



**SOLINSA**  
Support of Learning and Innovation  
Networks for Sustainable Agriculture

Agricultural Knowledge Systems In Transition:  
Towards a more effective and efficient support of Learning  
and Innovation Networks for Sustainable Agriculture

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# **TRAINING COURSE CONCEPT FOR TRANSITION PARTNERS SUPPORTING LINSA**

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## Executive summary

The SOLINSA transition partner<sup>1</sup> training is designed for professional and experienced rural extension officers, rural development managers, researchers, experts and advisors aiming to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to contribute in the emergence and development of LINSAs.

The SOLINSA project has followed and studied 17 LINSAs of different types in eight European countries over a period of almost three years, searching to understand how to better support them in their role in the transition towards a more Sustainable Agriculture. The participatory research approach has applied a set of tools and methods, to support the needs of both the LINSAs and the transition partners. Understanding the key success factors of this collaboration has been at the centre of the reflections for preparing the pilot training at the end of the SOLINSA research project.

The different experiences have shown that the knowledge, skills and attitude of the person or group of persons playing the role of transition partners have a major influence on the success of the supportive interactions. By sharing the experiences during the project researchers have played the role of transition partners allowing them to distinguish, identify and describe a set of competences that were needed.

The training concept presented in this document aims to share the knowledge acquired in the project with future transition partners, i.e. relevant actors and stakeholders who are in the situation to support a LINSAs. It is based on the real life experiences of a pilot training which was carried out and evaluated by a trainer team stemming from the SOLINSA consortium. This pilot training took place with 13 participants, 6 trainers and 2 observers, coming from 7 European countries, between 7th and 25th of October 2013. The learned experiences, during the pilot training place has been documented, analysed and fed into the presented concept.

The trainees considered that the tools to analyse social learning, the dynamic of innovation, as well as the processes in networks are very useful for their daily work. The test training resulted in a training methodology that can now be used and adapted to train transition partners in different situations. It also gave the opportunity to better formalise the methodology to support LINSAs and the different possible roles of transition partners.

This training concept is on the one hand the result of all the work carried out during the SOLINSA project ([www.solinsa.net](http://www.solinsa.net)), and on the other hand it triggered a number of specific tools and concepts that have arisen to face of the challenges of the training itself as well as the questions of the participants. The support of a transition partner (trainings and support of a collegial transition partners' network) is considered a substantial part of policy recommendations (Burkart et al. 2013).

We therefore would like to stress that this concept is the fruit of a large

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<sup>1</sup> See definition in chapter 2

collaboration and the willing investment of many experts, and we want to acknowledge them thankfully for their valuable contributions.

As a result of the three years interaction with LINSAs, the SOLINSA researchers have identified that the transition partners play a key role in supporting the LINSAs in their transition process towards a more sustainable agriculture.

Each of the fields of action of a transition partner requires its particular set of knowledge and skills. These do not fit into the hands of single persons but often need the collaboration of a transition partner team. They could be professional and experienced rural extension officers, rural development managers or advisors, researchers or other experts. They must have among other competences profound facilitation skills and dispose of a large network within the Agricultural Knowledge System (AKS) and outside the AKS, have strong projects management and organisational development skills.

The training focuses on a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that the SOLINSA project has brought to light as crucial for supporting the LINSAs. These are considered necessary and have to underlie the different fields of action to be able to carry out a coherent and efficient support for LINSAs. The efficient transition partners need to know and understand the theoretical key concepts that will allow them to carry out context relevant analyses, to understand and to apply successfully the suggested methods and approaches. They also have to understand the importance and the impact of their own position and attitude to be able to create the needed links and establish a trustful partnership with the LINSAs.

After the training, participants shall have a new understanding about learning and innovation processes in networks for a sustainable agriculture. Participants shall be able to analyse the context and to design an adequate support strategy to lead LINSAs through an empowerment process, allowing LINSAs to achieve autonomously their own transition towards sustainable agriculture. Participants shall be able to reflect about the impact of their own attitude on the process, specifically concerning the building of a trustful partnership.

The training is composed of three phases: firstly e-learning to enable the participants to learn theoretical background and to interact with the expert during dedicated webinars; secondly a three and half days face-to-face seminar, during which the participants work on their own show case and different examples coming from the SOLINSA project to train the application of the theoretical concepts; and lastly a learning community which allows the participants share their experience on a web-based community of practice (CoP).

# TABLE OF CONTENT

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>OBJECTIVES OF THE TRAINING.....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1	Transition partners and their training needs .....	9
2.2	Target audience .....	10
2.3	Outcome challenges.....	10
2.4	Learning Objectives.....	10
2.4.1	<b>Knowledge .....</b>	<b>10</b>
2.4.2	<b>Skills .....</b>	<b>11</b>
2.4.3	<b>Attitude.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>DIDACTICAL OUTLINE OF THE TRAINING AND FACILITIES.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>TRAINING PROGRAM.....</b>	<b>14</b>
4.1	E-learning phase .....	15
4.1.1	<b>Objectives .....</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1.2	<b>General organisation of e-learning phase .....</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1.3	<b>Lesson description .....</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1.4	<b>Best practices for webinars – from the SOLINSA experience.....</b>	<b>26</b>
4.2	Face-to-face seminar .....	27
4.2.1	<b>Specific objectives of the face-to-face seminar .....</b>	<b>27</b>
4.2.2	<b>General organisation .....</b>	<b>27</b>
4.2.3	<b>Module description .....</b>	<b>27</b>
4.3	Learning material .....	41
<b>5</b>	<b>EVALUATION OF THE TEST TRAINING .....</b>	<b>43</b>
5.1	Results of the evaluation – the point of view of trainees .....	43
5.2	Results of the evaluation: the point of view of the trainers .....	45
5.3	Major lessons learnt from the test training: .....	46
<b>6</b>	<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>47</b>
	<b>ANNEX 1.....</b>	<b>49</b>
	<b>ANNEX 2.....</b>	<b>54</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Theme centred interaction (Cohn 1976).....	24
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## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Program overview .....	14
Table 2 Results of 1st evaluation sheet: Course evaluation.....	43
Table 3 Results of 2nd evaluation sheet: Course structure evaluation ...	44

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The SOLINSA project has followed and studied 17 LINSAs of different types in eight European countries over a period of almost three years, aiming to understand how to better support them in their role in the transition towards a more Sustainable Agriculture. The participatory research approach has applied a set of tools and methods (Home and Moschitz, 2014), to support the need of both the LINSAs and the researchers. The outcome challenges of these interactions had to be defined together between the researchers and the stakeholders of the studied LINSAs. This allowed an adequate collaboration protocol to be established. Understanding the key success factors of this collaboration has been at the centre of the preparation for the pilot training at the end of the SOLINSA research project.

The different experiences have shown that the ability of the researchers to contribute to this transition is not obvious and that the knowledge, skills and attitude of the person or group of persons playing the role of transition partners<sup>2</sup> have a major influence on the success of the supportive interactions.

By sharing the experiences during the project researchers have played the role of transition partners allowing them to distinguish, identify and describe a set of competences that were needed.

The training concept presented in this document aims to share the knowledge acquired in the project with future transition partners, i.e. relevant actors and stakeholders who are in situation to support a LINSAs. It is based on the live experiences of a pilot training that has been carried out and evaluated by a trainer team stemming from the SOLINSA consortium. This pilot training took place in Paris, with 13 participants, already acting as transition partners from research and innovation organisations, coming from 7 European countries, between 7th and 25th of October 2013. The learned experiences, during the pilot training place has been documented (see annexes pages 42 and following), analysed and fed in the presented concept.

The concept of “transition partner” emerged only after the training, but the interest to get involved in the LINSAs, within a supportive role was clearly identified by the participants. The trainees considered that the tools to analyse social learning, the dynamic of innovation, as well as the processes in networks as very useful for their daily work. Parallel to this, the facilitated and interactive sequences, creative methods which help to know each other, to exchange and to collaborate were well received. The test training resulted in a training methodology that can now be used and adapted to train transition partners in different situations. It also gave the opportunity to better formalise the methodology to support LINSAs and the different possible roles of transition partners (Dockes et al., 2013; Helmle 2013;).

