



Deliverable 1.13

Second overview of topical insights from innovation activities, services and networks

30th June 2021



Task 1.4

Identify topical knowledge in innovation networks, services and activities across Europe

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Second overview of topical insights from innovation activities, services and networks

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Project funded under the Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under Grant Agreement number 863039.

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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)	

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Version number	Implemented by	Submission date	Reason
V .01	Tom Kelly	30 June 2021	

This version will be updated regularly to adapt it to the project progress.

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Summary

Project number: 863039

Project: i2connect – 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*

Project manager: *Carmen Avellaner de Santos*

Deliverable: 1.13

Due data of deliverable: June 30th 2021

Actual submission date: 30th of June 2021

Work package: 1

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The views and opinions expressed in this report do not represent the official position of the European Commission and are entirely the responsibility of the authors.

Executive summary

This document provides an additional selection of topical insights from partners in Task 1.4 in the i2connect project. Ten insights were selected from 37 topical insights and were submitted in D1.5a in June 2020. A further 60 topical insights were shared by partners throughout the year June 2020 to June 2021, 19 were added in October 2020, 23 were added in Feb 2021 and 18 were added in June 2021. An additional selection of 30 more insights are included in this report from all shared insights collected to-date. These insights reflect the issues, topics, learnings and thoughts of people from the project consortium which are identified as being useful insights. These insights may be theoretical or practice based, they should indicate a connection between the ongoing science which supports interactive innovation theory and the day to day experience of actors who support innovation. The process of gathering, selecting and reporting topical insights will be repeated every 4 months up to the end of the project. All of the insights collected are visible to all consortium partners and may be added to by designated partners throughout the project. The process for the identification and collation of topical insights for Task 1.4 in the i2connect project will evolve throughout the project and this will be reflected in all the associated deliverables.

1.0 Background and Context of topical insights for interactive innovation

1.1 Introduction

Task 1.4 in the i2connect project aims to track and report the topical insights coming from the project partners' activities and interactions with other projects, outputs, events and networks relevant to effective support of interactive innovation. These reports will be produced in month 8, June 2020 and every four months thereafter up to and including month 60.

These topical insights are issues, observations, problems or solutions relevant to the support of interactive innovation by advisors who perform facilitation, knowledge brokering or other forms of support. These may be practical, theoretical or conceptual insights which have a currency which relates to the i2connect project and its ambition. These include new learnings from project

activities and partners active in supporting innovation through their own organisations, activities, services, networks and other projects.

These insights are written in short summary narratives with links to audio, audio-visual or infographic details if needed. The insights were collected and stored in digital format using a shared template on the collaborative platform Meteodocs. Each partner in Task 1.4 added their own contributions regularly to the shared spreadsheet template and a summary of the main insight topics from all the partners' contributions and 10 selected insights will be included in these reports (D1.5a to D1.5n). These outputs may be elaborated subsequently in i2connect newsletters, practice abstracts and in social media channels. This selection of insights will be by agreement among the T1.4 partners.

1.2 Context of task 1.4

The aim of the i2connect project is to build the capacity and motivation of agricultural and forestry advisors in interactive innovation methods and improve their support roles in innovation networks. Advisors will be better enabled to effectively support interactive innovation processes and thus contribute to faster and more successful innovations in rural areas.

1.3 Objective of task 1.4

The objective is to record and report on cutting-edge knowledge and topical insights of functions, activities and the enabling environment of advisors working in innovation groups and networks as evidenced from H2020 projects and EIP-AGRI Operational Groups. The Task 1.4 challenge is to identify topical knowledge in innovative networks, services and activities across Europe (M5 – 60).

Task 1.4 actors are individuals from the partner teams of Teagasc, APCA, AUA, ILVO, EUFRAS, IALB, SEASN, UHOH, NAK, CREA, MAPA, ZLTO and WR.

2.0 Identifying topical insights

2.1 Topics and issues

The **first step** is to identify topical issues where there may be insights – these are topics that capture the attention of advisors, farmers and others including the public media. They are also topics which the provider feels are urgent and important with useful and interesting insights. These may be the consequence of an observation, discussion, reflection, report, interview or analysis of an interactive innovation project,

process, activity, service or network. Topics may arise from academic literature, project deliverables and reports, EIP-AGRI reports, support literature and other interactive innovation public sources, but relevant to ongoing work in the providers projects, regions and countries.

This was done by listing up to 5 topics by each of the 13 partners involved. These were from each partners' involvement in innovation practices, projects, activities and networks. Ideas for topics can be sourced from day to day interaction and conversations, EIP AGRI publications and other local publications and events.

2.2 What are insights?

The **second step** is to ask the question- what are they saying to each other or to us that is relevant and interesting to interactive innovation, advisors, the AKIS and the activities in i2connect?

Topical insight narratives summarise the details of current stories, observation, rumours, opinions, facts and counter facts that key actors are talking about. These insights must be relevant to the broad objectives of i2connect and attract the attention of the advisors and other interactive innovation actors.

2.3 Categorisation

The **third step** is to categorise the topical insights under headings so that they can be searched and grouped easily. This should be done by the contributor, of course some insights can be categorised under more than one heading.

