

D4.14 Comprehensive and reduced Report on the Clustering activities with other projects



THEGREEFA

Thermochemical fluids in greenhouse farming

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Document references

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¹ PU = Public

PP = Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)

RE = Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)

CO = Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)

Document history

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Table of Contents

Executive Public Summary	4
Lists of tables, figures and acronyms	5
1. Document information	6
a. Relation to other activities	6
b. Partners contribution	6
2. AREA ZERO cluster	6
a. Structure.....	6
b. Website.....	8
c. Activities	9
3. Future actions	16
4. Conclusions	17

Executive Public Summary

The success of TheGreefa project strongly depends on the dissemination of the project results. To broaden the reach of the project's target groups, it is advisable to establish cooperation with other projects, which allows for the exchange of knowledge and broader networking.

The aim of this report is to outline the collaboration that TheGreefa consortium has undertaken with other projects working in a similar field. AREA ZERO, the alliance of six projects has been formed focusing on the areas of agriculture and energy efficiency. The report contains information about what the cooperation in the cluster consists of and the dissemination activities undertaken.

Lists of tables, figures and acronyms

Figure 1. Part of the Collaboration Agreement between the cluster projects.	7
Figure 2. AREA ZERO website www.arezerocluster.eu	9
Figure 3. AREA ZERO logo.....	10
Figure 4. AREA ZERO poster	10
Figure 5. AREA ZERO brochure.....	11
Figure 6. The AREA ZERO board meeting (03.02.2022).	12
Figure 7. TheGreefa presentation during AgroFossilFree’s workshop in Athens.....	13
Figure 8. TheGreefa and AREA ZERO posters during the Swiss workshop (13.09.2023).	14
Figure 9. The Policy Brief prepared by TheGreefa.	15
Table 1. The agenda of AREA ZERO 1 st webinar (24.03.2022).....	12

1. Document information

This Deliverable comprises the actions undertaken in *T4.6 Collaboration with sister projects*. The success of TheGreefa project strongly depends on the dissemination of the project results. In doing so, we should reach out to defined target groups, among which are stakeholders, greenhouse cultivation professionals, owners, technology suppliers, consulting companies, etc. To broaden the dissemination and be able to reach more potential customers, it is advisable to establish cooperation with other organisations and projects working in a similar field. This activity was foreseen in TheGreefa project from the beginning, as a specific task was defined for this (T4.6). The cooperation should be based on the exchange of experience, knowledge, and opinions as well as joint dissemination activities.

The aim of this paper is to report on the activities undertaken by TheGreefa Consortium to establish cooperation with sister projects also funded by the European Union and to explain what this cooperation consists of.

a. Relation to other activities

The clustering activities relate to the Consortium's work in all tasks of WP4 where TheGreefa partner dealt with dissemination of the project's results, strategies for exploitation and IPR management, as exchange of knowledge is a part of cluster collaboration.

b. Partners contribution

The partners who are in the most involved in clustering activities are IZNAB as the Dissemination Leader and ZHAW as the Coordinator of the project. Of course, TheGreefa partners are also participating in the activities of the cluster during specific dissemination activities – presentations of the results during common events, joint events, joint scientific publications, etc.

2. AREA ZERO cluster

a. Structure

TheGreefa consortium has started to collaborate with five other projects funded by the European Union under calls FNR-06 A and B, LC-SC3-ES-3-2018/2020 and LC-SC3-RES-28-2018/2020.

The projects being the creators of the AREA ZERO cluster are shortly presented below.



TheGreefa – Thermochemical Fluids in Greenhouse Farming (GA 101000801)
<https://thegreefa.eu/>



AgroFossilFree – Strategies and technologies to achieve a European Fossil-energy-free agriculture (GA 101000496)
<https://www.agrofossilfree.eu/>



HyPERFarm – Hydrogen and Photovoltaic Electrification on Farm (GA 101000828)

<https://hyperfarm.eu/>



RES4LIVE – Energy Smart Livestock Farming towards Zero Fossil Fuel Consumption (GA 101000785)

<https://res4live.eu/>



Renaissance – RENewAble Integration and SuStainAbility iN energy CommunitiEs (GA 824342)

<https://www.renaissance-h2020.eu/>



AgroBioHeat – Promoting the penetration of agrobiomass heating in European rural areas (GA 818369)

<https://agrobioheat.eu/>

The first collaboration was established in the first 6 months of TheGreefa project. In March 2021 a cooperation agreement between TheGreefa, AgroFossilFree, HyPERFarm, RES4LIVE and Renaissance was already signed. In June 2021 AgroBioHeat joined the cluster.