This training concept is also the result of: the theoretical framework as it has been structured and refined in the project (Brunori et al. 2011; 2013; Tisenkopfs

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<sup>2</sup> See definition in chapter 2

et al. 2014), the participatory learning and working methods described (Home and Moschitz, 2014), the understanding of the context (Hermans et al., 2011) and the structure of LINSAs (Ingram et al., 2013). But it also triggered a number of specific tools and concepts that have arisen from challenges of the training and the questions of the participants. The support of “transition partner” (trainings and support of a collegial transition partners’ network) is considered as a substantial part in the policy recommendations (Burkart et al. 2013).

We therefore would like to stress that this concept is the fruit of a large collaboration and the willing investment of many experts, and we want to acknowledge them thankfully for their valuable contributions.

## 2 OBJECTIVES OF THE TRAINING

### 2.1 Transition partners and their training needs

As a result of the three years interaction with LINSAs, the SOLINSA researchers have identified that the transition partners play a key role in supporting the LINSAs in their transition process towards a more sustainable agriculture. The different roles and functions of a transition partner require a particular set of knowledge and skills that this training can provide.

#### TRANSITION PARTNER

Transition partner is a collective term for actors supporting LINSAs in their development in a **co-operative way**.

Important is that these actors show a self-understanding of being learners and listeners. Basic attitudes are **authenticity, empathy and appreciation, as well as patience and sincere curiosity**.

The intention of transition partners is to **stimulate social learning processes, new developments respectively advancements of innovations, and network development** with the aim of supporting sustainable development.

Source: Helmle, 2013

The transition partners can have different roles. The authors identify the following fields of action:

1. Internal strengthening and advancement of the LINSAs, in the role of a **facilitator**.
2. Participative data collection and analysis with a group of LINSAs members, in the role of a **participatory researcher**.
3. Methodological support in the development and establishment of boundary objects, in the role of a **boundary person**.
4. Technical support in the development and establishment of boundary objects, in the role of **an expert, lecturer or trainer**.
5. Support in improving the connection to the AKS and in increasing networking activities, in the role of **an intermediary person**.
6. Support of LINSAs in developing Operational Groups, in the role of **an innovation broker** as defined in the European Innovation Partnership.

Each of the fields of action of a transition partner requires its particular set of knowledge and skills. These do not fit into the hands of single persons but often need the collaboration of a transition partner team. They could be professional and experienced rural extension officers, rural development managers or advisors, researchers or experts. They must have, among other competences, profound facilitation skills, access to a large network within and outside the Agricultural Knowledge System (AKS), and have strong projects management and organisational development skills.

The training does not concentrate on all the skills and competences needed by transition partners. It focuses on a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that SOLINSA project has brought to light as crucial for supporting the LINSAs. These are considered necessary and have to underline the different fields of action to be able to carry out a coherent and efficient support for LINSAs. The efficient transition partners need to know and understand the theoretical key concepts that will allow them to carry out context relevant analyses, to understand and to apply successfully the suggested methods and approaches. They also have to understand the importance and the impact of their own position and attitude to be able to create the needed links and establish a trustful partnership with the LINSAs. This set of knowledge, skills and attitude are the object of the transition partner training we describe here.

## 2.2 Target audience

The SOLINSA transition partner training is designed for professional and experienced rural extension officers, rural development managers, researchers, experts and advisors aiming to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to contribute in the emergence and development of LINSAs.

As they are not addressed in this training, the following skills are a prerequisite for participating:

- Participants have proven facilitation skills.
- They are key persons at the interface between AKS of their area or country and the rural networks.
- They are involved in linking relevant rural and agricultural stakeholders in joint learning and action-research programmes.
- They bring along their experience and are ready to share it with others.

## 2.3 Outcome challenges

After the training, participants shall have a new understanding about learning and innovation processes in networks for a sustainable agriculture. Participants shall be able to analyse the context and to design an adequate support strategy to lead LINSAs through an empowerment process allowing LINSAs to achieve autonomously their own transition towards sustainable agriculture. Participants shall be able to reflect about the impact of their own attitude on the process, specifically concerning the building of a trustful partnership.

## 2.4 Learning Objectives

In order to face the outcome challenges, the following learning objectives are defined regarding knowledge, skills and attitude.

### 2.4.1 Knowledge

The participants should know and understand the concepts of: LINSAs, networks, innovation, learning, boundary objects, social learning, sustainable agriculture, transition partner, (Brunori et al., 2011; 2013; Tisenkopfs et al., 2014)

Participants should know and understand the characteristics of LINSAs and how

Sustainable agriculture can be characterised (Ingram et al., 2013)

They should know and understand the concepts of AKS, Agriculture Innovation System (AIS), and be able to identify the different actors of the AKS and their roles (Hermans et al., 2011)

Participants should be able to understand the political context both at EU level, (in particular framed by the EIP ‘Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability’, and Horizon 2020); national and local level. They must be able to identify where LINSAs can find support (Burkart et al., 2013).

Participants should be able to choose appropriate interactive and participatory tools and methods to support LINSAs (Home and Moschitz, 2014).

### **2.4.2 Skills**

Participants must be able to use the learned concepts to analyse the context of their situation or case and to elaborate an adequate strategy to support a LINSAs.

### **2.4.3 Attitude**

Participants must be able to reflect about the impact of their attitude towards the LINSAs. They must be able to adapt it in order to facilitate the establishment of a trustful partnership with manifold and diverse actors.

### 3 DIDACTICAL OUTLINE OF THE TRAINING AND FACILITIES

In coherence with the findings and the general approach of the SOLINSA research project the didactical outline of the training is based on the following fundamentals:

- *The participants and the trainers are partners in a common learning process; there is not an expert (or group of experts) in front of a group of ignorant people. All participants and trainers bring their set of expertise and together they will co-construct a new knowledge stemming out from this particular situation and combination of persons. The trainers will adopt an exemplary position and role of transition partners ('walk the talk').*
- *The training is a learning opportunity where each participant is responsible for his own learning and development process.*
- *Learning is a systemic process and therefore is facilitated by the interaction between participants. The social learning aspects are emphasized through many participatory exercises carried out in small groups that contributing step by step to build the new knowledge.*
- *Theoretical inputs are considered as stimulating mater for reflection always subject to be questioned. They are never to be considered as absolute or definitive truth.*

The number of participants should be between 10 and 15 (max. 18) to allow an appropriated group dynamic and direct interaction between the participants and the trainers

The training is composed of three phases:

**E-learning:** During the three weeks preceding the face-to-face seminar the participants follow an e-learning process where they are able to learn (readings and exercises) the theoretical background and to interact with the expert during dedicated webinars. The objective is to start the training with sufficient understanding of the concept to step in to practical training from the beginning of the seminar. The participants are able to identify and document their own show case they will use to work on during the face to face seminar.

**Face-to-face seminar:**

During a three and half day seminar the participants work on their own show case and different examples coming from the SOLINSA project to train the application of the theoretical concepts. Participatory learning methods are used to be coherent with the philosophy of the SOLINSA project.

**Learning community:**

A training web-site is available to the participants and the trainer team to share contents and information about the logistics of the training. The participants are invited to share their own experience in a reflexive

position within a training blog where they share their learning experiences. This platform can thus turn to a web-based community of practice (CoP).

Evaluation is important to accompany the training, and was included at three points in time:

**Evaluation before the training:** adapt the concept to the exact needs of the participants doing interviews – focus groups or other methods.

**Evaluation during the training:** it is interesting to check if the perception and feeling of the participants during the training. In particular it is useful to carry out an assessment of this at the beginning of each day and at the end of each day.

**Evaluation at the end of the training:** it is valuable to evaluate the training at the end in order to further develop it for the next implementation. (The results of the evaluation of the test training are shown in chapter 5).

## 4 TRAINING PROGRAM

Table 1 shows the overview of the whole training program. After that, the different modules of the program are described in detail. The structure of the descriptions is inspired by Gerster-Bentaya and Hofmann (2011).

