



# Results of testing 3 tools in agronomic advisory

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WP2 – Experiment the transfer - Outcome n°08

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## **IMPORTANT MENTION**

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## SUMMARY OF THE DOCUMENT

### English

The innovation transfer between member countries carried out in the project 'New Advisers' concerned three tools to support agricultural advice: Clear Vision, Problem Based Learning and Discussion Groups.

These three tools were tested on various topics; 152 users and facilitators reported on their experience. Reviews of the tools are very favourable; however, learning them is difficult and cannot really be done only via the Internet or using even very complete instruction document. Furthermore, the difficulties encountered in setting up the tests of the tools in some countries are related to various barriers to methodological innovation which exist (availability of advisors, private financing of advisory, training and professional support ...).

The sustainable acquisition of innovative tools is achieved through the commitment of advisory organisations and is accompanied by new technical and behavioural skills.

### French

Le transfert d'innovation entre pays membres réalisé dans le projet 'New Advisers' concerne trois outils d'aide au conseil agronomique : Clear Vision, Problem Based Learning, Discussion Groups.

Ces trois outils ont été testés sur des thématiques variés ; 152 utilisateurs et facilitateurs ont rendu compte de leur expérience. Les avis sur les outils sont très favorables ; par contre leur acquisition reste difficile et ne peut vraiment se faire seulement par Internet ou un document papier, même très complet. De plus, les difficultés rencontrées pour mettre en place le test d'outils dans quelques pays sont en relation avec différents freins à l'innovation méthodologique (disponibilité des conseillers, financement privé du conseil, formation et accompagnement professionnels, etc.).

L'acquisition d'outils innovants réussit durablement grâce à l'engagement des organisations de conseil et s'accompagne de nouvelles compétences techniques et comportementales.

### German

Im Projekt "New Advisers" war ein zentraler Aspekt der Innovationstransfer zwischen den Mitgliedsländern hinsichtlich der drei Werkzeuge Clear Vision, Problem Based Learning und Discussion Group (\*). Dadurch soll die landwirtschaftliche Beratung gestärkt werden.

Diese drei Werkzeuge wurden in einer Vielzahl von Anwendungssituationen getestet: 152 Anwender und Moderatoren berichteten über ihre Erfahrungen. Die Bewertungen der Werkzeuge sind sehr positiv, sich die Methodik zur Anwendung der Werkzeuge anzuzeigen wird aber als sehr schwierig erachtet und kann eigentlich nicht nur über das Internet oder eine sehr ausführliche schriftliche Anleitung erfolgen. Darüber hinaus werden Schwierigkeiten bei der Durchführung der Tests in einigen Ländern in Beziehung zu Hindernisse hinsichtlich methodischer Innovation (Verfügbarkeit von Beratern, private Finanzierung der Beratung, Fortbildungsmöglichkeiten und professionelle Unterstützung, etc.) gesetzt.

Die nachhaltige Integration von innovativen Beratungswerkzeugen in die Beratungspraxis muss durch die Verpflichtung und das Engagement der Beratungsorganisationen erreicht werden und wird durch neue technische Kompetenzen und Handlungskompetenz begleitet.

(\*) auf Deutsch: „Klar sehen“, „Problembasiertes Lernen“ und „Diskussionsgruppe“

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## Introduction

Farm advisors across Europe use different methods to transmit knowledge to farmers. These techniques have evolved in individual countries and enable advisors to use their skills and local knowledge to tailor their message and more effectively transmit knowledge to the farmers. The work of New Advisors Leonardo project in Outcomes no1 and no2 identified many of these tools and information sources which are used by advisors across Europe.

This section (Outcome N°8) of the 'New Advisors' project was to evaluate the 'transferability' of selected advisory tools across different European countries. Each partner country participated in the setup of the test and contributed to its design so that tests would be possible by the different partner organisations. Three advisory tools (Clear-vision, Problem Based Learning and Discussion Groups) were selected from a suite of advisory tools collated by the partner countries. Each tool was already well developed/working in one or more of the partner countries. A comprehensive manual was developed to accompany each tool with background material, working examples and supporting material (Outcome n°5 and n° 6).

The test was designed to practically observe the tools in a real life situation to assess their effectiveness to help farmers cope with changing in pesticide regulations both nationally and at an EU level.

This report outlines the details of partner organisations and its effects on the test procedure. It reports on the test results completed and draws on the lessons learned to give some recommendations for the future.

## I - Organisation of the test

### ***a - Advisory structures in partner countries***

This section give details of the structures (funding model, advice delivery model, type of information delivered) of each partner organisation, and not that of the entire country where the partner works. Organisational structures differed greatly and it was recognised at an early stage of the test design this could pose difficulties for the test and the overall test results.

Each partner structure is outlined below.

