



Horizon 2020
Programme



D4.10 – Evaluation of the project

Project Data		Deliverable Data	
Project	Sm@RT	Deliverable identifier	D4.10
Project	Small Ruminant Technology - Precision Livestock Farming and Digital Technology for Small Ruminants	Deliverable beneficiary	lead MRI
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1. Executive summary

Sm@RT is a multinational project committed to sharing knowledge and improving uptake of new digital technologies, which will help to increase the efficiency and sustainability of small ruminant (SR) farming systems in Europe and beyond.

Sm@RT has been collating information on all digital technologies used across small ruminant farming in Europe, then disseminating this to end-users through a series of national and transnational workshops. In order to understand what end-users think of the project and our dissemination strategy to date, a survey has been designed and distributed.

1. Introduction

The Sm@RT project is at the halfway point and so we wanted to understand stakeholders pros and cons of the project and the knowledge exchange approach adopted. This would give us time to fine-tune any knowledge exchanges (KE) planned for the final section of the project to maximise our outreach and effectiveness.

2. Survey

The survey was designed by the Sm@RT partners, with 10 multiple choice questions covering basic information such as country and stakeholder type, although no personal details were collected (e.g. name, address or farm etc). A first set of questions was designed to collect information about levels of participation in Sm@RT workshops and people's level of satisfaction about the project as a whole. We also asked whether the project was beneficial at a national and/or European level and main benefits of being involved with the project. A final set of questions explored how attendees felt about the communication and knowledge transfer of the solutions and whether they had obtained new knowledge and if they would make any changes as a result of participation in the project. The survey was initially written in English, then translated into each of the languages of the project.

The survey was distributed to attendees of the 4th transnational workshop (TNWS4) in Norway in June 2023 as a hard copy and completed surveys were collected at the end of the meeting. The answers were translated into English by each network facilitator and collated by UNIDEB for analysis.

The survey is shown in Appendix 1.

3. Results

A total of 76 surveys were completed, with each country of the project represented (no. of completed surveys per country: Norway = 7, UK = 7, Estonia = 10, Hungary = 7, Israel = 9, Ireland = 5, Italy = 8 and France = 20). There were more French farmers at the event as France regroups all 3 production systems (meat sheep, dairy goat and dairy sheep), whereas other countries only have 1-2 systems.

The survey covered a range of stakeholders, as shown in Figure 1. Note the total does not add up to 100 as some people answered in more than 1 category. Just over 50% of responders were farmers with the remaining people either researchers, advisors or 'other'.



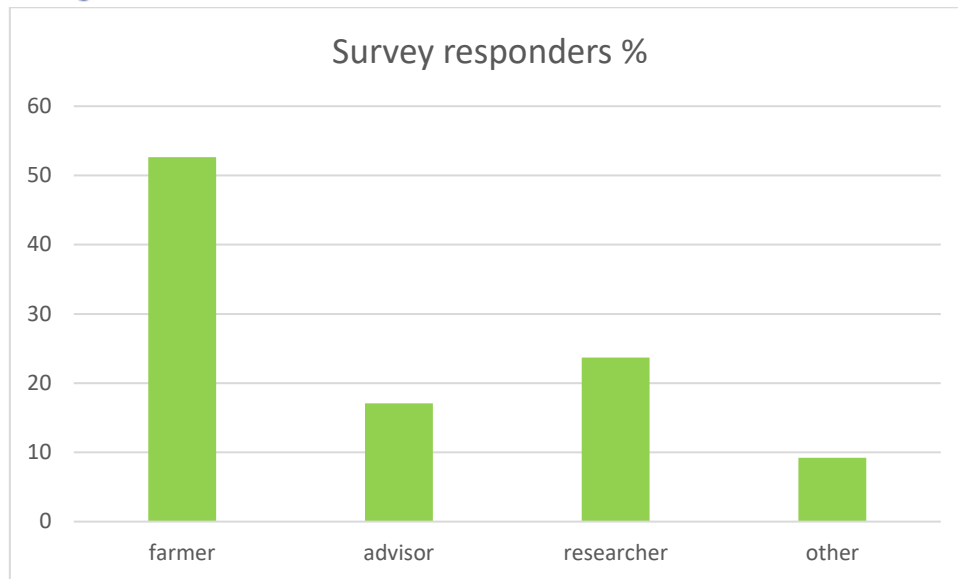


Figure 1. The type of people that took part in the survey, as a percentage.

