



Rural Innovation Support Service

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Innovation Support, Future Policy | Scottish Gov't

WHO IS INVOLVED?

- RISS is part of the Scottish Rural Network and is led by Soil Association Scotland
- Facilitators come from SAC, SAOS and Soil Association Scotland
- RISS is funded by the EU and Scottish Government
- C£250k per annum (operating from 2018 to end of 2020) through Technical Assistance

Structure

- Origins of the Rural Innovation Support Service (RISS)
- RISS operation
- Lessons learned & Future Prospects

RISS Origins: Innovation in the SRDP

- Section 5.3 of Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) – outlines the cross-cutting objectives of the SRDP including the promotion of innovative approaches to achieve rural development priorities.
- Specifically links to EIP- Agri– helping to deliver innovative solutions in agricultural productivity and sustainability through use of Operational Groups.
- Section 8.2.13 (measure 16/article 35) – Operational groups will support the development of new and innovative products, processes and technologies.

RISS Origins: Rural Network Remit

- Sub measure 16.1 of the SRDP – outlines role of the SRN in promoting opportunities for prospective Operational Groups and facilitating their animation.
- KTIF guidance – the SRN will promote and encourage the formation of OGs and the development of proposals for KTIF
- Other measures in SRDP – LEADER, Food Processing, Marketing and Co-operation, Forestry Grants all promote collaboration – but no explicit role for SRN with respect to collaboration (as suppose to LEADER co-operation)

RISS Origins: Key questions...

- What are others doing?
- How do we reinforce existing actions?
- Are we leading on innovation within the RDP?
- Is this an opportunity to enhance RDP implementation?
- How do we connect with Horizon 2020?
- How do we reach out to other rural actors?

RISS Origins: We wanted our approach to...

- Stimulate effective and enduring collaboration
- Add Value to existing work and make a difference to the food and drink supply chain.
- Provide space for ideas to develop and aspirations to be realised
- Be a pipeline for attracting investment from the SRDP (or not!)
- Capture/exchange ideas from across the rural arena
- Demonstrate that collaborative rural innovation works

A stylized flower icon with five petals in green, blue, and red, surrounded by small plus signs.

Rural Innovation Support Service

SCOTLAND
OF FOOD & DRINK

SAOS 

WHAT IS RISS?

- The Rural Innovation Support Service (RISS) is a programme designed to meet the needs of land based businesses in Scotland
- Farmers are time-poor but they know what's best for their business
- RISS provides a **broker** whose job it is to get their idea off the ground
- The facilitator brings the **right people together** and helps the group work through possible solutions and make a project plan
- That plan can be used to apply for funding or just to get started
- It may be a blueprint other farmers can adapt

Our Networks....



HOW DOES RISS WORK?

