



Action Plan for Innovation and Learning in organic and agroecological food and farming systems

Agroecology Conference
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Bram Moeskops
Scientific Coordinator

Innovation Union

- One of seven flagship initiatives to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (EU 2020 Strategy)

Research for its own sake



Innovation with tangible impact
Putting ideas into practice

Innovation Union

- More than dissemination of research results
- Results of the creativity and interplay between actors
- Horizon 2020
 - Multi-actor approach [which will] ensure interactions between researcher, businesses, farmers/producers, advisors and end-users
- European Innovation Partnership – Agriculture
 - Closing the gap between research and farming practice

Action Plan for Innovation and Learning

- Demonstrate innovation potential of organic farming and agroecology
- Develop a vision on agroecological learning and innovation
- Analyse opportunities offered by recent EU policy instruments
- Provide policy recommendations for innovation and better learning in the EU

Target Groups

- **EU Policy Makers**
 - European Commission
 - European Parliament
- **Transnational research networks:**
 - ERA-Nets and Joint Programming Initiatives (JPIs)
 - Knowledge & Innovation Communities (KICs)
- **National ministries**
- **Other EU umbrellas and NGOs**

Organic and agroecology

- Is organic part of agroecology or vice versa?

➔ Two movements with strong overlaps

- Is organic conventionalised?

➔ Organic is very diverse

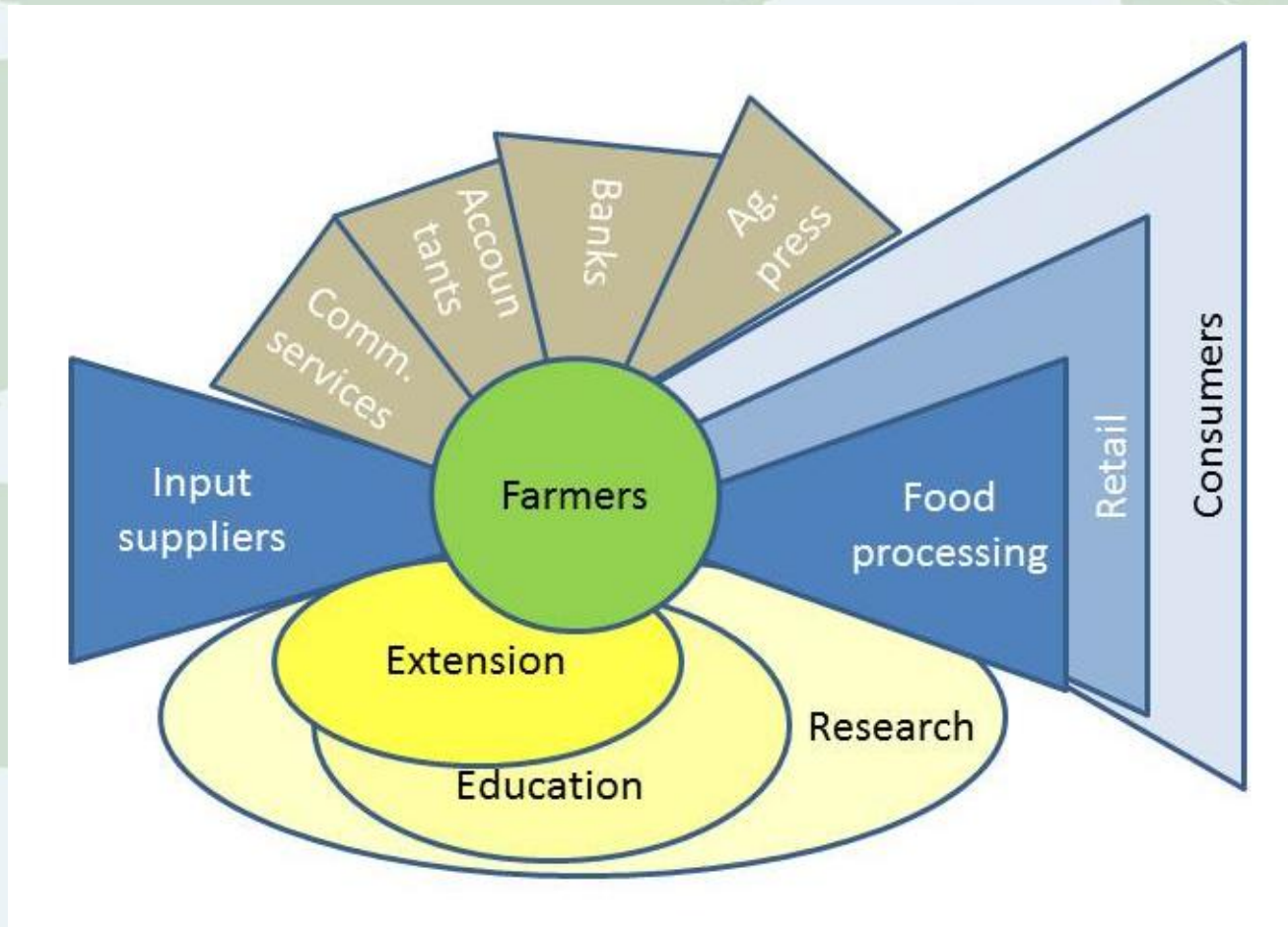
➔ Organic is defined by IFOAM principles not by regulations

