The Cross Visit Method

Deliverable 2.4: An Improved Methodologic Approach

Report on the development and final methodology for the AgriSpin Cross Visits

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Cross Visits as a method

Key activities in the AgriSpin project are the Cross Visits. Mixed teams, composed of colleagues from partner organisations in AgriSpin, visit a region during 3-5 days, to study innovation cases as proposed by the partner who's turn it is to be host. In total 13 Cross Visits have been made.

Purpose of the Cross Visit

What can support services do to stimulate innovations at farm level? This is the central question in AgriSpin. The Cross Visits aim at collecting information about innovations that have taken place or that are in progress. The members of the visiting team are predominantly support agents themselves, which allows for vivid exchanges of experiences. A cross visit creates space for intensive informal interactions between colleagues from different corners of Europe. This provides a basis for continuous contacts after the project.

The desired outcomes of the cross visits are:

- Inspiration for improvements in the services being offered.
- A deeper understanding of innovation processes.
- A method for exploring innovation practices and the role of support service providers.
- A professional network of innovation support agents.

Main features of the Cross Visit Method

The partners in AgriSpin are organisations involved in supporting innovations at farm level. The cross visits allow colleagues to take a look in the kitchen of each other. In principle, all partner organisations organise one visit as host. Colleagues from each organisation have the opportunity to take part in several visiting teams. For every partner there were 7 to 10 opportunities to take part, and it was up to the organisation to divide these slots over one or more colleagues.

In AgriSpin the regular team size varied from 7 to 11 visitors and 1 to 6 hosts, adding up to a total of an average of 11 persons visiting farms and other stakeholders. Only the teams in the first combined cross visits in The Netherlands and Belgium were bigger (19 and 17), to allow for a common start with all partners. Considering the experiences in the 13 Cross Visits, a group size between 8 and 12 persons works best. In larger groups, the time to collect all observations becomes a constraint, or some participants do not get the attention they need.

At least one participant should have sufficent experience in group facilitation, and be familiar with the tools being used during the cross visit. Two is even better: one for the method and another for time keeping.

Learning how to walk in a new manner

Developing a good methodology for this particular setting turned out to be not an easy task. In scientific literature methods have been described for 'quick and dirty' assessments of rural knowledge systems (e.g. PRA, RAAKS, and more recently RAAIS) but these methods require more time, and more active involvement of the stakeholders than could be expected in the Cross Visits of

AgriSpin. For example, RAAIS (Rapid Appraisal of Agricultural Innovation Systems[1]) is actually a path for self-assessment by major stakeholders in a system, aiming at agreements on diagnosis and changes they feel to be necessary. This could not be expected from the AgriSpin partners and the actors they work with in their region, within the given budget and time frame.

Moreover, the AgriSpin partners engaged in a discovery journey, assuming all of them had interesting examples and insights to share, while none of them pretended to know best. Learning from and with each other became the motto, and this was also true for the methodology to follow during the cross visits.

Collecting information that matters in a short time

The challenge is how to collect information, relevant for understanding what mattered most in the innovation process the actors have gone through, and the impact of the interventions made by the innovation support agency that have been involved. In most cases this was the host partner itself. How to divide tasks while visiting farmers and other actors? What are the right questions to ask? How to process all the observations, and how to ensure sufficient depth of the analysis so that the key actors appreciate the feedback and preferably do something with it? And all of this in just a few days?

It was quite a struggle, and especially in the earlier Cross Visits the processing of the observations at the end of a day of field visits took too much time. Gradually we learned how to do it better, and tools came in to facilitate the process. The last Cross Visits, in Romania and Ireland, went quite smoothly.

Description of the improved methodology

In this document on the improved methodology (Deliverable 2.4) we describe the different elements of the cross visit, following the order of the manual, and the experiences that made us to improve the method to what it is now. The basis of this text was already part of the mid-term report on WP2 (D2.7), and written when the Cross Visits programme was about half way its implementation. Since then, quite a number of improvements still have been made.

2. The Cross Visit Manual

Guidelines for visiting teams and hosts

After the first two Cross Visits in The Netherlands and Belgium a manual was made by the WP2 leader, guiding hosts and visiting teams through the process of the Cross Visit. Experiences and insights were added after almost every Cross Visit, resulting in the tenth edition of the Cross Visit Manual, which is added to this document. The manual is in PowerPoint format, allowing for browsing quickly to the issues the reader is interested in.

The manual serves as a guide for hosts and participants. The main elements are:

- Purpose of the Cross Visits (goal and leading principles)
- Prepare yourself (guidelines for participants)
- The Cross Visit in 6 steps (detailed instructions for each step)

[1] Schut, M., Klerkx, L., Leeuwis, C. (2015): *Rapid Appraisal of Agricultural Innovation Systems (RAAIS): A toolkit for integrated analysis of complex agricultural problems and innovation capacity in agrifood systems.* International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and Wageningen University, pp.140.

- Templates (cards, posters, questions for reflection)
- Methods and Tools (procedures an models for analysis)
- Guidelines for Hosts (things to prepare and instructions for video)
- Who's Who? (portraits of all participants for easy recognition of colleagues)

Preparations by the host

The host partner is responsible for the organisation of the cross visit in its region. The host proposes the cases to be visited to the Science Group, which evaluates them according to the list of criteria and makes choices when the diversity among cases is too large. A cross visit has a duration of 3-5 days, in which 3-5 innovation cases are being visited. The host prepares the actors to be visited, the accommodation for meetings, and the means of transport. It is important that the actors are aware of the nature of the visit: the visitors are asking the questions, so the general presentation should be as short as possible. The host also prepares fiches with key information about the cases that will be visited, and sends them to the visitors for preparing themselves.

At the end of every cross visit, the major actors from the region are invited for a feedback session. The visiting team summarises the main 'Pearls, Puzzlings and Proposals' of what has been observed, and enters into a dialogue with the invitees. Pearls are positive elements observed by participants, Puzzlings are questions regarding the innovation process and support to innovation process. This allows for adjusting the picture that is unavoidably incomplete after a few days of visit. The team refrains from hard judgements about what has been analysed. The focus is on what might be inspiring, both from the side of the host and the participants.

This focus is important to be stressed regularly during a Cross Visit. It means that it is not the intention to make a complete picture of a particular knowledge and innovation system. Nor can it be the ambition of the visiting team to tell the host how to do it better. The intention is to learn and to inspire.

The host can also make arrangements for video recordings of the cases. These videos should give a short impression of what the innovation in each case is all about. They should capture the key actors in short interviews, and preferably show them in action in order to clearly depict the innovation and highlight support services.

The participants

Participants should prepare themselves, by reading the manual and the fiches about the cases. It was also recommended to read the theoretical point of departure: "Support to Innovation Processes[2]", prepared by the Science Group.

In a number of Cross Visits, participants were asked to bring small presents from their region, as token of gratefulness for farmers and other actors after a field visit. This was highly appreciated.

[2] Deliverable 1.1

3. The Cross Visit in Six Steps

Step 1: Kick off

The first session upon arrival contains four elements: getting acquainted, getting oriented, getting updated and getting organised.

Getting acquainted: Team members tell each other who they are and what they are curious for. It is useful to take some time to explore ideas that are worth checking during this visit. We all have our suppositions and prejudgements that play a role in what we observe as well as what we tend to overlook. It is good for the team spirit to create a space where participants feel free to talk about it.

In practice, the tendency is to go over this part of the kick off too quickly, maybe with the idea to save time. But an atmosphere of mutual understanding is key, and saves a lot of time later on in the visit that is otherwise spent on sorting out misunderstandings. It takes good facilitation to give it the time it requires.

Getting oriented: The host gives an introduction to the regional AKIS, the role of the host organisation in this AKIS, and a brief overview of the cases that will be visited. The manual lists items that are interesting to include in the presentation. For visitors to prepare themselves, the host already sends them fiches with key information about each case at least a week before arrival.

Getting updated: A brief overview of what has happened before this cross visit is useful. How does this cross visit fit into the entire project? What were the highlights of previous activities, and what lessons have been learned that serve as input for this cross visit?

Getting organised: The visitors divide themes for observation amongst each other. Without a focus, technicians are tempted to ask all kind of technical details while visiting a farmer, but these details do not serve the objective of the visit. The focus should be on the innovation process and interventions made by support agents.

In the earlier CV's the team was divided in subgroups around four themes:

[1] Innovation process: what was the first spark, and what were significant moments thereafter?

[2] Actors and networks: which actors have been involved over time and what networks have plays a role?

[3] Environment: what external influences have been important for understanding this process?

[4] Innovation: what is new in what the key actors are practicing? What do they expect from the future?

After a day of field visits the sub teams came together to cluster their observations, and after this in a plenary session these observations were put on a 'Rich Picture Timeline'.

The results were not yet very satisfactory because this rich picture was not easy to

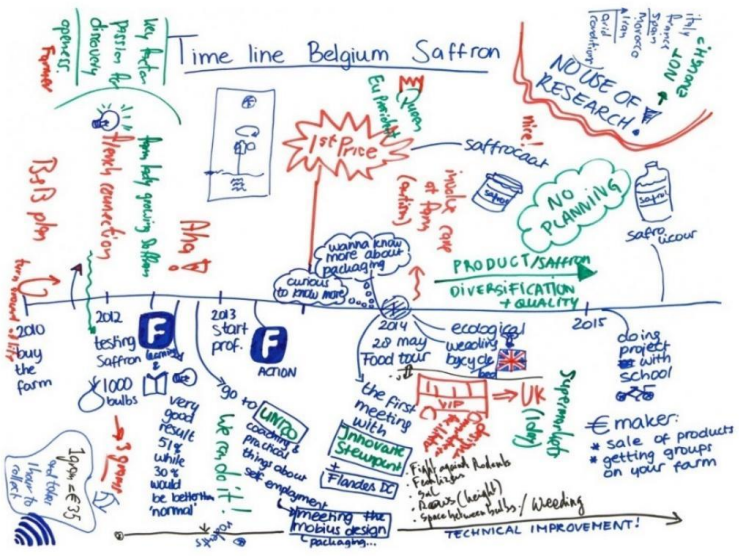

Figure 1: Rich Timeline Belgian Saffron Case

interpret. In the CV's in Basque Country and Guadeloupe, separate posters were made for

a) the innovation process,
b) the actors and networks,
c) the environment (fair winds and obstacles), and
d) main characteristics of the innovation, to be filled in by the corresponding subgroups.

This procedure gave more insight, but it was very time consuming.

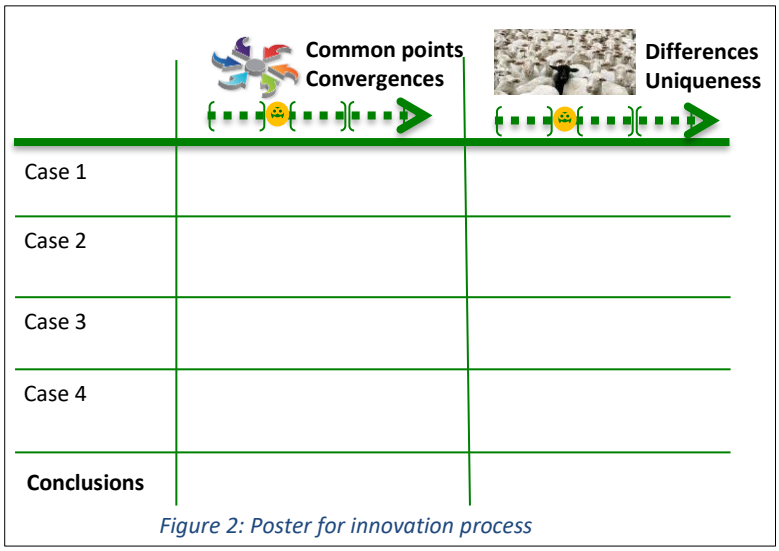

Figure 2: Poster for innovation process

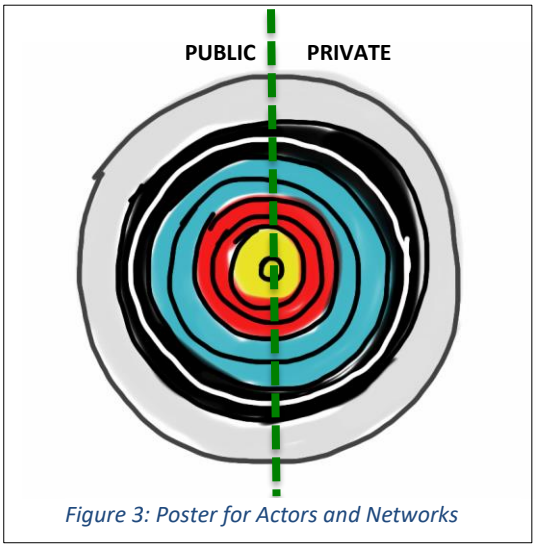

Figure 3: Poster for Actors and Networks

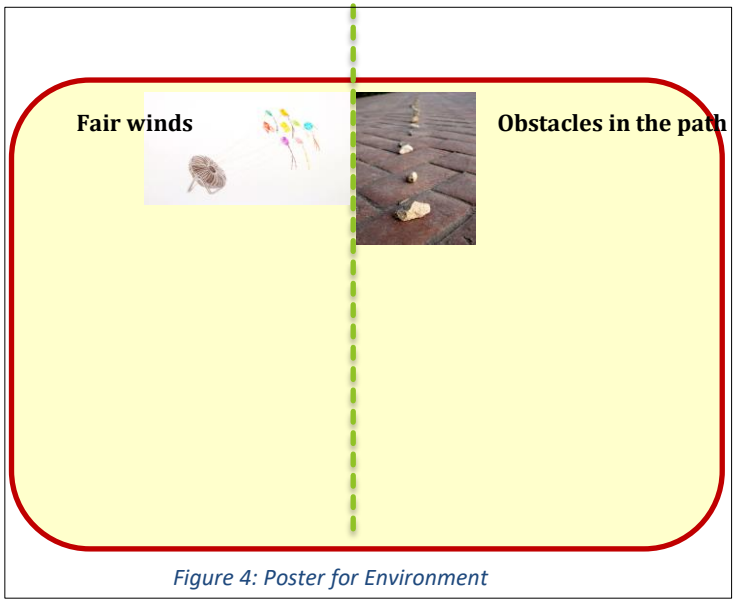

Figure 4: Poster for Environment

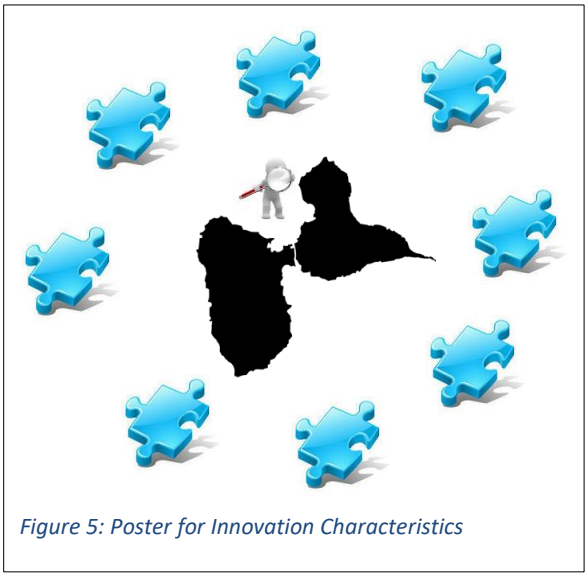

Figure 5: Poster for Innovation Characteristics

In the Cross Visit in Tuscany (March 2016) we abandoned the subgroups. Instead, we introduced the observation cards with 8 instead of 4 themes for observation. Each team member chooses 2 cards with questions to focus on during the field visits. The themes are:

1. **Innovation** (what's new?)
2. **Innovation process** (stages in the process)
3. **Innovation support** (contribution from host partner)
4. **Actors and networks** (key players and main in the process)
5. **Environment** (influences from external forces)

6. **Critical incidents** (crisis, surprises, and ways actors have coped with it)
7. **Dissemination** (influence on the external world)
8. **Future perspectives** (expectations, dreams and strategies)

Each card shows some suggestions for questions to ask *(see manual)*.

This procedure worked better as it was one step less in the collection of observations, and more detailed in the things to ask. Still, facilitation appeared to be needed for stimulating all participants to ask what they were supposed to ask.

Step 2: The Field Visits

During a field visit the team studies a particular innovation in a farm or farm related enterprise / organisation. Key actors, such as the farmer or farm family, the support agent and other persons who play a particular role in this innovation are being interviewed. The host has prepared them with the instruction to keep their presentations short and to focus on the questions that are asked by the visiting team.

Figure 6: Interviewing the advisor in the barn (Ireland)

Preferably key actors are present on the farm, and after a short introduction the team splits up to have in depth interviews with these actors. In some cases this principle appears hard to realise because of language problems. When actors do not speak English and only one interpreter is available, sometimes the team stays together.

A visit, including an introduction, a farm tour or a tour in the enterprise, interviews and wrap up session usually takes half a day.

The facilitator keeps an eye on the questions being asked, and stimulates the team members to use their observation cards.

Step 3: Reflection on the case

After a visit, the team takes time to share observations and to reflect on them. As was already mentioned, from the second cross visit onwards the Time Line Method was adopted to visualise these observations. There are many ways to make a time line, and several variations have been tried: the Energy Time Line and the Rich Picture Time Line (see manual 4.1). In Basque Country, Denmark and Guadeloupe an additional step for collecting observations was made. The subgroups wrote Post-It papers on the 4 sub-themes, before joining them on one Time Line sheet for the whole team. This approach was so time consuming that no

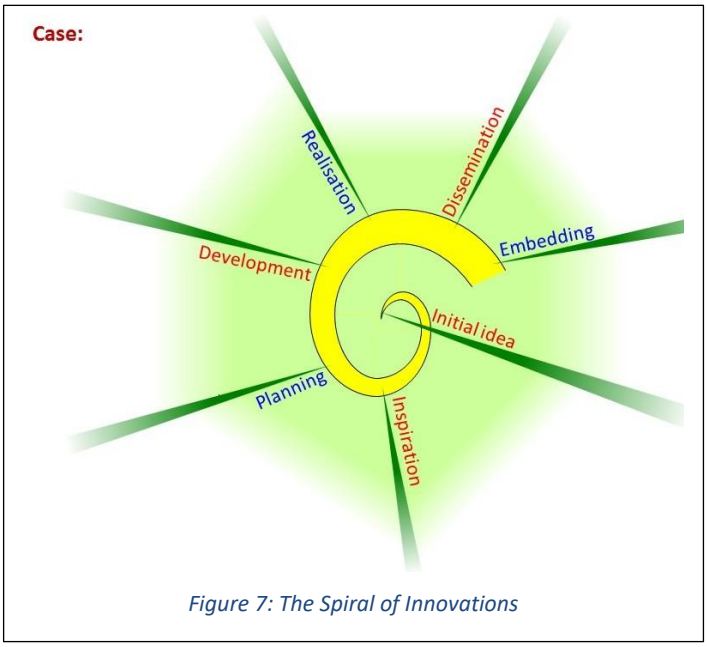

Figure 7: The Spiral of Innovations

time was left for a deeper analysis. .

In Greece, the Spiral of Innovations[3] was introduced as a tool for analysis. Commonly, in an innovation process three phases are being distinguished: the initiative phase, the development phase and the dissemination phase. The Spiral adds four more stages that appear to be important while they are often overlooked. In the Greece Cross Visit, the team tried out both the 3 and the 7 stages model, and concluded that the Spiral is richer indeed, and useful. We need to mention that the spiral is not a timeline. Due to feed-backs and loops occurring in innovation processes, some planning and development activities can occur when other dissemination activities take place.

For the cross visits in Latvia and later this tool was combined with the Time Line Method for enabling more detailed analysis of the cases. It stimulates to answer questions such as: “What phases in the innovation process have become visible? Which actors were involved in what phase, and could it be that some actors have been missing there? What actions have been taken, and could have been taken in that phase? Is it possible that some phases have been overlooked in the process? How did actors cope with pitfalls that are typical for each phase?” Etc..

The result of this session is a poster that visualises the observations and the discussion. This poster is input for the symposium at the end of the cross visit and for the Learning Histories to be written by the host partner after the cross visit.

In Transylvania, after drawing the last Spiral, the team took time to go one step further in analysing the role of the host organisation Adept in the rural innovation system, by making use of the Triangle of Co-Creation. The model visualises different positions actors can take in relation to an initiative. Actors in the position as initiators, managers and suppliers are needed in a successful process of co-creation for developing new practices that work. Actors can take positions that do not contribute as well: gatekeepers, survivors and activists. The theory supposes that any network needs at least one ‘free actor’ in the position to do whatever is needed to connect actors and stimulate them to take complementary positions.

Moving through the model (physically) brought new insights, confirming the important free actor role is playing, as well as ideas on its future agenda. Although the model had been in the manual already since the first edition, this was the only occasion where there was time to work with it and a facilitator who know how to work with it.

Figure 8: Social Evening in Romania

Step 4: Social Activity.

Somewhere during the cross visit there is time to meet each other in a socialising setting. This is important to build good relations that might continue after the AgriSpin project. There have been good examples, such as cooking

[3] Wielinga, H.E., Zaalmink, B.W., Bergevoet, R.H.M., Geerling-Eiff, F.A., Holster, H, Hoogerwerf, L., Vrolijk, M. (2008): *Networks with free actors: encouraging sustainable innovations in animal husbandry by using the FAN approach.* Wageningen University and Research.

together (Netherlands), farm games (Belgium), cultural evenings such as a tropical night (Guadeloupe), gastronomy (Tuscany), and cultural dances dinner (Transylvania).

Step 5: Preparation of the Feedback

Half a day or an evening is used for preparing the symposium at the end of the cross visit. The team formulates pearls, puzzles and proposals, based on what has been observed and discussed. The reflection starts individually on Post-Its, after which the harvest is clustered and analysed. Central questions: What did the host organisation do for enabling farmers and other entrepreneurs to innovate? What was the influence of the particular circumstances? What can be learned from it? What is still unclear or questionable? And what ideas are there for improvements? The result is summarised on a poster with three columns:

Figure 9: Preparing Feedback for the Symposium in Tuscany

- Pearls: inspiring observations, appreciations, lessons;
- Puzzlings: question marks, things that need clarification, doubts;
- Proposals: feedback for the host to consider, ideas for action.

In earlier Cross Visits the feedback was divided into Pearls and Puzzles. The latter was changed into "Puzzlings". Although this is not proper English, it expresses better what is meant here. A 'puzzle' consists of pieces that can complete the picture of a jig-saw puzzle. The reality of rural innovation processes is too complex for the suggestion that there would be a perfect end situation, once all the pieces are placed where they belong.

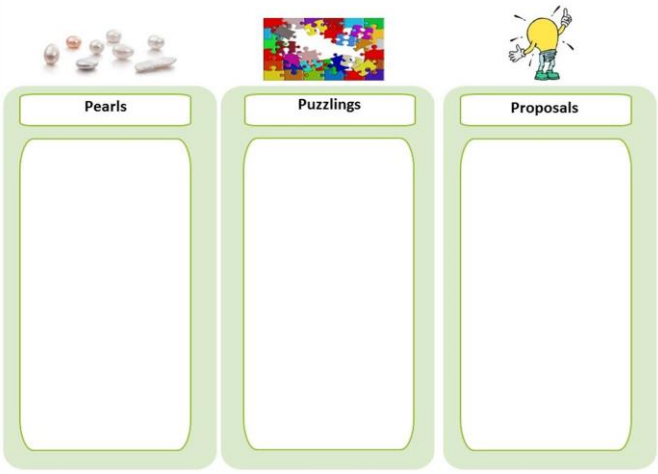

Figure 10: Poster for Pearls Puzzlings and Proposals

Although we always have been careful with judgements after just a few days of 'quick and dirty' exploration, a third column was added for Proposals: ideas the host could consider.

Step 6: The Symposium

At the end of every cross visit the host organises a symposium of half a day, for which key actors and decision makers in the regional AKIS are invited. This is a feedback session where the team and the invited participants exchange observations and opinions. The Time Lines, and later on the Spirals made for every case, are exposed on the wall.

The team presents the pearls, puzzlings and proposals, after which they enter into small group discussions with the participants. The conclusions of these discussions are shared in the final plenary session.

We experimented with different ways to organise these discussions. When the language barrier plays a role, interpreters are needed in the subgroups, or representatives of the host organisation have to translate. In Germany it worked well to organise a 'fish bowl' discussion: after the presentations, the invitees formed one group in the middle of the room where they discussed their opinions in German language. Hosts and German speaking visitors made translations of the highlights for the others observing in the outer circle. The conclusions were shared in the plenary again.

Figure 11: Seminar in Ireland

Starting with the Guadeloupe visit, the team also gave a short summary of the previous cross visits, which was well appreciated by the invitees.

The interest from key actors in the symposia varied from cross visit to cross visit. Remarkable was the attention these meetings received in Guadeloupe, Germany and Ireland, where high level decision makers participated.

The Pearls, Puzzlings and Proposals, as well as the conclusions of the symposium are part of the Cross Visit Report each host has made.

The conclusions of this symposium are part of the cross visit report.

4. After the Cross Visit

Tasks for the visitors

After returning home, the visitors write a personal reflection, using a template that can be found in the manual. They should do so within one week, when the memories are still fresh. These personal reflections cover the following themes:

- Pearls
- Puzzlings
- Thoughts about innovation and innovation support
- Proposals for the host
- Proposals to take home
- Progress in AgriSpin
- Proposals for AgriSpin

This worked well. All colleagues who participated in the Cross Visits starting with the one in Latvia in May submitted their reflections. All personal reflections are accessible for participants in AgriSpin at

the Share site. The information is valuable as feedback for the hosts. The WP2 leader made use of them as feedback on the methodology. And it was mentioned several times that the participants found it valuable for themselves as well to summarise what this cross visit has meant to them.

The personal reflections have replaced the 'Cross Cutting Questions' visitors were required to answer in the first series of Cross Visits. These questions were an attempt to collect analytical data for scientific research on perceptions from team members on the visited cases. It turned out that the team members found it hard to fulfil this obligation. Only half of the participants did so. From the feedback it turned out that they saw it as duplication of what has been done collectively during the cross visit itself. In a first trial to elaborate the incomplete material, it also became clear that it was not justified to draw conclusions for the knowledge systems in the region that had been visited. The samples were simply far too small. Moreover, it was not the ambition of AgriSpin to describe systems, but to search for inspiring examples. For this purpose, being complete is not important.

The next thing visitors are supposed to do is to share their experience with colleagues in their organisation. This -will lead to action plans, including dissemination and measures to implement. The results of these activities are beyond the scope of this document.

Tasks for the host

The host writes a Cross Visit report after the visit. This report includes:

- Introduction (period, participants, programme).
- The regional AKIS (general features of the farming system, the main players in the knowledge system, and the role of the host organisation).
- The cases: the narrative story of each innovation process that has been studied. The information that was known already is combined with the observations that found their way on the Spiral of Innovations during the reflection sessions. Each case description should also give answers to seven key questions, in order to make comparison possible and not to overlook important elements. These key questions are:
    - What is the **innovation**?
    - **Key actors and their role** in the process
    - **Role of the support agency**
    - **Success factors**
    - **Fail factors**
    - Regional and/or historical **particularities**
    - **Specific recommendations**
    - **Lessons** that can be generalised
- Pearls Puzzlings and Proposals: the harvest made by the visitors.
- Conclusions: the result of the final seminar with external invitees.

