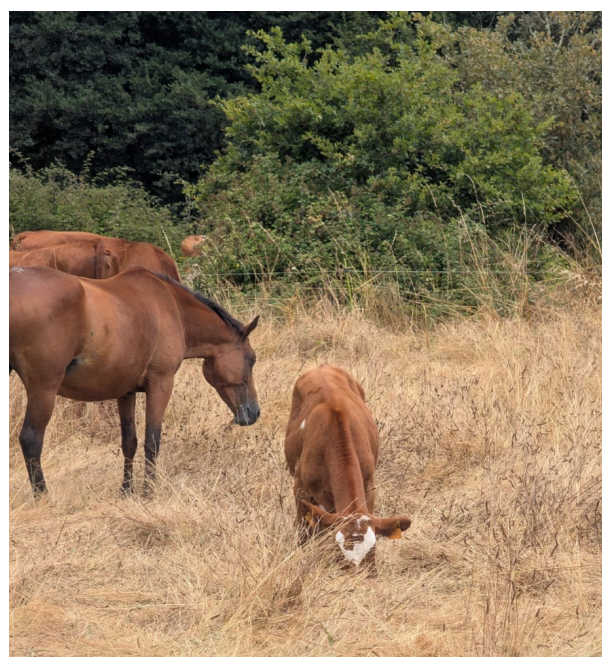


## Shaping Innovation Processes for Agroforestry

- Description:**  
 A practical 2-day training module that equips advisors with the skills to support innovation, co-creation, and network development in agroforestry.
- What you will gain:**  
 Understanding of innovation processes and co-creation approaches  
 Skills to facilitate creativity and idea generation  
 Tools to manage group dynamics and sustain network momentum  
 Confidence to act as an innovation broker and network facilitator
- Includes:**  
 Creativity techniques and facilitation tools  
 Frameworks for innovation cycles and stakeholder mapping  
 Peer learning, reflection tools, and real-world scenarios
- For:**  
 Agroforestry extension advisors, facilitators, and innovation support professionals

### Introduction

Agroforestry – integrating trees with crops and livestock – relies on **innovation networks** to spread and scale new practices. In Europe, policies like the EIP-AGRI and Horizon Europe projects emphasize *interactive, multi-actor innovation* to make agriculture more sustainable. For example, the AFINET project built a network of over 1,300 agroforestry stakeholders across Europe, co-creating dozens of practical solutions and resources. Such networks show that advisors and farmers are part of a larger movement and can leverage each other’s knowledge. However, guiding innovation is challenging. Innovation processes are **non-linear** – ideas evolve through stages, stall, or loop back. Diverse actors (farmers, researchers, policymakers, etc.) bring different perspectives, which can either spark creativity or lead to conflict. Without skilled support, farmer-led innovations may never move beyond a great idea, or networks can lose momentum once initial enthusiasm fades.



**FIGURE 1. Silvopastoral system combining dairy cattle and horses in Pantón, Spain. Source: Couso-Viana, A.**



Extension advisors are increasingly expected to act as **innovation brokers** or “network facilitators,” not just technical experts. This means **shaping innovation processes** – helping groups form a shared vision, experiment, learn, and overcome obstacles together. Advisors must foster trust and connectivity in networks so that new agroforestry ideas can emerge and take root. For instance, in Spain the Andalusian Network of Pasture–Firebreak Areas (RAPCA) links livestock farmers and foresters to prevent wildfires with innovative grazing models. An advisor in such a network might convene meetings between graziers and forest officials, ensuring productive dialogue and keeping the group focused on their shared goal of fire prevention. Research shows that when farmers and practitioners are actively engaged in co-learning (rather than passive recipients of advice), they are far more likely to adopt and sustain new practices. In other words, innovation thrives on **participation and co-creation**.

This 2-day training module equips agroforestry advisors with practical tools to support innovation networks from inception to implementation. It is **learner-centred, interactive, and scenario-based**. Through real-world examples from AF4EU project countries (Spain, Ireland, France, Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Hungary), advisors will practice facilitating multi-actor groups, applying creativity techniques, and managing the ups and downs of innovation processes. By the end, participants will be prepared to lead as “*free actors*” – agile facilitators who can do whatever is needed to keep an innovation network healthy and moving forward. We blend brief presentations of key concepts with hands-on exercises (brainstorming, role plays, peer consultation, etc.) so that learning is immediately applicable in the field. Evidence from European agroforestry initiatives and network theory underpins the module’s approach, ensuring that our strategies are grounded in both research and practice.

## Learning Objectives

By the end of this 2-day training, participants will be able to:

- **Explain what “innovation” means** in an agroforestry context and describe key characteristics of innovation processes (e.g. iterative cycles, multi-actor involvement, need for experimentation). They will recognize the typical *phases of an innovation* from idea to implementation and why the path is often non-linear.
- **Adopt the mindset of an innovation facilitator**, reflecting on their own behaviour and role. Participants will distinguish between traditional advisory (top-down teaching) and innovation support (brokering networks and guiding a process). They will assess how their behaviour can help or hinder co-creation, increasing self-awareness as *innovation managers*.
- **Identify patterns in group dynamics** during innovation processes and respond effectively. Using frameworks like the Circle of Coherence, they will learn to spot constructive vs. defensive interaction patterns in a network (e.g. openness vs. conflict) and intervene to keep the network vital. They will also recognize common roles people play (e.g. change agent, gatekeeper) and adjust their facilitation strategy accordingly.
- **Apply tools and methods for idea generation and innovation planning**. Participants will practice at least three creativity techniques to generate ideas (such as round-robin brainstorming, mind mapping, or role reversal). They will also learn innovation-specific tools – for example, how to use a **Network Analysis** to map stakeholders and resources, a **Timeline** to reflect on progress, or a **Learning History** to derive lessons. They will know when and how to use each tool in real extension settings.
- **Maintain and channel energy in innovation networks**. Participants will understand what creates “*vital space*” in a network – a climate of trust and energy where people commit and collaborate. They will learn strategies to sustain momentum (e.g. quick wins, celebrating successes) and how to re-energize a group that is flagging. Crucially, they will be able to employ “warm” versus “cold” interventions – knowing when to facilitate with gentle communication and when bolder actions or conflict mediation are needed to reconnect a team. Overall, they will be prepared to keep innovation networks cohesive and focused until new practices become embedded in routine.



## Training Structure Overview

**Format:** Two-day interactive workshop ( $\approx 6.5$  hours per day including breaks). Each day consists of four sessions that balance short presentations with group activities, discussions, and reflections. The module follows a logical progression:

- **Day 1 focuses on foundational concepts and initial stages of the innovation process**
- **Day 2 tackles advanced skills and the later stages of sustaining and scaling innovation.**

Throughout both days, the approach is **highly participatory**. Facilitators model the techniques being taught – for example, starting sessions with brief *dialogues* rather than lectures, encouraging questions (to model exchange), and using flip charts or sticky notes (to capture group input). Real agroforestry scenarios from AF4EU countries are used in exercises so that participants grapple with authentic situations (such as establishing silvopasture firebreaks in Spain or coordinating a multi-country innovation in an EU project). Each session plan below includes clear timing, learning objectives, required materials, facilitation tips, and step-by-step activities. Trainers should feel free to adapt examples to participants' backgrounds while preserving the overall didactic flow.

**Audience:** This module is designed for extension advisors, facilitators, and project managers working in agroforestry or agricultural innovation contexts. It assumes some basic experience in group work or advisory service, but no prior knowledge of specialized innovation models. Group size of 12–25 is ideal for interactive exercises. The room should be arranged flexibly (movable chairs, space for breakouts, wall space for charts).

**Materials:** Flip charts, markers, sticky notes, index cards, and tape will be used extensively for group work. A projector is needed for a few short presentations/slides (included in trainer notes). Printouts of any case study descriptions or toolkit cheat-sheets (e.g. Spiral of Initiatives diagram, peer consultation steps) should be prepared. If possible, an open wall for the Timeline exercise is very useful.

### Sources:

The training content and tools are informed by practical frameworks and experiences documented in European innovation support literature and projects, including the Free Actors in Networks approach, EIP-AGRI multi-actor network insights, and case studies from the AF4EU project. Each method (Spiral of Initiatives, Circle of Coherence, Triangle of Co-Creation, Timeline, Learning History, Peer Consultation, etc.) has been adapted from CECRA sources to create a consistent, ready-to-use module for agroforestry extension advisors in Europe. The blend of theory and practice ensures that participants not only understand the innovation process but can actively **facilitate and steer** it, contributing to the success of agroforestry innovations across the AF4EU network and beyond.

## Day 1: Foundations of Innovation in Agroforestry Networks

Day 1 introduces fundamental concepts of innovation and network facilitation. Participants will learn the stages that an agroforestry innovation typically goes through and how an advisor can support progress at each stage. They will also identify key actors in innovation networks and how to engage them, and practice techniques for sparking creativity in groups. By the end of Day 1, everyone will have a solid grounding in innovation process management – from planting the seed of an idea to organizing an initial network and generating momentum.

### Schedule at a Glance (Day 1)

09:00–09:30	Welcome & Introductions
09:30–10:45	Session 1: Understanding Innovation & Co-Creation
10:45–11:00	Break
11:00–12:30	Session 2: Actors and Networks – Who to Involve?
12:30–13:30	Lunch
13:30–15:00	Session 3: Creative Techniques for Idea Generation
15:00–15:15	Break
15:15–16:30	Session 4: Building a Vital Network (Exchange, Dialogue, Structure, Challenge)
16:30	Day 1 Wrap-Up & Reflection Assignment

*(Note: Timing can be adjusted based on participant number and interaction level. Each session includes interactive components as detailed below.)*

### Welcome & Introductions (09:00–09:30)

Begin the day by setting an inclusive, engaging tone. **Welcome** participants as they arrive, and do a brief round of introductions. Since this module is about networking and innovation, use an introduction activity that highlights the network present in the room: for example, a “network mapping” icebreaker. Provide a large map or flipchart and have each person place a pin or sticky where they come from and share one agroforestry challenge they are passionate about. As each person introduces themselves, draw lines or arrows between related challenges or regions to visually create a network on the map. This reinforces that we have a diverse group with varied expertise – a mini innovation network in itself.