Collaboration Agreement among FNR-06 A and B & LC-SC3-ES-3- 2019/2020 projects

Contents

Summary.....	2
Confidential Information.....	3
Objectives.....	3
Duration.....	4
Clauses.....	4
Applicable Law and Jurisdiction.....	4
Validity and Subsequent Agreements.....	4
Communications.....	5

"CLUSTER" AGREEMENT

Summary

The objective of this Collaboration Agreement is no other than to establish the basis for liaising and collaboration among projects funded under FNR-06 A and B and LC-SC3-ES-3-2018/2020, namely among: *TheGreefa*, *AgroFossilFree*, *HyperFarm*, *RES4LIVE*, and *RENAISSANCE* projects.

TheGreefa project is aimed at a new technology for heating, cooling, air humidity control and water recovery in greenhouses as well as for drying of agricultural goods using thermo-chemical conversion principles based on the use of salt solutions (thermochemical fluids). **TheGreefa** projects is represented by the Coordinator – Mrs. *Serena Danesi* from *ZHAW*, and Dissemination Manager – Dr. *Emil LEZAK* from *IZNAB*. Mrs. *Serena Danesi* is approved by the Consortium to sign this Collaborative Agreement, and to take the final decision (with consultation with Dr. *Emil LEZAK*) on the participation in any joint activity with one or all projects of this Collaborative Agreement.

AgroFossilFree project aims to create a framework under which critical stakeholders will cooperate to evaluate and promote currently available fossil-energy-free strategies and technologies (FEFTS) in EU agriculture to diminish in the short term and eliminate in the long run fossil fuels use in any farming process from cradle to farm gate, while maintaining yield and quality of the end-product. The **AgroFossilFree** consortium is represented by the Coordinator – Dr. *Thanos Balafoutis* from *CERTH* that will sign the Collaboration Agreement and the decisions on behalf of the project on participation in common events will be taken together with the Dissemination Manager of the project Dr. *Maite Zarranz* from *INI*.

HyperFarm aims to demonstrate combined agrovoltic systems, with dual land use for crop production and simultaneous power production. **HyperFarm** joins multiple types of actors with the objective to optimize viable agrovoltic business models as well as test the marketability of the products, via inclusion of new innovative photovoltaic technologies, radically new crop production systems, stakeholder innovation workshops, and citizen-consumer acceptance, public perception analysis and farmer adoption studies. The **HyperFarm** consortium is represented by the coordinator Dr. *Wouter Merckx*, Project Manager Dr. *Ilse Lenaerts*, dissemination and communication partners Mrs. *Marleen Gysen* and Dr. *Nader Akil*.

RES4LIVE is an IA project dealing with the adaptation of RES technologies and machinery and their demonstration at a large-scale on farm level that require supporting measures with respect to spatial planning, infrastructure, different business models and market organisation, trends that are not all under control from a farmer's perspective. **The RES4LIVE** consortium is represented by the Coordinator – Dr. *Dimitris Maniokas* from *ALIA* that will sign this Collaborative Agreement.

RENAISSANCE project is an Innovation Action (IA) whose aim is to deliver a community-driven scalable and replicable approach, to implement new business models and technologies supporting clean production and shared distribution of energy in local communities. The **RENAISSANCE** Consortium is represented by Ms *Stella Arapoglou*, Project Manager, and Ms *Rebecca Hueting*, Communication Manager. The Coordinator, Prof. *Thierry Coosemans* will sign the present document on behalf of the Consortium.

Figure 1. Part of the Collaboration Agreement between the cluster projects.

In June 2022 AgroBioHeat and in November 2022 Renaissance projects have been completed. Then only 4 ongoing projects were involved in the alliance.

In June 2023 AgroFossilFree project has finished and since from since that time AREA ZERO was looking for new potential projects to join.

