

EU CAP Network Support Facility for Innovation and Knowledge Exchange | EIP-AGRI

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Athlone, Ireland
11 November 2025



Funded by
the European Union

Structure of the presentation

- › EIP-AGRI and Operational Group projects
- › EU CAP Network | EIP-AGRI Support Facility and networking activities



EIP-AGRI and Operational Group projects



EIP-AGRI in a nutshell

- › EIP-AGRI: European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability
- › Launched by the European Commission in 2012
- › **Aim** - stimulate and speed up innovation in agriculture, while making it more sustainable and productive (agriculture, forestry and rural areas)
- › **How** - closing the innovation gap between research and practice



EIP-AGRI bridging practice and research

Closing the innovation gap between research and practice by:

- › using the interactive innovation model in projects (under CAP and Horizon programme)
- › linking actors via the EU CAP Network (previously EIP-AGRI Network)



EIP-AGRI bridging practice and research



The interactive innovation model – key principles



Bottom-up approach to innovation

focusing on actual needs from farmers, foresters or rural communities that require an innovative solution



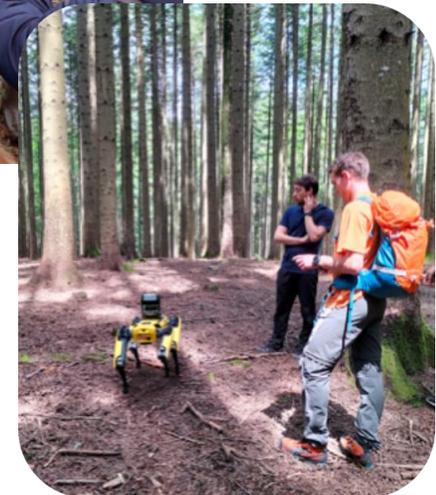
Complementary knowledge

bringing together partners with different expertise (multi-actor approach)



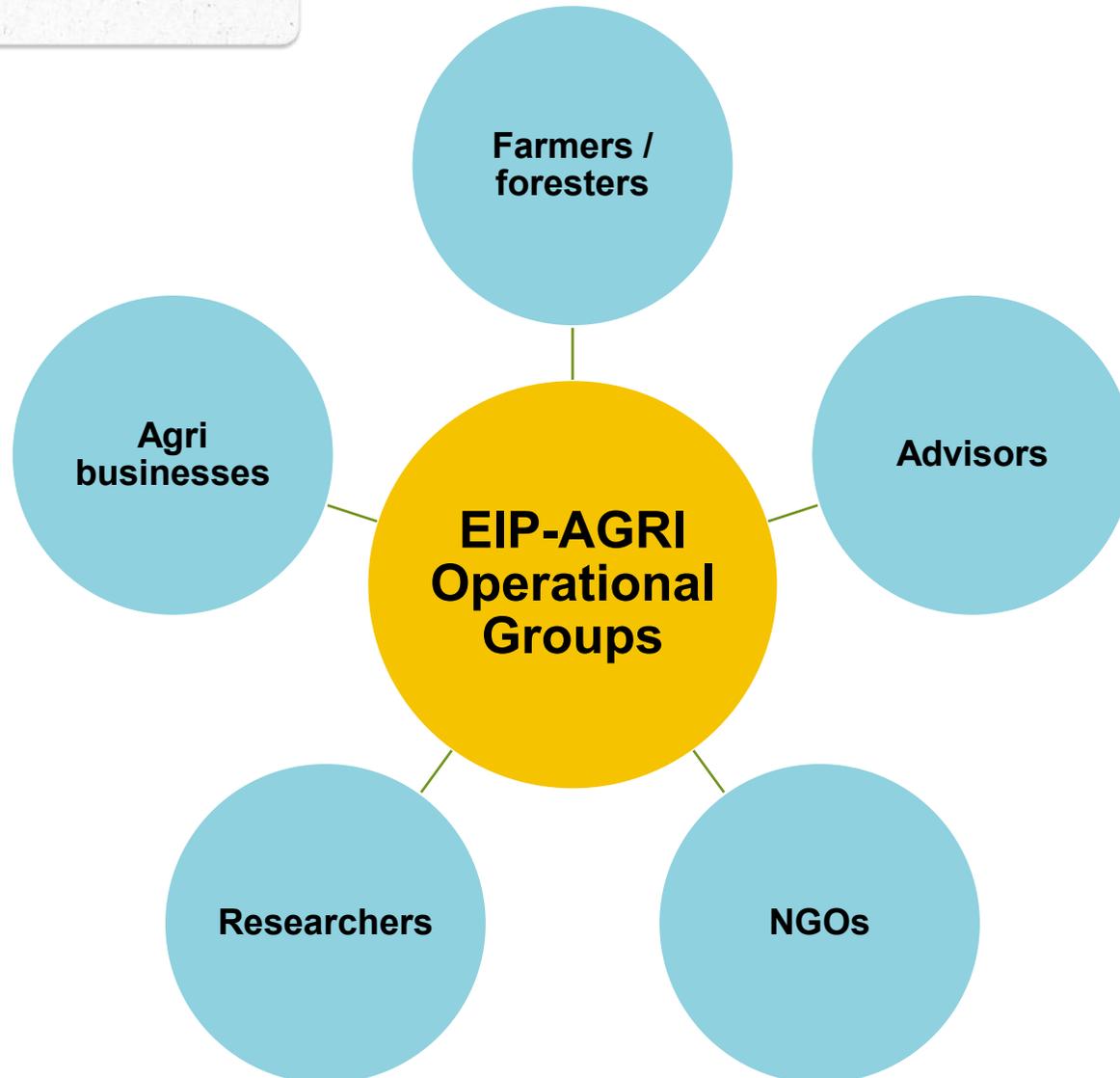
Co-creating and co-deciding

all along the project, from the beginning to the end





Setting up an EIP-AGRI Operational Group



Collaboration between different types of actors who bring the complementary knowledge — scientific, practical, technological, digital and more — needed to develop the innovative solution the project aims for



