

OK –NET Arable - Review Meeting 3 Nov 2016

WP3 Task 3.2
Identify best methods
for learning and
knowledge exchange



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Partners Involved: EUFRAS, FiBL Projekte, PFT Ltd/ORC, AU/ICROFS

Goal: to identify which tools are more efficient in sharing knowledge among farmers and advisers and why.

Two online surveys were launched, the first one targeted to farmers and the second one to advisers.

- The **farmers' survey** was integrated in the survey run by PFT Ltd/ORC and put online by AU/ICROFS during the summer 2015.
- The **advisers' survey** was launched in November 2015 through the farmers innovation groups involved in the project, but also the EUFRAS network and the EIP-AGRI website and social media channels of IFOAM EU (Twitter, Facebook).

AIAB elaborated the outcomes of the two surveys.

The draft report was presented at the project meeting in april 2016 and then circulated for comments to the farmer innovation groups.

The two online surveys

- **Farmers' survey:** 179 answers from 10 EU countries + 230 answers from Estonia (used to validate other answers as they represent more than 10% of Estonian Organic farmers).
Questionnaire in 9 different languages.
- **Advisers' survey:** 110 answers from advisors at EU level.
Questionnaire in English available online

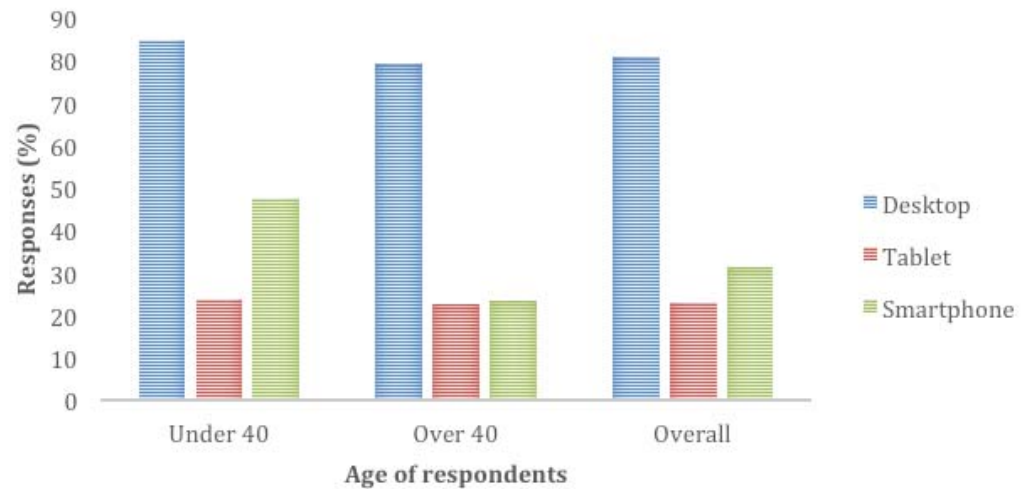
Several interesting results emerged from the two surveys and in combination with the literature **on co learning** and some reflection on the **role of advisers**, they could be useful as a basis to develop knowledge exchange and learning materials both within the project OK NET Arable and more in general for future development of EIP AGRI.

Increasing use of smartphones:

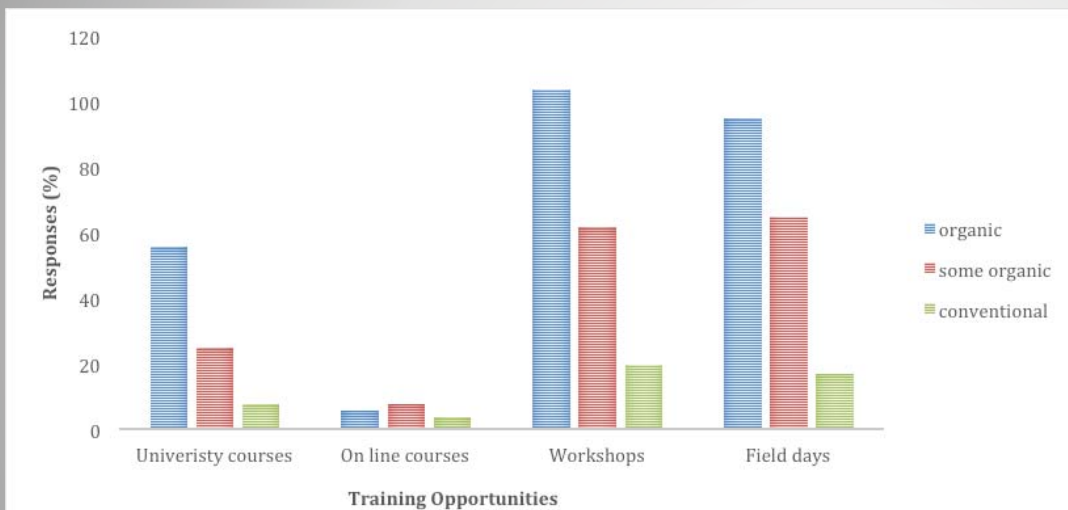
- allow farmers to increase the number of moment the can access to internet
- including access it **when they are in the field**

