



The added value of management consultancy in innovating strategies and structures of German agricultural cooperations

Appendixes

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Appendix 1: Structure of the agriculture sector

There is an ongoing structural change in the German agriculture with a reduction of the number of farms (Bundesministerium für Ernährung, 2007). In 2006, the structural change also followed the long-term trend. 1.26 million employers were working in the German agriculture, which means 2.6 % less than 2005. 61 % out of these are family employers (Bundesministerium für Ernährung, 2007). For this purpose, the statistical municipality of Germany counts farms with an amount of 2 ha of land or more. According to this, there were 353,300 farms in Germany in 2006 (compared to 429,000 in 1999) which stands for an average value of minus 3 % per year (Bundesministerium für Ernährung, 2007). Out of this, 93 % of farms are settled in Western Germany (Chmielecki, 2006). 43 % of the German farms are the main source of income for farmers and 57 % of the farms are running as a side job (Schwerdtle, 2001).

The structural change is marked by a decreasing number of farms and an increasing size of their hectares in production. Whereas in 1970, 1,000,000 farms with a production size of less than 30 hectares were counted in Western Germany, this number decreased to 235,500 in 2003 (Chmielecki, 2006). The amount of farms with more than 30 hectares has more than doubled in that period (1970: 772,717; 2003: 125,000). In Germany, the average size of the farms differs in each federal state. In the whole Western part of Germany, the average size of a farm is around 34 ha. One can observe a North-South divide, which means that in the Northern provinces bigger structures exist than in the south. The scale in the Eastern part of Germany is completely different. In 2005 there have been 27,600 agricultural companies, which are only 7.6 % of all farms in Germany. 55 % of them have a size from 2-40 ha, but they employ only 3 % of the used acreages. The biggest amount of land is in production of farms with more than 100 ha, they have 93 % of the whole agricultural used area in Eastern Germany's production. This explains the average size of Eastern farms with 202 ha (Bundesministerium für Ernährung, 2006).

The change in German agriculture can be seen in the decreasing amount of farms from 1991 until 2005; within this period the number of farms decreased by 174,400.

In the group of the small sized farms, i.e. from 2- 30 ha, are 63 % of all German farms but they only administer 16% of the land; on the other hand 8 % of all German farms (those with more than 100 ha) produce goods on 50 % of the agricultural land. (Chmielecki, 2006)

The whole acreage of Germany is 17.02 million hectares, which is equal to 170,200 km². Out of this, there are about 70% used in tillage, 28 % is used as grassland and 1.2 % is used for gardening, wine-production and tree nurseries. In 2005, 59 % of the used cropping area was used with grain and out of this there are 45 % wheat, 28 % barley and 9 % rye. 14 % of the whole used crop-land is in usage for fodder production, 11 % with oilseeds, 7 % fallow and 6 % root crops. The classification of the German farms shows that the dominant direction is the cattle farm. In 2003 approximately 42 % of the farms belonged to this group, subsequently came the main cropping farmers with 23 %, followed by permanent culture farms like fruit and wine producers with 9 % of all farms (Bundesministerium für Ernährung, 2006). To divide the different parts, the BMELV analyses the main gross income of each farm.

82 % of the farms have a livestock production site, which is about 306,000 farms (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2003). There are 13 million cattle and 26.3 million pigs. In the population of the cattle and of the piggery one can observe a North-South divide. In the North-Western parts, there are on average 120 cattle, in the North-Eastern part 220 animals per farm and in the Southern part of Germany, there are only 40 animals on average (Chmielecki, 2006). The situation of pig producers is similar: in Schleswig-Holstein, there are farms with 562 pigs on average and in Bavaria, the average population is about 120 pigs. The main piggery region is the North-Western part of Germany where 53 % of all pigs are located.

Due to bad weather conditions, the harvesting results in 2006 were lower than in 2005 and the long-term average as well. An exception were the oilseeds. In livestock-farming, there have been



different results in 2006. The milk-, egg- and chicken-meat-production decreased. On the other hand, there was an increased production volume of beef-, calf and pig-meat. The price development was in general positive, except for the milk and sugar-beets prices.

Table App.1.1: Creation value of German agriculture in 2006 in relation to 2005 BMVEL, 2007)

	€	Change to the previous year in %
Production value	39,9 billions	+ 2,8
Intermediate inputs	26,8 billions	+ 4,1
Net creation of value	11,9 billions	+ 3,6
Net creation of value per employer	20.885,0	+ 5,7

In 2005 also the export of agricultural products developed positively so that the export of agricultural goods represented 4.7 % of the whole exported goods of Germany (Bundesministerium für Ernährung, 2007).

In 2006, the creation of value by the German agriculture was higher, which is shown in Table 2.1.2. This means that the German agriculture had a more successful year in 2006 than in 2005. The net creation of value per employer shows that the level of productivity in agriculture is rather low in comparison to high industrial employers, who had 71.000 € in Germany in 2006 (Felix, 2007).

Main agricultural markets

These markets require a deeper definition. Olson (2004) describes (agricultural) markets as places where produced goods from farms and the inputs to create these goods are sold and bought at these markets and for these prices. On markets, prices are determined by supply and demand. Prices are not set and known in advance even if there are regulations like in some of the agricultural commodities. "Prices are discovered through producers, processors, consumers, buyers, and sellers talking together, sharing information, and setting on the price for that moment and place (Olson, 2004)." These market participants determine the "proximity, size and the price level of the market". Markets are constructs of trade, policy and demand. For the farmer it is the competition, policy regulations and the own resources which affect his success but also his managerial decisions. Thus it is of importance to understand how the market works: local, regional, national, international, or globally. For most farmers who do not produce for their own farming shops, the markets of their products are international. Yet there are still trading barriers for most of the products (Bundesministerium für Ernährung, 2006), which means that for them the European market is more relevant; otherwise their competitive market would be the world market. The world market for agricultural products is increasing due to higher consumption of agricultural goods every year especially by the emerging countries in Asia like India and China (Bundesministerium für Ernährung, 2007). Another influencing factor is the political force to develop bio-energy. In Germany, especially the biogas-sector was developed due to subsidies for this sort of produced energy.

For a farmer, it is of importance to know the market of his product, and to observe whether it is it shrinks or grows. For a better crafting of their position, farmers need information about the industrial sector they act in. As there are many small agricultural markets, it is not possible to



provide all of them, therefore we will only introduce the three German main markets for agricultural products: grain, milk, and pork.

Grain

In 2007, the grain production of Germany reached the amount of 40.5 million tonnes, which lowered the result from 2006 of 43.6 million tonnes. This is 3.1 million tonnes less than in the previous year. The long-term average was lowered by 5 million tonnes (Ø 45.5 mill. tonnes; last 5 years). The acreage was 6.58 million hectares, which was 0.14 million hectares less than in 2006. The weather conditions in the autumn of 2005 were not very good and the winter grain acreage equally lowered (-3.2 %), but the spring grain reduced by 9 % and in comparison to the average acreage it is 20 % lower (Bundesministerium für Ernährung, 2007).

The reduced amount of production is limited due to lower hectare yields (Bundesministerium für Ernährung, 2007). The average yield was at 6.15 tonnes per hectare lower than the average (- 7.0 %) and 5 % lower than in 2006 (Bundesministerium für Ernährung, 2007).

Since autumn 2006, the prices for grain are higher than in the past. Reasons for these developments are the lack of grain on the world market and the boom in the resource sector. The storage of grain has the lowest value since 25 years ago (Bundesministerium für Ernährung, 2007). Trends for the future are difficult to estimate, but the low prices like 100 €/ton in the years of 2003-2005 are not expected nowadays as the intervention storages are empty.

Milk

In 2005/2006, the amount of produced milk was at 27.8 million tonnes minus 2.3 % lower than in 2004/2005. Reasons for this were the market exit of small dairy farmers and the dry and hot weather in the summer of 2005. The German milk quota was fulfilled in the quota-year (April until March) and at 0.2 million tonnes over delivered. Because of this the concerned farmers had to pay around 62 million € retribution.

In 2006, the degree of self-sufficiency of milk in the EU 25 was around 108 %. After March 2006, the supply of milk to the dairies was at 1.1 % lower than in 2005/2006, which led to a lower supply than the quotas allowed. This had a quite big impact: due to warm weather conditions (May until October) the consumption of liquid milk products increased. The result was that the production of butter also decreased (Germany -1.3 %). As a matter of fact, the consumption of butter was lower than the production which was not the case for cheese. One quarter of the EU 25 cheese production comes from Germany. In Europe, the production of cheese was increased by 1 % and in Germany by 5 %. The import as well as the export of cheese increased significantly in Germany, especially the export of cheese was much higher than the year before (+ 8%).

The prices of milk decreased in the course of the year 2006. At 27.3 Cents/kg milk and 3.7 % fat and 3.4 % protein, the price was slightly lower than in 2005 (Bundesministerium für Ernährung, 2007).

Pork

Since the year 2000, the pork production has been increasing from year to year. In 2006, the German production was 2.5 % higher than in 2005 (at 4.3 million tonnes). The consumption was lower at minus 0.6% and 4.43 m. tonnes. This provides a degree of self-sufficiency of nearly 97 %. For years the consumption side has been stagnant, so Germany is on the way to be a net exporting country in pork. In 2006, the prices for pork were above the level of 2005. The good summer with good weather conditions for barbeque and the football World Cup supported this. The price in 2006 was at the level of 1.51 Euro, which is 7 Cents more than in 2005. In the EU 25, the production was at 21.3 million tonnes 0.9 % higher than in 2005. The consumption increased by 0.4 percentages up to 19.7 million tonnes. This forced the EU to export pork into other markets (one third to Russia) cp. (Bundesministerium für Ernährung, 2007).



Table App.1.2: Change of the amount of production, producer prices, and production value of selective agricultural goods in percentages; 2006 in comparison to 2005; (Bundesministerium für Ernährung, 2007)

Product	amount of production	producer price	Value of production compared to producer prices
Grain	minus 05.9	plus 16.3	plus 09.4
Oilseeds	plus 05.2	plus 18.0	plus 24.1
Sugar beets	minus 17.3	minus 22.8	minus 36.2
Potatoes	minus 15.4	plus 48.0	plus 25.3
Beef	plus 08.6	plus 04.5	plus 13.5
Pork	plus 00.2	plus 06.6	plus 06.8
Milk	minus 02.3	minus 01.3	minus 03.6

Market policy and size for agricultural core products

The European Union has a big influence on agriculture all over Europe, due to adjustment payments for the price reductions in the beginning of the 1990s, but since 2005 the payments do not belong to any special crop anymore.

In 2005, the European Union paid 4,955 million € subsidies to 383,690 German farms (which is on average 12,914 € per farm). It becomes obvious that the structure of the German agriculture would be different without any subsidies. Additionally, the E.U. paid 990 million € of compensation payment for dairy farmers in the year 2006 (reasons: different fiscal years between cropping and livestock farms). In 2006, the third step of the cross compliance rules was applied, which was implemented to improve food safety and hygiene standards (Bundesministerium für Ernährung, 2007).

The market size of the three main products is difficult to estimate as due to a lack of resources in the emerging world, all three core products are requested on the world market, which was not the case in the past. Overproduction in the market was regulated and farmers got intervention prices for their products, which guaranteed farmers a basic price (Breustedt and Glauben, 2005). In regards to the market size, it is important to realize that small markets are not as attractive for new competitors as large markets (Olson, 2004). In recent years the specialisation in agriculture increased. This entails that the amount of sub-businesses on the farms decreases and that the expertise in the different sectors increases (Bundesministerium für Ernährung, 2007).

Conclusion

In the above part, a short introduction on the main agricultural markets in Germany was presented. As data from recent years was used it is not possible to get an outlook from this section. It should provide an impression about the external environment the farm is acting in.

Appendix 2: Systems theory and system approaches

Systemic and holistic considerations of management are based generally in the research of systems theory and cybernetics. In 1948, Wiener (Wiener, 1948) realised that uniform mechanisms of information- / respectively data-transferring exist in animals, human beings and machines. Especially the fact that creatures are marked through homeostatic processes was a new development in science and this issue was the basis of the cybernetic research (Pfeiffer and



Wagner, 2000). Von Bertalanffy (Bertalanffy, 1968) argued that system concepts can be applied in a variety of fields in both the natural and the social science.

System theory provides information about constitution and the structure of systems whereas the cybernetic inquires on the function of systems and how individual processes are realised (Pfeiffer, 2000), which will be described in the next section. Firstly, a definition of the system will be provided followed by indicators of systems. This shows the relation of systems in a bigger context. Secondly, we will figure out that the systematic approach is valid for organisations. This description will be followed by a section about the organisation regarded as a system and finally we show important issues for using this for the management.

System Definition

Regarding systems in the most basic way, a system is an assemblage of parts (Miller, 1995). Furthermore, a system can be defined as a delimited classified amount of interacting elements (Dichtl E., 1987). Pfeiffer and Wagner (Pfeiffer and Wagner, 2000) describe it as an amount of boundary elements, which have inter-correlated relations. Dülfer (Duelfer, 1984) mentions a system as an ordered amount of elements with existing relationships to each other while Cummings and Worley (Cummings and Worley, 2005) see systems as “unitary wholes composed of parts or subsystems; the system serves to integrate the parts into a functioning unit”. The so called sub-system, which is build by many smaller sub-systems. On the other hand, the regarded system has always a bigger supra-system (Duelfer, 1984).

Following this, it is possible to see a system as: *an amount of bordered, interacting elements with ordered and inter-correlated relations, which possesses sub- as well as supra-systems.*

In the beginning it is possible to distinguish simple, multifaceted and complex systems (Pfeiffer and Wagner, 2000)

- A simple system is characterised through elements and relations (e.g. alarm connections, writing machines).
- A multifaceted system has many elements and relations but it is possible to recognise and to describe all of them. This issue makes it possible to copy these systems (e.g. cars, aeroplanes).
- A complex system thus can be described by the elements and relations inability of complete realisation (e.g. Societies, organisations) (Pfeiffer and Wagner, 2000).

Furthermore, it is possible to describe systems also through other notes. Closed and open systems for example. In a closed system there are only relations between the elements belonging into that system. Open systems are connected with other surrounded systems. Systems can be determined, which means that the relations between the elements are clear defined. They can also be probabilistic which means that the relations are not defined.

Systems Approach

The systems approach focuses on systems, on their holistic observation and on an analysis of their structure. Systems have different interacting elements and the systems approach analyses these elements not in a static way, but from a flexible perspective for recognising as much system information as possible. Especially the management of organisations needs to have a flexible perspective to be able to recognise the need for adjustments. To analyse organisations as cooperations, a holistic approach and will be used by analysing the opportunities but also the threats of change with a view on the whole company. Cooperations require coordination between different entrepreneurs who used to act as single entity before. The system theory is applicable for this purpose so as to show that the main task of the management is to connect relevant internal and external information, in particular data, and to investigate its interrelatedness. System approaches support managers in obtaining a holistic view and show indications for the company as a “system”. The definition of a system we will use in this work is: a system as *an amount of*



bordered, interacting elements with ordered and inter-correlated relations, which has sub- as well as supra-systems.

Systems processes and properties

Using the systems definition introduced in the beginning of this chapter, it becomes obvious that the knowledge on open systems is never fully available. This issue characterises the systems theory. There are always information gaps in internal parts, called atomistic aspect, and in external parts, called holistic aspect, of the systems (Duelfer, 1984).

Systems researchers try to identify the different components that compromise the system. Ulrich (Ulrich, 1970) mentions that the communication within the system is more intensive than outside the system. This exchange of information makes it possible to separate the system from its environment as an organisation. After identifying this, the next step is the analysis of the arrangements and the function of the system. Miller (1995) identifies three concepts which characterise system components: hierarchical ordering, interdependence, and permeability.

- Hierarchical ordering → Systems are ordered in a highly complex way that involves sub-systems and super-systems.
- Interdependence → This implies that the functioning of one component of a system relies on other components of the system.
- Permeability → Systems have permeable boundaries that allow information and materials to flow in and out.

In the following, we will have a look at how the hierarchical, interdependent, and permeable components work in a system. A basic perspective is provided by Farace et al. (Farace et al., 1977), by the input-throughput-output process. First, the system receives “input” material or information from the environment through its permeable boundaries. The system processes these goods in the throughput phase. Finally, the system returns the transformed output back to the environment. Two kinds of processes are of high importance: the process of information exchange and the feedback process (Miller, 1995). The exchange takes place in the input and output of goods and information and is highly related to the permeability of the system. The feedback is critical in the throughput portion of the system’s operation or function. Feedback helps to control the interdependent functions of system components. There are two types of feedback which are of importance, the negative (corrective) feedback and the positive (growth) feedback (Miller, 1995). Negative feedback informs the system about errors so that the system can function on a steady course. Positive feedback is information which serves to change system functions through growth and development (system improvements).

System properties, necessary for the further development of the system, emerge through the interaction of the components and the processes described above. Miller (1995) mentions that four properties are particularly relevant: holism, equifinality, negative entropy, and requisite variety.

- Holism → A system is more than the sum of its parts. Systems have this property because of the interdependent nature of system components and the information that flows through the processes of feedback and exchange (Miller, 1995).
- Equifinality → “A system can reach the same final state from differing initial conditions and by variety of paths” (Katz and Kahn, 1978). This is also caused by the interdependent nature of system components because they are integrated into systems in highly complex ways, a variety of means exist to reach any system goal (Miller, 1995).
- Negative entropy → This is the tendency of closed systems to run down (Miller, 1995). Open systems are characterised by negative entropy and the ability to sustain themselves and grow as they interact with the environment and use information out of it (Miller, 1995).
- Requisite variety → This states that a system has to deal internally with a diverse and complicated environment, otherwise it is not able to survive (Morgan, 1986).



Conclusion

System theory is the formal science that analyses the structures of systems. This approach focuses on the observation of the entire system and the structure as well as the interacting of the different system elements. As in this work the company's structure is of importance, the systems approach is applicable. The main issues of this approach are also of interest for the farmers and their consultants before starting the change process, as an in depth analysis of the system's (company) previous condition. The system theory shows that changes in systems and emerging complex problems require new ways of thinking as single changes might have influence on new emerging problems. To get deeper insight, the system theory has to be applied on organisational level.

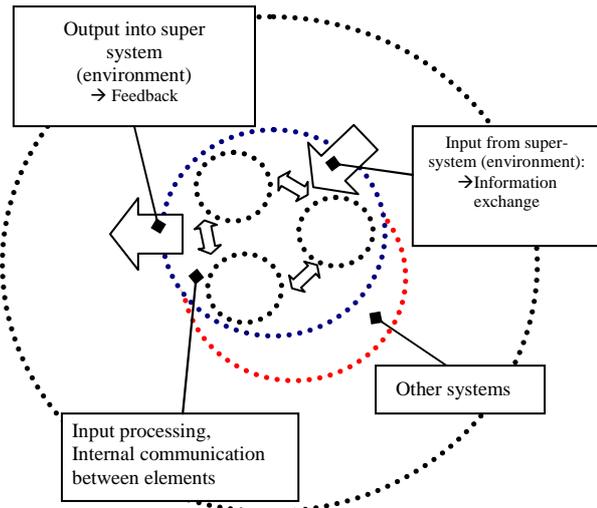


Figure App. 2.1: The system (own compilation)

Appendix 3: Objectives of organisational development

Change projects function to modify an organisation's strategy. They may include changes both in the grouping, how people perform tasks (structure) and in methods of communicating and solving problems (process) for supporting strategic changes (Cummings and Worley, 2005). An organisational development program implemented to support the management team gets more effective if it focuses on interactions and problem-solving processes within the group (Cummings & Worley, 2005). Focussing on this issue might result in a good ability of the management to secure the company against possible future problems in strategy and structure.

The organisational development perspective asks for a deeper insight into the change process and through this, also on consultancy as change in most cases happens with the help of internal and external consultants. More information about the change process and consultancy will be provided in the following.

Appendix 4: Change models

Lewin's change model

Kurt Lewin (Lewin, 1951) developed an elementary model of planned change in 1951. In his work, he describes change as an adjustment of the balancing forces of a company. More precisely, he defines two forces, which are influencing the behaviour within the company, (1) the intention to keep the status quo and (2) the pushing factors which are in favour of change. When both intentions are about equivalent, the current behaviour maintains. This state is called "quasi-stationary equilibrium". To change this situation, Lewin mentions that it is possible to increase the pro-changing forces or decrease the contra-change forces or apply a mixture of both (Lewin in Cummings & Worley, 2005). The best way for change is, according to Lewin, the modification of the forces maintaining the status quo. This produces less tension and resistance than the increasing forces for change (Lewin, 1951). Lewin sees the change process in three steps-unfreezing, movement, and refreezing (Figure 4.2.1.1).

- **Unfreezing** This step implicates the reduction of the maintaining forces of the organisational behaviour and its present level. Unfreezing is often carried out with a process called "psychological disconfirmation". This means the providing of information,



which shows the discrepancy between the behaviour of the organisation and the planned behaviour. This can motivate members to engage in change process (Schein, 1987).

- **Movement** This step modifies the behaviour within the company, department or individual to the new level. This is engaged in the development of new behaviour, values and attitudes through changes in structures and processes within the organisational system.
 - **Refreezing** This step gives stability to the organisation at a new state of equilibrium. It is often accomplished with supporting tools that strengthen the new state of the company such as organisational culture, norms, policies, and structures.

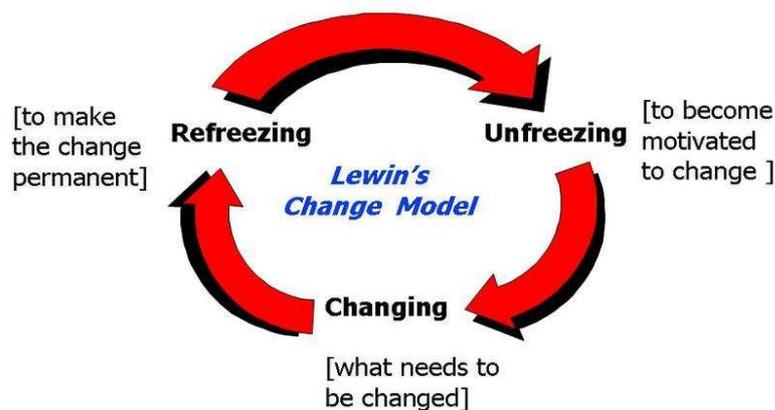


Figure App. 4.1: Lewin's change model (According to Lewin, 1951)

Lewin's model is a general framework to provide information to understand the change process in organisations. It is appreciable to show the basic steps in the change process. For a deeper insight on the change process especially regarding the feedback process, we will introduce the action research model.

Action research model

In comparison to Lewin's model, the action research model focuses on planned change as a more sophisticated process, wherein feedback after actions is of importance. This fact is of advantage because the results are investigated after the change. For this, an analysis of the organisation has to be done before the change process starts. This information is assessed and guides the action, which has to be done subsequently. After every step new information is gathered, providing new guidelines and objectives for the change process. This iterative cycle of research and action requests an ongoing communication between the organisational members and the consultant, which support the changes in the organisation (Cummings and Worley, 2005). In that case, the most important issues are the data gathering and the diagnosis before the planning of change-actions. After this, the implementation takes place followed by the evaluation.

