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Karlheinz has an agricultural, environmental and economics background and more than 25 years of experience in research and advisory work related to sustainable rural, agricultural and food systems. His experience comprises applied research, policy analysis and evaluation for the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the European Commission and government agencies. The projects Karlheinz is involved in tend to be transdisciplinary, international, comparative and policy-oriented. From 2008 to 2011, he was Senior Economist in the New Zealand Ministry for the Environment.

Karlheinz has a particular interest in the establishment of effective research-policy-practice linkages in his work and the translation of scientific concepts into practical solutions. He coordinated the FP7 project 'INSIGHT – Strengthening innovation processes for growth and development in agriculture and rural areas', the ERA-Net project 'RETHINK - Rethinking the links between farm modernisation, rural development and resilience in a world of increasing demands and finite resources', and the Horizon 2020 project 'SALSA – Small farms, small food businesses and sustainable food and nutrition security', <http://www.salsa.uevora.pt/en/>, and he is a co-author of the European Parliament study 'Sustainable competitiveness and innovation in EU agriculture'. His current research focuses on urban-rural relations related to the Horizon 2020 project 'ROBUST – Rural-urban Europe: unlocking synergies', <http://www.rural-urban.eu/>.