



Report of the European Regional Workshop on

## Internet-based communication support for SCORENA Thematic Knowledge Networks in Agriculture

Institute of Natural Fibres  
Poznań, Poland

10-12 April 2008

### 1. Background

#### 1.1. What is SCORENA?

The European System of Cooperative Research Networks in Agriculture (SCORENA) is a European initiative to enhance sustainable agricultural development and food security by improving the use of information, communication, and associated technologies. The overall aim is to enable SCORENA members, its partners and users to exchange opinions, experiences, good practices and resources related to agriculture research, and to ensure that the knowledge created is effectively shared and used in the European region and worldwide.

During the 33 years of its existence, SCORENA was a pioneer initiative for networking in the region in terms of the unique ways of knowledge and information exchange. Regular meetings of the experts, supported by FAO, strongly contributed to the efficient work and commitment within the Network. Today the SCORENA Network<sup>1</sup> urgently needs to be enhanced with new tools and technologies, in order to overcome problems with access for the community of experts and participating institutions.

#### 1.2. Current opportunities for the SCORENA network

The introduction of the new tool including the TYPO3 content management system shall take place at the European Regional Workshop "Internet-based communication support for SCORENA) Thematic Knowledge Networks in Agriculture" in order to prepare the platform for cooperation with similar initiatives within and outside the region.

The objective of the workshop in Poznań in April 2008 was to define achievable goals for the establishment of Internet-based knowledge sharing approaches for the SCORENA network.

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<sup>1</sup>The SCORENA network is a network of several other networks.

The Institute of Natural Fibres declared full help and contribution with its staff and facilities to improve ESCORENA activities.

The workshop was attended by 23 participants from twelve different countries, representing the network coordinators of ten networks under ESCORENA, the network secretariat and focal point, the FAO Headquarter and Regional office for Europe, the Agriculture museum network and the focal points of AgroWeb Ukraine and Poland. A complete list of workshop participants is provided in Annex 1.

## 2. Workshop Proceedings

April 10<sup>th</sup> Thursday

### 2.1. Introductory welcome

Before starting the opening session participants were welcomed by Mr. Demes, Information and Knowledge Management Officer at FAO/REUT, who addressed the current challenges of ESCORENA and possibilities of knowledge sharing through the internet. After a short introduction of participants, Ms. Loumbeva, Consultant in Knowledge Management and Capacity Building at FAO Headquarters, encouraged network coordinators to express their expectations from the workshop and refer to these throughout the workshop. Subsequently a short film about the Institute of Natural Fibres was shown.

On the opening of the workshop Mr. Kozlowski, Director of the Institute for Natural Fibres and host of the workshop, welcomed the participants and officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Poland and emphasized the importance of research in natural fibres and the necessity to improve technology transfer. Mr. Ardanowski, President Advisor, welcomed participants on behalf of the president of Poland Lech Kaczynski, and highlighted the importance of science in global agriculture as a base for political decisions aiming at ensuring food safety and energetic needs. Mr. Zalewski, Sub-secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, acknowledged the speed of information exchange and with this regard the contribution of this meeting to international cooperation in agriculture science.

Thereafter Mr. Demes thanked the hosts for their hospitality and the workshop organisation and focused on the role of FAO to create a platform for knowledge exchange. He reminded that during the lifetime of ESCORENA network communication technologies and content management systems have been changing and today open source tools might be implemented in order to increase the visibility of experts and to share experience in the different fields of agriculture. Mr. Blochowiak, Representative of local authorities (Wielkopolska region), welcomed all participants and thanked FAO for having organised a meeting in Poznan. In the following, Ms. Mackiewicz-Talarczyk introduced the staff of the institute involved in the work for ESCORENA and presented the meeting agenda (see Annex 2).

### 2.2. Presentation of the ESCORENA network

In his opening presentation Mr. Kozlowski presented the background of the ESCORENA network, its history and objectives. He summarised that ESCORENA stands for the voluntary exchange of persons and technologies, in order to establish close links between European researchers and institutions working on the same subject and to stimulate interaction.

SCORENA seeks further to accelerate the transfer of European technology advances to, and cooperation with, developing countries.

