



ECOPIONET Operational Group has established an effective knowledge exchange system in the field of organic farming, but it can also be used to transfer other practices or innovations towards the agricultural sector.

With ECOPIONET project we wanted to tackle 3 problems:

1. The low efficiency of rainfed farming in great part of the cereal producing area in Spain. We had, however, an opportunity in the organic farming, which is more sustainable, more resilient to the climate change and, the most important for producers, is more profitable.
2. The lack of producer organisation among producers undermines their chances of achieving success and being competitive. The project approaches the commercial aspect too. Producers could commercialise properly if they focus their production adapting to the demand. For getting that they should become associates.
3. Knowledge transfer systems used until now, usually unidirectional, have not been effective. It's not enough publishing papers and organise seminars with the agricultural sector in mind.

The Operational Group is composed by different actors (Professional Agricultural Organisations, research centers, diffuser of organic farming knowledge, consulting companies, agri-food industry...). It allows to join different points of view, experiences and abilities in order to get the objectives effectively.

ECOPIONET designed a knowledge exchange system, called Innovative and Transcendent Knowledge Transfer Methodology (MITTCon in Spanish), based on networking, where the different participating actors are:

- The Experts: applied researchers and other experts who have broad knowledge and field experience, but it's also very important they have the capacity for transmitting it.
- The Technical Advisors: they were selected among the technical staff (agricultural engineering degree was required) of the Professional Agricultural Organizations. Many of them were really sceptic about the organic production. After debating with the experts and being trained in advanced concepts about organic farming, they were totally convinced that it was a more profitable option for their associate producers.
- The Tutors: farmers who have been producing organic for a long time. Their role was very important, because their experience is very valuable for farmers who are beginning to change their productive model.
- The Pioneers: farmers who are going to perform the conversion to organic farming with the help of the other members of the project. They have received personal



advice, given by the technical advisors with the support of the experts, and training in productive, administrative and commercial aspects.

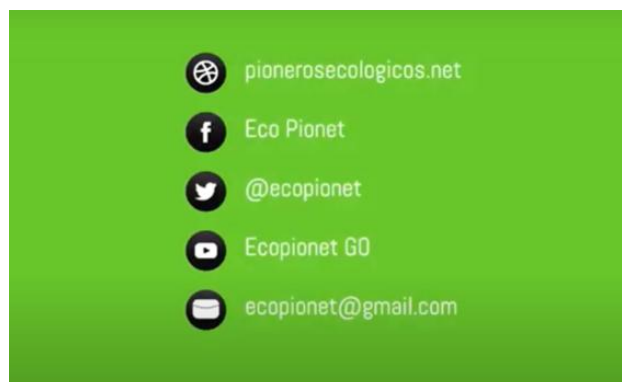
All these members create a Knowledge exchange Network using a digital platform where doubts, experiences and success are shared, getting closer all the Net members.

- And, finally, the Neighbours: those producers that are still reluctant to take the next step towards organic farming. We have celebrated field and technical workshops in order to bring them close to this production model. Moreover, the farms of the Pioneers will act as pilot fields so that the rest of the farmers in the area can see the achieved results.

Thanks to this knowledge exchange methodology we achieved:

- Effective and faster way to exchange the knowledge.
- The income of the producers increases about 20-30%. It allows to maintain the rural employment.
- The networking between producers favours their future association
- The advice provided by the Professional Agricultural Organizations have improved, so they could guide other farmers towards more sustainable and profitable practices.
- Research centers could focus in a better way their projects in order to respond to the agricultural sector problems.
- Savings of hidden costs that non sustainable practices could have and could finally turn into economic costs for the whole society. E.g. water contamination

We have published a final report of the results (also available in English) and some videos about the project, so you could know more about this Project and the conclusions obtained. You could find them in our website and youtube channel.



Thank you very much for your attention.