

April 2023



Helping young entrepreneurs to ask the right questions

A tool which helps entrepreneurs to plan for long-term activities

A Swedish Operational Group is developing a tool which helps entrepreneurs to plan for long-term activities, like future change of ownership or retirement. It also provides guidance on issues concerning the company's long-term sustainability and the importance of personal values for entrepreneurship and leadership.

Setting up, running and handing over a business as a farmer and small business owner is a significant undertaking and requires a lot of personal investment. Often it can be very difficult to distinguish between private life and professional work. Furthermore, finding advice on topics which go beyond the technical side of the business is not always easy. This has led to many young people deciding to move away from agriculture and even from rural areas.

In Sweden, farmers already use tools to help plan for the future. There are many tools available, each looking at different aspects of the business. The Operational Group Företagaren Plan B ('Entrepreneur Plan B') decided to take this to the next level, combining all relevant planning questions into one toolbox. Knut Wälstedt from the project "We wanted to help farm owners and entrepreneurs to develop their personal long-term plans regarding financial, social and technical aspects. Improving these prospects, particularly for young farmers, can contribute to the economic, social, and territorial development of rural areas."

The project's aim was to build the integrated Företagaren Plan B web-based planning tool and to develop a handbook and online training course to go with it. Knut continues "The tool helps young entrepreneurs to ask the right questions, it is based on and contributes to achieving a balance between the family's and the company's financial requirements and capacity." To create the online tool and training course, the Operational Group brought together agricultural advisers, environmental companies and banks.

The Företagaren Plan B tool-box has five different modules on finance, pension, generation, environment and values. Finance Plan B is a financial forecast model to help decision-making. It uses financial information from the company crossed with data from the Swedish Consumer Agency. A short form needs to be filled in where the entrepreneur can choose between maintaining 'business as usual' or making various investments and changes. Pension Plan B calculates

the future pension on the basis of contributions which have already been paid as well as future income. Generation Plan B guides the entrepreneur through upcoming or ongoing change of ownership. Data is based on a study by the Operational Group on successful changes of ownership thanks to which criteria for success were identified. Environment Plan B looks at the company from an environmental and sustainability perspective. Again, data is taken from an analysis by the Operational Group. Values Plan B looks more widely at personal values of entrepreneurs with regards to their business and families. Knut "The idea is to characterise what entrepreneurship means to them, setting out a foundation on which future decision-making can be based."

So far, the toolbox has only been tested in a few practical cases. Knut says "In these cases it was very clear that following our mind-set and using our toolbox provided valuable insight and knowledge to all partners in a family firm transition. The participating families provided very positive evaluations on the training courses."

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Background information

More information:

- > [Webpage on EIP-AGRI Operational Group database](#)
- > <https://www.fplanb.se/pub/>

Project information:

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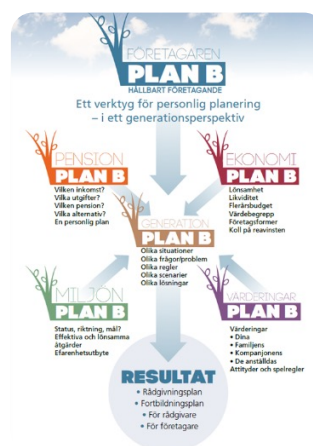
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Project photos:

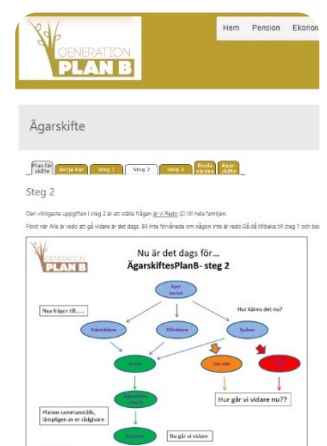
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Operational Group meeting to discuss next steps.
 © Företagaren Plan B



Modules within the tool
 © Företagaren Plan B



Screenshot from the tool
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More information on the Horizon Europe calls on EU advisory networks

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) and the Support Facility for Innovation & Knowledge exchange | EIP-AGRI organised the **EU CAP Network workshop 'Young entrepreneurs - Engines of innovation in rural areas.'** The event took place in **Dublin, Ireland, on 30 November and 1 December 2022.** The workshop focussed on exchanging knowledge and sharing innovative, inspirational practices that can support young entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems. You can find all information on the [event webpage](#).