In March 2024, 3 new projects joined the cluster – [REGACE](#), [PV4Plants](#) and [Symbiosyst](#).



REGACE – Crop Responsive Greenhouse Agrivoltaics System with CO2 Enrichment for Higher Yields (GA 101096056)

<https://regaceproject.com/>



PV4Plants – AgriPV system with climate, water and light spectrum control for safe, healthier and improved crops production (GA 101096409)

<https://www.pv4plants.eu/>



Symbiosyst – Create a Symbiosis where PV and agriculture can have a mutually beneficial relationship (GA 101096352)

<https://www.symbiosyst.eu/>

Finally, at the end of May 2024 there are 5 active projects in the cluster – 2 which will also finish soon (HyPERFarm and RES4LIVE) and 3 young projects presented above. There are talks with new projects to join and inherit the AREA ZERO cluster.

b. Website

The AREA ZERO website has been created and is managed by IZNAB. Other cluster projects were invited to propose and publish content. The website presents the previous and current members of AREA ZERO and news section for publication of information about results and events. The website address is <https://areazerocluster.eu/>.



Figure 2. AREA ZERO website www.arezerocluster.eu.

c. Activities

In May 2021, TheGreefa was invited to take part in AgroFossilFree GA meeting (online) and give short project presentation. TheGreefa coordinator, Serena Danesi took part in the event and presented the project.

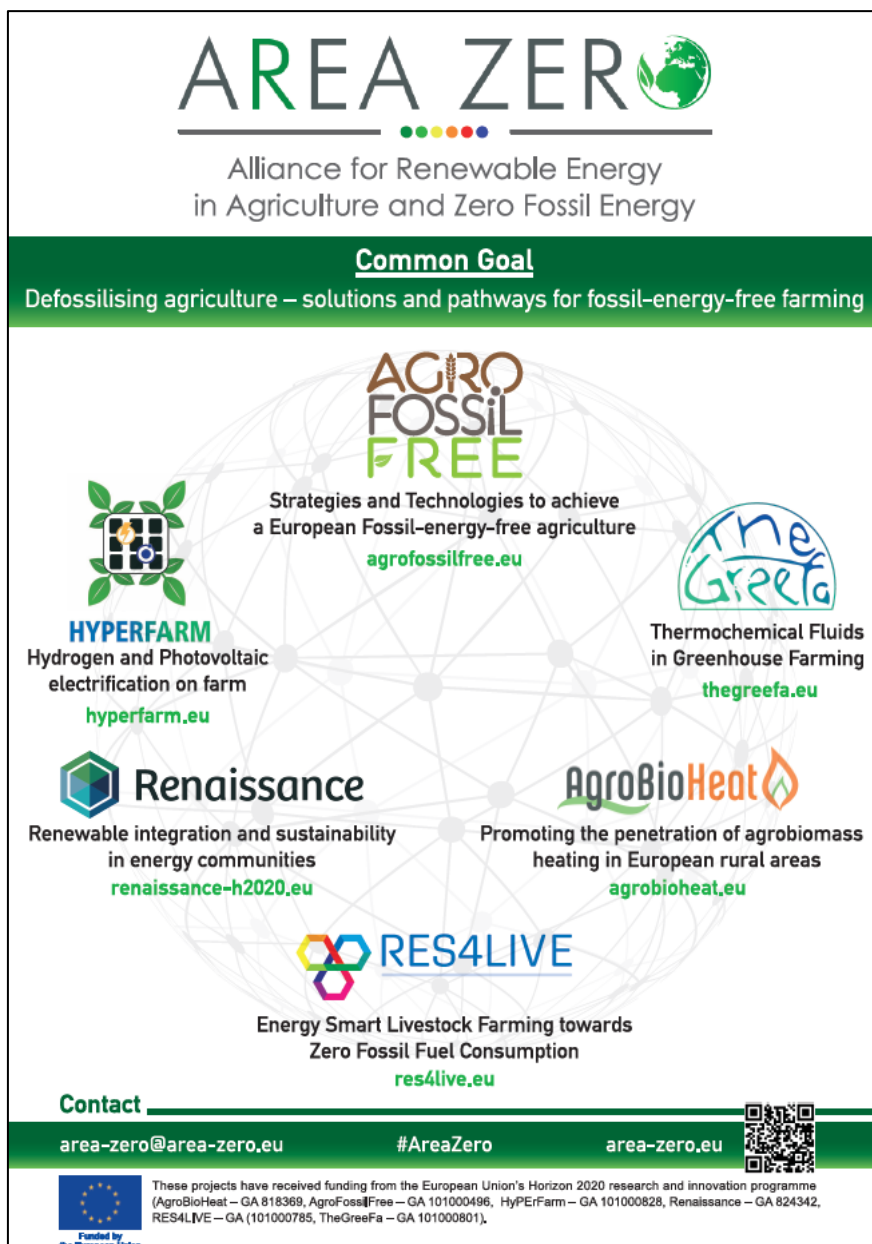
The real cooperation started at the beginning of 2022. TheGreefa took the initiative to organise a joint meeting to discuss further cooperation and the creation of joint dissemination materials. The meeting was organised on 3rd of February 2022. On the meeting projects discussed responsibilities of creation of the dissemination materials, logo and about name of the cluster. Later it was decided through voting the name of the cluster is AREA ZERO – Alliance for Renewable Energy in Agriculture and Zero Fossil Energy. AgroFossilFree was responsible for design of the common poster, TheGreefa for design of the common brochure, and RES4LIVE for logo.


