SOLINSA

Support of Learning and Innovation
Networks for Sustainable Agriculture

Agricultural Knowledge Systems In Transition:
Towards a more effective and efficient support of Learning
and Innovation Networks for Sustainable Agriculture

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Understanding Learning and Innovation Networks to Support Transition Towards Sustainable Agriculture

Heidrun Moschitz, Robert Home
Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL
Dirk Roep, Frans Hermans, Laurens Klerx, WU
Talis Tisenkopfs, Baltic Studies Centre
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SEVENTH FRAMEWORK
PROGRAMME

Funded by the European Union

Contents

- Brief overview of the SOLINSA project
- Concepts of Learning in SOLINSA
- Application of the learning processes in SOLINSA: What are LINSA?
- What has been done up to now
- Challenges to come

SOLINSA Partners

P1	Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, **Switzerland**

P2	University of Pisa, **Italy**

P3	University of Gloucestershire, **United Kingdom**

P4	University of West England, United Kingdom

P5	Wageningen University, **The Netherlands**

P6	Center for Agriculture and Rural Development, Switzerland

P7	Federal Institute for Technology, Switzerland

P8	Baltic Studies Center, **Latvia**

P9	French Livestock Institute, **France**

P10	University Hohenheim, **Germany**

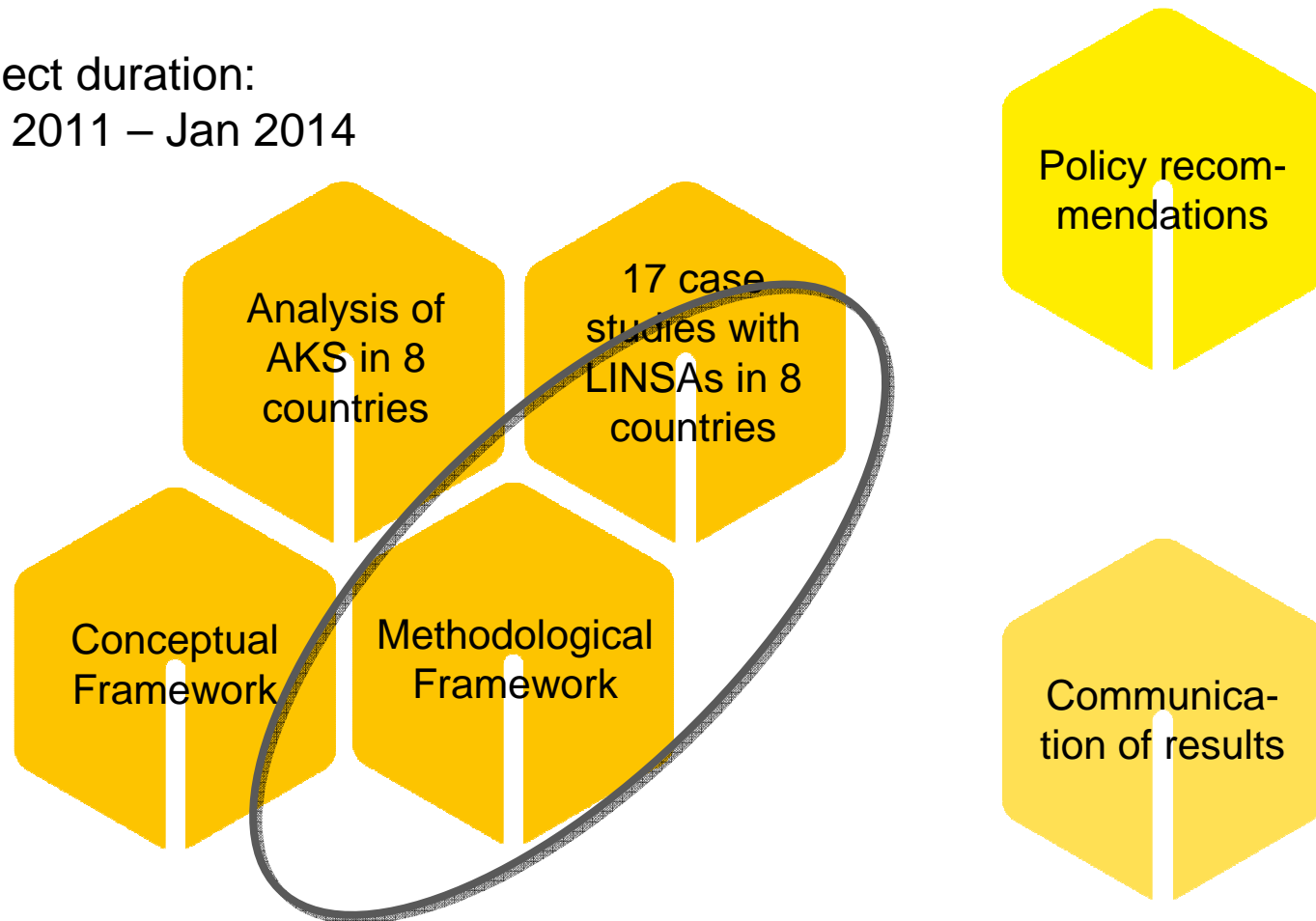P11	Institute of Economics Hungarian Academy of Science, **Hungary**