The proposed headings are:

- Funding, business models
- Network management, facilitation, moderation
- Back office support, training, capacity building
- Competency assessment
- Other advisory roles and activities
- Impact assessment, evaluating success
- Other

Funding and Business models

Regardless of the funding source (public or private) the value proposition of the interactive innovation project or network for all involved is important. Can it be justified in order to ensure the long-term value added of the initiative? These issues have been elaborated in D1.1. They contribute to the enabling environment which will be elaborated through the review of the country AKIS in T1.2.

Network management, facilitation, moderation

What are the issues and experiences around innovation networks? Are there insights around the multi actor networks that can be shared and help to guide the i2connect project? Some of these will be apparent from partners own experiences and will be added to by WP2 and other i2connect activities and experiences as the project proceeds.

Back office support, training, capacity building

How is this being done to good effect? Can we learn from the current Covid19 restrictions and be more efficient in how we support advisors and improve their capacity to support the different needs of interactive innovation activities, projects and networks? The ongoing work in WP3 and WP4 in addition to insights from other projects should provide a number of relevant experiences and insights.

Competency Assessment

These competency frameworks are interesting and they are used more and more in staff recruitment and service procurement. Do these exist for high end advisory services such as interactive innovation support? Task 1.3 will provide some useful insights. Are these considered at undergraduate level? Are there metrics and benchmarks for advisors in innovation support roles? Insights in this regard would be useful particularly in WP3 and WP4.

Other Advisory roles and activities

To what extent are advisory support services and interactive innovation activities, projects and network stand alone or added on to other roles which advisors perform across a range of one to one technical/financial support, group events, publications or education with a wider base of farmers clients? How does this help or hinder the interactive innovation support role? What do we see in the inventory of advisors in Task 1.2, D1.3 or in the selected practical cases Task 2.3, D2.2 or the harvested common best practices from field reviews in Task 2.6/D2.4?

Impact Assessment

As advisors, how are the impacts of these interactive innovation activities, projects and networks recorded and evaluated? Are their lessons, qualitative and quantitative tools from the EU funded project LIAISON which can help in the impact assessment? WP2 is expected to learn from successful practical cases. Are there insights which can help to get better impact assessments to support the promotion of interactive innovation activities, projects and networks?

Other

Everyone in the project should feel free to express their own issues, concerns, successes and failures in the form of insights. From these insights we all learn and understand better the complexity of the interactive innovation process. It is therefore particularly important that other insights coming from the day to day experience, thoughts and feelings of individuals are documented and shared with others.

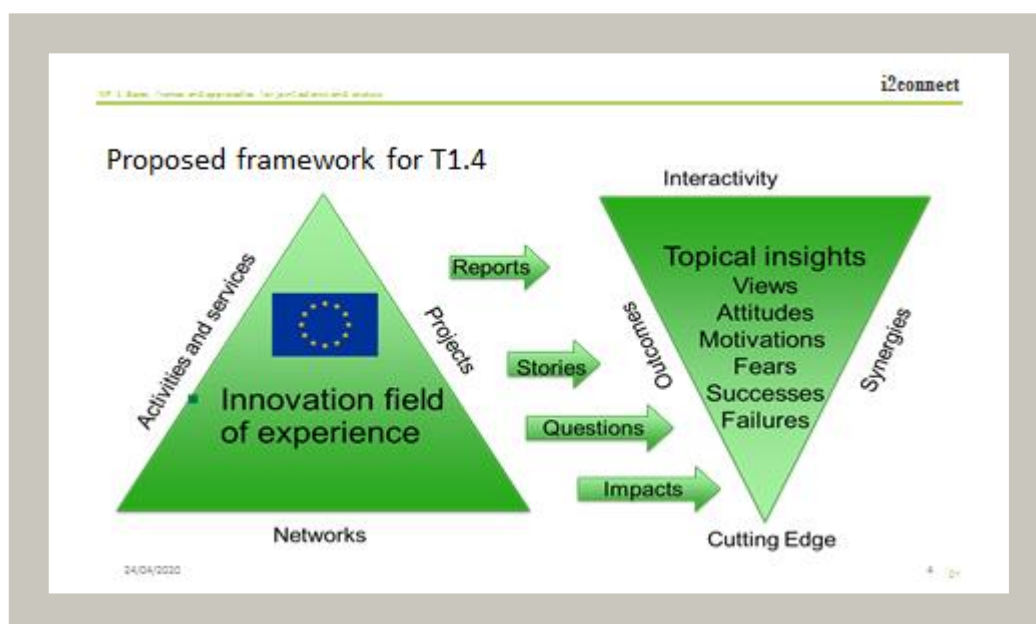


Figure 1. An infographic representation of Task 1.4

3.0 Collecting the topical insights

The following partners Teagasc, APCA, AUA, ILVO, EUFRAS, IALB, SEASN, UHOH, NAK, CREA, MAPA, ZLTO and WR will nominate an individual or individuals to gather topics and to articulate the insights within the framework provided. The framework will be maintained as a living document. These informed sources within the project partners and their networks will interact as necessary and will finalise their contributions 2 weeks before the deliverable is due.

