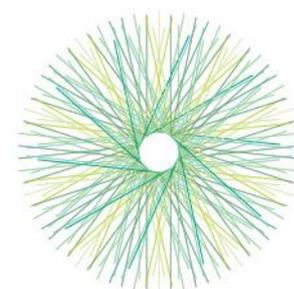


Press article

Innovation support

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AGRICULTURE & INNOVATION

Press article long article

Support centre fosters agricultural innovation in the green heart of Italy

Innovation support services play a central part in stimulating innovation for agriculture and forestry. They can bring the right partners together to collaborate and help project results reach a wider audience. Agrifood Technology Park 3A-PTA gives innovation support to Operational Groups and other innovative projects in the Italian region of Umbria, connecting different players in the innovation chain for maximal impact.

The Umbria Agrifood Technology Park (3A-PTA) provides innovation support for the agricultural, food and forestry sectors in the “green heart” of Italy. The centre currently supports 13 EIP-AGRI Operational Groups and more than 40 other innovation projects in the region. 3A-PTA organises events to bring farmers, researchers and agrifood businesses together and let them share their innovation needs. “We look for suitable partnerships, help define project ideas, and assist partners in solving problems in all project phases”, says Dr. Luciano Concezzi, Head of the 3A-PTA Innovation and Research department. “We help spread project results more broadly at local, national and European level by putting the partnerships in contact with national rural networks and the EIP-AGRI network.”

The centre has extensive expertise in building partnerships and fostering networks involving farmers, agrifood companies, advisers and research centres. “Many of these connections became stable and helped form an innovation culture that allowed 3A-PTA to further support innovative collaboration in Umbrian agriculture”, Luciano continues. “We are now using this expertise to support the region in managing Measure 16.1 and regional Operational Groups in the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme.”

One of the projects supported by 3A-PTA is Operational Group FiLO. Its partnership includes agrifood companies, farms and agricultural cooperatives, and research centres. The project is improving sustainability through organisational efficiency in agrifood supply chains, boosting the competitiveness of farmers. Umbrian melon producer TOP Melon has been a partner from the start, contributing with its expertise in supply chain management.

Carolina and Marco Spinetti are quality and processing managers at TOP Melon: “We help identify the logistic needs of the partners, carry out market surveys and directly test solutions in a business context to see what works”. We’ve also been collaborating with the University of Perugia to test software and hardware tools that can make logistics more efficient, for instance by locating our vehicles or analysing routes.”

3A-PTA has been nurturing the connections between these partners since before the start of the project. “The centre has been organising events and regular moments where we can share experiences, best practices and objectives with the other partners, but also with other Italian and international Operational Groups”, Carolina says.

While the partners strengthen the Operational Group with their expertise, TOP Melon itself also takes away new ideas and knowledge from the collaboration, Carolina explains. “Our involvement in the Operational Group has allowed us to introduce new management control systems that make our logistic activities more efficient and allow us to cut time and costs. This is where we can really make a difference.”

Press article short article

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Background information

Umbrian innovation support centre 3A-PTA was visited during the **EIP-AGRI Seminar 'EIP-AGRI: From Operational Group project to impact'** (Spoleto, Italy – October 2018). All background documents, information on the field visits, and seminar presentations can be found [on the event webpage](#).

More information

- **3A – Umbria Agrifood Technology Park:** www.parco3a.org
- **Operational Group Fi.L.O.:** <https://retefilo.eu/>
- TOP Melon is involved in the Operational Group FiLO through its logistics company 'Società cooperativa La Strada dei Sapori'. **More information on TOP Melon:** <http://www.topmelon.it/>

Italian Operational Groups

- [Overview Italian Operational Groups on the EIP-AGRI website](#)
- **An overview of Italian Operational Groups (update October 2018)** can be downloaded on the [website of the Italian National Rural Network](#) [publication in IT and EN]. A national database will be online from the end of February 2019 onwards.

Pictures

Click on the picture to download the high resolution version. The pictures are free for use.



