i2connect

INTERACTIVE INNOVATION

Deliverable 1.7
First report on the reflective capitalisation approach

April 2021

This report only reflects the views of the authors.

Dissemination Level

PU	Public	X
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)	

Summary

Project number: 863039

Project title: Connecting advisers to boost interactive innovation in agriculture and forestry

Duration: 5 years

Start date of project: 1/11/2019

Coordinator: APCA

Project Coordinator: Sylvain Sturel

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Content

1. INTRODUCTION

This report (as *Deliverable 1.7: 1st report on the reflective capitalisation approach*) elaborates the results of a workshop on the reflective capitalisation approach during the 2nd General Assembly (6th and 7th of November, 2020) and the follow up steps, including an explanatory video that was developed and the technical developments made so far with the reflection tool. Also, it documents the reactions that were obtained with the first reflective practice template. Finally, the next steps are elaborated.

In an earlier deliverable (*D1.6: A light network evaluation tool*), the conceptual bases as well as an overall methodological framework for the reflective capitalisation approach were presented. In addition, the objectives of Task 1.5 were re-formulated to reflect current understandings of the task as follows:

(a) To develop and test a 'light' reflection tool that will support project partners and advisors to structure and reflect on their learning situations. This will be tested throughout the project and then publicly displayed as an online tool via the i2connect website.

(b) To systematically screen for commonalities and differences, synergies and conflicts in the individual and group reflections on learning events in field reviews, from pilots, trainings, cross-visits and other project events such as internal meetings and workshops.

As a first follow up to the deliverable, this report is structured as follows:

Chapter 2 presents the main insights obtained from a workshop conducted on the reflective capitalisation approach during the 2nd General Assembly.

Chapter 3 details the elaboration of an explanatory video on reflective practice that was developed as part of the efforts to support partners' further understanding.

Chapter 4 describes the developments so far regarding the online reflection tool.

A timeline of the main events from November 2020 – April 2021 is shown below as an overview.
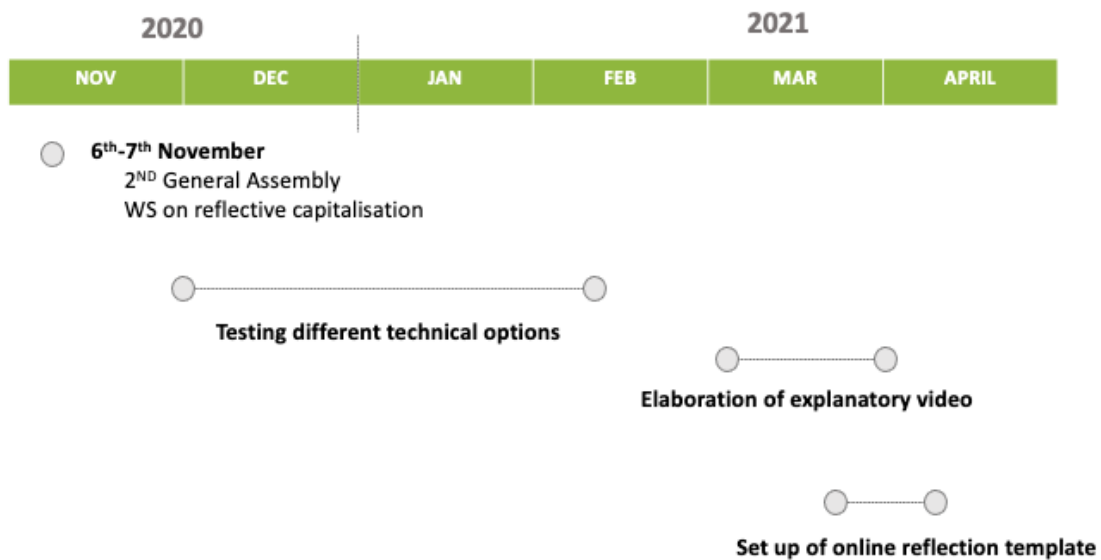

Figure 1 Timeline of recent activities

2. RESULTS FROM THE REFLECTIVE CAPITALISATION WORKSHOP

During the project's Second General Assembly in 2020[1], a workshop was organised with the objective to (i) establish mutual understanding of key definitions, concepts and purpose of the reflective capitalisation approach and (ii) to present the conceptual framework and collect feedback for improvement.

