

EIP AND LINSAs – PARTNERSHIP AND MUTUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

**What is the contribution of EIP to the development
and functioning of LINSAs?**

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LINSAs and EIP

Why does EU agriculture need innovation and learning to become more sustainable? What role can Networks such as LINSAs play in this process? How can EIP and LINSAs benefit from each other? What kind of interactions would be suitable to achieve this mutual benefit? And finally, what role do Innovation-Brokers have in such processes? These central questions will guide the Parallel Session 4 of the Afternoon-Workshop Series of the Final SOLINSA and FarmPath Conference on December 3 2013 in Brussels. This handout serves to give an overview on the experiences with LINSAs against the background of the new EU support policy "European Innovation Partnerships".

How can SOLINSA be connected with AKIS and EIP?

Extension focusing on partnership, trustful relations and mutual learning is still uncommon. Similarly transdisciplinary research processes, in which technical knowledge and its further development are put into spotlight, are so far still rare. Apart from this, it is almost impossible that knowledge, which is being generated in niches - mostly outside the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) - and involves new actors e.g. urban consumers or population groups in rural areas with an increasingly critical view on production, gains influence in the AKIS. The poor functioning of the AKIS in Europe sets the background of the SOLINSA project Since the beginning of modernization in agriculture, the AKIS has shown a strong orientation towards productivity. Systems, which developed environmental or social achievements in agriculture are being recognized but at the same time stand behind a well-established agriculture oriented towards productivity.

LINSAs stand for new developments: long term structure and boundary objects

LINSAs stand for new developments, for new groups emerging at the margins of AKIS. LINSAs are facing specific challenges: they generate knowledge which is suitable and relevant for them, they bring actors together which are relevant for their plans, they mobilize voluntary forces to a strong extent and have learned to operate with very low resources. The main characteristic of LINSAs is that they share a common vision for a sustainable society and they transform this vision in specific projects. LINSAs characterize themselves as a long-term structure which means that projects are among their most important boundary objects. Through projects, LINSAs knowledge becomes relevant; in projects, innovations originate and become visible, if any market for those innovations exists. As measured by the dimensions of the European Union, LINSAs are relatively clear in their cruising sphere of activity. This leads to the question how EIP and LINSAs can complement each other and develop mutually.

Trustful collaboration of LINSAs and AKIS players

EIP and Operational Groups are understood as an instrument to overcome "static" power relations in the AKIS. From the SOLINSA perspective, the collaboration of LINSAs and AKIS players is one of the aims of OG and EIP. It is important to understand the relationship in EIP and OG as a trustful,

collaborative partnership – considering the risk, that EIP and OG might reproduce existing power relations, or turn power relations in a radical way around in a strong bottom up process. A finding from the working experiences with LINSAs is, that most of the LINSAs have relationships with the AKIS and they are embedded in it to a certain degree. Ideally, within the EIP, there arises an open and constructive exchange about the various possibilities for a sustainable renewal of agriculture, as well as enriching discussions and projects resulting from the connection of perspectives and experiences of totally different actors.



Figure 1: EIP and LINSAs – partnership and mutual contributions

What do LINSAs need to be able to operate at the EIP level?

- Reflection and free spaces beyond the day-to-day business, so that LINSAs become clear of their potential for contribution to the EIP
- Recognition and appreciation for LINSAs achievements which very often have been developed autonomously and in an autodidactic way
- EIP as development forum in which LINSAs knowledge is being refined, which is inspiring and which builds bridges back to agriculture

How are LINSAs and OGs determined?

LINSAs mostly arise from projects and develop new projects. OGs can, through their project character and their impulse to co-operate with various actors, offer spaces to LINSAs for the development of new projects, for trying out new things and for receiving company in this development process. This company connects knowledge, transforms implicit into explicit knowledge and offers mutual support. At the project end, LINSAs have become a structure, in which project knowledge is being continued and continuously improved. OGs are in this context starting impulses for innovation.

What do EIPs need to become a supportive structure to LINSAs?

Co-operation, mutual learning and support are the main focus of the EIP-LINSAs relation. To change things and to develop innovations includes the experience that mistakes can be made. EIPs are a new institution for bringing together innovative actors and for supporting positive dynamics of innovation processes. Important motivators are curiosity, trust, openness and transparency of processes.

All this does not happen alone: The role of Innovation-Broker

Innovation-Brokers can come from the spectrum of LINSAs-AKIS actors. We understand Innovation-Broker as facilitators, communication experts or network supporters - depending on whether they work with LINSAs, OGs or EIPs. LINSAs receive support from Innovation Brokers concerning management issues, an improvement of governance and in decision-making and planning processes. With reference to OGs, Innovation Brokers can be part of them and take over leadership tasks. In EIPs, Innovation Brokers are in demand for initiating participation, for establishing communication among very different actors and for enabling an atmosphere of trust and co-operation.