#### **Public funded**

- **Hungary** - Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture – Publicly funded (European Union, FAS funding) organization with the capability for some farmer fees. The advisory mandate includes; deliver guidance and support for EU schemes and cross compliance regulations, technical advice as required.
- **Slovenia** - Slovenian Chamber of agriculture – Totally publicly funded organization (European Union, FAS funding). The advisory mandate includes; deliver guidance and support for EU schemes and cross compliance regulations and technical advice as required
- **Spain** - Federacion EFA Galicia – Publicly funded vocational training organization. The organizations mandate is to promote educational activities and vocational training in rural areas.
- **Portugal** - Casa Escola Agricola Campo Verde- CEA – This is a publicly funded non-for profit organization. The organizations mandate is to promotes educational activities and vocational training in rural areas

### **Mixed Funding (Public and Private)**

- **Ireland** – Teagasc – Funding is a mix of public and private (farmer fees). Advisory mandate includes; farmers technical advice (Livestock husbandry, agronomy, financial, etc.), education, transfer of research to farmers, Cross Compliance advice, etc.
- **Germany** - Bayerische Bauernverband LandSiedlung bbv-LandSiedlung - Funding is a mix of public and private funding. The organization is predominately privately funded with project based paid work. The organization mandate has an environmental focus with animal husbandry and crop agronomy. They also have an involvement with the regulation of EU schemes.
- **France** - APCA - Assemblée Permanente des Chambres d'agriculture – Funding is a mix of public and private (farmer fees). The advisory mandate includes; farmers technical advice (agronomy, financial, etc.), limited applied research, transfer of research to farmers, Cross Compliance advice, etc.

### **Private Funded**

- **Sweden** - Hushallningssällskapet Väst – Primarily private funded by farmer fees but operates as a non-profit organization. Some specific projects (mostly environmental projects) are publicly funded. The advisory mandate includes; farmer technical advice (agronomy, financial, etc.), transfer of research to farmers, Cross Compliance advice, but all work must be paid for (whether from private or public funding)

### ***b - Advisory core work***

All advisory (partners) organisations have regular contact with farmers. However Portugal and Spain mainly focus on the education of the rural community. Hungary and Slovenia predominantly focus on helping farmers in the area of regulation (National and European). German organisations focus on environmental issues with farmers, but also play a role in regulation. Sweden, France and Ireland have an integrated system where advice on technical and environmental regulation is offered to farmers. Ireland is also involved in education and research.

### ***c - Pre-test run***

Before the tests of the “problem situations” commenced it was identified that partner organisations had very different structures and capabilities within their organisation. It was recognised these could affect the partners’ ability to complete the tests. Areas such as their organisations funding model, farmer contact and core organisational mandates were identified.

Almost all of the personnel representing their organisation did not have a panel of staff to delegate the tests to. Therefore there was a heavy reliance on their own resources or to persuade other colleagues in their organisation to help complete the tests.

To negate the effects of the differences between partner countries, it was important to have some commonality on which to base the tests. The Sustainable Use Directive of Pesticides 2009/128/EC provided a common base and allowed for the diversity within the partners in that the Directive contains elements of regulation, training and advisory.

After the test was setup and agreed, the group decided to run the test in each country to see if there were difficulties with the test model, material used or the questionnaires used to evaluate the tests. Results from this pre-test were evaluated in May 2012. Issues were identified with the manual. However the overall test methodology was found to be sound and partner countries were happy to proceed.

Following this test the manual was adjusted and a number of questions were modified to capture more from the participants of the test.

**d - Challenges encountered during the pre-test and main test**

After the main test period was finished the co-ordinators of WP 2 (work package 2) ran an additional questionnaire, three workshops (during the Munich meeting) and one to one follow up interviews with each country to gain an insight into the benefits and challenges encountered during the test phase.

The tests required each partner country to test each tool three times (with three different groups/people), if possible. This required that others staff in the partners organisation needed to be involved in the test. Difficulties in completing the tests arose in organisations where their mandate requires the advisors time is paid. As the time taken to complete the tests by the advisor, was voluntary, not as many tests were carried out as planned in the countries.

Some of the difficulties faced by partners in completing the test are outlined below and reflect the comments from the partner countries.

- *Teachers have their own training methods and are reluctant to change (Portugal)*
- *Advisors have their own methods and felt their methods were good enough already (Germany)*
- *Permanent staff have too much work and contract staff are only paid on an hourly basis so they have no interest in completing the tests in a voluntary capacity (Portugal)*
- *Conducting the tests was explained to managers but they did not act upon the requests (Germany)*
- *Advisors were too busy (Germany, Sweden)*
- *The structure of advisory service hindered the introduction of the tests as farmers can have more than one advisor therefore getting the holistic view of the farm for a tool like Clear Vision was difficult. (Germany)*
- *Funding was an issue insufficient support from superiors (Germany)*
- *The organisation did not have advisors involved with pesticides and were relying on people outside the organisation to complete the tests (Germany)*
- *All advisors needed to be paid for every task. All time is accounted for. Voluntary work to carry out the tests is difficult (Sweden)*
- *Discussion groups not widely practiced and no group meetings were organised at that time of the year (Sweden)*
- *Clear Vision took too long to learn (Sweden)*
- *There was some political interference to the introduction of the work (Hungary)*
- *Not all advisors (30-40%) have the technical capacity to carry out the tests (Hungary)*
- *Clear Vision viewed as a more basic tool to identify problems not solve specific problems (Slovenia)*
- *It's difficult to engage advisors from a manual. One to one training interaction and coaching is needed to introduce a new tool (Ireland)*
- *Advisers are driven by commercial sales and not motivated to reduce pesticides or to carry out/implement tests (Portugal)*
- *The teachers in Poitou-Charente have their own training methods, so it was difficult to convince them to test Problem based learning. A specific relationship needed to be made with the teachers. It has happened, but it was difficult (France)*
- *As an adviser, I have the time to learn the tools, but with 400 farmers, I can't spend several hours with one farmer. Giving individual advice, it's impossible! (Hungary)*