EU CAP Network activities on young entrepreneurs

- › [EIP-AGRI Focus Group: new entrants into farming: lessons to foster innovation and entrepreneurship](#)
- › [EU CAP Network workshop "Young entrepreneurs - Engines of innovation in rural areas"](#)

EU CAP Network publications

- › [Agrinnovation magazine - Issue n° 7 - September 2020](#)
- › [EIP-AGRI Factsheet New Entrants](#)
- › [AGRI challenge video: young entrepreneurs- 29 September 2022](#)
- ›

Inspirational ideas from the network

- › [Smart logistics to connect producers and consumers \(BE\)](#)
- › [ECOPIONET: knowledge network supports pioneer farmers in Spanish drylands \(ES\)](#)
- › [Supporting new entrants into organic dairy sheep farming \(EL\)](#)
- › [Thriving not just surviving, support for new entrants into farming \(FR\)](#)
- › [Sustainable farming in French Guiana \(FR\)](#)
- › [Finding the right match - farms for new entrants \(IE\)](#)
- › [It's a match! Operational Group and thematic network find farms for new entrants \(NL\)](#)
- › [Finding the perfect match between farmers and new entrants \(NL\)](#)
- › [Future Farmers in the Spotlight \(EU\)](#)
- › [AgriSo - agriculture from soil to satellite \(RO\)](#)
- › [Helping young entrepreneurs to ask the right questions \(SE\)](#)

Horizon projects working on young entrepreneurs

- › **COCOREADO** - Connecting COsumers and producers to REbalance farmers' position through AmbassaDOrs trainings:

[website](#) - [CORDIS](#) (01/2021-06/2024)

- › **NEWBIE** - New Entrant netWork: Business models for Innovation, entrepreneurship and resilience in European agriculture: [website](#) - [CORDIS](#) (Thematic network - 01/2018-12/2021)
- › **RUBIZMO** - Replicable business models for modern rural economies: [website](#) - [CORDIS](#) (05/2018-04/2021)
- › **GO-GRASS** - Grass-based circular business models for rural agri-food value chains: [website](#) - [CORDIS](#) (10/2019 - 09/2023)
- › **LIVERUR** - Living Lab research concept in Rural Areas: [website](#) - [CORDIS](#) (05/2018-04/2021)
- › **BE-Rural** - Bio-based strategies and roadmaps for enhanced rural and regional development in the EU: [website](#) - [CORDIS](#) (01/2019-07/2022)
- › **INCREDIBLE** - Innovation Networks of Cork, Resins and Edibles in the Mediterranean basin: [website](#) - [CORDIS](#) (Thematic Network 11/2017-10/2020)

Further relevant multi-actor projects and thematic networks [here](#).

Multi-actor projects are projects in which end users and multipliers of research results such as farmers and farmers' groups, advisers, enterprises and others, are closely cooperating throughout the whole research project period.

Thematic networks are multi-actor projects which collect existing knowledge and best practices on a given theme to make it available in easily understandable formats for end-users such as farmers, foresters, advisers etc.