The SOLINSA Project

SOLINSA

- stands for «**S**upport of **L**earning and **I**nnovation **N**etworks for **S**ustainable **A**griculture (LINSA)»

- explores learning processes towards sustainable agriculture and rural development

- applies participatory action research (transdisciplinary approach)

- supports the transition from AKS to AIS
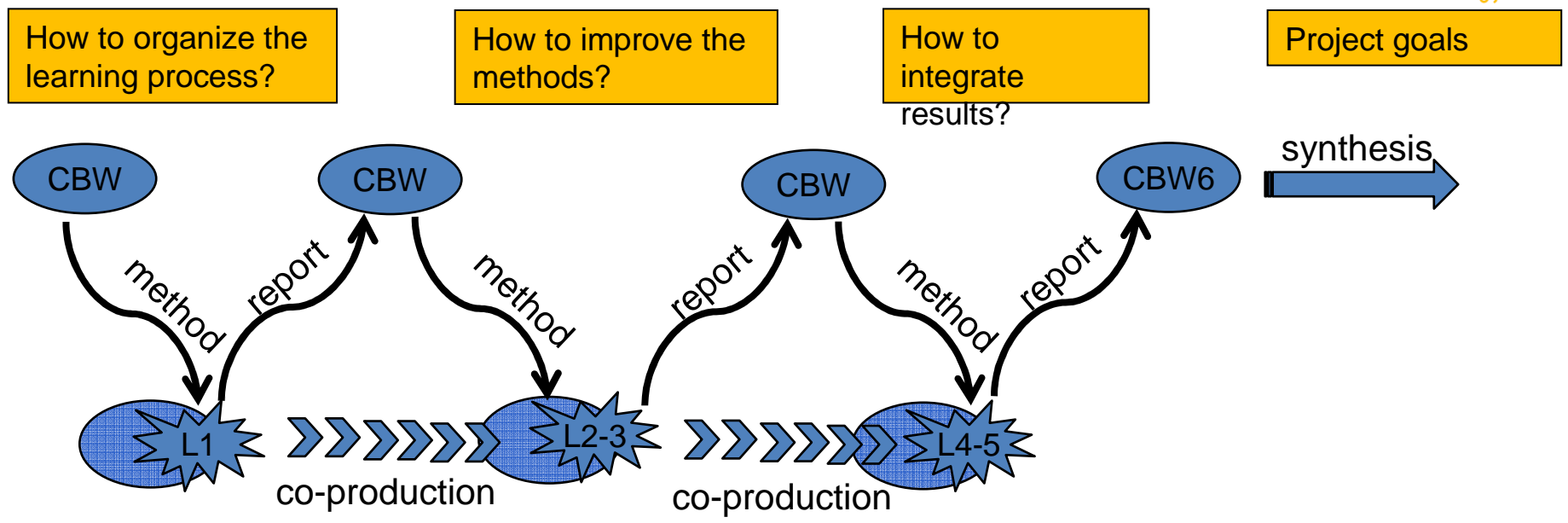
SOLINSA Project structure

