



PROVIDE

PROViding smart DELivery of public goods by EU agriculture and forestry

Call identifier: H2020-ISIB-2014-2; Topic: ISIB-01-2014
 Funding scheme: Research and Innovation Action (RIA)
 Duration of the project: 01 September 2015 – 31 August 2018

Deliverable D6.3

The toolbox beyond PROVIDE protocol

Version: **draft 31 August 2018**

Organisation name of lead beneficiary for this deliverable:

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Dissemination Level		
PU	Public	X
PP	Restricted to other programme participants (Including the Commission Services)	
RE	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (Including the Commission Services)	
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (Including the Commission Services)	

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1 Background and objective

The PROVIDE project has implemented a combined research strategy exploring different aspects of the provision of public goods (mapping, valuation, policy evaluation) through and in-depth co-constructing process. In addition, the project has tried to summarise and collect the information produced by the project into a dissemination strategy addressing a variety of target actors, which allow, at the same time, to provide diffusion of academic knowledge, building of a shared understanding of the issues addressed by the Project and deliver of practical policy supporting information. The dissemination and exploitation strategy is closely merged with stakeholder dialogue in such a way as to guarantee incentives to collaboration from all parties involved. While the academic partners have contributed to the scientific discussion by presenting results to the academic world, the LSL and PSL members have represented a privileged means for dissemination towards public decision makers and stakeholders (as well as incorporating their perspectives into the Project). The plan for use and dissemination of foreground has been prepared as the Deliverable D2.6.

A core part of the impact strategy has been the development of a toolbox in work package WP6 and the exploration of the options for the continuation of the toolbox beyond the life of the project. This is specifically addressing task 6.4 “The toolbox beyond PROVIDE” (Lead: UNIBO; co-lead: ZALF).

The text of the task is reported below:

“Co-evolution of the toolbox with multi-level decision makers, land managers and stakeholders is a central vision/mission of PROVIDE. In order to identify multi-level governance demands and information needs of different end users the knowledge brokerage process will be carried out in the stakeholder involvement over the project lifetime, hence strongly connected to WP2 activities. Task 2.2 and task 6.4 will plan and harmonize their activities together, in order to carry out participation steps from the very beginning of the

project, that aim at building a network accompanying PROVIDE and its findings beyond project lifetime. Practical steps from task 6.4 are the survey on practical operational requirements in the time slot of task 6.2 conduction, and a tool prototype feedback round, either to be performed as a workshop or an online survey (around project month 30), including multi-level stakeholders as well as colleagues from related projects with emerging tools. Final activities will be developed in order to make the toolbox suitable and create a community committed to make it evolve after the end of the project. The specific approach will be selected with the stakeholder involved in the project, but a suitable option could be the combination of: a) establish a network of “project friends” (PROVIDE Community) that feed their experience/ideas over time; b) develop a practical co-construction mechanism in the form of a wiki project (people can register, contribute info, get info, etc.).”

The objective of this document is to summarise the insights gained during the project in exploring interest for the development of the PROVIDE toolbox and to illustrate potential pathways for future use and valorisation.

2 Basic structure and contents of the toolbox

The PROVIDE online policy toolbox is intended to facilitate the transfer of the project results into policy-relevant information for policy-makers and stakeholder at different policy levels (EU and regional level). The URL of the toolbox is <http://provideknowledgeplatform.eu/> and consists of 8 main elements:

1. Stakeholder portal (with all 13 case study leaders): include written and visual documentation of the stakeholder workshops, audio-visual material in national language and partly interactive discussion forums;
2. EU-wide mapping tool, including 12 data layers on different public goods as well as linkage to the spatial location of the case study areas of the EU-research projects CLAIM, PROVIDE and PEGASUS;
3. Case study region documentation: include region descriptions, pictures, local maps and summaries of the PG demand and supply and governance analysis;
4. Public goods: Overview and descriptions of five groups of public goods and linkage to individual case study results;
5. Valuation: Overview and descriptions of five groups of valuation methods and linkage to individual case study results;
6. Governance: Overview and descriptions of five groups of governance mechanisms and linkage to individual case study results;
7. Linkages to other relevant information sources;
8. Large collection and structured application of social media information (Twitter) in different positions in the tool: in case study region documentation and public goods overview (with all 13 case study leaders).