EIP-AGRI Operational Group projects

EIP-AGRI Operational Groups (OGs) projects are part of the EIP-AGRI and so they are based on the interactive innovation model

- OGs are focusing **on needs from practice and** bring together partners with **complementary knowledge, co-deciding and co-creating** all along the project
- Innovative solutions that are ready to implement in practice, fostering a quicker uptake of solutions by practice
- OGs may be based on new practices, but also on traditional practices in a new geographical or environmental context
- OGs **disseminate summaries of plans and results** of their projects - in particular through national and European CAP Networks
- OGs may act at **national** and at **transnational** (including **cross-border**) level



Involvement of farmers, foresters and advisors in EIP-AGRI Operational Group projects

As a partner (lead partner or not) – an opportunity to:

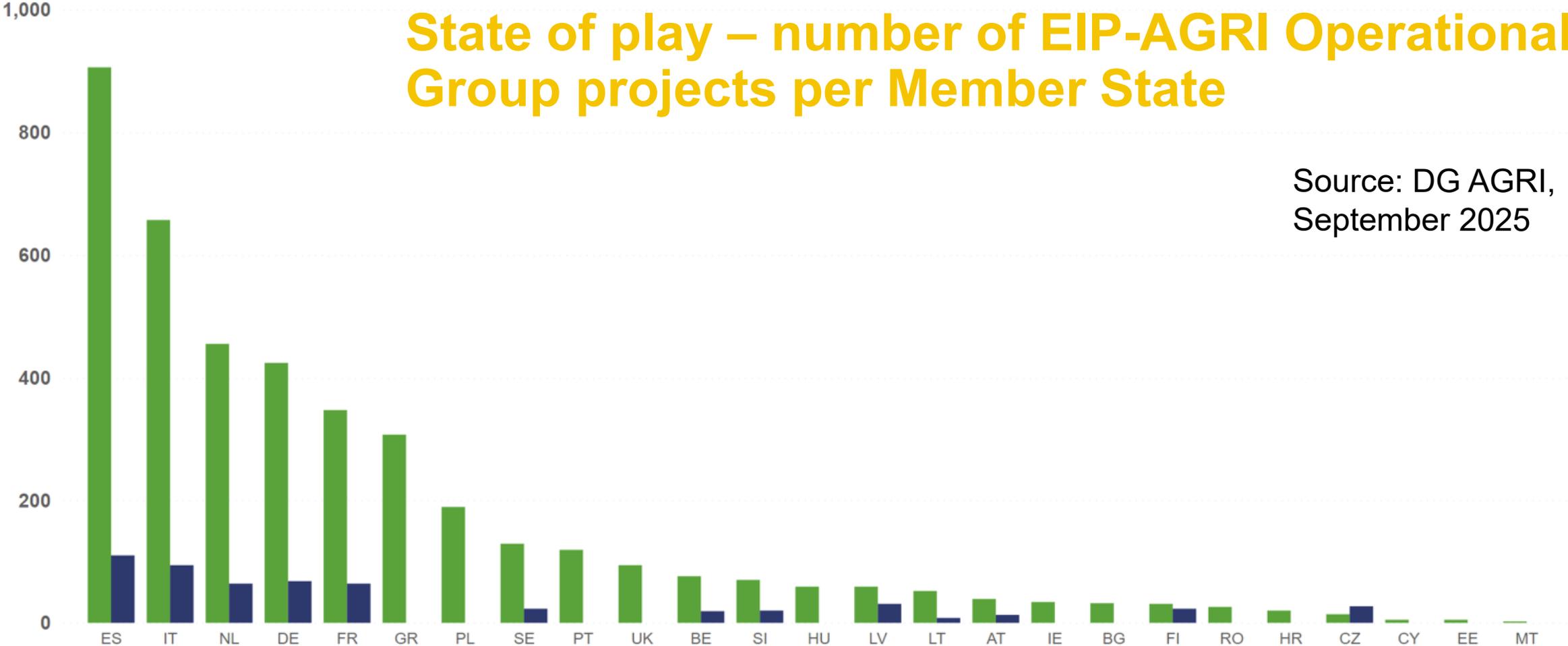
- Find a solution for challenges or opportunities existing in their (daily) practice, while benefiting from CAP funding
- Have an active role and a voice as part of the project development
- Work side-by-side with researchers and other types of actors / experts
- Increase knowledge on technical matters but also on soft skills, among others
- Learn about other existing solutions that are complementary / have synergies with their own situation
- Enlarge their network, get to know / collaborate with relevant stakeholders – become part of a national and EU-wide network

Farmers, foresters and advisors can also be involved in other ways: testing / uptaking project solutions, as part of an advisory / consulting 'board', sub-contracted, ambassadors, participating in networking activities, etc.



