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How can we best support innovation through strategic approaches for practice- oriented research?

Lessons from impact-driven research at
the interface between science, policy,
practice and society

22nd October 2025, Budapest

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Editorial
"Real impact": Challenges and opportunities in bridging the gap between research and practice – Making a difference in industry, policy, and society

Yogesh K. Dwivedi, Anand Jayaraj, Laurie Hughes, Gareth H. Davies, Manju Ahuja, Mousa Ahmed Alibeshrowi, Adil S. Al-Busaidi, Sulah Al-Sharhan, Khalid Ibrahim Al-Sulaiti, Levent Altinay, Shem Amalaya, Sunil Archook, Maria Teresa Bellestar, Shomi A. Bhogwat, Anandhi Bharadwaj, Amit Bhushan, Indrani Bose, Pawan Budhwar, Deborah Bunker, Alexandru Capatina, Paul Walton

Successful Farming

NEWS > TECHNOLOGY NEWS

Experts predict challenges ahead for ag tech adoption

Products and services that drive yield improvements and reduce input costs will be of greater interest to farmers than technologies that just provide data without clear insights toward actions.

By Leah Buhler | Published on May 9, 2024

Open Access Systematic Review

Farmers' Transition to Climate-Smart Agriculture: A Systematic Review of the Decision-Making Factors Affecting Adoption

by Marilena Gemtou¹, Konstantina Kakkavou¹, Evangelos Anastasiou¹, Spyros Fountas¹, Soren Marcus Pedersen², Gohar Isakhanyan³, Kassa Tarekegn Erekelo² and Serafin Pazos-Vidal⁴

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Agtech: Breaking down the farmer adoption dilemma

February 7, 2023 | Article

By David Faccio, Vasanth Ganesan, Maria Garcia de la Serrana Lozano, and Hussain Shaif

Yogesh K. Dwivedi
Laurie Hughes
Anand Jayaraj

March 26th, 2024

Academic research and industry need more mutual feedback

1 comment | 50 shares

Estimated reading time: 7 minutes

Why a farmer adopts – or doesn't adopt – precision technology?

27-10-2023 | Tech in focus | News

16 July 2024 by Diego Giuliani

From science to practice: circularity at the crossroad of market and agriculture

From bio-based fertilisers to nutrient recovery, research is intensifying efforts to achieve Green Deal targets and decarbonise the agriculture sector. Yet, recent farmer protests have brought new challenges and systemic questions to the forefront for the incoming EU institutions: are the targets of producing more, sustainably, and cheaper compatible? Is circularity viable and accessible to all?

