

# AgriDemo-F2F

## D1.8 Protocol for the Multi Actor Approach

### WP1: Project Management






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### AgriDemo-F2F Multi-Actor (MA) Approach


(Source: AgriDemo-F2F  
proposal, p. 7)

### AgriDemo-F2F Actors

#### — Demand side

-  Technology input providers
-  Advisors
-  Agri research
-  Training education centers
-  Agri magazines

#### — Supply side





-  Farmers and farmer cooperatives/associations
-  Operational groups, EIP thematic networks

#### — Umbrella organisations

-  Agricultural policy advisors
-  NGOs - International agricultural federations - civil society organisations

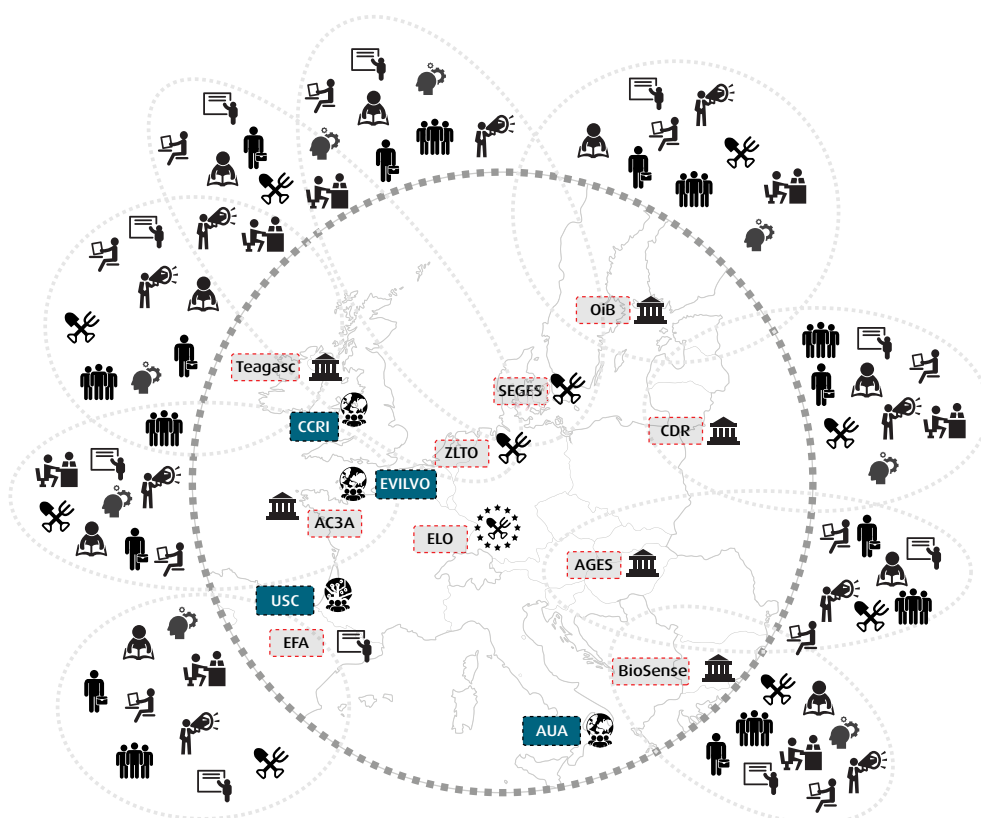
### AgriDemo-F2F Partners

#### — Practitioner partners

-  Farmer associations cooperatives
-  Private education organising bodies
-  EU farmer/land owner association
-  Governmental or public bodies providing research, advisory and training services

#### — Research partners

-  Social scientists
-  IT scientists with agronomic universities/research institutions



## Summary:

This document presents a MA protocol (roles and expectations toward different actors during the project), to describe which actors will be involved, how they will be involved and what kind of knowledge is needed from the actors to optimally achieve the project objectives. An interactive diagram is presented, illustrating a) the various actor types involved in each Task employing the MA approach and b) which individual actor types are involved across the range of project tasks, and when. Integrated to the interactive diagram are task-specific templates that can be used by MA teams (and Task Leaders in particular) to plan / record the who, how and what questions pertaining to each task. Guidance notes for successful multi-actor praxis and evaluation (self-appraisal of groups), are presented.



