

COMMUNICATION BEST PRACTICES IN THE FRAMEWORK OF MULTI-ACTORS INNOVATIVE AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS

30/10/2018

Jean-Marc CHOUROT

Elodie PASCAL



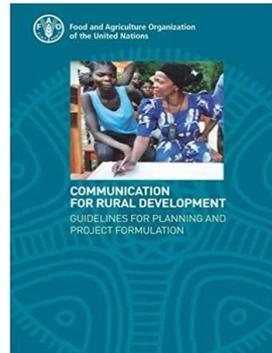
SCAR
akis
Agricultural Knowledge
and Innovation Systems



EUROPEAN UNION
Project co-funded by
H2020 Programme under
Grant Agreement n° 727486

Context of the study

- ❑ A large panel of striking examples
- ❑ Many guidelines: FAO, OECD...



Many examples of successful multi-actors projects

Many guidelines

Our choice : identify the main hurdles and levers to successfully communicate and increase impact of the project.



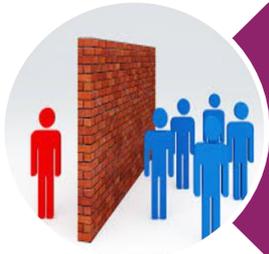
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

MAKE AN IMPACT



CASA, Support to SCAR

Problematic



What are the main communication **hurdles** and **levers** relative to agricultural innovative projects ?



Is there any **added-value** of adopting a **multi-actor structure** for communication purpose in agricultural research and innovation projects?



Is there any **added-value** for the **AKIS**?

What is at stake in terms of communication strategies?



How to **manage** communication all along the agricultural project life cycle?



Which **specific** communication **channels** and pathways are **most impactful** and most used for interactive innovation projects and AKIS?



Are there any channels, methods and means **adapted** to some **specific targets** (farmers, citizens, industry, advisory services, etc...)?



What makes communication strategies in the European agriculture area so specific ?



