



FAIRshare

DIGITAL TOOLS FOR FARM ADVISORS



Technical References

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Project Coordinator	TEAGASC
Contact	Tom Kelly (Tom.Kelly@teagasc.ie) and John Hyland (John.Hyland@teagasc.ie)

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1.0	10/01/2020	TEAGASC	John Hyland (TEAGASC); Áine Macken-Walsh (TEAGASC)
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D8.8: Multi-Actor Approach Training Events

Authors: John Hyland (Teagasc), Áine Macken-Walsh (Teagasc)

List of Terms Relevant to the Multi-Actor Approach

Co-creation: Bringing together a relevant mix of people with the complementary type of knowledge which helps solving problems and tackling opportunities e.g.: farmers, advisors, researchers, enterprises and/or other actors in project activities¹. It involves the processes of co-design and co-production².

Co-design: The process of engaging, giving voice and possibilities to those who are affected by the design but traditionally not part of the design process. End-users are therefore provided the opportunity to influence the design by revealing insights and understand complexities of the problem³.

Co-production: During this phase integrated research is conducted as a continuous exchange among academics and non-academics².

Multi-Actor Approach (MAA): A mechanism adopted by the European Commission's strategy for EU agricultural research and innovation. It aims to involve all actors in a process of genuine co-creation of knowledge (e.g. farmers, advisors, industry, product users) across all the phases of project formulation and activities. The MMA requires projects to focus on real problems or opportunities for actors in value chains who need a solution ("end-users")⁴.

Participatory methods: Diverse groups of people require particular facilitation tools to help them work together. Participatory methods stimulate and facilitate collaboration in which all members actively participate in understanding problems and finding solutions⁵.

¹ EC (2018) Interactive Innovation in Action – Multi-Actor projects learning from each other. Cross-fertilisation event for multi-actor projects, 8 March 2018, Brussels.

² Mauser, W. et al. (2013): Transdisciplinary global change research: The co-creation of knowledge for sustainability. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 5, 420–431

³ Strickdorn, M., Schneider, J. (2010) *This Is Service Design Thinking*. Amsterdam: BIS Publishers.

⁴ EIP-AGRI (2017) *Horizon 2020 Multi-Actor Projects*. Brussels: EIP-AGRI.

⁵ Chambers, R., 1997. *Whose Reality Counts? Putting The Last First*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

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Abstract

FAIRshare employs a multi-actor approach (MAA) which encourages sharing of Digital Tools and Services (DATS), experience, expertise and motivation to overcome the barriers that limit farm advisors in their role in digital advisory. This document sets out the processes for FAIRshare partners to apply the MAA and depicts training events carried out in M1 (Kick-off-Meeting), M8 (first face-to-face Management Committee Meeting), and M13 (first Annual Meeting) of the project. The approach seeks to strengthen the capacity of the partners, the stakeholders and end users to meet the objectives of the project.

The project has mainstreamed the MMA throughout all Work Packages (WPs) to proactively support project activities as well as how multi-actor events and workshops are facilitated. This ensures that the multi-actor membership of the consortium and the events with external actors taking place in workshops, focus groups, and 40 living lab user cases will be as effective, beneficial, and impactful as possible. The overall objective of D8.8 is to support MAA activities conducted throughout FAIRshare:

Teagasc will provide MAA training events to support the multi-actor networks involved in the project. MAA good practice training workshops will be facilitated for participants based state-of-the-art MAA criteria. This training will include a participatory training workshop and will be offered to partners coinciding with the Kick-off Meeting and again at the first general partners meeting, M12*. Throughout the project UC leaders and participants will be offered a similar training event to coincide with their initial workshops/meetings. This will embed a strong commitment to the project and its objectives.

*The first Annual Meeting was conducted in M13 rather than M12; therefore the delivery of the last MAA training event (D8.8), as well as the RRI workshop (D7.6), was carried out in M13.

This document is divided into two sections and reports the content of D8.8 carried out in M1, M8, and M13:

- i) Section 1: The process of participation (including the MAA and the MAA toolbox);
- ii) Section 2: The MAA training events conducted up to, and including, the first annual meeting.

D8.8 is categorised as 'Other' with regards to deliverable type in the Grant Agreement⁶. However, it was decided that a written report such as this would serve as an additional resource to D8.8 which can be used as a reference tool for partners.

⁶ FAIRshare Grant Agreement Annex 1 (Part A), p. 46.

Section 1: Participatory Processes and the Multi-Actor Approach

Introduction

Advisors play an important role in collecting, analysing and interpreting data for farmers. Therefore, the potential of digitalisation is unlikely to be realised at the European level unless advisors are mobilised to take ownership of digital tools and advocate them to farmers and other advisors. By using digital technologies advisors are able to make better informed agronomic recommendations to assist farmer decision making. Consequently it is vital that efforts are made to enable advisors to adopt digital tools in order to catalyse a digital transformation across both the advisory and farming community. FAIRshare is a CSA (Coordination and support action) project which will engage, enable and empower the independent farm advisor community, through sharing of tools, expertise and motivations.

FAIRshare has two main programmes both of which require effective engagement with a variety of actors. Work-packages (WPs) 1, 2 and 3 gather an evidence base of the digital tools and services used internationally, leveraging the social networks of partner institutions that span EU and non-EU countries. The inventory of tools will be accessible to end-users on an intuitively navigable online interface that has been co-designed using a multi-actor approach. WPs 4, 5 and 6 generate and resource a participatory 'living laboratory', empowering advisor peers from across the EU to interact with the online inventory and, in a series of workshops, to exchange, co-adapt, co-design and apply digital tools.

Design of the Participatory Training

FAIRshare places particular focus on learning methods and the active involvement of diverse actors through internal project activities among partners as well as events such as, workshops, focus groups, and living labs. To boost the efficiency of the MAA, internal training sessions on participatory methods were organised during FAIRshare meetings with the project consortium.

D8.8 documents the training provided at the Kick-off-Meeting, the first face-to-face Management Committee meeting, and the first Annual Meeting. The training activities were designed carefully and comprised of the following components:

- An overview of participatory processes and innovation brokering, ingredients for successful group dynamics, and the online toolbox of participatory methods;
- An interactive workshop where partners could apply what they learnt and ask questions if needed. These interactive sessions were also used to meet objectives relating to the project.

The objective of the training events was to provide FAIRshare partners with participatory methods, guidelines and good practice guidance to be applied throughout the project to enhance co-creation, co-design, and dissemination. There are many different types of participatory methods but the best approach to training is learning by doing⁷. This experiential learning provided in the workshops ensures that participants have adequate practice to achieve the MAA objectives of the project. This document first outlines the content provided in the overview provided to the consortium at the three meetings. Thereafter, a synopsis of the participatory workshops is detailed.

⁷ IIED (1988) A brief guide to training in participatory methods in the workshop. PLA Notes, 33, 82-85.

Participatory Processes and Innovation Brokering: First Principles

Participatory Learning: An Introduction

By involving different actors and stakeholders, participatory research approaches allow us to recognise implicit and explicit factors that shape how interactive processes work⁸.

Participatory MAAs to research and innovation have become particularly important in this context, inviting farmers, farm advisors, value chain actors and scientists to collaborate in a process of active knowledge construction rather than passive technology transfer. This should result in locally relevant solutions.