Project duration:
Feb 2011 – Jan 2014

Analysis of AKS in 8 countries

17 case studies with LINSAs in 8 countries

Conceptual Framework

Methodological Framework

Policy recom-mendations

Communica-tion of results

SOLINSA Learning framework

- ## Social Learning
  - "the process of iterative reflection that occurs when we share our experiences, ideas and environments with others" (Oreszczyn S., Lane A., Carr S., 2010)

- ## How does learning occur?
  - Participation
  - Reification

- ## Drivers of learning
  - People: brokering
  - Artefacts: boundary objects
  - Interaction: boundary interactions

Learning in SOLINSA

How to organize the learning process?

How to improve the methods?

How to integrate results?

Project goals

CBW — method — report — CBW — method — report — CBW — method — report — CBW6 — synthesis
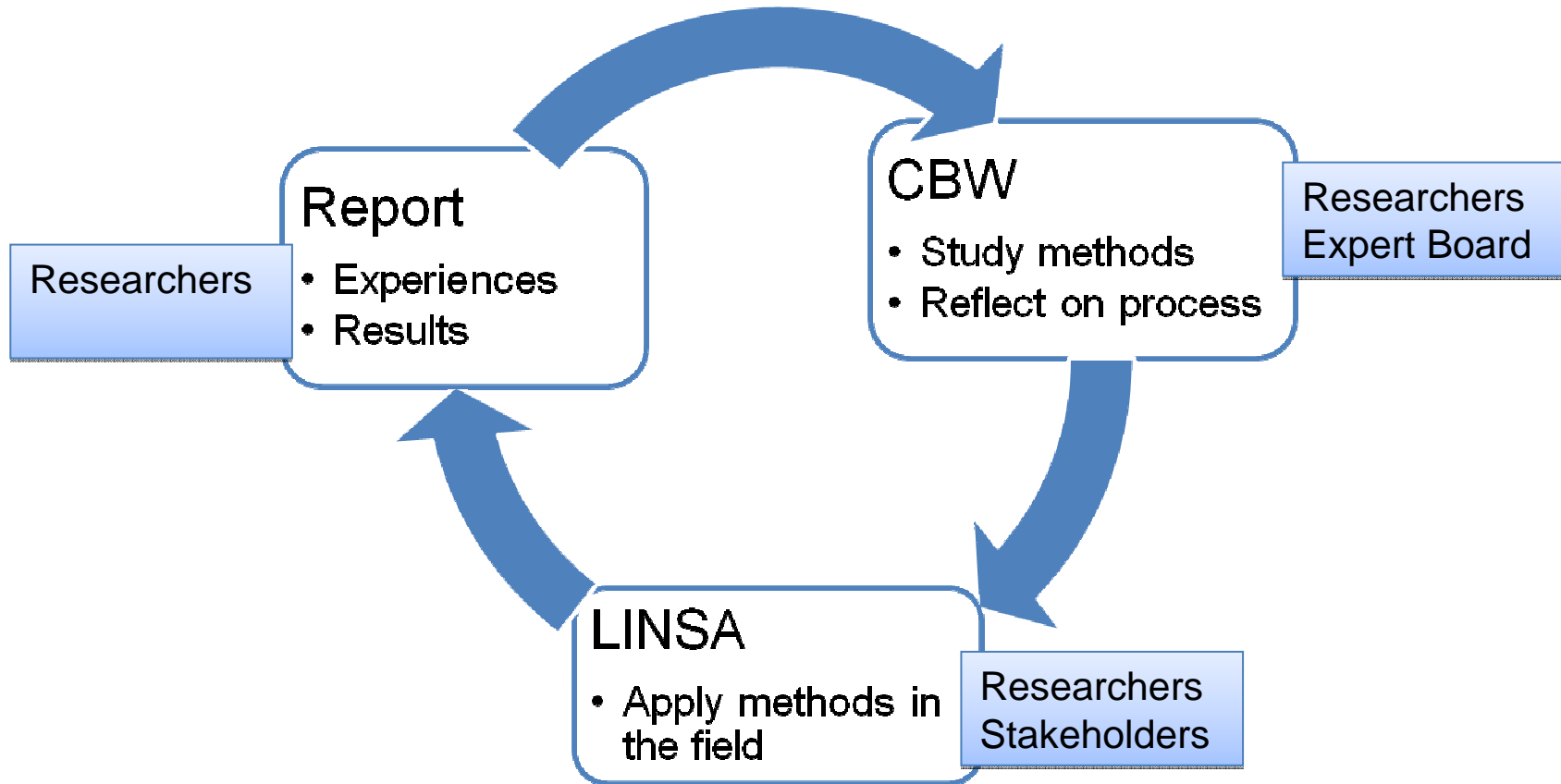
L1 — co-production — L2-3 — co-production — L4-5

