

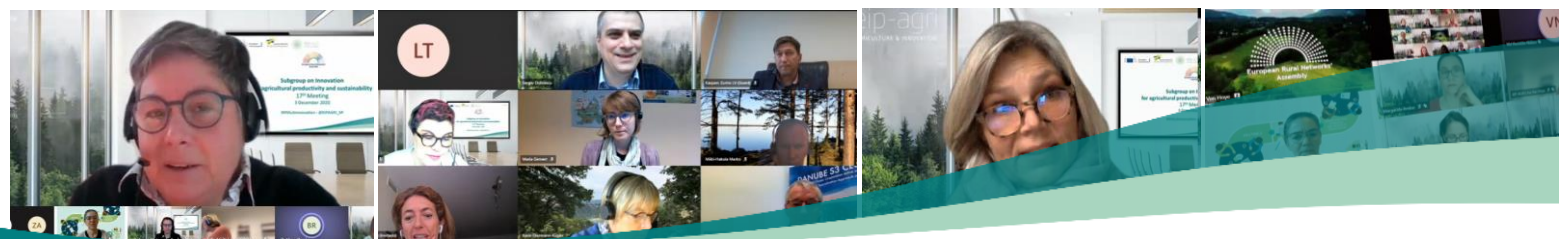


Subgroup on Innovation for agricultural productivity and sustainability

17th Meeting
Online meeting

3 December 2020

REPORT



The Subgroup on Innovation (Sol) met for the seventeenth time – online – on 3 December 2020.

The objectives of the meeting were:

- a) to provide feedback from recent EIP-AGRI networking activities and to present the upcoming events;
- b) to share and discuss examples and ideas for designing the innovation strand in the national CAP network in the coming programming period;
- c) to present the proposals for new networking activities to be carried out after 2020, based on the survey of Subgroup members conducted from 10/06/2020 to 10/07/2020 as well as on input from the EIP-AGRI website;
- d) to present the achievements of the EIP-AGRI network.

Welcome and introduction

Kerstin Rosenow, Head of Unit DG AGRI B.2, warmly welcomed the Subgroup members and presented the latest updates on relevant developments. You can find her presentation [here](#).

Since the last Subgroup meeting in March 2020, the Farm to Fork Strategy and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 have been published. Kerstin Rosenow reiterated that the Green Deal, and specifically both strategies are very closely linked to the work of EIP-AGRI. She mentioned that the Green Deal targets for sustainable food production are very ambitious and that innovative approaches will be needed to reach them.

Kerstin Rosenow also informed that in June 2020 a survey was sent to the Subgroup members to collect ideas for networking activities after 2020. The results of this survey and the proposals for new networking activities to be carried out after 2020 will be presented later in the meeting (session III).

Kerstin Rosenow provided the Subgroup members with an update on the Operational Groups (OGs). Currently there are 1.617 OGs in the database, and the number is assumed to grow especially as more and more countries are starting to get involved in the setup of Operational Groups, like for example Hungary, where about 80 new OGs are expected.

Regarding the new CAP, Kerstin Rosenow informed that the Commission is working hard to provide the Member States with recommendations for the development of performant national CAP Strategic Plans. There has been progress in the CAP negotiations. The triologue sessions have started in November. To ensure continuity between the current and the new programming period, transitional provisions have been established. Amongst others, it was agreed that the governance bodies of the European Rural Networks, and thus also the Subgroup on Innovation, will continue in the transitional period and until the governance structures of the new European CAP network are established.

As for Horizon Europe, Kerstin Rosenow clarified that the preparations are still ongoing and that the programme will be very 'Green Deal oriented'.

Finally, Kerstin Rosenow provided an update on the Horizon Europe mission in the area of Soil Health and Food. She informed the Subgroup members that the Mission Board produced an interim report proposing concrete targets and a timeline for a possible mission. The proposed mission: [Caring for Soil](#)

is Caring for Life has 8 specific objectives. The general objective is that at least 75% of all soils in the EU are healthy in 2030 for food, people, nature and climate. The proposed mission combines research and innovation, education and training, investments and the demonstration of good practices using “living labs” (experiments and innovation in a laboratory on the ground) and “lighthouses” (places to showcase good practices). Suggestions for farms that could be included in the list of living labs and lighthouses are still very welcome. The mission will strongly emphasise the involvement of stakeholders and citizen engagement. Communication and dissemination strategies will be set up. Various communication actions are already programmed to engage citizens, as for example the World Soil Day (05/12), two major EIP-AGRI Soil campaigns on social media, articles, press releases, etc. Kerstin Rosenow also referred to the documentary “Kiss the ground”, available on Netflix, that can help to sensitise people and raise awareness on the importance of soils. Kerstin Rosenow concluded by pointing out that EIP-AGRI has and will continue to play an important role in the topic of soil.

The session was concluded with a Q&A session:

- Q: Living labs is a well-known concept, but could you please provide a definition of "lighthouses"?
A: Lighthouses are places for demonstration, while living labs are places for experimentation. We could say that a lighthouse is an outstanding demo farm. E.g. John Gilliland’s farm in Ireland is currently a lighthouse and it demonstrates and shows innovations to other farmers.

- Q: Some Member States, like Sweden and Latvia, are asking the EU to facilitate, at the EU level, the collection and compilation of results of research projects on sustainable plant protection to promote their widespread application. Is the EU already working on this? If so, where can we find this compilation? Is it public?
A: We are working on this, but it is not yet concluded. We always do this when a new period starts. We call this ‘the gap analysis’ to know where further work is needed. This is always the basis.
Note: You can check the AgriResearch [factsheet on plant health](#). You can also find a list of projects in [the EIP-AGRI database](#) (scroll down and click on plant health).

- Q: is the Soil Mission Report already available for the public?
A: Yes, it can be found on the Mission page of the EU website.
Note: You can find the link to the Mission Report [here](#).

Session I: EIP-AGRI Service Point work programme: recent and planned activities

Véronique Rebholtz (EIP-AGRI Service Point) presented the recent and planned activities of the EIP-AGRI Service Point (SP) work programme. You can find the presentation [here](#).

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the SP work programme had to be adjusted: some events were replaced by virtual events, whilst others were postponed.

Four out of the five Focus Groups have met twice already, online. The remaining one will have its second online meeting in January 2021.

The online seminar 'CAP strategic Plans: the key role of AKIS in Member States' took place in September 2020. It aimed at supporting the Member States in the preparation of AKIS Strategic Plans and AKIS interventions. Véronique Rebholtz presented some highlights of the seminar, and noted that the final report will be available soon on the website.

The workshop 'Shaping the EU mission: Caring for Soil is Caring for Life' was held online in October 2020. Véronique Rebholtz shared the highlights of the event and announced that the results will become available on the website.

Véronique Rebholtz explained that the SP work programme was extended to Spring 2021 and that 2 events, originally planned for 2020, were postponed to 2021. These are the workshop 'Towards Carbon Neutral Agriculture' and the seminar 'Healthy soils for Europe: sustainable management through knowledge and practice'. It still has to be confirmed if it will be possible to organise these events face-to-face. If not, they will be replaced by virtual events.

