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

Version 2, September 2024

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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
deliverables

Clients define desired result

Interactive Innovation Process

Initiators define shared ambition

discovery journey

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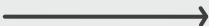
Shares power and responsibility
Requires sharing of power and responsibility in recognition of the different areas of expertise

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Communication

1 ## Knowledge Transfer
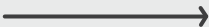
Fighting over solutions

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
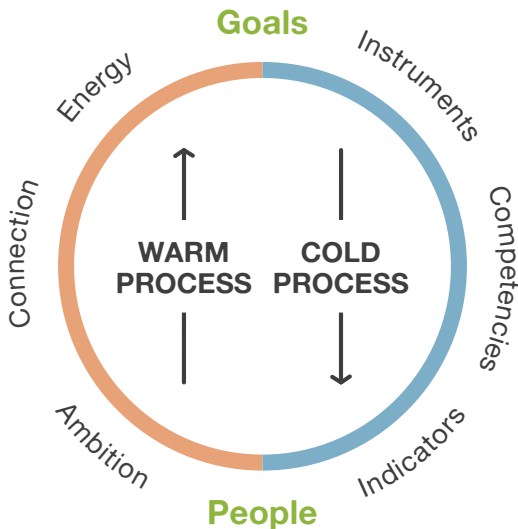
Initiative-based Networks
Differ From Projects

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 hope that shared ambitions might be realised together.

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**

Dissemination

Embedding

Realisation

Development

Initial Idea

Inspiration

Planning
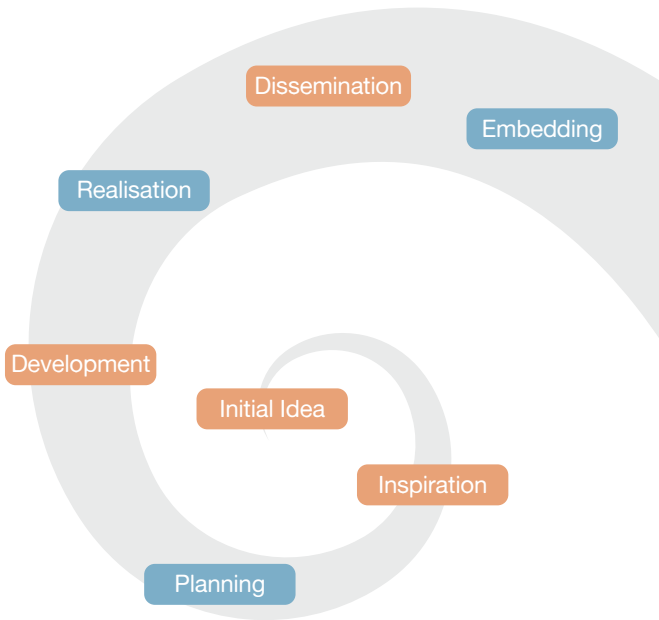
● Warm process needing attention   ● Cold process needing attention

In what phase is your initiative now? Who needs to be involved?
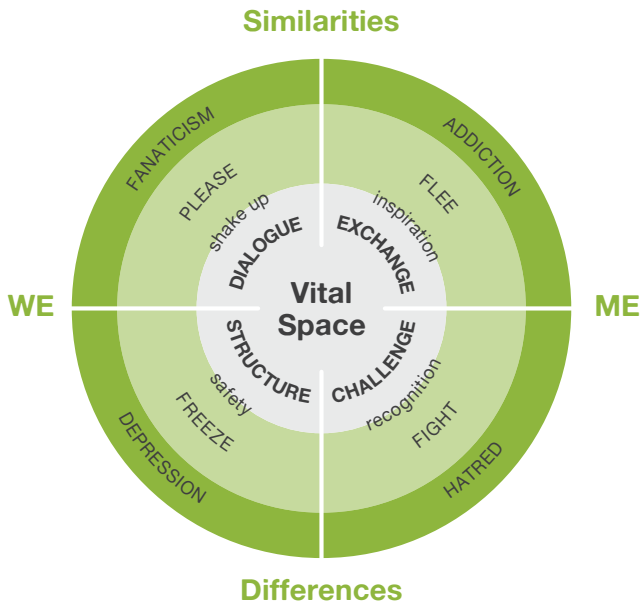What needs to be done for proceeding to the next phase?

Spiral of Initiatives

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

Phase	Actors	Activities
Initial Idea	Pioneers	Looking outside the box
Inspiration	Supporters	Mobilising a warm network
Planning	Managers Financers	Negotiating space for experimentation
Development	Experts Suppliers	Trying new practices
Realisation	Stakeholders	Acquiring position to put the innovation into practice
Dissemination	Users	Sharing experience with those who could benefit
Embedding	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**

Circle of Coherence diagram

Similarities

FANATICISM

ADDICTION

PLEASE

FLEE

shake up — inspiration

DIALOGUE — EXCHANGE

WE — **Vital Space** — **ME**

STRUCTURE — CHALLENGE

safety — recognition

FREEZE

FIGHT

DEPRESSION

HATRED

Differences

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. Intervention means reinforcing connection and taking away reasons for being defensive.