**Table 1 Program overview**

E-learning (see chapter 4.1)			Face to face Seminar (see chapter 4.2)				
Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	
<b>Lesson 1.1</b> Introduction to the training	<b>Lesson 2.1</b> <b>Self-learning</b> Understanding the context, what is AKS, AIS, AKIS, ... <b>Webinar</b>	<b>Lesson 3.1</b> <b>Self-learning</b> Transition partners and LINSAs <b>Webinar</b> Transition partners and LINSAs	Morning		Morning review	Morning review	Morning review
<b>Lesson 1.2</b> <b>Self-learning</b> The concept of LINSAs	Discussing the context with the expert				<b>Module 2.1:</b> Getting further in the concept of LINSAs and link to show cases brought by the participants	<b>Module 3.1:</b> The SOLINSA approach into practice: tools, methods, success factors	<b>Module 4.1</b> The self- understanding and resources to become to be a transition partner
<b>Webinar .2</b> Discussing the concepts of LINSAs with the expert	<b>Lesson 2.2</b> <b>Self-learning</b> The characteristics of LINSAs <b>Webinar</b>	<b>Lesson 3.2</b> <b>Self-learning</b> Participatory methods and learning processes <b>Webinar</b>					<b>Module 4.2</b> The policy context for transition partners in supporting LINSAs
	Discussing the characteristics of LINSAs	<b>Webinar</b> Participatory methods and learning processes					<b>Module 4.3</b> The concept of LINSAs in practice
			Afternoon	<b>Module 1:</b> Introduction to the training	<b>Module 2.2</b> The SOLINSA approach "light" and test during a visit	<b>Module 3.1</b> Continuation	<b>Module 4.4</b> Transfer to practice
		<b>Lesson 3.3</b> Preparing the F2F seminar				<b>Module 3.2</b> The roles and tasks of transition partners	<b>Evaluation of the training</b>

## 4.1 E-learning phase

### 4.1.1 Objectives

- Participants and trainers meet each other and start interactions
- Participants get first insights of the main concepts: LINSAs, AKS and AKIS, transition partners
- At the end of the webinars, participants are able to choose one show case they will work on during the training.
- Participants have a practical experience of the possibility to network and to learn using interactive internet tools (web 2.0). They are able to identify opportunities and challenges lying in this technology.
- Participants arrive to the meeting with a preliminary sense of community, belonging and with a clear idea about the approach and the methods they are going to meet during the training.

### 4.1.2 General organisation of e-learning phase

During this phase a set of webinars is carried out. In general each webinar is preceded by a self-learning task that enables participants to participate actively in the discussion with the invited expert. The webinars are facilitated by the training coordinator and an invited expert presents and discusses a specific topic with the participants. The self-learning tasks should as far as possible bring the participants to interact and to collaborate.

### 4.1.3 Lesson description

Each e-learning lesson is composed of a self learning part where participants read and vision learning material that they can find on the training site. In small groups they digest the contents and prepare the questions to be discussed with the experts.

During the webinar the participants give a feedback of their learning and formulate their questions to invited experts. The experts can then give additional contents and interact with participants to deepen the subject of the lesson.

## Lesson 1.1: Introduction to the training

### Webinar

#### Rational

It is important to welcome the participants and to clarify the frame of the training, so trainees may know if they are at the right place and what is coming up. They have to know what the topics are, the objectives of the training, and what investment they will have to make in terms of time, learning efforts and finances.

In the particular case of e-learning they also have to be informed and get familiar with the technical aspect of this learning media

#### Main messages

- Welcoming the participants and give them the opportunity to present themselves and their expertise
- Presenting the SOLINSA project, where it came from and why it brought to offer a specific training
- Present the program and the aims of the training. Set the rule for an efficient co-learning process
- Practicing the use of the webinar tool

#### Sessions

Main (what)	steps	Time	Learning objective (why)	Methods (how)	Learning material used
Opening the training and welcoming the participants	the and the	20'	Welcome the participants Form the working groups (3 persons)	Presentation round	
Presenting the SOLINSA project and the training	the the	40'		PPT presentation and discussion	PPT from H. Moschitz
Setting the frame		10'		Plenum discussion	
Feedback and closing	and	20'		Flash light feedback	

## **Lesson 1.2** The concept of LINSAs and the role of transition partners

### **Self learning**

The participants are invited to view the videos about the introduction of the main definitions and concepts “What is a LINSAs” (Prof. Gianluca Brunori, University of Pisa in Italy and Prof. Talis Tisenkopfs, Baltic Studies Center, Latvia).

In groups of three, participants prepare one slide of a PowerPoint presentation with the three key learnings and one open question to ask the expert during the webinar.

### **Webinar**

#### Rational

There is a strong commitment to sustainability by European Institutions, concerns about the capacity of the food system to meet sustainability goals and the official Agricultural Knowledge Systems (AKS) fail to move in the right way.

Therefore there is a need of innovation to move towards a more sustainable agriculture. Innovation is an improvement that can be technical, organisational or social.

Innovation involves the acquisition of new knowledge, in other words learning. Learning can occur by doing or by interaction. Networks are efficient means to increase these interactions. LINSAs have therefore high potential to bring the needed answers to face above cited challenges.

#### Main messages

- The complexity of change processes resp. innovation processes causes social learning, and interacting in networks, where different people bring in their expertise.
- Establishing a team spirit in a network is a learning process itself. Transition partner might give guidance to those processes, and to enable people to become to be a team.
- Learning about learning processes and gain the capacity of self reflection allowing stakeholders to learn about themselves, who they are what is their role in the system, etc...

Sessions

<b>Main steps (what)</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Learning objective (why)</b>	<b>Methods (how)</b>	<b>Learning material used</b>
Welcoming the participants and getting feedback from the self learning	20'	Acknowledge the work done by the participants	Presentation round Presenting the elaborated ppt slides	
Presenting the the concept of LINSAs and the role of transition partners	40'	Understand the key concept behind LINSAs and their importance to face the challenges of Sustainable Agriculture	PPT presentation and discussion	Videos from G. Brunori and T. Tisenkopfs
Feedback and closing	15'	Reflect about the process	Flash light feedback	

## **Lesson 2.1** “Agricultural Knowledge System in Europe: Characteristics and main issues”.

### **Self learning**

The participants are invited to view the videos about the introduction of the main definitions and concepts of Agricultural Knowledge systems AKS, AKIS, “*Agricultural Knowledge System in Europe: Characteristics and main issues*”.

In groups of three, participants prepare one slide of a powerpoint presentation with the three key learning’s and one open question to ask the expert during the webinar.

### **Webinar**

#### Rational

There is a lot of confusion in the scientific literature about what is Agricultural Knowledge systems AKS, the Agricultural Innovation system AIS, or AKIS if the “I” stands for innovation or information.

Formerly knowledge diffusion or knowledge transfer was often understood as a linear flow from scientist to farmers, with farmers as passive receptors. Today, given the complex problems of sustainable development, the linear knowledge transfer is not any longer appropriate to address the challenges, but a multi-actor perspective is needed, in which farmers are considered to hold a great amount of specific knowledge. In this understanding, scientists, advisors, and farmers are more and more considered as peer collaborators in the knowledge system.

The Agricultural Knowledge System (AKS) refers to the formal knowledge system including vocational schools, universities, advisory services, and research institutions. Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS) additionally includes farmers, NGOs and entrepreneurs in rural areas, and has a stronger focus on the processes between the actors. Agricultural Innovation System (AIS) would be an even broader system including actors outside the agricultural system that might have influence on the innovation process.

What is understood by innovation is also evolving, when innovation used to be considered as a technical device progressively introduced on the market, nowadays an innovation can be any kind improvements that include not only hardware but also the software such as social or environmental aspects.

The position of LINSAs in this context can be very variable from very close to official AKS or quite distant to it.

#### Main messages

- The analysis of the AKS of different nations showed that many actors are involved in developing, and transferring knowledge in the fields of agriculture and rural development. Often the AKS is

fragmented: the actors are not well interrelated; important parts of “alternative” knowledge are not well considered or integrated in the mainstream process of knowledge transfer, and linear ways of knowledge transfer are dominating the educational parts in the system.