AREA ZERO



Alliance for Renewable Energy
in Agriculture and Zero Fossil Energy

Figure 3. AREA ZERO logo



AREA ZERO 

Alliance for Renewable Energy
in Agriculture and Zero Fossil Energy

Common Goal
Defossilising agriculture – solutions and pathways for fossil-energy-free farming

AGRO FOSSIL FREE
Strategies and Technologies to achieve
a European Fossil-energy-free agriculture
agrofossilfree.eu


HYPERFARM
Hydrogen and Photovoltaic
electrification on farm
hyperfarm.eu

The Greefa
Thermochemical Fluids
in Greenhouse Farming
thegreefa.eu

Renaissance
Renewable integration and sustainability
in energy communities
renaissance-h2020.eu

AgroBioHeat
Promoting the penetration of agrobiomass
heating in European rural areas
agrobioheat.eu

RES4LIVE
Energy Smart Livestock Farming towards
Zero Fossil Fuel Consumption
res4live.eu

Contact
area-zero@area-zero.eu #AreaZero area-zero.eu 


 Funded by the European Union
These projects have received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (AgroBioHeat – GA 818369, AgroFossilFree – GA 101000496, HyPERFarm – GA 101000828, Renaissance – GA 824342, RES4LIVE – GA (101000785, TheGreeFa – GA 101000801).

Figure 4. AREA ZERO poster



IMPACT

The solutions and actions provided by AREA ZERO are designed to bring both environmental, economic and social benefits.

ENVIRONMENT

- reduction of CO₂ emissions
- reduction of water consumption
- increase of biomass use

ECONOMY

- reduction of thermal energy consumption
- reduction of operational costs
- increase of crop production and ensure optimum animal productivity

SOCIETY & AWARENESS

- increase of awareness about energy and water consumption
- exchange of knowledge and experience
- creation of stakeholders' networks
- rural development and job creation

MEMBERS

AgroBioHeat – Promoting modern, cost-effective and low emissions agrobiomass heating technologies for European rural areas (GA 818369)

agrobioheat.eu

AgroFossilFree – Strategies and technologies to achieve a European Fossil-Energy-Free agriculture (GA 101000496)

agrofossilfree.eu

HyPERFarm – Hydrogen and Photovoltaic Electrification on Farm (GA 101000828)

hyperfarm.eu

Renaissance – RENewAble Integration and SuStainAbility in energy Communities (GA 824342)

renaissance-h2020.eu

RES4LIVE – Energy Smart Livestock Farming towards Zero Fossil Fuel Consumption (GA 101000785)

res4live.eu

TheGreeFa – Thermochemical fluids in Greenhouse Farming (GA 101000801)

thegreefa.eu

areazerocluster.eu

#AreaZero

AREA ZERO

Alliance for Renewable Energy in Agriculture and Zero Fossil Energy

Technologies, techniques or strategies towards lower emissions, cleaner energy sources, improved energy efficiency, and cost-effectiveness in the agricultural sector

Funded by the European Union

CHALLENGES

AREA ZERO was created, so that innovative projects can work together to overcome current challenges in the areas of agriculture and fossil fuel use reduction.