State of play – number of EIP-AGRI Operational Group projects per Member State

Source: DG AGRI, September 2025



Number of OG projects (2014-2022)

Number of OG projects (2023-2027)

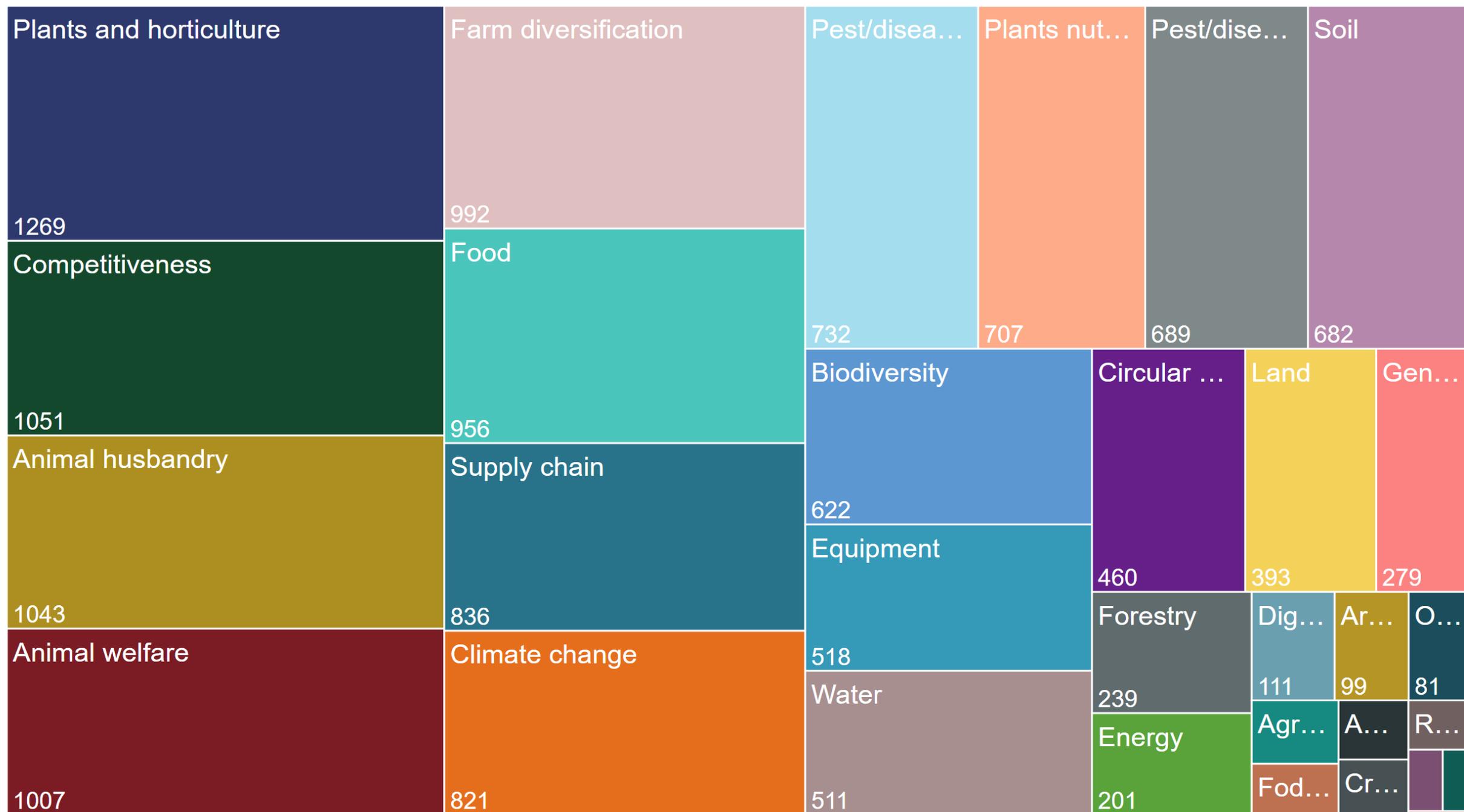
Total OG projects

 4,151

 564

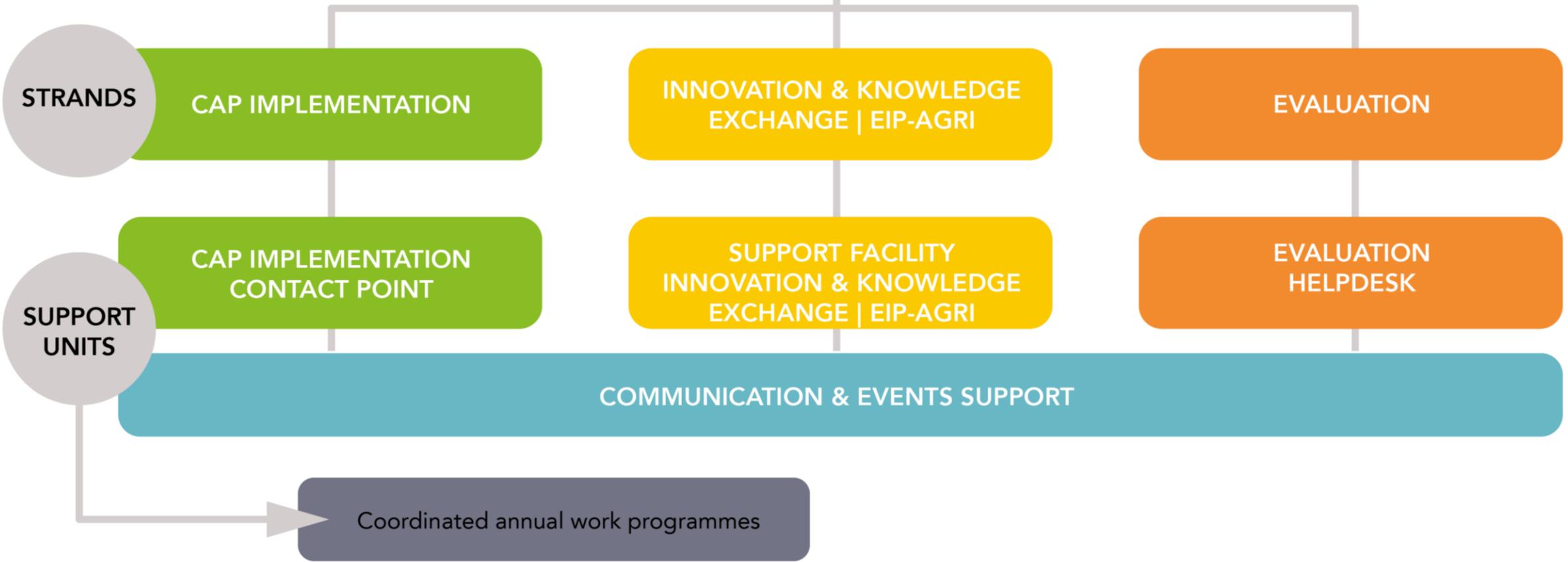
4,715

Keywords (both programming periods)



EU CAP Network | EIP- AGRI Support facility and networking activities





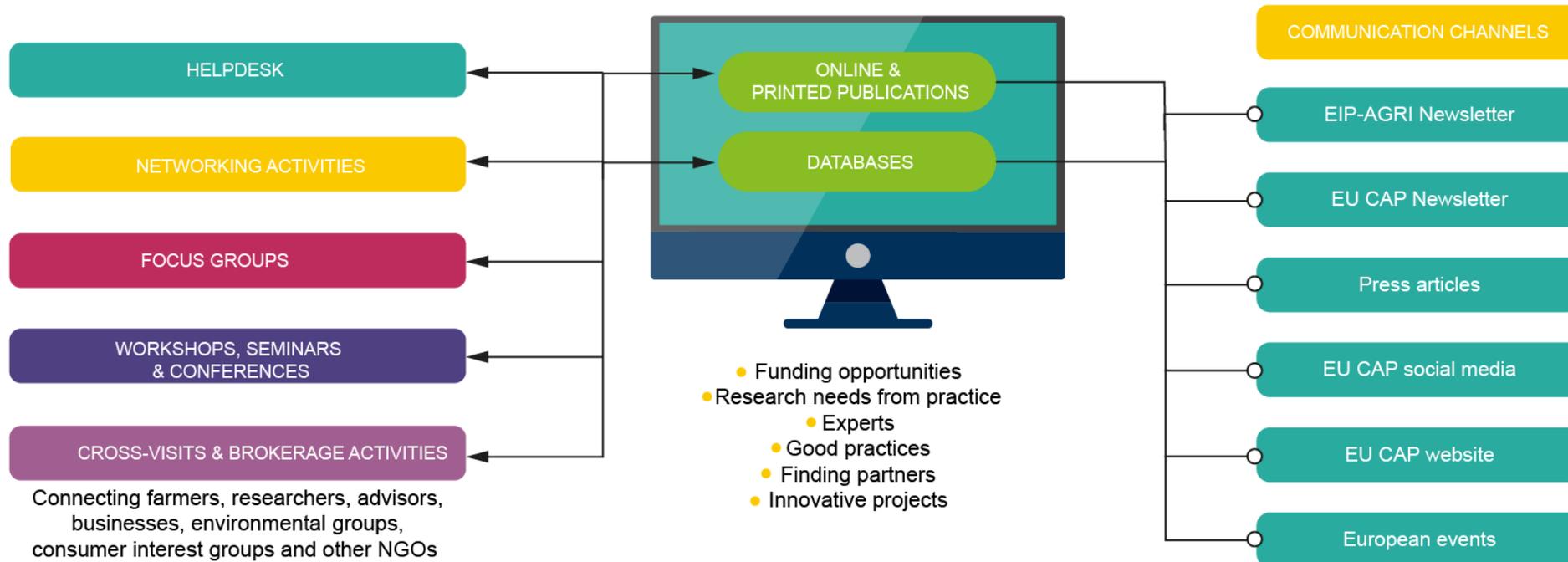
Support Facility for Innovation and Knowledge exchange | EIP-AGRI

- › CAP EUROPE Innovation Consortium
- › 18 organisations from 15 Member States
- › Mixed types of organisations:
 - › Public Agencies
 - › Research Institutes
 - › Universities
 - › Non-governmental Organisation
 - › Private Non-profit Organisations
 - › Small & Medium Enterprises





Support Facility Innovation and Knowledge exchange | EIP-AGRI': services



12 EU CAP Network networking events from January to June 2026

January

Workshop on
“Proximal and remote sensing
in agriculture and forestry”
27-28 January