Full documentation about the tool's features and specification is available in Zasada et al. (2018a).

3 Approach to collect feedback and interest about the toolbox

The project approached the development of the toolbox trying to exploit the high level of stakeholder involvement in the project. Basic steps where:

- An analysis of existing tools and their use to avoid redundancies;
- Early identification of potential users at regional and European level, requirements and desired features;
- Structured feedback system: presentation of intermediate versions and collection of feedback from project partners, regional and EU-level stakeholders.

The framework and the activities carried out in preparation of the toolbox are fully documented in Zasada et al. (2018b).

In addition a short questionnaire was diffused at the international Stakeholder and expert network of the project asking the following questions:

- What is your opinion about the PROVIDE Knowledge Platform?
- What do you think the knowledge platform can be useful for?
- Can you think of any direct use in the context of (future) CAP implementation?
- Who do you expect to be the most likely users of the PROVIDE Knowledge Platform?
- Do you know of any initiative the PROVIDE Knowledge Platform could be connected to?
- What kind of user/service provider could possibly be interested in contributing to the management of the PROVIDE Knowledge Platform after the end of the project?
- Where / with which organisation or initiative could the PROVIDE Knowledge Platform be hosted?
- Which other information would you like to see included in the PROVIDE Knowledge Platform to strengthen its function as agricultural policy support?
- In which direction the PROVIDE Knowledge Platform should be further developed?
- Any other comments/remarks/suggestions?

4 Community of Practice (CoP) Embeddedness

Within the tool development process a number of functional design and implementation approaches have been envisioned and implemented, which should enhance the usability of the PROVIDE toolbox after the project lifetime:

Focus on practitioners and stakeholders: The toolbox has a strong content focus on specific regional issues (problem-analysis-governance solution), high degree of user-friendliness (scientific findings “translated” in easy-to-understand information) and the specific access for stakeholders (stakeholder portal; <http://provideknowledgeplatform.eu/stakeholder/>), where detailed documentation of the stakeholder process and much more material beyond this (mainly in national language).

Interactiveness: A major functional features are the thematic and regional social media (Twitter) feeds and the interactive user forum (which has been later dropped due to lacking moderators).

CoP Ownership: In the project a number of approaches have been carried out to identify the relevant Community of Practice, either at the regional or the EU-level. The idea was to link the toolbox as a whole or as parts to interested stakeholder, who will host the tool (or part of it), update content and use the tool as interactive communication and exchange tool. However, due to broad scope of the content related to various regional context, it was difficult to pursue regional stakeholders get involved.

5 Insights gained during the project

Co-construction of research and feed back to policy are proven to be a very relevant but also challenging task, as also proven by the co-construction process developed in PROVIDE. Some of the difficulties can be ascribed to the diversity of contexts across regions, recruitment and handling of stakeholders with multiple agendas and the flexibility (or lack of) of the research agenda.

In addition, the nature of public goods of the topic also reflects in the willingness to use information coming from research projects, with attention largely linked to existence of a policy framework requiring or encouraging action.

Many toolbox and knowledge platforms are not used or rarely used, or, if used, this is done largely by the scientific community itself. There may be several reasons for this, including the fact that scientific information to support policy making needs mediation by consultant and practitioners. Discrepancy between project and policy objectives and timing are also relevant.

The activities carried out during the PROVIDE project showed the policy relevance of the results and of the topics addressed. This includes estimated valued for public goods, case studies and practical examples to learn from and insights into potentially alternative mechanisms. This is especially relevant at the stage of policy design, so the use is highly dependent on policy cycle. However, stakeholders seemed more interested in the direct discussion of the results than in a toolbox itself. Also, when directly discussed at workshops, stakeholders pointed clearly to the need to have cases and easily accessible information, rather than sophisticated decision-making tools.

Based on end-user requirements (open access, high degree of outreach), we also have decided to develop the toolbox as a web-based knowledge platform. The specific “tool” value here, is the guide process of accessing information (problem-orientation leading to specific solutions) and linking to comparable solutions from other cases. It also provides an overview and comparison functions suiting EU policy makers and stakeholder (governance solutions) as well as scholars (methods set). Especially for EU-level users and scholars, the tool has made an attempt to link to web tools, which have been developed in other EU-projects (CLAIM & PEGASUS). Here, there is the opportunity to complement further linkages, if needed. This is described later more in detail.