Finally, Véronique Rebholtz informed the Subgroup members about the communication-related activities. The last Agrinnovation magazine was based on the 'soil' theme. There were a number of thematic campaigns, brochures, and new animated infographics. The report about 'Ideas for Operational Groups' was also highlighted. The [new animated infographic on Focus Groups](#) was shared with the Subgroup members.



Session II: Sharing examples and ideas for designing the innovation strand in the national CAP network

Session II focused on the innovation dimension in the next programming period's national CAP networks. After a brief introduction by DG AGRI, two Subgroup members presented the ideas discussed in their countries regarding future networking activities for innovation. This was followed by an interactive discussion in breakout groups.

2.1. Introduction

Antonella Zona (DG AGRI) provided an introduction on the CAP networks (abbreviated as 'CAPnets') in the next programming period, both at national and EU level, and then zoomed in on the innovation dimension of the national CAP networks. You can find her presentation [here](#).

In the new programming period 2021-2027, **at national level**, the CAP network will be similar to the current National Rural Network, but the scope will be larger (including Pillar I and Pillar II). There will be a strong emphasis on the innovation dimension. The legal framework contains several articles that explain this dimension of the CAP Strategic Plans (CSP) clarifying for example, their mission, objectives and tasks as well as its key role as the pillar of the AKIS and in working with EIP OGs. The aim is to continue and follow up on the experience of the current EIP-AGRI network. Antonella Zona mentioned that it should be noticed that the innovation dimension at national level is quite diverse across Europe and that the starting points are very different.

She explained that, according to the draft regulation, the national CAP networks should be established within 12 months after the approval of the CSP. Until then, the current networks can continue with the implementation of the new CAP (payments under the current programmes can still be done until 2025). The CSPs are to be implemented as from 2023.

Antonella Zona then informed that, **at the EU level**, there will be continuity between the current EIP-AGRI network and the coming EU CAP network. An open [call for tenders](#) was launched for the new service provider that will facilitate the European CAP network. The call for tenders is divided into 4 lots: Lot N°1 relates to support for networking concerning the design and implementation of the CSPs (Pillar I and II), Lot N°2 focuses on innovation and knowledge exchange (the equivalent of the current EIP-AGRI with stronger focus on AKIS and CAP cross cutting objective), Lot N° 3 is about support for performance measurement of the CAP, and Lot N° 4 is about logistical and communication support for all networking activities (for the other 3 lots). The call is open until 19th of January 2021.

Regarding the national CAP networks, Antonella Zona reiterated that they will play a **key role for a well-functioning AKIS**. She shared five points of attention that resulted from previous discussions in the Subgroup on Innovation and from the seminar 'CAP strategic Plans: the key role of AKIS in member States' in September:

- Closer collaboration with advisers: advisers, both public and private, should be more involved. They should be aware of the new tasks in the coming CSP. They should actively promote innovation and be involved in Operational Groups. This implies that advisers need to be supported to improve their skills and to be able to provide innovation support services.
- Strengthen the links with Horizon Europe: at a national level, the CAPnets can contribute to strengthening these links in multiple ways: for example, by disseminating multi-actor projects (past and future), by connecting directly OGs with relevant H2020 / Horizon Europe projects, by intensifying contacts within EU and National Contact Points, by following up on the calls

under Horizon Europe and proactively disseminating them also towards OGs to get them involved in research projects, by increasing cooperation between projects, etc.

- Capacity building for public administrations (included in Art. 113 of the draft regulation): capacity building can help to avoid delays in the implementation for the new period. They should start now by already identifying actors, testing future interventions in advance, brainstorming about AKIS networking plans...
- Collect innovative ideas related to the 9 CAP objectives: OGs could already work on this. There is a lot to do on social and territorial innovation, on the future of the rural areas.
- Keep building on web-based platforms, peer-to-peer learning, new ways to reach out in the COVID-19 era.

Finally, Antonella Zona explained that **supporting Operational Groups is a priority** for the CAPnet innovation strand. There is a huge reservoir of more than 2000 Operational Groups. These need to be promoted and connected to Horizon projects. Connecting all actors is important. The setting up of transnational OGs is a new possibility. National CAPnets should try to connect partners and OGs from different Member States, either by organising transnational or cross-border OGs, or by fostering the cooperation and contacts between OGs in different Member States or regions.

This introduction was concluded with a Q&A session:

- Q: Kerstin Rosenow mentioned EU recommendations to Member States. Will the networks work on these specific recommendations as well?
A: There are two aspects: first, the CAPnets are mentioned by the EC as a key tool specially for the cross-cutting objective and the AKIS. Currently there are already some networks active in preparing the CSP and hopefully all MS will do, once the EC delivers the recommendations to the Member States (in the coming weeks). Secondly, in the future CAP it will be compulsory for the CAPnets to contribute to the preparation of the programmes. And as a last point: for the future CAP strategic plan, for the CAP network, the Commission has a legal obligation to assist the CAP strategic plan.
- Q: Different countries are building the AKIS. What kind of AKIS solutions are there?
A: All Member States are active in working on their AKIS because it is part of the CSPs. Recommendations will be published this month mentioning the AKIS as an important tool to achieve the Green Deal objectives, the Farm to Fork strategy, etc. However, starting points and progress differ between countries.
Note: you can find some examples on how MS are preparing their AKIS under Part V of the EIP-AGRI seminar 'CAP strategic Plans: the key role of AKIS in Member States'. All presentations and recording are [here](#).
- Q: What is the current number of OGs in cross-visits?
A: Less than 10 transnational OGs have emerged in the current period. We hope to have more in the future. This is a door to be opened in the new CSP. Some pilots were in place during this period. It would be nice if MS could indicate some targets to reach. For the moment, nothing is settled yet.

2.2. Presentations by Subgroup Members

2.2.1. Networking activities for innovation: challenges and ideas for the next period, Bettina Rocha (German National Rural Support Unit)

Bettina Rocha started her presentation by explaining how EIP-AGRI works in Germany.

Regions (the so called Länder) are responsible for rural development. In the 12 regions, EIP-AGRI funding is available. There is a national EIP-AGRI support unit. It is part of the National Rural Support Unit. This Unit provides 4 types of support to the EIP-AGRI network:

- thematic workshops for OGs: on demand; based on the request of at least four OGs, a specific theme may be taken up;
- (cross-border) excursions;
- workshops for OGs, innovation facilitators and Managing Authorities (sometimes with guests from other countries), and
- specific workshops for innovation facilitators. These happen twice a year and are very important for the networking. Facilitators are key!

Then, Bettina Rocha explained how the network is structured to support EIP-AGRI. There are two levels (national and regional), 12 regional authorities (Länder) and regional innovation facilitators. There are 2 main working groups (one for innovation facilitators and the other one for Managing Authorities). And at the national level, there is the Ministry of Agriculture and the national EIP-AGRI support unit. There are a lot of relations with research and with advisers, farmers and other stakeholders. All this supports OGs and the dissemination of their results.