From a logistical perspective these partners are mixed, some with advisory services while other have more academic and support expertise. The expectation is that each partner will identify a list of up to 5 topics every 4 months and will provide their insights on at least 3 of these.

Topics - each topic should be defined in its title with 2-5 words.

Topical Insights -there should be a short narrative to describe the topical insight; this narrative should explain the context, source and specific knowledge, theory or practice. It may contain links to other print, video or audio materials.

What will these Topical insights be used for?

It is expected that these topical insights will contribute to the reflective capitalisation in task 1.5. They will also be relevant to WP2, 3 and 4 in terms of the continuous development and ongoing learning in the project. In addition there will be regular reporting of these topical insights through Task 5.4.

3.1 Identifying the topics

The topics identified by each partner are collated and stored in the shared worksheet. Partners will add and remove topics to this master worksheet on an ongoing basis throughout the lifetime of the i2connect project. For each topic identified, the partner organisation will provide more details on the insight in the worksheet for their organisation. A descriptive narrative, of approx. 100 words, and links to background information, stories, brochures and websites may be provided for each topic. In addition, the topic may be assigned to one more of the categories described in section 2 above. Each topic must have an insight which tells its story in narrative format.



Topical insights -- what do we want?

- If you were asked to share your new knowledge on interactive innovation projects/activities/networks with advisors, farmers or other actors,
 - What topics and insights would you use?
 - What source (H2020 project, OG, EIP event, activity) or examples would you use to support your insight?
 - Could you prioritise these topics and insights?
 - Can you from your own logic explain why you feel its important
 - Where does it fit into the i2connect project landscape

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3.2 Selecting and reporting on topical insights

The insight narratives provided by each partner are extracted from the shared spreadsheet and presented in this deliverable (D1.5a to D1.5n) as a table of the topical insight titles, with ten selected topical insights elaborated. Where insights are

duplicated these may be combined, each of the 10 insights will be credited to the relevant partner(s). There will be no ranking of the 10 topics or insights in the deliverable.

Partners may classify the origin of the topical insights by referencing the background source. Some examples are listed below:

- Advisory activity
- Forestry activity
- Service provider
- Innovation Network/platform
- H2020 project
- Operational group
- Research activity
- Training/Education
- Community of practice

For the narrative we suggest the following parts in no particular order:

1. What is the insight?
2. Why is it important?
3. From what activity or where specifically did it come from (list above)?
4. How is it relevant to i2connect (also in the categorisation tick box can be used to express this point)?

The 13 partners should list new or rearranged topics and insights every 4 months, based on their own priorities. This will add new choices to selection system and reflect the current interest in these topics. For some topics there may be multiple insights, all of these should be reported in the deliverable. Some topics might remain priority topics for a number of reports, only new insights should be reported every 4 months. This will ensure that new topics and new insights will be featured in these reports.

The target is to select ten insights every 4 months based on the belief that the perspectives of the actor contributors are valued and important to interactive innovation advisors and i2connect. The following criteria were used to help to select insights for inclusion publication:

1. Relevance to Interactive innovation
2. Relevance to i2connect
3. Relevance to Advisory services in Agriculture and Forestry
4. Clarity
5. Novelty
6. Other criteria as amended throughout the project?

4.0 Topical Insights D1.13 b, c, d -Oct 2020 Feb 2021 and June 2021.

This Deliverable D1.13 is presented in three parts corresponding to the updated insights shared by partners and selected in Task 1.4 over the 12 months June 2020 to June 2021.

Subsection 4.1. October 2020 - Deliverable 1.13b.

Subsection 4.2. February 2021 - Deliverable 1.13c.

Subsection 4.3. June 2021 – Deliverable 1.13d.

The titles and source of all of the Topical insights shared are presented in Table 1.

4.1 Topical insights identified in the Task 1.4 2020 2021 - Deliverable 1.13

There were 97 topical insights shared from partners involved in this task (Table 2). Ten insights were selected from 37 topical insights submitted in D1.5a in June 2020. A further 60 were shared by partners throughout the year June 2020 to June 2021, 19 added in October 2020, 23 added in Feb 2021 and 18 added in June 2021. An additional selection of 30 insights are included in this report from all shared insights collected to-date. It was agreed that all were relevant to interactive innovation and to the i2connect project. The selection was based on relevance and clarity of the insight taking into account the priority of the participating partners, Dr Lies Dubryne, ILVO, Fanos Birke UHOH and Simona Cristiano, CREA who assisted in the selection of the additional insights for this deliverable.