- Innovation in agriculture may come from different sectors, for example, technological innovations from other sectors are often adapted to sectorial needs. Procedures to consider innovations that are developed on farms or in transdisciplinary projects that take in consideration farmers views are rare.
- Analyzing the AKS is helpful to identify the position of a specific LINSAs, to identify potential partners and to understand relevant knowledge fluxes.

### Sessions

<b>Main (what)</b>	<b>steps</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Learning objective (why)</b>	<b>Methods (how)</b>	<b>Learning material used</b>
Welcoming the participants and getting feedback from the self learning		20'	Acknowledge the work done by the participants Collecting the questions to the expert	Presentation round Presenting the elaborated ppt slides	
Presenting the concept of AKS, AKIS, AIS. Using a matrix to analyse AKS in different countries		40'	Understanding the context may identify opportunities and constrains for LINSAs the challenge of Sustainable Agriculture	PPT presentation and discussion	PPT presentation by Frans Hermans (video from webinar)
Feedback and closing		15'	Reflect about the process	Flash light feedback	

## Lesson 2.2 Characteristics of LINSAs

### Self-learning

The participants are invited to view the power point videos about the characteristics of LINSAs “*Support Of Learning and Innovation Networks for Sustainable Agriculture*”.

In groups of three, participants prepare one slide of a PowerPoint presentation with the three key learning’s and one open question to ask the expert during the webinar.

### Webinar

#### Rational

When analysing the LINSAs, we can observe a large diversity of them. When looking at the kind of support used or needed by LINSAs we can identify characteristics allow us to classify them in a certain extent.

LINSAs can be active in different domains: social innovation, technical main stream innovation, health- or care farming. They can be farm and/or, consumer oriented. They can involve many actors from inside and outside official agricultural knowledge system.

It is hard to identify a “one fits all” way to support LINSAs. We can identify a set of constrains and opportunities.

#### Main messages

- LINSAs can vary in a large range of scale, number of actors, state of development, aim, ...
- LINSAs support arrangements can have internal or external origin, most of the time LINSAs use a mix of them.

#### Sessions

Main steps (what)	Time	Learning objective (why)	Methods (how)	Learning material used
Welcoming the participants and getting feedback from the self learning	20'	Acknowledge the work done by the participants Collecting the questions to the expert	Presentation round Presenting the elaborated ppt slides	
Characteristics of LINSAs	40'	“ <i>Support Of Learning and Innovation Networks for Sustainable Agriculture</i> ”	Presentation and discussion	PPT
Feedback and closing	15'	Reflect about the process	Flash light feedback	

## Lesson 3.1 Transition partners and LINSAs

### Self-learning

The participants are invited to view the power point videos about the concept of transition partner (see SOLINSA factsheet 05<sup>3</sup>)

In groups of three, participants prepare one slide of a PowerPoint presentation with the three key learning's and one open question to ask the expert during the webinar.

### Webinar

#### Rational

The concept of transition partnership was developed due to the participative LINSAs-researcher interaction. These interactions focused on two aspects: the support of LINSAs and the analytical questions of the researcher to understand the potentials and challenges of LINSAs. Researchers applied a broad set of participative methods to gather data in collaboration with LINSAs members. The interactions themselves were considered as a specific type of support. Mainly via reflections and open discussion in the protected space of research, LINSAs gained deeper understanding of - their own history, - of their communication and decision making patterns, or - of their relationships.

The reflections focused on:

- the visibility of LINSAs in the “outside world” namely the AKS – often this happens through boundary object and/or intermediary persons,
- the mechanisms of learning, considered as a clarifying communication process about everyday procedures in LINSAs on a meta-level.

LINSAs demanded a specific expertise of researchers. People who work with LINSAs or who are part of a LINSAs can become a transition partner.

#### Main messages

Transition partners support LINSAs in their development in a co-operative way. Support through transition partners happens in different roles as facilitator, participative researcher, boundary person, expert/lecturer or trainer, or as intermediary person.

- It is important that transition partners show a self-understanding of being learners and listeners. Basic attitudes are authenticity, humility, empathy and appreciation, as well as patience and sincere curiosity. The interest is to support the LINSAs, and not to impose ideas of change or of an improved performance which comes from outside.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.solinsa.org/fileadmin/Files/newsletter/FACTSHEET\\_5.pdf](http://www.solinsa.org/fileadmin/Files/newsletter/FACTSHEET_5.pdf)

- The intention of transition partners is to stimulate social learning processes, new developments respectively advancements of innovations, and network development with the aim of supporting sustainable agriculture.

Sessions

<b>Main (what)</b>	<b>steps</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Learning objective (why)</b>	<b>Methods (how)</b>	<b>Learning material used</b>
Welcoming the participants and getting feedback from the self learning		20'	Acknowledge the work done by the participants Collecting the questions to the expert	Presentation round Presenting the elaborated ppt slides	
Presenting the concept of AKS, AKIS, AIS. Using a matrix to analyse AKS in different countries		40'	Understanding the context may identify opportunities and constrains for LINSAs the challenge of Sustainable Agriculture	PPT presentation and discussion	PPT presentation by Frans Hermans (video from webinar)
Feedback and closing		15'	Reflect about the process	Flash light feedback	

## Lesson 3.2 Participatory methods and learning process

### Self learning

The participants are invited to view the PowerPoint about the concept of transition partner by Studying learning and innovation networks – transdisciplinary methods in SOLINSA

In groups of three, participants prepare one slide of a powerpoint presentation with the three key learning's and one open question to ask the expert during the webinar.

### Webinar

#### Rational

In complex situations it is increasingly difficult for one individual to outline an adequate analysis of the context and to formulate pertinent reactions. There is a need to include implicate a significant number of actors to be able to identify weak signals present in the environment.

Participation is understood as a social learning and decision making process. Participants of training courses or LINSAs members come up with ideas, with own experiences, and with own concepts. From the trainer or transition partner perspective this knowledge pool is understood as an important and powerful resource. It is essential to activate this resource, to stimulate debates, and to initiate a constructive dynamic between training course participants or LINSAs members.

A powerful concept is the theme-centred about interaction, developed by Ruth Cohn (1976); see Figure 1. She considers that participatory methods have to balance the needs and the responsibility of the I, the patterns and relationships of the group WE, and the components of the theme IT. The triangle of the I, the We and the Theme is surrounded by a globe, which is considered as the subjective relevant environment. For the learning process it is important, that participants become to be aware of their own influence and self responsibility.

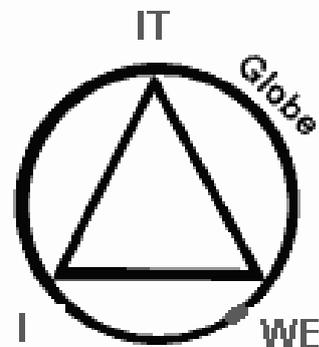


Figure 1 Theme centred interaction (Cohn 1976)

Main messages

- Only collective intelligence can give a pertinent decryption of complex situations.
- Learning is understood as a social process (social learning) among a group of individuals. Group dynamic is part of this learning process. Learning is part of change processes, based on a shared knowledge, with the aim to increase knowledge.
- Participatory methods are based on open questions which stimulate reflection, on short inputs to give some additional information when it is necessary, and on possibilities to interlink the content with own experiences.
- The group of learners (LINSA, participants) is responsible for the results and profoundness of the learning process. Transition partners give guidance to those processes, taking into consideration the content, the individuals and the group.

Main steps (what)	Time	Learning objective (why)	Methods (how)	Learning material used
Welcoming the participants and getting feedback from the self learning	20'	Acknowledge the work done by the participants Collecting the questions to the expert	Presentation round Presenting the elaborated ppt slides	
Presenting the concept of AKS, AKIS, AIS. Using a matrix to analyse AKS in different countries	40'	Understanding the context may identify opportunities and constrains for LINSA the challenge of Sustainable Agriculture	PPT presentation and discussion	PPT presentation "Studying learning and innovation networks – transdisciplinary methods in SOLINSA"
Feedback and closing	15'	Reflect about the process	Flash light feedback	

**Lesson 3.3**

**Self learning 3.2**

To prepare for the face-to-face seminar the participants are asked to prepare a CV of a network they have in mind or are working with that they consider could be a LINSA. This working situation or show cases shall be their reference during the seminar to relate the new learning to their day to day praxis.

