

Project “Regional policies for innovation driven competitiveness and growth of rural SMEs – INNOGROW”

Activity A2.2 “Public Consultation Meetings”

Activity A2.2 output “General principles for all public
consultation meetings”

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1 Introduction

The Interreg Europe project "Regional policies for innovation driven competitiveness and growth of rural SMEs – INNOGROW" (INNOGROW) aims to improve partners' policies on competitiveness of rural economy SMEs with regard to the integration of new production technologies and business models that lead to innovative products.

This document was produced within the INNOGROW activity A2.2 "Public Consultation Meetings". The activity A2.2 aims at co-shaping the future allowing for diffusion of innovations that alter existing business models and social habits, thus improving rural economy's propensity to innovate. The purpose of this activity at policy level is to build consensus and ensure support by a broader regional audience.

The project partners (excluding the Newcastle University) will conduct public consultation meetings with the representatives of groups with vested interests in rural economy, e.g., rural SMEs, business consultants, investors, public authorities, NGOs, business associations, research and education organisations, members of general public, in order to ensure consensus building among a wide range of industry players with regard to the promotion of innovations in the rural economy. The public consultation meetings will cover such topics as:

- Innovative technologies and their impact on rural SMEs;
- Successful new business models for rural SMEs;
- Factors that induce/hinder rural SMEs to adopt innovations.

The results of the public consultation meetings will be outlined in a summary report by each project partner. Based on the summary reports, a synthesis report will be developed to identify common issues, barriers and facilitators of innovation in rural economies.

The role of public consultations can be defined as a generation of conditions for practice and creation of collective awareness. The following elements are of the utmost importance: participation of different stakeholders with different background, meeting place or agora, dialogue, data recording and time. Utility and sustainability of public consultations will depend upon the level of community participation in the policy learning process. Collaboration of individuals with diverse knowledge, skills, and expertise fosters knowledge sharing, development and creation of collective knowing. Implementation of principles of the

Action Research¹ during the public consultations can help to foster collaboration process in which actors share information, resources, responsibility, rewards and risks in order to achieve a common goal.

The synthesis report will use the results of the INNOGROW activities A1.1 “Investigating innovative technologies’ impact on rural economy SMEs’ competitiveness and productivity”, A1.2 “Methodology to collect and exchange cases of new business models for rural economy SMEs & corresponding dataset” and A1.4 “Investigating the factors that influence rural SMEs to adopt innovation”.

Based on the conclusions of the synthesis report, policy recommendations will be proposed for the project partners’ Local Action Plans to provide incentives for the local rural economy SMEs to adopt new technologies and business models. The recommendations will take into account regional conditions, challenges and specificities of partners’ territories.

The purpose of this document is to provide general principles for organisation of the public consultation meetings. Section 2 describes the methodology of public consultation – aim, topics and regional characteristics that should be taken into account in shaping the content of public consultation. Section 3 provides tools for identifying and surveying the potential participants of the public consultation. Section 4 describes the organizational issues and techniques for the public consultation meetings. Section 5 proposes the agenda of the public consultation meetings. Section 6 describes the preparation of summary reports. Last but not least, section 7 includes a time-plan for the implementation of the public consultation.

2 The methodology of the public consultation

2.1 The aim of the public consultation

The aim of the public consultation meetings is to build consensus and ensure support by a broader regional audience with regard to the promotion of innovations in the rural economy SMEs.

Rural economy SMEs are SMEs that operate in rural areas and contribute to the GDP of a rural area connected with rural-specific activities - businesses that are driven by or based on natural capital or environment. This includes farming and forestry but also tourism, leisure, food (where linked to particular

¹ Action research is qualitative research method

forms of natural capital or the environment, e.g. farm tourism, walking holidays) and/or activities of entrepreneurs located in rural areas due to quality of life.

More specifically, in terms of the NACE classification², the following categories are considered relevant to the INNOGROW project:

AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND FISHING
MANUFACTURING Manufacture of food products Manufacture of beverages Manufacture of tobacco products
ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD SERVICE ACTIVITIES (AGRO-TOURISM) Accommodation Food and beverage service activities Tourist-oriented transportation or other activities
ENTERTAINMENT AND RECREATION Various cultural, entertainment and recreational interests of the general public, including live performances, operation of museum sites, gambling, sports and recreation activities.
ENERGY AND RESOURCES
OTHER SECTORS RELATED TO RURAL SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

2.2 The topics of the public consultation

The public consultation meetings will cover such **topics** as:

- Innovative technologies and their impact on rural SMEs;
- Successful new business models for rural SMEs;
- Factors that induce/hinder rural SMEs to adopt innovations.

²<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/1965800/1978760/CORRESPONDENCETABLENACEREV.2NACE-REV.1.1.pdf/df9cd8a8-0b4a-4197-bad7-727a0b9fd59b>

Regarding the **innovative technologies**, a preliminary desk research conducted under the activity A1.1 “Investigating innovative technologies’ impact on rural economy SMEs’ competitiveness and productivity” has indicated several types of new technologies that have been adopted by rural economy SMEs to capture value from technological innovation and economies of scale, leading to increased competitiveness and productivity:

INNOVATIVE PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGIES	TECHNOLOGIES SUPPORTING PRODUCTS' DISTRIBUTION	TECHNOLOGIES SUPPORTING PRODUCT'S SAFETY
Organic farming, biotechnology Renewable energy Precision agriculture Crop resistance systems Novel crop Functional foods	E-platforms for products' promotion Online orders and delivery tools Food traceability systems as marketing tool	Smart meters and the Internet of Things (IoT) Internal products traceability systems and traceability as a supply chain management tool Selective breeding and feeding processes

As for the **new business models** for rural SMEs, a preliminary desk research report under the activity A1.2 “Methodology to collect and exchange cases of new business models for rural economy SMEs & corresponding dataset” has listed several types of business models that have been adopted by rural economy SMEs as a part of an overall strategy to increase their economic benefits and survive in a competitive environment:

BUSINESS MODEL	BRIEF EXPLANATION
Producer organisation / Cooperatives	A jointly owned enterprise (e.g. agricultural cooperative) engaging in the production/ distribution of goods or the supplying of services, operated by its members (e.g. farmers) to meet common economic, financial and societal needs, strengthening their position in the supply chain.
Horizontal supply chain collaboration	Companies of the same industry and in the same stage of production work together to support innovation and improve their competitiveness.

Vertical supply chain collaboration	Two or more independent companies across the supply chain work jointly to plan and execute supply chain operations with greater success than acting in isolation.
R&D co-operations	Collaboration with technology partners (e.g. universities, R&D institutes, technology parks, clusters) to enable specialisation / product innovation.
Internal R&D	Operation of an internal R&D department to enable the development of own portfolio of technologies or/and products.
Trading relationships	Durable and stable trading relationships with large companies and market leaders.
Product diversification	Restructuring or diversification of production (through modifying existing products or adding new products to the range) and commercialisation to enter new markets.
Market development	Development of new market segments for current products.
Market penetration	Increasing the market share of an existing product, through strategies such as bundling, advertising or lower prices.
Public Private Partnerships	Public-Private Partnerships to strengthen SME's capacity, competitiveness & development (e.g. through accessing financing).
Joint ventures	Formation of a new company, where parent companies have ownership and contribute complementary assets, technologies and human resources.
Value chain development	Co-operation with other companies, stakeholders to foster inclusive /sustainable value chain & market system development.

The **barriers and enablers that affect rural SMEs'** investments in innovative technologies and involvement in innovative collaborative networks and models will be analysed in the survey conducted under the activity A1.4 „Investigating the factors that influence rural SMEs to adopt innovation”.

2.3 The characteristics of the project regions

Specific characteristics of the regions should be taken into account while planning the topics of the public consultation. While the project partners have an in-depth knowledge of their territories, an outlook of the regional economy reveals some similarities and differences among the partner regions (Annex 1).

The structure of the regional economy allows for dividing the partner regions in three distinct groups:

- **Agricultural regions with a high share of the primary (agrarian) sector** in the economy and a medium or low share of the secondary (manufacturing) sector – Zemgale (Latvia) and Thessalia (Greece);
- **Diversified regions with an important secondary (manufacturing) sector** and medium or low share of the primary (agricultural) sector – Pardubický kraj (Czech Republic), Nyugat-Dunantul (Hungary) and Gorenjska (Slovenia);
- **Regions with a highly developed tertiary (service) sector** and medium or low share of primary (agrarian) and secondary (manufacturing) sector – Stara Zagora (Bulgaria), Molise (Italy) and Lombardia (Italy).

The matrix illustrates the structure of the economy of the partner regions:

		SHARE OF AGRICULTURE (NACE A)		
		High	Medium	Low
SHARE OF MANUFACTURING (NACE C)	High		Padubický kraj** (CZ) Nyugat-Dunantul* (HU)	Gorenjska** (SI)
	Medium	Zemgale** (LV)	Stara Zagora*** (BG)	Lombardia*** (IT)
	Low	Thessalia*** (EL)	Molise*** (IT)	

SHARE OF SERVICES (NACE ALL-NACE A-NACE C): *** - high, ** - medium, * - low

In order to develop the economy, the rural regions are advised to:

- Increase productivity in the traditional sectors, raising the value-added production and developing niche products;
- Promote modernization of economy by adapting and expanding the use of new technologies;
- Encourage diversification of the regional economy by developing new business directions related to the current specialization;

- Developing new business activities with the help of radical innovation and scientific discovery;
- Expanding new types of innovation as a user innovation, social innovation, service innovation etc.

