

Fostering agroecological transition in Rwanda through farmer-centred social learning and knowledge co-creation

Authors: Shu-Wei Chow¹, Maria Gerster-Bentaya¹, Hycenth Tim Ndah¹, Beatriz Soledad Herrera Sabillon¹, Andrea Knierim¹, Vicky Ruganzu², Marc Corbeels³

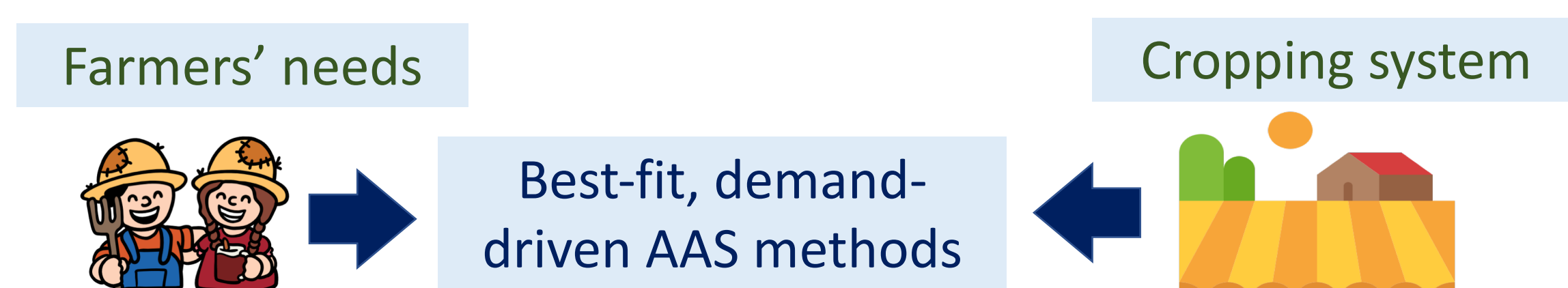
¹ University of Hohenheim (Germany)

² Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board (Rwanda)

³ French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD)

