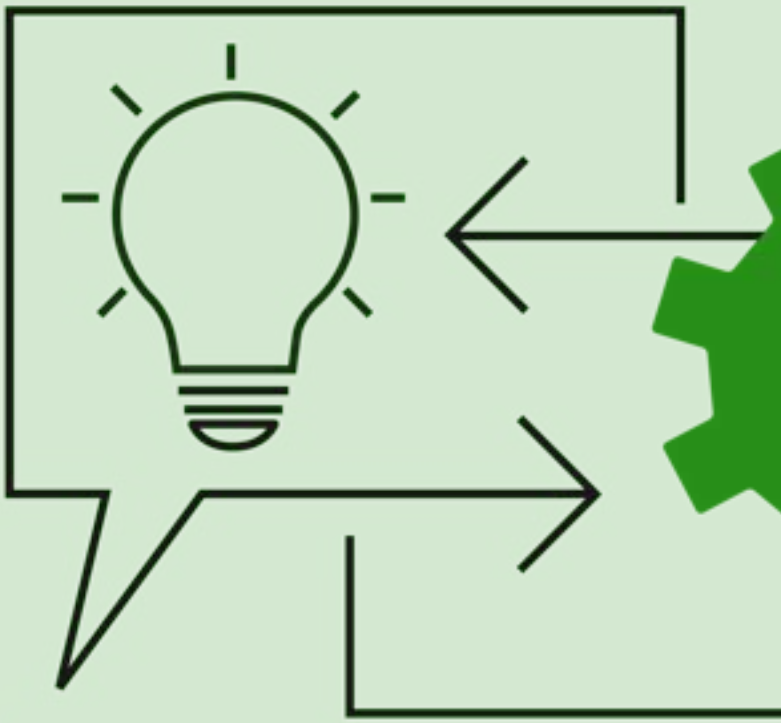
LIAISON
Optimising interactive innovation

LIAISON's Interactive Guide to Facilitating Participatory Projects



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LIAISON

Better Rural Innovation: Linking Actors, Instruments and Policies through Networks

GA no. 773418

LIAISON's Interactive Guide to Facilitating Participatory Projects

D2.3 Practitioner manual/handbook on multi-actor learning processes and participatory methodologies combined with a set of Practice Abstracts

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Acronyms

CS	Case Study
D	Deliverable document listed in the DoA of the LIAISON project
DoA	Description of Action of the LIAISON project
EIP-AGRI	European Innovation Partnership – Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability
HTG	How To Guide
H2020	Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Framework Programme of the EU
LTR	Light touch Review
MA	Multi-actor
MAA	Multi-actor approach
OG	Operational Group
WP	Work package of the LIAISON project

Definition of key terms

Project/Initiative	Any form of entity/multi-actor group engaged in interactive innovation, whether funded or non-funded, operating formally or informally
Interactive Innovation	In the EIP-AGRI context, the interactive innovation model is the collaboration between various actors to make the best use of complementary types of knowledge (scientific, practical, organizational, etc.) in view of co-creation and diffusion of solutions/opportunities ready to implement in practice
Method	Collection of tools and processes that are useful together for a common aim
Tool	A specific instrument to be applied in the field to support evaluation and impact assessment
Facilitation	Service that supports groups when they are cooperating or communicating: workshop facilitation, guidance during co-innovation processes, enabling the understanding of actors from different background

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1 Introduction to Deliverable 2.3

1.1 Context of the LIAISON project

LIAISON is an H2020 multi-actor project that brought together a diverse community of researchers, actors from innovation projects, initiatives, and networks, decision-makers, and administrators in an interactive work programme to jointly investigate the design and implementation of interactive innovation projects – both inside and outside of the EIP-AGRI. The project aimed to optimise the interactivity and co-creation among different actors in innovation initiatives and deliver policy recommendations to the EU level to speed up innovation in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas.

LIAISON had nine work packages (WPs): WP1 provided the conceptual framework and ensured a common understanding of key terms and concepts between teams. WP2 aimed to enhance the participatory methods we used to work together. This Deliverable (D2.3) is an output of this WP. WP3 organised a European Rural Innovation Contest (EURIC) and included a 'light-touch review' of 200 projects and initiatives through which we assessed research and rural development programmes at the project, national, and European levels. This database provided the foundation for WP4. WP4 guided an in-depth assessment of 32 interactive innovation projects in a range of sectors and countries. WP5 tested and enhanced the methods used for assessing the effectiveness and impact of interactive innovation projects. WP6 integrated all findings and synthesised the main recommendations. WP7 brought practitioners and stakeholders to the project, and facilitated the dissemination and exploitation of project results. WP8 ensured a successful and efficient implementation of the project by coordinating all activities and processes, and was responsible for the communication. WP9 dealt with ethical issues.

1.2 Definition of the document and its development process

WP2 teams have worked collectively, between 2020 and February 2022, to create this deliverable, which is structured around the aims (What?), the form (How?), and the target audiences (For whom?). The structure is described in Figure 1.

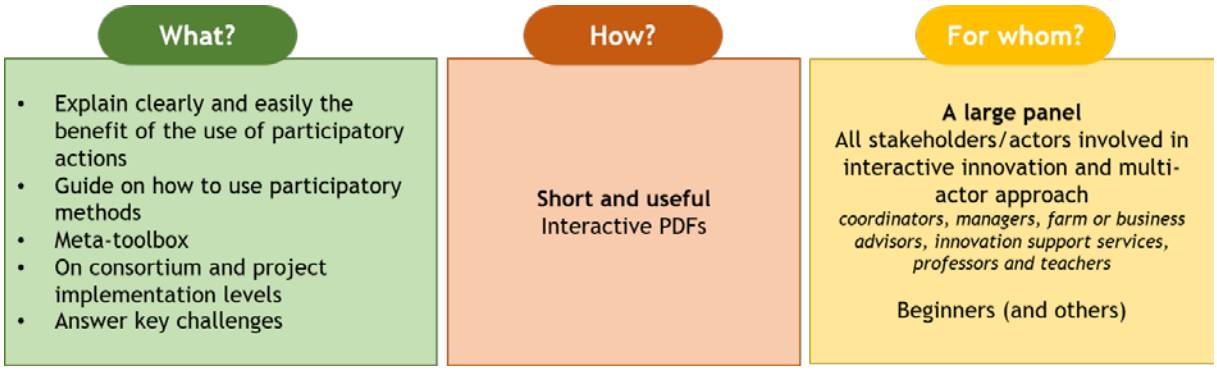

Figure 1. Aims, form and target groups of Deliverable D2.3

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This deliverable is an interactive guide to support the work of innovation project managers in MA groups. It identifies the main 'human' challenges of MA projects and the role of participatory methods. It offers "challenge and tools" sheets from the emergence of the idea through to supporting the creation of ownership by the direct targets of a project. It does not address the links between a project and its funders.

The Annex of this deliverable contains three Practice Abstracts for the EIP-AGRI platform the EU Commission. Their content is based on the chapters of this guide.

1.3 Sources of information used in this document

The identification of challenges is based on work, collective exchanges, and analysis during several meetings as part of the LIAISON project. The case study analyses conducted in LIAISON WPs 3 and 4 also helped to identify the challenges faced by facilitators and project managers regarding the participatory aspects of MAA. This work was supplemented by four participatory meetings, with about 60 participants, in France in November-December 2020, which enabled us to gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by OG project leaders and H2020 project coordinators. Links with the H2020 i2connect project have been maintained since December 2019, which has also contributed to the richness of this deliverable. Specifically, there have been exchanges about co-construction of the content of the training of trainers "tools, postures for animating MA interactive innovation projects" (September 2020 and September 2021) and facilitation of training of field advisors to carry out this training (9 participants - March 2021).

The tools we highlight in this document have been identified as a result of:

- Consultation of all LIAISON members to identify what they had identified in the case studies and reflection on their own practices;
- Selection of tools used in Idele participatory facilitation practice.

Interviews were conducted to gather testimonies of use.

1.4 A Deliverable about what to do and for whom

The content of this deliverable will serve as a basis for the production of an interactive PDF that will be added to the LIAISON toolbox.
The use of this document should be complemented by reading the How-To-Guides that have been produced under the LIAISON project, which address, in more depth and in a complementary way, the challenges that multi-stakeholder projects can face.

The interactive PDF will be able to be used by MA project managers or facilitators but is designed for people who are just beginning with using participatory methods and tools. However, more advanced users can also discover new tools or ideas.

This deliverable has three main parts:

- An **introduction** which details the benefits of using participatory methods in MA projects. It also gives some inputs about the roles of a facilitator and highlights some basic tools to begin with.

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- The **challenges** faced during the three phases of a project life and examples of **tools** to facilitate a consortium with different aims. This section is illustrated with testimonies and tips for how to use the tools. A quick menu is available at the beginning of the section to ease the navigation.
- A deeper presentation of the five toolboxes.

In the challenges part (Part 3), the challenges are detailed in the same structured way (Fig. 2).

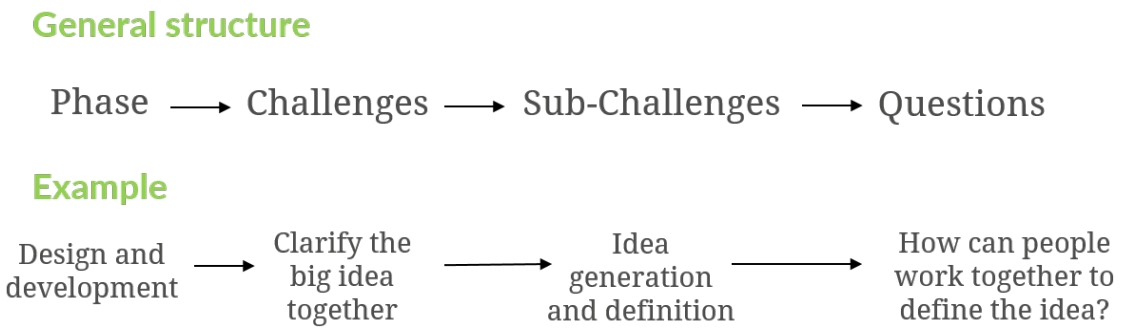

Figure 2. Structure of the challenges in part 3

The questions are also detailed with a recurrent structure (Fig. 3). Each question is illustrated by an example of tool to use to facilitate it or/and testimonies.

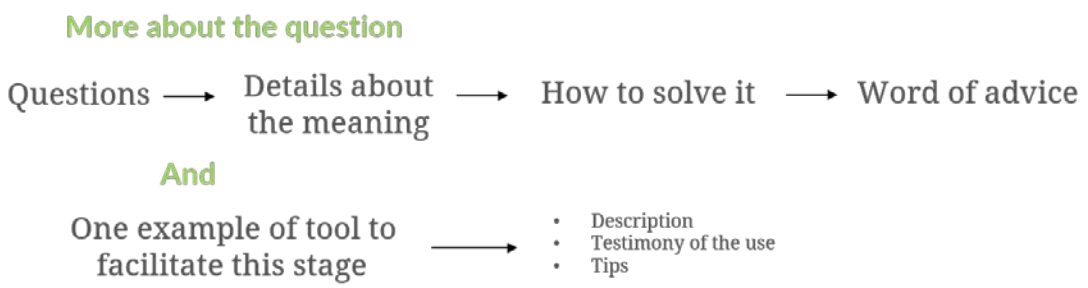

Figure 3. Stucture of the questions in part 3

The users of the document can navigate in this part through the phases, the challenges or the questions according to their questions and needs.

2 Participatory methods at the heart of the 21st century agricultural revolution

2.1 The EIP Agri: a new model for innovation

Traditionally, **innovation has been the domain and privilege of research** alone, whether private or public. Researchers transmit their contributions to development structures or, if it exists, to applied research, which tests, adapts, and prepares

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reference materials for advisory services. The advisory services then provide farmers and foresters with what they imagine are **'turnkey' solutions**.
This linear and "**diffusionist**" model, developed in Western Europe in the 20th century, has largely proven effective. Combining the diffusionist model with "**simple**" messages, such as using chemical inputs, increasing the surface area, or keeping more animals, has made it possible to increase agricultural production. However, the combination has also found its limits and has **created a range of imbalances**. By failing to consider induced effects, such as water pollution, loss of biological diversity, soil erosion, and farmers' unease, the complexity of agricultural systems resurfaces, which invites us to take the complexity into account more globally and systemically.

This means that new challenges emerge. How can we integrate agricultural and forestry production and their consequences on the local and distant environments, both human and non-human? How can we consider biological, technical, organisational and economic complexity? How can we transform agricultural and forest systems and respond to the challenges and expectations we face in a new way?

One European response to these challenges is offered by the MA projects of the EIP Agri. These projects promote a **new conceptualisation of innovation**—a **collective innovation resulting from** a **co-creation process**. The following specific characters and potentials characterise MA innovation. MA Innovation:

- Involves a **maximum number** of actors concerned by the theme of a project: academic, technical, and economic actors, as well as those in the field, such as advisors, farmers, and foresters.
- Provides all actors with the opportunity to bring their knowledge, their **point of view**, their tools, and their network.
- Allows the issue to be broadly **defined**, integrating all aspects
- Is based on **creative** techniques
- Allows us to **work out** new answers to the questions raised **together.** Creates a **deep joy** associated with sharing and creating together
- Facilitates the **implementation** of the innovations by mobilising everyone's networks.

MA innovation processes are well illustrated by the adage: You go faster when you do it alone. When you do it with others, you go further (and see).

MA projects have been very fruitful in the new technologies sector. Integrating end-users and involving them in the design of services and products intended for them has enabled a significant qualitative leap.

2.2 MA innovation: what it changes

MA innovation is a leap into the unknown for some, which is difficult to envisage. It is attractive and even exciting for those who have already tested such a leap and have had the chance to experience it with joy. It may seem daunting and prohibitive for those who have had a less pleasant experience.

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In any case, the implementation of MA innovation challenges established ways of working due to several of its characteristics. Indeed, MA innovation induces (at least) 3 main types of changes (Fig. 4).

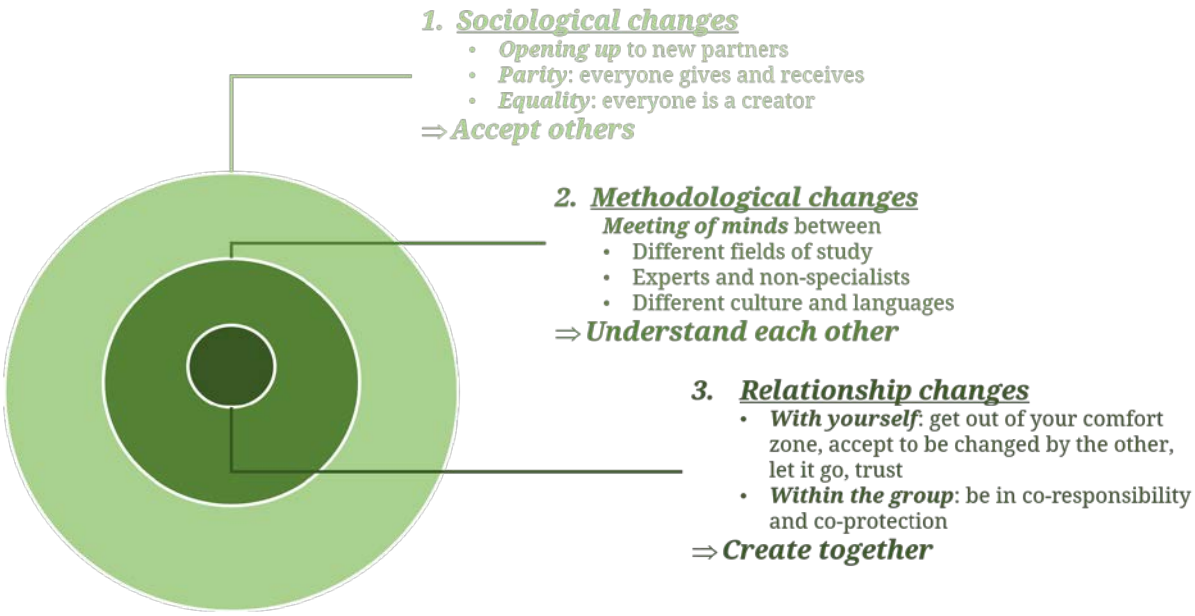

Figure 4. Changes linked to multi-actor innovation

Parity and the complementarity of knowledge: a sociological revolution?
Sociological changes (see Figure 4)

The usefulness of the points of view of the different actors implies a form of **equality/parity**: each learns from the other and holds important knowledge for the collective. For example, a farmer can only testify to this when they describe their practices, their trials, etc. Without this information, the collective reflection will remain limited.