The action research model follows two main intentions. Firstly, the support of companies in running the change process, and secondly, the development of more general knowledge, which can be applied to other settings (Shani and Bushe, 1987). Although it was formerly developed for this reason, the action research model has been adapted to the planned change process (French, 1969). The model has eight main steps, which are further explained in the next section:



1. Problem identification: In this phase, the management realises one or more problems which have to be tackled and solved by a consultant.
2. Consultation with a behavioural science expert: Initially, the management and the consultant are assessing each other. The consultant has to communicate his idea of the problem. There, he will use his own normative, developmental theory of reference and must be very conscious of those assumptions and values (Tichy, 1974). If he shares these information with the client, the atmosphere and the relation will be more open and collaborative (Cummings and Worley, 2005).
3. Data gathering and preliminary diagnosis: Usually this step is executed by the consultant in close interaction with the company's staff. This comprises the gathering of information and the analysis of the organisation's problems and their origins. The four basic actions to get the data are interviews, process observation, questionnaires, and organisational performance data (Cummings and Worley, 2005).
4. Feedback to key client or group: The diagnostic data has to be discussed with the client as the action research is collaborative. This feedback, provided by the consultant, gives the opportunity to get appreciable information about the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation. For this, the consultant provides the important data but keeps his sources confidential or if necessary withholds some data.
5. Joint diagnosis of the problem: Here, the employees of the company have to discuss the results of the consultant's connection and a decision by the management is required if a joint solving of the problem is possible and how this should be done. In these processes, like data gathering, feedback and diagnosis, a close interrelationship exists as the consultants receives the information from the organisation-members, presents the results to them and gets feedback afterwards.
6. Joint action planning: In this phase, the management and the consultant agree together on the actions which will be taken. This is the beginning of the moving process, described in the model of Lewin. Here, the company decides the best way to reach the estimated equilibrium. The action, taken by the company, is influenced by the culture, technology and the environment of the organisation; and the time and the expenses of this process (Cummings and Worley, 2005).
7. Action: This step contains the change from the current state to another in the organisation. This consists of the installation of new methods and procedures, reorganising structures and work designs, and reinforcing new behaviours (Cummings and Worley, 2005). This will need some time of transition as the company cannot change immediately (Beckhard and Harris, 1987).
8. Data gathering after action: Because of the cyclical process, the new data about the new state has to be collected and the expected status has to be compared with the reached status. This provides the effects of the change. The results of this comparison have to be discussed and may lead to re-diagnosis and new action.

Appendix 5: Consultancy

A closer description of the consultancy is needed, as consultants are playing a big part in the organisational development (Cummings and Worley, 2005). This section will provide information about the skills which are required for the consultancy process and will explain the difficulties which might emerge. According to Freedman and Zackrisson (Freedman and Zackrisson, 2001), consultants should have "self-management" competence, interpersonal skills and general consultation skills.

Self-management competence



The consultancy process is a complex field where different streams of information, which is in the need of consultants, who are able to handle these situations. The “self-management” competence can also be expressed as intrapersonal skills. This ability of self reflection is one of the core competences for consultants (Worley and Feyerherm, 2003). Consultants need to have the “personal centring to know and keep their own values, feelings, and purposes as well as the integrity to behave responsibly in a helping relationship with others.” (Cummings and Worley, 2005) Especially in the consultancy discipline, the self-knowledge gets more and more important (Tannenbaum, 1995). Additionally, active learning skills are of high importance because of the uncertainty of the consultancy process, constant adjustment and innovation are required (Church and Burke, 1995).

Interpersonal skills

Consultants must develop and maintain effective relationships with working partners in the customer company and support them in gaining problem solving competences. Expertise in group dynamics, comparative cultural perspectives and business functions are of high importance (Cummings and Worley, 2005). The appropriate managing of the consultation process and facilitation should be regarded as basic knowledge for consultants. These interpersonal competences encourage effective and helping relationships. Those relationships start with an analysis of the company’s perspective and with listening to organisational members about their perceptions and feelings (Cummings and Worley, 2005).

Furthermore, it is necessary to establish trust and empathy through the consultants and the company’s members for an efficient work and important information sharing. Already the data gathering process has influence on the members of the organisation and this has to be known by the consultant (Schein, 1998). Furthermore, there is a requirement of a partnership-relationship between the consultant and the client because solutions have to be compiled together. If this is not the case, the client will not follow the agreed solution or strategy or he will not share important information with the consultant, which will mislead the diagnosis of the problems (Schein, 1998). After the sharing of information, an instinctive feeling is required in providing useful data for the company as the members could be affected by contempt of the employees’ privacy. Furthermore, the data which the consultant provides should not force the customer to act out of a defensive position (Cummings and Worley, 2005). Therefore, it is required to speak the members’ language and to be able to give and receive feedback. For supporting the members to learn the new behaviours and skills, the consultant have to counsel and train the members in a for them appropriate way (Cummings and Worley, 2005).

General consultation skills

The abilities to manage the consulting process and the designing of interventions are two of the core competences which are required from a consultant. As the consultation process starts with a diagnosis of the current situation, the consultant must be able to recognise the problems in the company and should be able to discover new areas for development (Cummings and Worley, 2005). So, the consultant should be able for an efficient diagnosis and he should be able to support employees of the company during the diagnosis process. Furthermore, it is necessary to ask the right questions to collect information and he should be able to analyse the information in the right way. Additionally to the diagnosing skills, the consultant should be able to design and execute an intervention and should know the right moment for it (Cummings and Worley, 2005). That means the ability to define an action plan and to gain commitment for the change programme (Cummings and Worley, 2005).

These are the basic requirements for the consultants. In the following the special needs will be mentioned throughout the literature part (→ *network analysis*).



Appendix 6: Case study introduction

Type of case study: Interview

Selection:

Three farmers with already an existing cooperation
 Ten management consultants
 One external stakeholder of the farmers union
 One external researcher of a German agricultural university

Type of interview:

In-depth semi-structured interviews

Characteristics:

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews consisting of open questions;
 The most important concepts and topics of the literature review are used as a basis for the questions in the interview protocol;
 Next to the answers to the questions, additional questions ask during the interview and also background information, and `hidden` information can provide a good insight;
 The interviews will be recorded on tape;
 Main questions sent upfront in the `pre-interview document`
 (structure used from Debaire 2007)

Advantages/ disadvantages of case study

- ☺ The results are accepted more readily by the people in the field; because of the data following from a case study are of a more every day nature, results are identifiable and more easily accepted;
- ☹ External validity is low, because of the limited cases studied; it can also be more difficult to apply the results to the whole situation or similar cases (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 1999).
 (structure used from Debaire 2007)

Unit of analysis

Internal and external stakeholders of cooperations and the consultancy process

Reliability and validity

Case study tactics for four design tests (Yin, 2003)

Tests	Case study tactic	Phase of research in which tactic occurs
Construct validity	Use multiple sources of evidence Establish chain of evidence Have key informants review draft case study report	Data collection Data collection Composition
Internal validity	Do pattern matching Do explanation building Address rival explanations Use logic models	Data analysis Data analysis Data analysis Data analysis
External validity	Use theory in single-case studies Use replication logic in multiple case studies	Research design Research design
Reliability	Use case study protocol Develop case study database	Data collection Data collection



Appendix 7: Pre-Interview document

Einleitung

Vielen Dank für Ihre Zusage sich für ein Interview zur Verfügung zu stellen. Dieses einführende Dokument soll Ihnen einen kleinen Einblick geben, was beim Interviewtermin auf Sie zukommt.

Hintergrund des Interviews

Im Rahmen meiner Masterarbeit untersuche ich folgendes:

1. Veränderungen in der Unternehmensführung in landwirtschaftlichen Betrieben durch die Gründung von Kooperationen
2. Veränderungen in der Unternehmensführung in Weiterentwicklungsphasen der Kooperation.
3. Analyse des jeweiligen Einflusses von Beratung auf die Unternehmensführung.

Ziel ist es den Stand der Unternehmensführung in Kooperationen zu erfassen und mit theoretischen Ergebnissen zu vergleichen, um Rückschlüsse für Praxis und Theorie finden zu können.

Ablauf des Interviews

Im Interview werden wir über Ihre Erfahrungen bei Kooperationen in der Gründungs- und Weiterentwicklungsphase sprechen. Die Ziele und Motive der beteiligten Personen sind ebenso Bestandteil des Interviews, wie auch deren Umsetzung bzw. Neukonzeption innerhalb der Kooperation. Des weiteren werden Fragen zur kooperativen Gruppe, Beratung und die Interaktion von Beratern mit dem Einzelnen und auch mit der kooperativen Gruppe eine Rolle spielen. Das Interview wird ca. 45 Minuten in Anspruch nehmen. Wenn Sie es erlauben wird es auf Tape aufgenommen, anschließend durch mich niedergeschrieben und Ihnen zum richtigen Verständnis zugesandt. Die Ergebnisse werden anonym verwendet.

Rahmen des Interviews

Teil 1

Profil des zu Interviewenden

Profil des Unternehmens

Teil 2

Hauptarbeitsprozesse innerhalb des Unternehmens

Teil 3

Gründungsphase der Kooperation

- Mögliche Rechtsformen und deren Vor- und Nachteile
- Ziele der Landwirte
- Kritische Punkte während der Gründungsphase
- Mitglieder-/ Partnerauswahl
- Strukturen innerhalb der Kooperation
- Umgang mit Problemen
- Umgang mit Skeptikern

Teil 4

14



Der kooperative Betrieb

- Veränderungen bedingt durch die Kooperation
- Führung in der Kooperation
- Kontrollmechanismen
- Veränderung in Planung von Abläufen
- Verhaltensmuster bei Problemen
- Kooperationserfolg

Teil 5

Die kooperative Gruppe

- Informationsaustausch
- Umgang miteinander
- Unterschiede aktiv arbeitendes nicht aktiv arbeitendes Kooperationsmitglied
- Problemlösungsprozesse bei Gruppentreffen
- Umgang mit Veränderungsprozessen
- Probleme untereinander

Teil 6

Beratung

- Art und Dauer der Beratung
- Beratungsfähigkeiten
- Verhalten des Beraters vor der Kooperationsgründung
- Aufträge/Arbeiten vom Berater für die Kooperation

Teil 7

Gruppe/ Berater

- Feedback
- Kontaktfrequenz
- Erfassung vom Beratungserfolg

Teil 8

Unternehmensführung

- Einführung von Neuerungen
- Entscheidungshilfen
- Managementfähigkeiten

Appendix 8: Questionnaire

Part 1

Consultants

What is your function in your company?

Was ist Ihre Funktion in Ihrer Firma

What are your most important tasks and assignments you do for your company?

Was sind Ihre wichtigsten Aufgaben, bzw. welche Aktivitäten erledigen Sie in Ihrer Firma?

Farmers

What is your function in your cooperation?

Was ist Ihre Funktion in Ihrer Kooperation?

What are your most important tasks and assignments you do for your cooperation?



Was sind Ihre wichtigsten Aufgaben, bzw. welche Aktivitäten erledigen Sie in Ihrer Firma?

Researcher

Since when are you already owning this Professor-position?

Wie lange besitzen Sie schon die Professur?

What are your major research subjects?

Was sind Ihre wichtigsten Forschungsschwerpunkte?

Part 2

Consultants

When was the year of establishment of your company?

What are the single business units of your company?

How many farms are customers of your company? And how many of them are cooperations?

Farmers

When was the year of establishment of your company?

Wann wurde Ihre Kooperation gegründet?

What are the single business units of your company?

Was sind die einzelnen Betriebszweige in der Kooperation?

How many farms are joining the cooperation?

Wieviele Betriebe gehören der Kooperation an?

Researcher

Did you have any research experiences about agricultural cooperations?

Haben sich Forschungsprojekte von Ihnen schon mit landwirtschaftlichen Kooperationen beschäftigt? Was waren dabei die wichtigsten Ergebnisse? (Bzw. Wie würden Sie aktuell Ihren Einblick in den Bereich „Landwirtschaftliche Kooperation“ beschreiben?)

How can you evaluate the cooperation on a time horizon from the view of researcher? Is there an image development? The increased numbers?

Wie ist die Kooperation auf einer Zeitschiene aus wissenschaftlicher Sicht zu bewerten? Imageentwicklung? Zunahme?

What do you expect about future developments regarding cooperations (Number increasing? New image of cooperations?)?

Was erwarten Sie wird zukünftig für Entwicklungen im Bereich von Kooperationen? (Zunahme, Veränderung in der Betrachtungsweise von Kooperationen..?)

Did you tackle in a research project already agricultural consultancies?

Haben sich Forschungsprojekte schon mit Landwirtschaftlicher Beratung beschäftigt?

What have been the results of this investigation?

Was waren dabei die wichtigsten Ergebnisse?

In your opinion, what will be changing in the agricultural consultancy? Are there any trends?

Was wird sich Ihrer Meinung nach in Zukunft im Bereich der Landwirtschaftlichen Beratung verändern (erkennen Sie Trends)?

How would you see the agricultural management on the farms in relation to the industrial management?

Wie würden Sie das Management in Landwirtschaftlichen Betrieben bewerten bzw. es im Kontext zum industriellen Management einordnen?

Part 3

Establishment of the cooperation

1. Which legal status do farmers chose most often? In your opinion, which are in general the best statuses?



Welche Rechtsformen werden am Häufigsten für Kooperationen gewählt? Was sind Ihrer Meinung nach im Allgemeinen die besten Formen?

Farmers:

Which legal status did you choose for your cooperation? Welche Rechtsform wurde für die Kooperation gewählt?

2. What are generally the targets of the farmers if they decide to participate in a cooperation? Was sind i.d.R. die Ziele der Landwirte wenn Sie sich entscheiden eine Kooperation zu gründen oder einer beizutreten?

Farmers: What have been your targets to decide to participate in a cooperation? Was waren Ihre Ziele, als Sie sich entschieden haben eine Kooperation zu gründen oder einer beizutreten?

3. Before joining a cooperation, do farmers inform themselves about advantages and disadvantages at colleagues, which are already joining a cooperation.

Wird sich vor der Kooperationsgründung bei Kollegen, die sich schon in einer Kooperation befinden, über die Vor- und Nachteile von diesen informiert?

Farmers:

Haben Sie vor der Kooperationsgründung bei Kollegen, die sich schon in einer Kooperation befinden, über die Vor- und Nachteile von diesen informiert?

Before joining a cooperation, did you inform yourself about advantages and disadvantages at colleagues, which are already joining a cooperation

4. In your experience, what are the critical facts in the establishment phase of the cooperations?

Was sind Ihrer Erfahrung nach die kritischen Dinge in der Gründungsphase der Kooperation?

5. For the farmers which changes are the most difficult ones to accept?

Welche Veränderungen sind für die Landwirte die am Schwierigsten zu akzeptierenden?

6. Are there often members, which have problems in accepting changes through cooperation participating?

Gibt es oft Mitglieder, die Probleme haben Abweichungen durch die Kooperationszugehörigkeit zu akzeptieren?

7. May it happen that you advise a farmer not to join or not to take somebody in the cooperation?

Kann es vorkommen, daß Sie anderen Landwirten abraten jemanden in die Kooperation mit aufzunehmen?

8. a) Before the establishment, do the members create a vision for the cooperations?

Werden vor den Gründungen ein langfristige Unternehmensziele in den Kooperationen definiert?

b) if so, where are they rooted in?

wenn ja, worauf beziehen sich diese dann?

9. How big is the influence of single objectives for the planning of the cooperation?

Inwiefern fließen einzelne Ziele in die Kooperationsplanung mit ein?

10. a) Before the establishment, do the members create a strategy to reach short and middle term targets for the cooperations? Do cooperations define these explicitly?



Werden vor den Kooperationsgründungen mittel- und kurzfristige Unternehmensziele in den Einzelbetrieben verfolgt (z.B. Problembhebung)? b) Werden diese für die Kooperationen explizit definiert?

c) if so, where are they rooted in?

wenn ja, worauf beziehen sich diese dann?

11. Do farmers prefer special structures in the management of the cooperations?

Legen Landwirte Wert auf eine bestimmte Strukturen in der Unternehmensführung für die Kooperation?

12. Do the members define these structures in advance, or are they adjusting working processes afterwards?

Werden diese Strukturen vorher definiert, oder werden Arbeitsabläufe im Nachhinein angepaßt?

13. Do farmers need new ways of thinking about problems and their solutions after founding / joining a cooperation?

Benötigen Landwirte nach der Kooperationsgründung neue Wege im Umgang mit Problemen, und dem Lösen von diesen?

14. a) Before the founding, are farmers often sceptical about the cooperation in regards of the internal teamwork?

Sind Landwirte vor der Gründung der Kooperation oft skeptisch dieser gegenüber, oder haben Sie oft Zweifel, ob die Zusammenarbeit reibungslos klappen kann?

b) How does the family influence that point?

Welchen Einfluß hat hier die Familie des Landwirtes?

15. How do farmers accept changes in working processes? Are farmers more sceptical until a benefit of them is proven?

Wie werden Veränderungen in Arbeitsabläufen akzeptiert, gibt es oft Skepsis bis ein Mehrwert deutlich erkennbar ist?

Cooperation / Kooperation

16. Does the cooperation membership support the recognition of changes? And does it support the active acting in regards of emerging challenges?

Trägt die Kooperation dazu bei, daß Veränderungen jetzt schneller geschehen, um sich neuen Herausforderungen zu stellen?

17. How is the management in cooperations structured? (Is there a CEO? How does the management participating of other members look like?)

Wie wird die Führung in Kooperationen aufgebaut? (Gibt es einen Geschäftsführer? Wie verläuft dann die Mitbestimmung der anderen Mitglieder?)

18. Do the members introduce controlling systems?

Werden Kontrollmechanismen eingeführt (Finanz-Controlling System)?

19. Are farmers more active regarding change processes?

Gehen Landwirte, bedingt durch die kooperative Zusammenarbeit, aktiver an einen Veränderungsprozeß heran?



20. a) Does the planning of all processes improve in the cooperation in comparison to the single farm?

Verbessert sich die Planung aller Vorgänge in der Kooperation im Gegensatz zum Einzelbetrieb?

b) Do you use special techniques to get the agreement of doubting people?

Nutzen Sie spezielle Techniken um Zweifelnde innerhalb der Gruppe vor Entscheidungen zu überzeugen?

21. Do the members use beforehand defined behaviour-patterns?

Gibt es ein untereinander abgestimmtes Verhaltensmuster für kritische Situationen (7-S Model)?

22. How is it possible to measure the success of the cooperation?

Wie kann man Ihrer Meinung nach den Kooperationserfolg erfassen?

23. What should be the main objective of the cooperations (motivation for change; development of a vision)?

Was sollte Ihrer Meinung nach das Hauptziel von Kooperationen sein (Veränderungsmotivation; Visionsbildung)?

Kooperative Gruppe

24. How does the information sharing take place?

Wie erfolgt der Informationsaustausch zwischen Kooperationspartnern?

25. If the cooperation has non-active working members, how different is the information sharing with them?

Sollte eine Kooperation nicht aktiv arbeitende Mitglieder haben, inwiefern unterscheidet sich der Informationsaustausch mit diesen (z.B. Frequenzunterschiede)?

26. How loose does the interaction in the cooperation group takes place?

Wie lockere verläuft die Interaktion in den Kooperationsgruppen?

27. Do you have special processes for solving problems?

Haben Sie bestimmte Problemlösungsprozesse, die sich bei den Gruppentreffen etabliert haben?

Farmers: How do you try to make doubting people agree a solution?

28. Do you know any cooperative groups which have any defined problem solving processes?

Gibt es kooperative Gruppen, die bestimmte Problemlösungsprozesse haben?

29. In the cooperative group, does an higher efficiency grow in solving problems?

Entsteht in der kooperativen Gruppe eine höhere Effektivität bei Problemlösungen (z.B.: mehr Sicherheit da Entscheidungen auf mehreren Schultern ruhen)?

30. a) Are cooperation members trying to find a balance of private and working life?

Erfolgt innerhalb von Kooperationen eine Abstimmung zwischen Arbeit und Privatem?

b) How big is in your opinion the influence of this point on the success of the cooperation? Wie groß ist Ihrer Meinung nach der Einfluß von diesem Punkt auf den Erfolg der Kooperation?

31. How different does the frequency of interaction look like, which takes place through solving different big problems?



Inwieweit unterscheidet sich bei unterschiedlich großen Problemen die Interaktion zwischen den Gruppenmitgliedern (wie sehen Probleme aus, die ein Mitglied ohne Rücksprache lösen kann, wo würden Sie die Grenze sehen)?

32. How do members react in the cooperation if one member is going to far in regards of his power of decisions?

Wie wird in Kooperationen reagiert wenn ein Mitglied seine Entscheidungsbefugnisse überschritten hat?

Beratung

33. Are you often hired in the establishment phase of cooperation?

Werden Sie oftmals für die Gründungsphase der Kooperation zu Rate gezogen?

34. Does it happen often that that leads to long term consulting relations?

Bilden sich aus diesen langfristige Beratungsverhältnisse?

35. In your opinion what are the most important skills a consultant should have in the establishment phase as well as in the further development phase?

Was sind Ihrer Meinung nach die wichtigsten Fähigkeiten, die der Berater in der Gründungsphase und anschließend in der Weiterentwicklung haben sollte?

36. Are you taking an analysis of every farm before you work with the members to establish the cooperation?

Machen Sie sich einzeln ein Bild von jedem Betrieb, bevor Sie die Kooperationsgründung begleiten?

37. What are in general the assignments you do for the cooperations?

Was sind Aufgaben, die Sie für Kooperationen erledigen?

38. Do you take over any management assignments of cooperation?

Übernehmen Sie in Kooperationen spezielle Managementaufgaben bzw. Aufgaben zur Managementunterstützung (wie z.B. die Auswertung der betriebswirtschaftlichen Daten)?

Gruppe/Berater

39. How do you give feedback, after analysing something for the cooperation?

Wie geben Sie Feedback nachdem Sie etwas analysiert haben?

40. How does the cooperative group process your feedback?

Wie wird dieses Feedback in der kooperativen Gruppe verarbeitet bzw. umgesetzt?

41. How often do you have contact with the cooperative group?

Wie oft haben Sie Kontakt zu den kooperativen Gruppen?

42. How is it possible to recognise the success of consultancy?

Wie kann man Ihrer Meinung nach den Beratungserfolg erfassen?

Unternehmensführung/Management der Kooperation



43. Do cooperations introduce new management processes which have not been used in the farms beforehand?

Werden innerhalb von Kooperationen Neuerungen in der Unternehmensführung eingeführt, die es vorher in den Betrieben nicht gibt?

44. Do the cooperations use systems for finding decisions?

Werden in Kooperationen Entscheidungsfindungssysteme eingesetzt?

How would you rate the following factors in regards to their importance for the management of the cooperation?

Wie würden Sie die folgenden Faktoren hinsichtlich Ihrer Wichtigkeit für das Management in der Kooperation bewerten?

45. – a) Implementation of controlling systems for information reasons of the cooperative group
Einführung von Kontrollsystemen zum Informieren der kooperativen Gruppe

Very important	important	less important	unimportant
Sehr wichtig	wichtig	weniger wichtig	unwichtig
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b) Who can implement that in the best way?

Wer kann dieses am Besten umsetzen?

CEO	cooperative group	consultant
Geschäftsführer	Kooperative Gruppe	Berater
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

46. – a) Openness against important changes in the group and the environment?

Offenheit gegenüber wichtigen Veränderungen in der Gruppe und in der Umwelt?

Very important	important	less important	unimportant
Sehr wichtig	wichtig	weniger wichtig	unwichtig
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b) Who can implement that in the best way?

Wer kann dieses am Besten umsetzen?

CEO	cooperative group	consultant
Geschäftsführer	Kooperative Gruppe	Berater
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

47. – a) Integrative skills, that means the ability to connect different opinions and information?

