

eip-agri
AGRICULTURE & INNOVATION



EIP-AGRI Workshop
Innovation in the supply chain:
creating value together
WORKSHOP REPORT
6-7 FEBRUARY 2018

1. Introduction

The EIP-AGRI workshop on ‘Innovation in the supply chain: creating value together’ was held in Lyon, France, on 6-7 February 2018. The event was organised by the European Commission’s DG Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) in cooperation with the French National Rural Network, led by the French Ministry of Agriculture, Food and the General Commission for Territorial Equality and Régions de France. The workshop was developed in recognition of the number of new and existing Operational Groups (OGs) whose innovative approaches were focused on supply chain developments.

At the time of the event, there were over 300 Operational Group projects that had been set up across Europe, supported by the Rural Development Programmes. Innovation in new and existing supply chains is one of the top five themes being worked on by OGs alongside plant protection, precision farming, agro-environment and organic farming. The theme of short supply chains is complex and diverse, which is reflected in the broad array of projects being developed and delivered – from a production focus to a consumer-led approach involving many different products and new systems ideas. Most of them focus on new supply chains and commercialisation in crop production such as arable crops, flowers, fruits and vegetables and vines. Some also relate to animal production, food supply chains, forestry and bioenergy.

To successfully explore this diversity of projects, find the commonality between OGs, and identify ways of effective working, a short survey was distributed to participants prior to the workshop. This identified that the biggest driver for attending the workshop was to share innovative ideas and find examples of innovation in practice. The people that OGs most wanted to meet were researchers working on similar issues, representatives from innovation support services, and marketing experts. The replies to the survey also enabled the participating OGs to be grouped into three main thematic areas – producing under a quality scheme or regional brand, developing new supply chain products or processes, and organisation of the supply chain through new business models.

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2. Brief description of the process

Objectives and format of the workshop

The aim of the event was to promote cross-border knowledge exchange, networking and ongoing cooperation between Operational Groups, and between Operational Groups and relevant research projects. Consequently, the workshop was designed to create opportunities for discussion in groups through breakout sessions, field trips and open space. To achieve this aim, the workshop focused on using these opportunities for discussion to support OGs in better achieving their objectives. This could be done by:

- connecting OGs with each other and to relevant research activities
- exchanging good practice
- identifying common challenges and exploring potential solutions, and
- promoting ongoing cooperation beyond the workshop

Over 100 participants from 17 different countries attended, including members of OGs, multi-actor projects and in particular, thematic networks. The participants came from diverse backgrounds including farmers, researchers, innovation brokers, supply chain specialists and people involved in consumer-focused branding. The following projects were notably represented at the event:

- 33 Operational Groups
- 9 thematic networks and multi-actor projects

Whilst I was there... "It was very refreshing and inspiring to talk with so many different people from so many different countries and backgrounds about what we all had in common: short supply chains." **Since I've been back...** "The Lyon event was the trigger to give me even more energy to continue with my own short supply chain, it gave me some insights and connections which will soon help me to set up my supply chain business with more solid foundations. People have overlapping business cases and comparable challenges to tackle. By sharing and coaching each other we can grow quicker and save time on innovation and development."

- Steven, the Netherlands -



The box below shows examples of some of the short supply chain topics that are being explored by Operational Groups

Developing new supply chain products or processes

Sweet potatoes in a strategy of agricultural diversification in the Languedoc-Roussillon region

Healthy food from the Appenines – Appen.org

Winter Harvest: Seasonal, low-energy, innovative vegetable production to extend the growing season

Innovative systems for leguminous plants

Development and adaptation of innovative cultivation steps in crop-based supply chains

Setting up guayule plots

Growing algae as a greenhouse crop

Muscat grape innovation

Creating and marketing innovative products from laying hens at the end of the laying period

Developing pet treats to obtain higher added value from the by-products of animal slaughter

Improving the economic value of the supply chain in production and marketing of flowers & plants

Development of a management system for farmers and communities to improve environmental protection and conservation through optimised energy crops

Building a sustainable process chain for sugar beets as an energy or raw materials supplier

Is short rotation coppicing a solution for future regional bio-refineries?

