



EU CAP Network brokerage event 'Partnering for innovation with impact in agriculture and rural areas'

Prague, Czech Republic
29-30 April 2025

Experience with the coordination of a Horizon project

Sylvain Sturel
Chambres d'agriculture, France



i2connect
INTERACTIVE INNOVATION



THIS PROJECT HAS RECEIVED
FUNDING FROM THE EUROPEAN
UNION* HORIZON 2020 RESEARCH
AND INNOVATION PROGRAMME
UNDER GRANT AGREEMENT N. 863039

Experience with the Coordination of a Horizon Project

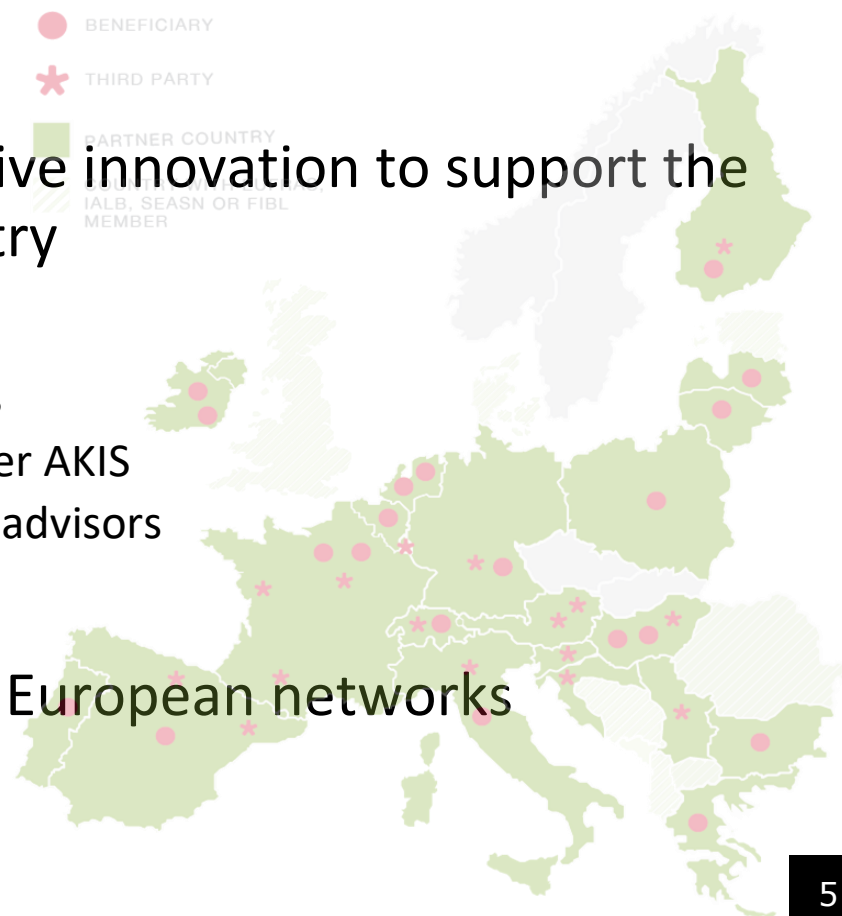
EU CAP Network Brokerage Event
29–30 April 2025 in Prag, Czech Republic
Sylvain Sturel, French Chambers of Agriculture