After introductions, **review the agenda** for both days. Emphasize the workshop’s interactive nature: “We will be *doing* innovation, not just talking about it.” Establish some quick **ground rules** for a productive learning environment (e.g. respect each perspective, one person speaking at a time, it is fine to disagree but aim to build on ideas, etc.). You might invite the group to suggest norms, modelling a participatory approach.

Finally, introduce the module’s *purpose*: “We’re here to learn how to help innovations flourish. Agroforestry is full of great ideas – our job is to connect the right people and guide the process so those ideas grow into reality.” Pose a quick question to get minds engaged: “What words come to mind when you hear ‘innovation’?” Take a few responses and note them. Likely terms like “new ideas,” “change,” “risk,” or “improvement” will emerge.

**Tip for Success:** From the start, model the facilitation techniques you will be teaching. During introductions, practice *active listening* (paraphrase what people share to show understanding) and *inclusive facilitation* (if someone is quiet, gently invite them in). This sets the tone that everyone’s voice matters – a key principle in innovation networks.

## Session 1: Understanding Innovation & Co-Creation (09:30–10:45)

### Objective

Establish a common understanding of innovation processes and the advisor’s role in fostering co-creation. By the end of this session, participants should grasp that innovation is more than a single event – it is a journey through stages. They will be introduced to the **Spiral of Initiatives** model to visualize these stages, and learn about different modes of collaboration (from one-way knowledge transfer to full co-creation). Participants will reflect on where their projects stand in the innovation spiral and how they can shift their approach from simply transferring knowledge to facilitating collaborative innovation.

### Content Overview

Start with a short interactive presentation defining *innovation*. Highlight that innovation in agroforestry can be a new practice (e.g. a novel silvopasture technique), a new organizational approach (a cooperative marketing agroforestry products), or a social innovation (a policy change driven by stakeholder input). What makes it *innovation* (as opposed to just routine change) is that it is something novel **that adds value** – and often it is generated through the interplay of many actors. Emphasize two key points: (1) Innovation is **process**, not just a product; (2) Effective innovation in agriculture is usually **participatory**.

Introduce the concept of **three modes of collaboration** that extension advisors can engage in: **transfer**, **exchange**, and **co-creation**. Define each briefly:

- *Transfer* – a one-directional flow of knowledge from expert to farmer (the classic “teach the new practice” model).
- *Exchange* – a two-way interaction where advisors and farmers share knowledge and adapt ideas (more interactive, but each party mostly sticks to their own knowledge domain).
- *Co-creation* – a fully collaborative mode where multiple actors (farmers, advisors, researchers, etc.) work together from the start to define problems and develop solutions jointly.

Ask participants: **“Which mode do you think leads to more lasting agroforestry innovation?”** Of course, co-creation is the goal – research and EU policy both push for this interactive innovation. Summarize: *In this training, we are moving from transfer to co-creation.* Advisors need to facilitate processes where **farmers are partners in innovation**, not just recipients of advice.

Now delve into the **phases of an innovation process**. Explain that innovations typically go through recognizable stages, though not always in a straight line. Introduce the **Spiral of Initiatives** (also known as the innovation spiral) as a framework.

This spiral model outlines seven key stages an initiative may pass through: **Initial Idea** → **Inspiration** → **Planning** → **Development** → **Realisation** → **Dissemination** → **Embedding** [akisconnect.eu](http://akisconnect.eu). Unlike a linear timeline, the spiral shows that you may sometimes loop back or repeat stages as the idea evolves.

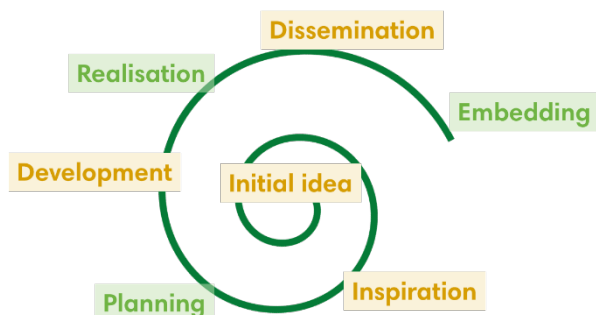


FIGURE 2. Spiral of initiatives (modified from CECRA)

Briefly describe each stage in plain terms, relating them to agroforestry examples:

- **Initial Idea:** Someone (a farmer, advisor, researcher) thinks “*What if...?*” – e.g. “*What if we use sheep to control weeds in our orchard?*” It is a spark, often from thinking outside the box or exposure to a new perspective .

- **Inspiration:** The idea is shared informally and starts to **attract like-minded people**. A loose network forms as others get excited and add their dreams to it. (In our example, a few farmers and an advisor start meeting over coffee, energized by the potential of silvopasture.) This stage builds *ambition and energy*.
- **Planning:** The group becomes more organized. They plan how to test or implement the idea, identify resources needed, and perhaps seek support or permission (For example: writing a simple project plan or applying for a small grant to trial grazing sheep in an orchard.)
- **Development (Experimentation):** Trying it out – pilot projects, on-farm trials, gathering evidence that the idea works. Iteration is key: they refine the practice through learning. (Our farmers graze sheep in a few orchards, monitor the effects, and tweak the approach.)
- **Realisation:** Scaling up and making it real beyond pilots. Larger implementation and negotiation with broader stakeholders occurs. Power dynamics come into play; convincing sceptics or gatekeepers is critical. (The group might now negotiate with an agricultural cooperative or local authorities to support rolling this practice out region-wide.)
- **Dissemination:** The innovation spreads to others who were not originally involved. This could be through field days, networks, publications – others see the success and adopt it. (Sheep-in-orchard practice is featured in agricultural journals; more farmers start doing it after hearing of the results.)
- **Embedding:** The new practice becomes “the new normal” – incorporated into standard practice or policy. Structures (like policies, institutional support) adapt to accommodate it. (Eventually, extension recommendations and perhaps subsidy programs include managed orchard grazing – it is just how things are done now.) After embedding, the cycle may spark a **new innovation** (hence a spiral that continues upward) as new needs emerge.

Stress that *not every initiative reaches all stages*. Many ideas stall – maybe they gather some interest but never get funded (stuck between Inspiration and Planning), or pilots work but broader adoption fails. Understanding where you are in the spiral helps an advisor know **what support is needed**: e.g. if at Inspiration stage, focus on broadening the network and vision; if at Development, focus on experimentation and learning; if at Dissemination, think about communication channels, etc.. Each stage has typical pitfalls and success factors (for instance, a pitfall in early stages is not involving enough people or lacking a clear vision; a pitfall in Realisation is rigid opposition from gatekeepers).

Facilitate a **group reflection**: Ask participants to consider an agroforestry project or idea they are involved in (or know of). “*What stage of the spiral is it in right now?*” Have them turn to a neighbour and briefly discuss their examples. After 5 minutes, invite a couple of share-outs: “*We manage a community tree-planting initiative in ---; we think we’re between Development and Realisation – we have pilots and now need to convince the local council to adapt rules to support it.*” Use these to illustrate how one would apply the spiral concept in practice. Acknowledge that stages can blur, but the model gives a language to discuss progress.

Now link back to the advisor’s role: for each stage, advisors can play different roles. For instance, in **Initial Idea/Inspiration**, an advisor might act as an “*animator*” – encouraging people to dream and connect (often through **exchange** of ideas in informal settings). In Planning, the advisor might switch to a “*project manager*” mindset – helping structure the effort (which edges a bit into a “cold” role of bringing in formal agreements, as we will discuss later). Emphasize the need for **flexibility**: as the innovation evolves, the advisor’s facilitation style should also evolve.

Finally, summarize Session 1 by reinforcing the move from transfer to co-creation. One powerful way to convey this is through a metaphor given in innovation literature: *When stakeholders struggle or merely negotiate, they are just dividing or slightly enlarging a fixed pie; but in co-creation, they “bake a new pie together” that no one could*



*have made alone*. In an agroforestry network, this means the outcome of true collaboration can exceed what any single actor initially envisioned.



### Activity - Innovation Post-Its (10 min)

- To wrap up, give each participant three sticky notes. Ask: “Write down one thing that an advisor should *do* to support an innovation at the **Inspiration** stage (on note 1), at the **Development** stage (note 2), and at the **Embedding** stage (note 3).”

For example: Inspiration – *“connect people, organize a farm visit to inspire”*; Development – *“help set up a trial and document results”*; Embedding – *“work with extension service to include practice in advisory curriculum”*.

Collect the notes on a flipchart under the three headings. This creates a rough toolkit map that you can refer to in later sessions (and correct/make more precise as they learn more tools). It also shows participants they already have intuitive ideas which we will build on.

### Key takeaways:

Innovation is a journey that advisors can navigate using different approaches at different times. Our goal is to nurture the journey (co-create) rather than just hand out a map (transfer). This sets the stage for Session 2, which will delve into the *people* side: who is on this journey with us?

## Session 2: Actors and Networks – Who to Involve? (11:00–12:30)

### Objective

Identify the diverse actors in an innovation network and understand their roles. Participants will learn how to conduct a **Network Analysis** to map stakeholders around an initiative. They will also be introduced to the **Triangle of Co-Creation** framework, which distinguishes constructive roles (change agents, managers, suppliers) from less productive ones (activists, gatekeepers, survivors) in relation to a network’s structure. By the end of the session, participants should be able to prioritize which relationships to build in an innovation project and recognize what role they themselves – as advisors – play in the mix.