Table 1: Source and titles of topical insights shared to date

Partner	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Topic 4	Topic 5	Topic 6	Topic 7	Topic 8	Topic 9	Topic 10	Topic 11	Topic 12
Teagasc	Covid 19 networking	Business models	Impact Assessment	Trusted Peers	Face to face review meetings	Risk of snapshot reviews	Participatory approaches	Digital enabling	Trust and adoption	Younger and new farmers to drive innovation.	The new entrant journey.	Filling the knowledge gaps for new farmers
APCA	Agreen Start Up: an entrepreneurial competition based on IL	GIEE: Environmental and economic interest groups of farmers to develop agro-ecological practices	AGLAE: Farmers share their agro-ecological practices	PROXIMISER reaching out to isolated farmers	IRD network I	Advisory companies mgt						
AUA	AKIS structure	HEIs	Brokerage/Facilitation	Facilitation	Advisory companies mgt	AKIS	Advisors' training	Digitization	ICT tools	Interactive learning and digitization	Partnerships	Innovation-led/farmer-led projects
ILVO	Training young advisors	Time as a crucial factor for group/network creation	Advisory services aiming at actors other than farmers	Importance of digitalisation in advisory services	Defining an innovation advisor	EIP & co-innovation	Overcoming the digital divide					
EUFRAS	EU-Regulation Draft Cap-Strategy Plans Art. 13e	4th SCAR-AKIS Report	New project idea triggered thanks to i2connect	Conditions for innovation in network	Smooth knowledge transfer							
IALB	Learning co-creation	resistance to change innovation support	methods to support interactivity									
SEASN	AKIS structure	Peer to peer	EIP projects	Knowledge transfer								
UHOH	Online Interactive training	Tool for reflective practice	Role of advisors in micro AKIS	Advice on farm succession	Facilitating rural innovations by interaction	Advisory focus shifts from farm to family advice	Information System for Agriculture and Food Research	Talking to each other instead of about each other-	The power of vocational education and training in the AKIS			
NAK	Hungarian e-learning training for agricultural advisors-	NAK AKIS WS: knowledge flow	Skill development and skill measurement training of agricultural advisors in Hungary	Create mixed, selection forests	Expert advice for innovative technological developments							
CREA	Recognition of the Pluralism of advisors and their active and earlier involvement	Public extension advisory services	Role of the CAP networks	Digital competencies of advisory services	Practical tools for M&E advisory and ISS	Defining competences						
MAPA	AKIS Strategic approach	Knowledge hubs	Digital tools for advisors	Living Labs	On farm Demos	Xana-i.Cat	PITA	RuralApps	Coffee with research (Professional Mentoring Program		
ZLTO	Peer to Peer Exchange	Peer to Peer Exchange	Energy of farmer groups	Relationships in networks								
WR	Knowledge hubs	Project procedures	Knowledge sharing	Inclusive advice	Lack of practical field experience	Holistic advice	Knowledge circulation	Networking of advisory services	Advisory involvement	Intermediary role		

4.2 The 10 selected Insights for D1.13 b - Oct 2020

Table 2. Categorisation of selected Insights D1.13b

Topics	Business models	Network Facilitation	Support	Quality Control	Other advisory roles	Impact	Other issues
Face to face review meetings						1	
Snapshot reviews of cases						1	
Brokerage/Facilitation		1	1	1		1	
Digitalisation in advisory services			1	1	1		
Defining an innovation advisor			1	1			
Peer to peer	1	1	1			1	
Advice on farm succession					1		
Advisory focus shifts from farm to family advice					1		
Relationships in networks	1					1	
Networking of advisory services	1	1	1		1		1

4.2.1 Titles, source and narrative of the Deliverable 1.13b October 2020 - Topical Insights.

Value of face to face review meetings

Anita Naughton, Teagasc, Ireland

LIAISON WP3 partners conducted a 'light touch review' of 200 multi-actor interactive innovation cases in agriculture, forestry and rural development ranging from H2020 projects, Operational Groups to 'under the radar' networks. The cases varied in terms of geographical location, size number of partners, type of funding and length of operation. Project leaders who participated in the review rated excursions and field days, together with face-to-face meetings of diverse actors to discuss issues, as the best methods of communication, idea generation and innovation (Fieldsend et al., p. 53, 2019).:

<https://liaison2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/LIAISON-Deliverable-3.2-Discussion-paper.pdf>

Risk of snapshot reviews of innovation cases

Anita Naughton, Teagasc, Ireland

Within the LIAISON WP3 light touch reviews of interactive innovation case studies, the reviews showed that a snapshot made of an interactive innovation activity at one point in time, could lead to a distorted picture of reality. The difficulty is in placing the reviewed projects within the Innovation Spiral in the correct time horizon and context. This makes the planned review of interactive innovation casework very complex as the object of study is highly dynamic and ever-changing: <https://liaison2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/LIAISON-Deliverable-3.2-Discussion-paper.pdf>

Brokerage/Facilitation

Alex Koutsouris, AUA, Greece

Intermediation (facilitation and brokerage) has yet to be thoroughly described, operationally defined, or well-evaluated. There is a need for conceptual clarity (since the current abundance of terminology and the use of the same terms but with different meanings complicate the scene). Explicit attention has thus to be given to theoretical developments; without nuanced understanding of the concepts, terminology, and controversies, study findings will be difficult to interpret and guidance to practice change may become untenable.