Organisation of the supply chain through new business models

Supporting intermediate supply chains - SYAM

Development of a sustainable model of best practice for promoting ancient wheat grains in the Emilia-Romagna region

Adding value to regional pear varieties

Sustainable development of cattle and poultry supply chains in Mayotte

Increasing the potential use of endemic wild fruit species

Cooperation to improve the competitiveness of the value chain of Idiazabal cheese

Basic business models for sustainable and innovative agricultural poultry meat production

Basis business models for sustainable and innovative agricultural beer production

Mustard of Bourgogne: creating an international market

Organisation of the supply chain through new business models

Lammyftet - a Swedish standard for lamb quality

Improving the quality of fish and plant products in aquatic systems

Establishing regional, organic cultivation and processing chains for Einkorn & Emmer wheat

Innovative and participatory vegetable & berry production in the conurbation of Cologne & Bonn

FRUGAL – short supply chains in a city food policy

3. Setting the scene



After a cordial welcome to Lyon from **Pascale Riccoboni** (picture) on behalf of the French Ministry of Agriculture and Food, **Alberto D'Avino** (DG AGRI) provided an overview of the OGs and of the support and research network that surrounds them. He focused on the role of the EIP-AGRI in closing the gap between research and practice. This can be done by forming partnerships that help improve the relevance of research, and help to successfully implement results.

This workshop was one of many methods used to achieve this, by bringing actors together and supporting them in turning existing knowledge into practical solutions. The EIP-AGRI works as the link between Operational Groups, which are funded through the Rural Development Programmes, and research projects, multi-actor projects and notably thematic networks, which are funded at European level.

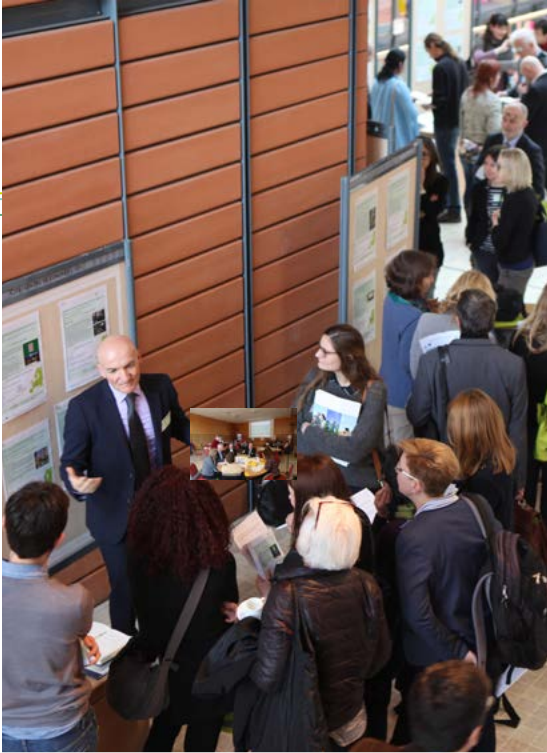
Horizon 2020 multi-actor projects were also described. These bring together a group of actors with complementary knowledge and experience to focus on innovation that supports end users. Horizon 2020 thematic networks complement these groups by bringing together similarly mixed actors around a specific theme, to explore existing knowledge and research, and to make this usable and accessible for end users.

To develop a deeper understanding of these different groups on a practical level, short interviews were held with representatives from each:

- **Operational Group – Food Value:** Marieke Karsen briefly explained the OG she is involved in, which is developing an online tool for short supply chains. She shared her optimism for the workshop and highlighted the importance for OGs to connect with research activities that could support their more practical work.
- **Thematic Network – SKIN:** Fedele Colantuono's network is focused on short supply chain knowledge and innovation, making it perfectly linked to the event. He talked about the role of the network in dissemination, and the importance of networking with OGs to understand how they operate and communicate with the agricultural communities involved.
- **Multi-Actor Project – TREASURE:** Marjeta Candek-Potokar discussed her multi-actor project looking at traditional high quality pork products in a modern supply chain. She was feeling enthusiastic about sharing her experiences with other groups, particularly those working on the same theme and was hoping to explore possible further collaborations.

All three representatives wanted to learn more about how other groups innovated, and disseminated their results. They also wanted to look for ways of working with other participants after the event. All participants were provided with a 'Let's Connect' sheet to help record the details of the people they wanted to connect with after the event. These sheets acted as a tool for enabling collaborations to continue in a more effective way than exchanging business cards.