The vast majority of people (75%) had not participated in any other Sm@RT workshops, and all participants were satisfied with the project, with 46% reporting they were ‘very satisfied’ with the project. In addition, nearly all thought that Sm@RT was beneficial for sheep and goat sectors at a national level with 41% ‘totally agreeing’ with that statement, 58% ‘agreed’ and 1% ‘didn’t know’. Similar responses were obtained when asking whether Sm@RT was beneficial to sheep and goat sectors at a European level, with 47% of people ‘totally agreeing’, 49% ‘agreeing’ with the statement and 4% responding that they ‘didn’t know’.

Respondents felt that ranked the benefits of the Sm@RT project, from a list, as shown in Figure 2. The highest ranking benefits were ‘discovering new tools and how to use them’, closely followed by ‘exchanges between countries’, ‘opportunities to use new tools’ and ‘discovering different types of sheep and goat production systems’. Lowest ranking was ‘discovering different cultures’. This suggests that the project is delivering on its objectives to sharing knowledge and enhancing uptake of digital technologies in the small ruminant livestock industry across Europe.

When asked about the communication and dissemination of the solutions identified by the Sm@RT project, the vast majority of responders felt that it was ‘about right’ see Figure 3.



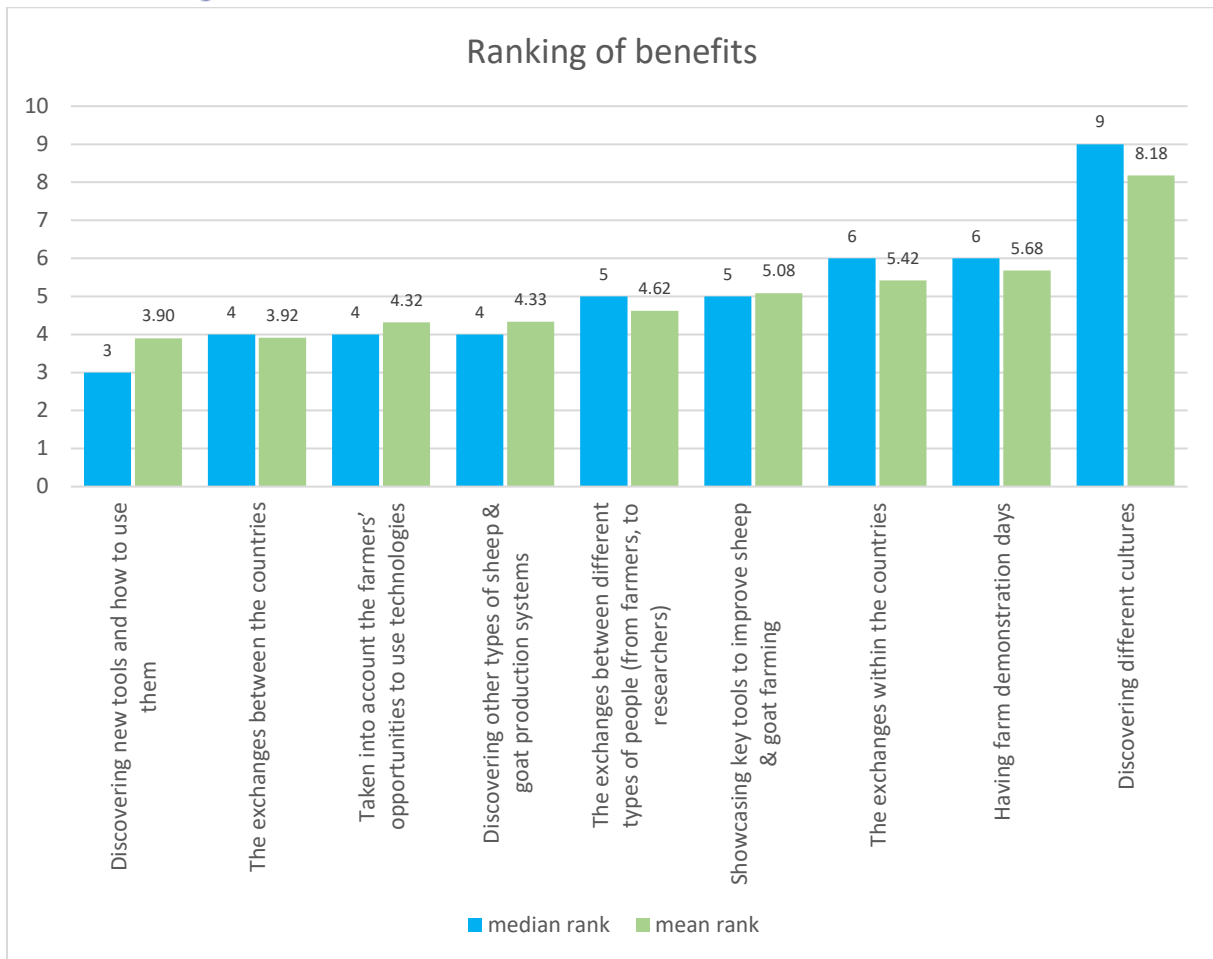


Figure 2. The respondents ranking of the various benefits of the Sm@RT project, showing the mean and median of each benefit.

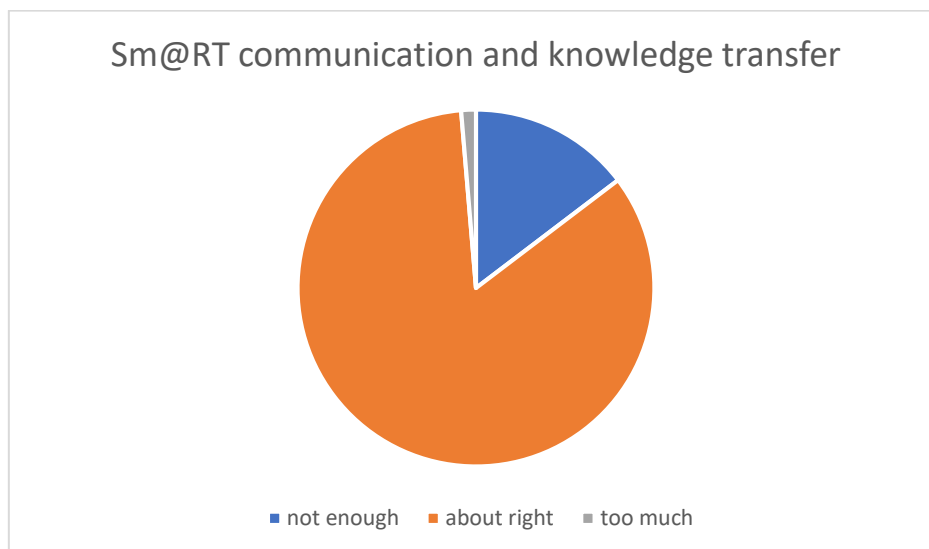


Figure 3. Responses to the question “What do you think about the communication and knowledge transfer of the Sm@RT solutions.”



Finally, when asked if the Sm@RT project had brought people new knowledge and confidence in using the tools, all participants thought that they had obtained ‘some new knowledge’, with 41% reporting that they had gained ‘a lot of new knowledge’. Importantly, the majority of responders (83%) thought that the new knowledge gained would change the way they farm, either by changing farming practice or how decisions are made, with 23% thinking that they would change their practice a lot (Figure 4).

