

D5.10 Practice abstracts MOP



EURAKNOS

Connecting Thematic Networks as Knowledge Reservoirs towards a European Agricultural Knowledge Innovation Open Source System

Task 5.10 Cross-exchange

Summary

The major aim of the Thematic Network (TN) EURAKNOS is to boost compiling knowledge for practice by intensifying interaction between various agriculture and forestry networks, thereby maximising the output for practitioners. While WP2 has compiled and evaluated 28 H2020 TNs on data and content impact, the design of the knowledge reservoirs, communication and dissemination strategies, and the multi-actor approach (MAA), WP3 has defined the best practices for TNs to achieve better impact. Task 5.4, part of WP5 "Widen impact of TN knowledge reservoirs", will organise cross-exchange visits between TNs and end-user groups to share best practices for TNs. Task 5.4 will capitalise on the results of WP2 and WP3 and will capture the outcomes in 100 practice abstracts (PAs) in the common format of the European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural productivity and sustainability (EIP-AGRI). D5.10 "Practice abstracts Middle of Project (MOP)" represents the first batch of 20 PAs. Besides, this report presents the concept and the structure for the entire 100 PAs, linking the results EURAKNOS project and the content of the PAs. The PAs are usually addressed to end-users. In most TNs, these are farmers, foresters, and advisors. EURAKNOS aims at an optimised exchange of existing MAA, communication, and dissemination methods and tools between the different TNs as well as linked EIP-AGRI Operational Groups (OGs) and H2020 multi-actor projects (MAPs). It seeks a harmonised approach to the establishment of future TNS to maximise the impact on practitioners, farmers, and foresters. Therefore, the PAs focus more on methodology and practical applications for future network participants, coordinators, or leaders. Through the PAs, the resulting innovative knowledge and easily accessible end-user material from this project will be included in the EIP-AGRI website for broad dissemination within the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS) community. The end-user material to be produced will contain a considerable number of recommendations for practitioners on the results in the common EIP-AGRI format.

Deliverable Number	Work Package		
D5.10	WP5		
Lead Beneficiary	Deliverable Author(S)		
GLZ	Jendrik Holthusen		
Beneficiaries	Deliverable Co-Author (S)		
IfA, NAK, ARC, RAU, IFOAM Organics Europe, PSKW, ACTA, IDELE	Laura Palczynski (IfA), Eniko Fazekas (NAK), Konstantin Mihhejev (ARC), Jessica Stokes (RAU), Maria Gernert (IFOAM Organics Europe), Els Berckmoes (PSKW), Léa Tourneur (ACTA), Maxime Marois (IDELE), Sylvia Burssens (UGent)		
Planned Delivery Date	Actual Delivery Date		
31/12/2019	August 2020		
Type of Deliverable	R	Document, report (excluding periodic and final reports)	X
	DEC	Websites, patents filing, press & media actions, videos	



	E	Ethics	
Dissemination Level	PU	Public	
	CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium	X



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List of abbreviations and acronyms

AKIS –Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System

CV – Curriculum vitae

D – Deliverable

EIP-AGRI – European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural productivity and sustainability

EURAKNOS – Connecting Thematic Networks as Knowledge Reservoirs: towards a European Agricultural Knowledge Innovation Open Source System

EOP – End of project

KR – Knowledge reservoir

MA – Multi-actor

MAA – Multi-actor approach

MAP –Multi-actor project

MOP – Middle of project

OG – Operational Group

PA – Practice abstract

TN – Thematic Network

WP – Work Package



1. Introduction

1.1. Context

Deliverable 5.10 is an output of Task 5.4 on cross-exchange within WP5 that aims to widen the impact of TN knowledge reservoirs (KRs). This deliverable report reflects the production of 20 practice abstracts (PAs) by the middle of the project (MOP) (M12). Another set of 80 PAs will be delivered in D5.11 by the end of the project (EOP) (M24), making it a total of 100 PAs. With D5.10, the mid-point of the EURAKNOS projects' progress is indicated. These initial practice abstracts are largely based upon the learnings from WP2 "Compile and evaluate TNs" and WP3 "Design a High Impact Knowledge Reservoir". The remaining 80 PAs, to be delivered at the end of the EURAKNOS project, will be based upon the findings of WP4 that will explore the feasibility of creating a digital, EU-wide, common KR and will analyse the results of the cross-sectoral and cross-border activities carried out as part of Task 5.4 within WP5.

The PAs follow the EIP-AGRI format, requiring practical information to be conveyed in 1,000-1,500 characters. The purpose of these PAs is to share practical knowledge about content or knowledge collection and storage, communication and dissemination strategies, and the multi-actor approach (MAA) that can be implemented by TNs and other multi-actor projects (MAPs) to interact with their targeted end-users more effectively.

A PA is usually addressed to a specific end-user group, i.e. farmers, foresters, or advisors. In the EURAKNOS project, a second group of end-users can be distinguished, namely coordinators or partners of a TN, or facilitators of a discussion group with a leading function. This explains the selection of topics for the PAs that are mostly dealing with the different aspects of the TNs, including content or knowledge collection and storage, communication and dissemination strategies, as well as the MAA from the conceptualisation to the post-project phase. The PAs will help participants of current and future TNs to achieve more impact in terms of reaching and engaging the end-users, and ultimately the uptake of the results by farmers, forester, and advisors.

