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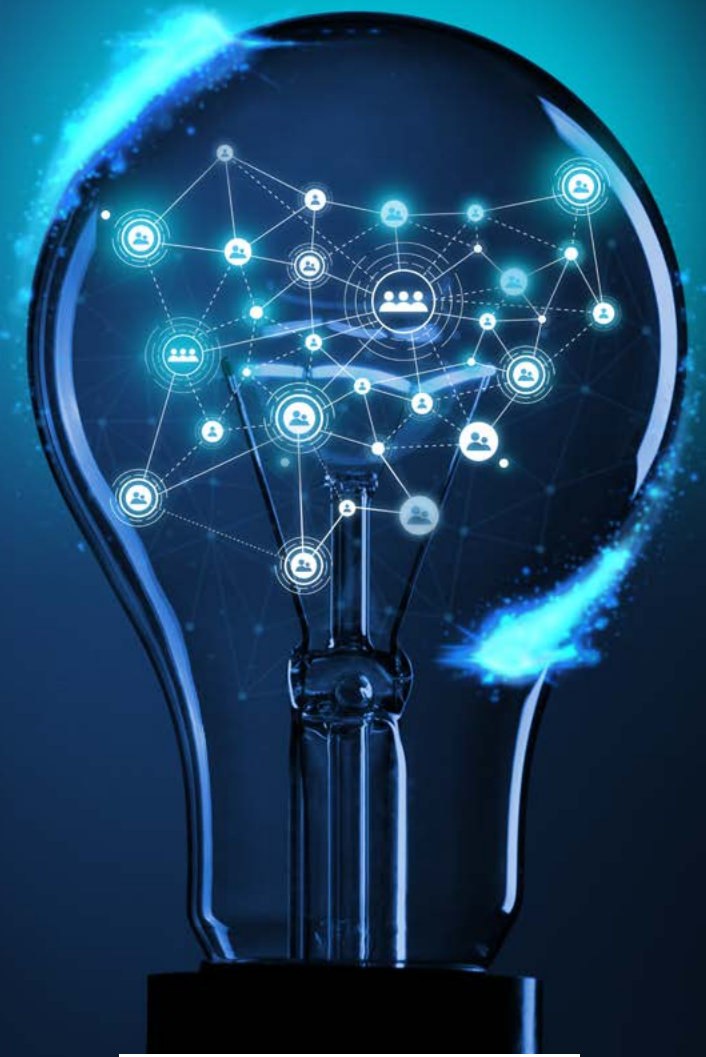
AGRICULTURE & INNOVATION

Horizon 2020 multi-actor projects



funded by European Commission

Horizon 2020 multi-actor projects

The European Commission's Horizon 2020 programme (H2020) provides funding for research and innovation for 2014-2020. It supports projects in many fields, including 'Food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine, maritime and inland water research and the bioeconomy' (Societal Challenge 2).

Many of its calls require projects to apply the "multi-actor approach" (MAA). This means that projects must focus on real problems or opportunities that farmers, foresters or others who need a solution ("end-users") are facing. It also means that partners with complementary types of knowledge – scientific, practical and other – must join forces in the project activities from beginning to end. As a result, MAA projects are able to develop innovative solutions which are more ready to be applied in practice and cover real needs. Moreover, those benefiting directly from the results of the projects will be more motivated to use them, because they were involved in generating them. They helped to build the project, bringing in their ideas and views so they feel a co-ownership of the solutions generated.

This brochure presents the benefits of the MAA, includes some examples of existing H2020 projects and explains where to find project results.

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This is an EIP-AGRI Service Point publication
brochure 'Horizon 2020 multi-actor projects', September 2017
Pictures: Treasure, Diversifood, Shutterstock
more information: www.eip-agri.eu

Boosting interactive and demand-driven innovation

The traditional, top-down linear model of knowledge 'transfer' from science to farmers is increasingly outdated: knowledge no longer only flows in one direction. Challenges in agriculture and forestry are becoming more and more complex, so it is necessary to see them from all angles.

To ensure that project results are implemented in practice, it is essential to work together. The **multi-actor approach (MAA)** aims at exactly this. It brings the right people together from science, practice, or anyone who can help tackle the objective of the project. All experience and knowledge are therefore taken into account and the partners create results together, to answer real problems.

The collaboration between all of these different partners also helps to implement results and broadly communicate right from the project start.

Interactive innovation in practice

The MAA puts into practice the "**interactive innovation model**" which is promoted by EIP-AGRI. It means that knowledge is co-created between practice, scientists, advisers, enterprises, NGOs, etc. This involves looking at different dimensions, including technical, organisational and social aspects which helps to bridge the gap between science and practice, applying a "**systems approach**".

The interactive innovation model is also used by EIP-AGRI Operational Groups, who work on tackling a specific problem or opportunity on a local, regional or national scale and bring together partners from several different professional backgrounds. More information.

Many Horizon 2020 calls for agri-food or bioeconomy projects explicitly ask in the call text for proposals to apply the MAA. Projects should in this case meet a certain number of MAA requirements, see infographic on page 8.