The importance of digitalisation in advisory services

Lies Dubruyne, ILVO, Belgium

Building on insights from DESIRA and FAIRshare, and put to the fore by the current COVID crisis, digitalisation is key for current and future advisory services. However, at the same time many issues arise around this topic (required competencies both for farmers and advisors, access to the technologies, design and complexity of the systems, data privacy and ownership issues). Interactive innovation could be key in overcoming at least some of these issues (e.g. co-creative design of the tools, but also about the wider context, e.g. smart villages)

Defining an innovation advisor

Lies Dubruyne, ILVO

Ongoing discussions in Task 1.3 clearly highlight existing issues around a clear definition for this role. What does it mean exactly to be an innovation advisor, what competencies are needed, and more importantly, how can these be developed (trained) and evaluated. Literature offers some insights, but overall feeling so far is that a lot is too general. Further development of this profile and needed trainings should and will be further developed along this project, and will need to be continuously evaluated, improved and refined. Connection with the work in LIAISON could also be relevant in this respect.

Peer to peer

Igor Hrovatic, CAFS & SEASN, Slovenia

Peer-to-peer learning is another trend that's been gaining traction in the learning and development world. It can take many forms and it is an effective method of knowledge transfer. Project Wise farmer is an example of intergenerational peer-to-peer learning, where younger farmers pass on digitalization knowledge to older farmers. In return, older farmers pass on their knowledge, gained through many years of experience to younger ones. Together they can effectively solve specific problems in agriculture, with the help of farm advisers, who provide professional support throughout the whole learning process. This is an interactive way of connecting farm generations in the digital age.

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

Advice on farm succession

Fanos Birke, UHOH, Germany

In Germany, the demand for farm succession advice is increasing as younger farm successors or interested siblings are asking for it, or start-ups are interested in taking over existing farms. To respond to the demand, advisors and advisory organizations in Germany are developing advisory topics and formats in farm succession besides the 'classical' agriculture advice. Advisory organizations such as chambers or public organizations collaborate with associations and third

sector organizations to provide farm succession advice and facilitate professional support using multiple methods. The insight here is the diversification of services in agriculture advisory organizations and the focus on broader topics of advice that address the legal, economic, social and personal conditions. More about farm succession advice in Germany

<https://www.bildungsserveragrar.de/zeitschrift-bub-agrar/online-beitraege/online-spezial-archiv/beratung-bei-der-hofuebergabe/>

Advisory focus shifts from farm to family advice

Fanos Birke, UHOH, Germany

The focus of agricultural family advisory service is on people in both their living and working environment. Through collaboration associations, church-based organizations, private sectors..., advisors work to strengthen the capacity and individual resourcefulness of their clients to improve their quality of life. Topics on family advisory include inheritance law, marriage contract, tax, and inter-personal difficulties such as fear, burnout and depression. Advisors who provide family advice are expected to know the context and the agriculture practice in the area and the subject matter. The insight from this topic is the increasing demand for new knowledge and skills for advisors to support in solving problems or addressing concerns of farm holdings in rural areas.

More on the topic:

https://www.bildungsserveragrar.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Bilder/Literatur/BuBAgrar/Ausgaben/5003_2020_bub-agrar_x007.pdf

Relationships in networks

Peter Paree, ZLTO, Netherlands

Support with network, critical feedback and small incentives (ca 10k) throughout some years give a substantial effect on the long term. Advisors build long years relations with core group of farmers. Insight is that through this group many signals come to the organisation, so that the advisory organisation has a 'nose' for what is innovation at grassroots level (2 ways exchange). Example in NL: agri Innovation Brabant LIB Example NL: existing 25 years, recently being assessed by Prof. Katrien Termeer, WUR.

Networking of advisory services

Floor Geerling, WR, Netherlands

The regional/national advisory services might be too small to attain all knowledge and skills needed and therefore more networking of advisory services is needed. Additionally, as the advisors become more involved in the development of the sector, they need to communicate farmers' needs back to the

researchers to a higher degree and participate in research and innovation projects. However, to ensure this, financing and incentives are mostly missing. Also, incentives for researchers to present the results of their work in a comprehensive way are needed. Source:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/food-farming-fisheries/key_policies/documents/report-preparing-for-future-akis-in-europe_en.pdf

SCAR AKIS Policy brief on the Future of Advisory Services (2017).

4.3 The 10 selected Insights for D1.13c – Feb 2021

Table 3. Categorisation of 10 insights – Feb 2021

Topics	Business models	Network Facilitation	Support	Quality Control	Other advisory roles	Impact	Other issues
Digital enabling	1	1	1		1		1
Trust and adoption			1	1	1	1	
EIP & co-innovation		1					1
Overcoming the digital divide		1					1
New project idea from i2connect						1	
Smooth knowledge transfer from research to practice		1					
Expert advice for innovative technological developments	1	1	1				1
Information System for Agriculture and Food Research				1			
Talking to each other instead of about each other-		1		1	1		
The power of vocational education and training in the AKIS				1	1		

