



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Brussels, 13 May 2013

Minutes of the 1st meeting of the High Level Steering Board for the agricultural EIP

21 February 2013 in Brussels

(Presence list attached in Annex)

1. Welcome by Commissioners Ciolos and Geoghegan-Quinn

In his introductory speech, Commissioner Ciolos recalled the general principles of the agricultural EIP (catalyst, based on interactive innovation model, exchange of knowledge and experience, ...) and the crucial role of the High Level Steering Board to establish the general orientations of, and to give strategic advice to, the EIP. Commissioner Ciolos indicated that the HLSB will identify a list of priority areas where innovation is needed and bottlenecks to innovation. It should help to answer questions such as: How to mobilise all relevant innovation actors? How to reconcile the need to improve productivity with that of sustainable development? How to speed up innovative actions and exchange of knowledge? How to create a culture of innovation in the agricultural sector?

Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn underlined the importance of EIPs as innovative tools to foster competitiveness, sustainability and economic recovery. She emphasised the need to keep the momentum for EIPs through fast delivery and involvement of all stakeholders. She also highlighted the coherence that the agricultural EIP will promote between the different funding opportunities. Finally, Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn mentioned the specific contribution that the Research Framework Programme (current and future) can bring to the EIP.

2. Discussion

In view of ensuring a challenge-driven handling of the wide range of relevant issues and bringing the wide range of partly diverging views into a constructive interaction, several interventions underline that the EIP should maintain a holistic approach. Innovation should concern systems, not isolated practices. Specific environmental, economic, and social concerns should be looked at in their wider context and interdependency and not in an isolated manner.

Whilst some intervention emphasised the higher merits of certain farming systems or structures, it was also underlined that engaging in such a discourse might fail to result in tangible outcomes. Instead, innovative solutions should be sought to drive the

sustainability (in its social, economic, and environmental dimension) of all existing system, while keeping an eye on the possibility to learn from each other.

It was also stressed that innovation can emerge from using different knowledge systems. Both traditional knowledge and scientific research can provide inputs leading to innovation. Bridges between the two knowledge systems need to be made or reinforced.

Strong emphasis was given to the need for a strong bottom-up approach (i.e. OG should not be imposed from the top down at national or regional level).

Discussion on question 1

- *Which would be the main areas of actions for the EIP? How to pursue innovative solutions which tackle the need for increased productivity whilst integrating environmental and societal concerns? What focus groups? How should members be selected, who should chair these focus groups?*

There were calls to avoid defining the areas of actions in the form of a shopping list but rather to merge the areas listed by Sherpas within broader categories.

Examples of grouping included:

- food production, non-food production, climate adaptation, water, ecosystem management;
- innovation in resource use efficiency, consumer driven innovation, organisation of knowledge transfer in Europe;
- land management, consumption side, market for ecosystem services, nutrient management.

A number of missing or not developed enough areas of action were identified, especially sustainable animal husbandry (integrated management of livestock, emerging animal diseases, application of technologies in stables), the international dimension of EU agriculture, the integrated nature of the value chain, the interdependency between production and consumption pattern, avoiding food waste, innovation in the policy design and underlying delivery mechanisms (i. a. diminishing administrative burden, improving access to funds).

Questions were raised about the relationship between productivity and sustainability. Whilst some considered a strong focus on productivity as detrimental, others underlined that enhanced productivity is a function of improved resource efficiency. Consensus emerged that productivity must integrate that aspect of enhancing quality. Furthermore strong emphasis was given to the need for the farmer to make a living from his farming activity and that this requires it to be competitive. In this perspective, solutions would consider low input farming systems, knowledge-intensive systems (amongst which organic farming), as well as systems that enhance the ecological and climate-related footprint per unit of production.

Some interventions elaborated on the need to look at farming within the whole value chain, whether related to food production or to non-food ("bio-economy").

The territorial dimension was highlighted, in particular as regards the need to maintain agriculture throughout the whole EU territory. Actions under research and innovation

programmes should involve all farmers (including small and HNV farming systems). Innovation should provide solution for all types of farming systems and structures and should not be reserved just for the front-runners.

The need to monitor the implementation of the EIP was mentioned. There was a suggestion that the HLSB might play a role in this.