### Presentation - Introduction (20 min)

Open with the question, “*Who needs to be part of an innovation for it to succeed?*” Refer back to the spiral stages: at each stage, certain people are critical. For example, in Inspiration, you need enthusiasts and early adopters; by Realisation, you also need gatekeepers on board. Highlight that innovation is **social** – it happens in networks of people, not in isolation. Successful agroforestry innovations often involve farmers, researchers, extension advisors, agri-business, local officials, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), etc., forming a support web around the idea.

Introduce the **Network Analysis tool** as a method to map this web. This tool “puts an initiative in the middle” and maps actors in relation to it. Draw a simple diagram on a flipchart to illustrate: write a sample initiative (e.g., “Agroforestry Training Centre in Ireland”) in the centre. Around it, draw concentric circles or clusters for different roles:

- **Partners/Carriers (“We”):** Those who carry the initiative forward (core team/owners). These are the primary innovators or change agents who feel ownership (maybe a farmer cooperative or an NGO launching the training centre).
- **Users/Beneficiaries:** Who will benefit if this initiative succeeds? For a training centre, users might be local farmers seeking knowledge, or agricultural students.
- **Suppliers/Contributors:** Who provides key resources or inputs? Maybe funders (government program, EU grant), land providers, technical experts providing content.
- **Links/Connectors:** **People or entities that** connect the core team to others. Perhaps a well-networked advisor (that could be the participant! who connects the initiative to policy makers, or a respected farmer who links to the wider farming community).
- Optionally, **External Factors:** The tool sometimes includes impersonal factors (market conditions, regulations) on the outer periphery– these are not actors but elements that matter.

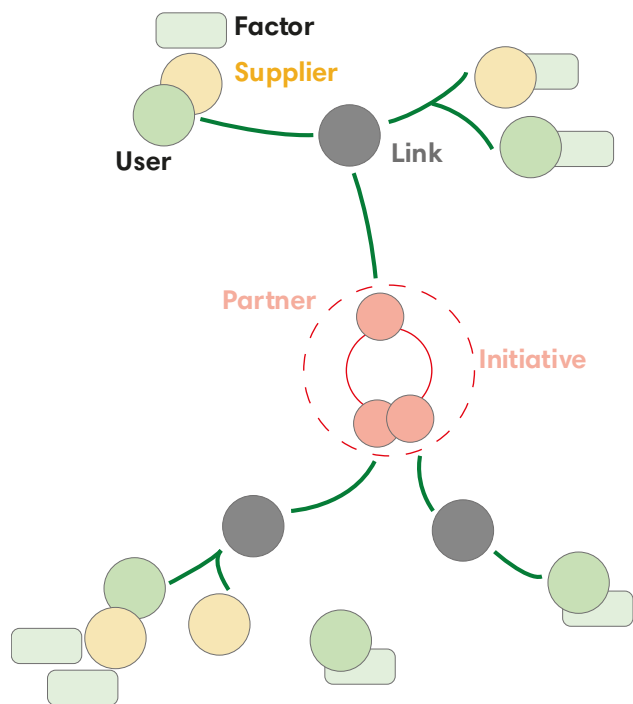


FIGURE 3. Network analysis diagram (modified from CECRA)



In this schematic, the initiative is at the centre of a network. “Partners” (or carriers) form the inner circle of those committed to the project (dark green). Around them are various actors (light green circles with patterns) categorized as users, suppliers, or connectors (links) depending on how they relate to the initiative. The outer boundary (“They”) represents the wider context or external stakeholders who are not yet engaged. By visualizing who is where, the analysis helps identify missing connections and priorities for engagement .

Explain how to do a quick Network Analysis in practice: you gather your core team and literally draw this on paper or use cards for each actor. Ask guiding questions: *“What is needed for our initiative? Who has or controls that? Who benefits? Who could block this?”* Place actors on the map accordingly. The result is a clearer picture of the human landscape. Advisors can then ask, *“Which relationships should we strengthen first?”* Perhaps you notice you have partners and suppliers but no clear links to the end-users – that is a gap to fill. The tool thus guides stakeholder engagement strategy.



### Activity – Practice Network Mapping (30 min)

In this 30-minute exercise, participants work in small groups (3–5 people) to apply the Network Analysis tool using AF4EU RAIN examples:

Spain (<https://af4eu.eu/rains/spain>),

Ireland (<https://af4eu.eu/rains/ireland>),

France (<https://af4eu.eu/rains/france>),

Netherlands (<https://af4eu.eu/rains/netherlands>),

Germany (<https://af4eu.eu/rains/germany>),

Italy (<https://af4eu.eu/rains/italy>).

Each group is assigned one country and given a flipchart and markers. Over 20 minutes, they briefly review the link and draw a simple network map of the initiative by identifying key actors: partners (who is driving it), users (who benefits), suppliers (who provides resources or knowledge), and links (who connects actors, such as advisors or facilitators). Encourage participants to use guiding questions (displayed on a slide or handout) to explore relationships, highlight strong and weak connections, and identify any missing stakeholders. Trainers circulate to support groups, offering prompts where needed. After mapping, each group gives a short 1–2 minute report, sharing one key insight (e.g. a missing actor or weak link). For example- *“One key actor we realized we need to involve is...”*, or *“Our map showed that we lack a good link between ... and ...”* Discuss briefly: Did any map surprise them? Are there common actor types that appear across cases (e.g., farmers, advisors, policymakers)? Reinforce that in agroforestry innovation networks, it’s normal to see a mix of practitioner knowledge (farmers), scientific knowledge (researchers), and facilitation (advisors), among others. The advisor often plays the **link** role – connecting the “we” (core group) to the wider “they” (external stakeholders).



### Triangle of Co-Creation (20 min)

Transition to a complementary perspective on roles: not by project position (user, supplier) but by **behavioral role in the change process**. Present the **Triangle of Co-Creation** model. Draw a triangle on the board with labels on each corner: “Change Initiator”, “Manager (Structure)”, “Supplier (Contributor)”. Explain these are the *complementary positions needed for co-creation*:

- **Change Initiators (Change Agents):** The drivers of new ideas, providing the push for change (in networks, these are often the enthusiastic innovators).
- **Managers (Structure Responsible):** Those who take care of existing structures and ensure stability – in a network, they might be the organizers or people mindful of rules/constraints.

- **Suppliers (Resource Providers):** Those who contribute whatever is needed (knowledge, labour, funding) to make the innovation happen.

In a healthy innovation network, these three roles complement each other: initiators bring ambition, managers bring order and legitimacy, suppliers bring support. Often, participants have formal titles that align (e.g. a researcher might act as a “*supplier*” of knowledge, a cooperative leader as “*manager*”, a farmer-champion as “*initiator*”), but roles can be fluid.

Now, around the triangle, draw a circle and label three points on the circle: “*Activists*” (near the initiator side), “*Gatekeepers*” (near the manager side), “*Survivors*” (near the base, opposite the free actor. Explain these as **defensive or non-contributive positions** people might take

- **Activists:** People pushing change *at the cost of* structure – they might dismiss rules or others’ concerns recklessly. Their passion is high but they can risk blowing up a network if unchecked (fanaticism).
- **Gatekeepers:** Those who hold power or cling to the status quo (structure) *without* accommodating needed change. They can block innovation by saying “*we’ve always done it this way*” or by not allowing new ideas to pass through.
- **Survivors:** Individuals mostly looking out for themselves – they neither drive change nor support the collective structure. They may comply on the surface but avoid risk or contribution, just hoping to get by (often draining energy).



FIGURE 4. Triangle of co-creation(modified from CECRA)

In the centre of the triangle, note the role of the **Free Actor**. This is essentially what an innovation advisor often is: someone who isn’t fixed to one corner, but moves as needed to keep balance. The free actor can talk to all sides, reduce gaps between them, and do “*whatever it takes*” to foster healthy collaboration (with or without formal mandate). It is the ultimate network facilitator role, ensuring initiators, managers, and suppliers coordinate.

In this diagram, the inner triangle represents constructive positions – **Initiators, Manager, Suppliers** – with a **Free Actor** at the centre bridging among them. The outer circle (green ring) lists the corresponding negative stances: **Activists** (extreme change focus), **Gatekeepers** (extreme structure focus), **Survivors** (interest only in self). The horizontal axis implies a spectrum from Change to Stability, and the vertical axis from “We” (collective interest) to “Me” (self-interest). A healthy innovation process needs a balance of change and structure, aligned toward collective “We” interests – that is where initiators, managers, and contributors working together (guided by a free actor) can co-create effectively.

Walk through a quick example using the triangle: Consider a local agroforestry network in France trying to introduce hedgerow intercropping. A **change agent/initiator** farmer proposes a novel approach (lots of drive for change), a **manager** type person from the agricultural board ensures compliance with regulations and that the group stays organized, and a **supplier** (perhaps a local seed company or a researcher) provides trees or expertise. If they collaborate, the project moves forward creatively *and* safely. Suppose one member becomes an **activist** (“*Let’s rip out all fences now, who cares about permits!*”) – they risk alienating others and causing chaos. Or if a key official is acting as a **gatekeeper** (“*You can’t do this, it’s not how we do things, no.*”) – they stall progress. Meanwhile, some farmers might be **survivors**, nodding along but not contributing or taking any risk, which can



sap group energy. The **advisor as free actor** might mediate here: persuading the official to give the idea a chance (easing gatekeeping), channelling the activist's enthusiasm in a more constructive way (maybe pilot first rather than all-or-nothing), and encouraging survivors by reducing perceived risk (e.g. securing insurance or small incentives so they engage).