## II - Main test results

### a - Background information to the test results

The hypothesis of the test was that advisory tools could be effectively adapted by advisors (concerned with pesticide reduction/use) if

- (1) adequate supporting material accompanied each tool; and
- (2) Advisors were prepared to devote time and effort to understanding, learning and adapting the tool to their own situations.

The tests were conducted by groups of consultants and trainers in each partner country. These were pre-selected by each partner country as that ensured the best chance that the tests were carried out correctly and the results collated. In each test, there were 'learners' (persons who were acquiring new knowledge) and trainers (persons who were disseminating new knowledge).

A comprehensive evaluation of each test was based on a questionnaire. The questionnaire was filled in (anonymously) by each of the trainers and learners involved in each test. The results of the questionnaires were supplemented by interviews and workshops (with the trainers) conducted after the tests by each partner country (see WP 3). The test results were compiled by Sweden and are outlined below.

The original test schedule was for each partner country to complete three tests of each tool (9 tests). There were difficulties in many of the countries reaching the test targets. Only four countries (France, Ireland, Slovenia and Spain) returned questionnaires. The reasons as to why countries did not participate in the tests are crucial in our understanding of how advisory systems operate in the various EU countries. It is also important for policy makers to see that, given advisory systems are a key part in the implementation of pesticide reduction targets, therefore they must be supported adequately.

In countries with a well-developed national advisory system e.g. France, Ireland etc., there is a dedicated training/specialist/back-up function being performed by part of the advisory service. This appears to be very important when new tools/systems are being adapted by an advisory service. Privately funded advisory services do not have the time to dedicate to trialling these methods as it is not paid for.

### b - Test results

Overall, 152 questionnaires were completed and analysed.

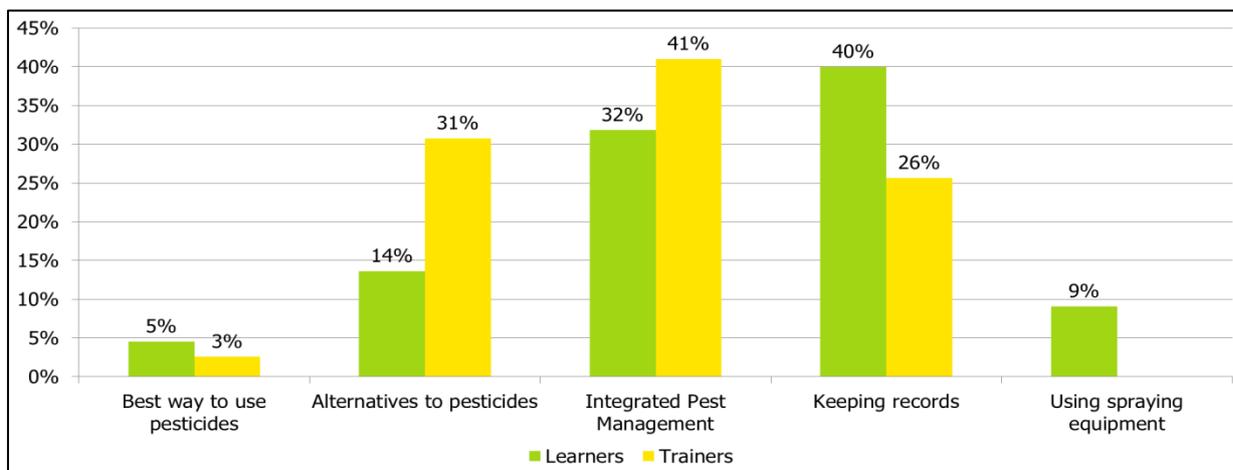
Figure 1: Breakdown of tests completed

Clear Vision (CV)		Discussion Groups (DG)		Problem Based Learning (PBL)		Total
Learners	Trainers	Learners	Trainers	Learners	Trainers	
10	17	53	13	48	11	<b>152</b>

