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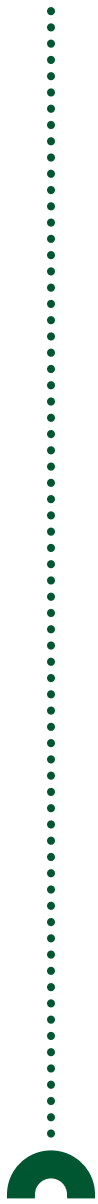
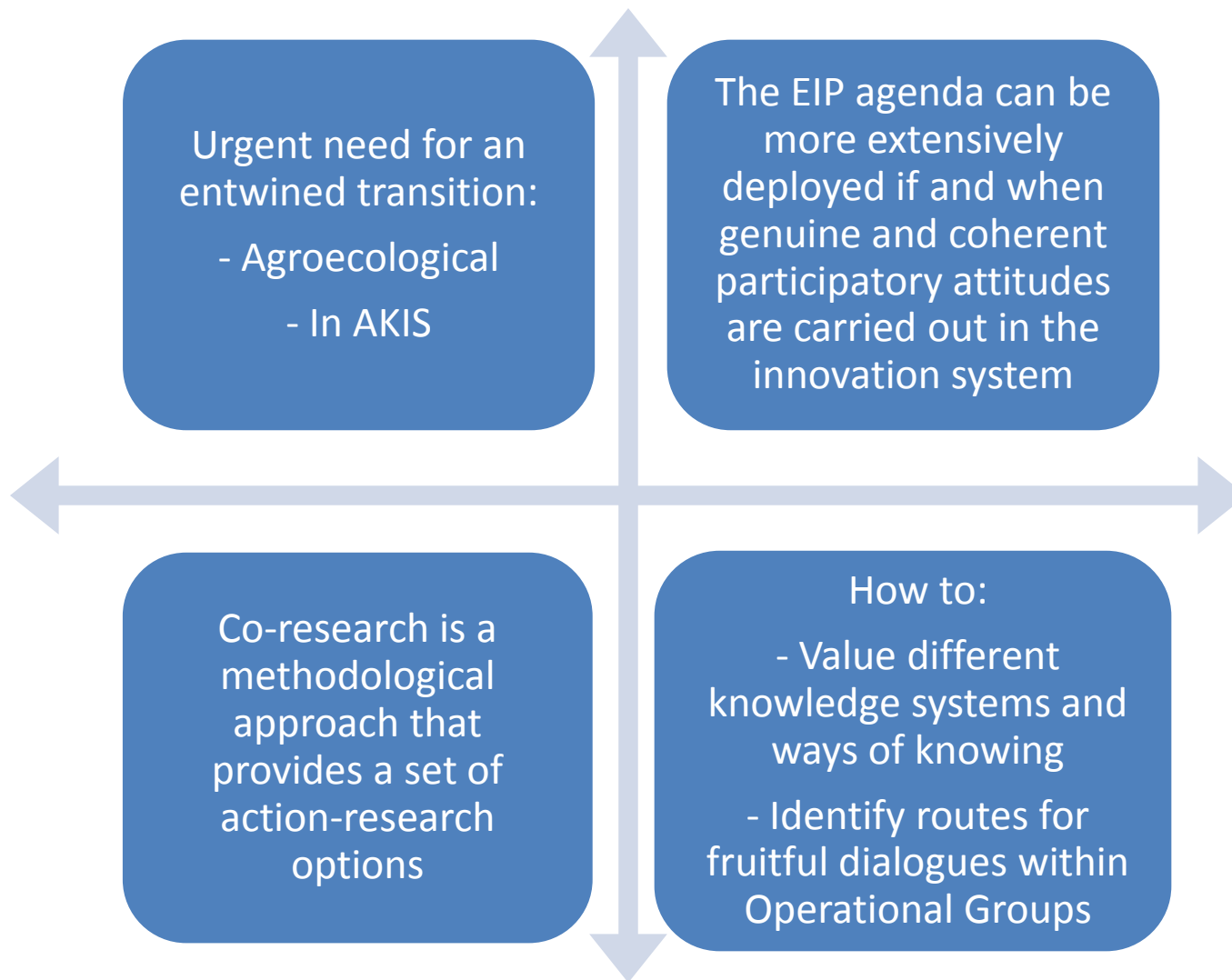
Co-research as a (pre)condition for the EIP implementation

