

**Tools for  
co-creation**

**i2connect**  
INTERACTIVE INNOVATION



This set of Quick Reference Cards is offered to you by the i2connect project:

## Connect to Innovate

**Fuelling competences:** The project aims to strengthen the capacities of advisors in agriculture and forestry in Europe to guide interactive innovation processes.

**Duration:** The project started in November 2019 and has a duration of 5 years.

**Partners:** The consortium is formed by 24 partner organisations and 18 linked third parties, from 21 European countries. The three major associations for advisory services, EUFRAS, IALB and SEASN are partners in the project. This means that the project covers practically all Europe.

**The Quick Reference cards:** The cards summarise models and methods that are frequently being used during the trainings being offered by the project.

What makes them special is the focus on the energy of people with initiatives in multi actor processes. They create networks that make things move. Such networks behave differently from projects and organisations. Partners in such networks do not follow the logic of hierarchy. Their motivation is key.

The cards serve as a source of inspiration. They do not offer recipes or roadmaps to follow.

**Origin:** The cards are reproduced in agreement with Netwerk&Co, a Dutch cooperative of network professionals working according to the theory of living networks. [ See last card ]

[www.i2connect-h2020.eu](http://www.i2connect-h2020.eu)

Version 1, September 2022

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THIS PROJECT HAS RECEIVED FUNDING FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION' HORIZON 2020 RESEARCH AND INNOVATION PROGRAMME UNDER GRANT AGREEMENT N. 863039

# Interactive innovation

In an **interactive innovation** process the outcome is the result of the efforts of a variety of actors who bring in relevant knowledge and experience. Such a process is different from **technology transfer**, in a **production process**.



## Technology Transfer

researcher

advisor

user

Experts define desired result



## Production Process

order

project

Clients define desired result

deliverables



## Interactive Innovation Process

discovery

journey

Initiators define shared ambition



# Conceptual definition: What is “Interactive innovation”?

Key characteristics of an interactive innovation process

## Addresses a real challenge

Takes up real problems faced by farmers/foresters to which there is no simple solution



## Multi-actor based

Brings together diverse people from various sectors (e.g. advisors, researchers, farmers/foresters, NGOs, private companies)



## Collaborative

Requires frequent interactions among the partners throughout the process where members actively share their knowledge, skills and expertise

## Shares power and responsibility

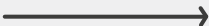
Requires sharing of power and responsibility in recognition of the different areas of expertise

# Communication

1

## Knowledge Transfer

Fighting over solutions

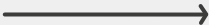


Pie becomes smaller

2

## Exchange

Smart negotiation



Pie becomes bigger

3

## Co-Creation

Creating

Baking  
a new pie  
together



# How to get others involved?

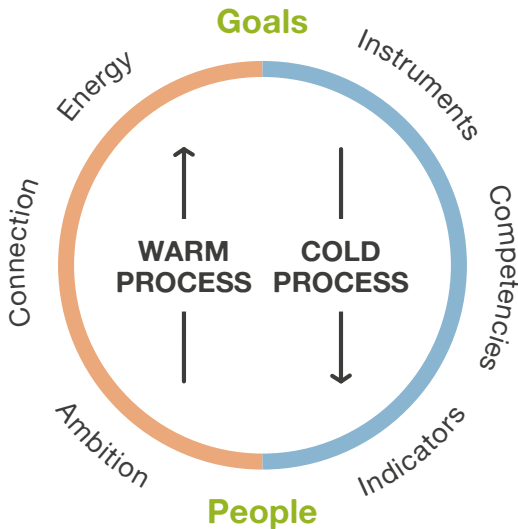
If you want others to participate in an initiative, then there are different ways to communicate about it.

**Transfer:** Trying to convince others about the benefits of participation. This is less a conversation, than a one-way broadcast transmission. One side believes they know the ideal outcome. The others just need to understand why it would be good for them. This easily leads to fighting over solutions. The pie shrinks, and so does the basis of the relationship between those involved.