1.2. Practice Abstract Guidance

In this section, the framework conditions and principles for the development of a PA are presented, based on the EIP-AGRI PA guidelines and the EURAKNOS outputs:

- Specifications for structure and format in a PAs: Short and easily understandable title (one key sentence, max 150 characters);
- Summary using easily understandable language (max 1500 char.) = 'practice abstract';
- What problem will the collected or generated knowledge be solved for the end-user? What will be the main benefits to the practitioner?;
- Main outcome/recommendation (2-3 main results);
- Contact data author (institution, e-mail), project funding information, link to the project website

Guidelines for the selection of an appropriate theme for the PA:



- Choose the right topic: the content needs to be assessed against their potential to bring concrete recommendations and useful results for practice (i.e. information/tools that practitioners can immediately use);
- Consider the appropriate level of detail: to identify practical information it is useful to focus on the level of work packages or tasks, rather than to try to summarise the project itself to find practice-relevant information;
- Focus on useable results: the main scope is to focus on results, outcomes, and recommendations that can 'be used' and move the practitioner to action. Avoid describing project activities since these are of no further use for the reader at the time, he/she is reading it;
- Take advantage: use already available and relevant information from your project. The sometimes short, concise and ready-to-use information is already available for the target audience on your website or in reported deliverables;
- Appropriate presentation: It is key to put yourself in the place of the reader (end-user) when writing. What do they want to read about? What would practitioners find useful? Would they disengage when reading this sentence?

1.3. The categorisation of the practice abstracts

The structure for the categorisation of all PAs was adapted from D2.5, which is the basis for the further work in WP3, whereas WP4 mainly relates to TN content storage. In WP2, main categories were defined that build the basic framework for the optimised development of a TN. Additionally, subcategories were defined to derive a higher benefit from the use in TNs. Finally, the PAs were classified into these subcategories or topics.

TN content <i>creation of outputs</i>	TN content storage <i>how outputs are stored</i>	TN Communication & Dissemination <i>uptake and promotion of outputs</i>	TN multi-actor approach <i>who to involve and how.</i>	TN Best Practice Examples
TN Purpose	TN Purpose	TN Resources Dissemination	TN Structure:	TN Livestock
TN State of The Art:	TN Output Standardisation	TN Output Format	TN Fasilitasiion	TN Crops
TN Content	TN Sustainability	TN Peer-To-Peer Exchange	TN Roadmap:	TN Horizontal Themes
TN Digital Support	TN Digital Support	TN Assets Leveraging	TN Digital Support	TN Forestry
TN User Interaction	TN User Interaction	TN Training	TN User Interaction	
TN Digital Platform	TN Digital Platform	TN Digital Platform	TN Digital Platform	
	TN Separate Communication & Dissemination	TN Community of Practice	TN Community of Practice	
		TN Separate Communication & Dissemination	TN Culture:	
		Access to TN Output		

Figure 1: Practice abstracts' categories and topics

2. Practice Abstracts

The first 20 PAs produced by the EURAKNOS project are mainly based on findings of WP2 and were developed with the support of all partners. These PAs, together with the 80 additional PAs, contribute to the development of the TNs. Together with the TN Explorer's Guide (D3.6), a major output of WP3, they form a basic manual for the TNs to be more effective and to achieve better impact. In addition to the categories from WP2 (content, content storage, communication and dissemination, and MAA), PAs

based on best practices of TNs are also provided. These are intended to serve as concrete examples for running TNs or those currently being developed.

Table 1 lists the PAs by category and topic as well as title and responsible partner. Below the table, the separate PAs are presented. **All practice abstracts are available for download via the EIP-AGRI portal¹ as well as the EURAKNOS project homepage².**

Table 1: List of Practice Abstracts

Nr	Category	Topic	Practice Abstract Title	Responsible Partner
1	Content	Content	How can I make project communication a success: By defining end-user types and their needs	IFOAM Organics Europe
2	Content	Purpose	Multi-actor-approach at its start - conceptual phase as the foundation of your project! What is to be considered?	GLZ
3	Content Storage	Digital Support	The persona method: an efficient tool to define the future users of a digital platform	IDELE
4	Content Storage	Digital Support	Key steps in the process of designing a digital knowledge platform	IDELE
5	Content Storage	Sustainability	How to set up an effective electronic knowledge reservoir platform	IFOAM Organics Europe
6	Communication & Dissemination	Peer-to-Peer Exchange	Why and how a Thematic Network should use Twitter	ACTA
7	Communication & Dissemination	Peer-to-Peer Exchange	How to make an attractive presentation	ACTA
8	Communication & Dissemination	Peer-to-Peer Exchange	Face to face meetings with farmers	ARC
9	Communication & Dissemination	Resources Dissemination	Post-execution and evaluation of the impact of a multi-actor Thematic Network. How to monitor? How to measure?	GLZ
10	Communication & Dissemination	Digital Platform	Improving visibility of project websites using key search terms	IFA
11	Communication & Dissemination	Training	Training method as a communication and dissemination tool for advisors	NAK
12	Communication & Dissemination	Output Format	Supporting farmers' involvement in discussions by using voting apps	PSKW
13	Communication & Dissemination	Digital Platform	Using videos to engage further with audiences	IFA
14	Communication & Dissemination	Peer-to-Peer Exchange	The use of monitor farms to enhance knowledge exchange with farmers	RAU
15	Multi-actor approach	Peer-to-Peer Exchange	New actors' involvement in a Network	ARC
16	Multi-actor approach	Peer-to-Peer Exchange	The use of social media for project communications	RAU
17	Multi-actor approach	Facilitation	Moderation of collaborative learning	GLZ
18	Multi-actor approach	Facilitation	Teamwork (Communication between partners)	GLZ