Integrative Fähigkeiten, d.h. Fähigkeit zur Zusammenführung von verschiedenen Meinungen und Informationen?

Very important	important	less important	unimportant
Sehr wichtig	wichtig	weniger wichtig	unwichtig
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b) Who can implement that in the best way?

Wer kann dieses am Besten umsetzen?

CEO	cooperative group	consultant
Geschäftsführer	Kooperative Gruppe	Berater
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



48. – a) Skills for the selection of information and the ability to recognise different importance.
Fähigkeiten zur Selektion von Informationen und zum Erkennen deren unterschiedlicher Wichtigkeit?

Very important Sehr wichtig	important wichtig	less important weniger wichtig	unimportant unwichtig
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b) Who can implement that in the best way?

Wer kann dieses am Besten umsetzen?

CEO Geschäftsführer	cooperative group Kooperative Gruppe	consultant Berater
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

49. – a) Skills to steere and define the direction of the company?

Fähigkeiten zur Lenkung, bzw. Richtungsvorgabe für das Unternehmen?

Very important Sehr wichtig	important wichtig	less important weniger wichtig	unimportant unwichtig
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b) Who can implement that in the best way?

Wer kann dieses am Besten umsetzen?

CEO Geschäftsführer	cooperative group Kooperative Gruppe	consultant Berater
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

50. – a) Skills to develop a we-feeling in the company?

Fähigkeiten ein Wir-Gefühl zu entwickeln?

Very important Sehr wichtig	important wichtig	less important weniger wichtig	unimportant unwichtig
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b) Who can implement that in the best way?

Wer kann dieses am Besten umsetzen?

CEO Geschäftsführer	cooperative group Kooperative Gruppe	consultant Berater
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

51. – a) Fähigkeiten zur Entwicklung eines ganzheitlich die Kooperation erfassendes Kontrollsystems?

Very important Sehr wichtig	important wichtig	less important weniger wichtig	unimportant unwichtig
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b) Who can implement that in the best way?



Wer kann dieses am Besten umsetzen?		
CEO Geschäftsführer	cooperative group Kooperative Gruppe	consultant Berater
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

52. – a) Fähigkeiten zur Entwicklung von Regelkreisen und Definitionen von Toleranzschwellen innerhalb der Kooperation?

Very important	important	less important	unimportant
Sehr wichtig	wichtig	weniger wichtig	unwichtig
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b) Who can implement that in the best way?

Wer kann dieses am Besten umsetzen?		
CEO Geschäftsführer	cooperative group Kooperative Gruppe	consultant Berater
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How do you think do the cooperation develop in future, are there any competitive advantages?
Was glauben Sie, wie werden sich schon existierende Kooperationen in Zukunft entwickeln, gibt es Wettbewerbsvorteile?

Farmers:

What do you expect from the future regarding your cooperation? Wie stellen Sie sich die Zukunft Ihrer Kooperation vor?

Appendix 9: Results of the interviews

This section provides the results of the interviews with the main findings, which have been mentioned by the respondents. Consistency has not been regarded and also differences within the sub groups are not took into account.

Establishment phase of the cooperation

Q1 Common legal status and its evaluation

5 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 4 private consultants, 4 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 2 externals)

Regarding the legal status the GbR is the most often used one, as it was mentioned by all 10 consultants and both experts.

All interviewed farmers were participating in cooperations with the legal status GbR. Advantages of the GbR are the comparable easy way to establish it with less difficulties on fiscal issues and on legal issues. Also the income of the farms are pooled together and are separated according a pre-defined scheme. The disadvantages are the full liability of the cooperative members, which can be important especially with large investments. On the other hand the liability might be seen advantageous, as respondent 3 replied that is the only way to “reduce the disadvantages of the mine-and-yours-thinking close till zero”.

Other mentioned legal statuses are more advanced with a more complex accounting system, but it is possible to reduce the liability. 5 times the GmbH & Co KG was mentioned. In that, it is possible to separate the liability if you have non-active members, it makes it possible to reduce their liability until a special amount. The advantage is that the commercial management can ask



for more power as it is more liable than the other partners. It is able to improve the management structure through an increasing of its power, as respondent number 9 mentioned.

The KG was also mentioned five times. With that it is good to work if the cooperative group is bigger. “In taking this status I’m able to state and define the participation of the members on a legal basis”, interviewee number 4 mentioned.

The GmbH was mentioned two times as its advantage is to keep the liability at 25,000 €. The disadvantages are that the farms are seen as corporate businesses and that is influencing the fiscal situation of the farm. It was mentioned that this is especially interesting for a biogas cooperation.

Q2 Common targets of the farmers to join a cooperation

12 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 2 externals)

12 non-farmers (NF) replied on that question. The majority stated that the farmers are joining a cooperation to reach costs reduction, which was 7 times mentioned. Other mentioned economical factors have established the willing to improve: -the structure, which was stated 6 times, -the economic situation, mentioned 5 times, or -the production processes e.g. through specialising, which was also mentioned 5 times. The 4 times mentioned expanding of the farm was also stated as a reason and in this regards also the admission of an elder farmer as a slow taking-over, if he has no successor, which was also stated by 4 interviewees.

The social factors have been 7 times mentioned as the reduction of the workload is more and more important nowadays and the farmers also want to have more spare time and holidays.

The interviewed farmers had several objectives to join their cooperations. Respondent 11 mentioned that the cost reduction was in focus and the reduction of dependency on the local traders. Furthermore, he mentioned the social advantages of the cooperation and that this is very appropriate. Respondent 12 explained that he also wanted to reduce the costs, and he wanted to improve the efficiency in cropping through bigger acreage units. Another issue was the interaction with colleagues for a better decision finding and the exchange of experiences. Additionally, he expected to have more spare time which did not work out as expected, yet. A future objective is the specialising, but according to him this needs some time after the implementation of the cooperation. Respondent 13 mentioned that his objectives have been the securing of the acreage and the improvement of the economic situation.

Further statements have been (each one time):

- the need to have a joint communication- by r8:“I also think that farmers like to have partners to speak with, to feel more safe regarding bigger decisions. You can recognise that if a farmer does not have another partner to discuss with he calls his consultant.”-,
- a willing to diversify,
- the joint financing of big projects.

Q3 Information gathering through other farmers

10 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 4 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 1 external)

Only one farmer (r12) was actively involved and he was informed himself with colleagues. 7 consultants, one external and this farmer, agreed on the high level, that information gathering takes place with the farmer’s colleagues. 5 of the interviewees plus the farmer mentioned that the consultant is the more valid source of information. Enough information, about other farmer’s cooperations, won’t be provided in a deep way, which was seen by 3 interviewees and by all experienced farmers. These farmers are not telling everything (e.g. negative things) about their cooperation, was 2 times the opinion. 3 interviewees also mentioned that finding of the right partner seems to be a key success factor. 2 respondents mentioned that other cooperations are considered as good examples before the founding of the cooperation. The farmer, respondent 12,



mentioned that the main success factor is the personality of the partner, or that they are fitting to each other.

2 farmers answered in a different way, as their father had established the cooperation, they did not found the cooperation actively.

Q4 Critical facts during the establishment phase

23 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 2 externals)

All 15 respondents replied on that question. 6 interviewees recognised the importance that the future partners should have the same targets and potentials, whereas respondent 9 mentioned that not enough communication takes place about the personal targets with each other. The farmers should agree about the direction of the new cooperation, which was also declared as similar attitudes by 5 respondents. 4 times it was mentioned that a proper analysis of the past does not happen, so the farmers do not know all important economic issues about the partners. The same 4 also mentioned that it is similar important to analyse the status quo of each farm before the founding. The profit allocation is also an issue which should be in a deeper focus as it is currently was seen by 4 interviewed persons. Here, especially the evaluation of the brought-in assets was mentioned 6, but also the evaluation of the others work is an problematic issue within the cooperation, and was stated 3 times. 3 respondents saw the joint communication with each other as an critical issue, also 3 times mentioned was that the separation of the work is problematic, to agree on the question who does what.

Q5 Difficult to accept changes

15 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 2 externals)

12 out of the 15 respondents mention, that for farmers it is not easy to accept the reduction of their autonomy. The 7 times mentioned difficulties in accepting the need for discussions, might also have positive influences for the farm later on, which was the opinion by 5 interviewees. They stated that discussions might be fruitful for the development of the cooperations.

6 respondents thought that the joint decision process is a procedure the farmer needs to get used to. Different work processes are also difficult to admit for the farmers, 5 informants stated. Furthermore, the coordination about the different tasks for each group members is an issue for the farmers, was stated by 5 NF-interviewees and by 2 out of 3 farmers. The force for a better and more exact documentation is also seen as a difficult-to-accept argument by 4 respondents. Next to this, it is difficult to coordinate the different expectations the farmers have through joining the cooperation, was mentioned 3 times. Additionally 3 times mentioned, it might be difficult for some farmers to see all members as equal partners, wherein one farmer (r13), who also mentioned that issue, meant especially the passive partners. A personal issue for farmers is the different usage of the farms after the cooperation, as the farm has always been the centre of their (working-) lives, it is difficult for them to see the farm empty as the headquarter might be at another place, this information was provided by 3 respondents. The same three mentioned, that it might be difficult for farmers to get used to drive to their job at the new headquarter.

Regarding the issue if members do have often problems in accepting changes through the cooperation participating (Q6; 16 issues as answers mentioned) all 15 respondents are mentioning that this takes place. The reasons for that are e.g. the entering of the farmer's successor (3 times mentioned). It was mentioned to discuss potential problems before, 3 times by the respondents.

Q7 May it happen that you advise a farmer not to join or not to take somebody in the cooperation? Influence of consultants (for externals)?



14 farmers issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 4 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 0 farmers, 2 externals)

All 11 asked NF -interviewees, mentioned that it takes place that a consultant advises farmers not to participate in the cooperation, or that they should not allow a candidate to enter. Interviewees 2 and 5 mentioned: "It is our job not to speak according the farmers expectations.". 9 respondents mentioned that this takes place if the people do not fit together as the human relations are very important for the cooperations. Respondent 8 mentioned: "I would suggest them not to work together if I would realise that one farmer is intellectual and in a moral manner more weak than the other". The consultant has a key position, as he can take over an outsider perspective, was the opinion of 3 interviewees. An issue mentioned by 2 consultants was that it may happen that the farms do not fit together on an economical basis.

Q8 Before the establishment, do the members create a vision for the cooperations?

26 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 2 externals)

Regarding the creation of a vision, out of the 12 NF interviewees, 8 have the opinion that a vision is built and 4 respondents disagree, here within both externals. One, respondent 15 mentioned, "that many small companies do not have a clear and explicit formulated vision and there is not an explicit strategy, this is only build in the mind of the owner of the company, but seldom it is defined explicitly, and so not written down or communicated and shared with others. The explicit definition of targets happens only after the separation of ownership and management.". 5 respondents mention that a general plan is built in the beginning. Respondent 3 stated: "Here it is described what happens when a cooperation is established. So, if we have 3 single farms we have 3 times the result of the analysis. In them, we see what happens with the farms in a cooperation and we see the advantages and are able to recognise the effects for each farm". 4 interviewees said that, often, Expanding can be seen as the vision of farms, this is also related to a positive image (3 times mentioned) [for being able to get available acreages for rent]. It was 4 times mentioned that the vision is created by the single farmers according their personal targets. 5 interviewees did mention that the reaching of a better economic result is functioning as a vision.

Regarding the farmers, there are 2 who did not create a vision, one said they did. The farmers without an explicit vision had the improvement of the economic result as a main intention. For the other farmer (r12), it was the case that he wanted the farms to merge slowly together, to reach a more integrated development stage on a long term view.

Q9 Influence of single objectives for the cooperation planning ?

10 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 4 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 1 externals)

6 NFs and 2 farmers mentioned that this is related to a degree which needs to be defined by the cooperation, respondent 1 mentioned that tolerance is required in this regards. This means that the members should create a line, where in the members should act according to their own objectives. As a key factor the arrangement of the individual objectives is mentioned by 5 NF-interviewees and by all 3 farmers. Respondent 4 mentioned: This might be difficult, "but it is not possible at all to force the partners to follow somebody or that objectives are followed next to each other. You say: you will do the cropping and I will do the pork production. But if only somebody has a good feeling and the other feels very bad and monotone, there will be the best floor for quarrels."

3 NFs mentioned that compromises regarding the objectives do not work out on a long term. All farmers and 2 consultants mentioned that it is important to regard the economic and the social objectives of each member. Respondent 11 mentioned that if his father would not have participated in the cooperation he would have had doubts to take over the farm, as it is a main objective of him to share the work and to be able to have spare time e.g. in the harvest.



Another issue was mentioned by 2 interviewees (r13 & r15), that it is necessary to evaluate the benefit of the cooperation constantly. Respondent 15: “This might be source for problems. The current situation might be different in five years, and when the cooperation has moved away from its intended objectives or place it might be more difficult to keep the cooperation running.”

Q10 Before the establishment, do the members create a strategy to reach short and middle term targets for the cooperations? Do cooperations define these explicitly?

24 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 4 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 1 externals)

The NFs gave different answers on that question. So, this makes it valid to bundle the answers. Regarding the beginning of the cooperation 1 consultant mentioned that the new members are very active and 2 consultants stated that new ideas are taking place to reach a faster benefit for and through cooperation. 1 external expert added that strategies developed in that phase are fixed in the mind of the farmers. 2 consultants had the opinion that written reports are very important in the establishment phase of the cooperation, as respondent 2 said: “... to be able to recognise afterwards, why decisions have been taken place”. Whereas 3 interviewees mentioned that a written explicit strategy is not necessary.

4 Interviewees regarded new investments after the cooperation was established. In short or middle terms the restructuring of the machinery equipments is targeted, was 3 times mentioned or bigger investments are planned, stated by 2 respondents. Respondent 2 mentioned here that this should not happen too fast, as there is a danger of bigger losses after the separation of the cooperation.

4 interviewees stated that an improvement of the general conditions of the farm is targeted by the farm-managers. This implements explicit the expanding, which was stated 2 times, the knowledge transfer between the members, stated one time, higher yields, mentioned one time, a creation of a better image, 2 times mentioned, optimisation of structures and management processes, 2 times stated, and through this workload reduction, of the whole cooperation, which was 3 times mentioned.

3 respondents have regarded the planned strategy. 2 respondents were mentioning that potential members should be very healthy in an economical way, 1 consultant stated furthermore that the cooperation should be well prepared on a mental, economical, and human basis.

Regarding the farmers it can be stated, that all 3 mentioned that the reduction of the costs was/is a short and middle term objective. 2 farmers (respondent 11 & 12) are also focussing on the structural improvements like respondent 11 mentioned the optimisation of processes through specialisation. Respondents 12 and 13 want to reach a workload reduction through the cooperation, another issue is that they want to grow with their farms. A single objective of farmer 12 is the that he wants to take over a retiring farmer in the future.

Respondent 15 stated: “In general, people are more clear about their short term objectives as about their long term objectives. ‘E.g. I know in the morning what I will have done in the evening. But in comparison, what I will have done in the end of the following year, is usually only an expectation.’ So, these short term targets are more touchable for individuals than the middle- and long term objectives. Science uses the word emergent strategies, so it is developed during the process. These created strategies are developed over time. The strategy of a company you can only recognise ex-post, after it is developed. Often, this was not planned, but was a self developed process. So this was ex-post the strategy.”

Q11 Do farmers prefer special structures in the management of the cooperations?

20 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 1 externals)



6 NF-respondents agreed on that question, respondent 10 stated that in general the farmers do not look on the structure, but it is a main intention of him. He wants the farmers to focus on that carefully. 2 respondent have not been sure about that issue.

4 interviewees mentioned that farmers have preferences according to their personal skills and want to do things they are good at. 3 consultants said that some farmers want to develop specialised departments.

All farmers agreed that they have had preferred structures. The reasons have been various. One farmer (respondent 12) mentioned that he wanted to keep the structure simple, which was also agreed by two consultants who also have the opinion that farmers want that. Respondent 13, who has rented his farm from the government mentioned that he needs to be the general manager of the cooperation as his contract requires that issue. Two consultants also mentioned that it is often the case that farmers want to have a main position in the cooperation. Respondent 11 mentioned again that the members in his cooperation want to have the specialised departments, which was developed by them over time.

Other issues which have been mentioned were (each 2 times mentioned):

- in small cooperations an equal leading takes place
- as bigger the cooperation as more separation of assignments are taking place
- that the legal status has influence on the management structure
- responsibility is requested

Q12 Do the members define these structures in advance, or are they adjusting working processes afterwards?

11 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 1 externals)

All 14 respondents stated that this is done in advance whereas 12 (including all three farmers) said that the basic concept needs to be defined beforehand, but according to respondent 2 it is “not necessary to have an exact and written down description about the tasks”. Six interviewees, one farmer (r11) included, said that it is essential to declare the positions and tasks from the beginning. Four respondents, also included by two farmers (r11&r12), have the opinion that this is related to the kind of production, which is mainly done in the cooperation, e.g. in livestock production it is clear from the beginning who does what. Important in this regards and to be able to define the processes before, it is necessary to have a good self evaluation of the members, so that they are aware about their strength and weak points and tell this to their partners, this was mentioned by 3 respondents.

A special view was provided by respondent 15 as he quoted: “The cooperations will also have a formal and an informal part. There, they have defined the tasks (e.g. cropping and livestock farming) of each member in a formal level, discussed and defined beforehand, as it is important in the starting phase. But it may happen that special situations require a structure modification e.g. in the harvest. There will be a special situation when the situation requests it that another one will do the work in the shed. That is the informal part of the agreement. These informal parts emerge through the forces of the everyday work. So it is truly possible to transfer that knowledge also into agriculture.”

Q13 Do farmers need new ways of thinking about problems and their solutions after founding / joining a cooperation?

17 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 2 externals)

Out of the 15 interviewed experts, 13 agreed on that and 2 did not mention that explicit, but they gave comments. So, all 15 mentioned that the partners need to communicate and discuss, whereas respondent 9 had the opinion that “as more communicative the persons are, as less problems are



emerging, and as less communicative the members are, the more need of balancing consultancy exists". Respondent 10 said that the communication should not only happen during the good times, but "also during quarrels".

For the farmers it is a change that there is a group they have to speak to after the cooperation was founded. This was stated 5 times. Furthermore, the farmer have to find compromises, was seen as new for the farmers by 5 respondents. More openness and the recognition of important group related things are necessary, which was 4 times mentioned. Another change, stated by 4 respondents, was the new situation that the farmers are also working for others now, this develops a new working situation for the farmers, 3 informants stated, as they have to defend their decisions then. This might bring each member in the situation that potential problems are not recognised and that they feel good about a situation, but not the others, so, there might be problems the single person does not realise, was stated 3 times. Other issues which have been mentioned were (each 2 times mentioned):

- everybody sees the weak point of the other partners or mistakes cannot be hidden anymore
- attention on tackling issues is increasing
- new problems are emerging, if responsibility is determined
- regular meetings should take place on a formal, but also on an informal basis

Q14a Before the founding, do farmers often have doubts about the cooperation in regards of the internal teamwork?

14 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 4 private consultants, 3 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 2 externals)

4 out of the 12 respondents mentions that this can always be recognised, but also 4 said that this can be useful as it makes the farmers to discuss. 3 informants stated that all doubting is gone if farmers decide to participate in a cooperation. If there is too much of this sceptical thinking the question could emerge if they are fitting together, was mentioned 3 times. It also happens that it is the other way around, so that the farmers are even too enthusiastic, which was mentioned by 2 respondents. Also 2 times it was stated that slow steps and actions are better sometimes. All 3 farmers mentioned that they have known their partners in advance and so that is why they were not doubting.

Q14 b How does the family influence the potential doubts?

10 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 0 farmers, 2 externals)

Regarding the family and if they do influence the doubting of the farmers, 7 consultants mentioned that their influence is very high in special regards. 7 interviewees stated that doubts against the cooperation by the wife or the predecessor are bad for the cooperation: 'In the past he was able to manage the farm on his own,' was mentioned 3 times. The potential negative feelings against the cooperations out of the family and need to be regarded from the beginning was the opinion of 5 informants. A big issue can be the farming work during the weekend and may lead to quarrels, was seen by 4 respondents. 3 times mentioned, was the issue, that it is important for doubt-reduction to provide a high load of information for the family members, whereas 1 consultant said it is better not to inform the wives, that she cannot think about unfairness against his husband.

A predecessor who does not have any doubts can be very useful for the cooperation as he might act as a mentor and may reduce the stress load for the members during quarrels, was mentioned 3 times.



Q15 How do farmers accept changes in working processes? Are farmers are having doubts until a benefit of them is proven?

16 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 2 externals)

7 out of the 15 respondents have the opinion that discussions are always necessary. In the beginning everybody has the same objective that the cooperation should run and that is why they do not want to speak about small disagreements already in the beginning, was seen by 4 interviewees. Also 4 informants stated, that it is also an issue that a younger farmer first has to prove his intentions before he adjusts processes independently. Furthermore, decisions about the different processes and their best execution are necessary, which was recognised by 3 respondents. As an advantage of the cooperation is seen that the group has to rethink about work processes. This was mentioned 3 times, like also the following 2 issues: The changes, the group had to discuss, become normal after time. But, the discussions might be difficult if the changes are very big. Other issues which have been mentioned were (each 2 times mentioned):

- specialisation can lead to problems, as farmers are used to have always different work
- changes in working processes are accepted related to the ability to make compromises
- predecessor with doubts are often a problem in this regards

The self evaluation by the farmers was that all three thought that they are quite open regarding new processes and process improvements, as you need to get new impressions for reducing the danger to miss blind spots (r13).

Cooperation

Q16 Does the cooperation membership support the recognition of changes? And does it support the active acting in regards of emerging challenges?

19 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 2 externals)

Out of the 15 respondents 13 agreed on that issue. 2 respondents (r4&r13) did not see any difference. 7 gave as a reason that more people think about the same issue and process. As respondent 2 stated: “working processes are evaluated and developed, new production directions are developed, and diversification takes place”, and respondent 14 added that the meeting preparation of the members is also valid. Through the increase of discussions the recognition of changes takes place, was stated 7 times. 6 interviewees mentioned that the people become more open regarding changes and as they can learn from each other. “More people see more”, was a statement provided by 4 interviewees. More process improvements and process innovation takes place, was 4 times mentioned. Additionally, 3 interviewees stated that through the joint objective the flexibility increases in the cooperation. So, this might be used for a new orientation of the cooperation, 3 informants stated. Other issues which have been mentioned were (each 2 times mentioned):

- the farmers started with the willing for change and this stays
- related to the personality of the joining members
- ability for risky actions increases, maybe because risk is shared
- farmers are getting more agile
- farmers are going deeper into all topics

Q17 How is the management in cooperations structured? Is there a commercial manager /CEO? How does the management participation of other members look like?

18 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 2 externals)



Out of the 15 experts 11 stated that there is a commercial manager. In smaller cooperations all members have the same voting rights, was mentioned 9 times. 3 times mentioned was that the management structure will be discussed during the first meetings. According to 4 respondents, there are also other examples like specialising departments so that every member can act more or less autonomous in their department. 3 informants mentioned that it is very different. Important stays that there are meetings necessary to define the strategy, was 3 times mentioned. According to 3 respondents is that you speak with one voice to externals. Other issues which have been mentioned were (each 2 times mentioned):

- according contracts the general manager may decide until this and this amount
- the general manager has still communicate everything to the member
- the members discuss everything together in a weekly meeting
- related to the legal status (GbR, KG)

If a manager is doing the main work for the cooperation respondent 1 sees “the danger that the commercial manager does not tell everything, or that he tries to come out best through a cooperation meeting, this is a big danger and also if the manager is an external, he should be impartial and keep that”. Respondent 15 stated that in his opinion “the structure becomes more formal as more members are participating. There, again, we have the influence from size on the organisational structure, as bigger as more formalised (contingency-theory) is the cooperation”.

