

# **The SDGs and the European research and societal impact challenges –**

***with special reference to agro-food and the bio-economy in Europe***

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Resilience Center

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EURAGRI

Aalborg University

Oslo, 24 September 2018

# 21 workshop participants

- 7 – EURAGRI
- 7 – agro – food researchers
- 2 - Social science researchers
- 1 NGO
- 1 Research funder
- 3 COM DG-agri and DG R&I

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# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

17 GOALS TO TRANSFORM OUR WORLD



# Concerns to be discussed

- Research strategies have to take all these goals into account
- New considerations of how to evaluate IMPACT
- What types of impact?
- Methods to assess these impacts
- Scaling level considerations

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# Concerns (continued)

- The broader understanding of societal impacts
- Being open for new discipline contributions AND combinations of trans-disciplinary kinds
- New project partners and thus new research combinations
- Approaches with regard to co-production of knowledge.

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# **I. Challenges of the SDGs and their relation to agriculture and food issues**

(“The societal challenge” issue)

- The multiple dimensions of the SDGs
- The special concerns for the European agro/food/fishing sector
- How the societal impacts could be perceived and judged?

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# Alain Billand



## SDGs compromise

- Everything that hurts was taken out
- Private sector not mentioned
- Global, not just developing countries

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# Consumption of food most important for sustainability

- Necessary to transform food industry
  - Implementation indicators on diet
  - Not 'green' but health policy
  - Eating is a social moment, not just calories
  - Researchers prefer territory as baseline but rather foodsystem and health
- But also production sector – change entire pathway (not less industrialisation but more respect for human body)



## **II. How to know that the chosen approaches and potential results are relevant to the agro-food issues and challenges?**

(The “process and assessment” issue)

- To discuss the different strategic approaches in different countries
- Different approaches in different research organisations
- The issue of integration of approaches and increased overall reflexivity capacity



# Olivier le Gall

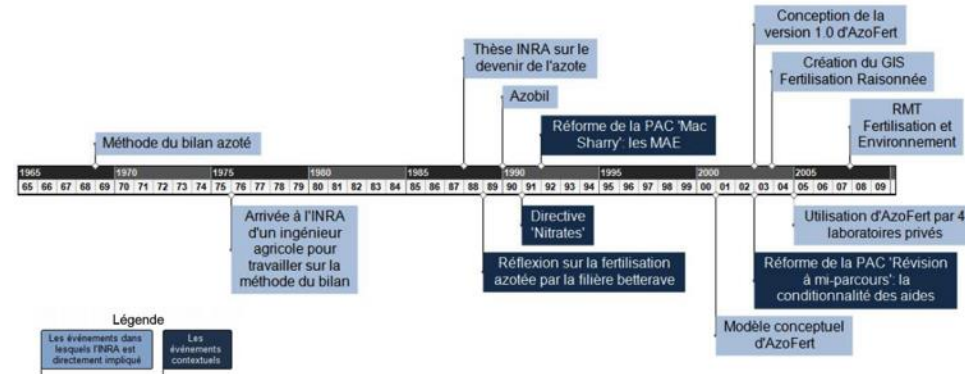


- Research minister's strategy
- SDGs - strategy mean for international cooperation
- Had to be merged ([2025.inra.fr/en](https://2025.inra.fr/en))
- But food system under major transition

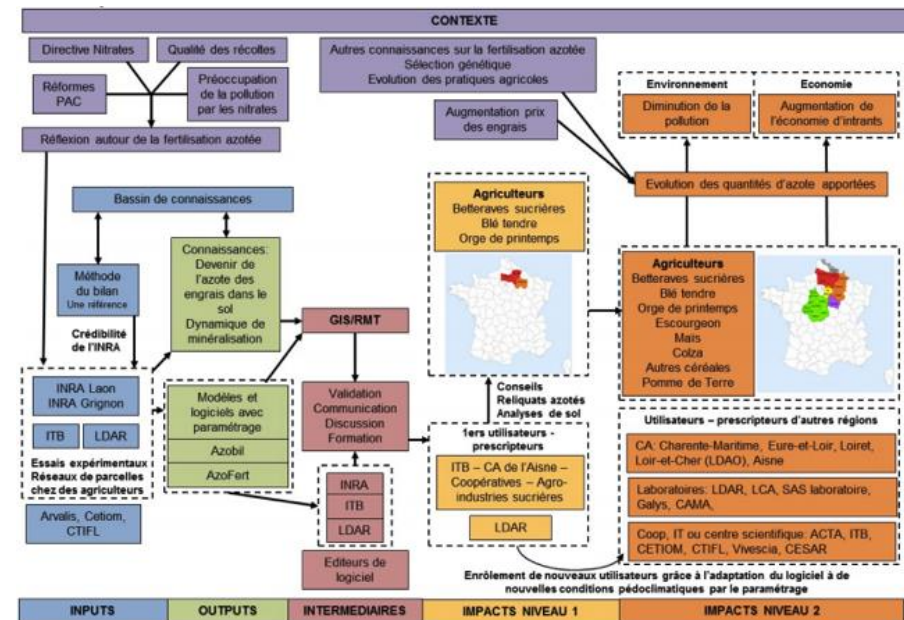
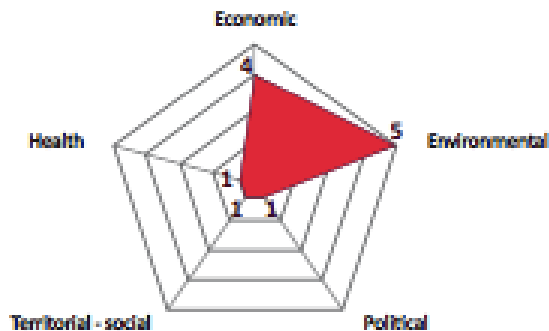
# From research to outcomes

(see <http://www6.inra.fr/asirpa>)

- ❖ Impact of public Ag research:
  - ❖ (Complementary to an Internal Return Rate approach)
  - ❖ Takes about 20 years
  - ❖ Requires excellent & international standard of research
  - ❖ Needs partnerships and ready-to-adopt end-users
  - ❖ Etc.



