

Report SCAR SWG AKIS 4 - 7th Meeting TALLINN, 7 December 2017

The SCAR SWG AKIS4 meeting in Tallinn was the seventh of the meetings proposed for the development of the mandate endorsed by the SCAR plenary in December 2015. This meeting looked to develop the following topics, identified in the AKIS 4 mandate:

- **Learning and feedback from interactive projects approaches:**
 - ✓ Presentations and exchanges with cross-border OGs
- **Improve the integrated approach within the European AKIS - with supporting Infrastructures**
 - ✓ Presentations and exchanges on digitization and knowledge reservoirs of projects and institutions
- **Other topics of interest**
 - ✓ Introduction of "Future of food and farming" CAP communication and AKIS in it

This meeting was particularly important since - with the text in the **CAP communication for the period 2020-2027 - we will now need to go from an "analytic" AKIS mode into a more active mode** designing Member States' CAP AKIS plans and with guidance and legislation, soon to be prepared. With the extra incentives from the post 2020 CAP to step up AKIS and thanks to the long-lasting experience in the group that should be feasible.

In the meeting we **reflected on country's current AKIS system** and how it could be improved with a view to better/closer/more integrated interaction between research, advisors and (rural) networks. We summarized the most relevant lines from this discussion and the input from members sent before and after the meeting. With a view to strengthening knowledge flows and innovation, the organization of the interactive management and structuring of actors (advisors, rural networks and researchers) was discussed, and this is intrinsically linked with the (digital) knowledge data management and infrastructures. This is based on and has already been prepared in our discussions last year on the Policy Brief on the Future of Advisory services and many thematic networks have been developing this too.
([http://scar-europe.org/images/AKIS/Documents/Policy Brief Future Advisory Services.pdf](http://scar-europe.org/images/AKIS/Documents/Policy%20Brief%20Future%20Advisory%20Services.pdf)).

CO-CHAIRS: Aniko JUHASZ & Adrien GUICHAOUA; facilitator: Floor Geerling-Eiff (report)

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Presentation of the Estonian research and innovation approach - including clusters and cross-border EIP OGs (Toomas Kevvai)

Estonian RDI policy strives for a knowledge based Estonia. This includes (policy driven) programmes with focus on smart specialisation, rural development and national programmes including R&D activities. The main objectives are that research in Estonia is of high level and diverse (top level excellence in the wider sense, and not only for Estonian interest). Focus is on knowledge based decisions and knowledge driven policy. Estonia wants to become more visible. Estonia is problem based; they need to concentrate on the topics where they have competitive advantage. The ministry supports universities to cooperate in international research cooperation. Science is important, yet to be effective, Estonia needs to have a good AKIS, including advisory services.

The overall funding principle exists of both public and private investments and common interests (public-private). Some projects are financed 100% publicly, some 100% privately and there exist public-private partnerships for professional know how in relation to both environmental /societal and economic goals. Public investments are organised through legal frameworks, standards and societal demands. Private investments are based on business plans and other economic fundamentals.

Estonia is involved in ERA-nets and JPI (Facce, Oceans). RDP instruments are based on 2 lines: knowledge creation through the development of new products, practices, etc. incl. EIP. And knowledge exchange and learning through innovation clusters, knowledge transfer and advisory services. Regarding knowledge creation brokers take initiative but farmers should formulate their own ideas too.

Estonia designed innovation clusters including organising partnerships. The main structure is that several farmers gather together around 1 project/study. The way cofinancing is organised varies.

Estonia considers EIP rather as a continuation of the previous programme period on innovation clusters. On EU level we have more continuous flows but for every project you need a new group and new administration. That's why when Estonia heard about EIP, they designed their innovation partnerships as clusters. OGs are similar to the innovation groups Estonia had before; the main difference is that EIP also focuses on knowledge flows and linkages with the EU R&I policy (H2020 thematic networks and the multi actor approach (MAA). Hence, innovation clustering is the Estonian approach to the EIP.