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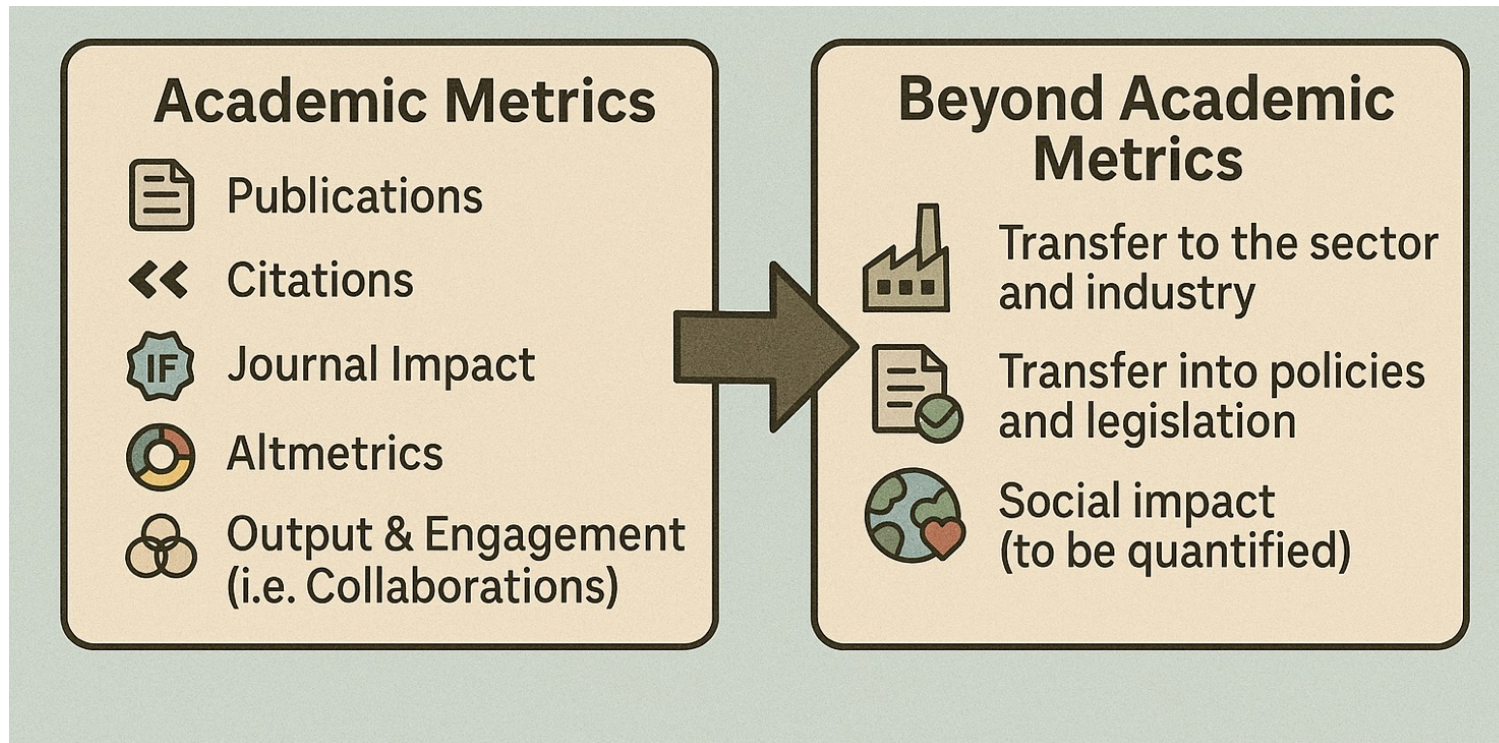
Homepage > News & events > News > 240 researchers supported to turn their science into practice

Press release #RESEARCH FUNDING #PROOF OF CONCEPT

240 researchers supported to turn their science into practice

18 January 2024

Is it accurate to condition the impact of the research to the present-day academic metrics?



Is it accurate to condition the impact of the research to the present-day academic metrics?



How can we best support innovation through strategic approaches for practice-oriented research?

Increase the adoption of the results of research and innovation projects




Strategic approaches for practice-oriented research: Instruments and Solutions

Beta's experience in capitalisation projects


Regional level (Catalonia)

EU level




FertiCap: Capitalisation of projects in the field of livestock and fertilisation management.

EIP-AGRI
Operational
Groups + Others



ReH2OCap: Capitalisation of projects in the field of water reuse.


EIP-AGRI
Operational
Groups + Others



NUTRI-KNOW


Capitalisation of projects in the field of nutrient management.

EIP-AGRI
Operational
Groups




BioCircularCap: Capitalisation of projects in the field of bioeconomy and circular economy.

EIP-AGRI
Operational
Groups + Others



EmissioCap: Capitalisation of projects in the field of emissions in the agrifood sector.

EIP-AGRI
Operational
Groups + Others



AQUAGRI-KNOW

Capitalisation of projects in the field of water management.

EIP-AGRI
Operational
Groups

Strategic approaches for practice-oriented research: Instruments and Solutions

EU level

- NUTRI-KNOW**
Capitalisation of projects in the field of nutrient management.
- AQUAGRI-KNOW**
Capitalisation of projects in the field of water management.



Become an AQUAGRI-KNOW Ambassador!

Driving Innovation in Agriculture Across Europe

The AQUAGRI-KNOW Ambassadors Programme brings together regional changemakers to lead the way in efficient water use in agriculture. Ambassadors act as mentors in their territories to scale up innovative solutions stemming from EIP-AGRI operational groups and promote knowledge sharing across Europe.

