

The European Innovation Partnership (EIP) „Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability“

Operational Groups: steps in the process and first examples



NRN Conference – Athens – 21 November 2016

Nicole Stylianidou & Inge Van Oost - DG Agriculture and Rural Development

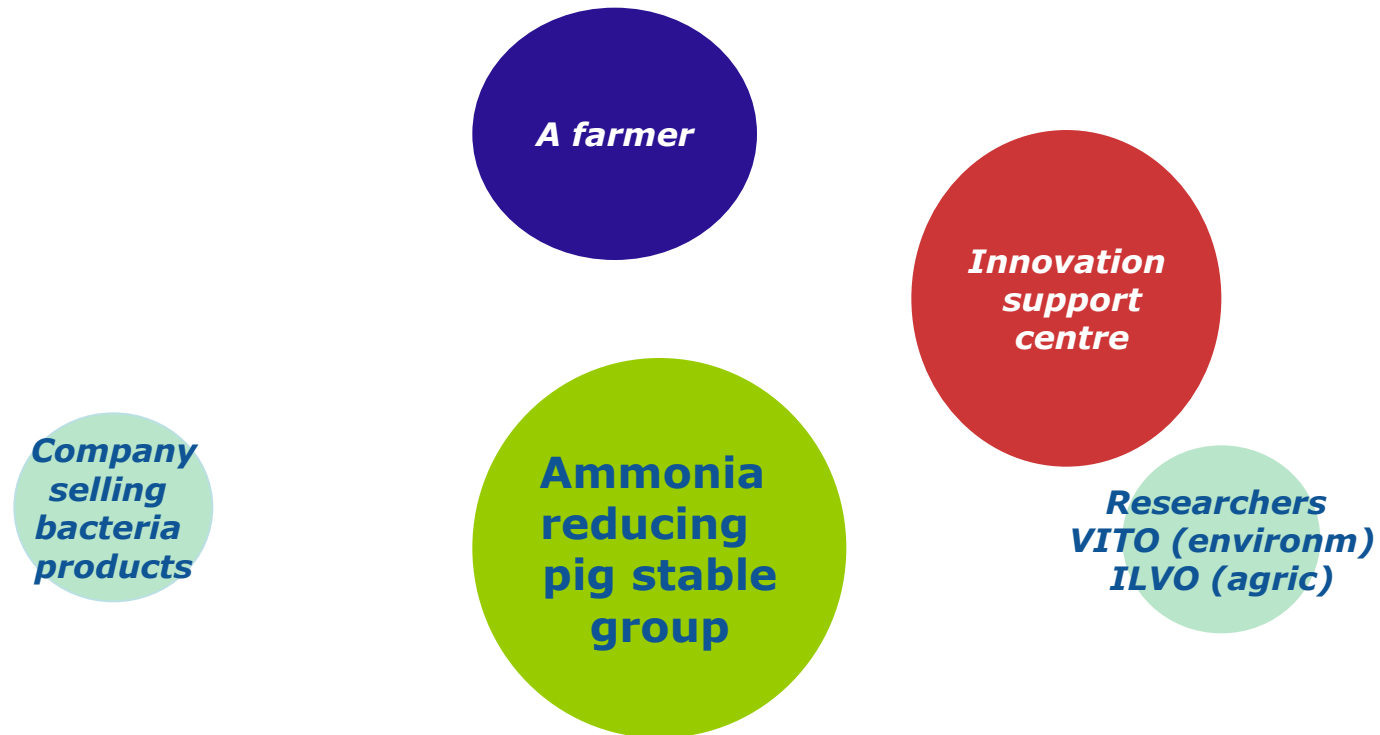
What is an Operational Group (OG) ?

- EIP operational groups funded under rural development programmes are multi-actor, project based and **tackle a certain practical problem or opportunity** which may lead to an innovation
- The operational group is tailored to this problem/opportunity and **makes the best use of different types of knowledge** (practical, scientific, technical, organisational, etc) in an interactive way.
- The operational group is composed of **those key actors** (farmers, advisors, researchers, businesses, NGOs etc) which are in the best position to realize the project's goals and **to share experiences broadly.**
- A group with a project **becomes an OG if its project is selected** in a call organised by the regional/national RD managing authorities

1. Steps in the process of an Operational Group's project

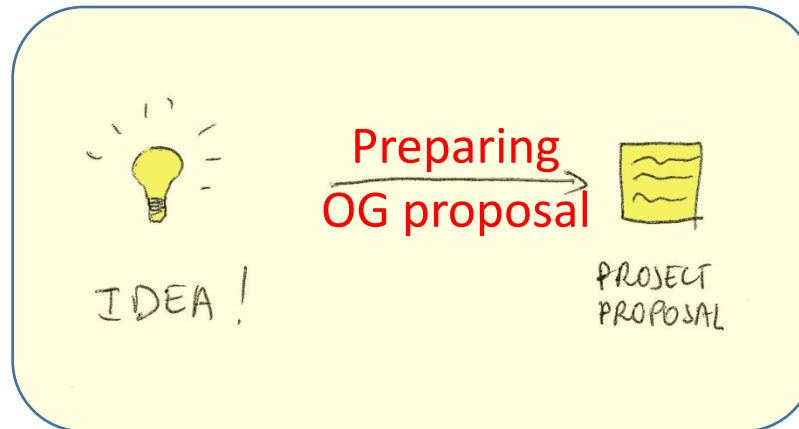
Interactive innovation under Rural Development Programmes

