

INNOVATION – SHAPING THE FUTURE

Strengthening links between research and practice in the agri-food sector

BACKGROUND

The workshop aimed at taking a closer look at the policy tools available today for bridging the gap between research and practice in the agri-food sector. It also gathered ideas to improve policy support in the future, both by better implementing the policy tools currently available (e.g. under the EU rural development policy, Horizon 2020) and to inform future policy initiatives, namely after 2020.



PRESENTATIONS



Winter Harvest - Seasonal, energy-extensive and innovative vegetable production

Alexandra Depisch, Bio-Austria

The EIP-AGRI Operational Group Winter Harvest is testing innovative ways to increase the availability and variety of winter vegetables for consumers, and to find new ways of growing them.

At the technical level the aim is to improve the cultivation systems by using existing varieties, and to increase the profitability of production for producers.

In terms of marketing, new methods are developed to improve the communication between producers and consumers, for instance by developing a "winter vegetable language". Packaging is also optimised.



WINETWORK – How to optimise and value existing knowledge and know-how across Europe

Eric Serrano, French Institute for Vine and Wine

WINETWORK is a Horizon 2020 Thematic Network looking into control of diseases that jeopardise the current grape production in Europe, mainly for Grapevine trunk diseases and Flavescence Dorée. It involves 231 partners of which approximately 20% are wine growers.

More information at www.aislisbon2017.com

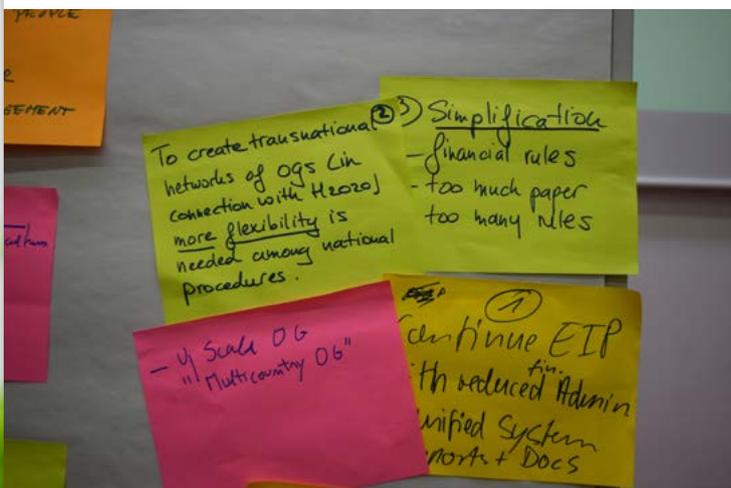
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MAIN OUTCOMES FROM THE DISCUSSIONS

- ▶ The multi-actor approach has proved to be actually working. It should continue in the future and, possibly, even be improved. Farmers must **actually** be involved throughout the lifetime of the project.
- ▶ Capitalising on projects' results is key to avoid reinventing the wheel. Project results and the new knowledge that is generated need to be spread out as widely as possible. Farmers (as end users of such knowledge) are the first recipients. Further efforts should be made to reach out to them.
- ▶ In order to take stock of the results achieved and to enable stronger connections, we need a more robust and coordinated flow of information, among projects and the people involved in them. Are the available tools fit for purpose (e.g. websites, platforms)? How can they be improved?
- ▶ The administrative burden for project holders needs to be addressed. Beneficiaries are looking for more flexibility and harmonisation of rules, for example in the case of national / regional rules for setting up transnational networks of projects (including Operational Groups).
- ▶ With the appreciation that today most EIP-AGRI Operational Groups tackle issues that are specific to the farming sector, there is still space for widening the scope of the EIP-AGRI to the whole agri-food value chain.



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