

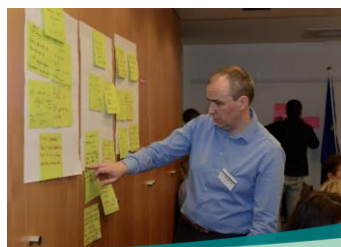


Subgroup on Innovation for agricultural productivity and sustainability

4th Meeting

18 February 2016

REPORT



Introduction

Opening remarks

Rob Peters opened the fourth meeting of the Subgroup on Innovation clarifying the main objectives of the day, namely to:

- a) Consider how the EIP-AGRI network can best operate within the wider framework of Rural Networks and to identify possible ways to promote synergies between networking activities
- b) Discuss how the EIP-AGRI network can best support operational groups based on a first screening of the 94 RDPs that are supporting the EIP through the cooperation measure
- c) Provide input for the RN Steering Group meeting of 4/3/2016, based on the conclusions of discussions under point a) and b) above
- d) Launch a discussion on how focus groups' outcomes can be best used and what kind of follow-up can be considered, based on the experience gained in 2014 and 2015

[The detailed agenda of the meeting can be found here.](#)

Session I: Embedding the EIP-AGRI network in the broader networking activities

Overview of Rural networks' activities for 2016

[Link to presentation](#)

Antonella Zona presented the common strategic framework for EU Rural Networks (EIP-AGRI network and ENRD). The ten priorities identified by the Assembly for networking activities in 2015 and 2016 have been organised in three work streams common to both networks:

1. Capacity building and peer exchange
2. Thematic work around two themes: "Smart and competitive agriculture and rural areas" and "Promoting the transition to green growth"
3. Cross cutting activities (analyses, good practices, communications, guidance documents)

The EIP-AGRI network contributes to the three common work strands and coordinates its activities with the ENRD.

Discussion in groups

The question "**Considering the Rural Networks' workplan for 2016, do you see gaps/overlappings and possibilities for further synergies?**" was discussed in groups. The main suggestions and inputs for the Steering Group coming out from the discussions are:

- Need for capacity building: it can be promoted by involving Paying Agencies to share knowledge e.g. on costs for operational groups; more specifically, capacity building between MAs and PAs on solutions and costs on the setting up and running of OG projects

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for further dissemination activities regarding outcomes of focus groups in order to promote their use by all interested actors within EU Rural Networks: develop dissemination plans and organise events to present and discuss FG outcomes; reports cannot be too long; translation of relevant parts of reports should be promoted in cooperation with NRNs • Promote networking between OGs • Organise a workshop on measure 16 involving LAGs • Adapt communication to the different types of stakeholders, looking at their specific skills • Put more emphasis on activities in eastern Europe • Organise the meetings of governance structures in the same week or combined with other events.
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Session II A: EIP-AGRI implementation in RDPs

<p>RDP support to Operational Groups</p> <p>Link to presentation</p>	<p>Fabio Cossu presented a first global picture of RDPs support to Operational Groups through the cooperation measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 106 RDPs (out of 118 RDPs in total) implement cooperation through Measure 16 • On average 1,8% of the total RDP budget (total public expenditure) will be spent on cooperation (M16) for a total public expenditure of 2,8 billion EUR. The average size of a cooperation project is approx. 183.000 EUR • M16 will be contributing to all the 6 RD priorities and to several Focus Areas, depending on the choices of the Member States. The highest shares of M16 budget is allocated to FAs 2A "farm performance" (27,4% of total M16 budget) and 3A "Agrifood chains" (27,4% of total M16 budget) . • 94 RDPs will support EIP Operational Groups <p>Overall 3.205 OGs are planned in 2014-2020, corresponding to approximately 20% of the total number of cooperation projects</p>
<p>First elements from the RDP screening</p> <p>Link to presentation</p>	<p>Margarida Ambar and Sergiu Didicescu presented some first elements emerging from the screening of the 106 RDPs implementing Measure 16. The presentation focused on the following aspects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Eligibility criteria (OG composition, Functioning of the partnership, Innovative angle) b) Selection criteria (quality of the partnership, Innovation, Dissemination of results, etc.) c) Types of beneficiaries d) Cross-border possibilities e) Specific aspects (duration, setting-up and project implementation, max. amount and rate of support).

