

ELN-FAB



The first conference 'Towards a European Learning Network on Functional Agrobiodiversity', held in The Hague, the Netherlands on 23 and 24 June 2008, resulted in the decision to establish a European Learning Network on Functional AgroBiodiversity (ELN-FAB). ECNC in cooperation with DIVERSITAS agroBIODIVERSITY International Project Office (AB-IPO) took up the coordination of this network, and the Netherlands Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment provided funding. The first phase of the project started in January 2009 and will run until the end of 2009. Further support and financial participation is being sought in order to expand the Network in the longer term.

Vision

By 2030 the use of agrobiodiversity to enhance ecosystem services in a way that promotes sustainable agricultural production and contributes to sustainable rural development (triple P) is fully integrated into European agricultural policies and practices.

Mission

The European Learning Network on Functional Agrobiodiversity is founded to exchange knowledge and practical experience across country and language borders, between farmers and policy makers, scientists, businesses and NGOs, to enable fast and effective implementation of best practices. This will help to optimize agrobiodiversity benefits, promote sustainable agriculture and will encourage widespread uptake of biodiversity concepts, thereby also enhancing non-agronomic ecosystem services.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the project are to:

- stimulate dialogue, influence policy making and support implementation of best practices;
- generate and exchange knowledge on best and worst practices as well as on mechanisms and practices underlying functional agrobiodiversity;
- undertake outreach activities;
- provide advice to farmers, policy makers and scientists and other stakeholders.

Benefits for Stakeholders

The European Learning Network started in the 27 member countries of the EU and was extended beyond the scope of the EU27 with Switzerland and Norway.

The primary stakeholders in the ELN-FAB are those organizations and people in the geographical scope that represent:

- the land managers (e.g. farmers, landscape and nature managers);
- the research community dealing with functional agrobiodiversity;
- the policymakers at all levels from local to international.

The benefits for the respective stakeholder groups include, among others:

- improved capacity and skills for land managers to integrate functional agrobiodiversity into their management practices through e.g. easily accessible information on best practices, opportunities for dialogue with colleagues elsewhere in Europe, digested research results as basis for adaptive management;

- collaboration and knowledge exchange among researchers and between researchers and other stakeholders contributes to improved scientific understanding of the contribution of FAB to ecosystem services;

- enhanced possibilities for researchers to consult colleagues in their research field as well as land managers and policymakers to be in dialogue with;

- enhanced access to a growing number of field sites that can be used by researchers as living laboratories for the research on FAB;

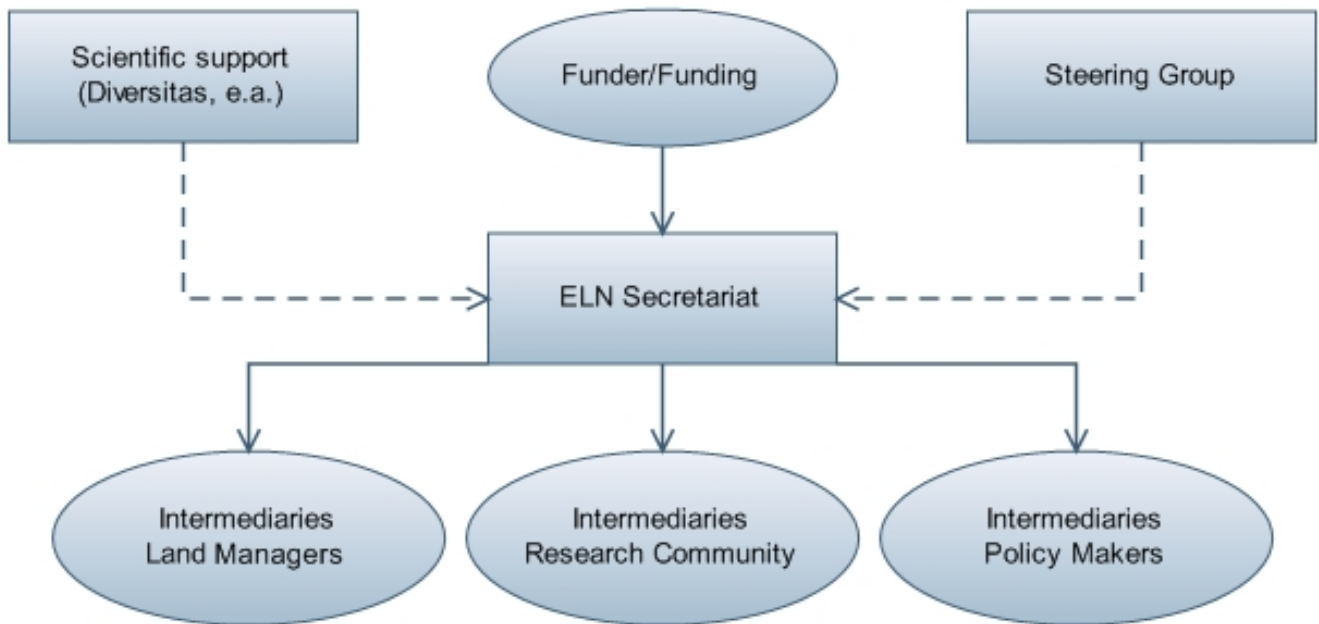
- greater impact on agricultural policies at national and European levels because of the large pool of evidence, practice and multipliers that jointly promote the integration of FAB in agricultural policies (notably, the opportunity to influence the CAP reform in 2013);

- greater opportunity for decision makers in agriculture to access knowledge and advice with regard to their policy field.

Implementation structure

ECNC hosts the Secretariat of the European Learning Network. ECNC and AB-IPO are partners within this project and complement each other to ensure successful realisation of the project.

The implementation structure of ELN-FAB is provided below.



The Steering Group of the initiative consists of 17 European scientists and policy makers of 13 different countries. The Steering Group is responsible for the overall management of the network. Source: <http://www.eln-fab.eu/index.php?do=page&lang=en&id=22>