The knowledge of farmers/foresters, researchers, advisors, and industrialists are not the same, nor can it be substituted. Nevertheless, they are **complementary** and all-important. This parity/equality is facilitated by the level of education of many farmers and foresters today, in many countries, or is still in the making in others.

It upsets what remains/exists of the diffusionist, linear model with knowledgeable people at the top and non-knowledgeable people at the bottom. The balance of power is being altered. It is an evolution, sometimes even a revolution.
The MA project manager will be able to spot tensions. They will be able to decipher what is at stake and help the actors put things into perspective. This will enable them to be patient and understanding for those who:

- Are used to being the only "knowers" and may feel uncomfortable, questioned,
- They are not used to being heard, really taken into account, and may have difficulty taking their place.

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The dialogue between points of view and disciplines: going beyond the usual limits

Methodological changes (see Figure 4)

Agreeing to work in parity with others is not necessarily self-evident from an institutional point of view. We have just seen that. Nevertheless, even if it is acceptable, it is not necessarily easy. Getting along and understanding each other is sometimes difficult. There are differences linked to each one's experiences, ways of thinking, language, and worlds.

At the start of a project, each actor gives their point of view of the starting situation and contributes their perspective. This common description aggregates the contributions of each person and constitutes an indispensable starting point. The actors share the objective of the project and their vision.

Besides, it can be helpful to make some of your knowledge available to others, share it, and develop something new together.

We illustrate this by taking the example of a farmer considering changing their cropping system to limit their carbon footprint and who is in dialogue with a scientist. The farmer needs to describe their practice, system and constraints, while the scientist is asked to explain the elements on which their reasoning is based so they can work together and model a change.

Another example is the dialogue between specialists in different disciplines: human sciences, ethologists, zoologists, agricultural advisers, breeders, among themselves and even with citizens. They need to listen to each other and understand how to design new buildings and equipment together. This takes time, concentration, and courage to leave one's knowledge and way of thinking and understand the point of view of others.

It is not a question of becoming specialists in other disciplines but of establishing sufficient bridges to understand each other and articulate their knowledge. This already involves establishing a **common language**. This dialogue creates a **common basis**.

Making actors with different or even competing interests work together accentuates the difficulty. Setting a clear framework on what is shared and what remains the property of each via consortium agreements makes it possible to soothe exchanges and make work possible.

The MA project manager has different leading roles which require specific skills. They make sure that everything is clear to everyone and that the participants understand each other. To do this, they anticipate the time needed to create a common language, support efforts to understand each other (because going towards the unknown requires intellectual courage). Furthermore, they agree on what is common and different, and clarify what each person brings, will be able to use, and how they will use it.

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They are also in charge of providing rules and work frameworks. They provide a safe framework so that everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves and remind people of the objective and the issues associated with the cross-fertilisation of knowledge (condition for creating something new, otherwise, we remain in the known). They create space to exchange effectively and with trust. They use the appropriate tools for listening and sharing and identify fertile ground for dialogue. To maintain motivation, they acknowledge and celebrate successes.

Successful co-creation: a human adventure!

Relationship changes (see Figure 4)

The acceptance of working in parity, a common goal and mutual understanding are the basis for co-creation between actors. Moreover, co-creation can emerge spontaneously from sharing each other's knowledge. However, co-creation is something else again. Co-creating is doing together what none can do separately (1 + 1 > 2), sharing a deep joy among the actors involved.

Collectively, co-creating involves defining a clear framework and using facilitation tools focused on creativity. One or more person facilitates the co-creation process within a collective maturity that relies on the responsibility of each person.

As an individual, co-creating requires having the desire to participate actively. Participants must be willing to accept the ideas of others and to share what they know. Co-creating and exchanges can also involve being transformed to evolve. Participants need to be open to this. Everyone has to trust the process, trust others and accept to let it sometimes go out of complete control.

It helps the collective bring to light the untouched areas of friction that need to be explored to go further. Preserving the richness of the plurality of views is also helpful. This works if everyone is aware of their responsibility for the success of the co-creation. Participants need to be comfortable enough to:

- Say what they think, especially the disagreements, with kindness,
- Openly acknowledge that they also feel tensions, intuitions, etc.,
- Ask for what they need.

Co-creation also requires to let room for creativity, fun and the possibility to think out of the box.

To this end, the MA project manager should keep in mind that trust between actors is a key to the project's success. To do this, they can give sufficient time and space to exchange (which seems simple but is not always) and remains available to help overcome any relational difficulties between actors. The manager also has, or delegates, a facilitator's knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Emphasising/supporting the importance of co-creation helps maintain partners' motivation and develop trust in the process.

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2.3 Participatory methods are at the heart of MA projects

There is finally some good news in this extended inventory of changes and even challenges to managing a successful MA innovation. Participatory methods exist and are available. They offer excellent tools to meet all the challenges that arise (see rest of document).

Participatory methods are like a campfire
Participatory methods bring together various tools and a common principle: to provide a space for collective expression and production within a structured and facilitated framework. They are very diverse and difficult to summarise in a few words, so let's take an image to explore some of their characteristics further.
This image is a campfire(Figure 5).

Figure 5. Participatory methods as a campfire

Indeed, a campfire has multiple roles.
It **produces light and warmth and helps to cook new meals.**
The **light enlightens** and helps us to **understand** each other. Indeed, some of the participatory tools allow participants to explain and share their ideas and understanding. The **warmth motivates**, makes you feel good, and makes you want to contribute, to share. It helps **create new** meals that would not have existed without the exchanges and warmth.

It brings together people.
Everyone is all around, at **equal distance**, in a circle. Even if some participants bring twigs and others logs, they are equal. Everyone's opinion **contributes to the whole** and is beneficial. Everyone **listens and hears** what is said and brings their vision and ideas. Attendance is **voluntary**; you only come because you are motivated.

It requires safety rules.
Without rules, you can burn yourself or others. This is why participatory tools are always accompanied by **safety rules** that define the framework in which **exchanges and collaboration occur.** These rules must be **adapted** to each context, objective, challenge, etc. They commonly specify how participants are invited to interact to allow everyone to **express themselves, listen, and be heard.** The facilitator and the participants are then **responsible** for them. They can, of course, use them to remind the participants of what was defined at the beginning and **validated by all.**

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It must be maintained and kept.
A fire will go out if it is not regularly fed or if the wood is not organised and properly grouped. Someone must watch over the fire and ensure that it burns properly. In the same way, the role of the **facilitator is central**. They are the organiser of the process. They choose the tools and the rhythm and adapt what is planned to what is happening. The facilitator is also the **guardian of the process** and, for this reason, is uncompromising about anything that might hinder it. They do not hesitate to **regulate** and question the participants about any difficulties in the cooperation. In this respect, the tools of self-reflection and collective reflection are very useful for expressing what may be blocking and seeking solutions.

It needs an initial spark and oxygen.
The facilitator provides the initial spark through their **confidence** in the **participants' ability** to take up the challenge collectively. They also have confidence in **their facilitation** and ability to facilitate exchanges from the outset. Then, the fire only continues if there is enough oxygen. The various participatory tools make it possible to fuel the fire of exchanges.

It goes through different stages.
The fire does not immediately give off much light or heat. In the same way, participatory activities **begin by facilitating trust**, between participants and the facilitator, before trying to produce results. Without this **essential trust**, nothing is possible. Production can be amplified as a group works together. On condition, of course, that trust is maintained and that **everyone's needs** are met (recognition, equity, production, etc.).

2.4 Challenges: project management and process facilitation

On closer examination, it is possible to see that multi-actor projects have a dual nature. They are both 'classic' projects and also co-creation dynamics.

Table 1. The two sides of multi-actor projects

	Multi-actor innovation project = Synthesis of two different dynamics	
	Project management	**Co-creation**
Activity	Monitoring, coordination, management	Facilitation, moderation
The manager is focused on	Production, the achievement of what is planned	The co-creation process, trust and the ability of participants to interact
Type of management	Rather vertical	Rather horizontal

The challenge for the MA project manager is to **articulate** these two logics and to support them as well as possible, without imbalance.

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Without **rigorous** management, the MA project will not progress. If the project is too rigid or does not leave **enough space** for co-creation processes, it will be impoverished, even disappointing.

The management of an MA project should take care to:

- Give **enough time to participatory processes** (get to know each other, understand each other, work together)
- Have **as much flexibility as possible** in the course of the project to integrate unforeseen events and new developments arising from co-creation
- **Open up to** little-known or even unknown actors.

2.5 Facilitator roles: concrete elements

2.5.1 What does it mean to organise and facilitate a participatory meeting?

Table 2. Steps to follow to organise and facilitate a participatory meeting

1st Step: the 'Intention'
The intention comes first and leads the action. It comes first, and it is linked to why it is important to work together in a participative way. **What does that mean?** • Really want to know the participants' points of view and ideas • Agree with the idea that we are smarter together • Accept that some ideas can be different from mine or from what could be expected It is not the same as the objectives.
2nd Step: the 'Preparation'
a) Design The facilitator needs to: • Define aims (global and sub-aims), • Reflect on the target group (*Who is coming? How many participants? Do people know each other / the subject?*), • Keep in mind the duration, • Pay great attention to the location to have enough space (+/- 4m² /participant is required). On the day of the meeting, they choose a suitable seating (no concert-type) and allow space for moving around. **b) Choose the tools** It must be relevant regarding the design aspects and allows to switch between collective discussion and individual reflection, quiet moments and "big activities". **c) Organise** The facilitator or a trusted contact person send the invitations and remind the date a few days before. They plan a welcoming time and refreshments/snacks.
3rd Step: the Facilitation

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"XXX" are examples of sentences for the facilitator.

a) Structure
First, the group needs to agree on the day's agenda or the workshop.
At the beginning of the facilitation, the facilitator sets the operational rules (see the focus below). At the beginning of each exercise, they give and explain the instructions. They check that all participants understand it well. *"Is it clear for everyone? Do not hesitate if you have questions."*

b) Link
One of the facilitator's roles is to make the participants comfortable since the beginning of the meeting and help them discover each other (see icebreaker tools). They encourage participants' movement inside the room.*"Feel free to move in the room if you need. We can use the rule of free feet."*

c) Motivate and support
After giving the instructions, the facilitator checks that participants start to work and everything is clear. They encourage exchanges, pay close attention to everyone (both verbal and non-verbal signs), and stay open-minded, positive, and reactive. They try to understand various points of view, rephrase to confirm and do not interpret. They promote positive feedback. *"Why what was said interests you"* and encourage people to go deeper.

d) Conclude
After each sequence, the facilitator summarises the ideas and concludes. *"Are you ok with this? Do I understand correctly?"*
At the end of the workshop/meeting, they:

- Take stock of the progress of the work,
- Assess the way of working (what pleased or not, suggested modifications),
- Deal with potential future development.

To highlight and value the involvement of the participants, the facilitator thanks people for their participation.

4th step: After the event

The facilitator prepares and circulates the minutes. They hold a debriefing session among the organisers and facilitators to discuss what worked well and what didn't work so well (Did the outcomes meet the original expectations? What you would like to change the next time?).

To sum up, facilitating a participatory meeting requires specific know-how and soft skills. Training is a good start. Then, it takes a lot of practice. The facilitator needs to be in the same meeting:

- Direct to set a clear framework for working and ensure that it is respected,
- Flexible to allow participants to express themselves as freely as possible,
- Adaptable to resolve potential tensions and best respond to different personality types (shy, talkative, etc.).

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2.5.2 Example of rules and how to use them

At the beginning of the meeting, the facilitator suggests a set of rules to create a clear framework to work. The participants need to validate and complete the set if needed.

One example of a set of rules and some adaptations
"*All **opinion** is welcome…without interrupting"* It could be helpful to emphasise this rule if some participants are talkative or passionate. The facilitator can let the rules be displayed in the room and can return to it if necessary.
"*You are **not obliged** to do anything…but we share **responsibility** for success*" This rule puts the participants at ease in the first instance. It also helps them realise that they have a role to play in the success of the meeting. This can be particularly useful for meetings whose objective is to create things together. The facilitator highlights the fact the participants are needed.
"***Kindness** towards the others…no **value judgment***" This rule can be developed; especially if participants need to give feedback on other participants' work. For example, during training, participants practice in front of the group. At the end, the facilitator can ask the participants to comment without judging, using "I" ("*In this situation, I would have done this…*") and highlight positive aspects ("*One thing I liked was…*").
"***Confidentiality** in the group*" This rule helps to free the speech if there are sensitive data, conflicts to solve, or controversial opinions to collect.
"***Respect** timetable and group decisions"* This rule completes the rules about the shared responsibility. If everyone has agreed on the rules at the beginning, it is easier for the facilitator to enforce the framework and to guide the participants if they get out of hand.

2.5.3 Basic tools to begin

Some tools are very common and straightforward, like sticky notes, votes, brainstorming, etc. A beginner facilitator can start by using these tools to gain confidence and practice. Those tools can also be used with participants who are not used to participatory meetings. Being active in a meeting and speaking freely in front of a group can be scary if not in your work habits. To facilitate the process, the facilitator chooses simple tools to explain, understand and implement.

Four examples of basic tools to begin in facilitation
Group work (online or not) - Abolish the distance and increase the frequency.
It is one of the most versatile and straightforward tools available for the facilitator. For example, they can use it to make the participants work on various topics, create opportunities for shy participants to express themselves more freely, or bring people together. The description is available in the "Ensuring ownership" section.

Sticky-dots vote – You don't need to do the big voice. Stickers have the same weight.
Description of the tool

- *What*: prioritise, prioritise elements, choose the following topics to work on
- *How long*: 15 to 20 min

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- *How many*: max about 15
- *What you'll need:* sticky dots
- *Steps*: This step follows a production step or the presentation of the voting elements. The facilitator makes sure that the elements to be prioritised are clear to everyone.
    - The facilitator distributes the stickers and gives instructions. For example, they can vary according to the objective (one or X stickers per participant, stickers of different colours to show interest or not).
    - Let the participants circulate and stick the stickers.
    - The facilitator summarises the results, asks for clarification (if necessary) and validates with the group.

Tips

Logistic:

- Cut out the sticker roll with the number of stickers per participant beforehand to save time
- Think about where to stick the stickers
- Leave space to read/paste and move around
- Number of stickers to think about and distribute evenly

To help the participants:

- Simple and straightforward rules of the game in the way decisions are made at the end
- Sound synthesis for proposals at the beginning

Brainstorm – The Swiss Army knife: takes us out of all our worries, simple and effective.

