There is a compelling need for research to play a significant role for the future, in meeting the challenges of increased demand for food balanced against the need to deliver other ecosystem services. If this role is to be fulfilled, outreach and translation of research for innovation must be drastically enhanced. Many EU and nationally funded research projects in the fields of agriculture and forestry provide excellent scientific results but outreach into practice remains limited. The VALERIE project responded to the challenge of boosting innovation by facilitating the uptake of knowledge, and its integration into innovative field practices.

The main aims of VALERIE were:

- Review, extract and summarise knowledge - from national, international and EU research projects in agriculture and forestry.
- Translate promising research results into formats for end-users (farmers, advisers, supply chain, actors).
- Develop a ‘smart’ search engine (ask-Valerie.eu) for research outputs, for use by farm/forestry community and link to the EIP-AGRI platform.

Ten case studies in six countries across Europe participated in VALERIE. These had a regional orientation and a focus on either specific commodities, farming systems, or on the landscape scale.

Case Studies and Co-innovation

- Catchment scale resource use efficiency, UK
- Soil management in livestock supply chains, UK
- Sustainable forest biomass: recycling of wood ash, Finland
- Agro-ecology: reduction in use of plant protection, France
- Innovative arable system, France
- Sustainable forest management and ecosystem Services, Spain
- Improving milling wheat quality, Italy
- Drip irrigation management in tomatoes and maize, Italy
- Sustainable onion supply chains, Netherlands
- Sustainable potato supply chains, Netherlands

Consultation of stakeholders in the case studies (advisers, farmers, processors, researchers, decision makers etc.) was a key part of the project using a co-innovation methodology [see Figure 1 above].

By talking to stakeholders it was possible to learn how they identify innovation needs and how they seek, interpret, and integrate new information. In the process, the project provided the case studies with information on innovations and gave them the opportunity to test selected innovations in trials.
Stakeholder Trials
Summary documents detailing the trials, demonstration and results of the following activities can be downloaded from www.valerie.eu:

- Potato brown spot issues in the supply chain in northern Poland: testing the susceptibility of potato varieties to tobacco rattle virus.
- Demonstrating the use of wood ash as a forest fertilizer on mineral forest soils in the Joensuu area, Finland.
- Sustainable innovative practices in the central region of France: a focus on soil structure assessment in the field.
- Using LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) to inform joint forest management planning with a forest owners group in Roncal, Navarra, Spain.
- Demonstration of combined cropping of wheat and lentils (English version).
- The use of leaf treatment on the infection rate of neck rot in onions in Netherlands.
- Sampling for quality assessment and improvement for a wheat supply chain in Alessandria, Italy.
- Fusarium head blight sensitivity of bread wheat variety in Alessandria, Italy.
- Evaluation of biostimulants in the bread wheat value-chain, Alessandria, Italy.
- Cover crop experiences of farmers in Alessandria, Italy.
- Maize and tomato drip irrigation in Alessandria, Italy.
- Sustainable innovative practices in the central region of France: a focus on soil structure assessment in the field.

ask-Valerie.eu

VALERIE has developed a highly interactive tool for advisers and practitioners, named ask-Valerie.eu. It uses web-semantics technology and a ‘built-for-purpose vocabulary’ of key terms that cover the domain of sustainable and profitable agriculture and forestry.

With the unique features of the tool combining stakeholder and expert inputs, we believe that ask-Valerie.eu has the potential to provide a more tailored, smarter and more interactive gateway to knowledge for innovation in the domain of sustainable and profitable agriculture and forestry than other search engines.

The portal ask-Valerie.eu now gives access to over 80,000 documents selected by experts. These documents originate from CORDIS, Horizon2020 Thematic Networks, EIP-AGRI, and selected national and regional repositories. The document base covers 50 scientific and non-scientific sources in six national languages, and can be further expanded.

The ask-Valerie.eu tool is available at www.ask-valerie.eu, and on the EIP-AGRI platform. It can also be modulated as a widget for integration in additional platforms, for example to suit thematic networks and operational groups active under the EIP-AGRI umbrella.

Publications

The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Union Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under grant agreement No. 613625.

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