The agricultural regions could focus the public consultation topics upon the following themes:

- Strengthening of the primary sector (agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fishing) by facilitating the transition of the agricultural sector towards production of high value added goods;
- Industrialization of the regional economy by promoting the development of a competitive manufacturing (manufacturing of food products, beverages or tobacco) and energy sector that is based on the use of the region's natural assets and resources;
- Development of the service sector related to rural characteristics (agro-tourism, entertainment and recreation, distant services, private social services, e.g. retirement housing, etc.) thus diversifying the regional economy.

The public consultation in the diversified regions with an important secondary (manufacturing) sector could focus upon:

- Adaption and expansion of new technologies in their primary sector (agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fishing);
- More intensive use of innovation and scientific discovery in the manufacturing and energy sector to increase the international competitiveness;
- Development of a competitive service sector (agro-tourism, entertainment and recreation, distant services, private social services, e.g. retirement housing, etc.) by commercializing its rural assets.

Last but not least, the regions with a highly developed tertiary (service) sector could focus the public consultation upon the following topics:

- Adaption and expansion of new technologies in their primary sector (agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fishing);
- Industrialization of the regional economy by promoting the development of a competitive manufacturing (manufacture of food products, beverages or tobacco) and energy sector that is based on the use of the region's natural capital;
- Introduction of innovative technologies in its service sector in order to increase its productivity and competitiveness.

3 The participants of the public consultation

3.1 Stakeholder identification

In order to choose the potential participants for the public consultation meetings, the project partners have to define their stakeholders. “Stakeholders are people, groups or organisations that have an interest or concern in an organisation. Stakeholders can affect or be affected by the organisation’s actions, objectives and policies”.³ Stakeholders encompass a large group of different people and organisations and may include the local businesses, communities or individuals, public authorities, civil society organisations and interest groups, politicians, as well as the academic and research community.

More specifically, a stakeholder is any person, group or organisation who can be positively or negatively impacted by, or cause an impact on the issue tackled by the project (i.e. improvement of policies) because they:

- Participate in decision-making process;
- Participate in policy implementation;
- Are end-users of the policy instruments.

It is important that the participants of the public consultation meetings are people who are familiar with the topics, those are people that:

- Can affect the project and the results in some direction;
- Deal with the topic already;
- Need a solution/or something done to the challenge/topic tackled by the project.

As the INNOGROW project includes not only public consultation meetings, but also the regional stakeholder meetings, the main target groups of these activities should be distinguished from each other. The public consultation meetings should focus on the opinion of the industry players – the rural SMEs, whereas the regional stakeholder groups should include the regional or national actors that play the key role in supporting rural SMEs in adopting innovation. These organisations will participate not only in the regional stakeholder group meetings, but also the interregional workshops and the EU regions summit.

³ <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/stakeholder.html#ixzz3m5TFEaPy>

The participants of the regional stakeholder groups should participate in the public consultation meetings too.

More specifically, under this project activity the stakeholders that are directly affected include:

- The main target group of the project – the rural economy SMEs;
- Organisations representing the rural SMEs – cooperatives, business association, relevant NGOs and informal interests groups;
- Stakeholders directly involved in the diffusion of innovations in rural SMEs – business consultants, funding angels and venture capitalists.

The rural economy SMEs include businesses (e.g. companies, cooperatives, self-employed) that operate in such fields as farming, forestry, tourism, leisure, food (where linked to particular forms of natural capital or the environment, e.g. farm tourism, walking holidays) and/or activities of entrepreneurs located in rural areas due to quality of life (Section 2.1.).

While the rural economy SMEs are the main target group of the project, it might be rather difficult to engage the business owners or managers in the public consultation meetings because of the time constraints they are facing. Therefore it is advisable to contact also the organisations representing the rural SMEs that might have professional advisors that engage in the dialogue with public bodies regularly. In addition to the bottom-up opinion on the challenges and opportunities of the rural SMEs, which introduce innovations, such organisations could also assist the organisers of the public consultation meetings in ensuring the participation of the representatives of rural SMEs. The organisations representing the rural SMEs might include trade association (e.g. in farming, tourism), chamber of commerce, local business network etc.

Moreover, stakeholders that are directly involved in the diffusion of innovations in rural SMEs might provide useful insight into the topic. These include business consultants, which are assisting rural SMEs in shaping their development strategies, as well as funding angels (business angels) and venture capitalists that provide capital for business start-ups in exchange for equity in the companies they invest in. Such investors might be found in angel investor networks, associations of private investors, investor forums or investor bourse.

Although precedence should be given to the project's stakeholders that are directly affected, it is important that the process of identifying stakeholders should incorporate also those that are indirectly affected. The stakeholders that are indirectly affected by this project activity are:

- Research organisation that already cooperate or would like to expand their cooperation with SMEs;
- Educational organisations that offer courses for educating future entrepreneurs and skilled workers;
- Public authorities that are engaged with business support issues and support the economic transition in rural areas;
- Employers' and workers' unions that are directly interested in the raising the productivity and the creation of qualitative new jobs;
- NGOs, informal interest groups and local activists dealing with rural development issues;
- Local branches of political parties that would in turn disseminate the project messages to the relevant departments/units of the central parties;
- Rural society and especially the youth as the future entrepreneurs and leaders.

While defining the group of participants for public consultation meeting, the organisers should keep in mind the relations among the different stakeholders, because these might impact the dynamics of the group. Sometimes it could be a good idea to include stakeholders that do not support the project or are sceptic about the project idea in order to avoid that they will counteract to the project at a later stage.

3.2 Pre-consultation questionnaire

The project partners are advised to use a pre-consultation questionnaire before the group of the participants for the public consultation meetings is formed. It should be included in the electronic registration form (Section 4.10.).

The purpose of the pre-consultation questionnaire (Annex 2) is to gather additional information about the potential participants of the public consultation in order to prepare for the discussions and adjust the proposed activities with the specific audience in mind. It could also help to select participants in case there were more people interested than the recommended number of the participants.

The pre-consultation questionnaire is in line with the structured questionnaire included in the report under the activity 1.1 “Investigating innovative technologies’ impact on rural economy SMEs’ competitiveness and productivity”, but much shorter. Thus it will allow gathering information about the participants of the meeting in a structured way using a form, which has been already agreed among the project partners. The questionnaire includes 11 questions related to the:

- Participant (contact information);
- Company/organisation, industry and location it represents;
- Adoption of an innovative technology in the company/organisation, if applicable.

The estimated total time for completion of the questionnaire is 10 minutes. The project partners can adjust the pre-consultation questionnaire in line with the specificities of the partners’ territories, if necessary.

The pre-consultation questionnaire is available online: <https://goo.gl/forms/6nnyQWa4hjJwR8f83>

Link for editing (copying) the form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Tw5DWBkN2Brj_jD-W8sqeBjlsYKjZaa2no66Dtznw/edit?usp=sharing

4 Organisation of the public consultation

4.1 Key principles

For every event there should be dedicated people responsible for the planning. It is important to make a detailed plan and allocate roles and tasks among each other in order to be successful. In particular, the budget spreadsheet should be prepared as much in advance as possible, including allocation of all fees and costs, and some contingency budget for emergencies. Particular attention should be paid to the eligibility rules of all expenditure.

It is advised to read the chapter Venue before researching suitable venues. Consider how many rooms you will need and what kind of catering is required for 30 participants. If you select service provider for always check what is included in the price (catering, technical equipment, etc.). You can also consider using a meeting room in your office to save money.

If you consider inviting speakers they will need some information on the event (draft programme) a briefing on the types of people attending the event (including other speakers) and a summary of what is expected from them. Provide the speakers with the presentation templates (with a logo). Obtain and assess their presentations and hand-outs well in advance of the event if possible.

After the event upload the documents (presentations, photos, etc.) on the dedicated website. Send thank you notes to the external speakers and participants.

The format and the style of each meeting should be carefully planned in order to achieve the given objectives. The agenda and a fact sheet reflecting the upcoming theme in INNOGROW project should be circulated together with the invitation letter to potential participants of the meeting.

In order to document each meeting, a list of participants needs to be circulated for them to sign. Following each meeting list of participants should be circulated to all participants as well as any members who were not able to participate or who will benefit from the information.

4.2 Planning

The headline theme of an external event defines its identity and is an important factor in helping people decide whether or not they want to attend. The theme must fit the INNOGROW project. Keep it short simple and easy to understand – for example, **Public consultations on innovation in the rural economy SMEs.**

The date chosen should not conflict with any other events that the target audiences might also be interested in attending. Check carefully if all relevant employees and spokespeople are able to attend. Also check for clashes with other more newsworthy events: political events, holidays, etc.

The agenda must be based on the needs and interests of our target audiences. Organise sessions and arrange speakers in a clear and logical order. For example: General introduction to the topic, specialist views and case studies, workshops on different aspects of the topic, summary and conclusions.

As a general principle, it is better to avoid excessive use of one-way communication. Include regular interactive elements in the programme, such as panel discussions, workshops and break-out sessions for discussions. Always allow time for questions and discussions. Also build in some flexibility in the

programme, for example if some presentations do not finish on time. And finally plan time for coffee break before the meeting.