Have participants reflect: *Which role do you naturally gravitate towards in a group? Are you more of an initiator (idea person), manager (organizer), or supplier (supporter)? Or have you found yourself being a gatekeeper or other defensive role at times? This ties back to the earlier objective of reflecting on one's behaviour. Give them a minute to jot a thought. Invite one or two to share if comfortable. It is often insightful if someone says "I realize I often play gatekeeper as an agronomist – I tend to initially shoot down wild ideas for lack of data" – a realization that can help them adjust.*

## Wrap up Session 2

Emphasize that *who is in the network* and *how they behave* both matter. Advisors can use **Network Analysis** to ensure all the right actors are engaged, and use insights from the **Triangle** to navigate personalities and roles. If an innovation is stalling, maybe a needed actor is missing (network gap) or maybe the pattern of roles is off (e.g., too many gatekeepers, no active change agent). The advisor's job is often to fill gaps – sometimes literally being the "missing link" or acting as the "free actor" to break a deadlock.

**Tip For Success:** Mention that these tools (*Spiral, Network Analysis, Triangle*) come from real practice in Europe. For instance, the Spiral and Triangle were developed in the Netherlands to guide innovation networks in livestock farming. This reassures participants that these are **tested concepts**. Also, acknowledge that in real life, we do not walk around drawing triangles for people – these are mental models to aid our strategy as facilitators.

Before the break, suggest that the participants informally think about their own networks: "Over lunch, consider an innovation you are working on – do you have the right people involved? Who else might you need?" That primes them for the next creativity session, where we assume we have our network and now need *ideas*.

## Session 3: Creative Techniques for Idea Generation (13:30–15:00)

### Objective

Equip advisors with practical creativity and brainstorming techniques to generate ideas and innovative solutions within their networks. By the end of this session, participants will have experienced several ideation methods firsthand and learned how to facilitate these methods with farmer and stakeholder groups. They will understand the importance of an open, non-judgmental environment for idea generation (especially in the early “Initial Idea” and “Inspiration” stages of the spiral) and know how to kickstart innovation when a group seems short on fresh ideas.



### Presentation - Introduction (10 min)

Start after lunch with a light energizer to reset minds – perhaps a quick fun activity like “*One-Word Story*”: go around the room with each person adding one word to spontaneously create a story about an agroforestry innovation. Keep it to a minute or two of laughter; tie it in by noting how creativity emerges when we build on each other’s contributions without overthinking.

Reiterate that **innovation thrives on new ideas**, and advisors often need to help groups think beyond the obvious. Ask the group: “*Have you ever been in a meeting where you ask for ideas and you get silence or the same old suggestions?*” It is likely many nod agreement. That is where structured creativity techniques help break the mould. Emphasize that these techniques are not about silly games – they are proven methods to help people **think differently** and overcome mental ruts.

Introduce a principle: in brainstorming, *quantity breeds quality*. In the early phase, it is critical to separate **idea generation from evaluation**. Many good ideas die young because someone said “*But that won’t work*” too soon. As facilitators, we create a space where all ideas are welcome first; evaluation comes later. This aligns with the “Inspiration” pattern of the Circle of Coherence – fostering open dialogue and curiosity.

### Technique 1

#### Brainstorm “Rules” and Classic Brainstorm (15 min)

Quickly review the classic brainstorming rules: *defer judgment, aim for lots of ideas, encourage wild ideas, build on others’ ideas, be specific, one conversation at a time*. You can have these on a flipchart. Then facilitate a **brainstorming exercise** with the whole group to model it. Choose a simple, relatable question like: “*How might we encourage more farmers in [participant’s country] to try agroforestry?*” or even more fun, “*What could we do with an empty field besides farming – the crazier the better?*” Give them 5 minutes to shout out ideas as you or a co-facilitator scribble them on a board or sticky notes (fast and free-form). Encourage building: “*Ah, I see X suggested a community picnic area – anyone want to add to that or spin it further?*” After 5 minutes, you might end up with 15–20 ideas of varying sanity. Point out how no one shut down ideas, and how that led to some unexpected suggestions. Note: it can help to enforce a rule that the word “but” is not allowed during the brainstorm – only “and” or nothing at all.

Now mention: classic brainstorming is common, but some people (especially quieter or very analytical folks) struggle in free-for-all. So we have other techniques.

### Technique 2

#### Brainwriting (10 min)

Explain *brainwriting 6-3-5* (if group is small) or a simplified version: Instead of speaking ideas, write them. For example, in a 6-3-5, 6 people write 3 ideas in 5 minutes on paper, then pass the paper to the next person to add more – but since our participant groups at tables might be 4-5, adapt accordingly. Conduct a quick round: each



participant takes a piece of paper, writes *one idea* to improve a given scenario, then passes to their neighbour, who reads it and adds another idea that builds on or is inspired by it. Do 3 passes so each paper has 3 ideas. The total time is maybe 5-7 minutes. Then have a few people share interesting ideas from the paper they end up with. Emphasize how writing can sometimes free up people who hesitate to speak, and seeing someone's idea can trigger a new angle for you.

### Technique 3

#### Random Stimulus (15 min)

Introduce a more playful method: using random prompts to jolt new thinking. This could be *"Random Word"* or *"Object Association."* For example, give each small table a random object (a bunch of props like a spoon, a toy, a plant leaf, etc.) or a random word (pick from a jar of nouns). Then challenge: *"Relate this object/word to agroforestry – what new idea does it inspire?"* As a demo, hold up something like a **brick** and model: *"Brick...hmm bricks make me think of building... how about an idea to build insect hotels out of farm waste to integrate biodiversity? That's a bit off agroforestry, but it could connect – maybe building modular planters with trees...."* The point is the weird association might spark something fresh. Let groups try with their own random stimuli for a few minutes and share the quirkiest idea that came up. This tends to loosen creative inhibitions and can lead to surprising connections.



#### Discussion (10 min)

After experiencing these techniques, ask participants how they felt and which might work with their stakeholders. Acknowledge cultural differences: some farmers might think these are silly at first – it is important to frame *why* you are doing it (*"to generate fresh solutions to your problem"*). Often, once people see results and have a laugh, they appreciate it. It is acceptable to start with more structured or private methods (like brainwriting) if people are shy, then move to open brainstorm as they warm up.

Mention other creativity tools briefly (just by name, in case they want to explore): mind mapping, SCAMPER (an acronym-based prompt for modifying an idea), role-storming (brainstorming from another person's perspective), etc. The idea is not to overwhelm but to show there is a suite of tools.

#### Application to Agroforestry (10 min)

Now tie it back to real innovation. Ask: *"When in the innovation process do we need big idea generation?"* Likely at the very beginning (Initial Idea/Inspiration) – like when farmers identify possible innovations to pursue. Later on, creativity can help in problem-solving obstacles (e.g., if in Development stage a technical issue arises, creative thinking can find a workaround). So these techniques aren't just for the fun ideation of new projects; they can be used whenever a team is stuck and needs novel solutions.

Give an example from agroforestry: In the EU Horizon project AF4EU, each country's RAIN (Regional Agroforestry Innovation Network) had meetings to devise solutions to regional challenges. For instance, in Galicia, Spain, one challenge was integrating trees into dairy farms while maintaining yield. A facilitator might use brainstorming to generate ideas from farmers – some realistic, some wild (like "train cows to prune trees!" which might get laughs but lead to a more practical idea of selecting tree varieties that naturally drop lower branches). The key is generating options. Some of those options later became trials in the project. This shows the pipeline from creative idea to actual innovation action.



### Mini-Activity (optional if time)

*Idea Gallery* – If time permits, do a 10-minute gallery walk: post 4 big sheets around the room with 4 different agroforestry problems (for example: “*How to reduce labour in alley cropping,*” “*How to finance a new orchard-pasture system,*” “*How to engage youth in agroforestry,*” “*How to mitigate wildfire risk with agroforestry*” – using contexts from different countries). Divide participants to each sheet (or let them roam) and have them write or stick at least one idea on each. This gets them applying techniques to content-relevant issues. Afterward, quickly review the collected ideas per sheet. This doubles as a way to surface participant knowledge and creative thinking on real topics they care about.

### Closing this session

Emphasize that an advisor does not have to be the *source* of all innovation – rather, they are the *facilitator of the group’s creativity*. With these techniques, they can draw out the ideas from farmers and stakeholders. Many agroforestry innovations (like novel crop combinations, new grazing methods) have come from farmer experimentation and informal brainstorming in groups, not from research labs alone. Advisors can catalyse these grassroots ideas. Also point out: creativity builds **engagement** – when people contribute ideas, they feel ownership (a huge boost for later adoption and follow-through).

**Tip for Success:** Emphasise how each session builds on the previous session. For example, prepare to transition to Session 4 by noting: “*We’ve generated lots of ideas. But a network must also decide, organize, and act on ideas. And along the way, group dynamics come into play – not always positive. Next, we’ll look at how to keep a network **coherent and energized** as it moves forward.*”

## Session 4: Building a Vital Network – Exchange, Dialogue, Structure, Challenge (15:15–16:30)

### Objective

Teach participants how to maintain a **vital and coherent network** by balancing four key interaction patterns: **Exchange, Dialogue, Structure, and Challenge**.

Participants will learn how each pattern contributes to a healthy innovation process and how to intervene if one is missing or if negative patterns (like avoidance or conflict) arise. The session introduces the **Circle of Coherence** model to visualize constructive vs. defensive dynamics in a group. By session end, advisors should be able to assess their network's "health" – e.g., do members openly exchange? is there productive debate? clear structure? – and apply "warm" or "cold" interventions to improve network coherence.