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/>

² www.euraknos.eu



19	Multi-actor approach	User Interaction	Retrieving end-users' feedback through small surveys	PSKW
20	Multi-actor approach	User Interaction	Engaging Farmers in Online Forums	RAU

2.1. How can I make project dissemination a success: By defining end-user types and their needs

Successful dissemination depends on selecting and addressing the right audience, that is, the persons or groups that apply the information, outcomes, or tools produced, evaluated, or shared by your project. Therefore, it is crucial to map your end-users and their specific needs. Evaluate your end-users by following these steps:

1. Identify potential end-user types that your project targets, e.g. farmers.
2. Define categories to profile these end-user types, e.g. farmers: farming system, organisation/management, geographic location, size, age group, gender.
3. Identify the knowledge needs of your end-users through a literature review and/or surveys with representative end-users. Compare and complete your findings with information from your project:
 - Regarding the type of knowledge, farmers need up-to-date knowledge that is easily accessible and understandable, concrete, practical, and context-specific.
 - Content that is relevant to farmers would hence be tailored advice that is adapted to their context and needs as well as specific technical knowledge necessary for the farm.
 - Exemplary types of content/formats that are useful for farmers include online information such as practice abstracts, videos, and factsheets.

To successfully disseminate the results of your project to end-users as to maximise the uptake, tailor your information or tools to the key audience target groups by identifying end-user types and needs, and create a bundled package of information with the correct information infrastructure using the right channel (e.g. social media, newspaper, cross visit in the form of presentation, text, video or podcast).

Character count: 1405/1500

Contact information of the authors

Name	Maria Gernert
Institution	IFOAM Organics Europe (Belgium)
E-Mail address	maria.gernert@organicseurope.bio



2.2. Multi-actor-approach at its start - Conceptual phase as the foundation of your project! What is to be considered?

The multi-actor approach (MAA) is based on the co-creation principle to achieve agricultural innovation is a systemic way. Many project tenders require that actors from different areas of knowledge and fields of work participate actively in the project from the very beginning.

The main framework to set up a MAA is to build the project's skeleton by including and interlinking specific actors and their needs. In the conceptual phase of your project, the cornerstones for the later success or failure of your project are set. Thus, the first step is to identify relevant key actors according to the theme, topic, and activities of your project.

- What agriculture or forestry challenge and legal framework conditions is your project dealing with? Who has political responsibility? Who has authority? Who has financial resources? (public and private funds) Who has the skill and expertise in the topic and related domains? Who is part of the value chain? Who will use the results? This will give insights into who the key actors are.
- Who are the intermediaries? (e.g. farmers associations, chambers of agriculture, NGOs, innovation brokers, facilitators, media, etc.)
- What size is the project area to cover the main issue(s) and the requirements of all initial actors? Where is it located? By setting the system boundaries by your challenge, you will identify the representative actor for your project area, for example, local authorities, local end-user groups

In all project phases, conceptualisation, initiation, and execution phase, all actors interfacing your challenge must be engaged. If they are not part of the consortium they can be involved through an advisory board or participatory activities such as workshops.

Character count 1456/1500

Contact information of the authors

Name	Sebastian Pagenkemper, Mathias Paech
Institution	Center for Grassland in Lower Saxonia / Bremen (Germany)
E-Mail address	sebastian.pagenkemper@gruenlandzentrum.de



2.3. The persona method: an efficient tool to define the future users of a digital platform

To define the target users, the personas method is effective. It involves creating fictitious characters whose characteristics (social and psychological) must be clearly defined beforehand. This method serves: to personify the targets, to put themselves into shoes of the end-users, and to establish the habits of access to the knowledge of these personas. During the building of the persona, this fictitious persona is assigned a series of attributes that enrich its profile to better express the characteristics of the target group. Thanks to these attributes, it then becomes possible to design scenarios for the use of a knowledge platform. The basic description of a persona includes name, gender, age, positioning profiles to digital tools, a lifestyle, and possibly other attributes depending on the field studied. The persona method can be used to select a panel of users who will be involved as test users throughout the process of creating the platform. In the case of EURAKNOS, the different categories of profiles sought are farmers, foresters, advisers, and teachers. Using these test users has the advantage of regularly collecting their opinions, suggestions, and needs to be considered in the platform development process. This multi-actor approach should make it possible to build a tool that considers the needs of end-users to the extent possible and thus develop a tool that is used, recognized, and sustainable.