So, where are the bottlenecks in the value chain? We need innovative solutions and therefore innovative projects, ideas. A value chain programme with a multi-project approach, multi-annual, together with scientists/researchers. It is a twofold approach. On the one hand, there are innovation brokers to formulate the questions. During the process they became part of the implementation process, involved in the process. On the other hand, there is the knowledge transfer process. The brokers have to disseminate the knowledge to the wider public. Before, multi-day trainings, including study trips were organised per activity. For this programming period, they introduced long-term programming for several years to come. Estonia now has 8 programmes on different topics. Big data is just starting. In most of the programmes there is an environmental component. It was designed with the scientific community. There are also programmes that were designed from practice. Finally there is public procurement with tenders to

propose the design of the final programmes, coordinated by councils who are following changing needs (continuous up-dating).

Questions and answer (Q&A)s:

- Q: how is the link organised? There are several regulation measures. If we look to the future, will they be completely separate? Are the advisors already involved in knowledge transfer?
- A: one of the connections is that our advisory systems have a calendar in which the different events are listed. It is a coordination issue. With regard to advice, a farmer has to read the available information (booklet) first. If he needs more advice then there is private advice. We try to link the different approaches.
- C: we have education regulation requirements for trainers who can lead the trainings. Advisors can also be those trainers.

Presentation of an Estonian cross-border EIP OG process (Helena Pärenson)

In Estonia they organised a call for cross-border EIP cooperation, which opened in December 2017. Total call budget amounted: € 1 000 000, with max 350 000 per project. The application is submitted to the national funder according to its requirements. Estonian applicants can apply for co-funding for innovation cooperation (M16.2 activities) with partners from EIP OGs from in other countries which have already established or about to apply for support in their home countries/regions. The system works in a way that each applicant applies to its own agency, with partners who have already started or are planning to do so. Focus in on innovation cooperation in agri, food, forestry and dissemination cross-border, on solving a practical problem and developing a new product.

What is supported? Innovation cooperation in agriculture, food and the forestry sector, as in: pilot projects, development of new products, practices, processes and technologies, dissemination of the results of these projects, including cross-border activities. Focus is on solving a practical problem, developing a new product, etc., by joining the needs of the enterprise and the expert knowledge of the research and development institution.

The funding decisions are based on the ranking list. Evaluation is based on the pre-determined criteria: economic and environmental impact, scope of cross-border cooperation and dissemination activities. A prerequisite for a positive funding decision is passing the threshold of 40%. After a positive funding decision, the implementation of project activities must begin within three months.

How does it work? For a cross-border project, each country/region provides support to their participant. In each OG, there is at least one farmer/enterprise or an organisation of entrepreneurs present (cooperatives, non-profit organisations), a research partner, plus an EIP OG (participant) from another country is involved. Estonia supports the costs of the activities of the Estonian part and supports the costs for being able to cooperate and general project coordination costs. Funding decisions are based on a ranking list;

In the preparations for the cross-border call, Estonia exchanged information with colleagues in other countries and there was close contact and exchange of information between internal actors and parties involved. Two webinars for potential applicants were organised.

They started with a series of seminars for potential applicants. Who are the other countries? Only Finland was in the picture so they sent in requests. Sweden and Finland have already shown interest. In Sweden they make use of a 2-step application. All year round the Swedes can participate in international OG projects. There are also other countries which are implementing cross-border cooperation. Slovakia is anticipating it for example. They are working on their local legislation. Greece is quite active, similar to Finland, and some German regions are allowing cross-border cooperation.