Great opportunity but:

Web tools need to be responsive and adapted to the smarthphone format to be used



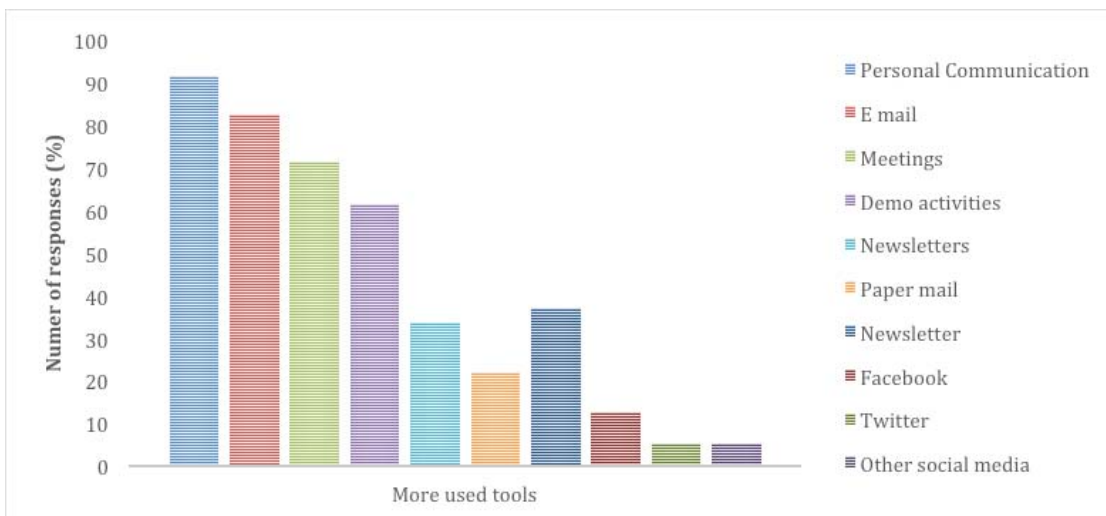
Source: Farmers' survey



Source: Farmers' survey

Preference for physical meeting:

-Field days and on farm experiments are preferred to online courses for training



Source: Advisers' survey

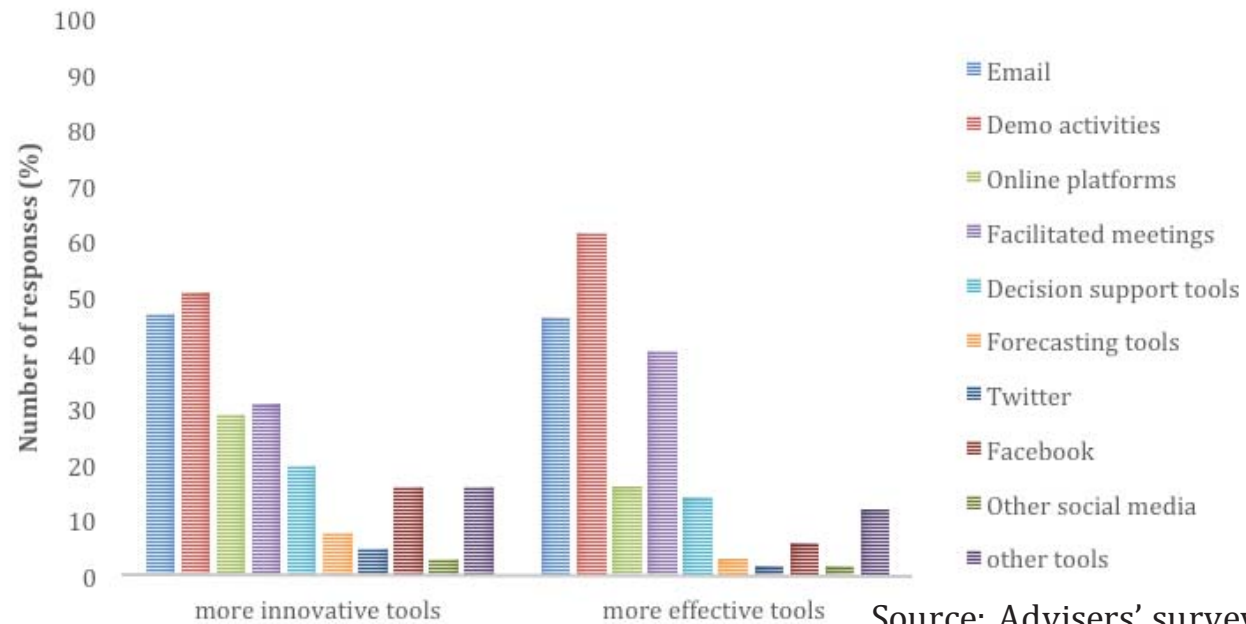
-Personnal communication, meetings and demonstration activities are the most used tools by advisers to reach farmers.