**Exchange:** Negotiation is based on the 'give and take' involved in participating in the initiative. The conversation is a two-way communication. The final outcome will depend on the quality of the negotiation. Smart negotiation goes beyond the requirements and desires on the table. The more each party knows about the others, the more trade-in options become apparent. The pie grows, and the basis for the relationship becomes bigger too.

**Co-Creation:** Initiators explore what they want to make possible together. What could they create if they pull their resources and join forces? The expansion of the possibilities releases creativity and energy. The resulting outcome will be a surprise. The chances are that it is better than anything anyone could have devised or predicted before the collaboration.

# Warm and Cold Processes



# Initiative-based Networks Differ From Projects

Projects have goals, plans and task divisions. In initiative-based networks, people are connected through shared ambitions. Project leaders assign tasks and targets to employees. People in networks drop out when they run out of energy.

Warm processes release energy, while cold processes drain it. Project management is usually only focused on cold processes. Initiative networks always develop from a warm process. Both types are necessary. If the warm processes are overlooked, then the cold ones will not lead to anywhere new.

## WARM PROCESS

### People:

Everything starts with people who want something.

### Ambition:

Motivation to act.

### Connection:

Contact and linking with others for action.

### Energy:

Released by the new possibilities which arise around shared ambition.

### Goals:

Articulated collaboratively, to turn ambitions into action.

## COLD PROCESS

### Goals:

Where should the plans lead to?  
What is the desired outcome?

### Instruments:

What strategies and procedures are chosen?  
What resources are needed?

### Competences:

What knowledges and skills are required?

### Indicators:

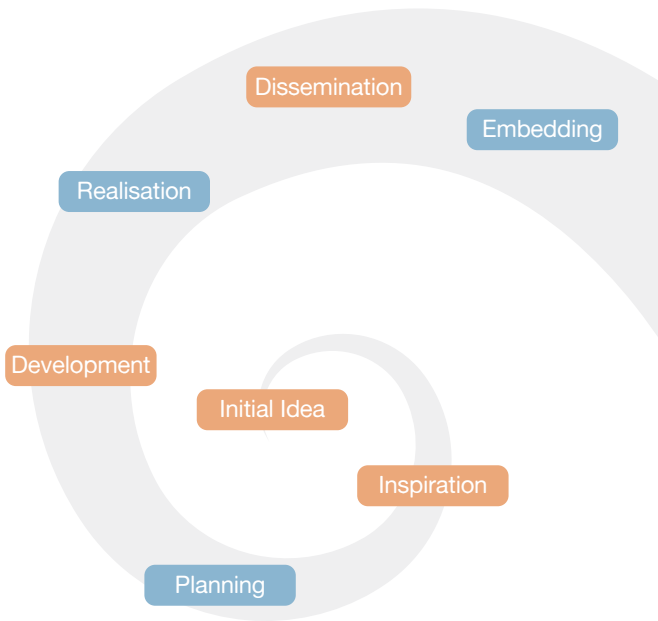
How can progress be measured?

### People:

How can we make sure that people will contribute as planned?



# Spiral of Initiatives



● Warm process needing attention

● Cold process needing attention

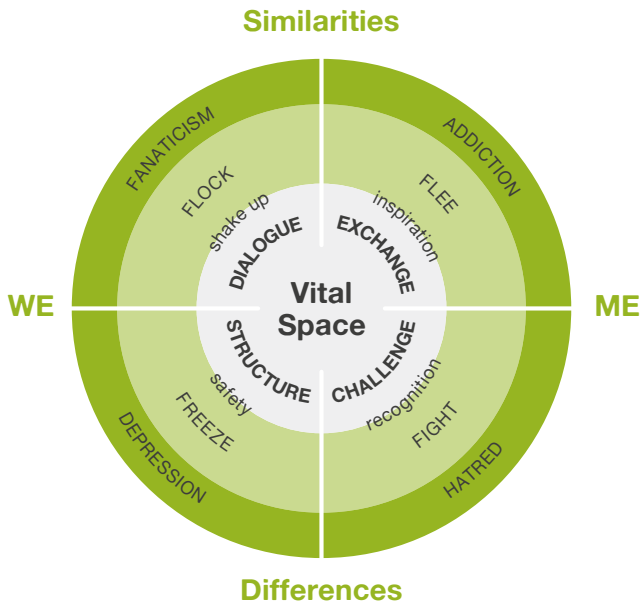
# Spiral of Initiatives

Initiatives evolve through different phases, each with different actors and activities.