4.3.1 Titles, source and narrative of the Deliverable 1.13c February 2021 - Topical Insights.

Digital Enabling - Digitalisation

Tom Kelly, Teagasc, Ireland

H2020 DESIRA supports the belief that digitalisation should be viewed and promoted as a means to an end and not an end in itself. Could there be lessons for I2connect? Guiding principles for digitalisation looked at in rural development domains strongly support education & training for basic digital skills, encouraging peer to peer networking, public support to infrastructures, monitoring Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) indicators. Anchoring digitalisation to sustainable development by raising awareness; Education & training for above basic-level skills; Training of AKIS agents. Digitalise ARKIS and aligning it with Responsible Research Innovation (RRI), linking investments and projects to sustainability goals. The role of the brokers/advisors/connectors becomes essential to link up the needs of the local actors with innovation and digital centres, so as to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to identify, design and implement the digital and technological solutions. Peer learning among digitalisation brokers (within ARKIS) and align them to RRI. Develop fast and flexible supporting mechanism or policy instruments to support local/regional multi-actor cooperation processes for digitalisation. Support should be provided for all preparatory work around digitalisation such as animating stakeholders, facilitating engagement processes, feasibility assessments, prototype and project development, etc. link https://desira2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/DESIRA_LTVRA_General_fv.pdf

Trust and Adoption

Tom Kelly, Teagasc

In the H2020 IPM Decisions project the factors which supports the adoption and use of new digital decision support tools is the level of trust by farmers and advisors in the system. In looking the factors influencing adoption it found that there was a need for training, mobile access, combined text and graphics. The live demonstration of new DSS tools had a highly positive influence on trust and likelihood to adopt, while commercial advertising efforts had a negative influence on trust and adoption. In i2connect have we the correct approach to gain the trust of advisors, managers and farmers?

[Survey responses workshops | IPM Decisions](#)

EIP & co-innovation

Lies Dubruyne, ILVO, Belgium

A recent paper published by partners of the LIAISON project, showed that the EIP-AGRI is just one part of a complex matrix of multi-actor co-innovation activities involving farmers and foresters in Europe. They state that it is important to recognise the existence of a multiplicity (projects, non-project activities, formal and informal) of multi-actor

approaches. Their data suggests that many of these are effective methods of supporting co-innovation and are, therefore, 'sharing the space' within the AKIS.

(<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1389224X.2021.1873156>)

Overcoming the digital divide

Lies Dubruyne, ILVO, Belgium

This is linked to the importance of digitalisation in advisory services. As mentioned, the current situation has led to a surge in digital approaches, also in farming and advisory contexts. It is however crucial to consider the existing digital divide, where the lack of infrastructure (e.g. broadband) is a real issue in many rural areas. As a result, Living Labs and other co-creation approaches, which also switch to online, may completely fail to include the more vulnerable end users, while their needs may in fact be the most pressing to consider in the current situation. This became clear during discussions about DESIRA Living Labs

New project idea triggered thanks to i2connect

Aleksander Bomberski, EUFRAS

The participation in i2connect project has brought an idea in the form of a project or activity to be carried out: The aim of the action would be to create a search engine supporting consulting and brokerage activities in the field of innovation in agriculture. The client enters the "inventorum web" - search engine, submits a demand and fills in a short form for quick and effective transfer of technological needs in the field of agriculture, then he select the agricultural sector and sent application. Specialists and experts from a huge database with a solution in a given field are responsible for the notification and request. The portal should have a transnational- European level. We should develop this.

Smooth knowledge transfer from research to practice

Aleksander Bomberski, EUFRAS

In the Best4Soil H2020 project a network of practitioners united for sharing knowledge on prevention and reduction of soil borne diseases. With the project they are building a community of practice network across Europe by inter-connecting growers, advisers, educators and researchers - a precondition of success for an innovative project. The insight here is that the project provides open-access databases with information on the range of pathogens and nematodes that affect vegetable, arable and cover crops that helps practitioners themselves to build appropriate crop rotations and innovative control strategies. Thus, they are provided through easily understandable tutorial videos and factsheets which give more in-depth information and are highly comprehensible to guarantee a smooth knowledge transfer from research to practice.

Expert advice for innovative technological developments

Agnes Jakab, NAK, Hungary

With expert advice for innovative technological developments: A Chamber (NAK) working group helps with site-specific farming across the country. An Innovation Working Group on Digital Information Providers and Technology Developers has been established within the National Chamber of Agriculture (NAK). The working group wants to provide quality support to those who choose site-specific farming in Hungary with the help of NAK. (ongoing)

FISA- Information System for Agriculture and Food Research (fisaonline.de)

Fanos Birke, UHOH

Fisaonline.de is a web portal in Germany that gives an overview of research projects and programs in agricultural and food science topics financed by public funds at the national and regional levels. Information on the portal includes the research aim, research subjects, implementation area (geographic area), funding program managing and collaborating institution and funding period. The platform is open to the public and interested individuals can search for information based on the relevant categories. Web portals such as FISA have an important contribution for understanding the AKIS at the national level as they provide a broader overview of programs, structures and organisations engaged in the subsystem. The AS-database in i2connect has the potential to serve a similar purpose in providing an overview of the advisory service subsystem. More about FISA <https://fisaonline.de/ueber-fisa/forschungsprojekt-eintragen-lassen/>

Talking to each other instead of about each other-

Fanos Birke, UHOH, Germany

Recently, a public dialogue that engaged trainees from an agriculture college and students in the local high school took place in Holzkirchen, Bavaria. In this event, together with their supervisors at the agriculture college and the responsible person in the high school, the college trainees who are soon to be fulltime professional farmers, prepared and delivered presentations on selected agriculture topics for the high school students. The presentations were followed by rounds of discussion that allowed open exchange and dialogue between the trainees and the students. This initiative's ultimate goal is to create more opportunities to improve communication among farmers and consumers and reduce conflicts that are caused by misunderstandings and reservations from both sides. Through this approach, the trainees realised the importance of presenting complex issues in a simple and understandable way to reach young

consumers. Also, for high school students, the approach proved to help them understand complicated topics and interact with those directly from practice. The methodological approach is relevant and interesting to i2connect. It introduces a unique approach to collaborate and engage in dialogue and exchange with project partners and beneficiaries on interactive innovation and other project activities.

