



## Update on EIP-AGRI

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DG AGRI - EC



16-17-18 September 2020  
II Seminar 'CAP Strategic Plans: the key role of AKIS in Member States'

## **EIP Focus Groups ongoing 2020-2021:**

- Wildlife and agricultural production
- Sustainable industrial crops in Europe: new market opportunities and business models which do not replace food production
- Reducing the plastic footprint of agriculture
- Sustainable beef production systems
- Climate-smart (sub)tropical food crops in the EU



# **(POSTPONED) EIP-AGRI seminar: Healthy soils for Europe: sustainable management through knowledge and practice**

- dedicated to identifying, learning from and promoting sustainable soil management practices to maintain soil health. The overall aim is to raise awareness and address practical soil management challenges and solutions to enhance soil health.



## **Outcomes EIP Seminar**

### **“CAP Strategic Plans: the key role of AKIS in Member States”**

**16-18 Sep 2020**

Online - 277 participants: CAP planners;  
Managing Authorities for M1, M2, M16;  
advisory coordinators; national rural  
networks; speakers and experts; DG AGRI  
staff





## Results from online discussions through e-questionnaires



16-17-18 September 2020  
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## **Document B**

# **Integrating advisors in the AKIS**

**to foster the sharing of knowledge  
and innovation for agriculture and  
rural areas**

Mark Gibson



## Q1 Identifying impartial advisers

- Need to define what we mean by impartial adviser. E.g. Private (for-profit) advisers must be accepted as “impartial” only if their activity does not include inputs selling
- Register of advisers/advisory services that are trained to a minimum standard.
- It will be more efficient to ask advisers to identify themselves. A set of criteria of what it means to be an impartial adviser is needed.
- Online rating system to rate the quality of work by the adviser.
- We need coherent messages going on to farms from all parties visiting farms. (advisors, vets, etc)

## Q2 Attracting and integrating advisors into the AKIS?

- A good working environment, clear purposes and aims, career opportunities, appropriate remuneration, recognition of the role, etc.
- The feeling of belonging to a group. (Fragmentation of advisory services)
- An AKIS coordinator/national service point should be responsible for explaining a very clear message of AKIS system benefits, rules (advisors), financial support and what concrete additional value can be expected.
- Provide training for them and have them recognize the benefits of 'belonging to that club'.
- NRN organises camps and info days for all advisors. Researchers, innovation brokers, advisors share their activities.
- Regular newsletter for advisors and other organisations + website.
- Need to provide supports such as budget for meetings (traveling and time) should be taken into consideration. Interaction with OG and other national networks should be fostered.



## Q3 Creating transparency for farmers on the available advisors and their competencies, specialist knowledge, training completed?

- Searchable database of advisors showing
  - life long learning credits
  - rating of advisors by farmer clients (use of blockchain)
  - Areas of expertise
- EU wide certification based on similar principles to CECRA.
- Farmer buy-in crucial to this

## **Q4 How can we empower farmers to choose the advisor of his/her choice which can help them best? How to articulate and promote the benefits of using an advisor?**

- Provide a 'neutral' party that can help farmers with choosing the right advisor.
- Advisors have to be visible e.g. giving lectures, attending courses, through media etc.
- Promote benefits of advisory during agricultural college.
- Obtaining some subsidies would be linked to the contracting of an advisor. Advisory fees, valued and fixed, would be included into the plan presented for obtaining the subsidy.

## **Q5 - How can advisors act as innovation support services and, in particular, work with EIP Operational Groups?**

- Make 'innovation support' a specifically recognized discipline of advice, preferably even an organisationally separate branch of the advisory service with their own set of requirements concerning training and experience.
- Innovation Support Skills can be trained. Funding needed.
- Our experience of the rural innovation support service is that you need to have expertise in both the subject matter and in brokerage/facilitation.