Ensuring the successful adoption of a technology or practice requires taking into consideration the culture, power, institutions, policies, as well as the actors themselves. Participatory approaches can achieve this⁷.

Participatory approaches can be described as “a growing family of approaches and methods to enable local people to share, enhance and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions, and to plan, act, monitor and evaluate”⁹. Therefore, participatory methods are carried out for, with and by people, not on them.

Of particular importance are facilitators’ behaviours and attitudes. It is imperative that the facilitator establishes rapport, listens and learns, is patient, respectful, facilitates, is personable, and knows when not to speak and when not to be present. It is essential that facilitators know when and how to **‘hand over the stick’**, to empower, be flexible, embrace mistakes, become aware of biases, and to encourage positive participation.

⁸ Darnhofer, I., Gibbon, D., Dedieu B. (2012) Farming Systems Research: An Approach to Inquiry. In I. Darnhofer, D. Gibbon & B., Dedieu (eds) Farming Systems Research into the 21st Century: The New Dynamic. Dordrecht: Springer, pp. 3-33.

⁹ Chambers, R., 1997. Whose Reality Counts? Putting The Last First. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

There are seven key principles of participation¹⁰:

1. The right to participate

All individuals have a right to play a part in shaping decisions.

2. Hearing unheard voices

Seeking out unheard voices and creating the safe spaces that allow individuals to be heard.

3. Seeking local knowledge and diversity

Local people have their own expert knowledge of their community. It is crucial to recognise that there are different perspectives and realities within communities. Different actors bring their own unique experiences and interpretations.

4. Reversing learning

Being prepared to unlearn what has already been learned.

5. Using diverse methods

Using a range of participatory methods assists in attracting in as many people as possible to undertake learning.

6. Handing over the stick (or pen, or chalk)

'Experts' should allow space for others to participate.

7. Attitude and behaviour change

Changing the attitudes and behaviours of the powerful is a vital aspect of participatory practice.

A practical, adaptive research strategy enables diverse groups and individuals to learn, work, and act together in a co-operative manner; to focus on issues of joint concern; identify challenges; and generate positive responses in a collaborative and democratic manner.

¹⁰ www.participatorymethods.org

Multi-Actor Approach: Guidance Notes

Effective multi-actor processes, including multi-actor co-creation; stakeholder engagement; and innovation brokering, create conditions where different knowledge, perspectives, priorities, objectives and resources etc. of a wide variety of actors are facilitated to come to light and shape project processes and outcomes. Uncovering different stakeholders’ knowledge through effective participatory techniques is the ‘gold’ of the multi-actor ‘mining’ process.

FAIRshare aims to engage with a diverse variety of actors. In this context, it is important to note the distinction between ‘stakeholders’ and ‘actors’, which is highlighted in guidelines for Horizon 2020 projects.

An actor is described as a ‘partner taking part in project activities’ while a stakeholder is a ‘person expressing a view/stake at a certain moment during the project’¹¹. Arnstein’s Ladder of Participation echoes these definitions and draws attention to the meaning of genuine partnerships between actors, as distinct from consultations with stakeholders¹².

Figure 1 Arnstein’s (1969) Ladder of Participation



Source: Arnstein (1969) adapted by Macken-Walsh (2016)

¹¹ Van Oost, I. (2015) The multi-actor approach under WP 2016-2017: what’s new? State of play of EIP-AGRI and operational groups: what outcomes and on-going activities could be useful for the development of proposals.

¹² Arnstein, S.R. (1969), “A Ladder of Citizen Participation”, Journal of the American Planning Association, 35 (4): 216–224.

Awareness that people have different subjectivities ('mind sets') and attentiveness to these subjectivities is crucial for facilitators to support effective multi-actor work. Researchers, rural extensionists, farmers, entrepreneurs etc. all have different knowledges, priorities, circumstances, perspectives etc. Within single groups there will also be great diversity in circumstances, perspectives, priorities etc. The ultimate aim of multi-actor work is to create processes where all actors involved contribute their valuable knowledges, perspectives etc.

*The interactive innovation approach under the agricultural European Innovation Partnership (EIP-AGRI) fosters the development of research into practice applications and the **creation of new ideas thanks to interactions between actors, the sharing of knowledge and effective intermediation.** In this interactive innovation model, **building blocks for innovation are expected to come from science, but also from practice and intermediaries such as farmers, advisors, businesses, NGOs etc.** Key for interactive innovation is to include existing (sometimes tacit) knowledge into scientific work: **endusers and practitioners are involved, not as a study object, but in view of using their entrepreneurial skills and practical knowledge for developing the solution or opportunity and creating ownership.** Innovation generated with an interactive approach tends to deliver **solutions that are well adapted to circumstances and easier to implement** since the participatory process is favourable to speeding up the acceptance and dissemination of the new ideas”.*

(Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2016-2017, part 9, p. 10).

The nature of different actors' knowledges and how these knowledges are communicated vary widely and it is the challenge of those facilitating or supporting multi-actor work to uncover and valorise different knowledges. Pre-conceived ideas and assumptions in relation to the nature of different actors' knowledges and perspectives should be avoided/ overcome.

Stakeholder Engagement & Innovation Brokering

It is important to observe that while ‘stakeholder engagement’ and ‘innovation brokering’ are related, they are strategically different.

An advisory service or related individual can broker innovation by connecting stakeholders to different DATS and/or other actors in the agricultural network. Stakeholder engagement is widely discussed in the business literature, where definitions vary from understanding engagement as ‘consultation’ to understanding engagement as actively generative of enhanced learning, innovation and performance¹³.

[The] overall importance of stakeholder engagement is to drive strategic direction and operational excellence for organisations, and to contribute to the kind of sustainable development from which organisations, their stakeholders, and wider society can benefit by¹⁴:

Learning

- Identifying and understanding:
 - The needs, expectations and perceptions of internal and external stakeholders;
 - The challenges and opportunities identified by those stakeholders and;
 - The material issues of internal and external stakeholders

Innovating

- Drawing on stakeholder knowledge and insights to inform strategic direction and drive operational excellence;
- Aligning operations with the needs of sustainable development and with societal expectations

Performing

- Enhancing performance
- Developing and implementing performance indicators that enable internal and external stakeholders to assess the organisation’s performance.

Innovation brokering is a topic discussed widely in the agriculture literature and Klerxx et al. highlight the value of brokers as neutral and impartial actors in responding to and supporting the interests of various stakeholders¹⁵.

¹³ Unerman, J. (2007) Stakeholder Engagement and Dialogue, in (eds) J. Unerman, J. Bebbington, B.O’Dwyer, Sustainability Accounting and Accountability, Routledge, London and New York, 2007.

¹⁴ Accountability, 2005, 9 cited in Unerman, 2007, 87-88.

¹⁵ Klerxx, L. Hall, A., Leeuwis, C. (2009) Strengthening Agricultural Innovation Capacity: Are Innovation Brokers the Answer? United Nations University, Maastricht Economic and social

Definition of an Innovation Broker

Howells (2006) first coined the term “innovation intermediary”¹⁶:

“An organization or body that acts as an agent or broker in any aspect of the innovation process between two or more parties. Such intermediary activities include: helping to provide information about potential collaborators; brokering a transaction between two or more parties; acting as a mediator, or go-between, [for] bodies or organizations that are already collaborating; and helping find advice, funding and support for the innovation outcomes of such collaborations” (Howells, 2006, 720 cited in Klerxx et al., 2009,4).