Next, Bettina Rocha explained the different phases of EIP-AGRI implementation. She highlighted that the dissemination of the project results towards other OGs, countries, researchers could be further enhanced and that adequate dissemination methods should be identified.

To end, she presented some questions and challenges that their Unit is facing at the moment while working on the ideas for the innovation strand in their national CAP network. These are mostly linked to the innovation facilitators and OGs: they should be asked what kind of support they need. Further, there are still some questions to be answered on what could be the future role of the innovation facilitators and their tasks in different phases of EIP implementation. They could set up OGs, guide OGs. They have a crucial role in results dissemination, in ensuring the links to AKIS and in improving knowledge exchange. This should be planned at the very beginning. Funds for dissemination should be foreseen. In this way, a constant dissemination network could be foreseen. A lot of thinking needs to be done on methods and tools for the dissemination, and how to best reach the target groups. Bettina Rocha presented some of the ideas for more strategic dissemination and knowledge exchange. You can find her presentation [here](#).

The presentation was followed by a Q&A session:

- Q: Innovation facilitators are they institutionalised in the regions (Länder), and are they advisers?

A: Yes, they are institutionalised, but they are performing different tasks depending on the Länder (involved in the dissemination, or in the setting up phase). They are a kind of advisers but not in the sense of agricultural advisers. They are specifically trained in soft skills for advisory services. They can come from different organisations, for example from universities, chambers of agriculture, from the ministry, etc. depending on the priority of the Länder.

Note: In several regions of Germany the innovation facilitators are the "engines" of innovation processes.

- Q: What is the background of the innovation facilitators? Will they act as innovation brokers?
A: Some of the innovation facilitators are advisers coming from chambers of agriculture, some of them have a background in research or administration. In addition, although we talk about one facilitator for each of the Länder, it can actually be a group of people with different backgrounds and tasks. We do not use the word "broker" in Germany.

- Q: Will advisers in the future also act as innovation brokers? If so, how will they be coordinated with the innovation facilitators in regions?
A (via mail): Innovation facilitators act as described above in many ways, depending on the tasks that are given to them by the managing authorities in the Bundesländer. Even if they deal with knowledge and information, we do not see them as a "broker", nor do we call them a „broker“. However, their tasks are similar: bringing members of potential OGs together (setting up the group), supporting the potential OG when it applies, joining the group during their work, helping the group to network with others, dissemination of results. More importantly for the next period is, how Innovation Facilitators will work as part of the AKIS? That's what we are discussing at the moment.

- Q: Do you expect new OGs to be approved in Germany under the current RDPs? In addition to the 193 currently notified to EU?
A (via mail): We have now about 250 approved OGs in Germany. There are 4 more calls running. I guess there will be about 270 at the end of this period.

- Q: Could you tell us a bit more about the workshop for innovation facilitators (content, training material, continuous training and follow-up of facilitators...)?
A (via mail): We offer an open space for exchange for the facilitators. They have to say what they need for training (of course we offer certain trainings like, for example, communication training, creative writing workshops, how to disseminate results, how to make a good video about a project etc.). We bring the innovation facilitators together with journalists. We inform them about other initiatives besides EIP that foster agricultural research. We invite experts for different themes, technical and soft skills, etc. We have a continuous process where the facilitators tell each other what works well or not in their region and we discuss together how problems could be solved or how we can multiply a good experience and bring it to a higher level. The group of innovation facilitators is a core group for us as a network unit. Without this group our work for the OGs would be much more difficult, the access to partners in the Länder is much easier this way.

2.2.2. Suggestions for improving knowledge exchange, networking and innovation: Teagasc perspective, Paul Maher (Teagasc)

Paul Maher first gave an overview of Teagasc. The organisation has a strong body of advisers with 50 advisory offices, and a focus on education with 7 agricultural colleges. With its 7 research centres Teagasc is also involved in research. Teagasc has a professional staff of 650 members who interact with the Irish AKIS. The Irish AKIS puts 'farm families' at the centre. Other AKIS actors are researchers, education, businesses, media, organisations and networks, and policy.

Paul Maher gave an overview of Teagasc current activities. Besides activities on integrated research, advisory and education, it has a number of activities which focus on collaborations with industry partners and with third level institutes and governments. Teagasc is also active in outreach activities to rural professionals, and working with partners and networks. A lot of emphasis is put on building the capacities to connect with different actors. Finally, Teagasc also focuses on setting service standards and enabling and supporting networks (NRN, CAP, EIP).

Then, Paul Maher presented some of Teagasc proposals for improving knowledge exchange, networking and innovation. First, he explained that to support the Irish AKIS for the many horizontal challenges (such as ageing, water, biodiversity, IPM,...), a very flexible and dynamic responsive innovation system will be needed in the future, and very strongly motivated AKIS actors. Their proposals for advisers are: a CAP AKIS network group guiding the AKIS function, continuous professional development for advisers and the establishment of a registration and inventory of advisers and a knowledge exchange platform. As for farmers and farm families, Teagasc proposes a strong support to peer-to-peer learning. The farmers' work environment is more complex now and asks for a flexible and simplified knowledge transfer/exchange. Teagasc also proposes lifelong learning possibilities for farm families and farm workers, and specific targeted training for young farmers. At a more general level, Teagasc would like to see more EIP-AGRI Operational Groups, since these allow for bottom up innovation. They also propose to reduce the administrative burden for everyone, and, finally, and probably the biggest challenge ahead for the agri-sector, to foster and make better use of digital tools. You can find the full presentation [here](#).

Paul Maher's presentation was followed by a Q&A session:

- Q: What does CPD mean?
A: Continuous professional development or continuous professional education
- One of the Subgroup members commented that training of young farmers is indeed very important, e.g. through farm demonstrations and exchanges.
- Q: How was Teagasc involved in EIP Operational Groups dealing with new approaches for agri environmental and climate measures addressing future CAP targets - looking for new implementation models?
A: We had some involvement with the majority of groups, generally in a supporting or advisory role. We are in a strong leadership / management role in a number of the groups.
- Q: Can you add a bit on the adviser register/inventory? What's the aim? And how does it link to the knowledge exchange platform?
A: The adviser register would be an advance from the Farm Advisory Services list and may for example facilitate the access of farmers to advisers with specific skills or expertise on some specific topic, but also, for example, help the advisers to find the right information and find each other (e.g. when needed support or further info in some topic they personally do not know). It would be like creating something similar to 'LinkedIn for advisers'. The knowledge platform would be a way of connecting different streams of knowledge from advisers' experiences and funded projects so that a "library" might be developed over time – a mini Google for advisers perhaps.

2.3. Interactive morning sessions

Katrien Dejongh (EIP-AGRI Service Point) presented the process for the interactive sessions. The aim was to share possible ideas, examples or proposals for designing the innovation strand in the national CAP network in the next programming period. The main questions to guide the group discussions were:

- Which ideas could Managing Authorities use to design the innovation strand?
- What is being planned in your country?

