



Barriers to plant team uptake: the need for advisory services

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Intercropping adds a level of complexity to crop management systems that provides benefits but also challenges when it comes to crop management and other decisions. As such, it may be considered a more knowledge-intensive system than high-input monoculture cropping.

DIVERSify has worked to identify traditional knowledge, on-farm innovations, and current best practice in intercropping systems. At the beginning of the project, between June 2017 and February 2018, 15 participatory stakeholder workshops were conducted in 11 countries throughout the different pedo-climatic zones of the EU as well as Kenya and Palestine. Barriers to uptake of plant teams were also identified and participants were invited to engage in on-farm trials.

The workshops provided evidence that plant teams are already in use in practice, with a wide range of potential combinations being identified in the different countries. Yet barriers to uptake and implementation were also identified. Pre-determined barriers were discussed and categorised in relation to perceptions and the availability of solutions.

- Lack of available knowledge and advice was the most identified unsolved barrier, with 9 out of 11 countries identifying it as a barrier. Stakeholders communicated a need for further evidence and explanation around where, what, and how to implement plant teams and a desire for free, readily available, and independent advice that is tailored to their own situation and conditions.
- Harvest complexity was identified as an unsolved barrier in 8 of the 11 stakeholder workshop countries. Particularly uneven maturation dates, the need to adjust combine harvesters in relation to different grain sizes and the increased labour and time involved in this and other management operations.
- Processing complexity was identified as an unsolved barrier in 7 of the 11 stakeholder workshop countries, including issues with separation, drying and storage all potentially leading to increased production costs. It was noted that this depends on the end-market and intended use of the crop.
- Other areas that stakeholders identified as barriers to uptake were complexities in seed choice (and potentially higher seed costs), drilling, weed, pest and disease management options, lack of available markets and lack of a supportive policy environment.

> Find out more, including references, at: plant-teams.org