Destructive patterns escalate from bad to worse, and force the network apart. Intervention means taking position for making destructive action impossible.

Triangle of Co-Creation

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:
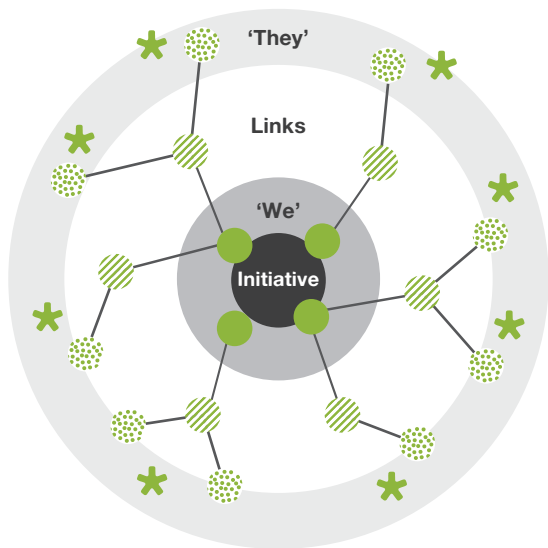
Gatekeepers control structures and don't permit change.

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**

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
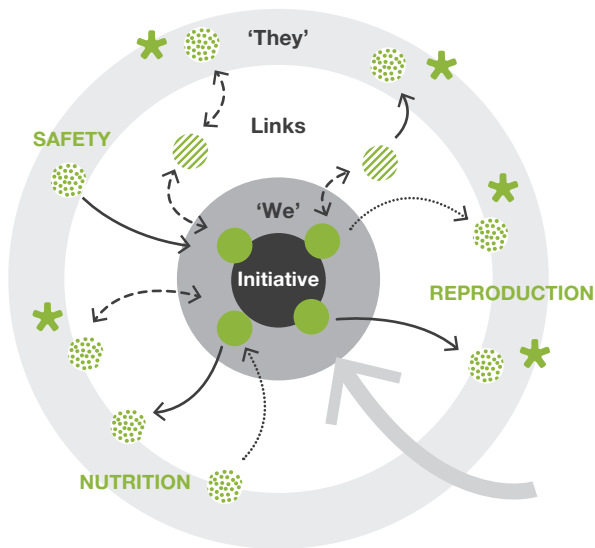
🟢 Carriers	✴ Factors	Actors	⁄⁄ Links
←→ Partner: exchange	→ Predator/Prey: one-sided	⋯▸ Parasite: intruding and sickening	→ Plague: threatening at large scale

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?

Safety:	Protective influences that create supportive conditions. Threatening influences which hinder the initiative.
Nutrition:	Knowledge, experience, human power, 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**: What is the nature of the relationships
between the actors in it and the 'they' network? Indicate this
relation with arrows. 'Be aware of the assumptions you make'.

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 comple-
mentary ones.

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Facilitation Triangle

Travel Agent
"I make it easy for you"

Facilitation

Animation

Booster
"I stimulate the flow"

Moderation

Traffic Controller
"I provide structure"

What is yout facilitation style?

Facilitation Triangle

Facilitation is a serving activity

A facilitator serves the ambitions and wishes of the network (client, Operational Group, etc.). They are suppliers in the terminology of the Triangle of Co-Creation. The Facilitation Triangle shows different ways in which this serving role can be performed.

Moderators provide structure for the process: they make agendas and timetables, bring in methods for exchange and discussion, lead meetings, etc.

Animators stimulate people in the network to become involved and active. They focus on enthusiasm and removing barriers for collaboration. They boost energy.

Facilitators make it easy for people in the network to participate and to give their contributions. They do whatever is needed for allowing participants to concentrate of the contents of their joint endeavour. They act like the travel agency that ensures that their clients can enjoy the journey without any worries.

In practice facilitators will do things that belong to each of the corners. Useful questions for facilitators:

1 Where would you place yourself in the triangle I you just follow your personal preference?

2 What is needed most at this moment in the network you are serving?

**3** What actions can you take to improve the performance of your network?

When you do things for the network for which the mandate is not clear or absent, and the key actors in this network are grateful to you for doing so, you act as a **Free Actor**. This requires a high level of commitment from you, and skilful action.