This tool, and in a more general way, the use of sticky notes, is also simple and very adaptable. It can be used to let everyone speak freely. The description is available in the "Idea generation and definition" section.

The Fridge – Elegant and efficient handling of questions and interruptions

Description of the tool

- *What*: How to listen to different opinions and questions while remaining focused on a goal? There is a simple way, "the fridge".
- *How long*: immediate, spontaneous use
- *How many*: no limit
- *What you'll need:* A free space (board, white sheet) is set up in the room or on the shared work screen (virtual board)
- *Steps*: At the beginning of the meeting, the facilitator mentions the existence of the fridge and the fact that everyone can come and put their ideas in it whenever they want.

Testimony of the use

Marleen Gysen, ISP, Belgium

During the interview, Marleen Gysen said: *"I have been using this tool again recently. I really like it. I find it very effective. It is "a simple method, useful everywhere! It really helped me with a group of farmers who had a lot of questions. I used the fridge to keep the discussion going while listening to their requests. It's often a challenge to do these two*

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things at odds. It builds trust and calms the group. Plus, we get to listen to each other better."

Tips
Remember to value what is written; otherwise, it is counterproductive, leading to a loss of confidence.

3 Challenges emerging at different project phases

Using participatory methods in multi-actors projects is challenging. Various questions can be asked during the different phases of the project. This part highlights the challenges that can be faced during three phases:

- The design and the development: This deals with the time when the idea, the partnership, and the project is born. Before really starting the work described in the project.
- The interactive and collective project work: This is the heart of the project when people need to learn to work together to produce useful results.
- The communication and embedding: To be kept in mind from the first phase. It allows useful productions to be built.

The structure of this part is illustrated in Figures 2 and 3.

The navigation in this part is possible through the phases, the challenges or the questions (Table 3).

Table 3. Quick menu to navigate in Part 3

Design and Development	Clarify the big idea	Idea generation and definition How can people work together to define the idea? How will you ensure the project meets the need of the targeted user?
		Agree on the idea How to ensure clarity of the goals (of the project) for everyone?
	Reflecting on the partnership	Building a balanced partnership and wider networks How to identify and connect with other networks (other projects and their network)? How to form a well-balanced consortium (in terms of geography, skills, experience etc.)? / How to involve relevant actors?
		Ensuring benefits for the different partners involved How to ensure the project is relevant for all the individuals involved?
		Understanding each other How can project partners best find common ground?
	Setting up	Building the co-innovation project together How to engage all project partners in the design of the project?
		Plan How to develop a strategy for the most effective dissemination? How to manage the sharing of intellectual propriety?
		Building a community

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Interactive and collective project work	Internal functioning and building a community	How to help people work together and not alone or with people they already know?
		Communicate transparently How to efficiently update each other (when, how often, where, using which tools, etc.)?
		Managing the diversity of partners How to deal with heterogeneous skills/experienced levels/working habits inside the consortium?
		Involve and maintain motivation during the lifetime of the project How to ensure participation and involvement? How to involve farmers?
	Innovate together during the project period	Working together How do we organize our working together and decision making? How to build innovation together? How do we learn together?
		Monitor How to monitor the participatory process?
	Preparing for impact and dissemination	Create useful content How to ensure useful and usable deliverables?
Communication and embedding	Communicate on the results	Giving yourself the means What resources are needed for effective communication?
	Internal impact	How to facilitate learning within the partnership?
	Embedding/ make it used	Ensuring ownership How to ensure 'ownership' of results (Who can use what? How to share? How to communicate/convince beyond the circle of already convinced actors?

3.1 Phase 1: Design and Development

This part explores the beginning of the collaboration, even before the project's official start. It highlights how to identify, clarify, and validate the idea together. It also deals with relevant partnership building. Then, it details how to structure and define the project within the partnership.

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3.1.1 Clarify the big idea together

3.1.1.1 Idea generation and definition

<u>How can people work together to define the idea?</u>

A project will be built around an idea for change or innovation. The initial idea will typically emerge from one of three sources:

- A pre-existing collective that wishes to continue working together
- A person/group wishing to respond to a call for projects
- A person/group who has an idea and is looking for a framework to develop it.

The emergence and definition of the idea is an essential step, and the more it is developed collectively with the first partners engaged, the more robust the project is likely to be. This preparation foreshadows what will follow. It is important to take the time to listen to and understand each partner's vision. Moreover, mobilizing potentially interested people as soon as possible greatly facilitates the project.

<u>How to solve it</u>

Creativity is welcome at this early stage of project design (before the project officially exists), taking the time to imagine together a motivating project. It can be helpful to approach a variety of people who may or may not eventually be part of the actual project team. This helps to flesh out the idea, including knowledge of the context, expertise, etc. Some steps to do this can be:

1/ Sharing with each actor the analysis of the existing situation and current issues: a shared and solid vision is needed to build a new project;

2/ Identifying together what could be done and the necessary skills required to achieve it;

3/ Defining the first foundations of the project: what, why, with whom, etc.

<u>Word of advice:</u>

You quickly set up rules of confidentiality within the project planning group. This stage requires preparation time. The idea needs to evolve and mature. A valuable investment is to meet regularly, which helps build a trustful work environment and facilitate co-innovation during the project.

<u>One example of a tool to facilitate this stage</u>

Brainstorm – The Swiss Army knife: takes us out of all our worries, simply and effectively.

<u>Description of the tool</u>

- *What*: exchange ideas, explore a subject, share representations
- *How long*: depends on the size of the group, 30' to 1h
- *How many*: 3 to 20
- *What you'll need:* sticky notes, markers, whiteboard or flip chart
- *Steps*:
    - The facilitator states the question and makes sure that it is clear to everyone. In explaining the instructions, the facilitator specifies that one

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idea should be written on each sticky note (to facilitate sorting later) in felt-tip pen (for good legibility from a distance).

- Participants think on their own and write their ideas on sticky notes. Depending on the time and the objective, the facilitator can limit the number of sticky notes per participant.
- Participants share their sticky notes:
  - They take turns to stick the sticky notes on a flip chart or a board. They can group the sticky notes according to common ideas. The facilitator makes sure that they understand the fundamental ideas expressed in the sticky notes rather than interpreting them from their own perspective.
  - The facilitator collects a sticky note that the participant explains. The facilitator then asks if any participants have a similar idea and picks it up. They then pick up another idea.
- The facilitator groups the sticky notes by central ideas or recapitulates the groupings already made by writing the themes and materialising the groupings. They ask the participants if these groupings suit them and ask whether they can think about other options or other ideas.
- The facilitator takes a photo of the final picture to report back.

<u>Testimony of the use</u>

Sylvain Quiédeville, FiBL, Switzerland – case study deputy of the project Agrolora

Agrolora is a local Swiss multi-actor project. It tests the functionality, reliability, and scalability of an automatic irrigation system.

Some participants used the 'brainstorm' tool at the very beginning of the creation process, during the inception phase of the project and also during the project delivery. The aims were to work on the project's idea, develop the idea, and exchange about the possible funding. The team were already used to working in this way within their organization. The team that carried out the brainstorming was composed of four actors from the same organization but with different skills. They used the brainstorming method to develop and move forward on specific ideas. They often did this spontaneously, as it has become a working habit.

<u>Tips</u>

Logistics:

- If the analysis is delayed, have the participants write down their names
- Provide for a pair of facilitators

For the facilitator:

- Have a precise question
- Texts to be combined with expression because sometimes sticky notes are limiting on ideas on complex subjects
- The talent of the facilitator to agglomerate the sticky notes: this comes with practice

For the participants:

- Keep always in mind the "one idea per sticky notes" rule
- Provide one large felt-tip pen per participant: it's big, so they are pushed to write a word, not a novel

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- Write in capitals for clearer reading

Another tool: Disney's method

Description of the tool

- *What*: Stimulate creativity, produce ideas (and make decisions)
- *How long*: 30 to 40 min
- *How many*: from 5 to 15
- *What you'll need*: flip chart, sticky notes, markers
- *Steps*:
    - Space is divided into three parts: creative space, realistic space, and ethical space. In practice, the flip chart can be moved to different places in the room.
    - The protocol starts in the creative space. The facilitator writes down the question to be dealt with at the top of the page. It is a brainstorming phase, where the important thing is to set no limits and let your imagination run wild. Participants can put their ideas on sticky notes to express more freely. The facilitator records all the answers.
    - Once the time is up, the facilitator moves the flip chart to another part of the room: the realistic space. It consists of going through the proposals one by one, clarifying them if necessary, and then deleting those that are not financially or materially realistic. It is important here to focus only on material barriers.
    - Finally, the flip chart is moved again, this time into the ethical space. It is here that, with the remaining proposals, the group will eliminate those that would go against the project's ethics. The facilitator lists the proposals and asks the group whether there is an objection.

How will you ensure the project meets the need of the targeted user?

According to the OECD's (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) Oslo Manual (2005), an innovation is a novelty that finds its audience: "*The implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service) or process, a new marketing method or a new organizational method in business practices, work organization or external relations*".

Thus, by definition, innovation connects to users' needs and will be adopted by a wide range of practitioners. The basic assumption is that users are the ones who know their needs and expectations best. Even if the initial idea does not necessarily come from them, it is essential to verify the alignment/appropriateness between the intended outcomes of the project and the needs of the users.

How to solve it

It helps to check very early on that the users are on board. To do this, ideally, you need to involve them during the set-up of the project or consult them in parallel. They can also be involved throughout the project to be consulted, make adjustments, and start developing it (see "Create Useful content").

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A participatory method (see “Focus Group” bellow) to collect their opinions and needs is ideal.

Word of advice

Before contacting users, the idea needs to be explored, the context(s) known (see “How to define the idea”). But of course, the manager must keep the possibility to adapt it after meeting the end-users.

One example of a tool to facilitate this stage

Focus Group - Confronting points of view on a given subject.

Description of the tool

- *What*: group interview, compare and share different ideas; to generate a rich understanding of participant’s experiences and beliefs
- *How long*: 1h30 to 3h
- *How many:* 5 to 12
- *What you’ll need*: sticky notes, flip chart, markers
- *Steps*: A moderator guides the interview while a small group discusses the topics that the interviewer raises. The facilitator begins by proposing the group's operating rules and having them validated collectively (listening, benevolence, respect, etc.). This method unfolds open questions like a funnel. The first question is broad on the theme that the facilitator wishes to address, for example, "*for you, what does animal welfare mean*?” The next question explores the experience and practices of participants concerning the topic in more depth. The following questions are more specific and may, for example, ask for an opinion on a tool or gather particular needs.
  The facilitator should encourage participants to express themselves without any judgement. The objective is to gather all opinions. The facilitator can use different participatory tools in the different sessions.
  It is advisable to record the activity to illustrate the report with quotes.

Tips:

Invite the participants:

- Take care when creating the sample group(s): which people according to the objective?
- Ensure that participants can speak freely among themselves and that there are no conflicts of interest within the group.
- Recruitment managed by partners directly involved with the target audience -> trust, easier to come, to feel engaged if you know the person who is asking you
- Create a clear invitation
- Secure participation on the day: be sure that enough participants are coming, make follow-up calls a few days before, and send a gentle reminder the day before

Prepare the content:

- Rigorous preparation:
  - Very well defined objectives
  - Method, precise sequence of events

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During the Focus Group:

- Time is working against the group. Identify one person appointed to watch the time
- Let each participant have the chance to express themselves. An experienced facilitator can help you

Logistic:

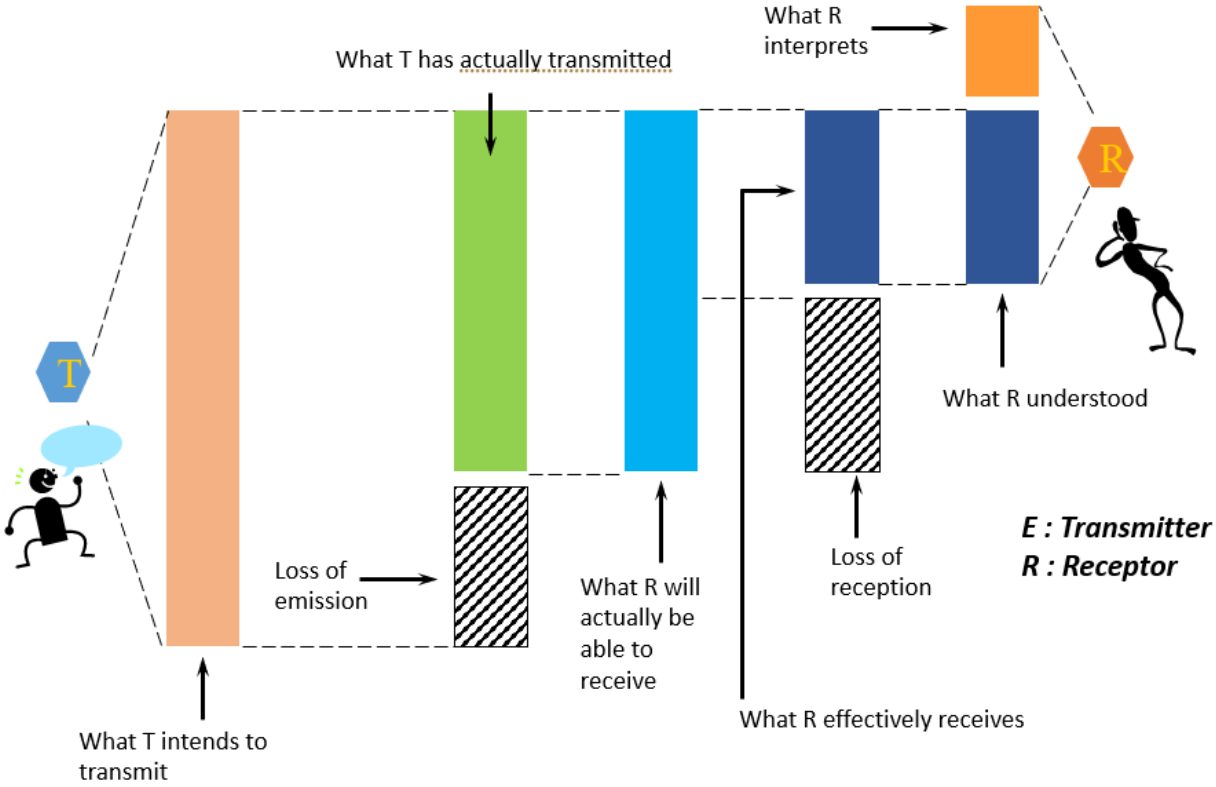
- No more than 10/12 people
- Minimum of 2 facilitators: one leading and the other taking notes

3.1.1.2 Agree on the idea

How to ensure clarity of the goals (of the project) for everyone?

Each participant has their professional vocabulary or language (especially if participants are from different countries or disciplines) and their own cultural and personal representations. Thus, each person understands and receives information differently. This potentially leads to discrepancies between the information transmitted by the facilitator and the information that is understood.

Ensuring a shared, deep understanding (challenges, objectives, methods, roles) before launching the co-innovation project helps avoid tensions or even the failure of certain actions. Figure 6 illustrates how easy it is to create misunderstandings when you communicate.



Source: Concevoir et animer une action de conseil collectif, Idele, 2005

Figure 6. Communication - a risky process

How to solve it

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To do this, you give each actor the opportunity to:

- Express themselves to explain things in their own way
- Participate from the beginning of the project whenever it is possible.

This way, you can ensure that all actors have the same objectives and clearly understand their tasks. If necessary, the objectives and tasks can be clarified and adjusted before the project starts. You will continue to ensure the clarity of the aims during the project.

