

PRO AKIS regional workshop – Krakow: Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems for an inclusive Europe - 7th of March 2014

Covered countries

Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland and Slovakia



Background and objectives

Pro-AKIS is an EU FP 7 project that investigates agricultural advisory services within the context of Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems (AKIS). During the first year, the project team compiled an inventory of AKIS institutions in 27 EU member states with a focus on the functions of advisory services. This newsletter reports on one of three workshops which took place in Krakow – Poland, aimed at:

1. Presenting, evaluating and complementing findings on AKIS and advisory systems in selected countries
2. Confirming results; identifying controversies and discussing challenges for AKIS and advisory systems with AKIS stakeholders from the respective countries.
3. Discussing and developing policy recommendations.

Workshop Agenda: 7 March, 2014

08:00 am - 09:00 am	Registration, Coffee
09:00 am - 10:30 am	Plenary Session: Welcome to the Workshop AKIS and Advisory services – results from the PRO AKIS inventory
10:30 am - 11:00 am	Coffee break
11:00 am - 12:30 pm	Poster Session: AKIS and Advisory Services in specific countries – discussion in walking groups (accompanied by country experts)
12:30 pm - 01:30 pm	Lunch break
01:30 pm - 02:30 pm	Plenary Debate: feedback information and presentations of walking groups' remarks (countries' experts)
02:30 pm - 03:30 pm	Working Groups' Session – 4 groups accompanied by facilitators
03:30 pm - 04:00 pm	Coffee break
04:00 pm - 04:45 pm	Working Groups' Reports And Discussion

Issues raised and discussed during the workshop

- 1. Challenges for advisory organisations and national policy recommendations**
- 2. Quality of advisory services**
- 3. Evaluation of AKIS actors**
- 4. Changing role of public administration in AKIS**

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Key issues raised and discussed during the workshop

Challenges for advisory organisations and national policy include:

- Increasing diversity in types of users (commercial farms, self-sufficient farms, young farmers etc.)
- Increasing diversity in topics of advice
- The fact that other groups of farmers (e.g. part time farmers) are excluded from advisory services

On the quality of advisory services, the following questions were raised:

- What makes good quality advisory services?
- How can quality be evaluated?
- What criteria of evaluation should be established (e.g. requirements; certification; level of education; specialisation; communication skills etc.)?
- Who should do this?



On the evaluation of AKIS actors there is need for:

- Evaluating the role of research and education in implementation of research results and knowledge flow

- Identifying strengths and weaknesses of research and education sector in the flow of agri-information and innovations to practice
- Evaluating the general relationship and linkages amongst AKIS actor

On the changing role of public administration in AKIS, the following trends have been increasingly observed:

- Commercialization and privatization of public advisory services
- New private advisory businesses in free market economy system
- Individual / private consultants
- Decentralization and fragmentation of advisory services

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Question and answer session for PRO AKIS from audience

- **Q1:** What were the criteria for selecting the countries to be represented in three regional workshops?
R1: project terms of references; decision of research consortium to select the EU member states geographically (North, Central and South of EU)



- **Q2:** Who elaborated country reports?
R2: members of research consortium and individual country experts as subcontractors
- **Q3:** How did you get data for country reports?

R3: the main tool for the survey was a questionnaire developed by the research team under the supervision of the Polish research team responsible for WP3; statistical data taken from existing databases such as EUROSTAT, and the worldwide extension organisation database

- **Q4:** How are you going to disseminate projects results?
R4: a publicly accessible website, flyers, slide presentation, press releases, and policy briefs, an AKIS-Inventory web-portal, encouragement and monitoring of academic publications, e.g. conference presentations, books, journal articles, etc.



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General comments and recommendations - after poster session

- Many congratulations for the design and quality of posters.
- Excellent tool to present AKIS in particular EU countries.
- More information about funding of advisory services should be presented on posters, e.g. % of funding by particular sources
- More clear presentation of linkages between AKIS actors, e.g. direct and indirect connections, mutual influences of AKIS actors, and agreements of co-operation.
- More numbers and figures wanted on the posters

4 *Reflection and conclusions based on inventory reports*

In summary, there is no unified AKIS structure (in terms of its consistency, management and funding). Despite many common features, there are also some significant differences related to the type of AKIS institutions and organisations, differences related to type and number of AKIS actors, the strength of relationship between various actors of the system, especially with end users (farmers), dominant type of agricultural advisory services, main clients of advisory services, main topics of advice, main methods and main sources of funding the advisory services.