Discussion in groups

The discussions focussed on the following elements:

Question 1 - Based on the elements contained in the RDPs, what are the key facts/learning and emerging patterns for OGs support?

- **Eligibility and selection criteria:** What would be an effective size for EIP-AGRI projects? Overhead costs can become quite high for projects with a small budget (e.g. less than 50 000); but on the other hand, large sums of money may hinder 'real' innovation. Focus on innovation needs to be well emphasized in RDPs; the EIP-AGRI network and NRNs can stress this and follow up the innovative features in OGs projects/ activities
- **Types of beneficiaries:** broad spectrum of beneficiaries, but clearly producers/farmers are key players; processors seem missing. Important to have other types of beneficiaries - such as consumer interest groups – to spark innovation
- **Cross-border possibilities:** There seems to be little room for transregional/transnational cooperation through OGs but this is probably a temporary situation; the implementation of the measure has just started and MAs possibly prefer to take it step by step. Cross border learning for farmers was highlighted, and the Spanish participants explained why the regional programmes in Spain did not include cross-border opportunities for OGs: because this is covered by the national programme in Spain
- **Specific aspects:** Huge differences between countries and regions, in approach, and in budget range. Several MS have a differentiation in the support according to 2 phases (setting up and project).

Question 2 - How can the EIP network support and add value to the innovative projects supported by the RDP?

- Share **best practices** and provide **guidance** on:
 - Selection criteria for OG proposals
 - What is successful and unsuccessful?
 - How to measure?
 - Time duration – (interactive) innovation vs R&D
 - Relationship between amount of money and ambition of the project
 - What are the ways to work cross-border?
 - How to establish selection criteria?
 - How to establish an independent evaluation commission?
- **Capacity building:**
 - Promote peer to peer exchange
 - Identify pioneers and make use of them as facilitators / hosts in activities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exchange and development of practical tools, e.g. standard templates for applications, reports, self-assessment ● Promote effective communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop and share videos, create a "video bank" with videos by individual OGs ○ Focus on improving dissemination of results through activities targeted to specific stakeholders' group ○ Develop toolbox for OGs to disseminate their outcomes ● Work hand in hand with Managing Authorities and National Rural Networks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organise exchanges between MAs, PAs and EC auditors on the practical issues regarding the implementation of OGs ○ Explore the potential of combination of RDP Measures (e.g. M16 in combination with M1) ○ Bring together national and regional rural networks with actors in OGs ○ Offer exchange opportunities for OGs from different MS working on similar topics; set-up a framework where OGs can visit each other's projects ○ Connect OGs with LAGs ○ Dealing with translation of publications: NRN should have resources for translating material that is relevant and important for their territory ● Explore the potential for cross-fertilisation with other EIPs (e.g. Health, Raw Materials)
<p>Discussion in groups</p>	<p>The following questions were discussed in groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Based on the elements contained in the RDPs, what are the key facts/learning and emerging patterns for OGs support? ● How can the EIP network support and add value to the innovative projects supported by the RDP? <p>The discussions focussed on the following elements:</p> <p>Q1 - Based on the elements contained in the RDPs, what are the key facts/learning and emerging patterns for OGs support?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Eligibility and selection criteria: What would be an effective size for EIP-AGRI projects? Overhead costs can become quite high for projects with a small budget (e.g. less than 50 000); but on the other hand, large sums of money may hinder 'real' innovation. Focus on innovation needs to be well emphasized in RDPs; the EIP-AGRI network and NRNs can stress this and follow up the innovative features in OGs projects/ activities ● Types of beneficiaries: broad spectrum of beneficiaries, but clearly producers/farmers are key players; processors seem missing.