Background

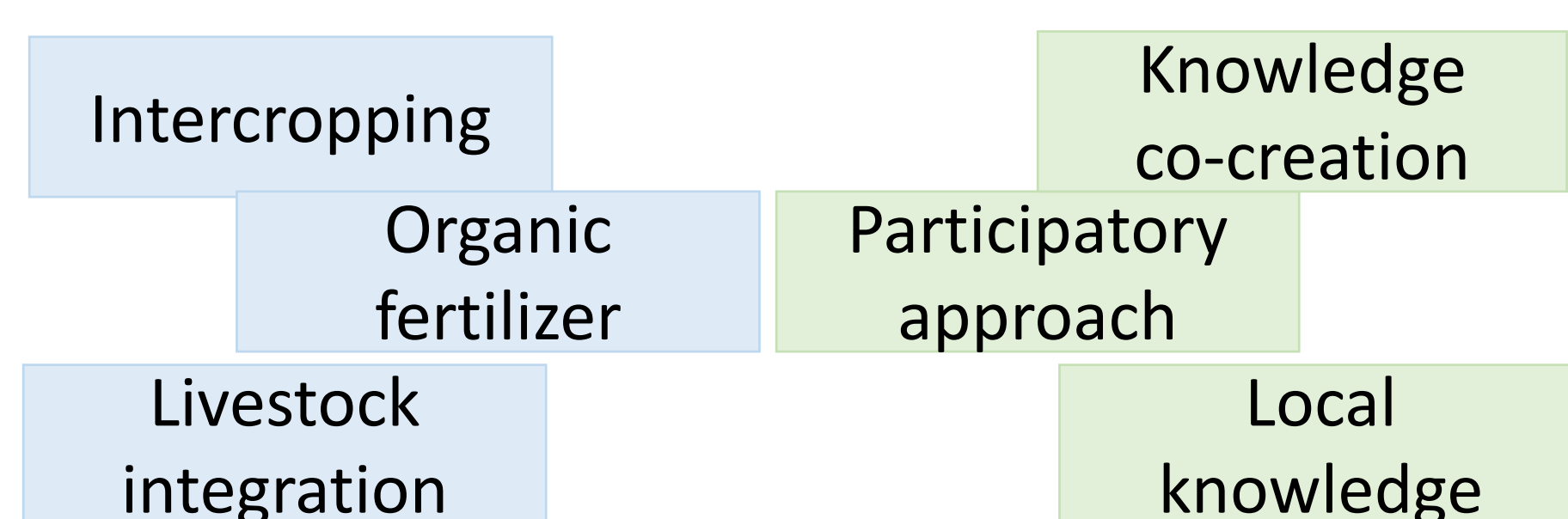
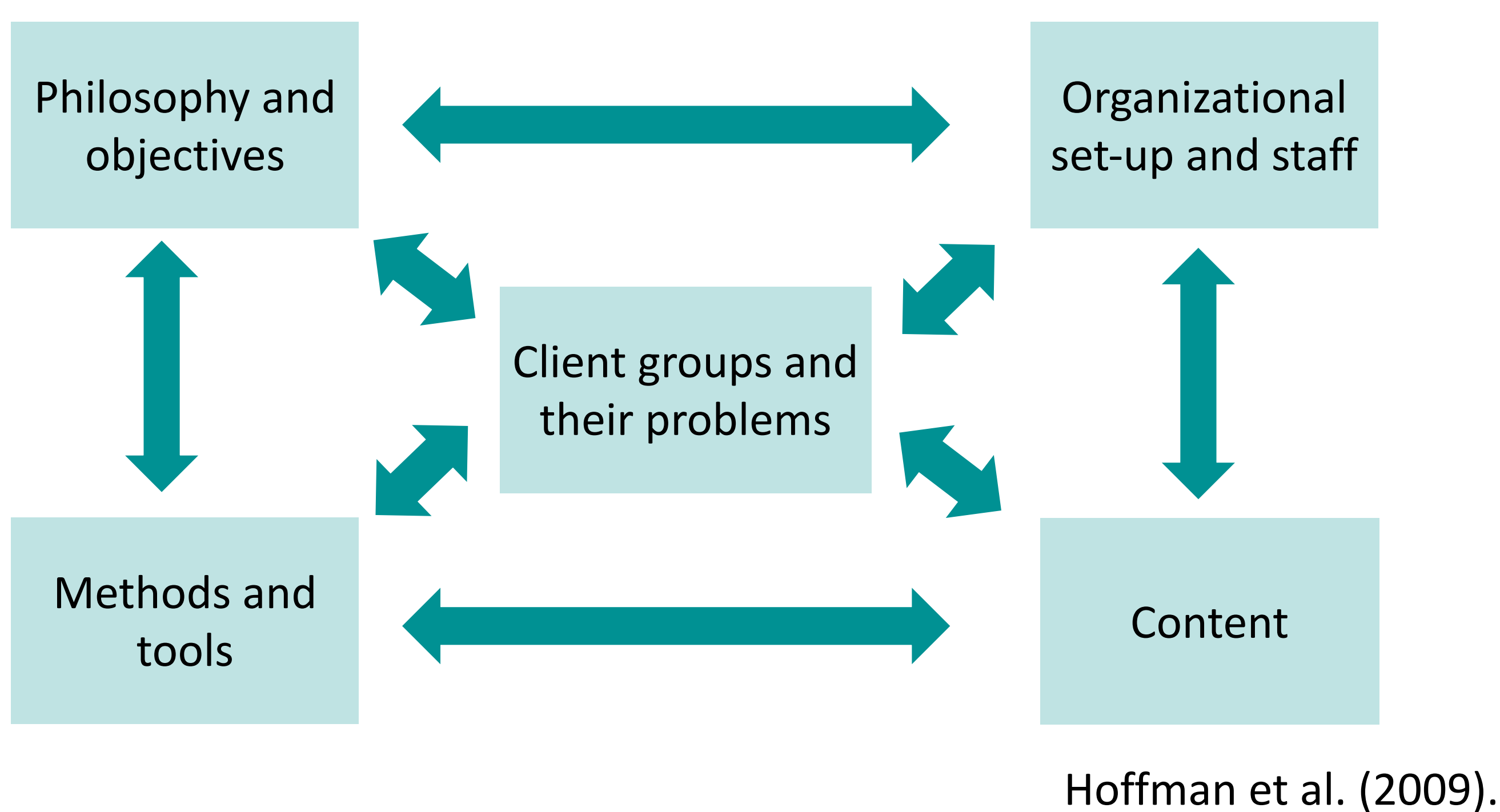
- Agroecology solves sustainability challenges by promoting site-specific farming practices and participatory knowledge exchange.
- AAS in Rwanda is influenced by the Crop Intensification Program and farmers have limited rights to express their knowledge needs.
- AAS methods should be “demand-driven” and best fit