1. Situation analysis
- Where do we want to go with this collaboration?
- Which actors?
- Where is the LINSA with regard to innovation?
- What is the context?

2. Reflection process
- Constraints, opportunities
- Network development
- Learning processes
- Etc.

3. Finalization
- Understanding learning processes+ approaches
- Effectiveness of support

Research steps in LINSAs

Transdisciplinary learning process in SOLINSA

Researchers

Report
- Experiences
- Results

CBW
- Study methods
- Reflect on process

Researchers Expert Board

LINSA
- Apply methods in the field

Researchers Stakeholders

Learning within LINSAs:
Co-production between researchers and stakeholders in NoP

Role of researcher

•Observers

•Co-researchers

•Roamers

•Facilitators
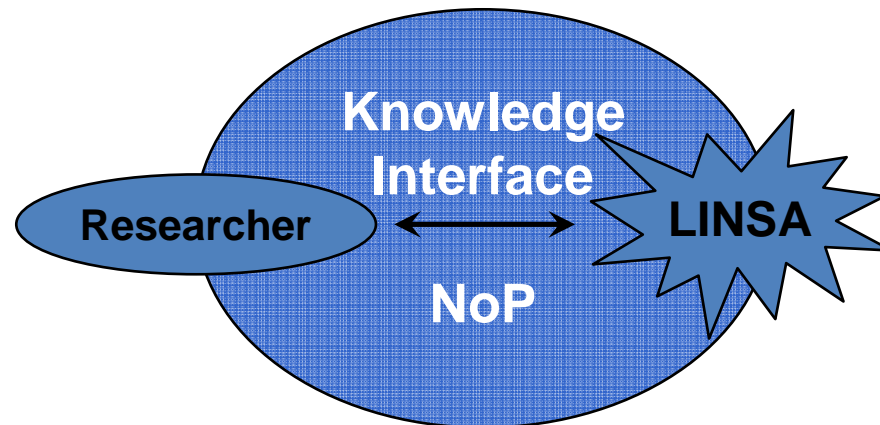
Co-production within NoP

•mapping actors, understanding identities, weaving connections, stimulating reflexivity, favouring sense making, participating, supporting reification, finding boundary objects, analyzing context and governance

FIRST RESULTS FROM SOLINSA

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What has been done so far?

- Established the initial conceptual framework: will be revised continually
- Baseline methodology developed and discussed
- Agreed on a shared initial understanding of LINSA
- Assessment of current AKS in eight countries
- Identified 17 LINSAs as case studies

ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AKS SOME FINDINGS FROM COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS OF COUNTRY REPORTS

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Knowledge infrastructure (1)

- Research facilities :
  - Very good in Switzerland, Germany
  - Improving research facilities in Latvia
- Funds for research in many countries decreasing
  - Latvia
  - Netherlands: money from fundamental research towards applied research and innovation
- Extension and advice:

  (Commercial) supply of advice well established, good coverage

  France, England, Germany, Netherlands

  Often linked to agro-industry (in all countries)

- Paradox: with increasing diversity , complexity of AKS increases, overview becomes difficult

Knowledge infrastructure (2)