High energy consumption in greenhouse horticulture, especially for heating purposes and livestock buildings.

Water usage in agriculture.

Agriculture's dependence on fossil fuels in both crops and livestock.

High emissions of greenhouse gases.

Limited valorization of biomass potential from agricultural residues.

AREA ZERO ANSWERS TO THE CHALLENGES

The six EU projects propose different solutions that aim to help to fight with current challenges.

State-of-the-art technologies using agricultural biomass (crop residues and energy crops) can provide cost-effective and low emissions heat for applications in rural areas: greenhouses, municipal buildings, agro-industries, district heating networks and others.

The framework, where critical stakeholders can cooperate to evaluate and promote the currently available Fossil-Energy-Free Technologies and Strategies (FEFTS) in EU agriculture.

Inclusion of new innovative PV technologies, radically new crop production systems, stakeholder innovation workshops, and citizen-consumer acceptance, public perception analysis and farmer adoption studies.

The community-driven scalable and replicable approach, to implement new business models and technologies supporting clean production and shared distribution of energy in local communities.

Introducing market integrated, cost-effective and case-sensitive Renewable Energy Sources (RES) solutions, towards fossil-free livestock farming, to be demonstrated and evaluated in dairy, swine and poultry farms.

The innovative use of absorption processes in the greenhouse air-conditioning using the hygroscopic properties of fluid salt solution, providing multiple functions and services such as heating, cooling, de-/humidification within a single device and water recovery.

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Figure 5. AREA ZERO brochure.

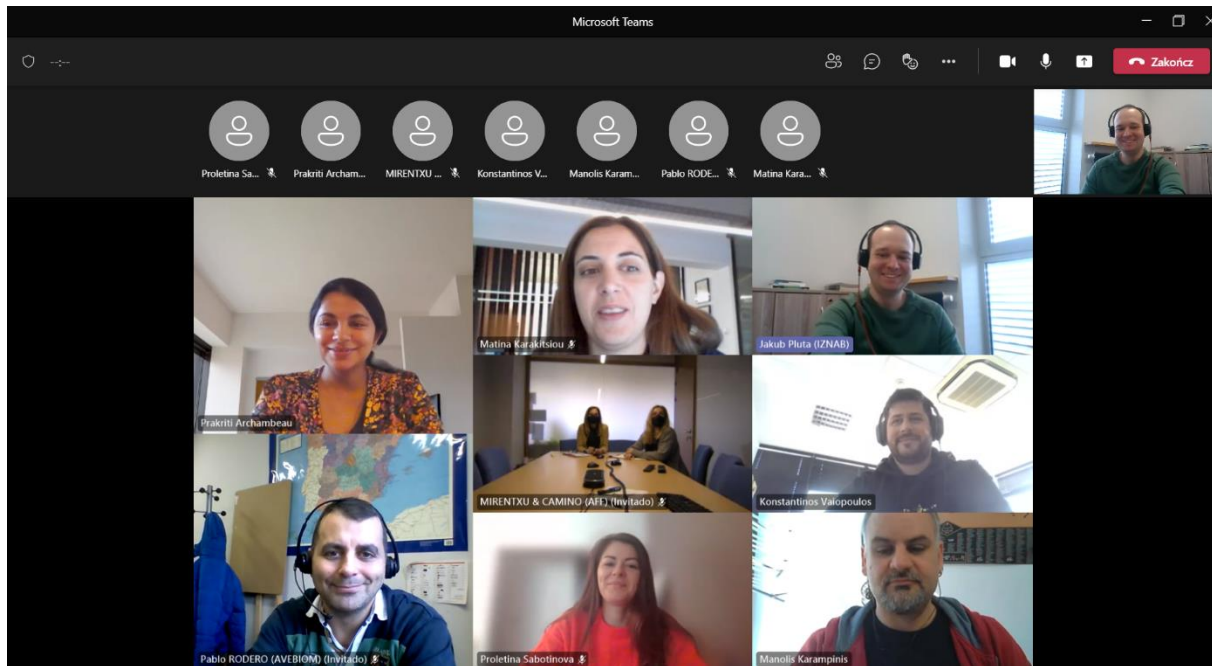


Figure 6. The AREA ZERO board meeting (03.02.2022).

