

# Facilities for co-innovation: the case of the EU agricultural R&I policy

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*Boosting agrifood research and innovation  
cooperation for impact at scale*



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# Creating an enabling environment: putting research, innovation, knowledge and skills at the heart of Europe's agri-food economy



An **attractive** and **predictable** agri-food sector where incomes enable farmers to thrive, attracting future generations

**ATTRACTIVENESS**



**SUSTAINABILITY**

A **future proof** agri-food sector that is functioning within planetary boundaries



An agri-food sector that is **competitive** and **resilient** in the face of rising global competition and shocks

**COMPETITIVENESS & RESILIENCE**



**FAIRNESS**

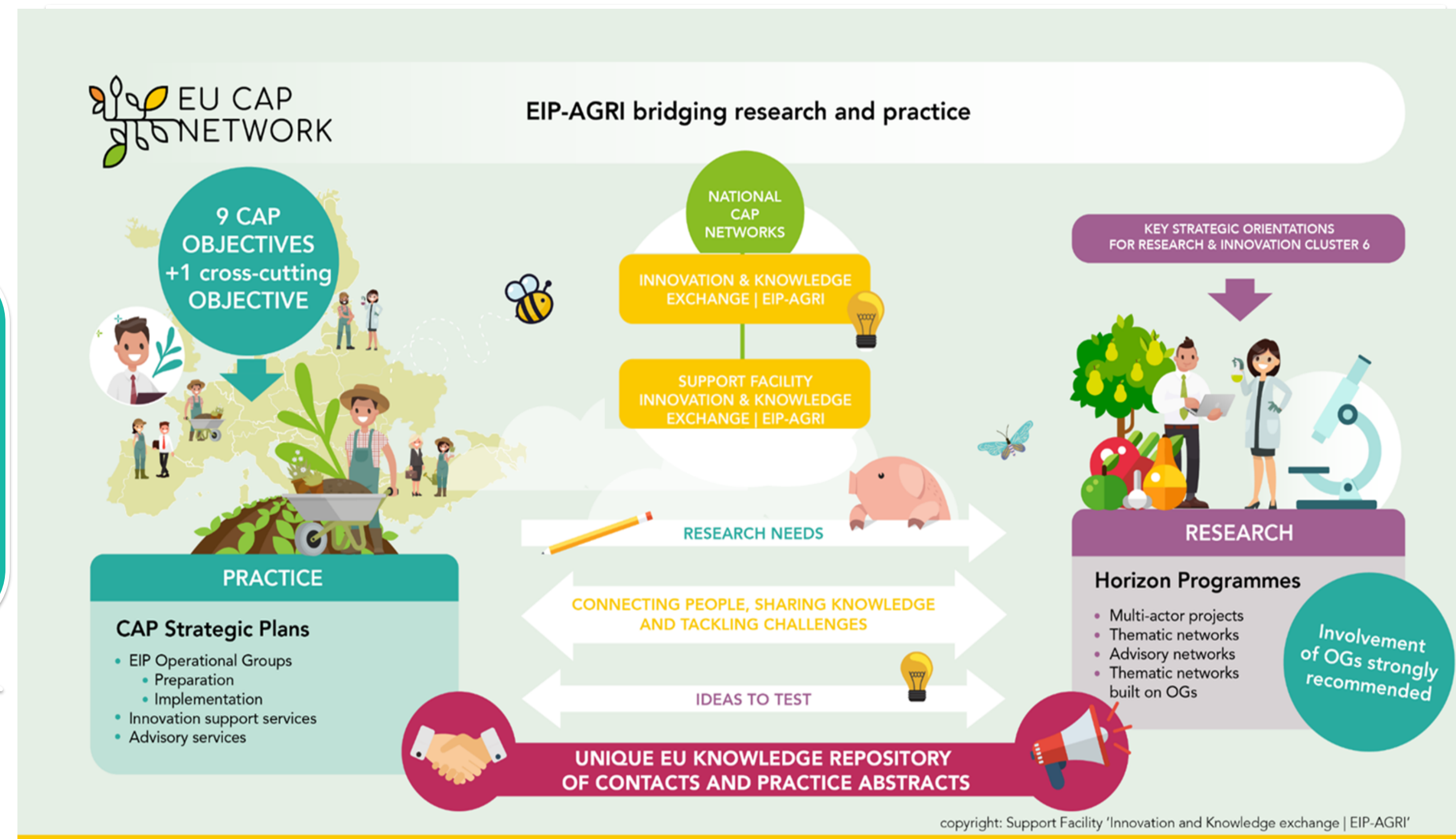
An agri-food sector that values **food**, fosters **fair working and living conditions** and vibrant and well-connected rural and coastal areas