Operational Groups working on young entrepreneurs

16 Operational Groups working on young entrepreneurs are available in the EIP-AGRI Operational Groups database (update January 2023)

- › Italy: 4
- › Netherlands: 10
- › Spain: 2

The CAP of the Future

The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (2023-2027) was formally approved end November 2021. [Find all information on the new CAP on the European Commission website.](#)

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Innovation & knowledge exchange | EIP-AGRI in the EU CAP Network

Since 6 October 2022, the EIP-AGRI network has joined forces with the European Network for Rural Development, merging into the new European CAP Network. The 'Support Facility for Innovation and Knowledge exchange, including EIP-AGRI' continues to act as a mediator, enhancing communication and cooperation between everyone who has a keen interest in sharing knowledge and innovating agriculture, forestry and rural areas.

The European Innovation Partnership 'Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability' (EIP-AGRI) was launched in 2013 by the European Commission in a bid to promote rapid modernisation of the sectors concerned by stepping up innovation efforts. The EIP-AGRI aims to foster innovation in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas by bringing research and practice closer together - in innovation projects as well as via the European CAP Network and the national CAP Networks. Also grassroots ideas from farmers get developed into innovations through the so-called Operational Group innovation projects. The EIP-AGRI aims to streamline, simplify and better coordinate existing instruments and initiatives, and complement them with actions where necessary. More information on [Innovation, Knowledge Exchange |EIP-AGRI](#) on the EU CAP Network website.

EIP-AGRI Operational Groups

EIP-AGRI Operational Groups **are groups of people who work together in an innovation project**. They bring together partners with complementary knowledge. The composition of the group will vary according to the theme and specific objectives of each project. Farmers, advisors, scientists, businesses or other relevant partners work together to find practical solutions for specific problems or opportunities for European farmers and foresters.

Farmers and foresters need to cooperate throughout the project to ensure that the innovative solutions are practical and likely to be quickly applied in the field. Read the **basic principles. Innovation support services** (including advisors with a focus on innovation), and in particular innovation brokering, can therefore play a crucial role in getting worthwhile projects off the ground by facilitating contacts.

Operational Groups funded under Rural Development Programmes 2014 - 2022

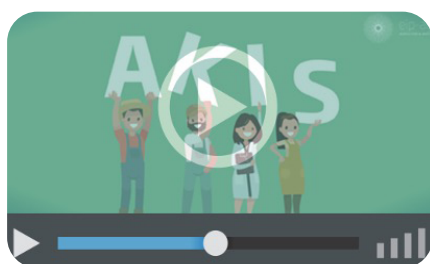
- › 98 Rural Development Programmes provide support to innovative EIP Operational Group projects
- › Over 3200 Operational Groups are planned to be established under the approved RDPs (2014 - 2020)
- › More than 2700 Operational Groups projects have been selected for funding and are currently ongoing (or already finished)*. Member States will still start more Operational Group projects which may run until 2025 (under current transitional rules for EU rural development programmes). [Find information on all of them in the EIP-AGRI database.](#)

* Information officially submitted to the European Commission by RDP Managing Authorities (March 2023)

Operational Groups funded under CAP Strategic Plans 2023 - 2027

Within the new common agricultural policy each EU country has designed a national CAP Strategic Plan combining funding for income support, rural development, and market measures. All CAP Strategic Plans have been adopted and their implementation started on 1 January 2023. 26 CAP Strategic Plans provide support to innovative EIP-AGRI Operational Group projects.

EIP-AGRI videos



[AKIS: building effective knowledge flows across Europe](#)



[AGRI challenge: young entrepreneurs](#)



[EU CAP Network events on Innovation and knowledge exchange - EIP-AGRI - Spring events 2023](#)

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EIP-AGRI, 9 years of innovation



The enthusiasm is essential for the success of the EIP-AGRI, and in ensuring that everyone can benefit. [Watch this EIP-AGRI video](#) to hear researchers, farmers, advisors, Managing Authorities and National Rural Networks explain how the EIP-AGRI has helped them over the past 9 years.



Since 2013, the EIP-AGRI has been promoting interactive innovation to make EU agriculture and forestry more sustainable, productive, and fit for the future. This report shows how the EIP-AGRI network has grown into a thriving network. [Read the report](#)