

# Evaluation study of the implementation of the European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability



- Recent **trends in Europe demand substantial innovation** in the agricultural sector
- The importance of **coherent innovation policy** and the public sector's role in fostering innovation has increasingly come into focus
- In response to current challenges, agriculture has been identified as one of the **five key areas**\* in which European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs) have been launched under the **EU's Innovation Union** Flagship Initiative.

*\*The other EIPs focus on: active and healthy ageing; smart cities and communities; raw materials; and water.*



- **Mainly on innovation under CAP funding + linkages to H2020, Europe's research policy**
- **Most RDPs were just beginning to become operational.** Only a first series of OGs had been set up by the time the evaluation team conducted its research.

*The evaluation is based on approved RDPs, underlying national legislation, first calls and on likely effectiveness and efficiency of activities that are expected to follow.*

- The evaluation relied to a significant extent on programming of decisions and perceptions of **key stakeholders**

*Nonetheless, we showed how the Member States and regions have understood the EIP concept of interactive innovation, and allowed us to assess the enabling environment they have been building.*

The evaluation study **collected evidence** via a range of participatory methods.

- **Document review**, most importantly **in-depth analysis of all 118 RDPs**. Where the RDP programmes for the EIP, we examined how the EIP works in practice in given Member States / regions.
- Key informant **interviews** of Managing Authorities, EU officials, the EIP Service Point and EU-level interest groups representing farmers and landowners.
- An **online survey** of relevant actors across the EU, to broaden the evidence base on certain issues (especially the work of the EIP network).
- In-depth **case studies** covering eleven Member States and 20 RDPs. The case studies **examined in detail and mapped** the dynamics, motivations, incentives, needs, expectations and experiences of the actors involved in the EIP-AGRI at national and regional levels.

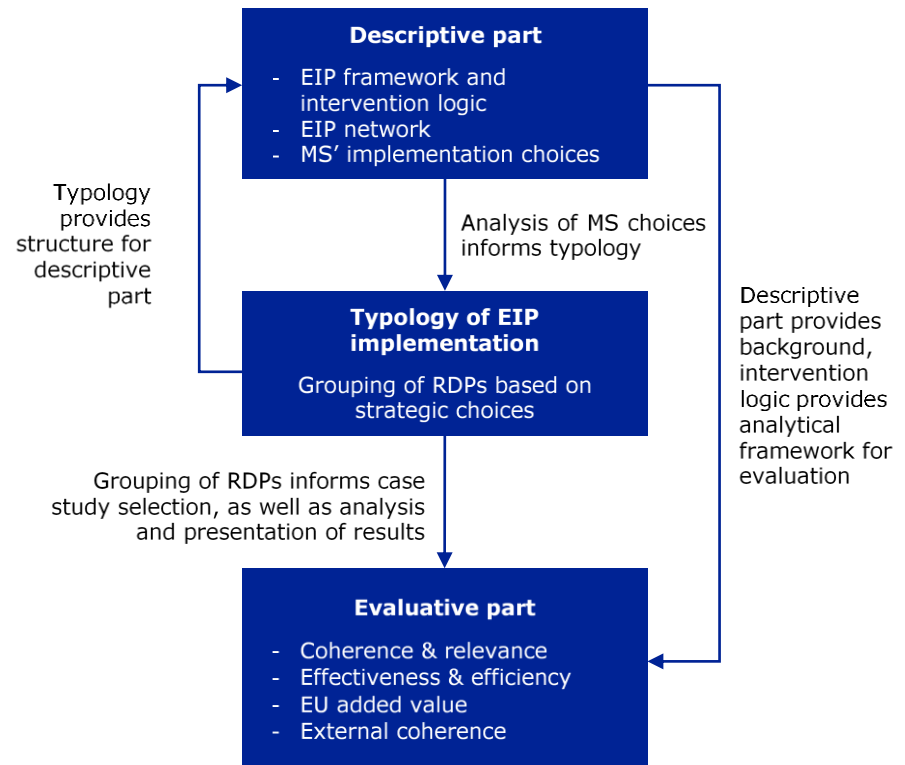
- The evaluation study
- Main findings
  - Theme 1: internal coherence and relevance for the EIP-related elements in the RDPs
  - Theme 2: effectiveness and efficiency of the EIP implementation through RDPs
  - Theme 3: EU added value of the EIP network, effectiveness and efficiency of the EU level and national networks
  - Theme 4: external coherence of the EIP with other policies
- Overall conclusions
- Recommendations
- Questions and discussion

Purpose was to:

- **Identify strengths and weaknesses**, opportunities and threats
- Generate evidence to improve the EIP

The research was structured in three parts:

1. **Descriptive part:** overview of the EIP and description of its constituent parts and current state of implementation;
2. **Typology:** classification of the RDPs into distinct groups
3. **Evaluative part:** answering a set of five evaluation questions spread across four themes.