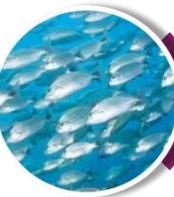
Highly **traditional** backgrounds



High **cultural heterogeneity** from one farmer to another



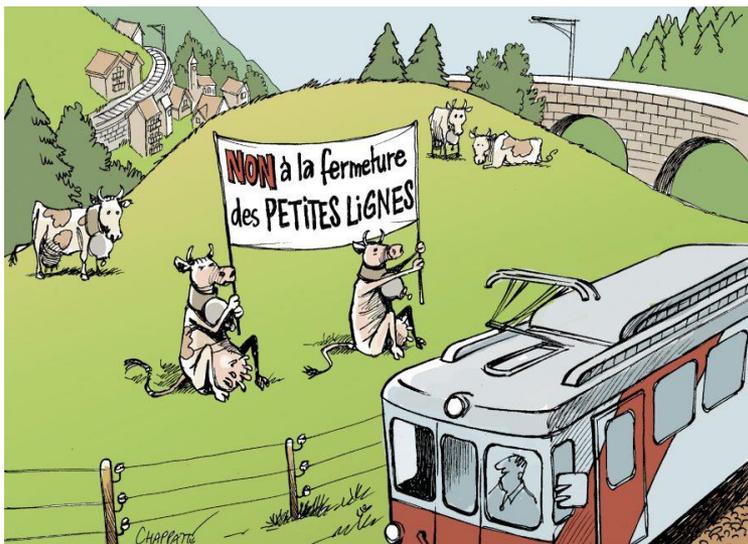
Solutions must be **locally** provided



High **social** and **linguistic** boundaries

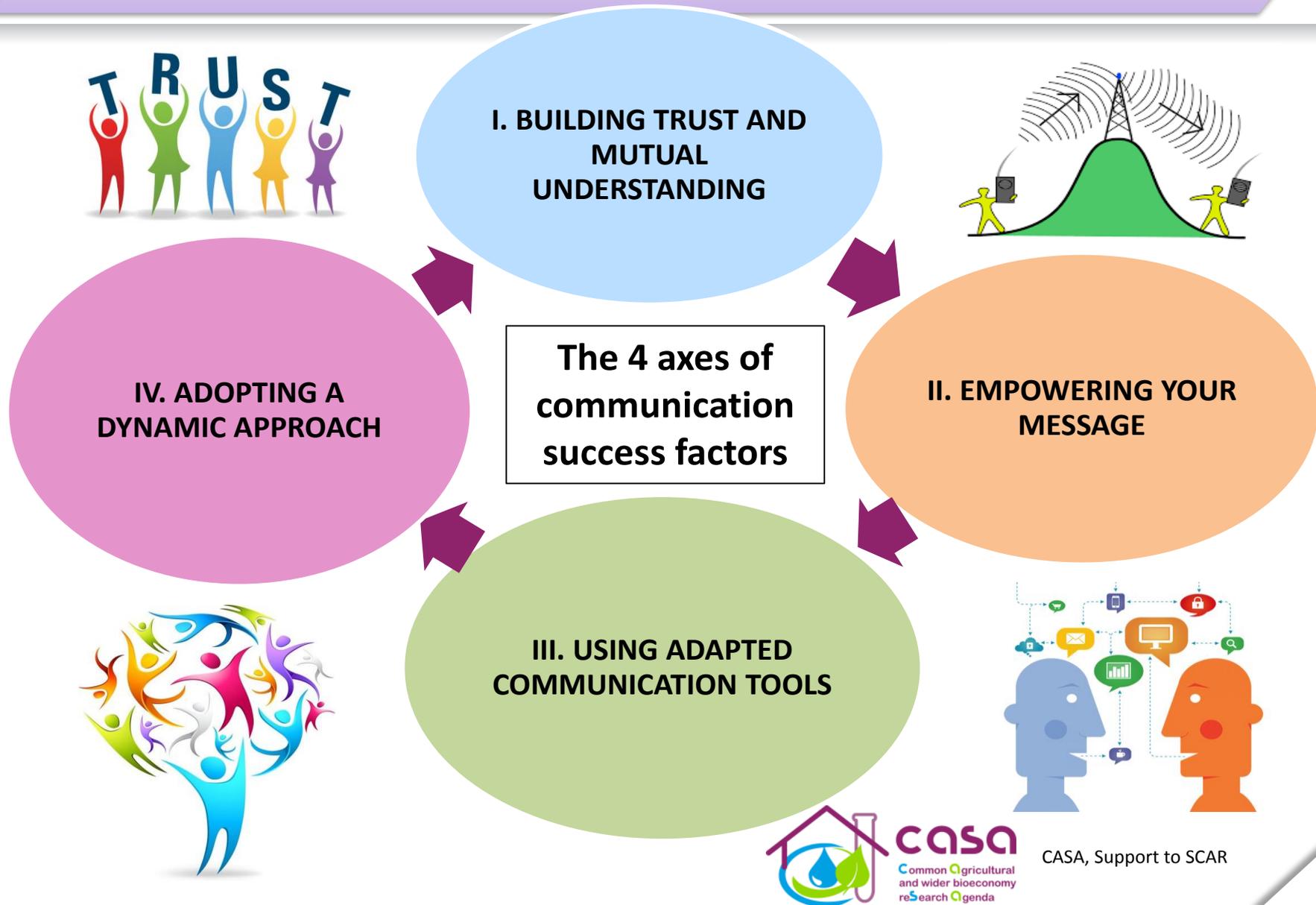
Towards a successful communication

- **Effective communication** happens when a **complete message** is sent and **fully received and understood** by an audience.



- Good communication is about getting **the right message** to the **right person** in the **right medium** at the **right time**. Depending on the nature of the message and audience, **the audience** may then have the **opportunity to engage** in a **productive discussion of the message**. (The National Archives, 2013)

The 4 axes of the projects communication success factors



I. BUILDING TRUST AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING



Building trust and mutual understanding

Outstanding projects which managed to build **trust** and **mutual understanding**



Filos in Bus,
Italy



AMWC
project,
Austria



“Filos in Bus” EIP: a bus for building trust

EIP Operational Group **Filos in Bus**

PRATI_CO Parmigiano Reggiano: Agrotecnica organic carbon footprint



Creative concept of communication: partners **travel together** by bus during a **one-day-visit to the farms** which are **partners** of the OG



Knowledge sharing on territories, local products and other local actors which are involved in the supply chain of Parmigiano Reggiano



AMWC: involvement of all end-users for mutual understanding

Example of the project: “Alternative methods for wireworm control in potatoes”



Key success factors



- A **strong involvement** of the **end-users**: potato growers,
- Regular** presentations on the project **results** and **progress**,
- Efficient** presentation supports
- Open discussion** at the end to enhance **experience sharing**.