EIP-AGRI (2017)¹⁷:

“An innovation broker tries to link different partners from the field, from science, commercial partners etc. and make sure that the right expertise and knowledge is involved in the project. They have to ask themselves, who should we get together in the same room to discuss this particular subject?”

In working with stakeholders and brokering innovation between them, it is necessary to take an emic approach - i.e. be attentive to the different ‘mind sets’ of diverse stakeholders (partially represented in the illustration presented in Figure 2). For those seeking to effectively engage with and/or broker between stakeholders, a starting point for an intuitive approach is to strive towards uncovering *what is important to and motivates different stakeholders; and what is their ‘inside’ distinctive knowledge?* **The distinctive, inside knowledge is the ‘gold’ of the multi-actor ‘mining’ process. Practicing attentiveness to the ‘inside’ views of stakeholders demonstrates (and generates) intuitive skill. However, according to some, there is no ‘recipe’ for intuition:**

Research and training centre on Innovation and Technology, Working Paper Series (2009-019), Keizer Karelplein 19, 6211 TC Maastricht, The Netherlands

¹⁶ Howells, J. (2006). Intermediation and the role of intermediaries in innovation. *Research Policy*, 35(5), 715-728.

¹⁷ EIP-AGRI (2017) <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/news/inspirational-ideas-innovation-brokerage-and-support-operational-groups> Date accessed: 04.12.19

Figure 2 Etic (the names we give) and Emic (the names they give themselves)



Source: Pinterest, cited by CPS (2017)

Knowledge for Stakeholder Engagement & Innovation Brokering

While there are important distinctions between stakeholder engagement and innovation brokers, the knowledge and skills required for success are similar. Arguably, the most important and fundamental skill is intuition. However, there is no 'recipe' for intuition:

"It is a big problem in a democratic society where people are supposed to justify what their intuitions are. In fact, nobody can justify what their intuition is. So, you have to make up reasons, but it won't be the real reasons"¹⁸

¹⁸ Dreyfus, H., Dreyfus, S., Athanasiou, T. (1986) Mind Over Machine: The Power of Human Intuition and Expertise in the Era of the Computer. New York: Free Press.

It is difficult if not impossible to develop a manual to train people how to be intuitive. However, it is also argued, “Intuition is a muscle; you have to use it to make it stronger or it atrophies”¹⁹. There are ways of thinking and forms of knowledge that are supportive of intuitive ability. Furthermore, particular practices are supportive of building intuitive skill. For example, ‘reflective practices’ such as a keeping journal of learning reflections when involved in an interactive project is supportive of developing intuitive ability (participatorymethods.org, 2017). The practicing of participatory methods and techniques in general requires and develops intuitive ability. It is practicing participatory methods in a *reflective* way; however, that develops intuitive ability, not the methods and techniques themselves.

“Participation can do without special methods and tools, but not without special attitudes and behaviour!!!”
(FAO, 2003)²⁰

“A ‘participatory method’ per se does not exist because whether or not a method becomes participatory, relies on the frame of mind of the facilitator”
(Groot, 2002)²¹

Providing spaces for stakeholders’ circumstances, priorities and resources to emerge and shape the engagement and innovation process is a relational and methodological challenge. The required methodological techniques are available in a vast technical literature. However, choosing and practicing the techniques in the ‘right’ way (considering the contextual and relational context(s) involved) is vital for effectiveness, which again highlights the importance of intuition. It is often only after beginning the engagement process is the facilitator sufficiently informed about and acquainted with the group to choose the correct tool/technique.

¹⁹ Jenkins, L.M. (2015) Intuition: the most undeveloped business skill, the Huffington Post, 1/06/2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lisa-marie-jenkins/intuition-the-most-undeve_b_6424150.html

²⁰ FAO (2003) Participatory Processes towards Co-Management of Natural Resources in Pastoral Areas of the Middle East, A Training of Trainers Source Book Based on the Principles of Participatory Methods and Approaches, GCP/SYR/009/ITA, FAO, Rome and Palmyra, 2003. Accessible at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/006/ad424e/ad424e03.htm#bm3.5>

²¹ Groot, A.M. (2002) Demystifying Facilitation of Multi-Actor learning Processes Annemarie E. Groot, Wageningen University, available online: <http://edepot.wur.nl/165782> Date accessed: 02/12/2019.

*“Facilitation of participatory processes addressing complex issues implies the reverse of the proverb look before you leap’ - facilitators must ‘leap before they look’”
(Geldof, 1999)²²*

The Multi-Actor Protocol

When applying the MAA some preparation work is required which involves defining the questions of which actors will be involved, how they will be involved and what kind of knowledge is required. Who are/should be the stakeholders/actors involved in the FAIRshare community?

- Why, from their perspectives, is it worth being involved?
- Where are the venues for their engagement?
- What are the underlying objectives (activity-specific objectives but also objectives from a FAIRshare project perspective)?
- How may these objectives and the objectives of stakeholders be realised (methodological techniques)?

The additional question of ‘when’ is important from a data management and coordination perspective. This is because some actor groups will be frequently involved in the project, with several tasks requiring their participation/input all along the project. Unless the project engages with a range of different actors from the actor groups, thereby reducing the resources needed from individual actors, a coordinated approach is needed to make engagement as efficient as possible.

²² Geldof, G. (1999). 'Manifest' tegen het Doeldenken: Pleidooi voor een adaptieve aanpak van integrale omgevingsvraagstukken (concept). Enschede, Universiteit van Twente, CT&M

Figure 3 illustrates considerations FAIRshare can implement to ensure successful multi-actor activities.

Figure 3 How to build a successful H2020 multi-actor project?²³



²³ EIP-AGRI (2017) Horizon 2020 Multi-Actor Projects. Brussels: European Commission.

How to Engage Actors throughout the Project?

Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) calls for the engagement of societal actors in research and innovation. D7.6 outlines that RRI is focused on four dimensions: anticipation, inclusion, reflexivity and responsiveness²⁴.

- **Anticipation** supports exploration of the possible short- and long-term impacts of research and innovation (including social and ethical); reflection on how research and innovation may shape the future; and engagement in upstream risk assessment.
- **Inclusion** encourages engagement of diverse voices at an early stage, and on a continuous basis, during the research process, ultimately resulting in the collection of diverse types of knowledge (including local, practical knowledge).
- **Reflexivity** fosters actors to critically reflect upon their own assumptions, values and interests, and actively consider the views and values of others and how they may correspond or conflict with one's own views.
- **Responsivity** ensures that actors take meaningful action in response to insights which emerge during the RRI process so that the research and innovation process is adapted to align with the needs expressed by other actors.

Actor/stakeholder continued engagement in FAIRshare requires conditions that support such engagement. The views of actors/stakeholders needs to captured throughout the lifetime of the project.

What encourages or hinders actors/stakeholders to engage with project activities and how can barriers to engagement be lowered or overcome?