# Typology of EIP implementation (case study RDPs in **bold**)

		Dimension 1: Average funding per Operational Group		
		Small <i>Up to €100,000</i>	Medium <i>From €100,000 to €300,000 per OG</i>	Large <i>More than €300,000 per OG</i>
Dimension 2: Prescriptiveness of approach to selecting Operational Groups	Open OGs free to propose themes  NB: the following MS / regions take an open approach but we did not have budgetary data: Bolzano (IT), Madrid (ES), Malta, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (DE), Saxony Anhalt (DE)	Type 1: small & open  Asturias (ES), <b>Flanders</b> (BE), <b>Wales</b> (UK)	Type 2: medium & open  Abruzzo (IT), <b>Andalusia</b> (ES), Baden-Württemberg (DE), <b>England</b> (UK), Finland, Galicia (ES), <b>Greece</b> , Hessen (DE), Hungary, La Rioja (ES), Martinique (FR), Murcia (ES), Spanish National RDP (ES), Northern Ireland (UK), Picardie (FR), Saxony (DE)	Type 3: large and open  Basilicata (IT), Campania (IT), Guyane (FR), Haute-Normandie (FR), Ireland, Lower Saxony and Bremen (DE), North-Rhine Westphalia (DE), Piedmont (IT), <b>Poland</b> , Portugal (Mainland), Romania, Sardinia (IT), Schleswig-Holstein (DE), <b>Scotland</b> (UK), Sicily (IT), <b>Sweden</b> , <b>Veneto</b> (IT)
	Restrictive OGs must choose from pre-defined focus areas	Type 4: small & restrictive  <b>Basque Country</b> (ES), Cyprus, Liguria (IT), Limousin (FR), Réunion (FR), Slovakia	Type 5: medium & restrictive  Aquitaine (FR), Aragon (ES), Austria, Bavaria (DE), Canary Islands (ES), Castilla y Leon (ES), <b>Catalonia</b> (ES), Corsica (FR), <b>Croatia</b> , <b>Emilia Romagna</b> (IT), Extremadura (ES), Lazio (IT), Lombardy (IT), Lorraine (FR), <b>Midi-Pyrénées</b> (FR), Netherlands, Pays de la Loire (FR), <b>Rhineland-Palatinate</b> (DE), <b>Rhône-Alpes</b> (FR), Slovenia	Type 6: large & restrictive  Auvergne (FR), Basse Normandie (FR), <b>Berlin and Brandenburg</b> (DE), <b>Brittany</b> (FR), <b>Bulgaria</b> , Burgundy (FR), Centre – Val de Loire (FR), Champagne-Ardenne (FR), (IT), Czech Republic, Friuli-Venezia-Giulia (IT), Guadeloupe (FR), Ile de France (FR), <b>Pyrenees</b> (FR), Roussillon (FR), Lithuania, Marche (IT), Mayotte (FR), Molise (IT), PACA (FR), Poitou-Charentes (FR), <b>Puglia</b> (IT), Tuscany (IT), Umbria (IT)
NB: Data were unavailable for Thuringia, Germany; Calabria and Trento in Italy; and Azores and Madeira in Portugal. Denmark and Latvia are not included in the typology because they had not planned any OGs as of June 2016				

Evaluation theme	Evaluation question
<b>Theme 1: Internal coherence and relevance</b>	<p>EQ1: To what extent are the EIP-related elements included in the RDPs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coherent with the needs assessment and strategic priorities of the programme area?</li> <li>- Relevant with regard to the needs of the farmers and forest managers in the programme area?</li> <li>- Coherent with related initiatives and elements of the first Pillar of the CAP?</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 2: Effectiveness and efficiency</b>	<p>EQ 2: To what extent are the implementation choices made in the RDPs by the MSs intended to contribute to reaching the general objective of enhancing agricultural productivity and sustainability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Effective or providing the necessary preconditions for enabling effectiveness?</li> <li>- Efficient in terms of limiting the administrative burden?</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 3: EU added value of the EIP network, effectiveness and efficiency of the EU level and national networks</b>	<p>EQ 3: To what extent are the structures and work programme of the EU level EIP network in terms of supporting the aims of the EIP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adequate to achieve the aims set out in Article 53(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013?</li> <li>- Efficient and providing EU added value?</li> </ul> <p>EQ 4: To what extent is the National Rural Networks' design and operation with regard to innovation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adequate for achieving the aim set out in point (d) of Article 54(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013?</li> <li>- Efficient?</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 4: External coherence with other policies</b>	<p>EQ 5: To what extent is the EIP complementary and coherent with the Europe 2020 strategy and with other policies, notably with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Horizon 2020?</li> <li>- Environmental policy?</li> <li>- Regional policy?</li> </ul>