6 Valorisation pathways

5.1 Intellectual Property Right (IPR) and exploitation

Any IPR will remain with the PROVIDE project partners according to Consortium Agreement. However, based on the information and feedback collected, and consistently with the practices experienced in evidence to support the provision of public goods by agriculture and forestry, it is not expected any commercial exploitation for the knowledge platform. If any initiative is taken in the future, partners that have contributed to it will be informed.

5.2 ZALF/UNIBO to bridge to new projects

ZALF and UNIBO have engaged in keeping the knowledge platform alive for a suitable time to allow the consideration of future exploitation opportunities through future projects. The platform remains hosted by ZALF. If for any reason ZALF would need to dismiss the platform, UNIBO would take charge of hosting.

5.3 Linked-in and local communities

PROVIDE ends up with a rich network of stakeholders at EU and local level, and through linked-in and twitter. Though participation has been not always continuous, this network is an asset allowing a wide involvement of actors in future initiatives. In particular local networks have involved a range of 150-200 stakeholders in four rounds of workshops plus final conferences. This has created a potential strong link to use for further valorisation of the platform.

5.4 Policy cycle

Interest by users will depend on the opportunities offered by the policy cycle. The end of PROVIDE comes in parallel with the proposals for the next CAP; however national and local administrations are rather in the stage of focusing on concluding spending in the current programming period.

Potentially the regulation proposals by the European Commission open space for a relevant innovation in public good provision including: the new delivery model, voluntary environmental measures in the first

pillar, merging between greening and conditionality and results based and collective approaches in agri-environmental schemes.

It is likely that a higher attention in support and also in the knowledge platform will be raised when current or revised proposals will arrive at the stage of local implementation. In this respect, project partners are committed to contribute to valorisation exploiting existing opportunities and current networks in order to promote the use of results through the platform.

5.5 Link with other research initiatives

The knowledge platform has built on the exploitation of case studies and insights from previous projects, in particular CLAIM and PEGASUS, following the strategy to promote collaboration among clusters of projects pursued by the European Commission.

This strategy will be further pursued through links to the currently funded projects LIFT (https://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/215945_en.html) and UNISECO (https://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/215949_it.html). Both projects include some of the PROVIDE partners.

In addition attention will be drawn on potential synergies/development in relation to the projects funded under the currently open call RUR-03 Contracts for effective and lasting delivery of agri-environmental public goods (<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/topics/rur-03-2018.html>).

This will allow mainly to:

- Better link the knowledge platform to the research community;
- Enrich case studies and data;
- Provide a better geographical coverage;
- Complement with additional types of information.

5.6 Link to EIP AGRI and ENRD

Link with EIP-AGRI and ENRD have been sought since the beginning of the project. Articles have been published on the EIP-Agri newsletters and ENRD has participated to the PROVIDE events. There is a potential interest by ENRD to disseminate the link to the knowledge platform through their website. This option has been discussed but not finalised yet.

5.7 Potential future projects under H2020 / EU-Life / Interreg

Contacts have been taken with different potential actors for the development of the platform into a more practical instrument targeting funding in H2020. Following the suggestion of the officer/policy officer one of the focuses have been the H2020 topic: RUR-15-2018-2019-2020 - Thematic networks compiling knowledge ready for practice (<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/topics/rur-15-2018-2019-2020.html>)

Precise contacts are not revealed in this document for confidentiality issues in the potential stage of network building during the preparation of eventual proposals.

Also options for Life/Interreg projects have been discussed with selected stakeholders, with no concrete proposals for the moment but potential future consideration.

7 Conclusions

The use of toolboxes and supporting information in PGs-related policies and decision making is a difficult task, which usefulness is mostly not straightforward for potential users. While there is a demand for practical examples for inspiration, the relevance of the information collected is linked to policy cycles and is normally filtered by consultants and practitioners.

In spite of the early involvement of the community of potential users, the main suggestion is to delegate the further development of this kind of tool to public funding. So the prevailing strategy is made of the following:

- Continue to develop the knowledge platform using public funding and integrating contribution from different projects;
- Link to the main EU-wide and country-level institutions providing good practices and support;
- Continue disseminating the information about the platform through the network established locally, through twitter and linked in.

8 References

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