The cross visit reports are illustrated with the Timelines of Spirals, and pictures of the Cross Visit.

5. Learning Histories

Deepening understanding

After a relatively short visit of half a day on a farm or three to four days in a region, the visitors have impressions and sometimes feel inspired to know more. This is not the same as a deep

understanding of what made this innovation to what it is now. When the first attempt for collecting scientific data failed, we were aware that something different was needed.

The Science Group in AgriSpin adopted the Learning History Method as an alternative. The method has been developed by Kleiner and Roth[4]. It consists of a story which contains the elements that matter most, according to the actors who are involved in the story, and it adds an analysis to it, making sense of the observations.

Answers to the key questions as part of the Cross Visit Reports could easily lead to a rather static picture the case in its current situation. For understanding the process better, we need to see the movie of what has happened. The Learning History method has a range of advantages over the more usual table or matrix in which observations are systematically presented:

- The story can be checked with the actors involved: these are observations on facts that matter in their opinion, which serve as an accepted basis of knowledge about what happened.
- The strict separation of observed facts at one side and interpretations and analyses at the other allows for meaningful dialogue about how to understand the story, and what lessons have been learned.
- A story can be brief (2-5 pages) if it focusses only on those elements that appear to matter. Especially in AgriSpin, with 54 cases in total, this is an important advantage.
- For anyone who was not part of the process a well written story is much nicer to read than tables and matrices.

The Learning Histories are made in a few steps:

- The host writes the narrative: the story as a sequence of events that apparently mattered.
- The host adds the answer to the seven standard key questions to the narrative, for comparison.
- The Science Team writes the analysis of each case.
- The combination of the narrative and the analysis makes the Learning History complete.

Separating the narrative from the analysis is crucial in the method, according to Kleiner and Roth. Observers tend to mix their observations with their interpretations and opinions. These interpretations and observations are based on their mindset: the assumptions and beliefs which are the undercurrent of thinking. But someone with a different mindset will select other facts as being important and draw different conclusions about their causes and impact.

In comparison with an individual observer, the observations made by a group of visitors reduce the risk that some important facts are being overlooked, as long as all observations are being taken seriously and the group dynamics do not inhibit people to express what they see. Post-its, written individually, and Timelines or Spirals of Innovation as tools to visualise them, are helpful in this respect. Good facilitation is important as well.

The analysis is made by the Science Group members in the period until December 2016. This analysis includes the interpretation of the facts, as described in the narrative stories, and the conclusions with respect to the purpose of AgriSpin. How do we understand what really mattered in the cases we visited? What conclusions can we draw about the role the support agents have performed to move innovations forward. And what lessons can be generalised?

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[4] Kleiner, A, Roth, G (1997): *Learning History. How to make your experience your company's best teacher*. Harvard Business Review, Sept. 1997.

The conceptual framework (deliverable 1.1) and the typology of innovation support services (deliverable 1.4) provide language and tools for this analysis.

6. A milestone on a journey

Feedback from the Personal Reflections, regarding the methodology

From the ninth Cross Visit in Latvia onwards, participants have given feedback on the methodology in their personal reflections. This feedback can be summarised in the following pearls, puzzlings and proposals:

Pearls

1. The Cross Visit Method is valuable, and improved a lot over time.
2. The manual is useful, and it was good that it was continuously improved using the experiences picked up along the road.
3. The tools that have been developed and introduced along the way are helpful: Pearls – Puzzlings – Proposals; observation cards, Spiral of Innovations.
    a. In the Transylvanian Cross Visit we applied the Co-Creation Triangle as well, which was well appreciated, as it gave insight in roles and positions of key players in the system, including the support agency.
4. One case per day and three days of field visits seems to be optimal for making observations.

Puzzlings

1. It takes time and effort to learn how to work with the method and the tools.
2. Good facilitation is key. How to ensure this in future cross visits?
3. When translation is needed and only one interpreter is available, the whole team sticks together during interviews, which is regrettable. Clever solutions should be found for splitting up (e.g. by having hosts as interpreters).
4. Some critics found the Spiral of Innovations a limiting tool, as it forces the team to think along the lines of the phases. The discussion was sometimes confused by different interpretations of what each phase entails. Some saw the tool as too descriptive, while we need something to analyse the dynamics of the interaction between key actors and the support agency.
5. The time was often too short for a deeper reflection on what had been observed. Apart from the Pearls, Puzzlings and Proposals, participants would have liked to spend more time on analysing the role of the host organisation in the system.
6. Someone mentioned that the discussions should not only touch the *when* and *how* but also the *why*.
7. How can we fully involve the professionals (our colleagues who gained experience in the cross visits) in the analysis?
8. What strategies can be developed for regions without a formal advisory system?

Proposals

1. Considering that none of the reflections mentioned the duration of the Cross Visits, one could conclude that it was just right. However, many participants mentioned that more time should be given to a deeper analysis of the cases, and especially on the role of the host organisation in the

system. This would call for half a day longer than the 3½ to 4 days which was the common duration.

2. While getting acquainted, ample attention should be given to expectations, including the 'hidden agenda' of the host.
3. At the start of a visit, the team should be familiarised with the tools that will be used.
4. A model for positioning a support agency in the regional knowledge system would be useful. In the same sense, key functions to be performed in an innovation system could be visualised. A third suggestion is a tool to identify driving forces. Can we make a template for this?
5. Discussion on the future perspectives should get more attention.
6. There is still room for deepening out discussion on different pathways to realise innovations, and what innovations are seen as desirable. We should keep this on the agenda in the remainder of the AgriSpin project.

General conclusions about the use of the Cross Visit Method

After a path of trial and error along 13 cross visits in one year, the Cross Visit Method in AgriSpin style has developed far enough to be applied elsewhere. The tenth edition of the manual serves as a detailed guide for hosts and visitors, and can easily be adapted to the circumstances in which the method will be used. Nevertheless, we are aware that what we call 'the method' reflects a certain condensed state of experiences and insights from AgriSpin in Dec 2016, likely to evolve further through reflections and evaluative steps in the remaining project time.

The method is useful for the following purpose:

- To organise exchange between professionals with similar tasks in different regions.

Advantages of the Cross Visit method are:

- It creates opportunities to appreciate the way partners do similar work, to find out about solutions they found for problems they share and to inspire each other with practices that appear to work.
- It creates opportunities to reflect on the role partners play in their own system, by comparing what colleagues elsewhere are doing.
- Spending time together, travelling to places, meeting key actors, and reflecting together of what has been observed: this interaction is much more productive in terms of learning than attending a seminar or a training course where lecturers try to transfer their wisdom.
- The interactions form a good basis for professional relationships that last after the cross visit. We have seen many activities emerging as a result of the contacts made during the cross visits: we called them by-products.
- The exchange between practitioners on an equal basis (no one pretends to know best) shapes an environment where co-creation can emerge: finding new solutions together.

Issues to be taken into account, when the method is chosen:

- The costs are considerable as compared with a seminar where people meet and listen to presentations. On the other hand, compared to a training course or a consultancy for making case studies, the costs are reasonable, and the learning effects are much higher.
- A facilitator with good skills and experience in the Cross Visit Method is necessary.

- More efforts are needed for cross analysis of the cases among countries by valorising the knowledge of the participants.

We hope that the method will grow further with other experiences, so that we can regard the manual and this description as a milestone on an ongoing journey.

AgriSpin

Space for Innovations in Agriculture

Manual Cross Visits

Compiled by
Eelke Wielinga

Tenth edition, November 2016

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 652642

In the presentation mode of PowerPoint *(press F5)* you can browse through the document by using the arrows.

Contents

1. Purpose

Purpose of the Cross Visits

We wish to learn from each other and with each other about ways to effectively assist entrepreneurs in agriculture in their efforts to innovate. The central question is: What can support services do to stimulate innovations at farm level?

Leading principles:

- *All of us have valuable experiences to share.*
- *In our exchanges we try to appreciate what is there, and to understand why things work as they do within their specific historical and cultural context.*
- *We hope to inspire each other with examples that are shown, and with ideas from elsewhere.*
- *Each partner decides for himself what to do with the ideas and suggestions from others.*

Desired outcomes:

- *Inspiration for improvements in the services being offered.*
- *A deeper understanding of innovation processes.*
- *A method for exploring innovation practices and the role of support service providers.*
- *A professional network of innovation support agents.*

2. Prepare yourself

Things to do before you go

Please consider the following questions:

- *What are you most curious for?*
- *What kind of answers would you like to take home after this visit?*
- *How would you like to use these answers for your own work?*
- *To what questions would these answers correspond?*
- *What specific experience or knowledge would you like to share?*

This is preparation for yourself to get focussed. A written version is not a requirement for participation.

Things to read:

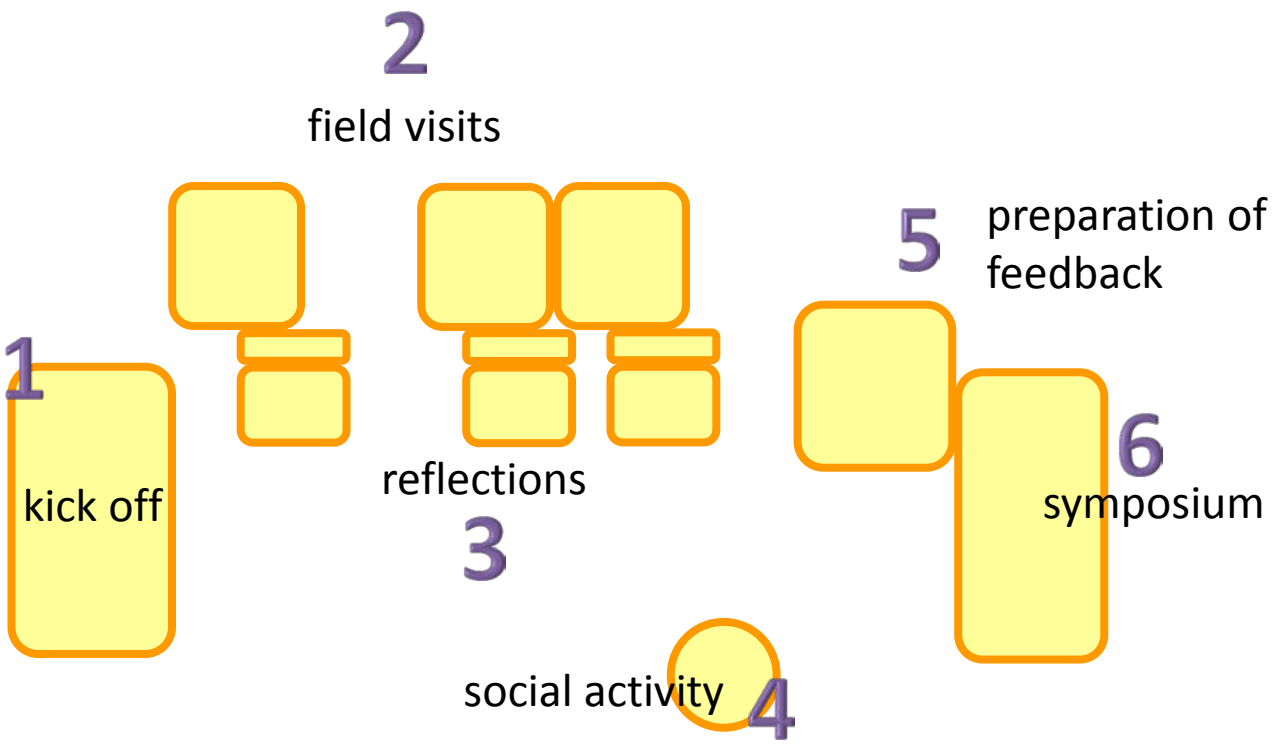
- *This manual.*
- *Story (stories) from the host partner.*
  http://sites.centerit.dk/projekter/AGRISPIN Log in with your username and password(*).
  > documents > WP1 > deliverables > 1.1. An edited book
- "Support to Innovation Processes: a Theoretical Point of Departure."
  (Deliverable 1.1, the inventory of theories and concepts, made by the science group).

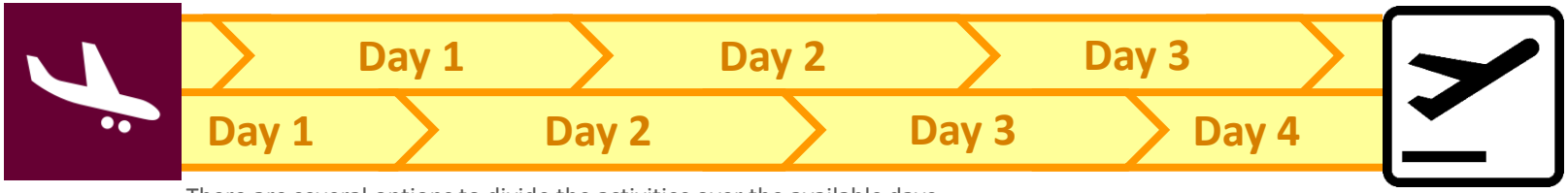
Things to bring along *(if the host chooses to ask you):*

- *Small presents from your own region, as gifts to the farmers and other actors we will visit.*

(*) No account? Mail to hhr@seges.dk.

3. The cross visit in 6 steps





There are several options to divide the activities over the available days.
The host partner decides what fits best under the circumstances.

3. The cross visit in 6 steps

1

kick off

- Getting acquainted
- Getting oriented
- Getting updated
- Getting organised

Make or renew contact with each other.
Focus on what participants are curious for.

Host presents an overview of the current situation of the agricultural sector in the region, and the activities of the host partner.

Summary of highlights previous cross visits:
Pearls and puzzlings.