### Presentation - Opening (5 min)

Pose a scenario: *"Imagine you have a great group of stakeholders with a brilliant idea. Yet, when they meet... nothing gets done. Maybe everyone is polite but nobody commits (lots of talk, no action). Or meetings devolve into arguments and hurt feelings. What's going on?"* Solicit quick thoughts. Explain that beyond having the *right people* (Session 2) and *good ideas* (Session 3), the **interaction patterns** in the group determine if the network will flourish or wither. This is about group dynamics and relationships over time – essentially the *culture* of the innovation network.

Introduce the concept of **Vital Space**: a term from the Circle of Coherence meaning the sense of energy and trust people feel in a constructive network. When vital space is high, people feel it is rewarding to participate, they trust others to do their part, and the whole network becomes more than the sum of individuals. You might say, *"Think of a team you loved being part of – you were energized and had trust. That's vital space."* It cannot be forced, but it grows when certain positive patterns are present.

Draw a simplified **Circle of Coherence** diagram on the board (if you have a slide or poster of it, use that for accuracy). The core idea: there are **four constructive interaction patterns** that feed vital space

1. **Exchange** – people balance give-and-take, seeking mutual benefit. Everyone should see some personal benefit in the shared goal (they are getting something out of it) and be willing to contribute. Example: farmers and researchers exchange knowledge – farmers get new info, researchers get data. Signs of Exchange: people openly share resources or information and look for win-wins. If Exchange pattern is missing, individuals may feel *"what's in it for me?"* and disengage.
2. **Dialogue** – genuine learning together, being open and curious. In dialogue, people suspend judgment, listen to understand, and new insights emerge collaboratively. It feeds trust because people feel heard and valued. For example: A policy maker and farmer have a frank discussion to understand each other's constraints, leading to creative solutions. Without Dialogue, a network might have shallow communication or misunderstandings.
3. **Structure** – creating agreed rules, roles, and plans so that actions are coordinated. It is about reliability: when structure is present, members trust that if they do their part, others will do theirs. Example: setting regular meeting times, defining who will do what tasks. Structure provides safety (predictability) which is necessary for trust. Too little structure, chaos reigns; too much, it stifles.
4. **Challenge** – constructive debate and pushing boundaries. In a healthy way, members challenge each other – question ideas, bring up different viewpoints. This pattern prevents groupthink and leads to learning (*"steel sharpens steel"*). It is tied to recognizing differences and using them for progress. For example, an agronomist might challenge a farmer's assumption (*"Will that tree species survive here?"*)

not to demean, but to ensure rigour, and the farmer, in turn, challenges the agronomist’s conventional wisdom with on-ground experience. Without challenge, a network might become complacent or blind to flaws; with too much or hostile challenge, it might fracture.

Explain that these patterns **alternate and interact** in a thriving network. It’s not a linear sequence; rather like a continuous balancing act. One meeting might emphasize Dialogue (brainstorming new ideas), the next demands Structure (assigning tasks), etc., and Challenge and Exchange thread throughout.

Now mention that each constructive pattern has a **defensive opposite** when things go wrong: Exchange ↔ **Flee** (people withdraw or “flee” if they find no benefit);

Dialogue ↔ **Flock** (a false harmony where tough issues are avoided, like a complacent “flock” mentality);

Structure ↔ **Freeze** (over-structuring or bureaucracy that paralyzes action);

Challenge ↔ **Fight** (conflict becomes personal or destructive).

Sometimes an obsession with similarities (avoiding conflict) leads to stagnation, or overemphasis on differences leads to chaos – the circle model shows a need for balance between “We” (unity) and “Me” (individuality), “Similarities” and “Differences”.

To make this concrete, use a quick **role scenario**: “*Imagine our network: at first, everyone was exchanging info and excited (Exchange), but nobody brought up a lurking disagreement about money. They wanted to keep harmony (Dialogue was present, but perhaps too polite). They avoided challenge and tough questions (lack Challenge). Over time, a few key members saw no personal benefit anymore (Exchange turned into people ‘fleeing’ – they stop showing up). Meanwhile, two remaining members finally had a blow-up fight over the budget (Challenge came out as Fight). Others got discouraged and the meetings stopped (Freeze – structure fell apart).*” This hypothetical chain shows how missing one pattern or handling it poorly triggers defensive patterns that can spiral. The network lost its *vital space*.

This diagram illustrates the “living” dynamics of a network. At the centre is **Vital Space** – the energy and trust that we want to nurture. The inner circle (light green) lists the four constructive patterns: **Exchange, Challenge, Structure, Dialogue**. The outer ring (dark green) shows the defensive patterns that emerge when things go wrong:

**Flee** (escape, avoidance);

**Fight** (aggressive conflict);

**Freeze** (paralysis);

**Flock** (unthinking herd behaviour).

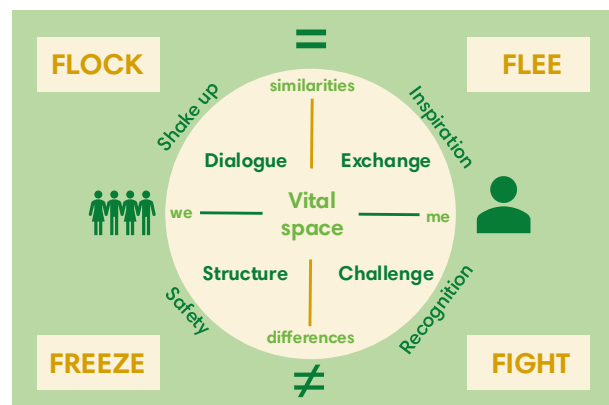


FIGURE 5. Circle of coherence (modified from CECRA)

The axes indicate balancing **Similarities vs. Differences** and **Collective (We) vs. Individual (Me)** orientations. A healthy network sees continuous movement through Exchange, Structure, Challenge, Dialogue – feeding vital space – whereas unhealthy dynamics slide into one of the outer extremes (e.g., a “Fight” dominating with hatred, or a “Flock” mentality with fanatic groupthink). The facilitator’s aim is to notice which pattern is dominant and intervene if it is tipping to a defensive side.

### Application (15 min)

Engage participants in diagnosing patterns. Split them into small groups of 3-4. Give each group a short case description (or have them use their own experience) of a meeting scenario and ask: “*Which constructive pattern was most lacking, and what intervention might help?*” For example:

- Case A: *At a new agroforestry project meeting, everyone is very polite and agreeable, but few ideas surface and real issues (like who will pay) are not discussed.* (Lacking Challenge, maybe Dialogue only on surface, likely defensive *Flock* pattern) – Intervention: inject some structured debate, ask hard questions in a safe way, maybe use a devil’s advocate or data to prompt discussion.
- Case B: *In a network steering committee, two members dominate with opposing views on every detail, and others stay quiet.* (Constructive Challenge has devolved into personal Fight; others are Fleeing by staying quiet) – Intervention: establish ground rules (Structure) to manage turn-taking, perhaps break into smaller groups to ensure everyone’s voice (Dialogue) and refocus on shared goals (Exchange benefits). Possibly a “warm” intervention like re-framing each side’s concerns, or if needed a “cold” one like enforcing speaking time.
- Case C: *A farmer group has lots of excitement (Exchange high) and big brainstorming (Dialogue high), but no one takes responsibility to follow up; nothing gets done between meetings.* (Structure is lacking; things may Freeze soon when enthusiasm runs out) – Intervention: help them create an action plan (who does what by when), maybe form sub-teams with specific tasks, introduce light accountability – essentially infuse Structure, and possibly Challenge by asking “*who will take charge of X?*”
- Case D: *A multi-actor forum has become very bureaucratic (tons of rules, long protocols) and people feel stifled – attendance drops.* (Over-Structure leading to Freeze and Flee; lacking Exchange and Dialogue – no one sees benefit or can speak freely) – Intervention: loosen format (maybe switch to workshop style from formal meeting), re-focus on participants’ needs (Exchange) by asking what they want to get out of it, incorporate interactive dialogue (like a roundtable or cafe instead of speeches). This is an example where a bit of “cold” intervention might ironically be to break structure – for example, as an authority, to cut through red tape, or to use your influence to reset meeting style.

Have each group share their diagnosis and suggestion. Compliment insightful answers and add any missed points.

### Warm vs Cold Interventions (10 min)

Introduce the terms “**warm process**” vs “**cold process**” interventions explicitly.

Warm interventions = using communication, empathy, facilitation skills to **restore connection** (e.g., mediating a conflict, encouraging shy members, finding common ground – essentially working through dialogue and understanding).

Cold interventions = using authority, rules, or decisive actions to **jolt the network** (e.g., imposing a decision, replacing a problematic leader, or in extreme case, kicking out someone undermining the group).

Both aim to get back to constructive patterns, but cold uses power; warm uses persuasion and emotional intelligence. Neither is “bad” – sometimes, firm action is needed (like splitting two fighting parties into separate tasks, or insisting on a decision to break analysis paralysis). The key difference is **intent**: using power to “win” is destructive, but using power to *reconnect* the group is sometimes necessary. For instance, a respected person may step in to stop a deep-seated argument (cold move) so that constructive exchange can resume.

Provide an example:

In an innovation network, two organizations kept arguing over data ownership (Fight pattern). A facilitator (from a funding agency) finally said: “*If you cannot resolve this, we will allocate the budget elsewhere*” – a cold intervention that imposed a consequence. This shocked them into cooperation (they realized winning against each other meant everyone loses the project). Immediately after, the facilitator convened a mediation meeting



(warm process) to help them agree on data sharing. The combination resolved the conflict and got the network back on track. This illustrates using authority not to dominate but to preserve the network's overall health.