How can an Operational Group start: a farmer with an idea about bacteria

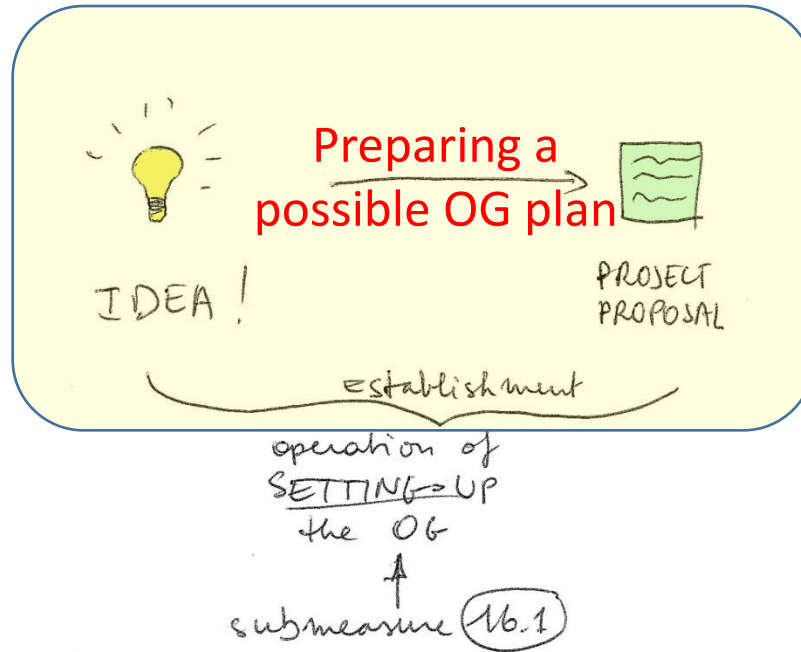


Project objective: develop a pig stable reducing ammonia emissions by 50 % in a more cost-efficient way than existing stable systems ("saving energy" idea from a farmer, brokered by the Innovation Support Centre in BE-FL)

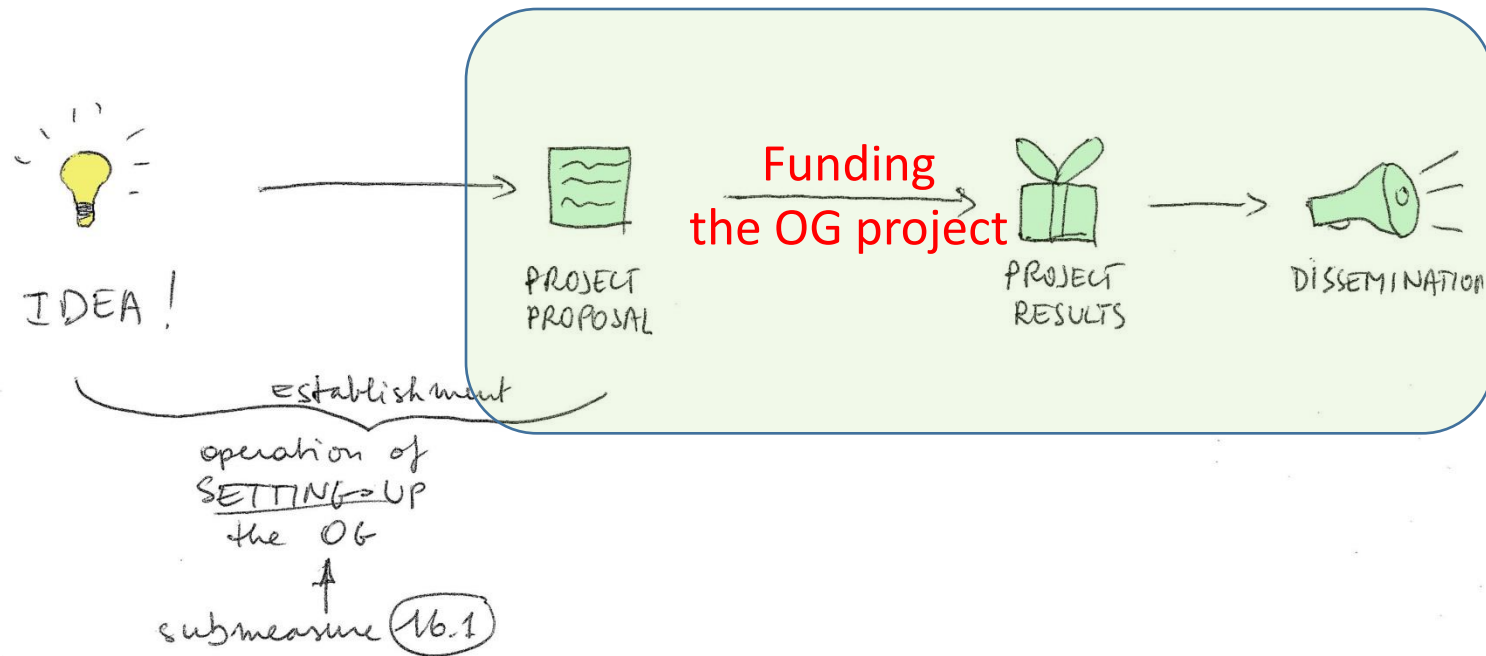
Support for **preparing** OG's project ("setting up") complements the funding for the OG's **project** ("operation")