Overview of methods to be used.
Choosing aspects for focussing.

3. The cross visit in 6 steps

1

kick off

- **Getting acquainted**
- Getting oriented
- Getting updated
- Getting organised

What are you curious for?

Curiosity

What makes you interested in this particular cross visit?

It usually helps to take some minutes to formulate this individually and than share it with the team.

Suppositions and suspicions

What ideas do you have which are worth checking during this visit?

We are all full of prejudgements. It is good for the team spirit if you acknowledge this and dare to share them. This creates the opening to let yourself be surprised later on.

Hidden agenda's

What effects are you hoping for from this visit?

Especially for hosts it is not unusual to have hopes to get something done within the own organisation of structure with the help of the advice of the visiting foreigners. It is useful to share them at the start of the visit.

3. The cross visit in 6 steps

1 kick off

- Getting acquainted
- **Getting oriented**
- Getting updated
- Getting organised

Preparatory document

A well prepared team gets faster to the point. The host contributes to this by sending information about the questions mentioned here to the participants **before they arrive**.

AKIS of the host partner

The host partner presents the key features of the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS) in the Region. The team should understand in what context the host partner is operating.

Elements you could think of:

- *Types of farming*
- *Types of farmers, farm households, enterprises*
- *A bit of history*
- *Main challenges for the agricultural sector*
- *Most important actors in the innovation system:*
- *Support agencies*
- *Partners in research*
- *Partners in education*
- *Partners in food industry, supply chain*
- *Dynamics: who sets the agenda, conflicting interests, how do actors cope with them?*
- *Etc..*

3. The cross visit in 6 steps

1 kick off

- Getting acquainted
- Getting oriented
- **Getting updated**
- Getting organised

Project overview and lessons learned

A member of the Steering Committee of the project reminds the team of the function of this cross visit in the larger picture and gives an update of recent developments in the project.

Elements to touch upon:

- *Goal of the project*
- *Relevant developments within the project*
- *Relevant developments in the larger picture (e.g. regarding the funding agency)*
- *Lessons learned in previous activities*
- *Consequences for this cross visit*
- *Next steps after this cross visit*
- *Time for questions*
- *Time for exchange of relevant developments at the level of the partner organisations*
- *Etc..*

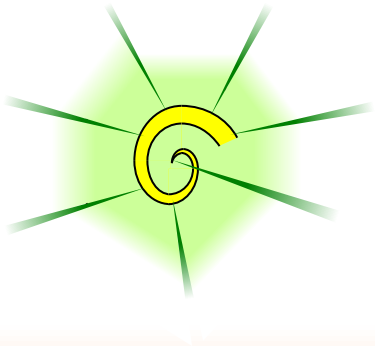
3. The cross visit in 6 steps

1 kick off

- Getting acquainted
- Getting oriented
- Getting updated
- **Getting organised**

Facilitator

It is necessary to nominate an experienced team member as facilitator for the group. She / he keeps an eye on the time, and stimulates all team members to ask their questions during the visits.



Focus

Key aspects for observations

In order to understand how an innovation came about and how the support agency played a role in the process, there is a range of aspects to be explored.

The observation cards on the following pages highlight eight aspects of innovation processes. For each aspects some questions have been formulated. You can use your creativity to reformulate them or add others.

The host prepares two sets of these cards.

The team members take turns to select a card. When all members have one card, a second round is made, until all cards have been distributed. Most team members will then have two cards to attend to.

During the visits, each team member is responsible for collecting answers to the questions on is/her cards.

The Spiral of Initiatives

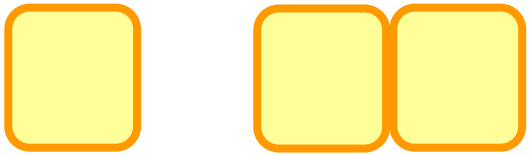
This tool will be used to collect and analyse the observations made by the team.
***The facilitator explains the model** so that the team knows what to look for.*

cards

3. The cross visit in 6 steps

2

field visits



Reminders:

- *Informants should keep their introductions to a minimum, and allow the team to ask the questions.*
- *A group discussion with all informants together generates less variation and depth in the answers, than individual interviews.*

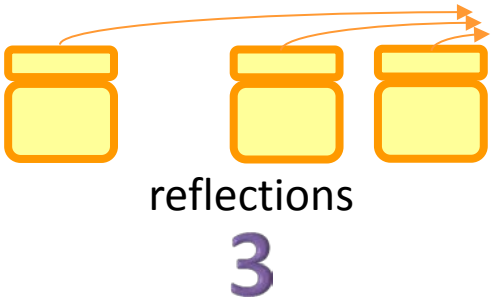
Visits to the cases can be organised in various ways:

- The team splits up and visits two enterprises or organisations in parallel.
- The team can visit one farm, where other key actors are invited too (advisor, colleague, neighbour, agents from marketing, funding, etc.). The team splits up to interview these key informants.

During the field visit:

- The actors being visited introduce shortly what the innovation is about, and what can be seen during the visit. *They should be prepared for the purpose of this visit: we are not so much interested in the technical details. We like to understand ow this innovation came about.*
- The **participants make sure they collect the information needed** for the two aspects they have chosen at the start of the visit.
- A small present will be given as sign of appreciation.

3. The cross visit in 6 steps



After visiting a case, the team reflects on what has been observed.

First step: participants fill in the Spiral of Innovations collectively.

Second step: the team makes an analysis of the case.

Third step: the host summarises the result in the form of a Learning History.

See *Spiral of Innovations*

See *Tools for Analysis*

Make use of the observation cards: ***…… …… …… …… and the corresponding tools***

- **Innovation** — *What type of innovation is this?*
- **Innovation process** — *What stages can be recognized?*
- **Innovation support** — *What type of support is this?*
- **Actors and networks** — *Which actor is taking what position?*
- **Environment**
- **Critical incidents**
- **Dissemination**
- **Future perspectives**

3. The cross visit in 6 steps

social activity 4

A social activity can be filled in the way the host likes.
Preferably informal, creative and pleasant.

3. The cross visit in 6 steps

5 preparation of feedback

In the symposium the team shares its findings with the host organisation and its most important partners.

- The team presents its most important observations to the guests, as **PEARLS,** PUZZLINGS* and PROPOSALS.
- The guests comment on these findings.
- Team and guests summarize what they take home from this encounter.

Pearls	Puzzlings	Proposals
Pearls *are those issues you find interesting, inspiring, well done, etc..*	***Puzzlings*** *are those issues where you have your doubts, question marks or critics.*	***Proposals*** *are ideas that might help to improve the current practices that have been observed.*

- ***Puzzlings*** *are critical observations or issues that are not well understood. Although it is not proper English, the word expresses that the visitors are puzzling about it. This is in contrast with a puzzle, for which there usually is a solution, which only needs to be found.*
- *The term prevents harsh judgements based on limited information, and it creates room for further exploration with actors involved.*
- *It is preferable when hosts and guests draw conclusions regarding improvements to make by themselves, as compared to outsiders who come and tell them what to do better.*

3. The cross visit in 6 steps

6
symposium

Agenda *(suggested)*

1 Introduction

Who is who and what is AgriSpin?

2 Summaries of previous Cross-Visits

5 minutes highlights

3 Presentation of Pearls, Puzzlings and Proposals

Rich pictures and conclusions of the analysis

4 Comments from guests, discussion

This might be done in small group discussions, enabling optimal opportunity to enter into discussion.

5 Take home messages

Both hosts and participants mention one ore more statements to bring home. What are interesting lessons to share with colleagues back home? Are there possibly points for action?

Who should be invited?

- *Managers of the host organisation.*
- *The organising team of the host organisation.*
- *The visiting team.*
- *Key informants who are interested in feedback from abroad.*
- *Authorities (representatives of the regional administration, policy makers).*
- *Important players in the sector.*

Note: Entrepreneurs, especially those who have been visited, should be welcome as well. Experience shows however that they often have difficulties in spending time on it.

Fish Bowl

In the German Cross Visit it worked well to have a “Fish Bowl Discussion” among the visitors and hosts, to comment on the presentations. They could do so in their own language. This conversation ends with formulation four themes to discuss further in subgroups with the AgriSpin team members.

3. The cross visit in 6 steps

Things to do after you get home again

- Write a **personal reflection** about this cross visit and send it ***within one week**** to:
  eelke.wielinga@gmail.com (Cross Visit coordinator)
  He takes care for further distribution and availability on the Share-site.
- Upload your **pictures and video's** to the Share-site of AgriSpin
- Share your insights **with colleagues** in your own organisation.
- **Make an action list** of things to do / to set in motion regarding the innovation support services your organisation is offering.
- Keep AgriSpin informed about activities that can be seen as a **by-catch** of the project (mail to Heidi and Eelke).
- *Get you project administration updated.*

** If you wait longer than one week important observations are already fading out of your memory.*

4. Templates

Templates to capture observations and perceptions

Contents

innovation

What is new?
For whom is it new?

What problem does it solve?
What is the benefit?
Who benefits?
Does it affect the interests of other actors?
Are there any side effects (positive / negative)?

innovation process

What was the first spark?
Who took initiative?

What stages can be recognised in this process?
How far is it now?
What are the current obstacles?
What do key actors expect from the near future?

innovation support

What is the contribution from the host partner?

What would not have happened without this support?
What is the potential for the near future?
Do the key actors have wishes regarding the support they can obtain?

actors and networks

Which actors play a key role in this innovation process?
Who are the main drivers?
Are there any actors who actively resist the changes?

Which networks are important for this innovation process?
What is their importance?
Who keeps these networks healthy?

environment

Which external factors play a role here?

Which changes in the environment influenced the actors to take initiative?
What external factors were helpful?
What external factors were obstacles?

critical incidents

Have there been any crisis in this process?
What was the cause?
Who did what to overcome this crisis?

Have there been big surprises in this process?
What have been the consequences?

Has there been a turning point in this process?
How did it change the course of the process?

dissemination

What is the influence of this innovation on the environment?

Do others show interest in what is happening here?
Do others change their practices because of what they see here?
Is dissemination being actively promoted? By whom?

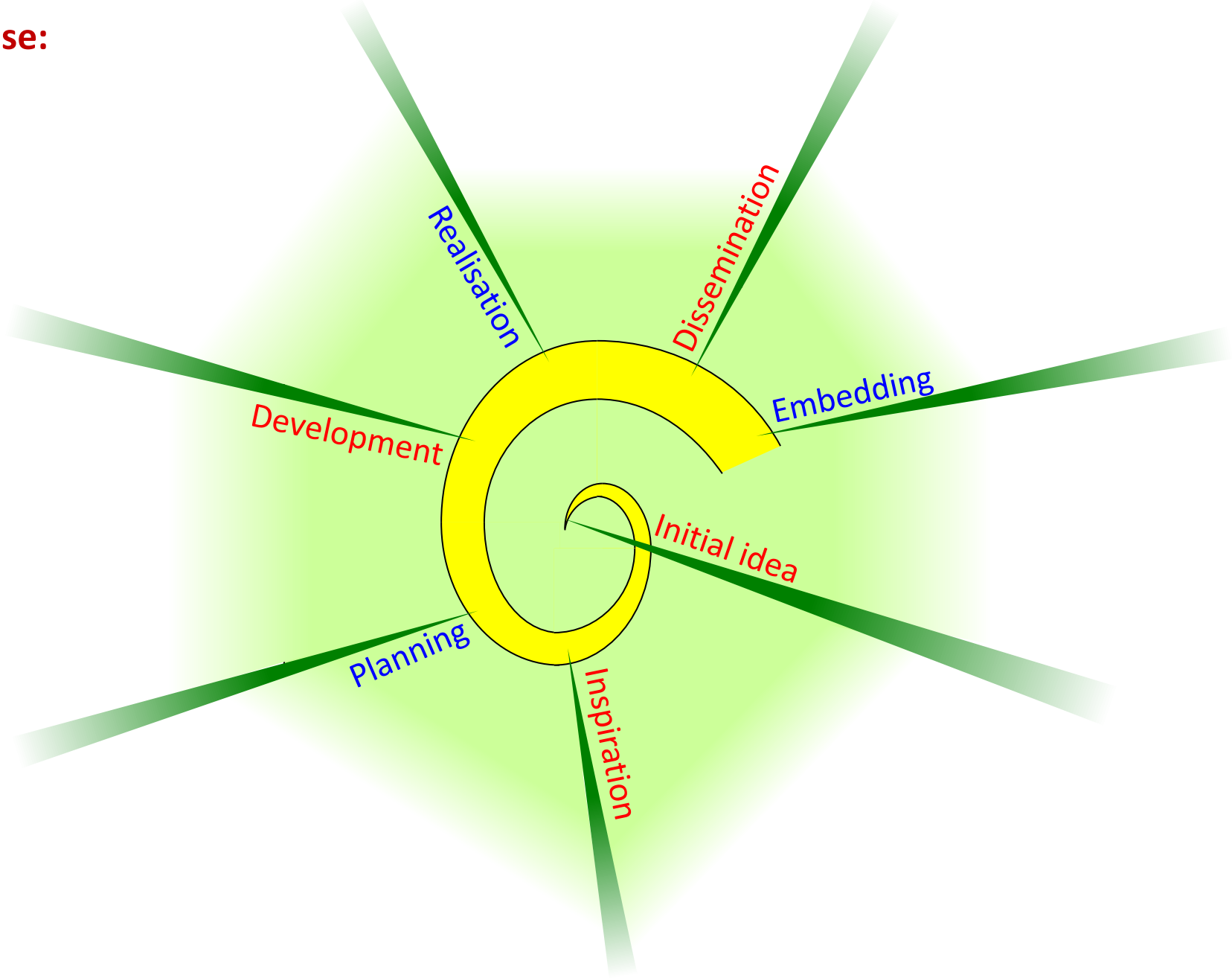
future perspectives

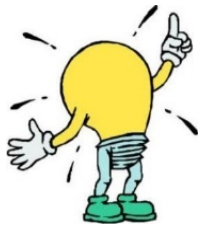
Suppose all their dreams come true, what will be the situation after a few years?