Mr. Kozłowski reported as well that the network on FLAX AND OTHER BAST PLANTS has been part of the SCORENA for almost 20 years. Currently this network is involved in the preparation of the International Year of Natural Fibres 2009, proclaimed by United Nations and FAO, including the promotion of the *Journal of Natural Fibres*, edited by the institute and published in USA by Taylor & Francis.

### 2.3. Presentation on the RAMIRAN network website as a possible example for the other networks

Subsequently Mr. Misselbrook, coordinator of the research Network on Recycling of Agricultural, Municipal and Industrial Residues in Agriculture (RAMIRAN), illustrated the web utility of this network. The network contains seven different working groups. He reported on conferences being held every 2 years apart from particular meeting of the working groups. As a common effort a glossary of agriculture terminology related to agricultural and industrial residues has been developed. Statistics for <http://www.ramiran.net> provide transparent information on quantity and origin of the webpage's visitors.

### 2.4. Short presentations of the SCORENA networks' coordinators

#### CENTAUR

Mr. Wojciechowski, coordinator of the Veterinary Biotechnology and Epidemiology Network (CENTAUR), reports about 2000 links to their webpage <http://centaur.vri.cz/> which is recognised on global scale. Around 90 countries are reached by the existent web information which is provided and managed on voluntary basis mainly by Mr. Hruska and Mr. Wojciechowski. The webpage presence enables also for distant lectures and e-learning on veterinary biotechnology and epidemiology.

#### PASTURES AND FODDER CROPS NETWORK

The Pastures and Fodder Crops Network represented by the coordinator Mr. Alain Peeters, was created in 1962 by originally four countries. In 1972 the network joined SCORENA and three sub-networks (working groups) were created. Meetings are organised every year. The network is partly supported by the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM). While no specific webpage exists, materials of meetings are published as proceedings, including in 'Options méditerranéennes (CIHEAM)', on different institute web pages and on the CIHEAM's internet site.

#### SHEEP AND GOAT NETWORK

The Sheep and Goat network, represented by Mr. Hichem Ben Salem, has been part of the SCORENA) network since 1995. Conferences within the network are taking place every two years with the support of CIHEAM. No network webpage exists but network's activities are partly visible through the CIHEAM webpage.

#### BUFFALO NETWORK

Mr. Borghese, coordinator of the BUFFALO network reported that the network was founded in 1992 and a newsletter is published in 1600 copies. International partners comprise the FAO and the International Buffalo Federation.

#### COTTON NETWORK

The COTTON network, represented by its coordinator Ms Urania Kechagia, was created in 1990 and has members in various Mediterranean countries and also countries outside

Europe. Every 4 years plenary meetings take place. FAO support was provided until the year 2000.

#### SUNFLOWER NETWORK

Mr Skoric, coordinator of the SUNFLOWER network reports that a big challenge for his network is a generational problem related to science. Many researchers retire while younger researchers prefer to work for private companies. Nonetheless important results are reported from hybrid selection. Information on research and results is provided on the webpage of the International Sunflower Association and Serbian web pages. Financial ways has to be explored in order to support networks activities.

#### NUT NETWORK

The NUT network, represented by the coordinator Ms. Rovira, receives financial support from CIHEAM, research money from the government and the region and from FAO. It publishes a newsletter and is partly visible through the CIHEAM webpage.

#### OLIVES NETWORK

The OLIVES network, represented by the coordinator Mr. Caballero was established in 1984 by FAO and the Spanish Institute for Agriculture. It comprises four working groups and face to face meetings took place until 1990. After an inactive phase today the network concentrates on genetics and continues publishing a bulletin on olives in printed form and on the web.

#### SREN NETWORK

The SREN (Sustainable Rural Environment and Energy) Network is working on the improvement of the rural environment and sustainable energy production but has been inactive during last years. There is interest from Mr. Borivoj Sarapatka from the Bioinstitut in Czech Republic to work within the SREN network on organic farming.

