



A Leonardo Da Vinci Transfer of Innovation project to

Support professionalization and recognition of agricultural advisory in the diversity of European national situations

Advisers and trainers involved in European agricultural and environmental issues have to reconsider their practices. In particular, the general goal of reducing pesticides leads to major changes in cropping systems and impacts on the mode of intervention with farmers. The New Advisers project aims to adapt and expand the skills used by advisers,

to increase both efficiency and professional recognition. Maintenance and development of skills are facilitated by internal diversity of technical teams and networks of peers.

By their ability to take into account various points of view (farmers and stakeholders), advisers in agronomy require creativity and self-confidence.

Three facilitation tools provided by practice

New Advisers involves eight countries and two international networks of advisers. In the first phase, three tools were used: the "Discussion group" developed by the Irish Teagasc, the "Problem based learning" quite commonly practiced in the countries of northern Europe, the "Clear vision" interview used by the French Chambers of agriculture. The transmission of tools appears more effective by examples and testimonies than in a theoretical form.



The processes aim to help the farmers who are "reconstructing" their crop systems with less pesticide. In these situations, advisers and advisory organizations have to recompose their own practices, as part of a mutual exchange of knowledge, where "learning by doing" is the rule.

New skills to develop

The transfer and testing of the three tools was conducted in eight countries with positive results. The tests however revealed the



diversity of situations and specific constraints. In order to analyse the skills in implementing the three tools, a workshop for advisers, trainers and managers was held in each country in April 2013.

Their contributions according to the questionnaires on used skills and knowledge, confirm the assumptions of *New Advisers*:

The 'soft skills' (mainly relational and methodological) are more effective and more important factors to accompany the reduction of pesticides, (since this is the focus we chose).

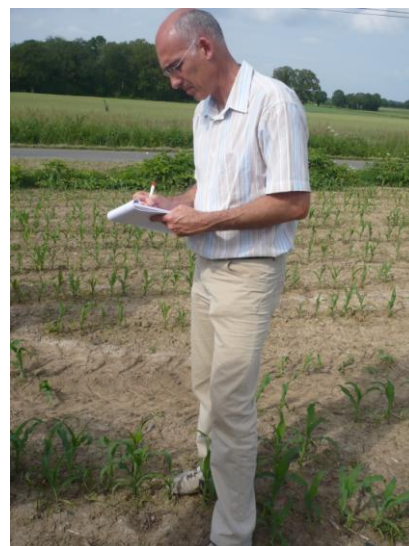
So the production of new educational resources was shown to be crucial and we decided to film four video tutorials, about the problem-situation concept and the three tested tools.

Enriching advice methods and education in agronomy

The results were achieved on a transnational level by disseminating "learning by doing" and transferring innovative tools (including the three that we tested).

The skills used to give appropriate advice include scientific knowledge, but also an understanding of the concrete and specific situation of each farm, and of the professional dynamics of each farmer. The type of training should maintain and develop the skills of agronomic advisers at scientific, technological, organizational and relational levels.

The national networks already distribute information, sometimes with help of transnational organisations (IALB, Chambers of agriculture). *New Advisers* has facilitated connections between some new projects and European networks, including ENDURE (integrated farming), Solinsa (networks for sustainable agriculture), EUFRAS (agricultural advisers), in view of the revision of the Common Agricultural Policy, of the implementation of ECVET and of the European Innovation Partnerships. It is important for networking in Europe to be reinforced beyond language barriers.



Dissemination of the results

New Advisers has held various transnational meetings. After the last one in Budapest, during September and October 2013, we would like to offer a one-day working session to any advisory service, in order to present the new professional tools and resources that we have produced throughout the *New Advisers* two-year Leonardo project.

If you would be interested in organising **one session on a local level**, with a group of agronomic advisers, trainers and managers of advisory service,

please contact us at claude.delbos@loire-atlantique.chambagri.fr.