What will be the main challenges to overcome, for realising this dream?

What will be their strategy to do so?

Case:


Realisation
Dissemination
Development
Embedding
Initial idea
Planning
Inspiration



Pearls

Puzzlings

Proposals

4. Templates

Personal reflections

Cross Visit:

After the cross visit you are requested to write a personal reflection on your experiences in this cross visit, and send it **within one week** to:

eelke.wielinga@gmail.com

a. Pearls
- *What are for you the most important pearls to take home?*

If these pearls are in the final presentation, just indicate briefly which ones were most important for you.

b. Puzzlings
- *What puzzles are remaining for you after this visit?*
- *Why are they important for you?*

If these puzzles are in the final presentation, just indicate briefly which ones were most important for you, and why.

c. Your thinking about innovation and innovation support
- *What thoughts about innovation and innovation support have been triggered by this cross visit?*

We are interested in your personal opinion.

d. Proposals for host
- *What proposals do you have for the host, or for actors you have been visiting?*

If these proposals are in the final presentation, just indicate briefly which ones were most important according to you.

It is important to notice here that in the second half of the AgriSpin project the partner organisations are supposed to make **action plans**, based on the experiences from the cross visits. Question [e] is input for those action plans.

e. Proposals to take home
- *What proposals do you take home for your own organisation?*

Why?

f: Progress in AgriSpin
- *If you can compare with previous cross visits you were participating in, please do so.*

g: Proposals for AgriSpin
- *What proposals do you have for AgriSpin?*

Think of further improvements in the methodology, the over-all approach, the planned activities and deliverables, new ideas etc..

4. Templates

Cross Visit Report

After the cross visit the host prepares a report of the visit. This template serves as a guideline.

The **HOST** writes the narrative story, using all input that has been collected in:
- The initial book (if applicable)
- The case fiches
- The timeline or spiral of initiatives
- The cross cutting questions or personal reflections

The **Science Group** writes the analysis

1. Introduction
- *Period*
- *Participants*
- *Setting the scene*

Any considerations for choosing the cases can be mentioned here, just as remarks about the methods used in this cross visit, if they deviate from what has been done earlier.

2. The regional AKIS
- *General features of the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System in the region*
- *The role of the host partner in this system*

Summarise the information you have presented in the introduction on the first day.

3. Learning History of the cases

*The observations of the participants have been captured in the Spiral of Innovations. You are now requested to **summarise this result as a story**.*

***A story** has a starting point, things happen underway, there are opportunities to grasp and difficulties to deal with. And the initiators end up somewhere. That might not always be what they intended to achieve.*

*A **Learning History** adds an analysis to this story. How do you understand that it happened as it did? What was most crucial?*

Make a separate Learning History for each case

It can be very useful to share your draft Learning History with the actors who have been visited by the team!

4. Pearls Puzzlings and Proposals
- *Summary of what has been presented during the symposium.*
- *Summary of the discussion with the participants in this symposium.*

5. Conclusions
- *General final remarks.*

4. Templates

Learning History

Please give attention to the following issues:

- What is the **innovation**?
- **Key actors and their role** in the process
- **Role of the support agency**
- **Success factors**
- **Fail factors**
- Regional and/or historical **particularities**
- **Specific recommendations**
- **Lessons** that can be generalised

This is what we promised to deliver to the EU

3. Learning History of the cases

*The observations of the participants have been captured in the Spiral of Innovations. You are now requested to **summarise this result as a story**.*

***A story** has a starting point, things happen underway, there are opportunities to grasp and difficulties to deal with. And the initiators end up somewhere. That might not always be what they intended to achieve.*

*A **Learning History** adds an analysis to this story. How do you understand that it happened as it did? What was most crucial?*

So, a Learning History has two components:

The narrative

This is a story, build up from the observations on those moments and elements that mattered most, according to those actors involved. It has a kind of "….and they… , and then …" structure, like what you would find in a newspaper.

When the actors you visited read it, they should say: "Yes, so it happened, and you did not forget anything relevant".

The analysis

This is how the author(s) make(s) sense of these facts. This includes assumptions on why things happened as they did, conclusions about possible options people would have had for different interventions or ways to go, and lessons to be learned.

Someone else could draw different conclusions, based on the same narrative.

Kleiner and Roth, who first introduced the Learning History method, made the narrative on one page, and the analysis on the opposite page.

Find a way to make these different components visible in your lay out.

Kleiner, A, Roth, G (1997): *Learning History. How to make your experience your company's best teacher*. Harvard Business Review, Sept. 1997.

5. Tools for Analysis

Contents

The tools in this section are optional, except for the **Spiral of Innovations**.

They are useful for a **shared language** (terminology, typology).

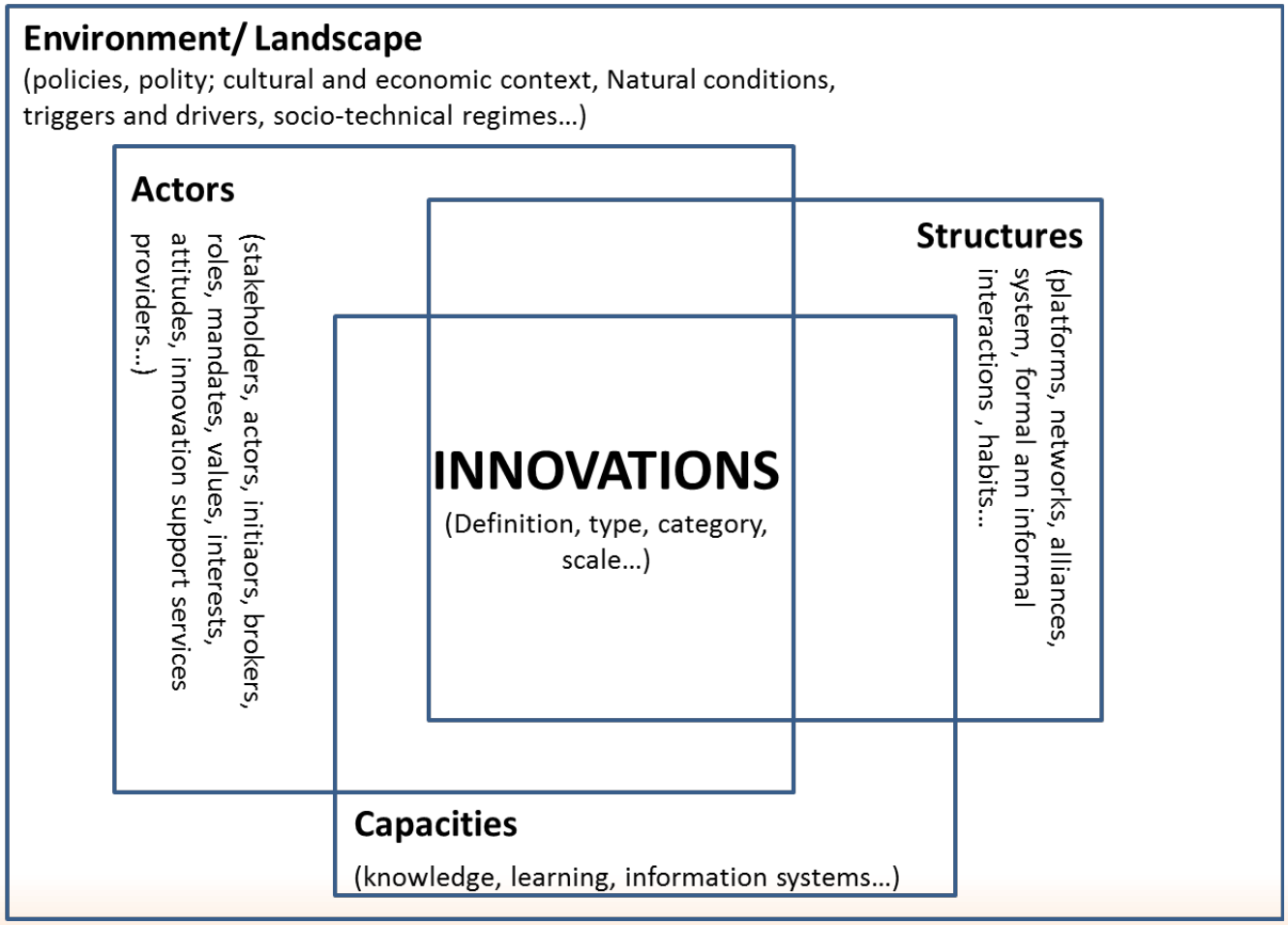
The models are designed for **analysis** of specific cases.

Anyone who is familiar with other tools for these purposes **is invited to** suggest them for the next edition of the manual.

5. Tools for Analysis

The Picture

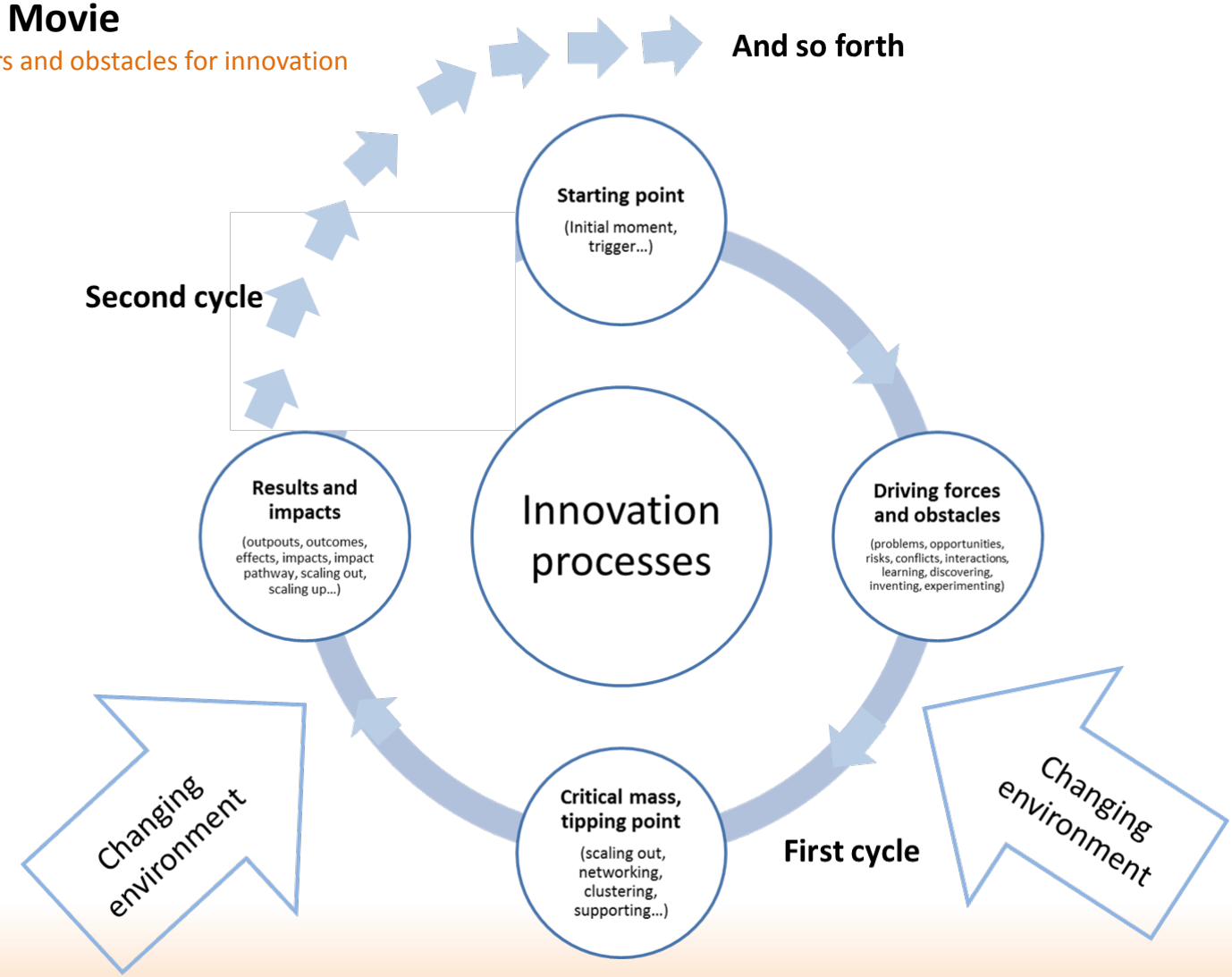
Factors influencing the innovation process



5. Tools for Analysis

The Movie

Drivers and obstacles for innovation



Strategies to frame providers and beneficiaries relationships

Albert 2000

Provider-driven technology transfer: Technology transfer is the traditional, somewhat 'top-down" approach. It remains relevant in many situations, as farmers often lack understanding of options and many innovations come from outside. "Innovation" are usually restricted to production technologies embodied in inputs, but can also include a broad range of management, organizational, and technological adaptations to production, post-harvest, and off-farm.

Farmer-driven advisory Services: When farmers take the lead in identifying problems and promoting innovation, extension shifts to an advisory service function, drawing on experience from farmers, from research and other programs, and from more sophisticated scientific, social, and political analyses to resolve problems. Both the problems and the solutions are co-constructed through a dialogue between farmers and extension agents. Advisory services are particularly relevant where agriculture is highly commercialized or farmers are able to formulate questions.

Interactive facilitation and Building Linkages: The third extension strategy relies heavily on partnerships and networking. The initial partnership between the extension agents and clients serves to jointly diagnose problems and opportunities and identify potential innovations. The extension agent then serves as facilitator building linkages between farmers and the private sector, NGOs, government programs, researchers, or others to address problems and stimulate rural innovation.