	<p>Important to have other types of beneficiaries - such as consumer interest groups – to spark innovation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-border possibilities: There seems to be little room for transregional/transnational cooperation through OGs but this is probably a temporary situation; the implementation of the measure has just started and MAs possibly prefer to take it step by step. Cross border learning for farmers was highlighted, and the Spanish participants explained why the regional programmes in Spain did not include cross-border opportunities for OGs: because this is covered by the national programme in Spain • Specific aspects: Huge differences between countries and regions, in approach, and in budget range. Several MS have a differentiation in the support according to 2 phases (setting up and project). <p>Q2 - How can the EIP network support and add value to the innovative projects supported by the RDP?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share best practices and provide guidance on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Selection criteria for OG proposals ○ What is successful and unsuccessful? ○ How to measure? ○ Time duration – (interactive) innovation vs R&D ○ Relationship between amount of money and ambition of the project ○ What are the ways to work cross-border? ○ How to establish selection criteria? ○ How to establish an independent evaluation commission? • Capacity building: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promote peer to peer exchange ○ Identify pioneers and make use of them as facilitators / hosts in activities ○ Exchange and development of practical tools, e.g. standard templates for applications, reports, self-assessment • Promote effective communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop and share videos, create a "video bank" with videos by individual OGs ○ Focus on improving dissemination of results through activities targeted to specific stakeholders' group ○ Develop toolbox for OGs to disseminate their outcomes • Work hand in hand with Managing Authorities and National Rural Networks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organise exchanges between MAs, PAs and EC auditors on the practical issues regarding the implementation of OGs ○ Explore the potential of combination of RDP Measures (e.g. M16 in combination with M1)
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bring together national and regional rural networks with actors in OGs ○ Offer exchange opportunities for OGs from different MS working on similar topics; set-up a framework where OGs can visit each other's projects ○ Connect OGs with LAGs ○ Dealing with translation of publications: NRN should have resources for translating material that is relevant and important for their territory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore the potential for cross fertilisation with other EIPs (e.g. Health, Raw Materials)
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Session II B: Support for Operational Groups

<p>Toolkit for Operational Groups</p> <p>Link to presentation</p>	<p>Inge Van Oost presented a guide gathering information on the opportunities for Operational Groups under the Rural Development Regulation that will be published on the EIP-AGRI website in spring 2016. The guide includes information on the following points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. EIP-AGRI concept 2. What is innovation? 3. EIP-AGRI Operational Groups – basic principles 4. Innovation support services, including advisors focusing on innovation 5. EIP-AGRI networking 6. Links to other policies
<p>Information on the first calls for OGs and on selected projects</p> <p>Austria</p> <p>Link to presentation</p> <p>Spain</p> <p>Link to presentation</p> <p>Sweden</p> <p>Link to presentation</p> <p>United Kingdom</p> <p>Link to presentation</p>	<p>Four Managing Authorities/National Rural Networks presented their experience in launching the first calls for operational groups.</p> <p>Mirjam Linninger explained that Austria has put in place a two-step (setting up & projects) call process. The first call was launched in spring 2015 and the first selection of projects was completed in February 2016.</p> <p>Carolina Gutiérrez stressed the importance of OGs in Spain: 859 OGs should be supported overall by 2020 both under regional RDPs and the National Programme. A two-step call process is adopted at the national level. Catalonia is the most advanced in the OG selection process.</p> <p>Inger Pehrson presented the system adopted in Sweden, where applications for OGs can be submitted all year round electronically via the Swedish Agricultural Board's website. Decisions for project funding are taken 2-4 times per year. The NRN plays an important role.</p> <p>Fay Collington explained that the four British RDPs have different systems and timing for selecting OGs: England is expected to select the first projects in</p>