- **Education everywhere in a difficult position**
  - Lack of funds and/or students (almost everywhere)
  - Great differences in quality of schools (Latvia)
  - Difficulty in cooperation between business and education (NL, Switzerland)
- **Other facilities**
  - Banks, insurances for farmers (France)
  - Active role of government creates favourable institutional context for innovation in Italy

Hard institutional failures/ merits (1)

- Fragmentation of innovation policy observed
  - France: lack of stable funding and tenders
  - Switzerland: public financing rules not well focussed
  - Italy: difficulty in translating public discourse in coherent programmes and methodological approaches
  - Regionalised system leads to fragmentation in legislation in Italy and Germany
- Bureaucracy is a serious problem
  - EU subsidies notoriously difficult
  - Hungary only 'successful' advisory business is related to European subsidies...

Interaction paradox: closed vs. open networks

- Closed AKS network
  - Good overview, short communication lines, shared view of problems and possible solutions
  - However: difficulty incorporating new actors and views

- Open AKS network:
  - With increasing diversity of knowledge supply, complexity of AKS increases, overview becomes difficult, Quality of services becomes uncertain (Germany)
  - Possible confusion of end-users (England and Netherlands)

ENTERING COLLABORATIVE WORK WITH LINSAS

Selection criteria for case study and Short profiles of LINSAs

Characteristics	Low (small)	Range	High (large)
SCALE	small	medium	large
ORIGIN AND FUNCTION	market-based	pluralistic	non-market-based
DEGREE OF INTEGRATION	stand alone bodies	networks	communities
LINKS BETWEEN AKIS AND LINSA	Low	medium	Strong
LEVEL OF LEARNING	imposed learning outsider K&I		co-learning insider K&I
LEVEL OF INNOVATION	incremental innovation		radical innovation
GOVERNANCE	top down bodies		bottom up bodies
TEMPORALITY	Old (> 10 years)	medium (3 – 10 years)	young

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Diversity of LINSAs

Scale	Small		medium		large
	N3	L3 H2 I3	L2 F1 F2 **L1**	I1 H1 N1 G2 UK4	G1 S4 S5 UK1 EU2
Origin and function	*market*		*Pluralistic*		*Non market*
	I1 L2 L3 UK1		I3 H2 H1 UK4 **L1**	F1 N3 G1 S4 S5 EU2	N1 N2 G2
degree of integration	*alone*		*networks*		*Communities*
	H2	I3 L2 L3 S4	F1 N1 N3 S5 UK1 UK4 **L1**	H1 F2 G1	G2 EU2
Links AKIS LINSA	*Low*		*medium*		*strong*
	I3 UK1 UK4 EU2		L3 N1 F1	L2 F2 H1 G1 G2	I1 H2 N3 S4 S5 **L1**
Level of learning	*Imposed*				*Co-learning*
	H2	L2 G2 S4 S5	G1 L3 F2	I3 N3 I1 N1 UK4 **L1**	F1 H2 UK1 EU2
Level of innovation	*Incremental*				*Radical*
	N1 UK1	G2 S4	I1 H1 F2 G1 **L1**	L2 L3 I3 F1 S5 EU2	UK4 H2 N3
Governance	*Top down*				*Bottom-up*
	I1 F2 G2 EU2	N1 G1	L2 L3 I3 F1 N3 **L1**	S5 UK1	UK4 H1 H2 S4
Temporality	*old*		*medium*		*Young*
	H2 F1 L3 G1 G2 S4 **L1**		I3 S5 EU2	L2 I1 N1 H1 UK4	N3 F2 UK1

Research questions for LINSA

- What is the current situation in this network?
- How does this network work?
- Where do we want to go?
- Where can we go?
- Which major events have put us in this position?
- Which processes have put us in this position?

Research strategy

LINSA1

Where are we now?

Where do we want to go with this collaboration?