## **Q6 - With regard to preparing CAP plans, what kind of supporting interventions are most useful to integrate existing and new advisors to the AKIS?**

- The cost of advisory services should not be a financial burden for farmers.
- Consider training budget to help existing and new advisors to start up to date on hot topics like smart/sustainable agriculture, data driven agriculture, etc.
- Set up a range of well-defined set of enabling arrangements: inclusion of advisors in stakeholders' consultation (participation) in CAP planning; assessment of the needs for services of farmers; identification/definition of the relevant training courses to increase the skills and competencies of the advisors;

## Q7 Do you have concrete plans already on how to make the transition from FAS to AKIS?

- We prepare a totally new setup of our advisory system within AKIS. new registration system, new measurements (vouchers and learning networks), better networking between AKIS members and promoting the AKIS system
- Support them working together? Incentives. Measure the effort made by researchers and technology transfer specialists to help field advisors with info
- Sweden plans to increase the amount of resources spent on training advisors.

## **Document C**

**How can CAP networks boost knowledge exchange and connect actors?**



# CAP networks creating an innovation enabling environment

- Enable existing networks that were created during project lifetime. Such networks (or TNs, or KRs) that are based on farms/advisers' needs should be financed after the project ends.
- Separate operational functions (including support functions) from control functions in public bodies involved in the CAP process to improve relations with AKIS actors and create innovation enabling environment.
- Have good running AKIS facilitator service or innovation brokers.
- The CAP network shall include at least aspects focus on strengthening AKIS' governance, exchange of knowledge (cross visits, multiactor focus, OG's projects), strengthening innovation and dissemination of the results of it, boosting of digitisation and improving advisory system.
- There is a need for a digital networking platform.

## CAP Networks support knowledge flows across borders

- Language can be a barrier.
- CAP Networks should promote the use and test of these automatic translation technologies even if they are not perfect.
- Connect existing networks
- Human interaction and discussion is very important to understand and motivate people to use that knowledge.
- We find useful to organize study trips abroad.
- Role in disseminating research outcomes from H2020
- Support new thematic networks and reinforce cooperation actions in all EU member states RDP.
- Thematic events organized by EIP AGRI are very useful.



# CAP Network supporting farmers and advisors to engage with innovation and available knowledge

- Public Research Organizations and private farmers and advisors could work together to improve testing systems and other ways to validate available knowledge.
- Establish a subgroup on innovation at national level
- Dissemination and creation of connections between OGs and innovation projects.
- Dissemination of Horizon Europe Project and creation of connections of actors participating in them.
- Stronger connection between H2020 national contact points and NRNs.
- Field trips in other MS
- Working on joint research projects (farm associations/ advisors and researchers
- Introduce criteria linked with innovation engagement when selecting the projects financed in the national RDP

## **Document D**

# **Drafting post 2020 CAP plans with effective AKIS interventions**



## Q1 Involving stakeholders to prepare your AKIS strategy and collecting good ideas

- It is fundamental to engage participatory methodologies which empower all the potential AKIS actors to develop a common understandings/vision on the AKIS concept and on respective roles and functions to play for a well-functioning of the systems.
- Collecting of good ideas have taken place through workshops, online meetings, questionnaires and telephone interviews
- The Swedish Rural Network has just made a report "Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) in Sweden"

## Q1 Involving stakeholders to prepare your AKIS strategy and collecting good ideas

- Web exchange with other MS of progress in other countries could be useful
- Working parties that are organised to collect good ideas together with farm associations, advisors, researches and national authorities. These activities need to be funded (costs for travels, accommodation, meeting room - if needed)
- Drafts of the AKIS chapters in the strategic plans are spread informal to AKIS actors who have not been officially involved
- Old traditional, big actors are not always the most innovative.

## Q2 What key AKIS related priorities and needs do you see for your country?

- Enhance advisors' capacities to address farmers' needs using innovative methods and tools.
- To change evaluation of researchers work: to include in the evaluation system of scientists the work with sector practice/farms/advisers.
- Need to close the gap between R&D, innovation, advisory services and farmers.
- Simplified and timely administrative procedures and reduction of administrative burdens for cooperation projects and for the use of advisory services.

## Q2 What key AKIS related priorities and needs do you see for your country?

- Promoting peer-to-peer exchanges among the different AKIS actors, to enhance relations and to facilitate mutual learning and knowledge loops.
- Create a strong knowledge transfer system where advisors are properly remunerated in order to attract the best experts,
- Identify educational needs of the farmers.
- Need to ensure that farmer experience while searching for knowledge, innovation and training is smooth and transparent.
- Communication strategy is necessary to ensure that the AKIS as a whole is also easily known to the various actors in the sector.