More about the initiative

https://www.stmelf.bayern.de/mam/cms01/allgemein/publikationen/sub_heft_11_12_20.pdf (pp 22)

The power of vocational education and training in the AKIS

Fanos Birke, UHOH, Germany

When we were compiling the AKIS report, we invited experts from various institutional affiliations to share their views on German AKIS. The experts discussed at length the diverse actors and complex linkages. One of the many fascinating insights from the discussion was the important role vocational schools and training institutions play in ensuring knowledge flows through their structures and strong linkage with diverse actors at multiple levels. Additionally, the continued need for enhancing advisory service quality, particularly by qualifying advisors with methodological skills was evident. This insight is relevant and interesting to i2connect in the sense that the project has much to offer to meet the demand of qualifying advisors by collaborating with existing structures.

4.4 The 10 selected Insights for D1.13d – June 2021

Table 4. Categorisation of 10 insights – June 2021

Topics	Business models	Network Facilitation	Support	Quality Control	Other advisory roles	Impact	Other issues
The new entrant journey.		1	1				
Filling the knowledge gaps for new farmers			1	1	1		
Farmers share their agro-ecological practices	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Interactive learning and digitization		1	1				
Partnerships		1	1				
Innovation-led/farmer-led projects		1				1	
Tools for M&E advisory and ISS provision	1			1		1	
Defining competences for advisory and ISS	1	1	1	1		1	
Coffee with research (Cafès amb la Recerca)	1	1	1		1		1
Professional Mentoring Program to support innovation	1	1	1		1		1

4.4.1 Titles, source and narrative of the Deliverable 1.13c February 2021 - Topical Insights.

The new entrant journey.

John Moriarty, Teagasc, Ireland

The reinforcement of good practice within the general succession and inheritance systems as a whole is weak and inconsistent in some European regions, with the importance of generation renewal and innovation potential offered by new entrant lost to traditional beliefs and practices. The Newbie project identifies the need for a clear and simple presentation of the new entrant journey to explain the education, legal, CAP, taxation and general policy steps and requirements along the way. They also need to be clear that the journey is an interactive innovation journey where support is available from advisors and other farmers. Newbie deliverable 2.3 Collection of strategic planning of advisory services identifies inconsistencies in the assistance available. While business planning is catered for in all regions, provision of advice on entry routes and dedicated advisors varies greatly. The full report can be viewed here: http://www.newbie-academy.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Deliverable-2.3_Collection-of-strategic-planning-of-advisory-services_Ma....pdf

Filling the knowledge gaps for new farmers

John Moriarty, Teagasc, Ireland

As new entrant farmers face a huge and steep learning curve, access to impartial advice and information is needed, not only for themselves but also their parents, other farmers and particularly farmers at the end of their working careers. The Newbie project is developing industry standard fact sheets aimed at individual farming contexts that will provide information on the agencies, institutions and businesses that are best placed to assist new entrants on a regional and national level. These factsheets will form part of the Newbie Umbrella Toolkit; <http://www.newbie-academy.eu/umbrella-toolkit/> these should encourage collaborative approaches to farming and farm business decision making and involve all relevant actors in the AKIS support networks.

AGLAE: Farmers share their agro-ecological practices

Marie Boitelet, ACPA, France

The objective is to create a repository of innovative agro-ecological practices in crop farming, livestock farming, viticulture and arboriculture, validated by

experts and based on feedback from farmers in the Occitanie region. The practices are disseminated in the form of video testimonials and practical information sheets. Since beginning of the process, 33 farmers testified about innovative agronomical practices.

Website : <https://occitanie.chambre-agriculture.fr/agroenvironnement/agroecologie/aglae/>

Interactive learning and digitization

Alex Koutsouris, AUA, Greece

The "WiseFarmer: Connecting farm generations in the digital age" (WF) project (ERASMUS+), aimed at bringing the younger and elder farm generations together in a common programme for the exchange of knowledge, from one side in the use of digital tools and from the other side the crucial farming practices based on local knowledge. The project partners collaborated to secure access of the participants (pairs of young and eldest farmers) into high quality learning opportunities and facilitation support aiming at the sustained collaboration among participants for increased competence in the use of digital tools (re; elder farmers) as well as in crucial farming practices based on local knowledge (re; younger ones)

Partnerships

Alex Koutsouris, AUA, Greece

Partnerships between diverse actors are deemed necessary with regard to interactive innovation. Preconditions for partnership formation are a) positive attitude towards collaboration with others (vs. individualism) and b) knowledge of relevant others. On the other hand, if such preconditions are not in place, the existence of innovation brokers who can align demand and assist in network formation and management is essential. In this respect the training of advisors as facilitators/ brokers is essential.