February

Workshop on
National
Networking for
Innovation and
knowledge
exchange
11-12 February

Brokerage event
25-26 February

March

Seminar on
“Innovative
tools for
advisors”
19-20 March

Subgroup on
Innovation &
Knowledge
Exchange

April

2nd meetings
Focus Groups 56, 57 and 58

Workshop on
“Adapting to
climate change:
new market
opportunities
through crop
alternatives”
22-23 April

May

Conference on
“Water
resilience”
19-21 May

June

3 cross-visits

Subgroup on
Innovation &
Knowledge
Exchange

Focus Groups/Cross-visits

Focus Groups

Take stock of a specific topic, explore practical and innovative solutions to problems or opportunities

Discuss and document research findings and good examples and identify implications for future research activities that will help solve practical problems in the sector.

3 Focus Groups
20 experts
2 face-to-face meetings (1,5 days each)

Cross-visits

Enable peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange on the innovations that the involved projects address allowing a deeper understanding of their innovations, identifying synergies and complementarities between projects, and providing further inspiration to participants for future collaborations

3 Cross-visits
Around 20 participants
One face-to-face meeting (1,5 days)



On-going Focus Groups



FG 'Forestry and forest health: new and emerging pests and diseases'

1st meeting :19-20
November 2025



FG Innovative and sustainable ways to strengthen the role of farmers in revitalising the European wool value chain'

1st meeting 27-28 November
2025



FG Innovative on-farm energy production systems'

1st meeting: 12-13
November in Dublin



Workshop/Seminar/Conference/brokerage event in 2026

Workshop

Bring together innovation stakeholders to share and disseminate innovative approaches and practices, and exchange knowledge

3 Workshops
80 experts each
Face-to-face meetings (1,5 days each)

Seminar/conference

1 or 2 seminars/
conferences
from 100 to 300 participants
Face-to-face meetings (1,5 to 2,5 days)

Brokerage event

Support the preparatory work to respond to the Horizon Europe call

1 brokerage event
80 participants
Face-to-face meetings (1,5 days)





Propose networking topics

Suggest a new topic

for which a Focus Group, workshop, seminar, or publication could help spark innovation!

[Suggest a new topic](#)

Propose
before
XX
January



Translate an EU CAP Network publication into your own language

- By requesting the word document and source files to the communication team through a dedicated form
- No layout support is offered by the EU CAP Network support units

[fill in the online form](#)

the EU CAP Network Communication Team
will get in touch with you!



Social media

Social media accounts

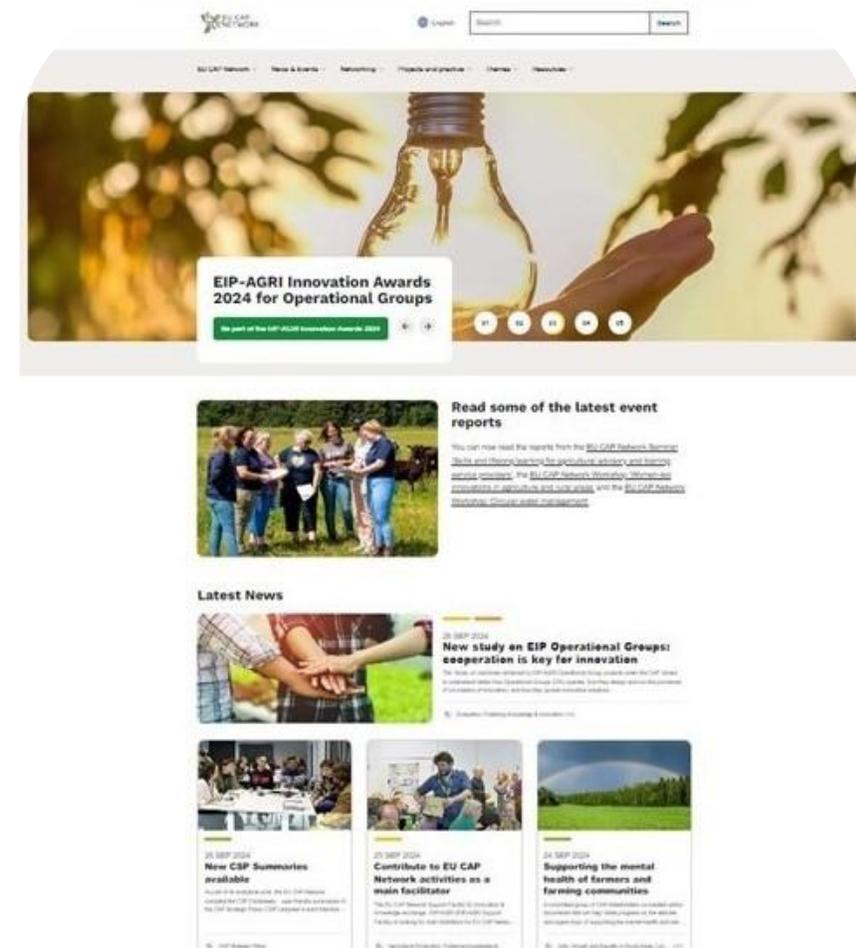
- › Facebook – @EU CAP Network
 - › Twitter - @eucapnetwork
 - › LinkedIn - @EU CAP Network
 - › YouTube - EU CAP Network
-
- › Official hashtags
#EUCAPNetwork
#BloomTogether
#hashtags