Related to the second objective, the following questions were posed to partners who were divided into sub-groups for an open exchange.

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[1] The GA was organised online due to the COVID restrictions to travel and conduction of physical meetings.

> 1. Please exchange on how you could **apply** reflective practice:
>   • How best can you get engaged?
>   • Do you agree to the way it is proposed or is there a need for change, and what change?
>   • Are there other constraints or concerns that may affect your engagement?
>   • Any other ideas …
> 2. If possible, also exchange on how **collective reflective practice** and **reflective capitalisation** can be realised within the i2connect project?

In general, partners showed enthusiasm and support for the approach. Regarding the above questions, there were doubts among a few partners who felt that the approach, although conceptually comprehensible, was still vague. This was on two levels: first because it is a rather new practice and also because the end goal of the reflections was still not clear. The partners requested for a guide or an extra workshop. For some other partners, the concern was about the practical arrangements; that is, how to get every partner committed so that reflective practice becomes a habitual activity. Suggestions to this included: setting a fixed schedule for reflection every month, and to send reminders. Others also expressed their wish for an online tool that is easily accessible and also allows partners to reflect anonymously. (Detailed feedback and suggestions are provided in the ANNEX).

3. ELABORATION OF AN EXPLANATORY VIDEO

Following the doubts shared by some partners who requested for further guidance on reflective practice, the University of Hohenheim (UHOH) team elaborated a short 8-minute video on the purpose, method and content of reflective practice. The purpose of the video was to:

1. Motivate partners, through a simple and illustrative manner, about the benefits of reflective practice and why they should all get engaged.
2. Explain the content and process of how partners can all get engaged.

Following a series of internal reviews for clarity, the video was converted into an easily accessible format and sub-titles added with the help of Thomas Alföldi (WP5). The video is currently available (non-public) on YouTube via the [following link]:

3. DEVELOPMENT OF AN ONLINE REFLECTION TOOL

With the elaboration of the reflection template (previously available as a word document), it was envisaged that in the future, an online tool will be developed that will facilitate the partners' reflections , as well as data collection for research purposes.

In the team, it was discussed that this online tool should fulfil a number of criteria:

1.   Be open source and freely accessible to all users
2.   Has an easy and simple user interface
3.   Provides a private space, accessible to only the user and administrator, where the user can safely store his/her reflections
4.   User has access to previous reflections

In addition, the digital tool should preferably:

1. Be easily accessible, even via mobile phone.
2. All the personal reflections can be seen by the administrator at a glance, without opening individual folders one by one.
3. Be easily disaggregate the reflection by event, person, date.

To meet these requirements, several possibilities were explored to which the results are summarised below:

Criteria	Open-source	Simple interface	Private space accessible to both user and administrator	Access to previous reflections	Comments
Google survey form	o	o	o	x	Requires that the survey form is sent out for each new entry; once submitted, there is no possibility to edit & no access to previous reflections
Microsoft onenote app	x	+/-	o	o	Requires access to a Microsoft account; requires users to join the Hohenheim Microsoft teams platform which is not so easy; a bit of learning curve to find one's way around the interface.
Moodle	+/-	x	o	o	Freely open to all; accessible even as a mobile app; easy to manage all reflections at once as an administrator; however, free version requires a steep learning curve for the administrator; makes difficult to build up the platform.

As it can be seen in the table, there was no perfect option. The choice of one option over another required compromises to be made. Thus, the decision was made that accessibility be the utmost criteria, i.e. the tool should be easy to access by all partners, without the need for downloading or registering to an application.

A tool, in the form of an online survey, was thus chosen as the preferred method.