Each ambassador helps identify challenges, share best practices, and foster collaboration between key actors:

- Farmers
- Researchers
- Agri-businesses
- NGOs
- Policymakers

With the support of the AQUAGRI-KNOW consortium, ambassadors will diagnose water-related issues, spark rural innovation, and guide farmers and practitioners through diverse legislative frameworks.

Benefits of becoming an Ambassador:

- Be part of a Europe-wide innovation network
- Co-create region-specific upscaling initiatives
- Join online mentoring & peer exchanges
- Participate in cross-border trainings and visits
- Receive your own tailor-made 'Ambassadors Suitcase'

Together, we'll strengthen the resilience of farming communities, promote smarter water use, and build a more sustainable future for European agriculture.

Eligibility Criteria

There will be a maximum of 10 ambassadors selected

Eligible actors

- Experts from farming advisory, research, or innovation communities

Thematic expertise

- Promoting innovative and sustainable water management practices on-farm

Eligible countries

- Countries beyond the project consortium (Spain, Belgium, Italy, Poland, and Cyprus are NOT eligible)
- Horizon Europe eligible countries

Interested?

Show your interest here: 

[in aquagri-know](#) [aAbout_soil](#)
[AQUAGRI-KNOW](#) [aquagri-knoweu](#)

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency (REA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Research and Innovation development can be structured in 3 stages



**AGRICULTURAL
RESEARCH**



**RESEARCH
RESULTS**

During

After

Research and Innovation development can be structured in 3 stages



How can we best support innovation through strategic approaches for practice-oriented research?

During



MULTISTAKEHOLDER approach

Identify and engage MULTIPLIER ENTITIES

Consider SSH

LCA/LCC/SLCA

Beyond Project implementation



Communities of practice



STATIC RESEARCH vs ADAPTATIVE RESEARCH



START _____ END

START  END

- Identify Barriers
- Consider Challenges
- Promote new Opportunities
- Adjust to increase the Impact



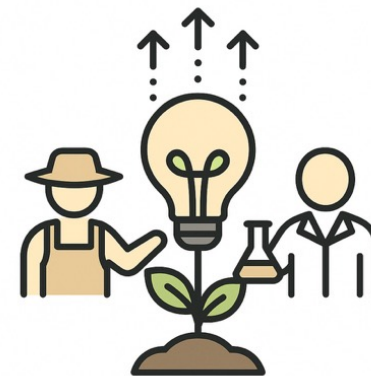
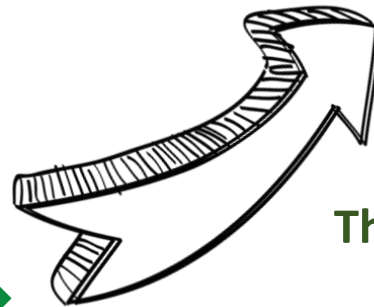
ADAPTIVE & FLEXIBLE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION FUNDING PROGRAMS IN THE AGRIFOOD SECTOR