4.3 Team

Team members with the necessary skills and effective leadership all contribute to ensure that the internal process of team work facilitates the task in hand. Size of the organising team can vary from 1-5 persons. However the size of the team depends on the expert's competencies and skills. A team of experts with the following skills and competencies would be necessary to ensure organization of public consultations:

- Planning, problem solving and decision-making – person who has the necessary competencies and skills in planning, organisation and management of public events with participation of different stakeholders. Interpersonal and communication skills are of the utmost importance. Personal contacts with different stakeholders can help to ensure wider participation.
- Technical or functional skills – persons who are familiar with the ICT and have knowledge about maintenance of the necessary technologies (laptop, wi-fi, photo or video equipment), and use of technologies during the discussion process.
- Data recording and processing – person who is a native speaker, but who has excellent knowledge of the English language and who is experienced in data recording, has a knowledge about the theme of the discussion and has experience with preparation of reports and studies.
- Skills in public relations management - production of news releases, involvement in community relations activities, work with media and implementation of digital activities for promotion of public discussion.

4.4 Moderator/Facilitator

A good event can become great with the addition of an excellent moderator. The moderator should be one who is able to manage the event, lead discussions and debates and make the event interesting and relevant to participants. Many journalists are good moderators; sometimes the local media knows someone suitable. At the same time acting researchers, experts, local stakeholders or someone from the organising institution who possesses the necessary skills can facilitate the discussions and bring ideological background to the process. Remember:

A FACILITATOR IS AN ACTIVE UNBIASED MEMBER OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

THE ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR IS TO SKILLFULLY ASSIST A GROUP OF PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND THEIR COMMON OBJECTIVES AND TO HELP THEM TO ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES

THE ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR IS TO GUIDE AND HELP ACHIEVE UNDERSTANDING AND CONSENSUS

The basic skills of a facilitator are:

- Timekeeping
- Following an agreed agenda
- Assisting a group to brainstorm and problem solve.

An experienced facilitator will also have the following skills:

- Ability to intervene in a way that adds creativity to the discussion rather than leading the discussion and taking away creativity from the group
- Ability to understand the group process and dynamics – successfully address these inequalities in the group dynamic, e.g.:
 - who is dominating in the group and how stop them;
 - who is withdrawn and how to involve them;
 - who looks bored and how to draw them into the process.

4.5 Speakers

The organisers can also invite external speakers to the event. Interesting, knowledgeable and skilled speakers are one of the make-or-break factors of any event. High profile names or people from well-known organisations **will help to make an event appealing to the target audiences**. Individuals who are naturally good at presenting to the groups can also transform the atmosphere and impact of the event itself.

Interesting speakers might include participants from various levels:

- European policy: people from the Commission or Parliament,

- National policy: people from Member State governments or organisations,
- Regional policy: people from regional assemblies, local authorities, etc.,
- Experts: academics, researchers, think-tanks, etc.,
- NGO's with an interest in the topic,
- Industry: INNOGROW project has a link with industries and it is important to involve them in this event,
- Trade associations: relevant EU or Member State-based bodies.

You should decide the necessity of external speakers, depending on the overall frame and the Agenda of the public consultations meetings. From one hand, it might be difficult to find speakers of a high profile. On the other hand, the attraction of such speakers may raise higher interest of potential participants to participate in the meeting.

Nevertheless you should be flexible in this matter, instead of inviting external speakers, you may use your own resources for presenting the key topics.

If you decide to invite external speakers, you will need to provide them with more information on the event, normally in the form of a draft programme, a briefing on types of people attending the event (including other speakers) and a summary of what they are expected to do. The earlier the planning begins the earlier notice can be given the speakers – and it will also be possible to get good speakers for the event.

Inviting speakers, provide them with presentation templates. Obtain and assess all their presentations and hand-outs well in advance of the event.

4.6 Venue

When researching for venues, it is necessary to have a very clear idea of how many people is expected to attend, how many rooms will be needed (for example for workshops) and what kind of catering is required. Make sure the venue is accessible for the people you wish to attract.

It is recommended to have venue with at least 2 rooms (at least 100 square meters) with tables and chairs for total 30 persons, which can be easily transformed for group works. It is recommended to have one

meeting room U-style or theatre style for the introduction part and other meeting room with 5 tables (6 chairs for each) for work shop discussions. Venue with one meeting room with a possibility to move chairs and tables freely also is acceptable. Before the discussion part chairs and tables should be arranged for groups up to 6 persons. You can invite participants to participate with rearranging the room for small work groups – good physical activity to wake up sleepy participants, but be aware that **rearrangement of room during the meeting can take extra time.**

The organisers should ensure that the venue is easily accessible by foot, bicycle and car. It would be recommended to have parking and bicycle racks. Make sure that there is necessary technical equipment (laptop, projector, flipcharts, board for moderation, wi-fi, pens, pencils, markers etc.).

It is recommended to provide catering - one coffee break for 30 persons before the meeting:

- Drinks and snacks - water, coffee, tee, biscuits, sandwiches
- To be served within the meeting room (allowing participants to take a coffee during the meeting) as there are no separate coffee breaks planned
- To be served before the meeting and left till the end of the meeting

Make sure if there are enough clean cups, glasses, dishes (with a reserve to be used till the end of meeting)

Always ask for several offers and check what is included in the price (e.g. catering, technical equipment, etc.). Visit the venues before making a decision.

4.7 Technical equipment

Technical equipment necessary for organisation of the event should be considered – laptops, projectors, screens, etc. Always check what the venue provider has to offer; some equipment is often included in the price. Ensure that on the day of the event there will be somebody available for support at all times.

If possible, collect all presentations before the event and pre-load them in one large presentation file on the presentation laptop – run one after another, including links to any external media. Make sure that you have at least the following equipment:

To be ensured within the venue of the meeting

1. Tables and chairs for 30 persons

2. Projector
3. Computer/Laptop
4. Wi-fi
5. Board for moderations
6. Flipcharts
7. Blank paper (A3, A4)
8. Markers
9. Signs showing the direction to the meeting room (see template in the Annex 7).

Take with you from the office

1. Papers and pens for notes to each participant
2. Flipcharts for discussions& voting questions
3. Sticky notes
4. Small sticky round papers (for voting questions)
5. Printed copies of the Agenda to be circulated for participants
6. The registration form of participants (see Annex 5)
7. Any small presents in case you want to thank the Group Leaders for moderation of Workshops.



Fig.1. Sticky round papers

4.8 Preparation for organisation of the meeting of public consultations

Plan in advance all preparatory tasks and allocate appropriate time for the preparatory activities. It is good to plan and try new and creative techniques before using them at a meeting. You can practice and design new ideas with your friends or work colleagues. Make sure that your techniques are culturally appropriate and do not offend any local ethnic, religious or gender sensibilities.

You can prepare a participant pack including a name badge (optionally), an agenda, a list of participants, an evaluation form, contact phone numbers of organisers and project related information/ fact sheet.

This information/ fact sheet may contain the following information:

- Information about the project, its objectives, partners and main results expected,
- Main consultation topics and why they are actual,

- What are the existing challenges and opportunities related to the innovations in rural SMEs,
- Current policies supporting innovations in rural SMEs,
- At least one best practice of local SME that has introduced innovations or applied new competitive business models.

It is advisable to send the Agenda in advance and the fact sheet (by email) thus introducing all participants with more detailed topics for the discussion.

Key underlying principles that should be taken into account while planning public consultation meetings include: 1) creation of interaction between the researchers and practitioners; 2) generation of knowledge useful for practitioners; 3) ensuring active engagement of participants; 4) creation of an Agora – a space for dialogue and prevention of conflicts; 5) contribution towards collective knowing. These principles should underline planning and elaboration of specific tasks and planning activities of the public consultation meetings.

The group work is especially useful with a large number of participants, creative thinking exercises and brainstorming. Group work will also make large number of participants more manageable. Assuming that the approximate number of participants within the public consultations meeting shall be 30, all the participants shall be divided in 5 groups to ensure better feedback and involvement of all participants of the meeting. Approximate number of participants within one smaller group shall be from 4 to 6 persons.

HOW TO DIVIDE PARTICIPANTS IN SMALLER GROUPS

- YOU MAY USE STICKY PAPERS OF 5 DIFFERENT COLOURS. TAKE 6 PAPERS OF EACH COLOUR; STICK THEM TO NOTEPAPERS FOR PARTICIPANTS.
- THEN PUT NOTEPAPERS ON THE SEAT OF EACH PARTICIPANT RANGING THE COLOURS ONE BY ONE (DO NOT PUT SIMILAR COLOURS TOGETHER). THIS WILL ENSURE MIXED GROUPS OF PARTICIPANTS OF DIFFERENT ORGANISATIONS.
- AFTER YOU WILL DIVIDE ALL PARTICIPANTS IN 5 GROUPS BY COLOURS THEY HAVE ON NOTEPAPERS (EACH GROUP HAVING PARTICIPANTS WITH ONE COLOUR).



During the meeting the moderator shall follow the overall social climate and relationship within each smaller group. If the moderator notices that there are dominant participants not giving a possibility to others express the opinion, then the facilitator might form new groups or swap some of the participants around.