This approach recognizes that an extension agent cannot have all the answers, but must have confidence and ability to help farmers draw on their own resources, make contacts with other institutions, and establish linkages for innovation in markets, inputs, credit, and information services.

5. Tools for Analysis

Typology of support services by content

AgriSpin Typology (D1.4)

Content of the service	Definition/Description
Technical	Services targeting a better and improved understanding and use of techniques and technologies
Legal	Services regarding accountability, tax management, regulations, and bureaucracy.
Financial/insurance	Services regarding access to credit, insurance, incentives, subsidies
Marketing	Services regarding farm marketing (packaging, advertisement, or opening up new marketing avenues) and sales management (contract negotiations, alliance, etc.)
Environmental	Services regarding the environmental dimension at farm or territorial levels of human activities related to production, processing, or transport
Organisational	Services regarding farm management (funding, labor, professional network of the farm manager/ innovators), farmers' organization management, support or expansion of the network with partners (other fellow innovators/managers, private firms, etc.) or with the wider context.
Social	Services regarding the social dimension at family level (human and social capital) or territorial level (cultural heritage, etc.)

5. Tools for Analysis

Types of Innovation Support Services

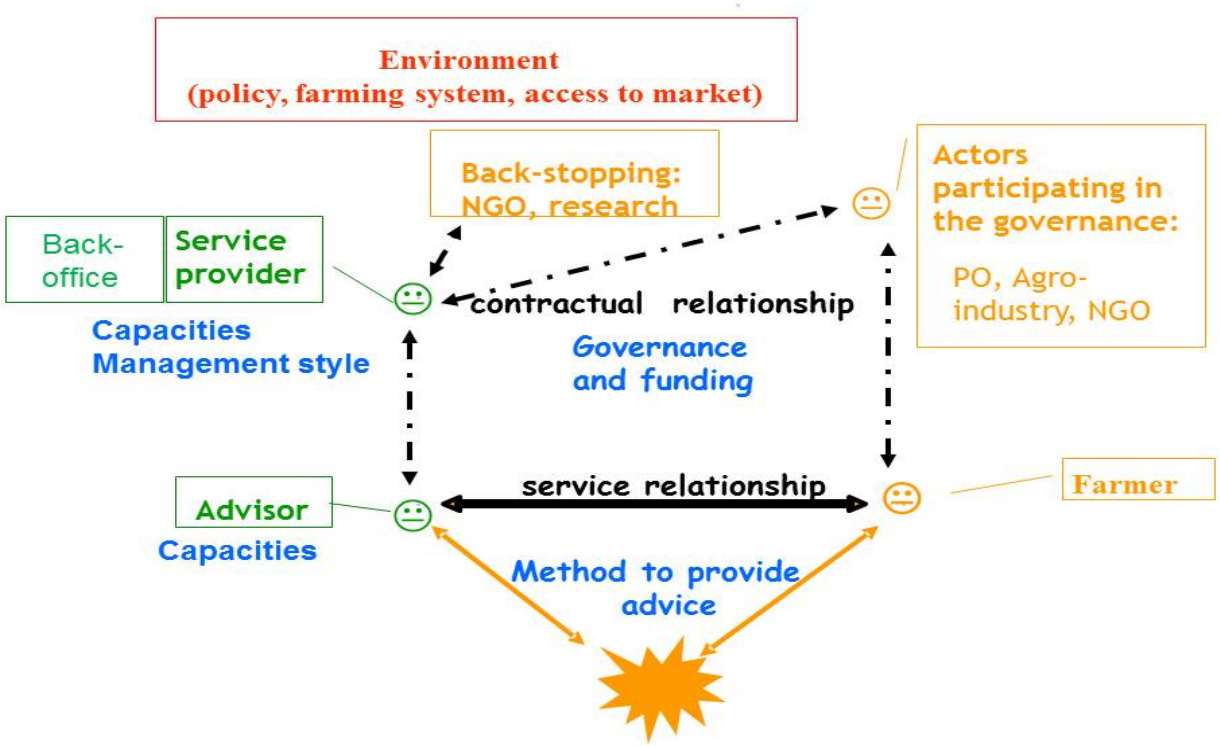
AgriSpin Typology (D1.4)

ISS types	Definition
1- Knowledge and technology transfer	Provision of knowledge and technologies for innovation. For example, dissemination of scientific knowledge or technical information for farmers or group of farmers. The method to provide knowledge is based on information dissemination (web site, leaflets),trainings or demonstration.
2- Advisory, consultancy and backstopping	Provision of advices (technical, legal, economic, environmental, social etc.) during the innovation process based on the farmers' demands and co-construction of solutions. Backstopping can be used for solving complex problems regarding a new farming system (For example shift from conventional agriculture to conservation agriculture or organic agriculture).
3- Marketing and demand articulation	These services are related to the support given to better target market. Various methods can be used as vision building, diagnosis, foresight. The service provider may help the stakeholders understand the market demands and adapt to this demand.
4- Networking facilitation and brokerage	Provision of service to help organize or strengthen networks, to improve the relationships between key actors (conflict management, for example), and to align services in order to be able to complement each other's (the right service at the right moment). Also it includes all activities aiming at strengthening collective action.
5- Capacity building	Provision of services aiming at increasing innovation actors' capacities to be fully equipped to play their roles in the innovation process. It includes capacity building at individual level (for example leadership strengthening) and at organizational level. The services are based on the provision of classical training but also on experiential learning thinking. Another dimension is the provision of service concerning the difficulties that farmers often have to define their production objectives, identify their needs, and express clear demands to R&D providers. Trainers/ Advisors / facilitators use several methods that can help them define their problematic situations and articulate their demand for the provision of more specific services.
6- Access to resources	Provision of tangible services to support the process. It could be inputs (seeds, fertilizers, etc.), facilities and equipment (technological platforms, labs…), and funding (credit, subsidies, etc.).
7. Institutional support for niche innovation and scaling mechanisms stimulation	Provision of institutional support for niche innovation (incubators, experimental infrastructures etc.) and for out scaling and upscaling of the innovation process. This refers to the support of the emergence of norms or funding mechanism that facilitate the involvement of other actors in the innovation process or the diffusion of innovation

5. Tools for Analysis

Framework to analyse the service relationship and influencing factors

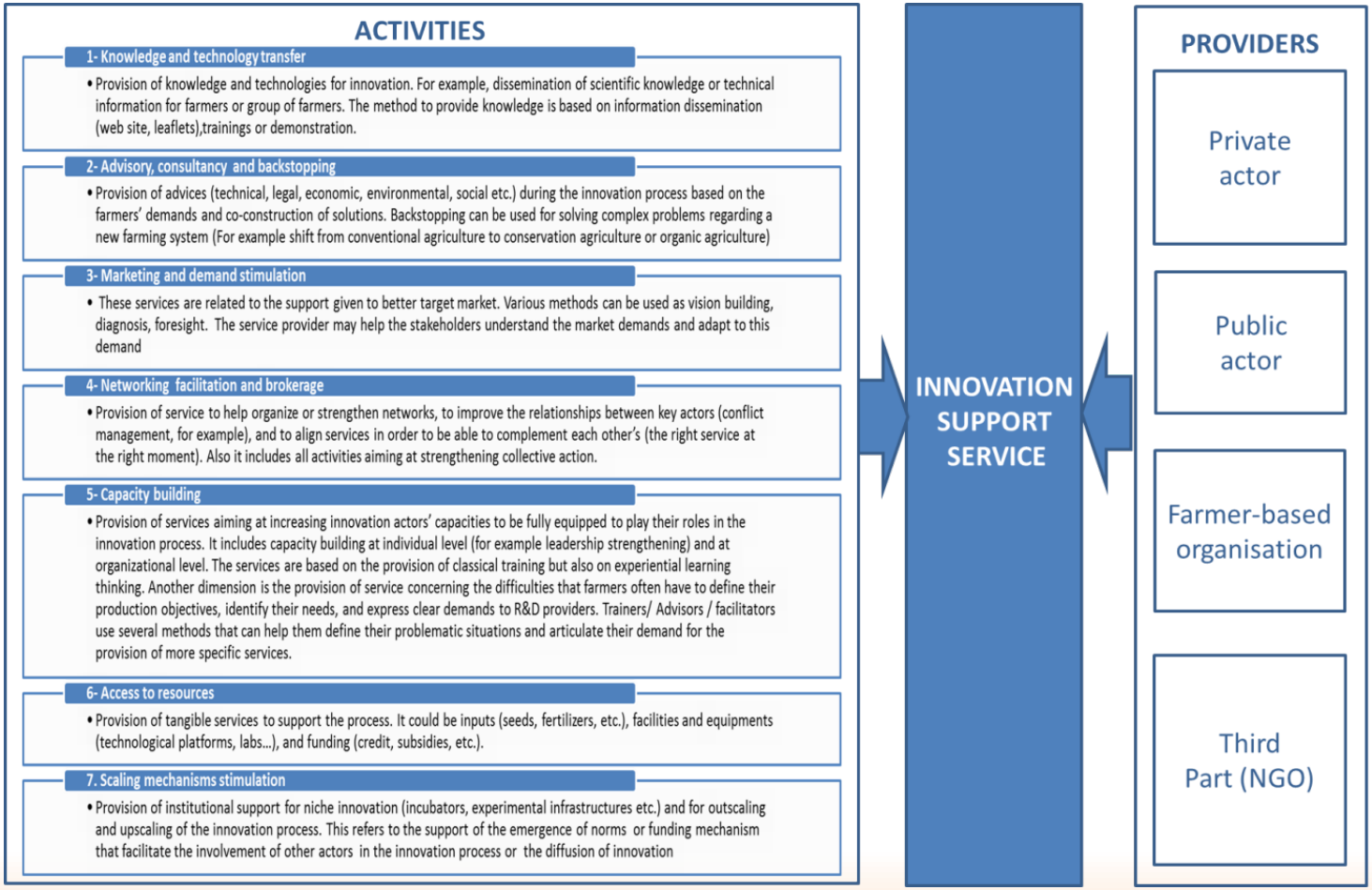
Free after Labarthe 2009; Faure et al. 2011; Gadrey 1994



5. Tools for Analysis

Typology of innovation support activities

AgriSpin Typology (D 1.4)



5. Tools for Analysis

A grid for analysis

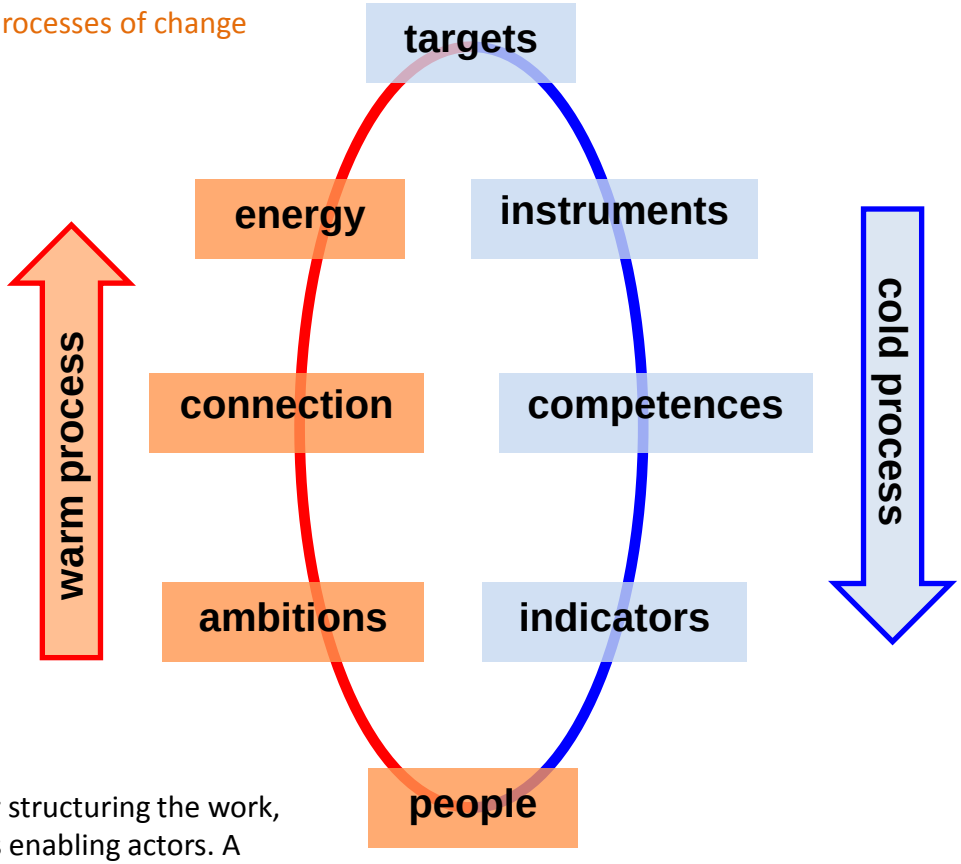
According to Deliverable 1.4

1. What was the type of service (see typology)?
2. Who was(were) the innovation support service provider(s)?
3. What was the objective /content of the service
4. At what stage is the innovation process? Especially regarding the critical moment/ problematic situation (conflicts, controversies, pressures.
5. What were the methods mobilized (approach, activities)?
6. How is the service being funded?
7. What are the mechanisms for orienting, monitoring, assessing the service?
8. Who is asking for services?
9. What are the coordination mechanisms to align services?
10. What were the effects of innovation support services on the innovation process?

5. Tools for Analysis

Warm and Cold Processes

Complementary elements in processes of change



Warm process

When **people** with **ambitions** make **connection**, this generates **energy** for action.

This is called the warm process.

This is usually happening in informal settings.