# Horizon Europe works in tandem with the Common Agricultural Policy

under the European Innovation Partnership for agricultural productivity and sustainability (EIP-AGRI)

**+3900 EIP-AGRI Operational Groups(OGs)**  
bottom-up innovation projects at local/national level funded under the CAP 2014-2022



**+550 R&I projects**  
at transnational level funded under Horizon programmes 2014-2024

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# How to make sure that the new knowledge and solution generated by R&I are used in practice?

**1** Co-create, test, demonstrate and scale up innovations via:

- ✓ multi-actor approach
- ✓ living labs
- ✓ on-farm demonstrations (incl. lighthouses)



**2** Share new knowledge and innovations via specific tools such as:

- ✓ advisory networks
- ✓ thematic networks
- ✓ EU-FarmBook

*\*Streamlining these approaches & tools across the projects funded under Horizon in the areas of agriculture, forestry and rural areas.*



# Fostering interactive innovation model under Horizon programmes

**Multi-actor approach (MAA)** – all relevant actors with complementary backgrounds and expertise co-create and share new knowledge and solution responding to the concrete needs of the end-users on the ground. The **end-users are put at the center of the R&I activities all over the whole course of the project**:

- ✓ their **practical expertise** is used to co-create innovative solutions
- ✓ it makes them **co-owner** of the results
- ✓ they **implement** them in practice
- ✓ they **share** them in peer-to-peer meetings

In this way, we expect to achieve **much quicker and bigger impact in practice!**

**R&I programming:**

- ✓ evaluated as **eligibility and excellence criteria**
- ✓ **definition & 7 key requirements** clearly outlined in the introduction to the Horizon Europe Cluster 6 Work Programmes
- ✓ recommendation for **involvement of EIP-AGRI OGs**

Examples:  **RELACS**  
IMPROVING INPUTS FOR ORGANIC FARMING

**+385 Horizon-funded  
R&I multi-actor projects**



# Boosting place-based interactive innovation model under Horizon programmes

**Living labs (LL)** – (group of) **real-life sites** in which diverse actors experiment and test solutions for soil health and agroecology, in a **co-creative manner**.

They follow the **multi-actor approach** focusing on the end-users' needs and develop solutions that are tailored to the **local conditions**, in which end-users operate.

**LL foster:**

- ✓ **context-specific innovative solutions** generated in close **collaboration between science and practice**
- ✓ **knowledge exchange** and the **uptake** of these solutions by practitioners on the ground

**Examples:**



**R&I programming:**

- ✓ selection criteria in the specific topics included in the Mission Soil work programme / Agroecology partnership calls

*(!) LL applied in other programmes & projects in diverse ways*

- ✓ In the Mission Soil LL are together with lighthouses (on-farm demonstrations)



- ✓ cooperation with relevant networks active at local level, such as **EIP-AGRI OGs**, is encouraged



# Lessons learned & recommendations

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Varied interpretations of the MAA & LL concepts and selection criteria  | Ensure continuous capacity building on MAA and LL to improve common understanding and effective implementation  |
| 2 | Distinct perspectives, interests and timelines of the actors involved in MAA & LL projects & need to build trust among them | Plan many high-quality knowledge exchange activities outlining the precise and active roles of the different non-scientific actors in the work                                      |
| 3 | Effective engagement of end-users, e.g., farmers or SMEs, during the whole project  | Provide and/or improve support services, e.g., Horizon National Contact Points / LIAISON / PREMIERE / EU CAP Network helpdesk   |
| 4 | Adaptability of practical solutions from one local context to another   | Foster a network of LL working in diverse context and encourage involvement of EIP-AGRI OGs in MAA & LL   |
| 5 | Long-term sustainability of MAA & LL projects beyond the funding period, incl. dissemination and exploitation of results    | Enhance synergies between diverse funding streams and/or implement AKIS tools such as thematic & advisory networks, EU CAP Network EIP-AGRI communication and networking activities |

# Keys to success

- 1 Maximise **synergies** between EU R&I programmes and Common Agricultural Policy
- 2 Foster **interactive & place-based innovation** to achieve much quicker and bigger impact in practice
- 3 Continuously improve **understanding** and build **capacity** to effectively implement multi-actor approach and living labs