4. Poster sessions

All participants had prepared a poster which described the activity of their particular project or group. In the following sessions, participants presented their posters in four rounds of fifteen minutes. Some also brought some additional materials along, such as products their group had developed, examples of branding and packaging, or flyers and other information to take away. There was a real buzz in the room as everyone learnt more about the diversity of projects being delivered and began conversations with those they might be able to collaborate with after the event.



5. Sharing experiences: common challenges and possible solutions in the innovation process

The participants joined interactive sessions where they were asked to explore the drivers of innovation in short supply chains, and how collaborative actions could add value to the innovation process. They split into three themed groups across four rooms with an inspirational speaker presenting their experiences of innovation to kick off the sessions:

- Producing under a quality scheme or regional brand
Matthew Gorton
- Developing new supply chain products or processes
Soizic Ozbolt
- Organisation of the supply chain through new business models | Gerard Ferriere
- Organisation of the supply chain through new business models | Astrid Weiss



Inspiration in innovation Focus on: The Innovation Cycle | Astrid Weiss

Astrid discussed her experience of utilising innovation to create new business models for selling beer that is produced on-farm in South Tirol, Italy. She shared an innovation cycle which covered all aspects of the innovation process and explored how these elements impacted on each other. She showed how she had applied this cycle to her work in Italy on new business models.

The key to success had been to develop strong customer relations to understand their expectations and so to better target the product. Her project had also enabled small farmers to save costs and become more competitive by sharing new economic models. Innovation through digitalisation had also provided new tools to optimise production and distribution, and to improve marketing strategies. Identifying key partners and establishing peer learning schemes had opened opportunities to gain knowledge and produce innovative business models.



Participants were then asked to work through three progressive questions, encouraging them to explore the process of capturing innovation and adding value to it within short supply chains.

The questions were:

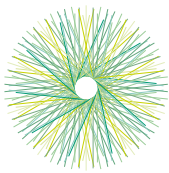
- What are the most promising drivers of innovation in the supply chain? And what is their potential for addressing challenges that the supply chain is facing?
- How can we make the best of these innovation drivers, creating a win-win for all actors, notably farmers?
- How can cross-regional / cross-border exchanges add value to these drivers and support innovation in the supply chain?

Participants worked in small groups to first identify what they felt were the key drivers of innovation. They then ranked these in order of importance. The participants' next challenge was how to capture these drivers. Finally, the discussions dealt with how collaboration could add value to these drivers, and with the overall process of innovation. The combined results from these breakout groups are presented in the table on the next page.

Whilst I was there... "I found the event very informative, especially in connecting OGs with H2020 projects. The study tour was insightful on intermediate circuits. It was also good to chat with staff from EIP Agri to better understand their operations"
Since I've been back... "I made several contacts and followed up with leaders from particular operational schemes. It was a good mechanism for sharing experiences"

- Matthew, UK -





How to capture the highest ranked and most frequently identified drivers?

| DRIVERS | Consumer behaviour, expectation & demand | Leadership, collaboration & connecting stakeholders | Environment, climate change & the impact of food production | |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|
| CAPTURING THE DRIVERS | <p>Educate and involve consumers by building better links with producers: Focus innovation on customers' needs and expectations, but make sure that strategies focus on connecting with consumers in the long term, diversifying customers and targeting products to meet those needs.</p> | <p>Build collaborations around a strong vision led by an open leader and facilitator: Start with small-scale collaborations of multi-actor teams built around a vision or idea, to build stakeholder skills and create the foundations for trust along the supply chain. Consider a diversity of approaches for delivery but share common ground and objectives.</p> | <p>Develop a new mindset on yield and income: Less is more effective and may have more impact in the market, both through a focus on quality rather than quantity, and a reduced environmental impact.</p> | |
| DRIVERS | Communication & transparent information | Political willingness, policy & innovation incentives | IT, logistics & supply chain technology | Marketing, social media & storytelling |
| CAPTURING THE DRIVERS | <p>Develop bottom-up local, regional and European forums: to connect people, cooperate, share experiences and learn from both best practice and mistakes.</p> | <p>Simplify farmers' administrative burden and their access to innovation: to ensure better distribution of the value added along the supply chain.</p> | <p>Provide incentives to improve uptake of new technology: ensure that these incentives exist throughout the supply chain.</p> | <p>Make farming and food attractive: Use farms, farmers, products and provenance to tell a modern, engaging story.</p> |

How can cross-border exchanges add value to these drivers of innovation?