Q&A and comments (C):

- C: you were already really proactive and it is really moving. You started something up: 'the era-net under the rural development'.
 - o A: it is the first formal call cross-border call at EU level. The main problem is that in Estonia we do not have the experience how to collaborate with different paying agencies. How to
 - o organise this, it is very useful and it is a good possibility. I hope we will have some OGs cross-border. There will be a joint call.
- C: in France we are struggling with it. Are there sufficient common interests? What do other countries say; how do you deal with different aims? Will the different regions roughly have the same strategies, how will the MAs in the different countries cooperate? On the other hand, it is quite a simple framework. We need to have 2 common interests from the different countries or regions involved.
- Q: we want to move further in this direction and the CAP AKIS plans can support this, e.g. operating in at least the same time period, that way we can coordinate the timing. Also, in having a common platform. There is a lot to do there. We have transnational groups. Did you compare the approaches? Can we learn from that? Does it work easier with Leader? We have to address questions like these.
 - o A: we did not go into details of comparing instruments but Estonia has good experience with cross-border cooperation in Leader.
- Q: it could be interesting to learn from that. Is the legislation possible?
 - o A: yes, in the legislation it is possible to organise cross-border cooperation but administratively, it is more difficult in EIP. In theory we speak of 2 separate groups. If there are lessons to be learned from cross-border cooperation, that could help. We know from Leader, that it is not always that easy. For instance, management of control. It is hardly likely that Estonian budget will be controlled by the Fins. We have to be able to learn from experience.
- C: in Spain, there was an example of another type of a cross-border project. In 2014 there was a meeting between the MAs of Portugal, Spain and also at regional level (Extremadura). They wanted to develop cross border cooperation within EIP. They thought of different regional programmes. From experience they faced that there are different aspects and topics to collaborate on. Certain topics like animal health and other very common topics. But until now they have not implemented it. Yet they talked about Leader experiences and developed many different initiatives for the development on common interests. Catalonia wanted to do something. Navarra

with France, etc. This derived from experiences with previous projects/activities. It would be really interesting to experiment at EU level and we would like to learn from that. Spain would also like to discuss this at the level of rural development programmes. It is a good opportunity to make the links with thematic networks and make the connection with other OGs, because not all the countries are represented, to enlarge the groups and get more impact and get higher dissemination capacity at transnational level.