Despite the potential of new ICT technologies,

Peer to peer exchange and **co learning approaches** remain the more effective knowledge exchange tools to trigger the innovation process and to move from **creative ideas to innovative practices**

Field days and demonstration farms and **meeting with farmers** have high social benefit

Farmers need to know each other personally and to see what others are doing in the field to be motivated to apply innovative solutions in their fields.

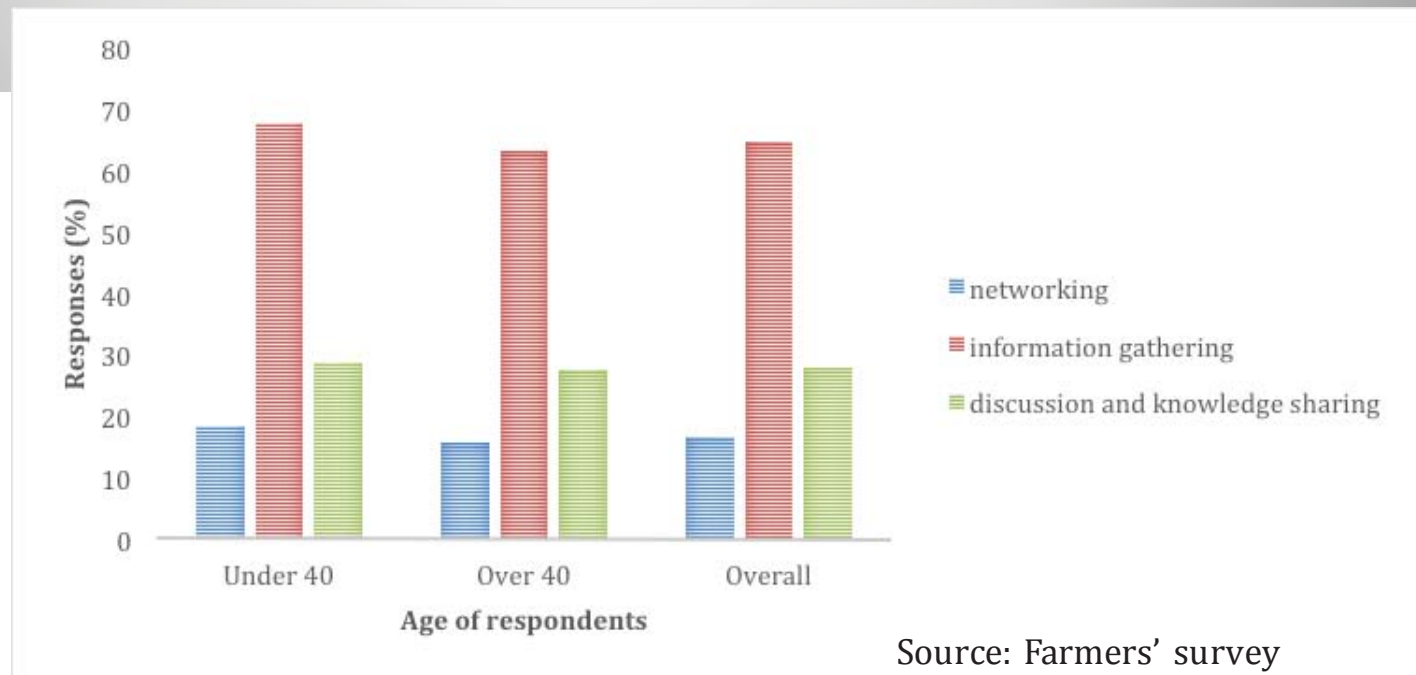


Source: Advisers' survey

However after the meetings.....

