Farmers at the heart of innovation

How EIP-AGRI turns practical challenges into solutions on the ground

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Working with Farmers and Nature: Water-Smart Agroecology and Landcare in Action
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European Commission

What is the EIP-AGRI?

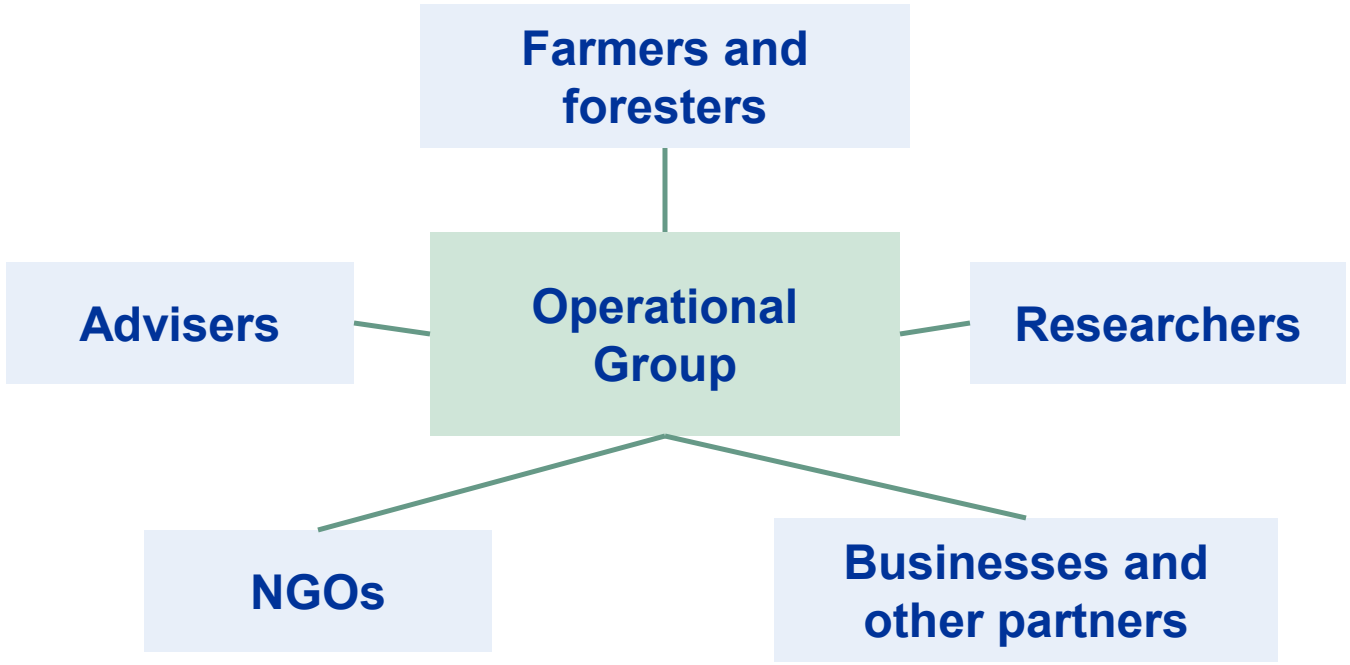
- **Launched** by the European Commission in February 2012
- **Aim:** Speed up innovation in agriculture and make it more sustainable and productive
- **How:**
  - **Support farmers and foresters to develop practical innovative solutions** together with a targeted group of **complementary** partners
  - Provide opportunities for **networking and knowledge exchange,** including better connections between research and practice



Bridging practice and research
EIP-AGRI and EU CAP Network



What is EIP-AGRI OGs?



Needs from practice

Start with a concrete challenge or opportunity in agriculture, forestry or rural communities.