There are a number of principles that should be applied to MAA activities throughout the FAIRshare project enhance engagement (Table 1). Partners should also be cognisant of the project target audiences as specified in D7.2 (Section 4).

²⁴ FAIRshare (2019) Deliverable 7.6: Responsible Research and Innovation Workshop

Table 1 Possible barriers of engagement with actors/stakeholders and what can be done to overcome them²⁵

Barrier	Measures to Overcome Barrier
Lack of Relevance Actors may perceive an engagement process as not relevant to their own interests, concerns, and goals.	Establishing or using processes and structures to connect with actors/stakeholders on a more continuous basis.
	Assuring openness of outcomes in engagement processes.
Lack of Impact Actors may refrain from accepting an invitation for engagement when they expect the process to have little or no impact in terms of policy or societal effects.	Being transparent about expected impacts during the recruitment phase.
Lack of Trust Actors may refrain from engagement when they distrust the agendas of organiser(s) of the engagement process or have negative views of other participants.	Raising awareness and taking advantage of opportunities for informal encounters and networking.
	Providing opportunities for informal encounters and networking among researchers, advisors, farmers, policy makers, and other relevant actors/stakeholders.
	Using facilitators.
Lack of Knowledge and Skills Actors may refrain from engagement when they fear they lack the necessary knowledge and skills to engage in research or in research and innovation policy.	Combining dialogue and information in engagement processes.
	Using attractive stimuli to support dialogue.
	Raising awareness and taking advantage of capacity-building Opportunities.
Lack of Time and Financial Resources Actors may refrain from engagement when they fear they lack the necessary time and financial resources to engage.	Working with actors/stakeholders at times that are suitable to them.
	Combining workshops/focus groups where possible.
Lack of legitimacy Actors may refrain from engagement when they have doubts about the legitimacy of the engagement process or their own involvement.	Promoting a culture where engagement is recognised and awarded.

²⁵ Adapted from PRSSO (2018) Engaging Society for Responsible Research and Innovation: A support tool for promoting engagement of citizens and third sector actors in research and in research and innovation policy

Successful Group Dynamics

For multi-actor groups that convene several times over the duration of the FAIRshare project, for example the multi-consortium itself; multi-actor groups that are newly established for the project; or existing groups that are ‘plugged into’ specifically for the project, it is important that these groups be recognised as dynamic social entities made up of diverse members and that they be supported to function as best as they possibly can.

Aside from carrying out activities to serve the needs of the project tasks, incorporation of practices supportive of the group’s overall functioning should be considered. Practices such as forging common goals and building solidarity within groups can assist their overall functioning, thus enhancing their ability to deliver benefits associated with the multi-actor approach and to achieve project goals.

There is much guidance in the literature about group functioning. One practical example in the agriculture sector is an action research project involving farmers, an advisor, an agricultural specialist, a sociologist and a Knowledge Transfer manager instigated by Teagasc (Partner 1) to analyse and understand the functioning of a successful group. The action research project led to the identification of ‘5 key ingredients for success, and co-designed a simple self-appraisal exercise applicable to wide ranging group contexts²⁶.

A summary of the 5 ingredients for success is presented in storyboard format below and the self-appraisal guide is contained in the Appendix. Partners may use this at their discretion where relevant.

²⁶ Macken-Walsh, A (2016) ‘Influencing Farmers’ Decisions: a sociologist’s view’, presentation to the 5th European Forum for Farm and Rural Advisory Services (EUFRAS) Meeting / 55th IALB Conference (2016).



“We might all be different as individuals but our group has common goals. We as members genuinely believe in and commit to these goals. Our group is well organised and we have a clear idea about how we operate. We have our schedule of meetings well in advance so that we can plan and prepare”



“Enjoyment and fun is an important part of how our group works. It makes taking part a more positive experience. We have developed good working relationships and even some friendships. This provides an environment conducive to sharing challenges and to identifying solutions.”



“In order for us as group to create solutions, we must feel that we can speak openly and truthfully without feeling that what we say might be irrelevant or not useful... We are all different, we speak different languages, and it’s important that we show that we value each other’s point of view. There’s no sense that certain types of knowledge are superior in the group and people are not afraid to speak up”



“While the proverbial saying ‘a rising tide lifts all boats’ may not be true in many cases, it is a core principle of this group. What we do is relevant to all members and therefore is of interest (and potential benefit) to all members”



“We have access to and are exposed to different types of expertise in the group and this is a major driver of the group – it is why we want to be involved. Our group is also expertly facilitated and if we didn’t have that expert facilitation, our group wouldn’t operate as well as it does”

Evaluation

Evaluation is key part of the learning process²⁷. Therefore, participatory exercises conducted with stakeholders throughout the FAIRshare project should be evaluated.

It is important to find out if the project objectives have been achieved. Good feedback is essential to improve the effectiveness and the quality of the programme. The evaluation will be at three levels when conducting participatory exercises (refer to Appendix for more detail):

- An evaluation form;
- A quick review method called 'The Talking Wall';
- Oral feedback.

The information collected from the evaluation methods will be used to guide the future direction of the MAA during the project as well as the overall evaluation of the project.

²⁷ Deshler, D. 1998 Evaluating Extension Programmes. In R.E. Swanson, R.P. Bentz, A.J. Sofranko (eds) Improving Agricultural Extension: A Reference Manual. Rome: The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, pp 131-146.

Participatory Processes: Toolbox

The FAIRshare MAA toolbox provides a framework and selection of tools that are advantageous for participatory action research in the FAIRshare project. It provides suggestions to help users ensure that they:

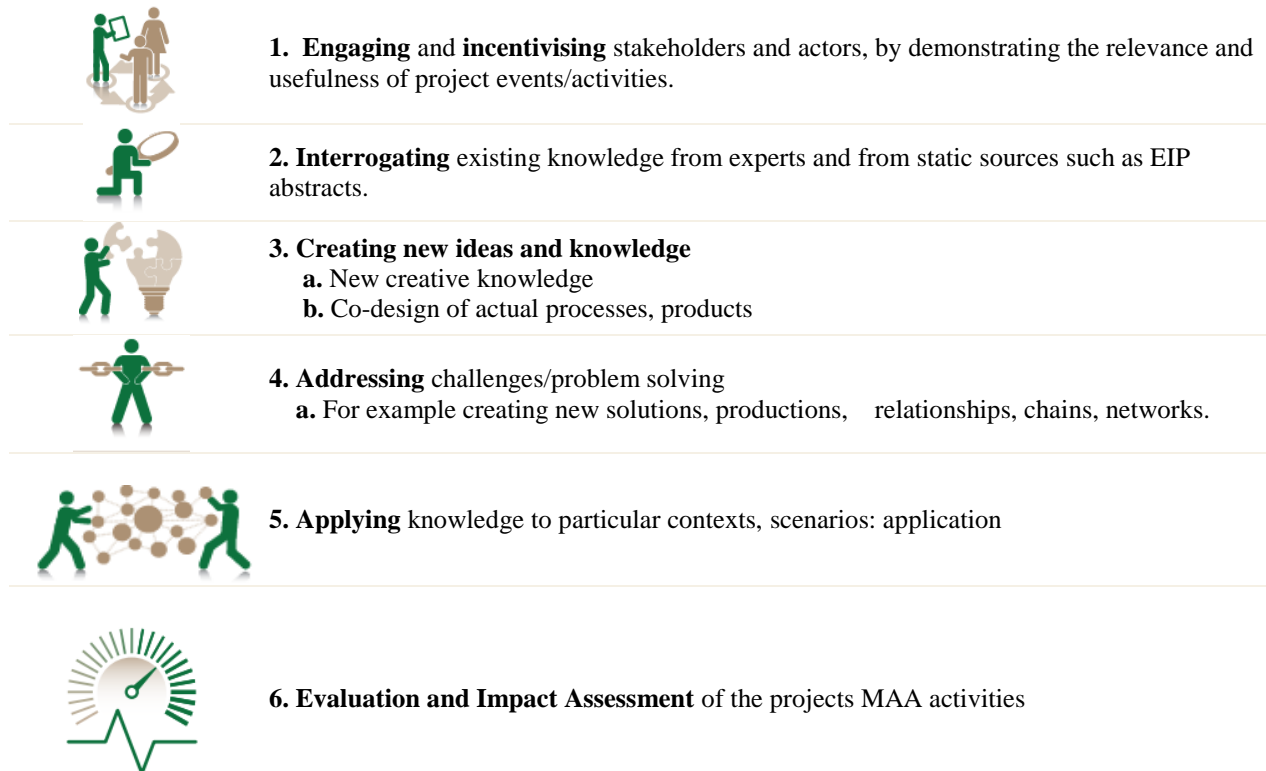
- Account for all factors necessary for conducting effective engagement and innovation-brokering;
- Consider what tools are available for engaging stakeholders;
- Communicate decisions and outcomes (within the project team, with funders, and with actors/stakeholders involved).

The toolbox demonstrates that there is a wide range of stakeholder/actor engagement methods and tools available, each with their own (scenario-dependent) advantages. The tools and processes presented help, in different scenarios, to engage people and mobilise co-creation.

Six core scenarios for multi-actor work were identified and applied in the context of other multi-actor Horizon 2020 projects: AgriDemo-F2F, BovINE, CERERE, and SKIN. The identification of these scenarios is useful for the purposes of identifying methods and techniques that can be utilised for each instance²⁸. The six scenarios are also relevant to FAIRshare and are contained in the multi-actor toolbox.

²⁸ Macken-Walsh, A. (2017) Guidelines for Learning and Brokering Activities. D4.3, Short Supply Chain Knowledge and Innovation Network (SKIN), H2020 728055.

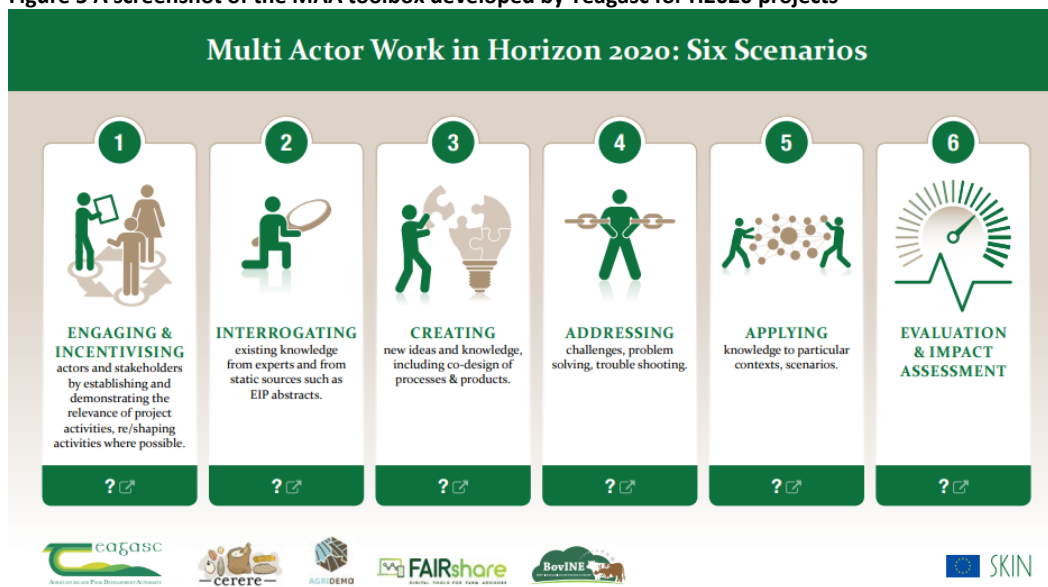
Figure 4 How to approach stakeholder engagement & innovation brokering (Source: Adapted from Macken-Walsh, 2017)



The toolbox is an integrated form online where and has two components:

- Figure 5 illustrates the interactive PDF interface of the toolbox. By clicking on one of the scenarios partners are brought to a [Google Sheet](#) where they can view examples of participatory tools/techniques from existing sources. These tools can be used together with stakeholders in achieving specific objectives (i.e. engaging and incensing actors and stakeholders or interrogating existing knowledge etc.). Links are provided to existing manuals and toolkits with instructions how to implement the techniques. Categories of tools/techniques to achieve each of the six objectives are allocated a unique symbol.
- Another [Google Sheet](#) serves as an online record where participants record where stakeholder engagement (i.e. workshops, user cases, focus groups etc.) occur. Other data that is to be recorded includes information on who involved and why they are likely to want /be incentivised to participate. The techniques that can be used for each where/who/why scenario are indicated by the unique symbols associated with each of the six objectives/functions.

Figure 5 A screenshot of the MAA toolbox developed by Teagasc for H2020 projects









Partners can access and add more techniques to the toolbox. It is important to remember that appropriate techniques must be intuitively chosen for different manifestations of how the scenarios evolve in context.

The list illustrated in Table 2 includes detailed guidelines to implement tools and techniques, such as the comprehensive modular manual by Chevalier and Buckles²⁹. Direct links to examples of the tools and techniques available in Chevalier and Buckles and other sources are provided in the table below, categorised according to the objectives identified.

²⁹ Chevalier, J.M., Buckles, D.J. (2013) Handbook for Participatory Action Research, Planning and Evaluation, SAS2 Dialogue, Ottawa. The work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution- Noncommercial 2.5 Canada License, available in pdf format from the authors' website at www.participatoryactionresearch.net