#### **4.1.4 Best practices for webinars – from the SOLINSA experience**

- Choose a powerful webinar tool allowing small group outbreaks and raising hand tool
- Invite participants to check in 15 minutes before the beginning of the webinar to control the quality of the connection
- Limit the duration of each webinar to maximum 90'
- Make sure to have as many interaction as possible with the participants during the webinar to stimulate their attention
- It is important to have short but frequent webinars to strengthen the adhesion of the participants to the learning process and to the learning community
- Ask participants to provide a kind of ID (picture, name&country, main working activities) for the first webinar
- Try to limit round table discussions
- Find a way to increase participation (questions, homeworks) and facilitate concentration
- For the training blog create a unique common platform where trainees can share their learning experiences and questions.

## 4.2 Face-to-face seminar

### 4.2.1 Specific objectives of the face-to-face seminar

- Participants and trainers meet in a residential seminar to strengthen their ties and build up a trustful partnership.
- Participants and trainers go through a social learning process and co-construct shared knowledge, skills and attitudes for transition partners.
- The training is the opportunity to experience and to reflect what it is about, more than just theoretical knowledge.
- The participants have the opportunity to make a relation between what they learn and their daily praxis.
- Participants have the opportunity to interact with researchers and LINSAs stakeholders that have experienced the SOLINSA approach.
- Participants and trainers get a deeper insight into SOLINSA concepts and their application possibilities.

### 4.2.2 General organisation

The face-to-face seminar has to take place in a training centre with adequate facilities for lodging and catering of the participants and the trainer team. The main training room will be big enough to allow the learning group to sit all in a circle, to have different practical activities, to hang up different working results on the walls. An adequate number of smaller rooms (one for every multiple of five participants) must be available for breaking out in smaller groups.

### 4.2.3 Module description

#### **Module 1** Introduction to the training

##### Rational

As Gerster-Bentaya and Hofmann. (2011) notes in participatory training approaches it is essential that at the beginning of the event the participants know who is present, why they are there, what they are going to do, and how they are going to do it. Therefore the participants have to know at any given time where the group stands and where it wants to go. The training objectives and the actual program should be visible at all time so that the participants can easily refer to it without disturbing the others. Working rules have to be elaborated and validated together with participants and made visible to be recalled at any time during the event. The trainers and the participants have to know each other to be able to start to build up the trustful partnership that will be needed throughout the training to enable the process of co-creation of new knowledge.

### Main messages

- Opening session: it is clearly understandable that we are now entering a specific process in which we acknowledge to work together to achieve the announced aims.
- Presentation of the trainer team: to know who has triggered and designed the event and to give elements proving their credibility and sincerity.
- Program, Logistics (rooms, excursions etc.): to set the frame of the training in time and in space.
- Training aims: to be clear why we are here and where we want to go to.
- Rules, question-suggestion board, tips & tricks box: to seal a collaboration contract between the trainer team and the participants as well as among them.
- Personal introduction, to know who is here and some elements of their background related to the training topic and to their person.
- Aims of the trainees, to seal a commitment of the participants to take responsibility for their own learning process.
- Blogger, review and logistics teams: to involve the participants in the didactical process each day of the training a new team of participants is responsible to update the learning blog, to prepare and to present a short review of previous day contents and learning's. They will also be involved in the good functioning of the event in terms of logistics (room setting, time keeping, cleaning up, etc.).

Sessions

Main steps (what)	Time	Learning objective(why)	Method	Learning material used
Opening	10'	Clearly understandable that we are now entering a specific process in which we acknowledge to work together to achieve the announced aims.	Presentation; Questions & Answers (Q&A)	
Presentation of the trainers team	15'	To know who has triggered and designed the event and to give elements proving their credibility and sincerity.	Presentation; Q&A	
Program, Aims, Blogger, review and logistics teams	20'	To know at any given time where the group stands and where it wants to go	Presentation; Q&A	
Set the rules	30'	To seal a collaboration contract between the trainer team and the participants as well as among them	Group work (GW); Plenum sharing and formal acknowledgment	
Aims of the trainees	20'	To seal a commitment of the participants to take responsibility for their own learning process	Card questions; Plenum sharing;	
Personal presentation	90'	To know who is here and some element of their background related to the training topic and to their person	Drawing; Plenum sharing; Q&A	

**Module 2.1:** Getting further in the concept of LINSAs and link to show cases brought by the participants.

Rational

For transition partners to be able to design an adequate support strategy it is important that they have understood the main theoretical concepts that allow them to describe what a LINSAs is and how they are functioning. They have to be able to relate these concepts to their actual praxis. Therefore they have to identify how the new learned concept can be illustrated in their own show cases.

LINSAs is a complex concept that can't be described in few words, only a discussion between trainers and participants and among them can create a clear and shared understanding.

Main messages

LINSAs can be defined in terms of:

- Boundary objects and boundary work
- Networks
- Governance
- Learning and innovation
- Degree of integration

Sessions:

Main steps (what)	Time	Learning objective (why)	Methods (how)	Learning material used
Presentation of the show cases by the participants	60'	All participants have the general view of the diversity of cases in the room and feels involve	Flipchart	CV of a LINSAs
Getting further with the concepts: level of innovation, boundary work and boundary objects	90'	The participants understand the concepts like level of innovation (radical vs. incremental) and boundary objects and work	PPT presentation + whispering rounds	PPT presentation
Discussion on the show cases	45'	Participants are able to implement these concepts to their LINSAs	Discussion in small groups	
Sharing results	45'	Get a common understanding	Plenum discussion	

## Module 2.2: The SOLINSA approach “light” and test during a visit

### Rational

The SOLINSA project has gathered experience in approaching and supporting LINSA. It was possible to outline key factors for developing a successful and trusting partnership with the stakeholders of the LINSA. By applying the proposed approach to a real case, it is possible to improve understanding of the main challenges and key steps to engage with stakeholders. An appropriate analysis of the situation based on document analysis and interviews allows drawing the first outline of a support strategy. These elements will be the ground stones for the partnership to be established.

### Main messages

- To understand and to apply analytical characteristics of LINSA, and to put them into practice
- To discuss potentials, challenges, needs and possible development paths of the LINSA
- To understand LINSA in the specific environment
- To consider the own role and attitude as transition partner
- To practice how to approach a LINSA, how to initiate co-operation.

### Sessions

Main steps (what)	Time	Learning objective (why)	Methods (how)	Learning material used
General presentation of the SOLINSA approach	20'	To have an over view of the general approach	Presentation Q& A	Powerpoint and document.
Preparation of the visit of a LINSA and test of the Solinsa approach	90'	To know about the show case and to prepare a question canvas that will allow small groups to gather the needed elements	GW	Descriptions of the show case
Visit	120'	To understand if the show case corresponds to the characteristics of a LINSA  To have the point of view of the show cases' actors	Common visit of the group of a LINSA and exchange with the LINSA members	
Debriefing on the visit	45'	To share results and to elaborate questions for next steps	GW and Q&A	

### **Module 3.1:** Putting the SOLINSA approach into practice: tools, methods, success factors

#### Rational

The SOLINSA researchers have interacted in a participatory manner with the LINSA. In these relationships, the role of the transition partner was to analyse and identify, and then provide, support for the LINSAs. LINSAs express various kinds of needs, depending on their stage of development: classical knowledge needs (technical, scientific, economic, marketing management etc.) or emerging knowledge (brokering information, networking, organisational evolution etc.). It was possible to identify and characterise the needs in a systemic manner, which led to a stepwise approach to support a LINSAs.

#### Main messages

The following steps should be followed when supporting a LINSAs:

- First step: identification of LINSAs, establishing trust between Innovation broker and LINSAs, and understanding its characteristics.
- Second step: joint analysis of needs, negotiation of collaboration, and formalising of the objective of the supporting activities.
- Third step: carrying out the supporting activities.
- Fourth step: evaluation of the activities, and possible definition of a new set of objectives.