Discussion on questions 2 and 3

- *Who will be the main stakeholders (acting) as well as the broader stakeholder communities involved in and driving the EIP? How can we get scientists involved? Which are the bottlenecks at different levels and for different types of stakeholders? Which strategic solutions could tackle such bottlenecks through the EIP?*
- *How will you mobilise farmers to engage on innovative actions and knowledge sharing? What is your approach to interlinking farmers with researchers, agri-business, and civil society in view of advancing and testing innovative approaches to enhancing productive and sustainable farming?*

Stakeholders

It was underlined that exchange and interaction between farmers and researchers needs facilitation. Such a role could be assumed by chambers of agriculture, advisory services, existing networks (including LEADER network). Universities could also contribute to mobilising farmers, establishing links between farmers and industry and other relevant actors. Importance was given to the concept of the "innovation broker".

Other stakeholders that should be closely associated to the EIP included agricultural workers as well as the local and regional authorities.

Bottlenecks and solutions:

As an important impediment to a fruitful interaction between practice and science, the use of jargon was identified. Another obstacle at regional and local level is the fact that some relevant information is available only in certain languages (i.e. English often used to disseminate knowledge).

Some members of the HLSB perceived regulations as burdensome and innovation unfriendly (e.g. long time to obtain authorisation of products) and sometimes lacking consistency between them. Others said that a certain level coercion brought by legislation could represent a big spur for innovation.

It was felt that publication of research results does happen, but further development of results towards concrete application is often lacking. Accordingly, early stages of research projects should involve also reflections on the concrete application of results.

Targeting measures to individual farmers might result in isolated and scattered outcomes. Better and more wide-spread results can be achieved by address groups of farmers which would also allow to benefit from the strong force of mutual learning. Along the same line, it may be important to look at the agricultural supply chain as a whole: If processing facilities fail to sustain, innovation in the related supply of primary products might face serious limitations.

Innovative solutions must correspond to the needs of farmers and society, otherwise they are not used. Often large industries decide on the subjects of innovation, but not the SMEs.

With respect to involving the scientific community, a specific need was seen for establishing incentives for engaging in applied research and extension activities.

Mobilising farmers

First of all it was stated that it is somewhat patronising to pretend that farmers need to be mobilised. Farmers are open for new possibilities and have been innovating for centuries. However, the risks they are forced to take (weather, markets) oblige them to be cautious. Reducing risk is therefore a way to involve farmers.

Advisory and extension services as well as innovation brokers have a crucial role to play in getting farmers involved, because they have a direct contact with farmers and they speak the same language. These services need to be well trained to be able to link farmers with the research community.

Networks of farmers are also important. It was considered that peer to peer learning is often better than knowledge coming from outside.

Demonstration and experimental farms help to disseminate knowledge by bringing together farmers, advisors, researchers, etc.. The need to establish a network of demonstration farms at EU level was highlighted in this context.

Innovation Culture

From the discussion of questions 2 and 3, a particular focus emerged on the need to establish a favourable innovation culture, which implies a change of the mind set at all level. This would be brought about by in particular:

- facilitating exchanges between all actors,
- sharing traditional and scientific knowledge,
- relying on a bottom-up approach and strengthening networking,
- multiplying via demonstration farms,
- identifying and developing inspirational models,
- further mobilising the innovation brokers and disseminating research results,
- developing social and institutional innovation.

Discussion on question 4

- *How should access to funding be structured in a way that eases the development and use of different types of financing (national/regional/private)? Which are the enabling conditions and success factors for an effective and efficient implementation of the EIP?*

Funding

Funding under RD was considered as not sufficient to cover all priorities. This implies that Member States will have to make a decision to select the right measures for innovation. There will need to be the political will to invest in innovation (longer term) rather than in capital (immediate benefits).

It was underlined that the possibility of creating of operational groups should be open to all relevant innovation actors, in a bottom-up process. Furthermore, it was seen necessary to base open calls on a strategic agenda, which would introduce a certain top-down element.

It should be reflected right from the start of the project on how to capitalise on the results, and how to disseminate results to make them accessible to farmers. Furthermore clear milestones should be defined. Towards the end of the project, they should assess the results (success/failure) against the initial objectives. A project should be allowed to fail. However, if this happens, the reasons thereof should be analysed and lessons drawn.

Other conditions that will ensure success for the EIP is whether there will be a strong agricultural funding under Horizon 2020, links between H2020 projects and RD projects, and consistency in evaluation criteria.