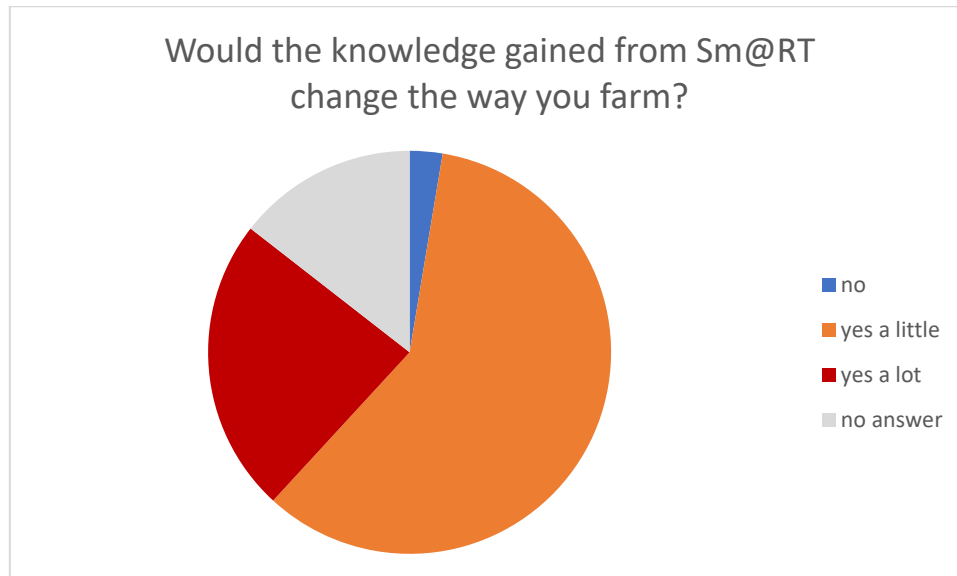


Figure 4. Results from the question regarding whether the new information received from the Sm@RT project would change the way respondents would farm, showing that the majority say that it would.

4. Final comments

There was a final area of the survey where people could tell us any further information. Overall, this was positive, both about the project and the use of technology in small ruminant farming. For example, people made additional comments that the Sm@RT project has been a “great opportunity to implement new technology” and “it’s given farmers options to see and use the new technologies, put them into practice maybe”. They also noted that “Technology is the way forward, [but] currently too expensive at farm level” and “If tools would be more accessible, knowledge could change farming practice”, showing that there is still work to do at an industry level to reduce costs associated with the implementation of these tools on small ruminant farms. However, respondents found the exchange aspect of the project beneficial, “ being able to see different countries and how they are using the technology and what is important in their systems” and finally “One of the most important achievements of the projects is that it helps the researchers/universities exchange knowledge with farmers all around Europe”.

5. Summary

All participants are very happy/ satisfied with the project, finding it overwhelmingly beneficial at both a local and national level. The majority of participants thought that they had gained new knowledge which they would use to change practice on their farm. Therefore, showing that the Sm@RT project is timely, and needed by the small ruminant farming community, who, with some support would be happy to use these new technologies on farm.



Appendix 1 :

Tell us what you think about Sm@RT

1. Which country are you from?

- Estonia
- France
- Hungary
- Ireland
- Israel
- Italy
- Norway
- UK

2. Are you a :

- farmer
- advisor/service provider
- researcher
- other : ...

3. Did you participate to any previous Sm@RT workshops (national and/or transnational, online or face-to-face) before today?

- yes
- no

4. After 2.5 years of Sm@RT, are you :

- very satisfied
- rather satisfied
- rather unsatisfied
- very unsatisfied

5. Sm@RT is beneficial to the sheep & goat sectors at the national level:

- totally agree
- agree
- disagree
- totally disagree
- don't know

6. Sm@RT is beneficial to the sheep & goat sectors at the European level:

- totally agree
- agree
- disagree
- totally disagree
- don't know





7. For you, what were the main benefits of Sm@RT?

Please rank from the most important (1) to the least important (10)

Taken into account the farmers' opportunities to use technologies	
The exchanges within the countries	
The exchanges between the countries	
Discovering other types of sheep & goat production systems	
The exchanges between different types of people (from farmers, to researchers)	
Showcasing key tools to improve sheep & goat farming	
Discovering new tools and how to use them	
Having farm demonstration days	
Discovering different cultures	
Other: ...	

8. What do you think about the communication and knowledge transfer of the Sm@RT solutions?

- not enough
- about right
- too much

9. Did Sm@RT bring you new knowledge and confidence in using tools?

- no new knowledge
- some new knowledge
- a lot of new knowledge

10. Do you think that this new knowledge will change the way you farm (practice change, decision making change, etc.)?

- no
- yes a little bit
- yes a lot

Please explain/give details :

11. Any last comments?