### 2.5. Presentation on Internet-based knowledge-sharing approaches for web-based knowledge networks

In the afternoon Ms. Loumbeva gave an overview of the nature of knowledge and knowledge management, knowledge management at FAO, FAO Thematic Knowledge Networks and the need for a social context in order for an internet-based knowledge network to work. During her presentation, she asked the ESCORENA networks' coordinators to think about why ESCORENA, as a network, is important to them. She also explained explicit and tacit knowledge in international organisations and other institutions. In addition she gave several examples on social networking and encouraged the participants to define the ESCORENA network's potentials and objectives. She also suggested that the ESCORENA networks' coordinators define an ESCORENA network Term of References (ToR) as part of their participation in the workshop. In other words, it would be good to, collectively and depending on the need, create an ESCORENA network ToR plus, if possible, an ESCORENA network strategic plan based on which requests for funding from interested institutions could be made.

### 2.6. Financial support for the ESCORENA network

Further topics discussed during the afternoon session include the financial support of FAO within ESCORENA. It was emphasised that training and capacity building on content management systems and TYPO3 is being provided by FAO in order to contribute to the network activities and especially its visibility on the web. Furthermore the official agreement between FAO and network members includes not only funds but also recognition of scientific activities and thus support in the communication with national governments. Concerning the

financial situation differences between the networks exist. Extended voluntary activities might sustain further actions. A checklist of possible funding organisations, e.g. the Soros Foundation, GTZ, Marshall Fund, World Bank, and an exchange of experiences in this field can help to mobilise resources. The suggestion to apply jointly for the Cost action program of the European Union is promising but a careful check should be conducted on eligibility of the ESCORENA network and requested standards.

## 2.7. Web visibility of the ESCORENA network

Concerning web visibility of ESCORENA and its members, Mr. Demes presented the existing webpage (<http://www.escorena.net>) and the entry points of the member networks. Additionally Mr. Bartol, programme coordinator of AgroWeb, gave examples on content management at AgroWeb and introduced the AGORA program (Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture at <http://www.aginternetwork.org/en/>) and AGRIS (International Information System for the Agricultural Sciences and Technologies at <http://www.fao.org/agris/>). AGORA provides a collection of 1278 journals to institutions in 107 countries and is designed to enhance the scholarship of researchers in agriculture and life sciences in the developing world. AGRIS is a cooperative system in which participating countries input references to the literature produced within their boundaries and, in return, draw on the information provided by the other participants. To date, 240 national, international and intergovernmental centres participate.

Participants agreed that every thematic network should have an entry point from the common ESCORENA webpage. The web pages should share a similar structure and include basic information on their users.

April 12<sup>th</sup> Friday

## 2.8. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and constraints of the ESCORENA network

On Friday the meeting discussed strengths and opportunities of the ESCORENA network and how to improve the quality and visibility of ESCORENA) on the web.

In the following Ms. Loumbeva summarised the “purpose checklist”, a questionnaire regarding the nature and purpose of the ESCORENA Network which was filled by the network coordinators in advance (see Annex 3). Therein all coordinators defined a research-focused and very clear purpose, probably because of the long years of existence of each network. The target membership and the type of member interactions in turn vary between the networks. Some networks publish newsletters and thus aim to reach out to bigger audiences as well as be visible to all members. A main problem with regard to information sharing and information exchange constitutes one-way diffusion and dissemination of information. Most networks have a website that is not interactive enough. However, some networks do show a certain level of e-mail interactions.

A bullet-point summary of the checklists is below:

- Responses: Most networks sent filled-in purpose checklists.
- Purpose: The purpose of each network which responded was defined very clearly, perhaps because of the long years of the existence of the network; in addition, the purposes of the networks are distinctly research-focused.
- Membership and Motivation: Membership span varies very much from network to network (i.e., from 60 to 1500 members). Only a part of members are active, which is normal. Some networks have organized the members into subgroups to ease the interaction on issues of importance to the network. Most networks' members undertake network activities as part of their jobs, provided that their affiliated

institutions are supportive of this activity. In this way, there is a formal component to each network.

- Member Interactions: Some networks publish newsletters and thus aim to not only be visible to the members of the network but also reach out to bigger audiences. On the overall, responses to the purpose checklists indicated that the relationship among members of each network could be strengthened. In particular, the expectations of members about their network in general, face-to-face meetings and new communication technologies should be better understood. Some networks (i.e., RAMIRAN) try to circumvent this by having conference proceedings on their websites, in this way involving members and potential members into what the network does.
- MAIN PROBLEM: ONE-WAY diffusion of information. Despite that all networks are involved in information dissemination activities, some are still and largely one-way and top-down rather than bottom-up. In this way, it would be difficult for these networks to be sustainable beyond the existence of their respective coordinators. This would also make these networks very dependent on financial assistance. An alternative could be to outsource the information creation to the network itself, empowering people and subgroups within the network to produce and share their own information.
- Web-based interaction space: Most of the networks have a website that is not interactive enough. Some networks do show a certain level of e-mail interactions.