Research and Innovation development can be structured in 3 stages



RESEARCH CHALLENGE
IDENTIFICATION

Previous

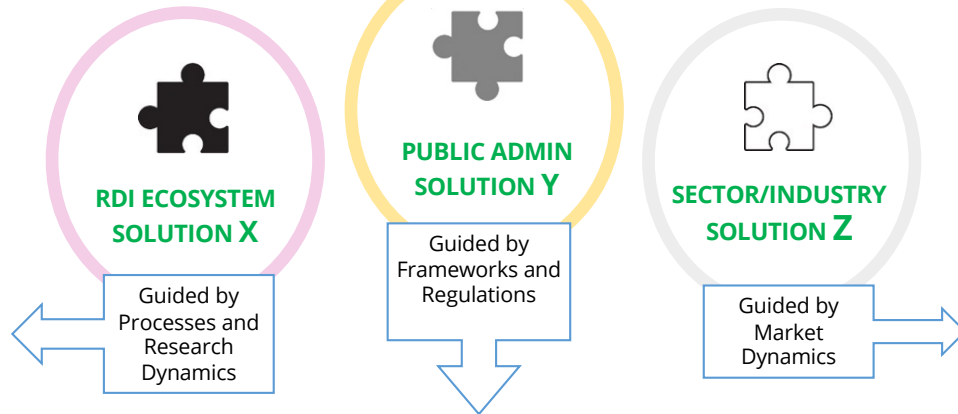


This stage presents great potential for further improvement

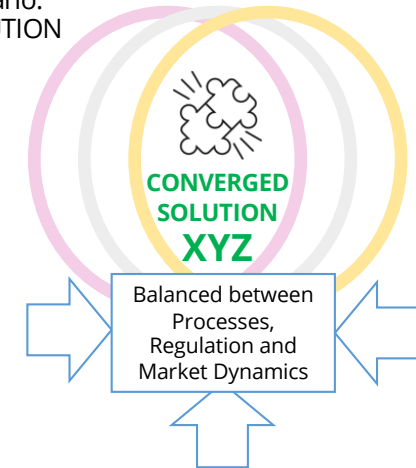


Signs of Lack of Alignment and Value Propositions to the Sector

Current Scenario:
DIVERGED SOLUTIONS



Longed-for Scenario:
CONVERGED SOLUTION



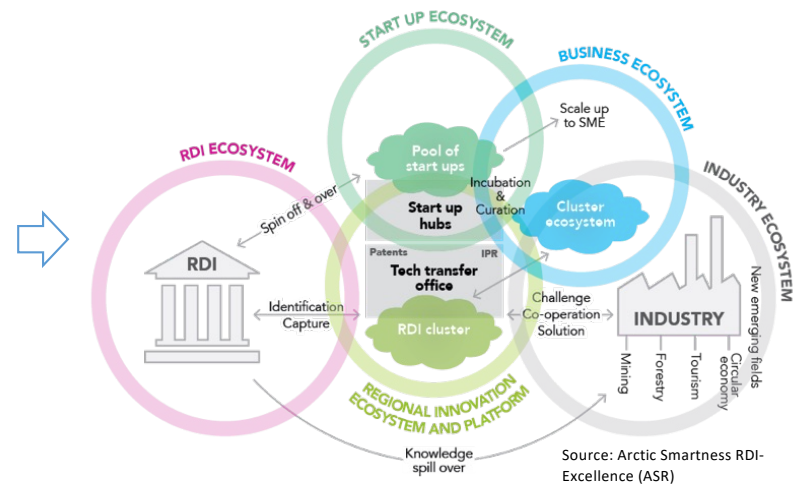
Theory does not always follow practice; Dysfunctionalities/misalignment detected from our experience



Strategic Theoretical Model at RDI Ecosystem Level aiming Actors & Interactions



Lack of Alignment & Mid-Long Term Value Propositions to the Agrifood Sector



Operational Model at Landscape Level aiming Private Sector/Market Dynamics & Vision

True innovation happens when these two worlds converge: when research for impact meets Sector/market logic and policy alignment.

**Strategic Theoretical Model
at RDI Ecosystem Level
aiming Actors &
Interactions**

**Operational Model at
Landscape Level aiming
Private Sector/Market
Dynamics & Vision**

RDI Ecosystem + Public Adm + Civil Society	To integrate	Agri-Food & Market Ecosystem
Research excellence	← →	Business competitiveness
Policy relevance	← →	Market adoption
Social/environmental impact	← →	Economic sustainability
Collaboration & co-creation	← →	Disruption & scaling
Public value	← →	Market value & Consumer acceptance