Content for the website

- EU CAP Network website - part dedicated to [Innovation & knowledge exchange | EIP-AGRI](#)
- EIP-AGRI [Focus Groups](#) (58)
- EIP-AGRI events - seminars, workshops, brokerage events, field visits – [here](#)
- Research needs from practice – search under ‘Publications’, the latest [here](#)
- Publications - Agrinnovation magazines, brochures, factsheets, reports from events and focus groups – [here](#)
- Press articles - website (under ‘News’ [here](#)) & newsletter
- Monthly [newsletters](#) - Innovation & Knowledge Exchange | EIP-AGRI + EU CAP Network





Website – find projects

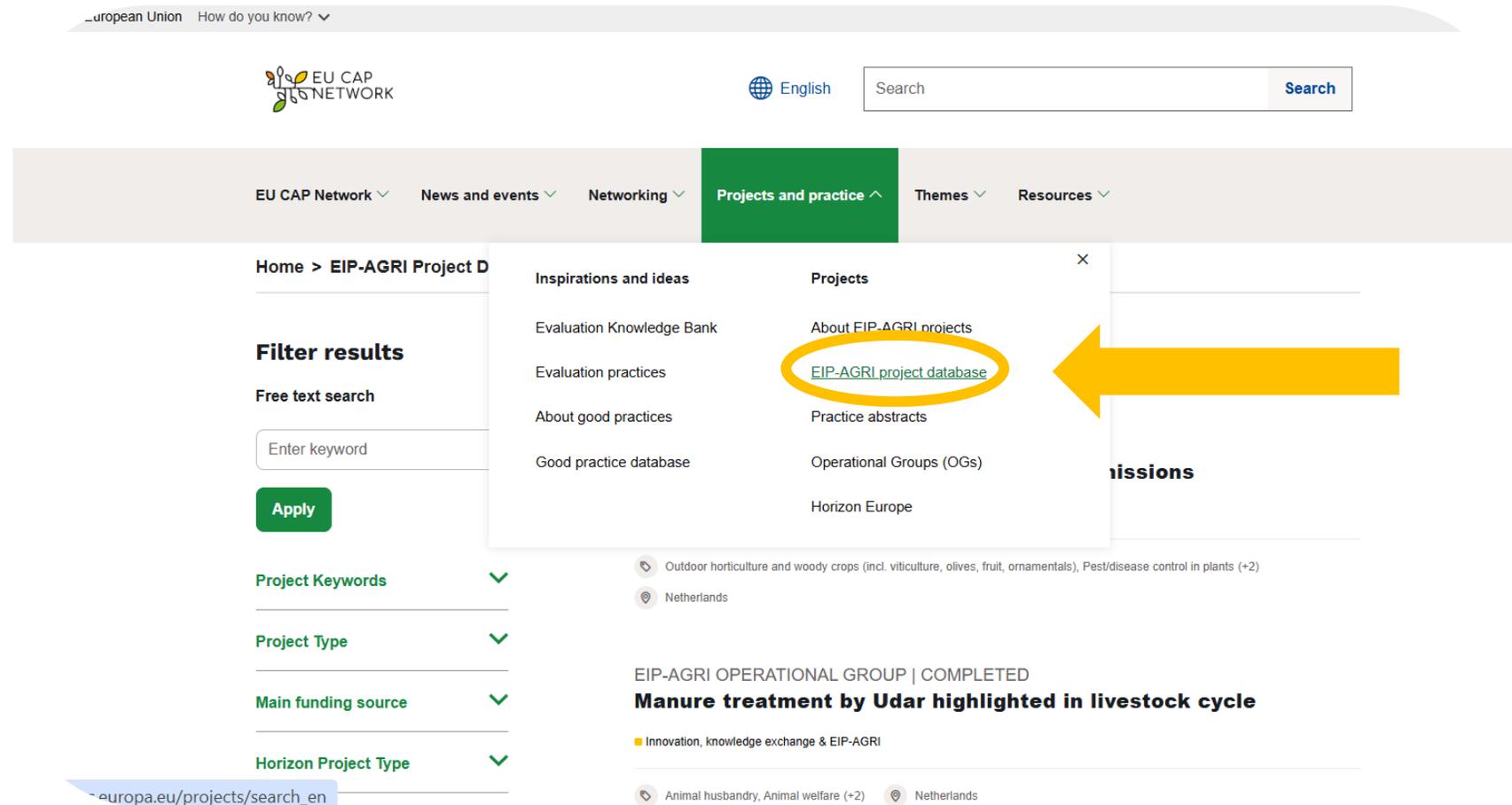
EIP-AGRI project database



Search by project (4760 in total)



4059 EIP-AGRI Operational Groups (OGs)
23 October 2025



Access here:

https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/projects/search_en 



Website – find practice abstracts (PAs)