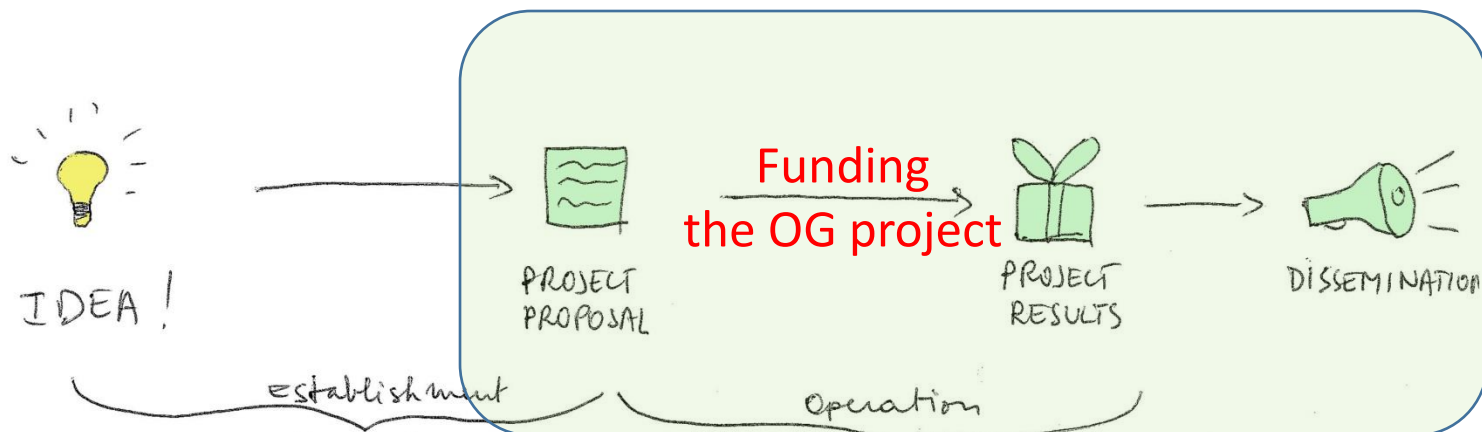
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operation of SETTING UP the OG

OG PROJECT OPERATION

Funding

↑
submeasure (16.1)

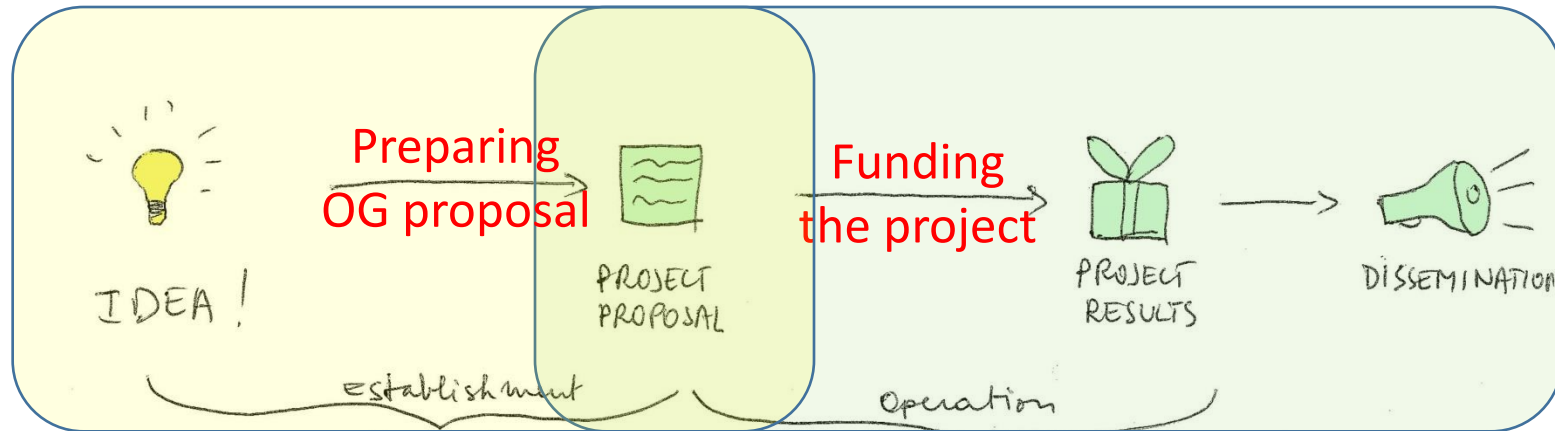
↑
submeasure (16.1)

AND 16.2
or 16.4
or 16.5
or 16.6

or other depending on the activities chosen from the list under Art 35(2)(a) to (k)

⇒ Funding of OG can be done via double subheading

Support for preparing OG's project ("setting up") complements the funding for the OG's project ("operation")



operation of
SETTING UP
the OG
↑
submeasure 16.1

OG PROJECT
OPERATION
↑
submeasure 16.1
AND 16.2
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Funding

⇒ Funding of OG can be done via double subheading

Supporting environment for OGs

- Experience learns you need supporting environment
- **Various types of help** are useful if well connected to agricultural world:
 1. Help to start up a specific group = prepare the project (innovation **broker**)
 2. Help to facilitate the project (**facilitator**, intermediate)
 - 3. Innovation support service** (covering all this and more)
- **Role of the NRNs** (OG partner search, awareness raising, collecting good examples, networking advisors and innovation support services)

2. First examples of EIP Operational Groups:

A variety of activities...:

Innovative activities such as the development of **new products or practices**, pilot projects, **supply chain** cooperation, **environmental** projects or climate change actions, cooperation in **biomass** provision or renewable **energy**, forest management and much more

***First EIP Operational Group projects are being set up ...
Some examples illustrate the variety of possible activities***

- Establishing a sustainable and environment friendly wheat value chain (Germany)
- Organic dock control in grasslands (Austria)
- Robust lamb in Pyrénées (France)
- Winter harvest: seasonal, energy extensive and innovative vegetable production (Austria)
- Zero herbicides in Mediterranean perennial crops (France)
- Farina Girona - common wheat varieties for artisan bread making (Spain)
- FruitNet - control of Monilinia spp. in stone fruits (Spain)
- Water saving in rice cultivation (Spain)

<http://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/content/eip-agri-workshop-operational-groups-first-experiences>

OG "Organic dock control" – Austria*

The existing problem from practice: docks



Potential innovation



- **Broad-leaved docks** (e.g. *Rumex obtusifolius*) are very serious weeds in grassland with a strong taproot, that can cause heavy loss of cattle fodder quantity and quality.
- Herbicide free measures like **digging out** the dock-roots or soil cultivation that aim at destroying the roots consume a lot of time, money or physical effort.
- To date **no effective** measures for organic dock control using **beneficial organisms** are available for the grassland farmers. → **Innovation: root feeding clearwing moths**



European
Commission

OG – "Organic dock control" – Austria*

Potential innovation



Larva inside a dock-root



Large dock-root with feeding damage

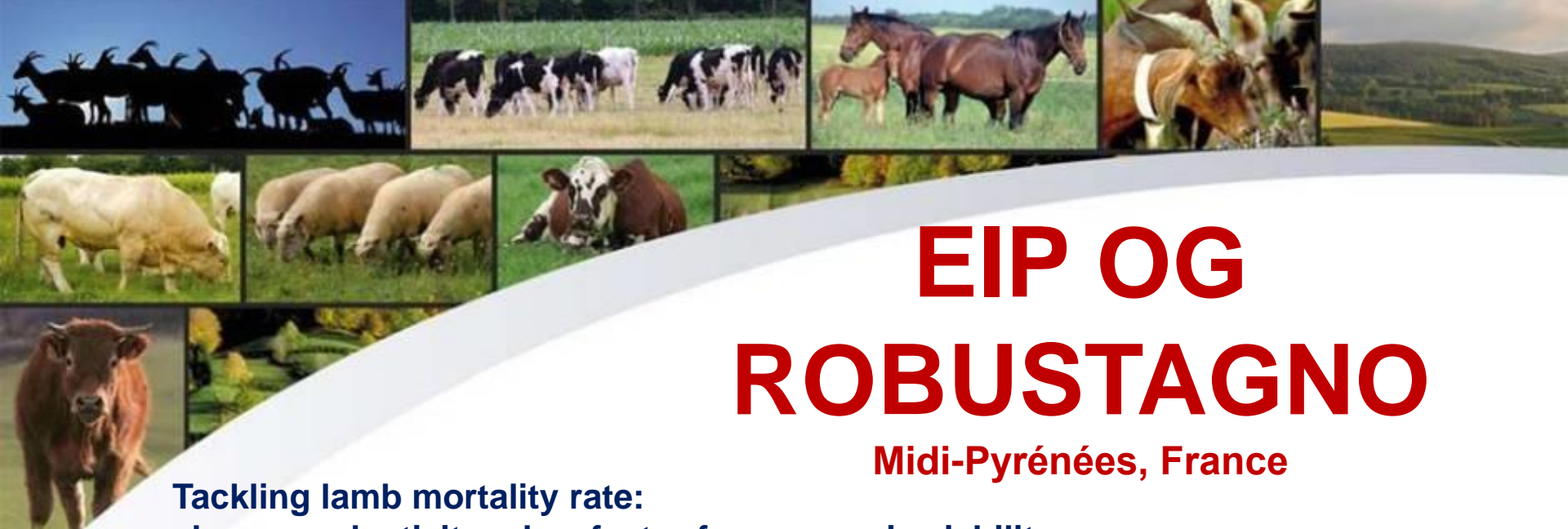


OG – "Organic dock control" – Austria*



Project implementation → mass rearing





EIP OG ROBUSTAGNO

Midi-Pyrénées, France

Tackling lamb mortality rate:
sheep productivity = key factor for economic viability

- Increase in 10 years
- high variability between farms



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

Innovative solutions for the establishment of
organic winter vegetables cultivation in Austria

Veronika Haslinger and Alexandra Depisch

Legnaro, April 20 / 21, 2016

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MINISTERIUM
FÜR EIN
LEBENSWEERTES
ÖSTERREICH



LE 14-20
Entwicklung für den Ländlichen Raum

Europäischer
Landwirtschaftsfonds für
die Entwicklung des
ländlichen Raums
Hier investiert Europa in
die ländlichen Gebiete



food cluster
of lower austria



Europäische Union Investitionen in Wachstum & Beschäftigung. Österreich.

14 partners

14 partners,

Lead partner: Bio-Austria



- **Network of Austrian organic farmers** with more than 12.500 members and 330 partners in food processing and food retail
- **Main services:** advisory in organic farming and marketing; trainings; advocacy towards policy and public; information for farmers and consumers



food cluster of lower austria

Innovation support: Food Cluster of Lower Austria

- Network for information and communication between innovative companies
- All along the food chain from agriculture to food processing to food retail
- Gives support in the cooperation between companies and science



Project Highlights



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Europäischer
Landwirtschaftsfonds für
die Entwicklung des
ländlichen Raumes
Hier investiert Europa in
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food cluster
of lower Austria

Europäische Union Investitionen in Wachstum & Beschäftigung, Österreich.