Diversity should be seen to bring richness

Sharing experiences and bringing new perspectives to problems encourages innovation. Successful examples inspire and motivate others. Working across borders means that there is a higher chance of finding the right partners, and wider competition supports innovation, for instance cross-border marketing strategies involving consumers.



- Collaborative cross-border projects
- Common policy and clear messages
- Events, websites and webinars to disseminate best practice
- Database of skills, knowledge and initiatives
- Innovation meetings
- Exchange visits and dialogue
- 'Travelling farms'
- Adjustments to national legislation
- New markets for ideas and projects

6. Field Trips – Learning from practical examples

During the afternoon of the first day, participants travelled to one of four innovative short supply chain projects, to learn from and feel inspired by practical examples from across the region. The trips were diverse and included innovation in production, processing, and marketing, representing the three main thematic areas for short supply chains that were identified throughout the event.

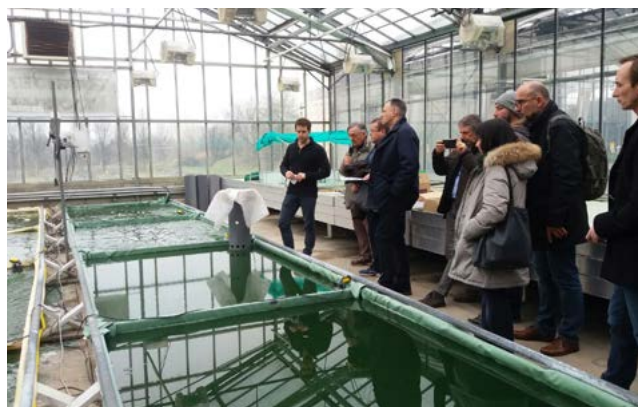
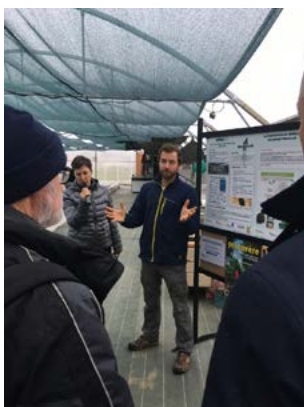
Field trip: 'Eleveurs Saveurs iséroises', Breeders of Flavour Iséroises

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Theme | Producing under a quality scheme or regional brand |
| Hosts | the SYAM Operational Group - Françoise Molegnana from SYAM Chamber of Agriculture of Isère - Geoffrey Lafosse |
| Description | The SYAM Operational Group is exploring intermediary supply chains. These involve too much volume to be considered short, but are not typically long either, because they work with strong branding based on provenance. The project analyses the connection between long and short supply chains, including how and why they perform well, to support existing supply chains in moving to this intermediary level. The project has supported the development of Breeders of Flavour in Iséroises, working with producers, artisan butchers and two supermarkets, to develop a sustainable partnership. This partnership is linked by a local supply contract to supply superior quality meat. The way the partnership has been established is innovative. Both the producers from the Breeders of Flavour Iséroises association and the butchers that are involved have confidence in the sustainability of the partnership. The assurances that are included in the contract enable them to develop in the longer term. The process and prices are completely transparent, as everyone involved along the supply chain understands the value that is added at each stage. All partners have agreed to a written technical specification to ensure quality. They feel that this guarantees a superior product for the consumers, who are the ultimate beneficiaries of this supply chain. |



Field trip: Algoculture and aquaponics

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Theme | Developing new supply chain products or processes |
| Hosts | Algoculture Operational Group and APIVA-Aquaponics - Pierre Foucard from ITAVI |
| Description | <p>APIVA is the first research and development programme on aquaponics in France. This national project focuses on the development of integrated farming systems and more specifically on the interaction between this type of fish farming system and a vegetal soilless culture. A variety of cultivation techniques are being explored, experimenting with a range of different fertilisers. Local farmer Vincent Libeaut provided insight into the successes and challenges of developing spirulina products.</p> <p>The Algoculture project is producing spirulina under a quality marque. The project is developing a high-quality spirulina product, named 'spirulina from the farm', in small quantities, processed into the shape of a twig. The strategy is to create a new product that looks different from existing Asian competition, with greater health benefits. This can set the product apart, making it easily identifiable for consumers.</p> |
| Information | projetapiva.wordpress.com |