## 2.9 New Chair of the ESCORENA network

First of all, the CENTAUR network was elected by the present coordinators as a member of the ESCORENA network. The creation of and handing over of responsibilities to a focal point for ESCORENA, represented by the Institute of Natural Fibres in Poznan, and namely by Mr. Kozlowski, Ms. Mackiewicz-Talarczyk and Mr. Barriga Bedoya, was discussed by the network coordinators. ESCORENA members agreed on an administrative and technical support of the umbrella network ESCORENA making the network more dynamic and highlighting synergies between the networks. It was further suggested to establish special email addresses for ESCORENA coordinators, to rotate the focal point's location each 3-4 years on a voluntary basis and to inform the partners, especially CIHEAM about this development.

## 2.10 Suggestions for the ESCORENA webpage design

In the afternoon session concrete suggestions for the ESCORENA webpage design and structure were collected (an example for these suggestions are presented in Annex 4). The suggestions proposed to:

- use the full name "The European System of Cooperative Research Networks in Agriculture" for the so far displayed ESCORENA abbreviation
- change the bar of partners for network members and place partners on the left creating a shared identity of all ESCORENA members while highlighting the role of partners including CIHEAM
- use labels and pictures to better visualise the topics being displayed
- create a website for each network and provide information on its users (evaluation tools)
- establish discussion forums if maintenance can be assured (possible temporary use before conferences or workshops)

## 2.11 Internet hands-on session

Subsequently three working groups examined existing web platforms and learned about social networking. Participants looked at Facebook, Ammodo, Ning, KM4Dev, D-Groups,

among others. Exemplary was the e-agriculture website <http://www.e-agriculture.org/> illustrating forum communication and e-learning opportunities.

In this regard also an Information Management Resource Kit (IMARK) was distributed to the participants by Ms Loumbeva, one of many modules offered in a partnership-based e-learning initiative to train individuals and support institutions and networks world-wide in the effective management of agricultural information.

### 3. Meeting Outcomes

The following conclusions were drawn during the closing session of the workshop:

- The focal point was voted by all coordinators to be located at the Institute of Natural Fibres in Poznan, Poland. Mr. Kozlowski confirmed the coordination of ESCORENA on voluntary basis;
- The CENTAUR network coordinated by Prof. Hruska and Prof. Wojciechowski became a new member of the ESCORENA network;
- The Agriculture Museum Network represented by Mr. Mackowiak became a new member of the ESCORENA network;
- ESCORENA as an independent network supports network coordinators of various fields of research; it exists and will be sustained through its active members;
- ESCORENA needs to be recognised by other organisations and therefore promoted on existing web pages;
- Much information and materials exist within the networks and can be published on the web;
- The visibility of ESCORENA should be enhanced; Networks coordinators aim for synchronised approaches for information sharing across networks;
- New experts should be selected continuously in order to maintain or enhance the membership;
- Internet based communication cannot replace regular personal meetings;
- Some FAO support can be provided through the Regional office location and its premises in Budapest; the BUFFALO network expressed its interest to organise a symposium in July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008 in the premises of the FAO;
- The ESCORENA network plays a useful role for universities, research centres and farmer's advisory services.

Furthermore the meeting discussed the network's name "European System of Cooperative Research Networks in Agriculture" and whether it reflects sufficiently its international members outside Europe. The meeting concluded to not change the abbreviation ESCORENA but to highlight the international component of its cooperation in the network description. In order to avoid limitations through the word 'European' and focus on the scientific dimensions of the network a proposal was made to alter the name to "Expert System of Cooperative Research Networks in Agriculture".