Objective

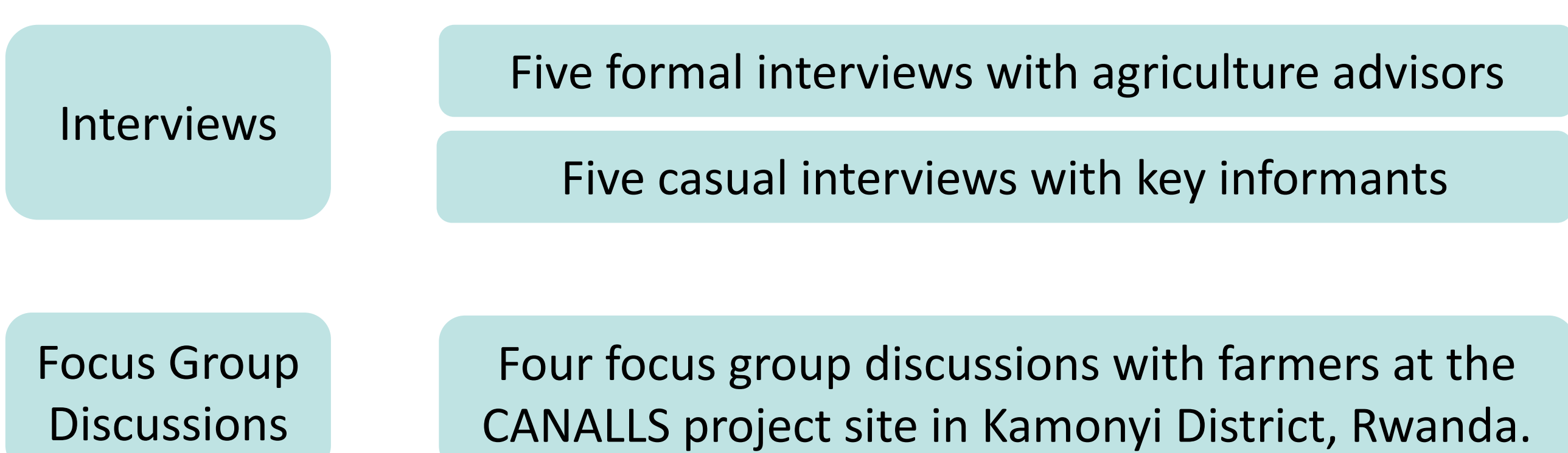
- Examine the strengths and needs for current advisory methods.
- Propose guidelines for more demand-driven and contextualized advisory methods to support agroecological transition in Rwanda

Conceptual Framework: Extension Approach Model



- Perceive agroecology as a scientific research approach, a social political movement, and a set of practices
- Agroecology as both an advisory objective and advisory content.