## Q2 What key AKIS related priorities and needs do you see for your country?

- It has to approach different issues: improvement of the farm's profitability, promote the farmers' business view, promote the holistic view of the agrosystem, organic farming, sustainable fight against infestation and illnesses, efficient water use, efficient inputs use in order to avoid water contamination, digitalisation, commercialisation.
- There is a lot here. Also climate action, AMR also.
- Where does the consumer fit in?

## Q2 What key AKIS related priorities and needs do you see for your country?

### Spanish Ministry

- Improve coordination, complementarities of funds, take advantage of synergies and initiatives.
- Adapt AKIS governance structure based on three principles: simplicity, interoperability and respectful to the competencies of each level/area
- Build a platform for knowledge exchange and interactions between advisers at the horizontal and sector level
- Boost young farmers and women, and small farmers participation to assure AKIS future. Include consumers, distribution and society in AKIS as well.



## Q3 Incentivising and rewarding researchers to tackle farmers' needs and exchange knowledge

- We lack EU level decisions. It would help us even to speak the same language with researchers. At the moment they are orientated to scientific results only, even if you have a good salary/project for them.
- We should be utilizing approaches, methods and tools to assess farmers' needs and to co-develop the project ideas.
- Giving some extra scoring in the evaluation to the projects to those where producer sector participates, and to those that promote the knowledge exchange.
- Creating incentives for carrying out field demonstrative tests.

## Q3 Incentivising and rewarding researchers to tackle farmers' needs and exchange knowledge

- The Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation is working on the National Strategy of Science, Technology and Innovation 2021-2027. In its sectorial agenda for agriculture a working group on AKIS' Governance has been agreed.
- The universities have to modify the merit system and make collaboration with farmers and advisors as well as research information more rewarding.
- The announcements for funding can demand that farmers and advisors are involved in the projects already **at the planning stage** in research and innovation projects.
- Proper funding for dissemination/communications activities.

## Q4 Do you already have a view on who should form part of the “AKIS coordination body”

- We think that AKIS coordination will be dedicated to one public institution by the Ministry of Agriculture
- The Swedish Rural Network acts as a coordinator for knowledge and innovation systems. The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences developed collaboration lecturers (samverkanslektorer) who act as a bridge between research and practice.
- Idea to establish an AKIS Council for thematic cooperation between the parties involved.

## Q 4 Do you already have a view on who should form part of the “AKIS coordination body”

- Organization of an AKIS Steering Committee consisting of universities, NGOs, research institutes, EIP and NRN, being organized working groups with Ministry representatives for a more efficient exchange of information.
- It has emerged from a survey that the AKIS coordination body must be public authority.
- All types of farming should be represented in the coordination body.

## Q 5 Tips that worked well to strengthen the organization of knowledge flows between AKIS actors?

- Finance the posts of facilitators and mediators.
- Regular collaboration between different types of institutions
- Participation of all the supply chain links
- Reduce bureaucracy and simplify processes where possible.
- Activities where both advisors, farmers and researchers participate, for example in field exhibitions, study tours, conferences, workshops, etc. Also, network groups meeting regularly have been useful.
- Suitable digital tools and processes for knowledge transfer.

## Q 5 Tips that worked well to strengthen the organization of knowledge flows between AKIS actors?

- Have meetings, preferably on farms where different actors of the AKIS system will meet and discuss good examples, discuss barriers and most of all inspire each other.
- Support the establishment and networking of demonstration farms and use these demo farms to connect researchers and advisors.
- **Ensure sufficient funding for dissemination of project results.**

## Q 5 Tips that worked well to strengthen the organization of knowledge flows between AKIS actors?

- Networks should organise regular meetings between research and advisors at national and international levels, e.g. TNs gathering research, advisors, networks and other stakeholders (farmers, education, administration, etc.), discovering needs from practice and sharing best practices and research results.
- AKIS plans need specific incentives for researchers (budget wise, number of publications in dissemination channels for end users, showing how they respond to practice needs).