The meeting agreed that the future process of shaping the ESCORENA network activities needs an increase in internet based communication and the visibility on the web. Participants recommended to:

- Establish content and structure of network websites within the next months, latest 6 months after the meeting; Use the same structure for all ESCORENA members;
- Add an historical review to each network; Link networks to the Agriculture museum network;

- Provide capacity building on the TYPO3 content management system and create web pages accordingly;
- Organise meetings of the ESCORENA network every 3 or 4 years with rotating locations of meetings. The next meeting could take place in two years;
- Increase knowledge on social networking and new ways for organising information according to the network's needs;
- Identify ways in which the technologies supporting the member networks of the ESCORENA network are used to optimise activities within and among these networks (for example, use of discussion forum technology to conduct discussions as preparation towards face-to-face meetings, e-conferences, write joint papers, etc.)
- Publish actively research outcomes and share network journal links on the ESCORENA website; clarify copyright issues;
- Introduce continuously a new generation of researchers to the network; Attract new members to join the network; (to attract and keep younger members, the current approach to communication and networking may need to be changed, with a bigger emphasis on social networking);
- Develop new ways of presenting ESCORENA to possible donors focusing on multidisciplinary scientific and innovative cooperation; collectively and depending on the need, create an ESCORENA network strategic plan based on which requests for funding from interested institutions could be made
- Investigate possibilities of the European program COST Action for ESCORENA activities support
- Promote ESCORENA on existing network websites and through FAO; Inform FAO Regional and Sub-regional offices about the ESCORENA network activities in order to avoid creation of overlapping thematic networks
- Explore means of support from the European Commission; improve project planning
- Support capacity building on project proposals and fundraising; explore synergies and common topics among thematic networks
- Contact and consult CIHEAM and explain new ESCORENA projects especially about the development of the internet site in order to make sure that the visibility and the support of CIHEAM is sufficiently highlighted
- Provide a contact person on web issues from each network who support the focal point in updating the websites
- Promote and improve information literacy and the use of information databases through ESCORENA, Link to e-agriculture (<http://www.e-agriculture.org/>), AGORA (<http://www.aginternetwork.org/en/>) and AGRIS (<http://www.fao.org/agris/>).
- Facilitate effective international cooperation through the network
- Examine the activities of each of the member networks of the network and identify possible ways of collaboration among these networks

List of ParticipantsEuropean Regional Workshop on Internet-based communication support for  
ESCORENA Thematic Knowledge Networks in Agriculture*in Poznań, Poland, 10-12 April 2008*

No.	Institution	Function	Name	Country	E-mail
1.	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Poland	Undersecretary	Marian Zalewski	Poland	Marian.Zalewska@minrol.gov.pl
2.	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Poland	Director of Department	Kazimierz Żmuda	Poland	Kazimierz.Zmuda@minrol.gov.pl
3.	President of Poland Office	President Advisor	Jan Ardanowski	Poland	Jardanowski@prezydent.pl
4.	Representative of the Local Authorities	Deputy Marshal	Arkadiusz Blochowiak	Poland	kancelaria@umww.pl
5.	Association of the Winners of Economic Prize of Wielkopolska Region	Director	Ryszard Peczak	Poland	rpeczak@umww.pl
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11.	CENTAUR Network V-ce Coord.	1977-1999 P5 Animal Health Officer FAO	Kris Wojciechowski	Poland	wojciechowskikris@hotmail.com
12.	CENTAUR Network	Assistant of Mr. Wojciechowski	Mrs. Barbara Ivory-Wojciechowski	Poland/Ireland	wojciechowskikris@hotmail.com
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		webmaster	Bedoya		
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European Regional WorkshopInternet-based communication support for ESCORENA  
Thematic Knowledge Networks in Agriculture

Institute of Natural Fibres  
ul. Wojska Polskiego 71, Poznań, Poland

10-12 April 2008

Objective: To define achievable goals for establishment of Internet-based knowledge sharing approaches for the ESCORENA thematic networks.

