

'Shift happens': Co-constructing transition pathways towards the regional sustainability of agriculture in Europe

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11th European IFSA Symposium, 1-4 April 2014, Berlin



Sustainability transition

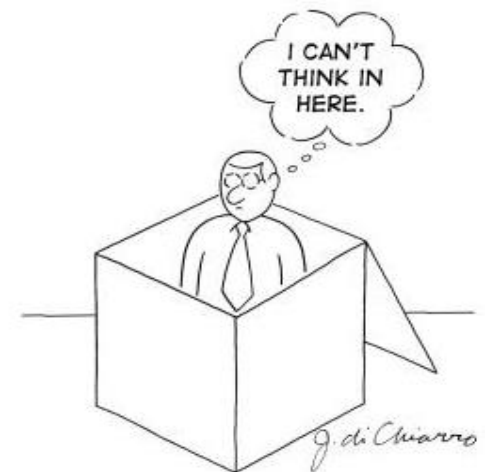
- **Radical transformations** towards a more sustainable society as a response to persistent overarching problems
- Requires **reflexive governance approach** at multiple scales
- Adaptative and reflexive capacity of actors enhanced through **co-design**, integrating different knowledge types and developing **social learning**

- **FarmPath** (<http://www.farmpath.eu>):

- **Identify mechanisms that promote transition processes in agriculture at regional level**
- **Participatory, transdisciplinary (TDY) approach.**
- **21 case studies in 7 European regions** **2011 - 2014**

Why visioning?

- Simplifying the conceptualisation of radical changes.
- Visioning contributes to strategic planning and transdisciplinary communication, flexibility in response to uncertainty and the consideration of consequences
- A tool to improving communication amongst stakeholders, planners, decision-makers
>> social learning



Methodology

- Convene a representative group of rural interests, including researchers, to answer to:
 - 1) What is desirable for agriculture and other land-based activities for the region in 2030?**
 - 2) What needs to be done to achieve this desirable future by 2030?**

Four groups of stakeholders:

(1) Run the Land (2) Young Farmers

(3) Benefit from the Land (4) Official Interests

Step-by-step visioning process

Stakeholders identification



Getting in touch



Desirable visions for 2030



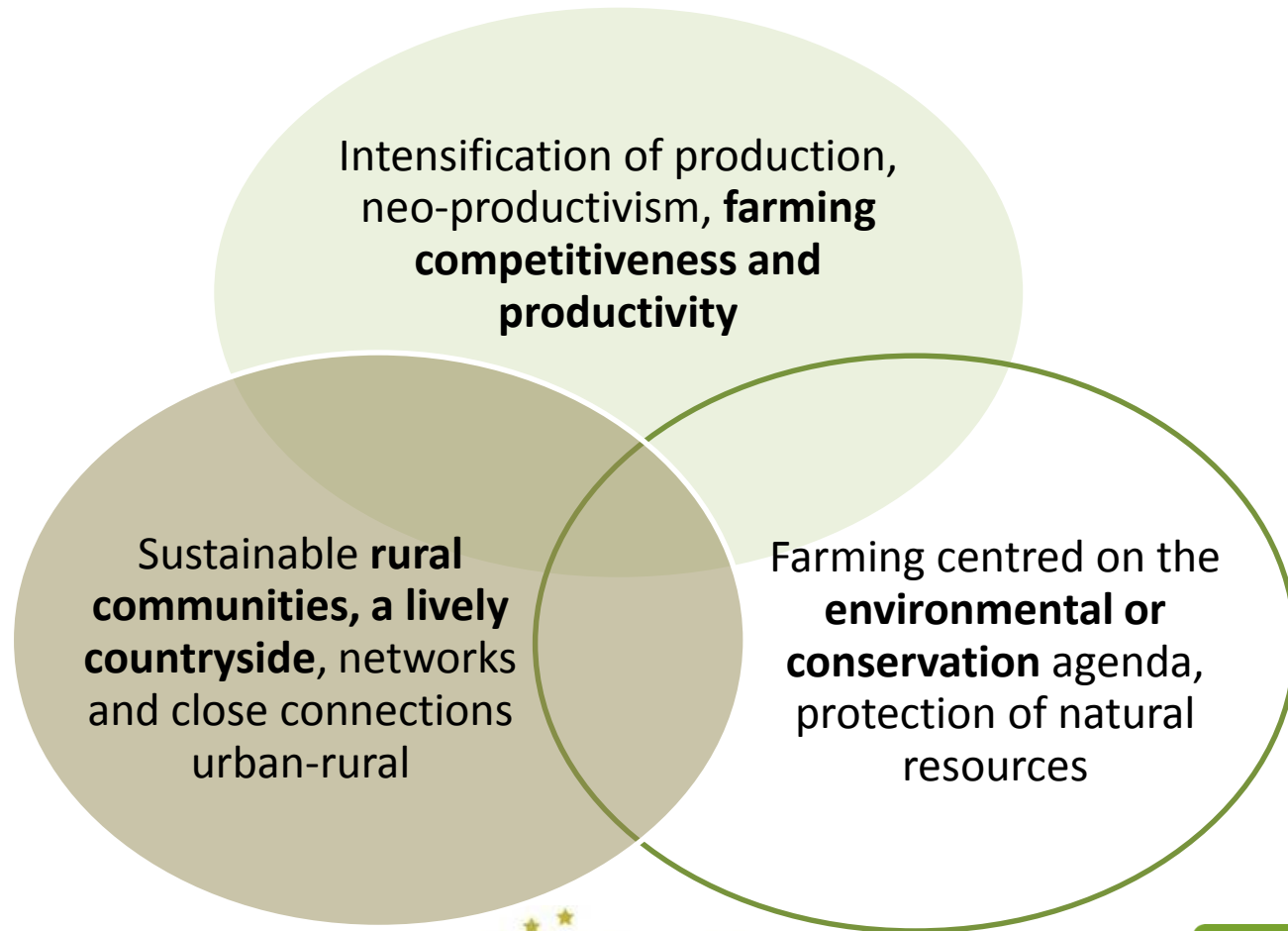
Visions compilation



Pathways towards the defined visions

The visions– a focus on Scotland and Portugal

Despite contrast between regions, common visions emerge :



The visions– a focus on Scotland and Portugal

to achieve the visions, transition pathways were identified,
which helped clarifying the visions,
with specific focus and contours in each region:

Maintenance or re-emergence
of farming activities

Innovation
in farming

New concepts of farming,
farmers and rural areas

Overall policy and
institutional change

Some lessons learned...

- Researchers may be reluctant, and they need to be **prepared for their TDY role**
 - >> to reduce perceived knowledge 'inequalities'
 - >> to keep involvement of all participants
- **Misunderstanding motivations:** can limit positive outcomes
- Stakeholders have **high expectations**
- Even starting from research formulated questions, the TDY process has supported **co-reflection**, reflexive and adaptive governance (*e.g. evidence of further research commissioned in Portugal*)
- Transformative **social learning** has occurred, through willingness of participants to engage with alternative viewpoints

Some keys for further development:

- >> a tailor-made and **structured participatory process**
- >> **avoiding inequalities** and promoting open dialogue >>
support by trained facilitator
- >> awareness of **researcher role** and commitment
to TDY research from the **research side**
- >> existing **long term social capital** researchers x community

can we promote a new research paradigm ?

THANK YOU

also many thanks to:

- The session convenors
- Facilitators and participants of the visioning process in North East Scotland and Montermor-o-Novo, Portugal
- The FarmPath project team
- The European Commission