You will need one **Group Leader** within each group for organisation of the round table discussion (see Chapter 5.2 for more details of organising the discussion part of the meeting). It is suggested that the Group Leader has the same overall characteristics as “Facilitator” described above. Please refer to that section when considering particular persons to be invited as Group Leaders.

You can agree with the particular persons before the public consultations meeting that they would take the role of the Group Leader and on the division of questions according to the field of knowledge of the particular Group Leader. It is suggested to brief the Group leaders on their role and an overall schedule of the meeting in advance. Group Leaders may feel more comfortable if they would be prepared before and will know precisely the content and schedule of the work. Briefing of the Group leaders can be organised in several ways:

- having a short briefing with all Group leaders approximately 30 or 40 min before the meeting,
- arranging a preparatory meeting in advance (few days before the public consultation meeting),
- sending an email explaining all the details and upon the necessity consulting each Group leader individually.

The preparatory meeting of Group Leaders before the public consultations meeting can have one advantage: you can consult with them about the participants of the meeting. In case you do not have enough number of participants registered, you may ask the Group Leaders to help with spreading the information about the meeting and inviting potential participants. In case you have larger number of participants than expected in the meeting, you can ask for the opinion of the Group Leaders, which participants should be the most appropriate for the meeting.

Please prepare the flipcharts for the round table discussions in advance (before the meeting) in order to be well prepared for the meeting. Please see the templates for each flipchart in Annexes 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. Keep everything simple and easy – take large papers – flipcharts - one for each of 5 questions. Take

a marker and write down the question on the top of the flipchart. Check list to make sure that you have prepared everything for the public consultation meeting is provided in Annex 16.

4.9 Invitations to participants

Develop the invitation and agenda of the meeting as soon as possible to notify target audiences well in time. Send invitation to potential participants at least 2 weeks before the meeting. To inform people about the event it is best to use a combination of email notification, letters and telephone calls.

The stakeholders to be invited to the meeting are described in more detail in the Chapter 3. Please take into account that majority of the potential participants are rather busy people (entrepreneurs, policy makers etc.) that are often not so keen to respond and participate in such events. Most probably, you will need to put different resources to get the response of potential participants. Use personal contacts with different people representing the stakeholders, invite some well-known and recognisable persons that may raise an interest for others to participate and collaborate within the meeting.

DEAR SIR/MADAM

WE ARE VERY PLEASED TO INVITE YOU TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING ON INNOVATION CHANGES IN THE RURAL ECONOMY SMES.

THE AIM OF THIS MEETING IS TO BUILD CONSENSUS AND ENSURE SUPPORT BY A BROADER REGIONAL AUDIENCE REGARDS INNOVATION CHANGES IN THE RURAL ECONOMY SMES.

YOU ARE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS MEETING AND EXPRESS YOUR IDEAS AND PARTICIPATE IN THE DISCUSSION ON FOLLOWING TOPICS:

- INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES AND THEIR IMPACT ON RURAL SMES;
- SUCCESSFUL NEW BUSINESS MODELS FOR RURAL SMES;
- FACTORS THAT INDUCE/HINDER RURAL SMES TO ADOPT INNOVATIONS.

THE INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES THAT HAVE BEEN ADOPTED BY RURAL ECONOMY SMES TO CAPTURE VALUE FROM TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION AND ECONOMIES OF SCALE, THUS LEADING TO INCREASED COMPETITIVENESS AND PRODUCTIVITY, INCLUDE INNOVATIVE PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGIES (ORGANIC FARMING, RENEWABLE ENERGY, PRECISION AGRICULTURE, CROP RESISTANCE SYSTEMS, NOVEL CROP AND FUNCTIONAL FOODS), TECHNOLOGIES SUPPORTING PRODUCTS' DISTRIBUTION (E-PLATFORMS FOR PRODUCTS' PROMOTION, ONLINE ORDERS AND DELIVERY TOOLS AND FOOD TRACEABILITY SYSTEMS AS MARKETING TOOL) AND TECHNOLOGIES SUPPORTING PRODUCT'S SAFETY (SMART METERS AND THE INTERNET OF THINGS, INTERNAL PRODUCTS TRACEABILITY SYSTEMS AND TRACEABILITY AS A SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT TOOL, AS WELL AS SELECTIVE BREEDING AND FEEDING PROCESSES).

FURTHERMORE, **THE NEW BUSINESS MODELS** THAT HAVE BEEN ADOPTED BY RURAL ECONOMY SMES AS A PART OF AN OVERALL STRATEGY TO INCREASE THEIR ECONOMIC BENEFITS AND SURVIVE IN A COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDE PRODUCER ORGANISATIONS / COOPERATIVES, HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL SUPPLY CHAIN COLLABORATION, R&D CO-OPERATIONS, INTERNAL R&D, TRADING RELATIONSHIPS, PRODUCT DIVERSIFICATION, MARKET DEVELOPMENT AND MARKET PENETRATION, PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS, JOINT VENTURES AND VALUE CHAIN MANAGEMENT.

YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION ON THESE TOPICS HERE: PLEASE PROVIDE LINK TO THE INNOGROW MATERIALS, E.G.:

- **PRELIMINARY DESK RESEARCH CONDUCTED UNDER THE ACTIVITY A1.1 "INVESTIGATING INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES' IMPACT ON RURAL ECONOMY SMES' COMPETITIVENESS AND PRODUCTIVITY", WHICH HAS INDICATED SEVERAL TYPES OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES THAT HAVE BEEN ADOPTED BY RURAL ECONOMY SMES;**
- **A PRELIMINARY DESK RESEARCH REPORT UNDER THE ACTIVITY A1.2 "METHODOLOGY TO COLLECT AND EXCHANGE CASES OF NEW BUSINESS MODELS FOR RURAL ECONOMY SMES & CORRESPONDING DATASET", WHICH HAS LISTED SEVERAL TYPES OF BUSINESS MODELS THAT HAVE BEEN ADOPTED BY RURAL ECONOMY SMES.**

THE PUBLIC DISCUSSION MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE IN JELGAVA, LATVIA ON THE 31ST OF AUGUST, 2016. PLEASE REGISTER FOR THE EVENT HERE (PROVIDE LINK TO THE REGISTRATION)

PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS ARE ONE OF THE ACTIVITIES JOINTLY IMPLEMENTED BY 7 EU COUNTRIES. THE "REGIONAL POLICIES FOR INNOVATION DRIVEN COMPETITIVENESS AND GROWTH OF RURAL SMES – INNOGROW" PROJECT AIMS TO IMPROVE PARTNERS' POLICIES ON RURAL ECONOMY SMES COMPETITIVENESS REGARDING THE INTEGRATION OF NEW PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGIES AND BUSINESS MODELS THAT LEAD TO INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS. THE PROJECT WILL PROMOTE THE ADOPTION OF INNOVATION BY RURAL ECONOMY SMES, THROUGH SHARING PRACTICES / EXPERIENCES BETWEEN REGIONS AND ACTORS RELEVANT TO RURAL ECONOMY SMES COMPETITIVENESS AND INTEGRATING LESSONS LEARNT INTO REGIONAL POLICIES AND ACTION PLANS. AGENDA FOR THE MEETING (PLEASE, PROVIDE LINK TO THE AGENDA OR INCORPORATE IT IN THE TEXT)

LOOKING FORWARD TO YOUR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION! WELCOME TO SEE YOU!
SINCERELY,
XXXXXXXX

You should consider the benefits you can provide to the participants and state these benefits clearly in the invitation letter when drafting the invitation message. E.g., for entrepreneurs this meeting can be an opportunity to get information on new support forms for further development or possibility to express the needs for further support. Make sure that the invitation tells the target audiences "why they should attend". You can modify and use following template.

Keep everything simple and easy to understand. A dedicated e-mail address is the easiest way to ensure replies. Indicate a reply-by-date and a contact mail/phone number.

It is advisable to send a reminder closer to the date to all registered participants. Remember to include all the necessary logos to the invitations. It is recommended to send invitation together with the agenda of the meeting. Template of the Agenda is provided in the Annex 4.

Remember to use your website to promote the event. It might be useful to publish a list of attendees or at least mention their organisation name somewhere on the website.

4.10 Registration

The registration can be organised by e-mail, but common practice is to have an online registration. This makes life easier both for the delegates and for the event organisers. People submit their details online into a database and will automatically receive a confirmation after having registered. You can have access to the site through a private site and can see the output in excel in order to keep track of delegates. A website that has a content management system will allow to add, delete and update event information.

Remember to mention practical information about the location where the event is taking place (address and map), main transport options to get there, parking options and other necessary information. Make sure that the list of participants has been printed out before the meeting.

The registration form should include the pre-consultation questionnaire (Annex 2), which will allow gathering additional information about the participants of the meeting and thus be better prepared for the discussions (Section 3.2.).

If more than 30 participants have shown their interest to participate at the meeting you might define some criteria in relation to the profile of the particular participants, for instance:

- Legal status – SMEs working in rural areas;
- Field / industry – you can analyse profiles of other participants and select the ones that are least represented
- Experience in development and introduction of innovations within rural SMEs
- Experience in researching, developing or introducing new competitive business models within rural SMEs.

4.11 During the event

Make sure to check the locations before the participants arrive. Organise for folders, the EU flag etc.

Make people feel invited: delegate someone to greet the participants and show them to the cloakroom and the registration desk. Have people at the registration desk to ensure registration of the participants and to answer questions. If you have prepared applicant pack, make sure that each participant gets one.