Slide of the presentation of Peter Schweiger for the University Krakow, with photos taken on fields

Building trust and mutual understanding



Trust is **vital** when **crossing professional cultural boundaries** as people are opening themselves to **vulnerability** and **risk** (University of Hertfordshire, 2013)

Trust is shown to be built by having:

- information** on others,
- prior experience** of working together,
- norms** of cooperation.
- intermediaries** or guarantors



Building trust and mutual understanding requires a strong involvement

One challenge in building trust and mutual understanding is: crossing different **social** and **educational** backgrounds.



Key success factor

A strong **involvement** of the **end-users**.



The **shared motivation** on the project topic facilitates the community building.

Examples highlighted that trust and mutual understanding are linked to the origin of the project

Research and Policy driven projects

- The **end-users** are **not necessarily** « on board »
- Additional effort in communication may be required to capture their interest.

Demand driven projects

- The **end-users** are **most likely** to be « on board »
- They **proactively participate** in the project life right from the **start**.



R&P driven projects
1st challenge= capturing the end-users' interest



The size of the consortium can be challenging too !

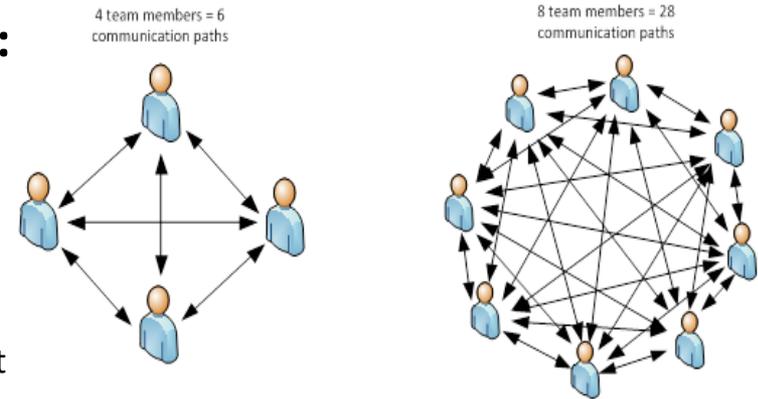
Challenges related to the size of the consortium:

Small consortia

- Internal communication might be **faster operated**.
- Every participant** might **contribute**
- Communication could require **more efforts** from the project participants.
- Difficult** to dedicate **full-time participants** solely to communication. (outsourcing part of these activities...)

Big consortia

- communication would be **more easily performed**
- but, **internal communication** might be **slowed down**
- trust** might take **longer to install**
- communication** will require an **efficient coordination**, especially when targeted at the “outside world”.
- communication **more easily managed** as a **dedicated work package** with **allocated resources** (both human and financial).



Seek an efficient governance

Challenges regarding the governance type of the consortium:

- ❑ Democratic functioning project team (1)
 - ❑ Core group of leaders (2)
- } complementary



shutterstock.com · 733723789

- (1) Essential in order to:
 - collect the different opinions and feelings
 - brainstorm as the project is on-going
- (2) Core group of leaders
 - useful and crucial so as to take decision
 - coordinate the different stakeholders' work
 - help by adopting a holistic vision of the project deliverables and progress.

How to better build trust...

- ❑ Ensure a **strong involvement** of the **end-users**
- ❑ Ensure **close interaction** between **researchers, practitioners** and **stakeholders**
- ❑ The cross visits on farms support **peer-to-peer processes** among the farmers.
- ❑ Encourage events where people can freely **exchange** and **build mutual trust**.



Smart AKIS at AGROTICA 2018



CASA, Support to SCAR

... and mutual understanding?