Field trip: Soya and alfalfa regional supply chains (LOC'ALP) of the Coopérative Dauphinoise

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Theme | Organisation of the supply chain through new business models |
| Hosts | SDR (Pour et Sur le Développement Régional) for and on regional development, Laurent Magnard |
| Description | <p>LOC'ALP is part of the POEETE project which links stakeholders from research, development and training from two regions, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes and Bourgogne-Franche-Comté. Together the partners involved are working on protein autonomy in mixed farming systems at farm and regional level. They have developed 'LOC'ALP' into a brand that they are using to commercialise their soya product. The soya beans are crushed to extract oil, with the remaining soya meal used as fodder for cattle. Regionally, the project is also developing short supply chains for alfalfa and soya as an animal feed product. This improves the local partnerships between producers and cereal farmers by involving them in supply chain cooperatives.</p> |
| Information | www.societe.com |

Field Trip: Cities and food

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|-------------|--|
| Theme | Organisation of the supply chain through new business models |
| Hosts | FRUGAL Operational Group, Claire DELFOSSE, Lyon University, Fabien CHAUFOURNIER, leader of agricultural policy and food at the Metropole de Lyon |
| Description | FRUGAL is an action research project focused on the analysis of food supply chain issues in urban areas across the region. The visits took place in three different markets in Lyon, to illustrate how the city of Lyon's policy on food governance has integrated local food supply chains into the areas that offer food products to consumers. First, in the Halle de la Martinière, participants learnt more about FRUGAL and the restoration programme that had been set up to reopen the market. The second market that was visited was the 'Super Halle', which houses shops that focus on local and organic products. Participants learnt how the short food supply chains that are used at this market had been developed and organised. The final market that was visited was the Halle Paul Bocuse, a renowned high-quality French gastronomy market. Whilst there, participants learnt more about the food policy of the city of Lyon. |
| Information | projetfrugal.fr |



Whilst I was there... "To me, the workshop was a nice and welcome step back from the daily project business, that enabled me to reflect on our activities and place our aims into a wider context. Preparing the project posters made me think of how to explain our ideas and challenges in a nutshell. The event then made the EIP-AGRI network "real" for the first time and brought us in touch with innovative agricultural projects in Europe!"

Since I've been back... "I have brought many inspiring examples home and have already shared them with partners in the region. I'm now setting up a meeting with a Dutch OG to chat about solutions around beer and poultry value chains. I'm going to The Netherlands anyway, so knowing about what's happening in the Veluwe and being able to combine my trip with a visit there is a great result of the workshop! We also got quite some input on the development of business models during the workshop and I'm still catching up with the literature. To me the workshop was super useful, as it opened up a lot of doors"

- Marianne, Germany -



7. Sharing experiences – exploring collaboration possibilities

The participants worked in their themed groups once more, to understand more about collaboration, about ways to make it happen, about connecting local, regional and European innovation groups and finally about how to share the results of the project. The three questions the participants had to answer were:

- How do I find the right partners and motivate them to build a successful innovation project?
- How can innovation groups operating at regional or national level connect to larger-scale research multi-actor projects or thematic groups operating at EU level?
- How can we successfully disseminate the results of an innovation project?

The key answers that were identified included:

Finding and motivating the right partners

- Communicate a clear vision and identify the benefits for all partners
- Funding for a trained facilitator to bring the partners together
- Face-to-face meetings and networking events to pitch ideas
- Present success stories to inspire and motivate
- Build a team of diverse partners with different experiences and skill sets to bring fresh ideas
- Mix experienced and new partners – a successful partner will attract others
- Use existing databases, networks and networkers
- Share experiences locally to ensure that the project is locally appropriate

Connecting innovation groups at regional, national & European level

- Funding for cross-border Operational Groups
- Greater flexibility during project implementation to build in work with larger research projects
- Build more funded networking time into projects, including for face-to-face meetings
- Funding to enable innovation groups of all sizes to work together
- A standard web platform that includes all the projects, and effective social media
- Events like this, which bring these groups together
- Raise awareness of existing collaboration tools