Designing impact before it happens: the strength of ex-ante strategies

Previous

During

After

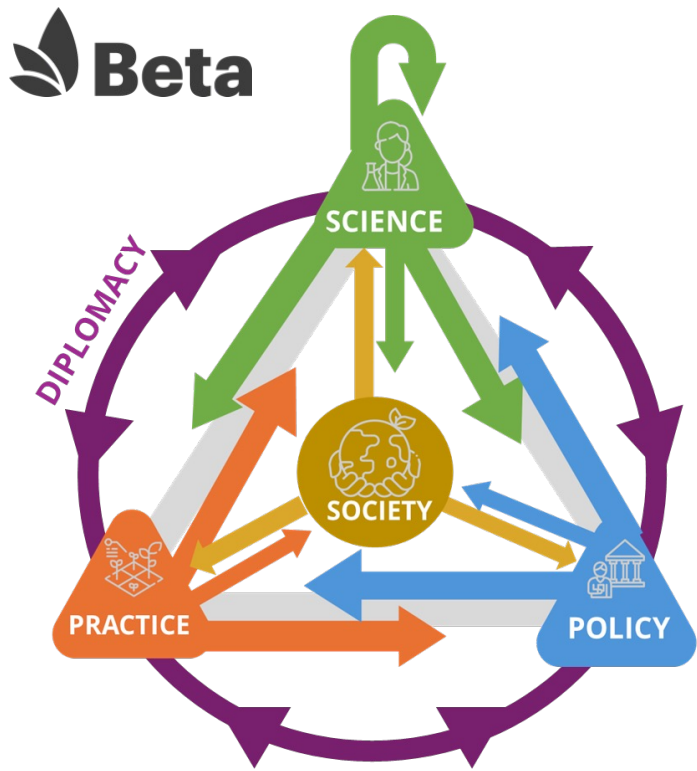


And the key question is: how to design this impact?



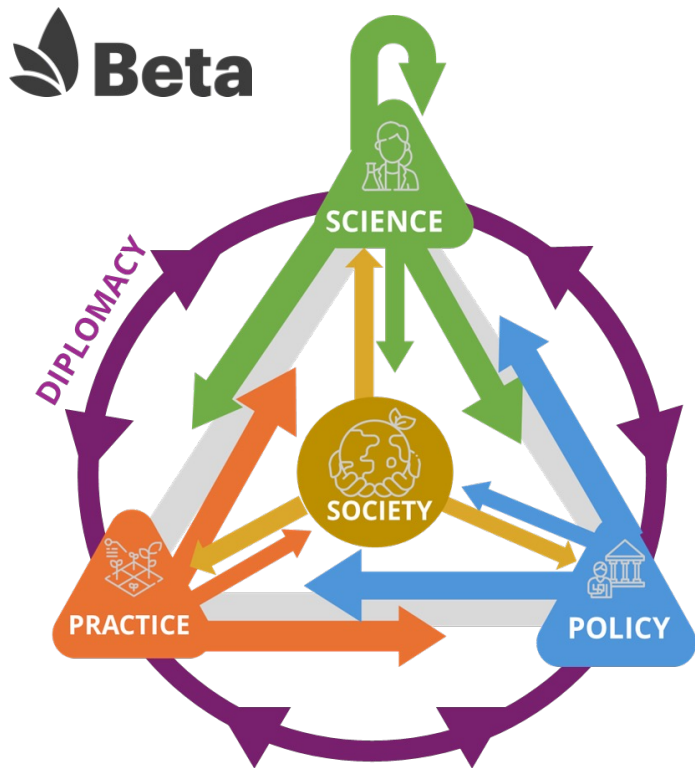
Co-Designing IMPACT:
farmers, policy makers and
scientist shaping the future
together

And the key question is: how to design this impact?



- 1 SCIENCE 4 PRACTICE
- 2 SCIENCE 4 POLICY
- 3 SCIENCE 4 DIPLOMACY-COOPERATION
- 4 SCIENCE 4 SCIENCE
- 5 SCIENCE 4 SOCIETY
- 6 PRACTICE 4 POLICY

And the key question is: how to design this impact?



1 SCIENCE **4** PRACTICE

2 SCIENCE **4** POLICY

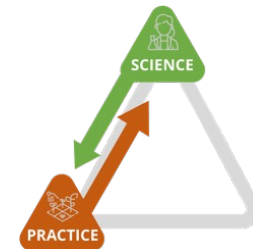
6 PRACTICE **4** POLICY

How can we best support innovation through strategic approaches for practice-oriented research?