Phase	Actors	Activities
<b>Initial Idea</b>	Pioneers	Looking outside the box
<b>Inspiration</b>	Supporters	Mobilising a warm network
<b>Planning</b>	Managers Financers	Negotiating space for experimentation
<b>Development</b>	Experts Suppliers	Trying new practices
<b>Realisation</b>	Stakeholders	Acquiring position to put the innovation into practice
<b>Dissemination</b>	Users	Sharing experience with those who could benefit
<b>Embedding</b>	Managers Gatekeepers	Improving conditions that enable it to become a common practice

Initiatives do not always evolve through these phases in this order. People regularly step back within the spiral, and some phases are passed through more than once.

# Circle of Coherence



● Constructive patterns ● Defensive patterns ● Destructive patterns

# Circle of Coherence

The Circle of Coherence shows patterns of interaction that can occur within a network. It gives insight into different ways to encourage vitality.

**Similarities and Differences:** between these poles, people make connections with each other based on shared ambition and curiosity.

**ME and WE:** between these poles, people become actively involved and coordinate their efforts with each other. In doing so, they cater to their own interests, as well as to the intention of the network.

**Vital Space:** participation feels meaningful and engaged. There is space for curiosity and creativity. People dare to make mistakes and learn. Vital space generates energy, whereas the space outside it drains energy.

**Constructive patterns** enhance vitality and coherence. These patterns can be reinforced.

**Defensive patterns** indicate people acting out for a sense of their own security.

**Destructive patterns** escalate from bad to worse, and force the network apart.

# Triangle of Co-Creation

Change ← Structure → Stability



# Triangle of Co-Creation

The Triangle of Co-Creation shows complementary positions.

**Initiators** encourage change. They have strong ambitions and their energy is contagious.

**Managers** guard structures. They can open doors or keep them closed.

**Suppliers** provide the building blocks needed to give shape and content to an initiative, such as human power, knowledge, material, access to other networks, etc. They do so within the conditions that managers control and that initiators try to change.

Co-creation requires people to accept others in complementary positions. These actors can also take a position outside the vital space, which means they do not contribute to a shared ambition:

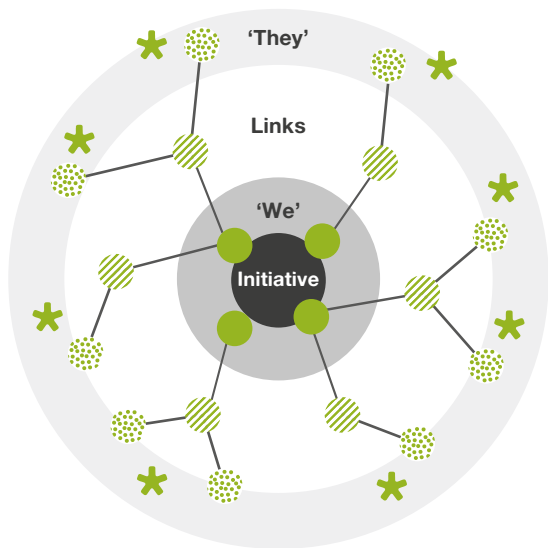
**Gatekeepers** control structures and don't permit change.

**Survivors** don't have space to take risks. Their own welfare takes priority.

**Activists** seek change, regardless of what it may cost.

**Free actors** exercise their freedom to do whatever is necessary to make and keep a network healthy, participative and creative. Others appreciate them for this, even if they scribble outside the lines when necessary. A network cannot function properly without at least one free actor, who will take those extra steps without being required to.

