



PRACTICE ABSTRACT NR. 26

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Tacit and explicit knowledge: Their usefulness for changing practices

Since the 1950s, the promotion of the conventional agricultural model has been based on the dissemination of standardised technical messages from researchers to farmers, supported by agricultural advisors. The technical knowledge disseminated is part of a category of knowledge termed 'explicit' because it can be easily formalised and transferred. Farmer-led innovation requires a second type of knowledge, termed 'tacit'. Contrary to explicit knowledge, tacit knowledge is acquired through learning-by-doing, problem-solving and practical experiences. The farmer observes changes in his environment, identifies possible problems, searches for and experiments with solutions, corrects for errors, then chooses the most appropriate solution for him. By doing so, the farmer develops his skills and innovative capability. Exchanges with other farmers within a community of practice and beyond foster the accumulation of tacit knowledge by allowing the entry of new members with different knowledge, by developing deliberation and legitimation processes. Tacit knowledge can then be converted into explicit knowledge to facilitate its dissemination. In this process, farmers are considered as experts and agricultural advisors become facilitators of the exchanges. Acknowledging the central role of tacit knowledge can thus help the different stakeholders - farmers, advisors and policymakers - to co-construct innovative technical references and agricultural services that meet the needs of each farmer and that are adapted to an increasingly constrained and uncertain environment.

For more see <https://www.agrilink2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/AgriLink-conceptual-framework.-Theory-Primers.13.pdf>

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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This Practice Abstract is derived from one of 27 Theory Primers that support the conceptual framework which underpins the AgriLink project. Each Theory Primer introduces a specific theoretical topic in the conceptual framework and is intended primarily for academic readers. The Practice Abstracts derived from each Theory Primer aim to make these topics more accessible and understandable to a wider non-academic audience.

The AgriLink Conceptual Framework and all Theory Primers can be found here: <https://www.agrilink2020.eu/our-work/conceptual-framework/>



## ABOUT AGRILINK

AgriLink is a multi-actor project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. It brings together 16 partners from 13 countries, including universities, applied research institutes, advisors and consultants from public organisations, private SMEs, a farmer-based organisation and specialists in communication and distance learning.

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All the Practice Abstracts prepared by the AgriLink project in the EIP-AGRI common format can be found here: <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/find-connect/projects/agrilink-agricultural-knowledge-linking-farmers>