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# 1. Task 1.4, WP 1: Management of the Multi-Actor Approach

Task 1.4, entitled 'Management of the multi-actor approach', is conducted as part of WP1, 'Project management'. Management of the multi-actor approach is described in the AgriDemo-F2F Grant Agreement as consisting of three sub-tasks:

**1.4.1:** Development of a MA protocol (roles and expectations toward different actors during the project) to describe ***which actors will be involved, how they will be involved and what kind of knowledge*** is needed from the actors to optimally achieve the project objectives. We will use stakeholder analysis tools to identify actors and their stake to differentiate and categorise in groups and to investigate relationships between the actors.

**1.4.2: Follow up of the protocol across countries:** Since we work in a transdisciplinary way, using expert and tacit knowledge from multi actors, the proposed project tasks are dependent on the willingness of actors to cooperate and on their valuation of the proposed tasks and methodologies used. Furthermore, ways of interaction can differ between countries, depending on local context and circumstances. Therefore, we need to be ***flexible in our approaches to collect data and to interact with the actors***. Methods and moments of multi-actor interactions can change throughout the course of the project. Therefore, we will follow up and evaluate the MA protocol every 6 months and adapt it where necessary.

**1.4.3:** Determine possible anchor actors or networks organised around themes and/or sectors. This task will ***make the link with RUR-12-2017 and other ongoing H2020 projects***. Furthermore, we will specifically look for opportunities for adding value to EIP "Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability", its networking activities (e.g. EIP Focus Groups) and its Operational Groups. This will be achieved by inviting EIP members to the general multi-actor meetings.  
Source: AgriDemo-F2F, Grant Agreement, WP1.

This document delivers T1.4.1 i.e. development of a MA protocol, however it provides a foundation for and considers in its formulation the two subsequent elements of T1.4 (i.e. T1.4.2 & T1.4.3).





## 2. Task 1.4.1: MA Protocol

The interactive diagram on page 8 of this document illustrates the involvement of each of these actor groups in the various Tasks across the project.

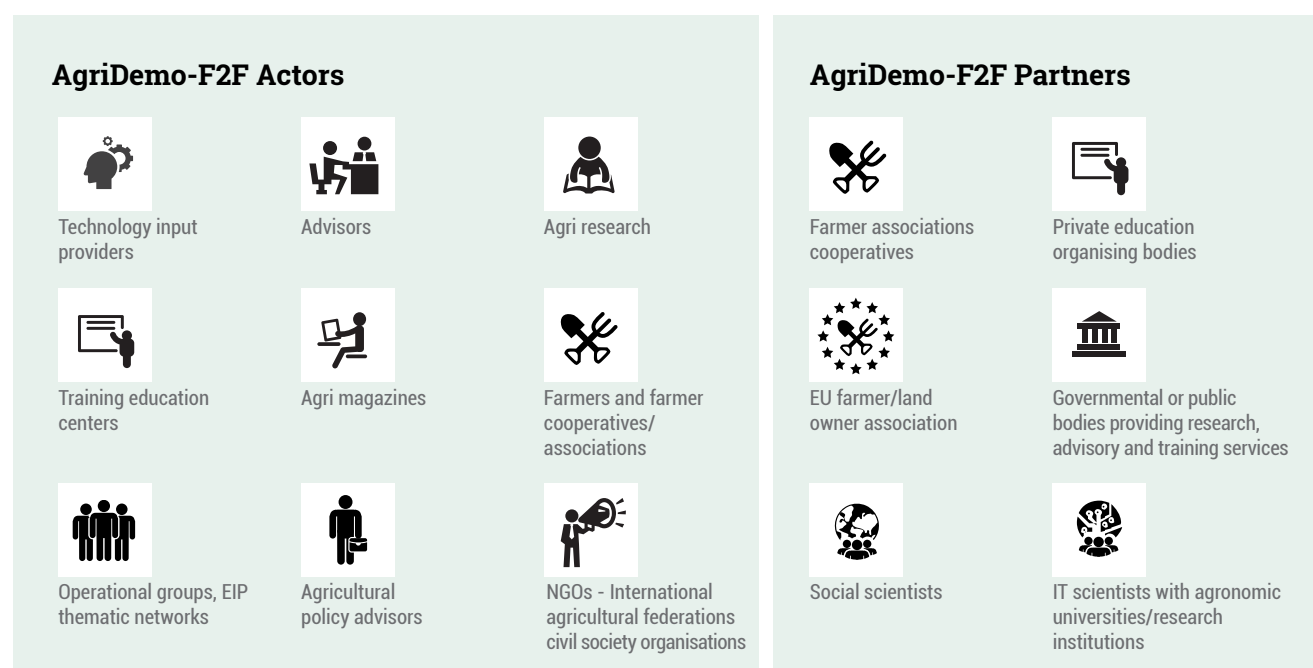
The questions of *which actors will be involved, how they will be involved and what kind of knowledge* is needed from the actors (main questions of T4.1.1) were discussed during M1 - M4 of the project. The questions were discussed in a workshop format at the Kick off Meeting (KOM) in January 2017 and following those initial discussions, online discussions were held using Skype. The meetings focused preliminarily on the questions of who, how and what, as specified in the Task (1.4.1) description. The additional question of when was also identified as highly important from a data management and coordination perspective. This is because some actor groups will be frequently involved in the project, with several tasks requiring their participation/input all along the project. Unless the project engages with a range of different actors from the actor groups, thereby reducing the resources needed from individual actors, a coordinated approach is needed to make engagement as efficient as possible.