To officially announce the collaboration the cluster decided to organise the 1st common event in a form of webinar. The webinar took place on 24th of March 2022. For TheGreefa it was also considered as the 1st international workshop out of three to be organised. The recording of the online event is available in YouTube: <https://youtu.be/3Map4FXQwul?si=DRhaor5p9TUrF14A>.

Table 1. The agenda of AREA ZERO 1st webinar (24.03.2022).

Time	Title	Speaker
9:30-9:40	Opening and introduction of AREA ZERO	Emil Lezak (IZNAB)
9:40-10:00	AgroFossilFree presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current energy status in EU agriculture - Farmers' needs, innovative ideas, and interests 	Bas Paris & Vasso Kanaki (AUA – Agricultural University of Athens)
10:00-10:20	HyPERFarm presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative interviews: How do stakeholders perceive the idea of Agrivoltaic? - Potential of Biochar as a soil amendment in cropping systems 	Ilse Lenaerts (KUL – KU Leuven) Gabriele Torma (AU – Aarhus University) Jannis Grafmüller (Offenburg – Hochschule Offenburg)
10:20-10:40	AgroBioHeat presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Producing energy from agrobiomass in Europe: potential, current status & technologies 	Michalis-Alexandros Kougoumtzis (CERTH – Centre for Research and Technology Hellas)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting modern agrobiomass heating technologies in rural Europe: highlights from the AgroBioHeat project 	
10:40-11:00	RES4LIVE presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RES4LIVE overview - First results and interventions in pilot farms 	Dimitrios Tyriss <i>(AUA – Agricultural University of Athens)</i>
11:00-11:20	TheGreeFa presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Innovative greenhouse system for heat and humidity control with water recovery in a single process 	Serena Danesi <i>(ZHAW – Zurich University of Applied Sciences)</i> Martin Buchholz <i>(WATERGY – Watergy GmbH)</i>
11:20-11:40	RENAISSANCE presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are you planning to kick-start an agrivoltaic energy community? 	Rebecca Hueting <i>(DBlue – Deep Blue)</i>
11:40-12:00	Discussion and final Q&A	

For the 2nd event, the Cluster projects applied together for a policy session during the EUSEW 2022 Policy Conference. The online event was approved within the Extended Programme and took place on 22nd of September 2022. The event *Together towards energy-efficient and defossilised agriculture* was organised by TheGreefa, AgroFossilFree and RES4LIVE. The recording of the event is available: <https://youtu.be/9qNUGml2pFY?si=6HP1qnA0oONyDsmP>.

On the 14th of June 2022, TheGreefa partner UAL participated in AgroFossilFree project's transnational innovation workshop in Athens. Mireille Nathalie Honoré (UAL) gave a presentation of TheGreefa project and then participated in the panel discussion.