LINSA2

LINSA3

| Research question | Research question | Research question |

LINSA4

| Research question | Research question | Research question |

LINSA5

Finalization

Order of research questions to be addressed
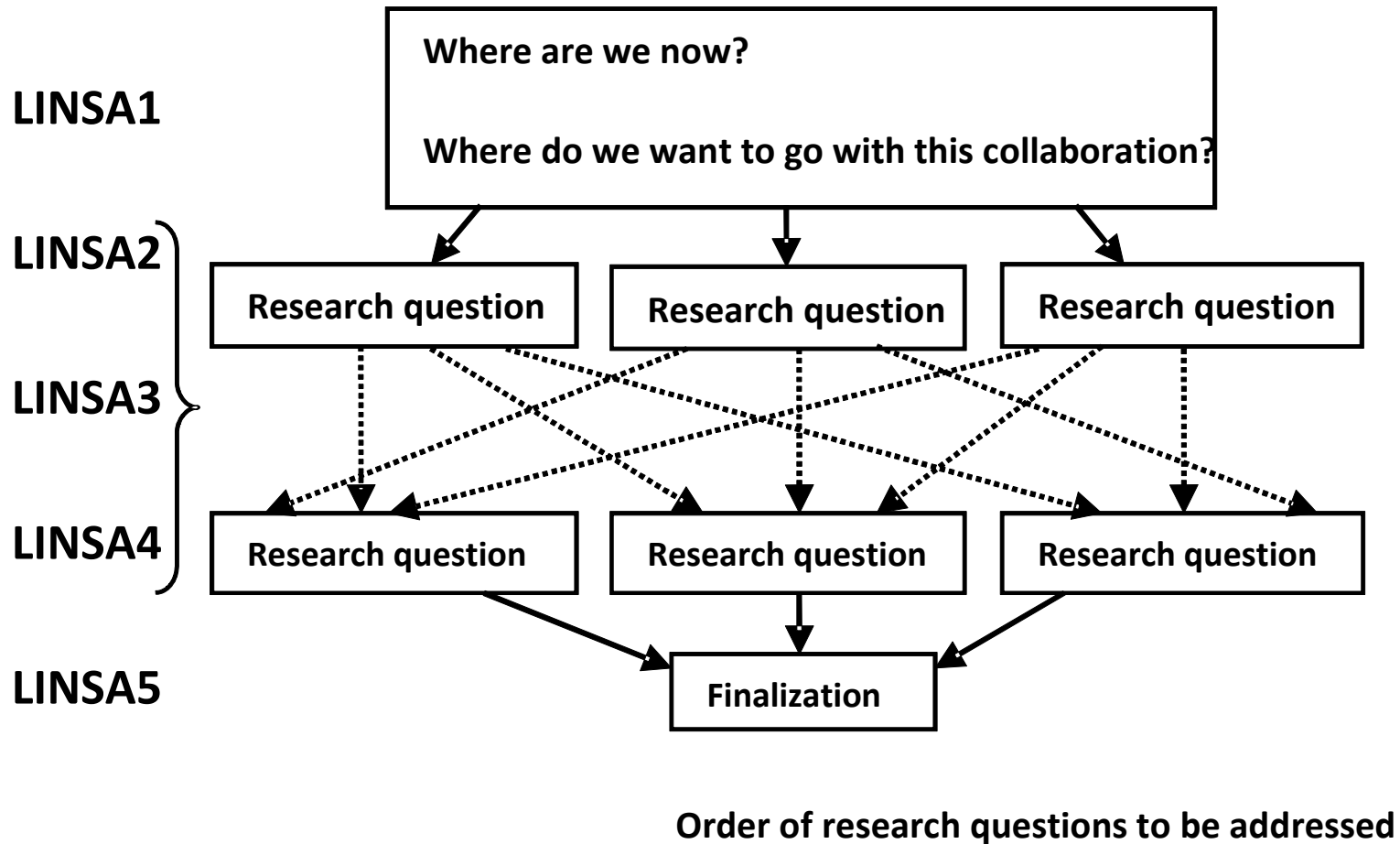
What is to come: challenges

- Tension between variety in case studies and common methodology

- How to effectively collaborate with LINSAs? How to support learning and innovation in LINSAs?

  – Theoretical concepts need to be «translated» to practical context of LINSAs

  – Practical experience needs to be translated into concepts on which to reflect

Thank you for your attention!

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