



Outcomes of the BiodivERsA/FACCE-JPI Workshop of 25-26 April 2018, Brussels: Opportunities for future collaboration

1. Rationale and background

On 25-26 April 2018, BiodivERsA and FACCE-JPI and organised a joint Workshop with European funding agencies associated to each initiative as well as with scientists, European Commission representatives, policymakers and other stakeholders in order to explore new opportunities for collaboration. The two initiatives are willing to further work together as there are strong bi-directional links between agriculture and biodiversity. Indeed, agriculture and food security strongly depend on biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides. At the same time, agricultural practices influence biodiversity. In the face of climate change, pressures on biodiversity and agro-ecosystem services are expected to increase, whereas biodiversity may offer Nature-based Solutions to help actors in the agricultural sector tackle climate change related challenges.

In addition, members from both Initiatives would benefit from addressing common challenges jointly, in a more systemic and integrated way, as this would foster greater cost-efficiencies, increase their visibility and enhance their impact on policymaking (e.g., EU CAP reform, Biodiversity Strategy, Climate policy, SDGs...), biodiversity conservation and management practices and climate-smart and biodiversity-friendly agricultural practices.

BiodivERsA and FACCE-JPI have collaborated successfully in the past, by launching jointly a [call for research proposals on “Promoting synergies and reducing trade-offs between food supply, biodiversity and ecosystem services”](#) in 2013-2014, which resulted in the funding of 10 transnational research projects (to be completed by end 2018).¹ The objective of the April 2018 workshop was to explore topics and approaches for new collaboration.

2. Main outcomes of the workshop

2.1 Thematic priorities

Both initiatives have identified the following main **overlapping research priorities** at the nexus of the agriculture, biodiversity and climate change fields:

- (a) **Agro-ecology:** its potential for improving agriculture sustainability and the status of agrobiodiversity (also encompassing nature-based solutions for agricultural systems)
- (b) **Land use allocation:** implications of land sparing vs. land sharing for food supply, mitigation and adaptation to climate change and biodiversity

Additional thematic priorities discussed during the workshop include: the role of precision farming for sustainable agricultural development and biodiversity preservation; changing consumer behaviour towards more sustainable and “biodiversity-friendly” products; lessons from traditional farming; valuation of ecosystem services in the agricultural sector; improving governance systems (this corresponds to the second sub-topic of the joint 2014 Call); and modelling and scenarios.

¹ The call focused on the following questions: (T1) To what extent can biodiversity better support agroecosystems / agricultural production systems in terms of multi-functionality and outcomes in a global change context? (T2) Which policies and governance systems can promote the emergence of agro-ecosystems / agricultural production systems benefiting from and beneficial to biodiversity and ecosystem services?

2.2 Collaborative activities

Workshop participants discussed different possible modalities for collaboration, as outlined below.

Short-term opportunities

(a) Valorisation of the key results of the 2013-2014 Joint Call

The two initiatives could organise joint valorisation activities for the projects funded under the 2013-2014 Call in order to **promote research uptake** and impact. These could consist in organising joint valorisation workshop(s) in late 2018 or 2019 for national/EU policymakers and practitioners and developing joint policy and practice briefs.

(b) Participation in the 2019 BiodivERsA ERA-NET COFUND on Biodiversity and Climate Change

BiodivERsA could allow interested FACCE-JPI funders to participate in the main co-funded Call and other activities. Under such a scenario, FACCE-JPI funders' interests could be taken into account in one of the themes identified for the call if a critical mass of additional funders is reached.

(c) Participation in the 2019 FACCE-JPI ERA-NET COFUND on Food Systems and Climate Change

FACCE-JPI's ERA-NET Cofund Food Systems and Climate Change could be opened up to BiodivERsA funders. In addition, coordination between BiodivERsA activities and the proposed European Joint Programme on Agricultural Soil Management (2019) could be sought.

