Facilitating Alternative Agro-Food Networks (AAFNs): Stakeholder Perspectives on Research Needs

From 2008-02-01 to 2010-03-31, closed project

Objective

The FAANs project is designed to engage civil society organisations (CSOs) in a “co-operative research” (CR) activity and in future research agenda-setting on “Alternative Agro-Food Networks” (AAFNs). Five academic institutions and five CSO partners dealing with alternative agriculture and rural development from five EU member states will co-operatively carry out literature review, design and conduct participatory action research including stakeholders (focus group discussions, scenario analysis workshops) on the following issues: a) how AAFNs are defined by social, political, commercial and cultural frameworks involving motives beyond direct material interests in practice, b) how current policies facilitate or impede the development of AAFNs, c) how alternatives may be complementary or oppositional to conventional agro-food networks, d) how AAFNs contribute to regional development, and e) how AAFNs link different types of innovation as a basis to broaden EU research policies on the “knowledge-based bio-economy”. FAAN is a social experiment in science governance through trans-disciplinary engagement of civil society people in research at the earliest stage in the process. This upstream approach will identify further research relevant to AAFNs, in order to inform future research agendas. The project will contribute substantially to the evidence base and the understanding necessary to foster more desirable types of agricultural innovation within the European Community, and we will point out how policy frameworks could better facilitate such improvements. Finally we will evaluate the co-operative research process of FAAN in order to identify the strengths and weakness of CR related to AAFNs. We will compare the applied qualitative research methods to see how valid and reliable they are in this context. A comparative approach of national experiences will help to identify best practises in research methods as well as AAFNs management and policies.

Related information

Report Summaries

Final Report Summary - FAAN (Facilitating Alternative Agro-Food Networks (AAFNs): stakeholder perspectives on research needs)
Coordinator

INTERDISZIPLINARES FORSCHUNGSZENTRUM FUR TECHNIK, ARBEIT UND KULTUR
Schloegelgasse 2
8010 GRAZ
Austria
EU contribution: EUR 226 183

Activity type: Research Organisations

Administrative contact: Sandra Karner
Tel.: +43-316-8139 09 43
Fax: +43-316-812661-10
Contact the organisation

Participants

OBV-VIA CAMPESINA AUSTRIA-OSTERREICHISCHE BERGBAUERN UND BERGBAUERINNENVEREINIGUNG
SCHWARZSPANIERSTRASSE 15 / 3-1
1090 Wien
Austria
EU contribution: EUR 53 878

Activity type: Other

Administrative contact: Irmtraud Salzer
Tel.: +43-1-8929400
Fax: +43-1-581132718
Contact the organisation

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY
WALTON HALL
MK7 6AA MILTON KEYNES
United Kingdom
EU contribution: EUR 110 715

Activity type: Higher or Secondary Education Establishments

Administrative contact: Gavin Hamilton
Tel.: +44-1908-659392
Fax: +44-1908-655477
Contact the organisation
GENEWATCH UK
Lightwood Road 60
SK17 7BB BUXTON-DERBYSHIRE
United Kingdom

**Activity type:** Private for-profit entities (excluding Higher or Secondary Education Establishments)

**Administrative contact:** Becky Price
Tel.: +44-1298-24300
Fax: +44-1298-24300
[Contact the organisation](#)

SZENT ISTVAN UNIVERSITY
PATER KAROLY UTCA 1
2100 GODOLLO
Hungary

**Activity type:** Higher or Secondary Education Establishments

**Administrative contact:** Barbara Bodorkós
Tel.: +36-28-522000 / ext. 2269
Fax: +36-28-415383
[Contact the organisation](#)

VEDEGYLET EGYESULET
1137 BUDAPEST
Hungary

**Activity type:** Research Organisations

**Administrative contact:** Zsuzsanna Keszthelyi
Tel.: +36-1-2791595
Fax: +36-1-2694251
[Contact the organisation](#)

INSTITUT SUPERIEUR DES SCIENCES AGRONOMIQUES, AGROALIMENTAIRES, HORTICOLES ET DU PAYSAGE
RUE DE SAINT BRIEUC 65
35042 RENNES
France

**Activity type:** Higher or Secondary Education Establishments

**Administrative contact:** Eric Fourrier
Tel.: +33-2-23 48 55 21
Fax: +33-2-23485417
[Contact the organisation](#)
FEDERATION REGIONALE DES CENTRES D'INITIATIVES POUR VALORISER L'AGRICULTURE ET LE MILIEU

17, rue du Bas Village
35577 CESSION SEVIGNE
France

**Activity type:** Research Organisations

**Administrative contact:** Pascal Aubrée
Tel.: +33-2-99773920
Fax: +33-2-23301575

Contact the organisation

EU contribution: EUR 63 865

UNIVERSYTET MIKOŁAJO KOPERNIKA W TORUNIU
UL. JURIJJA GAGARINA 11
87100 TORUN
Poland

**Activity type:** Higher or Secondary Education Establishments

**Administrative contact:** Wojciech Goszczynski
Tel.: 00 48 56 611 3644
Fax: 00 48 56 6224765

Contact the organisation

EU contribution: EUR 42 945

FORUM AKTYWIZACJI OBSZAROW WIEJSKICH
Gornoslaska 4 A
00444 Warszawa
Poland

**Activity type:** Research Organisations

**Administrative contact:** Urszula Budzich-Szukala
Tel.: +48-602-745058
Fax: +48-22-5931645

Contact the organisation

EU contribution: EUR 39 023

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