There were 5 discussion groups. Each group highlighted some ideas that were discussed in the plenary:

In Group 1, the importance of connecting the future CAP networks with the existing ones was stressed. In order to avoid delays, MA need to start thinking about this as soon as possible. For the future CAPnets, the group members proposed a few **key ingredients**, such as considering the **regional contexts** (because regions are closer to the farmers and their needs), and taking into account the **concept of 'family farms'** rather than individual 'farmers' at the centre of the AKIS framework. A last key ingredient is to pay attention to the **connection between AKIS actors** (not just researchers) and **Horizon Europe**.

Group 2 presented the example of Portugal, where a **national Subgroup of Innovation** was set up, inspired by the EU Subgroup on Innovation. This has been a very successful tool during the last programming period and they plan to continue with this group, involving all the innovation stakeholders. Another topic that was discussed in this group is the need for future CAPnets to connect people from different sectors, **looking more broadly to rural development actors** (like agritourism).

In Group 3, the importance of **creating facilitation units** at national or regional levels was highlighted as a key element for supporting the innovation process. This process also needs less administrative bureaucracy, and a lot of flexibility. **Early stage funding** of projects is needed. For regionalised countries, the importance of **regional events for dissemination and knowledge exchange** was proposed as a good experience that could be taken up by others.

In Group 4, the main topic that was discussed was **the importance of networking between OGs**, at different levels from EU to local. It was argued that a **facilitator**, external to the OG, could be very helpful to foster this networking and to help identify OGs that work on similar topics. **Thematic exchange** of knowledge is also important.

Group 5 proposed to **improve the link between EU and national CAP networks** specifically for the collection of information (e.g. a more structured database as in Italy), or for methodological issues (e.g. on 'how to do peer-to-peer learning'). The group also mentioned that at national level, the current period was an experimental phase for EIP in a lot of Member States. This should now be reinforced with **more funding for the next period**, for example to include dissemination or transregional exchanges and visits (not only cross-border) to inspiring projects.

More detail on the ideas, examples and proposals discussed in the breakout group discussions can be found in [Annex 1](#).

Session III: proposals for networking activities after 2020, in the context of the European CAP network.

3.1. Ideas of networking activities after 2020

Magdalena Mach (DG AGRI) introduced this session by explaining that, as compared to previous years, the process of collecting and discussing possible future networking activities is different: because of the COVID crisis, the usual face-to-face discussions could not take place. Furthermore, the end of the current programming period and the preparations for the next one required a different approach. The coming year 2021 will be different. A new contractor will be appointed. Activities will be shifted in time. Focus Groups, for example, will probably not be set up in 2021.

However, Magdalena Mach stressed that activities can be planned and therefore ideas were collected. Members of the Subgroup were invited to share their ideas in a survey that was circulated from 10 June to 10 July 2020. The survey allowed Subgroup members to submit priority topics for networking activities after 2020 and 33 ideas were collected. The survey also asked to share inspiring practices or projects that support farmers, foresters and rural entrepreneurs during the COVID-19 pandemic or that could help them to reduce its negative effects in the future. They were shared on the [EIP-AGRI website](#). Besides the survey, different stakeholders were able to submit ideas through the EIP-AGRI website on topics for future Focus Groups.

In total, 48 ideas were received. All these ideas were assembled in a booklet that was sent to the Subgroup members before the Subgroup meeting. The ideas in the booklet were organised into 4 clusters:

- Cluster 1: AKIS and digitalisation
- Cluster 2: Sustainable management of natural resources
- Cluster 3: Value chains and bioeconomy
- Cluster 4: Other ideas

Magdalena Mach presented the ideas in each of the clusters. You can find the presentation [here](#). Magdalena Mach indicated that the planning for future activities can be discussed in the next meeting in March 2021.

After Magdalena Mach's presentation, Subgroup members were invited to share comments or additional ideas. Two comments were shared:

- Comment 1: It might be a good idea to have an activity on exchanging ideas with other actors and regions on simplifying implementation of measures and on reducing administrative burdens. There is still a lot that can happen on these topics.
- Comment 2: In cluster 4 there is a proposal to work on agricultural workforce. It was commented that the COVID-19 crisis showed more than ever the strong dependence of agriculture on seasonal workforce from abroad. The COVID-19 crisis has forced the agricultural sector to think about alternatives and other tools to address the shortfall of much needed workforce.

Interactive voting exercise

After Magdalena Mach's presentation, the members of the Subgroup were invited to vote for the topics of their preference. You can find the detailed results of the voting exercise in [Annex 2](#).

About 57% of the participants thought that cluster 1 on 'AKIS and digitalisation' was the most important. Within this cluster, the topics on 'education and young advisers' (69,2%), 'online knowledge exchange' (42,9%) and 'collaborative EU projects focused on environment and climate' (42,3%) received most of the votes.

Cluster 2 on 'sustainable management of natural resources' received the second most votes as a cluster (25%). Payment for ecosystem services (53,8%), water governance and agriculture (53,8%) and water management in rural areas (46,2%) stand out as priority topics in this cluster.

Cluster 3 on 'value chains and bioeconomy' followed third in line (10,7%). Within this cluster, the two priority topics are 'fast methods for assuring food integrity along the whole chain' (42,3%) and 'area based circular farming' (46,2%).

In Cluster 4 (7,2%) a number of other topics were clustered, of which 'agricultural workforce' (56%) was prioritised, together with 'EU Farm to Fork: how can EIP-AGRI contribute?' (53,9%).

3.2. PAN Europe's work on low impact farming

Henriette Christensen started her [presentation](#) with an introduction of the Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Europe. The PAN Europe is a network of 600 NGOs. Its mission is to work towards the replacement of hazardous pesticides with ecologically sound alternatives.

Next, Henriette Christensen explained PAN Europe's campaign on low impact farming. Since 2014, it is mandatory for farmers to apply Integrated Pest Management. However, in the EU the uptake of IPM is still lacking. PAN Europe has been collaborating with researchers and companies to promote IPM. PAN Europe has collected 47 testimonies to prove that alternatives are possible. Henriette Christensen shared the example of IPM in grapes and explained that it is important to show what the farmers are doing and how they are changing their practices for instance by the organisation of symposiums, or by producing fact sheets to showcase the best practices. She stressed the importance of scaling up best practices and identifying and closing the scale-up gaps.

Then, Henriette Christensen shared some thoughts on the collaboration with EIP-AGRI and on how to improve it in future, for instance by highlighting the alternatives that we already know of, by ensuring continuity of Focus Groups, by focussing on upscaling, by discussing the independence of farming advisory services.