#### Sessions

<b>Main steps (what)</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Learning objective (why)</b>	<b>Methods (how)</b>	<b>Learning material used</b>
Detailed presentation of the Solinsa approach including tools and methods	30'	Provide a knowledge about the "SOLINSA" method to support LINSAs.	Presentation and Whispering rounds	Powerpoint and written document
Exchange with LINSAs stakeholders and Solinsa researchers on their experience	90'	Participants learn and discuss the 4 main steps of the approach	Carrousel (GW and sharing of the results)	
Adaptation of the SOLINSA approach the cases brought by the participants	60'	Pts reflect how the SOLINSA approach fits to their own praxis	Individual reflexion Peer discussion	
Key elements for successful interactions between transition partners and LINSAs	45'	Making the link between learned elements and praxis to identify opportunities and challenges	Plenum Q&A	

## **Module 3.2: The role and functions of transition partners**

### Rational

Participants have experience in working with LINSAs as free-lance, as advisors, as researchers or as farmers or LINSAs leaders. Taking over the role of a transition partner involves being able to reflect on and to understand the relation that exists between the transition partner's own attitudes and their own understanding of the role and the quality of the partnership with the LINSAs. It should be clear what role the transition partnership is expected to play. Beyond this personal development, training in participative methods, and continuous reflection of the LINSAs-transition partner interaction are key moments to increase the quality of the work.

### Main messages

- Know about the different roles and functions of transition partners, and to consider what competences are important in the respective part of transition partnership
- To be aware of potential role conflicts (i.e. expert and facilitator), and to reduce such conflicts by clarifying its own role
- To be open and interested to improve own competences and to develop specific attitudes
- Continuous development of the own understanding of partnership, of the specific methodological support, and of the consequences of the interaction with LINSAs.

### Sessions:

<b>Main (what)</b>	<b>steps</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Learning objective (why)</b>	<b>Methods (how)</b>	<b>Learning material used</b>
Definitions of key terms, roles, functions		15'		Presentation	
"Job profile" of a transition partner		60'	Pts identify specific skills and describe the ideal job profiles of transition partners	Small GW Card collection	
Sharing in Plenum.		45'	Create a common understanding	Small group presentations Plenum discussion	

## Module 4.1 Attitudes of the transition partners

### Rational

In the definition of transition partners a self-understanding of being learners and listeners is considered. Basic attitudes of transition partners are authenticity, humility, empathy and appreciation, as well as patience and sincere curiosity. Attitudes are not automatically given to the personality. Personal development, awareness of their own behaviour, a high level of self-reflection and focusing on the understanding of partnership, their own role, and their own responsibility are fundamental needs. The development of attitudes should be part of the exchanges with colleagues and face-to-face training in transition partner groups.

### Main messages

- Method and content training should be complemented with personal development
- Positive attitudes and their continuous reflection is a substantial part of transition partners skills
- The self-understanding of transition partners as learner and listener support LINSAs in clarifying own concerns and to identify own development paths
- Reflection and maturation of attitudes are substantial for the relationship to LINSAs. It helps to deal with stress and high dynamics in the LINSAs, to deal with the diverse personalities of LINSAs members, and it helps to perform in transition partner teams.

### Sessions

Main steps (what)	Time	Learning objective (why)	Methods (how)	Learning material
Definitions	15'		Presentation	
Peer coaching	40'	Stimulate self reflection, stimulate awareness on own habits and challenges of personal development	Peer coaching	
Sharing reflections	40'	Developing a common understanding of shared attitudes. Open the discussion for visions of supportive attitudes. Increase the sensitivity of personal development.	Plenum discussion	

## **Module 4.2:** the policy context for transition partners supporting LINSAs

### Rational

In the policy context, improved alliances between LINSAs and AKS are considered. Within the new support mechanism of European Innovation Partnership (EIP) LINSAs are considered as potential partners in Operational Groups and Focus Groups. Transition partners have a special role to play as innovation brokers. Innovation brokers in the EIP context support LINSAs. EIP can be a chance for LINSAs to open protected spaces for creativity, experimentation for trial and error. Due to the limited period of time of such project groups LINSAs offer a long-term structure which allows continuing what has been developed in projects in the EIP context. In the context of improved relationships to the AKS – including the role LINSAs can play in the EIP - transition partners are mainly in the role of intermediary persons, boundary persons and as experts of LINSAs. Conservative dissemination activities like papers and conference presentations are part of the task.

### Main messages

- Beyond the direct support of LINSAs – mainly via facilitation – dissemination activities, these are to increase LINSAs visibility and activities to interrelate LINSAs with actors from the AKS or from other LINSAs, are relevant.
- Transition partners stress the importance of classical dissemination activities (conference presentations, papers in relevant journals) as well as establishing new settings in conference and workshops.
- Adopting participatory methodologies for large groups at conferences helps to connect actors from very different areas. This way, conferences can become platforms for social learning and the co-creation of knowledge.

Sessions

<b>Main steps (what)</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Learning objective (why)</b>	<b>Methods (how)</b>	<b>Learning material used</b>
Definitions	20'	Transition partner / EU Innovation Broker; Relation LINSAs / AKS / EIP	Presentation Q&A	Ppt Examples from the SOLINSA dissemination workshops and from the final conference
Transition partner in the role of an intermediary person; participative methods for large groups	1h	Understanding of transition partners role and function to be an intermediary person. Developing strategies for intermediary persons. Developing participative dissemination activities.	World café	
Sharing reflections	30'		Plenary discussion	

## **Module 4.3:** The concept of LINSAs in practice

### Rational

It is important to understand how concepts can help transition partners in their daily work. This will be best achieved when concepts are illustrated in concrete examples (i.e. chosen among the LINSAs studied in the SOLINSA project). The transition partner must be able to make links between concepts and to identify actions that help LINSAs to reach their objectives

### Main messages

- Concepts are a **means for understanding** reality and **tools for changing** this reality.
- Concepts characterise the **main dimensions of LINSAs** agency (composition, participants, interaction, governance, etc.).
- Concepts are **paradigmatic** – they refer to scientific theories (e.g. theories of learning, innovation, etc.), political priorities (e.g. EIP), and social topicalities (e.g. climate change, urbanisation, food security).
- Concepts are **theoretically and empirically informed guidelines** for an innovation broker to orient his/her LINSAs support activities
- Concepts are tools to understand **the object of intervention** (LINSAs, CoP, farmers networks, etc.) and **the subject of interaction** (the same entity). No collective would appreciate a supporter who intervenes offensively.
- Concepts are **praxis oriented** – they project changes and improvements.
- Concepts are **tools for action** – where, why, and how to steward an innovation brokerage activity to support LINSAs capacity to innovate.

Sessions

Main steps (what)	Time	Learning objective (why)	Methods (how)	Learning material to be used
<b>How to implement and to turn operational the LINSAs concept</b>	45'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The participants understand how the concepts can help a LINSAs “supporter” in his/her daily work</li> <li>• They are given an illustration of the use of these concepts in the Latvian and other LINSAs experience</li> <li>• The participants can make links between these concepts and identify actions that help LINSAs to achieve their objectives</li> </ul>	Presentation Whispering rounds	Power point presentation by T.Tisenkopfs
Final discussion	15'	The participants prepare their own reflection	Plenum discussion	

## **Module 4.4:** Transfer to practice, evaluation and closing

### Rational

Coming to the end of the training participants must connect back to their own practice; consider what they learned and how to operationalise it. By applying the new knowledge to their show case they can check what they really understood and eventually identify gaps. This confrontation will be a good basis to evaluate the own learning process and the training itself.

After almost a week of intense collaboration in residential training, strong social interaction takes place involving strong feelings and emotions (joy, anger, fears, sadness, ...). An appropriate closing process has to take place for everybody to release the accumulated tensions and to meet at a later date in serene conditions.

To be able to put their knowledge in practices participants are invited to an individual reflection about what they will keep from the concepts in the LINSAs they work with and how they will help strategically LINSAs.

