

Session 8: Action Planning & Next Steps (15:30–16:15)

Objective

Help participants consolidate their learning into an actionable plan for their work and gather feedback on the training. By the end of this session, each advisor will have identified specific steps or changes they will implement in facilitating innovation processes (an “action plan”), and the group will have shared final reflections. This session also reinforces the network among participants for ongoing support.



Activity- Action Planning (20 min)

Distribute an “**Innovation Facilitation Action Plan**” template (a one-page handout) or have them draw columns in a notebook. The template includes:

- **My Innovation Context:** Which project or network do I intend to apply this to? For example: “*the local agroforestry working group,*” or “*an upcoming farmer field school series.*”
- **Key Challenges/Opportunities:** Where do I see need for improvement? For example: “*Group is stuck in planning,*” “*Conflict between farmer and extension agent,*” “*Need more ideas for value-chain development.*”
- **Relevant Tools/Approach to Apply:** List 1–3 tools or methods from the training you will use. For example: “*Use Spiral of Initiatives to identify stage and next step,*” “*Do a Timeline reflection at next meeting,*” “*Facilitate a brainstorming session for new ideas,*” “*Map network and involve missing supplier (e.g., an agroforestry nursery),*” or even “*Use peer consultation with colleagues monthly to stay on track.*”
- **First Actions:** List one or two concrete things you will do in the next month. E.g., “*Set up a brainstorming meeting in April with farmers and researchers – use round-robin method,*” “*Have coffee with that resistant official to find common ground,*” “*Email all network members a quarterly update newsletter with success stories,*” “*Organize a mini timeline exercise at our next review meeting.*”
- **Support Needed:** What support or resources do you need? For example: “*Get buy-in from my boss to allocate time for facilitation,*” “*Translate the triangle diagram to Spanish to explain to stakeholders ☺,*” “*Follow up with one of the trainers or peers for advice on facilitation plan,*” or simply “*receive moral support from this group.*”

Give them about 10 minutes of quiet time to fill this out. Circulate to assist anyone stuck or discuss briefly their ideas. This ensures they actively translate ideas to their situation.



Activity- Pair-Share (5 min)

Have participants pair up (preferably with someone from another district/ area/ organisation for cross-pollination) and share one highlight of their action plan. “*I plan to do X in my project.*” The partner can give a quick thumbs-up or add a suggestion if relevant. This speaking out reinforces commitment (saying it aloud increases likelihood of follow-through) and they might pick up an extra tip. Encourage the participants to exchange contact info if they have not, to follow each other’s progress.



Final Reflections (15 min)

Convene everyone for final thoughts. Possible questions to prompt:

- “*What is your key takeaway about supporting innovation processes?*” (Expect answers like understanding the human dynamics, importance of structured facilitation, etc.)
- “*How do you feel about your role as an innovation facilitator now, versus two days ago?*” (Perhaps more confident, or aware of complexity but with tools to handle it – either way, a sense of growth.)
- Go around and have each person share one word or phrase on how they are feeling or one hope they have going forward.

Acknowledge the group’s hard work and the richness of experiences shared. If any evaluation forms or quick feedback is needed by the organisers, conduct that (but try to weave it in interactively rather than a long survey if possible).

To formally close, you might present a slide or flipchart that humorously shows the journey the participants have been on (maybe referencing the hero’s journey analogy: *Call to adventure (Day1 start) → Trials and tools (all sessions) → Return with elixir (new skills back home)*). It reinforces that they are the heroes going back to their communities with new “elixirs.”

Closing Circle

If time, do a quick closing circle: each says a sentence: “*I commit to... (their next step)*” or “*I’m thankful for...*”. This solidifies commitment and ends on a personal note.

It is important to thank the participants sincerely. Encourage them to keep in touch with each other and the training team – the innovation network of extension advisors does not finish at this point. Perhaps suggest a follow-up virtual meeting in a few months to share how they applied what they learned. Remind them of further resources available- for example: the i2connect toolbox which contains many tools we used [i2c-toolbox.fibl.org](https://i2c-toolbox.fibl.org/i2c-toolbox.fibl.org).

End with an uplifting message: “*Innovation is a team sport. You are now equipped to be the coach and the glue of that team. Thank you and best of luck on your innovation journeys!*” At this point, you might present certificates of completion if appropriate, take a group photo, etc., celebrating the new “*community of practice*” that has formed.



Conclusion

Over the two day module, we have covered the **phases** of agroforestry innovation, the **roles** and dynamics of actors in networks, and a **toolkit** of methods to foster idea generation and network vitality. The training was structured to be highly interactive and learner-centred, mirroring the participatory approach advisors will use in the field. By grounding lessons in real agroforestry examples from across Europe – from Spain’s wildfire prevention grazing networks to Ireland’s silvopasture initiatives – participants saw how to apply principles in context. The emphasis on exchange, dialogue, structure, and constructive confrontation was not only discussed but practiced, ensuring advisors are ready to facilitate those patterns in their own networks. Creativity techniques were experienced hands-on, giving advisors confidence to break out sticky notes and spark fresh ideas with farmers.

Most importantly, the module reinforced that the **advisor’s role** is evolving: they are consultants and coaches in a multidisciplinary environment, not just technical experts. They learned to see themselves as “free actors” who can nudge a network from the sidelines or step in decisively when needed. They practiced diagnosing their innovation processes (using tools like the Spiral and Circle) so they can be proactive in guiding them. And through peer consultation, they also realized the value of leaning on each other – building a supportive advisor network that mirrors the multi-actor networks they facilitate for farmers.

As these agroforestry extension advisors return to their daily work, they carry a **practical toolkit**: they might convene a timeline reflection after the next growing season to evaluate progress, or use a quick brainwriting exercise at a stakeholder meeting to surface bold ideas. They might map out stakeholders for a new agroforestry Operational Group to ensure all key players are engaged. If a conflict arises between a forester and a farmer, they have strategies to mediate it and realign it with the shared goals. In essence, they are equipped to “**shape innovation processes**” and “**support networks**” with both the mindset and methods of a facilitator.

Innovations in agroforestry – whether it is introducing new tree-crop systems in Italy or developing business models in Finland – will benefit from these advisors’ enhanced capacity to manage the human and process aspects. By maintaining vital networks of collaboration, these advisors will help ensure that good ideas do not languish, but instead grow, adapt, and become adopted practices that improve farms and landscapes. The module concludes, but the work of innovation continues – and these newly empowered innovation brokers are ready to lead the way, ensuring Europe’s agroforestry networks remain dynamic, creative, and effective for years to come.

Conclusion for Extension Advisors

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