

eip-agri  
AGRICULTURE & INNOVATION



# EIP-AGRI SEMINAR DIGITAL INNOVATION HUBS FOR AGRICULTURE

FIRST OUTCOMES FROM THE SEMINAR HELD IN  
KILKENNY 1-2 JUNE 2017



## How can Digital Innovation Hubs support the digital transformation in agriculture?

On the 1-2 June 2017, the European Commission's DG Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) organised an EIP-AGRI Seminar on 'Digital Innovation Hubs: mainstreaming digital agriculture'. 150 delegates from 24 EU member states and Serbia met in Kilkenny (Ireland) to share experiences, discuss needs and identify priority actions for developing Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs) for agriculture.

The pace of technological innovation is proceeding faster than ever before and there is a need to ensure that the farming sector can take full advantage of this "digital revolution". Agricultural businesses and ICT developers alike strive to understand which technologies to invest in, when to invest and to what extent.

DIHs can help both, agriculture businesses and ICT companies to become more competitive by means of digital technology. DIHs allow any business to access the latest knowledge, expertise and technology for testing and experimenting with digital innovations. They provide connections with investors, facilitate access to financing, and help connect suppliers and users of digital technologies in agriculture across the value chain.



## Building digital innovation hubs for agriculture: priority actions

**The participants at the seminar identified the following priority actions for building DIHs for agriculture:**

- 1** Identify the local/regional needs and specialisations in rural areas to develop a DIH model that can deliver integrated services adapted to the context.
- 2** Map existing initiatives and identify the 'building blocks' which are already available in the local/regional context to develop DIHs.
- 3** Ensure that the farming sector is at the core of the DIH following the 'interactive innovation' model that underpins the EIP-AGRI. This will bring the knowledge of the sector into the innovation process and will ensure that technological solutions are adapted to farmers' needs.
- 4** Develop a strategic business model for DIHs which sets out how its services are to be financed and how the initiative will become and remain sustainable in the long term.
- 5** Build social and environmental concerns into the DIH business model. Consider the impact for example on employment, services, privacy, security. Anticipate risks and mitigation actions
- 6** Nurture the entrepreneurial ecosystem and foster participation. Bring together start-ups, incubators and accelerators through targeted activities. Encourage agri-businesses to seriously think about the implications of digitisation for them. Communicate!
- 7** Foster the collaboration between hubs across Europe. Linking regional/national DIHs in a wide European Network in order to access additional facilities, complete missing competences, foster knowledge transfer, and develop new services and tools together.



## Understanding the concept

The development of DIHs across Europe is one of the pillars of the European Commission's Communication on [Digitising European Industry](#) which sets out to ensure that "any industry in Europe, big or small, wherever situated and in any sector can fully benefit from digital innovations to upgrade its products, improve its processes and adapt its business models to the digital change".



A large part of the EIP-AGRI Seminar 'Digital Innovation Hubs: mainstreaming digital agriculture' focused on understanding what a DIH is and what it can do for the farming sector.



The delegates, working in a highly interactive setting (world café), brought the original concept (see [Ronan Burgess](#) – DG CNCT, European Commission) a step further by answering to the following questions:

- ▶ What does DIH mean to me?
- ▶ What are the specific needs and barriers to consider for developing DIHs for agriculture?



The discussions were built around the presentation of the 6 main 'building blocks' of a DIH in agriculture (see links):

- 1 Competence centres  
[Peter Liggesmeyer, Fraunhofer - DE](#)
- 2 Advisers/innovation brokers  
[Tom Kelly, EUFRA/TEAGASC - IE](#)
- 3 Start-ups, entrepreneurs, SMEs  
[Mihai & Stefan Stanescu, AGRISO - RO](#)
- 4 Public/private investors Hubert Cottogni, EIF  
([presentation](#), [hand-out](#))
- 5 Regional/National authorities  
[Alfonso R.Álvarez \(INGACAL\) & Luis P.Freire, \(Gradiant\) - ES](#)
- 6 Farming community  
[Daniel Azevedo, COPA-COGECA](#)







Finally all the delegates were invited to reflect how support the development of DIHs in agriculture, building on the already existing initiatives and considering the available support at regional, national and EU scale. In an 'open space' format they decided on the most pressing issues to work on and listed priority actions (see page 3) to start building a DIH for agriculture at home.

*"The DIH ecosystem can be seen as a coral reef where there are big and small fish, hunters and prey, but overall everyone performs better compared to isolation"* Grigorios Chatzikostas, seminar participant.





For more information on this event, you can take a look at [the dedicated webpage for this seminar on the EIP-AGRI website](#).

You can download the presentations, participants list and other documents on this event page. You can also download the [interactive sessions results](#).

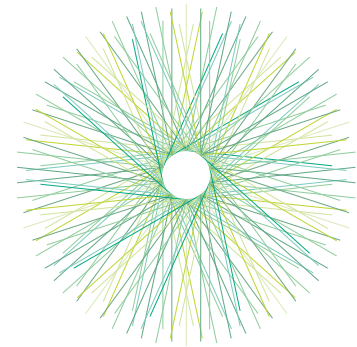
The final report will also be available on this page once it is published.

**The European Innovation Partnership 'Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability'** (EIP-AGRI) is one of five EIPs launched by the European Commission in a bid to promote rapid modernisation by stepping up innovation efforts.

The **EIP-AGRI** aims to catalyse the innovation process in the **agricultural and forestry sectors** by bringing **research and practice closer together** – in research and innovation projects as well as through the EIP-AGRI network.

**EIPs aim** to streamline, simplify and better coordinate existing instruments and initiatives and complement them with actions where necessary. Two specific funding sources are particularly important for the EIP-AGRI:

- the EU Research and Innovation framework, Horizon 2020
- the EU Rural Development Policy



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