The current version of the online reflection tool can be found via the following web address:

https://i2connect.aidaform.com/reflection-template

About the chosen host platform

AidaForm is an online form-building platform that is easy to develop and handle. One key advantage of this platform is that it not only is visually appealing and easy to use, but also offers several possibilities to build and customise the form according to one's needs. An additional advantage of this platform is that it allows respondents to receive a copy of their reflections after submitting, which is a key factor to achieve our purposes.

Snapshots from the online reflection template

INTERACTIVE INNOVATION

Your name (first name, surname) and organisation(abbreviation)

e.g. Natascha Bennet, CGIAR

> Currently **non-anonymous**; requires entry of name and organisation

What is the event or occasion to which your reflection is related?

Your reflection could be about a specific event e.g. i2connect workshop, meeting, GA, etc. or just reflections in general, not tied to a particular event

What are your observations and learning insights on 'interactive innovation' and/or 'the innovation advisor'?

This question aims at making achieved personal learning explicit based on one's observations. Tip: learning insight vs. observation An observation is what you saw and heard; an insight is when you make sense and meaning out of the observation)

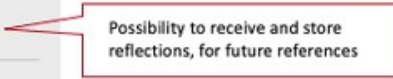**Which of these insights would you like to discuss with others in i2connect?**

This question aims at identifying issues for i2connect internal discussions and analyses. You can choose some or all of your previous answers which you deem relevant to share.

Issue of anonymity

The current version of the reflection tool does not allow a respondent to submit reflections anonymously. However, plans are currently underway to anonymize all reflections via two ways:

- Each partner is given an ID with which he will be identified in subsequent reflections, thereby eliminating the need to enter name and organization.
- Each partner will be able to download his/her reflection, via a reference code, thereby eliminating the need to enter his/her email address.

4. Partners' reactions to the reflective practice approach to date

Between November 2020 and March 2021, the reflection template (in either the word document format or the more recent online format) was shared within a number of i2connect events, where partners were asked to reflect on their main learnings after each event. One such event was in the Creative Content Group (CCG) meetings where the participating partners were encouraged to reflect after the meeting using the reflection template. Out of three such meetings conducted so far, three partners sent in their reflections. Considering that an average of 15 participants are usually present in a given CCG meeting, the response rate can be considered low. However, we expect that once the explanatory video is widely shared among project partners and a series of online sessions and active promotional activities are carried out to get all partners on board, more reflections will follow.

5. FUTURE STEPS

The following activities are planned as upcoming steps:

- Introduce the anonymity functionality to the current online reflection template.
- Widely disseminate the explanatory video among the i2connect partners
- Organise an online session as part of the promotional activities to get all partners engaged and address still open questions regarding the format of individual reflections.
- Organise a Scientific Task Force around Task 1.5.

i2connect General Assembly
Workshop on reflective capitalization
6th November, 2020

1. Please exchange on how you could **apply** reflective practice:
   - How best can you get engaged?
   - Do you agree to the way it is proposed or is there a need for change, and what change?
   - Are there other constraints or concerns that may affect your engagement?
   - Any other ideas …
2. If possible, also exchange on how **collective reflective practice** and **reflective capitalisation** can be realised within the i2connect project?

Results from group discussion

Group 1

On question 1
- The questions in the template were too broad that I did not know what was being asked.
- I have doubts about the process because I don't know if what I am answering is the right way to do it. Some guide and feedback on my responses will be good.
- In the beginning, I would like to do it with someone else, for example, with someone from 1.5

On question 2
- Collect answers from similar types of organisations to see the different points of view and afterwards make a synthesis

Group 2

On question 1
- Implement it after a very explicit "point" (event, step, product …)
- Important that individual reflections come up on the table

- Friday (or 30th of each month) reflections > take the most important "event" related to i2connect
- We have to do it repeatedly if we want to implement a new practice – it`s about creating a new habit;
- Sending reminders;
- WhatsApp (facebook) groups? (but: privacy?) > create sub-groups?
- Online tool that to make it visual, that also allows to do it anonymously;
- Online "Circle practice" for group level.