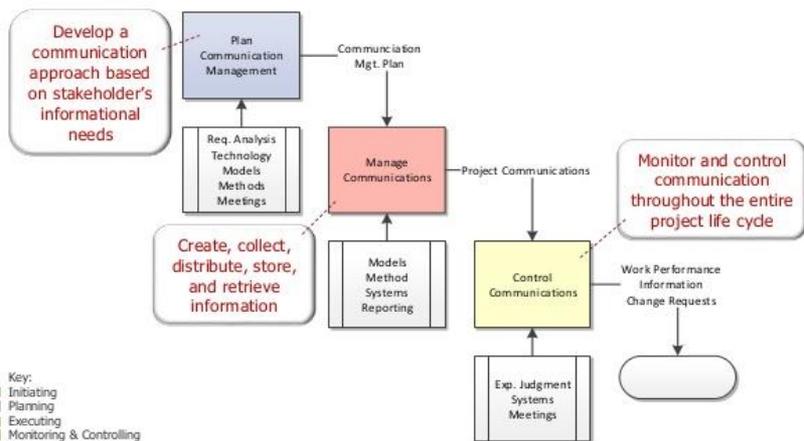
- ❑ Make a **detailed project and communication plan**.
- ❑ Establish a **clear leadership** of the project
- ❑ **Communicate often** with **impacting short and clear messages**.
- ❑ **Be prepared** to answer **unexpected** questions. Do not avoid addressing issues.



7. Communication Management - Process Activities



Roughly 90% of a project manager's job is communication.



Note, additional inputs, outputs, tools and techniques not depicted may apply



Relevant and strong messages

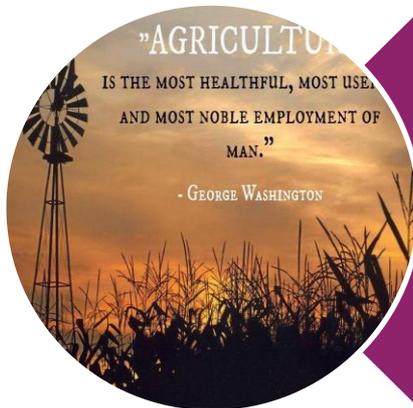
II. EMPOWERING YOUR MESSAGE



Why empower the message(s)?



The purpose of communication is to **support** and **increase** the **impact**.



This implies that

- **message(s)** must be carefully **formulated**,
- carried by the **relevant communicator(s)**
- The **targets** must be clearly **identified**
- Choosing of relevant tool(s)

Tips and tricks to empower the messages

- Pick the **right medium** for the **right message**
- Use the **preferred media** of **your audience**
- Do not restrain** communication to **only one message** through **one medium**.
- Use **legitimate** communicators
- Involve the **trusted** communicators
- Language ! Use the right “tongue” and the right vocabulary



Relevant Tools

III. USING ADAPTED COMMUNICATION TOOLS



Projects examples have shown the use of various communication tools...

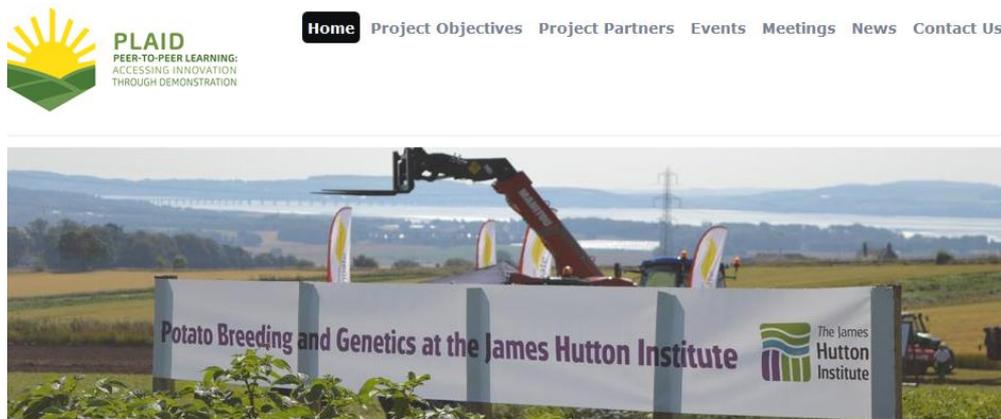
The **main types** of communication **channels** (based on the examples of projects):

- website / information system,
- social networks,
- institutional letter,
- technical letter,
- brochure,
- databases,
- videos, posters,
- technical leaflets,
- Presentations
- on farms demonstrations,
- meetings,
- radio, podcasts...