Pacôme Elouna Eyenga (EIP-AGRI SP) shared a comment on the follow up of Focus Groups. This follow up might not necessarily be a task of EIP-AGRI. The activity organised by EIP-AGRI should be seen as a starting point. Results are available for the EIP-AGRI network. Any actor can take the initiative to follow-up on the outcomes of a Focus Group. This often happens, but not always in a formally structured way. In future, we might think of more structural follow up of e.g. the ideas proposed in the FG on OGs or research. Willemine Brinkman (EIP-AGRI SP) added that it is also a good idea to bring thematically similar projects together. An overview of OGs and their project topics can be found in the [EIP-AGRI database](#).

Session IV: Session IV: Achievements of the EIP-AGRI network

Tereza Budnakova (DG AGRI) introduced this session by acknowledging that these 7 years of EIP-AGRI activities have only been as successful as they were because of the people who contributed. The report 'EIP-AGRI: 7 years of innovation in agriculture and forestry' shares the voices and impressions from across Europe and puts the people at the centre of the EIP-AGRI achievements.

Willemine Brinkman (EIP-AGRI SP) then gave the Subgroup members a heads up on the upcoming report on the achievements of the EIP-AGRI network. She shared some numbers to show how the EIP-AGRI network has grown over the 7 years into a thriving network. She highlighted a number of inspirational quotes from participants all over Europe and gave an overview of the content of the report. She mentioned that the report has thematic pages on different topics that were addressed during the 7 year period, with lots of quotes from farmers and advisers, for example on how they have used the work of Focus Groups or how they are still in touch. She gave a general preview of the report. You can find her presentation [here](#).

You can find the report 'EIP-AGRI: 7 years of innovation in agriculture and forestry' [here](#), together with an overview of events and publications.

In addition to this, Willemine Brinkman introduced the new video with testimonials of different actors on their involvement in EIP-AGRI. The video 'EIP-AGRI, making EU farming and forestry future-proof since 2013' is available [here](#).

Pacôme Elouna Eyenga (EIP-AGRI SP) reiterated that these are the achievements of all actors in the network, and invited everyone to now start looking at the future and how to best use these results.

Closing and celebration

Tereza Budnakova (DG AGRI) concluded that it was a very rich and interesting meeting and that, despite the virtual format, the interactive spirit was there. She thanked all participants for their valuable contributions and active involvement. She mentioned that the Subgroup on Innovation will continue to operate until the new governance structure is established, and announced that the next meeting of the Subgroup on Innovation is scheduled for March 2021.

Tereza Budnakova expressed a special thanks to EIP-AGRI Service Point team. Although the Subgroup meetings will continue, today's meeting was the last one that was organised by the SP team. Therefore, she warmly thanked the Service Point team on behalf of DG AGRI and of the Subgroup members. Both Subgroup members and the SP team contributed to the success of the Subgroup on Innovation. DG AGRI is looking forward to tackling the next challenges that lie ahead.

Pacôme Elouna (EIP-AGRI SP) thanked, on behalf of the Service Point, all participants for their contribution and valuable efforts. He expressed the desire to keep in touch for the coming years and invited all participants to raise their glasses to 7 years of EIP-AGRI networking!

The detailed agenda of the meeting and all presentations can be found on the [EIP-AGRI website](#).

ANNEX 1:

IDEAS, EXAMPLES OR PROPOSALS FOR DESIGNING THE INNOVATION STRAND IN THE NATIONAL CAP NETWORK IN THE NEXT PROGRAMMING PERIOD

Results of the breakout group discussions

Ideas shared in group 1:

- It is important to **consider regional levels** and the regionalisation of the innovation facilitation/brokerage because the ideas and challenges are region related. This could be a suggestion to MS even if they do not have a regionalised structure. At the regional level there is a more direct contact with farmers and a better vision on the actual needs. The regions are thus better positioned to look for ideas for OGs and for research needs.
- It might be an idea to look at the **broader perspective of 'farm family'** instead of 'farmer'. This a new way of looking at it, since the social dimension gets more attention. It allows taking into account processes like for instance: people coming back from urban areas to the farm with new skills, ideas and potential for diversification. It also relates to **small scale farming**, which is also important for the provision of services like environmental protection, or other rural amenities. The question is how to (better) involve them in the future network and in the exchange of information?
- It was suggested to better **connect Horizon Europe to the CAP network**. The National Contact Point should be involved. It is also important that all AKIS actors (and not only researchers) are able to get involved in Horizon Europe projects. 'Seed' funding could be provided for the setting-up of international projects.
- It is important to avoid delays in connecting the future CAP network with the existing network. MS should start thinking about this, in order to mobilise the CAP network as soon as possible after the approval of the CAP SP. The following ideas were shared on **how to mobilise the CAP network** within the first 12 months after CAP-SP approval:
 - A first step is informing all AKIS actors about their roles in the new framework, since a lot of AKIS actors do not understand this yet (Croatia).
 - A "focus group" will be created with national authorities dealing with education, innovation and advisory services, and involving AKIS actors, to identify the actions needed, through the CAP plan, in order to develop the AKIS system (Greece).
 - It is important to have researchers on board. They are already involved in AKIS and working very closely with farmers and advisers. There is a close cooperation and a good setup. When designing the research programs, authorities can decide on how researchers should be involved and how they should cooperate with other actors. (Denmark).

Ideas shared in group 2:

MA could use the following ideas to design the innovation strand:

- Set up a **national Subgroup on Innovation** in the CAP network (example of PT) and design the next period together with them. Cover all sectors in this subgroup (e.g. agri-tourism). Thematic groups can be organised inside the Subgroup. The local Subgroup can take inspiration from the

EU Subgroup on Innovation. From the experience in Portugal this has been a very successful tool during the last programming period and they definitely plan to continue.

- Set up a **specific group to design AKIS** putting all the stakeholders together.
- The CAP network should be the place where you can go to ask all questions regarding innovation and a place to find contacts for new initiatives. It is currently sometimes difficult to find the right people when you have a novel idea. In the future, national CAP networks could provide more help with **connecting people from different sectors**. An example from Austria was shared in the group. A person from the agri-tourism sector was looking for contacts to bring more innovative solutions to the tourism sector. He was struggling to find the right contacts because a lot of (technological) innovation projects are focused on the farming practice and not so much on tourism. To find the synergies, it would be necessary to first find the people/companies/projects who might be interested or are already looking at the broader aspects of rural development instead of just focussing on agricultural production.

The members of group 2 also shared some examples of what is being planned in their countries:

- Some countries are discussing about specific topics, like for example on how to involve rural development topics (as agritourism) and the stakeholders linked to this topic in the future network. A focus group on agri-tourism might be an idea.
- Introduce cooperation options such as living labs and lighthouse farms.
- Reduce the administrative burden : how can the future national CAP network help to reduce administrative burden, for example for the implementation of OG projects?
- Better connecting the advisers into the AKIS.

Ideas shared in group 3:

In group 3, it was agreed that **EIP-AGRI should be strengthened** and a number of ideas were shared:

- It is key to create facilitation units supporting the innovation process.
- It was also mentioned that innovation needs less bureaucracy and more flexibility.
- There is a need for inspiring tools for dissemination, in a more practical way.
- It is important to look for multipliers.
- Networking is very important (e.g. cross visits). Opportunities for cross visits within and outside the borders should be created.
- It is also important to foresee funding for preparations at earlier stages of the projects.
- Another point mentioned is the need to help to build bridges between OGs, thematic networks and H2020.
- There is a need for more training, for peer-to-peer learning.