Cold process

For action it is necessary to formulate **targets**, to choose appropriate **instruments** to achieve them, to mobilise people with **competences** to use those instruments, and to have **indicators** to monitor progress.

This is called the cold process.

This is usually happening in formal settings.

Complementarity

The cold process is needed for structuring the work, and for accountability towards enabling actors. A project proposal should contain these elements.

The energy to make things move must come from the warm process. This is what motivates people to do effort and to become creative.

5. Tools for Analysis

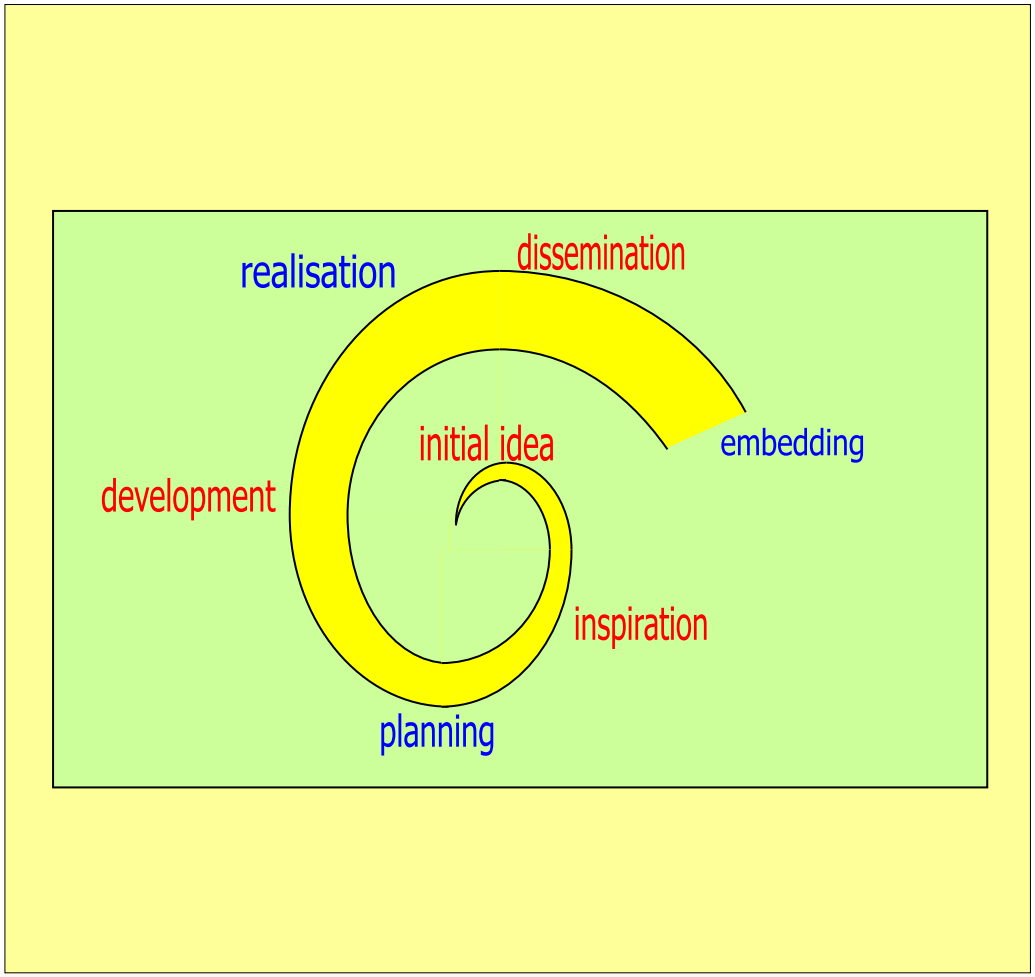
The Spiral of Initiatives

Phases in processes of change

Each stage has specific:

- actors to connect with
- activities to do
- pitfalls to avoid
- barriers to overcome
- needs for assistance

For what stages is support being offered? What does this support entail? How does it help to move the initiative towards the next stage?

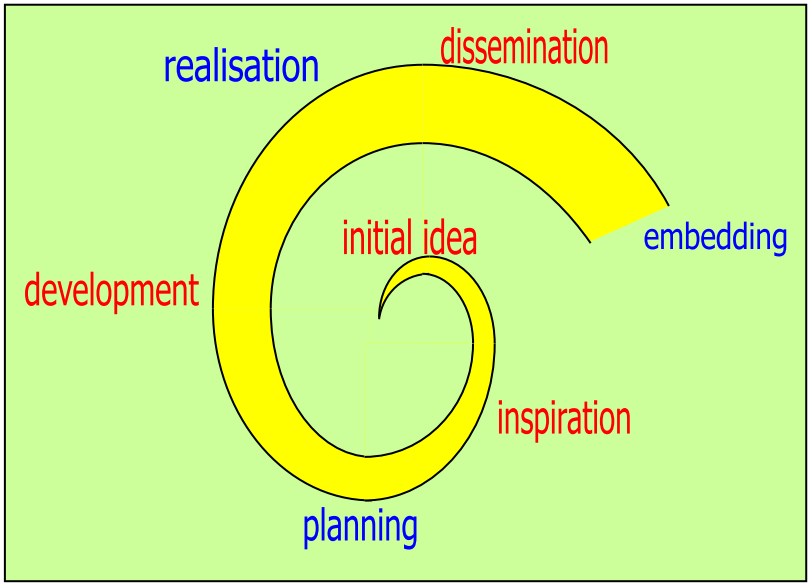


5. Tools for Analysis

The Spiral of Initiatives

Phases in processes of change

Phases and actors to involve.



Initial idea

Someone gets an idea, because of a felt problem or an opportunity. New initiatives can emerge from interaction as well.

Pioneers.

People who look beyond their own borders and comfort zone.

Inspiration

Others become inspired, and form a warm informal network around the initiative.

Initiators, change agents.

People with shared interests, similar ambitions.

Planning

Initiators formulate plans for action. They negotiate space for experiments with authorities.

Gatekeepers, managers.

People who control the conditions (funds, mandates, exceptions on rules, etc..)

Development

Searching and learning. Expertise (from outside) is mobilised for experimentations to develop new practices and to collect evidence that they work.

Experts, suppliers, facilitators.

People who control the conditions (funds, mandates, exceptions on rules, etc..)

Realisation

Implementation at full scale. This requires negotiation with actors who are affected by the change.

Stakeholders (representatives), gatekeepers, managers.

People who can open the door for change or keep it closed.

Dissemination

Effective new practices are being picked up by others.

Users.

People with similar interests and problems.

Embedding

The new practice becomes widely accepted. Structures incorporate it as normal.

Gatekeepers, managers, policy makers.

All actors involved.

back. cont. start

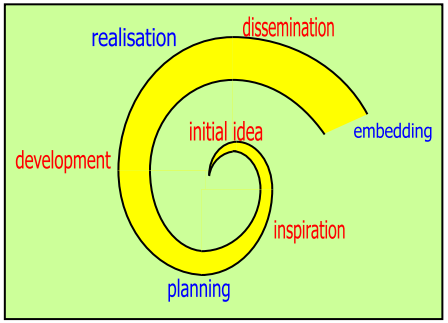
6. Tools for Analysis

Phase	Common barriers	Typical pitfalls	Possible actions
initial idea	• Comfort zone • Closed community • No capacity to take risks	• 'We know best' mentality	• Create exposure to experiences elsewhere • Allow for strange ducks • Create sense of urgency
inspiration	• Comfort zone • Vested interests • Too many actors involved, with focus on consensus (especially representatives)	• Early focus on problems • Involve gatekeepers too early • Keep on dreaming for too long time	• Connect with likeminded people • Focus on shared ambition • Stimulate dreaming • Proper timing for taking action
planning	• No capacity to take risks • Unfair balance give and take • Strict requirements from enabling actors for their (funding) support	• Product-type objectives • Rigid planning • Focus on realisation, rather than on experimenting	• Focus on creating space for experiments • Involve enabling actors in setting criteria for desired solutions • Define how to divide efforts, risks and benefits
development	• Comfort zone • No access to appropriate expertise or experience (technique, process)	• Stick to what is common • Keep on experimenting forever • No attention for the process • No involvement of stakeholders • Lack of involvement of enabling community	• Facilitate the process • Involve external expertise • Involve open minded stakeholders • Communicate about progress (successes and failures) • Remain curious
realisation	• Vested interests stakeholders • No sense of urgency among stakeholders • No support in power structure	• 'We have the solution' mentality • Ignore interests of stakeholders	• Facilitate negotiation with stakeholders
dissemination	• Underestimation of differences in target group • No interest in dissemination (protection of innovation)	• Technology push • Free riders	• Connect with potential users • Take care of 'earning model' for initiators who wish to recover their investment
embedding	• Structures adapt slowly to new realities	• Ignore power structure • Change too radically, too often	• Facilitate reflection on processes • Enhance responsive capacity

The Spiral of Initiatives

Phases in processes of change

Barriers, pitfalls and actions



5. Tools for Analysis

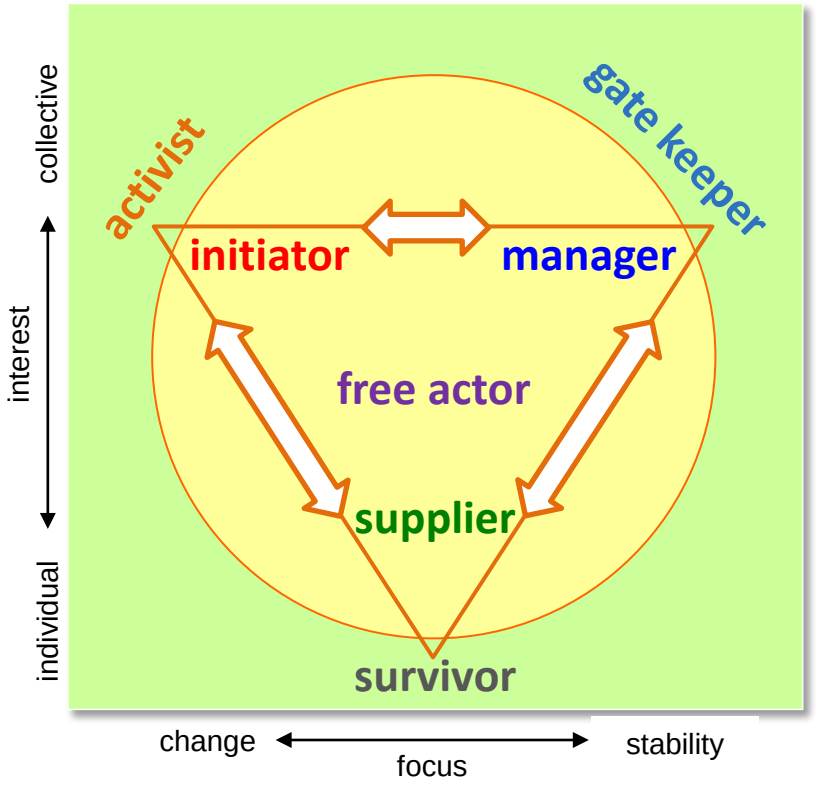
The Triangle of Co-Creation

Positions in processes of change

The Triangle of Co-Creation visualises positions people take regarding the initiative and the existing structure.
Innovation is seen as a result of interaction between multiple actors in a system.

Questions for observation:

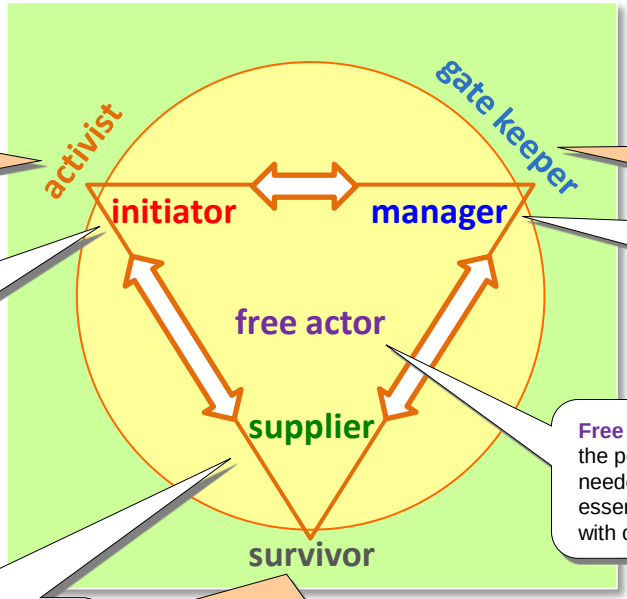
- Who are the actors in this innovation system that matter most?
- What positions do they take in the triangle?
  - Focus on change or stability?
  - Concerned about collective or individual interests?
- Are some positions vacant?
- Who takes a Free Actor position?
- *What is the position of the Innovation Support Agent?*



5. Tools for Analysis

The Triangle of Co-Creation

Positions in processes of change



Activists go for change, without respect for existing structures.

Movement starts with **initiators** (change agents). They have ambitions, see opportunities, or want to solve problems and take initiatives. When they meet there is energy being generated.

Gatekeepers consolidate positions and limit risks. They control conditions, but do not connect with the initiative.

Managers take responsibility for the structure. They control the conditions, and change them to allow for development of the initiative, but within acceptable risks.

Free actors have the capacity and the position to do whatever is needed to create an/or maintain essential connections. They do so with or without a mandate.

Suppliers deliver components that are needed to develop the initiative: for example knowledge and skills. They act within the given conditions (rules, terms of reference, etc..)

Survivors have limited capacity for taking risks. Their prime focus is their own safety, much more than the common good.

The model assumes that co-creative change in a network takes actors in different positions that complement each other.

- Within the circle actors contribute to the process of change.
- Outside the circle actors to not contribute constructively.