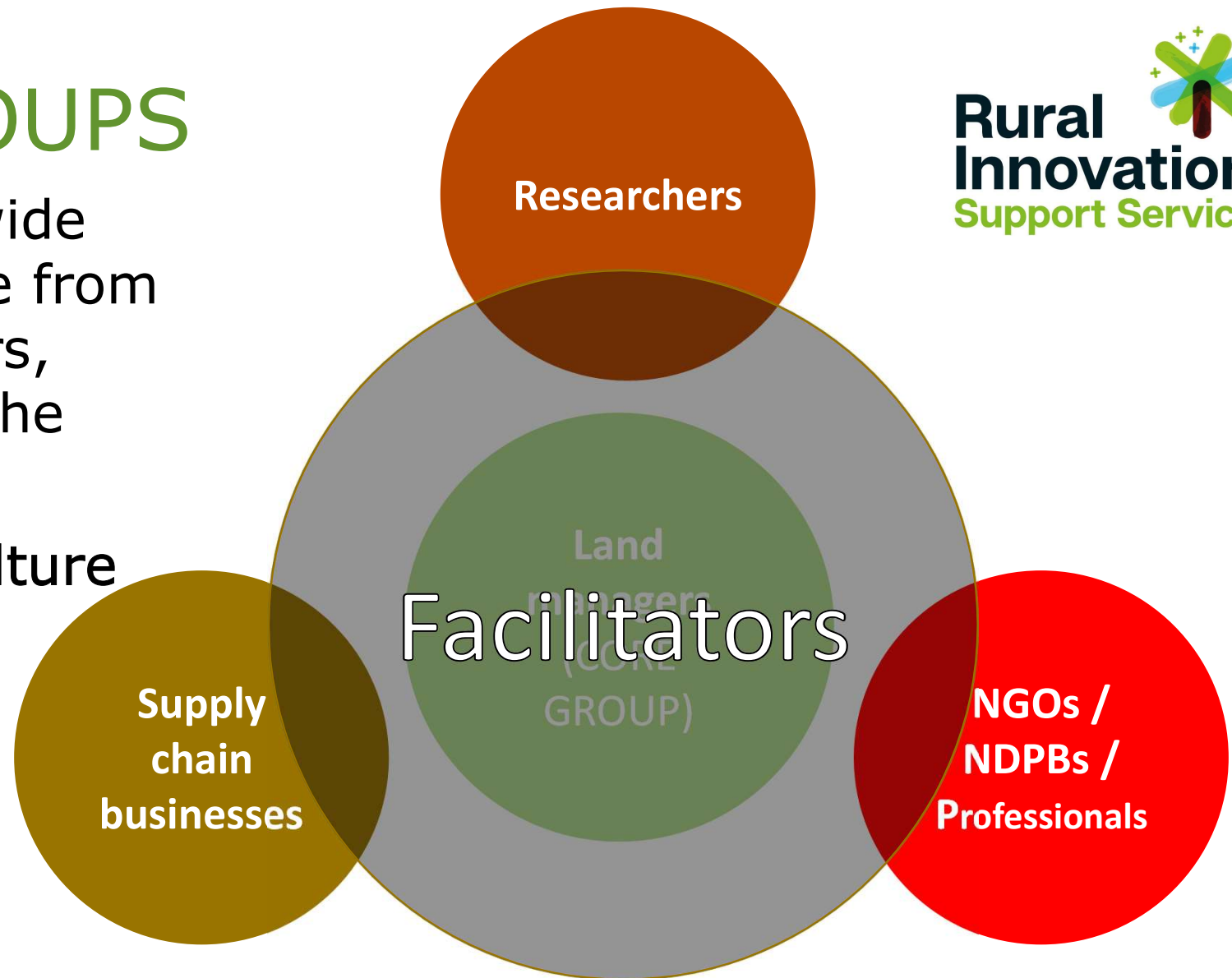


- Land managers set the agenda
- A facilitator helps the group figure out how to proceed with their idea

RISS GROUPS

Made up of a wide range of people from different sectors, depending on the group's aim

Not just agriculture



1. First steps

INITIAL STAGES

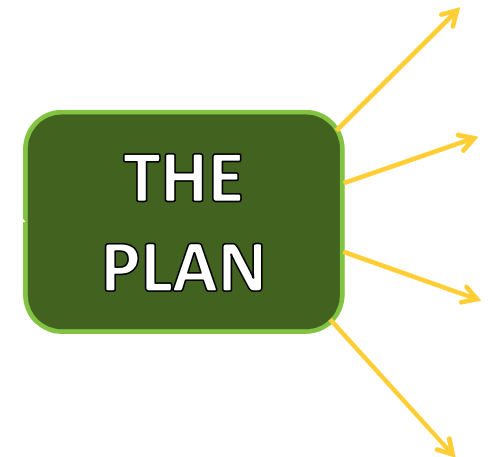
- Bring an **idea** forward
- This idea is **shared** and discussed
- A working **group** is formed around the idea

GROUP
STAGES

THE
PLAN

3. The final plan

- The broker gathers all the information from the group, and prepares a **robust project plan with partners** detailing how to progress the idea
- This may contain information to inform an SRDP bid, a research proposal, or another source of funding...
- ...or the plan could be used to approach a commercial company to develop the idea...
- ...or it could provide a framework for the group to just get on with it
- ...or a blueprint or a model that could be rolled out more widely



Some RISS Numbers...