# Network Analysis



● Carriers

\* Factors

● Actors

▨ Links

# Network Analysis

1

## What is the initiative?

What is the shared ambition of the 'we' network?

2

## Who are the carriers?

Which people (not institutions) will continue, even if others drop out. Is this 'we' network strong enough?

3

## Which factors could determine success?

4

## Who needs to move?

Which actors have influence over the key factors?

5

## Which people (not institutions) could be the links between the carriers and these actors?

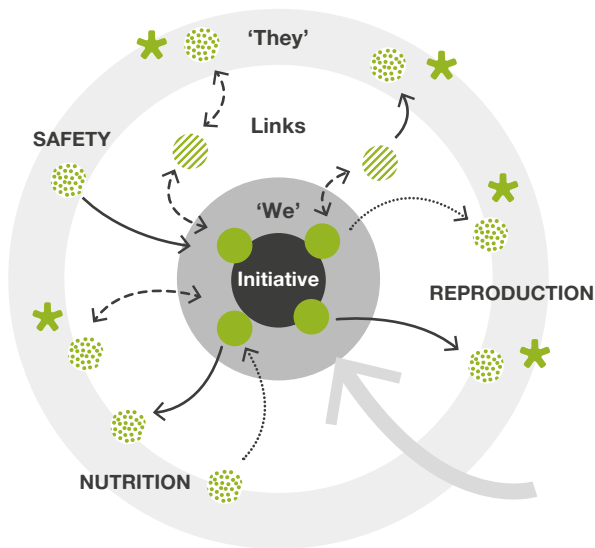
6

## Which carriers can approach the links?

Who approaches who? When, and with what request?



# Eco-Analysis



↔ Partner:  
exchange

→ Predator/Prey:  
one-sided

⋯ Parasite:  
affecting

→ Plague:  
threatening

● Carriers

★ Factors

● Actors

▨ Links

# Eco-Analysis

- 1 What is the initiative?**  
What is the shared ambition of the 'we' network?
- 2 Who are the carriers?** They continue, even if others drop out. Is this 'we' network strong enough?
- 3 Which actors form the 'they' network?** Which people or parties will get moving if the initiative is successful?
- 4 Nutrition, Safety and Reproduction Analysis:** How do they apply to the actors involved? Explore the 'we' network first!

**Safety:** Protective influences that create supportive conditions.  
Threatening influences which hinder the initiative.

**Nutrition:** Knowledge, experience, manpower, resources, financing.

**Reproduction:** What will become visible in the outside world as a result of the initiative. How can the movement continue?

- 5 Analysis with the 5 P's:** Examine the 'we' network first. What is the nature of the relationships between the actors in it and the 'they' network? Indicate this relation with arrows. Beware of making assumptions.

**Partner:** Balance between give and take.

**Predator - Prey:** One side benefits unilaterally from the other (or there is rivalry for the same rewards).

**Parasite:** Intrudes and is potentially deadly.

**Plague:** Threatening on a large scale.

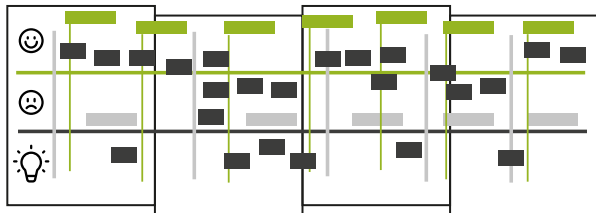
- 6 A vital network?** What picture emerges from it? What is notable?
- 7 Set priorities.** Which relationships require attention before taking the next step for the initiative? Each P calls for a different type of action. Every threat is a signal of imbalance within the system. The challenge is to convert conflictual relationships into complementary ones.

# Energy Timeline

The Energy Timeline visualises the history of the network process. It provides a basis for discussion about the process, insights which emerged from it, and how the network may wish to move forward. The defining feature of this method is the focus on energy.