These differences are due to historical circumstances, the level of economic development, including the level of agricultural development in particular countries in particular countries, importance of agriculture in the national economy and finally, the organisational structure of the state.

These differences could be observed by studying the AKIS diagrams during the poster session of the Krakow workshop.

5 *Summary conclusions and reflections from Workshop*

- Public institution or organization (existing or established or governmental unit) should be a platform of knowledge exchange and coordination body for several suppliers of advisory services, research and education institutions and other actors of AKIS;

- The poor agrarian structure and very large numbers of small farms requires the support for the small scale producers and advisory services not only in the field of agricultural production but also in non-agricultural activities and environmental issues.
- The AKIS system has to be changed, instead of contributing individual institutions, we have to contribute to the movements, networking, and clusters, in order to facilitate the flow of knowledge and information.
- Within the EU countries it is important to develop heterogeneous strategies for the transfer of innovations.
- Research, education, agricultural extension, communication systems together with farmers have to be integrated into the networks in order to benefit from the innovations and opportunities in line with their needs.
- In the transfer of knowledge and information to farmers there is need to utilize leading good examples such as:
 1. Innovation networks (e.g. Netherlands)
 2. Questions 'counters which will provide advice and other kind of information free of charge (e.g. Belgium)



3. Clusters for rural tourism development (e.g. Slovakia)

- 4 The best selection of the latest news in form of extended abstracts from applied research which can maintain that farmers are well informed about the newest development in the field of innovation and knowledge in their respective activities 'area. This kind of information should be provided electronically (e.g. Ministry of Czech Republic)



It seems to be useful / necessary to introduce the obligatory evaluation of subject matter advisors in terms of their competences (theoretical and experimental knowledge and communication skills) and efficiency in advisory work (good results well recognised by clients).

6 *General comments and recommendations on AKIS and advisory services*

- Need for adjusting to incoming new actors/users
- Need for a wide perspective on AKIS/consider limitations
- Need for education and training e.g. vocational schools, learning modules, web based learning.
- Need for a constant improvement in methodologies
- Need for coordination in the system e.g. role of government

7 *Participating countries and institutions*

Country	Institution	Country	Institution
Austria	Agricultural Chamber	Hungary	Ministry of Rural Development
Austria	Austrian representative in the SCAR AKIS 3 SWG Service Public de Wallonie (SPW). Direction Générale	Ireland	The Agriculture and Food Development Authority (TEAGASC)
Belgium	Agriculture, Ressources naturelles et Environnement (D GARNE)	Italy	National Institute of Research on Agricultural Economics (INEA)
Belgium	Flanders Government / Department of Agriculture and Fishery	Latvia	European Forum for Farm and Rural Advisory Service (EUFRAS)
Belgium	Standing Committee for Agricultural Research (SCAR)	Lithuania	Lithuanian Agricultural Advisory Service
Belgium	European Commission - DG Agriculture and Rural Development	Lithuania	Aleksandras Stulginskis University
Belgium	European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) Contact Point	Poland	Ministry Of Agriculture and Rural Development
Czech Republic	Czech University of Life Sciences, Prague, Department of Crop production	Poland	Ministry of Science and Higher Education
Denmark	Knowledge Center for Agriculture	Poland	The Agricultural Advisory Centre in Brwinów, Branch Office in Krakow
France	Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique(INRA)	Poland	Opolski Agricultural Advisory Centre in Łosiów
France	Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry	Poland	Univeristy of Agriculture in Krakow
Finland	MTT Agrifood Research	Portugal	Instituto Nacional de Investigação Agrária e Veterinária, I.P. (INIAV)
Germany	Landwirtschaftskammer Niedersachsen	Slovakia	Agroinstitut - Nitra
Germany	The Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF)	Slovakia	Slovak University of Agriculture
Germany	Association of Chambers of Agriculture	The Netherlands	Ministry of Economy
Germany	Biological Innovation & Economy EU & International Affairs (BIO 3)	The Netherlands	LINK Consult
Germany	University of Hohenheim	The Netherlands	Wageningen UR
Hungary	Szent István University, Regional Extension Centre	UK	University of Gloucestershire
Hungary	West-Hungarian University, Institute for Training and Consultancy	UK	Agricultural Development and Advisory Service (ADAS) Ltd