Q18 Do the members introduce controlling systems?

28 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 2 externals)

9 out of the 15 informants mentioned that a controlling system is implemented. 10 interviewees said that the planning of liquidity and its controlling takes place. 7 consultants mentioned that the controlling is done by the management consultant and also there is no explicit controlling department on the farms was mentioned by three interviewees. 7 respondents stated that the farmers are working actively with their result and 6 said that they do a preliminary of costs and use the balance sheet afterwards to control the planned issues. Another controlling tool is the benchmarking with other farms which was agreed by 5 times informants. Additionally, also five times mentioned was that farmers use reports to inform the cooperation members about the planning. The controlling is very important for cooperations which was stated by 5 respondents, as interviewee 9 said that as bigger the cooperations are, as more the banks ask for that. Four informants mentioned that this is related to the size of the cooperation. There were other issues which have been mentioned (each 2 times mentioned):

- through discussions in the cooperation-meetings
- together with the fiscal advisory
- consultant’s objective to create a business plan after the harvest
- not even on the bigger ones, not comparable as corporate businesses
- some space for improvement
- for the planning of the strategy
- in cropping: the hours allocation, field cards to control the cropping
- important as the commercial manager needs to defend himself
- necessary to decide about the profit allocation

Q19 Are farmers more active regarding change processes?

11 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 4 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 1 externals)

All 13 respondents agreed that cooperation farmers are more active to start change processes. Reasons are that the group discusses about emerging environmental changes with each other and



the cooperation asks for more activity, which were both 4 times mentioned. 4 respondents replied that they are more used to start and apply changes as they did find the cooperation already which was a major change. The cooperation develops faster than a single farm, which was seen by 4 respondents. The security of decisions about the changes is increasing as they are deeply discussed, was mentioned 3 times.

Issues which have been seen by two respondents were:

- speed increased
- is also based in the farmers personality
- they have to adjust themselves otherwise no objective fulfilment is possible

Q20a Does the planning of all processes improve in the cooperation in comparison to the single farm?

19 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 4 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 2 externals)

7 interviewees agreed that this does happen, 2 of the respondents disagreed that this does not take place (one farmer r13 and one external r15), and, 4 said sometimes yes, sometimes not (one private consultant r5 and three regional consultants r7, r8, & r10).

The cooperation brings advantages as there is the need to discuss and an appropriate planning and solving of problems takes place was the opinion of 6 respondents. Ideally, a dynamic process can be developed by the cooperation, was stated by 4 respondents. Also, 4 interviewees (included 2 farmers r11&r12) quoted that it might be difficult to find a good balance to plan the single steps in the plant production also in a cooperation. 3 informants saw a reason of improvement because a developing cooperation is asked to plan in a better way by the banks and by other money lenders. The coming year is planned very explicit was stated by 3 interviewees, included 2 farmers (r11&r13). In comparison, single farms are not acting so explicit with written reports and feelings are keeping their importance for the farmers was the opinion of three respondents. Other issues which have been mentioned were (each 2 times):

- the planning of processes is related to the farmer's personality
- the manager needs to refer to the cooperation's planning and give reasons why expectations did not hold to the others
- the planning is influenced by the consultant

Q20b Do you use special techniques to get the agreement of doubting people?

13 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 3 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 0 farmers, 2 externals)

5 consultants out of the 10 respondents stated that they use special techniques. One consultant said he does not, the externals did not answer that question with a yes or no, but interviewee 14 could provide an answer as respondent 15 could not give any answer.

6 respondents mentioned that it is important for the consultant to develop a good communication basis. Furthermore, 3 respondents stated that consultants should use good arguments and present them in a good manner. 2 interviewees shared the opinion that the experience of the consultant is very important to solve problems.

Q21 Do the members use beforehand defined behaviour-patterns in critical situations?

20 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 2 externals)

5 out of the 15 respondents stated that this does exist and 4 informants said this is not used. This needs to be regulated in the contract was mentioned 5 times. To be sure that not old problems emerge need to be discussed, it is necessary to speak about problems immediately, which was stated by 5 interviewees.



If a partner does not want to share a problem with somebody of the cooperative group it is necessary to tell that problem to their consultant, which was mentioned by 7 consultants. So sometimes the consultant acts as an mediator and a kind of psychologist, which was regarded by 6 interviewees. Also, 6 respondents stated that if the consultant cannot help to find a solution an external expert should support the cooperative group to solve their problem.

Important to keep the trust inside is that discussions should be kept internal, which was mentioned 7 times. A main focus should be put on communication, was explicitly stated by 3 respondents. 3 regional consultants mentioned that the information exchange should take place according a beforehand defined way.

Other issues which have been mentioned were (each 2 times mentioned):

- objectivity is required by all stakeholders of the cooperation
- single conversations are often necessary when problems emerge

Q22 How is it possible to measure the success of the cooperation?

17 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 2 externals)

11 out of the 15 respondents answered that the economical results have to fit. Also the personal satisfaction is an important indicator which was stated 10 times. 7 respondents argued that you should compare the situation before the cooperation was established, with the situation after that. 5 interviewees mentioned that a comparison with the starting objective can measure the success of the cooperation. A benchmark with similar farms was supposed by 4 respondents. The image in the near surroundings is also an indicator for the success, which was shared by 3 interviewees.

Q23 In your opinion, what should be the main objective of the cooperations?

15 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 2 externals)

9 out of the 15 respondents stated that their opinion is that the most important objective should be that the members could fulfil their objectives. This was also strengthened by 3 respondents that the life for the family should reach the highest possible standard. The target to improve the economical success of the farms was stated by 7 informants. 4 experts mentioned that the ratio between the work and profit should fit, this can be reached through successful management and through synergies. Also 4 respondents stated that the development chances are higher through the cooperation. Then, it was responded that a joint vision and a joint objective is important by 3 interviewees. Also 3 times mentioned was that the cooperation may reach a better position in the competitive environment. Regarding the innovativeness the cooperation makes it possible to be more up to date, and have better adoptions to innovations, which was seen by 3 respondents.

Other objectives mentioned by the respondents have been (each 2 times):

- higher efficiency level
- through group to have better decisions
- different ideas to reduce risk of decisions

Cooperative Group

Q24 How does the information sharing take place within the group?

12 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 0 externals)

According to 9 (included the farmers) out of the 13 respondents the daily business information is shared via mobile. 7 respondents (4 of the consultants and all 3 farmers) stated that information sharing takes place through meetings (r11&r12: weekly; r13: 2 times a month). 6 consultants mentioned that information is shared through conversations. The normal information is provided



to all cooperation members through assembly meetings, which was 5 times mentioned. While, according to 5 respondents it is important to meet especially in the beginning (around) once a week. Important information should be shared on a written basis via Fax, E-mail etc. which was stated by 3 interviewees.

Q25 If the cooperation has non-active working members, how different is the information sharing with them?

15 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 2 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 2 farmers, 1 externals)

6 out of the 10 respondents mentioned that this is very different, 2 said it is different and the other 2 said that there is no difference (r3&r13). 3 respondents mentioned that the passives are not interested so much in daily business. Often, they get the main information during the assembly meeting which was mentioned 3 times, but it should be clear that if they want to get any information they should get it immediately, which is also a task for the manager to be able to offer that information, 3 interviewees stated.

Q26 How loose does the interaction in the cooperation group takes place?

13 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 4 private consultants, 4 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 1 externals)

7 out of 12 interviewees recognised a need for a loose discussion style for being able to have a good relationship. 6 informants said that in general it is good to have a loose and friendly relationship. So, the work should be done in a good and loose atmosphere, but there are borders said four interviewees. 4 respondents mentioned that the assembly meeting takes place in a formal way. There are other issues which have been mentioned (each 2 times):

- active members are acting more informal with each other and the acting with passive members takes place more formal
- related to the size of the cooperation as bigger as more formal
- formalities have to fit to the members

Q27 Do you have special processes for solving problems?

20 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 4 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 1 externals)

7 respondents (6 consultants and the external expert r15) agreed but one respondent (r3) disagreed and according to all three farmers with their cooperations, there are no special processes. 5 consultants saw it the need of having serious and open conversations. All 3 farmers also use serious and open conversation for solving any problems. Respondent 11 mentioned that you should “allow everybody to speak and to finish, with no screaming, nor shouting”.

During emotional discussions the consultant should act as a moderator, which was stated by 4 respondents. 4 consultants stated that single conversations with every member are appropriate. The information gathering for the group meetings is important for the consultant, which was the opinion of 4 informants. So, possible solutions are always individual, and this means the consultant should be good informed beforehand until he can give advises, which was mentioned 3 times. “The consultant should be able to steer a bit,” interviewee 1 said. Other issues mentioned have been (each 2 times):

- related to the kind of situation as respondent 10 stated that “As long as all members are speaking with one voice and are still focussing on their targets everything is possible. If there is a member who tries to solve his own interests, it might emerge a problem out of it and it is possible to request the sense out of the cooperation”
- the manager will recognise problems before the assembly meeting
- problems should be told to the consultant beforehand



- the consultant should focus that no different parties are emerging with different opinions
- the consultant should know all actions which have been done already to solve the problems
- the consultants try to solve the problems but we/they are no professionals in solving problems
- mediator usage or usage of externals if the problems become too big

Summarised it can be seen as respondent 4 was mentioning “We are trying to steer it according to two main reasons. First, because of the costs, and second, we know the strength and the weaknesses of the members and their background. But of course there is a border, we are not professional problem solvers, we only can try to help. If this is not possible anymore, it might be better to ask coaches or mediators”. Respondent 7 stated that in their consultancy education they have a course “with the name socio-technological consultancy, with other words the solving of problems. Then we also have some further education courses. In them we learn how to act with problems, how to solve them; and also some coaching seminars/ mediator-seminars. Then, there are of course some personal factors which are getting bigger in time.”

Q28 In the cooperative group, does an higher efficiency grow in solving problems?

18 issues as answers mentioned (included answers on Q28a)

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 1 externals)

10 out of the 14 respondents agreed on that question. 4 interviewees have not been sure about that question. 5 respondents stated that the decisions are more developed in bigger groups as there is a bigger need to discuss with each other. Also, there are group members who all have different strengths which might be advantageous to put them together, quoted by 4 informants. Further issues which have been mentioned were (each 2 times):

- bigger groups decide more easy as the smaller group, like respondent 3 stated: “As there are people with ideas but they have been agreed by the others or they vote against him and are the majority. You do not have to convince one doubting person.”
- The farmers are not improved in solving personal issues not but on technical issues
- same educational level of the members is an advantage
- sometimes groups are creating different decisions as they would have done without the group as respondent 15 mentioned “I cannot say it exactly in regards of a cooperation. Regarding the general social-psychological literature it is mentioned that decision processes in groups have some own, non-typical processes in both a positive and a negative manner. They are positive in relation with competences, more information is taking into consideration. Negatively is that group decisions are tending to be more risky, also as the responsibility is shared with others.”

Q28a Only for farmers: How do you try to make doubting people agree a solution?

All three farmers mentioned that they try to find good arguments. Respondent 11 and 12 mentioned that in the end they try to find agreements. Interviewee 11 stated furthermore, that the doubts are there for a reason. If the doubts are still there after discussions he said that the group decides to do it and the issue is analysed afterwards to keep the discussions running also after the analysis, that no problem stays in the group. In most of the cases it is solved on its own then. Interviewee 12 stated that an ongoing information-providing process is used if the doubts are resistant and time to rethink is given.

Q29a Are cooperation members trying to find a balance/coordination of private and working life?

9 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 4 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 1 externals)



Out of the 13 interviewees, 9 respondents mentioned that this takes place and one farmer said it does not happen, as he is the commercial manager and does the daily business alone with 2 employers. 5 informants stated that weekend and holiday substitution takes place. The private life and its improvement is a main objective for the establishment of the cooperations, was mentioned 4 times. Further issues which have been mentioned were (each 2 times):

- the amount of holidays should increase through the cooperation
- in exceptional situations farmers can get spare time even if the workload is high
- differentiation is difficult
- should be tried if the situation allows that

Q29b How big is in your opinion the influence of this point on the success of the cooperation?
8 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 4 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 2 farmers, 1 externals)

This is an important point as satisfaction in your life improves also the working life, so the cooperation more successful, which was stated by 7 of the 12 respondents. Respondent 10 stated: "The members only feel comfortable if the social side and the economical side fits." 3 interviewees stated that to be empathic regarding the partners is strongly advised for a cooperation.

Other issues mentioned by the respondents have been (each 2 times):

- it is important for the personal satisfaction if you see also something else than only the farm
- the members should have the issue in mind that their partner has also needs and plans, as respondent 4 mentioned: "The most important issue is that all partners have the feeling that they take care on each other. This should be possible to recognise for all partners. This is very important for the success, but it is not possible to measure that in Euro."
- the family also needs to be satisfied with the situation
- very big, you have to like each other also in private life
- if the partners are different about the kind of work/life balance, it is a source for conflicts
- nobody should start to think that the other works less, about that you need to discuss immediately

Q30 How different does interaction look like for different problem sizes. What are problems a partner can decide on his own?

15 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 4 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 1 externals)

13 interviewees replied on that question. 6 stated that the cooperation members should create a feeling over time, how to act and what the partners accept. This is different according to individual borders from cooperation to cooperation, which was seen by 4 interviewees.

The individual space for decisions is very important and needs to be regulated only in a general way, was stated by 6 respondents. Respondent 10 mentioned: "This means that it is important if somebody is specialised on something he needs to have the authority to decide on his own, if he thinks this is important." This opinion was shared by respondent 5, who said that "it is a matter of the specialisation". 5 interviewees stated that this should be written down in the contract. 4 respondents stated that joint decisions should be taken together if they are influencing the future in a bigger scale. In general, partners should take care if single decisions are accepted by everybody in the cooperation, which was mentioned 4 times. The communication is "everything" all 3 farmers agreed on that. 2 respondents had the opinion that bigger decisions require interactions.



Respondent 3 stated that the manager should write a written plan before the economic year starts: “The commercial manager has to prepare himself, and the partners feel comfortable with the situation, as they have something in their hands, and it is more easy to control the manager afterwards. If then the plans are changing he should provide information about that.”

Respondent 15 stated about that issue that it is related to the management: “related to the character of the managers, all partners should be good in delegating, then the decision autonomy is quite high.”

Q31 How do members react in the cooperation if one member is going too far in regards of his power of decisions?

11 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 4 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 0 externals)

8 out of 9 consultants said that this needs to be discussed and the reasons should be provided. Then the group should find a solution for the future, what is done if this happens again, which was stated 4 times. The individual situation needs to be regarded and the alternatives for the cooperation should be considered, was 2 times mentioned. 2 consultants had the opinion that a border should be put in the contract to declare the space for decisions and the actions after somebody does not follow that rule. It is important to speak about problems immediately in a group meeting was stated 2 times as respondent 10 said: “It may not happen that any problems are not discussed. Then, we can close the cooperation straight away, so the quick discussion of problems are a very important success factor. Especially in the beginning of the cooperation it needs to be done regularly. This costs time, but it is of advantage to use this time for that, you can recognise the success and the effects much more easy. You can only build up trust if you speak with each other.”

2 farmers mentioned that this did not occur yet. One farmer mentioned that his father was developing a concept for a biogas factory without informing the others which ended in a big quarrel.

Consultancy

Q32 Are you often hired in the establishment phase of cooperation?

12 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 1 externals)

13 out of 14 are responding that question with a yes, interviewee 8 mentioned that he is not so experienced yet, so his boss is asked. The farmers mentioned that they all have got some help through consultants and respondent 15 said that cooperations hire consultants if they are planning to merge: “This is related to the kind of cooperation. If farmers share the machinery equipment not always. If you have a joint venture or a merger level I think so yes, as bigger as earlier.”

Respondent 4 stated: “Yes, we are hired often. The problem is that they ask us for help, but in most cases too late. The reason is in most cases the evaluation of the assets, and the profit allocation. This is the cause in most of the cases, and we develop the, what we have already discussed earlier, the target development, and the planning of the farm. But this we create afterwards, as we think that is of high importance. They have discussed their objectives beforehand, but it was not bundled in a concrete planning of the different possible alternatives. Often the farmers come to us and ask for a contract, which we cannot even deliver as business consultants.”

Q33 Does it happen often that that leads to long term consulting relations? And for farmers: Is that consultant still yours?

9 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 0 externals)



Out of the 10 consultants 9 agreed on that question and one replied that there are also some better experts than he is. 4 respondents mentioned that often there is already one potential member a customer of the consultancy. Often, if new customers are involved, these stay the customers (3 times mentioned). 3 consultants stated that the long term relationship is the main intention of their work. Respondent 4 mentioned “as we want to support the founding and the further developing. Also in sense of conflict prevention, in sense of good business planning, and in sense of the support of the member relation, we can help the farmers a little bit. We cannot influence it in a bigger context but we can support them with more or less intensive care.” Respondent 3 regards himself and his colleagues as “a kind of bridge between the active and the non active members, as through our reports we can provide information for all members.”

Two farmers that their consultant is not active anymore, so one of them has a new consultant (r13) and the other stated that they do not have one anymore (r12). The other farmer (r11) mentioned that they still have the same consultant.

Q34 In your opinion what are the most important skills a consultant should have in the establishment phase as well as in the further development phase?

17 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 2 externals)

All 15 interviewees were responding on that question. 8 respondents stated that it is important that the consultant knows the current standards in agriculture, on a technical, and an economical basis but also the 3 times extra mentioned “basic understanding of the juridical and fiscal possibilities and consequences of what the farmers are planning.” 7 mentioned that the consultant should have enough experience, “regarding his profession, on a businesslike level, and in regards of human relations”, respondent 3 mentioned. Then, the consultant should be able to recognise if the farmers are fitting together in time, not only their farms, which was stated 6 times, included all three farmers. 6 informants added that the consultant should be able to listen actively (r9: consultants should be empathic), and should be able to give good feedback. 5 respondents stated that neutrality is required, which can be “difficult sometimes, if you are already knowing the other customer longer,” as respondent 2 quoted. Social capabilities are needed, stated by 5 respondents. Interviewee 10 said: “I think it is especially important to support the coordination of work processes of the former single farms, so that the social things are of high importance.” Also, 5 interviewees stated that the consultant should be a team player and should be able to create social networks. Furthermore and 4 times mentioned, he should be able to understand the needs of the future cooperation-members, which is connected with the 3 times mentioned knowledge about the potential of conflicts in each single cooperations. Interviewee 4 stated: “(...) that they know what needs to be regulated verbally and on a contractual basis in the establishment phase beforehand and what can follow afterwards.” Additionally, the consultant should be able to recognise the real objectives of the different actors) and being able to classify targets in dreams and reality, which both was mentioned 4 times.

Q35 Are you visiting and analysing every farm before you work with the members to establish the cooperation?

11 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 0 external)

9 out of 10 consultants agreed on that, and additionally all 3 farmers. Respondent 5 mentioned “that this is not absolutely necessary, but it is always better, that you know the facilities”. 5 consultants mentioned that you need to get a whole impression of the farm, and to regard the whole farm on the spot was seen by 4 consultants, and again also by all 3 farmers. That is necessary for the consultant to get a feeling about the cooperation, which was stated by 3 consultants. Furthermore, it is good to meet the family, which was stated by 4 consultants, but



“this is not always wanted by the clients”, respondent 9 mentioned. The 3 farmers stated that this took place during their establishment phase. Then, it is important, that the consultants can write an exact analysis of the farm, which was mentioned by 4 consultants (only by private consultants) and all three farmers.

Q36 What are in general the assignments you/ the consultants do for the cooperations?

14 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 2 farmers, 1 external)

Out of the 10 consultants 8 mentioned that they do the controlling for the cooperations, and 7 consultants mentioned that they do the business planning. Then, 5 mentioned that they act as a moderator, in the assembly meetings, but also in the establishment phase as a moderator between the different consultants (fiscal advisors, lawyers etc). Furthermore, in the establishment phase an analysis of the current and past situation of the farms was mentioned 4 times by the consultants. Then, 3 also mentioned that they participate in the development of the cooperation-contract. Another issue is the defining of the of profit evaluation and the profit-allocation, which was stated by 3 consultants. The consultants assist the partners if critical situations emerge, which was also stated 3 times. Respondent 15, as a the only answering external expert, expected that the consultants support the farmers in the contract development and in the application of their plans. The 2 farmers mentioned different issues. Respondent 11 said that the consultant was also supporting them in the contract development. Respondent 13 mentioned the controlling and the business planning, the moderation, and the support in applying their plans is done by his consultant. Furthermore, he uses the consultant as somebody to speak with, as a neutral advisor about farm-related problems.

(Q37, 11 issues as answers mentioned) Management assignments for the cooperation is done by 3 consultants and not done by other 3, whereas 7 gave an answer on that question. Respondent 3 said, he is joins a supervisory board of a cooperation. Interviewee 4 mentioned that he is negotiating special conditions with a bank about loans, but not very often. Respondent 9 stated that he writes annual statements for cooperations and prepares the assembly meeting of the cooperations, which was both also mentioned by respondent 13 the only replying farmer, that his consultant does that for his cooperation. Furthermore interviewee 13 said that he gets a benchmark of his results by his consultant, which was also mentioned by respondent 15, that a consultant should do that, and he stated that the consultant should provide feedback from an outsider perspective.

Group/Consultant

Q38 How do you give feedback, after analysing something for the cooperation?

11 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 2 farmers, 1 external)

8 out of the 10 answering consultants mentioned, the personal conversation explicitly and also the external respondent. Then, it was mentioned 6 times by the consultants that the economic analysis and the planning is done on an interactive basis, which takes also place in both cooperations of the responding farmers (r11&r13) and was also stated by the external respondent. Consultants should speak out explicit what they are thinking, which was stated by 5 consultants, both farmers and the external respondent. It was also mentioned by 4 consultants and the external interviewee that the consultants should explain the farmers about problems they recognise and provide scenarios how to solve them. Furthermore, it was mentioned by 4 consultants that they are moderating the assembly meetings and write the protocols of that, which takes place also in the cooperation of respondent 11. 2 respondents stated that they write their feedback down and send it to the customers.



Q39 How does the cooperative group process your feedback?

19 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 2 farmers, 1 external)

This is related to the problem was mentioned 4 times. 4 consultants stated that a discussion starts after the consultant has explained his opinion, which was agreed by one farmer (r11). Then, it should be clear to all partners, that they have to decide on their own, as they are the owners and not the consultant, which was quoted 3 times. This was also recognised by both responding farmers as they have mentioned it themselves. 3 consultants experienced that their opinion is influencing the cooperation in a big scale, which was also the opinion of both answering farmers. Other 3 respondents, included the external, replied that their feedback is often not used exactly, which was also mentioned by respondent 13. It might also be different from cooperation to cooperation which was stated 3 times. 2 respondents (r4&r15) stated that this a problem, as respondent 4 stated: "I 'm already satisfied, if the farmers start to move a bit after I was speaking with them." Interviewee 15 said: "The appliance of consultancy is always a general problem. If that person you give an advise to will apply that is always questionable. This we know about consulting in general, that not all advises are applied in practice or that they are not accepted, which is not a special case only from farmers."