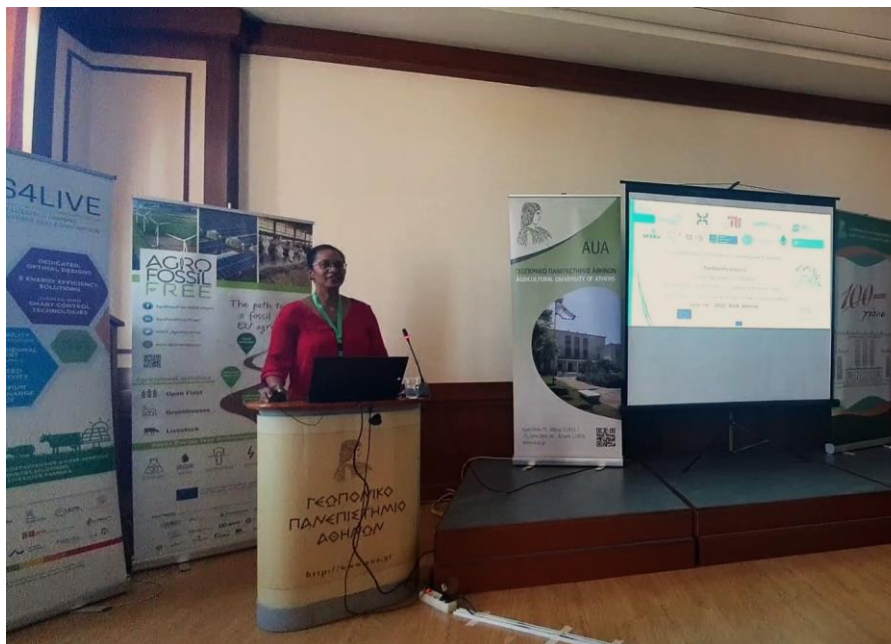


Figure 7. TheGreefa presentation during AgroFossilFree's workshop in Athens.

Another transnational workshop was organized in Poland in Warsaw, where TheGreefa was invited. IZNAB participated in the event on 23rd of September 2022. The event was a good occasion for discussion and exchange of ideas between researchers and farmers.

TheGreefa have printed the AREA ZERO poster and brochures to use them for the cluster dissemination during the project's events, e.g. during the Swiss workshop in September 2023.



Figure 8. TheGreefa and AREA ZERO posters during the Swiss workshop (13.09.2023).

The last joint event where TheGreefa participated was the AREA ZERO online event on 14th of March 2024 - *The Farming Future: Opportunities and Challenges in the Agricultural Energy Transition*. The event was an online conference, where 3 remaining ongoing projects of AREA ZERO (TheGreefa, HyPERFarm and RESLIVE) presented their results for better energy and resource efficient systems for agriculture. In the moderated panel the representatives of the 3 projects discussed about social aspects related to the implementation of the new technologies. Also, 3 new members of AREA ZERO were introduced and gave their presentations (SYMBIOSYST, PV4Plants, REGACE). As relatively new projects, they will inherit the cluster management to keep it alive and bigger. The recording is also available online: <https://youtu.be/UMpVz6Cv7m0?si=HSGF9s96-C7bQQOen>.

In collaboration with the AgroFossilFree project, TheGreefa prepared a Policy Brief and recommendation document regarding *The use of thermochemical fluids for energy saving and storage*

in agriculture. The document is available online: <https://www.agrofossilfree.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/PB16.pdf>.

AgroFossilFree

AgroFossilFree

total energy efficiency. This has the potential to reduce energy losses and heating systems. Diversification of the energy mix through renewable energy sources can improve security by **reducing dependence on fossil fuels**. Thermochemical fluids can improve energy efficiency. Excess energy created during crop production can be stored for **later use** using TES (Thermal Energy Storage). Thermochemical fluids + TES (Thermal Energy Storage) can reduce energy demand. Farmers can lessen their dependence on fossil fuels during low-demand periods.

Waste heat recovery systems can improve energy efficiency, electricity generation, and **improving overall system efficiency**. Adoption of thermochemical fluid-based energy storage **saves money** for the implementation of these technologies, leading to economic growth.

Expected Impacts

Thermochemical fluids + TES can improve agricultural energy use. Efficiency and increasing investment in friendly agricultural sectors. Agricultural **heating and energy** from thermochemical fluids. These conditions while minimizing energy losses. Thermochemical fluids can efficiently **remove** crop post-harvest losses. Promoting renewable energy can subsequently **improve air quality**. Thermochemical fluids can store **nutrient uptake** by plants. Thermochemical fluids can **retain** moisture in drought-prone areas. Thermochemical fluids can **capture** grade waste heat into useful energy by using the reversible chemical interactions of these fluids, hence boosting energy efficiency.

Policy Brief Note 16

The use of thermochemical fluids for energy saving and storage in agriculture (The Greefa Project)

What is the challenge?

Increasing the **efficiency** of the thermochemical fluid systems is one of the major difficulties. Multiple processes are required to convert thermal energy to chemical energy and vice versa, and it is essential for overall efficiency to reduce energy losses at each stage.