When partners are involved later in the design process and not from the beginning, be sure everything is clear for them and take the time to question them about points you can adapt.

Word of advice

The actors need to share a common definition of key terms. Even if the term seems obvious, it costs nothing to agree on an understanding, which avoids confusion and loss of time during the project.

One example of a tool to facilitate this stage

Speed boat - Staying the course together

Description of the tool

- *What*: By visualising a boat sailing towards an island, we work on the group's objectives and what has to be put in place to achieve them. The strengths, weaknesses, and milestones of the project are discussed. It can be used to plan, start a project, or make a mid-term assessment.
- *How long:* 45 minutes to 1h30
- *How many:* 10
- *What you'll need:*
    - Drawing on a flip chart or projecting a slide:
    - Place a boat in one corner and a treasure island in the other (see Fig. 7)
    - Visualise the wind in the sails/carrying currents = forces
    - Placing anchors/shark fins = weaknesses and risks
    - Moreover, sticky notes and markers
- *Steps*:
    - During the two first steps, each participant thinks about the different themes (objectives, strengths, obstacles and barriers). They then materialise their ideas, position them on the visual medium (paper or digital), and explain them orally
    - The first step aims to define the "Island", which is the projection of goals to be achieved: "*In 3 years we will be...*", "*What will be different...*"
    - The second step is about strengths and weaknesses: "*What helps/hinders us in achieving these objectives*?"
        - The wind in the sails is the internal force of the group, the project.
        - The current near the boat represents the opportunities.
        - The anchors are the internal weaknesses.
        - The shark fins illustrate the risks.

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        - The positioning of ideas is done spontaneously. If a team member finds a hindrance particularly annoying, they will place the idea very low down at the anchors. On the other hand, if they consider that one of the team's strengths constitutes a real booster, they will position their idea very high up in the space that represents the wind in the sails.
    - At the end, the facilitator organises a debriefing of the exercise. The group validates the scheme and the milestones that have been set.

<u>Testimony of the use</u>
Manon Fuselier, IDELE, France
The objective of the Rhaporc project is to analyse the human-animal relationship in pig farming, its importance for the farmer, the animals and the results of the farm, and to propose ways for farmers to improve it. It is a national multi-actor project.
During this project, the speed boat tool was used to think collectively and identify hindrances and levers concerning the human-animal relationship. It also helped to bring out solutions. The facilitator gathered farmers and advisors (about 12).

During the interview, Manon Fuselier said, "*This tool is very illustrative and very rich! It allows participants to develop their thinking through images. These images help in visualisation and allow many ideas to emerge. It is very rich despite the online format.*"
"*When you look at the synthesis, you can see the link between each element; you can see what makes the boat move forward, what slows it down. The whole picture takes shape! It's very interesting!*"
She also highlighted that "*The most difficult thing was to make participants understand where we wanted to take them. There were sometimes people who didn't understand what the image represented. Hence the importance of clarifying what each image means. You have to find the balance between the time to explain and the time to take action in order not to lose people.*"

<u>Tips</u>
- This tool is accessible to beginners, but beware: it requires some preparation work for the facilitator
- During the introduction of the workshop, take the time to explain the instructions but don't forget to take action
- Adapt the elements around the boat to your question

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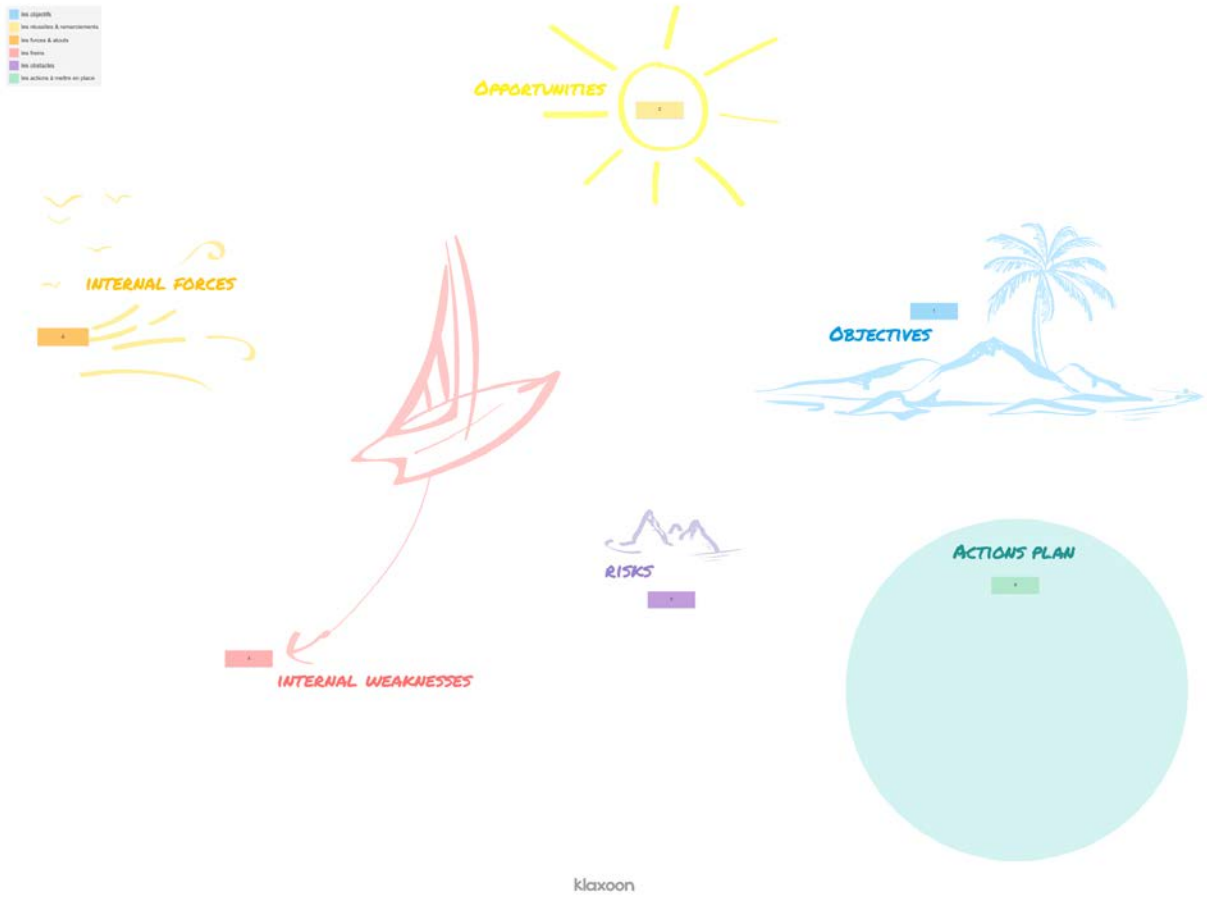

Figure 7. Example of the starting drawing for speed boat exercise

Another tool: SWOT analysis (Tool 18, The MSP tool guide)

3.1.2 Reflecting on the partnership

3.1.2.1 Building a balanced partnership and wider networks

How to identify and connect with other networks (other projects and their network)?

The project (all participants and stakeholder groups) needs to be connected as closely as possible to existing networks. Connections allow it to be improved and challenged by other skills, knowledge etc. and maximise future impact through the influence and mobilization of the other networks once the project begins to produce outputs.

How to solve it

It helps if the individuals and organisations are involved during the preparation phase of the project to identify potential networks.

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Contributors who have already worked together know each other and understand how they work. This saves precious time (both for the creation of the project and for relationship building) and facilitates the project's progress.

However, these internal linkages do not allow for, or at least do not encourage, the renewal of working methods and networks, nor do they allow for the diversification of bottom-up issues. The sharing of knowledge is, therefore, more limited. So, you have to find a balance between building a project where all the partners know each other and a project where none of the partners knows each other; while controlling diversity and covering the knowledge and skill needs for the project (see "How to form a well-balanced consortium?").

You can designate a person responsible for links with other networks to manage this task. Throughout the project, this person will ensure a "watch" (to create links with new networks) and share information and results with the other networks.

Word of advice
It helps to anticipate the time needed for this essential but time-consuming investment in the project.

Targeting the networks or people who will enrich the project, who will assist in meeting the project's objectives, will help disseminate the results. They can even participate in the project

To involve multiple networks in a project, it is advisable to plan a meeting of the networks (or their representatives) and the project partners at the beginning to define the objectives of the relationship, the role of the participants, and the "rules" (regularity of meetings, types of information shared, etc.). This approach will lend even more importance to the networks and can only be beneficial for disseminating results.
Don't just stick to your usual networks if you need new skills and a fresh eye on the topic. Do not hesitate to seek out partners with whom you are not used to working. As long as they are motivated, the cooperation will only be more enriching.
You can invite external partners and internal actors to sign the confidentiality rules of the project. Those who do not sign it can nevertheless be informed of the project, but they cannot be internal actors.

How to form a well-balanced consortium (in terms of geography, skills, experience etc.)? / How to involve relevant actors?
This question deals with the building of the consortium. The first step is identifying relevant actors and when the (first) contacts are made.

Diversity within a project is an asset and has been cited several times as a success factor in multi-actor projects "*the complementary skills of project partners and the good cooperation between project partners*" (Protecow, LTR). This diversity can be geographical (different languages, cultural contexts etc.), functional (researchers, advisors, farmers, etc.), experiential (various degrees of experience of participation in

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research projects, on technical themes, community-building etc.). Everyone will bring their knowledge, skills, vision, and experience from their context.

Diversity (especially geographical diversity) can hinder the smooth running of the project and, therefore, innovation. Indeed, the more diversity there is, the more time and effort it will take to translate and establish a common language.

How to solve it

Care should be taken to find the balance between too much and too little diversity. A small core team is often more efficient than large working groups.

It is not skills that "work", but individuals. Moreover, people will collaborate with each other on the one hand and with the coordinator on the other. The "soft skills" of the individuals are essential. "*The personality is really the key*" (Inno4Wood). It is important to have effective complementary skills in scientific and technical fields, but also in the types of activities (research, translation, experimentation, etc.). The person behind the skills is essential.

Word of advice

If possible, you can choose the people, their soft skills, in addition to their technical skills. A project is a team.

To face the challenge of language differences, you can designate someone to be in charge of the translation can help. Patience is required.

If there is a lack of skills or knowledge, it is quite possible to ask for outside help without this person (a broker, a facilitator, etc.) being a full-fledged actor in the project.

The challenge for governance is to create cohesion between people from different backgrounds. Until the team has reached a significant level of cohesion, it tends to be only a collection of individuals with little to share.

Bringing together actors with complementary skills helps. If specific skills are indispensable and rare (carried by only one person), you can - if possible – think of a backup plan, with another person(s) being able to make up for the absence/disappearance of the first person.

One example of a tool to facilitate these stages

What, Who, Why, Where, When & How - « *Brainstorming of Who should be involved? Who should be around the table?* »

Description of the tool (see Impact assessment handbook in LIAISON toolbox)

- *What*: plan multi-actor tasks in advance, challenge multi-actor consortia with implementing multi-actor tasks in a rigorous and meaningful way, plan at the level of the whole-project/initiative how the project intends to engage with its actor/stakeholder community to avoid fatigue
- *How long*: 1-2h
- *How many*: Whole multi-actor group, small to large. Particularly useful for large consortia who are challenged with coordinating a consistent multi-actor approach across many tasks
- *What you'll need:* sticky notes, markers
- *Steps*:

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- Explain the purpose, logic and background
- What: The facilitator writes a 'topic banner,' i.e. a title on flip chart paper – 'What MAA Tasks?' Starting from the beginning of the project and working through to the end, participants are facilitated to identify all tasks in the project/initiative that employ the MAA.
- Who: The facilitator writes a 'topic banner,' i.e. a title on flip chart paper – 'Who should be involved in this MAA Task?' (taking each task in turn, with its own flip chart paper). Participants identify, for each task, the actors (who should be involved as partners) and the stakeholders (who should be consulted).
- Why: actors are invited to identify why actors/stakeholders may be motivated/incentivised to participate in the tasks. Why, from their perspectives, are they likely to want to be involved? Each actor & stakeholder type is taken in turn for each task, and a motivations register is built.
- Where and When: At this step in the process, the logistical questions of "where"? And "when"? are answered, specifically about the events/activities of the project, involving actors and(or stakeholders. They are addressed together, particularly for international projects/initiatives, as there may be possibilities to hold more than one activity/event together (for stakeholder engagement, for example).

<u>Testimony of the use</u>
Aine Macken-Walsh, sociologist, Teagasc, Ireland
This tool, often used by Aine Macken-Walsh in project facilitation, is "*very useful to help the facilitator and the participants think critically about who should be involved in the tasks*".

It helps to address different questions:
- What: What is the task to be done?
- Who: Who should be involved?
- Why: Why do these actors want to be involved? "*This is perhaps the most important question to understand: why do these stakeholders want to be involved in the project? What would be their motivation for getting involved in the project? The facilitator needs to understand the stakeholders' point of view to understand their interest in being involved in the project. The reason why a farmer would want to be involved in a particular project is completely different from that of a researcher.*"
- Where: logistical issue
- When: a question of logistics

"*The very design of this tool aims to raise awareness and make people more aware of the needs and motivations of others*".

3.1.2.2 Ensuring benefits for the different partners involved

<u>How to ensure the project is relevant for all the individuals involved?</u>

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The group of project actors is constituted according to their skills and knowledge, but this is not enough to ensure their motivation and involvement. Indeed, and before the project's launch, it is important to check that each actor will benefit from their participation, such as by knowledge development or production of new knowledge or skills. This is important for the actors themselves to remain motivated throughout the project, which contributes to the project's success. If the actors do not maintain their interest in the project, motivation may decrease, and the actors may disengage. This will impact the whole project: the actors and the work.

How to solve it
Asking each partner of the innovation group what they need, what their constraints are, and what they want to achieve will give clarity. You can meet them before the project starts to discuss. Creating a link and a trusting relationship are the main steps. Involving partners in the definition of the new idea and the design of the co-innovation project is a way to create this trust.

Word of advice
You can keep regular updates on this with each partner. Use the joint agreement to attract people and strengthen the trust (see "how to share intellectual property").

Example of tool: Rainbow diagram (tool 28 in Impact assessment handbook in LIAISON toolbox)

3.1.2.3 Understanding each other

How can project partners best find common ground? How to enable/facilitate partners to understand (from the outset) each other's perspectives/needs? (e.g. classic tensions between academic and non-academic partners in a multi-actor project)
It is essential to start the co-innovation project on a collaborative and healthy basis in a group composed of diverse persons and organisations with different cultural and work contexts and different objectives. Each participant should understand and appreciate the expectations and problems of the others in an atmosphere in which everyone is motivated to work together despite the inevitable differences.

How to solve it
It is not enough to check that everyone understands what they have to do but rather to create a common base by sharing the problems and objectives. The sense of community is thus developed, which will allow the group to avoid, or at least reduce, tensions.

Word of advice
Be careful not to leave certain actors aside because they do not have the facilities for expressing themselves. Everyone must be able to express themselves to find common ground.

Example of tools: Speedboat (see above), Photolangage (see below)

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3.1.3 Setting up the project

3.1.3.1 Building the co-innovation project together

How to engage all project partners in the design of the project?

This part concerns the period where it is necessary to detail the actions, the tasks and who does what. The aims are already clarified, and the partnership is as stable as possible.

Probably the fastest way to construct a project is for the person who has the idea to build it, but this approach will lose all the richness of a group, and the rest of the project will probably be even more complicated. A preferred option is to involve all the project's actors in defining the project's limits, the problems to be solved, the different contexts, the actors who will be concerned (closely or by far), and the beneficiaries.