### 2.1 Who?

The AgriDemo F2F Grant Agreement identifies broad groups of actors for inclusion in the MA protocol. However, other actors who may possibly fall outside of these broad groups may become involved in the project as it progresses.

In the AgriDemo F2F proposal, symbols were developed by the coordinator (EVILVO) to represent each of the actor groups. These are replicated in Figure 1 below:

**Figure 1:** Symbols representing different actor groups in the AgriDemo F2F multi-actor protocol



(Source: AgriDemo-F2F proposal, p. 7.)



Many AgriDemo-F2F tasks involve the AgriDemo-F2F & PLAID consortia, which themselves have a multi-actor membership. Where engagement with actors external to the consortia is concerned, the prospect of the consortia engaging with or 'plugging into' existing multi-actor groups (such as relevant EIP Operational Groups as recommended by the Horizon 2020 Work Programme, for example, or other nationally initiated groups) was emphasised in the preparatory meetings. The alternative of newly establishing a dedicated multi-actor group/s within each country for AgriDemo-F2F & PLAID was also highlighted. Such groups would become involved in activities and convene at various junctures all along the project.

Each partner country will decide the most appropriate and feasible route for them, choosing, for example, from: multi-actor engagement through a series of transient engagements with a range of actors; linking with one or more existing multi-actor group(s) for engagement throughout the project duration; establishment of one or more dedicated multi-actor groups(s) for the project duration.

## 2.2 How?

How various actors will be involved depends on the Task. Links to templates containing task-specific data on the nature of the tasks, who will be involved and how they are likely to be involved (i.e. methods and techniques to support multi-actor engagement and involvement) is accessible through the interactive diagram on page 8. Considerations for the selection of techniques to support multi-actor engagement are presented in Section 5 of this document.

## 2.3 What?

The types of knowledge contributed by different actors will unfold once multi-actor engagement as an iterative process begins. A wide range of actors is included in the MA engagement process in order to leverage and represent different forms of knowledge (practical, scientific, relational etc.). While in preparing for a multi-actor process, a constellation of different actors are included with a view to representing different knowledges, we avoid rigidly associating particular actor groups with specific types of knowledge in this MA protocol. The knowledge ultimately contributed by different actors will inevitably reflect the particular task, the relational dynamic of the MA group, and the process of knowledge exchange/co-creation that will be catalysed through the facilitated MA process.