Ingredients: flip-charts positioned next to each other in a line

- **Top row (smiley face):** moments that gave energy
- **Middle row (sad face):** moments that drained energy
- **Bottom row (lightbulb):** breakthrough moments and insights



● Milestones

● Claims

● Scene Title

# Learning History



Like travellers keeping logbooks, initiative networks can do well to record a Learning History of the lessons learned along their way. Turning an Energy Timeline into a story and then adding an analysis to it creates a Learning History.

**Timeline → Story + Analysis = Learning History**

## **Characteristics of a good Learning History:**

It tells the story like a film storyboard. There is a beginning, and a course of events that lead to the current situation. In each scene something happens which gives a twist to the overall story line.

An analysis is added to each scene. The various network tools are suitable for this, helping to make assumptions visible and providing insight into the process.

# Peer Consultation

## START

Make an agenda for issues to be discussed. Organise the time. Start with the most urgent issue.

### 1 Formulate the Question

The narrator tells just enough so that the participants understand what the question is about.

### 2 Gather Information

Participants ask questions until they know enough to start the analysis.

### 3 Analyse

Select and use network tool(s) to understand what might be happening.

### 4 Re-formulate the Question

The narrator reformulates the question.

### 5 Offer Advice

Participants tell what they would do if they were in the narrator's shoes. No discussion!

### 6 Conclude

The narrator tells which advice appeals to him/her the most and why.

## WRAP-UP

Each participant tells what they are taking from this conversation. A follow-up appointment may be scheduled, if necessary.

# Pick a Network Tool

**Models:** recognizing patterns, and options for acting effectively.

## PROCESS

### Spiral of Initiatives

How far has the idea developed, and what is the next step?



## ACTORS

### Network Analysis

To what degree are actors involved?  
Who is needed to move the initiative further along?



## RELATIONS

### Eco-Analysis

How is the quality of relationships between initiators and other actors? Which relationships need attention?



## POSITIONS

### Triangle of Co-Creation

What positions do actors take? What changes are necessary for co-creation to become possible?



## INTERACTION

### Circle of Coherence

How is the quality of interactions within the network?  
How can vitality be improved?



**Methods:** instructions

## MONITORING

### Timeline / Learning History

How is the quality of interactions within the network?  
How can vitality be improved?



## REFLECTION

### Guideline for intervention

How is the quality of interactions within the network?  
How can vitality be improved?



# Origin of the Quick Reference Cards



Network&Co

This package of QR cards is a slightly adapted version of the original set published by Network&Co, a Dutch cooperative of network professionals.

They offer language and scientifically sound concepts to explain what matters in network processes. What makes the difference? How do you make the difference? And how can you coach each other on it? With this, Network&Co is happy to assist anyone who wishes to build a healthier and more sustainable world.

[www.netwerkenco.nl](http://www.netwerkenco.nl)

## Theory of Living Networks

Network&Co works with the theory of Living Networks, developed by Eelke Wielinga, and recently reformulated in the book “Energising Networks”.

H.E.Wielinga, S. Robijn (2020): *Energising Networks, Tools For Co-Creation*. Wageningen Academic Publishers.

# Working on Projects or in Networks

## PROJECTS

- Success defined by client
- Product is central
- Structure leads
- Focus on tasks and agreements
- Rules, procedures and sanctions
- Hierarchy
- Supervision
- Path is mapped out in advance
- Contractors are accountable to the client
- Support from higher management
- Reporting on results using indicators



## NETWORKS

- Success defined by initiators
- Ambition is central
- Creative process and opportunities lead
- Focus on relationships and energy
- Space to fail and learn from it
- Equality, voluntariness
- Mentorship
- Path is discovered
- Facilitator is accountable to network
- Nourishing relationships throughout the network
- Communication about the process through storytelling



Initiative networks are voyages of discovery, undertaken by voluntary travellers. Such networks require energy regulation and also accountability through stories about what is learned.



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