## Decision-support tool for Nitrate fertilization



# **20 yrs needed for impact - only 12 yrs timeline for SDGs (2030)**

Who is responsible to increase the use of knowledge?  
Research – Policy?

- Difficult to design programmes about these issues
  - Greater integration of research & innovation
  - Research on innovation processes needed
  - Participatory research
- ("We don't do it and we don't know, how to do it.")
- Indicators and their flexibility

# Impact

## Agriculture

- Many beneficiaries
- Not one big industry
- No governance for innovation (or too much)

## Territories

- There is government & decision making
- Increased production attention
- Limited consumer attention



# III. Distributed roles of involved actors?

(The "actor" issue)

- Examine the respective frameworks for  
*governments,* *private sector actors*  
*pressure groups,* *citizens*
- How to frame the continued reflectivity process?
- How to integrate actors constructively?
- How to understand the different roles of actors?





# Knowledge Brokerage for Sustainable Development

**Distributed roles of involved actors?**



Norma Schönherr

a.Prof. Dr. André Martinuzzi

WU Vienna, Institute for Managing Sustainability

**[www.sustainability.eu](http://www.sustainability.eu)**



“There is little awareness of SDGs  
and little knowledge on how to  
engage.”



# How to bridge the gap?

## **Simplified approaches**

follow a linear model of knowledge flows and assume that the provision of correct information (science) automatically leads to a different decision (policy)

no real problem

## **Network-based approach**

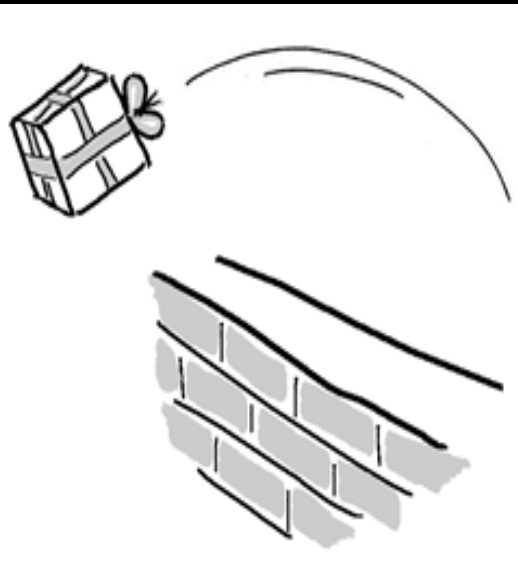
is are characterized by long-term interactions to build up trust mutual understanding of contexts, rationalities, perspectives, and interests

**need for insights & tools**

## **System theory based approaches**

see science and policy-making as self-referential and autopoietically closed social systems and discusses the fundamental limits of knowledge transfer

no real solution



TO UNDERSTAND WHAT  
**RECURSION IS,**  
YOU MUST FIRST  
UNDERSTAND RECURSION.

## Researchers

- Policymaking is primarily based in political values and beliefs, persuasion and negotiation, rather than scientific evidence and truth.

## Policy makers

- Scientific results cannot be directly translated into policy recommendations or decisions.



## **Business leaders**

- Science is committed to the pursuit of knowledge and truth-seeking. Application of this knowledge in practice is not necessarily a priority.

## **Activists/Civil society organisations**

- Most research strives for objectivity. The mission-orientation of CSOs and activists is sometimes hard for them to accommodate.

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# Co-creation

”Why, who, for whom, how good?”

but

Science has to maintain its independence!

# **IV. The case of the SDGs – policy and implementation**

(The "impact" issue)

- Political opportunities and dilemmas
- How could we create relevant frameworks in which society could accept outcomes?
- How to start processes of change?



# Bettina Rudloff

SWP

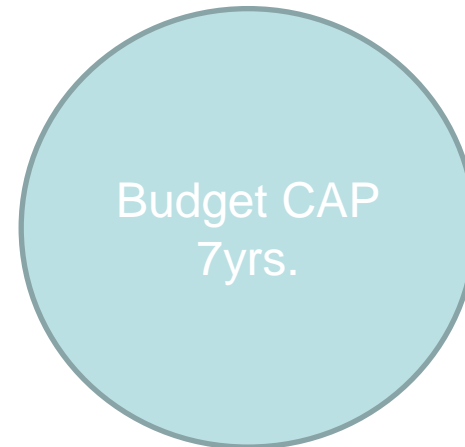
Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik  
German Institute for International and Security Affairs



- Understand logic of policy and policy making



SDGs



Budget CAP  
7yrs.

overall visional view

deep detailed expert program

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# Summary

- The SDGs are here – to stay
- The implementation in the research and innovation agenda is an operational challenge
- The co production of knowledge is there as an ambition – but need to be carefully handled
- The connection to policy is obvious – but calls for a number of considerations