Carolina and Marco Spinetti present the collaboration and innovation activities that TOP Melon and 3A-PTA are involved in to national rural networks and the EIP-AGRI network. – Copyright European Commission



Top left: Luciano Concezzi with Carolina Spinetti at TOP Melon. Carolina: “3A-PTA has created opportunities for us to meet and share experiences and best practices with other partners, and with other Italian and international Operational Groups.” – Copyright European Commission

Right and bottom left: TOP Melon contributes to Operational Group FiLO with its expertise in supply chain management: “We help identify the logistic needs of the partners, carry out market surveys and directly test solutions in a business context to see what works.” – Copyright European Commission and TOP Melon

More information on innovation support services

The goal of the EIP-AGRI is to support innovation, following an interactive 'bottom-up' approach that relies mainly on cooperation, knowledge sharing and intermediating advisory methods. This approach is implemented under the EIP-AGRI through the creation of Operational Groups. These are groups of people including farmers, researchers, advisers and others, who work together on a practical innovation project, to solve concrete issues facing farmers and foresters (for more information, see the [EIP-AGRI brochure on Operational Groups](#)). Sometimes however, it is not enough to offer stand-alone funding for groups that are cooperating in innovation projects. Innovation support services and innovation brokering play a crucial role in bringing the right people into the projects, connecting farmers and advisers with researchers, and helping to identify funding. This means that innovation support services and brokering can significantly contribute to getting many worthwhile projects off the ground and capturing grassroots ideas from farmers and foresters in the field.

- [Innovation support services \(including advisers with a focus on innovation\)](#)
- [EIP-AGRI Brochure on Innovation support services](#)
(available in English – Greek – Hungarian – Romanian – Spanish).
The brochure includes inspiration from:
 - Yann Pouliquen, SME, Spain
 - Dr. Stein Harald Hjeltnes, private consultancy, Norway
 - Edit Pop, innovation support, Romania
 - Bio-competence centre of healthy dairy products, Estonia
- [Inspirational idea: Support for new agricultural entrepreneurs in Bulgaria](#)
- [Launch of Scottish Rural Innovation Support Service](#)
- [Farming Connect – supporting transformational change for the agricultural industry](#) (Wales, UK)
- [Inspirational ideas: Innovation brokerage and support for Operational Groups](#) (France)
- [Inspirational ideas: Finding the right match](#) (Ireland)

EIP-AGRI

The European Innovation Partnership 'Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability' (EIP-AGRI) is one of five EIPs which have been launched by the European Commission in a bid to promote rapid modernisation of the sectors concerned, by stepping up innovation efforts. The EIP-AGRI aims to foster innovation in the agricultural and forestry sectors by bringing research and practice closer together – in research and innovation projects as well as via the EIP-AGRI network.

EIPs aim to streamline, simplify and better coordinate existing instruments and initiatives, and complement them with actions where necessary. Two specific funding sources are particularly important for the EIP-AGRI: the EU Research and Innovation framework, Horizon 2020, as well as the EU Rural Development Policy.

- [EIP-AGRI Brochure on the EIP-AGRI Network \(2015\)](#) (EN – BG – DE – ES – FR – GR – HU – IT – PT – RO)
- [EIP-AGRI Brochure on Funding opportunities under Horizon 2020 – Calls 2019 Calls](#) (EN)
- [EIP-AGRI Brochure on Horizon 2020 Multi-actor projects](#) (EN – BG – DE – FR – SI)
- [EIP-AGRI Brochure on Thematic Networks under Horizon 2020](#) (EN – BG – DE – ES – FR – HU)

EIP-AGRI Operational Groups

EIP-AGRI Operational Groups are groups of people who work together in an innovation project funded by Rural Development Programmes (RDPs). Operational Groups are the EIP-AGRI's main tool for turning innovative ideas into real solutions for the field.

An Operational Group consists of several partners with a common interest in a specific, practical innovation project. The people involved in the Operational Group should bring in different types of practical and, where necessary, scientific expertise. They may include farmers, scientists, agri-business representatives and many others. Every country or region has the possibility to define specific national demands or restrictions on how to put together an Operational Group.

- Visit the [Operational Groups page](#) on the [EIP-AGRI website](#)
- [EIP-AGRI Brochure on Operational Groups: Turning your idea into innovation \(update 2016\)](#) (EN – BG – CZ – DE – ES – FR – GR – HU – PT – RO – SI – SK)
- [EIP-AGRI Brochure Operational Groups – Collaborate to innovate](#) (EN – LV – SI)

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