**c - Analysis**

**Breakdown of subject matter during tests**

Figure 2: Main topics covered during the tests

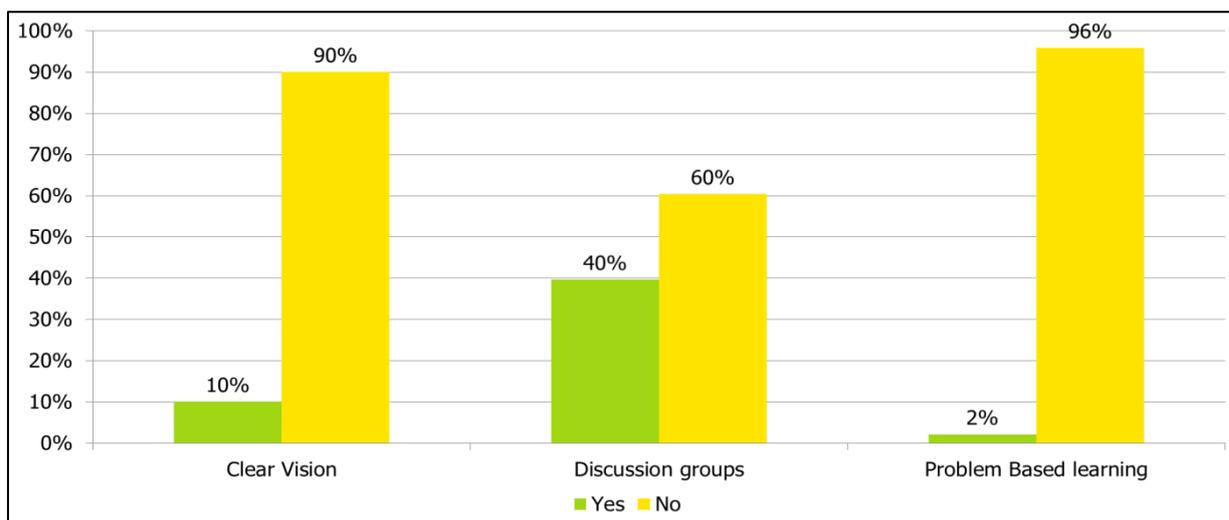


Record keeping and integrated pest management were the main topics covered during the tests. These are very important aspects of the Sustainable Use Directive concerning professional users of pesticides.

**Main findings from the learners**

It was mainly younger male students who participated in the trainings. Only one third of the learners were farmers. This may be due to the fact that ‘farmer’ tests (Clear Vision) is a one-to-one training so numbers will be less than a group technique (Discussion Groups) or classroom situation (Problem Based Learning).

Figure 3: Previous exposures to this training method (% of learners)



The discussion group technique is well established in France and Ireland, thus 40 % of learners expressed familiarity with the technique. However it is not clear if it is a widespread technique in other countries. Clear Vision and Problem Based Learning appear to be new techniques to the learners.

Figure 4 combined effectiveness of knowledge transfer as a result of the test process (% of learners)

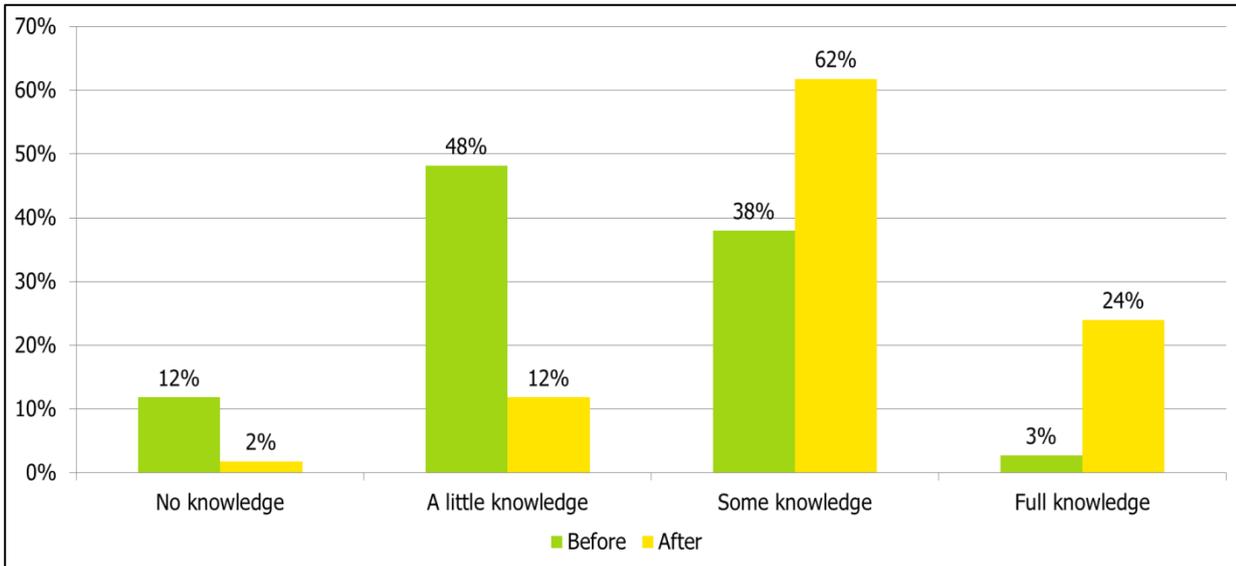
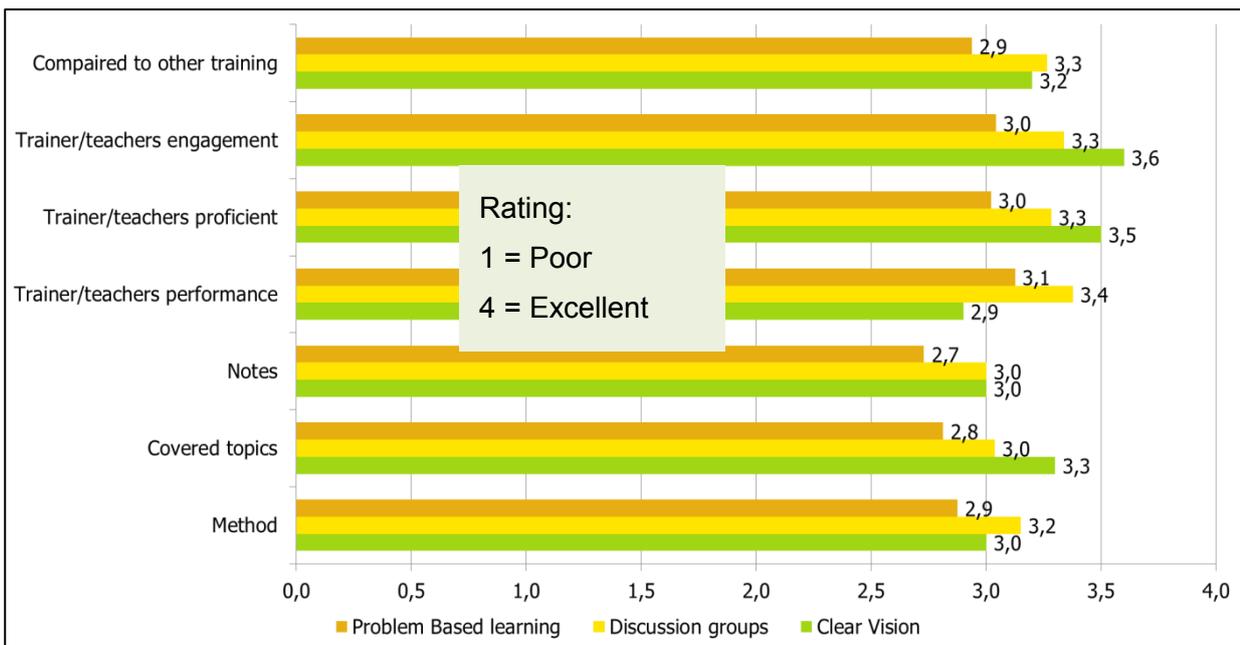