Character count: 1210/1500

Contact information of the authors

Name	Marois Maxime
Institution	Institut De L'Elevage (France)
E-Mail address	Maxime.Marois@idele.fr



2.4. Key steps in the process of designing a digital knowledge platform

To set up an effective digital knowledge platform, consider the following critical aspects:

1. During the value creation process:
 - What is the purpose of creating the platform?
 - What is the innovation compared to the existing one?
 - Who are the targets, the future end-users?
 - What service is proposed?
 - What are the expectations of potential users?
 - What resources can be mobilised (human, financial, time)?
 - Whom should the platform serve? For what purposes?
2. During the design process:
 - Who will create the platform? And how? Following which steps?
 - What are the detailed specifications expected from the future platform?
3. During the business modelling:
 - What is the budget allocated for development?
 - What is the budget allocated for operation and future maintenance?
 - Who produces the tool: in-house expertise or an external service provider?
 - i. What level of service is needed?
 - ii. Within what timeframe?
 - iii. What type of collaboration is needed?
 - iv. What are the costs?
 - Who ensures that deadlines are met?
4. During the deployment process (some perspectives for the EUREKA project):
 - Who manages the platform?
 - Does it require special training?
 - How to promote the platform?
 - What maintenance is required?

Following these steps will ensure a successful digital knowledge platform is created.

Character Count: 1105/1500

Contact information of the authors



Name	Marois Maxime
Institution	Institut De L'Elevage (France)
E-Mail address	Maxime.Marois@idele.fr



2.5. How to set up an effective digital knowledge reservoir platform?

To set up a digital platform that makes your project results and knowledge widely available, start with clearly defining the context, objectives, and users to be reached. During the design process, pay attention to the following points:

- **Content:** To be of high impact in terms of uptake of results by the users, make sure the knowledge stored on the platform is of high relevance, easily accessible, and understandable. Ensure a quality review of the content. Content and presentation should match.
- **Multi-actor approach:** A user-friendly interface should at best be co-designed with the end-users. Develop a prototype that can be presented to users with different profiles. Collect feedback through surveys and tests and use them to improve the platform.
- **FAIR data principles:** Make both data and metadata (that is, data that provide a structured description of the data on the platform) findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable. A complete, detailed, and coherent metadata structure is the basis for an effective and user-friendly search function and supports users in their navigation.
- **Additional channels:** Focus on those communication channels that are most frequented by the users (e.g. newsletter, contact info).
- **Monitoring:** Use specific quantitative and qualitative indicators to evaluate the success and impact of your project results, such as the number of interactions on the platform, downloads, and comments on the content.
- **Self-supporting system:** Make sure resources to maintain the platform are available beyond the project lifespan.

Later, you can add new functionalities, such as a login function with personalisation and user recommendations, a contributor community with guidelines, or specific (thematic) user communities.

Character Count: 1491/1500

Contact information of the authors

Name	Maria Gernert
Institution	IFOAM Organics Europe (Belgium)
E-Mail address	maria.gernert@organicseurope.bio



2.6. Why and how a Thematic Network should use Twitter

Communication and dissemination activities are a mandatory part of European Commission funded projects and are specifically relevant for Thematic Networks for disseminating ready-for-practice knowledge.

The specific challenge is to reach the TN targeted audience. Today's audience is shifting towards online sources of information and interactive channels such as social networks.

Twitter is most used by Thematic Networks to share best practices and outputs. The Twitter platform enables a constant supply of useful information, including news, events, and research outputs.

It is important to understand how Twitter works and how to maximize its impact. Below is a guide to help you get started:

- Create your professional profile with a short bio/CV.
- Follow relevant people and organizations from your sector - no specific permission is required and once followed; you can see the tweets of the person/organization followed. Nobody will receive a notification if you decide to unfollow.
- Share your favorite tweets and react with likes and comments
- When tweeting, do not forget to mention people/organization with @ and to use # for keywords/specific term and related topics - these two symbols will be helpful to increase your visibility and enable future online engagement.
- Your tweet can only contain 280 characters - hashtags can be used to reduce sentences while highlighting the major topic/issue.

Twitter is a reactive social network, but the information is lost in few hours/days. It requires regular engagement and updating.

Many projects have a Twitter account and use it to share their news. You can address your tweet to a specific audience according to the content, the keywords, and mentions.

Character count: 1450/1500

Contact information of the authors

Name	Rémi Duchesne
Institution	The Agricultural Technical Institutes (France)
E-Mail address	remi.duchesne@acta.asso.fr



2.7. How to make an attractive presentation

The main objective of a Thematic Network is to disseminate its collected knowledge and best practices to its end users. Many tools are used for that, including online platforms or physical presentations. The second one can be done at different levels: 1) at international, national, or local events, 2) at multi-actor or practitioners' workshops and 3) during on-field events/demonstration days. These kinds of dynamic exchange activities are advised to effectively spread the knowledge, as face-to-face meetings are viewed as one of the most impactful ways to disseminate results.

Here are some recommendations to realize an impactful presentation towards practitioners:

- The language must be straightforward and simple. Scientific words must be translated into practice-based language to not lose the audience's attention.
- Visual materials such as videos and images should be used to explain some practices concretely.
- Do not use long sentences on a presentation but rather insert infographics and icons to express an idea. It makes it more attractive, with a continuous flow.
- One idea per slide should be developed to be as clear as possible.
- The design should follow the project layout, it is important to not make a difference of colors and typography along with the graphic presentation.
- An interactive poll can be included in the presentation, to make the audience react and express themselves.
- In the demonstration/on-field presentation, the public is looking for practical answers more than scientific knowledge, so a large part should be dedicated to open questions.
- Links to other relevant initiatives, projects, and/or practices can be included at the end of the presentation, so the end-users will be able to search for more details.