Interviewee 3 stated that he gives the members the protocol after the meetings and let them sign it: "Ideally, in the end of the assembly meeting, the protocol is written and the joining members sign it. Then you have the result and the people have a paper, where they have all the information about what has happened and what was decided."

Q40 How often do you have contact with the cooperative group?

11 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 3 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 0 farmers, 0 externals)

4 of the 8 responding consultants said that this is related to the size of the cooperation and so if different appointments during the year are necessary, so it is very different which was also stated 4 times. Respondent 7 mentioned "This is accorded to the kind of cooperation, We meet about 7 till 8 times, if a cooperation is small and runs without problems maybe less often." Furthermore, the answers have been various, so 2 consultants mentioned that with some cooperations they only meet at the assembly meetings. They also meet other cooperations 2 till 3 times next to the formal assembly meetings, which was also mentioned 2 times. 2 consultants said that regularly meetings are taking place if the farmers want them to do their planning and analysing. Then, it is also an issue, according to 2 consultants, how the manager is acting and the trust he receives by the cooperation.

Q41 How is it possible to recognise the success of consultancy?

19 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 1 externals)

10 out of the 14 respondents mentioned that the satisfaction is a subjective issue. 7 respondents, two farmers included, said that it is possible to measure the economical success. Whereas 4 think that an issue to regard is the improvement of the family's situation. Another tool to measure satisfaction is if the farmers are coming back or not, which was mentioned 4 times, or the frequency the farmers call the consultant, which was stated 3 times. Then, the self evaluation of the consultant if they think that they have supported the farms management to become better, and 3 times respondents said, how the farmer react in personal meetings on a non-verbal basis. Other issues which have been mentioned (each 2 times):

- sometimes it happens when a consultant can save a farmer to become bankrupt
- make the customers to focus and to think about issues



- if they pay the bills
- our consultancy is more advanced difficult to measure as normal consultancy in corporate businesses, so mainly through situation improvements
- how did the farmers use the consultant's advises

Management within the cooperation

Q42 Do cooperations introduce new management processes which have not been used in the farms beforehand?

22 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 2 externals)

12 out of the 15 respondents agreed on that question, and 6 see process improvements and more thinking about process improvements takes place which was mentioned 5 times. Respondent 9 stated that more process innovations are taking place as longer the cooperation runs. Then, the liquidity planning improves and reports are written down, stated by 3 respondents. The assignments for the manager are defined in a clear way as he has higher risk in liability of the others and on his decisions, which was mentioned 3, respectively 2 times. 2 consultants mentioned that the usage of computer and technique improves.

Respondent 3 recognises the mental ability to leave old structures behind: "The thinking takes place to rethink and optimise daily processes is much bigger and is also supported by passive members as they only have in mind the increasing of the profit."

Interviewee 8 stated that more strategic ideas are taking place: "There are marketing strategies, purchase strategies, spraying strategies etc."

Q43 Do the cooperations use systems for finding decisions?

14 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 5 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 1 externals)

7 out of the 14 respondents said that most decisions are done in well prepared assembly meetings and supported by planning calculations which was mentioned 5 times. Then, 4 interviewees mentioned the better documentation which takes place in the cooperation. Three informants stated that there is a force to keep all members informed on a high level. 3 respondents mention that the manager gets an amount of influence and related to that the decision process look like. Respondent 15 stated about that: "In general, you will try to get agreements in the personal interaction. The formal issues, like the contract, are only for bad times if there exists disagreement. Then, it is fixed in the contract, if there is not the need for full agreements, so a basic majority is enough etc. But I think that is the beginning of problems."

Other issues which have been mentioned (each 2 times):

- decisions are different in the group as they have been before in the single farms
- deep discussions about investments
- discuss about misunderstandings and afterwards solution evaluations

Respondent 11 stated how the decision process takes place in his cooperation: "Yes, for finding decisions we calculate all work processes. Which fertilisers are used, what are the real advantages of new machinery equipment? We also analyse the market and how it will develop in future, this already before we do investments."

Q44 How do you think do the cooperation develop in future, are there any competitive advantages?

17 issues as answers mentioned

(Respondents: 4 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 0 externals)

8 out of 12 respondents see competitive advantages, 3 even big advantages. 7 interviewees said that the growing goes faster and 5 mention that the growing steps are bigger as respondent 7



stated: “Bigger growing steps are possible through more working capacity. It is more easy to rent hundred more hectares, as there workload would not be too high and the machinery is as a rule already good enough for a better usage.” 4 interviewees see a better image in the cooperations environment which allows the farmers to grow also faster. 2 consultants had the opinion that through the group the cooperation has a bigger network as a single farm. So, it is able to receive more information about all processes related to the cooperation.

The farmers stated their objectives. Respondent 11 stated: “I think that the cooperation is going on like that and that we also survive the next generational change without bigger problems. Maybe the children are joining the work, or the are only managing. Maybe the cooperation grows, the grain storage needs to grow, the asperge cropping, and that we can grow in the agricultural services. I think we are a growing farm.” Respondent 12 said: “We want to become more close with our farms. We still want to reduce our machinery equipment. The marketing should happen together. More specialising of the members. Joint projects...”

Finally respondent 13 stated: We want to grow, but the rest is difficult to say. In the next 20 years we hopefully get some hectares more. But every farm has to see it individually.”

Q45 Implementation of controlling systems for information reasons of the cooperative group
(Respondents: 4 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 1 external)

Nobody of the 13 respondents stated that this issue is unimportant. 3 interviewees evaluated it as less important. 4 saw it as important and 7 stated that this is very important.

Answering the question who can apply that in the best way the respondents chose the commercial manager, the cooperative group and the consultant each 6 times. Whereas respondent 7 saw the manager and the consultant in the focus to apply it. Respondents 9 and 10 saw it as a task of all 3 to do.

Q46 Openness against important changes in the group and the environment?

(Respondents: 4 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 1 external)

Nobody of the 13 respondents stated that this issue is unimportant or less important. 8 interviewees evaluated it as important. 5 stated that this is very important.

Answering the question who can apply that in the best way the respondents chose the commercial manager 4 times, the cooperative group 12 times and the consultant 1 time. Whereas respondent 4 saw the manager and the group in the focus to apply it. Respondent 5 saw it as a task of all 3 to do.

Q47 Integrative skills, that means the ability to connect different opinions and information?

(Respondents: 4 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 1 external)

Nobody of the 13 respondents stated that this issue is unimportant nor less important. 3 interviewees evaluated it as important. 10 stated that this is very important.

Answering the question who can apply that in the best way, the respondents chose the commercial manager 4 times, the cooperative group 6 times and the consultant 7 times. Whereas, respondent 7 and 9 saw the manager and the consultant in the focus to apply it. Respondent 4 evaluated it as a task of all 3 to do.

Q48 Skills for the selection of information and the ability to recognise different importance.

(Respondents: 4 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 1 external)

Nobody of the 13 respondents stated that this issue is unimportant nor less important. 8 interviewees evaluated it as important. 5 stated that this is very important.

Answering the question who can apply that in the best way the respondents chose the commercial manager 7 times, the cooperative group 5 times and the consultant 8 times. Whereas respondent 5, 7, 9 and 10 saw the manager and the consultant in the focus to apply it. Respondent 8 saw the



cooperative group and the consultant in the task to apply it. Respondent 4 saw it as a task of all 3 to do.

Q49 Skills to steer and define the direction of the company?

(Respondents: 4 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 1 external)

Nobody of the 13 respondents stated that this issue is unimportant nor less important. 5 interviewees evaluated it as important. 8 stated that this is very important.

Answering the question who can apply that in the best way the respondents chose the commercial manager 9 times, the cooperative group 6 times, and the consultant 1 time. Whereas respondent 9 saw the manager and the group in the focus to apply it. Respondent 10 saw it as a task of the manager and the consultant.

Q50 Skills to develop a we-feeling in the company?

(Respondents: 4 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 1 external)

Nobody of the 13 respondents stated that this issue is unimportant nor less important. 3 interviewees evaluated it as important. 10 stated that this is very important.

Answering the question who can apply that in the best way the respondents chose the commercial manager 3 times, the cooperative group 12 times, and the consultant zero times. Whereas respondents 3 and 5 saw the manager and the group in focus to apply it.

Q51 Skills to develop a controlling system to measure the econ factors in the whole cooperational system?

(Respondents: 4 private consultants, 5 regional consultants, 3 farmers, 1 external)

1 out of the 13 respondents stated that this issue is unimportant. 2 interviewees evaluated it as less important. 7 saw it as important and 4 stated that this is very important.

Answering the question who can apply that in the best way the respondents chose the commercial manager 6 times, the cooperative group 4 times and the consultant 8 times. Whereas, respondent 5, 7 and 9 saw the manager and the consultant in the focus to apply it. Respondent 8 saw the cooperative group and the consultant in the task to apply it. Respondents 10 and 11 saw it as a task of the manager and the group.

Q52 Skills to develop regulation cycles and define tolerance borders within the cooperation?

1 out of the 13 respondents stated that this issue is unimportant. 1 interviewee evaluated it as less important. 9 saw it as important and 2 stated that this is very important.

Answering the question who can apply that in the best way the respondents chose the commercial manager 3 times, the cooperative group 10 times and the consultant 3 times. Whereas, respondent 5, 7 and 9 saw the manager and the consultant in the focus to apply it. Respondents 5 and 10 saw it as a task of the manager and the group. Respondent 4 saw all three in the task to apply it.



Appendix 10: Analysis of the results

Establishment phase of the cooperation

Question (Q1) about different types of legal statuses of cooperations, the private consultants replied on average 3 times, the regional consultants 2,3 times, the farmers only mentioned their own status and the externals on average 2,5 statuses. The only obvious difference was that KG was mentioned by 3 private consultants in comparison to only one regional consultant.

Regarding question 2 (Q2) and the general targets of the cooperation the amount of answers between the groups have been quite similar from 3,5 (externals) issues answered till 3,7 (farmers). Obvious is that the social factors are regarded by 4 regional consultants and only by 2 private consultants. The private consultants on the other hand saw the objective to take over an elder farmer through cooperation which was mentioned 4 times by them and only 1 time by the regional consultants.

In question 3 (Q3), it becomes obvious that the amount of issues in the answer is different. The private consultants gave 4,5 issues, which was caused by respondent 4 with 10 issues mentioned. The regional consultants stated 2,2 issues, the farmers 2,7 and the externals 3. An issue with a difference is that the private consultants see an higher importance provide deeper information about the cooperation by the consultant, than the regional consultants. Here the vote was 3:1. This issue was also mentioned by 2 farmers and the external. 2 regional consultants saw as the only respondents that other cooperations are functioning as examples.

Regarding the critical facts (Q4) in the establishment phase of a cooperation the amount of answers provided by the groups was similar around 3,6 answers, excepts by the regional consultants with 4,4 average answers. For the private consultants it is more an issue that members are not having the same targets and potentials, which was seen as an issue by three of them and only by one regional consultant, one farmer and one external. Similar with the shared attitudes which was seen important by 2 private consultants and also by one farmer and one external. It looks the other way in regarding the evaluation of the assets, this is regarded as critical by 4 regional consultants and only one private consultant and one farmer. Another issue for 2 regional consultants is that not enough joint communication takes place, which was not mentioned by any private consultant, but by one external.

The question (Q5) about different changes which are difficult to accept looks quite similar with average amount of answered issues from 3,0 (regional consultants) and 3,2 (private consultants) till 3,5 (externals), with the exception of the farmers with an amount of 7,0 issues. An exception is respondent 13 who stated 11 issues, but also respondent 12 mentioned 6 issues.

The restriction of autonomy was recognised by all 5 private consultants as a critical thing, but only by 3 regional consultants and 2 farmer and both externals. Furthermore, 2 private consultants see problems to accepts equality between previous bigger and smaller farmers, which was not mentioned by any regional consultants, but also by one farmer. According to three regional consultants it is difficult for farmers to get used to the joint decision process, which was not seen by any private consultants, but also by 2 farmers and one external. Difficulties, according to 2 farmers and one external, have been that the farms are used in a different way after the cooperation was established, and that it may take place that they have to drive to their job now, which was both not stated by any consultant. Also 2 farmers and one private consultant mention that it also might be difficult when the partners have different expectations regarding the cooperation.

The question (Q6) if there are often members with problems in accepting changes was answered by all 15 interviewees. The average amount of replied issues varied from 2,0 issues by the externals. 2,2 issues by the regional consultants, 2,8 issues by the private consultants, till 3,0 issues by the farmers. No obvious differences between the groups can be recognised here.



The question (Q7) about the happening if consultants advise farmers sometimes not to join or not to take somebody in the cooperation was not asked to the farmers. The average amount of replied issues was 4,0 issues by the private consultants, 3,6 issues by the regional consultants, and 3,0 issues by the externals. 2 regional consultants have also economical reasons (that one farm is not healthy enough to join) in mind in comparison to all other respondents. Furthermore, 2 regional consultants stated that an outsider perspective is valid for consultants, which was also seen by one external, but by no private consultant. They, on the other hand stated with 2 respondents, that it is their job to speak free and not according to the farmers expectations, which was not mentioned by any other interviewee.

The private consultants stated more issues regarding the vision (Q8) in comparison to the others, with 6,4 issues. The other stated all around 2,6 responds. The reason for that high amount of answers has been again respondent 4 with 15 issues mentioned.

Obvious differences could be recognised in creating a general plan, this was stated by 4 private consultants and only one regional consultant. Then, 2 private consultants, 2 farmers, 1 external and no regional consultant, mentioned that the first intention of cooperations is the improvement of the economical result. The expanding is also more an issue for the private consultants, 3 of them saw that as an vision and only one of the regional consultants, and nobody of the other respondents. Another issue was mentioned only by 2 private consultants and nobody else, that discussions about structural planning takes place.

The question (Q9) about the influence of single objectives for the cooperational planning was answered in a different way. The private consultants gave 3 issues to answer that question, the regional consultants only 1,5 issues, the farmers 3,7 issues and the single answering external 2 issues for answering.

The answer, 8 respondents mentioned, was that this takes place according to a degree of agreement and compromises, this was mentioned by 4 private consultants, 2 regional consultants, and by 2 farmers. On the other hand, 3 single private consultants mentioned that compromises about targets do not work out. Regarding the farmers it is obvious to see that they are strongly believe that a key issue for the success of the cooperation is the ability for objective arrangement within the group, which was also mentioned by 3 private consultants, and 2 regional consultants. Then, the farmers are all agreeing that economical as well social targets are of high importance, which was also stated by one private consultant and one regional consultant.

Regarding the question (Q10), if the farmers are creating a strategy for the cooperation to reach short term, and middle term targets, was also replied in a different way by the groups. The private consultants gave 4,8 issues as answers, the regional consultants 3,0 issues, the farmers 5,3 issues and the single expert again 2. Regarding differences between the answering groups, 2 private consultants see the importance of using protocols during the group meetings, which was not seen as important by anybody else. Then, it was also an issue for 3 private consultants and one farmer, in contrast to the regional consultants, that a restructuring of the machine equipment takes place. Furthermore an issue which was not seen by the regional consultants was the optimisation of processes. That was mentioned by 2 private consultants and 2 farmers.

Preferred structures in the management were tackled by the next question (Q11). Here, the private consultants gave 3,8 issues as an answer, the regional consultants 2,6, the farmers 3,7 and the only replying external expert stated 4 issues. Differences in the answers can be found in the issue, that some farmers do have the willing to lead in the management of the cooperation. This was not mentioned by any regional consultant, but by 2 private consultants and one farmer. Then, 2 private consultants mentioned as the only ones explicitly, that in a cooperation responsibility is required.

The followed question (Q12), if these structures are defined in advance, was again replied in a different intensity, the private consultants stated 4,0 issues, the regional consultants stated 2,8 issues, the farmers 4,0 issues and the single expert gave 2 issues. Differences in the answers could



only been recognised in two issues. First, that the structure of a cooperation is related to the production processes and if livestock is in the cooperation. This issue was mentioned by 2 private consultants and 2 farmers. Second, it was mentioned by 2 single private consultants that an high sense of communication and information sharing is necessary in cooperations.

Regarding the question (Q13) if farmers need new ways of thinking about problems and their solutions after founding or joining a cooperation, there can be stated that that the amount of responded issues is harmonised. 4,4 issues mentioned by the private consultants, 3,8 issues by the regional consultants, 5,0 issues by the farmers and 4,5 issues mentioned by the external experts. Recognisable differences can be monitored that 2 single private consultants mentioned that an issue to get used to is that the whole group can see the weaknesses of all partners. Another issue, mentioned by 2 regional consultants, one farmer and one expert, is that more openness is necessary to see things and discuss them together.

The question (Q14a) if the farmers are doubting about the internal teamwork was answered in a similar low level regarding the mentioned issues by the regional consultants with 2 issues mentioned, by the farmers with 2 issues mentioned and by the externals with 1,5 issues mentioned. In contrast, the private consultants stated 3,3 issues.

An obvious difference between the group can be recognised in the statement, that these doubts can always be recognised. That was not mentioned by any private consultant, but by 2 regional consultants, one farmer and one expert. A doubting behaviour of the farmers makes 3 private consultants thinking if they fit together on the long term, which was not mentioned by anybody else. The three farmers have stated that the partners knew each other already before, so, doubting did not emerge. This issue was not mentioned by anyone out of the other sub-groups.

The influence of the family on that issue was also asked (Q14b), but only to the external stakeholders of the cooperation. Here the amount of issues to answer that questions was more balanced: 2,8 issues by private consultants, 3,2 by the regional consultants and 3,5 issues by the external experts. Differences in the answering of this question can be monitored. It can be seen that 4 out of 5 private consultants have the opinion that a doubting wife or a doubting predecessor are bad, but this was only mentioned by 2 out of 5 regional consultants, and additionally by one external. 3 regional consultants and one external mentioned that through the weekend work on the farm problematic issues might emerge, this was not mentioned by any private consultant. Then it was also only stated by 2 regional consultants and one external, that the predecessor are not very open to the idea in joining a cooperation as he was able to manage it on his own in the past. An outsider opinion was mentioned by respondent 8 who mentioned that wives should be informed at all to have no quarrels with the other members of the cooperation.

Differences in the responding behaviour can also been seen in the question (Q15) about changes in the working processes and if farmers are having doubts about that in the beginning. The private consultants replied 4 issues on average, the regional consultants 2,6 issues, the farmers 1,3 and the externals 1,3. More regional consultants, namely 3, have the experience that farmers want the cooperation keep running in the beginning and do not want to say anything already, which is evaluated as not good. That was only shared by one private consultant. The opinion that discussions are necessary had 4 regional consultants and only 2 private consultants and one external. The private consultants had, in comparison, other issues which were more important to them, like that the younger farm managers have to prove themselves in the beginning to get processes adjusted. That was seen by 3 private consultants and one external. Another issue which was not shared between the groups have been that decisions about best practices are necessary. This, again, was only mentioned by 2 private consultants and on external. The same result was provided by the issue about problems farmers have with the amount of changes. The founding of the cooperation is already a big change and if all processes are also changed it might be a bit too much, respectively too fast. Then, the private consultants stated each time with 2 respondents, that the predecessor might be a problem regarding new processes and that changes in processes may



work out, which is strongly related to ability to make compromises. All three farmers evaluated themselves as very open for new processes.

Cooperation

That part was followed by the question if the cooperation membership supports the recognition of changes (Q16), and if it supports the active acting in regards of emerging challenges. The amount of answered issues of the different sub-groups have been quite high: 4,6 by the private consultants, 4,0 by the regional consultants, 4,7 by the farmers, and 5,0 by the externals. Some differences between the opinions of the groups could also be recognised. There are 2 single private consultants, who stated, that the cooperation members started with the willing for change and this stays also after the establishment phase. Also, a difference can be recognised between the groups in regarding the answer that discussions are taking place on an ongoing basis. This was mentioned by 3 private consultants, one regional consultants, one farmer, and both externals. So the amount of the regional consultants was a bit low. They mentioned with 2 of them that the ability for risky actions increases according to them maybe because it is shared. Then, also 2 regional consultants and one farmer, but no private consultant, recognise higher flexibility through a joint objective in the cooperational group.

The structure of the management was a question (Q17) where the respondents also gave a different amount of issues between the groups: the private consultants stated 4 issues to answer, the regional consultants 3,2 issues, the farmers 3,7, and the externals 2,5 issues. Less private consultants stated that there is always a commercial manager, in comparison with the regional consultants, which gave a full agreement, which was also shared by 2 farmers and one external. Additionally, 2 regional consultants, one farmer and one external expert mentioned that there are also other examples with specialised departments in the cooperations. 2 single private consultants stated that this is related to the legal status, how the management looks like. Also 2 private consultants mentioned, agreed by one farmer, that there is a need to speak with one voice as the cooperation, no matter how the management look like. The management structure is developed during the first meetings, was stated by 2 private consultants, and one external expert.

The question (Q18), if a controlling system is introduced by the members, was also answered by the groups with an high amount of different issues. The private consultants stated on average 8 issues to answer that question, the regional consultants stated 4,6 issues, the farmers 6,7 issues and the external experts 3,5 issues. Differences in the answers can also be identified. The private consultants are all mentioning that the controlling is done by them in general, as only 2 regional consultants mention the same. Furthermore, 2 single private consultants mentioned that this is done together with the fiscal advisory. 3 private consultants, only one regional consultant and 2 farmers said that the controlling takes place through a preliminary of costs and a comparison with the final balance sheet. 2 single private consultants mentioned that a planning of the strategy takes place and is valid before the controlling system can be used properly. 3 regional consultants, only one private consultant and one farmer, mentioned that controlling takes place through benchmarking reports.

The degree of activity regarding change processes was also asked (Q19). Here, the amount of answered issues was smaller as in the previous question: the private consultants gave 3,3 issues, the regional consultants 3,2 issues, the farmers 3,0 and the external mentioned 2 issues. 3 private consultants and only one regional consultant mentioned that cooperation asks for more activity. 2 single private consultants mention that the farmers have to adjust themselves otherwise an objective-fulfilment cannot be reached. 2 regional consultants and 2 farmers recognised a faster development, which was not stated by the private consultants. Similar to the issue that 2 regional consultants and one farmer stated that the security of the decisions is better through the partner-discussions. 3 regional consultants and only one private consultant mentioned that the farmers are more used to apply changes through cooperation founding.



Regarding the question (Q20a), if the planning of all processes improves in the cooperation in comparison to the single farm, the amount of answered issues between the groups was quite different, as it was varying from 5 issues mentioned by the farmers, 3,8 issues by the private consultants, 2,8 issues by the regional consultants and 2,5 issues by the externals. In the agreement on that question, equality was predominating, from each group, except of the externals with one respondent, 2 respondents agreed. A difference can be monitored in the answered issue that it is partly better. This was mentioned by 3 regional consultants and by one private consultant. Furthermore, 2 regional consultants and 2 farmers saw the difficulty but also the necessity to find a balance in the planning of the cropping. 2 single private consultants mentioned that this is related to the personality of the joining farmers. Furthermore, 2 private consultants and 2 farmers stated that a dynamic process should be developed. The farmers also had some main opinions. Two farmers and one regional consultants declared that through the expanding it belongs to the normal development that the planning improves. Furthermore, 2 farmers and one private consultant mentioned that the next year is always planned explicit.

The question about special techniques (Q20b) for getting agreement of doubting people, was answered by the private consultants with 3,7 issues mentioned to answer that question, by the regional consultants with 2,2 issues, and by the externals with 2 issues. Differences to mention between the groups have been that 4 regional consultants, but only one private consultant, and one external mentioned that the consultant should try to develop a good communication basis with the group. 2 single private consultants stated that they are using arguments and presentations with solutions.