Figure 4 shows that participating in the test process gave the learners more knowledge. Note that the main test subjects were about pesticide reduction and record keeping i.e. subjects that are likely to be new to farmers and students. The differences were significant for all methods combined and for each single method. The learners said that being part of the test gave them new knowledge and understanding, and may encourage them to take a new approach and change of practices.

Clear Vision was rated very strongly by the learners as a method that encouraged them to adapt or change their practises, whereas Problem Based Learning was the least likely method that would bring about a change in practice (results not shown). Most of the learners rated Discussion Groups as good and said the experience would bring about a change of practice on their farms.

Figure 5 Key metric ratings for each advisory tool (by learners)



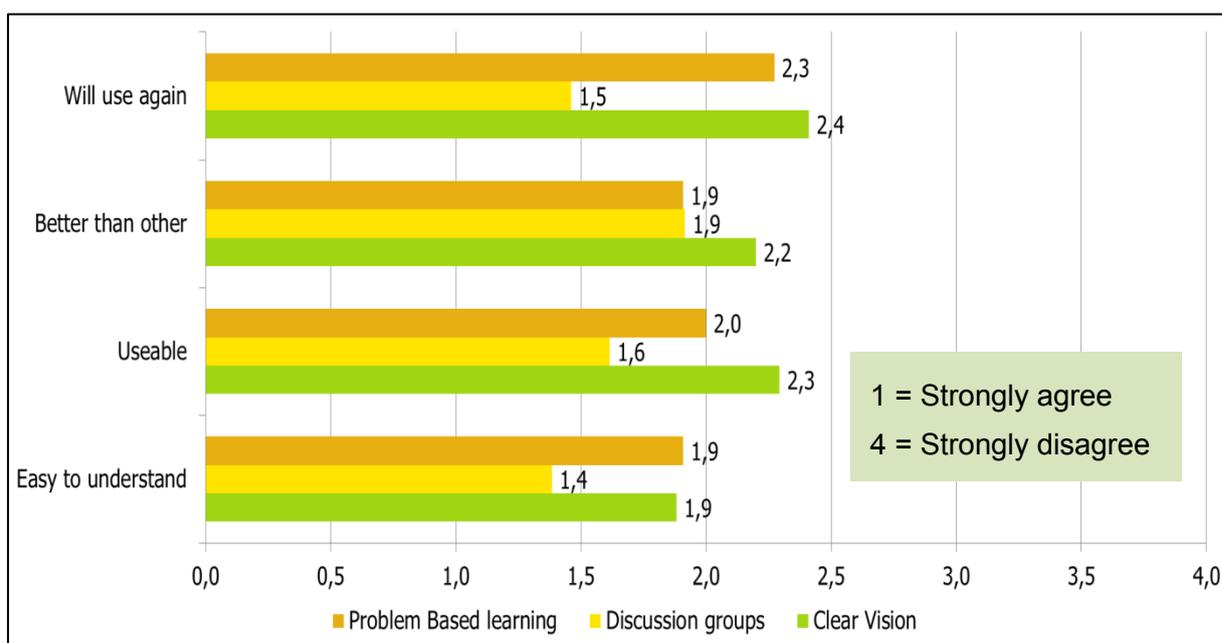
Overall, the three advisory tools received favourable ratings from the learners. Figure 5 shows that the methods chosen, 'transfer' successfully across language, cultural and social barriers. This is an important point to make when promoting these methods to advisors as they can have confidence that farmers and students will engage with these methods. Interestingly, the learners rated the one-to-one method (Clear Vision) as the one with the highest score for trainer engagement/proficiency, again reiterating their liking for this method. Learners found PBL and Discussion Groups to be good overall and helped them acquire new knowledge.