Meet speakers upon their arrival and introduce them to the necessary people e.g. the person responsible for technical support.

If media attend the event, make sure they are well taken care of. Always appoint people responsible for journalists who can introduce them to the people to interview, explain the project, and act as a contact point if they require any information.

Remember to take photos. The meeting should be documented by using audio and video recording equipment. While making notes during the meeting is advisable to write down the most significant ideas, conclusions and suggestions.

4.12 Recording

Very important part of the public consultation process is recording of the discussions and preparation of the minutes. Take into account that ethical guidelines shall be respected. Before the meeting ask permission for recording. Inform participants about the purpose of recording to ensure that participants are fully aware of the process of the meeting, development of the minutes and data analysis. It is advisable to offer participants an opportunity to confirm, usually in writing, their consent to use of the recording following a recorded meeting.

Before the meeting prepare and print out registration form of participants. Use registration form also to ask permission in writing for recording. Example of template for the registration form and permission for recording is provided in the Annex 5.

To ensure proper recording of the discussions and preparation of summary reports it is recommended to use Dictaphone (or smart phone with recording functions) or video camera during the meeting. This will help you/your staff to save resources and follow the process and not to concentrate all the time on the recording of minutes.

Finalize minutes as soon as possible after the completion of the meeting and do not postpone it. As precise as possible minutes, will help you in the preparation of summary reports. When completing minutes

please ensure procedure of privacy and confidentiality of participants e.g. name participants in the minutes if the participant has given specific consent to be identified, try to provide information in the minutes in the aggregate form avoiding mentioning of the Interviewees.

5 The agenda of the public consultation meetings

The Agenda is an important tool for the organisers and for the participants. For the organisers it helps to keep the right path for the discussions and overall event. Agenda allows following the plan and reaching the aim of the meeting. For the participants an agenda clarifies the overall schedule of the work in the meeting. Based on the research results summarised in previous sections, the template of the Agenda has been prepared (please see Annex 4). Partners may use this agenda or modify it according to individual needs of the particular partner while using the overall frame described below.

The public consultation meetings should last 3-4 hours, including short breaks, if necessary. A longer agenda is not advisable as it might decrease the number of participants. Especially the representatives of the SMEs might abstain from participation in a longer meeting.

The presentations of the meetings and other materials should use the project’s visual identity and the logos of the project, the EU.

The public consultation meeting should consist of three parts: the introductory part (20-30 min), the discussion part (2-3 hours) and the summarizing part (~30 min). Below you can see the division of the Agenda by main parts of the meeting. The template for the Agenda is attached in the Annex 4.

Main parts of the meeting	Detailed points of the Agenda
The introductory part (up to 30 min)	Welcome and introduction <i>Moderator</i>
The discussion part (up to 3 hours)	Presentation introducing the key topics to be addressed in workshops <i>Moderator</i> Round table discussions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main obstacles and risks for introduction of innovations and new competitive business models within rural SMEs; • Successful examples of the introduction of innovations and new competitive business models within rural SMEs;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing opportunities or positive factors for promotion of innovations and new competitive business models within rural SMEs; Further solutions for promotion of innovations and new competitive business models within rural SMEs; Further support necessary to promote innovations and new competitive business models within rural SMEs. <p><i>Group leaders organise discussions of participants within each workshop</i></p>
	<p>Summary of group discussions on each question</p> <p><i>Group leaders</i></p>
Summarising part (~ 30 minutes)	<p>Summary conclusions, suggestions and policy recommendations</p> <p><i>Moderator organises open discussion of all participants</i></p>
	<p>Closure of the meeting</p> <p><i>Moderator</i></p>

5.1 The introductory part

The meeting should start with a short introduction by the moderator, outlining the aims of the public consultation and giving short information about the INNOGROW project. You may use the presentation as the backstopping tool to be followed (Please see Annex 3).

TO GET THE MOST FROM A WORKSHOP OR DISCUSSIONS WITHIN GROUPS, ALL PARTICIPANTS NEED TO BE COMFORTABLE WITH ONE ANOTHER.

IF WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS ARE NOT INTRODUCED PROPERLY, SIT PASSIVELY AT TABLES, OR ARE NOT INVOLVED IN THE DISCUSSION THEY WILL LOSE FOCUS VERY QUICKLY.

Ensure introduction of the participants of the public consultation. The participants should say their name, the sector (SME, NGO, research, education, etc.) and organization they represent. The introductory part shouldn't last more than 30 minutes.

It is important to use **facilitation techniques to:**

- Help the participants to be comfortable with each other
- Create a fun and interesting environment
- Boost the energy levels of workshop participants
- Organize interesting and productive group work activities

- Use participatory activities
- Increase group activity so that workshop participants can be actively engaged and contribute to the process and output.

This chapter introduces several types of creative facilitation techniques and suggested methods for the introductory part.

Icebreakers

Participants often enter a workshop as strangers and / or apprehensive about what will happen during the workshop. Right from the beginning of the workshop it is important to take some time to allow the participants to get to know one another, to get to know the facilitator(s) and to create a sense of team working and camaraderie. **“Icebreakers” are techniques, which can be very helpful to:**

- Help participants get to know each other and become comfortable with each other at the beginning of a workshop
- Help energize participants at the beginning of a new stage of a workshop
- Encourage team working and creative problem solving

“Icebreaker” - Stand up if you . . .

This is a useful opening exercise. The facilitator can ask a series of fun, general questions or some more specific questions relevant to the workshop. This is the way how facilitator can get a snapshot of existing experience of the workshop participants.

These can be:

- General questions - to get the participants laughing and offering a little bit of information about themselves
- More specific questions linked to the workshop material

Ask questions of the participants using the following opening words: “Stand up if you ...”

For example: Stand up if you ...

- can speak more than one / two / three languages;
- grow your own vegetables

- ... raise chickens, cows or other animals etc.

This is a fairly quick exercise. The time needed will be determined by the number of questions that are asked.

There are times when people's energy is low during workshops, particularly after a long presentation or after a break. After brake workshop participants usually tend to be tired while they are still digesting. The "Energizers" are fast and fun ways to :

- Get people laughing
- Put people at ease
- Get participants refocused on the workshop

Energizer - Truth & Lies

This is a fairly quick exercise - each participant needs about 2 or 3 minutes. The entire energizer usually doesn't take more than 20 minutes. Each participant needs a note pad / card and pen / pencil.

What to do:

1. Participants write on cards / note pads two truths about themselves and one lie.
2. The participants then walk around sharing with one another their three statements - **during this time participants should not reveal which of the statements is a lie**. During this sharing it is the goal of the participants to :
 - a) Convince others that your lie is true
 - b) Guess the correct lie of the other participants
3. The participants gather back together in a circle and the first person reads aloud their statements to remind everyone. Statements can be linked with the workshop theme. For example:

"I am familiar with organic farming and biotechnology"

"My company is using food traceability systems."

"My company is using selective breeding and feeding processes technologies."
4. **The group then tries to guess which of the three statements is not true** - at each end of each statement ask for a vote through a show of hands.

"Who thinks this statement is true? Raise your hand."
5. The participant then reveals which of the statements is untrue.

Role of the facilitator:

- For large groups (30+), it is best to split into smaller group sizes.
- Give examples (like the above) of statements and remind people that they should use short statements.

5.2 The discussion part

The discussion part should last 2-3 hours, depending on the discussion methods used and on the number of participants. The suggested methods for the discussion part are provided assuming that the approximate number of participants within the meeting shall be 30. All the participants will be divided in 5 groups.

The presentation introducing key topics to be addressed in workshops

In order to induce fruitful discussions about the innovation changes in the rural economy, a moderator should introduce the participants with the global economic challenges and opportunities that affect the rural economy. The presentation could be followed by a short overview of the local conditions and current policies supporting innovation in rural SMEs (including the EU funded programmes). Last but not least, a local good practise of one or several SMEs effectively introducing innovative technologies or new business models could be presented to show how innovation happens locally. An indicative structure of the presentation is included in the Annex 3.

MAIN TIPS FOR THE PRESENTATION

- THE LENGTH OF THE PRESENTATION – **UP TO 10 MINUTES!!!**
- THIS PRESENTATION SHOW THE RIGHT DIRECTION TO PARTICIPANTS FOR THEIR DISCUSSIONS DURING WORKSHOPS
- YOU MAY SHOW EXAMPLES ANALYSED OR EXPLORED DURING OTHER PROJECT ACTIVITIES.

As mentioned before, the public consultation meetings should cover such topics as:

- Innovative technologies and their impact on rural SMEs;
- Successful new business models for rural SMEs;
- Factors that induce/hinder rural SMEs to adopt innovations.

The topics are described in more detail in the section 2.2. of this document and within the materials produced under the project activities A1.1 “Investigating innovative technologies’ impact on rural economy SMEs’ competitiveness and productivity”, A1.2 “Methodology to collect and exchange cases of new business models for rural economy SMEs & corresponding dataset”, and A1.4. „Investigating the factors that influence rural SMEs to adopt innovation”.

The structure of the regional economy and corresponding challenges and opportunities should be also taken into account while deciding upon the topics of the public consultation. Section 2.3. of this document provides an analysis of the partner regions’ economy and divides them into three groups - agricultural regions with a high share of the primary (agrarian) sector, diversified regions with an important secondary (manufacturing) sector and regions with a highly developed tertiary (service) sector.