- C: to organise cross-regional cooperation, in other member states, Estonia could be the pioneer.
- In France there was a co-initiative programme between Loire and Bretagne on animal husbandry topics. One region was able to fund actions in the other regions and the other way around. These lessons learned can be interesting, however, they stopped.
- C: to my knowledge they stopped to define their own strategy with their own stakeholders because it was quite top-down driven. Now they start discussions bottom-up for the next call.
- Spain: is it possible to organise cross-border cooperation if there is no particular given topic? In Andalucía they organised a 2 stage approach similar to Sweden. We can learn from initiatives such as ERA and EUREKA. It is also a matter of budget. We learnt that defining specific common topics of interest, is better than organising open calls. We can also learn from the lessons of the PRIMA programme.
- Poland: in the Baltic countries we make use of INTERREG. These projects are not OGs but maybe they do not have to be. We have to take into account the different funding strategies. The rules and regulation are quite different in the different member states. We should focus on common sources;
- C: at least some projects are funded in the different Baltic countries. It is a good ground to look from INTERREG onward.
- C: we are looking at 2 different funding sources here. Interactive groups can instigate in different countries e.g. through funding from H2020 such as the Winetwork with 8 international facilitators. They only had 1 scientific partner. And there are more exemplary projects.
- C: if there is no or not enough budget for cross-border visits, it is very tricky to organise. We should focus on that (we also discussed this in the Lisbon meeting).
- C: OGs should (be able to) organise INTERREGional meetings where they bring partners together. In SheepNet for example, also other partners would like to join. It depends on how you integrate and implement it in your H2020 project.
- C: but the budget is now restricted to the partners.
- C: they can reserve funding for having meetings with local, other partners. They can organise that outside their countries. So before proposals are drafted, they should include that. They can anticipate that in advance.
- C: it is not so much a matter for the partners of H2020 involved in the project but the challenge is to spread the information to other countries that are not involved in the project.
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- C: it is not easy to organise it. The conclusion is to make a provision of a certain budget and to get other people on board during the project life. It is challenging to identify other projects and groups if you do not foresee that beforehand. So you have to anticipate on that.
- C: maybe we should organise some incentive measures to foster connections between INTERREG projects, OGs and thematic networks (synergy). There is no real trigger yet. For example, in earlier presentations on synergies, there are no clear links between EIP-related projects and other programmes. We should be able to combine different measures.
- C: there is a possibility to cascade projects like innovation hubs in ICT. With thematic networks you can link groups. If you have big projects in which you have a mandate to fund smaller projects, then you could be able to organise what we want to achieve here (such as IoF). The projects do not have to be internationally oriented, they could also be (inter)local.
- Q: there are a lot of INTERREG projects dealing with the same challenges outside the EIP process. How do we want to create linkages, would that be challenging?
- C: link with ESIF.
- C: the Commission should cooperate on linking INTERREG with EIP.
- C: that is also mentioned in the EIP evaluation (by Coffey, 2016).
- C: in smaller countries that already happens. There are experts who understand all about INTERREG. It would be nice if the two commission groups cooperate more on synergies and communicate about the possibilities, so that the MSs do not have to find this out their selves.
- C: we and other actors know about the situation in our own countries. We should have these people come together, learn from each other and save that information in a database. We have to connect the local links so we know what is going on in each country/region.
- C: there is a need to deal with overall actions. This should be done/stimulated by the national rural networks who are the contact points to the agricultural sector. INTERREG has the possibility to disseminate the value from those projects that are already realised. Perhaps we can think about how we can develop these lessons learned within the OG concept, also the coordination aspects. Money should not be the issue, if the results of the projects are interesting for other people.
- C: In Ireland there is willingness and a need for people dealing with cross-border cooperation. We got 500 applications with 52 groups funded. It is foreseen that we will have more. That has increased the total budget up to 57 M€. The needs come from the sector. All the initiatives come from the ground, bottom-up. We have to think about how we can further develop these innovation stimuli, also regarding future challenges we face.
- Belgium: in Flanders we do not have cross-border OG's in particular. The University of Wageningen UR (NL) is involved in an operational group. These experts can bring the results back to their member state.
- Spain: we also hire in international/regional capacity;
- C: Fertinnowa is an example of a project that shares innovative practices cross-border and showcases are open to all stakeholders. This was foreseen in the project. In the current thematic network showcasing is implemented.

Conclusion: we identified 2 primary actions for stimulating cross-border cooperation:

- 1) exchange lessons learned from other initiatives and instruments for OGs, and
- 2) explore connections/synergy with INTERREG.

Presentation of the Estonian advisory service development - (Küllil Kaare & Leho Verk)

The legal basis forms the (EU) No 1305/2013 article 15 of Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council, on support for rural development by the EAFRD (repealing 1698/2005). Measures are: support for advisory services and training for advisors. New is: mentoring for small agricultural enterprises (sales turnover: 1200-100 000 €, 100% support. There are long-term contracts with advisors / practitioners, up to 25 hours a year, 50 hours during programming.

Regarding the training of advisors, the applicant can have a background in university, vocational school, research organisation or an advisory body. Regarding the trainees, they are advisors holding a valid certificate, advisors whose certificate became invalid not more than 12 months ago or advisors who do not possess a certificate, but is related to the advisory body and is actively involved in providing advisory services.

Activities are: specialized training courses, training programmes drawn up by a body comprising of representatives of producers, research and advisors, training programmes approved by the minister, public procurement for implementation of the training programmes.

In the previous programming period we had advisory centres in each county. On top of that we had so called coordination centres. They were different entities. There was no strong commitment or not at all; they did not work together. The problem were the requirements. Each of the centre wanted to have the best advisors. If he/she wanted to work for another county, it was not possible. It was quite a complicated system. We wanted to change that so we asked them to make an action plan. Estonia is not such a big country, so we thought we don't need all these requirements in all counties. We decided to change the system.