Table 2 Methods for Stakeholder Engagement and Innovation Brokering

Objective (What?)	How?
Engaging 	Active Listening (P.35 of LINK) Stakeholder Identification (p. 75 of LINK) Participatory Engagement Planning (p. 64 of LINK) Power (p. 83 of LINK) Stakeholder Rainbow (p. 77 of LINK) Social Analysis CLIP (p. 79 of LINK)
Interrogating Existing Knowledge 	Audience Reaction Team (LINK) ‘Exploring’ (P.63 of LINK) Concept Mapping (p. 8 of LINK) The Socratic Wheel (p. 47 of LINK) Information Gathering, Analysis, Sharing (GAS) (p. 54 of LINK) Timeline (p. 59 of LINK) Case Visits: Pearls, Puzzles, Proposals (p. 4 of LINK)
Creating New Knowledge 	Flexible Brainstorming (p. 6 LINK) Opening Out’ (p. 63 of LINK) Concept Mapping (p. 8 of LINK) Ideal Scenario (p. 97 of LINK)
Addressing Challenges/Problems 	Previous Responses (p. 61 of LINK) Resource Mapping (p. 63 of LINK) Problem Tree (p. 65 of LINK) Levels of Support (p 105 of LINK) Sabotage (p. 100 of LINK) Gaps and Conflicts (p. 67 of LINK) Card Sort (p. 8 of LINK) Force Field (p. 69 of LINK) Paradox (p. 71 of LINK)
Applying Knowledge 	‘Closing down’ (p. 64 of LINK) Free List and Pile Sort (p. 39 of LINK) Ranking (p. 41 of LINK) Validation (p. 32 of LINK) Rating (p. 44 of LINK) Results and Risks (p. 111 of LINK)
Evaluation and Impact Assessment 	Diagnostic Checklist (LINK) Outcome Mapping (LINK) Force Field Analysis (LINK) SIMP process visual (p. 6-7 LINK)

Section 2: Multi-Actor Training Events

Introduction

Participatory training took place at the Kick-off-Meeting (29/11/2018), the first face-to-face Management Committee Meeting (13/06/2019), and the first Annual Meeting (21-22/11/2019). As previously outlined; “A ‘participatory method’ per se does not exist because whether or not a method becomes participatory, relies on the frame of mind of the facilitator”³⁰. Therefore, the purpose of these initial training events wasn’t necessarily to train partners in the methods per say; rather they served to familiarise and train partners in the principles of participatory methods. The events were also used to seek partners opinions, extract their knowledge and ultimately to demonstrate how to solve problems in a collaborative and creative environment.

Figure 6 FAIRshare partners taking part in a participatory exercise at the Kick-off-Meeting



The objectives of the training events were to develop knowledge and practice of participatory principles and to learn to adopt the MAA to engage with diverse actors and stakeholders in a participatory manner. The approach adopted was to

³⁰ Groot, A.M. (2002) Demystifying Facilitation of Multi-Actor learning Processes
Annemarie E. Groot, Wageningen University, available online: <http://edepot.wur.nl/165782> Date accessed: 02/12/2019.

train partners through ‘learning by doing’³¹. All three events had two components; a detailed explanation of the concept of participatory processes and the MAA (i.e. an overview of the content provided in the previous sections) and group exercises. The sections that follow outline the activities adopted at each of the first three training events carried out for FAIRshare.

Ground Rules and Group Dynamics

At the beginning of each training event the importance of building a positive personal rapport with the participants was stressed. In doing so, facilitators can gain trust in moderating group exercises. Hence, at each training event the group was provided the opportunity to establish ground rules. Ground rules ensure that at group events everybody takes responsibility to make it successful. Examples of ground rules include:

- Participation
- Familiarisation
- Rapport
- At ease
- Energy
- Confidentiality
- Listen
- Learn
- Use ‘I’
- Avoid ‘side discussions’
- Critique idea rather than person
- Mobile phones / laptops?
- Relax and have fun!

The seven principles of participation outlined earlier in this document were also referred to at the beginning of each exercise. Posters displaying the ground rule and the principles of participation were placed on a wall at each training event. Although a group exercise is participatory the process must have a focus and keep to topic and agenda. A ‘Burning Issues’ poster was used to demonstrate how to defuse potentially difficult situations where people feel they don’t have space or permission to voice an issue that’s important to them. Participants were therefore provided an outlet to note their pertinent issues on another poster placed on a wall. Facilitators could return to poster and address the issues at a later time, thus ensuring that the focus of each exercise was maintained. A ‘Talking Wall’ poster was also placed on a wall as an evaluation tool.

³¹ IIED (1988) A brief guide to training in participatory methods in the workshop. PLA Notes, 33, 82-85.

Training Event No.1: Kick-off-Meeting (26/11/2018)

Icebreaker

Group task: An ‘icebreaker’ was used at the Kick-off-Meeting as a method for the consortium to get to know one another. Icebreakers are often used for groups where people are not familiar with one another and assist in removing the initial barriers of associated with people meeting for the first time. The method involved each person having to speak to the person next to them on a predefined theme. At the Kick-off-Meeting the icebreaker comprised of consortium members briefly discussing their favourite meal.

Materials used: N/A

Debriefing: After the exercise was finished, the participants were asked to quickly summarise to the audience what they had learnt about the person next to them with regards to their favourite food.

Actor/Stakeholder Identification: Social Network Diagram

Group task: Social network diagrams can be used to analyse social relationships and be used as a visualisation tool. Áine Macken-Walsh of Teagasc spoke about the different roles of actors and stakeholders. Partners then engaged in a ‘Stakeholder Identification’ brainstorming exercise for each of the individual WPs. A collection of picture cuttings were provided which could be used to prompt ideas and wider thinking and asked to write down stakeholders for their group’s WP. Next, a large group participatory sort was carried out whereby participants called out stakeholders they had identified and sorted them into categories for the overall FAIRshare actor/stakeholder map. For more detailed information please refer to D8.1.

Materials used: flipchart paper, random picture cuttings from newspapers and magazines, four premade matrix tables, printed topic guides, sellotape, blue-tac, thick black markers on each table (1 per person), post-its.

Debriefing: Áine Macken-Walsh concluded the findings of the exercise to the audience at the end of the session.

Figure 7 Outcomes of the stakeholder/actor identification exercise at the Kick-off-Meeting



Brainstorming, Card Sort and Matrix

Group task: The participatory techniques used in the WP break-out sessions included 'Brainstorms', 'Card Sorts' and 'Matrix'. These techniques were first demonstrated to participants by Áine Macken-Walsh using WP2 as an example. A 'Topic Banner' was developed for each WP; these were targeted questions for facilitating a structured discussion around each WP which generally target the 'who', 'what', and 'why' issues. For example, for WP2 the Topic Banner was as follows:

- What? "A multi-actor approach to identifying Good Practice DATs"
- Who to involve? Why (what knowledge will they bring)?

First, participants carried out a brainstorm of the 'who' (the actors involved in the issue) and the 'why' (why from their perspective should they be involved). Ideas were written down on different coloured post-its; one idea per post-it was specified. Then, participants sorted the post-its onto a poster with a developed Matrix, as shown in the image below for WP2. The yellow Post-its represent the 'who' while the green post-its represent the 'why'.

Figure 8 An example of the outcomes of the brainstorming, card sort, and matrix exercise at the Kick-off-Meeting



For the break-out sessions, each WP was given a ‘Topic Banner’ and a Matrix template to work on; WPs were given the option to revise the Topic Banner if they wished. At the end of the break-out sessions, the matrix developed for each WP was displayed on the walls of the meeting venue for all consortium partners to view. For more detailed information please refer to D8.1.

Materials used: flipchart paper, four premade matrix tables, printed topic guides, sellotape, blue-tac, thick black markers on each table (1 per person), post-its.

Debriefing: After the exercise was finished, the participants were asked to present their results to the audience. What did they find? Which conclusion did they draw?

Training Event No.2: Face-to-Face Management Committee Meeting (13/06/2019)

The first face-to face Management Committee meeting represented an opportunity to conduct a training exercise with WP leaders. The format of the training was similar to that of the Kick-off-Meeting where an overview of the MAA and participatory processes was first conducted followed by a group exercise.