Mobile abattoir



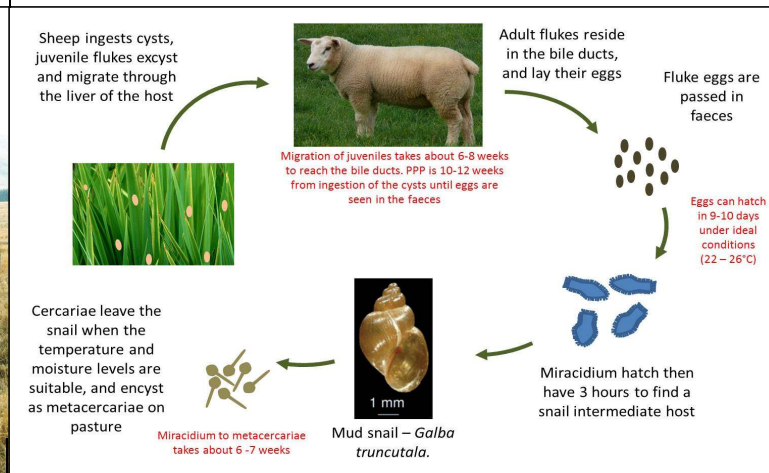
Speeding up dairy breeding



Promoting mutton on Skye



Better hill sheep farms



Fighting liver fluke



Farm workers co-operative

BETTER HILL SHEEP FARMS

- A group of upland hill sheep farmers
- Had come to a dead-end in terms of progressing profitability
- We got them together with a facilitator to address this challenge
- Thought the issue was genetics, was actually sales and marketing
- Taking a supply chain approach to address problems
- Group going ahead to self-fund communications/marketing resource

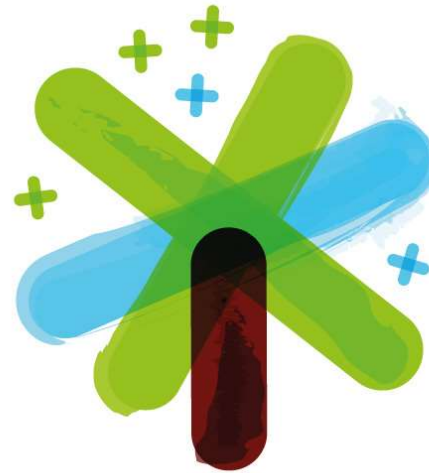
ORGANIC OILSEED RAPE

- A group of organic farmers in Aberdeenshire
- There is a market for organic oilseed rape – as a protein source - to reduce reliance on soya and other costly proteins
- But there is a lack of confidence in producers to supply this market
- Got them together with researchers, feed processor, and specialist crop growers, to identify challenges and opportunities
- Went to Sweden on a learning journey
- Trialling this year as an intercrop with legumes – to address fertility – also addresses biodiversity and climate change challenges

MANY OTHERS...

- Land matching service
 - Industrial hemp
 - Glampshire!
 - Woodchip for bedding
 - Net zero Arran
 - Sugar beet for bioethanol
 - Block Chain for Oats
- Ultimately - no bounds on what innovation is, or where it goes

Rural
Innovation
Support Service



Reflections on RISS

- Very aware this is new! – really important to **reach out to others as we go:**
 - UK Farmer Led Innovation Network (FLIN) Steering Group Member
 - Linked in with LIAISON H2020 project – case study
 - Partners reaching out to other others through H2020.
 - Strengthened links with EIP funding in Scotland

Reflections on RISS (1)

- *Moved beyond low hanging fruit – reflecting much more the needs of farm businesses.*
- *Greater recognition and acknowledgment by farmers.*
- *We are making a difference! – bringing dormant ideas to life, making links through the supply chain, progressing ideas – realising possibilities.*
- *We are unique – flexible, tailored support, genuine collaboration, not afraid to tackle big issues.*

Reflections on RISS (2)

- Busy surrounding landscape – overlaps, common goals? – what is the role of RISS?
- Striking the right balance between brokerage & subject matter expertise
- Understanding our ‘legacy’ – attributing business change to RISS – communication & evaluation key
- Climate change key focus for 2020 – workshop.

Future?

- Farm businesses need to be able to both mitigate and adapt to impacts of climate change, they need to do more to enhance biodiversity as well as work to ensure that they are profitable.
- Fostering collaboration and new ways of working will be key to success. – there is role for Innovation Support
- There is a role for innovation support as part of enhanced agriculture (rural) knowledge innovation system (AKIS)
Enhanced AKIS.
- AKIS workshop in Spring 2020 to bring current AKIS actors together.

<https://www.innovativefarmers.org/welcometoriss>

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