Not only will each bring their ideas, networks, and contexts, but they will also appropriate the subject more easily. They will get to know each other, work together, and be more efficient during the project. All the actors will feel more involved and engaged with the project.

How to solve it

You can bring together all the actors you have already identified who could be part of the project. Each time new stakeholders are identified, they need to be involved in the process.

Reflection tools allow everyone to express themselves. It is the beginning of the project; it is the moment to give all the ideas and not restrict yourself.

Word of advice

Be careful! Preparing the project with several people can take a long time. Therefore, plan even more time than seems necessary so that the project has time to mature.

You can involve the actors in the writing of the project by sharing the parts to be written.

Take your time. So that each actor finds their place before the project begins. The time you take is an investment for the future.

One example of a tool to facilitate this stage

Actor ID – The right skill for the right task

Description of the tool (see Impact assessment handbook in LIAISON toolbox)

- *What*: Engage people to participate, which is crucial at the team-building stage and often at the pre-project phase. The Actor ID tool can then be used iteratively throughout the project to identify a collection of tasks for completion, and the competencies required to undertake them.
- *How long*: 30 mins-2 hrs
- *How many:* Used in small, nascent groups, particularly in the pre-funding stage
- *What you'll need:* flip chart paper, sticky notes, markers
- *Steps*:
    - Brainstorming tasks: Ask participants to brainstorm tasks for project/initiative development, summarizing the task on a sticky-note

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- Clustering tasks into roles: Ask participants to cluster similar tasks together/tasks that need a particular skill set.
- Ask participants to choose a cluster of tasks and present it to the group. Verify if it is comprehensive, complete, and in the right cluster. Identify with the participants the skill sets required, the resources needed, and who will take responsibility for each task.
- Allocation/adoption of roles with matchsticks
- Creating plans for roles and how and when tasks will be undertaken: Participants have agreed to take a role and can be invited to work alone or as a team (where two or more participants are working on a task).
- Plan a follow-up meeting to assess progress

Testimony of the use

Aine MackenWalsh, sociologist, Teagasc, Ireland

The H2020 Skin project is a project on developing short food chains. The project brought together different communities of actors within each country, composed of diverse actors (with different backgrounds, types of knowledge etc.).

In Ireland, they used the "Actor ID" tool. The tool aims to assign tasks to actors based on their competencies, skills, forms of experience, and, perhaps most importantly, interests. Taking a role that they're interested in can energize participation and engagement. If the person doesn't have the required experience or background in the area, they can be paired with someone more experienced in a kind of a buddy system, or the task can be undertaken as a group.

Actor ID was a way of identifying ways for people to diversify their skillset and learn things that they found energizing. Furthermore, there's the practical aspect to ensuring that particular types of expertise, knowledge and experience held by different actors are fully leveraged. The project benefits from the complementarity of the kinds of experience and expertise in the multi-actor group, which is maximised by strategically pairing people to the right tasks.

Tips

This tool can be used at different project stages whenever there is a need to assign tasks to several people.

It is easy to understand and use by novice facilitators.

Another tool that can be used in similar circumstances is “brainstorm” (see above)

3.1.3.2 Plan

How to develop a strategy for the most effective dissemination?

All the stakes of a project are based on disseminating results at the end. Indeed, the first objective of an innovation and development project is to produce outcomes, such as tools, references, and advice for those who need them. Results that do not reach their targets fail in achieving their purpose. Therefore, as soon as the project is built, it is necessary to work on a plan for disseminating the results.

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Again, this should be a participatory process to profit from the experiences and known dissemination channels that partners can use to transmit the results. Although dissemination occurs after the results have been produced, it remains a strong recommendation to think about it before beginning the project.

How to solve it

A practical early step is to identify the targets for the results and plan for their involvement as early as possible. It means identifying available communication channels and expertise and planning for results in a form appropriate to the target audience.

Words of advice

All partners need to share how they disseminate results to be aware of your possibilities. Then, you can classify the types of results to be disseminated and the types of targets. It can be helpful to identify a person who will be responsible for organizing the dissemination and ensuring that all channels are used throughout the project.
Dissemination can be planned throughout the project to maintain interest and highlight the real-world relevance of the results.

Testimony:
Christine Moulin, Head of IMPACT, Institut de l'Elevage, France
Example of tools: Actor ID (see above)
In the interview, Christine Moulin explained: *"Identifying the different categories of stakeholders is quick to do. By bringing together 10 to 15 experts for a 2-hour meeting, we can gather a lot of information. What's more, it's an easily accessible, very visual process. This distancing clarifies and calms. I've often noticed, moreover, that it is a founding element for a project group.".*
This tool presents various advantages:

- Gather enough people
- Stay focused on the objective
- Identify any unspoken issues (competition, etc.) by knowing what is going on in the ecosystem in question.

How to manage the sharing of intellectual propriety?

In a project that brings together many types of actors, there can always be competition between them, such as conflict over ownership of the results and the data collected. This is especially likely when they are economic actors who are competitors within the same sector.

How to solve it

Rules must be established at the beginning of the project, validated by the group before the project's launch, and written in the AD.
To find an agreement between everyone takes time. But, this will avoid conflicts later.

If the project actors are also competitors, facilitate them to establish the rules for data sharing from the beginning. The goal is to create trust between the competitors so that everyone can bring the necessary information and data to the project.

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Words of advice
It helps to discuss the issue collectively as soon as possible and to identify the constraints and habits of each partner organisation. The process needs to be co-validated and suited to all partner organisations.

Testimony
Katrina Rønningen, Ruralis, Norway – studied the project Arena Skog
The Arena Skog case study is a multi-actor project within the Norwegian business cluster Arena Skog. The case was a preliminary project about building urban wood construction, up to eight stories, in timber frame construction. Several of the core companies in the cluster were included as suppliers, who worked with external actors, such as researchers in the fields of fire safety, sound, and statics, a contractor on the demand side, and an engineering consultant.

For the Arena Skog project, the actors, some of whom were economic actors and competitors within the same wood industry, established a joint agreement to define what information and data they could share with each other and what should remain confidential.

"*It was entirely up to the participants themselves to choose how much they wanted to share. In my experience, there was no formal agreement. But they were all aware that they should share relevant knowledge and expertise, but that "trade secrets" and other less relevant or sensitive information could remain private. It was understood that relevant information/knowledge had to be shared for the project to develop and make the necessary progress. All players knew that they depended on the different expertise and knowledge of others to succeed.*"

3.2 Phase 2: Interactive and collective project work

This part details the heart of the project. It highlights how to build a community and maintain a team spirit to help the collective work. It gives some clues about how to work and innovate together. It also details the benefits of self-reflection and the importance of the links and exchange with stakeholders, both inside and outside the project.

3.2.1 Internal functioning and building a community

3.2.1.1 Building a community

How to help people work together with people they may not already know? How to build team spirit?

Multi-actors projects bring together individuals and organisations with different skills, knowledge and working habits. It is easier to stay in one's comfort zone with actors who work the same way as one does or at least with whom one is used to working. At the beginning of the project, during the creation and the first moments of the consortium's life, you need to plan time to encourage the links between the actors to facilitate collective work.

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How to solve it

It is helpful to create team spirit and understanding between actors within the group You can leave space for expression adapted to each person (e.g., a farmer during a farm visit). To ease the exchanges, you need to break down any fictitious barriers that may exist between the different types of actors (e.g. between farmers and researchers).

Word of advice

It is helpful to plan regular "face to face" meetings, sometimes in an informal setting. You need to take the time to identify and understand potential barriers between partners to address them better.

One example of a tool to facilitate this stage

Photolangage - A picture is worth a thousand words. Say it with a picture.

Description of the tool

- *What*: to introduce themselves, to present their experience, to share representations, to look for creative solutions
- *How long:* 5 to 15' per participant, depending on the objective
- *How many*: 2 to 20 (The more participants, the longer it takes)
- *What you'll need:* You can use cards that already exist (GIMCA©, Dixit© ...), or you can prepare your own set of pictures (it takes time to gather a good set).
- *Steps*:
    - Place the cards on a flat surface (e.g. a table) visible and accessible to all
    - Clarifies the question you are asking the participants and make sure it is clear to everyone
    - Suggest that they each choose one or more card(s) that represent(s) what they want to express
    - Each person, in turn, shows their card and explains how they understand it and how it answers the question asked.

Tips

For the facilitator

- Provide a clear question
- To introduce oneself, express a feeling, an opinion (individual expression), it is not a debate
- Rules of kindness, listening, neutrality/not judging
- Short answer requested in instructions
- Synthesis to be built and capitalized

The logistic

- Set of various/nice pictures
- Possible from distance
- Beware of the time it takes

More tools: Icebreaker (e.g. bingo, weather of the day, cross-presentation)

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3.2.1.2 Communicate transparently

How to efficiently update each other (when, how often, where, using which tools, etc.)?

Transparent communication with partners is the key element to keep them informed about the progress of the work, what remains to be done, and the organization. This enhances the involvement of partners and creates a transparent working atmosphere. Each partner needs clarity about their involvement:

- At what time? To organize themselves as well as possible, to anticipate when they need to keep time for this
- On what? To have all the elements to feel comfortable participating, to be sure they have the skills.

How to solve it

For the daily work: emails, newsletters, etc. The choice depends on the partners, the country and the working habits. It can be defined within the group when building the project. For example, in some contexts/countries, it is easier to exchange with farmers via WhatsApp. For others, it will be more interesting and efficient to meet physically.

During group meetings: to share, collect everyone's opinions, and work collectively. At these times, It is important to remember to:

- Take the necessary time and ensure that the partners have understood and appropriated the information,
- Attractively transfer the information: prefer visuals and a few key elements to a long text.

Word of advice

Be careful to find a balance. Everyone needs to feel included but not overloaded with unnecessary information. It is helpful to think about who should/would like to have this or that information and validate it collectively.

In addition, the frequency should also be discussed collectively. Once again, the right balance needs to be found: not too often, so as not to get bored, but regularly enough to maintain a dynamic. You can, for example, organize regular meetings (every month), leaving the possibility of cancelling unnecessary meetings if there is not enough information to share. This will save time for everyone.

Testimonies in various projects

ArenaSkog (*Rita Sivertsvik, Ruralis, Norway – case study deputy of the project Arena Skog*)- the facilitators set up monthly technical meetings and regular workshops, throughout the project, during which the project actors reinforced the common objectives and challenges through exchanges, discussions and keeping each other informed of the project's progress.

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Fraimon (*Maddalena Bettoni, researcher, UPM, Spain*) – *"Fraimon is a farmer's association that aims to improve the marketing and sale of agricultural products, provide solutions to the environmental and labour problems in the rural population of small agricultural enterprises, and transforms the local farms into a centre of employment generation for the rural society. A practice that has helped achieve the objectives and overcome initial conflicts has been a good flow of communication and an appropriate channel. Unlike previous failed attempts to group farmers into an association, in 2014, there were many more communication tools and more accessible from the rural community. This has allowed for a real-time exchange of information, and consequently, they serve as a channel for a more agile and simple decision-making process.*

Specifically, the main communication tool implemented in the SAT case that has obtained the greatest success for the purposes has been WhatsApp. This type of communication, which can be defined as more informal, has also made it possible to reinforce existing relationships and establish new ones." (Gallego Moreno, FJ; Díaz-Puente, JM; Bettoni, M; Suarez, D. (s.a.) Huete Futuro Foundation: Cuenca, Spain. Editor Mendez Rivera, M. and Noll, D. Situation and Good Examples of Social Capital Across Europe. Not published)

Huete (*Maddalena Bettoni, researcher, UPM, Spain*) – *"The Huete Future Foundation (FHF) came into being in 2008 to help build a future for Huete and its administration. FHF is a private, not-for-profit organization that aims to rescue and promote the historical, archaeological, ethnographical, and natural heritage of Huete. The factors that allowed the foundation to succeed in the urgent action of inspiring the local population were transparency and communication with all actors and administrations involved in the actions and public dissemination of the activities and results.*

In this sense, the newsletter's publication has served to keep all the actors related to the Foundation and the population in general constantly informed. The information contributes to building trust towards the Foundation commitment and has contributed to giving visibility to the objectives and actions that increase the population interest and motivation." (Gallego Moreno, FJ; Díaz-Puente, JM; Bettoni, M; Suarez, D. (s.a.) Huete Futuro Foundation: Cuenca, Spain. Editor Mendez Rivera, M. and Noll, D. Situation and Good Examples of Social Capital Across Europe. Not published)

3.2.1.3 Managing the diversity of partners

How to deal with heterogeneous skills/experienced levels/working habits inside the consortium?

European multi-actor projects bring together very heterogeneous personalities and organisations. In a multi-actor project, they will have to collaborate. Everyone brings their own point of view and enriches the exchanges. However, difficulties can arise due to misunderstandings or (too) large gaps between habits/comfort zones.
Participatory methods allow everyone to feel understood, included, free to participate, and comfortable when participating and expressing themselves. The facilitator's posture plays an important role.

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How to solve it

The first step **is to gain a common understanding of** each other. A language that everyone understands must be used and shared. If this is not the case initially, the partnership needs to build a common language. Partners have to avoid using overly technical/academic language that only some participants would be comfortable with.

Knowing each other is the next step. The collective work is easier if everyone knows each other and understands each other's issues, objectives and constraints. To help the process, you can alternate the venues for your meetings. If your project involves farmers and researchers, spend time in the field and in the meeting room.

Then you can **exchange**, share and build a way of working collectively. You can encourage experience sharing and knowledge transfer where necessary.

If not everyone has the same experience in using participatory tools, it is important to start simply at the beginning. To stimulate the exchanges, the meetings can be organised in various places. A farmer will be more comfortable and feel more able to exchange if they are in a known environment, such as on a farm. A researcher might be more comfortable in a meeting room.

Word of advice

The methods need to suit the different types of actors. It is helpful to take the time to identify these actors and their working habits, and to understand the links and power relationships that may exist. This will help you to choose the most suitable way to exchange. Furthermore, you can anticipate the location and timing. For example, you want to avoid milking hours if you want to bring together dairy farmers.

One example of a tool to facilitate this stage

Barcamp – We need you to choose the topic!

Description of the tool

- *What*: Share ideas and experiences, learn from each other, create a sense of community and cohesion, and work together on ideas, processes or action plans
- *How long*: 1 day
- *How many:* large and diverse groups
- *What you'll need*: circles of chairs, space, flip chart papers and coloured markers for each group
- *Steps*:

  Set up
  - The facilitator set up the room with chairs in a circle.
  - The facilitator explains the workshop principles:
    - Whoever comes are the right people
    - Whenever it starts is the right time
    - Wherever it happens is the right place
    - Whatever happens, is the only thing that could happen
    - When it's over, it's over
  - The participants identify the topic individually, which are the ideas they want to deal with during the workshop

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Agenda

- Any idea participants feel passionate about and want to take responsibility for can be put on a flip chart paper. The facilitator invites anyone who wants to host a group to share the topic, the location and the time needed. The information is gathered on a flip chart paper called the Agenda Wall.

Groups talks

- Participants are invited to join the sessions in small groups. They are free to change group at any time (the law of two feet).

Conclusion

- At the end, participants are invited to share their key learning points.

Testimony of the use

Robert Home, FiBL, Switzerland – case study deputy of the project Inno4wood

Inno4wood is an Interreg project gathering four organising institutions, with participation by more than 72 industry partners. The cross-border goal of the project was to facilitate access to know-how, R&D results and relevant competence centres for companies along the forest-wood value chain and thus strengthen their innovation performance.