The amount of mentioned issues, on the question (Q21) if the members use beforehand defined behaviour-patterns in critical situations, was also different between the sub-groups. 4,2 issues have been stated by the private consultants, 4,6 issues have been said by the regional consultants, 5,7 issues were stated by the farmers, wherein the respondent 13 gave with 8 issues the highest amount, and 2 issues have been provided by the externals on average. A difference was emerging already in the agreement of that question. Whereas 3 regional consultants and 2 farmers agreed explicitly on that question, but no one else. The disagreement was mentioned explicitly by 2 private consultants one farmer and one external. 3 single regional consultants stated that the information exchange should happen according a defined way. Furthermore, 3 regional consultants and 2 farmers, but no private consultant, stated that there is a need to discuss problems immediately as it may become an issue afterwards. An issue which was mentioned by 2 private consultants exclusively is that objectivity during critical situations is required.

Answers regarding the question (Q22) how it is possible to measure the success of the cooperation, were given with a different amount of mentioned issues. The private consultants gave 4,2, the regional consultants gave 2,8, the farmers gave 5, and the externals gave 4 issues. Differences in the answering between the group could be recognised. Personal satisfaction of the members was mentioned by 4 private consultants, only 2 regional consultants, but by all three farmers and by one external. Then, 2 private consultants and one farmer, but no regional consultant, mentioned that benchmarking with others are a tool to measure the success.

Asked about their own opinion, what the main objective of a cooperation should be (Q23), the amount of mentioned issues between the different groups were: 3,6 issues by the private consultants, 3,4 by the regional consultants, 2,7 issues by the farmers, and 1,5 issues by the externals.

Here a separation between the groups regarding the answered issues can be recognised. 2 single private consultants mentioned that the efficiency level should increase. Then, 3 private consultants, only one regional consultant, 2 farmers, and one external expert mentioned that an improvement of the economical success should be reached. Similar, regarding the consultants with 3 private and one regional, was the result of the issue that better development opportunities can be reached. Then, 3 single private consultants mentioned that a main objective should be to be



up to date through the cooperation. The main points of the regional consultants have been that the ratio of work and profit should fit through successful management and synergies, which was mentioned by 3 regional consultants and one external expert. Then, 4 regional consultants and only 2 private consultants, 2 farmers, and one expert, mentioned that objective fulfilment of the members to be highly satisfied should be an objective. Also, the families should reach the highest living standard, this was mentioned by 2 regional consultants and one farmer. Also important for 2 regional consultants and one farmer have been that a joint vision and a joint objective exists.

Cooperative group

Answering the question about the information sharing (Q24) within the cooperative group, the private consultants stated 4 issues on average, the regional consultants 3,4 issues, the farmers 2 issues and the external experts did not reply on that question. Differences between the groups could be recognised that 4 private consultants, and only one regional consultant mentioned that this takes place through the assembly meeting. Also mentioned by 4 private consultants and by only 2 regional consultants was the direct conversation. No regional consultants stated that important facts are send around by e-mail or fax, but 3 private consultants did. Then, 2 single private consultants mentioned that information sharing takes place through loose meetings the commercial manager has with the member. The regional consultants put the focus more weekly meetings. 4 regional consultants, but only one private consultant mentioned that these should take place in merger cooperations. Also, all 5 regional consultants monitored that the information exchange takes place via mobile, which was agreed by all 3 farmers, but was only mentioned by one private consultant. Then, 2 single regional consultants mentioned that the information sharing differs from cooperation to cooperation and is related through the size of it.

Differences between the sharing of information between active and passive members could be recognised (Q25). The amount of answered issues was similar between the consultant groups with 2,5 issues by the private consultants and 2,6 issues by the regional consultants. Important to recognise is that only 2 private consultants replied on that question. So, any differences have to be regarded more relative between the groups now and are not mentioned here explicit, except of the following: 4 out of 5 regional consultants, one private consultants and one farmer mentioned that the information sharing is very different. One regional consultant mentioned that it is different and one private consultant and one farmer saw no differences.

The evaluation of the formality during interactions (Q26) was done in a more balanced way by the consultant groups as out of each group 4 consultants replied. The amount of answered issues have been also quite balanced with 2,8 issues mentioned by the private consultants, 3 issues mentioned by the regional consultants 2,7 issues stated by the farmers, and 2 issues stated by the external expert. The only obvious difference between the consulting groups was that 2 single regional consultants mentioned that the formality is related to the degree of activity within the cooperation, so active members are acting more informal with each other and active members are acting more formal with the passive members. Regarding the farmers, it gets obvious that all three and the only replying expert, but only 2 regional consultants, and one private consultant, mentioned that there is also a need for an informal relationship.

The amount of answers regarding the followed question (Q27), if the consultants have any special processes in solving problems, was similar high except the farmers. The private consultants stated 5 issues on average, the regional consultants 4,8 issues, the farmers 2 issues, and the external expert 4 issues. Differences emerged in the answering as follows: 4 private consultants, but only one regional consultants, and all 3 farmers mentioned that serious open conversations are taking place if problems emerge. All three farmers stated at first that they do not have any special techniques, which was agreed by the only private consultant who did not stated that point. Then, also a difference, 3 private consultants and only one regional consultant mentioned that the consultant should make single conversations with all members. Then, the same result was



mentioned about the issue that the consultant is collecting information for the members, if problems emerge. 2 single regional consultants mentioned that this is related to the kind of situations.

The question (Q28) if through the cooperative group an higher efficiency in problem solving emerges was answered in a low amount of mentioned issues by the consultants, as the private consultants stated 2,4 issues and the regional consultants 2 issues. The farmers stated on average 6 and the single external 4 issues. The respondents who stated maybe were belonging to all groups excepts to the farmers. One private consultant, 2 regional consultants, and the responding external expert mentioned maybe. Differences between the groups emerged in the mentioned issue that in bigger groups decisions are more developed than in smaller groups. This was stated by 2 private consultants and by all 3 farmers, but by no regional consultant.

The question (Q29a), if the cooperation members are trying to find a balance, or coordination between private life and working life, was answered on average as follows: 2,8 issues by the private consultants, 2 issues by the regional consultants, 1,7 issues by the farmers, and 2 issues by the single external expert. An explicit yes was mentioned by 4 regional consultants, but only by 2 private consultants, 2 farmers and by the external expert. 2 single private consultants mentioned that this should be tried at least and 2 other single private consultants mentioned that the amount of holidays should increase through the cooperation.

The evaluation (Q29b) of the influence of this point on the success of the cooperation was answered in a low level by the consultants: the private consultants answered 1,3 issues on average, the regional consultants 1,2 issues, and the external expert stated one issue. Only the farmers stated 4 issues on average. Differences between the groups could not been recognised.

The question (Q30), about differences in the interaction to solve different problem sizes and how problems are looking like a partner can decide on his own, was answered by the private consultants with 2,3 issues on average, 3,2 issues by the regional consultants, 4,3 issues by the farmers, and 3 issues by the external expert. Differences between the groups could be monitored. 3 regional consultants, only one private consultants, one farmer and the external expert mentioned that individual space for decisions is important and needs to be regulated. Then, the same result, but without any private consultants, had the issue that a border and a budget should be written down, to define the highest amount single decisions can cost. Three private consultants and one regional consultant mentioned that this can be seen individually from cooperation to cooperation.

The farmers mentioned in this regards, that communication is everything.

On the question (Q31) how members react, if one of them goes beyond his decision competences, the respondent-groups stated a lower level on issues. The private consultants gave on average 2,6 issues, the regional consultants stated 2,3 issues and the farmers stated one issue. The external experts did not respond on that subject. Differences in the answers between the groups emerged, that 2 single private consultants mentioned that a border should be contracted and also a penalty, what happens in this situation. 2 other private consultants stated that the individual situation needs to be regarded and the alternatives have to be evaluated. 2 single regional consultants stated that this needs to be discussed immediately in an assembly meeting.

Consultancy

Answers (Q32) on the issue if the consultants are often hired to advise farmers during the establishment phase, or if the farmers had a consultant was answered with a smaller amount of issues. The private consultants stated 2 on average, the regional consultants mentioned 1,4 issues, the farmers gave 2,7 responds, and the external experts gave 2 issues. Differences between the groups regarding the single issue could not be monitored. If this leads to long term consulting relations (Q33), respectively for the farmers if this consultant is still advising the cooperation, was the next question. The amount of average responded issues was the seam between the consultant groups with 2,4 issues mentioned each. The farmers stated only one issue on average. The



external experts did not respond. Differences could be recognised that 3 single private consultants mentioned that this is the main intention of their work, whereas 3 regional consultants and only one private consultant said, that often one member of the cooperation is already a customer of their consultancy in advance.

The most important skills (Q34), the consultant should have in the establishment phase and as well in the further development phase provided an higher amount of answers by the different groups. The private consultants stated on average 4,6 issues, the regional consultants stated 5 issues, the farmers 4,7, and the external experts only 2,5 issues. Differences about the answered issues within the groups could be monitored. The only obvious difference between the consultant groups was that 4 regional consultants, but only 2 private consultants mentioned that the consultant should know the current standards in agriculture, which was agreed by one external expert and by one farmer. The farmers, on the other side, expected from the consultant that he is able to recognise if the people do fit together on a long term perspective, which was stated by only 2 private consultants and one regional consultant. Furthermore, 2 farmers expected social capabilities from the consultant, which was explicitly stated by only 2 regional consultants and one private consultant.

The following question (Q35) was tackling the issue, if an analysis is applied of every farm before the consultant starts to work with the potential partners to start a cooperation. The private consultants stated 3,8 answered issues on average on that question, the regional consultants gave 3,2 issues on average, the farmers mentioned 4 issues. The external experts did not respond on that issue. A big difference between the answering consultant-groups can be recognised on the issue that the private consultants stated with 4 persons that they do an exact economical analysis of the single farms to create a business plan. This issue was also stated by all three farmers, but by no regional consultants. Also, a meeting with the family does not happen always for most regional consultants, only one stated this, in comparison to the private consultants. They mentioned this with 3 respondents, agreed by all three farmers again. The regional consultants mentioned that it is of advantage to see the whole farm on the spot. This was mentioned by 3 respondents in this group, agreed by all 3 farmers, but by only one private consultant.

The general assignment (Q36) the consultants do for the cooperation made the groups to answer on average 4,8 issues by the private consultants, 4 issues by the private consultants, 3 issues by the farmers, and 2 issues by the only answering external expert. Recognisable differences could be recognised between the groups regarding the answered issue that the consultants are doing the controlling, this was mentioned by all 5 private consultants, but only by 3 regional consultants (This was because respondent 9 is sometimes only a assisting consultant. Respondent 6 is different at all).

Then, a difference emerged that an analysis of the beforehand situation needs to be done to show which effects will be possible to reach through the cooperation. This was mentioned by 3 private consultants, but only by one regional consultant.

The question (Q37), if the consultant takes over any management assignments, was responded on a lower amount. 1,7 issues have been mentioned on average by only three private consultants. 2 issues were stated by 4 regional consultants, but 4 issues by the farmers, and 3 issues by the only responding external expert. A difference was already measurable in the agreement of this question. 3 private consultants stated that they do this, but no regional consultant, 3 said explicit no. One farmer said that a consultant does a management assignment for him, which was also agreed by the external, that this takes place.

Group/consultant

Regarding the feedback (Q38), the consultant are providing to their clients , the amount of average answers differed between the consultants. The private consultants gave 4,4 issues as an answer, the regional consultants stated 2,8, the farmers 2,5, and the external expert mentioned 5 issues. Differences in the answers could be recognised regarding the answered issue that



economical results are very important, which was stated by 2 single private consultants. The other mentioned issues have been mentioned in a similar way.

The processing of this feedback by the cooperative group was the next question (Q39). The private consultants gave 2,8 issues on average as answers, the regional consultants stated 3,6 issues, the farmers 3 issues, the external expert gave 3 issues. 3 private consultants, only one regional consultants, and one farmer stated that discussions start, after the consultant mentioned his opinion. The evaluation of this processing was mentioned by 2 single regional consultants, that sometimes it is used very good, otherwise it is related to the problems, which was mentioned by 3 regional consultants and only one private consultant. But, it was also mentioned by 2 regional consultants, agreed by the external expert and one farmer, but by no private consultant, that the consultant's feedback was not used exactly. Only 2 farmers were responding on that question. These both agreed on the issue, that in the end they have to decide on their own, which was agreed and mentioned also by 2 private consultants and one regional consultant. They also mentioned that the consultant has big influence on the opinion building process, which was also mentioned by 2 private consultants and one regional consultant.

The question (Q40) about the frequency of contacts between consultant and cooperation members was answered similar within the consultant groups, with 2,7 issues from the private consultants and 2,6 issues stated by the regional consultants. Both other sub groups, the farmers and the external experts did not respond on that question. Differences between the groups on different issues could be recognised in the following: 3 regional consultants, but only one private consultant stated that this is related to the size of the cooperation, as there is a different amount of appointments necessary.

Asking (Q41) the respondents how to recognise the success of the consultancy, the private consultants stated 4,4 issues on average to answer, the regional consultants gave 3,4 issues, the farmers mentioned 3,3 issues and the single external expert gave 3 issues. Differences between the frequency of answers and the groups could be monitored with the answer, that the consultant should be make the customers to do something and to think about important issues, this mentioned by 2 single private consultants. Furthermore, 3 private consultants stated, that they see the success in the frequency on how often they get called by the clients, or if they pay the bills, which was mentioned by 2 single private consultants.

Management within the cooperation

The question (Q42) if cooperations introduce new management processes which have not been used in the farms beforehand, was answered by the group of the private consultants on average with 3,2 issues, by the regional consultants with 2,6 issues, by the farmers with 3,7 issues and by the external experts with 4,5 issues. Between the consultants, the only difference in mentioning issues is that 2 single regional consultants stated, the usage of computers and modern technique is higher in cooperation. Special regarding the farmers is that all 3 agree that more thinking about working, respectively internal processes are taking place. This issue was also mentioned by one private consultants and one external expert. The external experts mentioned both that process improvements out of the industry are sometimes introduced through passive members of the cooperation. This was also mentioned by 2 regional consultants, one private consultant and one farmer.

Answering the question (Q43) if the cooperations are using systems for finding decisions was answered by the sub groups with 2 issues mentioned by the private consultants, then 2,6 issues by the regional consultants, 2,3 issues by the farmers, and 4 issues by the single responding external. Differences between the issues can be seen, that 3 regional consultants, 2 farmers, and the external, but only one private consultant mentioned, that before decisions are done the well preparation of the assembly meetings is done. Then, 2 single regional consultants mentioned that the decisions in the groups are different as in the single farms.



The amount of answers about the question (Q44) on the respondent's expectations of the future development of cooperations in comparison to single farms, was also answered different between the sub-groups. The private consultants stated 2,3 issues on average, the regional consultants mentioned 4,2 issues, the farmers stated 3,3 issues, and the external experts did not respond on that question. Bigger differences could be monitored in the statement that a faster expanding is expected by the interviewees, this was stated by 4 regional consultants and by 2 farmers, but only by one private consultant. Also, the expanding steps are bigger, 3 regional consultants, and 2 farmers said, but no private consultant. Additionally, 2 single regional consultants stated that the farmers are profiteering through a better network, as the members can receive more information about the different processes on the farm.





Appendix 11: Literature Framework added with empirical results

§	What is investigated ?	Which concept is mainly used?	Sub-parts of the investigation	Questions	Answers with AF(5) = Additional agricultural Information (ch. 5) Farm-perspective (FP) Cooperation-perspective (CP)	Information lead to following empirical question
3.1	Agricultural environment	Macro environment analysis Olson (2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Macroeconomic factors • Technological factors • Social factors • Demographic factors • Political/ legal factors 	1- How does the macro environment of agriculture in Germany look like and what are its challenges? 2- Does the structure of the German agriculture change? 3- How do agricultural markets look like? 4- How did main markets develop & change over the last few years? 5- How does the market policy for agricultural products look like?	A1: Markets are constructs of trade, policy and demand, Increasing food consumption world- wide, less farms in Germany, High Specialisation A2: The structure underlies an ongoing change, which means that the number of farms is decreasing. A3: The markets and the conditions are fast changing and policy influenced. A4: Less market protection, Subsidies, Unstable market conditions A5: There are import-quotas, the markets are regulated, and energy production is subsidised. AF(5)- (CP): Companies, acting in unstable market environments have a higher chance of surviving if they operate in a cooperative way.	What are business environmental problems of the German agriculture from the practical point of view? 1st presentation: problems of the German agriculture are settled in the conditions regarding the location. location is of advantageous, as Germany is the biggest consumer market in the EU. But, the agricultural structures are, in comparison to international competitor countries, unfavourably. Economic pressure on the single farms is getting stronger. Regarding market conditions: the markets are becoming internationalised. By innovation dynamics, it is getting more easy to develop bigger agricultural structures, as in e.g. Brazil. There, domestic markets are influenced on a high degree by acquirers.
3.2	Farming business	Micro business analysis (Olson, 2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-businesses of farms • Resources • Technology 	6- How are sub-businesses developed on the farm? 7- How do resources influence the businesses of the farms? 8- How can technology influence the businesses of the farms? 9- What are appropriate points to react on environmental changes?	A6: The triangle of resources, technology and the skills of the farm manager constitute the basis and the farmer has to decide about the sub-businesses. A7: The manager has to be able to use the resources in the best way for being successful and satisfied; this can only be reached if the required resources are capable for the manager. A8: The manager should find the best degree of technology on the highest efficiency level. A9: The farmer should have his own strategies to develop an efficient and growing business, if this is not possible e.g. he should cooperate to reach this. His question should be: How can the	What are farm related problems of the German agriculture from the practical point of view? 1st presentation: problems are the unused potentials in the communicational techniques of farmers. There are several new communication opportunities, like the mobiles, e-mail, and the internet. For cropping, there are other innovations, which have to be taken into consideration, like the remote sensing, the GPS-usage and other process automation. How can the management of the farms react on these environmental changes? 1st presentation: All the above mentioned points are developing a disadvantage on the markets for smaller farmers. So, a cooperation may help to get the situation improved.



					management of the farms develop the best structure of the farm to be able to develop the farm in the best way according to its resources, technology and skills?AF(5)-(FP+CP): Objective fulfilment requires using of resources.	
4.1.1	Systems Approach	Introduction in holistic systems & process analysis (Miller, 1995; Pfeiffer & Wagner, 2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holistic system analysis • Structure analysis • Communication analysis • Identification of system components 	<p>10- What characterises the system analysis?</p> <p>11- How can you understand the structure of a system?</p> <p>12- How can you characterise the system components?</p> <p>13- How can the components get coordinated with each other?</p> <p>14- How do systems reach further development stages?</p>	<p>A10: The knowledge on open systems is never fully available, but it is important to reduce internal and external information gaps.</p> <p>A11: Through recognition of the information exchange rate it is possible to identify the system's components.</p> <p>A12: Through the three concepts: Hierarchical ordering, Interdependence, Permeability.</p> <p>A13: The coordination happens through a structure building process, specifically reached through information exchange and through feedback.</p> <p>A14: A development process is only possible if the elements are interacting and if the relevant system properties, holism, equifinality, negative entropy, and requisite variety are reached..</p> <p>AF(5)-(FP+CP): Farms &Cooperations can be regarded as social-technical, open, objective oriented, economic systems</p>	
4.1.2	Organisation as a system	Organisational systems theory (Trist, 1969; Pfeiffer & Wagner, 2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of the organisational system • Structure of the organisational system • Organisational coordination • Identification of system components 	<p>15- How is it possible to regard organisations as system?</p> <p>16- How can you understand the structure of a system?</p> <p>17- How can you characterise the system components?</p> <p>18- How can the components get coordinated with each other?</p> <p>19- How do companies reach further development stages?</p>	<p>A15: Through an ongoing changing environment the organisation has to interact with it and needs to act as an open socio-technical system.</p> <p>A16: Whenever people are organised to perform tasks a joint system operates in a social and technical way.</p> <p>A17: Its elements are people, their work roles and relationships on a social side, and goods, tools, techniques and methods for task performance on the technical side</p> <p>A18: System elements are highly interconnected for reaching structural functionalism. High performance work systems can only be reached through a development of good internal and external communication channels.</p> <p>A19: This happens through ongoing interaction between the organisation and its environment, but also with internal interaction</p>	



4.2	Organisational development	Introduction in organisational development <i>(French & Bell, 1998; Cummings & Worley, 2005)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of organisational development • Objectives of organisational development 	<p>20- What is organisational development?</p> <p>21- What are the objectives of organisational development?</p>	<p>A20: It is a systematic process for applying behavioural science principles and practices in organisations.</p> <p>A21: The objective is to increase individual and organisational effectiveness, through focussing on interactions and problem-solving processes within the organisational group.</p>	<p>What should be the main objective of the cooperations (motivation for change; development of a vision)?</p> <p>A) Agreed opinions</p> <p>Most important objective of the cooperation is objective fulfilment of the members and life of members families should reach highest standard (regional consultants). Improvement of economical success of the farms (private consultants) Ratio between the work and profit should fit →reached through successful management and through synergies (regional consultants). The development chances are higher through the cooperation (private consultants). Joint vision and a joint objective within the cooperative (regional consultants) Reaching of better position in the competitive environment. Higher innovativeness → more up to date & better innovation-adoptions (private consultants)</p> <p>B) Outliers, 2 times or less often mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • through group to have better decisions • different ideas to reduce risk of decisions • higher efficiency level (private consultants)
4.2.1	Planned change	<p>Lewin's change model (<i>Lewin, 1951</i>)</p> <p>Action research model (<i>French, 1969; Shani & Bushe, 1987</i>)</p> <p>General model (<i>Cummings & Worley, 2005</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental change • Organisational change 	<p>22- What kinds of changes can be recognised in the environment?</p> <p>23- What kinds of changes can be recognised in the company?</p> <p>24- How might these changes be used by the company?</p> <p>25- How can you differentiate the change process?</p> <p>26- What do companies have to take into account during a change process?</p>	<p>A22: There are two main changes which can be recognised, that one which overcomes the company and that one which was influenced by the company itself.</p> <p>A23: Revolutionary changes affect the whole company and are big influences, evolutionary changes are smaller adjustments on a smaller scale.</p> <p>A24: These changes can be used by the management for a planned change approach to make the company more efficient and "seed" a capability of change.</p> <p>A25: The requirement for change can emerge through misfits in the whole company, so there are several and also interrelated options where to start and execute the change process, which makes it possible to use different interventions.</p> <p>A26: The change process is not only the defining of the solution and its implementation. Planned change is a process mostly supported by consultants. It can be seen as a process with four main steps, the 1.) entering & contracting, (2.) diagnosing, (3.) planning & implementing, and (4.) evaluating & institutionalising</p>	<p>Does the cooperation membership support the recognition of changes? And does it support the active acting in regards of emerging challenges?</p> <p>A) Agreed opinions</p> <p>Yes:</p> <p>Reasons:</p> <p>More people think about the same issue and process, so more process improvements and process innovation takes place (evaluated and developed)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meeting preparation of the members is also valid. <p>Through ongoing discussions recognition of changes takes place (private consultants) Farmers become more open regarding changes and as they can learn from each other: "More people see more", Through the joint objective the flexibility increases in the cooperation (regional consultants).</p> <p>May be used for a new orientation of the cooperation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new production directions are developed • diversification takes place <p>B) Outliers, 2 times or less often mentioned:</p> <p>Yes: reasons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the farmers started with the willing for change and this stays (private consultants) • related to the personality of the joining members • ability for risky actions increases, maybe because risk is shared (regional consultants) • farmers are getting more agile • farmers are going deeper into all topics
4.3.1	Entering and contracting phase &	1st part of the General Model: Starting the consultancy process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultants skills • Consultants abilities • Consultancy relation 	<p>27- What are the basic requirements for consultants?</p> <p>28- What kind of problems might occur during the consultancy</p>	<p>A27: The consultant should have self - management competence, interpersonal skills, and general consultation skills to support the company in solving the</p>	<p>In your opinion what are the most important skills a consultant should have in the establishment phase as well as in the further development phase?</p> <p>A) Agreed opinions</p> <p>Consultant should:</p>