Long-term opportunities

(d) Development of a common vision for collaboration

The two initiatives could elaborate a common vision that will underpin their future collaboration. The vision will identify common research priorities and develop a **common understanding of key concepts** (e.g., agro-ecology, nature-based solutions in agricultural areas, precision agriculture, etc.). This work could feed the future revision of both initiatives' Strategic Research Agendas. A joint Working Group made up of representatives from both initiatives could be set up to carry out this work in late 2018. The vision will among others consider the collaborative options below.

(e) Launch of a new, non-cofunded Joint Call

A new joint call could be developed by the two initiatives to **address remaining research gaps**, e.g., in "agro-ecology and the use of nature-based solutions to improve the resilience and adaptive capacity of agricultural systems and the status of agrobiodiversity"; or "Land use allocation: implications of land sparing/sharing for food supply and biodiversity". The exact focus would have to be defined by a joint Working Group of funders, and supported by a critical mass of funders. Collaboration could also be sought with other partners (e.g., CoreOrganic) depending on the topic(s) chosen. Given the current implementation plan of the two initiatives, a new joint call could not be launched before 2021. If relevant, it could be developed as part of the additional activities of the 2019 BiodivERsA COFUND Action on "Biodiversity and Climate Change", which would allow coverage of the call secretariat costs.

(f) Set up of a Knowledge Hub

The two initiatives could consider setting up a joint Knowledge Hub to conduct a systematic literature review (also mobilising knowledge arising from national or international projects not funded by BiodivERsA or FACCE-JPI) and review lessons from practical experiences. The objective would be to **synthesise available knowledge and identify a "menu" of best practices in support of sustainable and biodiversity-friendly agricultural practices** (to be implemented at different scales). These practices could relate to the options put forward in the context of the EU CAP reform.

The Hub could be composed of experts from the BiodivERsA and FACCE-JPI communities. Involvement of practitioners early on would help ensure that the work of the Knowledge Hub focuses on the most promising measures, in terms of delivering economic, social and environmental, including biodiversity, benefits and in terms of acceptability and uptake.

(g) Organisation of joint outreach activities in support of the CAP reform

Both initiatives could consider organising joint outreach activities to support the **uptake of the Knowledge Hub's outputs by a wider community of policymakers and stakeholders**. Such activities could include organising a Conference targeted at EU and national policymakers, in view of feeding into the preparation and/or implementation of the CAP reform. In addition, sub-national workshops could be organised to promote the uptake of the most promising agri-environmental measures at the regional level.² In both cases policymakers involved in the elaboration or implementation of CAP-related National Strategic Plans, outlining the measures to be put in place out of those proposed in the EU CAP legislation, would be invited.

(h) Other

During the workshop, some instruments were considered to be less relevant in the context of collaboration between two initiatives, to be of less interest, or to have lower priority because other institutions cover them already (e.g., TAP, summer courses and other training activities for young researchers). However, in the course of developing and implementing the proposed Vision, these or new opportunities could be included if considered relevant at that time.

3. Next steps

The BiodivERsA and FACCE-JPI member-countries agreed to consider two options for collaboration:

- An opportunity-based collaboration option, which would focus on the short-term and would consist in developing collaborative activities by building on ongoing or already planned BiodivERsA and FACCE-JPI activities for 2018-20
- A longer-term strategic collaboration option, which would build on the development of (i) a Common Vision for the collaboration; and (ii) a joint Action Plan for collaborative activities.

These two options were discussed by the FACCE-JPI Governing Board (during a meeting on 31 May – 1 June 2018, Cyprus) and the BiodivERsA General Assembly meeting (during a meeting on 28 June 2018).

BiodivERsA and FACCE-JPI will organise consultations in view of elaborating a framework for the long-term collaboration between the two initiatives.

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² Important notice: given the uncertainty related to the precise timing of the CAP reform and of the described activities of the Knowledge Hub, as well as in light the upcoming legislative proposal to be presented by the European Commission to the European Parliament and Council of Ministers in late May 2018, the above activities related to preparing best practices and transferring results at European and National levels may be adapted as needed to ensure its relevance to policy-making or policy implementation.