During the European project Inno4wood, facilitators used the Barcamp tool during each general project meeting. The aim was to exchange on various topics with all the project actors. The project gathered different types of actors, including foresters (who are not overly contact-loving people), academics, and architects (who like interacting), with varying levels of knowledge of participatory methods. The first meeting gathered about 100 participants who formed 30 groups with four facilitators.

"*The big advantage is that participants talk about the issues that are most relevant to them.*" Everyone can share a topic, and participants share a common goal. *"The founder of open space technology, Harrison Owen, based the method on the idea of tapping into "the most natural and essential human behaviours – self-organisation, reminding us that we know how to be together, to collaborate, and make stuff happen, with the support of simple, basic structures*". Everyone is free to discuss. This engages everyone in the project and develops relationships between project actors. The Barcamp is similar to open space technology, but participants are encouraged to spread the result of the exchanges outside the group.

"*The risk, of course, is that the issues that are discussed might not be those that are most relevant to the workshop conveners."* It can be a bit scary for the facilitator the first time. It takes courage. This method requires time (one day).

Tips

- Training for less experienced actors
- A lot of support from experienced actors
- "*Be brave and trust the participants!*"

Another tool: word café (tool 13, The MSP tool guide)

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3.2.1.4 Involve and maintain motivation during the lifetime of the project

How to ensure participation and involvement?

The starting point is to ensure that you start with motivated partners from the beginning. The question here is how to maintain motivation. If there is a drop, an intervention is to analyse, collectively or individually, why. A regular process of self-reflection can help to take a step back and make adjustments as the project progresses. Maintaining a collective dynamic over time and paying attention to the involvement of partners are the keys.

How to solve it

Keeping partners **active** helps to maintain their interest. The partners need to be involved as much as possible in the reflection. Regularity and diversity are the main points. You can set up regular and effective exchange spaces and alternate types of exchange (meetings, calls, online exchanges, collaborative online tools, etc.). Convivial times should not be forgotten: at the end of a meeting or between several meetings, visits (related to the project theme or not), restaurants, etc.

Maintaining an atmosphere of **trust** is basic. It starts with regular information (*see* Communicate transparently). Shared rules established from the beginning, such as kindness in exchanges and computers remaining off, give a framework. Regular face-to-face meetings help to build trust. You must remain attentive to the need for recognition. The key point is to take the time to step back and conduct regular check-ups to identify difficulties.

Word of advice

Your role is to give partners the opportunity to be involved as they wish and as soon as they wish. You can also anticipate and understand declines in motivation and try to remedy them. However, the usefulness of participatory methods ends when the participants do not want to participate.

Testimony

In the *Huete* project (*Maddalena Bettoni, researcher, UPM, Spain*) – *"Regarding the process of actors' engagement, the main successful practice was to strive for short-term and tangible results. This has made it possible to generate interest in the new initiative from the beginning, drawing the attention of the population, attracting them to get involved and actively participate."* (Gallego Moreno, FJ; Díaz-Puente, JM; Bettoni, M; Suarez, D. (s.a.) Huete Futuro Foundation: Cuenca, Spain. Editor Mendez Rivera, M. and Noll, D. Situation and Good Examples of Social Capital Aross Europe. Not published)

How to involve farmers?

Involving farmers in the innovation process ensures valuable output from the field and facilitates ownership and therefore use. Participatory methods help gather the field's vision, another point of view, and their needs. It also allows them to participate in the creation of innovations that are useful for them. This is a first step towards ownership.

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How to solve it

The communication form must be adapted with the appropriate language and known means of communication. The benefits of their involvement in such projects need to be clarified at the beginning to keep participants interested.

Do not forget to take constraints and seasonality into account. For example, avoid organizing a focus group for farmers during the haying season.

You will adapt yourself:

- At the level of experience with such projects: need to make them more accessible, less scary
- The level of experience of working with participatory methods: start simple

The key message is "Keep it concrete and simple".

Words of advice

Beware of differences in timing with other actors. For example, long-term projects are more challenging for maintaining farmers' interest. Meetings should be organized to take the seasonality of the farming profession into account.

Testimonies

In *Fraimon* project (*Maddalena Bettoni, researcher, UPM, Spain*) – *"Facebook network that is used to give greater visibility to the actions and decision making of the SAT helping the engagement process of other farmers. Along with this communication tool, meetings or assemblies with all partners are also used to make government decisions."* (Gallego Moreno, FJ; Díaz-Puente, JM; Bettoni, M; Suarez, D. (s.a.) Huete Futuro Foundation: Cuenca, Spain. Editor Mendez Rivera, M. and Noll, D. Situation and Good Examples of Social Capital Across Europe. Not published)

Collective approach

Evelien Cronin, ILVO, Belgium – case study deputy of the project Food Heroes

Food Heroes is an Interreg transnational project gathering 12 partners. The idea was to work on the issue of food waste with stakeholder groups in different countries. The approach allowed for the collective creation of business models.

The method brought together groups of 15-20 people (farmers and other actors in the food chain). A collective work approach was developed with designers who are specialised in these methods. The approach is divided into three phases:

- 1: Analysis of the problem, exploring the existing needs, challenges and problems,
- 2: Idea generation and selection of the most promising ideas, which were summarised at the end of the first phase,
- 3: Conceptualisation, where the most promising projects were further developed.

Different participatory tools were used for the different stages.

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This approach has several advantages:

- Bringing together actors on a common theme, not presenting it as a problem but an opportunity to work and move forward together. "*You are part of the solution.*"
- Participants saw a real benefit in considering farmers as entrepreneurs
- Supported and trained beginners at the beginning
- Allowed competing actors who had never worked together to work together

This can be challenging for beginners and needs to be well prepared within the project. The partners did not have the same experience with participatory tools. Training was organized within the project. The more experienced facilitators also supported the beginners during the first participatory meetings. The tools were tested with the partners beforehand during a dedicated week. They were adapted for the target audience:

- Simplification,
- Doing less,
- Reduction/clarification of jargon.

3.2.2 Innovate together during the project period

3.2.2.1 Working together

How do we organize our working together and decision making?

To ensure that working together and the decision-making process are shared and clear to all, the group validates them collectively. If possible, you can encourage collective decision-making and involve partners to keep them motivated (*cf.* Involve and maintain motivation).

A decision about collective work, if taken collectively, will be easier for the partners to accept. They will have had the opportunity to exchange, share their views, debate, and understand each other's pros and cons.

How to solve it

A clear and shared work plan is helpful. It defines the bases and needs to be clear, understood and shared by all. It helps everyone to be clear about what is expected and when.

Trust is the key. It comes from clarity and transparency. Your role is to create a climate of trust so that everyone can express themselves freely when making decisions.
Time is a necessary resource. You make sure to allow sufficient time to establish the decision rules for collective decision making.
It is a collective process where everyone is included in the decisions that affect them.

Words of advice

These are prerequisites to be put in place for good functioning throughout the project.

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One example of a tool to facilitate this stage
Snowball technique - The tree that synthesises the forest.

Description of the tool

- *What*: Dealing with an issue in a participatory way, in a large group, quickly
- *How long:* 30' to 60' according to group size
- *How many:* 8 to 40 approx.
- *What you'll need:* flip chart papers, markers

- *Steps*:
    - The facilitator formulates the question to be addressed and ensures that it is clear to all
    - Alone: each person drafts their response to the question or issue raised
    - In pairs: pooling of ideas and development of a consensus
    - In groups of four: The same but between two pairs. The group of four writes its summary on a flip chart
    - If necessary, carry out an additional accumulation stage before the flip chart exercise
    - All: presentation of each summary for collective decision making

Tips:

- For a mature, self-regulating group
- Have space for people to connect
- Pace the time with a whistle
- Depending on the objective, creation or choice, it takes different times

Another tool: Mind map (Tools for Knowledge and learning)

How to build innovation together?

Take advantage of the diversity of actors (skills, points of view, context, etc.) to innovate. Participatory methods help to organize time for creation and collective production. The aim is to allow everyone to contribute something and to exchange freely.

How to solve it

As for lots of challenges in this guide, it takes time. Your role is to allow time to reflect and adopt/adapt the right participatory methods.
The main words are trust and adaptation to participants. It helps to have a space where everyone can express themselves freely and which encourage exchanges. It would help if you adapted to each person's comfort level with participatory methods
There are different steps:

- Brainstorming, exchanges, pooling/agreement, production.
- For each stage, the intention is different, which will influence the choice and use of tools.
- Plan to capitalize and make sure that you have validated the decisions/steps/advances collectively as you go along so that you do not have to go back to them (unless necessary).

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Word of advice
You need to adapt to the partners and their experience in such processes. For some, too much creativity can be scary at first.

One example of a tool to facilitate this stage
Scenario design + back-casting exercise – Back from the future together

Description of the tool

- *What*: To design desired futures (alternatively, neutral futures or also undesirable futures can also be considered) and identify pathways collectively to achieve/to get closed to these futures, engage people in a collective work, create trust
- *How long:* depending on the objective, 1-2h per step
- *How many:* Minimum 5-4, maximum 20
- *What you'll need*: flip chart, sticky notes, markers

- *Steps*:
    - Step 1: Build future scenarios together
        - The facilitator explains the context and the theme and gives the operational question (something like *"Let's try to design a possible future together in which…"*). Setting a consistent, valid, and agreed landscape and timeframe is important.
        - The participants identify the elements they would like to see in this future on sticky notes. The facilitator helps to refocus the discussion if it is too broad or, on the contrary, too narrowly focused on one detail.
        - The facilitator and participants collect the sticky notes and synthesise and design one scenario to which a title is given. It is also possible that more than one scenario emerges when the harvested elements refer to different, or even conflicting, directions. The title initiates the discussion and reflects the content of the scenario(s).
        - The facilitator takes the time to clean up the description of each scenario as a basis for the second step.
    - Step 2: Reflect on how to get there: starting from the future scenario(s) and moving backward to the present
        - Participants identify the actions needed before arriving at the identified scenario future and the opportunities and challenges to be faced. They also identify the resources needed. If more than one scenario has been identified and deemed worthy of analysis, the different pathways will be explored individually.
        - This operation can be repeated 1-2 times (or more, according to time, ambition etc.) to get back to the present through various steps. The facilitator is in charge of organising the proposals

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throughout the time. Ideally, the last question is, "*what can we do tomorrow?*"

- In the end, the participants may develop a somewhat chaotic pathway. The facilitator takes time to organise and validate a final version.

<u>Testimony of the use</u>

Stefano Grando, researcher, UNIPI, Italy

Those tools can be used with different aims:

- Build scenarios together,
- Define a detailed action plan,
- Create links around a topic.

It was used to identify pathways to develop sustainable urban food production in Rome. Fifteen local actors (farmers and experts) were gathered for two one-day meetings separated by a fortnight. The facilitator helps avoid mixing up the stages and going into detail too quickly. It also allows for stages of organization of ideas and synthesis that facilitate progress. Depending on the time available and the objective, you can co-construct the scenarios or start from existing proposals taken, for example, from previous exercises or reports.

This tool has different advantages:

- Encourages active stakeholder involvement
- Allows for a break from the day-to-day work, triggering a wide-horizon reflection
- Stimulates creativity but with a framework to structure
- Encourages to think outside the box

However, you need to keep in mind some points:

- Difficult to discuss a broad issue; clarifying the context is important to avoid chaotic talks
- If the question is too technical, participants tend to focus on 1 or 2 elements. It is interesting but complicated to stop them to discuss the other points.
- Talking about possible remote futures can be complicated with an audience used to concrete, practical issues: adapt to the audience

This method can also be used online. In another example described in a testimony, the method was used to develop sustainable livestock. Twenty researchers from different countries gathered for three online meetings of three hours on three consecutive days.

Doing it online makes some points easier:

- Allowed to work during the covid
- Allowed to bring more people together (no distance constraints)
- Facilitated keeping track of process and outcomes

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The disadvantage of online application is that you lose non-verbal communication, which is easier to grasp in face to face meetings. It is more difficult to get shy people to participate, and it is more challenging to adapt to participants' reactions.

Tips:
Logistic:

- Do not facilitate alone. If you are not doing subgroups, you need at least three facilitators.
- Provide a glossary, take time to clarify terms for all
- Plan a visual presentation of the scenarios

For the facilitator:

- Start simple
- Take time. If you only have, for example, 3 hours, choose another method or work with scenarios that have already been established

Regarding the group:

- Anticipate the heterogeneity of the group
- Plan a question wide enough to be able to inspire a scenario reflection, but not too broad (adapt according to the audience)

How do we learn together?
Multi-actor projects are an opportunity to share skills, learn together and from each other, and increase our collective skills. This requires transferring and sharing. How do we ensure this transfer?
Participatory methods help take advantage of the diversity of skills brought together in the project and share these skills and experiences. Partners can learn from each other as the project progresses.

How to solve it
Sharing requires access to information, having related exchanges, and being well organised. It should be done regularly (*see* communicate transparently).
It works if everyone has access to information/products and can learn during the project. If some topics/skills are interesting for a large number of partners, you can plan collective training.

A dedicated space and time for the "inexperienced" can be created to practice and put into practice. You can encourage the exchange and sharing of experiences in different ways:

- Mixed working groups,
- Create pairs between one experienced person and the other less experienced,
- Exchange of experiences in the form of interviews

Word of advice
Be careful not to gather the partners by skills and thus limit/make the exchanges and transfer difficult.

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It is helpful to identify the levels of knowledge skills of each person at the beginning (individual surveys at the beginning can be replicated to see the evolution).

One example of a tool to facilitate this stage

Dia-log tool – Slowing down to listen and create together

Description of the tool

- *What*: to get different perspectives on a topic, explore a question further, find a common solution, synthesise a question with the group, and discuss it.
- *How long*: Between 50-60 minutes to 90 minutes. Depending on the question and the number of participants.
- *How many*: Small (8-10) to bigger groups (>20)
- *What you'll need*: circle of chairs, flip chart papers, markers

- *Steps*:
    - Dia-log is a process of developing creative thinking and critical thinking skills. It is very different from open discussion. Participants sit in a circle and the discussion develops from the centre. Questions are posed to the whole group. Periods of silence and slowing down the conversation are essential elements. By slowing down, participants can better perceive what conversation is developing within them.
    - The facilitator clarifies the question and the framework (5 min). They hang the question on the wall as a poster and explain the context (e.g. how was the question asked? What do we want to achieve with the exchange?). They also explain the rules of the dia-log, the time frame, the role of the facilitator, the use of talking sticks, gong (start & end), etc.
    - The facilitator carries out the dialogue (35 min). The talking stick is in the centre of the room. Those who want to speak, take it from the centre and replace it when they have finished speaking. Everyone expresses what they think about the question and what motivates their ideas. The participants do not respond to each other but rather express their points of view and feelings.
    - The facilitator summarises (10 min). They gather the results on a flip chart (what were the common threads of the dia-log? What are the main lessons learned?) Since a lot happens within the dialogue, it is a demanding task for the facilitator to summarise the results for the group.

Testimony of the use

Ruth Moser, Deputy Head of the Training and Advisory Group, Agridea, Switzerland

During the interview, Ruth Moser explained: *"I really like this tool. I used it in a project where the momentum was waning. The collective was thinking of opening up to new members but didn't really know how to do it. Moreover, welcoming new people was scary for some of the members. The dia-log tool helped the group agree on a strategy, overcome their fears, and revitalise themselves.*

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I particularly like this tool because you have to slow down, and when you speak, you have had time for what you want to say to mature and even develop. It's very calming and constructive."

Tips

- Choose carefully a question that concerns everyone. For example, a common challenge without a solution etc.
- The facilitator refocuses expressions if necessary
- Suggest that participants do not take notes but listen carefully to what is said.

