

EIP IMPLEMENTATION IN FINLAND

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How is the EIP and issue of innovation taken up in RD-plans?

- Main impressions

The issue has been pursued vigorously and the need for better linkage between research, extension and education in supporting innovation in practice has been recognised from the start of the programming processes. However, in the draft programme, the specific drive to better link research to practice in agriculture is somewhat diffused owing to the fact that “innovations” are a cross cutting theme (along with “climate” and “environment”)

- Main bottlenecks, the issues and questions raised etc.

Concerns on e.g. (a) Research organisations looking for research funding from EARDF?

(b) Additional complexity and bureaucracy in managing programmes?

- Common understandings of concepts, (differences between LAGS and OGs, for example), terminology and procedures for implementation, and the added value to existing measures, have taken time to evolve.
- How to prioritise the innovation issue? How much to be committed under cooperation measures? How to balance the “innovation” spend between OGs under Cooperation Measure, and other measures to promote innovation, including those focused on international cooperation?
- Criteria for OGs, and particularly how to distinguish clearly between OGs and broad regional multi-actor platforms (Cooperation groups/networks v. innovation groups? Development projects v. innovation projects)

How is the EIP and issue of innovation taken up in RD-plans?

- Was there an interaction between research and agricultural administrations in the preparation?

Yes, research and higher education institutes participated in the regional stakeholder groups which produced inputs for the national programme development

Research and other stakeholder organisations have participated in EIP seminars and in the interactions between MTT and MMM (as planning authority) and other working groups

- Is an interaction with other EU policies foreseen?

An open question at this stage, at least with regard to the mode of interaction. Synergies between the rural funds (EARDF) and the structural funds are envisaged within the partnership agreement between Finland and EU, and the importance of primary production areas acting in support of the bioeconomy is emphasised. However, agriculture and food production does not have clear emphasis within the Regional Smart Specialisation document for the East & North Finland ERDF programme, yet! The EIP is not specifically mentioned ex-ante, and Ministry of Economy and Labour is “resistant” to having separate regional innovation strategies. Anyway, regional spend across different EU and national programmes and will be coordinated by regional stakeholder cooperation groups (MYRs); regional councils lead for development of 4-year regional plans with priority actions plan every two years.

Is the concept of Operational Group taken up in RD-plans ?

- Yes, nationally decided and programmed. Target is for only around 10 OGs with the intention and commitment also to continue support for other cooperation groups/development projects along earlier lines (about 300). (Provisional budget allocation for Cooperation Measures as a whole is €160 million)
- If NO, explain
- If (partly) yes: limited to certain topics or beneficiaries? Mention a few.
- Likely to be limited to a few targeted themes, particularly aligned with the implementation of national natural resources and bio-economy strategies
- Does this allow for cross-regional collaboration in your country or with other MS?
- Allowance for both cross-regional and transnational collaboration is considered to be of high importance and there are good experiences of promoting this under other EARDF action lines e.g. LEADER (animated by national rural network support unit)

Did you take actions to connect operational groups better to your AKIS?

- NO

- Why not: not needed (already excellent), not clear what they need, to difficult to change AKIS or.....
- No specific recognition of AKIS –or need to develop it - as such within the programme, but promoting interaction between research, extension, education and businesses is already well-practiced under the cooperation measures, and will be increasingly encouraged and targeted through the set up of OGs. Research, extension and education organisations are anyway actively discussing future cooperation models and possible revisions to their traditional roles and modes of interaction in the light of EIP-AGRI

- YES

- Extension / advisory services
- (Applied) research
- Education
- Innovation brokers
 - Actions taken: No specific action
- AKIS in other regions / at EU level:
 - Actions taken: No specific actions

Interlinkages between relevant networks

- Is there a view on the relation between the OG and the national EIP network (if existent) / national rural network?

National RN will (most likely?) animate the national EIP network and support development of international links

- Is there a view on the relation between the existing AKIS actors and the national EIP network (if existent) / national rural network?

- Interaction will be encouraged

- Are new or improved links prepared to improve flows within MS' AKIS?

- No specific top-down intervention, but re-positioning of stakeholders and the development of new operational/business models (e.g. For extension) is envisaged

- Which interaction with the European level? With other MS?

- Active exchange with EIP Network Support Unit foreseen. Strong linkages with other MSs around the Baltic Sea (interaction with Interregs), interaction with international activities under LEADER where appropriate

How will measures aimed at OG be monitored?

- Which indicators and method will be used in the framework of the rural development programme?
- Simple output indicators e.g. numbers of OGs set up, number of regional innovations piloted/implemented. (Still under development?).
- Which indicators and method will be used to monitor broader innovation measures
 - *Within the rural development programme*
 - “Innovations” is a cross-cutting theme. Impact assessment qualitatively by expert panel
 - *Other programmes aimed at innovation*

For ERDF: many, but relevant examples are:

- no. of companies participating in R,D & I projects/no. of new companies involved in cooperative projects with universities or research institutes
- No. of new companies/no. of companies initiating new area of business or launching new product
- No. of companies showing energy savings/overall fall in carbon emissions.
- No of new companies/no. of new jobs