### **Main findings from the trainers**

The trainers were all men, mostly between 30-45 years and they worked as advisors. Over half of the trainers had never used Clear Vision or Problem Based Learning to disseminate knowledge, whereas two-thirds of the trainers had used Discussion Groups before. Again, the fact that Discussion Groups are commonplace in France and Ireland gave this result.

The test scenario for Clear Vision and Problem Based Learning is very realistic as if these tools are to be adapted; it is likely that the trainer will not be familiar with the advisory tool. This also puts more emphasis on the usability/suitability of the manual and supporting material as trainers/advisors will have to adapt these tools from a manual.

*Figure 6: Key metrics about the advisory tool & manual (by trainers)*



The trainers thought overall that the supporting test material and advisory tool manual was good, but just over a third thought that the manuals had some issues (results not presented). When pressed further, the trainers cited lack of skills/back-up as main reason for their complaints. This last point is very important when you consider that widespread adaption of these tools will rely on advisors using/trying out tools that they will not be familiar with. It is also important to frame this issue when considering the range of advisory services across the EU. It is likely that many advisors will not have support when adapting new advisory tools.

In general, the trainers found PBL difficult which is in contrast to the views of the learners (above) who found PBL very useful.

All trainers agreed that the Discussion Group manual was easy to understand and usable. Most said it was better than other guides on the same subject.

All of the tests carried out on Clear Vision (CV) were for IPM. Most advisors had never used CV before. Most advisors said the manual was easy to understand, but not very usable. This may be due to the fact that each farmer's problem is unique and requires advisor core

knowledge and technical expertise. Clear Vision was the least tested method, probably because it was the most 'time hungry' method for the advisors involved.

#### **d - Positive outcomes from the tests**

The following comments were captured from questionnaires, workshops and one to one interviews in Herrsching, Germany

- *Clear Vision was difficult to implement as it was very new to us but we can adapt and integrate it into student learning and for farmers looking for solutions to agricultural problems of any kind (Spain)*
- *Discussion groups will be applied in local development projects and is important process of achieving the goals set (Spain)*
- *We used PBL, followed the guide, and it was successful (Spain)*
- *Discussion group: The tutor liked the concept of the tools. Once preparation was done, it was easy to do in class time. Students like the idea (Portugal)*
- *A specific relationship needed to be made with the teachers. It has happened, but it was difficult (France)*
- *We have a group of advisers who are supported. We could have a meeting with them and show them the 3 tools. Currently, they just give advice as well as they can, but they don't have specific methods. In a second meeting, we will provide them with the documents. We could give them each a goal to achieve (i.e. at least 10 farmers involved in each activity), with an incentive (not money, but invite to a specific meeting). This process can be repeated with other advisers. The tools should reduce their workload and facilitate their work! (Spain)*
- *Advisers have to be certified and to be updated continually. They would use the tools to help the training; for example, use of PBL to bring advisers up to a level, as preparation for an update course (France)*

### **III - Lessons learned from testing the tools**

All new tools need hands on training and support for successful implementation. Use of the internet to introduce and implement a new tool is unlikely to lead to adoption. A manual for each tool is necessary but additional technical support in the form of information on the topic the tool covers is also necessary for successful implementation

Even with good tools it can be difficult to get adoption as the perception among many advisors is that their methods were to a high standard already. Financial inducements such as the Discussion Group (BTAP, DEP as practiced in Ireland) could be an excellent development to kick start adoption from farmers in all countries. Many countries have too few advisors with too many farmers clients leading to time constraints to either test new tools or interacting on a one to one basis

#### **a - Adoption of tools post project completion**

The "New Advisors" project had a definitive time line to complete its work but the knowledge shared and experiences relayed is hoped to carry on long after the project finishes. For this reason partners were asked to outline plans for further demonstration or implementation of the tools into their core advisory work.