Methods for the Round table discussions

In order to reach the objective of the public consultations there are following five main questions to be discussed among the participants:

- Main obstacles and risks,
- Successful examples,
- Existing opportunities / positive factors,
- Further solutions,
- Further support necessary.

There is a limited time for the discussion part, but the intention is to collect opinions and a feedback from all participants. It means that any participant shall be allowed to express the opinion on each of the five questions mentioned above. It is important to encourage everyone in your meeting to contribute with their ideas and perspectives, but this would not be possible in a large group consisting of 30 people.

Therefore all participants of the meeting shall be divided in five groups with six participants each. The main advantage of a discussion within a smaller group is that it provides an opportunity for almost all participants to bring their ideas or conclusions to the table.

In order to collect the feedback of smaller groups on each of five questions, we suggest organising the discussion using principles of the **"World Café"**⁴ method. The idea of a World Café method is that several different "travel well" questions are circulated around the smaller groups of people thus collecting a feedback on each question from each smaller group.

For the purpose of this public consultations meeting, we suggest to combine the **"World Café"** in combination with **the brainstorming method**. Within brainstorming method all expressed ideas shall be written down without criticism and rejection. At the end of the brainstorming session you shall have a list of all ideas and opinions proposed by the participants of each group.

"Brainstorming" is a good way to generate creative ideas to solve a problem. The key results of a brainstorm may be:

- A complete solution to a problem,
- A list of ideas for an approach that may lead to a subsequent solution,
- A list of ideas resulting in a plan to find a solution.

Each Group Leader will host one of five questions defined above written on the flipchart. The task of each Group Leader will be to collect as many ideas as possible on the hosted question from each smaller group. It means that each question shall be circulated to each smaller group giving a specified time to each group discuss on each question. It can be organised in 2 ways:

- *1st option* - Stick flipcharts with an each question on the wall. Each Group leader stand behind his hosted question (flipchart). At the beginning each group is directed to one flipchart (one question) where they start brainstorming the ideas about that particular question. Moderator follows the time - 10 minutes are given for the brainstorming. After that, each smaller group moves clockwise to the next flipchart (question). The Group leaders may shortly introduce the question; show main ideas expressed by the previous group and launch brainstorming. When the 10 minutes time has passed, smaller groups again move clockwise to the next question. This task is repeated till all smaller groups have gone through all the questions and have come back to the first flipchart they started with.

⁴ <http://www.theworldcafe.com/key-concepts-resources/world-cafe-method/>

- *2nd option* – Each smaller group has its table and the Group leaders with the hosted questions move clockwise to each smaller group repeating similar task as described above. Each Group leader comes to the first group and launches the brainstorming. When the 10 minutes time has passed, each Group leader move clockwise to the next smaller group and launches next brainstorming round. This task is repeated till all Group leaders have visited all smaller groups and collected their ideas of a brainstorming.

During each brainstorming round, the Group Leaders shall follow the discussions and encourage the participants to express their view. The moderator shall follow the overall work of each smaller group and act in case there is any person dominating in brainstorming not allowing others to express their ideas (please refer to previous sections).

RESPECT BRAINSTORMING CORE PRINCIPLE – ALL IDEAS ARE GOOD AND SHALL BE ASSUMED

GROUP LEADERS LIST ALL IDEAS EXPRESSED BY PARTICIPANTS.

GROUP LEADERS ORGANISE THE DISCUSSION IN THE MANNER WITHOUT A CRITICISM OR A REJECTION OF ANY IDEA.

Group Leaders have to take into account some rules in order to have a valuable discussion and brainstorming:

- **Withhold judgment** - All ideas are potentially good - even seemingly foolish ideas can spark off discussion about better ones. Therefore, do not judge the ideas until after the brainstorm is complete – note down all the ideas. Judging ideas takes up brain power which could better be devoted to creating new ideas.
- **Encourage “wild” ideas** - It’s easier to adjust a wild idea than to think of an immediately valid one.
- **Quantity not quality** - Go for quantity of ideas and narrow down the list later. Strive to generate as many ideas as possible - the more creative ideas a group has to choose from the better. If the number of ideas at the end of the session is very large, there is a greater chance of finding a really good idea among them. Keep each idea short, do not describe it in detail - just capture its essence.

- **Build on others ideas** - Build and expand on the ideas of others - add extra thoughts to each idea & use other people's ideas as inspiration for your own. Combine several of the suggested ideas to explore new possibilities.
- **Every person and idea has equal worth** - Every person has a valid and unique perspective on any situation. You can always put forward ideas purely to spark off other people. Participate, even if you need to write your idea on paper. Each idea presented belongs to the group, so it is the group's responsibility to ensure all members feel able to contribute freely and confidently.



Fig. 2. Questions of the round table discussions within smaller groups (workshops)

There is a time limitation set for each brainstorming round (for each group discussing one question): one round lasts 10 minutes. The moderator shall strictly follow the time limits set and give a signal when the brainstorming round starts and ends. The moderator will help smaller teams to move to next flipchart in case of 1st option or will organise how Group leaders circulate around smaller groups in case of 2nd option.

As a result of both options described above, each question will be discussed within each smaller group. This means that each smaller group of participants will go through five rounds of the brainstorming and discuss one question in each 10 minutes round.

In any case you can follow a flexible approach in the planning and organising the discussions in smaller groups most appropriate for particular participants and the overall atmosphere of the meeting. The “world café” approach with “travel around” questions has an important benefit - smaller groups during

each brainstorming round are concentrated strictly just on one particular question. Thus in each brainstorming you will receive really focused answers and ideas related to that one particular question. Experience shows that in case of having more questions within one brainstorming round, these discussions are not so focused and often are flying around different topics.

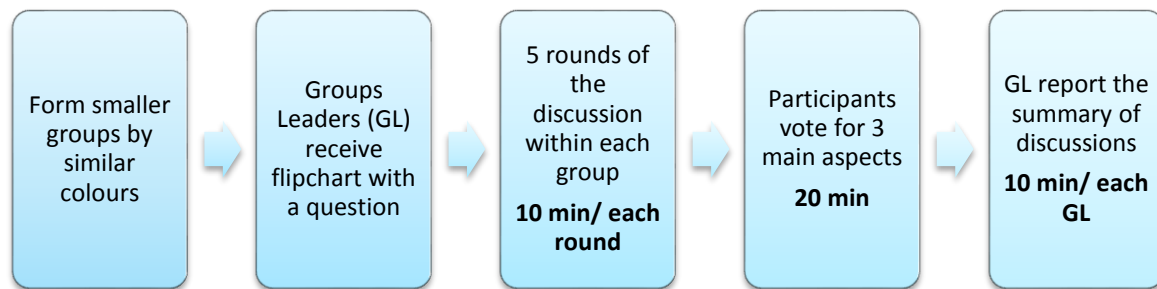


Fig.3. Main steps of the round table discussions within groups

Finish the brainstorming rounds with a voting break. Group leader will stick the flipcharts to the wall or leave them on the table. The moderator shall place small sticky round papers next to each flipchart.

Then a moderator invites all participants to come to each flipchart and vote for three main or most important issues by putting sticky papers next to each selected issue.

The “World Café” method ensures that each group contributes with ideas to each question. At the end of all rounds of discussions the participants will be interested in the overall result as they have been directly involved in the generation of ideas. During the voting break each participant can get familiar with the final content on each flipchart.



Fig. 4. Example of the result of a voting task done by the participants of the meeting

In addition to the flipcharts representing each question of the round table discussions, two separate voting questions (#1 and #2) shall be provided to participants for voting during the voting break.

- Voting questions #1 - Which are three most appropriate types of technological innovations to be applied within rural SMEs of your region (in order to increase their competitiveness)?

- Voting questions #1 - Which are 3 most appropriate types of new business models to be applied within rural SMEs of your region (in order to increase their competitiveness)?

These questions were defined in relation to the Activities A.1.1 and A.1.2 of the INNOGROW project. We will compare the voting results of each partner later preparing the report on the public consultations. Please see Annex 13 and 14 where templates of flipcharts are provided.

**VOTING BREAK IS A GOOD TOOL TO KEEP PARTICIPANTS TILL THE
END OF THE MEETING**

INSTEAD OF JUST ORGANISING A COFFEE BREAK WHEN USUALLY SOME
OF PARTICIPANTS RUN AWAY NOT STAYING TILL THE END OF THE
MEETING

GROUP LEADERS USE THE TIME TO PREPARE FOR A SHORT SUMMARY OF
DISCUSSIONS

While the participants vote on most important issues of an each question, the Group Leaders may use the time to prepare for reporting a short summary of the discussions.

After a voting break all participants come together in the plenary session and each Group Leader reports a summary of the discussion on each question. The moderator gives 10 minutes for each presentation of the Group Leaders.

5.3 The summarizing part

The summarizing part should include a short, but a comprehensive overview of the conclusions and suggestions developed during the public consultation. It should be done by the moderator and the Group Leaders.

The moderator shall ask each Group Leader to define at least one policy recommendation based on the discussions held. If there is a time left, the moderator may give a floor to the participants for max 3 to 5 comments or recommendations.