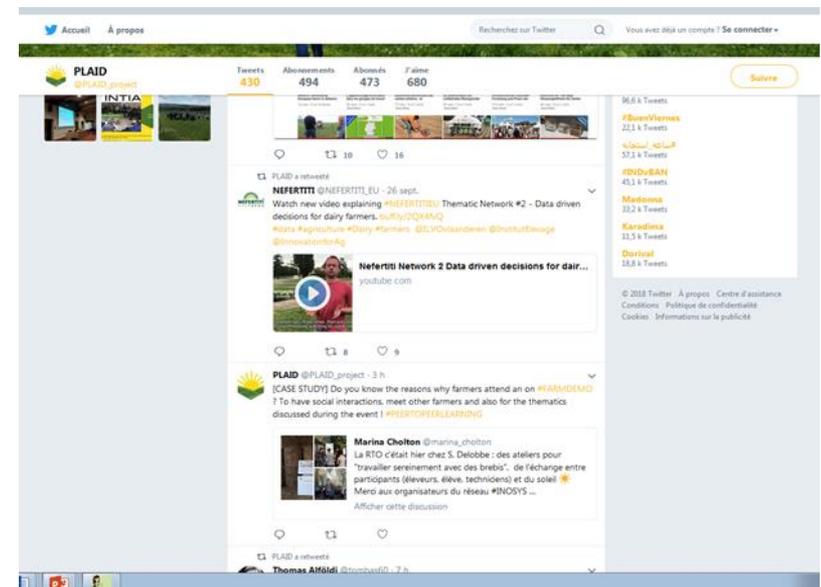
H2020 –Plaid: Selecting complementary tools for digital communication

Objective: improve access to demonstration activities on commercial farms, to boost knowledge exchange and innovation



The PLAIID project (Peer-to-peer Learning: Accessing Innovation through Demonstration) is an European Union funded project under Horizon 2020, starting in January 2017 and running until July 2019. The project has been designed to encourage farmers and farm employees to embrace innovations in agriculture, leading to a greater sustainability of European Agriculture, by accessing high quality demonstration activities on commercial farms.

[read more ...](#)



PLAIID developed a communication instrument that enables the building of a **digital community of farmers**



CASA, Support to SCAR

Choosing wisely in a large toolbox



Smart communication channels do **not necessarily** need to be created **from scratch**



Communication channels should also rely on the **network** of the **partners** and their **expertise**



(n messages, m tools, time t) = f
(**consistency, coordination**)

**IV. ADOPTING A
DYNAMIC APPROACH**

Sustainable Intensification Platform: A relevant cocktail of communication channels