Once the knowledges contributed by various actors become clear, the nature of the knowledges and their interplay may be qualitatively described by the Task leader/MA facilitator and recorded, for instance, using the EIP Practice Abstract<sup>1</sup> format. The EIP format is particularly relevant with respect to how knowledge exchange/co-creation leads to the generating of novel ideas or innovations.

Where data collection from different actor groups is concerned, the nature of the data needed from the actors is clearly specified in the relevant Task description or will be determined by the design of data collection instruments.

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<sup>1</sup> See PA1 tab of template available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/content/eip-agri-common-format>



## 2.4 When?

The timing of interactions with stakeholders all along the project is clear from the WP and Task descriptions/Gant Chart presented in the Grant Agreement. Tasks that include a MA approach are overviewed in the interactive diagram on page 8.

## 3. Components of MA Protocol

Supporting the varying approaches that are likely to be taken by project partners and ongoing evaluation of the MA approach employed throughout the project, this protocol document contains the following:

- I. An interactive diagram illustrating a) the various actor types involved in each Task employing the MA approach and b) which individual actor types are involved across the range of project tasks, and when. By clicking on an actor type, how and when this actor is engaged with project tasks becomes illuminated. Similarly, by clicking on a project task, the actors involved in the task are illuminated. This is a visual aide to assist Task Leaders in coordinating engagement with different actor groups.
- II. Integrated to the interactive diagram are task-specific templates that can be used by MA teams (and Task Leaders in particular) to plan / record the who, how and what questions pertaining to each task. The templates are stored on a shared drive so that partners are mutually informed about the multi-actor interactions taking place across all Tasks. Partners will also be able learn from each other as regards the techniques and tools used to support effective multi-actor work (how).
- III. Guidance notes for successful multi-actor praxis and evaluation (self-appraisal of groups), presented in Section 5.



# 4. AgriDemo-F2F MA Interactive Diagram & Recording Template

HOVER to Reveal Connections

CLICK to Access Task Spreadsheet

AgriDemo  
-F2F



## 5. MA Guidance Notes

Effective multi-actor processes, including multi-actor co-creation, stakeholder engagement and innovation brokering, create conditions where different knowledges, perspectives, priorities, objectives and resources etc. of a wide variety of actors are facilitated to come to light and shape project processes and outcomes.

The AgriDemo-F2F has a multi-actor consortium and is designed to engage with a diverse variety of external actors. The multi-actor consortium and the range of external actors engaged in three main types of activities: *multi-actor work*; *stakeholder engagement*; and conventional *data collection*. Although this document includes information on the timing of data collection activities, it focuses primarily on multi-actor work and stakeholder engagement.

The distinction between 'stakeholders' and 'actors' is highlighted in the context of Horizon 2020 projects. An actor is described as a '**partner taking part in project activities**' while a stakeholder is described as a '**person expressing a view/stake at a certain moment during the project**' (van Oost, 2015).

Arnstein's (1969) Ladder of Participation echoes these definitions and draws attention to the meaning of genuine partnerships between actors, as distinct from consultations with stakeholders, for example.



Source: Arnstein (1969) adapted by Macken-Walsh (2016)

Awareness that people have different subjectivities ('mind sets') and attentiveness to these subjectivities is crucial for facilitators to support effective multi-actor work. Researchers, rural extensionists, farmers, entrepreneurs etc. all have different knowledges, priorities, circumstances, perspectives etc. Within single occupational groups - farmers, for example - there will also be great diversity in circumstances, perspectives, priorities etc. **The ultimate aim of multi-actor work is to create processes where all actors involved contribute their valuable knowledges, perspectives etc.**

*"The interactive innovation approach under the agricultural European Innovation Partnership (EIP-AGRI) fosters the development of research into practice applications and the **creation of new ideas thanks to interactions between actors, the sharing of knowledge and effective intermediation**. In this interactive innovation model, **building blocks for innovation are expected to come from science, but also from practice and intermediaries such as farmers, advisors, businesses, NGOs etc.** Key for interactive innovation is to include existing (sometimes tacit) knowledge into scientific work: **end-users and practitioners are involved, not as a study object, but in view of using their entrepreneurial skills and practical knowledge for developing the solution or opportunity and creating ownership**. Innovation generated with an interactive approach tends to deliver **solutions that are well adapted to circumstances and easier to implement** since the participatory process is favourable to speeding up the acceptance and dissemination of the new ideas".*

Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2016-2017, part 9, p. 10).