Successfully disseminating results

- Ensure that the dissemination tool is adapted to the specific audience
- Deliver practical and usable results
- Harmonise dissemination tools, and develop shared templates to create a common platform
- Face-to-face dissemination – seminars, field trips
- Try new technologies for dissemination – Youtube, storytelling, social networks, AGRIfhackathon
- Use existing local and regional networks, especially for farmers
- Share failures as well, as a learning tool for others

8. Open space – finding solutions

Throughout the event, participants had been asked to contribute ideas for the Open Space session. The suggestions were presented and discussed with several grouped together under a single discussion point.

Seven different Open Space topics were selected, with each topic being hosted by the proposing participant. The topics were:

- Logistics for local short supply chains
- How do you assess the success and sustainability of your project?
- How to go from a Horizon 2020 research project to an Operational Group?
- Cross-border exchanges between craft and artisanal processors
- Developing 'communities of projects'
- The opportunities and implications for the EIP-AGRI to operate in overseas areas
- Tools and methods to develop business models for small farms
- Establishing local and regional abattoirs



Open Space Focus on: Developing 'communities of projects'

The Open Space group worked together to explore the value of creating project communities, how to develop them and finally how they might learn more from each other.

- The group explored whether these communities should be developed at European or national level, and concluded that this depends on the issue the project community has been working on. Communities for specific issues, for example legislation for abattoirs, can be better achieved at EU level. Communities for more general issues, particularly where language might be a barrier, would function better at national level.
- Communication within and across the communities was seen as key to its success. Modern media like webinars and social media could be used to support this.
- The group felt that thematic networks could play an important role in bridging the gap between research and practice, including the Operational Groups in the communities. Thematic networks should actively reach out to contact the Operational Groups.
- The National Rural Networks should also play an active role in organising events to establish communities on similar issues. Websites, newsletters, social media etc. would play an important role in this, but this is not enough. Face-to-face meetings are essential for starting up these communities.

Open Space Focus on: How do you assess the success and sustainability of your project?

Two topics were combined for this group to work on, exploring how to assess both the success of a project and its sustainability.

If a project has a defined time frame, how can it be considered a success at the end of the project?

Every project is established with the aim of solving a problem. It can therefore be considered a success when the problem has been solved. This can be measured through key performance indicators or deliverables that have been defined at the beginning of the project. Creating a cultural change or a change of practice in a given community should also be considered a success indicator, but this is very difficult to measure. Success can also be achieved through unexpected positive results and the involvement of new partners. Learning from failures is also very important, providing useful knowledge and experience for others to gain.

How can the project be considered a success after it has ended?

The sustainability of the project, or the fact that the dynamics that have been established continue after the end of the project, is very important when assessing success. The contribution of the project to a global objective is also significant. Because it is difficult to assess this at project level, a programme level perspective would be necessary. The impact of the project can very often be best appreciated after it has ended, so impact indicators must be clearly defined alongside result indicators. The potential of the project results to be disseminated to other geographic locations or to other sectors to support broader learning is very important.

The Open Space sessions enabled free-flowing conversations on subject areas that participants wanted to explore. These sessions yielded a range of interesting results.



9. Networking tools and opportunities

Céline Karasinski from the EIP-AGRI Service Point gave a presentation on the networking tools and opportunities that are available to support participants in collaborating after the event. She explained how participants could join the EIP-AGRI network and benefit from the opportunities that it offers to connect with a range of groups and activities across Europe. This includes registering to receive the newsletter and to gain full access to the website, applying to join Focus Groups and events, and suggesting topics for future Focus Groups and research needs.