This was followed by an exchange of thoughts on **regionalised countries**. In MS where there are shared responsibilities between regional and national level, it is important to look for synergies and networking. There was an exchange of thoughts about the need for exchange between regional networks in regionalised countries. This might be difficult because regions might not have incentives to do so. There are some good experiences (Germany) with online meetings because people do not have to travel. It might be advisable to organise seminars in each region to give people a reason to go there and interchange ideas. It might also be an idea to organise something at EU level for regionalised countries to exchange on approaches for the innovation strand, since they might have common challenges and problems.

The members of group 3 also shared some examples of what is being planned in their countries:

- Competences at national level in Spain focus more on coordination and establishing synergies (implementation is at regional level). Trying to improve connections with advisers, strengthening the AKIS, preparing a platform to register advisers, to better link them to farmers, a knowledge reservoir and improving knowledge exchange especially from OGs and Horizon projects with a platform. It will be done at national level and currently discussing with the regions as some do not agree with all the details.
- In Latvia, connecting projects with the cooperation of the current AKIS, mapping actors, building new networks for further discussion on the implementation. It is not clear whether there will be competition for funding for strengthening the AKIS and other priorities. There will be financing for AKIS and CAP/EIP, but probably there will be less for CAP activities and more for the newcomers, AKIS.
- Currently in EURAKNOS and EUREKA a knowledge reservoir on good practices from MA projects is being built which can be useful for managing authorities. It will be available in all national languages. There is a specific platform on 'organics' where partners have selected tools which are being translated to several national languages. The current EC's Organic Action Plan will be helpful e.g. for organic farmers advisers.
- Currently there is a solid base in Finland. No strong changes are foreseen. Currently smart agriculture seminars are organised to look for tools to use. The AKIS network will be broadened and farmers will be brought to the centre and will be given a stronger voice.
- In Slovakia there are no OGs yet, but a call is now open. Currently the AKIS is being built. The digital strategy can be helpful for several purposes. Some measures are in place, such as the provision of specific investments to improve innovation. In terms of dissemination there is a good basis in Slovakia, but more could be done, for example, to reach citizens. E.g. 'healthy soils' targets farmers, but it is also relevant for citizens living around the farms, so that they understand the role of soils and the importance of the green cover.
- In France, ACTA (network of agricultural technical institutes) is participating in multiple H2020, MAP projects and thematic networks. ACTA is appointed by the French Ministry of Agriculture and Food for transferring and valorising knowledge from European projects to national and regional level. This is done by organising regional events for dissemination, in cooperation with the Chambers of agriculture.

Ideas shared in group 4

In group 4, the main topic that was discussed was the importance of **networking between OGs** and of sharing information:

- Cross-border visits between OGs are important to network and exchange knowledge.
- There is a need for more **thematic exchange** across borders.
- People involved in OGs are quite busy with their work and they do not have a lot of time to search for similar projects. Therefore, an **external facilitator** is needed to connect similar projects and to foster the networking. A facilitator function could make things run smoother.
- A **clear OG database** is useful as far as the OGs send in the right information. Keywords are fundamental to identify the activities. The EIP-AGRI and regional level database are both useful. However, not all people use the database. One common information and communication system could be built with AKIS. Before the final report, the MA could ask an abstract of each OG and they can disseminate this to everyone.
- To share the outcomes of OGs, the national authority in Spain plans activities to share OG data. There are plenty of **webinars** on different themes. They are useful to disseminate information

on OGs, but also H2020 and regional projects. Different stakeholders are present in the webinars and are sharing information. More people can participate, less money and time is needed.

Ideas shared in group 5

The participants in group 5 shared some thoughts about needs for the EU network, and for the national level.

At the EU level two important aspects were mentioned:

- The need to improve links between the EIP-AGRI network and national networks. E.g. helping national networks on collecting information on OGs in other MS. There is a need for more structured ways to access information. The solution could be a structured database (e.g. Italy).
- Clarify methodological issues between EU and national networks e.g. on advisory services, peer-to-peer learning.

At the national level, the following needs were mentioned:

- Identify where information is lost. MA or NSU could assign some resources to communication and dissemination. It might be an idea to appoint intermediators.
- Assign more funding for EIP-AGRI in the next period, also for transregional and transnational visits. The current period was experimental in a lot of MS.
- Need for visual communication.
- Connecting OGs by cross-border visits is more important than transnational OGs.

ANNEX 2: VOTING EXERCISE: PRIORITIES FOR EU NETWORKING ACTIVITIES AFTER 2020

Which of the 4 clusters do you find most important? (One answer)

- Cluster 1: AKIS and digitalisation
- Cluster 2: Sustainable management of natural resources
- Cluster 3: Value chains and bioeconomy
- Cluster 4: Other ideas

Which of the four clusters do you find most important?

Posted to Session: Session III: Proposals for networking activities after 2020, in the context of the European CAP network

[Display Results](#)



In subcluster 1.1 (Knowledge exchange and dissemination), which topic do you find most important?

- 1.1.1 Future agriculture needs: how to address them now
- 1.1.2 Online knowledge exchange to support the transition to sustainable food and farming systems
- 1.1.3 Focusing on impact and recycling of prior project outcomes
- 1.1.4 Small-scale farms

In subcluster 1.1 (Knowledge exchange and dissemination), which topic do you find most important?

Posted to Session: Session III: Proposals for networking activities after 2020, in the context of the European CAP network

[Display Results](#)

A. 1.1.1 Future agriculture needs: how to address them now 7 votes 25%

B. 1.1.2 Online knowledge exchange to support the transition to sustainable food and farming systems 12 votes 42.9%

C. 1.1.3 Focusing on impact and recycling of prior project outcomes 3 votes 10.7%

D. 1.1.4 Small-scale farms 6 votes 21.4%

In subcluster 1.2 (Strengthening farm advisory services), which topic do you find most important?

1.2.1 Education of young advisers

1.2.2 The role of contractors in disseminating sustainable agricultural practices

In subcluster 1.2 (Strengthening farm advisory services), which topic do you find most important?

Posted to Session: Session III: Proposals for networking activities after 2020, in the context of the European CAP network

[Display Results](#)

A. 1.2.1 Education of young advisers 18 votes 69.2%

B. 1.2.2 The role of contractors in disseminating sustainable agricultural practices 8 votes 30.8%

In subcluster 1.3 (Enhancing cross-thematic and cross-border interactive innovation), which topic do you find most important?