SCIENCE ← PRACTICE

Previous

- ❑ Become an **active member** of practitioners' and advisors' networks
- ❑ Gain a **deep understanding** of the sector's dynamics, risks, potential and opportunities
- ❑ **Understand** daily and season **operations and challenges**
- ❑ Analyse **market trends** and develop mid-long term strategic visions
- ❑ **Engage in** regional, national, and global **networks**
- ❑ Take part in **sector events** and working groups

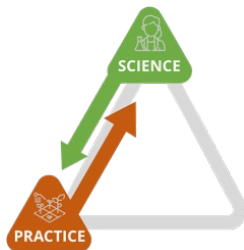


SCIENCE 4 PRACTICE



How can we best support innovation through strategic approaches for practice-oriented research?

Previous



SCIENCE 4 PRACTICE



SCIENCE → PRACTICE

- ❑ Ensure a **clear and compelling value proposition for farmers** derived from research and innovation outcomes.
- ❑ Engage **farmers as active partners in innovation** development and practice-oriented research.
- ❑ Support farmers in **overcoming administrative and financial barriers** to participate in research and innovation projects.
- ❑ Identify key challenges and enablers to **accelerate the adoption of innovations** and new technologies.
- ❑ Foster **communities of practice** and thematic working groups to **facilitate knowledge exchange** and collaboration.
- ❑ Promote task forces within private clusters and farmer's associations to **drive coordinated innovation actions**.
- ❑ **Strengthen connections with advisory networks** to ensure effective dissemination and uptake of innovations.

How can we best support innovation through strategic approaches for practice-oriented research?



It is essential to clearly define a **value proposition** for farmers, practitioners, and advisors derived from research and innovation projects, taking into account market dynamics, business models, logistics, commercialization, and the broader value chain, where consumers often play a key role.

How can we best support innovation through strategic approaches for practice-oriented research?

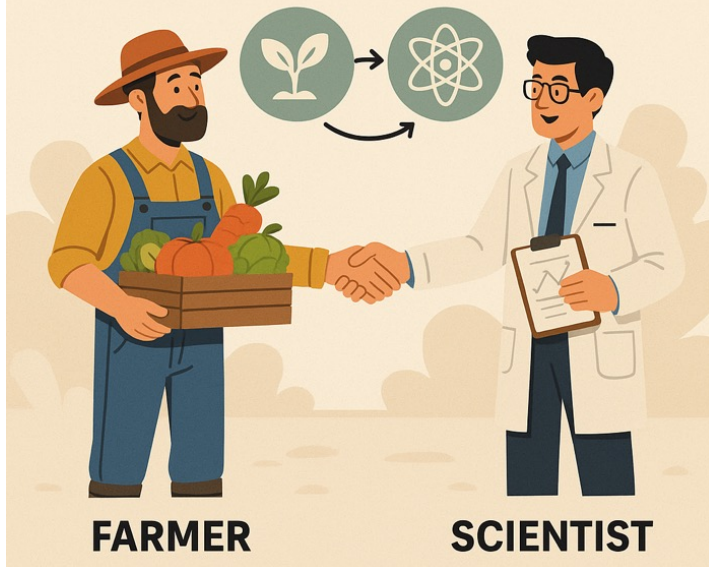
It is essential to develop tools, programs, and incentives that promote and support these activities prior to the initiation of the innovation definition process



We are advocating for PAIRING SCHEMES between farmers (and or advisors) and scientists

Previous

To better understand each other's work and achieve the highest level of empathy and business understanding



Aiming (wishing) to start in 2026 at regional level

BETA is running pairing schemes scientist-policy makers since 2023



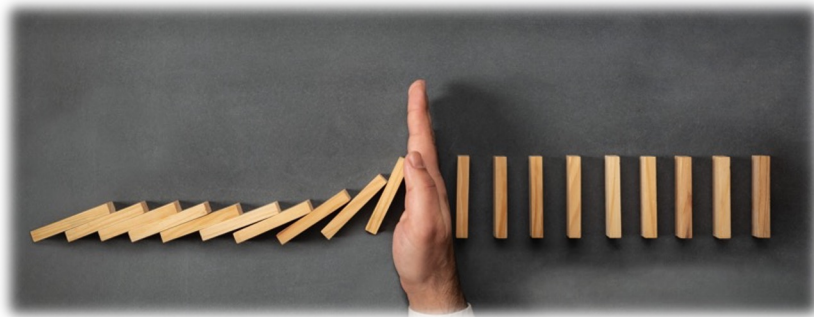
How can we best support innovation through strategic approaches for practice-oriented research?