- Evaluation finds that the EIP is both:
  - Internally coherent
  - Relevant to the needs of farmers and forest managers
- EIP seen to **fill a gap** despite big differences in agricultural context and innovation infrastructure
- Flexibility for RDPs and bottom-up approach means EIP can be **shaped to disparate conditions**
- Concrete links with the **CAP first pillar could be further explored**, but there is underlying coherence in principle
- Limitations in many cases seemed related to **early stage of implementation** and related and uncertainty
- Findings did not indicate strong relationships with **typology** categories

- Evaluation finds that the EIP is **likely to attract relevant applicants**
  - Seen as adding value to AKISs and RDPs
  - Relatively attractive to agricultural businesses
  - Focus on farmers and primary producers, even if they don't often “lead”
- **Composition criteria** in general seem to ensure presence of both primary producers and researchers
- Approaches to **brokering and facilitation** vary depending on circumstances, and it's too early to tell what works best
- Effectiveness depends on wide dissemination, RDPs intend to rely mainly on **national / regional EIP networks**, without many multipliers in OGs so far
- Effective dissemination **across national borders** cannot be guaranteed at this stage
- Application processes are generally appropriate but admin burdens could put off smaller entities from leading OGs

- The EIP network plays a **crucial cross-border role** in facilitating the exchange of expertise and good practices, promoting dialogue between farmers, innovation actors and the research community and contributing to connect the EIP with other EU programmes, particularly Horizon 2020
- It has succeeded in **generating interest** among rural innovation actors as a tool for cross-border knowledge exchange and dissemination of information and experiences
- Since OGs are implemented mainly at national / regional levels, the EIP network is **useful to make the initiative more ‘European’** beyond the effect of incentivising innovation in each of the Member States
- Those with **direct experience** of the EIP network have positive views. Due to **practical constraints** it would be difficult for the EIP network to engage directly with large numbers of farmers and other stakeholders. Therefore, **linkages and synergies with other relevant networks** are key
- There is room for **integrating** the EIP network and ENRD more effectively

- Because **EIP implementation is only getting started** in many countries and regions, evidence was not available to draw robust conclusions on the awareness of NRNs' / RRNs' EIP-related activities or their usefulness so far
- Where they are active, NRNs / RRNs have contributed to **informing stakeholders about EIP opportunities** and **encouraging buy-in**
- They have also **facilitated exchange** among rural innovation actors and contributed to the **establishment of OGs** and are expected to publicise and disseminate the results of OGs and help ensure follow-up
- But many such actors are either **unaware or unsure** of the NRNs' / RRNs' roles, and a lack of clear EIP-related activity plans raises concerns
- NRNs / RRNs should be **important multipliers** for translating EIP materials produced at EU level and disseminating results of the EIP network's activities, and some are clearly fulfilling this multiplier role
- In terms of value for money, the time rural stakeholders have spent dealing with NRNs / RRNs pales in comparison to the potential benefits

- There is a solid **basis for external coherence** between the EIP and other policies
- **Initial conditions** are in place for the EIP to contribute to the Innovation Union
- First steps are being taken to **ensure links** with H2020, environmental and regional policies
- For **H2020**, there are dissemination strategies and tools built into the EIP design and already available to make this happen in practice
- But there is a **widespread lack of awareness** of joint opportunities with these other programmes
- In part this is due to the **early stage of EIP implementation**
- It also reflects **wider coordination and dissemination challenges** that need to be addressed for the EIP to fulfil its potential

- The evaluation has shown that the EIP's **premise** on the development and dissemination of innovative farming practices which address both productivity and sustainability is seen as **valid and important**
- MSs and regions have perceived the **EIP's mechanism as necessary and truly distinctive** to generate innovative solutions for practical problems
- That the **vast majority of RDPs have programmed for the EIP** and devoted substantial resources to it is unusual for a new measure, and demonstrates that the Member States and regions are willing to prioritise and address these needs
- The EIP's **bottom-up and farmer-led approach is highly appreciated** by the stakeholders
- Assuming that a substantial proportion of the envisaged 3,205 OGs are formed, it is highly likely that they **will lead to a large number of innovative solutions to practical problems** of farmers and foresters.
- **Where EIP networks and NRNs/RRNs have been active** at national/regional level, they have strongly promoted the uptake of the EIP