The following are comments from partner countries about the adoption of the new tools in their countries:

- Clear Vision will be introduced to specific areas to support environmental initiatives (France)
- Germany propose to use Clear Vision and Discussion Groups in training of advisors and teachers in water quality, new cropping systems and whole farm analysis
- Problem Based Learning can be introduced to advisors with Certiphyto to support the process (France)
- Ireland intends to use Problem Based Learning tool with Moodle platform to test its effectiveness of up skilling store keepers on pesticide labels and good store management.
- Plan to use Discussion Groups to train advisors on pesticide use by Federacion EFA Galicia (Spain), and to introduce Discussion Group format with younger teachers (Portugal)
- Discussion groups will be applied in local development projects and is important process of achieving the goals set (Spain)
- Discussion Groups worked well during the tests and has huge potential for our advisory work (Hungary)
- Discussion groups will be incorporated into our standard working method. Problem Based learning will be used with advisors with a higher level of technical knowledge (Slovenia)

### ***b - Recommendations about transfer of tools***

The recommendations below are aimed at improving the transfer of tools in the future and also at policy makers as the results (or lack of results) show advisory service structures and support have an impact on the adaptation and eventual implementation of new advisors methods and ideas.

1. Due to the non-homogeneous nature of farming there is no singular best model for extension and multiple methods are required to reinforce the message in different ways (Vanclay, 2004). All three methods received favourable ratings but one to one (Clear Vision) scored the highest for training engagement and satisfaction by learners. This has implications for the numbers of advisors per farmer and their ability to interact on different levels with the farmer.
2. The reasons as to why countries did not participate in the tests are crucial in our understanding of how advisory systems operate in the various EU countries. Areas such as; core purpose of the advisory service, funding model, advisor client ratio, expertise within the service, training and support of advisors, etc. all played their part as to who more tests were not completed. It is therefore important for policy makers to see that, given advisory systems are key parts in the implementation of pesticide reduction targets, these advisors organizations must be supported adequately.
3. Partner countries repeatedly referred to a stronger adoption of tools where the advisor on the ground received training and support. Partner countries also referred to difficulties of learning new skill directly from the internet without support. Policy makers should take note that countries with well-developed national advisory system e.g. France, Ireland etc., have a dedicated training/specialist/back-up function which appears to be very important when new tools/systems are being adapted by an advisory service.
4. Privately funded advisory services had difficulties completing the tests and do not have the time to dedicate to trialling these methods as it is not paid for.
5. Eastern countries (Hungary/Slovenia) may have legacy issues from the communist era (sharing information) however both advisors services are willing to adopt Discussion Groups into their advisory systems. This gives hope for other east European countries as to the tools adaptability (a new tool) to improve technology transfer. Countries like Ireland have successfully increased Discussion Group participation by developing incentives for farmers to participate in such groups and outcomes have been

6. Problem Based Learning when used with platforms such as Moodle has the potential to increase learning existing, at lower cost, for existing professionals and students working within the phytosanitary sphere.
7. All partner countries viewed the project positively and the legacy of the project in adaptation is clear given the comments in the adoption of tools post completion. This clearly shows, despite the difficulties within advisory structures, advisors are willing to try and/or integrate new advisory ideas into their daily work and use these tools to reduce pesticide use.

## Conclusion

We decided to transfer tools that can be used in various conditions. The opinions expressed by 152 test participants were very positive: the three advisory tools received particularly favourable ratings from the learners. This shows that the methods chosen, 'transfer' successfully across language, cultural and social barriers. Learners rated the one-to-one method (Clear Vision) with a high score and Discussion Groups as good. Farmers said also the experience would bring about a change of practice on their farms.

Difficulties in several countries to implement the test also provide interesting information. They reveal locally the nature of the existing brakes against methodological innovations. Various reasons are mentioned: funding of advice (privatization), low availability of advisers, lack of support by the advisory body itself, etc.. Indeed, the acquisition of a new tool is often accompanied by a change in posture of adviser him/herself. Learning cannot be done only by reading documents or on Internet. It takes convenient training and a real long-term support. In the third phase of the project, the skills will be analysed in more detail.

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

- ⇒ BTAP: Beef Technology Adoption Programme (Ireland)
- ⇒ CV: Clear Vision tool
- ⇒ DEP: Dairy Efficiency Programme (Ireland)
- ⇒ DG: Discussion Groups tool
- ⇒ EU: European Union
- ⇒ FAS: EU Farm Advisory System
- ⇒ IPM: Integrated Pest Management
- ⇒ PBL: Problem Based Learning tool
- ⇒ WP 3: Work package N°3 in the New Advisers Leonardo project

## APPENDIX

In response to the question: “*What is it important to tell the novice user of a tool?*” below are some first indications from the test:

### Clear Vision

#### For the trainer of the tool

- Read the manual (+ Stephy guide?) - Emphasise the concepts of Clear Vision: Concept is to have an overall look at whole farm problems and potential solutions and come to agreed solutions with the farmer
- Once concepts established
  - Give guidance to advisor in first 2/3 farm studies
  - Guide the advisor to involve other experts where needed
  - The written plan agreed with the farmer very important
  - Follow up to monitor adjust plan over time as important as initial plan