EIP-AGRI project database

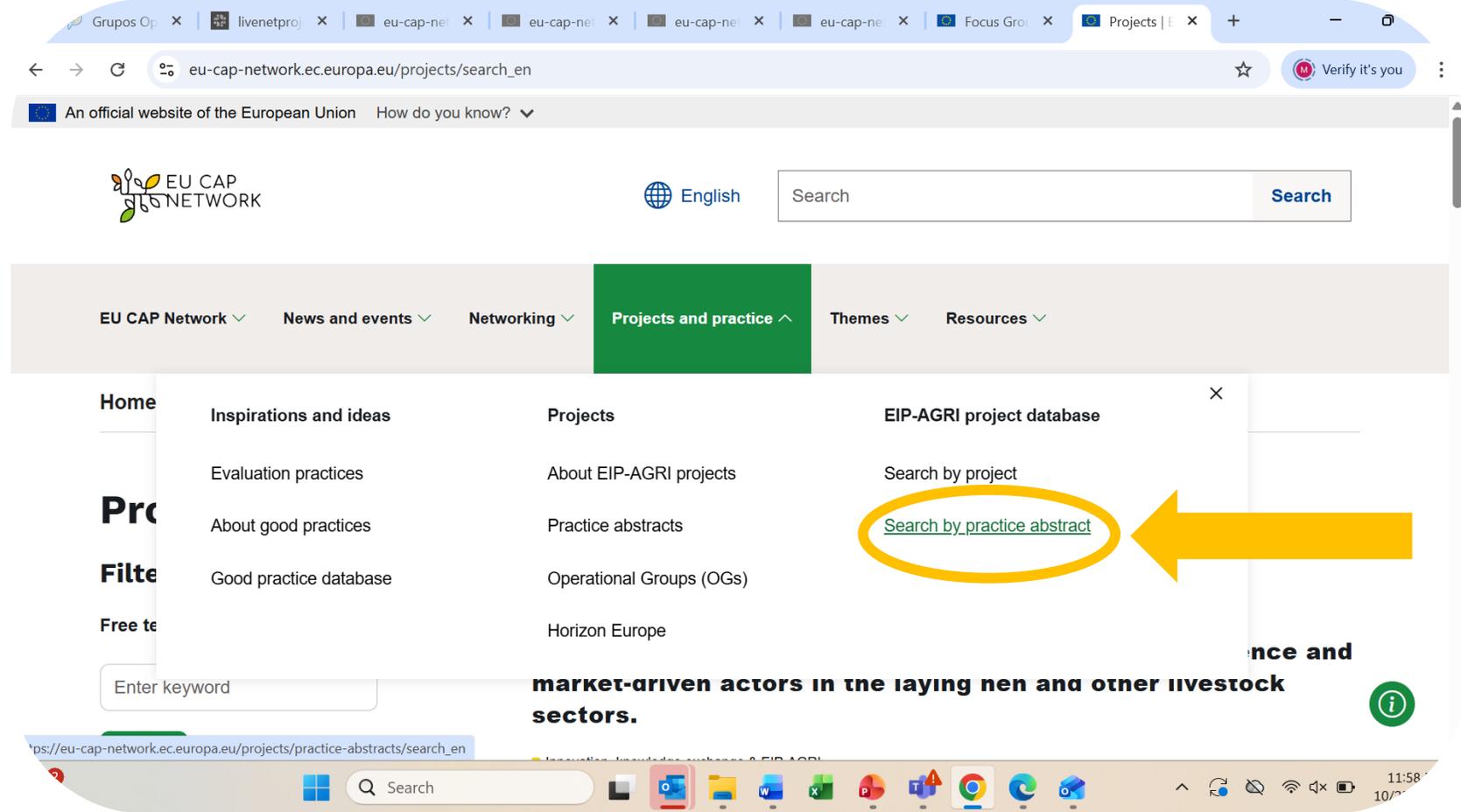


Search by PA (13055 in total)

4912 PAs EIP-AGRI Operational Groups (OGs)
23 October 2025



999 PAs from OGs text search under “soil”



Access here:

https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/projects/practice-abstracts/search_en





Newsletters

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**Innovation and knowledge
exchange | EIP-AGRI Newsletter**
March 2025

Inspirational ideas

Growing green through winter: the success of Austria's organic vegetable initiative

In Austria, the Operational Group 'Further development of organic winter vegetables' has found that site-specific strategies and robust crop varieties ensure high yields without heating. Winter vegetables are ecologically and economically sustainable, reducing CO2 emissions and costs.

[Read more](#)



Increasing farmers' competitiveness: BioBased Innovations Garden

Discover the BioBased Innovations Garden in the Netherlands, a demonstration farm which addresses the growing need for sustainable agricultural practices that enhance soil management and crop resilience. It also offers space and possibilities to develop new value chains and applications within the biobased economy.

[Read more](#)





Publications on Innovation



The Horizon Europe GRASS CEILING project seeks to empower rural women and increase the number of women leading socio-ecological innovations in agriculture, the rural economy and rural communities. These innovations aim to find solutions to social challenges while considering the environmental impact. To achieve its goal, the project has established multi-actor living labs in nine countries: Croatia, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Scotland, Spain, Sweden and the Netherlands.

In each of these countries, the project partners bring together rural women innovators, lab co-leads and academics, connecting practice with research. These living labs provide an opportunity to network, share experiences and acquire the necessary skills for innovation and for achieving the socio-ecological transition. At the same time, each living lab trains between six and eight women on how to lead innovation living labs. With this expertise, the women in the living lab establish a network for sharing knowledge by capturing and publishing innovations and practical experience.

Vesna Jakic is a Croatian entrepreneur who is participating in the project's living lab in Croatia. She produces island souvenirs by processing sheep wool that is often abandoned in the fields of the island of Cres. For Vesna, the project is "a great opportunity to network with innovative Croatian women" and she believes that the biggest benefit of the GRASS CEILING project is "the exchange of knowledge, especially of solutions to the many obstacles we face on a daily basis."