Current Situation: problems to be tackled

- The **availability and variety** of winter vegetables is **relatively small**
- **Consumers know little about winter vegetables** and prefer a small range of vegetable species
- Glass houses are energy-intensive, **customers** are increasingly **opposed to this type of cultivation** : expensive, ecological reason
- **Poly Tunnels are not used in winter**, no production in the tunnels
- **unemployment** during the winter season

Project Objectives

- Increase the availability and variety of winter vegetables for consumers
- Find new ways of growing winter vegetables
 - **Technological part**
 - Find New techniques – improve existing **cultivation systems**
 - **Increase profitability** of production for the producers
 - **Marketing**
 - Develop methods to improve the **communication between producers and consumers**
 - Develop a “winter vegetable language”
 - Optimize the **packaging**

Benefits for Farmers



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food cluster
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Europäische Union Investitionen in Wachstum & Beschäftigung. Österreich.

Benefits for Farmers

Achieve added value for producers in winter

Reduce the risks for producers

- select suitable varieties for the cultivation and retail
- Find the optimal cultivation-period
- Develop optimal working and production processes

Actions/methods for a better marketing

- **Increasing customer demand**
- providing information on the product
- optimize packaging for the product
- Using trends towards ecological packaging
- Carbon footprint



Project « Zero herbicides in Mediterranean perennial crops »

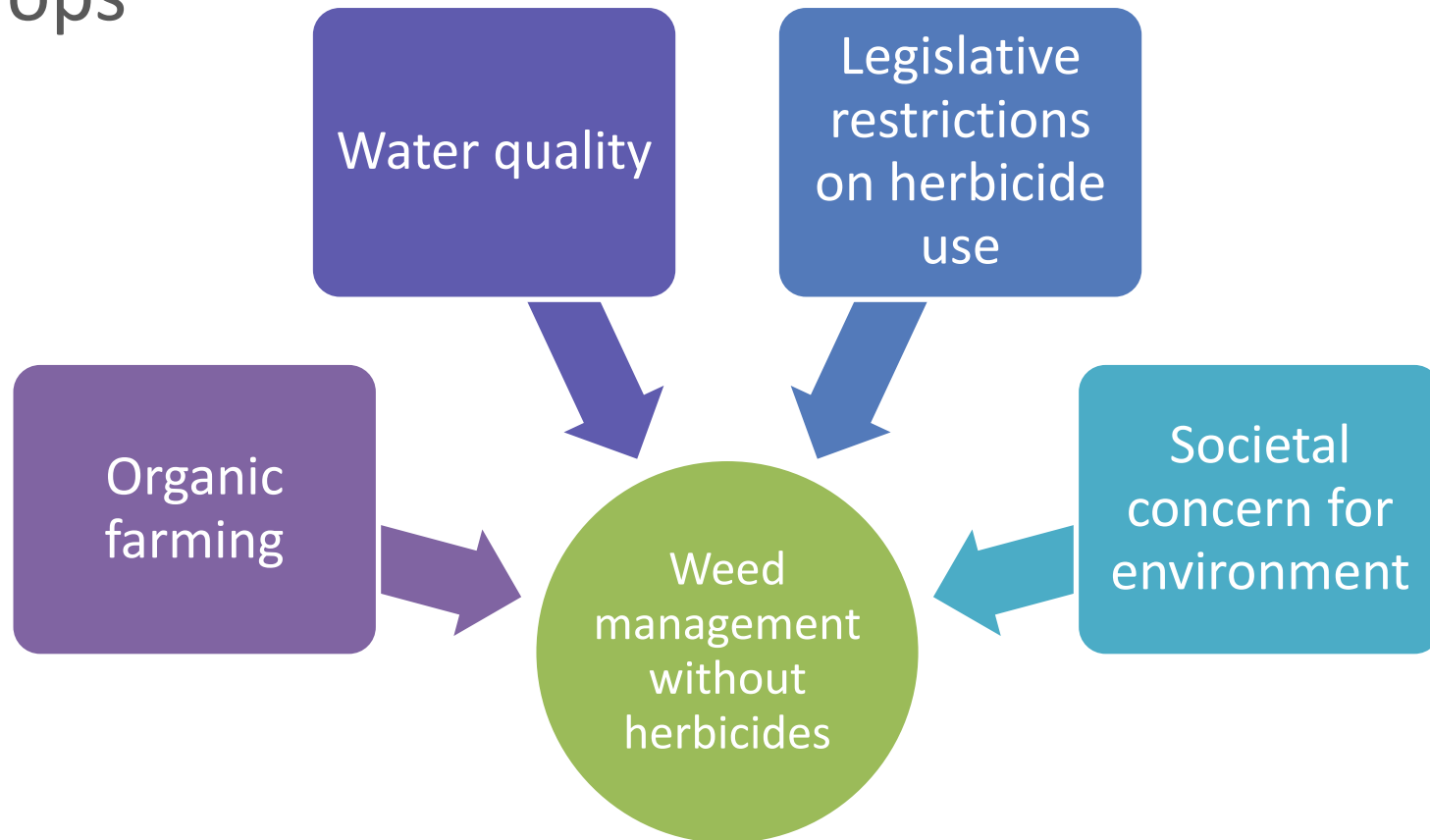
EIP-AGRI workshop "Operational Groups: first experiences"