1.3.1 Cooperation across national borders

1.3.2: EIP & Leader

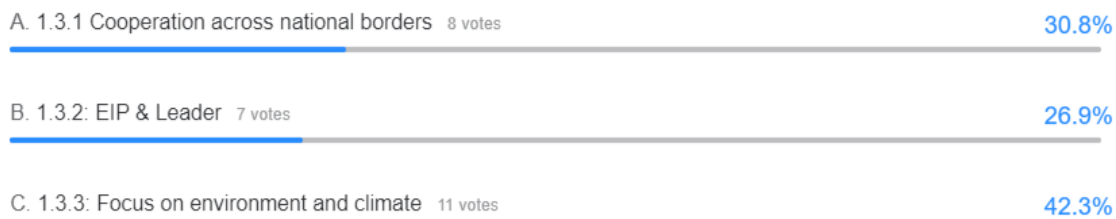
1.3.3: Focus on environment and climate

[Results](#) [Voters](#) [Edit Poll](#)

In subcluster 1.3 (Enhancing cross-thematic and cross-border interactive innovation), which topic do you find most important?

Posted to Session: Session III: Proposals for networking activities after 2020, in the context of the European CAP network

[Display Results](#)



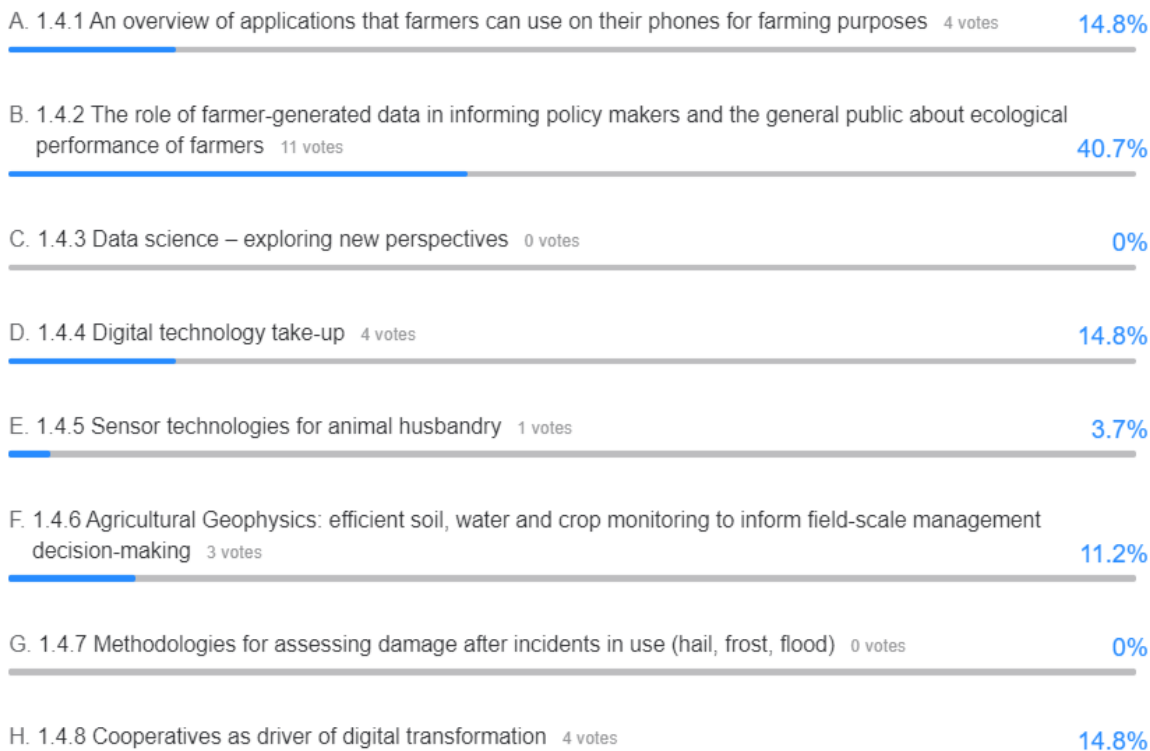
In subcluster 1.4 (Supporting the digital transition in agriculture), which topic do you find most important?

- 1.4.1 An overview of applications that farmers can use on their phones for farming purposes
- 1.4.2 The role of farmer-generated data in informing policy makers and the general public about ecological performance of farmers
- 1.4.3 Data science – exploring new perspectives
- 1.4.4 Digital technology take-up
- 1.4.5 Sensor technologies for animal husbandry
- 1.4.6 Agricultural Geophysics: efficient soil, water and crop monitoring to inform field-scale management decision-making
- 1.4.7 Methodologies for assessing damage after incidents in use (hail, frost, flood)
- 1.4.8 Cooperatives as driver of digital transformation

In subcluster 1.4 (Supporting the digital transition in agriculture), which topic do you find most important?

[Display Results](#)

Posted to Session: Session III: Proposals for networking activities after 2020, in the context of the European CAP network



In subcluster 2.1 (General sustainable farming aspects), which topic do you find most important?

- 2.1.1 The Myths and Truths of Sustainability - A macro perspective
- 2.1.2 Farmers want Sustainability
- 2.1.3 European Partnership on agroecology living labs and research infrastructures: How can it take shape in Member States?
- 2.1.4 Biodiversity in rural areas
- 2.1.5 Climate adaptation of the European agriculture and food sector

In subcluster 2.1 (General sustainable farming aspects), which topic do you find most important?

Posted to Session: Session III: Proposals for networking activities after 2020, in the context of the European CAP network

[Display Results](#)



In subcluster 2.2 (Sustainable practices in specific cultivations and sectors), which topic do you find most important?

2.2.1 Sugar beet

2.2.2 Beehive products: Diversification for beekeepers through production of pollen, propolis and royal jelly

2.2.3 Sustainability of olive cultivation

2.2.4 The wool sector in Europe - new opportunities for processing wool produced by European sheep

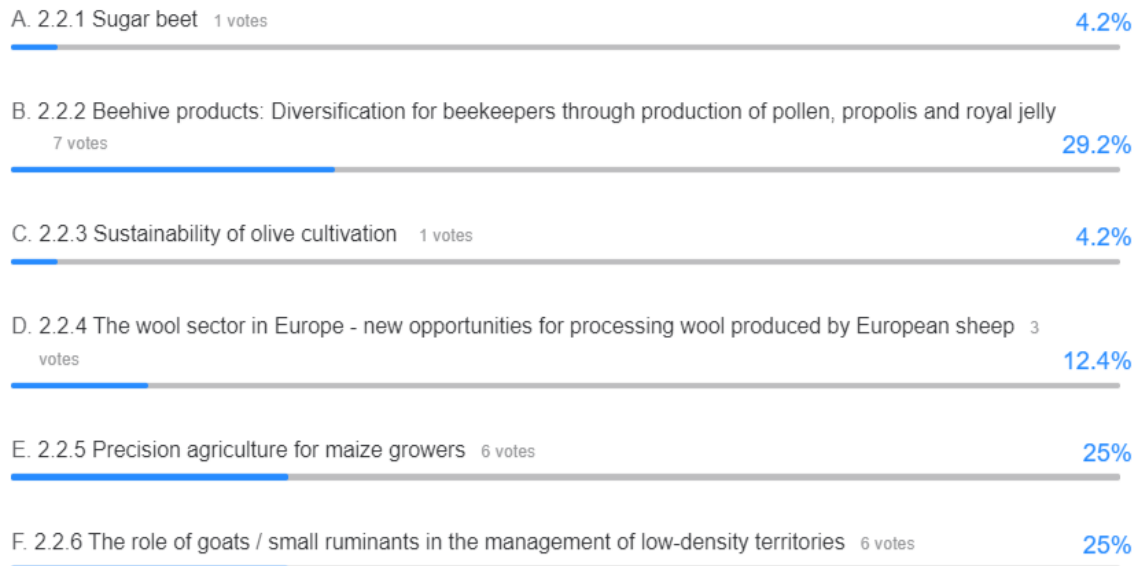
2.2.5 Precision agriculture for maize growers

2.2.6 The role of goats / small ruminants in the management of low-density territories

In subcluster 2.2 (Sustainable practices in specific cultivations and sectors), which topic do you find most important?