In the summarizing part participants should also fill in the evaluation forms to provide a feedback to the organisers of the meeting. An alternative is to provide an electronic evaluation form shortly after the meeting. However, the filling in of evaluation forms during the meeting gives a higher response rate compared to electronic evaluation afterwards. Template for evaluation form is provided in the Annex 6.

The moderator should thank the participants for their input and assure the participants that the results of the public consultation will be used in developing specific policy recommendations for the project partners' Local Action Plans.

The summarizing part should last about 30 minutes.

5.4 After the event

After the meeting, the event documents should be uploaded online (presentations, photos, etc.) and links sent to the participants along with the thank you notes. A debriefing session should be held to discuss what went well and what can be improved in the future when organising similar events.

Short conclusions of the discussion and photos taken at the event should be sent to media who attended (if any) as well as to those who did not. The organisers should be prepared to answer follow-up questions. Later media coverage should be checked and documented.

6 Preparation of the summary reports

The results of each of the public consultation meetings should be summarised in a report. Based on the summary reports, a synthesis report to identify common issues, barriers and enablers of innovation in rural economies will be developed by the Zemgale Planning Region.

The summary report of the public consultation has to be in English, should be short, but comprehensive, and include the following sections:

- Description of the participants of the meeting – number of participants, sectors, industries and territories represented (not more than 1/2 page);
- Summary of the pre-consultation questionnaire – sectors, industries and territories represented, innovative technologies implemented in the SMEs (not more than 1 page);

- An overview of the public consultation meeting's agenda, including a short overview of the local conditions and current policies, as well as a local good practise of one or several SMEs effectively introducing innovative technologies or new business models, if presented during the meeting (not more than 1 page);
- Summary of the discussion, stating the main conclusions and suggestions or each workshop (not more than 5 pages);
- Up to five policy recommendations based on the public discussions (not more than 1/2 page).

Graphic methods (matrix, flow-chart, etc.) can help representing the facts and ideas. Please find the template of the summary report in the Annex 13.

Consequently the synthesis report will systemize, analyse, summarize and generalise the results of the public consultations providing conclusions and suggestions regarding the common issues, barriers and enablers of innovation in the rural SMEs.

The synthesis report will include (the content of the report might be updated before its prepared):

- An introduction and methodology of the report;
- An overview of the public consultation meetings;
- A short introduction of the partner regions local conditions and current policies;
- A summary of main obstacles and risks for introduction of innovations and new competitive business models within rural SMEs;
- A summary of opportunities or positive factors for promotion of innovations and new competitive business models within rural SMEs (including successful examples from the partner regions, if provided by the summary reports);
- Policy recommendations for the project partners' Local Action Plans, including solutions and support necessary to provide incentives for the rural economy SMEs to adopt new technologies and business models.

The conclusions and recommendations of the synthesis report will take into account regional conditions, challenges and specificities of partners' territories (Section 2.3.).

7 Timetable

The draft of the “General principles for all public consultation meetings” will be delivered to the project partners until August 15, 2016. Feedback from project partners is expected within two weeks after delivery so that the draft final version of the “General principles for all public consultation meetings” could be distributed among the project partners till the end of August, 2016. It is proposed to pilot the First Public consultation meeting in ZPR and afterward update guidelines if necessary. The deadline for organising the public consultation meetings and preparing the summary reports is November 31, 2016. The draft “Synthesis report on common issues, barriers & enablers for innovation diffusion” should be prepared on basis of the summary reports of the public consultation meetings and should be distributed to the project partners until February 15, 2017. Peer reviews are expected within two weeks after delivery of the report. The final version of the “Synthesis report on common issues, barriers & enablers for innovation diffusion” will be delivered until March 15, 2017.

Chart of implementation for the INNOGROW A2.2 activity “Public Consultation Meetings”

Steps of activity A1.1	Deadlines	Aug 15	Aug 31	Sep 30	Jan 31	Feb 15	Mar 15
	Partners						
General principles for all public consultation meetings (draft)	ZPR	█					
			█	█	█	█	█
Final version of the general principles for all public consultation meetings	ZPR		█				
First Public consultation meeting piloted in ZPR and guidelines updated if necessary	ZPR		█	█			
Public consultation meetings	All partners			█	█	█	
Preparation of the summary reports	All partners				█		
Analysis of the summary reports	ZPR					█	
Consultations with the project partners responsible for the implementation of activities A1.1, A1.2 and A1.4	ZPR					█	
Synthesis report on common issues, barriers & enablers for innovation diffusion (draft)	ZPR					█	
Peer reviews from partners	All partners						█
Synthesis report on common issues, barriers & enablers for innovation diffusion (final version)	ZPR						█

8 Annex 1: Main economic data of the partner regions

Country	Statistical region	NUTS level	Number of inhabitants	Population density	GDP per capita (at current market prices), euro	GDP per capita (at current market prices), % of EU average	Share of agriculture in GDP, %	Share of manufacturing in GDP, %	Share of services in GDP, %
Year:			2015	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014
Greece	Thessalia	2	737,686	52.4	12,300	45	9.9%	13.3%	76.9%
Italy	Lombardia	2	10,002,615	418.5	34,900	127	1.1%	19.9%	79.0%
Latvia	Zemgale	3	242,150	23.4	7,200	27	11.9%	20.3%	67.7%
Bulgaria	Stara Zagora	3	325,963	65	7,300	27	3.6%	16.7%	79.7%
Czech Republic	Pardubický kraj	3	516,372	115.9	12,000	45	4.2%	33.0%	62.7%
Italy	Molise	2	313,348	70.4	20,600	75	5.2%	13.8%	81.0%
Slovenia	Gorenjska	3	203,850	96	15,800	58	2.1%	31.6%	66.3%
Hungary	Nyugat-Dunantul	3	983,925	86.9	11,100	40	5.1%	43.0%	51.9%

Data source: Eurostat

9 Annex 2: Pre-consultation questionnaire

1. Name of the participant

2. Name of the organisation (if applicable)

3. E-mail address

4. Phone number

5. Type of the organisation:

- Rural SME (including self-employed)
- Cooperative
- Other company
- Business association
- NGO
- Public authority
- Education or research organisation
- Other (e.g. informal interest group)

6. Please indicate the location (region, municipality) of your organisation

7. Please select the core industry of your organisation:

- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Fishing

- Agro-tourism, accommodation
- Tourism
- Animal husbandry
- Aquaculture
- Manufacture of food and beverages products
- Manufacture of tobacco products
- Cultural and recreation activities
- Food and beverage service activities
- Energy and resources
- Other (please specify)

8. Please provide a brief description of your organisation's profile:

9. Has your organisation adopted any of these innovative technologies?

- Internal products' traceability system and traceability as supply chain management tool
- Smart-meters and Internet of Things
- Selective breeding and feeding processes
- E-platforms for marketing products and services
- Online orders and delivery tools
- Food traceability system as marketing tool
- Organic farming, biotechnology
- Renewable energy
- Novel crop
- Precision agriculture
- Crop resistance system
- Functional foods
- Other, please specify.....
- Organisation has not adopted an innovative technology

10. Please provide a brief description of an innovative technology adopted by your organisation (if applicable):

11. Please specify the time of new technology adoption:

The questionnaire is available online here: <https://goo.gl/forms/6nnyQWa4hjJwR8f83>

10 Annex 3: An indicative structure of the presentation for the public consultation meetings

Please see the template of a presentation in a separate ppt file.

11 Annex 4: Agenda for Public Consultations

Project “Regional policies for innovation driven competitiveness and growth of rural SMEs – INNOGROW”

Public Consultations

AGENDA

Date: xx

Venue: xx

Duration: 4 h (from 10:00 to 14:00)

Time	Topic of discussion
9:30 – 10:00	Registration and welcoming coffee
10:00 – 10:30	Welcome and introduction <i>Moderator</i>
10:30 -10:40	Presentation introducing the key topics to be addressed in the workshops <i>Moderator</i>
10:40 – 12:20	Round table discussions (workshops): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main obstacles and risks for introduction of innovations and new competitive business models within rural SMEs; • Successful examples of the introduction of innovations and new competitive business models within rural SMEs; • Existing opportunities or positive factors for promotion of innovations and new competitive business models within rural SMEs; • Further solutions for promotion of innovations and new competitive business models within rural SMEs; • Further support necessary to promote innovations and new competitive business models within rural SMEs. <i>Group leaders organise discussions of participants within each workshop</i>
12:20 – 13:20	Summary of each group discussion <i>Group leaders</i>
13:20 – 13:50	Summary conclusions, suggestions and policy recommendations <i>Moderator organises open discussion of all participants</i>
13:50 – 14:00	Closure of the meeting <i>Moderator</i>

12 Annex 5: Registration form for organisers

Public Consultations Meeting

Venue: XX

Date: XX

Registration form of participants

With this I confirm that I have fully aware of the process of the meeting and I have **no objections for recording during the meeting and** use of the recording for development of the minutes and data analysis.

Name	Institution, position	Email, phone number	Signature
Xxx			
Xxx			
Xxx			

13 Annex 6: Evaluation form

Project “Regional policies for innovation driven competitiveness and growth of rural SMEs – INNOGROW”

Public Consultations

31, August, 2016 Jelgava, Latvia

Evaluation Form

Please take a few minutes to assist us in this effort of improving the quality of the organisation of event by telling us what you think. Thank you for your assistance!