Content

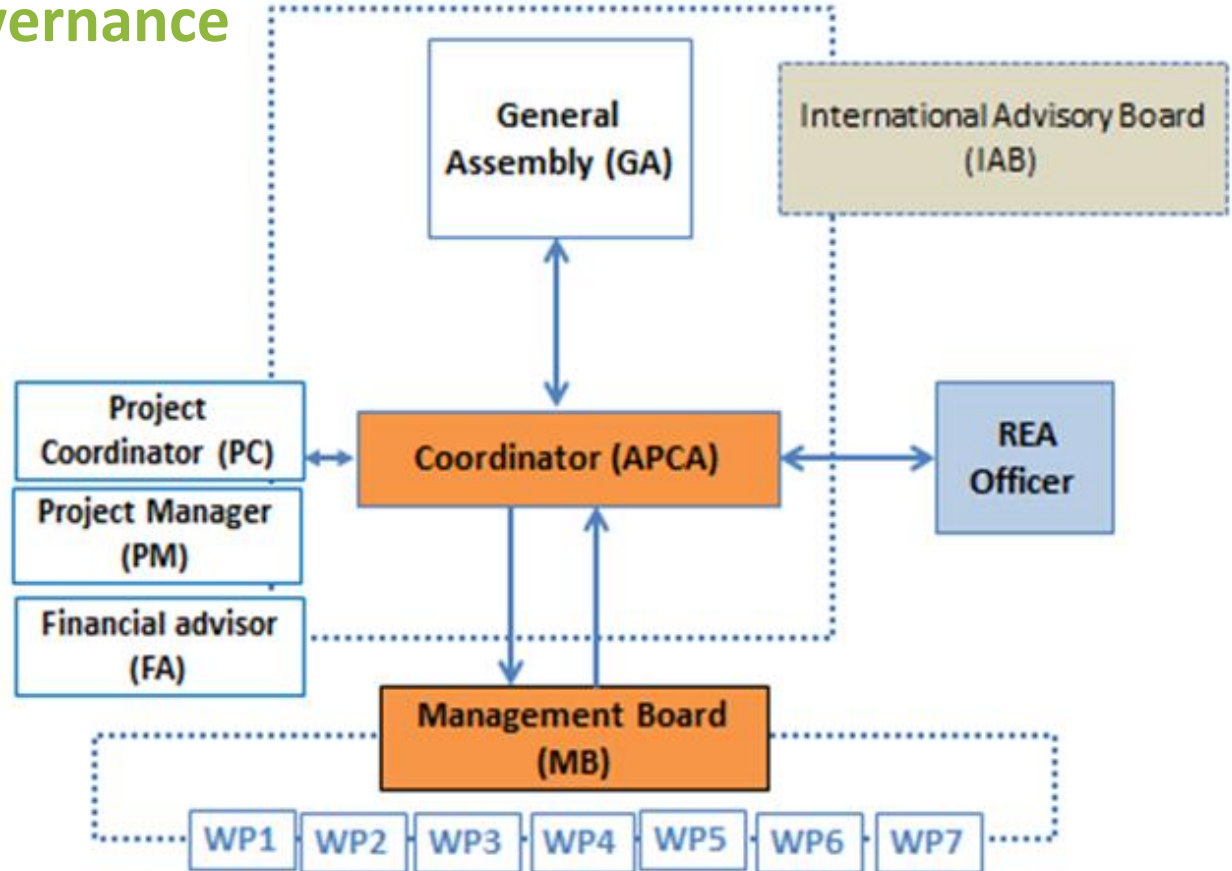
- Introduction
- Summary of the project
- Coordinator's responsibilities & skills + some lessons learnt
- What was easy vs. challenging for me
- Conclusion

The project in a nutshell

- **General objective:** Foster interactive innovation to support the transition of agriculture and forestry
- **Specific objectives :**
 - Strengthen the skills of individual advisors
 - Strengthen the role of advisors in the wider AKIS
 - Create a European network of innovation advisors
- **Type of project:** CSA / multiactor
- **Partners:** 42 (21 countries), incl. 4 European networks
- **Budget:** 5 M€ (Horizon 2020)
- **Duration:** Nov. 2019 – Oct. 2024



Management & governance



Responsibilities and/or tasks

- Select a call of major interest for you, your organisation & close partners
- Read carefully the topic & identify key requirements
- Draft a first project concept with a small core group
- Set up a consortium with complementary actors & appropriate geographical coverage
- Draw up the project proposal discuss & improve the proposal with the partners

Skills needed

- Be curious, find information, use your professional networks
- Be methodical
- Be familiar with tools for project design
- Be open, but selective
- Proposal writing methodology
- Facilitation methods
- Make decisions

Some lessons to share

- Keep a close watch on calls & spot interesting topics as early as possible
- Be involved in various groups & networks
- Make sure you have the support of your superiors
- Pay attention to the project's impact
- Start early to involve key partners
- Find the right balance between an ambitious and a manageable project
- Leverage the complementary expertise withing the consortium
- Ensure that each partner feels responsabile & spot the topics you're interested in as early as possible
- If you are not experienced in proposal writing: call on external support