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MAIN ASSUMPTIONS



WHEN BABEL HIDES NON-EQUIVALENT MEANINGS

- Participatory approaches are now becoming very sexy.
- A rich terminology, developed in at least 3 decades, implies different levels of participation, engagement, protagonism and even fairness among actors:

The fashionable acronym world

PRA (*Participatory Rural Appraisal*)
FPR (*Farmer Participatory Research*)
PTD (*Participatory Technology Development*)
PID (*Participatory Innovation Development*)
PAR (*Participatory Action Research*)
PLA (*Participatory Learning and Action*)

Farmers movements quest for centrality

community-based resource management
farmer-led research
campesino a campesino
farmer-back-to-farmer
farmer first
farmer first and last



CO-RESEARCH AND CO-INNOVATION

Emergence of innovation system theory and AKIS = innovation as a social process (circular model) and multi-actor endeavor.

A step farther: co-research and co-innovation

Some crucial pre-conditions (not a drug prescription):

- ❖ Recognition and socialization of the wealth of existing knowledge held in farming households and communities, including their capacity to generate that know-how with own investigation and experimentation methods;

- ❖ Need to value this knowledge and these capacities to further develop appropriate practices and technologies;

- ❖ A symmetric relationship among actors, based on trust and mutual learning;

- ❖ A systemic approach where techniques and technologies are just a component and are not all introduced at one time;

- ❖ A gradual approach to change, with adaptive processes, prioritizing resilience and flexibility



CO-INNOVATION: NOT NECESSARILY AN EASY ENDEAVOR

A NUMBER OF CHANGES IS NEEDED, EACH OF THEM RAISING QUESTIONS ABOUT ENABLING CONDITIONS

Methodological change acknowledging that all participants are knowledge and savoir-faire holders:

→ we need new processes to enable farmers effective participation in co-innovation, further to recover and value, co-experiment and co-validate their own innovations (including a reformulation of the 'peer' review system)

Professional change building new and complex competences among the actors involved:

→ **researchers** have to shift from up-ward accountability (scientific norms and rules) to down-ward accountability (responding to actual producer needs). What are the career consequences? What alternative reward is available? What changes in self-representation?

→ **farmers** also have to gain confidence with scientific procedures and modus operandi

Institutional change driving to a 'leadership from behind', enabling a genuine democratisation of the process:

→ push on & from funding bodies to support and legitimise these new processes + role for civil society

Pedagogic change developing new competences and curricula, exploring facilitating languages:

→ How to trigger the professional transition?



THE 'AGRI-PEI-BIO' PROJECT: ASSUMPTIONS AND GOALS

- In collaboration with the national Agricultural Research Council (CRA) and Veneto Agricoltura, funded by the Ministry of Agriculture's Organic desk.
- Piloting in Veneto new criteria to set up an Operational Group (with a 'research on research' mode):
 - starting from solutions not constraints,
 - collaboration between knowledge systems,
 - partnering among formal and informal organisations and institutions as peers,
 - co-experimentation and co-validation,
 - self-reflexivity



DEMOCRATISING AG. RESEARCH IN EUROPE (*DARE*)

- EIP as an opportunity to DARE:
 - ❖ **Farmers** (and their organisations) can DARE in taking a co-leadership in innovation
 - ❖ **Researchers** can DARE in renewing their career paths and in acquiring additional soft-skills
 - ❖ The **scientific establishment** can DARE in redefining research norms, rules, incentives
 - ❖ **Ag. & Research institutions** can DARE in exploring innovative funding mechanisms and support measures
 - ❖ **Civil society** can DARE voicing on innovation policies and goals



SOME PENDING ISSUES

- **OPERATIONAL GROUPS:**
- Amount, size, geographical scope and outreach, management, funding,
- **INNOVATION BROKER:**
- Familiarity, role, profile, acceptability, funding schemes, ...

