



EU CAP Network Brokerage event 'Get involved in Horizon Europe advisory networks'

17-18 January 2023
Sofia | Bulgaria



Funded by
the European Union

Brokerage event: 'Getting involved in Horizon Europe advisory networks'
17-18 January 2023 | Sofia, Bulgaria



Tips and tricks from the Horizon 2020 EU Advisory Network FAIRshare

Tom Kelly, TEAGASC, Ireland



FAIRshare

DIGITAL TOOLS FOR FARM ADVISORS

Experiences with Brokerage and Networking for EU projects

Tom Kelly
FAIRshare coordinator
Teagasc
18th of January 2023

Content

My experience from FAIRshare

- Why you should get involved
- Why you should not get involved
- How you can participate
- What you should do
- Issues which you should be aware of

Findable, Available, Interoperable, Reusable and Shareable

H2020 Rural Renaissance – Taking Advantage of the Digital Revolution

Topic: **RUR-13-2018:** Enabling the farm advisor community to prepare farmers for the digital age

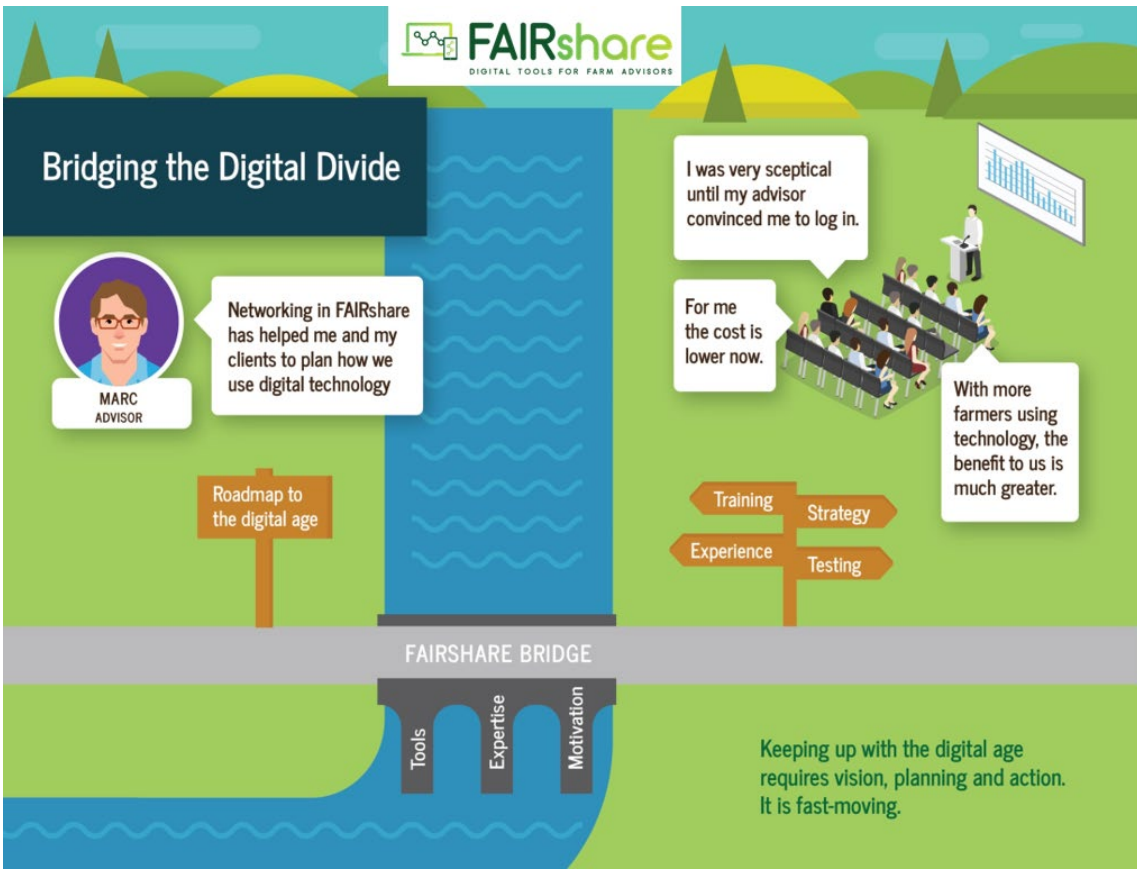
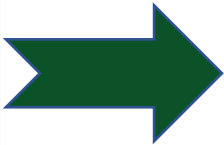
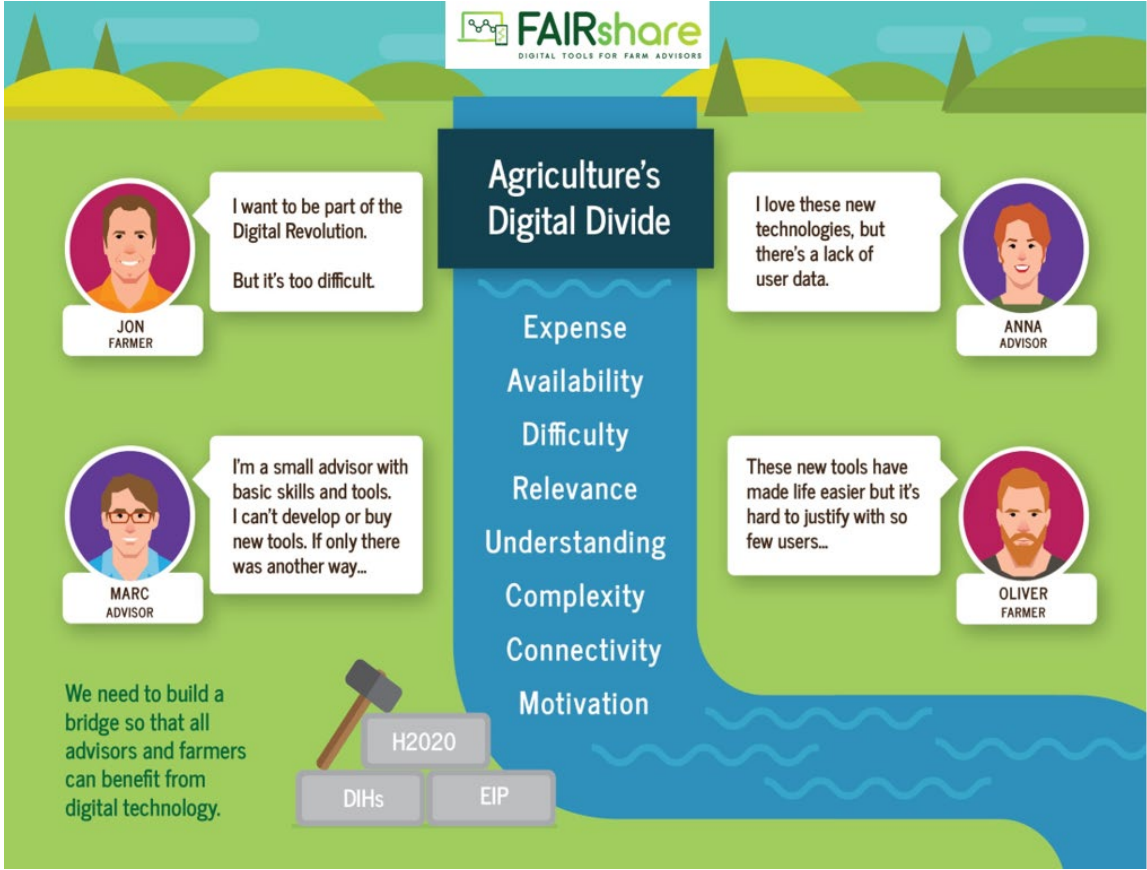
Coordination and Support Action (CSA)