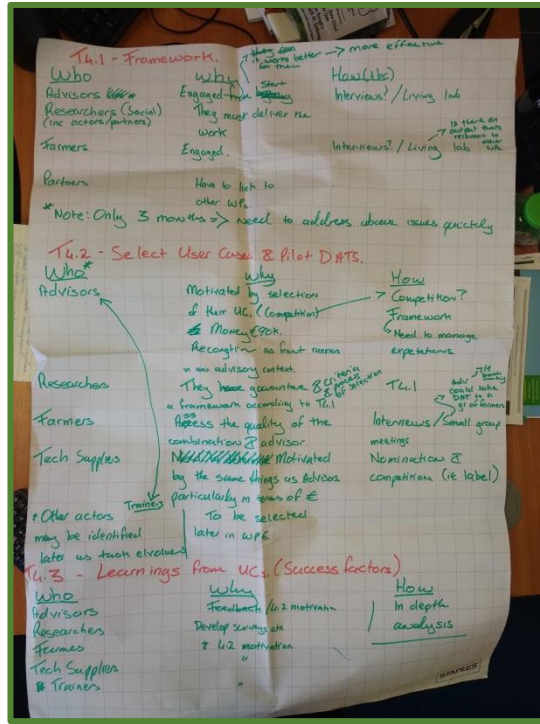
Brainstorming, Card Sort and Matrix

Group task: This technique was first demonstrated to participants at the Kick-off-Meeting and the same methodology was applied at the face-to-face Management Committee meeting. However, this time WP leaders were asked to apply the approach to WP2 and WP4 on a task-by-task basis. Those in attendance were broken into two groups where each group focused on one particular WP. A 'Topic Banner' was developed for each of WP; these were targeted questions for facilitating a structured discussion around each WP which generally target the 'who', 'why', 'how' and 'when':

- Who will be involved in each task?
- Why from their perspective should they be involved in the task?
- How will they be involved in implementing the task?
- When will they be involved in implementing the task?

It is important to emphasise that this was a training exercise and that the content generated does not necessarily reflect what will occur in each task over the course of its activity. The exercise was nevertheless useful in that it exemplified to all WP leaders how the MAA was relevant to all aspects of the project. For more detailed information please refer to the minutes of the Management Committee face-to-face meeting.

Figure 9 An example of the outcomes of the brainstorming and matrix exercise at the Management Committee meeting



Materials used: flipchart paper, four premade matrix tables, printed topic guides, sellotape, blue-tac, thick black markers on each table (1 per person), post-its.

Debriefing: After the exercise had finished, the participants presented their results to the other group.

Training Event No.3: Annual Meeting (21-22/11/2019)

Brainstorming, Card Sort and Matrix

Group task: An introductory presentation on what constitutes a good practice was provided by John Hyland. Thereafter, a brainstorming exercise was implemented to identify good practices using a matrix of what/how/where/who and why? The consortium will be divided into four tables. Partners from the same institutions were separated, as were those from similar institutions. Each table therefore included a diversity of people as well as a facilitator. Topic banners were displayed pertaining to the following:

- What type of DATS are you familiar with?/Where is the DATS used?
- How is the DATS used?
- Who uses the DATS?
- Why (from their perspectives) do advisors use the DATS?

In order to prevent ‘tunnel vision’ and ‘silo-thinking’ participants were asked to brainstorm the range of DATS by considering what DATS they were familiar with, where they are used, who uses them, how they are used and why (the motivations underpinning the motivations why people use them). By considering digitalisation in such a comprehensive manner the project is more likely to identify wide ranging diverse DATS and those that are more relevant to more wide ranging people/advisors. Partners were first asked to brainstorm different types of DATS and where they were used. Once brainstorming was fully complete, partners started to sort their ideas based on shared commonalities to prevent duplication etc. and to create more manageable categories to work with. A facilitator at each table asked probing questions such as: ‘do any of these go together and why?’; once sorted, ‘what name would you put on this category/cluster?’

After the brainstorming and card sorting exercises participants were presented with a matrix and subsequently asked to complete the missing cells. Firstly, participants placed their categories of DATS under the ‘what’ column. Then they moved across the matrix and filled in the corresponding fields associated with each DATS identified (how, who and why).

Materials used: a list of participants, flipchart paper, four premade matrix tables, printed topic guides, sellotape, blue-tac, thick black markers on each table (1 per person), post-its.

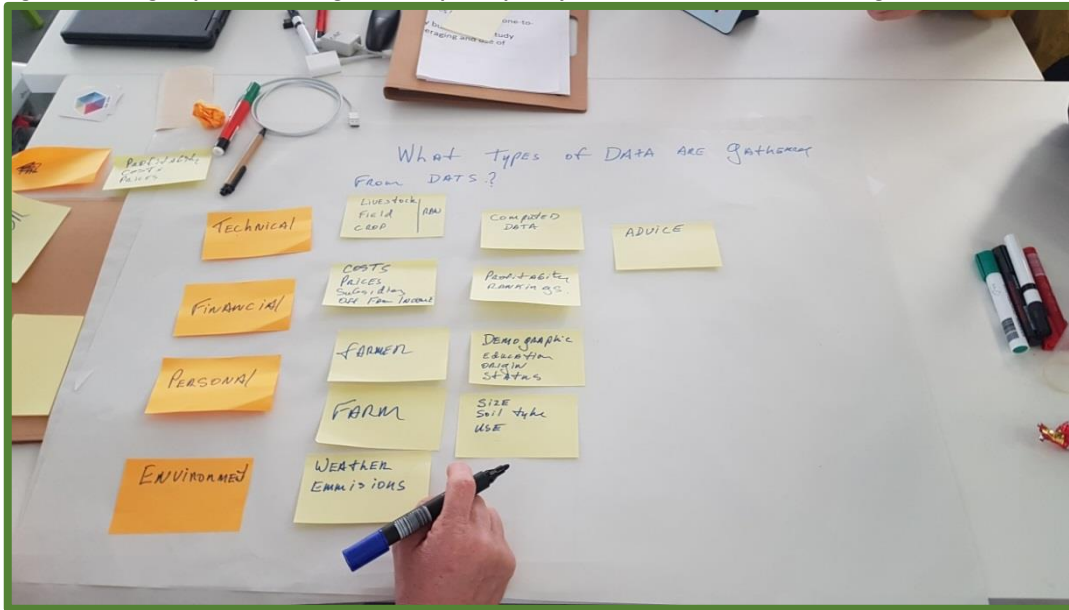
Debriefing: Each group was assigned five minutes to report their findings for each category of DAT identified. Each group placed their matrix on a wall and explained to the audience what they had found.

Figure 10 Consortium members taking part in a participatory exercise at the Annual Meeting



Brainstorming and Card Sort

Figure 11 One group works through the RRI participatory exercise at the Annual Meeting



Group task: On day two of the annual meeting brainstorming and card sorting were both implemented for a Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) workshop as well as a workshop focusing on advisors motivation to adopt DATS. Áine Regan from Teagasc provided a short introductory presentation explaining RRI. Afterwards partners were invited to take part in a participatory workshop on the topic. Participants were divided into four groups (with approximately 5-7 participants per group). The workshop consisted of three inter-linked exercises. For more detail on the workshop please refer to D7.6.

