

PRO AKIS regional workshop – PARIS: Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems for an inclusive Europe – 25th of Feb, 2014

Countries covered:

Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Spain



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: 25 February, 2014

Session 1

- 08:15 am - 09:00 am Registration, Coffee
- 09:00 am Welcome to the Workshop
- 09:00 am - 11:00 am AKIS and Advisory services – results from the PRO AKIS inventory
Presentation and discussion
- 11:00 am - 11:15 am Coffee Break
- 11:15 am - 12:30 pm AKIS and Advisory Services in specific countries
Poster presentation and group discussions to provide feedback on national
AKIS results and identification of transnational questions and issues
- 12:30 pm - 01:00 pm Challenges and controversies with regard to AKIS and advisory services
Plenary: gathering of group results and definition of topics for working groups
- 01:00 pm - 02:00 pm Lunch Break

Session 2

- 02:00 pm - 03:30 pm Topical challenges and controversies
Working groups on selected topics
- 03:30 pm - 04:00 pm Coffee Break
- 04:00 pm - 04:45 pm Reporting and taking stock – insights and highlights from the working groups
Plenary: presentation of workshop results and discussion with respect to
PRO AKIS inventories
- 04:45 pm - 05:30 pm Conclusions and recommendations for advisory services and AKIS in the addressed member states
Plenary discussion
Outlook on follow-up, and closure of workshop



Key issues raised and discussed during the workshop

1. **The relations between public and private actors within AKIS**
2. **The changing role of public administration in pluralist systems**
3. **The evaluation of services**
4. **The potential users and issues for advice**

1 *Topics presented and discussed at the workshop*

The relations between public and private actors within AKIS

- Which are the new players in the system (industries? NGOs?...)?
- Is there some overlapping between functions (research, advice, brokering...) between areas of competence?
- Which are the effects of increased competition and hybrid nature of certain actors?

The changing role of public administration in pluralist systems

- Public funding (when? For whom?) Public monitoring?
- How can public administration (or other actors) provide an effective coordination of complex public-private relations within AKIS



The evaluation of services

- How is it possible to assess the quality and effectiveness of advisory services?
- What about knowledge used by advisers? (and what are the competences needed)? With which indicators?

The potential users and issues for advice

- Are there populations excluded from access to

Services (small farms, gender issues, young farmers, farm employees) in different contexts of modernization of the agriculture?

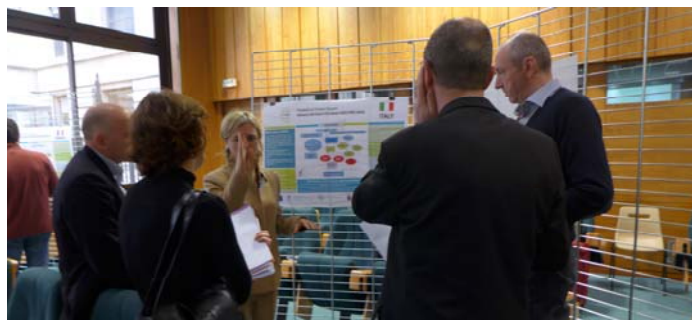
- How to capture and articulate the real needs of diverse groups of farmers? (methods)
- Are there issues not addressed by AKIS and farm advice (e.g. health?)



2 *On advisory services, competition and fragmentation*

Q1: How can farmers be increasingly informed about what is going on out there in relation to advisory services?

R1: Because of an increasing high diversity of small scale farmers and farming structures, it is difficult to have a very clear satisfactory mechanism through which they can acquire information. This is made worse by the increasing gap (differences) between small and big farmers in terms of their respective ability to pay for services



Q2: Were you able to point out the main stream between the competition issue? i.e. mainly between public and private sector?

R2: The impression from reports reveals that there exists a kind of dual system. While the public sector is becoming more focus on administrative issues, the private sector is increasingly focused on machinery and technology in farming etc. In this dual system, only the public sector covers the small farmers' needs. However in some cases e.g. case of France, under such a system, some advisers (e.g. Crop Consultants) do same work like private but they are public, hence the issue of competition arises.

3 *Key suggestions/comments with regards to the PRO AKIS inventory reports*



- First observation was that it could have been nice or will be quite informative if such reports (maybe including the AKIS diagrams are able to capture an overview of casual workers/ farm workers, private research and the role of private companies, trainers or advisers etc. for each region.
- Second observation pointed to the usefulness of outlining key points on the consequence of financial crises and effects on advisory systems especially for the synthesis part of the report.