Participants: Coordinators and Leaders of ESCORENA networks

Venue: Institute of Natural Fibres<sup>2</sup> (INF), Poznan, Poland

Organizers: Institute of Natural Fibres, Poznan  
FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, Budapest, Hungary

## DRAFT PROGRAMME

## Day 1 – Thursday 10 April

- 08:30            Guests depart hotel
- 09:00-09:30    Registration
- 09:30-10:30    Opening Session
- Opening speech by representative of the Polish Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
  - Welcome by FAO representative – Mr. Michal Demes, FAO REU Budapest.
  - Welcome by Host Institution – Prof. Dr. Ryszard M. Kozlowski, Director of INF
  - Welcome by Local Authorities
  - Presentation of the Meeting agenda, goals and targets – Maria Mackiewicz-Talarczyk, INF
  - Discussion
- 10:30-11:00    Coffee break
- 11.00-11:30    Presentation: ESCORENA background, history, and objectives – Prof. Kozlowski, INF
- 11:30-11:45    Presentation(s): current ESCORENA network(s) active on the web: Mr. Misselbrook, RAMIRAN
- 11:45-12:15    Presentation: New generation web-based technologies for knowledge sharing; examples from the agricultural domain; good practices for web-based knowledge networks – Ms. Nadia Loumbeva, FAO-HQ
- 13:00-14:00    Lunch at INF

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<sup>2</sup> Coordination Centre of the ESCORENA European Cooperative Research Network on Flax and other Bast Plants

- 14:00-14:45 Knowledge-sharing session: Participants to consider ESCORENA network roles and capacities of coordinators/leaders; discussion of feedback in plenary.
- 14:45-15:00 Coffee break
- 15:00-16:30 Working Groups Session 1: Participants work in three groups with facilitators, with inputs from individual participants to be discussed within the groups.
- Topic: current activities of ESCORENA networks – strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and constraints.
- 16:30-17:30 Working Groups report outcomes in Plenary and Discussion
- Evening: Dinner

#### Day 2 – Friday 11 April

- 08:30 Guests depart hotel
- 09:30-11:00 Working Groups Session 2: Participants work in three groups with facilitators, with inputs from individual participants to be discussed within the groups.
- Topic: Future prospects and feasible objectives for Internet-based collaboration in ESCORENA networks.
- 11:00-11:30 Coffee break
- 11:30-12:30 Working Groups report outcomes in Plenary and Discussion
- 13:00 Lunch at INF
- 14:00-15:30 Hands-on Internet Session
- 15:30-15:45 Coffee break
- 15:45-16:30 Plenary Crystal ball” Discussion: possible vision for establishment of Internet-based platforms for ESCORENA networks to enhance participation from experts and increase worldwide visibility.
- 16:30-17:30 Summary and Recommendations
- Evening: Dinner

#### Day 3 – Saturday 12 April

- 09:30 Study Tour: Departure from hotel
- Option 1: Experimental Factory of INF, Steszew, and Museum of Agriculture in Szreniawa
  - Option 2: Castle in Kornik (ca 30 km from Poznan)
  - Option 3: Sightseeing in Poznan: old market, the cathedral, historical churches and sites, museums.

## Purpose Checklist

This is a short questionnaire regarding the nature and purpose of the ESCORENA Network for which you are Coordinator. Please take time to study it and prepare answers before you come to the workshop in Poznan, so that you have the basis for fruitful discussions. Please do also send us your completed checklist before the workshop.

### ESCORENA Network Checklist

This Checklist can help you to outline the nature and purpose of your network. Some questions may be relevant to your situation, some may not. Please feel free to add any particular context that is missing. This Checklist could help you to start thinking about implications and/or challenges that could affect your network, as well as possible solutions.

***Name/Topic of Network:***

***Date:***

#### ***1. Purpose/Outcome***

What is the desired purpose and outcome of the network?

- Does your group have a vision/purpose that you can communicate to potential members? Please write it down here.
- Are there specific desired outcomes? Please describe them.
- Are the benefits of participation measurable and visible to members and potential members? Please describe them.
- Is the outcome determined by the organizer? ...by group members? ...by both? How are these outcomes negotiated?
- Can any or all of the group's purpose be accomplished online? Would that replace something offline? Or would some combination be better?

#### ***2. Target Membership***

How would you describe members/participants of the network?

##### Size

How many people are there in the network now? Do you have a sense of how your network could expand if there is greater interest?

##### Composition

- Do you want to work simply with an existing pool of participants? Or do you want to draw in new people? Where might you find potential new participants?
- Are there any subgroups in the network? Is so, on what topics?
- Do you want your community to be public or private? If private, what and who determines eligibility?