Ask participants to reflect on which style they are more comfortable with. Advisors often lean on warm interventions (discussion, influence) because they may not have formal power. Sometimes they might leverage external authority (like involving a project sponsor to set ultimatums) if needed. Recognizing one's comfort zone is useful; sometimes a situation calls for the other approach.

### Conclusion of Session 4 (5 min)

Encourage participants to use the Circle of Coherence as a *diagnostic lens*. When their innovation group is thriving, they will likely see exchange of ideas, friendly debate, good organization, and creative dialogue. When it is floundering, ask: which of the four might be missing or which defensive pattern do I see? Then think what *intervention* (small or big, warm or cold) could shift it. Remind them of an important takeaway: *Connection is key*. All interventions aim to restore connection in the network, because once people feel reconnected to each other and the shared ambition, the vital space grows again. The good news: a connected, coherent network can achieve outcomes better than anyone imagined– which is exactly what we want for agroforestry innovations.

**Tip for Success:** Ask participants to take 5 minutes at the end(or as homework) to write in their notebook: (1) *One insight from today that was most significant for me as an innovation advisor.*

(2) *One thing I plan to try with my stakeholders (or differently in my current project) as a result of today.*

This reflection helps transfer learning to their context and will help in any recap before the next session.

## Day 2: Steering Innovation – Advanced Skills and Practice

Day 2 builds on the foundations by addressing how to steer innovation processes through challenges and how to apply the toolkit in practice. Participants will tackle conflict and resistance in networks, learn to use reflection tools to guide long-term progress, and solidify their role as innovation consultants. The focus is on *practical application*: participants will engage in scenario role-plays and a peer consulting exercise to apply what they have learned to real situations. By the end of Day 2, advisors will have integrated their skills – from facilitating creative brainstorming to mediating conflicts to planning actionable next steps – ready to support innovation networks in their own work.

### Schedule at a Glance (Day 1)

09:00–09:15	Recap of Day 1 & Warm-Up
09:15–11:00	Session 5: Managing Challenges – Conflict, Resistance, and Risk
11:00–11:15	Break
11:15–12:45	Session 6: Reflection Tools – Timeline and Learning History
12:45–13:45	Lunch
13:45–15:15	Session 7: Advisor as Innovation Coach – Peer Consultation Practice
15:15–15:30	Break
15:30–16:15	Session 8: Action Planning & Next Steps
16:15	– Final Reflection and Closing

### Recap of Day 1 & Warm-Up (09:00–09:15)

Welcome everyone back. Start with a light-hearted **recap activity** to revisit key concepts from Day 1 in an engaging way. For example, play a quick trivia quiz or charades:

- **Quiz option:** Prepare 5 questions, for example “Name two of the four constructive patterns in the Circle of Coherence.” “*What does the Spiral of Initiatives stage ‘Development’ involve?*”, “*What’s one rule of brainstorming?*” Divide the room into two teams to answer alternately, or have individuals shout out answers for sweet/ fruit prizes.
- **Charades option:** Have a volunteer draw a card with a concept (“Active Listening,” “Gatekeeper,” “Brainstorm,” “Freeze pattern,” etc.) and act it out or draw it on flipchart for others to guess. Keep it quick and fun – this sparks memory in a joyful way.

After this, ask if anyone wants to share their overnight reflection – perhaps one insight or idea they are taking from Day 1. This can be just 1–2 people to avoid taking too long. Affirm their insights and link them to Day 2: e.g., if someone says “*I realized I need to involve more stakeholders in my project,*” you can reply “*Great – today’s peer consultation will let you explore that further with colleagues.*”

Outline the plan for Day 2 briefly, showing how we will dive into thornier issues (conflict management) and then hands-on practice (peer consulting their own cases). Then do a quick energizer to get blood flowing, maybe a silly group stretch or a quick round where each says one word how they feel starting out again.

## Session 5: Managing Challenges – Conflict, Resistance, and Maintaining Momentum (09:15–11:00)

### Objective

Prepare advisors to handle common challenges in innovation networks: conflicts between actors, resistance to change, and loss of momentum. Participants will learn techniques for conflict resolution and negotiation in multi-stakeholder settings, drawing on the “warm and cold” intervention ideas more deeply. They will also discuss strategies to sustain commitment (creating quick wins, maintaining urgency) and to address personal/emotional barriers to change (the human side of resistance). By the end of this session, participants should feel more confident in mediating disagreements and keeping an innovation process moving forward when faced with obstacles.



### Presentation – Conflict Resolution in Networks (30 min)

Begin by stating a reality: *Conflict is not a matter of if, but when.* In multi-disciplinary innovation groups, disagreements are natural – and can be healthy if managed (recall Challenge vs. Fight from Day 1). The advisor often plays the role of *mediator* or *facilitator* in conflicts.

Introduce a simple conflict-resolution framework tailored for group settings:

- **Step 1: Ensure all voices are heard (active listening).** Often conflict escalates from feeling unheard. The advisor can facilitate a short “each side explains, others summarize” process to make sure people understand each other’s perspective. This aligns with using a *Dialogue* intervention to transform a Fight back into Challenge.
- **Step 2: Find common ground or shared goals.** In an agroforestry network, remind feuding parties of the bigger ambition they both share (e.g., “We all want this silvopasture trial to succeed”). This taps the *Exchange* pattern – highlighting mutual benefit or shared ambition.
- **Step 3: Use objective information or third-party input if available.** Data or an outside opinion can sometimes depersonalize a conflict. (For example, if two farmers argue about an approach, bringing a research finding might shift it from personal to problem-solving.) Or enlist a *peer mediator* – maybe one member who’s respected by both – to help.
- **Step 4: Generate options (problem-solving mode).** Essentially do a mini brainstorming of solutions to the specific conflict (this moves from confrontation to co-creation).
- **Step 5: Agree on a way forward and ground rules to prevent recurrence.** That might mean a compromise, or a rotation system, or simply agreeing to revisit the topic later after trying something.

Demonstrate with a quick role-play: You (facilitator) moderate between “Person A” and “Person B” who disagree. For instance, simulate a clash: A researcher insists on a complicated experimental design; a farmer says it is too burdensome. Show how you would apply steps: let each explain their concern (the researcher wants publishable rigor; the farmer fears time costs). Common ground: both want reliable results to inform practice. Bring in a fact or outside example: mention another project that found a simpler measurement still gave good data. Brainstorm option: maybe track only the 3 most important variables instead of 10. Agreement: adopt the simpler design for this year, and if more data is needed, find an intern to assist (thus addressing both needs). This kind of facilitation can turn a potential gridlock into an acceptable path.

Emphasize **neutrality**: The advisor must be trusted by all, not taking sides. Use neutral language, reframe blame statements into problem statements. If one actor is clearly out of line (say, personal attacks), an advisor should

enforce ground rules respectfully (a “cold” intervention for the sake of safety, e.g., “*I’m going to ask that we keep our language civil and focus on the issue, not the person*”).



### **Presentation - Dealing with Resistance to Change (20 min):**

Shift to the broader challenge of *resistance*. In innovation, beyond active conflict, you often have passive resistance: stakeholders who are hesitant, dragging feet, or voicing lots of reasons why “*this won’t work*.” Ask: “*Have you encountered people resistant to a new idea? What did they do or say?*” Expect things like not showing up, constant criticism, etc.

Discuss common reasons for resistance: fear of risk, loss of control or power (gatekeepers feeling threatened), lack of trust, or simply overload and fatigue from too much change. Tie back to the **Survivor** role from the triangle – someone might appear resistant because they are in “survival mode,” worried about their own positions. **Gatekeepers** resist if they fear the innovation will disrupt what they’re responsible for.

Advisors can address resistance through both empathy and strategy:

- **Empathy & Communication (warm):** Talk one-on-one with the resistant person. Listen to their concerns. Often resistance contains valuable information (they might see a real risk others ignore). Acknowledge their perspective. Sometimes just being heard can soften opposition. Use techniques like reframing negative statements into questions to tackle (“*You say it’s too expensive – are there parts we can do within budget? What if we find funding for that part?*”).
- **Involvement:** Engage resisters by giving them a role. People often resist less if they have a hand in shaping the innovation. For instance, invite a sceptic to lead a risk assessment task – they will channel their concerns constructively and maybe be satisfied by the outcomes. This echoes Exchange (find something in it for them – perhaps recognition or addressing their needs).
- **Phased approach / quick wins:** If folks resist because they doubt results, propose a small pilot or quick win. Show success in a limited area to earn trust. For example, a Hungarian extension advisor dealing with sceptical farmers might set up a tiny demo plot on one farm rather than pushing all to convert land. When others see that farmer not losing yield (maybe even improving), their resistance lessens – *seeing is believing*. This strategy was part of Lewin’s change theory (unfreeze-change-refreeze) and Kotter’s “generate short-term wins” – not to dive deep into theory, but mention that quick tangible successes build confidence in the process.
- **Use peer influence:** Sometimes farmers who resist will listen to fellow farmers more than to experts. Leverage peer exchange: e.g., bring a farmer from another region (Spain to France or vice versa) who implemented the innovation to speak. That can challenge resisters in a friendly way (“*if they can do it, maybe I can too*”).
- **Set boundaries if needed (cold):** If one person is truly obstructive and harming the group, there may come a time to set a boundary, for example: “*We respect your choice not to adopt this, but we will proceed with those who are willing*.” Essentially, not letting one resistor veto the whole project. This is a last resort and must be done carefully to avoid breaking the network’s inclusiveness. However, sometimes a network can move faster after a chronic naysayer steps aside.

Ask participants to share any tactic they found effective in overcoming resistance. Summarize that resistance is natural – in fact, if there is zero resistance, maybe it is not a very innovative idea! Advisors should anticipate it and not take it personally. Think of resistance as feedback to address, not as an enemy.