Posted to Session: Session III: Proposals for networking activities after 2020, in the context of the European CAP network

[Display Results](#)



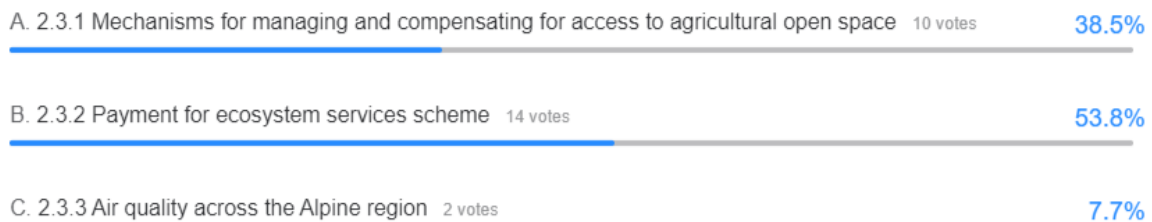
In subcluster 2.3 (Ecosystem services), which topic do you find most important?

- 2.3.1 Mechanisms for managing and compensating for access to agricultural open space
- 2.3.2 Payment for ecosystem services scheme
- 2.3.3 Air quality across the Alpine region

In subcluster 2.3 (Ecosystem services), which topic do you find most important?

Posted to Session: Session III: Proposals for networking activities after 2020, in the context of the European CAP network

[Display Results](#)



In subcluster 2.4 (Water management), which topic do you find most important?

2.4.1 Water management in rural areas and in agricultural production

2.4.2 Water governance and agriculture – models, best practices and solutions

In subcluster 2.4 (Water management), which topic do you find most important?

Posted to Session: Session III: Proposals for networking activities after 2020, in the context of the European CAP network

[Display Results](#)

A. 2.4.1 Water management in rural areas and in agricultural production 12 votes **46.2%**

B. 2.4.2 Water governance and agriculture – models, best practices and solutions 14 votes **53.8%**

In subcluster 3.1 (Food systems and food supply chain), which topic do you find most important?

3.1.1 Local food supply for Leipzig

3.1.2 Fast methods for assuring food integrity along the whole chain

3.1.3 Personalised nutrition will shape the food systems of the future: How will production adapt?

3.1.4 Developing new crops for new markets

In subcluster 3.1 (Food systems and food supply chain), which topic do you find most important?

Posted to Session: Session III: Proposals for networking activities after 2020, in the context of the European CAP network

[Display Results](#)

A. 3.1.1 Local food supply for Leipzig 2 votes **7.7%**

B. 3.1.2 Fast methods for assuring food integrity along the whole chain 11 votes **42.3%**

C. 3.1.3 Personalised nutrition will shape the food systems of the future: How will production adapt? 7 votes **26.9%**

D. 3.1.4 Developing new crops for new markets 6 votes **23.1%**

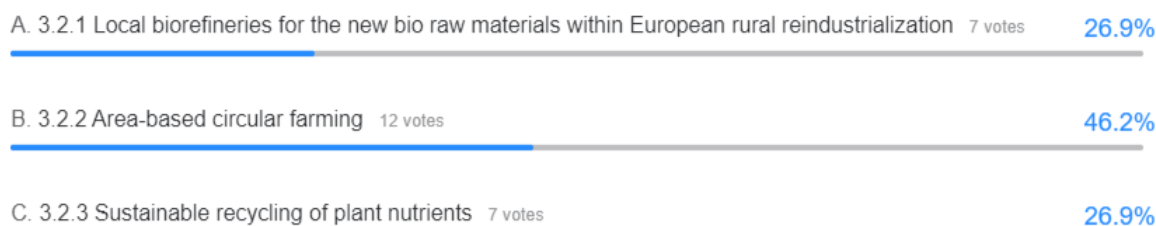
In subcluster 3.2 (Circular and bioeconomy), which topic do you find most important?

- 3.2.1 Local biorefineries for the new bio raw materials within European rural reindustrialization
- 3.2.2 Area-based circular farming
- 3.2.3 Sustainable recycling of plant nutrients

In subcluster 3.2 (Circular and bioeconomy), which topic do you find most important?

Posted to Session: Session III: Proposals for networking activities after 2020, in the context of the European CAP network

[Display Results](#)



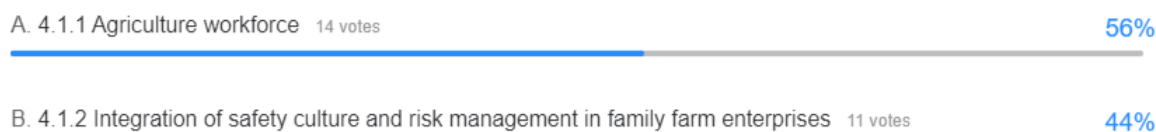
In subcluster 4.1 (Farmers' welfare and seasonal labour / workforce), which topic do you find most important?

- 4.1.1 Agriculture workforce
- 4.1.2 Integration of safety culture and risk management in family farm enterprises

In subcluster 4.1 (Farmers' welfare and seasonal labour / workforce), which topic do you find most important?

Posted to Session: Session III: Proposals for networking activities after 2020, in the context of the European CAP network

[Display Results](#)



In subcluster 4.3 (EIP-AGRI functioning), which topic do you find most important?

- 4.3.1 EIP between funding periods
- 4.3.2 More focus on innovation in EIP
- 4.3.3 Focus on competitiveness in all kinds of farming
- 4.3.4 EU Farm to Fork strategy: how can EIP-AGRI contribute?

In subcluster 4.3 (EIP-AGRI functioning), which topic do you find most important?

Posted to Session: Session III: Proposals for networking activities after 2020, in the context of the European CAP network

[Display Results](#)



Not counted (only 1 topic in the subcluster):

- Cluster 2.5 (Reduction of pesticides) – 2.5.1 Reducing use of phytosanitary product and farmer adaptation
- Cluster 4.2 (Organisational innovation) – 4.2.1 Social / organisational innovation in rural development