Methods

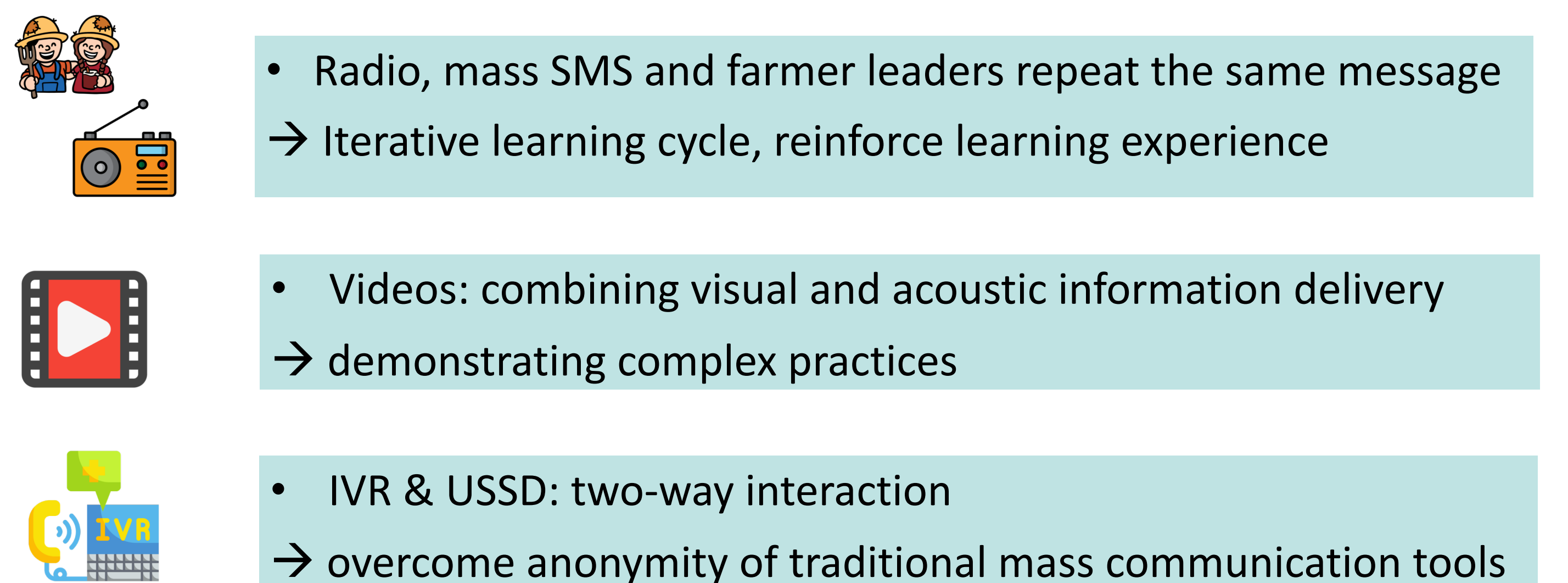


Results

- Farmer-to-farmer advisory



- Mass media communication and digital tools



* Abbreviations

- SMS: Short Message Service
- IVR: Interactive Voice Response
- USSD: Unstructured supplementary service data

Discussion

- Challenge: limited knowledge on digital tools in rural areas
→ Training on digital devices through social learning, starting with small groups
- Challenge: farmers are not aware of the importance of participation
→ Reflecting “decentralized extension personnel structure, top-down content design”
→ Suggestion: encourage farmers to participate in co-creating advisory messages via citizen science platform

Conclusion

- AAS should be embedded within farmer groups and farmer-to-farmer advisory.
- Digital advisory: great potential but requires participative content co-creation
- Citizen science network fosters bottom-up knowledge co-creation and social learning between farmers.
- Farmer-to-farmer advisory sessions could serve as occasion for knowledge sharing.
- Future research could focus on
 - Assessing farmers' motivation for participating in knowledge co-creation process.
 - Observing farmers' interaction with advisors and other farmers.

Acknowledgement

This work was funded by the European Union under GA no. 101083653. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. The European Union cannot be held responsible for them.