Actors need to show that they can be trusted by others. Each position has a suspected counterpart. Free actors are less suspect than others, and do those additional steps to create connection, trust and good working conditions.
In effective networks there is always at least one free actor.

[1] The energy for change comes from initiators who share ambitions. They form an informal warm network.
[2] When they have acquired sufficient position to be taken seriously, they negotiate with managers about changing conditions in the structure.
[3] Within these conditions suppliers can provide their contributions.

When managers want to initiate change, they have to form a warm network of inspired people too, before changing the rules. Otherwise they might end up in a gate keeper – survivor relationship.

back cont. start

5. Tools for Analysis

Types of support agents

innovator
individual taking initiative to try out new practices

innovation coach
assists innovator in building up necessary competences

expert
brings in useful knowledge or solutions

sparring partner
gives feedback and advice as a critical friend. Someone to share puzzles with.

supplier
delivers products of use, or takes over specialised tasks

knowledge broker
brings innovators in contact with useful carriers of knowledge

innovation broker
brings innovators in contact with useful partners

free actor
is committed to the initiative and does what it takes to keep actors connected and capable of realising the shared ambition

facilitator
guides a group in achieving a task together

initiative group
shares an ambition and takes action to realise it

6. Tools for Analysis

Type 1: Innovation consultants for individual farmers.
Such advisors assist farmers who wish to innovate in finding appropriate information and contacts.

Type 2: Innovation consultants for a collective of farmers.
Farmers have a common interest and wish to jointly develop or implement an innovation.

Type 3: Peer network academies.
These network organisations support farmers in a subsector such as dairy production. Exchange between farmers is the focus, with assistance from experts such as researchers.

Type 4: Systemic initiators ('instruments').
Such intermediary actors go beyond the assistance to individual farmers, and try to initiate changes in the system by involving larger institutional partners.

Type 5: Internet portals.
Internet facilities range from making information accessible to interactive websites that can be filled by users (e.g. Wikipedia) to chat boxes and question-answer databanks.

Type 6: Research councils with 'innovation agency'.
Major stakeholders in a system are represented in a council, which has the authority to set priorities for granting budgets for innovation projects.

Type 7: Education brokers.
Educational institutions in agriculture and rural development (schools, colleges and universities) represent a vast body of expertise and working capacity when it comes to innovations. Education brokers link farmers demands to students and their supervisors in order to work out practical solutions.

Types of intermediary actors (knowledge brokers)

What type of innovation supply services is being offered in this particular case?

This typology is based on research of Klerkx, Hall and Leeuwis (2009) on practices they distinguish in the Dutch agricultural sector.

5. Tools for Analysis

Add your typologies and models here …

6. Guidelines for hosts

Checklist

Prepare the actors to be visited

- Ask them to keep their introductions short.
- The visiting team has many questions to ask.

Prepare the posters

- Print the Spiral of Initiatives at poster format, for every case to be visited. *Slide 19*
- Print the Pearls, Puzzlings and Proposal sheet on poster format. *Slide 33*
- Make two or three sets of observation cards. *(slides 18 and 19: print at A4 and cut the cards)*
- Make sure there are Post-Its, markers and flip charts for the reflection meetings.

General points of attention

- Make clear at the start which meals will be paid by the host, and which ones are for the participants.
- It is preferable to have at least one meeting at the office of the host organisation.
- Create time for making a time line after a visit.
- Create also time for analysis of the observations.
- Prepare for all meetings participation lists, which team members and other visitors can sign. This is a EU requirement.

6. Guidelines for hosts

Video recording

Some guidelines

Video for whom?

- Inspiration for farmers
- Innovation service providers
- Your own network
- Networks of AgriSpin partners
- EIP network
- …

Video about what?

- The innovation itself (new practice)
- How partners were involved
- The story
- The support

Possible questions

- Who are you (short introduction)?
- What is the innovation about?
- Why was there a need?
- Which companies rely on this innovation?
- What problems did you have to overcome?
- How does it work now?
- How did it change the business (organisation)?
- How do you see the future?
- What assistance did you get? From whom?
- What did the innovation support service provider do?
- What haven't we asked yet?

Every partner has a budget for making video clips of cases

Language

- Mother tongue
- Subtitles in English
- *No voice-over!*

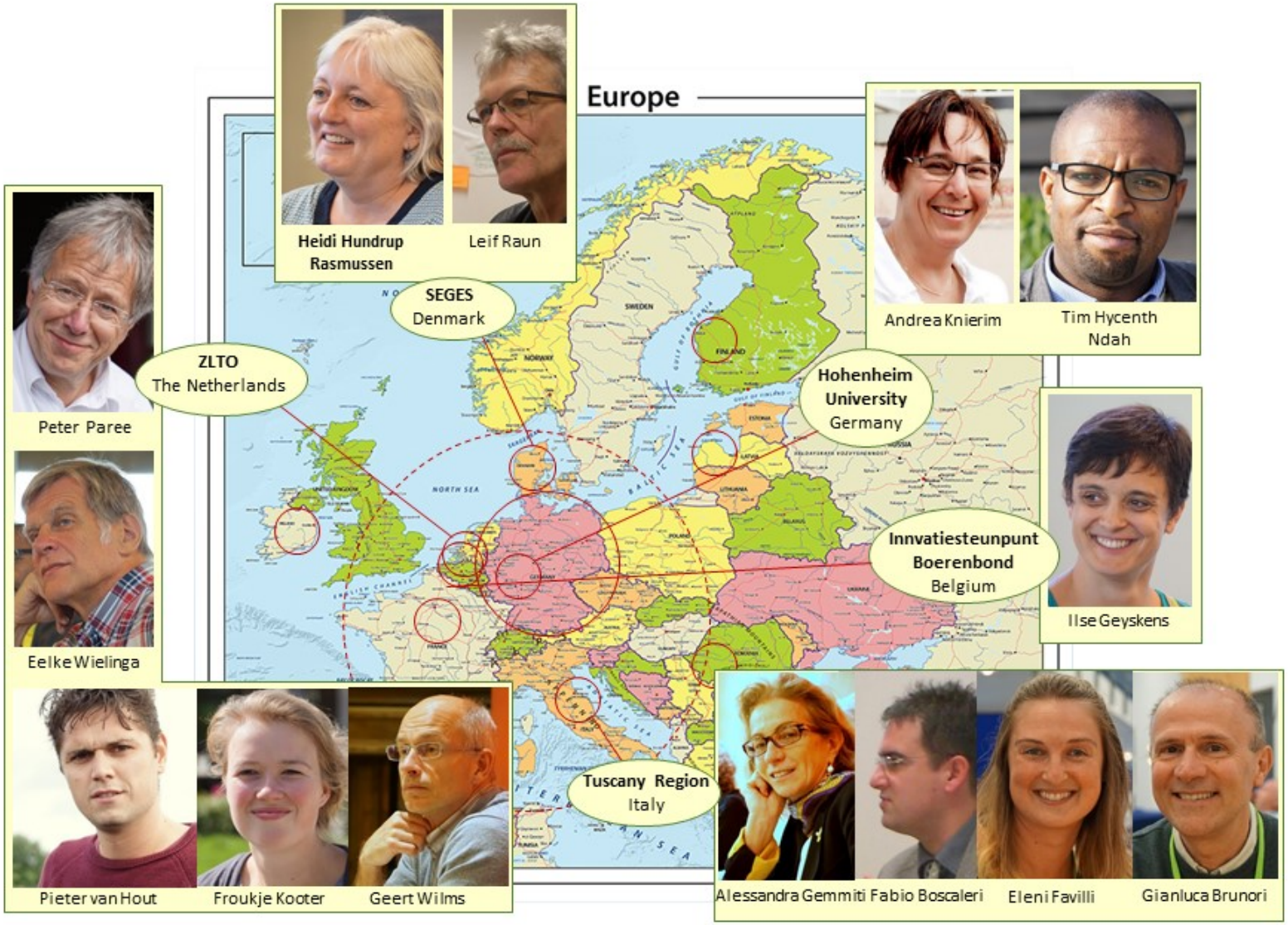
Tips

There is a program available on You Tube via which you can subtitle very easily the text of the interviewee in any language you want. Therefore you need the spoken text written down very accurately from minute to minute.

The Belgian team made from every person interviewed an intro image. On this image the interviewee stands still, looks straight in the camera, spacious and centrally framed, so there is next to the person enough space for text (being name and quote). See screenshot below.

To clarify an innovation which is not visible, you can make use of animation. The Belgian team will do so for innovative labor organization. For this part, a voice-over is useful.

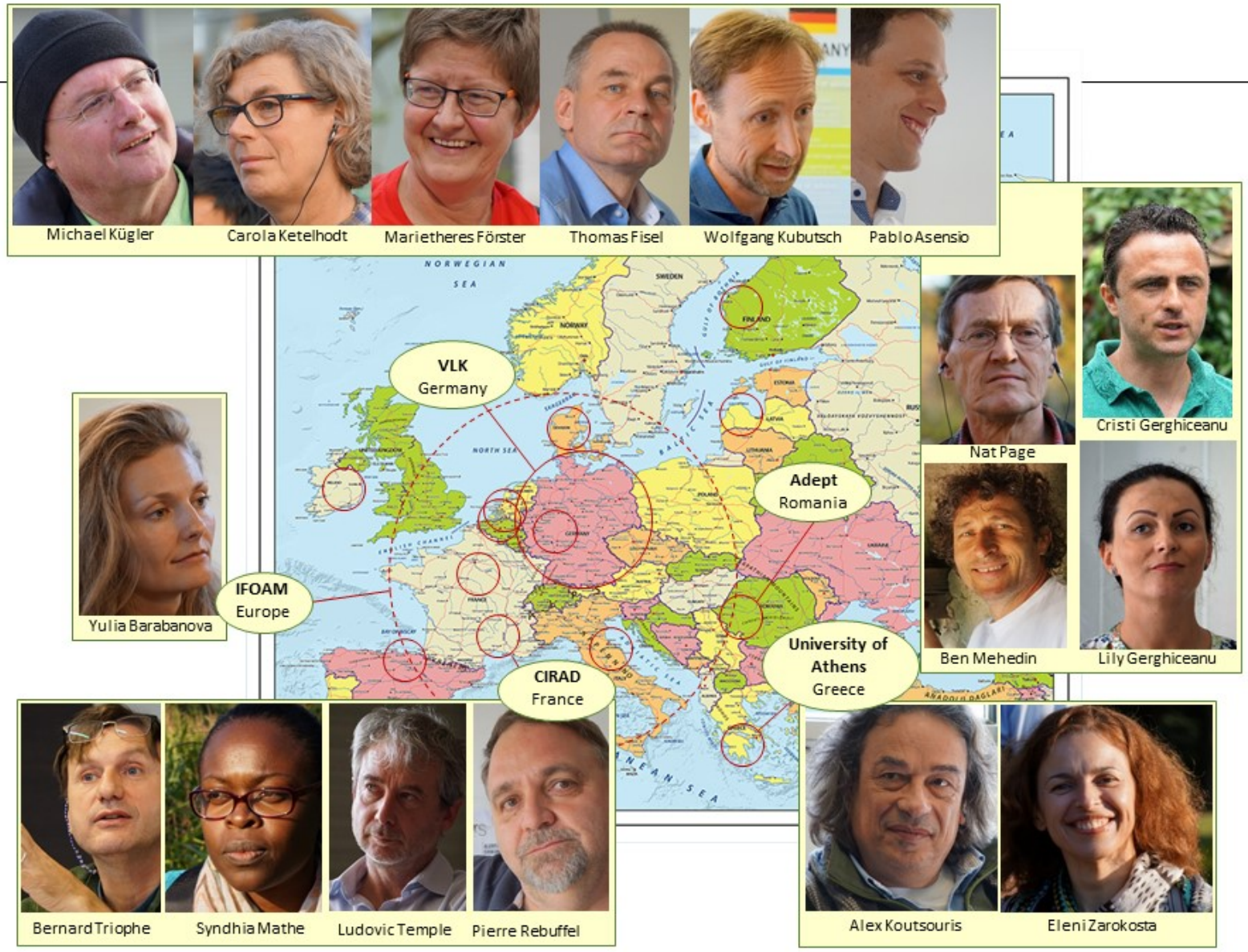
7. Who's who?


Europe
Heidi Hundrup Rasmussen
Leif Raun
SEGES
Denmark
Andrea Knierim
Tim Hycenth Ndah
ZLTO
The Netherlands
Peter Paree
Hohenheim University
Germany
Innvatiesteunpunt
Boerenbond
Belgium
Ilse Geyskens
Eelke Wielinga
Tuscany Region
Italy
Pieter van Hout
Froukje Kooter
Geert Wilms
Alessandra Gemmiti
Fabio Boscaleri
Eleni Favilli
Gianluca Brunori

7. Who's who?


Europe
Tom Kelly
Mark Gibson
James Maher
Kevin Haenue
Teagasc
Ireland
ProAgria
Finland
Hannu Haapala
Essi Tarsia
LLKC
Latvia
Anita Diabele
Kaspars Zurins
Andris Kurtis
HAZI
Basque Country
Spain
Damiana Maiz
ACTA
France
Pilar Riaño
Matthe Andres
Adrien Guichaoua
Philippe Prigent
Sonia Ramonteu
Frédéric Rey
Céline Cresson

7. Who's who?


Michael Kügler
Carola Ketelhodt
Marietheres Förster
Thomas Fisel
Wolfgang Kubutsch
Pablo Asensio
VLK
Germany
Adept
Romania
IFOAM
Europe
CIRAD
France
University of
Athens
Greece
Yulia Barabanova
Nat Page
Cristi Gerghiceanu
Ben Mehedin
Lily Gerghiceanu
Bernard Triophe
Syndhia Mathe
Ludovic Temple
Pierre Rebuffel
Alex Koutsouris
Eleni Zarokosta