

# Optimising co-innovation: educational institutes in the AKIS

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# Overview

1. Introduction
2. Findings from LIAISON field work
3. Concluding thoughts and questions

## Main objective of LIAISON

- To make a significant and meaningful contribution to optimising co-innovation projects, networks and initiatives; and
- the delivery of EU policies to speed up innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas.



## Educational institutes and co-innovation

The debate surrounding the **role of educational institutes in co-innovation** in agriculture and forestry tends to focus on:

- The need for educational institutes to further **develop the skills of AKIS actors**, especially farmers and foresters;
- The role of universities in **(international) research projects**;
- The role of universities and other tertiary educational institutes in **national/local (applied) research projects**.



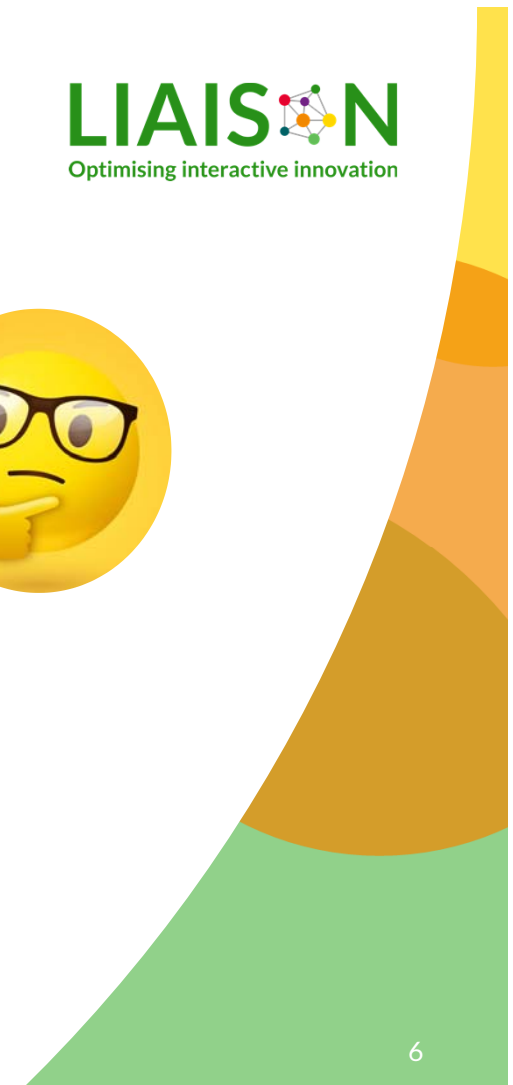
## The diversity of educational activities

- ISCED 0 = Early childhood education
- ISCED 1 = Primary education
- ISCED 2 = Lower secondary education
- ISCED 3 = Upper secondary education
- **ISCED 4 = Post-secondary non-tertiary education**
- **ISCED 5 = Short-cycle tertiary education**
- **ISCED 6 = Bachelor's degree or equivalent**
- **ISCED 7 = Master's degree or equivalent**
- **ISCED 8 = Doctoral degree**



## Mixed roles of education and research

- Universities, universities for applied sciences, agricultural colleges etc. do both: (applied) research **and** education / training!
  - Professors, lecturers and senior scientists act simultaneously as researcher and teachers.
  - The blending of teaching and co-creation for innovation depends on personalities, curricula, strategy of the institute and available resources.
- ➔ An assessment of the institutes' impact through education / training **OR** research will be very difficult.



... always only one part of the puzzle!



## 2) LIAISON's field work



20/01/21

Understanding Sustainable Vine Programme Alentejo (PT) 9/2019

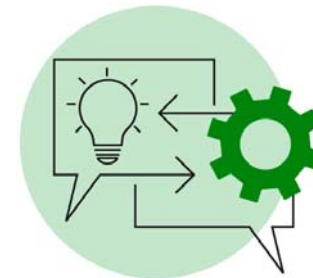
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## Our LIAISON case studies reveal four pathways of involvement

1. Partnership in innovation projects;
2. Maintenance of a lively network of diverse agricultural actors allowing for innovative ideas and groups to emerge;
3. Provision of particular innovation support services (brokerage, proposal writing, board of experts);
4. Education and training of future participants by imparting the capability of co-creation for innovation.

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## Pathway 1: Educational institutes as project partners

- Providing complementary knowledge (specific task):
  - 'OG hemp producers Werra-Meissner' (DE);
  - Interreg V-B project 'Food Heroes' (UK/DE);
  - 'Sustentabilidade de Vinhos do Alentejo' (PT).
- Coordinating the innovation project (mostly in H2020 case studies of LIAISON):
  - 'AgroCycle' (IE);
  - 'Fairway' (NL);
  - 'Organic Plus' (UK);
  - 'AFINET' (ES).