- Recognise short-comings and learn from each other

Learning and innovation

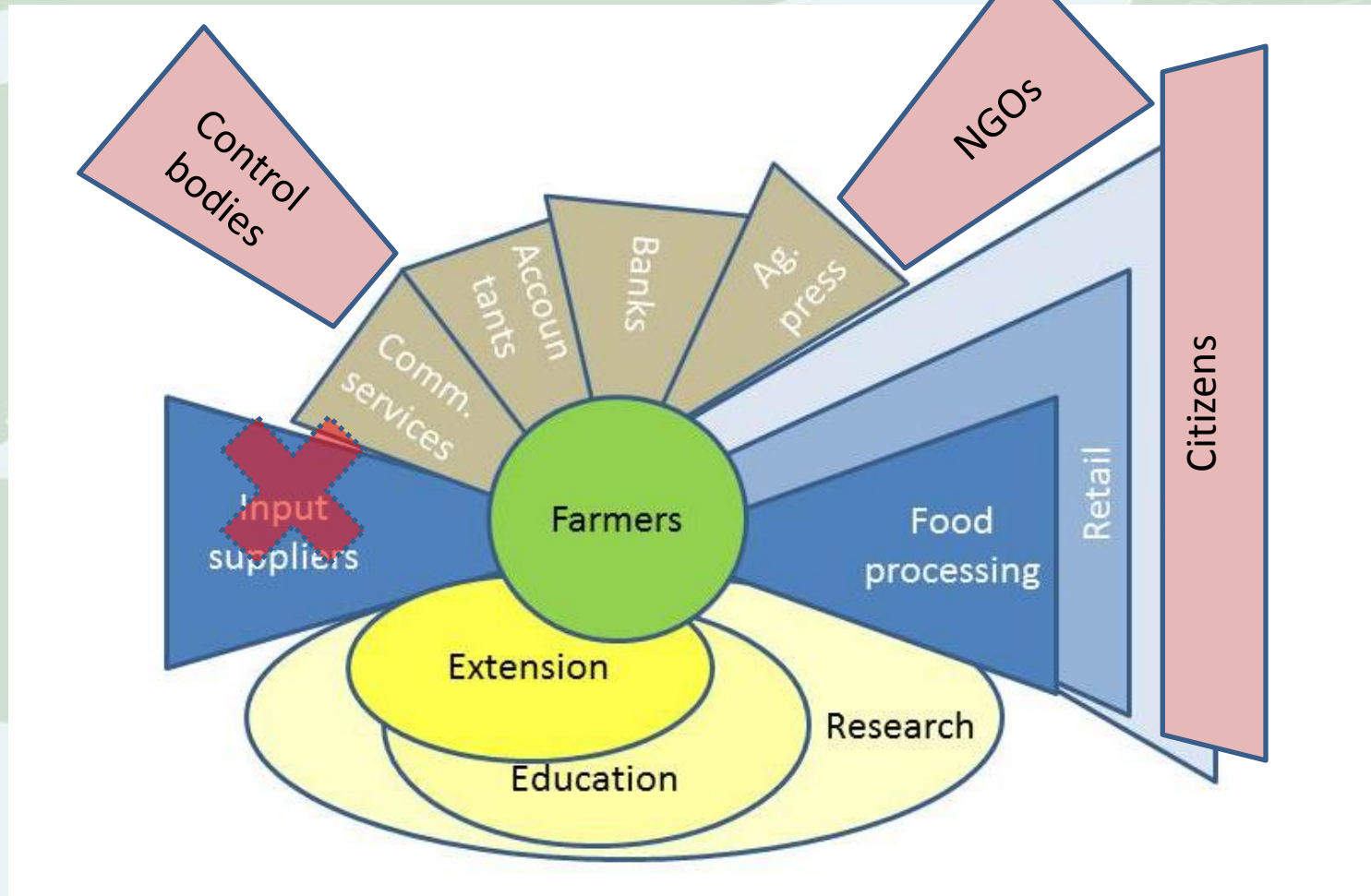
- Learning not education
- Innovation as a networking and social process, not linear diffusion from science to practice
- Focus on the actors and the process not outcome

Actors in agricultural knowledge and innovation systems (AKIS)



Source: SCAR-AKIS (2012) Reflection paper

Actors in agro-ecological knowledge and innovation systems



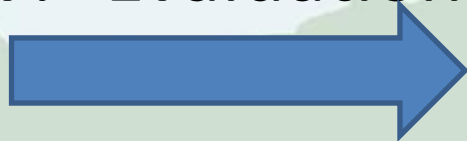
Source: Susanne Padel

Agroecological principles for innovation

- Multitude of realities
 - never single solution to a problem
 - take research out of the controlled environment
- Stakeholder participation ensures link between science and day-to-day life
 - Farms as individual cases
 - Farmer as professional expert
 - Farmers sharing expertise

Participatory Action Research

- I. Exploring the context and building trust
- II. Practitioners and stakeholders define research needs
- III. Researchers interpret input into researchable questions and assure scientific rigour of experiments - feedback to assure that experiments are understood
- IV. Research by scientists and/or practitioners
- V. Evaluation



Continuous dialogue

Organic districts as innovation

- Organic approach to rural development
- Networks of farmers, retailers, tourism industry, public authorities and associations
- All actors involved from the very beginning
- First organic district: Cilento, Campania Region, Italy

Policy Recommendations

- Practitioners and researchers should be appropriately rewarded for the time invested
- Project funding should allow for preparatory phased needed to build trust
- Funding bodies should accept that output cannot always be predicted
- Innovation requires sustained financial commitment
- All stakeholders can contribute to innovation, also general public

Time frame

Task

Draft version

Online Consultation

Preliminary final version

Action Plan printed

Deadline

April-September

October

End December

Mid February 2014



Thank you for your attention !

Bram.Moeskops@tporganics.eu

www.tporganics.eu