##### Motivation and Interest

- How motivated are your participants to participate? What benefits would they derive?
- Is this part of their job, or in addition to their job?
- How much time would they be prepared to spend on network activities?

#### ***3. Type of Member Interactions***

What kinds of interactions between network members exist now and could be fostered?

- In case you would know, how many members in your network currently know each other personally?
- Is there any exchange of information such as documents or other content?
- Are there any face-to-face meetings of network members? If so, how often?
- Are there ongoing discussions?
- Is the network conducting any learning activities?
- Does the network itself generate any information/knowledge? If so, where could that information be stored so that it is accessible?
- Does the network have a need for a web-based interaction space? (Remember: just putting up an online space does not guarantee anyone will come participate in it!)

#### ***4. Technological Issues***

- Do network participants have Internet access available at all times; are there any limitations?
- What is the expected level of comfort and skill of the participants in using web-based systems/tools?
- Does your network already have a web-based platform for collaboration or discussion?

New ESCORENA Web-page draft ( [www.ESCORENA.net](http://www.ESCORENA.net) )

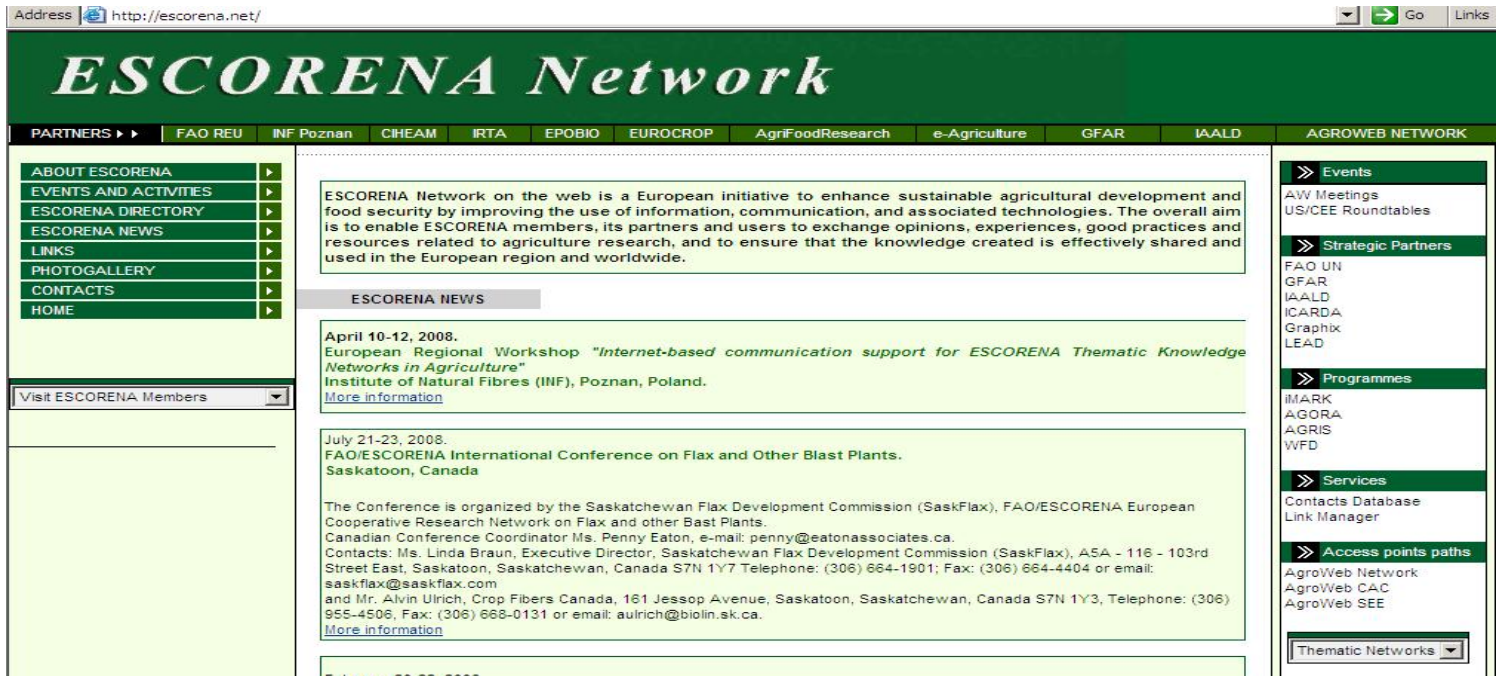


Figure 1: Current ESCORENA webpage

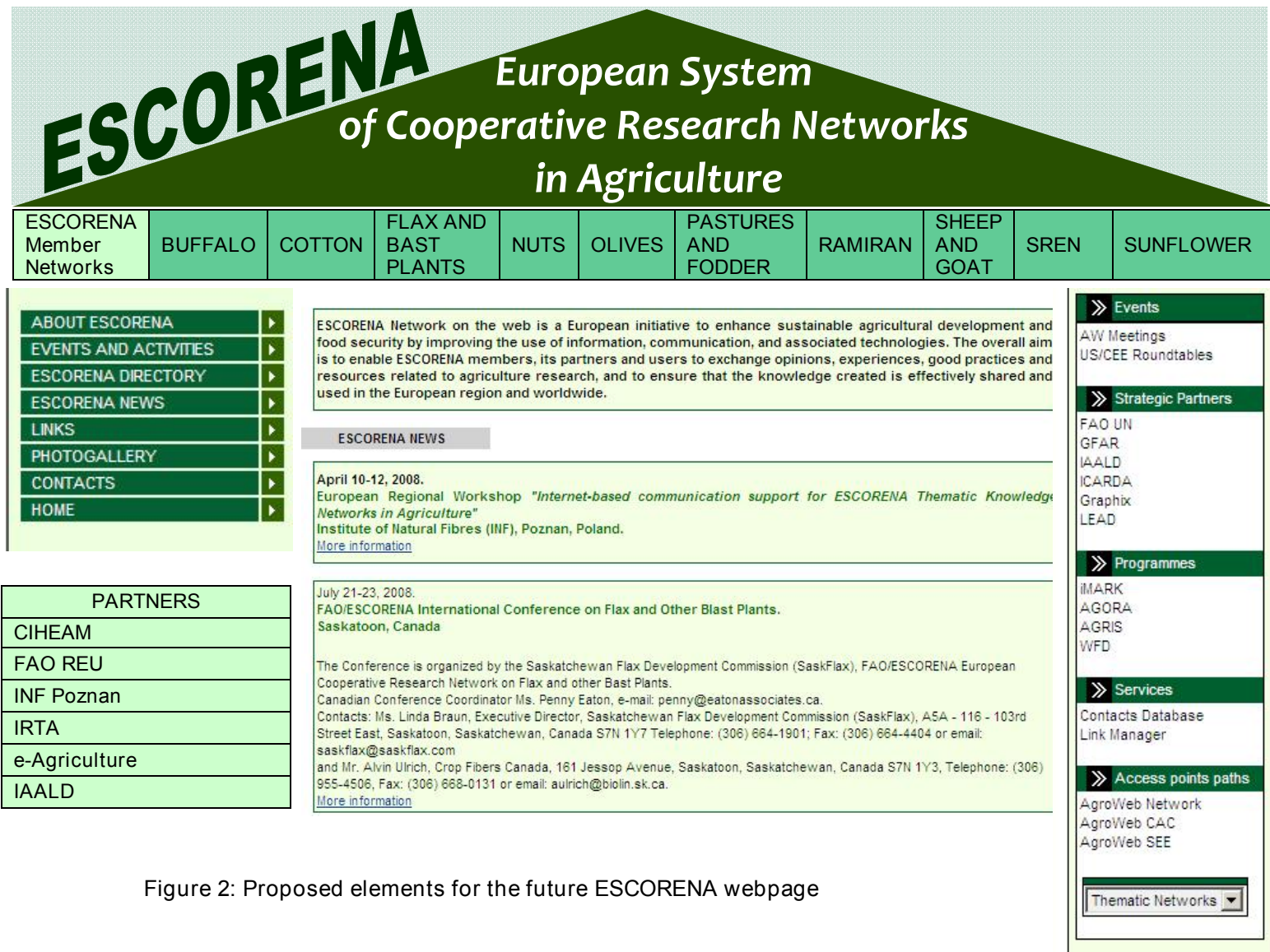


Figure 2: Proposed elements for the future ESCORENA webpage