# Types of actors participating in projects and partnerships in percent

Funding source and type	A	Business	E	Farmer	G	Marketing/Processing	N	O	R	S	F/S
H2020 RIA, IAs	58.8	67.6	67.6	32.4	50.0	29.4	38.2	38.2	100	64.7	79.4
H2020 CSA	56.3	56.3	62.5	25.0	37.5	31.3	50.0	37.5	87.5	68.8	87.5
Interreg	50.0	40.0	45.0	30.0	75.0	20.0	45.0	30.0	75.0	60.0	70.0
LIFE+ and LIFE	37.5	62.5	62.5	37.5	25.0	0.0	50.0	12.5	87.5	50.0	62.5
EIP-Agri OGs	67.6	45.9	27.0	81.1	32.4	13.5	29.7	24.3	83.8	51.4	91.9
Other ESIF and ERASMUS+	45.0	55.0	45.0	55.0	40.0	40.0	40.0	35.0	65.0	60.0	90.0
National / regional public	54.5	45.5	27.3	63.6	63.6	18.2	54.5	0.0	72.7	81.8	90.9
Other sources	37.5	31.3	31.3	68.8	37.5	12.5	18.8	25.0	50.0	25.0	75.0
Non-project activities	42.1	57.9	42.1	44.7	73.7	28.9	34.2	34.2	68.4	44.7	81.6



- A: advisors
- B: businesses
- E: education
- F: farmers/foresters
- G: public bodies
- M: processing/sales SMEs
- N: NGOs
- O: producer organisations
- R: researchers
- S: professional organisations



## When involved in projects, partners from educational institutes ...

- Provide ,complementary knowledge‘ to the partnership;
- Often include students which can result in capacity building;
- Can use the experiences and findings in teaching;
- Can disseminate the knowledge through any ,extension‘ activities associated with the institute.

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## When managing the project, educational institutes ...

- know how to apply for funding, prepare partnership agreements and other legal documents (including IPR);
- profit from the administrative capacity and experience to coordinate such partnerships;
- are trusted by the different types of AKIS actors in a multi-actor partnership, especially (local) farmers and foresters;
- can also foster trust between the diverse AKIS actors in the partnership.

## Pathway 2: University networks as seed beds for innovation projects

Several LIAISON cases from 'light-touch' review show:

- Universities and other tertiary education institutes offer many opportunities for **partnership formation**;
- Educational institutes (especially vocational and further educational colleges) have unparalleled **networks of former students** (farmers, foresters, advisors, supply chain stakeholders);
- They are well connected with **other AKIS organisations**.

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## Pathway 3: Educational institutes provide specific support for co-innovation projects

- Hessian Board of Experts for the **selection of OG projects** ('OG Hemp Werra-Meißner'):
  - Delegates from the three region-based agricultural universities.
- **'24 hops project'** emerged from a programme that KU Leuven set up (Single Hop Science) aiming to **bring together producers and processors**
  - It helps partnerships to optimise the opportunities offered by the **enabling environment**.



## Pathway 3: Educational institutes provide specific support for co-innovation projects

- Royal Ag University (RAU) has a unit of engaged people offering **innovation brokerage**.
  - Teams and individuals with capabilities and particular competences; and
  - They are aware of relevant policies, regulations and funding programmes.
- HNEE's **practice partner network InnoForum**:
  - Networking, brokering, facilitation....

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## Pathway 4: Educational institutes build the capability for co-creation

- **CDAIS project** run by Agrinatura (which includes strong educational institutes) and FAO.
  - Global partnership on capacity development for agricultural innovation systems; local projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America.
- **Erasmus+ project ,SPARKLE‘**: Co-creating a training programme for the purpose of building farmers and agriculture’s business manager of the future.
  - Close relationship between university staff and the ,agripreneurs‘.

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## Which capacities and skills are needed?

- **Technical skills** for the development of innovative approaches.
- **Functional skills** for the engagement in co-creation for innovation such as:
  - Leading (contributing) to **longer-term group processes**:
    - Understanding **partners' interests/motivation**;
    - Speaking '**different**' languages (science, practice, admin. ...);
    - **Facilitation** / moderation of innovation workshops.
  - Guiding through and **engaging in self-assessment** and critical reflection.
  - Spreading the news (communication, **dissemination**).

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## Closing thoughts

- Educational institutes provide direct and indirect support for co-innovation partnerships,
  - But these functions remain insufficiently studied and recognised.
  - Educational institutes are:
    - THE location for capacity building;
    - National, regional and local knowledge hubs;
    - Maintaining networks with former students and other relevant stakeholders in the AKIS.
- ➔ Our examples indicate the potential that educational institutes have to help close the gaps in the AKIS and to support co-innovation groups and networks.



## Questions

- How can educational institutes engage more in **maintaining innovation networks** and the **provision of innovation support**?
- How to ensure educational institutes **improve their capacity to educate** future innovators and train for the relevant skills?
- How to enhance the capacity of educational institutes to **transfer the experiences from innovation projects into education** and training programmes?



# Thank you!



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<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLSwCCZQECphqki10TZxJZmqNK6jj2fLI4>



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