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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, markers and sticky notes

- **Top row (smiley face)**: moments that gave energy

- **Middle row (sad face)**: moments that drained energy

- **Bottom row (lightbulb)**: breakthrough moments and insights
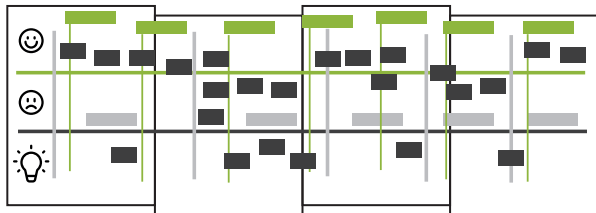
● Milestones   ● Claims   ● Scene Title

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.

Pearls, Puzzles and Proposals

Pearls	Puzzles	Proposals

Pearls, Puzzles and Proposals

A method for looking back and looking forward

A quick way to jointly an activity is the PPP method.
Make 3 columns, and fill them by cards with statements (one statement on each card):

PEARLS: achievements, discoveries, things you appreciate, things that gave you energy, etc.

PUZZLES: difficulties, things that are not clear to you, disappointments, unsolved issues, etc.

PROPOSAL: ideas for doing things better or doing better things. By yourself. Or by the ones who receive your feedback.

This method is based on a few important principles for appreciative feedback:

1. **Avoid judgements**: If you comment in terms of positive and negative, you judge according to your standard, pretending that you know better. You never have the whole picture. Furthermore, a judgement usually drains energy. Nobody likes to be judged.

2. **Seek balance**: Mention things you like, as well as things that are puzzling you.

3. **Wrap critics into puzzles**: Anything that takes energy is a signal that there is work to do for improvement. A puzzle is an invitation to explore. It leaves an opening to explain what has not been seen before, and to learn from what did not work out as expected.

4. **Seeing all this**: what do you propose people, who receive your feedback, to do (different)? And which ideas do you take home yourself?

Peer Consultation

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 / PPT

How can you reflect on the process collectively?
And how can you justify the effort to the outside world?

REFLECTION | Guideline for peer-to-peer consultation

How can you help each other with ideas on how to proceed in
puzzles from practice?

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Good practice
prompt card

- International perspective
- Actor diversity
- Strong AKIS
- Institutional support
- Social interaction

- Farmer led / driven
- Upskilled farmers
- On farm research

Network & Environment

Farmers actions

Agent

Agent actions

- Understand farmers needs
- Facilitator skills
- Upskilled advisor
- Project proposal experience
- Advisor trust

- Good communication planning
- Learning from practice
- Link to research and advice
- Wide support network
- Reflection and capitalisation

Good practice	Implementing the practice
International Perspective	Learn with and from the experience of others.
Actor Diversity	A diverse range of relevant actors for wider perspectives, skills and ownership.
Strong AKIS	Easy access and availability of expertise, human resources financial supports.
Institutional Support	The resourcing, development, testing and application of solutions.
Social Interaction	Organised events and social outings bond and build relationships.
Understand Farmers Needs	Identify, discuss and understand the real needs of individuals and groups.
Facilitators with Complementary Roles	Shared facilitation and technical support roles.
Upskilled Advisor	Professional Development, technical and facilitation, networking, problem-solving, coaching, etc.
Project Proposal Experience	Preparing project proposals, project resourcing, planning and documentation.
Advisor Trust	Building and supporting relationships between actors; trust, mutual respect, etc.
Good Communication Planning	Plan and manage effective communications both internally and externally.
Learning from Practice	Sharing and adopting knowledge, skills, experience, motivation and ideas.
Research & Advice Linked	Effective two-way communications channels with researchers.
Reflection and Capitalisation	Group reflections on puzzles to create common understanding.
Farmer Led - Driven	A shared responsability for farmers, giving leadership and direction as a group.
Upskilled Farmers	Delivering training that fills skills and knowledge gaps.
On Farm Research	Integrate farmers into research planning, experimentation and interpretation.

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Origin of the Quick Reference Cards

Netwerk&Co

The first version of this set of QR cards was published in 2018 in Dutch language by Netwerk&Co, a Dutch cooperative of network professionals. The English version followed in 2019. This set included cards 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11 and 14b.

For the i2connect version the cards were redesigned by CONSULAI (Portugal) and more cards were added. The first edition was made in 2022, adding cards 1 and 11 and the second in 2024 with cards 9, 11 and 13, emerging from the project activities.

The cards offer language and tools to explain what matters in network processes. What makes the difference? How can you make the difference? And how can you coach each other in doing so? Netwerk&Co is happy to assist anyone who wishes to build a healthier and more sustainable world.

www.netwerkenco.nl

The contents of the cards may be used and reproduced, as long as the source is being mentioned: I2connect (2024): "Quick Reference Cards for assisting interactive innovation processes". 2nd edition.

Theory of Living Networks

Netwerk&Co works with the theory of Living Networks, developed by Eelke Wielinga. For further reading:

H.E.Wielinga, S.Robijn (2020): Energising Networks. Tools for Co-Creation. Wageningen Academic Publishers (since 2023: Brill publishers, Leiden).

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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