Public procurement was required by EU regulation. It is built up now: we have the paying agency and we now have one operator on the system. We have 7 regional contact points but in one system; we have 54 advisors working in this system and an advisory council. This sets the guidelines for next year's training programmes. Nowadays we try to make it as easy as possible. An **advisory** makes a contract, the advisor gives advice, writes a report and the farmer pays 10%. Then the advisor bills us, the administration, 90%. New is the mentoring programme. Older farmers can give advice to younger farmers. This is financed 100%. It is important that advisors are well educated. The first idea was that the advisors should know everything that is happening. There are a lot of organisation who can organise training for advisors. There are different requirements for trainers. Training courses and programmes, have to be approved by our minister. We look at the programmes together with our stakeholders. We use public procurement and we want different types of advisors. The training of advisors is a good measure but we have to have legislation on how to proceed. The ministry of education and science is responsible. That we cannot change. We can influence it however. The definition of training is too narrow. They receive 25 hours of training per year.

Presentation of the Estonian long-term program for knowledge transfer in digitization (Toomas Kevvai)

Data has value that needs to be realised to develop the Estonian economy. A more effective use of data would save European countries one fifth of their administrative costs (OECD, 2015). It can have an additional effect on the private sector. Benefits for the public and private sector are:

- a user-friendly online access and updated datasets for creating more valuable products and services (private sector)
- possibility to reduce administrative costs and create better targeted legislation and measures by using data more efficiently (public sector).

Estonia introduced a long term programme for the use of agricultural big data. This includes a feasibility study for the development of a big data system, introducing the fertilisation and plant protection applications to the producers and gathering feedback from them on the usability and problems of these applications. It also introduces the implementation of precision agriculture through machinery and software solutions to the producers, including gathering feedback on usability and problems.

There are a lot of possibilities. Data give a better basis to implement measures. It is key how to create more valuable products. By creating a big data programme, Estonia wants to build up a platform where these data are combined and used in a 2-way direction. Also to use it as an up-dating source. Those databases can be connected to satellite services. All the data regarding plant production, spreading of pest, etc. Estonia wants to have it in one open system so it enables the private sector, so they can concretely design the environmental legislation for e.g. the use of fertiliser. Furthermore, Estonia wants to build a knowledge transfer programme to help the farmers to give them new ideas how to use data in a more effective way, such as precision agriculture.

Q&A:

- Q: when will this start? A: Public procurement has just started. It is foreseen for 4 years. It is cofinanced by the Commission.
- Q: where do the advisors fit in? A: they are involved in the proposal part. We hope that private service providers will join. We have several field books but they are not intensively used.
- Q: will the ministry support this? A: The first step is knowledge transfer. The next step is still under discussion. In the next programme we will give farmers the incentives to use it, so they will get some support. In the long run there should be also a business plan to enable this kind of system. Principally we are hoping the system will become self-financing.
- Q: is it the farmers that will deliver the data? A: One part is owned by the government, data about land use is created in the farm. They have to enable us. There are some investments to be able to communicate between different systems. It is not well integrated at the moment;
- C: we started with a feasibility study. We had one meeting with the farmers and the environmental agencies. Farmers thought it was going to be used as a control system (was the impression). If the farmers give their data they do not want to be sanctioned. So that had to be clarified.

SCAR-AKIS activities 2018

- Next meeting will be held in Athens: 2 days in February - March 2018;

- On the 9th of March there is a meeting on thematic networks. See email from Peter Paree (NL);
- There will be a meeting in Poland in June 2018.
- Another meeting in October/November 2018 in Italy or maybe Austria?
- It will depend on the work load if we need another meeting to draw the final report.
- We could organise a 1 day meeting in Brussels. It will probably be quite a workload;
- We might organise another day in the first semester with the food systems swg;
- We might organise a workshop with ARCH and food systems regarding evaluation of impact;
- We will have at least 3, 4, 5 meetings. Not everyone is obliged to attend but it needs to be done to finish off the mandate;
- The call for the two external studies will be launched very soon ;
- We will still host some presentations such as on AgriLink;
- A Food 2030 conference will be organised in Plovdiv in Bulgaria -13/14th of June 18.
- Point 5 and 6 of the mandate : developing countries + innovation processes, will be merged;
- The outline of the final report will be on the agenda in Athens. It will be a first round table conversation to hear first opinions.