The make-up of SIP



3 projects

across the scales of:
**The Farm, The
Landscape and The
Food Supply Chain**



3 digital tools

to help land
managers and
policy makers in
decision making

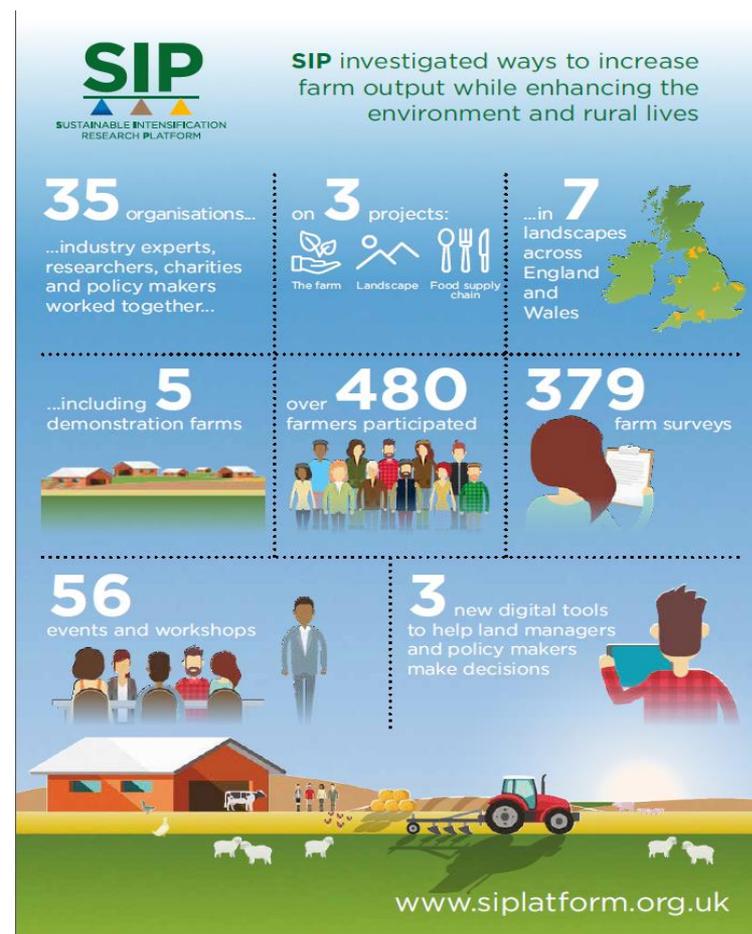


3 years

undertaken from
2014 – 2017, with
final reports to be
published shortly

SIP illustrates both the use of **digital media** and the **crossing of communication channels**:

- complementarity** of the pairs
(message, channel)
- promotion** of various channels



Sustainable Intensification Platform: A relevant cocktail of communication channels



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Sustainable Intensification Platform. At the top, there is a search bar and navigation icons for Home, News, Events, and Twitter. The main title 'Sustainable Intensification' is prominently displayed. Below the title is a horizontal navigation menu with the following items: STUDY FARMS, IFM, DECISION SUPPORT TOOLS, SI METRICS BENCHMARKING, COLLABORATION, ABOUT THE SIP, GET INVOLVED, and OUTPUTS. A red box highlights this navigation menu. Below the menu is a large banner image of a field with a blue text box on the left that reads 'What is Sustainable Intensification?' and provides a brief definition. Below the banner are sections for 'Latest News' (with three news items), 'Newsletter' (with a download icon and a thumbnail for 'SIPScene Issue 7 Autumn 2017'), and 'Latest Tweets' (with a Twitter icon). The footer includes the SIP logo and 'SIP Research'.

Development of a really attractive and **easy-to-use tool**, including **updated information** on the latest **publications**, latest **significant events**, **outputs**, so as to **promote the other communication channels**.

A smart **tab system** enables a very satisfactory browsing experience. The homepage provides **very accessible information**.

The information must be consistent and synchronous from one medium to another

- Sheep 2018 – From Farm to Fork.
- National Technical Event for Sheep Industry



- Showcase technical information around all aspects of sheep production in Ireland
- A Food village showcasing sheep products and European Region of Gastronomy



CASA, Support to SCAR

The information must be consistent and synchronous from one medium to another

The breakdown of the communication activities shows that the information is both **coherent** and **synchronous between** all communication **channels**.



Communication Instrument	When
Media articles	Published during build up to event in local and national papers.
Organizing team meetings	Monthly and then weekly one month before event
Flyers	Distributed to farmers via partners in advance of event.
Roadside adverts	8'x4' boards located across Ireland in advance of event.
Print advertising	Advertising in local and national papers in advance of event.
Promotional videos	Posted on social media in advance of event.
Radio interviews	Two weeks before event.
Event booklet	On the day of the event.
Event display boards	On the day of the event.

$(n \text{ messages}, m \text{ tools}, \text{time } t) = f(\text{consistency, time coordination})$

- Do not necessarily reinvent the wheel.
- Use **trusted** communication **channels already** in place.
- Use an understood language and vocabulary.**
- Always stay **positive!**
- A website / information system needs a dedicated facilitator to be fully effective.
- It is crucial to diversify the communication channels.



Conclusion



The **hurdles and levers** are very **specific** to the agricultural sector and the main challenges can be overcome



Communication is a **living and developing process** which needs to be **adapted all along** the agricultural project life cycle



The projects **examples** have shown the **added-value** of the **multi-actors** approach and **multi-channel communication**



The **most impactful** communication channels are all **trusted pathways** for interactive innovation projects and AKIS

How to communicate beyond the results of the projects?

- How to measure the contribution of the communication actions on the impact of the project?

- How to reach all end-users? (not only the early-adopters)

- How to spread further?

- What kind of initiatives for long-term support?

Go Further



How to capitalize the knowledge?

The AKIS are one answer



THANK YOU

For your attention and
for your contribution to
the work