Character count: 1483/1500

Contact information of the authors

Name	Rémi Duchesne
Institution	The Agricultural Technical Institutes (France)
E-Mail address	remi.duchesne@acta.asso.fr



2.8. Face to face meetings with farmers

The main challenge related to the implementation of a multi-actor approach in innovative agricultural projects is to engage the end-users. Farmers and foresters are very outcome-oriented, their direct involvement in the projects is limited due to lack of time, low interest at first sight for the project, lack of trust in the initiative, or in the ability of the project to deliver results which could help their daily business.

Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that farmers' costs for not being able to work on the fields are compensated, by providing useful knowledge. Pay more attention to study trips which aimed to introduce farmers with the latest developments and new technologies being used by other farmers or developed at research institutes, or to activities being implemented by other organisations. Set up Field days/Fairs/Study days; contact them directly (e.g. phone them); provide them feedback during the project's progress; be direct and short in communication; adopt an understandable language and involve them in small peer groups

Good dissemination to end-users is crucial to stimulate uptake of project results:

- allow participants to access concrete examples and experiences: “good practices” must be interpretable as practical and possible to adopt
- use a variety of methods and materials to support interaction: practical videos and web-based communication (e.g. Mentimeter)
- hold local workshops in inspiring places where best examples or practices are taking place, or where practices or technologies were elaborated
- promote main information channels that were created by the Network, among the attending farmers (e.g. newsletter, Youtube channel) as most subscribers usually come after face-to-face events

Character Count: 1479/1500

Contact information of the authors

Name	Konstantin Mihhejev
Institution	Agricultural Research Centre (Estonia)
E-Mail address	konstantin.mihhejev@pmk.agri.ee



2.9. Impact evaluation of a Multi-actor project

In many projects, there is a need to demonstrate the impact in comparison of the used resources and as information for the public. In Horizon2020, impact is defined as a measurement of an objective to be achieved, a mobilised resource, an effect achieved, or a context variable.

The best way to assess impact is to use indicators. Impact indicators represent what the successful outcome should be in terms of impact on the economy/society beyond those directly affected by the intervention. During the evaluation of current practices and methodologies of existing TNs, qualitative, and quantitative impact indicators for the following categories were identified and have been formulated for:

- Knowledge collected and shared;
- Design of knowledge reservoirs;
- Dissemination, communication, and information strategies;
- Multi-actor approach.

The use of impact indicators can be quite simple, for example, when it comes to the quantitative assessment of the MAA. One indicator to quantitatively evaluate the TN structure is the ‘equal distribution in the consortium between partners from different European regions’, specified by the no. of partners in consortium per European region.

On the other hand, the evaluation with output indicators can be more difficult. If in content and knowledge the content of a TN is to be evaluated about its quality, then “output relevant and practically applicable for users” should be consulted. However, to do this, one must consider the users’ needs for practical solutions.

See also the soon published deliverable on “Summary on current practices and methodologies of Thematic Networks” found here: <https://euraknos.eu/deliverables>.

Character count: 1421/1500

Contact information of the authors

Name	Sebastian Pagenkemper
Institution	Center for Grassland in Lower Saxonia / Bremen (Germany)
E-Mail address	sebastian.pagenkemper@gruenlandzentrum.de



2.10. Improving visibility of project websites using key search terms

Thematic Networks often use websites as main communication tool and as the central point of information, in many cases linked to a knowledge reservoir, so it is important to consider how to direct potential users. End-users are likely to be interested in, or have a question about, a topic but may not be aware of your specific project and its dissemination outputs. To find answers and resources, they will probably use a search engine. The first page of a search result receives 95% of web traffic so it is important for the visibility of your project website to feature among the top search results. Search engine optimisation is complicated, but it is possible to improve the ranking and visibility of your website by:

- Harnessing the power of searchable keywords, ensuring they are specific to the aims, sector(s) and scope of the project. Think about what questions potential end-users will be asking or have answered by your material.
- Regularly updating the website with relevant, quality content.
- Choosing a single, specific keyword phrase for each page of the website.
- Using this specific keyword phrase in the page URL, title, headings and subheadings, and main text wherever possible whilst avoiding being overly repetitive.
- Taking advantage of high-traffic websites e.g. social media channels, video hosting websites, etc. to host your content and resources to expand the dissemination potential. Link to your website from these third-party websites and include relevant keyword phrases e.g. in the video description. Also, embed links to these materials from your project's website.

Character count: 1348/1500

Contact information of the authors

Name	Laura Palczynski
Institution	Innovation for Agriculture (United Kingdom)
E-Mail address	laurap@i4agri.org



2.11. Training method as a communication and dissemination tool for advisors

According to the results of EURAKNOS' interviews on Thematic Networks, the second most promising dissemination channels are educational programs, or training courses directed towards students, farmers/foresters, or advisors. A good example is the Hungarian Advisory Training System that is easily transferable as a framework for short term training to TNs. The following training method and scoring system are used:

- Two-day advisory skills development and self-assessment training.
- A small group of up to 16 advisors and three trainers. One trainer conducts the exercises and the other two observe and continuously evaluate.
- At the end of the training, the advisors receive an individual assessment of their competencies: collaboration, communication, conflict management, activity, initiative, creativity, and appearance. Skills trainer rating ranges from 1 to 10 points.