### Main messages

- Using the concepts and tools presented during the training, come back to the personal show case and elaborate an intervention strategy with the considered LINSAs. Sharing with peer trainees to improve your plan and identify strength and weaknesses. Reflecting about one's own learning process embeds new knowledge.

Different axes of reflection are suggested:

- Policy making or understanding, at local or regional level
- Market : how to put innovation into market, different kind of markets
- Links with civil society
- Links with research, expectations from researchers.

Sessions

<b>Main steps (what)</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Learning objective (why)</b>	<b>Methods (how)</b>	<b>Learning material used</b>
Describing the task	10'		Presentation	
Working on its own show case	45'	Using the concepts and tools presented during the training, come back to the personal show case and elaborate a intervention strategy with the considered LINSAs	Individual work	
Sharing with peer trainees	15'		In pairs and in plenum	
Evaluation of the training			Ad hoc evaluation sheets	
Closing the training		A clean closing facilitates the mourning	Flash light feedback	

## 4.3 Learning material

Throughout the training material was used, prepared by different members of the project consortium. All the learning material listed below can be downloaded from <http://www.solinsa.org/the-results/interacting-wih-linsa/>

- [The “SOLINSA Approach” to support LINSA by A. Dockes et al. \(2013\)](#)
- Power Point Presentations
  - [What is a LINSA by G. Brunori \(University of Pisa\)](#)
  - [What is a LINSA by T. Tisenkopfs \(BSC\)](#)
  - [“Agricultural Knowledge System in Europe: Characteristics and main issues” by F. Hermans \(University of Wageningen\)](#)
  - [“Support Of Learning and Innovation Networks for Sustainable Agriculture “ by J. Ingram \(CCRI\)](#)
  - [“Studying learning and innovation networks –transdisciplinary methods in SOLINSA” by R. Home \(FiBL\)](#)
  - [“Development process and supporting needs for a LINSA” by A. Dockès \(IDELE\)](#)
  - [“Social learning and transition partnership” by S. Helmle \(University of Hohenheim\)](#)
  - [“How to implement and turn operational the LINSA concept by T. Tisenkops \(Baltic Studies Centre\)](#)
- [LINSA and Shows cases reports](#)
- Video presenting the concepts:,
  - G. Brunori  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yUm27XNc5nw&feature=youtu.be>
  - T. Tisenkopfs  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJ2eimiwHwE&feature=youtu.be>
- Links to Webinars on Youtube
  - Webinar I  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M-nWDUOG1kE&feature=youtu.be>
  - Webinar II  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6-1z\\_14O2U&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6-1z_14O2U&feature=youtu.be)

**To implement the didactical outline some specific methods are used during the training:**

- Carrousel in Bolliger and Zellweger (2007)
- World café in Slocum (2006)
- Whispering rounds in Hourst and Thiaaranjan (2008)
- Peer coaching in <http://www.cahiers-pedagogiques.com/Animer-un-groupe-d-analyse-de-pratiques>
- Preparing a field visit and expert interview in Gruber et al. (2011)
- Facilitation in Gerster-Bentaya and Hoffmann (2011)

## 5 EVALUATION OF THE TEST TRAINING

The programme, the detailed programme of the training and the content presented are available in the chapter 7. The training has been implemented with 13 participants, 6 trainers and 2 witnesses. Evaluation was done both by the participants and the trainers.

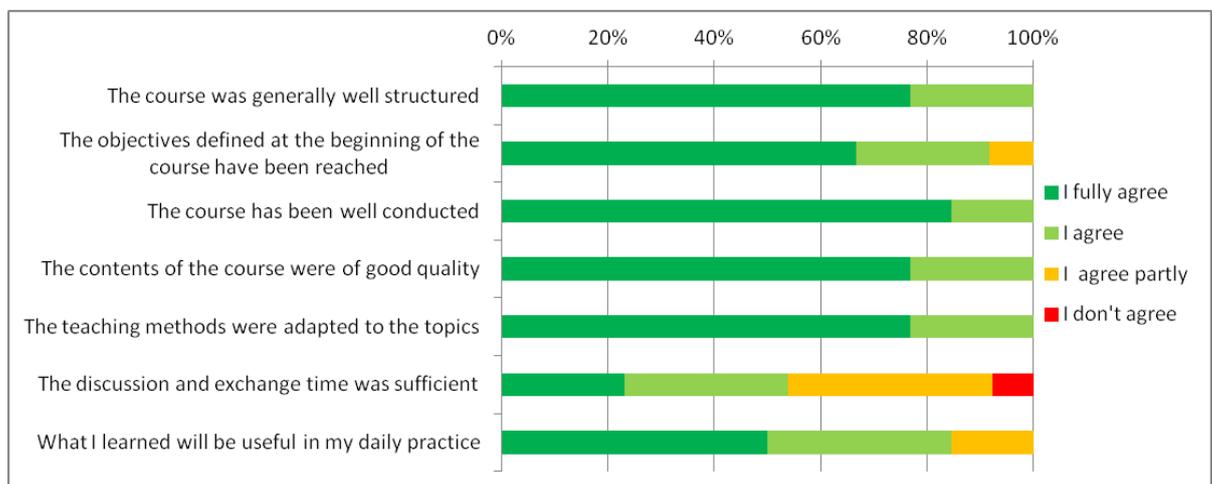
Overall, the lessons learned are the following:

- Starting point and presentations: avoid redundancy of self-presentations, focus on 1 of the 2 round table for participants' presentation (the one with the poster).
- Training material:
  - print out all the presentations (careful to the size of the slides)
  - give a detailed content to participants
  - create a document in order to share the most important results of the course
- Exchanges:
  - Plan enough time for the participants to work on their one cases and to interact informally
  - At least take one or two concrete case studies to go deeper in the analysis.
  - Plan exchanges with trainers after the training. This needs time, voluntarism and facilitation.

### 5.1 Results of the evaluation – the point of view of trainees

Trainees were asked to complete evaluation sheets at the end of the course in order to give feedback on the training. The following figures show the questions asked and the answers given. The third one aims at stressing points that went well and other that went not so well.

**Table 2 Results of 1st evaluation sheet: Course evaluation**



**Table 3 Results of 2nd evaluation sheet: Course structure evaluation**



### **Results of 3rd evaluation sheet:**

#### **WHAT WORKED WELL?**

The participants were satisfied and mostly agreed on the following points:

Concerning the group dynamic and the process they acknowledged the positive attitude and tolerance from the trainers and participants, the interaction and participation and the interesting group works.

Concerning the facilitation, the participants acknowledged the skills and preparation from facilitators, they were happy about new methods, and inspiring material. They appreciated the examples of tools used for workshops and the management of discussions (plenum, whisper rounds, small groups).

Concerning the content, participants saw particular relevance in the inputs from both lecturers and about the EIP. They liked the well-structured framework (sequences), and the link between theory, practice and policy.

#### **WHAT DID NOT WORK SO WELL?**

The point shared by the majority of participants is the lack of time for discussion and feedback, due to an intense program. The days were too long: starting too early and finishing too late, not sufficient breaks, there was not enough time on case studies and there was not enough time for evaluation.

Some of the participants would have liked more theoretical inputs and PPT presentations; others would have liked more practical applications. Some concepts remained unclear and not all presentations had consistent quality.

Regarding facilitation: Sometimes too much time was needed to understand the task (and consequently, there was too little time for discussion).

## **5.2 Results of the evaluation: the point of view of the trainers**

The trainers completed an evaluation sheet to give their feedback on the training. Informal exchanges also contributed to complete these results.

#### **WHAT WORKED WELL?**

The trainers shared the feelings of the trainees about group dynamic and process, facilitation aspects and content. They especially stress the following points: a positive and motivated dynamic; they appreciated the co-responsibility in facilitation; new methods learnt; the logic of the program and organisation of the different sequences; the management of discussions.

A special acknowledgment was given to the amount of experiences, knowledge and complementarities that were gathered and the huge work for preparation and facilitation from the main facilitator.

#### **WHAT DID NOT WORK SO WELL?**

The trainers pointed out some occasional tensions between trainers linked to the fact that their involvement in small group discussions was not clear to them. Like the trainees, they thought that some time was lacking for studying participants' case studies.