Another tool: Fishbowl (tool 55, The MSP tool guide)

3.2.2.2 Monitoring the participatory process

How to monitor the participatory process?

As the project progresses, you need to check the motivation of the partners and the presence or not of tensions/conflicts to be resolved.

The process of evaluation throughout the project using participatory methods allows:

- Identify risks/problems and adapt
- Find solutions quickly
- Involve all partners
- Share/maintain an overview,
- Release tensions by exchanging and identifying problems that can be shared: catharsis effect.

How to solve it

Identify potential risks helps to anticipate conflicts and problems. To keep partners involved, the manager should know if they still have the necessary resources (time, budget, skills, etc.). An important point is to understand power relations and potential pre-project conflicts between partners, which can help you avoid conflicts or difficulties.

Regular contacts throughout the project help to stay involved. Another solution is to enable transparent communication. The consortium building the project can reserve time for self-reflection throughout the project and not only at the end. Offering the group regular time to reflect fosters trust and connection.

Taking diversity into account allows everyone's opinions and feelings to be considered. Everyone will have different feelings and constraints depending on their personalities, cultures, habits, etc.

Word of advice

Some conflicts may require a more detailed approach, so identify (as much as possible) the contextual elements in mind before organizing the collective work.

A session led by a facilitator from outside the project (neutral) can help to gain perspective.

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You can find more details about project evaluation in LIAISON toolbox.

<u>One example of a tool to facilitate this stage</u>
Timeline and learning history – A collective travel to understand the past

<u>Description of the tool</u>

- *What*: Self-reflect on what has happened in the project so far (results, relationship, collaboration, etc.), take a step back and analyse the events to learn from them
- *How long*: about 2-3h
- *How many*: max 10 per group
- *What you'll need*: sticky notes of various sizes and colours, flip chart papers, markers
- *Steps*:
    - Timeline
        - Prepare a flip chart paper with an arrow representing the time from the beginning of the project (or the beginning of the building phase) to now.
        - The participants identify individually, on sticky notes, three types of moments
            - Moments with a positive impact
            - Moments with a negative impact
            - Moments of flashing insights
        - They place the sticky notes along the timeline
        - Facilitate the exchange to be sure to understand every idea
    - Learning history
        - Convert the timeline into a brief narrative story
        - Divided the story into four to six scenes with a title for each
        - Analyse each scene: What changes can be observed? What caused them? Which external factors were important? And what did people in the network do to make it happen?

<u>Testimony of the use</u>
We used this tool in LIAISON in the middle of the project to self-reflect on how we have worked together since the project's launch. We split into three groups of about 10 participants to define our timeline.
It helped to:

- Rationally analyse events and to see things from a new perspective
- Understand tensions
- Identify successes and analyse them

The groups gathered people working on different project parts with various backgrounds and work habits. Everyone saw, understood, and lived the steps and actions from a different perspective.

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Doing it together and therefore sharing the analysis helped us understand each other better and clarify and understand our common past better. In the end, we were more aware of the risks and the difficulties to avoid in the future.

Tips:

- Give clear instructions
- Prepare sticky notes of different sizes and colours
- Keep in mind that it could be a difficult exercise for partners who are new to the project

More tools: in Impact assessment handbook in LIAISON toolbox

3.2.3 Preparing for impact and dissemination, drafting deliverables

3.2.3.1 Create useful content

How to ensure useful and usable deliverables?

To produce useful deliverables for users, involve them as early as possible in the creation process. The earlier users are involved, the better:

- The easier it is to take ownership
- The more the output will meet needs and expectations and be useful and used.

Be prepared to adapt the project according to feedback and needs if possible.

How to solve it

At the beginning, it helps to collect the needs of the users. Users need to see the benefits of getting involved.

Throughout the project, you need to regularly contact a targeted group of users to get feedback at different key stages of the project.

In general, you involve the diversity of potential users and adapt the involvement to the types of users.

Word of advice

When gathering needs and feedback on the production concept, you adapt your presentation to the users and be clear. A concrete example often helps in understanding a concept. Finding the right balance not to bias the feedback while making sure the concept is understood is key.

One example of a tool to facilitate this stage

Collective feedback facilitation – Everyone has something to add to the building.

Description of the tool

- *What*: collect points of view and opinions on a first draft/prototype/concept, identify the needs of future users, build an adapted production together.
- *How long*: 1 to 2h
- *How many*: 4 to 12
- *What you'll need:* sticky notes, markers

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- *Steps*:
    - The facilitator presents the elements to discuss in a way that is both clear enough for participants to understand and open enough not to bias their feedback
    - Participants use sticky notes to give their feedback. The facilitator can help them by giving specific categories, such as
        - Positive aspects, something to improve, a limit,
        - Different sub-topics,
    - The facilitator gathers the ideas and asks for clarification—the participants exchange.
    - If needed, the facilitator can ask the participants to prioritise the topics, the improvements, and the key elements.

Testimony of the use
Sylvain Quiédeville, FiBL, Switzerland
In the WP5 of LIAISON, some assessment methods were developed collectively with end-users. The meeting aimed to get feedback on a first draft and build the method together. In this example, the collective feedback facilitation was conducted online (with the tool MURAL) with 4 participants.

It allows for evaluation of progress and confirmation of the work done. It works well if there is a need and if everyone is interested. Doing this, you collect everyone's individual opinions. It allows you to develop useful tools for the field.
Participants embraced the method, and it aroused interest.

Tips:
- Familiarize yourself with the platform beforehand
- Adapt to the audience's knowledge of the subject
    - If there is little knowledge, make the presentation clear but general and open enough so as not to bias the feedback
    - If knowledge is plentiful, keep the presentation as short as possible while keeping the instructions clear
- Categories the types of feedback (themes, questions) to structure and not forget anything
- But allow general/open feedback at first
- Adapt according to the type of audience (if not used to this type of exercise, guiding can help)

Another tool: Six Thinking Hats (Tools for knowledge and Learning; tool 28, The MSP tool guide)

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3.3 Phase 3: Communication and embedding

This part deals with the process needed to ensure that the results/productions will be known and used. It is not enough to produce and present the results. Ownership must be provided. It is a process that began in the first phase (see Plan) and needs specific resources. The end of a project can also be the time to take a last step back within the partnership and identify what we have learn together.

3.3.1 Communicate on the results

3.3.1.1 Giving yourself the means

What resources are needed for effective communication?
Communication capacity is a skill and should not be neglected. The diversity of skills brought together in the project is an advantage and it can be useful to share responsibilities. It requires special skills, time, planning, networks, etc.

How to solve it
It needs to be plan from the beginning. The partnership identify the skills and resources (time, materials, budget, networks) of each partner regarding communication and plan the key stages (*cf.* Plan).
Remember to plan communications during the project. It allows to maintain momentum and generate interest and make the project more concrete for external stakeholders.

Word of advice
Do not underestimate the time needed for this particular action.

3.3.2 Internal impact

How to facilitate learning within the partnership?
Multi-actor projects are an opportunity to share skills, to learn together and from each other, and to increase our collective skills. This requires transferring and sharing. How do we ensure this transfer?

Participatory methods help to take advantage of the diversity of skills brought together in the project and to share these skills and experiences. Partners can learn from each other as the project progresses.

How to solve it
Sharing requires an access to information and to have related exchanges and a well organisation. It could be done regularly (*see* communicate transparently).
It works if everyone has access to information/products and can learn during the project if they wish. If some topics/skills are interesting for a large number of partners, you can plan collective training.

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A dedicated space and time for the "inexperienced" can be created to practice and put into practice. You can encourage the exchange and sharing of experiences by different ways:

- Mixed working groups,
- Create pairs between one experienced person and the other less experienced,
- Exchange of experiences in the form of interviews

Word of advice

Be careful not to gather the partners by skills and thus limit/make difficult the exchanges and the transfer.

It is helpful to identify the levels of knowledge, skills of each person at the beginning (individual surveys at the beginning and can be replicated to see the evolution).

One example of tool to facilitate this stage

Peer to peer learning - You are never better advised than by your peers.

Description of the tool

- *What*: Solving a problem one person has by taking advantage of the outside perspective of peers
- *How long*: 20-25 min
- *How many*: group of 5 max
- *What you'll need*: flip chart paper, something to take notes for participant A
- *Steps*:
    - A participant presents their problem, the situation, the limits: a concrete work situation and a question aligned to it (5')
    - The others ask comprehension questions only (3').
    - The facilitator can help to clarify the question and write it on a flip chart paper.
    - The other participants analyse the situation, share their experiences, and propose solutions. The participant listens to the ideas and proposed solutions and takes notes but does not react. It is easier if the participant is outside the circle or not facing the others. If you are doing it online, the participant can turn off their camera. (5')
    - The participant returns to the circle gives feedback to the other people, and explains which of the ideas they will adopt and which they will reject. (3').
    - The process is repeated until each participant has presented their individual problem
    - The facilitator proposes a round table to close the session in which each participant can share a key element or feedback on the session.

Testimony of the use

Niels Rump, Human Systems Engineer, KEK-CDC consultant, Switzerland

"*We get together and talk about it.*"

One of the key aspects of success is to establish a framework, a security. This makes it possible to establish trust, confidentiality, non-judgmental exchanges and to clarify the

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stages. The facilitator is the guarantor of this security. This is all the more important if you are faced with a tense situation or conflict.

Avoid getting into solutions straight away. This is not a space to judge and say what is right and wrong. The idea is to analyse the situation together from new angles, to understand the mechanisms. You get more out of the analysis than the solutions.
This method can become a habit within a group of peers (farmers, advisors, etc.) who meet regularly. With practice, the analyses become more refined. This reinforces the reflective practice of professional practices.

It can also be used as a starting point for sharing and developing common knowledge. There are different methods that share these principles (co-development, GEASE, etc.). It is possible to adapt them according to the situation.

This tool allows:

- Exchange among peers that brings practical expertise (more pragmatic, more operational)
- Opening up to the possibilities
- Taking advantage of collective intelligence to have a deeper analysis
- Building self-confidence because participants hear that others have problems too -> capacity-building effect

But, it requires trust within the group. It works well with peers but is more complicated with a diverse audience.

Tips:
For participant A:

- Ensure that the person is in a listening posture for themselves
- Possibly ask the person to turn around to avoid interventions and non-verbal cues
- Suggest that the person truly withdraws from the group during the solution-finding phase

For the facilitator:

- Respect the steps and timing to avoid going in circles. The limit for listening is 15-20 minutes. It is preferable to do several short cycles than one long exchange.
- Do the exercise with different people in the group
- Respect the steps
- Do not become judgmental or critical in a harmful way
- After the facts have been presented, ask the group to guess/identify/reformulate the problem
- The question must be very specific and well-formulated, then rephrased

Another tool: Fishbowl (tool 55, The MSP tool guide)

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3.3.3 Embedding the methods and tools

3.3.3.1 Ensuring ownership

How to ensure 'ownership' of results (who can use what? How to share?

It is helpful to plan to involve users from the beginning and maintain a link throughout the project. (See Create useful content).

Once the deliverable is produced, you should communicate to a wide circle of end-users (among others) who are not aware of the results. The end-users need to take ownership of the outputs and make them as useful as possible. This involves different steps:

- Make it easy to understand the outcomes,
- Emphasize the benefits to users,
- Support adaptation if necessary.

How to solve it

The results need to be accessible. The communication needs to be adapted to user types (the form and the language).

You can encourage "understanding by doing" and engage the actors using the tool in the production.

Do not hesitate to leave room for adaptation and consider users' needs, expectations, and constraints.

Word of advice

Remember that adaptations may be necessary to facilitate use and stay flexible (as much as possible).

One example of a tool to facilitate this stage

Group work (online or not) - Abolish the distance. Increase the frequency.

Description of the tool

- *What*: getting participants to work together on a given issue, taking advantage of the richness of the exchanges and the diversity of points of view, facilitating the expression of participants who are uncomfortable in a large group
- *How long*: depend on the objective, from 10' to 45'
- *How many*: from 2 to 6 per group
- *What you'll need*: something for the group to take notes,
    - Face to face: flip chart paper, coloured markers
    - Online: tools like Klaxoon, MURAL, etc.
- *Steps*:
    - The facilitator gives the instructions, making sure that they are clear to everyone. The time available for group work should also be clear to all
    - For the creation of groups, several solutions are possible:
        - Prepare them in advance if you wish to ensure a particular mix of participants, such as if you group them according to specific themes for different participants (by sector, for example)
        - Let the participants form them at will

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        - Make them random. For example, if you want three groups, designate each participant by number: 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3…
    - Give each group something to take notes on to report back later. At the beginning of the group work, the facilitator or group can choose who will share the summary with the rest of the large group (one or more people).
    - While the groups are working, the facilitator can answer questions and drop in on the different groups to help/clarify if needed and check on progress. The facilitator is the timekeeper.
    - When finished, participants come back together and share their thoughts with the whole group. This can be done in different ways:
        - Each group presents what they have discussed,
        - Each group gives one or a few key points,
        - The first group present and the others complete.

Tips:
Face to face:

- Do not hesitate to give the instructions orally, write them down and ask if they are clear to everyone
- Inform participants when they are close to the end of the time allocated to allow them to keep time for synthesis and writing if necessary
- Avoid letting participants do their groups on their own if they don't know each other to save time
- If several group work sessions are planned, if the objective allows, change the groups so that participants work with different people

Online:

- Concerning the tools:
    - Not too many different tools in the meeting
    - Train yourself
    - Practice! Test the tools before the meeting
    - Use tools that you know well
    - Have the user profile in mind to know whether they are used to doing it or not
- For the facilitator:
    - Start small so that people take ownership of the tools
    - Work in pairs to facilitate
    - Prepare (takes time)
- Logistic:
    - Distribute user=participant tutorials
    - Keep to a short time frame

How to communicate/convince beyond the circle of already convinced actors?

You have finalized your productions, communicated, and ensured the ownership for users in your networks who are already convinced by the beginning. How do you reach potential users outside your networks? The steps described in the previous section are still valid, but how do you first reach this audience and convince them?

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How to solve it

Networking is the key element. Partners identify trusted relays.

Creating trust is still basic. You can reach it with appropriate language and knowing habits and working methods. It is helpful to identify the constraints and potential obstacles to using the communication so it can be adapted if necessary.

You can use concrete examples, practice, and testimonials.

Word of advice

Social networks are a great way to communicate broadly if you know how they work and if your potential users use them. Some tips about the use:

- Short sentences, images, videos
- Adapt the publication to the type of network
- Do not duplicate them
- Clarify the mandate (as what I am talking about)
- Animate/moderate/keep the space alive

Testimony

Frédéric Muel, Project manager on R&D in grain legumes, Terreinovia, France – Coordinator of LegValue

LegValue is an H2020 EU project concerning the development of legumes in the EU (http://www.legvalue.eu/). During the interview, Frédéric Muel explained: "*For me, it is important to form a broad consortium of stakeholders interested in the project, in parallel with the consortium of internal project stakeholders. It is a question of exchanging with them at different moments of the project so that they evaluate, discuss, in a word, accompany the project and connect it to their reality. A dialogue is established between the project and this group, as broad as possible and from the outset. This second consortium comprises actors in the value chain, decision-makers from the structures involved in the project, a pool of researchers who are interested but not directly involved, teachers, etc. The idea is simple, but its implementation requires a lot of work in networking and animation, when the networks do not exist.*"

Some elements helped:

- Allocate a significant budget to the animation of the external consortium,
- Deploy it in each of the project countries,
- Ask the members of the external consortium to sign a confidentiality agreement.