	July 2016; Scotland has already selected 4 Operational Groups and further project proposals will be considered in 2016; Wales will open a window for first applications in June 2016, focused on specific themes.
<p>Information on the Workshop "Operational Groups: the first experiences"</p> <p>Link to presentation</p>	<p>Aniko Seregely informed about the workshop "Operational Groups: the first experiences", that will be held in Legnaro (Italy) on 20-21 April 2016.</p> <p>It aims at bringing together the first already existing OGs, potential actors in OGs and stakeholders creating a supporting environment for OGs in order to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exchange and learn from the first experiences; • learn and discuss what kind of supporting environment is most useful for Operational Groups and good practices to create it; • what is the role of the various actors, and • disseminate those first experiences in the EIP-AGRI network.
<p>Presentation of the template to be used to report about selected OGs</p> <p>Link to presentation</p>	<p>Fabio Cossu presented the common format to be used by Managing Authorities to communicate on operational groups during their activities and to disseminate their result. The format includes a short and easily understandable title, a short summary ("practice abstract") and the main outcome/recommendation.</p>

Session III A: Ongoing and new Focus Groups: state of play

<p>Information on the state of play of Focus Groups</p> <p>Link to presentation</p>	<p>Willemine Brinkman informed about the state of play of the 18 Focus groups finished or ongoing. A final report is available for 10 FGs. The detailed situation presented to the Subgroup is annexed to this report.</p>
<p>Launch of calls for experts for FG 19 and FG 20</p> <p>Link to presentation</p>	<p>The call for experts for FG 19 "Nutrient recycling" was presented at the 3rd meeting of the Subgroup.</p> <p>Antonella Zona presented the call for FG 20 "Sustainable mobilisation of forest biomass", stressing the significant contribution provided by the 12 Subgroup members who volunteered for helping in drafting the call. The calls for both Focus Groups will be published on 23/02/2016 and the deadline for applications will be set on 21/03/2016.</p>

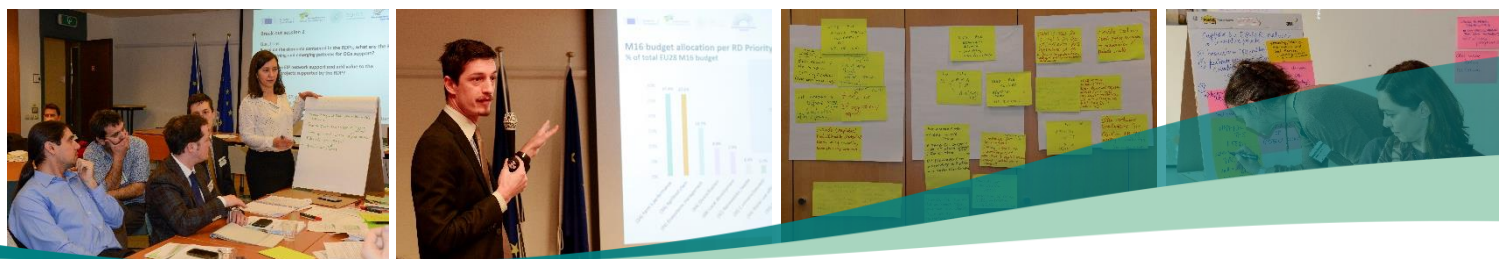
Session III B: Making best use of Focus Groups' outcomes

