

**NEFERTITI**

**Networking European Farms to Enhance Cross Fertilisation and Innovation Uptake through Demonstration**

*D6.4: Policy recommendations for the regions and EC*

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## **D6.4 Policy recommendations for the regions and EC**



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## Abstract

*NEFERTITI Programme promotes the creation of interactive thematic networks related to the agriculture sector to promote knowledge, learning and the adoption of innovative techniques through the exchange of information between different actors and live demonstrations.*



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## **I. Identified challenge: Assure appropriate funding to Demo Farms**

Demonstrations and excursions at the farm level (peer to peer learning) are being seen by farmers as the most effective way of knowledge transfer and innovation uptake. This is not always supported with the necessary funding and training tools. Public authorities, Research and Innovation funding bodies and other relevant AKIS actors should implement specifically targeted funding measures to assure that Demo Farms are properly supported and valorized. In these (new) funding instruments particular attention should be deserved to the closest-to-market Technology Readiness Levels (TRL 7 or higher), which have the highest potential for actual improvements in farming practices.

### **Key recommendations for policy makers (EU, national and regional)**

- Integrate as much as possible demonstration approaches as a requirement for innovation and investments schemes in funding programmes (eg. EIP AGRI OGs, CAP, ERDF, etc.).
- Learn from existing funding measures in EU Countries<sup>1</sup>.
- Leveraging on investments from a mix of donors and sources is beneficial to raise the level of awareness and co-ownership of Demonstration facilities in local communities of the farming sector. Specific Public-Private Partnerships or Agreements that provide targeted funding to such facilities could be a good tool to make Demo Farms more beneficial to all the actors and stakeholders within the innovation ecosystem.
- Develop funding instruments (e.g. innovation actions funded via the ERDF) that facilitate direct investments by actors interested in demonstrating innovative solutions, favoring the use of demo farms as a way to prove the economic sustainability and as a way to facilitate the marketing of the solutions.
- Identifying funding instruments which are less known by the agricultural sector and that could support demo farms as knowledge transfer infrastructures<sup>2</sup>.

### **Main expected benefits**

- Better and more efficient infrastructures for knowledge transfer and innovation uptake
- Quicker adoption of innovative solutions by farmers to respond sectorial and societal challenges
- A more attractive agricultural sector, with better connections with advanced technologies and skills

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<sup>1</sup> Eg. The Netherlands has recently developed a specific legal instrument called SABE; Italy and Poland are defining specific measures under their CAP programmes to support Demo Farm activities and their Networking

<sup>2</sup> Eg. [FI compass](#); [Alliance for Innovation](#); [ESFRI](#)



## II. Identified challenge: Networking Demo Farms to strengthen the AKIS

Based on the information collected from the different Country analysis, Networking activities are considered a **positive contributor** to the functioning of Demo Farms in the AKIS and, hence, possibly influencing future funding streams devoted to such activities. The level of Networking is strictly related to the activism and vitality of AKIS actors in the Countries. In the EU, several networking activities are in place in Countries and Regions, with the adoption of different models of demonstration actions and Demo Farm management. Efforts are still necessary to support the alignment of Demo Farm quality standards at EU level and the creation of a broad European repository of competences and Demo facilities that can provide guidance and identify strategic priorities.

### Key recommendations for policy makers (EU, national and regional)

- In order to select concrete topics and challenges, which can steer more focus on the need for knowledge transfer and demonstration, matching and focusing on specific policy targets is of utmost importance. Policy makers have the fundamental role to facilitate participatory approaches and public-private quadruple helix partnerships.
- Beside participatory approaches, policy makers have also to facilitate cross-sectorial approaches that are open to interregional cooperation. In that respects, connections with the Smart Specialization Strategies can raise a broader overview on European and international context.
- It is important to organize dedicated follow up actions that connect project results and best practices from the agricultural sectors to territorial and sectorial strategies, so that each single project may provide a better impact to the local community.
- It is important to promote the integration of training policies with demo farm practical approaches, pursuing missing/new curricula strategies with industry. There are examples of life-long learning systems and micro-credentials<sup>3</sup>.
- Safeguarding knowledge in the EU by making sure to use national knowledge platforms from member states, the NEFERTITI website and connect with EU FARM BOOK<sup>4</sup> and other relevant initiatives (eg. WIKIFARMER<sup>5</sup>).
- Recognise and support the role of “Hub Coaches” as proposed by NEFERTITI project: specialised and trained experts who are the glue and connectors of Demo farms and Demo farms aggregations in different geographic or thematic areas.

### Main expected benefits

- A more connected and challenge focused AKIS within the EU
- A more efficient AKIS within the EU (not inventing the same wheel)
- Improved opportunities for farmers, students, researchers and other professionals
- More synergies between sub sectors in agriculture

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<sup>3</sup> <https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/micro-credentials>

<sup>4</sup> <https://eufarmbook.eu/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://wikifarmer.com/#>



### **III. Identified challenge: Finding the balance between private and public Demo Farms**

As reported several time by the NEFERTITI project, there are different kinds of Demo farms<sup>6</sup>. In NEFERTITI we propose that they can be divided in three macro groups: Private commercial farms which can operate as demonstration sites; Public owned farms that have an intrinsic role of demonstration; Experimental farms owned by private or public bodies with research oriented targets. They all have an important role in knowledge transfer but a balance must be found to assure that the most appropriate demo approach can reach the different agricultural sectors and farmers' needs.

#### **Key recommendations for policy makers (EU, national and regional)**

- Assure the necessary capability to implement longer demonstrations, for instance those required for tree crops, agroforestry, and any other plurennial crop. These longer required capabilities are generally not economically viable for private demo farms, however they can be more easily afforded by public demo farms.
- Assure the necessary capability to have demonstrations in situations where on-site visits in private commercial farms are not possible due to risks of spreading diseases, f.i. for protected horticulture and animal husbandry. Public owned demo farms have generally better facilities for visitors.
- Public demo farms should be acknowledged for their transparency, having no difficulties to disclose also negative results and points of failure.
- Public demo farms should be acknowledged for their independency, as they are less affected by the pressure exerted by lobbies and organized interest groups.
- Private demo farms are more easily acknowledged by farmers, as they are considered actual peers. Those farms should be supported to operate with the necessary standards to reduce possible vested interests and to pursue a farmer-oriented approach.
- Private demo farms can be involved in the AKIS for a limited amount of time demonstrating a certain innovation and can offer more flexibility in the AKIS.
- Put in place collaborations and agreements between private and public demo-farms, possibly with a coordination role assured by the public ones.

#### **Main expected benefits**

- Improved synergies between private and public interests
- Adoption of higher standards in demonstration and knowledge transfer activities
- More integration between commercial and research oriented approaches

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<sup>6</sup> NEFERTITI Deliverable 6.2

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