Innovation-led/ farmer-led projects

Alex Koutsouris, AUA, Greece

The SCAR-AKIS SWG have stressed the need for and importance of transdisciplinary, innovation-driven research, that is of problem-based research through networks of stakeholders/ actors; in such networks the initiative and active involvement of farmers is a "sine qua non" precondition. EIP-AGRI, in-line with such thinking, has promoted Operational Groups (OGs) to strengthen interactive innovation in the EU. However, at first glance (at least), some among the OGs seem to violate such a rationale with farmers having rather a nominal role instead of a collegial relationship with other actors - especially researchers

who either take the initiative and co-opt farmers in their projects or attempt to impose their agenda and solutions.

Practical tools for M&E advisory and innovation support service provision

Simona Cristiano, CREA , Italy

The need for practical and worthwhile monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools is disruptively emerging due to the strengthening and major integration of advisory services within the AKIS supported by the new CAP 2023-2027 and to help farmers facing up the agricultural challenges.

These should support tracking and assessing the performance of advisory service provision, by including feedback mechanisms on the service delivery, acceptance/satisfaction by the clients and learning programmes applied by the advisors. This in view of supporting quality of advisory, coverage and access of farmers and systematic assessment on advisors' performance.

However, according to the EU level studies conducted under some research projects (e.g. RAMONES PL ERASMUS+; i2connect) the use of M&E of the advisory services and delivery is less systematic.

On this regards, comprehensive M&E frameworks are needed for systematic application at the level of individual advisors and of advisory body, by including performance and competence indicators that could help improving quality, responsiveness and effectiveness of the service provision (output), at farm (outcome) and at farming system/sector (impact) levels, along with the collection of useful information to track the impact pathway of policy support to the enhancement and use of advisory services.

Defining competences for the provision of advisory and innovation support services

Simona Cristiano, CREA, Italy

The need for a clearer definition of the competences needed by rural advisory and innovation support services emerges above all in relation to the evolution of agricultural policy topics, the accreditation of service providers under public programmes (e.g. RDPs) and the novelty of interactive innovation processes. Moreover, following the privatisation of advisory services, professional training and up-to-date learning courses for providers are not always systematic or continuous across Europe.

The topic acquires a certain importance at light of the new CAP 2023-2027, that envisages strengthening rural advisory and innovation support services by fostering their integration and interplays within the AKISs.

A rural advisory and innovation support services dictionary, possibly paired with a precision learning tool and with a the framework for the evaluation of the performance of the advisory services, is needed to help services' providers and

public funders identifying lacking (or overexploited) areas of expertise and to highlight specific training needs for the strengthening of advisors' capability of responding to farmers needs and policy objectives, besides offering advisors a feedback on strategies to better meet advisory services demand. On this regard, precision learning practices and tools should be based on concurrent systematic feedback mechanisms on performance assessments, trainings and certification programmes. RAMONES <https://ramones.eu/> , SPARKLE <http://sparkle-project.eu/> , cross-reading from the AKIS report of i2connect <https://i2connect-h2020.eu/resources/akis-country-reports/>

Observatory for EIP Operational groups helps interaction and communication

Visi Garcia, MAPA, Spain

Xarxa-i.Cat (<https://ruralcat.gencat.cat/web/quest/xarxa-i.cat>) is the virtual AKIS-network hosted by RuralCat, the virtual community of the rural world in Catalonia. The objective of this network is to jointly display and disseminate recent research and innovation activities (European projects, demonstration activities, Operational Groups...), and to stimulate and facilitate contacts between different AKIS-actors to co-create new activities. The network includes an Observatory for Operational Groups, with detailed statistics about their pilot projects and contact details of their leaders.

Coffee with research (Cafès amb la Recerca)

Visi Garcia, MAPA, Spain

The "Cafés amb la Recerca" program, organized by the FCRI (Catalan Foundation for Research and innovation) in collaboration with DACC, is a meeting point for research organizations, companies and investors to find possible ways to collaborate. Conceived as a space of intersection between researchers, universities, research groups and SMEs with innovative potential, it encourages and promotes public-private collaboration. These meetings, face-to-face or virtual, aim to point out possible points of interest between the lines of research and the objectives of the companies, in order to create synergies and initiate ways of collaboration.

Professional Mentoring Program to support innovations

Visi Garcia, MAPA, Spain

DACC coordinates the Professional Mentoring Program among women in the primary sector, within the framework of the Rural and Maritime Women's Program. This initiative offers personalized and individualized advice to women who are starting a professional activity in the primary sector or in

complementary activities, such as agro tourism. Mentoring is possible thanks to the support of mentors, women with consolidated business projects, who provide support and advice to emerging female talent. The program aims to promote the employment of women in the primary sector and, consequently, promote the fixation of people in rural areas, promote innovation, entrepreneurship, generational change and continuity in the countryside and combat depopulation.

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