During the individual assessments, the advisors also carry out a self-assessment of the sample skills. Part of the trainer's evaluation is the presentation of strengths and the identification of areas for improvement. In addition to the individual evaluations, a comprehensive analysis of the entire target group is made, which clearly shows the advisory skills that need further to be developed. The measurement gives a comprehensive picture of the advisors' competencies, and additional training modules can be planned.

Character count: 1198/1500

Contact information of the authors

Name	Eniko Fazekas
Institution	The Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture (Hungary)
E-Mail address	nagy.aniko@nak.hu



2.12. Supporting farmers' involvement in discussions by using voting apps

Targeting real-time needs, problems, or opportunities of the end-users is defined as one of the key elements that support multi-actor projects becoming successful. In practice, it might be challenging retrieving feedback from farmers and foresters, which are defined as the most important end-users.

Events, such as workshops, study events, ... are, in general, excellent occasions to collect the valuable farmers' and foresters' input. However, farmers and foresters might show restraint in participating in discussions, especially in larger groups. Voting apps might offer an exciting way to act as an 'ice – breaker' and support farmers' and foresters' active involvement in meetings and discussions. In general, the facilitator of the meeting or presentation posts a series of questions. Participants will answer the questions one by one and the outcomes will appear in real-time initiating the discussions.

Some practical recommendations when using mobile voting apps:

- Provide a slide or small paper with the website or app and the entrance code.
- Keep the first question simple as participants still need to become familiar with the tool; it is also a teaser for farmers' still doubting to participate. In general, the number of participants increases after 1 or 2 questions.
- Define questions very well and think about the kind of feedback you want to receive. This will define the type of answers you will allow (open-ended questions or categories).
- Limit the number of questions!
- Provide enough time for discussion as you want your participants' feedback. Provide at least 5 minutes per question.
- Be prepared for unexpected outcomes and make yourself, as a facilitator, familiar with how to react on these.

Character count: 1452/1500

Contact information of the authors

Name	Els Berckmoes
Institution	Proefstation voor de Groenteteelt (Belgium)
E-Mail address	els.berckmoes@proefstation.be



2.13. Using videos to engage further with audiences

A Thematic Network can produce material of the highest standard, but to successfully disseminate this information, an effective strategy to reach and engage end-users should be applied.

It has recently emerged that videos are one of the leading ways to engage with an audience. On Facebook alone, 500 million users watch videos every day. Videos are more memorable than traditional marketing content and more convenient for audiences to engage with. However, to be effective when using videos for marketing purposes, it is crucial to consider both how and where the end-user will engage with the video, and how to create video content that stands out.

- The average viewer will watch a video for 10 seconds before they choose to continue viewing or scroll on. Therefore, the first section of a video must be engaging.
- Tell the story using powerful visuals. Avoid allowing the viewer to sit watching an interviewee speak for any longer than 20 seconds. The video should use appropriate ‘cutaways’ to depict the audio content.
- Use testimonials of people who have experienced issues that the TN is trying to overcome, and who are interested/involved with the TN. End users are more likely to watch a video they can relate to.
- Use the video to deliver clear calls to action and practice-based solutions, whether that be to follow a TN on social media, or to approach the TN for information or recommendations.
- Consider the audience’s attention span and keep the video short. A video around 1-3 minutes is optimal.
- Use videos to show a project's progress. Even if there are no results at that stage, videos from workshops and kick-off meetings can be useful to generate interest and to show the development of the TN.

Character count: 1363/1500

Contact information of the authors

Name	Laura Palczynski
Institution	Innovation for Agriculture (United Kingdom)
E-Mail address	laurap@i4agri.org



2.14. The use of monitor farms to enhance knowledge exchange with farmers

Monitor farms are farmer-led initiatives to improve the performance and profitability of a farm and a great platform for effective knowledge exchange. Monitor farm events act as a live library for excellent farming practice to provoke engagement, opinion sharing, and useful discussions between participants. Key ingredients for a successful monitor farm event:

- The superhero: a farmer with a passion for excellence (but can also share failures), who is engaging and can communicate with others
- The enablers: a skilled team that enables the event set up and can help stimulate discussion in new groups
- The demonstration: a practice or process that can be demonstrated to participants and enable active learning

Additional useful tips:

- Location: identify monitor farms near other possible farm tours, which encompass a range of learning opportunities as well as bringing together different farming types
- Marketing: identify the target group and requirements for knowledge sharing
- To enable groups of farmers working in a fixed system to learn from different farming systems, use:
- Benchmarking: provide a benchmark that can help participants to engage and acts as a useful conversation starter
- Follow-ups: understand how the social capital built within the event can be maintained and feedback/lessons reported back to the group

Monitor farms can encourage participants to work together through both formal and informal means of improving practice through discussion. Promote discussion about how practices learnt at the event can be employed as well as what would not work in their farming context.

For inspiration see NEFERTITI Demo Farms <https://nefertiti-h2020.eu/> and EuroDairy Monitor Farms <https://eurodairy.eu/case-studies/>

Character count: 1484/1500

Contact information of the authors

Name	Jessica Stokes
Institution	Royal Agricultural University (United Kingdom)
E-Mail address	Jessica.Stokes@rau.ac.uk



2.15. Actors' cooperation in a Thematic Network

Teamwork is a challenging part in agricultural multi-actor projects. To avoid that bottleneck you should start with the composition of the multi-actor structure based on a thorough actors' analysis carried out before the project started.

