



Background & Objectives

The Problem:

Rural areas in Europe are facing similar problems:

- An ageing population
- High unemployment
- Lack of adaptive potential to the global market

Policy Strategy at EU level:

The Lisbon Strategy

- Aims to make Europe the most competitive, knowledge-based society in the world
- Focuses on jobs and economic growth
- Promotes innovation as a precondition to reach these goals

RAPIDO Objectives

To facilitate innovation and knowledge transfer in EU rural areas with a special focus on agriculture, forestry and food industry through the following approaches:

1. Analysis of current processes & actors
2. Identification of key actors & sectors
3. Development of scientific research on which to base future policy decisions to integrate the Lisbon Strategy objectives into rural development policies

Approach & Activities: RAPIDO Work Packages

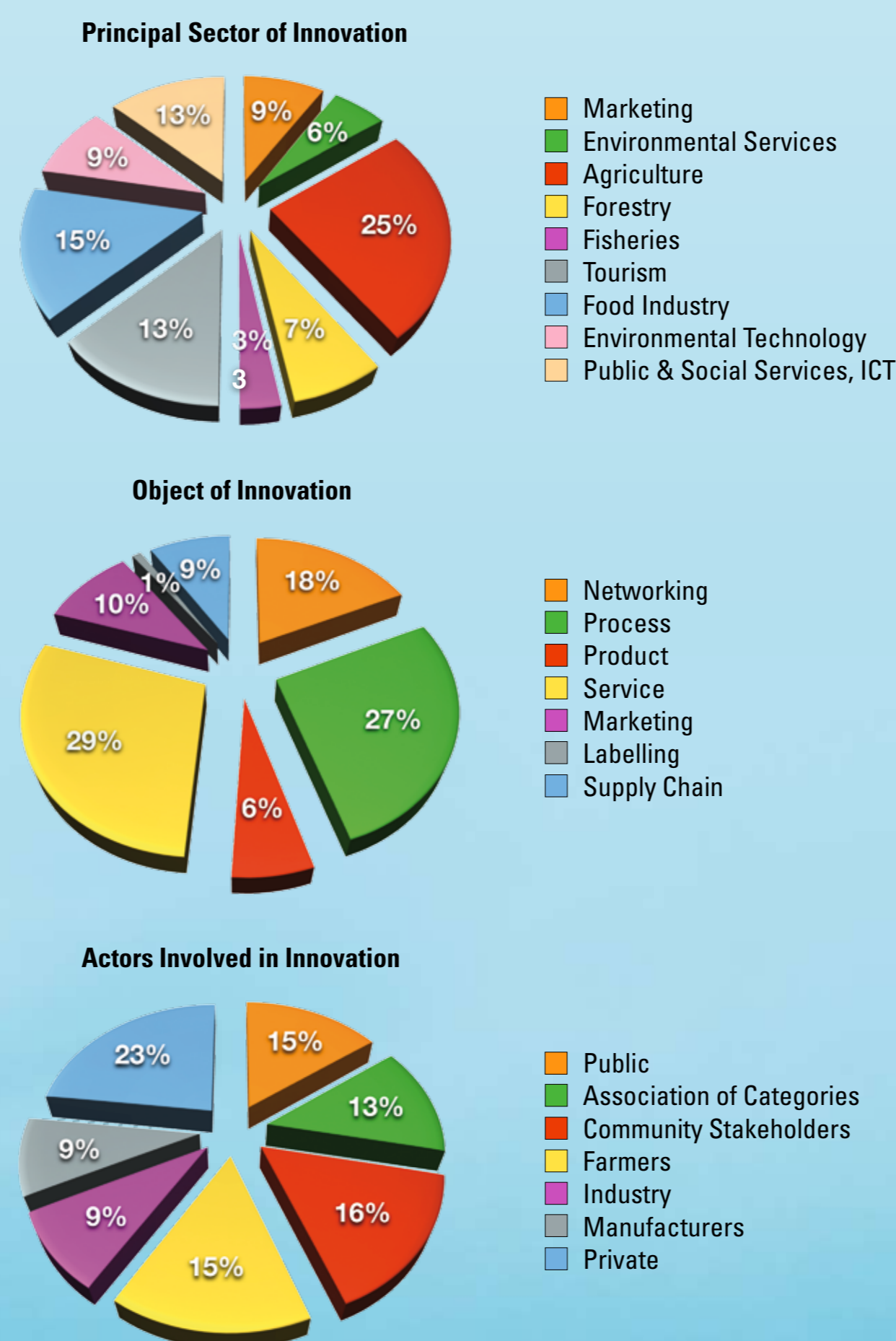
1. Identification of best practice examples for innovation in rural areas in the EU-27
2. Review of key areas for innovation in agriculture, forestry and food industry
3. Identification of sectors where innovation could help to create employment in rural areas
4. Review of processes and roles of different actors (public/private) to foster innovation
5. Review of environmental technology initiatives
6. Summary of the most efficient methods to transfer knowledge
7. Two workshops on innovation and knowledge transfer in rural development, focusing on policy recommendations for future research and policy development
8. Project management and dissemination

First results

Best practice examples of innovative initiatives in 17 European countries have been evaluated. First results show that most of these 67 initiatives occur in the agriculture sector, followed by food industry, tourism, ICT and services.

Innovative services and process innovations appear to be the most frequent objects of innovation considered in these examples. Among the actors, private stakeholders comprising investors, service providers, tourism operators etc. are most frequently involved.

The figures illustrate the distribution of these initiatives according to the principal sector, type of actor and object of innovation implemented in these examples.



Output

The RAPIDO project aims to provide its results to a wide spectrum of interested end users, including EU and national policy makers, farmers and industry associations, rural NGOs and community groups etc. Project activities will be disseminated through the project website, which will feature policy briefs and scientific reports on topics such as:

- Best practices for rural innovation across Europe
- Role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) within the innovation process
- Key factors for successful knowledge transfer mechanisms in rural areas
- Policy recommendations on how to facilitate innovation and on which sectors to focus future investments.

Co-ordinator:



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