Legnaro, Italy, 20-21 april 2016



Problems to be tackled

- A new context for weed management in perennial crops



Project objectives

- A project to validate and promote an innovative crop system in vineyards and orchards



- Tractor time and fuel consuming
- Expensive
- Aggressive for soil and roots

Old system

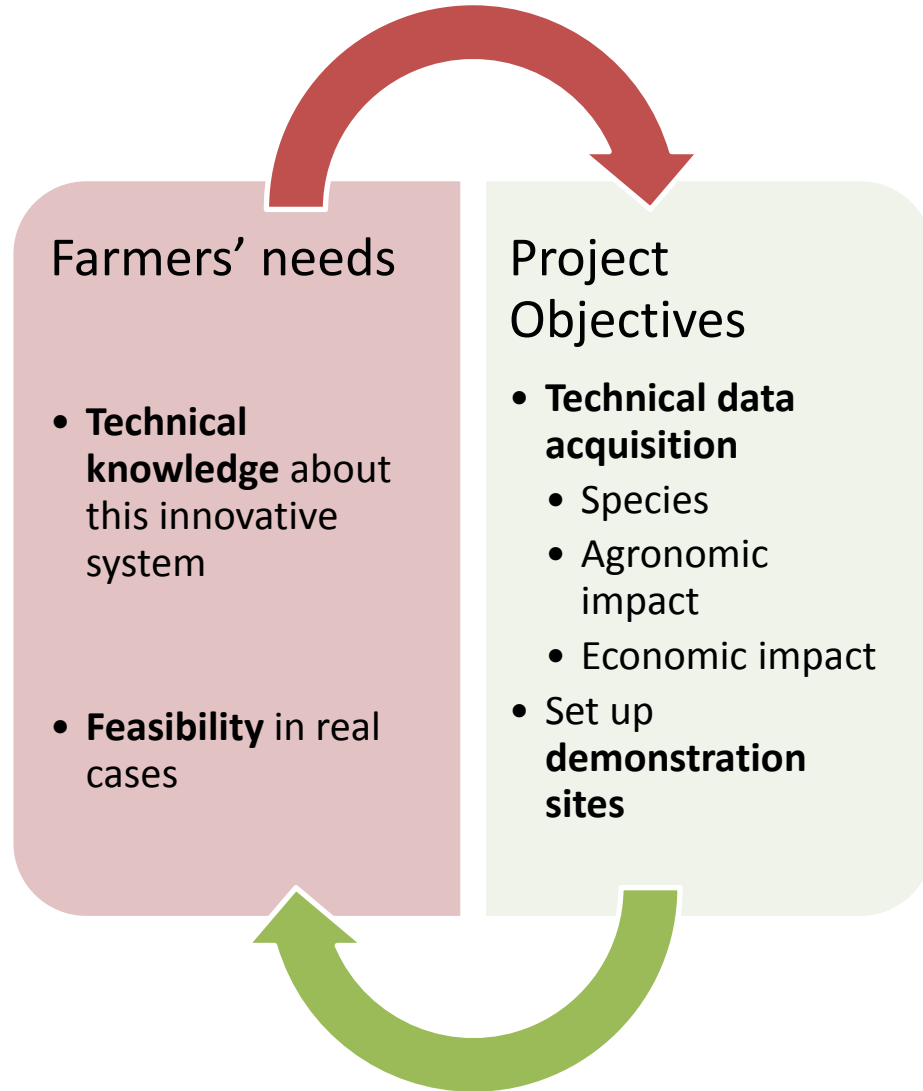


New system

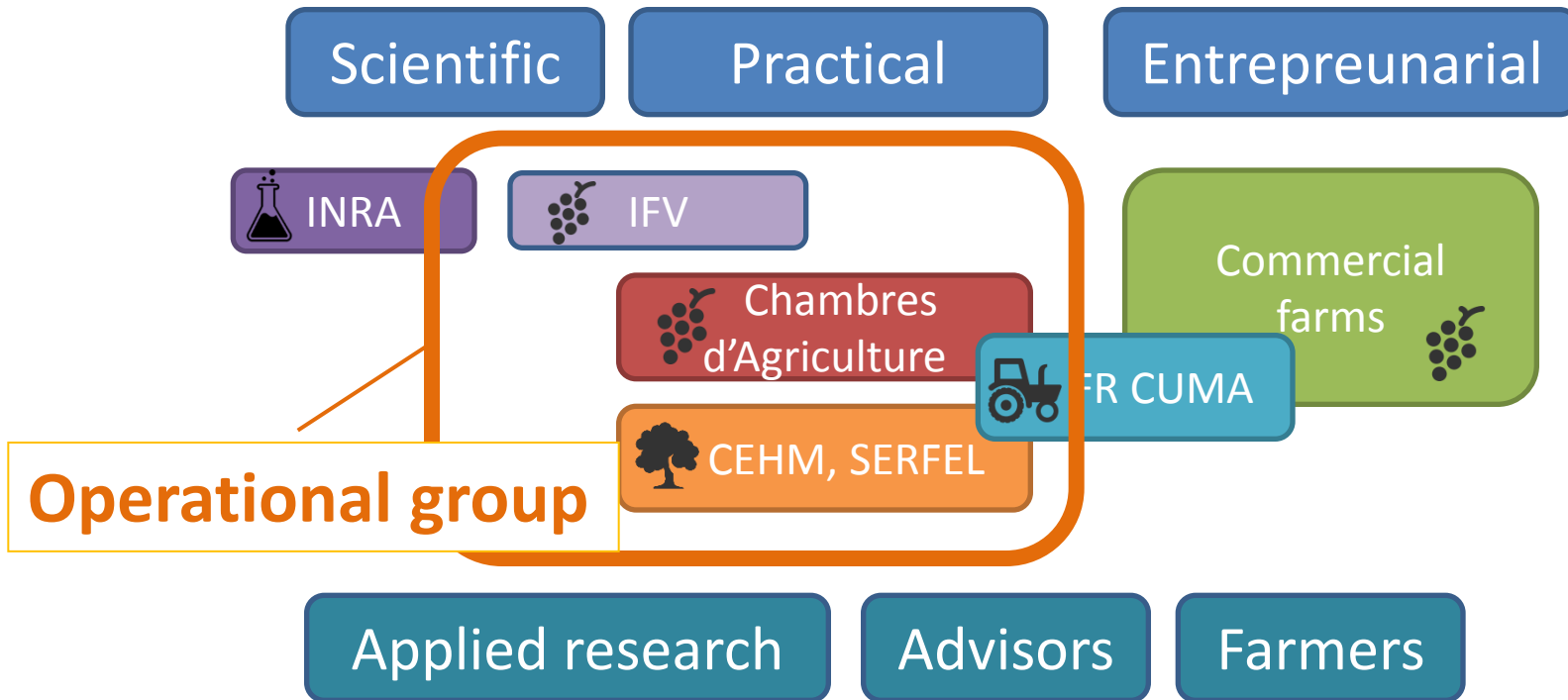
- Lower cost
- Provide soil and root protection
- Lower Greenhouse Gas Emissions

innovation

Project objectives



- **Complementary knowledge**



- Partner search & preparation of the proposal:
- Regional innovation support service helped integrating unusual and small partners

Summary

- An OG focused on a specific problem
- 7 partners
- One lead-partner
- One project manager
- A specific part of the project dedicated to dissemination



An approach to produce wheat more ecological & sustainable



*OG-Project ENU-Wheat
Germany region of Hessa*

Dr. agr. Ludger Linnemann, Forschungsring e.V. (Leadpartner)



Problem: farmers are involved in the enrichment of nitrate in groundwater



Excessive fertilization of wheat (200-260 kg N/ha) is partially responsible for nitrate problems in groundwater

Solution for farmers:

- Lowering N-fertilizing down to 170 kg/ha
- Increasing wheat protein-quality with suitable varieties



Challenges in wheat production

High wheat kernel protein requirement 13-14 %. Wheat is paid by protein content !
(bakeries & mill)



Fertilizing 200-260 kg N/ha is needed to reach high wheat kernel protein content: 80kg N/ha remains unused in soil!
(farmers)



High nitrate concentrations in groundwater from soil
(society)



Questions & Conclusion:

For farmers it is not possible to act on her own!

Partners and objectives for the OG