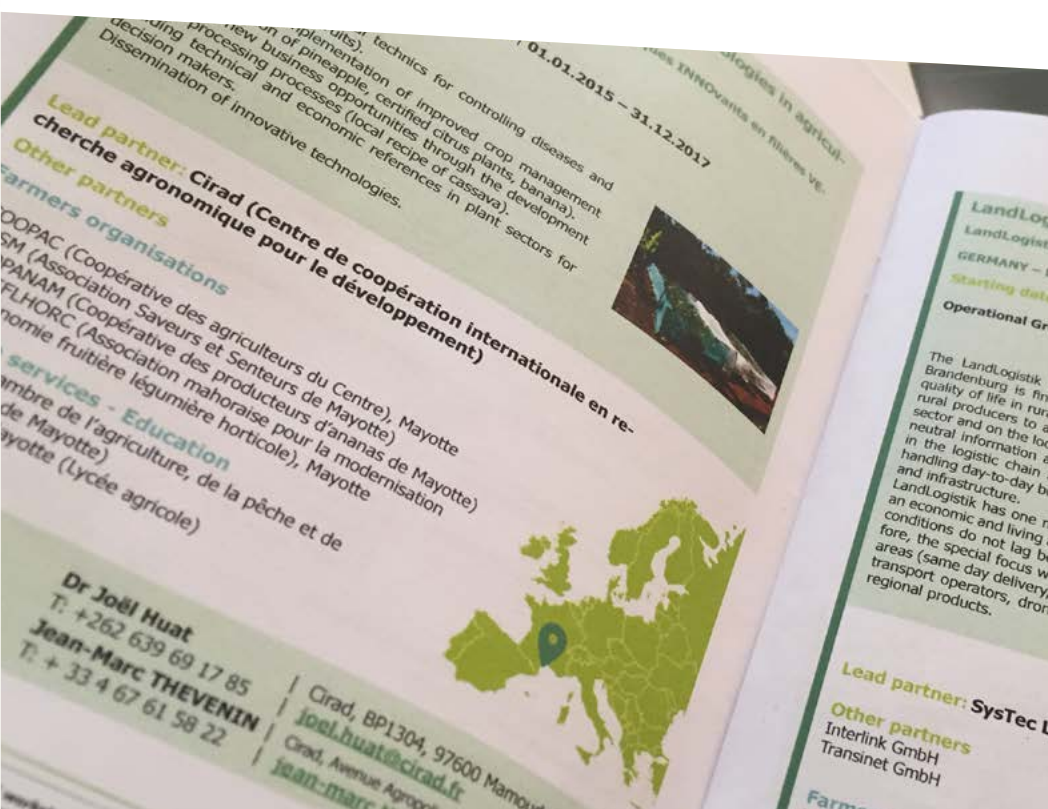
The event was then closed by **Alberto D'Avino**, who congratulated everyone on their hard work, inspirational projects, and enthusiasm to develop new collaborations. Participants were encouraged to develop the connections they had made at the event as soon as they returned home, and to continue to share skills, knowledge and best practice across Europe.

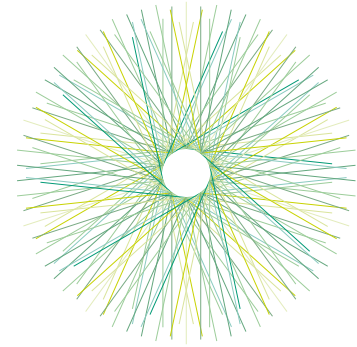


More information?

You can download the presentations, fieldtrips information and other documents on the [event webpage on the EIP-AGRI website](#).

[Read the booklet](#) to find out all the information on 50 Operational Groups and other innovative projects represented at the workshop.





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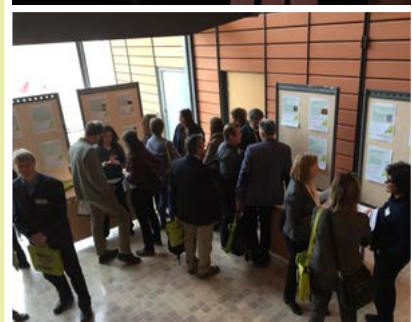
The European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-AGRI) is one of five EIPs launched by the European Commission in a bid to promote rapid modernisation by stepping up innovation efforts.

The **EIP-AGRI** aims to catalyse the innovation process in the **agricultural and forestry sectors** by bringing **research and practice closer together** – in research and innovation projects as well as through the EIP-AGRI network.

EIPs aim to streamline, simplify and better coordinate existing instruments and initiatives, and complement them with actions where necessary.

Two specific funding sources are particularly important for the EIP-AGRI:

- the EU Research and Innovation framework, Horizon 2020
- the EU Rural Development Policy



funded by  European Commission



Join the EIP-AGRI Network & Register via www.eip-agri.eu

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