	<p>Consultancy</p>	<p>(Cummings & Worley, 2005)</p> <p>Consultancy theory (Freedman & Zackrisson, 2001)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information sharing Consultancy expectations Consultant's skills and experience Problem recognition Problem solving 	<p>process?</p> <p>29- How does a consultancy relation start?</p> <p>30- How can the company support the consultant to introduce him into the problem?</p> <p>31- What are important issues before signing a consultancy contract?</p> <p>32- What should both parties take into account before signing a consultancy contract?</p>	<p>problem.</p> <p>A28: If the consultant is not honest that he has these skills or if he is not able to communicate his different steps, it might happen that the change programme fails.</p> <p>A29: Information exchange and collecting to get to know each other.</p> <p>A30: Inform him about the problem and all important issues regarding the problem and give him the power to get all information he needs.</p> <p>A31: If both parties understand the problem in the same way and a trustful relation is built.</p> <p>A32: If both parties agree on the best way to solve the problem.</p> <p>AF(5)- (FP): Mostly, farms have a consultancy relation, specialist finding takes place through personal network</p> <p>AF(5)- (FP): Solution in farmer's mind?</p> <p>AF(5)- (FP): Farmer would fit into a cooperative group?</p> <p>AF(5)- (CP): Now problems are group problems</p> <p>AF(5)- (CP): New kinds of problems emerge (e.g. internal group problems)</p>	<p>-know the current standards in agriculture [technically & economically] (regional consultants)</p> <p>-have basic understanding about juridical & fiscal possibilities & consequences of farmers plans</p> <p>-have enough experience [in his profession, on business-level, & about of human relations]</p> <p>-be able to recognise if farmers are fitting together in time [not only their farms] (farmers)</p> <p>-be able to listen actively [empathic]</p> <p>-be able to give good feedback.</p> <p>-neutrality is required</p> <p>-social capabilities are needed (farmers)</p> <p>-support the coordination of work processes of the former single farms</p> <p>-be a team player and should be able to create social networks</p> <p>-be able to understand the needs of the future cooperation-members</p> <p>-knowledge about the potential of conflicts in each single cooperation.</p> <p>B) Outliers, 2 times or less often mentioned:</p> <p>-know what needs to be regulated verbally and on a contractual basis in the establishment phase beforehand and what can follow afterwards</p> <p>-be able to recognise the real objectives of the different actors</p> <p>-being able to classify targets in dreams and reality</p> <p>How do you give feedback, after analysing something for the cooperation?</p> <p>Agreed opinions</p> <p>Through personal conversation</p> <p>Economic analysis and the planning is done on an interactive basis.</p> <p>Consultants should speak out explicit what they are thinking</p> <p>Consultants should explain the farmers about problems they recognise and provide scenarios how to solve them.</p> <p>Consultants are moderating the assembly meetings and write the protocols of it.</p> <p>B) Outliers, 2 times or less often mentioned:</p> <p>Consultants write their feedback down and send it to the customers.</p> <p>Do you use special techniques to get the agreement of doubting people?</p> <p>Agreed opinions</p> <p>Yes,</p> <p>Importance for consultants to develop a good communication basis (regional consultants).</p> <p>Consultants should use good arguments and present them in a good manner (private consultants).</p> <p>Experience of the consultant is very important to solve problems.</p> <p>Do you have special processes for solving problems?</p> <p>A) Agreed opinions</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Need to have serious and open conversations (private consultants + farmers)</p> <p>[allow everybody to speak and to finish, without screaming, nor shouting]</p>
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						<p>During emotional discussions the consultant should act as a moderator. Single conversations with every member are appropriate (private consultants) Information gathering for the group meetings is important for the consultant (private consultants)</p> <p>Possible solutions are always individual, [→consultant should be good informed beforehand until he can give advises]</p> <p>B) Outliers, 2 times or less often mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> related to the kind of situation (regional consultants) [all members should be speaking with one voice and should focus on their shared targets. If one member follows his own interests = emerging problems possible, then request of cooperation's sense] the manager will recognise problems before the assembly meeting problems should be communicated to the consultant beforehand the consultant should focus that no different parties are emerging with different opinions the consultant should know all actions which have been taken already to solve the problems the consultants try to solve the problems but we/they are no professionals in solving problems mediator usage or usage of externals if the problems become too big <p>Are you often hired in the establishment phase of cooperation?</p> <p>A) Agreed opinions Yes</p> <p>B) Outliers, 2 times or less often mentioned: As bigger the cooperation will be as earlier a consultant will be hired. Farmers ask the consultants for help, but in most cases too late.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> often for the evaluation of the assets, and the profit allocation consultant made the farmers to rethink about development of the target and of the planning of the farm so, re-creation after first inter-farmer discussions, as it is of high importance [objectives discussion happened already beforehand, but not bundled in a concrete planning of the different possible alternatives] farmers are coming and asking a contractual information [not the consultant's job.]
4.3.2	Diagnosing	2nd part of the General Model: Investigating the company for pointing out the exact problematic issues (Cummings & Worley, 2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company analysis: current functioning Cybernetic leading Different management systems Balanced company Organisational communication Network analysis 	<p>33- How can you analyse the company's functioning?</p> <p>34- How can the problems be recognised?</p> <p>35- What has to be analysed in the diagnosis phase for reaching an appropriate result?</p>	<p>A33: It is possible through analysing the company as a cybernetic system with a control centre and its goals, system mechanisms, the system behaviour, and the feedback provided by the system.</p> <p>A34: The management can recognise problems through a controlling system wherein it tests if it is open to identify them (development main values for the company [philosophy / corporate identity]; using integrative management skills for investigating the interconnections of sub-systems).</p>	<p>Are you taking an analysis of every farm before you work with the members to establish the cooperation?</p> <p>A) Agreed opinions Yes</p> <p>Visiting the farm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -a need to get a whole impression of the farm -to regard the whole farm on the spot (regional consultants + farmers), -to get a feeling about the cooperation -good to meet the family (private consultants + farmers), -this took place during their establishment phase (farmers) <p>Then, consultants write an exact analysis of the farm (private consultants + farmers)</p> <p>Which legal status do farmers choose most often? In your opinion, which are in general</p>



		<p>Theory of organising</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical components of organising Informational environment analysis 	<p>36- How is it possible to identify necessary interventions? 37- What should be the main objectives of leading? 38- What are important issues to focus on during the diagnosis? 39- How can you define the organising process? 40- What are the main aspects of this theory? 41- What are the main aspects to organise companies?</p>	<p>A35: The management should be able to understand the interconnectedness of divisions, or persons. For reducing the complexity ordering it is an important management tool as well as navigating and regulation for keeping control of the system. It should also receive informative feedback out of the system. A36: The company should be analysed according to the St Gallerer Model, so focussed on the environment, the organisation and on the management. A37: The objectives of leading should be to reach a balanced company as described in the 7-S model. A38: In the company and also with the consultant there should be a trustful relationship. A39: Organising is the reduction of equivocality in the informational environment, by means of interlocked behaviours embedded in conditionally related processes. A40: Sense making supports organisations to perform, as they exist in informational environments. A41: A company should have (1) assembly rule, these are tutorials for guiding organisational members in sense making and (2) communication cycles support members of the organisation "to introduce and react on ideas that help to make sense of the equivocal environment. A42: A network is built through system elements, if you want to analyse the network you have to regard the elements and their interconnections. A43: Communication networks should be regarded from a hierarchical perspective as well as from a relational perspective, then the properties of networks, the properties of network links, and the network roles have to be regarded. A44: Very important is to recognise that through the network complexity factor changes might influence other factors, and indirect changes might follow direct changes. AF(5)- (FP): In Farm diagnosis, the</p>	<p>the best statuses? A) Agreed opinions: <u>Generally, GbR</u> + advantages easy way to establish less difficulties on fiscal issues and on legal issues - disadvantages full liability of the cooperative members → But through liability: reduce the disadvantages of the mine-and-yours-thinking close till zero <u>Less active members</u> GmbH & Co KG -possible to separate liability from non-active members until a special amount -commercial management may get more power as it is more liable → improved management structure B) Outliers, 2 times or less often mentioned: <u>Bigger groups</u> KG good to work in bigger groups -possible to state & define the participation of the members on a legal basis</p> <p>How is the management in cooperations structured? (Is there a CEO? How does the management participating of other members look like?) A) Agreed opinions Yes, there is a commercial manager (regional consultants), but → management very different small cooperations= members all same voting rights Management structure will be discussed during the first meetings. There are also other examples like specialising departments so that every member can act more or less autonomous in their department (regional consultants). Important:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings necessary to define the strategy (private consultants) Speaking with one voice to externals (private consultants). <p>B) Outliers 2 times or less often mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> according contracts the general manager may decide until this and this amount the general manager has still communicate everything to the member the members discuss everything together in a weekly meeting related to the legal status (GbR, KG) (private consultants) structure becomes more formal as more members are participating [influence from size on the organisational structure, bigger =more formalised (contingency-theory)] <p>Big dangers if only one CEO -that the commercial manager does not tell everything -tries to come out best through a cooperation meeting a big danger -is an external, he should be impartial and keep that</p> <p>Do cooperations introduce new management processes which have not been used in the farms beforehand?</p>
		<p>Theory of Network analysis</p>		<p>42- How can you define network analysis? 43- What are the main aspects of this theory? 44- Which aspects are of high importance regarding networks?</p>		



				<p>problem analysis is straight-forward, special regards should be put on the role of the family. AF(5)- (CP): Member farms become dependent on each other through joining the cooperation. AF(5)- (CP): Cooperations are production units with integrative connections AF(5)- (CP): Independent single businesses are going together (business autonomy is required) AF(5)- (CP): Coop. members have different objectives, this requires target coordination through integrative mechanisms AF(5)- (CP): Member businesses ask for benefit through joining (cheaper work, less time consuming etc.) AF(5)- (CP): Decision making process shifts from single farmer to the group. AF(5)- (CP): There might be constitutive influence through pre-cooperational relations between the members. This may also have influence on the group cohesion AF(5)- (CP): Interdependence of social and economic relations may lead to less logical/economic decisions (solidary acting) AF(5)- (CP): Emergence can improve the single member and the group; a higher development level can be reached which would not be possible without the group.</p>	<p>A) Agreed opinions Yes Process improvements More thinking about process improvements takes place (farmers) More process innovations are taking place as longer the cooperation runs. Liquidity planning improves & reports are written down Assignments for the manager are defined in a clear way as he has higher risk in liability of the others and on his decisions B) Outliers 2 times or less often mentioned: -usage of computer and technique improves(regional consultants) -bigger mental ability to leave old structures behind [thinking takes place to rethink and optimise daily processes, supported by passive members → more profit oriented -industrial influences from passive members (external experts) -more strategic ideas like marketing strategies, purchase strategies, spraying strategies</p> <p>Do the cooperations use systems for finding decisions? A) Agreed opinions Most decisions are done in well prepared assembly meetings; supported by planning calculations (regional consultants+ farmers) Better documentation in cooperations. Force to keep all members informed on a high level Related to the amount of influence the manager gets, the decision process look like. Try to get agreements in the personal interaction, less formality, only if there are big quarrels formality starts Checking the fixed statements in the contract, is the beginning of problems. B) Outliers mentioned 2 times or less often: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decisions different in the group as in the single farms (regional consultants) • deep discussions about investments • discuss about misunderstandings and afterwards solution evaluations Best: for finding decisions we calculate all work processes. Which fertilisers are used, what are the real advantages of new machinery equipment? We also analyse the market and how it will develop in future, this already before we do investments."</p> <p>Does the planning of all processes improve in the cooperation in comparison to the single farm? A) Agreed opinions Yes, in general; sometimes not (regional consultants) Cooperation brings advantages as there is the need to discuss Appropriate planning and solving of problems takes place Ideally, a dynamic process of further development can be built up through the cooperation (private consultants + farmers) It might be difficult to find a good balance to plan the single steps in the plant production also in a cooperation (regional consultants + farmers) Reason for improvement: in developing cooperations planning is required by bank. The coming year is planned very explicit(farmers). In comparison, single farms are not acting so explicit with written reports and feelings are keeping their importance for the farmers. B) Outliers, 2 times or less often mentioned:</p>
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						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the planning of processes is related to the farmer's personality (private consultants) • the manager needs to refer to the cooperation's planning and give reasons why expectations did not hold to the others • the planning is influenced by the consultant <p>Do the members introduce controlling systems? A) Agreed opinions Yes, Planning of liquidity and its controlling takes place. Controlling is done by the management consultant (private consultants). No existing explicit controlling department on the farms Farmers are working actively with their result Preliminary of costs and use the balance sheet afterwards to control the planned issues(private consultants + farmers). Controlling tool: benchmarking with other farms (regional consultants) Farmers use reports to inform the cooperation members about the planning. Controlling is very important for cooperations Is related to the size of the cooperation as bigger the cooperations are, as more the banks ask for that.</p> <p>B) Outliers, 2 times or less often mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • through discussions in the cooperation-meetings • together with the fiscal advisory (private consultants) • consultant's objective to create a business plan after the harvest • not even on the bigger ones, not comparable as corporate businesses • some space for improvement • for the planning of the strategy (private consultants) • in cropping: the hours allocation, field cards to control the cropping • important as the commercial manager needs to defend himself • necessary to decide about the profit allocation <p>Do the members use beforehand defined behaviour-patterns? A) Agreed opinions: Disagreement, 5 times mentioned yes (regional consultants + farmers), 4 times mentioned no (private consultants). Needs to be regulated in the contract. To be sure that not old problems emerge and need to be discussed, it is necessary to speak about problems immediately (regional consultants + farmers) If a partner does not want to share a problem with the cooperative group he should tell that problem to their consultant Consultant may act as an mediator and a kind of psychologist If consultant cannot help an external expert should support the cooperative group to solve their problem. Important to keep the trust inside is that discussions should be kept internal. A main focus should be put on communication. Information exchange should take place according a beforehand defined way (regional consultants). Outliers 2 times or less often mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • objectivity is required by all stakeholders of the cooperation (private
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					<p>consultants)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> single conversations are often necessary when problems emerge <p>How do members react in the cooperation if one member is going too far, in regards of his power of decisions? A) Agreed opinions This needs to be discussed and the reasons should be provided. Group should find a solution for the future, what is done if this happens again. Individual situation needs to be regarded and the alternatives for the cooperation should be considered (private consultants). Borders should be put in the contract to declare the space for decisions and the actions after somebody does not follow that rule (private consultants). It is important to speak about ALL problems immediately in a group meeting. “Immediately discussions of problems are a very important success factor. [in the beginning of the cooperation it needs to be done regularly. This costs time, but it is of advantage to use this time for that, you can recognise the success and the effects much more easy. You can only build up trust if you speak with each other.”] (regional consultants)</p> <p>Are cooperation members trying to find a balance of private and working life? A) Agreed opinions Yes (regional consultants) Weekend and holiday substitution takes place Private life and its improvement is a main objective for the establishment of the cooperations B) Outliers 2 times or less often mentioned: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the amount of holidays should increase through the cooperation (private consultants) in exceptional situations farmers can get spare time even if the workload is high differentiation is difficult should be tried if the situation allows that (private consultants) </p> <p>How big is in your opinion the influence of this point on the success of the cooperation? A) Agreed opinions Important as satisfaction in your life improves also the working life, so the cooperation more successful Comfortably with the farm if the social side and the economical side fits Being empathic regarding the partners is strongly advised for a cooperation (“members should have the issue in mind that their partner has also needs and plans”) B) Outliers 2 times or less often mentioned: Other issues mentioned by the respondents have been (each 2 times): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> take care on each other →should be possible to recognise for all partners. This is very important for the success, but it is not possible to measure that in Euro the family also needs to be satisfied with the situation very big, you have to like each other also in private life if the partners are different about the kind of work/life balance, it is a source for conflicts </p>
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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> nobody should start to think that the other works less, about that you need to discuss immediately <p>How does the information sharing in the group takes place? A) Agreed opinions Daily business information is shared via mobile. Important information sharing takes place through meetings weekly-two times a month Conversations General information is provided to all cooperation members through assembly meetings. Important to meet especially in the beginning (around) once a week. Important information should be shared on a written basis via Fax, E-mail etc.</p> <p>If the cooperation has non-active working members, how different is the information sharing with them? A) Agreed opinions Very different Often, they get the main information during the assembly meeting which was Takes place that the passives are not interested so much in daily business. They should get it immediately if they want [task for the manager to be able to offer that information]</p> <p>How loose does the interaction in the cooperation group takes place? A) Agreed opinions Need for a loose discussion style for being able to have a good relationship (farmers) Generally, it is good to have a loose and friendly relationship. Working-atmosphere should be nice and loose →borders Assembly meeting takes place in a formal way. Outliers 2 times or less often mentioned: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> active members are acting more informal with each other and the acting with passive members takes place more formal (regional consultants) related to the size of the cooperation as bigger as more formal formalities have to fit to the members </p> <p>How different does the frequency of interaction look like, which takes place through solving different big problems? A) Agreed opinions Different according to individual borders from cooperation to cooperation (private consultants) Cooperation members should create a feeling over time, how to act and what the partners accept. Individual space for decisions is very important and needs to be regulated only in a general way (regional consultants). “This means that it is important if somebody is specialised on something he needs to have the authority to decide on his own, if he thinks this is important.” “It is a matter of the specialisation”. Should be written down in the contract (regional consultants). Joint decisions should be taken together if they are influencing the future in a bigger</p>
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						<p>scale. Partners should take care if single decisions are accepted by everybody in the cooperation, which was mentioned 4 times. The communication is "everything" (farmers) Outliers 2 times or less often mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bigger decisions require interactions. • manager should write a written plan before the economic year starts: "Prepared commercial manager then partners feel comfortable, as they have something in their hands →controlling: changed plans: need to inform them" • "related to the character of the managers, all partners should be good in delegating, then the decision autonomy is quite high."
4.3.3	Planning and implementing	<p>Change situations in organisations (Cummings and Worley, (2005))</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change readiness of the company • Change capabilities of the company • Change capabilities of the consultant • Change in the organisation 	<p>45- What are essential points during the change situation? 46- Which types of interventions can be pointed out? 47- Which aspects are of high importance regarding interventions?</p>	<p>A45: There are several criteria of interventions which are related to the change situation (the organisation's readiness for change, its current change capability, its power distributions and the consultant's skills and abilities) A46: Change within the organisation can be separated in human process interventions, structure and technology modifying interventions, human resource interventions, and strategic interventions. A47: Interventions should be checked before their appliance if they fit into the company for reducing the risks of failures, important for that are the readiness of change, which is related to the change-willingness, also the intra-organisational change capabilities, which is related to internal change knowledge, and also the consultant's change capabilities, which is related to the consultant's competences and experiences.</p> <p>AF(5)- (CP): There are the economic and the social objectives which make farmers establish the cooperation. AF(5)- CP): Most important for farmers is a favourable balance between inducements given and contributions expected from the cooperation. AF(5)- (CP):For finding the right partner, it is more important that the persons fit together, not only the farms. AF(5)- (CP): Most important factor is that the members are able to abolish the mine-and-yours thinking. AF(5)- (CP): Farmers should be able to</p>	<p>What are generally the targets of the farmers if they decide to participate in a cooperation? A) Agreed opinions Farmers are joining a cooperation to reach costs reduction To improve economical factors: -the structure, -the economic situation, -the production processes e.g. through specialising [-> needs time]. Expanding of the farm Admission of an elder farmer as a slow taking-over (if no successor) (private consultants) Social factors (regional consultants): -reduction of the workload, -more spare time, and -holidays. Farmers stated: -reduction of dependency on the local traders. -improve the efficiency in cropping through bigger acreage units, -interaction with colleagues for a better decision finding and the exchange of experiences, and -securing of the acreage B) Outliers 2 times or less often mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the need to have a joint communication- by r8:"I also think that farmers like to have partners to speak with, to feel more safe regarding bigger decisions. You can recognise that if a farmer does not have another partner to discuss with he calls his consultant."-, • a willing to diversify, • the joint financing of big projects. <p>According to 1st presentation: <i>Targets and objectives</i> Economical targets: sustainable increase of profit, simultaneous reduction of the entrepreneurial risk. reduction of the work expenditures. Ccooperation has the objective to increase the benefit -through input of specialised equipment, -through concentration of expertise within the cooperation. Also improvement of market position purchase + marketing of goods Specialising on defined work processes→ less work costs & decrease of the capital-costs per product-unit. Cooperation might be appropriate for the future development. New usage of farm facilities,→a concentration of best the location for farming is possible (joint investments). Time efficiency (optimisation of governmental subsidies) Social objectives: reduction of the workload, improvement of the social security (accidents, diseases), better social image (members of cooperations are often associated with positive character attributes as dynamic, open mindedness, give-and-take ability in the social environment)</p>