Group 3

On question 1
- We need commitment from everyone, there are supporters.
- We have to develop an attitude as a team.
- … concerns about the practical arrangements, how to stimulate people; how to reach 'participants'; some people with no social science background may have more difficulties to practice: guidelines, mentoring would be a good thing.
- Some people are new to the project, they start to get acquainted first;
- We could also try to include people who are not directly involved in i2connect.
- The regularity is a challenge; also if you want it after a certain while (!)
- It could support our internal communication; how could it be included in the GA.
- Use the process in the field reviews (T2.3).
- How can we externally communicate about the reflective practice?
- Mentoring for different task / groups; reflective practice could support us in getting more familiar with each other
- How to do group / collective reflections? We do it, but it is not yet 'capitalised' … connect it to the 40 fields reports (T2.3)

Other comments in the chat

Eelke Wielinga :	Nice! distinct from measuring progress according to yardsticks
Peter Paree (ZLTO) :	this fits nice on the 1st exercise today
Peter Paree (ZLTO) :	Cheers Andrea
Floor Geerling-Eiff (WR)	Is this linked to learning histories?
Peter Paree(ZLTO) :	never thought you can reflect and capitalise so well on an egg and balloons :)
Sylvain Sturel (APCA)	Another purpose of reflective capitalisation is obviously to avoid repeating mistakes

Christèle Couzy (IDELE) :	In 3.6 we have started a group reflection… to reflect on new training session...
Eelke Wielinga (ZLTO) :	this is action research at its best. I like it.
Floor Geerling-Eiff (WR)	What about feedback loops between meta, organisational and individual level? Oh, sorry, I was too quick ;-)
Thomas Alföldi (FiBL) :	Great presentation, thanks a lot Andrea and Sangeun!
Mikaël Naitlho (APCA) :	Very interesting and very pragmatic
Ruth Moser (Agridea) :	Yes indeed, thank you!
Sylvain Sturel (APCA) :	Where would you place peer-to-peer learning in your general scheme?
Eelke Wielinga (ZLTO) :	We need to pay attention to collecting from all participants in an event. That usually takes some following up by the organisers.
Floor Geerling-Eiff (WR) :	Thanks, very interesting!
Christèle Couzy (IDELE) :	yes, thanks a lot, very inspiring!
András HU (SZE) :	Great presentation, clear vision!
Peter Paree(ZLTO) :	when people like to discuss in i2c, should that be planned in advance, so that we can make appointment?
Emilie (Astredhor) :	Thank you! very clear
Eelke Wielinga (ZLTO) :	we will need harvest as well for 3.1: creative contents group
Elke Wielinga (ZLTO) :	supervision: similar to the peer-to-peer learning in WP4
Christèle Couzy (Idele) :	not obviously, between peers it's more intervision for me
Eelke Wielinga (ZLTO) :	as long as trainers facilitate the peer-to-peer learning of advisors it is quite similar we hope that these groups continue as peer groups.
Visi Garcia - DARP (MAPA) :	Taking into account the nature of my organisation (Regional Administration), I have doubts about the level of reflective practice that you are asking from partners at this stage. Is it individual personal input, or I should put myself in the skin of a potential "innovation adviser" from my region that may follow i2connect training in the future?
Floor Geerling-Eiff (WR) :	Here are some interesting insights adding to the process: https://www.wur.nl/nl/show/Reflexive-Monitoring-in-Action.htm
Christèle Couzy (Idele) :	Good Opportunity to start doing it
Ruth Moser (Agridea) :	Yes!
Simona Cristiano (CREA) :	I wonder whether here reflective capitalization means something different from Reflexive Monitoring ...
Christèle Couzy (Idele) :	eager to contribute!
Simona Cristiano (CREA):	willing to contribute @Andrea&team
Floor Geerling-Eiff (WR) :	Thank you Andrea and team. It was very good.