### Presentation - Sustaining Momentum (15 min):

The final challenge to discuss: keeping the energy up over the long haul. Many projects start with a bang and fizzle out. We touched on this yesterday with vital space, but here focus on practical project management side:

- **Set intermediate goals and celebrate achievements.** If your innovation will take 3 years to fully realize (say establishing a new agroforestry system until first harvest), find milestones (1st planting done, first field day held, first policy meeting) and acknowledge them. Small celebrations or even just a shout-out in the group keeps morale up.
- **Regular Communication:** encourage the network to stay in touch. Something as simple as a WhatsApp group or email newsletter with updates keeps people reminded that progress is happening. Advisors often play the role of communications hub – sharing news like “*X farm saw the first fruits from their trees!*” to the whole group, which rekindles excitement.
- **Rotate leadership or tasks** to avoid burnout. If one person (maybe the advisor themselves) is carrying the load, they’ll tire. Involve others by delegating tasks or letting others host meetings. Multi-actor projects benefit from shared ownership. For example, an Italian agroforestry network could rotate their monthly meeting location among farms – each host gets pride and the group experiences variety.
- **Refocus on the Vision:** When enthusiasm dips, remind everyone of *why* they started. Tell the story of the initial idea again, or envision the end goal (for example: “*Imagine five years from now, our region could have doubled tree cover and increased farm income – that’s what we’re working towards!*”). Sometimes advisors use visuals like a simple timeline on the wall with progress marked or a “vision board” created by participants to keep the end in sight.
- **Address external threats or changes:** Sometimes momentum falters due to outside factors (funding delayed, market prices dropped). Acknowledge these and integrate them into planning rather than ignoring. If a grant did not come through, openly discuss alternate plans – showing that the network can adapt. This maintains trust in the process even when context shifts.

Interactive element: Ask each participant to write on a sticky note one idea to sustain momentum. Post them on a “Sustainability Wall.” Read a few: they might include things like “*organize periodic field visits,*” “*keep core group meetings fun (include a shared meal),*” “*document and publicize results to motivate participants.*”

**Tip for Success:** It is important to recognise that innovation facilitation is partly about being a part-time diplomat and part-time cheerleader. You have to resolve conflicts (diplomat) and motivate people (cheerleader) throughout the journey. When things get tough – and they will – an advisor who can calmly navigate disagreements and re-energize the group is invaluable. Reassure them that these skills grow with practice; having frameworks (like we learned) helps them remain calm and methodical rather than feeling overwhelmed.

## Session 6: Reflection Tools – Timeline and Learning History (11:15–12:45)

### Objective

Introduce participants to two complementary tools for participatory monitoring and reflection: the **Energy Timeline** (participatory timeline method) and the **Learning History**. By practicing a mini-timeline exercise and examining how a learning history is constructed, advisors will learn how to capture the story of an innovation process, analyze it with stakeholders, and extract lessons to improve future actions. The outcome is that participants can facilitate a timeline session in their networks to evaluate progress and can produce a simple learning history document to make sense of what their group has experienced.



### Presentation - Introduction (5 min)

Pose a question: “How do we know if our innovation process is on the right track? And how do we help the group learn from its journey?” Traditional project monitoring might use metrics (number of trees planted, etc.), but here we focus on **process monitoring** – the qualitative story of the network. The Timeline and Learning History are *participatory M&E* tools that involve the stakeholders in evaluating and learning from their own experience.

Explain that after some time (mid-way or end of a project), it is useful to pause and reflect with the network: What have been our high points? Low points? Surprises? What can we learn? These tools structure that reflection.



### Presentation - The Timeline Method (20 min)

Describe the **Timeline** (sometimes called Energy Timeline) as a facilitated workshop where participants collectively create a timeline of their project or network’s history. It’s straightforward and engaging: you draw a long chronological line on paper (taping flipcharts together on a wall or table), and mark positive moments, negative moments, and breakthrough “Eureka” moments along it. Typically it looks like:

- Top row = **Positive moments** (times that gave energy, successes), often marked with a smiley or green colour.
- Middle row = **Negative moments** (challenges, conflicts, disappointments) marked with a frowny or red.
- Bottom row = **Flash or insight moments** (turning points, big realizations) with a lightbulb symbol.

Participants write events on sticky notes and place them in the appropriate row and time sequence. For example: “Mar 2024 – field day with 50 farmers (positive)”; “Jul 2024 – drought killed seedlings (negative)”; “Sep 2024 – discovered local nursery as partner (flash).”

Emphasize *participation*: everyone’s perception is valid even if people see the same event differently (that itself is insightful). No need to agree on one version – just get them all up there. It is a non-judgmental way to gather feedback: facts and feelings can coexist on the timeline.

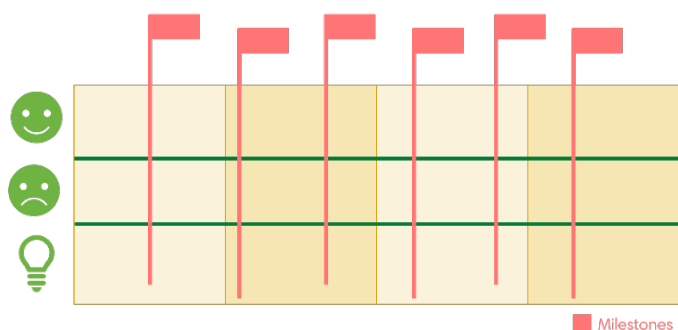


FIGURE 6. example of a Timeline setup (modified from CECRA)

After building the timeline, the group **discusses patterns**: Where were clusters of positives? How did they handle the negatives? Did a big negative lead to a later positive (for example: conflict leading to better understanding)?



Often, seeing it laid out, people realize “Wow, we had a rough patch but then recovered,” which boosts morale, or “We haven’t had any breakthroughs in a while, maybe we need to shake things up.”

Mention practical tips: you may need 1–2 hours with a group to do a full timeline if the period is long. It is good for mid-term evaluation or end-of-project reflection. It helps newcomers see the history and veterans to share perspectives.



### Activity – Mini Timeline (15 min)

Let’s do a miniature version now, using our training experience as content (or if participants prefer, one of their own projects). Since Day 2 morning, they have about approximately 1 day of “network” together – we can timeline that as an example. Draw three rows on a flipchart titled with a smiley, frown, and bulb. Ask: “*What were some high points for you since we started yesterday? Any low points or confusing moments? Any aha moments of insight?*” Have them call out or jot on stickies. Mark a rough time axis (yesterday morning to now). You’ll likely get things like “*Great discussion on stakeholder mapping*” (positive), “*Felt tired after lunch*” (negative), “*‘Bake a new pie’ metaphor really clicked*” (insight). This exercise is a bit meta and fun. To summarise- if we were the network, this would tell us how our process (the training) is going. We might learn, say, the afternoon needs more energizers, or that particular topics were very valuable.

Now pivot: imagine doing this with your farmer network after one year of work – how insightful that would be. It brings out emotions and lessons that reports miss. It is a group **sense-making** process.



### Presentation – Learning History (20 min)

The timeline captures what happened and how people experienced it. The **Learning History** goes a step further: it is a documented analysis of that story, typically written in a way that separates the narrative of events from the analysis and lessons. Often, it is formatted with two columns: right column tells the story (with quotes, like “In June, farmers and researchers met... one farmer said ‘X’”), and the left column has the analyst’s commentary or interpretation (“This meeting was a turning point because trust was built...”).

Explain that the Learning History aims to answer: *Why did things happen the way they did? What can we learn?* It is usually written after conducting the timeline or interviews, and then shared back with the group for validation and future planning. The value is it **makes implicit knowledge explicit** – lessons aren’t just in people’s heads or fleeting talk, but documented for the network and others.

Give a concrete example: Suppose an agroforestry Operational Group in France had a timeline done. A learning history might be a 5-page document with sections like

“Scene 1: The Beginning – ‘Seven Farmers Join Forces’ (the goal setting phase, with quote from a farmer about hopes), analysis noting initial excitement);

Scene 2: First Conflict – ‘Misunderstandings towards Insights’ (narrative of a conflict meeting, with quotes, analysis explaining how conflict led to clearer roles;

Scene 3: Breakthrough – ‘Surprise Encounters!’ (narrative of the group discovering a new partner or technique, analysis of why that was pivotal).” This example aligns with the suggestion in the reference to use newspaper-style scene headlines.

The left-column analysis might apply models like we learned: for example, “*This conflict corresponded to a Challenge pattern turning defensive (Fight), requiring a cold intervention to reset norms*” – making our theoretical tools part of understanding practice.



Emphasise: one need not always write a formal dual-column report; the key is to consciously reflect and derive lessons, not just list events. However, the dual column format (story vs analysis) is a neat method from Kleiner & Roth (1997), who pioneered learning histories in corporate settings.



### Presentation - Link to Hero's Journey (5 min)

To make it relatable, mention that a Learning History often reads like a story – even a hero's journey. The *hero* is the network (or could be a protagonist group). They start with ambition, face challenges (dragons), receive help (maybe an unexpected grant or expert), perhaps fail and learn, and eventually achieve something different (maybe not what they originally thought, but valuable). This narrative perspective encourages people to see meaning in struggles – “the dragon (conflict) taught us X.” It is motivating: even if the innovation did not go exactly as planned, the journey had growth and outcomes. Sharing a learning history can be inspiring to others who might undertake similar journeys.



### Group Discussion (10 min)

Ask participants how they might use these tools. For instance, if an advisor is halfway through a project and feels things are messy, doing a timeline session could clarify issues. Or at the end of a project, writing a learning history helps justify and explain results to funders (and to themselves). One can also combine them: timeline done by participants, then an advisor or evaluator writes the learning history from that timeline.

