

# EIP-AGRI

## Focus Group charter

SEPTEMBER 16TH 2013



### CHARTER

## What is an EIP-AGRI Focus Group?

A temporary group of selected experts focusing on a specific subject formulated by DG AGRI which is creating a forum for sharing knowledge and experience on that subject. The group explores practical innovative solutions to problems or opportunities in the field, and draws on experience derived from related useful projects. The focus groups catalyze sharing and exchange among actors involved in those projects (researchers, farmers, advisers etc.).

The group also discusses and documents research results and best practices and implications for further research activities that have helped or may help to solve practical problems in the sector. These may be related to production, processing, consumption, transport or other issues.

The tangible output is focused on practical knowledge and where to get that knowledge as well as ideas for operational group projects (in future, please see the database of operational groups).

Under the supervision of DG AGRI, an EIP-AGRI Focus Group is facilitated by several (usually two or three) experts of the EIP-AGRI Service Point. The group is chaired by one of the EIP-AGRI Focus Group members who is selected by the group during the first meeting. An additional expert can be invited on ad hoc basis, subject to the authorization of DG AGRI.

The output of every EIP-AGRI Focus Group is published on the dedicated website.

## Objectives of an EIP-AGRI Focus Group

1. To take stock of the state of the art of practice in the field of the EIP-AGRI Focus Group activity, listing problems and opportunities
2. To take stock of the state of the art of research in this field, summarizing possible solutions to the problems listed
3. To identify needs from practice and propose directions for further research
4. To propose priorities for innovative actions by suggesting potential practical operational groups or other project formats to test solutions and opportunities, including ways to disseminate the practical knowledge gathered.

## Terms of reference

- An EIP-AGRI Focus Group meets twice a year, for one year only, or for several consecutive years, depending on the theme and the results.
- EIP-AGRI Focus Group meetings may be combined with a field visit.
- Following the meetings, participants may be requested to prepare a document and attend a web conference to discuss the output of the EIP-AGRI Focus Group, and to further document results.

- EIP-AGRI Focus Group meetings are chaired by an EIP-AGRI Focus Group member who is selected by other members. The chair is responsible for animating the discussion, in cooperation with DG AGRI and the EIP-AGRI Service point experts.

## Membership

- Members of an EIP-AGRI Focus Group are selected in a transparent manner from the pool of applications according to their competences based on proven expertise to support the work of the EIP-AGRI Focus Group.
- With the main emphasis on the expertise, the EIP-AGRI Focus Group is also composed with the intention of geographical balance and an adequate proportion as regards the fields of expertise and professional activity.
- Members of the EIP-AGRI Focus Group, including the group's chairman, participate in the work of the EIP-AGRI Focus Group without any financial compensation, however, their travel costs and accommodation costs may be reimbursed in cases where members do not have other means to cover their travel and accommodation costs.
- Each member shall attend and actively contribute during the EIP-AGRI Focus Group meetings. Between meetings, members may be asked to prepare a document and/or attend a web conference to further improve, complete, or focus the output of the group.
- A member can be replaced by a new member if the former lacks participation

## Selection of EIP-AGRI Focus Group members

EIP-AGRI Focus Group members will be selected from the applicants who have successfully completed the online application procedure following the open call for expression of interest, published by DG Agriculture and Rural Development.

The applications are scored independently by at least 3 evaluators in terms of relevant expertise, motivation and relevant qualifications, and any other criteria specified in the call. Consequently, the evaluators draw up a list based on the scores.

When composing each focus group, this list is used as the point of departure. Each EIP-AGRI Focus Group typically consists of 8-12 scientists, 2-6 farmers, 2-4 advisors in order to strike a balance among the different professional capacities. In that sense, the list is used to fill in these quotas within the group. Finally, a very limited number of changes can be introduced in the final composition of the focus group, taking the geographical balance into account.

## EIP-AGRI Service Point team

Each EIP-AGRI Focus Group is supported by a designated EIP-AGRI Service Point team member and outsourced expertise. The EIP-AGRI Service Point facilitates the EIP-AGRI Focus Group, including deliverables as described below. The EIP-AGRI Service Point is responsible for all issues related to the EIP-AGRI Focus Group logistics.

The EIP-AGRI Service Point prepares the EIP-AGRI Focus Group meetings, including agenda, discussion paper(s), proposals for a location and field visits, working closely and coordinating with DG AGRI.

## Deliverables

Each EIP-AGRI Focus Group receives a list of minimum topics from DG AGRI. These topics are further elaborated by the EIP-AGRI Service Point team and formalized in discussion paper(s) (deliverable 1). The discussion paper clearly identifies points of discussion for the first/next meeting of the EIP-AGRI Focus Group. The members of the EIP-AGRI Focus Groups are expected to comment on all discussion points/selected points, according to their fields of expertise.

The EIP-AGRI Service Point prepares the draft agenda for the meeting (deliverable 2). For the first meetings of any EIP-AGRI focus group, venues and dates are set by the EIP-AGRI Service Point in agreement with DG AGRI. For the second and any subsequent meeting, the proposals for next meeting's venue, field visits and agenda stem from the group. The actual organization of the meeting is the responsibility of the EIP-AGRI Service Point, in coordination with DG AGRI.

In the first meeting of the EIP-AGRI Focus Group, a round table is organized (with the EIP-AGRI Service Point temporarily chairing the meeting). Apart from introducing themselves, members identify possible subjects for further reflection by the group. At the end of this session, members select a chair from their midst.

The selected chair conducts the meeting with the support of DG AGRI and the EIP-AGRI Service Point. The discussions evolve around the points listed in the discussion paper as well as around other points taken up from the round table. Members may send their written comments before (no later than 5 working days) and after the meeting, respecting the deadline announced during the meeting in the latter case.

The chair is responsible for drawing conclusions on individual points/discussion points, in agreement with the EIP-AGRI Service Point and DG AGRI and with the members of the EIP-AGRI Focus Group. The EIP-AGRI Service Point is responsible for collecting and analysing written documents on individual points provided by members (deliverable 3). The EIP-AGRI Service Point is responsible for taking minutes in the meeting (deliverable 4). The minutes are sent for comments to all participants of the meeting within two weeks of the meeting date.

Consequently, the EIP-AGRI Service Point prepares the final document (deliverable 5). This document includes deliverables 1 – 4 and it draws conclusions on all the topics predefined by DG AGRI (see the first paragraph of this section). Where applicable, it outlines the next steps of the EIP-AGRI Focus Group's work. In drafting, particular attention is paid to formulating specific issues that could be taken up by operational groups in the sense of [Article 62] of the [draft] rural development regulation 2014 – 2020. It also summarizes the gathered knowledge and best practices (following the template and the 4 objectives of the Focus Group) and lists its sources - lessons learnt, audio-visual material, further recommendations, etc. The final document is distributed for comments to the EIP-AGRI Focus Group no later than 5 weeks after the meeting of the EIP-AGRI Focus Group and published no later than 8 weeks after the meeting.

This scenario is repeated in the subsequent meetings of the focus group to the extent applicable.