- The lead Partner **contacts the mill** and all partners including **agricultural advisors to inform** about outstanding innovation properties.
- The leadpartner united all interests of partners.
- The managers of the mill use contracts with farmers and bakeries in connection with a special **certification system**, which deals with rural product-quality (MGH).
- **Lower protein content** in kernel with **higher protein-quality** and better usable wheat **varieties**.
- For certification, a scientific verification is needed about the ecological effect and to optimize the fertilizer application.

How the OG-partners achieve the goals

10 Farmers in the region around Frankfurt :

Producing 1.000 tons of wheat with high protein-quality in contract for one mill. Fertilizing Nitrogen with max. 170 kg/ha

Miller: *producing flours with lower protein concentration for regional bakeries around Frankfurt*

Certification: *To sell the bread produced with regionally grown project-wheat as “Groundwater-Protection-Bread”; The whole process has to be controlled and documented*



How the OG-partners achieve the goals

Estimation the best fertilizing dates and amount in field trials. Controlling of NO_3 -leaching in the soil. Comparison of traditional versus optimized fertilizing strategy.



Testing the resulting flour quality with the OBT to verify the practise results with respect to the bakers demands. Finding varieties with synergistic and best flour characteristics to grow in contract.

Bakeries: They are invited to produce a “Groundwater-Protection-Bread” with regionally grown wheat and use our publicity material.



***Innovation is: an idea put into
practice with success !***

***To an
„Agriculture of Knowledge“***

More information:

www.eip-agri.eu

Inge.Van-Oost@ec.europa.eu

Thank you for your attention!