Discussion on question 5

- *"Commitment": Which commitments will the members of the High Level Steering Board bring to the EIP? How can the Members of the High Level Steering Board and their respective organisations use their networks to advance agricultural innovation?*

This question will be debated at the second meeting of the HLSB.

3. Conclusions

Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn's representative stressed the need for bottom-up approaches, involving all stakeholders. Furthermore, he underlined the multiple dimensions of innovation, including social, economic, and ecological aspects. The SIP was said to be an important input into the planning of Horizon 2020 actions.

Commissioner Ciolos concluded by summarizing the main strands of the debate. He reiterated the need for breaking up the thinking in silos by concentrating on four main challenges: Resource efficiency (including productivity and social innovation), the social role of agriculture (provision of public goods), ensuring the sustainability of the whole value chain; and the creation of an enabling innovation culture. Finally, he announced the next meeting of the HLSB for 11 July 2013.

Annex 1: Presence list at the HLSB meeting

Name	Institution
Minister D. CONSTANTIN	Romanian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
Mirela JURCONI	Counsellor of the Minister
Roxana GRADINARIU	Sherpa to the Romanian Minister
Minister A. TSAFTARIS	Greek Ministry for Rural Development and Food
Georgia BAZOTI-MITSONI	Sherpa to the Greek Minister
Anders MIKKELSEN	Deputy Permanent Secretary - Danish Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries
René SOUCHON	Committee of the Regions
Richard HOWELL	SCAR
Franco MIGLIETTA	Istituto Agrario di San Michele all'Adige (IASMA)
Doru PAMFIL	Univ. of Agricultural Science and Veterinary Medicine, Cluj
Urs NIGGLI	Forschungsinstitut für Biologischen Landbau (FIBL)
Erik MATHIJS	Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KUL)
Marion GUILLOU	JPI FACCE - INRA
Wim SARIS	JPI HSHL - Maastricht University - NUTRIM
Karin METZLAFF	European Plant Science Organisation (EPSO)
Franz BIGLER	International Organization of Biological and Integrated Control – IOBC (INRA)
Willy KESSLER	European Grassland Federation (EGF)
Alan MATTHEWS	European Association of Agricultural Economists (EAAE)
Andrea ROSATI	European Federation of Animal Science (EAAP)
Peter DAVIES	Eurogroup For Animals
Marco CONTIERO	GREENPEACE
Ariel BRUNNER	BIRDLIFE
Benedikt HAERLIN	ARC 2020
Albert Jan MAAT	COPA-COGECA
Geneviève SAVIGNY	VIA CAMPESINA
Christopher STOPEs	IFOAM
Ingrid PETTERSSON	European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA)
Jacob B. HANSEN	FERTILIZERS EUROPE
Friedhelm SCHMIDER	European Crop Protection Association (ECPA)

Francois VEILLERETTE	Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Europe
Jean-Paul JUDSON	European Seed Association (ESA)
Christian SCHREFEL	ARCHE NOAH
Nathalie MOLL	EUROPABIO
Hans VAN ES	FRESHFEL Europe
Mella FREWEN	FoodDrinkEurope
Petri RINNE	European Leader Association for Rural Development (ELARD)
Carlo PETRINI	Slow Food International
Michele FINO	Slow Food International
Arnd SPAHN	European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT)
Harald MAUSER	European Forest Institute (EFI)
Wendelin VAN GRAVENREUTH	Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF)
Martin BERGES	European Association of Chambers of Agriculture
Dacian CIOLOȘ	Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development
Máire GEOGHEGAN-QUINN	Commissioner for Research and Innovation
Alina-Stefania UJUPAN	Cabinet - Ciolos
Patricia REILLY	Cabinet - Geoghegan-Quinn
Keith SEQUEIRA	Cabinet - Geoghegan-Quinn
Diana IVANOVA-VAN BEERS	DG RTD C.1
Maria Angeles BENITEZ SALAS	DG AGRI H
Martin SCHEELE	DG AGRI H.1
Iman BOOT	DG AGRI H.1
Inge VAN OOST	DG AGRI H.1
René L'HER	DG AGRI H.1
Sergiu DIDICESCU	DG AGRI H.1
Emanuela GALEAZZI	DG AGRI H.1