The nature of different actors' knowledges and how these knowledges are communicated vary widely and it is the challenge of those facilitating or supporting multi-actor work to uncover and valorise<sup>2</sup> different knowledges. Pre-conceived ideas and assumptions in relation to the nature of different actors' knowledges and perspectives should be avoided/ overcome.

**Figure 2:** Etic (the names we give) and Emic (the names they give themselves)



Source: Pinterest, cited by CPS (2017)

<sup>2</sup> Valoriser: French transitive verb, to; donner de la valeur à = to increase the status; (economics) [région, matériau, produit, ressource] = to develop (finance) = to increase the value of; considérer comme important = to value; mettre en valeur = to highlight, to bring out. Collins French-English dictionary.



In working with stakeholders and brokering innovation between them, it is necessary to take an emic approach – i.e. be attentive to the different ‘mind sets’ of diverse stakeholders (partially represented in the illustration presented in Figure 2 above). For those seeking to effectively engage with and/or broker between stakeholders, a starting point for an intuitive approach is to strive towards uncovering *what is important to and motivates different stakeholders*; and *what is their ‘inside’ distinctive knowledge*? The distinctive, inside knowledge is the ‘gold’ of the multi-actor ‘mining’ process. Practicing attentiveness to the ‘inside’ views of stakeholders demonstrates (and generates) intuitive skill. However, according to some, there is no ‘recipe’ for intuition:

*“it is a big problem in a democratic society where people are supposed to justify what their intuitions are. In fact, nobody can justify what their intuition is. So, you have to make up reasons, but it won’t be the real reasons”*

(Hubert Dreyfus cited in Flyvbjerg, 2004, 427)

It is difficult if not impossible to develop a manual to train people how to be intuitive. However, it is also argued, “Intuition is a muscle; you have to use it to make it stronger or it atrophies” (Jenkins, 2015). There are ways of thinking and forms of knowledge that are supportive of intuitive ability. Furthermore, particular practices are supportive of building intuitive skill. For example, ‘reflective practices’ such as a keeping journal of learning reflections when involved in an interactive project is supportive of developing intuitive ability (participatorymethods.org, 2017). The practicing of participatory methods and techniques in general requires and develops intuitive ability. It is practicing participatory methods in a *reflective* way, however, that develops intuitive ability, not the methods and technique themselves.

*“Participation can do without special methods and tools, but not without special attitudes and behaviour!!!”*

(FAO, 2017)

*“A ‘participatory method’ per se does not exist because whether or not a method becomes participatory, relies on the frame of mind of the facilitator”*

(Groot, 2002)

Providing spaces for stakeholders’ circumstances, priorities and resources to emerge and shape the engagement and innovation process is a relational and methodological challenge. The required methodological techniques are available in a vast technical literature. However, choosing and practicing the techniques in the ‘right’ way (considering the contextual and relational context(s) involved) is vital for effectiveness, which again highlights the importance of intuition. It is often only after beginning the engagement process is the facilitator sufficiently informed about and acquainted with the group to choose the correct tool/technique.

*“Facilitation of participatory processes addressing complex issues implies the reverse of the proverb look before you leap’ – facilitators must ‘leap before they look”*

(Geldof, G., 1999 cited in Groot, 2002).

Five core scenarios for multi-actor work were identified recently in the context of another multi-actor Horizon 2020 project, SKIN, for the purposes of identifying methods and techniques that can be used in those scenarios (Macken-Walsh, 2017). **The five scenarios are also broadly relevant to AgriDemo-F2F and are contained (along with sample techniques and tools) in the templates linked to the interactive diagram on p. 8 of this document.**



## Multi-Actor work in Horizon 2020: five scenarios



1. **Engaging** and **Incentivising** stakeholders and actors, by demonstrating the relevance and usefulness of project events/activities



2. **Interrogating** existing knowledge from experts and from static sources such as EIP abstracts.