"Use not only your brains, but all that you can borrow"

Woodrow Wilson, 28th U.S. president

"The value of an idea lies in the using of it"

Thomas Alva Edison, inventor of the light bulb

"Enlightenment comes when views collide"

Nicolas Boileau, French philosopher

Case study – DIVERSIFOOD

Horizon 2020 multi-actor project, launched in 2015

Promoting crop diversity and networking for local high quality food systems

The diversity of crops grown in the EU is diminishing, while organic and low-input agriculture in particular need crop varieties which can cope with diverse and changing environments. The DIVERSIFOOD project is finding ways to enrich both crop diversity and the products derived from these crops. It aims to strengthen "food culture" and the resilience and economic viability of local food chains and agroecosystems. It is evaluating the genetic resources of a dozen underutilised and forgotten plant species for organic and low-input agriculture or marginal/specific conditions.

DIVERSIFOOD's multi-actor approach

The DIVERSIFOOD consortium connects the whole food chain: from genetic resources to marketing. The core team consists of farmers and seed savers' networks, and researchers involved in organic farming or participatory research. The partners bring in complementary expertise, and they represent diverse environmental contexts from all over Europe.

The project actively reaches out to farmers, bakers, consumers and others beyond those already involved in the project through tasting sessions, farms days, share shops and more.

"The multi-actor dimension of DIVERSIFOOD means a dynamic organisation where all investigations from seed to market are progressing together, and interacting, e.g. on farm experimentation, seed network organisation, food labelling. Our annual meeting brings together all the different types of actors. We spend part of the annual meeting on one farm that is participating in the project." Véronique Chable, INRA, France.

www.diversifood.eu

Case study - TREASURE

- Horizon 2020 multi-actor project, launched in 2015
- Sustainable pork chains based on European local pig breeds and their production systems

Consumer demand for high quality, healthy, regional pork products is increasing, and concerns for the impact of food production on the environment are widespread. TREASURE focuses on the preservation and development of a local supply chain, using traditional resources to improve diversity, animal welfare and sustainability in the pork sector.

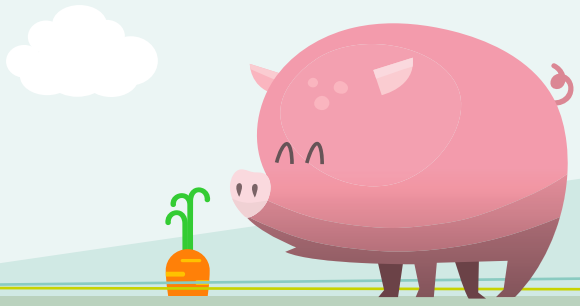
TREASURE's multi-actor approach

Despite revived interest, many local pig breeds in Europe are still endangered. Both scientific evidence on their values and cooperation between different actors is needed to build up sustainable pork chains based on local pig breeds. "We initiated TREASURE from a research network on Mediterranean pig breeds. We enlarged the consortium with pig breeders' associations, agricultural advisery services, meat technology competence centres and SMEs to ensure the use of results and exchange of know-how between partners, including the joint venture development of a collective trademark. These partners also play a key role in collecting genetic material, data and organisation of field experiments." Marjeta Candek-Potokar, Kmetijski institute, Slovenia.

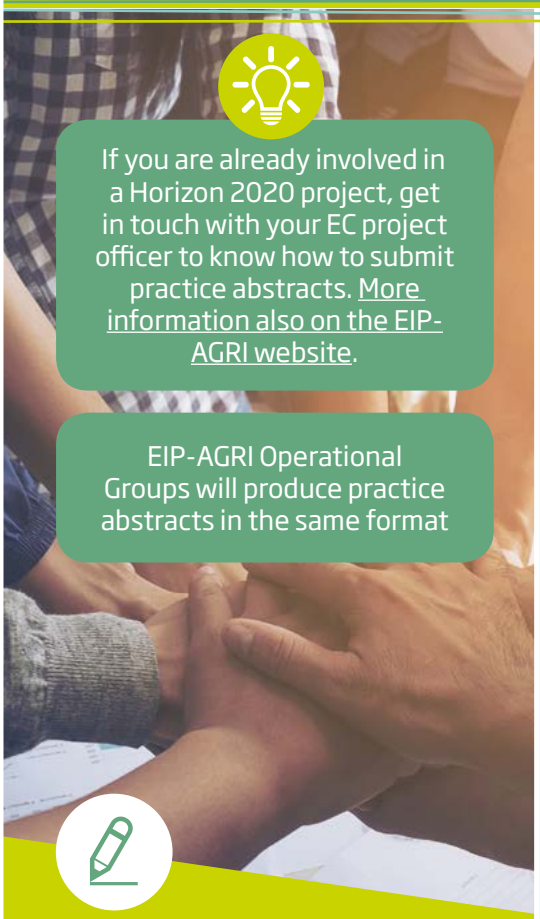
Each partner has a clear and visible role in the project and is involved from the planning phase right through to dissemination. The field experiments are mainly conducted in real-life situations where scientists and farmers are working together. The project tasks are designed so that shared efforts are essential to reach project goals.