- The **flexibility of the EIP** allows it to tackle the gap between research and practice and to be **shaped to widely different circumstances** and innovation infrastructures.
- Emphasis should be given to **not watering down** EIP's distinctive practical bottom-up approach
- **Structures to enable connections** and the dissemination of innovation between the regional, national and EU levels, which are crucial to the EIP, **are not adequately developed in some Member States and regions**
- To involve farmers and forest managers in lead roles, the **application process and cash-flow implications can't be too burdensome**. While innovation brokers may help address some of these issues, they are not foreseen in some Member States and regions
- Not all RDPs grasp the **potential value of the cross-border element**
- For the EIP to fully realise its potential, it needs to **fit well within the wider innovation ecosystem**. Practical connections are already being made with H2020, but later on it will be important to take advantage of wider potential synergies and complementarities.



- **Challenges**
  - Volume of information
  - Multiplier mechanisms
  - Language
- **Recommendations** for addressing these challenges
  - Improve the EIP website (EU level)
  - Include multipliers (e.g. advisors, farmers' organisations) in OGs (RDP level)
  - Build the mechanisms for multipliers to play a dissemination role (EU and RDP levels)
  - Improve linkages between OGs and Thematic Networks (EU level)
  - Improve linkages between OGs (RDP level)
  - Ensure translation of practice abstracts (EU and RDP levels)



# Recommendations

## 2. Administrative systems and rules

### Challenges

- Perceived burdens from EU regulation, national / regional interpretation of these regulations and the interaction between the regulation, national / regional interpretation and EU audit process

### Recommendations for addressing these challenges

- Promote a two-step application process and encourage tailored application forms (RDP level)
- Place more emphasis on third party brokering and facilitation (RDP level)
- Adapt the rules for RDPs to allow for advance payments (EU level)



### Challenges

- Promoting various elements of EU added value has not been well supported
- Greater effort is needed to explain the benefits of the EIP and its complementarity / interaction with Member State / regional innovation systems

### Recommendations for addressing these challenges

- Improve clarity about the distinctive features and EU added value of the EIP for incentivising innovation (EU and RDP levels)
- Enhance dissemination across Member States building on the H2020 thematic networks (EU level)
- Incentivise multi region / Member State OGs through legislation (EU level)



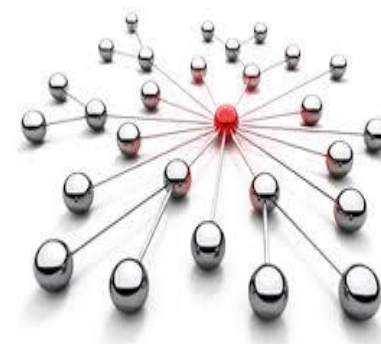
## 4. *Links to existing agricultural knowledge and innovation systems*

### Challenges

- While EIP is mainly implemented at Member State / regional level, stronger links with other R&D and innovation actions would help the EIP to further its objectives and leverage its resources
- For the EIP to optimise its effectiveness it is essential that its place in this wider innovation ecosystem is clear to all stakeholders

### Recommendations for addressing these challenges

- Build coherent national or regional AKISs (RDP level)
- Improve integration of existing advisory and networking structures: build an EU wide AKIS (EU level)
- Support Knowledge Exchange actions: innovation focused farmer-to-farmer exchanges, travel to demo farms and innovation centres abroad (RDP level)



# Recommendations

## 5. Longer-term links to other funding opportunities

### Challenges

- To develop an enhanced innovation culture in agriculture, it is important that farmers continue to co-create innovative solutions
- Unless OG members believe that there is a way forward the projects can become overly local and /or limited in scope

### Recommendations for addressing these challenges

- Make common needs from practice visible and link to innovation support under H2020 to reduce costs and duplication (EU level)
- Further links to other elements and funding mechanisms in the CAP and RDP, e.g. AECM, POs etc (RDP level)
- Further build on links to other funding opportunities with potential links to the EIP (e.g. widening use of practice abstracts), such as ESIF, Interreg, Life+ and other parts of H2020 (SC5, EIT KICs, etc)