FAIRshare Project Overview

- A €7 million funded project
- Coordinated by Teagasc
- 22 partners from 15 countries across Europe + 9 new partners in year 3 (case studies)
- 5 year project (2018-2023)
- Aims to ensure that **farm advisors** effectively use digital tools and services to support a more productive and sustainable agriculture

To Summarise



Why get involved in a project?

- To learn more about a topic
- To learn about other Advisors and AKIS actors
- To broaden your career and experience
- To develop a network among people with similar interests
- To stimulate new ideas for how you work

Why not to get involved?

- If you can't see what benefit it is to you or your organisation
- If the topic is not a priority for you and your organisation
- If you and your work colleagues are already under pressure with work
- If you cannot find it difficult to work in a collaborative way with people you don't know or if you don't like working in collaboration

How to get involved?

- As a **participant (your time or expense may or may not be funded)**
 - In surveys, workshops, training courses etc.
 - Register on the i2connect database and other platforms (show others that you exist and are interested in a topic or have a skill set)
- With your organisation as a **linked third party or partner (funded)**
 - To carry out specific tasks with others
- As a **task lead or co-lead** to take responsibility for leading a specific task or activity in the project by helping others to co-design, agree, deliver and report this tasks aligned with the ambition of the overall project (funded)
- As a **work package leader** you need to take responsibility for the work package and how the tasks and activities planned in this WP are aligned to the overall objectives of the project and support the other WPs. (Funded)
- As a **project co-ordinator**, you take overall responsibility for the project proposal and final agreements, tasks and reporting if successful. Regular contact with the project officer, finance officer and policy officer as needed. Should appoint a project manager to manage the project but should maintain the oversight and support the PM and management board. Should also select and take care of the advisory board if needed. Represent the project.

What kind of work can you expect?