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Key suggestions /comments after the poster session

- Adding number of farmers to the AKIS diagrams could add value
- Observed difficulty in deciding which actor or content to be including in AKIS visualisation to capture its diversity
- Small scale farmers in AKIS, missing in most of the visualisations
- What is the use of AKIS outcome? i.e how can this be used to give feedback?
- No need for classification of systems before suggesting improvements? So whats the real use of AKIS diagrams?

Selected impression of AKIS and advisory service – opinion on experts

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Portugal

with special reference to the case of Portugal,

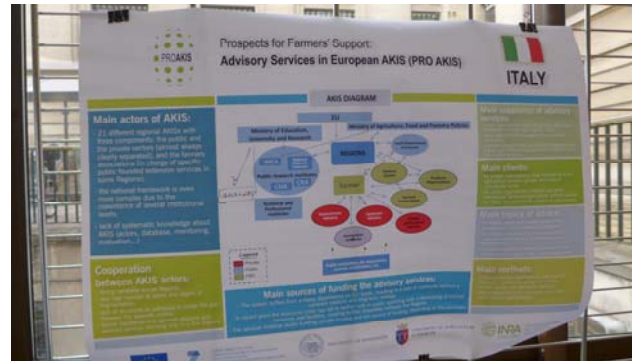
- Big organisations compete to have lobby for funds and,
- A dual system exists in the types of farms (due to the continuous presence of small farmers)
- State and Farmers Based Organisations (FBOs) are observe to be doing basically similar things e.g technical and administrative but sometimes leaving out advisory work

Romania

- Competition is observed mostly between public and private companies limited by the fees of the consultant
- No competition in the internal market and the public sector is completely absent while a few large scale companies dominate

Italy

- Topic such as advice on environmental issues is gradually abandoned with the onset of private competition
- The difficulty is how this can be addressed
- Maybe possible solution is to expand and strengthen the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) network



Bulgaria

- Some competition is observed for the case of Bulgaria
- Farmers can choose between the public and private sector
- More concern is on issue of quality of advice offered
- Those not able to pay for advice e.g small scale farmers go mostly to the public sector for advice and vice versa
- Large commercial farmers use more private advisers and NGOs



France

The issue of fragmentation can be highlighted from the point of content:

- 1) regulation
- 2) economic and technical advice
- 3) more strategic (helping farmers)
- 4) when advice is mainly public, hence mostly everyone will have access e.g regulation
- 5) the more private it is, the more difficult it is for small farmers with less ability to pay
- 6) the question is who gives advice for strategic transformation?



General remarks

- 6 Competition leads to change of role resulting in the question of who is in the field and how can advice be designed?. This takes place more in the private sector with an additional role of creating transparency not specifically adopted
 - In most countries competition exists but the public sector works more with small scale farmers

7 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, importance of agriculture in the national economy and finally, the organisational structure of the state.

8 *Participating Countries and institutions*

Country	Institution	Country	Institution
Bulgaria	Agricultural University,Plovdiv	Germany	University of Hohenheim
Bulgaria	National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAAS)	Germany	Leibniz-Zentrum für Agrarlandschaftsforschung
Bulgaria	Ministry of Agriculture	Greece	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
Denmark	Knowledge Center for Agriculture	Greece	Ministry of Agriculture
France	Inter AFOCG	Italy	Joint Research Centre (JRC)
France	Assemblée Permanente des Chambres d'Agriculture (APCA) RESOLIA	Italy	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
France	Institut de l'Elevage. Département Métiers d'Eleveurs et Société	Italy	Regione Emilia Romagna
France	ACTA- Institut des filières animales et végétales	Latvia	European Forum for Farm and Rural Advisory Service (EUFRAS)
France	Centres d'Initiatives pour Valoriser l'Agriculture et Milieu Rural (CIVAM)	Romania	PMU CESAR- MARD
France	Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement (CIRAD)	Italy	Università di Cassino
France	Conseil Général de l'Alimentation, de l'Agriculture et des Espaces Ruraux (CGAAER)	Portugal	University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro
France	EUROQUALITY	Poland	University of Agriculture in Krakow
France	Pôle du Conseil Indépendant en Agriculture - PCIA	Slovenia	Zavod EKometer
France	National Institute of Research on Agricultural Economics (INEA)	Spain	Universidad de Valencia
France	Trame	Spain	Instituto Valenciano de Investigaciones Agrarias (IVIA)
France	Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (INRA)	UK	The James Hutton Institute
France	Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Agroalimentaire et de la Forêt		