



Rural Innovation Support Service

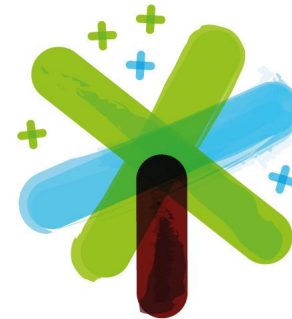


WHAT IS RISS?

- The Rural Innovation Support Service (RISS) is a programme designed to meet the needs of farmers and land managers in Scotland
- Farmers are time-poor but they know what's best for their business
- RISS provides a **facilitator** whose job it is to get their idea off the ground
- The facilitator brings **the right people together** and helps the group work through possible solutions and make a project plan
- That plan can be used to apply for funding or just to get started
- It may be a blueprint other farmers can adapt

WHO IS INVOLVED?

- RISS is part of the **Scottish Rural Network** and is led by **Soil Association Scotland**
- Delivery partners are **SAC Consulting** (part of SRUC – Scotland’s Rural College), **Scotland’s Agricultural Organisation Society (SAOS)**, **Scotland Food and Drink** and the **Soil Association’s Innovative Farmers**
- Facilitators come from SAC, SAOS and Soil Association Scotland
- The facilitators bring in group members from any sector: supply chain businesses, research, tech, data – depending on the group aim
- RISS is funded by the **EU** and **Scottish Government**



Rural Innovation Support Service



Through the partners, facilitators are connected to a wider knowledge network and to existing projects that might help your group



HOW DOES RISS WORK?

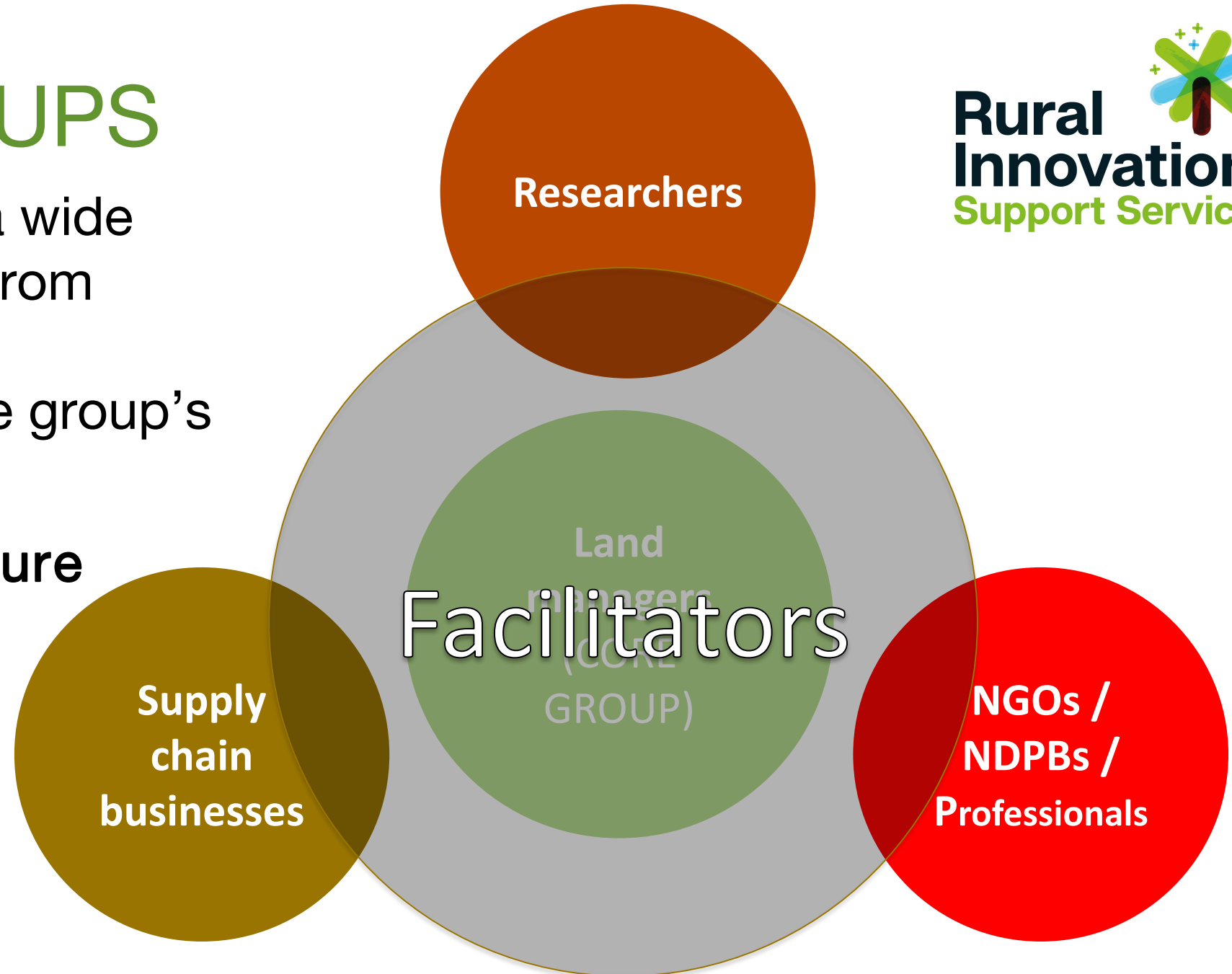


- **Users** set the agenda
- A facilitator helps the group figure out how to proceed with their idea

RISS GROUPS

Are made up of a wide range of people from different sectors, depending on the group's aim

Not just agriculture



RISS GROUPS

- RISS launched in February 2019
- In April 2019 there were 25 active groups
- By the end of the programme (Dec 2020) there should be 42
- Here are some examples...

BETTER HILL SHEEP FARMS

- A group of upland hill sheep farmers
- Had come to a dead-end in terms of progressing profitability
- We got them together with a facilitator to address this challenge
- Thought the issue was genetics, was actually sales and marketing
- Taking a supply chain approach to innovation to address problems
- Group going ahead to self-fund communications/marketing resource

ORGANIC OILSEED RAPE

- A group of organic farmers in Aberdeenshire
- There is a market for organic oilseed rape – as a protein source - to reduce reliance on soya and other costly proteins
- But there is a lack of confidence in producers to supply this market
- Got them together with researchers, feed processor, and specialist crop growers, to identify challenges and opportunities
- Went to Sweden on a learning journey
- Trialling this year as an intercrop with legumes – to address fertility – also addresses biodiversity and climate change challenges

SPEEDING UP BREEDING

- Forage based dairy farmers in Dumfries & Galloway
- Wanted to rapidly improve the genetics of their dairy herd
- Need to do this in a way that supports their system and also build business resilience
- Got them together with a genomics expert, reproductive technology business, and facilitator with a lot of dairy experience
- The science is complicated; essentially they are using female genetics better
- Received bigger pots of funding to develop this further

MANY OTHERS...

- Cow with calf systems
- Rural skills in Ayrshire
- Land matching service
- Industrial hemp
- PRRS in pigs
- Woodchip for bedding

- No bounds on what innovation is, or where it goes

**Rural
Innovation
Support Service**