Internet is becoming the place where technical information is searched for

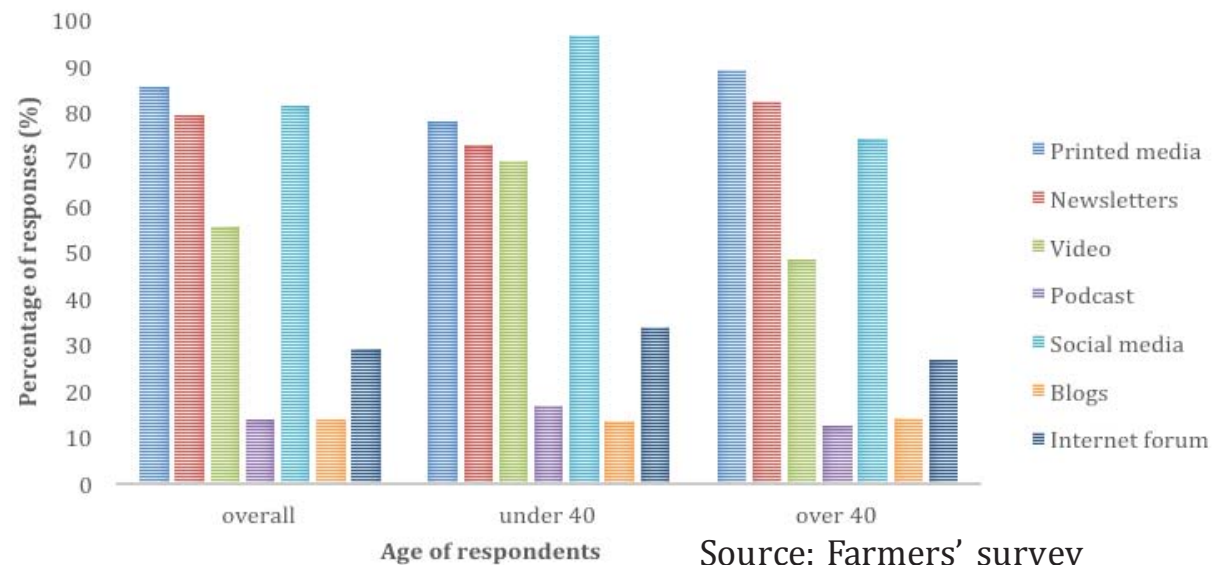
New ICTs tools have great potential to **maintain active the social relations** identified by Morgan and Murdoch (2000) as the base for effective knowlesge exchange processes.



Social media are spread among farmers:

- Inform farmers about availability of specific new technical information online
- Farmers use them daily in their smartphones
- Raise awareness of farmers on specific issues
- Promote farm events, field days and other physical meetings for knowledge exchange
- Farmers can have an active role in knowledge exchange becoming not only user but also knowledge provider.