All relevant actors in the project should be involved in the core group right from the start of the project. At least at the beginning of the network's formation process, the project should have enough visibility.

For that purpose, you need to have a clear understanding of the motivations of different actors to be involved in the network, and keep the dialogue on an equal basis, valuing their knowledge and experience. Participatory methods are effective when they meet the needs of the actors. It is important to consider good facilitation operated by a professional moderator:

- set a trust-based ecosystem of actors
- start building a sustainable network of actors
- maintain mutual understanding between actors
- define the role of each actor; the roles must be complementary to each other
- adopt understandable language for different actor groups.

Successful interaction: E.g. use social media to provide external actors with information about the main principles of the created network, main planned activities, and potential benefits for the end-users. These informative involvement activities need to be well defined specifically to catch the interest of potential actors.

But also try to reach the end-user (farmer, forester) indirectly at the conceptualisation phase by involving such as key intermediaries such as farmers' organisations; the agro-industry; existing networks linked to farmers and foresters, National Rural Networks, advisors, educators and trainers, and the rural community at large.

Character Count: 1487/1500

Contact information of the authors

Name	Konstantin Mihhejev
Institution	Agricultural Research Centre (Estonia)
E-Mail address	konstantin.mihhejev@pmk.agri.ee



2.16. The use of social media for project communications

Effective communication activities in a Thematic Network (TN) are essential to promote and generate interest in the project. A recent study by the EURAKNOS project showed that TNs use a variety of tools and channels including social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube (<https://euraknos.eu/deliverables>). Whilst social media is an incredible communication resource, it also presents challenges. All information shared is public and can be read, accessed, re-posted, or retweeted by people outside of the intended audience. When deciding to use social media for your TN communication:

- Know your audience: before deciding on which platform to use, make sure you know whom you are targeting, their information needs, and what platforms they are already using.
- Know your platform: platforms are all different in terms of functionality, lifespan, perception, and length of posts. A post on Facebook has a lifespan of five hours versus 24 minutes on Twitter.
- Have a purpose: all social media engagement needs to be part of your well-thought-out Communication and Dissemination plan.
- Optimise engagement: through the identification of influencers (e.g. farmers' organisations/peers), creating discussion through comments, engaging with followers, and using different types of content.
- Protect your project's digital identity: develop a content approval process and protocol and make sure all project consortium partners are aware of these.
- Be accurate: proofread whatever you share and be critical about what you (re)share.
- Be responsible and respectful: adhere to social media etiquette, be measured and transparent, and create credibility and trust.
- Measure your success: monitoring and regularly review your results using analytics.

Character count: 1497/1500

Contact information of the authors

Name	Jessica Stokes
Institution	Royal Agricultural University (United Kingdom)
E-Mail address	Jessica.Stokes@rau.ac.uk



2.17. Moderation of collaborative learning

The facilitator plays a key role as a moderator of the interactive process of collaborative learning. The Facilitator starts the discussion by introducing the topic of the day and oversees its positive development by asking pertinent questions. If the Facilitator is not the main moderator, he/she still participate in the discussion, actively cooperating with the moderator and supporting the circulation of energy and interaction among the participants.

As moderator, the Facilitator ensures that the central topic of the discussion does not get lost and that the group focuses on it, stimulating the analysis of the several aspects linked to the theme of the discussion (e.g. environmental, technical, social and economic factors). For this purpose, the moderator ensures that every participant can speak and contribute to the discussion, offering his/her point of view, experience, cultural background, and knowledge.

The Facilitator has to make certain that the various stakeholders treat each other with respect while interacting and that the basic rules for a discussion are followed, i.e. people speak in turn and not at the same time, people speak for a limited time avoiding a participant monopolizing the discussion.

In other words, the Facilitator ensures that a favourable group climate is maintained for the discussion. As a moderator, it is important that the meeting starts and finishes on time.

He/she should also ensure that everyone in the group can follow the discussion and understands the contents, inviting the participants to use a simple language, or asking questions to better define unclear concepts and ideas.

Character count: 1386/1500

Contact information of the authors

Name	Jendrik Holthusen
Institution	Center for Grassland in Lower Saxonia / Bremen (Germany)
E-Mail address	jendrik.holthusen@gruenlandzentrum.de



2.18. Teamwork: Communication between partners in a Thematic Network

In addition to communication with all actors in a TN, teamwork and proper communication at the consortium level are also relevant for the success of a project. Thus, it is essential, besides the usual structures of a project, to consider additional organisational aspects for your project:

- Choose a moderator for each discussion/meeting, who is responsible for facilitating and taking the lead in the discussion, so that there is no drifting away from the main topics defined;
- Choose a person responsible for the protocol because the moderator cannot do both. With consent at a video conference can be recorded;
- The project's hierarchical structure should be continued invisibly so that, for example for each subordinate working group and a specific task a contact person is responsible.

Every project / TN has a fixed team, the consortium, which should not be subject to personnel changes from the beginning to the end of the project. In case it is necessary to introduce a new member to the team there should be a handover protocol and ceremony, by an introduction, and welcome to the team, to close the initial communication gaps.