Encourage them that facilitating a timeline is well within their ability – it is mostly about asking the right questions and providing materials. As a reference, mention that the detailed guidelines (like those we paraphrased from our document) exist, and they will get a handout or reference in the training materials.

Conclude Session 6 by asserting: *An innovation process without reflection is a lost opportunity*. Reflection tools turn experience into knowledge, which is the essence of innovation – learning what works in complex reality and why. This prepares us for the final parts of our workshop, where participants will apply everything – including reflection – to their own cases.

**Success Tip:** The timeline session requires gathering everyone, which itself can renew network bonds (like “*wow, we went through a lot together*”). The learning history might require one person (often the advisor or an external facilitator) to spend time writing and analysing – but it does not have to be perfect prose, even a summary report with bullet points of lessons is good.

## Session 7: Advisor as Innovation Coach – Peer Consultation Practice (13:45–15:15)

### Objective

Provide participants with a hands-on opportunity to apply the module's concepts to their own real-life challenges through a structured **peer consultation** exercise. By acting as both “consultant” and “client” in small groups, participants will deepen their understanding of how to analyse an innovation process problem and generate solutions using peer input. They will practice using the toolkit (spiral, network analysis, etc.) in a coaching conversation. The aim is for each participant to leave with concrete ideas or next steps for a current challenge they face, and to experience the value of peer support among advisors.



### Presentation - Introduction (10 min)

Introduce the concept of **peer-to-peer consultation**: a structured process where colleagues help one person think through a problem, often called a “case clinic” in some training circles. Emphasize that advisors can use this among themselves (building a community of practice) and even facilitate peer consultations among farmers (like group problem-solving). It is a way to leverage collective intelligence, which we have in this very room.

We can follow these steps in small groups:

1. **Formulate the Question:** One person (the “narrator” or the case giver) briefly presents an innovation-related challenge they face and frames a question they want help with. For example, “*How can I engage more farmers in my agroforestry network meetings?*” or “*Our project is stuck in planning – how do we move to action?*” The key is a clear, focused question.
2. **Gather Information:** The peers ask the narrator clarifying questions to understand the context better. The narrator should share enough detail (stakeholders involved, what’s been tried, etc.) but not a full novel – perhaps 5–7 minutes of Questions & Answers (Q&A).
3. **Analzse:** Together, the group uses relevant **innovation process tools or principles** to analyse what might be happening. This is where they might say, “*Sounds like in Spiral terms you’re between Inspiration and Planning – maybe the group needs more structure*” or “*Could it be a gatekeeper issue? Who might be playing that role?*” They can sketch a mini network analysis or identify a pattern (this step is essentially the peers discussing, while the narrator mostly listens).
4. **Re-formulate the Question (if needed):** Sometimes through analysis, the real challenge becomes clearer. The group or narrator might reframe the question, For example: “*Maybe the real question is how to build trust between farmers and researchers, not just get farmers to attend.*”
5. **Offer Advice:** Now the peers each offer their suggestions or “*if I were you I might try...*” ideas. Importantly, **no discussion or defending** during this – the narrator just listens and takes notes. This is a brainwriting of advice in spoken form. It taps their creativity and experience.
6. **Conclude:** The narrator shares what advice or ideas resonate most and what they might do. They essentially “harvest” the consultation, and thank the group.

Wrap up with a quick reflective round. This process is powerful: it’s structured (so it’s safe and efficient) and peer-driven (so it respects that we all have wisdom to share). Research in professional development shows that peer consultation improves skills, confidence, and reduces isolation – mention that to motivate full engagement.

## **Activity- Facilitating innovation or networks (60 min):**

Break into groups of approximately 4 people (so each consultation can take 15 minutes and everyone gets a turn if time allows; if time is short, not everyone may present, but ensure at least 2-3 cases per group). If groups are larger, do 20 minutes (mins) per case and not everyone will present.

Have each group choose a timekeeper/facilitator to keep them on track (you can give them a cheat-sheet of steps with suggested timings: 2 mins formulate, 5 mins Q&A, 5 mins analysis, 5 mins advice, 2 mins conclude = 19 mins each).

Ask participants to think of a challenge *now* they could bring up. It should be related to *facilitating innovation or networks*, not a purely technical agroforestry question (so “*how to get funding*” or “*how to deal with an uncooperative stakeholder*” – yes; “*what density to plant trees*” – not the focus here, unless the issue is how to convince others of that density). If someone does not have a personal case, they can imagine one from their context or even adopt one from a colleague’s experience that they know of.

Once in groups, give them approximately 15 minutes per consultation. Walk around to observe quietly, making sure they follow the structure (intervene only if a group is confused or off-track). It is important the narrator does not get interrupted by unsolicited advice too early, and that others do ask questions before jumping to solutions. After about 45-60 minutes, all or most groups should have done 3-4 rounds. Call time.

## **Debrief (15 min)**

Bring everyone back. Lead a debrief:

- Ask the “narrators”- “*How was it to receive advice in this way? Was something particularly useful?*” Perhaps one says “*I realized I’ve been neglecting the Inspiration stage with my group; we jumped to Planning and lost people. My peers gave me ideas to do a visioning exercise to re-inspire everyone.*”
- Ask the “consultants”- “*How was it to advise? Did the frameworks help you structure your thinking?*” They might say it was satisfying to use the concepts to help a colleague, or that explaining someone else’s issue gave them insight into their own.
- Highlight any instance where a tool clearly informed a suggestion, For example: “*In one group, they drew a quick network map and found no ‘link’ to policymakers, which was the crux – great use of the tool!*” or “*I heard someone identify a ‘freeze’ pattern and suggest a warm intervention – wonderful application of yesterday’s learning.*”

Underscore the value of peer learning: often, innovation advisors operate solo in their region; forming a peer network (like through this training or professional associations) can be extremely valuable. Encourage them to continue reaching out to each other for peer consults after the module – maybe schedule a follow-up call or online group.

**Success Tip:** This peer consultation method can be adapted to work with farmers or mixed stakeholder workshops – e.g., farmers consulting each other on farm-level innovations, which is empowering and breaks the expectation that only the “expert” has answers. It reinforces the co-creation ethos.

## 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

- Over this 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.



## Shaping Innovation Processes Tools, Templates and References

This reference list below contains the key tools, sources and projects cited in the training module 'Shaping Innovation Processes'. It includes open-access links where available, focusing on agroforestry, interactive innovation, and network facilitation.

**AF4EU:** Horizon Europe project promoting agroforestry through innovation driven networks <https://af4eu.eu/>

**EIP-AGRI:** European initiative supporting interactive innovation in agriculture. <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/>

**Horizon Europe:** EU's key funding programme for research and innovation. [https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en)

**AFINET (Agroforestry Innovation Networks):** EU project connecting agroforestry stakeholders across Europe. <https://afinet-project.eu/>

**RAPCA - Andalusian Network of Pasture-Firebreak Areas:** Spanish initiative using grazing to prevent wildfires. <https://www.juntadeandalucia.es>

**AKIS Connect:** Supports multi-actor innovation in EU agri-food sectors. (<https://akisconnect.eu/>)

**i2connect Toolbox:** Online tools for advisory services in interactive innovation. <https://i2c-toolbox.fibl.org/>

**ScienceDirect:** Scientific publications supporting co-learning and agroforestry adoption. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/>

**Winnovation:** Austrian innovation training platform for advisors. (<https://www.winnovation.at/>)

**Kleiner & Roth (1997):** Learning History: Harvard Business Review article. <https://hbr.org/1997/09/how-to-make-experience-your-companys-best-teacher>

**CECRA (EU Advisory Certification):** Framework with facilitation tools (e.g. Timeline, Network Analysis) <https://www.euracademy.org/cecra/>

## Innovation Tools and Their Sources

Tool / Method	Purpose / Use	Source / Reference
Spiral of Initiatives	Framework outlining the stages of an innovation process from idea to embedding, emphasizing iteration.	Developed by Eelke Wielinga (2001), Networks as Living Tissue (PhD, Wageningen University).
Network Analysis	Maps relationships between actors in an initiative to identify roles, gaps, and engagement strategies.	Adapted from CECRA and the Free Actors in Networks (FAN) approach.
Triangle of Co-Creation	Illustrates constructive and defensive roles actors play in innovation networks.	Derived from the Triangle of Change (Wielinga, 2001), expanded by WUR research.
Circle of Coherence	Diagnoses group dynamics in networks by distinguishing constructive vs. defensive interaction patterns.	Developed by Eelke Wielinga (2001) for use in network facilitation.

Timeline Method	Participatory tool to reflect on the sequence of events, mapping positive, negative, and flash moments.	Used in CECRA and FAN; related to the Critical Incident Technique (Flanagan, 1954).
Learning History	Structured document combining narrative and analysis to derive insights from past experiences.	Kleiner & Roth (1997), Harvard Business Review: 'How to Make Experience Your Company's Best Teacher'.
Peer Consultation	A structured peer support method for solving complex facilitation or innovation challenges.	Inspired by action learning methodologies, common in CECRA training.
Creative Techniques (e.g., Brainwriting, Brainstorming, Random Stimulus)	Tools to generate diverse and novel ideas in groups.	General facilitation practices adapted for agroforestry by CECRA and i2connect.
Free Actor Role	Represents facilitators who maintain network vitality by bridging roles flexibly and insightfully.	Originates from the FAN approach; highlighted in Wielinga's network leadership research.

### OUTCOMES OF THE COURSE MODULE

Understanding of innovation processes and co-creation approaches

Skills to facilitate creativity and idea generation

Tools to manage group dynamics and sustain network momentum

Confidence to act as an innovation broker and network facilitator

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