Co-create solutions

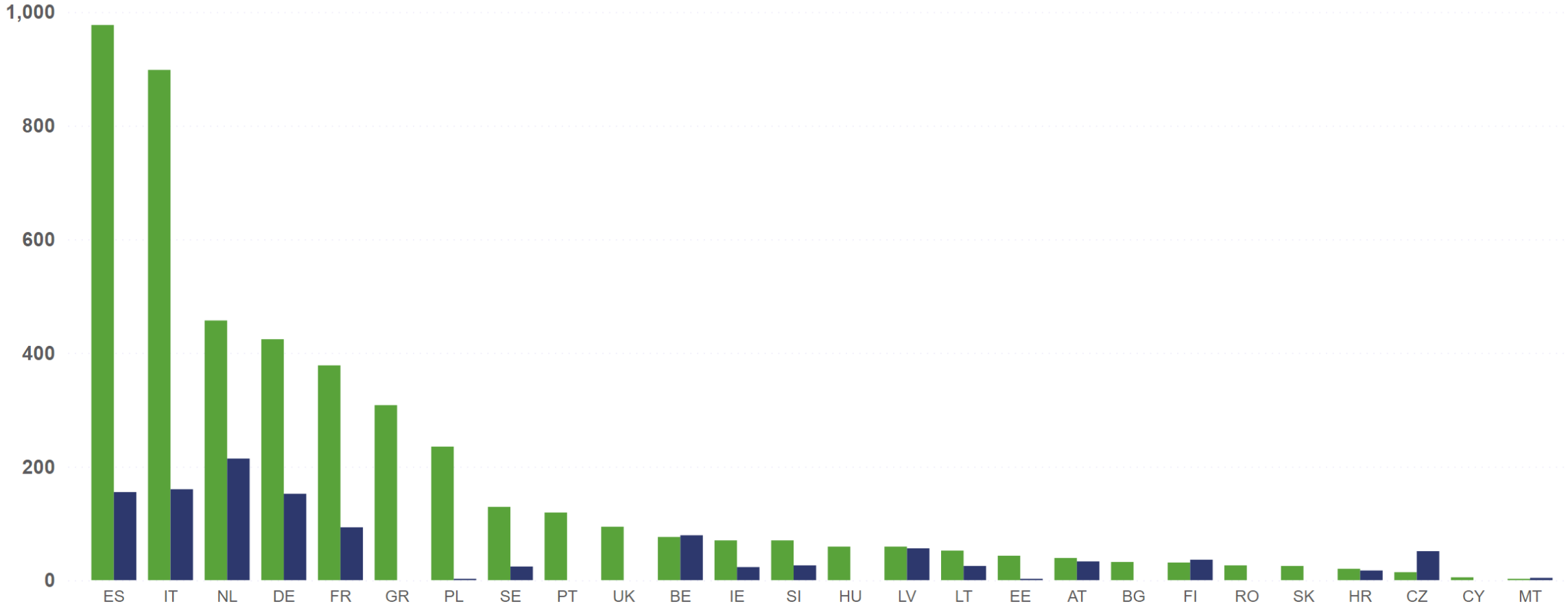
Partners co-creates and co-decides throughout the project.

Apply

Solutions are ready for implementation on the ground.

Operational Groups are CAP-supported innovation projects

Number of OG projects per Member State (both periods)



Number of OG projects (2014-2022)

4,642

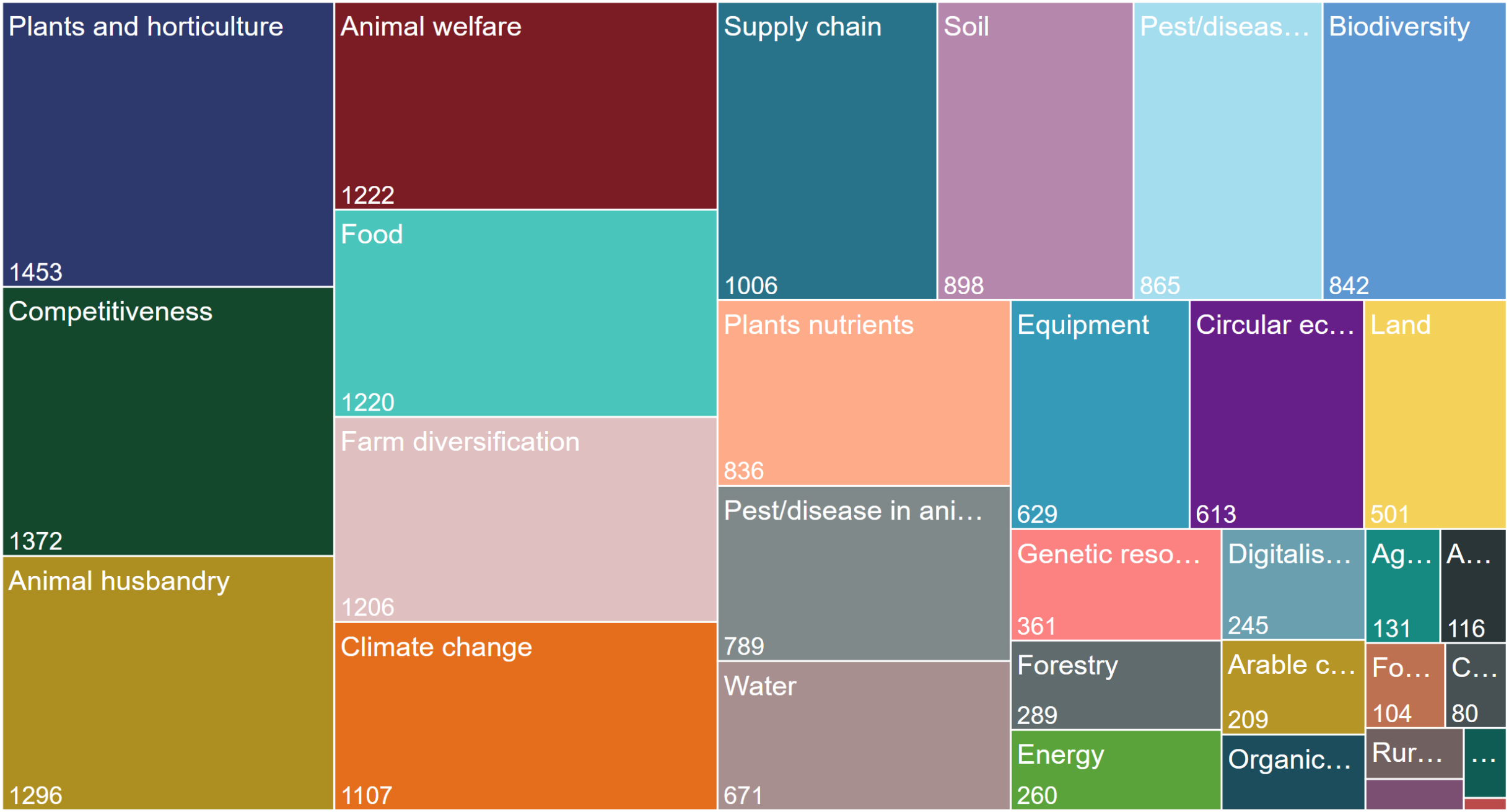
Number of OG projects (2023-2027)