Responsibilities and/or tasks

- Close collaboration with the project manager, financial advisor & WP leaders
- Design & apply guidelines & monitoring tools
- Internal financial reporting
- Management Board meetings
- Participation in WP meetings
- Support for partners in difficulty
- Partners' General Assemblies

Skills needed

- Team work
- Organisation
- Project management
- Delegated to our financial advisor
- Meeting facilitation
- Providing guidance, making decisions
- Ensure consistency, exchange of information & synergies between WPs
- Pay attention to partners & be supportive
- Organisation
- Facilitation

Responsibilities and/or tasks

- Timely submission of the deliverables
- Timely submission of periodic reports
- Review meetings
- Respond to questions & formal notifications from the EC
- Ad hoc monitoring meetings with PO
- Financial & contractual management
- Ex post obligations: maintain website, continue C&D activities, keep records for 5 years

Skills needed

- Organisation
- Close collaboration with authors
- Writing or proofreading
- Close collaboration with WP leaders & FA
- Delegated to our financial advisor
- Responsiveness
- Largely delegated to our financial advisor
- Still: need to check the financial tables & follow-up the payment process

Responsibilities and/or tasks

- Supervision of communication, dissemination & exploitation activities
- Internal communication:
 - in the consortium: internal newsletter, partners' ad hoc meetings...
 - within the partners' organisations
- External communication (regional, national & EU): external newsletter, website, on social media posts, conferences, webinars, practice abstracts, liaise with projects & networks
- Continue C&D after the project's end

Skills needed

- At least basic communication skills (written & oral)
- Responsiveness
- Organisational skills for events
- Partner(s) with strong expertise in communication: social media, videos, storytelling...

What skills are needed to lead such a project?

- For the proposal preparation:
- Keep a close watch on call for projects to spot those of major interest
- Contact trusted partners to check if they would be interested in joining
- Get the green light from your manager to get involved
- Draft the project concept
- Start early to involve the right partnersinvolve key organisations
- Maintain good relations with partners
- Apply the right mix of “carrot and stick”: you need to motivate the partners as much as possible, but sometimes also remind them of their duties (as set out in the DoA)

Some lessons to share

- Make sure that meetings are not only informative but that decisions are taken
- Pay attention to partners falling behind schedule or struggling to achieve their targets
- Organize more often plenary meetings
- To ensure high quality of deliverables: appoint reviewers
- Be responsive to requests from EC
- Put strong more on C&D, even train partners on C&D
- Pay attention to the impact

Some personal reflections (1/2)

What was easier for me?

- Human relations
- Teamwork
- Familiar with EU networks
- Familiar with content
- Familiar with Horizon rules

What was challenging for me?

- Writing & speaking in English
- Leadership
- Organisation, strict deadlines
- Avoid to be stuck in administrative matters
- Keep in mind the impact
- Communication & dissemination

Some personal reflections 2/2

All in all:

- Challenging & sometimes stressful
- Competition with other duties
- A long-term commitment

But also a lot of satisfactions:

- An interesting & rewarding role
- Discover a lot, at various levels
- Results sometimes beyond expectations
- Exciting follow-up actions

What practical guidance or lessons learned would you share with others planning or managing similar initiatives?

- spot the topics you're interested in as early as possible
- keep a close watch on calls for projects to spot those of interest to your organisation
- A wide network of partners
- Keep a watch on Horizon calls for projects

Main results of i2connect

- **Where can you find these resources?**



- Website: <https://i2connect-h2020.eu>
- YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@i2connect799>
- also available on AKISconnect: <https://akisconnect.eu/>
- and soon on EU-FarmBook: <https://eufarmbook.eu/en>

- **Lead partner: French Chambers of Agriculture**

- Contact: sylvain.sturel@apca.chambagri.fr

EU CAP Network brokerage event ‘Partnering for innovation with impact in agriculture and rural areas’

29-30 April 2025
Prague, Czech Republic

All information on the brokerage event is available on the event webpage:

<https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/events/eu-cap-network-brokerage-event-partnering-innovation-impact-agriculture-and-rural-areas>