The living labs organise closed coaching sessions with women as well as multi-actor sessions with women and relevant Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) actors. GRASS CEILING will record progress made by these women innovators through in-depth case studies and educate rural entrepreneurs about the type of support they need. The outcomes can be put into practice when working with agri-rural women innovators.

Laura Pala, a Spanish poultry farmer, highlights the importance of GRASS CEILING in providing an important way for the voices of rural women to be heard. She is one of the participants in the Spanish Living Lab and is an initially self-taught entrepreneur who later trained in agriculture and livestock farming to set up her hen farm. Laura says she has met other women in the sector with similar problems, and sharing their experiences helps them to find joint solutions. "We must continue to enhance the visibility of rural women. We are gradually making progress, but there is still much to be done."



Through these living labs, researchers will also analyse the current position of women regarding megatrends in European agriculture and rural areas. This will help them to understand the drivers and enablers for women-led innovations, the barriers encountered and support needed at Member State and EU level.

During 2024 and in 2025, GRASS CEILING is also developing an online forum where women can work on innovations in response to socio-ecological challenges and strengthen the resilience of rural areas. The aim of the forum is to mobilise stakeholders and create a space for engagement between project participants and the broader community.



How to integrate crop associations into existing cropping systems and farm landscapes to increase farm resilience and efficient use of natural resources while reducing the dependency on external inputs?

European cropping systems are dominated by specialised farms growing simplified crop sequences, frequently based on cereals or grasslands (>60% crop sequences). This simplification, based on a small number of high-input monocultures, has contributed towards environmental degradation and biodiversity losses in agricultural landscapes. Crop associations not only increase crop diversity within a field and provide resources for wider agrobiodiversity, but also improve crop productivity, regulate pests and diseases naturally, increase soil fertility, and reduce pollution through less use of pesticide and fertiliser inputs.

The key findings from the Focus Group on 'Crop associations including Milpa and protein crops', which aimed to overcome the challenges of crop associations and encourage their uptake, included novel ways to:

- Mechanise crop associations by making use of existing equipment, with machinery adaptations as and where needed, and also by tapping into the practical experiences of others engaged in crop mechanisation.
- Adopt breeding and variety testing schemes to assess mixing ability that allow the identification of suitable plant cultivars and varieties.

- Add value to crop association produce, to increase economic viability.
- Introduce crop association practices gradually, using practices that provide 'stepping stones' in the transition from monocrops.
- Seek out existing knowledge from a variety of information sources using systematic search strategies.

Success factors of implementing crop associations included their potential for reducing external inputs, diversifying the farm business, increasing income from subsidies, using land more efficiently, and spreading the workload on the farm throughout the year. Agronomic, economic, and social barriers to uptake included the perceived additional complexity of managing diversified cropping systems, and potentially higher costs and labour, leading to some reluctance to invest effort when returns are uncertain.

"I wasn't aware of so many people working with crop associations. Linking all those initiatives could really create something that uses all of our experiences."

Joshua Finch,
Expert at the EU CAP Network Focus Group
'Crop associations including Milpa and protein crops'



Which innovative approaches and innovations linked to agriculture, forestry and the bioeconomy can foster the competitiveness and the socio-economic and environmental resilience of mountain areas and their communities?

Mountain communities face significant environmental, societal, economic, and migratory challenges, which render them ecologically and socially vulnerable, as well as fragile. A Focus Group of 20 experts has looked for innovative ways for mountain areas to remain competitive and resilient in the long term.

The key findings from the Focus Group on 'Competitive and resilient mountain areas' are:

- The most promising opportunities in mountain areas are the growing markets for specialised local niche products, the high quality of mountain products, local breeds, sustainable tourism, a quiet and remote environment, green core and social farming activities, the existence of beautiful landscapes, unique biodiversity, and a range of further common goods, as well as living traditions and historic buildings.
- Agriculture, forestry and the bioeconomy in mountain areas operate in a complex and dynamic human-nature system, and long-term and transformative solutions are needed to increase resilience at the regional level.
- Social innovation can play a key role in this transformation, alongside the innovation in products, processes and marketing.

The success of innovation in rural (mountain) areas is challenged by the lack of scale in terms of population and industrial base, and the distance from economic partners and centres of consumption, which makes the diffusion of innovation and knowledge more difficult.

Finally, the drivers for innovators and the public policies to guide innovation are, as yet, not fully understood. In order to unlock this knowledge, the members of the Focus Group have identified several factors that are responsible for the successful implementation of innovations in mountain areas, in terms of organisation, strategic planning and management, as well as access to infrastructure, funding and other resources.

"For good governance, historical prejudices and barriers are broken down in favour of common work."

Juan Antonio Lizaso,
Expert at the EU CAP Network Focus Group
'Competitive and resilient mountain areas'





Publications on Innovation





Publications on Innovation





Publications on Innovation



3 reasons to apply for the 2025 EU CAP Network cross...



EIP-AGRI Challenge: Regenerative agriculture for...



EIP-AGRI Challenge: Crop associations including Milp...



EIP-AGRI Challenge: Women-led innovations in agricultur...



EIP-AGRI Challenge: Competitive and resilient...



Rural challenge: digital tools for nutrient management



Thank you for your attention!

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