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Support of Learning and Innovation Networks for Sustainable Agriculture

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Outline

- Introduction –SOLINSA and LINSA
- Constraints and opportunities in LINSA
- Current arrangements for support
- Effectiveness of support
- Support needs
- Emerging knowledge needs
- Support for LINSA, fostering successful LINSA

SOLINSA

- Designed to identify barriers and catalysts to the development of learning and innovation networks for sustainable agriculture
- Support of Learning and Innovation Networks for Sustainable Agriculture
- 17 case studies (**LINSAs**) of sustainable agriculture networks being examined across eight European countries

LINSA diversity



Fodder production network of institutions, extension & farmers in Switzerland aiming to optimize fodder production



Latvia Biogas network of producers, investors, scientists, service providers, technology suppliers, policy makers, consultants, municipalities, NGOs & environmental agencies

Learning and Network Demonstration
50 Permaculture sites in England



Crisoperla Association
regional organic food network in Italy of farmers, food artisans, fishermen & consumers



Boeren en Zorg, Farmers and Care
network of care farms in N'lands

Constraints & opportunities

	Constraints	Opportunities
Organisation	<u>Organisation capacity/</u> status/falling membership	<u>Voluntary ethic</u> Leadership/entrepreneurship
Skills, Knowledge & Communication	Gaps in knowledge for responding to new/diverse demands	Embedded in all or part of the AKIS
Resources	<u>Lack of finance</u> - capital and long term Lack of human/time resources	Growing membership
Attitudes and Values	Different values, lack of consensus	<u>Good relationships with the state, public, AKIS</u> Strong sustainability ethos

LINSA support arrangements

- Typically combine external and internal support
- External support measures –largely financial but some non-financial policy measures
- Internal support measures –income from membership, events etc; and facilitation, knowledge exchange
- Importance of ‘soft support’ and volunteerism

LINSA support arrangements

- Different stages in LINSA development
- External support can be strategic, one-off, targeted at certain needs or long term covering core costs
- Applying for support is demanding on time/resources
- The nature of the LINSA –not mainstream
- Some do not receive any external support – they promote individual entrepreneurship & self reliance

LINSA Support arrangements



Naturli Co-operative Cheese marketing platform

External Support: Interest free loans from Swiss regional policy for logistics; New Regional Policy (NRP): grants for the label/marketing development; Capital funding from municipalities.

Internal Support: Farmers and dairies invest in enterprises; Informal support at canton and community levels

Support needs: Financial support for investment into infrastructure and further development of the trademark and sales promotion. Support in management accounting and fundraising

Effectiveness of support

Sustainable Dairy Farming, Netherlands

Different projects (funded by provincial funds) applying low external input farming using farmer study clubs.

Effective -additionality, environmental gains in terms of improved water quality; increased level of trust between farmers, government and environmentalists, and in extending the low external input farming network

BUT study club method is expensive for the small share of dairy farmers reached



Support needs

Support needs	
Governance and internal coordination and communication	Organisational needs –governance and management, communication, coordination and networking, managing relationships
Technical support Capacity and skills Communication skills	Individual needs -technical and scientific skills, economic and market knowledge, management and admin Responding to demands- a wide range of topics, new knowledge and new skills
More permanent resources/ financial support	Easily accessible small funds for targeted support (eg training) and seed funding
Political and public support	Exposure through communication/events

Support needs

G7 Gödöllő Hungary

Organisational development:

- Stabilize internal management, procedures, communication, and decision-making process;
- Co-operate effectively both with other NGOs, and the local government
- Improve communication, negotiation strategy, local social and political embeddedness, etc.

Fostering successful LINSAs

- Support to improve organisational capacity needs - facilitation, training and mentoring -esp. loose networks
- Broader recognition and acceptance from policy makers and AKIS
- Support to enhance networking and cooperation
- Support of learning, technical support, research and dissemination, individual skills – more traditional approaches
- Funding mechanisms to enable these