

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