Generalitat de Catalunya
**Departament d'Agricultura, Ramaderia,
Pesca, Alimentació i Medi Natural**

Some innovative initiatives

- Establish a **network of experimental fields and test sites** to support applied research and knowledge exchange among farmers and researchers.
- Develop **open and shared innovation facilities** (pilot plants and prototypes) to test and upscale innovations, focusing on small and medium-sized farms.
- Promote **Living Labs** to foster co-creation and validation of innovative solutions in real-life settings.
- Identify and support **lighthouse initiatives** with strong potential for replication and wide adoption across regions and value chains.



Regulatory and policy barriers

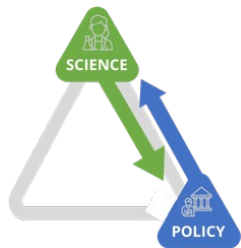
Engage with regulators and legislators to ensure the legal framework evolves in line with emerging innovation realities, while upholding high standards of transparency, accountability, and protection.



Promote the generation and use of evidence-based information to strengthen technical assurance and inform regulatory decision-making.

Establish structured dialogue platforms and coordination mechanisms with legislators to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and evidence in support of policy adaptation.

How can we best support innovation through strategic approaches for practice-oriented research?



SCIENCE 4 POLICY

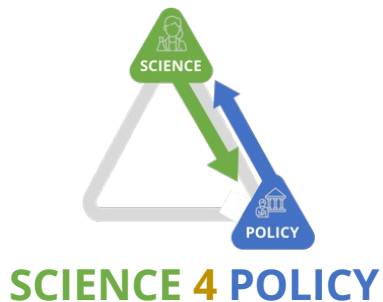
SCIENCE ← POLICY

Previous

- Understand **policy-making and decision processes** at EU, national, and regional levels.
- Develop a **deep understanding of the EU policy framework** and strategic priorities.
- Learn to communicate research results in **policy-relevant and accessible language**.
- Understand how **national and regional authorities transpose** and implement EU policies.
- Recognize and analyse the **complexity** and interlinkages of **overlapping policy areas**.



How can we best support innovation through strategic approaches for practice-oriented research?



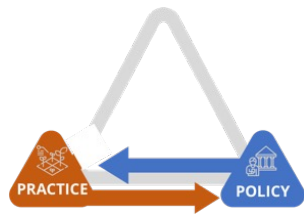
SCIENCE → POLICY



Previous

- ❑ Prepare position papers to contribute to **evidence-informed policy dialogue and advocacy**.
- ❑ Generate and consolidate evidence-based information to underpin **policy recommendations and actions**.
- ❑ Develop **technical reports and policy strategies** grounded in scientific and practical evidence.
- ❑ Contribute to advisory boards and scientific committees by **providing expert analysis and recommendations**.
- ❑ **Support the design, implementation, and monitoring of policy instruments** to ensure relevance, coherence, and impact.

How can we best support innovation through strategic approaches for practice-oriented research?



PRACTICE 4 POLICY

PRACTICE 4 POLICY



SCIENCE as FACILITATOR



Boundary Organisation

- Mediation
- Stakeholder engagement
- Knowledge exchange
- Co-production
- Accountability
- Boundary-spanning



Risks Decreaser

- Risk mitigation
- Preventive research
- Resilience building
- Data analysis
- Interdisciplinary approach
- Policy alignment
- Stakeholder collaboration

Territorial and thematic sandboxes to identify and address undetected policy barriers



Territorial and Thematic approach vs.
Regulation approach

How can we best support innovation through strategic approaches for practice-oriented research?

Strategic approaches for practice-oriented research: Instruments and Solutions





"Great things are never done by one person, they are done by a team of people". Steve Jobs



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THANKS



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