Expanding the most common current technology, pumped hydroelectric storage, is **limited by geography**, and lithium-ion batteries are too **expensive for storing excess renewable power** over multiple days (around €140/kWh). The storage period defines how long the energy is stored (i.e., hours, days, weeks), and this is a challenge associated with implementing thermochemical energy storage.

Integration and compatibility: To ensure seamless integration, thermochemical fluid systems should be compatible with current energy systems and infrastructure. This covers considerations for energy storage, transportation, and consumption in various applications. The need to develop and operate coupled thermochemical energy storage systems makes thermochemical energy storage implementation difficult.

Stability and durability: Thermochemical fluids must be stable and durable over multiple cycles of energy conversion and storage. They should be able to tolerate high temperatures and other difficult operating conditions without significant degradation, ensuring an extended operational lifetime.

For broad adoption, the **cost-effectiveness** of thermochemical fluid systems must be competitive with other energy storage techniques. To make these systems economically viable, cost-effective materials and manufacturing processes must be developed.

Scalability: Developing thermochemical fluid systems that can be scaled up for practical uses is another challenge. Fluid systems must be designed to be easily implemented on a wider scale, allowing for widespread adoption and integration with existing energy infrastructure.

Environmental impact: The choice of fluids and associated materials should minimize negative environmental effects, including emissions and natural resource depletion.

Policy Recommendations

Strengthen and expand the EU's commitments to **combat climate change** with the goals of the Paris Agreement and ensure their effective implementation by member states by setting more ambitious emission reduction targets and **promoting the transition to a low carbon economy** and ensure their effective implementation by member states.

The European Commission has recommended **ten points for EU Member States to maximize energy storage** to its full potential. The Commission's suggested reforms for Europe's electricity design underline the fundamental role of flexibility that storage can provide to the electricity system. According to their recommendations, Member States should develop new market products, particularly for peak shaving, curtailment prevention, and congestion management, to secure predictable revenue streams for storage, both utility-scale and behind-the-meter. A lower carbon cap needs to be mandated in the capacity market.

On 14 March 2023, the Commission Recommendation Energy Storage – Underpinning a decarbonized and secure EU energy system was adopted. It addresses EU countries on the most important issues contributing to the broader deployment of energy storage. They should consider the double role of "consumer-producer" of storage by applying the EU electricity regulatory framework and by **removing barriers**, including **avoiding double taxation** and **facilitating permitting procedures**.

Joint EASE/EERA recommendations for a European Energy Storage Technology include the need to **develop and implement thermal energy storage** systems that are coupled to power-to-heat technologies, classify thermal energy storage systems, and promote the use of these systems.

Page 41 of 50

Page 42 of 50

Page 43 of 50

Figure 9. The Policy Brief prepared by TheGreefa.

3. Future actions

At the end of TheGreefa, the project is still the member of the AREA ZERO cluster. On the 29th of May 2024, there was an online meeting of the cluster to discuss further plans. IZNAB participated to the meeting.

The 2 old projects (HyPErFarm and RES4LIVE) remain still active. 3 new projects (PV4Plants, Symbiosyst and REGACE) joined the cluster in March 2024. During the meeting another project interested to join AREA ZERO participated and gave a short presentation – [Value4Farm](#) (GA 101116076).

It means that in June 2024, there are 6 active projects in the cluster.

TheGreefa remains in contact with the other projects. Transfer of the cluster website to one of the new members is in consideration. IZNAB informed also the cluster members that TheGreefa is interested in participation in the future events, if possible, to disseminate the projects final results.

4. Conclusions

The aim of this report is to outline the collaboration that TheGreefa consortium has undertaken with other projects working in a similar field. AREA ZERO, the alliance of six projects has been formed focusing on the areas of agriculture and energy efficiency. The name and the common logo and dissemination materials such as brochure and poster of the alliance have been developed by all the projects and were used during the dissemination and communication activities.

TheGreefa took active part in organisation of three common online events which have been recorded and are available online in the cluster's YouTube channel.

The project helped in preparation and publication of the policy documents shared by the AREA ZERO cluster.

New members have been invited to AREA ZERO to inherit the cluster and perform future activities.