1. innovative supply chains OG

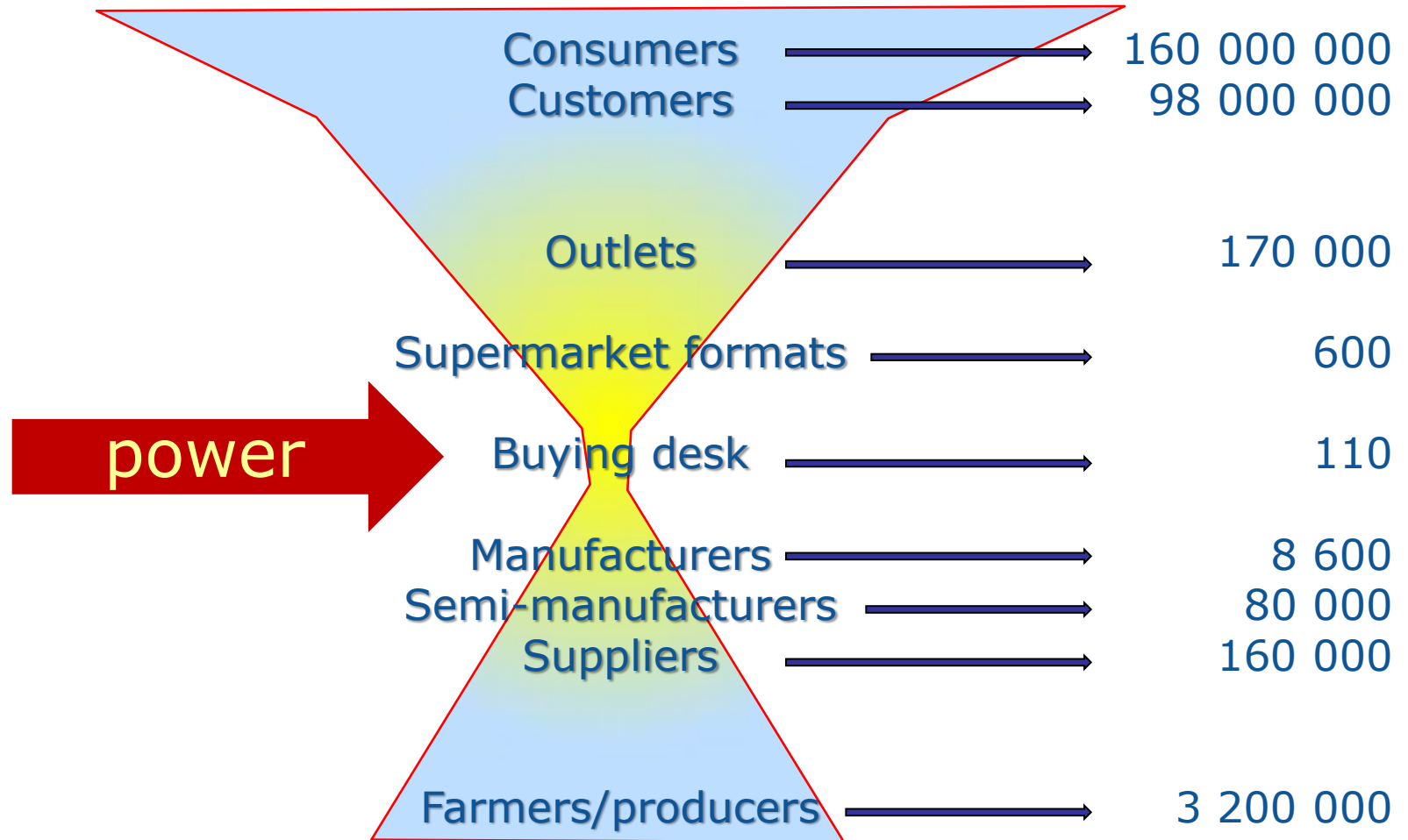
EIP workshop "Cities and Food: Connecting consumers and producers"

Combined the **2 perspectives** from cities and producers

Connecting Consumers and Producers - Why ?

- Current challenges for food systems : how to **adapt to consumer needs/wishes and to producers' challenges** (fresh minimal processed foods, traditional, regional (local) and artisanal prepared food for different consumer groups (age, lifestyle, health and culture)
- We need innovation to make smart and sustainable food systems: **rethinking the organisation of the food value chains**, empowering consumers and local, short(er) value chains where farmers, cooperatives and small companies are an important engine
- **Cities' food system policies** are key and can incentivize new business models and a food system approach (MUFPP)

Illustrating the typical Supply Chain funnel



(1) Rural Development Programmes (within RD prog areas)

- **Operational groups** (setting-up of groups and funding for their projects from 30.000 till 1 mio €)
- *Listen to Bastien Farges explaining the funding for **supply chain Operational Groups in Aquitaine** (in this workshop on 22 Sept at 9:00)*

(2) EIP-AGRI networking activities at EU level: Workshops, Seminars and Focus Groups

The Focus Group on Short Supply Chains collected and analysed different short food supply models existing in Europe, including a set of practical cases with potential for innovation in other regions/ countries (*see your workshop package*)

(2015 report – coordinating expert Moya Kneafsey)

https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/sites/agri-eip/files/eip-agri_fg_innovative_food_supply_chain_management_final_report_2015_en.pdf

M.16.1 – Operational Group

- Step 1 - Sub-measure 16.1 ("setting up") supports potential operational groups to formalize the consortium, find new partners with complementary skills and finalize the project plan.
- Step 2 - Once their project is selected, they are labelled "EIP Operational Group"
- OG receives funds dedicated to functioning costs and external costs (studies, etc...), max 50.000 euro, 90%



Funding for EU projects on food systems and novel supply chains

(3) Horizon 2020 – EU research and innovation projects
various finished/ongoing food system projects on 22 Sept

- European **multi-actor "research" projects** (2- 10 mio € per project): 370 mio € in 2016-2017
- **Thematic networks: "coordination" actions**
"Compiling knowledge ready for practice"
(2 mio € projects)

SKIN: Short Supply Chain Knowledge and Innovation Network (2017-2019): *project starting soon, listen to the pitch tomorrow*