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4 Five recommended toolboxes to go further

This document presents some examples of participatory tools you can use. A large variety of tools exist, and almost each tool can be adapted to your specific context (type of actors, skills and work habits, etc.). It also exists lots of toolboxes gathering tools with different approaches. In this part, the structure of five toolboxes are presented. Do not hesitate to take a look, explore and test it.

4.1 Specificities and comparison of the toolboxes

Name of the ressources	FoodLinks	Tools for Knowledge and Learning:	80 tools for participatory development	The MSP tool guide	Handbook for participatory Action Research, Planning and Evaluation
Number of tools describe	22	30	80	60	57
Classification	Purpose/application	Competences	Topics	Purpose (connected to the stage of MSP)	Purpose/application
Precision	🟡	🟠	🟢	🟢	🟢
Examples	Yes	Yes	No	No, rarely but link for other websites	Yes, not always
Figures/ illustrations	🟠	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢
What we like in it ?	Well organised, easy to find a tool according to our objective, the list of purpose and application for each tools	Examples, tools for beginners and experienced users	Introduction about the participation of the beneficiaries of the development process. And the profile of a Good Facilitator, The common mistakes in participatory workshops. Easy to read	Tools specially selected for multi-stakeholders partnership, easy to read and find tools	Many tools and process are very well described and precised. Always a good illustration or schematics

Figure 8. Comparison of five existing toolboxes

Figure 8 describes five toolboxes. The classification line specifies how the tools are organised inside the boxes. The level of detail in the description of the tools is rated with three colours in the line “Precision”. A green dot means that you will find information about the objectives, steps, and useful tips. The line “Figures/illustrations” informs you whether there are figures or not.

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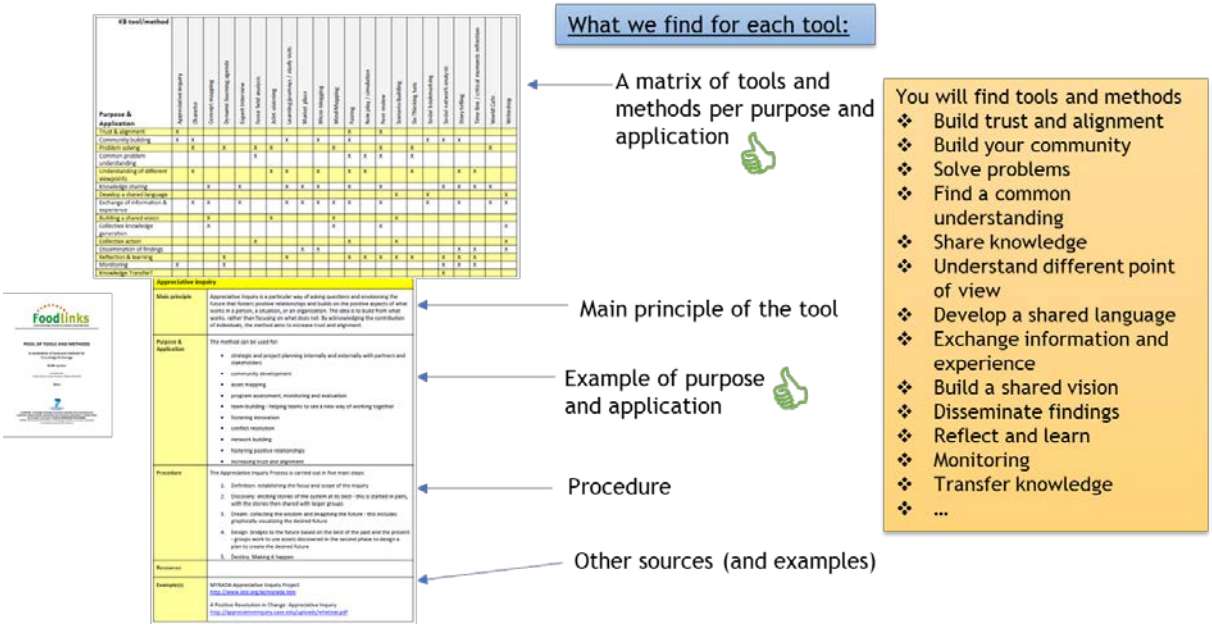
4.2 Quick presentation of the toolboxes

This part quickly describes what you can find in the five toolboxes and give you a better look at the presentation of the tools. The green thumbs highlight the elements we find particularly useful.

4.2.1 FoodLinks – Tools and methods for Knowledge Brokerage



[Go to the toolbox.](#)

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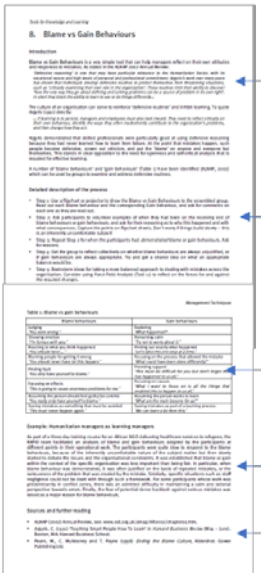
4.2.2 Tools for knowledge and learning



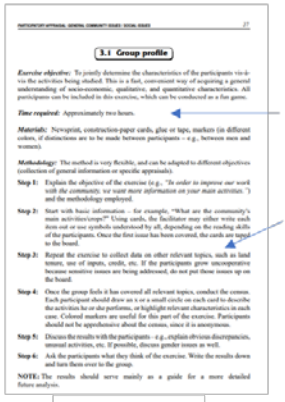
What we find for each tool:

- Introduction about the tool
- Description of the process
- Sometimes, table or scheme
- Example
- Other sources

You will find tools and approaches
- to plan, monitor and evaluate knowledge and learning initiatives.
- to reflect on the workings of teams, and to help strengthen relationships and develop shared thinking.
- to try and build on past experiences to improve activities in the future
- To make sure that essential knowledge is retained by an organisation requires

Go to the toolbox.

4.2.3 Eighty tools for participatory rural development



What we find for each tool:

- Objectives, time required, material
- Procedure step by step
- Illustration

You will find tools for rural developement stakeholders and professionals who wish to improve community participation. The tools are ordered by thematics :
- Generally applicable dialogue, observation, and group-dynamic techniques
- Analysis of problems and solutions
- Planning
- Participatory follow-up and evaluation

An the participatory appraisal around:
- General community issues - social issues
- Natural resource management
- Production systems
- Animal production
- Gender issues
- Communication and extension

Good to know: *this toolboxe has been constructed for rural developement in central america, but can be of course adapted to Europe*

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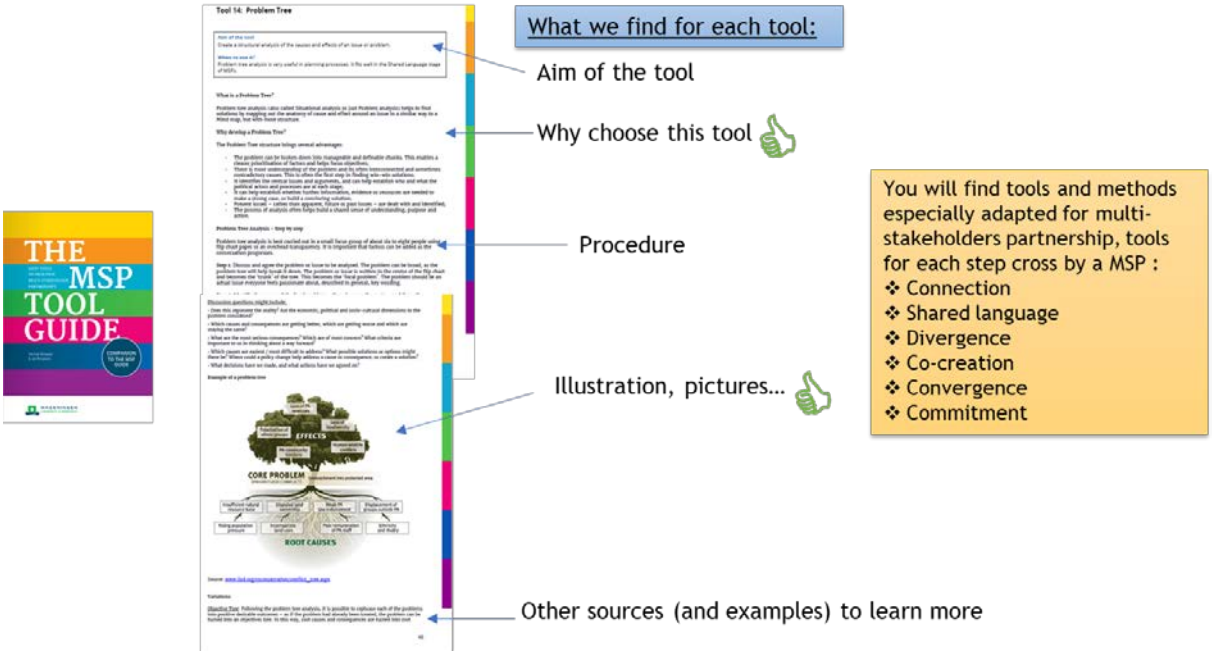
4.2.4 MSP Tool Guide - 60 tools for multi-stakeholder facilitation



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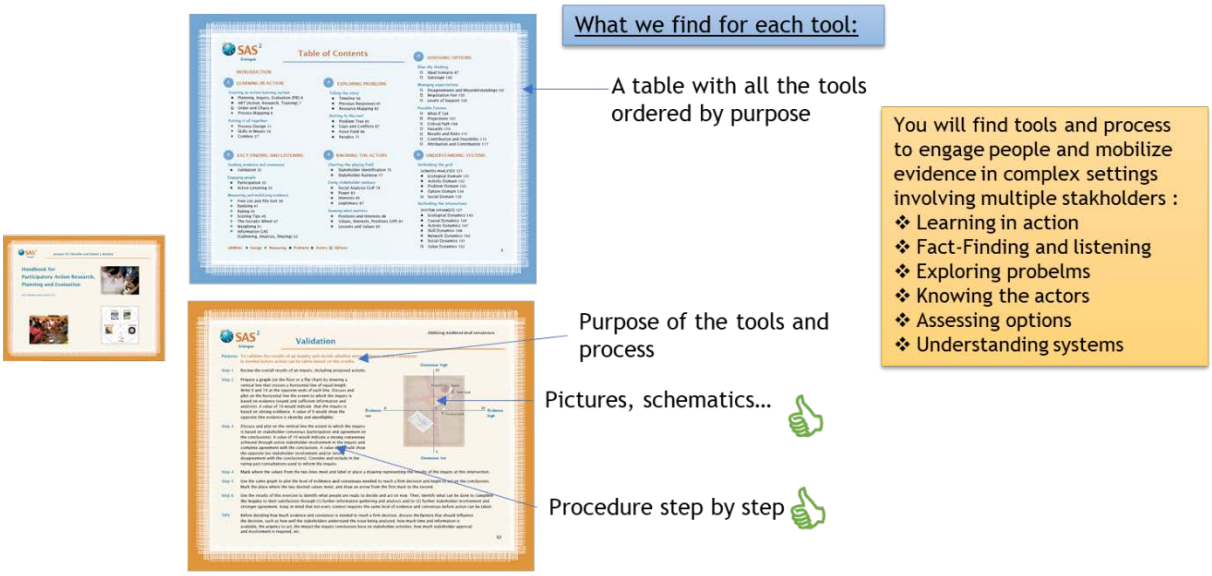
4.2.5 Handbook for participatory action research, planning and evaluation



Go to the toolbox.

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5 Annex – Set of Practice Abstracts

A set of three Practice Abstracts emerged from this manual on participatory tools (D3.2):

1) WP2-PA1 How can participatory methods help with the design and the preparation of a multi-actor project?
2) WP2-PA2 How to use participatory methods when innovating, working and learning together?
3) WP2-PA3 How can participatory methods enable communication and embedding of the output from a multi-actor project?

PA1 - How can participatory methods help with the design and the preparation of a multi-actor project?

Participatory methods can be used at any stage of a multi-stakeholder project. These methods can help from the birth of the project idea and during its development. The LIAISON interactive guide to facilitate participatory projects addresses this in the 'Design and development section'. It explores the beginning of the collaboration, even before the project's official start.

The first challenges that may be encountered concern the identification of needs or challenges that need to be addressed. The definition of the idea is essential. The more it is developed with the first partners engaged, the more robust the project is likely to be. Creativity is welcome at this early stage. The brainstorming tool can be used to collectively identify the idea. Important is also the construction of the partnership. The group needs the set of skills that are nessessary to solve the problem. At the same time, the benefits for all partners need to be obvious otherwise motivation will be an issue. Partners in a multi-actor projects can come from the same networks. However, exploring new networks can help to include new skills and approaches. A stakeholder mapping tool can help to identify future partners.

Once the group has validated the idea, participatory tools such as 'Speed Boat' can help to develop the work programme collectively, and to identify risks. The aim is to involve everyone to facilitate ownership. Multi-actor projects need to be clear for all members in order to avoid misunderstandings and potential tensions. Getting to know each other at the early stage of the collaboration is key. Tools such as 'Icebreaker' can help here.

PA2 – How to use participatory methods when innovating, working and learning together?

Participatory methods can be used throughout any multi-actor project. They will allow to produce together while building trust. The first step is to create a community and facilitate the participation of everyone. Multi-actors projects bring together individuals and organisations with different skills, knowledge and working habits. Therefore, the participatory tools chosen need to be adapted to the group's needs and specificities.

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In order to ensure good collaboration, it is important to allow some time for the establishment of a good work relationships at the beginning. A participatory tool like 'Photolanguage' can be helpful. Transparent communication is the key element to keep partners informed about the work in progress, about the upcoming tasks or organizational details.

Collective work and decision-making processes should be discussed and validated by all members of the multi-actor project. A clear and shared work plan defines the basis for the collaboration. It needs to be clear, understood and shared by all. This helps to have clarity about expectations and timelines. The definition of common rules (respect, benevolence...) at the beginning of the meetings ensures an atmosphere favorable to open exchange. Participatory tools such as the 'Snowball technique' can help to make decisions collectively.

Once group members feel confident, they are likely to participate actively and work together effectively. Different participatory tools can be used depending on the objective. For example, 'Scenario design' and 'Back casting' exercises can help to identify action plans for the achievement of envisaged situation. Key to success is also the shared review of the ongoing work and of the collaboration process all along the project. This takes time but allows risks to be identified and adaptations to be implemented collectively. The participatory tool 'Timeline' can help in this case.

PA3 - How can participatory methods enable communication and embedding of the output from a multi-actor project?

Communication of outputs and experiences from a multi-actor project is crucial. The collective work cannot stop with the finalization of the results. Ownership must be provided. This process starts at the early phase of a project development when the group plans future communication and dissemination activities and the related skills, time, stakeholder networks, etc. Since communication is a skill like any other, the diversity of skills within a multi-actor project is an advantage and should we used to share responsibilities efficiently and effectively.

In order to produce useful deliverables, it is important to involve the users or their representatives as early as possible in the project work. Participatory methods can help to maintain such connections throughout the project. At the beginning, the 'Focus group' tool can be used for the needs assessment. Later, the Collective feedback' helps to receive users' feedback. Such regular feedback loops ave several advantages. The project team can adapt its production and ensures usable and useful results. The users can be involved and contribute to the project's output. The fact of being involved, listened to and considered creates a relationship of trust. Moreover, it is necessary to communicate in an adapted format. Communication should be in a language that users are familiar (with an appropriate level of technicality) and in a form of common language. Participatory methods enable the presentation of results. Working in sub-groups can help to better understand the outputs. It can also help to think about concrete situations of use and adaptations to be made.

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