<p>National Initiatives</p>	<p>This sub-session started with the presentation of the initiatives taken in three Member states to ensure a follow up at the national level to EIP-AGRI Focus groups in 2015-2016.</p> <p>Maria de S. Luis Centeno stressed the relevance of the topics treated by 2014 and 2015 EIP Focus Groups for Portugal. The NRN established a direct contact</p>
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<p>Portugal Link to presentation</p> <p>Hungary Link to presentation</p> <p>Spain Link to presentation</p>	<p>with the Portuguese experts participating in Focus Groups and developed a series of dissemination activities targeted to national and regional actors in Portugal.</p> <p>Timea Reszketo highlighted the links between the Hungarian initiatives at the national and regional level (workshops, focus groups, support to operational groups, communication&dissemination activities) and the EU-level Focus Groups and Horizon 2020.</p> <p>Carolina Gutiérrez informed about the Focus Groups organised at the national level in Spain: a FG on irrigation started in 2015, 3 other FGs are following in 2016 (one on forestry, other topics to be decided). All national FG are Supported by the National Rural Network. She stressed the need to improve the dissemination of EU-level Focus Groups, including by translating the reports.</p>
<p>Thematic networks under Horizon 2020 Link to presentation</p>	<p>Mark Redman presented the follow up to the EIP-AGRI Focus Group on Sustainable High Nature Value Farming: several initiatives stemmed from the FG, such as some concrete initiatives in Romania to catalyse actors and tools for sustainable HNV farming (including potential EIP operational groups) as well as a promising H2020 Thematic Network on HNV Farming.</p> <p>He highlighted the strength of the Focus Group approach within the EIP-AGRI network as a node connecting and engaging existing networks and pools of expertise in creative and inspiring dialogue.</p>
<p>Discussion in groups</p>	<p>The question “Based on the experience gained until now, how can we make best use of FG outcomes?” was discussed in groups. The following recommendations emerged:</p> <p>Link with Operational Groups and Horizon 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect FG with OGs; in particular, connect relevant OGs with future FGs • Connect FG to H2020 projects and Thematic Networks <p>Organisation of FG work and outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map the outcomes / information and provide feedback • Organise all knowledge that has been collected: for instance, all research needs identified by FGs in one database • Take out the important elements from FG results and make them searchable in the database; this would also make easier the translation of important bits • Prepare a questionnaire for stakeholders, elaborated by FG members, in between meetings about identified challenges and ideas • Broaden the participation <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate FG outcomes using the right language according to each target group

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring forward the success stories, for example how the FG inspired H2020 thematic networks • Prepare the FG reports in such a way that they become easier to translate • Disseminate via FG members (multipliers) and promote multipliers' missions; involve them in the dissemination plan • Do "branding" of FG outcomes <p>Dissemination activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the main results: organise thematic events and involve MAs and stakeholders, have speed dating and use "TED talk" style; use public media and PR, show examples via videos on the EIP website and involve students in dissemination; disseminate FG results via field trips, use visual elements; • Intensify use of NSUs / NRNs as facilitators; to whom – research networks, advisors, stakeholders, Ministry offices, agriculture organisations • Link with other initiatives / projects / organisations working on the same topic • Organise meetings with FG participants • Organise national/local FG and local events on the same themes
<h2>Wrap up and next steps</h2>	
<p>Upcoming Events Link to presentation</p>	<p>Iman Boot gave an overview of the activities planned for 2016, on a monthly basis, and anticipated two possible items for the next meeting of the Subgroup on 2/6/16:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First ideas work programme 2017 • Linking up to research (thematic networks)
<p>Organisation of the Subgroup's work</p>	<p>This point was not treated due to lack of time.</p>

The next meeting of the Subgroup on Innovation will take place on Thursday 2 June 2016 in Brussels. The agenda and all presentations can be found on the [EIP-AGRI website](#).



ANNEX

EIP-AGRI Focus Groups	State of play February 2016
Animal husbandry reducing antibiotic use in pig farming	Final report - Brochure
Benchmarking farm performance	Ongoing – 1 st meeting
Ecological Focus Areas	Ongoing - 2 nd meeting
Fertiliser efficiency	Ongoing - 2 nd meeting
Genetic resources	Final report - Factsheet
High Nature Value	Final report - Factsheet
IPM for brassica	Final report
Livestock emissions	Ongoing – 1 st meeting
Mixed farming systems	Ongoing – 1 st meeting
New entrants into farming	Ongoing - 2 nd meeting
Organic farming	Final report - Factsheet - Brochure
Permanent grassland	Ongoing - 2 nd meeting
Precision farming	Final report - Factsheet
Protein crops	Final report – Brochure – Infographic (Estonian)
Short food supply chains	Final report – Fact sheet
Soil organic matter content in Mediterranean regions	Final report - Factsheet
Soil-borne diseases	Final report - Factsheet
Water & agriculture	Ongoing - 2 nd meeting