Figure 12 Consortium members working through the participatory exercise conducted by AUA



Later in day two of the annual meeting Alexandros Koutsouris from AUA hosted a workshop on focusing on advisors motivations to use DATS. Brainstorming and card sorting were again both used to form a participatory exercise. The exercise consisted of two steps:

- Step 1: Mentimeter was used to assess the use of smartphones, tablets and apps among the participants;
- Step 2: Participants were divided into four groups (two groups focusing on farmers and two groups focusing on advisors) and asked what are the motivating factors of their assigned actor type to use digital tools and what obstacles do they face.

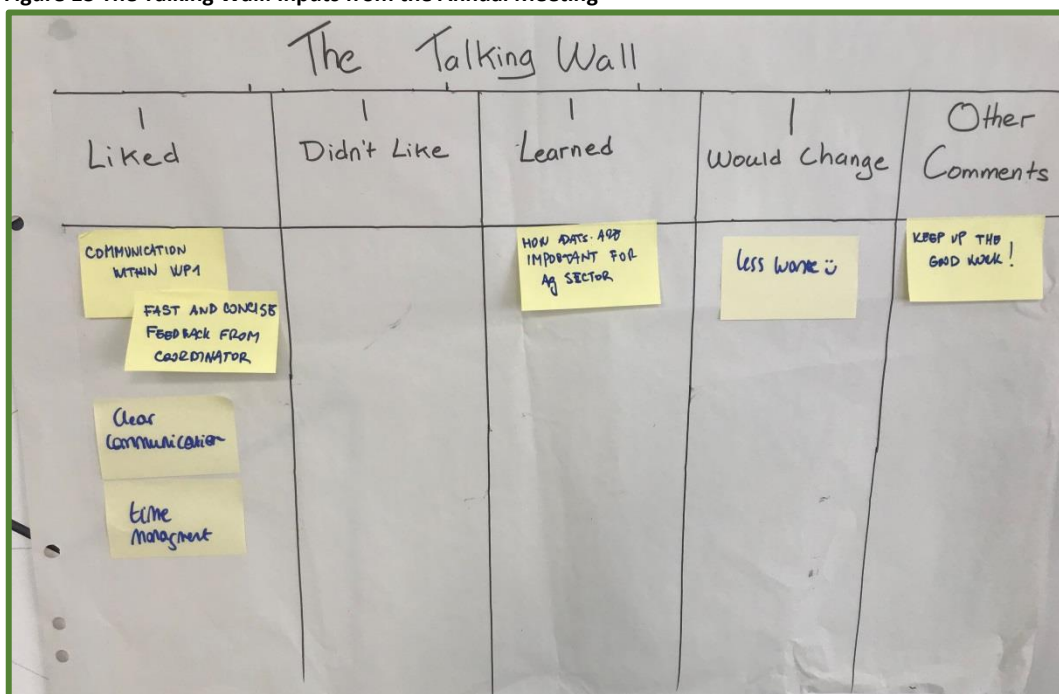
Materials used: flipchart paper, thick black markers on each table (1 per person), post-its.

Debriefing: Each group was assigned five minutes to report their findings for each category of DAT identified. Each group placed their findings on a wall and explained to the audience what they had found.

Evaluation: Cross-checking of Expectations

Group task: Consortium meetings also began with an introduction to the concept of the Talking Wall. The method is a participatory evaluation approach which allowed participants to express their experiences of the sessions. In order to capture participants' input, a large poster was displayed in a prominent position in the meeting room and participants were able to add post-it's on aspects of the meeting that they liked, disliked, learned or would change.

Figure 13 The Talking Wall: Inputs from the Annual Meeting



Participants were offered the opportunity to add their inputs to the Talking Wall gradually over the course of the meetings although it must be introduced along with the ground rules.

Materials used: flipchart paper, post-its.

Debriefing: After the meetings were over the coordinator reviews the findings of the evaluation process and addresses issues where required.

Appendix

Self-Appraisal for Groups: Guide for Facilitators

This assessment sheet found on the proceeding page is designed to assist in facilitating a structured conversation about how a group is functioning on an iterative basis and how it might function better. The sheet is divided into five components, which correspond to five key ingredients for successful groups (please refer to the next page).

Table 3 The self-appraisal sheet for facilitators

1. Do you have shared goals in this group		
Members have different goals	We have some shared goals	Many shared goals
2. Is the schedule of meetings clear and predictable		
Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
3. Do you feel comfortable talking truthfully in the group		
Sometimes people don't feel comfortable sharing	Most members feel comfortable most of the time	Yes, we all feel comfortable sharing
4. Do you think member feel comfortable challenging others within the group		
Sometimes members feel offended by others	There's a challenging but mostly positive atmosphere	We readily and positively challenge each other
5. Are the meetings enjoyable to attend		
Sometimes	Most of the time	Always very enjoyable
6. In this group, are the activities relevant and interesting to all members, do you think?		
Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
7. If you were to pick one word to describe this group, what would it be?		
Hard to pick a word	A positive word:	A not so positive word:
8. Can you please comment on the facilitation of this group		
9. Can you give an example of a very well facilitated meeting or event that you attended		
10. Are there any other issues you would like to mention/address		

Please tick where appropriate for questions 1 to 7. Questions 8 to 10 are open ended and can be answered as desired in the space provided.

Evaluation Form

A standard training evaluation form can be used for the evaluation of MAA activities^{32 33} (Table 3).

Table 4 The evaluation form for participatory exercises

	Negative —————> Positive				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. The event has met overall objectives?					
2. The objectives were appropriate to my needs?					
3. Did the event fit your expectations?					
4. How beneficial did you find the event?					
5. Were the topics explained in a clear way?					
6. Did you find the topics interesting?					
7. Was the content at the appropriate level?					
8. The event encouraged participant involvement?					
Additional Comments					
9. Please comment on the methods used.					
10. Is there anything about this event that you would like to have been done differently?					
11. Suggestions for future events?					

³² Tote, C. Van Hoolst, R., Imala, V., Dong, Q. (2014) Crop Monitoring as an E-agricultural tool in Developing Countries: Report on E-Agricultural Workshop and Training on Remote Sensing. Brussels: European Commission.

³³ van Dijk, L., Hayton, A., Main, D. C. J., Booth, A., King, A., Barrett, D. C., Buller H. J., Reyher, K. K. (2017) Participatory Policy Making by Dairy Producers to Reduce Anti-Microbial use on Farms. Zoonoses and Public Health, 64 (6), pp. 476-484.

Respondents are required to score initial questions on a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being particularly negative and 5 being particularly positive. Questions in the 'Additional Comments' section are open ended and can be answered as desired in the space provided.

The Talking Wall

Participants will be given post-it-notes and asked to write comments about the training which they received onto a flip-chart for each of the following categories:

- “I like”
- “I didn’t like”
- “I learned”
- “I would change”

All participants are encouraged to read the comments provided by others.

Oral Feedback

Oral feedback entails listening and understanding everyone’s perspective of the event. It assesses how the training was received and establishes what changes needed to be made to the training that may not have been elicited in the other evaluation methods.