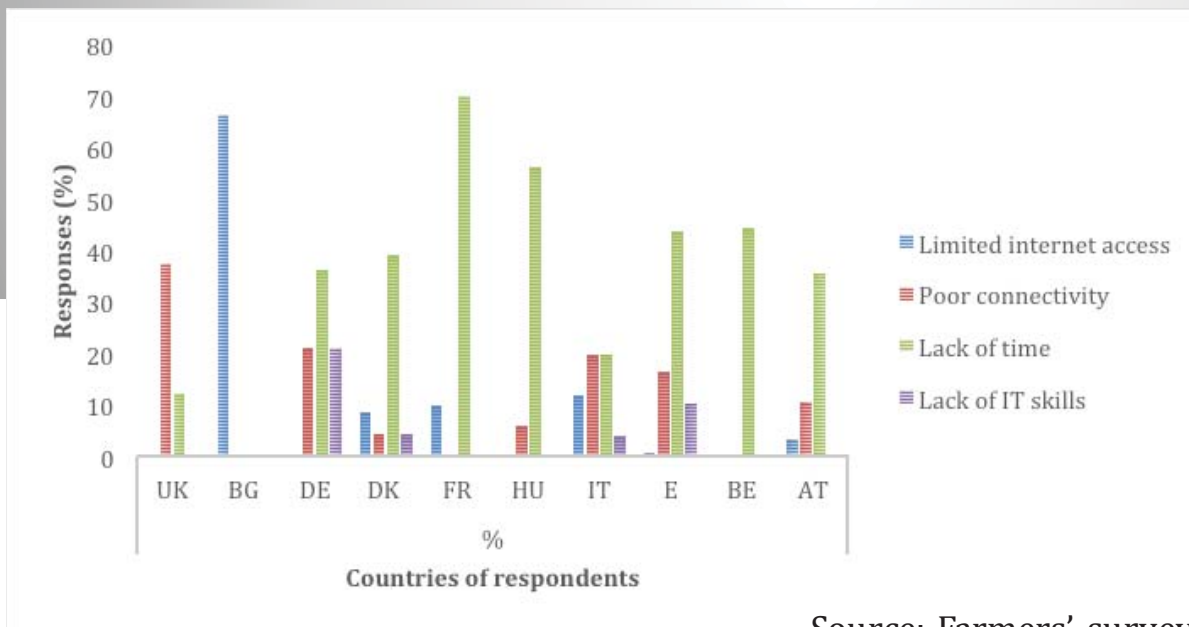
Knowledge flow becomes more inclusive



The potential of videos:

- Most spread ICTs tools used by farmers
- Can easily be disseminated through social media
- Reduce language barriers
- Immediate communication language

Similar potential
for visual social
media
(e.g. Instagram)
But still not used



The use of
images reduce
the time needed
to catch up
technical
information

Research findings and farmers practices should be **processed** in a way that aims to reach different audience effectively

Integration of technical and communication skills are needed.

The role of advisers Changing with the change of the innovation model

However advisers are still trained in a
knowledge transfer approach to
innovation
With great sectoral specialization.

New actors are fitting in the role of
intermediaries in research
communication.

With skills to facilitate two way
multi dimensional communication
flows.

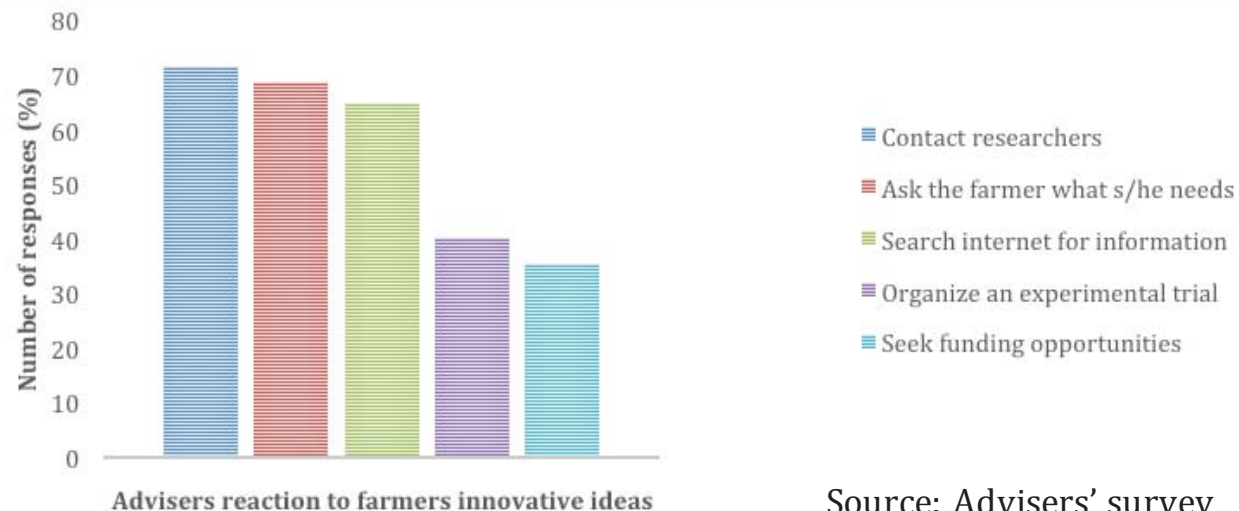
The capacity to get farmers
and researchers involved in
innovation is no longer a
peculiarity of agricultural
advisers.

Sharing information with farmers

How advisers would support the development of farmers innovative ideas?

