

Idea 1: Take into account the specificities of the food sector



The European food sector requires innovation to meet the consumer demand for affordable, safe, healthy and sustainable foods. The sector has characteristics (e.g. number of SMEs, importance of incremental innovation) that make innovation and knowledge transfer particularly challenging. In FP7, an effort was made to improve the communication of research results through several support actions. This effort should continue in FP8.

How? Continue to support projects dedicated to knowledge transfer in FP8.

Idea 2: Stimulate the use of intermediaries such as regional innovation networks



Knowledge transfer is a process in which intermediaries, such as regional innovation networks or technology mediators, play a crucial role. They act as an interface between the numerous food SMEs and the research community and they play an important role in communicating results to both the consumers and the European food industry

How? In the guide for proposers, ask which information relays will be used to communicate the results to the targeted audience. Continue also to support actions for the networking of intermediaries at European level.

Idea 3: Facilitate access to research results and knowledge



Currently, DG Research and Innovation is compiling information about the projects that are supported at EU level but information about the results of these projects is missing. To facilitate access to the knowledge generated in these projects, a single website with brief summaries of the projects' results could be created

How? Require that each project submit a one-page summary of its results and publish it on a dedicated website (as done by the EACI for eco-innovation projects). Publish guidelines and reports related to knowledge transfer on this website

Idea 4: Make dissemination more professional



The AgriFoodResults survey reveals a lack of professionalism in food research projects financed by the EU. More than 50% of the projects surveyed did not employ a dissemination manager trained in communication and did not prepare a communication strategy

How? In the guide for proposers request the profile of the person in charge of communication and knowledge transfer. Ask beneficiaries to include a dissemination plan in the Description of Work (DoW) and include a chapter on dissemination in the periodic activity reports (and not only in the final activity report as it is the case in FP7 projects).

Idea 5: Stimulate the participation of stakeholders via involvement of user groups



Improving the effective use of research results in the food sector requires a change of paradigm; from a very early stage, users should be involved in the design of the research projects to ensure that the impact of the activities and the exploitation of research results are maximised. A participatory approach where users are involved should be stimulated.

How? In the guide for proposers, require that a user group is involved in the project. This user group will provide reports on the benefit of the project results in the final management report.

Idea 6: Implement mechanisms to stimulate knowledge transfer after the end of the project



The AgriFoodResults survey shows that a large majority of stakeholders consider it necessary to continue dissemination activities after the end of research projects. Incentives are needed to stimulate the continuation of knowledge transfer after the project end.

How? For “marketable” results, the final management report should describe how and who (in most cases the party which holds the IPR) will take care of dissemination after the project end. In a review, one year after the project has ended, this partner should describe what was done and the outcome of the project.

Idea 7: Promote the importance of communication activities by rewarding projects for their dissemination strategy



When efforts are acknowledged people are more motivated. The organisation of such events in the future will help to motivate project coordinators or dissemination managers to invest more time and effort on this subject.

How? Organise a European competition to reward food research projects for best practice dissemination (like Communication Star 2011). Consider making participation mandatory.

Idea 8: Promote the use of innovative communication tools



New technologies offer an interesting potential to raise awareness and to engage users in interactive experiences. The prototype of virtual supermarket has been developed and AgriFoodResults demonstrates that there is interest in interactive tools.

How? Continue to support the development and the utilisation of innovative new media.