3. **Creating** new ideas and knowledge
  - a. New creative knowledge
  - b. Co-design of actual processes, products



4. **Addressing** challenges/problem solving
  - a. For example, creating new solutions, productions, relationships, chains, networks



5. **Applying** knowledge to particular contexts, scenarios: application

(Source: adapted from Macken-Walsh, 2017)



## 6. Self-Appraisal of group work: periodic 'evaluation'

For multi-actor groups that interact several times over the duration of the AgriDemo-F2F project, for example the multi-consortium itself; multi-actor groups that are newly established for the project; or existing groups that are plugged into and convene specifically for the project, **it is important that these groups be recognised as dynamic social entities made up of diverse members and that they be supported to function as best as they possibly can.** Aside from carrying out activities to serve the needs of the project tasks, incorporation of practices supportive of the group's overall functioning should be considered. Practices such as forging common goals and building solidarity within groups can assist their overall functioning, thus enhancing their ability to deliver benefits associated with the multi-actor approach and to achieve project goals.

There is much guidance in the literature about group functioning. One practical example in the agriculture sector is an action research project involving farmers, an advisor, an agricultural specialist, a sociologist and a Knowledge Transfer manager instigated by Teagasc (Partner 6) to analyse and understand the functioning of a successful group. The action research project led to the identification of '5 key ingredients for success', and co-designed a simple self-appraisal exercise, applicable to wide ranging group contexts (Macken-Walsh and O'Dwyer, 2016).

A summary of the 5 ingredients for success is presented in storyboard format below and the self-appraisal guide is contained in Annex 1. Partners may use this at their discretion where relevant. Otherwise, **the standard method for periodically appraising the MA approach in AgriDemo-F2F, every six months as envisaged in the Grant Agreement, will be facilitated workshops/open discussions at consortium meetings in addition to analysis of the completed templates (containing records of the actors involved in various tasks) accessible through in the interactive diagram on page 8 of this document.**



## Group Work: Five Ingredients for Success



*"We might all be different as individuals but our group has common goals. We as members genuinely believe in and commit to these goals. Our group is well organised and we have a clear idea about how we operate. We have our schedule of meetings well in advance so that we can plan and prepare"*



*"Enjoyment and fun is an important part of how our group works. It makes taking part a more positive experience. We have developed good working relationships and even some friendships. This provides an environment conducive to sharing challenges and to identifying solutions."*



*"In order for use as group to create solutions, we must feel that we can speak openly and truthfully without feeling that what we say might be irrelevant or not useful... We are all different, we speak different languages, and it's important that we show that we value each other's point of view. There's no sense that certain types of knowledge are superior in the group and people are not afraid to speak up"*



*"While the proverbial saying 'a rising tide lifts all boats' may not be true in many cases, it is a core principle of this group. What we do is relevant to all members and therefore is of interest (and potential benefit) to all members"*



*"We have access to and are exposed to different types of expertise in the group and this is a major driver of the group – it is why we want to be involved. Our group is also expertly facilitated and if we didn't have that expert facilitation, our group wouldn't operate as well as it does"*

## 7. Consolidating the protocol: workshop on the Multi-Actor Protocol, Aberdeen, June 2017

A workshop is proposed by the coordinator (EVILVO) to take place at the consortium meeting in Aberdeen (June, 2017). The workshop, facilitated by Teagasc, will include:

- A demonstration and workshop on how to use the multi-actor protocol recording template (on shared drive).
- Brainstorming to think further about the different actor/stakeholder groups and to co-create a common understanding of what we mean, for instance, by supply, demand and umbrella actors. Do partners think it is feasible and logical to identify/engage with these different stakeholders in their country?
- Learning from each other's country approaches for completing the inventory. Each country has proposed an approach: what are the differences and can we use each other's ideas to optimise our approaches?
- Work further on a coordinated approach for data collection and stakeholder engagement for the tasks over the next 6 months of the project.
- Practice the self-appraisal guide in Annex 1 of this document within our own group, familiarising partners with the exercise, making it more likely that they will use it themselves.

