



SWG SCAR-AKIS

Strategic Working Group on Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems

**Dublin Meeting
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Italy

1. Introduction on Art 102 on AKIS

Article 102 Modernisation

The description of the elements that ensure modernisation of the CAP referred to in point (g) of Article 95(1) shall highlight the elements of the CAP Strategic Plan that support the modernisation of the agricultural sector and the CAP and shall contain in particular:

(a): *an overview of how the CAP Strategic Plan will contribute to the cross-cutting general objective related to fostering and sharing of knowledge, innovation and digitalisation and encouraging their uptake set out in the second subparagraph of Article 5, notably through describing....(i) and (ii)*

There are 2 parts in Art 102 to describe in the CAP AKIS plans:

- (i) the **organisational** set-up of a well-functioning AKIS in your country
- (ii) how this organisation helps to **deliver services**: better advice, more innovation and improved knowledge flows

Introductory remarks

- The analysis of the AKI System (context and SWOT) has not started yet in Italy.
- However, a discussion about the best methodology to be used to run this analysis kicked off.
- Some initial thoughts can, nevertheless, be formulated, based on the work done over the years by CREA Policies and Bioeconomy and on the debate recently launched on this topic.

A) Characteristics of your AKIS (SWOT)

- ▶ What are the **main characteristics of your national AKIS** (strength, weakness, main actors, knowledge flows that characterize your AKIS)? **(1)**
- **Complexity:** the Italian AKIS is characterized by a high number of actors involved and activities undertaken.
- **Fragmentation:** the high number of actors and activities increased considerably in the past few years and this, combined with the lack of governance and coordination among them, contributed to fragment the system. In addition, the widespread use of participatory approaches in the implementation of research and innovation projects increased participation of both the main institutions and other actors, but without a clear and defined strategy.

A) Characteristics of your AKIS (SWOT)

- ▶ What are the **main characteristics of your national AKIS** (strength, weakness, main actors, knowledge flows that characterize your AKIS)? **(2)**
- The **existing knowledge** of the main actors and activities of the AKIS can be considered advanced, even if some integration might be needed. **New actors** most probably became active in the system in the past years and they will need to be identified; **relations** between actors and the presence of **new functions**, also, will need further investigation.
- The needs of some AKIS actors, such as farmers, would benefit for a more thorough analysis, to better identify their needs in terms of innovation, also using financial and structural data.
- **Use of participatory tools:** professionals active within the AKIS are aware about the importance of using those tools, but they are not necessarily able to use them properly or to select the most appropriate ones.

A) Characteristics of your AKIS (SWOT)

- What will be the **main changes** to implement if you compare with the current situation?

One of the most serious issues appears to be fragmentation and this could be overcome by a more strategic policy intervention. The current RDP-funded interventions related to the AKIS are based on measures that have different implementation rules and this make it difficult to promote coordinated actions within the system. The approach of the new CAP might enable to solve this issue and allow for more systemic action.

The completion of the context analysis both at national and regional level will help have more detailed thoughts about the needed changes.

A) Characteristics of your AKIS (SWOT)

- ▶ Main **barriers and bottlenecks** hindering knowledge flows in your AKIS.
- ▶ How to **overcome** them?

Knowledge will flow more easily if the policy intervention promotes the human capital growth (both for farmers and professionals) and supports the connections between AKIS actors.

- ▶ How is the **process** of discussion on AKIS going in your country?

The Ministry of Agricultural Policies and the regions are discussing what methodology should be used to run the context analysis of AKIS.

Main issues to decide upon are:

- the level at which the analysis should be performed (national, regional, or both);
- the minimum functions an AKIS should guarantee and the most effective ways to deliver them;
- which services are available, which are lacking and which are not available; which actors are already involved and which should be involved.

This analysis will be carried out with on-desk surveys and by direct contacts with some stakeholders.

B) Future CAP AKIS Strategic plans

- Starting from Art 102 in the Commission proposal, and in order to tackle the cross-cutting objective on K&I, please explain:
 - ▶ (i) how the **organisational set-up of the AKIS**, and in particular **advisory services as referred to in Article 13, research and CAP networks**, will improve cooperation and the sharing of knowledge in an integrated manner; and
 - ▶ (ii) how they will **provide** advice, knowledge flows and innovation support services

C) interventions planned in your future AKIS

What are the **main CAP interventions you may plan for your national AKIS?**

With regard to:

- a. Enhancing knowledge flows and **strengthening links between research and practice**
- b. **Strengthening farm advisory services within the AKIS**
- c. **Strengthening interactive innovation**
- d. Supporting **digital transition** in agriculture

It is too early to identify these operational interventions. They depend on political choices that will be made by the European and Italian institutions in the near future.

Based on the experience gained by CREA Policies and Bioeconomy in recent years, it will be essential to promote a coordinated strategy using all available tools (information, training, consultancy, EIP AGRI, etc.) to promote the growth of AKIS as a system, which should include also innovation-related actions as envisaged in the Operational Programmes of the POs.

Some thoughts for the common reflection (1)

If the objective of the new programming period is to coordinate and connect actions, knowledge and actors related to innovation in order to promote an effective systemic work, the fundamental question is how the strategy is built.

1. How agri-food and forestry sectors are analysed becomes relevant: e.g. if knowledge and innovation related policies address mainly small and medium holdings, it will be necessary to clearly identify their needs (with quantitative and qualitative indicators) and, based on them, to fine-tune the related interventions.
2. It might be useful to highlight which AKIS functions are mainly considered of particular importance to be delivered by the system (and this might change depending on the region/rural area) and to understand which competences and skills actors have or will need to acquire with respect to the working methods introduced by the new Regulation (interactivity, information exchange capacity, user's involvement, tailormade advice, etc.).

Some thoughts about the future (2)

3. It is also necessary to organize meetings with the AKIS actors in a very open way in order to bring in actors who are not part of the traditional system, but who might have innovative skills and proposals to share.
4. The construction of the final strategy will have to provide the possibility to identify priorities when planning innovation-related measures/operations in order to make the available tools more focused and effective.