP is more a hindrance than an help; another three do not even qualify for CAP support. Meanwhile a further three of these farmers have lost faith in national policies, and do not believe support will come from the EU level.

The next phase of our Rural Resilience project (“Nos Campagnes en Résilience”) will build on the existing momentum of this engaged and motivated network on the ground in France. We will broaden the geographic scope, and reach out to actors and organisations who are experimenting solutions for rural resilience, like agroecology, on-farm diversification, seed saving, cooperatives, social farming, art and creativity. We will continue exploring the attributes of rural resilience. At the same time, we will engage in building collective capacity and a stronger connecting effort to integrate rural resilience at different nested levels, from farm to farmers’ groups, associations, and regions to EU Brussels policies, with a particular focus on the CAP Strategic Plans, the unfolding of the Rural Pact Community, and other initiatives that are highly relevant for the selected partners (e.g. access to land, carbon farming, pesticides, access to seeds).

About ARC2020

ARC2020 – The Agricultural and Rural Convention – was founded in 2010 as a European network of NGOs and individuals working for a profound reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and sustainable agriculture. As a political platform of over 150 organisations, ARC drafted and adopted a “[Communication from Civil Society to the EU](#)” with a broad range of common demands and suggestions for a paradigm shift towards sustainable farming and food policies.

Since 2016, ARC has been an independent European NGO that has continued [through this website](#) to provide news, features and analysis on agri-food and rural policy, with a particular emphasis on agroecology, while also providing insights and analysis on the shifted governance of agricultural and rural policies from the EU level towards renationalisation. ARC initiates and supports common European visions, debates and campaigns for a political and practical turnaround in agriculture and food. The ARC website, social media and regular newsletters offer up-to-date political and scientific analyses and practical experience in times that require civil, political and professional commitment at all levels.

ARC’s topics & fields of action

ARC already covers a wide range of topics in the field of its own analyses, current articles and the organisation of European debates. These include climate, water and soil protection, promotion of agroecological practices and organic farming, biodiversity, phasing out pesticide use and genetic engineering, but also access to land and support for newcomers and small businesses, rural development, and democratisation of agricultural policy and access to food. With the digitisation and expected intensification of agriculture, the risk also rises that more and more small farms will cease to exist and that large investors will determine the direction of agriculture. Critical analysis of these trends is therefore urgently needed.

One difficulty, however, is to communicate this broad spectrum of issues and challenges in such a way that we can reach and animate our wide network of supporters and potential actors and build the necessary pressure for a turnaround in agriculture at national and European level.

ARC's Mobilisation and coordination work

Only a broad and well-coordinated network of NGOs and activists can take action against the reform standstill in Brussels and against business as usual in the member states. The ARC team intends to work more closely with partners at European and national level. This includes the associations and alliances in Brussels as well as the national ones.

The ARC team and the ARC board are only able to provide a certain level of analyses, articles and publications. Clever and creative coordination and mobilisation of a wide range of actors, in Brussels and all over Europe, is even more necessary now. This is especially the case with the elaboration of the CAP national strategic plans.