				<p>make compromises, able to give acceptance, be respectful to others, able to understand the partners, have collective objectives, and should be able to develop good intra organisational communication</p> <p>AF(5)- (CP): Pointing out every critical point in the beginning but also in the future for the cooperation on a contractual basis (also the legal status).</p> <p>AF(5)- (CP): New management behaviour in the cooperation will be necessary (decisions in a strategic way)</p> <p>AF(5)- (CP): Creation of corporate identity feeling through planning process</p> <p>AF(5)- (CP): In implementation-phase the farmers are often alone with the inner organisation and through this difficulties might emerge in working processes through a lack of competence-allocation between the farmers.</p> <p>AF(5)- (CP): Cooperation's stakeholder should have realised big changes before the start.</p> <p>AF(5)- (CP): The decision-making process will be different as cooperative decisions have to be communicated and discussed.</p> <p>AF(5)- (CP): Specialisation of the members should take place.</p> <p>AF(5)- (CP): Network complexity can be reduced through trusting each other, so the costs for controlling and the costs for information gathering will also be reduced..</p>	<p>Weak point in this regards is that through the loss of autonomy.</p> <p>2nd presentation: Few farms have stated their objectives in a written basis. Strategies are often only partly applied. Often, there is a lack of objectives and strategies for the whole farm.</p> <p>Before cooperation-establishment, some basic conditions need to be fulfilled,.: the personal suitability, the analysis of the economical ability and advantages, the objectives of the members, the strategy for their fulfilling, and the organisational/legal issues. These issues also are assignments to do before the cooperation can be established.</p> <p>Before joining a cooperation, do farmers inform themselves about advantages and disadvantages at colleagues, which are already joining a cooperation?</p> <p>Agreed opinions</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Consultant is the more valid source of information (private consultants).</p> <p>Enough information is not provided in a deep way (e.g. negative things)</p> <p>Finding the right partner seems to be a key success factor.</p> <p>Other cooperations are considered as good examples before the founding of the cooperation (regional consultants).</p> <p>Main success factor is the personality of the partner, or that they are fitting to each other.</p> <p><i>How can the farmer be analysed by the consultant?</i></p> <p>1st presentation: Self awareness of farmer is the 1st step of success (what kind of character am I?)</p> <p>For cooperations good soft skills are necessary: ability to be innovative, to be tolerant, to work continuously, to possess willpower, the acceptance of the family, the ability to act in conflicts, to act panic-proofed, to be team-player and the ability to lead.</p> <p>Farmers "period of life" needs to be regarded, like: the loading capacity, the succession, the age and the sex.</p> <p>Asset status of the farmers is important, as: his kind of the consumption, the reserved property for the parents, liquidations, mentality of investments, the development of equity and the old-age provision.</p> <p>According to the consultancy, then, analysis of the farmer should be an evaluation of the qualification: the education, the economic success in the past, the adequacy for farming in the livestock and in cropping or as a business man. Farmers' own targets need to be observed. The entrepreneurial objectives e.g. the maximal interest rate on his equity, the security of his own- or the employer's job position, the expansion, or consolidation, prestige, or spare time.</p> <p>Kind of work the farmer does needs to be analysed. According to the Pareto-principle is 20% of the working time is needed to reach 80% of the result. Analysis necessary.</p> <p>Analysis of personal organisation of the farmer. How is he organised? How efficient is he? How big is his loading capacity? How long do decision processes need to be realised? How many "construction" place are existing for the farmer?</p> <p>A realistic assessment of the farmer himself needs to be regarded. The type of human with his inner feelings and thoughts influences strategy and vision.</p> <p><i>How can the single farm be analysed by the consultant?</i></p> <p>1st presentation: The annual statement is the real figure of the economic situation it can</p>
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					<p>be seen as the un-manipulated, unadorned truth. It is the ongoing self-controlling of: the production capacity, the interest yield of the equity, the interest yield of the used factors, the development of capital, and its structure, and the ability to get financed Objectives of the annual statements, from consultancies perspectives: -support for the farmer's family to get information on their farms, -is used to measure the profit ratio through target/actual comparison (key numbers), -through discussions of the results. Usage of annual statement as an early warning system, to be able to recognise non-profitable processes and business branches, bottlenecks in financing and weaknesses of the entrepreneur.</p> <p>Annual statement -is used for ongoing development (leads through a dynamic process of improvements) -is the basis of the profit allocation during negotiations before the cooperation is established.</p> <p>Benchmarking reasons, the analysis of the whole farm and all branches is essential. This analysis is the basis for a comparison before and after the establishment of the cooperation.</p> <p>May it happen that you advise a farmer not to join or not to take somebody in the cooperation? A) Agreed opinions Yes Consultant has a key position, as he can take over an outsider perspective (regional consultants) B) Outliers, 2 times or less often mentioned: "Our job not to speak according the farmers expectations" (private consultants) -if the farms do not fit together on an economical basis (regional consultants). -if the people do not fit together, the human relations are essential for cooperations. -if one farmer is intellectual and in a moral manner more weak than the other</p> <p>Before the founding, are farmers often doubting about cooperation in regards of the internal teamwork? A) Agreed opinions This can always be recognised (regional consultants) vs. All doubting is gone if farmers decide to participate in a cooperation (private consultants). 4:3 votes It might be useful as it makes the farmers to discuss. Doubting = Do they fit together? All 3 farmers mentioned that they have known their partners in advance and so that is why they were not doubting. B) Outliers, 2 times or less often mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It also happens that it is the other way around, so that the farmers are even too enthusiastic • Slow steps and actions are better sometimes. <p>How does the family influence that point? A) Agreed opinions Family's influence on the doubting farmers is very high in special regards. Doubts against the cooperation by the wife or the predecessor are bad for the cooperation (private consultants). 'In the past predecessor was able to manage the farm on his own (regional consultants). Potential negative feelings against the cooperations out of the family needs to be</p>
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					<p>regarded from the beginning. Farming work during the weekend might be problematic (regional consultants). It is important for doubt-reduction to provide a high load of information for the family members, Predecessor without any doubts might be useful for cooperation → might act as a mentor for emotions regulating. B) Outliers, 2 times or less often mentioned: 1 consultant (r8) said it is better not to inform the wives, that she cannot think about unfairness against his husband.</p> <p>In your experience, what are the critical facts in the establishment phase of the cooperations? Agreed opinions The importance that the future partners should have the same targets and potentials (private consultants), Too little communication takes place about the personal targets with each other (regional consultants). Farmers should agree about the direction of the new cooperation, which was also declared as similar attitudes (private consultants) Proper analysis of the past does not happen, so the farmers do not know all important economic issues about the partners. Equally important to analyse the status quo of each farm before the founding. Profit allocation is also an issue which should be in a deeper focus as it is currently Evaluation of the -brought-in assets (regional consultants), -others work is an problematic issue Joint communication with each other as an critical issue Separation of the work is problematic, to agree on the question who does what.</p> <p>Do farmers prefer special structures in the management of the cooperations? A) Agreed opinions Yes,. Farmers have preferences according to their personal skills and want to do things they are good at Some farmers want to develop specialised departments. Farmers want to keep the structure simple Some farmers want to have a main position in the cooperation (private consultants) B) Outliers 2 times or less often mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in small cooperations an equal leading takes place • as bigger the cooperation as more separation of assignments are taking place • legal status has influence on the management structure • responsibility is requested (private consultants) • should be main intention of consultant <p>Do the members define these structures in advance, or are they adjusting working processes afterwards? A) Agreed opinions Yes, in advance Basic concept needs to be defined beforehand.</p>
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					<p>It is essential to declare the positions and tasks from the beginning. It is related to the kind of production in cooperations (private consultants + farmers), e.g. livestock production → clear who does what. Good self evaluation of the members is required to plan the tasks before [awareness of their strength and weak points and share that and tell this to their partners] B) Outliers 2 times or less often mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not necessary to have an exact and written down description about the tasks • high sense of communication and information sharing is necessary in cooperations (private consultants). <p>“The cooperations will also have a formal and an informal part. There, they have defined the tasks (e.g. cropping and livestock farming) for each member in a formal level, discussed and defined beforehand, as it is important in the starting phase. But it may happen that special situations require a structure modification e.g. in the harvest. There will be a special situation when the situation requests it that another one will do the work in the shed. That is the informal part of the agreement. These informal parts emerge through the forces of the everyday work. So it is truly possible to transfer that knowledge also into agriculture.”</p> <p>How big is the influence of single objectives for the planning of the cooperation? A) Agreed opinions This is related to a degree which needs to be defined by the cooperation; tolerance is required in this regards (private consultants) → members should create a line, where in the members should act according to their own objectives. Key factor the arrangement of the individual objectives (farmers) → might be difficult, “but not possible forcing partners to follow somebody or that different objectives are followed next to each other. No compromises possible (private consultants). Otherwise: floor for quarrels. Important to regard the economic and the social objectives of each member (farmers). One farmer said: a main objective of him to share the work and to be able to have spare time e.g. in the harvest. B) Outliers, 2 times or less often mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Necessary to evaluate the benefit of the cooperation constantly. <p>Might be a source for problems → Current situation might be different in five years or cooperation has moved away from its intended objectives → difficult to keep the cooperation running</p> <p>Before the establishment, do the members create a vision for the cooperations? A) Agreed opinions Consultants have the opinion, a vision is built (not the externals; R15: many small companies do not have a clear and explicit formulated vision and there is not an explicit strategy, this is only build in the mind of the owner of the company, but seldom it is defined explicitly, and so not written down or communicated and shared with others. The explicit definition of targets happens only after the separation of ownership and management.”) General plan is built in the beginning of the cooperation (private consultants) [about actions when cooperation is established] E.g. 3 single farms = 3 times the result of the analysis → recognition of effects for each farm Often, expanding can be seen as the vision of farms (private consultants) → positive</p>
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					<p>image necessary [for being able to get available acreages for rent]. Vision is created by the single farmers according their personal targets. Discussions about structural planning takes place (private consultants). Reaching of a better economic result is functioning as a vision (private consultants). 2 farmers without vision → improvement of the economic result as an intention. Other: merging the farms slowly together, to reach a more integrated development stage on a long term view.</p> <p>Before the establishment, do the members create a strategy to reach short and middle term targets for the cooperations? Do cooperations define these explicitly? A) Agreed opinions New investments after the cooperation was established → should not happen too fast, as there is a danger of bigger losses after the separation of the cooperation. Restructuring of the machinery equipments is targeted (private consultants). Improvement of the general conditions of the farm targeted by the farm-managers (farmers): → Expanding, knowledge-transfer between the members, higher yields, a creation of a better image, optimisation of structures and management processes (private consultants) [specialisation], through this workload reduction, of the whole cooperation. Planned strategy. Potential members should be very healthy in an economical way. Cooperation should be well prepared on a mental, economical, and human basis. Taking over a retiring farmer in the future (farmers) B) Outliers, 2 times or less often mentioned: Beginning the cooperation new members are very active New ideas are taking place to reach a faster benefit for and through cooperation. Strategies in that phase are fixed in the mind of the farmers. Written reports are very important in the establishment phase of the cooperation (private consultants) Other opinion: Written explicit strategy is not necessary. Respondent 15 stated: "In general, people are more clear about their short term objectives as about their long term objectives. Short term targets are more touchable for individuals than the middle- and long term objectives. = "emergent strategies", The strategy of a company you can only recognise ex-post, after it is developed. Often, this was not planned, but was a self developed process. So this was ex-post the strategy."</p> <p>What should be done in the establishment phase? 2nd presentation: Consultant can function as the moderator. Discussions necessary to recognise the objectives of the single potential members. Evaluation if the personal objectives can be arranged with a joint corporate objective. A vision, should be created. To reach this, it is necessary to develop strategies with the company of the consultant. Personal objectives may be contraire within the group, but not the cooperational objectives. → Definition of the joint objectives, like the optimisation of the "new" farm, using and supporting personal skills and interests, developing existing business branches, creating new branches, taking up of new members, implementation of new members.</p>
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<p>4.3.4</p>	<p>Evaluating and institutionalising</p>	<p>Implementation and evaluation feedback (Mohrman and Cummings, (1983)) Institutionalising framework (Goodman and Dean, (1982))</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of feedback • Organisation characteristics • intervention characteristics • Institutionalisation Processes • Institutionalisation Indicators 	<p>48- How can you evaluate change interventions? 49- How can you institutionalise interventions?</p>	<p>A48: Feedback is very important in this regard, the implementation feedback, which measures the features of the intervention and immediate effects, and the evaluation feedback, which measures the long term effects of the changes A49: This is related to four main points, which can be connected to each other: organisation characteristics, intervention characteristics, institutionalisation processes, and indicators of institutionalisation AF(5) - (CP): Necessary to test if the scheduled target is reached AF(5) - (CP): The assessment of the results of cooperation is always related to the own targets and objectives of the members AF(5) - (CP): If the targets are not reached, farmers have to change something which might be a further development stage or if the problems are too big the elimination of the cooperation might be the best solution. AF(5) - (CP): Test success according to the issues of Mann and Muziol AF(5) - (CP): Regarding the communication within the cooperation, regular meetings between the members are very important AF(5) - (CP): Group processes improve the potential of ideas, the potential of organising, and the potential of success within the team. AF(5) - (CP): For successful institutionalisation it is important that the farmers can recognise possible changes in their daily-working beforehand. AF(5) - (CP): The institutionalisation is an issue the consultant should observe and he should ask the farmers about working processes. Also here the structure of communication is of importance. AF(5) - (CP): For ongoing success the cooperation develops a kind of communication culture between the cooperative partners.</p>	<p>How does the cooperative group process the consultant's feedback? A) Agreed opinions R4&r15 stated that this a problem R4: "I'm already satisfied, if the farmers start to move a bit after I was speaking with them." R15: "Appliance of consultancy is a general problem. If that person you give an advise to will apply that is always questionable." Generally: related to the problem (regional consultants); Discussion starts after the consultant has explained his opinion (private consultants). It should be clear to all partners, that they have to decide on their own (farmers). Consultant's opinion is influencing the cooperation in a big scale (farmers) Consultant's feedback is often not used exactly (regional consultants). It might also be different from cooperation to cooperation. B) Outliers, 2 times or less often mentioned: Signing meeting protocol in the end.</p> <p>Which changes for the farmers are the most difficult ones to accept? A) Agreed opinions For farmers it is not easy to accept the reduction of their autonomy (private consultants). There are difficulties in accepting the need for discussions [might have positive influences for the farm] They stated that discussions might be fruitful for the development of the cooperations. Joint decision process is a procedure the farmer needs to get used to (regional consultants). Different work processes are also difficult to admit for the farmers. Coordination about the different tasks for each group members is an issue for the farmers. The force for a better and more exact documentation is also seen as a difficult-to-accept argument. Coordination the different expectations the farmers have through joining the cooperation (farmers). Might be difficult for some farmers to see all members as equal partners (private consultants)[regarding passive partners]. Different usage of the farms after the cooperation and having a job outside the own farm (farmers).</p> <p>Are there often members, which have problems in accepting changes through cooperation participating? A) Agreed opinions Yes, takes place. Reasons: -the entering of the farmer's successor -discuss potential problems before</p> <p>Do farmers need new ways of thinking about problems and their solutions after founding / joining a cooperation? A) Agreed opinions Yes, that is necessary. Partners need to communicate and discuss [as more communicative the persons, as less problems are emerging otherwise a balancing consultancy is necessary] Communication not only happen during good times, but "also during quarrels". Change for farmers that there is a group they have to speak to after the cooperation was</p>
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						<p>founded. Farmers have to find compromises. More openness and the recognition of important group related things are necessary (regional consultants). New situation that the farmers are also working for others now → Defending their decisions now (private consultants)! Potential problems are only recognised by partners, so the farmer needs to get informed about that. B) Outliers, 2 times or less often mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • everybody sees the weak point of the other partners or mistakes cannot be hidden anymore • attention on tackling issues is increasing • new problems are emerging, if responsibility is determined • regular meetings should take place on a formal, but also on an informal basis <p>How do farmers accept changes in working processes? Are farmers more doubting until a benefit of them is proven? A) Agreed opinions Discussions are always necessary (regional consultants). Everybody same objective → cooperation should run, so small disagreements are not discussed, as no quarrels already in the beginning (regional consultants). Younger farmer first has to prove his intentions before he adjusts processes independently (private consultants). Decisions about the different processes and their best execution are necessary (private consultants). Cooperation's advantage: rethinking about work processes. Changes, the group had to discuss, become normal after time. Difficult discussions might be difficult if the changes are very big. Self evaluation (farmers): "We are quite open regarding new processes and process improvements, as you need to get new impressions for reducing the danger to miss blind spots (r13)". B) Outliers, 2 times or less often mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specialisation can lead to problems, as farmers are used to have always different work • changes in working processes are accepted related to the ability to make compromises (private consultants) • predecessor with doubts are often a problem in this regards (private consultants) <p>Are farmers more active regarding change processes? A) Agreed opinions Yes, they are more active to start change processes. Reasons: -group discussions about emerging environmental changes, -cooperation asks for more activity (private consultants), -members are more used to start and apply changes [found the cooperation already which was a major change, they are used to now] (regional consultants), -cooperation develops faster than a single farm (regional consultants), -and security of decisions about the changes is increasing as they are deeply discussed. B) Outliers, 2 times or less often mentioned:</p>
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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speed increased • is also based in the farmers personality • they have to adjust themselves otherwise no objective fulfilment is possible (private consultants) <p>How is it possible to measure the success of the cooperation? A) Agreed opinions Economical results have to fit. Personal satisfaction is an important indicator (private consultants + farmers). Comparison of situation before/after cooperation establishment Comparison with the starting objective can measure the success of the cooperation. Benchmark with similar farms (private consultants) Image in the near surroundings is also an indicator for the success.</p> <p>In the cooperative group, does an higher efficiency grow in solving problems? A) Agreed opinions Yes; the decisions are more developed (private consultants + farmers) in bigger groups as there is a bigger need to discuss with each other. Also, there are group members who all have different strengths which might be advantageous to put them together. B) Outliers, 2 times or less often mentioned: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bigger groups decide more easy as the smaller group "majority decides" • The farmers are not improved in solving personal issues but on technical issues • same educational level of the members is an advantage • sometimes groups are creating different decisions as they would have done without the group as respondent Positive group influence: more competences & information into consideration. Negatively group decisions: more risky, also as the responsibility is shared with others." </p> <p>Does it often happen that long term consulting relations are established through the establishment phase? A) Agreed opinions Yes; often there is already one potential member a customer of the consultancy (regional consultants). Often, if new customers are involved, these stay the customers. The long term relationship is the main intention of their work (private consultants). R4: "As the consultants want to support the founding and the further developing. Also in sense of conflict prevention, in sense of good business planning, and in sense of the support of the member relation, we can help the farmers a little bit. We cannot influence it in a bigger context but we can support them with more or less intensive care." B) Outliers, 2 times or less often mentioned: One consultant mentioned, that there are also some better experts than he is in regards of cooperation</p> <p>What are in general the assignments the consultant does for the cooperations? Agreed opinions Controlling, business planning, acting as a moderator in assembly meetings, and in the establishment phase as a moderator between the different consultants (fiscal advisors, lawyers etc). During establishment phase: analysis of the current and past situation of</p>
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						<p>the farms (private consultants). Participation in the development of the cooperation-contract. Another issue is the defining of the of profit evaluation and the profit-allocation. The consultants assist the partners if critical situations emerge.</p> <p>B) Outliers, 2 times or less often mentioned: Consultant functions as somebody to speak with, as a neutral advisor about farm-related problems.</p> <p>Does he take over any management assignments of cooperation? Agreed opinions, different yes: (private consultants) no: (regional consultants)</p> <p>B) Outliers, 2 times or less often mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joining a supervisory board of a cooperation. • Sometimes: negotiating special conditions with a bank about loans • Writing annual statements for cooperations and prepares the assembly meeting of the cooperations • Benchmark of his results by his consultant, • Providing of feedback from an outsider perspective. <p>How often do you have contact with the cooperative group? Agreed opinions Is related to the size of the cooperation (regional consultants) and so if different appointments during the year are necessary, so: very different R7: "This is accorded to the kind of cooperation, We meet about 7 till 8 times, if a cooperation is small and runs without problems maybe less often."</p> <p>B) Outliers, 2 times or less often mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some cooperations only at the assembly meetings. • Other cooperations 2 till 3 times next to the formal assembly meetings, • Regularly meetings are taking place if the farmers want them to do their planning and analysing. • According to the acting of the manager trust he receives by the cooperation. <p>How is it possible to develop a successful relationship within the group? 3rd presentation: Psychology of the cooperation 3 main issues: non-calculable factor human being, psychological thesis about cooperation, and seeing and avoiding of conflicts. Regarding cooperations, different variables are basically calculable, like acreages, facilities, assets, and equipment, , but not the humans, the different owners of the cooperating farms. Partners within a cooperations want, according to what they have given, fair behaviour in return, if not, emerging unbalance, which is rebalanced by the concerned person through different reactions. Therefore, a balance between input and output needs to be developed. This is necessary in a cooperation. Which principle should be followed, the principle of performance, the equality principle, or the principle of needs? The theory of phases of personality means that there are different phases the human runs through. (Until the age of 30 [storm!], from the age of 30 to 50 [crisis?], from the age of 50 to 65 [relaxed!?]. From the age of 65 onwards [harvesting!]). Every cooperation needs to have a leader, a promoter for the group. But, conflicts need to be solved by the whole group. The presenter mentioned 9 different phases of conflicts. Strategies to avoid conflicts necessary. Development of standards, rules, values, and norms. This should be discussed within</p>
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					<p>the group, even though not everything can be contracted. Then, also the opinion on other members should be adjusted and changed. All sides should be regarded by partners, joint experiences, joint solving of critical moments. Regular feedback processes should be developed →to discuss well working well working issues and necessary changes. A neutral mentor should be present, to get neutral feedback if problems emerge. Important in the feedback process is the meta-communication, which takes place during the speaking with each other. So, a main issue of the success of the cooperation is the communication.</p> <p>What are potential results for cooperating farms? 2nd presentation: Ideally, benefits visible: economize on production, facilities and not used entrepreneurial skills of the farmer. Also, new ideas of the cooperation members, creation of freedom for new innovations may be a result. But: partners with different objectives for the cooperation cannot work together. For further <i>development</i>, a clear strategy is necessary. The following questions should be regarded: Where are we now? What are the next steps? Which stages might be formulated to reach next? Who does which assignments? When is the target reached? What is then the next objective? Using these as a strategy, and this systematic application saves money and time, improves the efficiency, develops interest from outside, uses the skills of all members, develops potentials of entrepreneurial actions. Without strategy no planned acting possible. Bigger cooperations, success if they are planned exactly, if clear rules exist (with entrance rules, exit rules, and expansion rules), if transparency exists, if open discussions are taking place, if trust is existing between the members, if the commercial manager is sensible to the needs of others, if compromises can be reached easily, while considering the interests of all partners.</p>
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Appendix 12: General differences between the groups

Adding all answers together 2308 sub-answers/issues have been given. Whereas, the private consultants gave 856 responds, the regional consultants gave 777 answers, the farmers stated 477 responds and the externals provided 197 answers.

On average it would make that the private consultants would have given each 171,2 answers, the regional consultants 155,4, the farmers 159 answers and the externals 98,5. The issue to take into account is that not every respondent was replying on each question. The average amount of respondents per question have been 4,3 private consultants responded on average per question, 4,6 answers on average for the regional consultants, 2,5 average respondents of the asked farmers and 1,2 respondents of the external experts. Differences caused by the amount of questions every respondent answered.

Respondents 7 and 10 replied on 55 questions with 178 and 169 different issues mentioned. Interviewees 3 and 4 replied on 54 questions with 173 and 230 issues mentioned, informants 5 and 9 react on 53 questions with both 172 issues mentioned. Respondent 8 answered 52 questions with 134 issues mentioned. Then, interviewee 13 answered 51 questions with 175 issues and respondent 6 provided his opinion on 50 questions with 124 issues, followed by respondent 11 with 49 answers and 165 issues. Respondent 15 gave 47 with 122 issues, respondent 2 gave 46 with 168 issues, and respondent 1 replied on 40 answers with 113 issues. In the end, respondent 14 answered 23 questions with 75 issues.

One reason for less answers by the consultants was a lack of time during the interview. So, it was not possible to ask every question during the interview. Respondent 14 was not asked about the consultancy process, as she is not involved in that in a deeper way. In comparison, respondent 15 is also an external, but as a researcher it is possible to him to provide some statements on these issues.

The average amount of respondents per question makes it possible to show how the answering behaviour between the groups has been, in relation to the others. The private consultants gave the most answers (100%), followed by the farmers who replied an amount of 94,3 % in comparison with the private consultants. Then, the regional consultants are following with 84,3 % and the external experts with 81,2 %.

Regarding the single respondents respondent 4 had rank 1, as he gave on average 4,3 answers per replied question. Respondent 2 gained rank 2 with 3,7 answers, followed by two farmers respondents 11 and 13 with each 3,4 responds. Rank 5 is reached by informant 14 with 3,3 answers per replied question. Then, respondent 3, 5, 7 and 9 are following on rank 6 with 3,2 answers. Rank 10 respondent 10 gained with 3,1 answers followed by interviewee 12 with 3,0 answers. Then, respondent 1 follows with 2,8 answers, and respondent 8 and 15 with 2,6 responds. The last position is reached by respondent 6 with 2,5 answers per replied question.