The best way to develop good communication, besides regular physical meetings, is to:

- implement digital visual meetings via video conference
- do regularly retrospective or timebox meetings in smaller organisational groups (e.g. sub-task)
- do well organized, social and informal, meetings to strengthen team building and break down communication barriers

Tools to be used:

- Every video-capable conference software (Skype, Zoom, GotoMeeting, MS Teams, etc.)
- Software that supports interactive digital teamwork (e.g. Mentimeter, Mural, Slack, MS Teams)

The overall aim is to generate a “Team-feeling” without meeting every day at the office.

Character count: 1496/1500

Contact information of the authors

Name	Jendrik Holthusen
Institution	Center for Grassland in Lower Saxonia / Bremen (Germany)
E-Mail address	jendrik.holthusen@gruenlandzentrum.de



2.19. Retrieving end-users' feedback through small surveys

Farmers, foresters, and advisors, being defined as end-users, provide valuable feedback to thematic networks and research projects. In practice, it can be challenging to retrieve input from end-users throughout the different phases of the project. The thematic network EURAKNOS is focusing on best practices related to multi-actor projects. The projects' workshops and surveys have shown that events, such as workshops, study events, and fairs, all attract large numbers of end-users and are, therefore, in general, excellent occasions to collect this valuable input. Small surveys, consisting of only three to five questions, may be all that is necessary to provide you with the information you need:

- Keep the number of questions limited. Completing the survey should not take more than a couple of minutes.
- Define your questions accurately. Ensure that they can be understood in the desired way.
- Use clear and understandable, local, language
- Avoid open-ended questions; this will slow down the completion of the survey.
- Provide a host/hostess who is actively asking farmers to complete the survey. You will not only have a higher response rate, but you might also receive additional information and feedback on the survey.
- Use the correct tool at the correct occasion. For example, if you require farmers' feedback on an event, provide a poster with stickers at the exit of the event. If you have more questions to ask, it might be better to use a digital survey.
- Distinguish between the types of participants. Assure that you can distinguish between the people that replied based on your requirements. This can be based on type (farmer, advisors, etc.), region, etc.
- Before doing the actual survey do testing with a small group and adapt the survey accordingly

Character count: 1490/1500

Contact information of the authors

Name	Els Berckmoes
Institution	Proefstation voor de Groenteteelt (Belgium)
E-Mail address	els.berckmoes@proefstation.be



2.20. Engaging farmers in online forums

Online forums are an effective way of engaging farmers. Google groups for example enables members to create and participate in online forums and email-based groups for specialist topics. Farmers learn successfully by engaging with each other and completing the learning journey together. Online forums are an excellent place for farmers to discuss ideas and concepts before putting them into practice. The forum platform means that they can then report their findings, challenges, and practical alterations, reflecting the learning cycle. The collective knowledge generated by the forum offers great value. When developing an online platform for end-users:

- Ensure target farmers see the value in investing time online.
- Forums can either be paid or open access. The benefits of paid forums mean that engagement rules can be set, ensuring a respectful group etiquette.
- When setting up the forum agree on communication ‘rules’ and invest in developing a sharing culture. Be aware that farmers may feel vulnerable communicating their ideas online so take measures to encourage their participation.
- Online forums can generate several comments a day with forums creating thousands of threads. Provide the ability to set email preferences so that engagement can be tailored to suit members.
- Categorized threads can then be used for targeted knowledge exchange outputs.

Whilst barriers exist, online forums are a useful platform to generate self-motivated farmer engagement as well as providing a reservoir of knowledge for practitioners to analyse for further learning content, which can be used to communicate to ‘hard to reach’ farmers.

See 4D4F <https://4d4f.eu/forum> and DISARM Community of Practice <https://www.facebook.com/groups/242076006728832/>

Character count: 1493/1500

Contact information of the authors

Name	Jessica Stokes
Institution	Royal Agricultural University (United Kingdom)
E-Mail address	Jessica.Stokes@rau.ac.uk



3. Conclusion and next steps

The EURAKNOS deliverable D5.10 was discussed intensively in the middle of the project with all partners. The biggest challenge was to agree on who the addressees of the PAs should be. As already mentioned in the introduction, a PA is usually aimed at end-users, e.g. farmers or foresters.

Who are the end-users or practitioners in the context of the EURAKNOS project and its objectives?

The main target group consists of TNs, TN-leaders, and their partners, including all types of actors. The PAs can also be used by networks at the national level and OGs, and all persons in networks. Therefore, the thematic focus of the PAs was placed on the methodology dealing with the question “How can end-users, e.g. farmers, be involved in the processes of a TN and/or knowledge sharing?”, based on the results of WP2 "Compile and evaluate TNs" and WP3 "Design a High Impact Knowledge Reservoir". The PAs aims to support running and future TNs and to meet the challenges they cope with, such as end-user engagement. A clear structure of categories with subcategories to classify the EURAKNOS results so far was provided and used to order the PAs according to their topics linked to the TN aspects covered in WP2 and WP3, i.e. content, content storage, communication and dissemination, and MAA. In the next step, the PAs will be published on the EIP-AGRI and the EURAKNOS websites. Furthermore, based on WP4 "Explore an e-Knowledge Reservoir Platform" and the cross-exchange visits to be organised as part of Task 5.4, a further set of 80 PAs will be developed by the end of the project (M24) (D511 Practice Abstracts EOP).