1150

Total OG projects

5,792

Keywords (both programming periods)



EIP-AGRI project database

EIP-AGRI Operational Groups, Horizon multi-actor projects and practice abstracts submitted by Member States & Horizon project coordinators

Explore thousands of practice-driven projects and practical solutions

+5 000 EIP-AGRI projects

+14 100 practice abstracts

Scan here

projects

abstracts

Why put farmers at the centre?

Farmers know the problem

What works on paper may not work on a farm.

Farmers know the context

Soil, water, climate, machinery, labour, costs, markets…

Farmers test what works in practice

Is it workable? affordable? useful? adaptable?







Innovation becomes stronger when practical and scientific knowledge meet.

Operational Groups: innovation in action



UMZOG – Our Moor Future Oldenburger Graben
Germany

Working together at landscape scale to combine peatland rewetting and farming

- Farmers, water authorities and other stakeholders **jointly plan water management across the landscape**
- A **landscape zonation** allows intensive agriculture, transition areas and wet zones to coexist
- The project explores **viable farming options for rewetted areas**, including paludiculture and solar energy

Find out more:
Project website
EIP-AGRI project database



GO Brenta 2030
Italy

Turning water protection into an opportunity for farmers

- Farmers, water authorities, environmental organisations and advisers worked together to **reduce conflicts around water use** in the Middle Brenta.
- The project developed and tested a **Payment for Environmental Services approach**, linking water protection with economic opportunities for farms.
- Farmers were remunerated for practices contributing to **water retention, groundwater recharge and water purification**, including forested infiltration areas, wetlands and permanent meadows.

Find out more:
Project website
EIP-AGRI project database

EU CAP Network Focus Group: “Nature-based solution for water management” 2022-23

How Nature-based solutions (NBS) could have an impact on water management and water availability at farm level and contribute to sustainable farming under climate change?







Main aim: promote a better understanding of NBS and to facilitate knowledge and innovation exchange between farmers, farm advisors, researchers and other relevant actors at local, regional and national levels

Solutions that improve the availability of water and its quality, the efficiency of its use and/or the protection of the farm against flooding or excess water must:

- be cost-effective, simultaneously provide environmental, social and economic benefits, help build resilience, and contribute to good water governance;
- bring more diverse natural features and processes into farms and landscapes, through locally adapted, resource-efficient and systemic interventions;
- benefit biodiversity and support the delivery of a range of ecosystem services.

Workshop ‘Circular water management’



Main goals: to **bringing together innovation actors** to share innovative approaches and practices, disseminate and exchange knowledge on **circular water management** considering **the reuse and recycling of water for agricultural production**.

83 participants: farmers, advisors, researchers, projects and initiatives related to circular water management, water cooperatives and associations, SMEs, and other innovators,



Solutions have been presented :

- capture and/or treat runoff water from fields, re-use at farm level
- water harvesting, reservoirs, ponds or aquifer recharge to store water runoff
- wastewater treatment systems, specifically designed for agricultural runoff
- wse treated water from agri-food industries on a small scale



Thematic Group (TG) on Improving Water Resilience in Rural Areas through the CAP

Overall aim: to examine how to **best utilise the CAP's potential for improving water resilience in rural areas and promote more systemic transformative changes in the way water and land are managed to enable rural areas to withstand climate extremes better** and how this can be best supported through the CSPs.