Most of the time farmers' innovative ideas remain out of research projects and funding opportunities.

Only 35,2 % of advisers would seek funding opportunities to develop farmers innovative ideas!



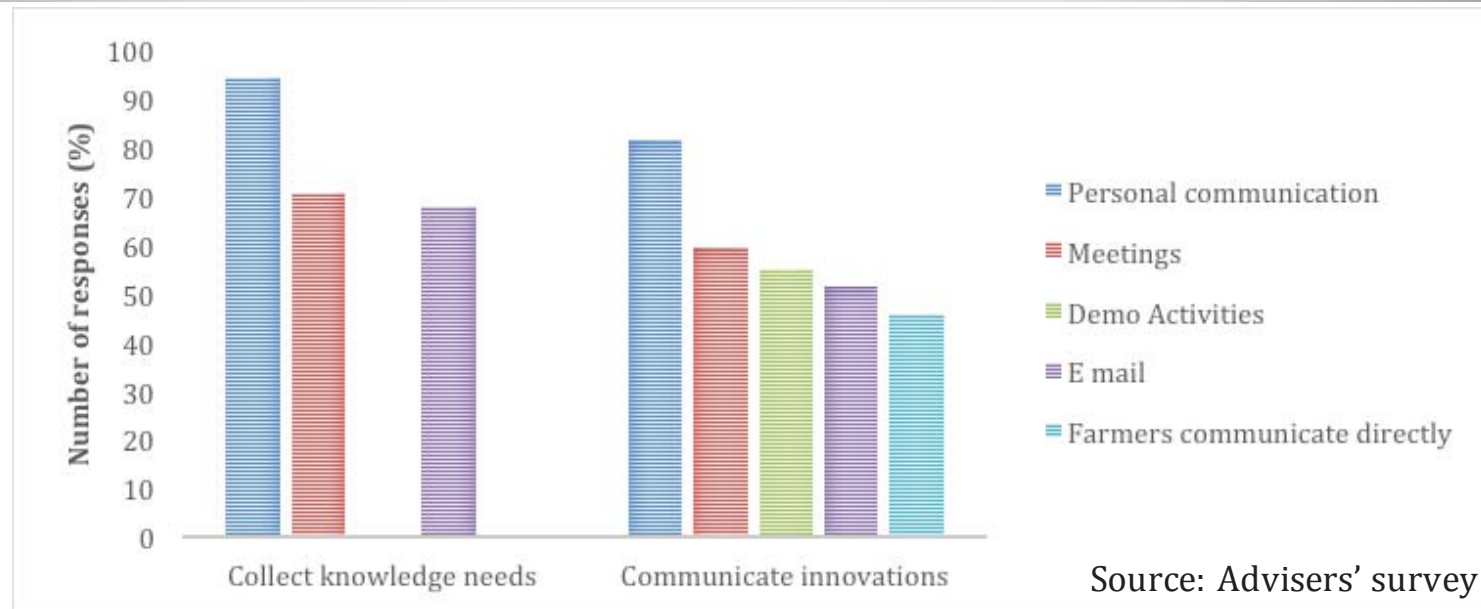
Source: Advisers' survey



Tools advisers use to collect knowledge needs from farmers and to communicate them about innovations implemented by other farmers.

Demonstration activities and direct farmers communication are less important tools to collect knowledge need from farmers,

Field days and on farm experiments are still too much seen as a one way information provision rather than a mutual learning process.



Farming is a **knowledge-rich activity** (Lobley et al. 2013) that require a two-way multi-dimensional communication flows among actors.

Different tools have **specific features** that determine the topics that can be best communicate using them.

The development of material for knowledge exchange is a **dynamic process** that is influenced by the existing materials and can be changed once new material is available.

The surveys underlines how farmers in general are using more ICTs tools than advisers to build relationships in agricultural knowledge systems.

Language barriers can be overcome using images (e.g. Videos and Social media)

Conclusions

The use and perception of tools by farmers and farm advisers are **changing over time**. The availability of good materials with innovative formats can influence this perception.

The Steering Committee decided to **relaunch a consultation** in the second half of the project using a simplified version of the first surveys to discover **evolutions and trends in ICTs tools** use for agricultural advice.

The results of this report will be the base for the development of the OK Net Arable knowledge platform.

The platform could be in the future the space for EIP AGRI to collect further data on the **quality of knowledge exchange tools**.

Further development



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Thanks for the attention