Overall Content: *How do you agree with these statements?*

This event was useful

Strongly Mostly Partially Not at all

This event met my objectives for attending

As a result of this event I have gained new knowledge

I will be able to use this knowledge in my work

Organisation: *How do you agree with these statements?*

The overall organisation was good

Strongly Mostly Partially Not at all

The length of the event was right for the material covered

Presentations: *How do you agree with these statements?*

The presentations were useful

Strongly Mostly Partially Not at all

The discussions were focussed and interesting

Workshop 1 “Main obstacles and risks”

The discussions were focussed and interesting

Strongly Mostly Partially Not at all

Workshop 2 “Successful examples”

The discussions were focussed and interesting

Strongly Mostly Partially Not at all

Workshop 3 “Existing opportunities / positive factors”

The discussions were focussed and interesting

Strongly Mostly Partially Not at all

Workshop 4 “Further solutions “

The discussions were focussed and interesting

Strongly Mostly Partially Not at all

Workshop 5 “Further support necessary”

The discussions were focussed and interesting

Strongly Mostly Partially Not at all

Your Suggestions: *(Please feel free to use reverse side for further comments)*

Are there any other issues would you have liked to see covered?

What did you like best?

What can be improved?

14 Annex 7: Template for the direction signs

Project “Regional policies for innovation driven
competitiveness and growth of rural SMEs –
INNOGROW”

Public Consultations Meeting

2nd floor/ Room 21



15 Annex 8: Template for the flipchart of Workshop 1 “Main obstacles and risks”

What are the main obstacles and risks for introduction of innovations and new competitive business models within rural SMEs?

Obstacles	Risks

You may use this template for preparing a flipchart for a round table discussion. You will need to translate this question in your local language. Make sure that both columns are created.

If you have any opportunities and appropriate resources we can suggest you to print this table on the A1 size flipchart.

16 Annex 9: Template for the flipchart of Workshop 2 “Successful examples”

Can you mention any successful examples of the introduction of innovations and new competitive business models within rural SMEs (within your region)?

You may use this template for preparing a flipchart for a round table discussion. You will need to translate this question in your local language.

If you have any opportunities and appropriate resources we can suggest you to print this table on the A1 size flipchart.

17 Annex 10: Template for the flipchart of Workshop 3 “Existing opportunities / positive factors”

What are the existing opportunities or positive factors that promote innovations and new competitive business models within rural SMEs?

Existing positive factors	Opportunities

You may use this template for preparing a flipchart for a round table discussion. You will need to translate this question in your local language. Make sure that both colons are created.

If you have any opportunities and appropriate resources we can suggest you to print this table on the A1 size flipchart.

18 Annex 11: Template for the flipchart of Workshop 4 “Further solutions “

What should be further solutions for promotion of innovations and new competitive business models within rural SMEs?

You may use this template for preparing a flipchart for a round table discussion. You will need to translate this question in your local language.

If you have any opportunities and appropriate resources we can suggest you to print this table on the A1 size flipchart.

19 Annex 12: Template for the flipchart of Workshop 5 “Further support necessary”

What kind of further support is necessary to promote innovations and new competitive business models within rural SMEs?

You may use this template for preparing a flipchart for a round table discussion. You will need to translate this question in your local language.

If you have any opportunities and appropriate resources we can suggest you to print this table on the A1 size flipchart.

20 Annex 13: Template for the flipchart of a separate voting question #1

Which are 3 most appropriate types of technological innovations to be applied within rural SMEs of your region (in order to increase their competitiveness)?

Innovation types		Vote for 3 most appropriate
Innovative production technologies	•Organic farming, biotechnology	
	•Renewable energy	
	•Precision agriculture	
	•Crop resistance systems	
	•Novel crop	
	•Functional foods	
Technologies supporting products' distribution	•E-platforms for products' promotion	
	•Online orders and delivery tools	
	•Food traceability systems as marketing tool	
Technologies supporting product's safety	•Smart meters and Internet of Things	
	•Internal products traceability systems and traceability as a supply chain management tool	
	•Selective breeding and feeding processes	

You may use this template for preparing a flipchart for a voting. You will need to translate the question and innovation types in your local language.

If you have any opportunities and appropriate resources we can suggest you to print this table on the A1 size flipchart. In case of printing this flipchart, you can add a separate column with a short description of each type of innovation (this description has been provided within A.1.1. activity⁵).

⁵ A1.1 “Methodology to gather data on new disruptive technologies’ impact on rural economy SMEs’ competitiveness and productivity”

21 Annex 14: Template for the flipchart of a separate voting question #2

Which are 3 most appropriate types of new business models to be applied within rural SMEs of your region (in order to increase their competitiveness)?

Business models	Vote for 3 most appropriate
Producer organisation / cooperatives	
Horizontal supply chain collaboration	
Vertical supply chain collaboration	
R&D co-operations	
Internal R&D	
Trading relationships	
Product diversification	
Market development	
Market penetration	
Public Private Partnerships	
Joint ventures	
Value chain development	

You may use this template for preparing a flipchart for a voting. You will need to translate the question and types of new business models in your local language.

If you have any opportunities and appropriate resources we can suggest you to print this table on the A1 size flipchart. In case of printing this flipchart, you can add a separate column with a short description of each type of new business models (this description has been provided within A.1.2. activity⁶).

⁶ A1.2 “Methodology to collect and exchange cases of new business models for rural economy SMEs & corresponding dataset”

23 Annex 15: Template for the summary report of the Public consultations meeting

The summary report of the Public Consultations meeting

Venue: XX

Date: XX

Overview of the participants and a pre-consultation questionnaire

- A description of the participants of the meeting – number of participants, sectors, industries and territories represented.
- A summary of the pre-consultation questionnaire – sectors, industries and territories represented, innovative technologies implemented in the SMEs.

This part shall take not more than 3 pages.

Overview of the agenda and the plenary part of the meeting

- List of main points of the agenda.
- A short overview of the local conditions and current policies, as well as a local good practise of one or several SMEs effectively introducing innovative technologies or new business models, if presented during the meeting.
- Other issues covered within the plenary part of the meeting.

This part shall take not more than 1 page.

Summary of the discussion

A summary of the discussion, stating the main conclusions and suggestions mentioned by participants within each round table discussion:

- Workshop 1 “Main obstacles and risks“
- Workshop 2 “Successful examples“
- Workshop 3 “Existing opportunities / positive factors“
- Workshop 4 “Further solutions “
- Workshop 5 “Further support necessary“

All participants were asked to vote for 3 main or most important aspects discussed within each workshop. Please indicate the ones that received the highest number of votes of participants.

A summary of both separate voting questions (#1 and #2). It is suggested to include the statistics of votes provided by the participants in each question in the Annex of the report (use templates provided below).

This part shall take not more than 5 pages.

Policy recommendations

Please list up to 5 policy recommendations based on the public discussions

This part shall take not more than 2 pages.

Annex of the summary report

Voting questions #1 - Which are 3 most appropriate types of technological innovations to be applied within rural SMEs of your region (in order to increase their competitiveness)?

Innovation types		Number of votes of participants
Innovative production technologies	Organic farming, biotechnology	
	Renewable energy	
	Precision agriculture	
	Crop resistance systems	
	Novel crop	
	Functional foods	
Technologies supporting products' distribution	E-platforms for products' promotion	
	Online orders and delivery tools	
	Food traceability systems as marketing tool	
Technologies supporting product's safety	Smart meters and Internet of Things	
	Internal products traceability systems and traceability as a supply chain management tool	
	Selective breeding and feeding processes	

Voting questions #1 - Which are 3 most appropriate types of new business models to be applied within rural SMEs of your region (in order to increase their competitiveness)?

Business models	Vote for 3 most appropriate
Producer organisation / cooperatives	
Horizontal supply chain collaboration	

Vertical supply chain collaboration	
R&D co-operations	
Internal R&D	
Trading relationships	
Product diversification	
Market development	
Market penetration	
Public Private Partnerships	
Joint ventures	
Value chain development	

24 Annex 16: Check list

Technical equipment:

Tables and chairs for 30 persons	✓
Projector	✓
Computer/Laptop	✓
Video camera or Dictaphone	✓
Wi-fi	✓
Board for moderations	✓
Flipcharts	✓
Blank paper (A3, A4)	✓
Markers	✓
Sticky notes	✓
Small sticky round papers (for voting questions)	✓
EU flag	✓

Preparation for organisation of the meeting

Signs showing the direction to the meeting room	✓
Participant pack including a name badge (optionally), an agenda, a list of participants, an evaluation form, contact phone numbers of organisers and project related information/ fact sheet, Papers and pens for notes to each participant.	✓
The registration form of participants	✓
Any small presents in case you want to thank the Group Leaders for moderation of Workshops	✓

Flipcharts for discussions& voting questions

Flipchart of Workshop 1 “Main obstacles and risks“	✓
Flipchart of Workshop 2 “Successful examples“	✓
Flipchart of Workshop 3 “Existing opportunities / positive factors“	✓
Flipchart of Workshop 4 “Further solutions “	✓
Flipchart of Workshop 5 “Further support necessary“	✓

Flipchart of voting questions #1 - Which are three most appropriate types of technological innovations to be applied within rural SMEs of your region (in order to increase their competitiveness)? ✓

Flipchart of Voting questions #2 - Which are 3 most appropriate types of new business models to be applied within rural SMEs of your region (in order to increase their competitiveness)? ✓