- → 40 experts from 20 MS and EU
- → 2 TG meetings in autumn 2025
- → TG website



Resources

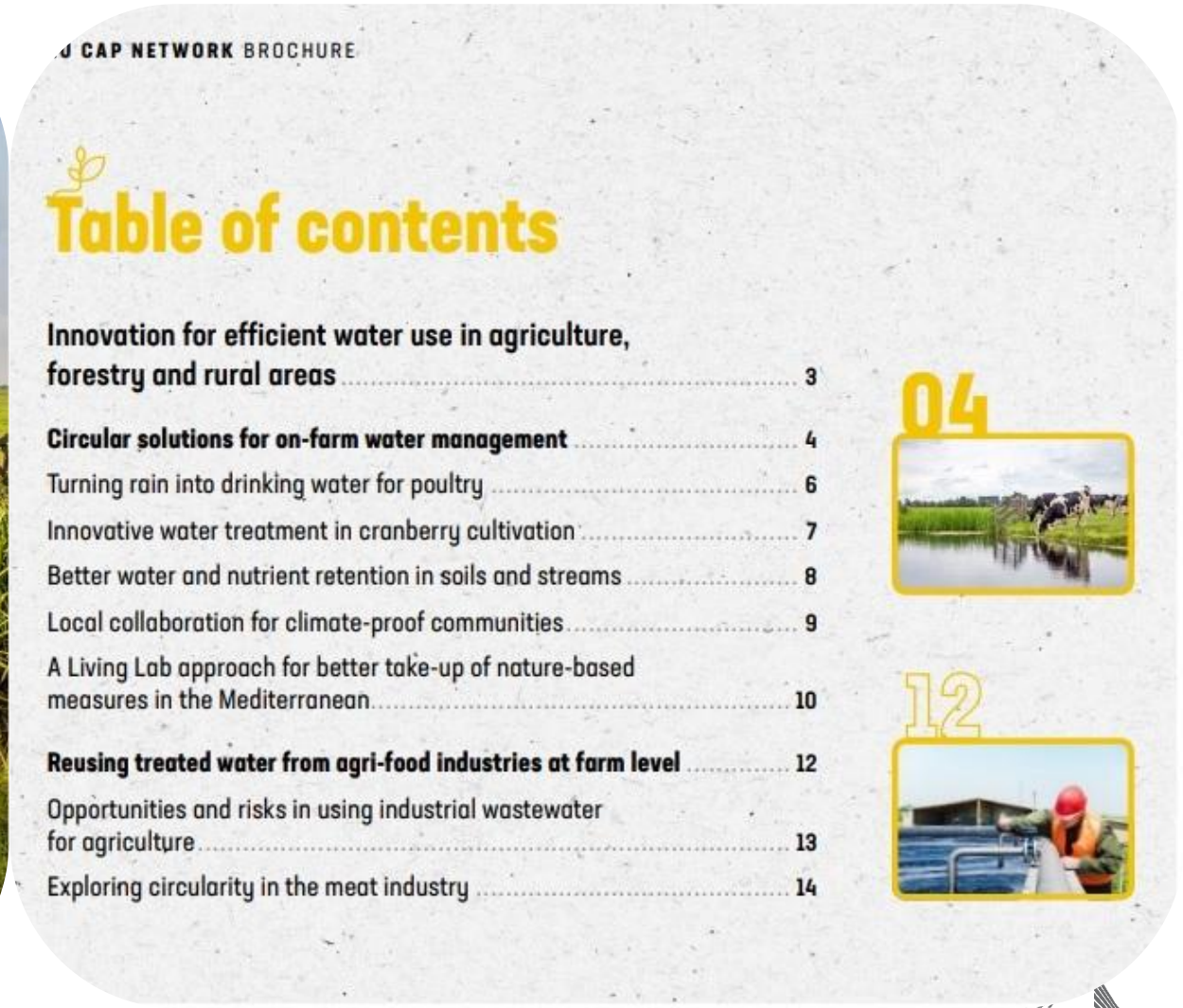
- Background paper
- Highlights reports of first and second meeting
- Compendium of good practice examples
  - Selected CSP Interventions
  - Catchment level / landscape scale approaches
  - Improved water governance / collaborative action
  - Technical solutions
  - Advice and knowledge sharing

How to stimulate greater action?

- Strategic planning to inform action at landscape scale & better governance for collaboration at catchment level
- Focus on holistic approach to water
- Long-term funding: 10-20 years (public & private)
- Demonstration sites needed to show new approaches in action & active engagement to enable change of mindsets
- Good quality advice and training – advisers need up to date skills & technological knowledge

Brochure on Circular water solutions





[Brochure 'Circular Water Solutions']

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Thank you



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