## 5.3 Major lessons learnt from the test training:

Taking into account participants' and trainers' feedback, here are the main changes in the training concept after the training. These elements have been integrated in the concept that is presented in the main document.

### **CHANGES THAT AFFECT THE STRUCTURE OF THE TRAINING**

#### Preparation

- Joint elaboration of the program is essential and can help to receive contributions from all SOLINSA partners to the SOLINSA method
- A common understanding about participation during the training course should be reached before the course
- A clear and collective governance is important for the trainer team
- Time for briefing and debriefing is very useful and necessary
- Sending (long) documents to read to participants before the session could help them to prepare the training

#### Content:

Some sessions could benefit from more time:

- The module dedicated to the transfer into practice (Module 4.4)
- The debriefing of the study visit (Module 2.2)
- The carousel on SOLINSA method's steps (Module 3.1)
- Illustrate theoretical inputs with practical experiences and examples (based on LINSA).
- Take time to explain and illustrate with an example the tool for a better comprehension
- The concept of LINSA governance should be discussed (leadership, role repartition, conflicts management etc.)
- The specificity concerning "sustainability" as part of the concept of LINSA should be deepened. Explain the specificity of working with LINSA instead of LIN.

### **ORGANISATIONAL ASPECTS**

#### Time and schedule:

- There were too many sessions planned and the training was very intense
- More time wished for personal logistic and reflection (longer breaks, time between course and social activities etc.).

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# Annex 1

## Invitation and Programme of Test Training in Paris

### SOLINSA Transition Partner Training

#### When and where?

##### **Webinars and e-learning**

**From Sept 30th through Oct 21st**

##### **Face to face seminar**

**Monday Oct 21st to Thursday Oct 24th**

Centre International de Séjour M. RAVEL

**6 avenue Maurice Ravel  
75012 PARIS**

Phone **+33 (0)1.43.58.96.00**

#### Who is it for?

This course is designed for professional and experienced rural extension officers, rural development managers and advisors. It aims to transfer skills that will enable the participants to contribute in the emergence and development of LINSAs (Learning and Innovation Networks for Sustainable Agriculture). LINSAs are defined as *"networks of producers, customers, experts, NGOs, SMEs, local administrations and components of the formal AKS, that are mutually engaged with common goals for sustainable agriculture and rural development - cooperating, sharing resources and co-producing new knowledge by creating conditions for communication"*.

Participants may also be considering playing a key role in the implementation of Operational Groups within the European Innovation Partnership (EIP).

#### What is it about?

This training course will give participants new understanding of how networks are learning and innovating to contribute to a more sustainable agriculture.

Participants will identify and discuss the key factors that contribute to the emergence and development of LINSAs and will also analyse a set of tools and methods that have been shown to be efficient in supporting LINSAs.

The content of this course is based on the results of the SOLINSA participatory research project, which has studied a large range of LINSAs. They range from local scale to national or transnational; from small, simple homogenous networks to large, complex and diverse networks with multiple actors; and from top-down to bottom-up origin.

#### What will you get out of it?

- You will gain a leading understanding of learning and innovation processes in rural networks
- You will gain specific skills to support LINSAs
- You will become part of a specialised European Innovation-Broker Network

#### What will you learn?

- The latest findings about LINSAs and their characteristics
- The role and approach of the I-Broker as a facilitator
- Tools and methods to support LINSAs
- How to measure the perception of Sustainable Agriculture

#### How will learning take place?

##### **Virtual classroom training**

Prior to the seminar, participants will be introduced to the basic concepts of LINSAs and I-Brokers through an e-learning platform with several webinars: together with the SOLINSA researchers.

##### **Classroom training**

The participants will be able to probe their knowledge during a three and a half day seminar in interaction with the researchers.

Together with representatives of selected LINSAs, they will analyse the outcomes of the collaboration with I-Brokers and advance their skills and ideas in real case situations.

## What else should you know?

The participation fees for this training course and accommodation costs are covered by the SOLINSA project budget. Grants for travel costs can be applied for.

## Training coordination

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### **and others**

(to be confirmed)

## Program for e-learning sessions

(Time and dates to be confirmed)

<b>Basic SOLINSA Concepts and Web Tools for Networking</b>		
30.09.2013 16:00-18:00	Webinar 0 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to the training and to the e-learning platform</li> <li>• Introduction to the SOLINSA project and discussion</li> </ul>	<i>N. Rump</i>  <i>Heidrun Moschitz</i>
	Self-learning I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovative networks and the EU policy</li> <li>• Agricultural Knowledge systems in Europe: characteristics and main issues</li> </ul>	
7.10.2013 16:00-18:00	Webinar I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>General context of I-Brokering</b></li> </ul>	<i>Gianluca Brunori</i>
	Self-learning II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discovering the diversity of LINSAs</li> <li>• Identifying their main characteristics</li> </ul>	
14.10.2013 16:00-18:00	Webinar II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What are LINSAs</b></li> </ul>	<i>University of Gloucestershire</i>
	Preparing the training	

## Program for Monday October 21st

<b>Getting Started and Setting the Frame</b>		
During the day	Arrival of participants	
17:00	Welcome aperitif/ Networking	
18:00	Opening Session, Workshop objectives and program	<i>Dominique Barjolle &amp; Anne-Charlotte Dockes</i>
19:00	<i>Dinner at Maurice Ravel</i>	
20:30	The participants introduce themselves and share their motivations for participating	<i>Niels Rump</i>
22:00	End of the first day	

## Program for Tuesday October 22nd

<b>Getting to a common understanding of LINSAs</b>		
08:00	Presenting participants' homework	<i>Niels Rump</i>
10:00	Theoretical framework	<i>Gianluca Brunori</i>
12:00	<i>Lunch</i>	
13:30	Understanding the characteristics of the LINSAs	<i>Gusztáv Nemes</i>
15:30	SOLINSA method to support LINSAs	<i>Dominique Barjolle &amp; Anne-Charlotte Dockes</i>
16:30	Visit of « Les jardins de Paris », an association for gardening on the roofs of Paris, an experience about the topic. at AgroParisTech,.	<i>Anne-Charlotte Dockes</i>
19:30	<i>Diner at AgroParistech</i>	

## Program for Wednesday October 23rd

<b>Working on case studies</b>		
08:00	Reviewing the 1 <sup>st</sup> training day	<i>Participants</i>
	Working with LINSAs	<i>to be confirmed</i>
	Challenging the SOLINSA method	<i>Simone Helmle, Gusztáv Nemes, Kim Anh Joly</i>
11:00	Facilitation methods to support LINSAs	<i>Anne-Charlotte Dockes</i>
12:30	<i>Lunch</i>	
13:30	Outlining key elements	<i>Simone Helmle</i>
16:00	Role and approach of the I-Broker as a facilitator	<i>Gusztáv Nemes</i>
17:30	End of 2 <sup>nd</sup> training day	
19:30	<i>Diner in Paris and pedestrian visit of the Centre of Paris.</i>	

## Program for Thursday October 24th

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08:00	Reflection about the interactions of the previous day	
	Scope of intervention for an I-Broker : Analysing the context and formulating action strategies	<i>Dominique Barjolle</i>
10:30	The European Commission expectations concerning I Brokers if the frame of PEI	<i>Pascal Dagron</i> <i>AC3A - Chambres d'agriculture Arc Atlantique</i>
11:00	Debriefing about the SOLINSA method	<i>Talis Tisenkopfs</i>
<i>12:00</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	
13:30	Transfer into practice : framework for an I broker network	<i>Niels Rump</i>
	Training evaluation	
15:00	End of the training	

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## Registration

Via e-mail : [cours@agridea.ch](mailto:cours@agridea.ch)

via our website : [www.agridea-lausanne.ch](http://www.agridea-lausanne.ch)

Deadline: 15.09.2013

## ANNEX 2

### What a participatory training can look like: a set of pictures



Working in plenum



Working in small groups



Is it a LINSAs ?  
« Field » visit



The learning group in front of the Agro Paris Tech - an important player of the French AKS