### Acknowledgement:

James Carter Art for artwork.

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## Annex 1: Self Appraisal Sheet

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>1. Do you have shared goals in this group</b>   |  |  |
| members have different goals   | We have some shared goals                            | Many shared goals                              |
| <b>2. Is the schedule of meetings clear and predictable</b>  |  |  |
| Sometimes  | Most of the time                                     | Always   |
| <b>3. Do you feel comfortable talking truthfully in the group</b>  |  |  |
| Some people don't feel comfortable sharing   | Most members feel comfortable, most of the time      | Yes, we all feel comfortable sharing           |
| <b>4. Do you think members feel comfortable <i>challenging</i> others within the group</b>   |  |  |
| Sometimes members feel offended by others  | There's a challenging but mostly positive atmosphere | We readily and positively challenge each other |
| <b>5. Are the meetings enjoyable to attend?</b>  |  |  |
| Sometimes  | Most of the time                                     | Always very enjoyable                          |
| <b>6. In this group, are the activities relevant and interesting to all members, do you think?</b>                                   |  |  |
| Sometimes  | Most of the time                                     | Always   |
| <b>7. If you were to pick one word to describe this group, what would it be?</b>   |  |  |
| Hard to pick a word  | A positive word:                                     | A not so positive word:                        |
| <b>8. Can you please comment on the facilitation of this group</b>   |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| <b>9. Can you give an example of a very well facilitated meeting or event that you attended (name the event, meeting, farm etc.)</b> |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| <b>10. Are there any other issues you would like to mention /address?</b>  |  |  |
|  |  |  |



## Self-Appraisal for Groups: Guide for Facilitators

This assessment sheet is designed to assist you to facilitate a structured conversation about how the group you facilitate is functioning and how it might function better.

The sheet is divided into five components, which correspond to five key ingredients for successful groups. These key ingredients were identified through research undertaken in Ireland and are consistent with research findings internationally in relation to how groups function at their best.

### How to use the sheet:

- I. Distribute a copy of the appraisal sheet to each of the group member present.
- II. Allow an appropriate time (10 minutes suggested) for each member to complete the sheet.
- III. Prior to the meeting, you will have placed the A0 (flip chart size) version of the appraisal sheet on a flipchart stand.
- IV. Distribute 10 self-adhesive discs to each group member. All discs should be of the same size and colour.
- V. Once the allocated time has elapsed, invite each member to mark their answers onto the A0 size poster on the flipchart. In this way, each individual group member has an equal opportunity to record their views anonymously.
- VI. Take a short break to visually review the scatter of sticky discs under each question. It is likely that the collective answer i.e. the arrangement of the adhesive discs under each answer will shed some light on group perceptions.
- VII. Use the questions listed below to prompt further appraisal and reflection within your group. Pose the questions to the group and allow them time to respond. Make sure to acknowledge the questions where the perceptions are positive (you want more of that in the future) as well as probing how to improve the situation where perceptions are less positive/ negative (what can we do to improve?).
- VIII. Record the decisions reached and agreed actions, including the individual(s) responsible. Ideally, group members would take responsibility for many of the actions.
- IX. At the end of the meeting, photograph the A0 worksheet and email a copy to aine.mackenwalsh@teagasc.ie





# Probing Questions for use following completion of assessment exercise

## 1. Membership & Organisation

- What goals have the group currently?
- What additional/ new goals should the group adopt?
- How could we improve the organisation of the group? Who will take responsibility for that?

## 2. Security

- Why do you think certain people don't feel comfortable sharing information?
- Under what circumstances, do people not feel comfortable sharing?
- Why do you think people feel comfortable sharing?

## 3. Emotional and Social

- What makes our meetings enjoyable?
- When, and under what circumstances, are our meetings unenjoyable?
- What ideas have you got for keeping our meetings enjoyable?

## 4. Solidarity

- How do we show that the group is relevant to us all; what examples can you recall from the past 12 months of this?
- In the future, how could the group move towards a greater sense of solidarity?

## 5. Learning drivers

- What information topics are of interest to members?
- Do we require any information inputs from external sources?