- Sharing ideas and experience
 - Advisors/farmers Surveys
 - Workshops with other advisors
 - Workshops with Farmers
 - Workshops with Farmers and advisors
 - Workshops with other actors
 - Collecting testimonials written or video
 - Cross visits with other advisors
- Participating in dissemination and publicity activities
 - Seminars / conferences
 - Farm Demonstrations /walks
 - Articles and videos
 - Social media

How to make time and convince your boss

- Address this issue to your work colleagues, family and boss.
- Can you schedule days at certain time of the year?
- Can you involve a bigger team and share out the responsibility to people who are also interested?
- Some colleagues may have additional skills and experience.
- As time working on the project and expenses are paid you can offset the income against the other work you would have done.
- The learning experience for yourself, your colleagues and your organisation is the most important value added.
- Consider funding a student to work with you on the topic and share the analytical workload.

Organisations have different approaches

- Only a few specialist people get involved – one person may have 5-10 projects and do nothing else
 - **A good approach if these people are near to front line advisors** and have a good relationship and don't change during the project
- A lot of people (4-8) are involved in a project but only 2-5% of their time doing different tasks
 - Better for organisational learning and workload, however **careful management needed to ensure that space is provided for the work** with all other demands considered

Issues to watch out for..

How to maintain the interest and energy of partners (5 year project, 7-8 year timeline)

- A **well thought out flow of activity** clearly showing the progression of the work to be done with deliverables and milestones described
- A detailed Gant chart and task dependency map.
- **Regular communications not just emails, short weekly meetings** at critical times.
- Careful use of virtual meetings, **short and action focused**, use interactive tools
- Good use of social media and WhatsApp

1. Developed an open sharing platform and networking facility

- **Advice:** make it **simple and very attractive to advisors**. This consisted of an open platform for advisors to record the Digital Advisory Tools (DATs) they use and to make contact with the provider/user of the DATs for more information etc. There are almost 300 DATS on the platform and they are used.
 - The platform does not validate or promote individual DATS, it merely is a means of sharing their existence and basic information about them.
- **Expectations** – All advisors would contribute and publish their DATS, at least advisors from partner organisations
- **Reality** – Advisors are not motivated to share DATS . Why? They are too busy. Unsure of the commitment to further requests for information if demanded by others users
 - There is no obligation on partners to publish DATS – not linked to budget
 - The people with most knowledge of individual DATS are not involved or interested, they are often too busy supporting the DATS among their own staff or users.

Practical experience from FAIRshare - 2 - 3

2. Identify and describe good practice, form existing DATS

- This worked well, clear definition a good framework tested in other projects. Lots of information in the description of DATS. Short online workshops with a small team to manage the task.

3. Identifying barriers and challenges to digitalisation

- Difficult to get good attendance of advisors and farmers in workshops, why? They are slow to commit time to something that is not an immediate benefit or an obligation.

Practical experience from FAIRshare - 4

4. Payment for external actions by other Actors. In FAIRshare the project set an ambition to deliver actions beyond its partners. This raises the issue of how to reward the effort for those who are outside the project and don't want the administration burden of being partners or third parties in a 5 year project.

- This was difficult to find a way to find and fund more advisors to work on digitalisation problems, opportunities, actions if outside of the project.
 - Used an open tender process – good experience – fair system – off putting to some
 - Used subcontracting for smaller cases €30,000. VAT liability falls to the grantor if it is international, may not be refundable.
 - Work may be classed as services and subject to PSWT if the contractor is an SME
- External user cases lots of issues with subcontracting – would like to see possibility to pay advisors and farmers smaller amounts of aid as grants rather than subcontracts.

Issues to watch out for ..

How to involve as many advisors as possible ?

- Diversity of advisors - wide audience: 40.000 farm advisors in Europe
- Diversity of organisations, sectors and structures
- Active involvement: not just observers and on lookers
- Provide funding for specific actions or fund rewards
 - Study trips/ cross visits
 - Training courses
 - Grants or payments for actions
- It is difficult to pay grants to or to subcontract work to advisors outside your partner organisations – VAT – PSWT (professional services withholding tax) or other taxes. (talk to your financial controller)

Issues to plan for...

Things will go wrong and the clock keeps ticking -

- Covid
- War
- Partner/ beneficiary Termination
- Personnel changes and disruptions

Plan - Regular updates to risk register and financial reports

- Regular communications with Project officer and own management teams within and outside the project.

Thank You

EU CAP Network brokerage event 'Get involved in Horizon Europe advisory networks'

17 – 18 January 2023

Sofia, Bulgaria

All information on the workshop is available
on the [EU CAP Network website](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/eu-cap-network-brokerage-event-get-involved-horizon-europe-advisory-networks-2023-01-17_en)

On the event webpage:

[https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/
news-events/events/eu-cap-network-
brokerage-event-get-involved-
horizon-europe-advisory-networks-
2023-01-17_en](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/eu-cap-network-brokerage-event-get-involved-horizon-europe-advisory-networks-2023-01-17_en)



Funded by
the European Union