"Recognising and exploiting potentials of different actors with varied but complementary competences is crucial in multi-actor projects to overcome cultural differences between science and practice, public and private." Marjeta Candek-Potokar.

https://treasure.kis.si/



Spreading the results of multi-actor projects



If you are already involved in a Horizon 2020 project, get in touch with your EC project officer to know how to submit practice abstracts. More information also on the EIP-AGRI website.

EIP-AGRI Operational Groups will produce practice abstracts in the same format

Guidance for drafting practice abstracts

- Focus on **useable results**: do not summarise the project, but split it into short and concise pieces of information that can be put into practice immediately
- Choose the right topics: information which farmers/foresters or other "end-users" really **need**
- Use of language: put yourself in the place of the reader when writing – is it **attractive** to read?

EIP-AGRI Practice abstracts

As part of their communication activities, MAA projects are required to produce short "practice abstracts" which outline their plans and main findings. The information should be easy understandable and provided throughout the project's life-cycle.

This information must therefore be shared in a specific format (the "EIP Common format") which is specially made so that project info and results can be shared with those who can apply the findings. The format includes: a short and understandable **title**, a **succinct summary** of the issue tackled and the main outcomes and recommendations produced, and **contact details** to find further information. The content of the submitted practice abstracts can be updated at any moment according to new findings.

A unique EU collection of practical knowledge

The practice abstracts produced by H2020 MAA projects, as well as those from EIP-AGRI Operational Group projects, will be made available on the EIP-AGRI website. This will form a unique **EU collection of practical knowledge**. Anyone will be able to search through the information by theme, sector or region. These practical project outcomes will be easily visible for any reader and contribute to the knowledge exchange and networking activities of the EIP-AGRI, encouraging contacts and interaction across Europe.

This unique EU database will also enable researchers to highlight the work they have carried out in a multi-actor environment. Such work is more likely to be taken up in practice, and this can help research institutions to show and measure the **impact** of their research, which is becoming ever more relevant to justify public funding.

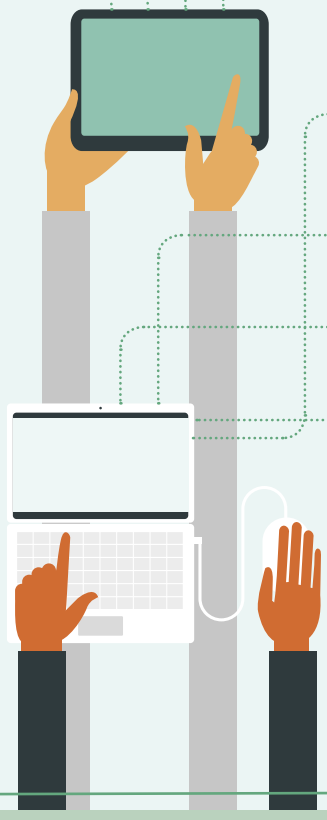
Practice abstracts from other funding sources

Interactive projects from all funding sources are welcome to use the EIP Common format to submit practice abstracts too. A number of nationally funded projects are already doing this. This will enrich the EIP-AGRI database of information and increase opportunities for interaction across Europe. The format can be found on the EIP-AGRI website.

Resources for multi-actor projects

There are a number of resources available for anyone wanting to set up a H2020 MAA project, or a project applying the multi-actor approach, funded through other means. See below:

- EIP-AGRI Brochure on Funding opportunities under Horizon 2020 - 2018 Calls
- EIP-AGRI Brochure on Thematic Networks under Horizon 2020
- EIP-AGRI common format
- EIP-AGRI Brochure on Participatory approaches for agricultural innovation
- EIP-AGRI Brochure Operational Groups
- H2020 work programme
- List of existing MAA projects
- EIP-AGRI common format: servicepoint@eip-agri.eu



On the EIP-AGRI meeting point, you can already find examples of on-going innovation projects, including Operational Groups, and ideas for new initiatives which fall under the "interactive innovation model".

How to build a successful Horizon 2020 multi-actor project?

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Target **real-life needs, problems or opportunities**

Choose consortium partners with **complementary types of knowledge and skills** (for "cross-fertilisation")

including **farmers, foresters or other end-users** to benefit from their entrepreneurial skills

Involve "multipliers" - people who can bring in practical knowledge and help disseminate the results in the long term

Set up a plan with a **clear role for each of the different partners**

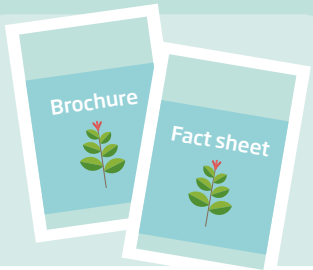
Organise **knowledge exchange activities** between the partners

Bridge the gap between research and practice **by facilitating discussions**

Involve interactive innovation groups such as **EIP-AGRI Operational Groups**

All partners must **co-create and co-decide throughout the project**

Illustrate how the project **complements existing research and best practices**



Produce practical information which feeds into the most common **existing dissemination channels** ...

... and write easily understandable **practice abstracts in the common EIP format**

Join the EIP-AGRI Network at www.eip-agri.eu

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