

D5.8: First set of Practice Abstracts



EUREKA

European Knowledge Repository for Best Agricultural Practices

TASK 5.4

Summary

This short deliverable contains the first set of Practice Abstracts from the EUREKA project. These are derived from Work Package 2 and have also been prepared and submitted in the EIP-AGRI common format.

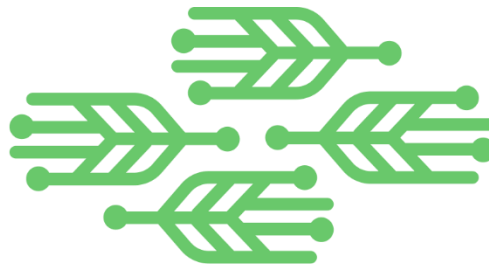
An additional 45 Practice Abstracts will be prepared in the second half of the project (January – December 2021).

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Practice Abstract #1

Organising effective online workshops for EU projects

In Horizon 2020 multi-actor projects such as EUREKA (www.h2020eureka.eu) workshops are important for gaining input from end users, as well as communicating and disseminating the knowledge that is built in the project. Physical face-to-face project workshops are moving online because of increased concern about the impact of international travel, as well as restrictions on human movement due to COVID-19. But what are the advantages of online workshops, what does a good workshop look like and what aspects are critical to its success?

Key advantages of online workshops include:

- Reduced environmental costs of travelling
- Reduced time commitment for all participants
- Potential for input of participants that cannot usually travel to such meetings
- Reduced expenditure on travel costs, enabling funds to be spent on other important tasks

Some advice for planning a good workshop:

- Plan in advance and send invitations early
- Promote the workshop on social media and through networks
- Include interactive features, including discussions, rating apps (e.g. Mentimeter) and the group chat function
- Check that interactive exercises work in advance
- Send out a workshop pack the week before with details of the project and joining instructions

Tips for delivering a good workshop:

- Encourage all participants to enable their video so that the conversations feel more personal
- Small groups work best to stimulate conversation e.g. using 'breakout rooms' can help to split large groups
- Use interactive features to stimulate discussion

Be honest - technical difficulties happen!



Practice Abstract #2

Understanding the end user using personas and journeys

End user personas and journeys are a critical tool for product development, they enable practitioners to understand who they are designing for as well as getting to the core challenges and opportunities that the end user experiences. Without understanding the end user it is possible that practitioners design applications without fully understanding the system complexities, problems and what the end users actually need.

End user personas and journeys are useful in the agricultural context and can help develop technology, knowledge outputs and policy for a range of stakeholders including farmers, foresters and advisors. The EUREKA project (www.eurekah2020.eu) is using end user personas and journeys to develop and pilot an open-source agricultural knowledge reservoir called the FarmBook.

User personas are:

- A collection of single fictional representations of a larger segment or group (not a real person)
- Grounded in key shared characteristics
- Consistent, but are never fully correct representations of all members of the group

They include key demographic characteristics such as:

- Age
- Gender
- Location and language
- Employment

They also include key information relating to professional challenges and opportunities. For example, a farmer persona may have the challenge of 'access to land' but the opportunity of 'successful networking'.

User journeys help to provide additional insight into the personas. Journeys present the steps required to perform a professional task and include information on:

- Behaviours and emotions, both positive and negative (what the persona felt)
- Touchpoints for gaining knowledge such as the internet or an advisor (how the persona did it)



Practice Abstract #3

Successful knowledge dissemination: targeting the key sources used by the agricultural community

Communication and dissemination strategies are critical for ensuring effective knowledge transfer to the agricultural community as well as being mandatory by the European Commission for Horizon 2020 projects. A key factor for successful knowledge transfer is understanding the preferences and habits of the agricultural community in how they search for and obtain new knowledge.

The end users of the outputs of Horizon 2020 projects use a range of sources to obtain knowledge, from formal to informal. Formal sources are usually easy to consult but often require effort of the user to apply to practice, whilst informal sources allow interactivity with the source of the knowledge, but may not be useful if things subsequently go wrong and additional help is needed.

Formal sources include:

- The internet – most commonly used is the google search engine to then link with more specialist websites
- Printed texts such as books and magazines
- Agricultural TV, popular in countries such as Bulgaria but not common in other areas.

When searching for information online users commonly look for text, which is more popular than images, video and audio.

Slightly less formal sources include:

- Meetings and events (study trips, demonstrations)
- Training and seminars.

Informal sources include:

- Friends, family and colleagues
- Advisors / technician
- Communication / media tools (e.g. Whatsapp and Facebook) and online communities.

The value of informal sources of information should not be underestimated, especially when farmers are facing urgent problems to solve. Also keep in mind that formal sources act as important mechanisms to ensuring that new and relevant information can be distributed by the more informal channels.



Practice Abstract #4

The challenges of obtaining knowledge in the agricultural sector

Knowledge can be obtained from a wide variety of sources and in a wide range of formats. Effective knowledge exchange is critical for the advancement of the agricultural sector and the strengthening of knowledge exchange within the so-called Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS) of EU Member States has become an increasingly important objective of EU agricultural policy. The EUREKA project (www.h2020eureka.eu) aims to help strengthen knowledge exchange through the development of an online, open-source EU agricultural knowledge reservoir.

But what are the key challenges experienced by users in obtaining agricultural knowledge?

1. **Finding trustworthy information** – users don't always trust information that is delivered alongside advertisements as it appears to be more of a sales article. Sources without references can also be problematic.
2. **A lack of critical insight** – users often want to compare knowledge to enable them to make decisions based on a range of quality sources, where these sources don't exist to compare, a barrier exists.
3. **Language** – is a barrier to users from two perspectives, firstly obtaining knowledge in the native language and secondly, obtaining information that is written for them as an audience without too much technical, policy or academic jargon.
4. **Not everyone wants to share information** – despite vast quantities of knowledge existing in the agricultural sector, not everyone in the community is willing to share with others. This is commonly due to market competition. Information that exists behind a pay wall is also a challenge.
5. **Building a network with the right people** – finding the right people to share knowledge with can be a challenge, especially in specialist agricultural sectors.



Practice Abstract #5

End user requirements for open-source knowledge e-platform features

The EUREKA project (www.h2020eureka.eu) aims to help strengthen agricultural knowledge exchange in EU Member States through the development of an online knowledge reservoir called the FarmBook. An open-source e-platform is a good tool for the development of such a knowledge base and can improve connections between two distinct user groups: multi-actor project partners and multi-actor end-users (farmers, foresters, advisors).

In order to design for user groups, it is important to involve them in the e-platform design from the beginning. In respect of features to include in an agricultural e-platform it is expected that certain key features are included, such as sector specific information or an advanced search function.

However, designers also need to pay special attention to the features end users require, based on the end user needs, if the e-platform is to be successful within the agricultural community. Understanding user needs and requirements can be undertaken using a range of methods, with a triangulated approach suggested for rigorous results.

- Workshops are a good place to start and enable in-depth discussion about potential needs and requirements, and how these can be translated into features
- One-to-one interviews enable targeted understanding
- Online surveys add a numerical ranking to the qualitative data collected during workshops and interviews

Using these methods, additional features for an e-platform highlighted by end users include the ability to:

- See other people's opinions on information
- See information automatically tailored to user preferences
- Receive emails with information based on preferences
- Rate information on the platform
- Provide opinion to information on the platform
- Create own user profile