#### For the novice user

- Make sure the concept is clear before starting - Familiarise yourself with manual
- Continue to communicate with trainer during the first 2/3 farm cases
- Ensure the solutions are co-envisaged with the farmer
- Ensure the farmer agrees with the final plan
- Set out a simple but clear written plan to solve problems
- Monitor the farmers progress over the time frame identified in the plan

#### For the farmer

- The following points should be clear to the farmer from the outset and through the process
  - the aim of Clear Vision
  - enthusiasm to engage
  - willingness to change/adjust practice
  - will engage with the written plan
  - happy to revisit the plan during implementation

### Problem Based Learning (PBL)

#### For the trainer of the tool

- Read the manual - Communicate with the tutor to be trained - Emphasise the concepts of PBL:
  - Find out the communication method to be used (face to face / distance)
  - Discuss with the novice user (tutor): learning outcome(s) required, current knowledge and skills of learners, timeframe of learning
  - Ensure tutor understands quality assurance procedures and requirements
- Plan an appropriate approach with the tutor
  - guidance required for learner
  - approximate learning schedule (so that you can track progress)
  - set starting and finishing dates
  - testing of learning outcome(s)
- Set out possible task(s) or question(s) with the tutor.
  - Tutor sets up the group, communication method, sets deadlines and first task or question for learners.
  - Tutor replies / gives feedback to learner statements and attempts at questions – making sure

that all learners are involved.

- Tutor sets testing procedure, runs testing on learning outcomes and compiles the results.
- Trainer mentors the tutor by:
  - Trainer monitors progress and testing procedure and guides tutor where needed
  - Trainer monitors replies to the question(s) / tasks and guides tutor where required
  - Ensuring quality assurance procedures are met

#### **For the novice tutor**

- Read the manual and understand concept - Ask the trainer (mentor) questions to aid understanding
  - Arrange to meet / talk to the trainer (mentor)
- Before meeting / talking with the trainer (mentor)
  - Plan a possible approach
  - Set up a communication method
  - Identify learning outcome(s)
  - Identify current knowledge and skills of learners
  - Set out your timeframe of learning
- Meet / contact your trainer (mentor)
  - Outline your plan to delivery of learning
  - Outline your plan to test learning
  - Discuss issues that concern you
  - Discuss how the trainer will mentor you
- Start the learning process
  - Set up / contact the group
  - Ensure that everyone can communicate with each other
  - Give learners the timetable
  - Outline to the learners the task(s)/question(s) they have to answer and how to communicate ideas to each other
  - Answer questions from the group
  - Set a task – allow group to brainstorm and communicate and feedback an answer
  - Once you are satisfied that the group is working together set another task and deadline
  - Reply to all communications
  - Guide and encourage the learners to the learning outcomes
- Test the learning outcomes
  - Prepare the learners for the testing procedure by directing the learners with question(s) / task(s)
  - Inform them of the test methodology (time, date format and results)
  - Test learning, correct the tests
  - Ensure that at all times quality assurance is being met
- If in doubt check with your mentor

#### **For the learner (farmer, adviser or student)**

- ensure that you know what you have to do and play your whole role
  - ask questions
  - look at the syllabus and read the learning outcomes (this will show you what you are aiming to achieve)
  - ensure that you can communicate properly with everyone in your group
  - answer the question(s) or do the task(s) posed, and communicate them to your fellow learners
  - Look for help from within the group as well as from the tutor
  - Contribute to every task or question (your experience will be different to others and this helps everyone)
  - If you have a problem contact the tutor

- Before the testing procedure
  - know the time, date, location and test methodology
  - ask questions to ensure that you understand the methodology
  - make sure that you are available at the appropriate time
  - make sure that you answer questions asked

## Discussion Group

### For the trainer of the tool

- Read the manual - emphasise the concepts of discussion groups
- Once concepts established, run the training like a discussion group meeting and involve all participants in training
- After initial training, mentor staff in method by:
  - Attending the first discussion group
  - Help only when needed at the meeting
  - Encourage the correct questioning at the meeting
  - Give feedback positive/constructive
  - Continually give staff ideas and support material
- To help run meetings - refresh training after 7-8 meetings to re-establish good habits

### For the novice user

- Make sure concept is clear - You are the facilitator not presenting the material
- To set up the group
  - Encourage known farmers to come (& neighbours)
  - Select farmers from existing base
  - Talk to a key member to establish a Chairman (Chairman's role essential to help smooth running)
- Preparation of each meeting is the key - Plan out the meeting beforehand – this is VIP
  - Set up props/farm before meeting
  - Give the group an agenda before the meeting to help everybody prepare and bring material. It helps to clarify why the meeting is being held
- At the start of the meeting write up aims of the meeting (2 sentences or less)
- At the end of the meeting, write up what has been decided (with reference to the aims)
- Have patience as every groups take time to function properly (due to human nature)

### For the farmer

- The following is what the farmer should be aware of within the first 2/3 meetings
  - The aims of the Discussion Group
  - Frequency of meetings
  - Expected attendance at meetings
  - Contribution he/she should make
  - Timeliness attending the meeting
  - Courtesy towards other members
  - Openness to discussing all possibilities
  - Attendance and contribution to subject areas which may not be of primary importance