Further upcoming events:

- CASA workshops in Poland and Hungary (date TBD)
- Cross-fertilization workshop for Multi-actor projects and Thematic Networks in Brussels, March 8th 2018
- International conference on advisory services – Mosónmagyaróvár – Hungary – June 2018
- SWG AKIS 2018 Work plan (Athens / Poland / Italy? Austria? / Bruxelles).



**Summary: exchange of views on how to improve MSs'
Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems
Strategic Working Group on AKIS - Tallinn - Dec 2017**

The following summary is a follow-up to the December 2017 Tallinn meeting dedicated to the MSs' plans for improving their AKIS plans. In the February 2018 Athens meeting, the main aim was to go one step forward with these reflections related to the design of the Member States' AKIS plans. The objective there was to cross-fertilize on context-specific AKIS approaches that could make the regional, national and EU AKIS stronger and to draw generalized guidance from those exchanges. This will help prepare and fine-tune Member States' CAP Strategic AKIS Plans for the CAP 2021-2027 period. To this end, this **note summarizes the exchange of views in the December 2017 SWG SCAR-AKIS meeting in Tallinn and includes all inputs received from the members after the December meeting.**

Since the specific context in each Member State differs and this summary was made by a group, it **cannot state individual positions of the participating Member States' experts. This note collects the views of the members of the SWG SCAR AKIS as a think tank in Tallinn.** The conclusions of the discussions were further enriched in the SWG SCAR AKIS meeting in Athens and provide food for thought for all involved in the future role of Member States' and regions' AKISs in Europe.

IMPROVING THE STRUCTURING OF MEMBER STATES' AKIS – Design of Member States' AKIS plans

1. Enhancing knowledge flows within the AKIS and strengthen links between research and practice

As a general line:

Improve AKIS to support the CAP by improving farm economic, environmental and social performance => **CAP AKIS plans should be a strategy for sustainable agriculture**, AKIS should not be a goal on its own. Give AKIS a role in the implementation of the RD (CAP) programme. Link it to measures on knowledge and information actions, to the use of advice and the setting up of advisory services, to the training of advisors, to the EIP OGs or other innovative cooperation measures, to agri-environment-climate measures etc. Seek to combine measures e.g. Irish OGs to develop farming practices preparing for an agri-environmental measure on habitats for hen harrier, NL farmers' groups implementing AEM, EL OGs developing novel supply chains which could become a producer organisation. The aim is to safeguard

and exploit to a maximum public knowledge on agriculture and enhancing knowledge flows within the AKIS. We need a clear vision on AKIS and its function for rural development.

Therefore knowledge flows need to be strengthened within the AKIS, for instance by:

- Making a CAP AKIS Strategic Plan: producing a **coherent inclusive document with actions** for farmers, researchers, advisors, education institutes (all ultimately impacting farmers' actions).
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- **Requesting specific obligations in the CAP AKIS plan to ensure results. Make strategic plans specific** enough, defining the activities and target groups in the plan (e.g. universities, private researchers, international institutes etc.).
- Minimum EU requirements: if the EU does not request involvement of researchers, the Ministry of Agriculture cannot force involvement of researchers.
- **Further development of the EIP networks + sufficient funding to do so** (technical assistance).
- EIP networks/NRNs (=> MSs' "**CAP networks**") **should know about and share all info on all multi-actor projects** in their country, in other countries and at EU level (at least all OGs and H2020 multi-actor projects for a start).
- CAP networks should summarize and **translate all info relevant for their country** about OGs, H2020 MA projects, other relevant EU or national (research) projects (source: material on EIP website: practice abstracts, videos, photos, links to useful websites and projects etc)- sufficient funding needed.
- Establish **knowledge centers and knowledge reservoirs and systems of exchange of information**, including e-learning.
- Organise **farmer-to-farmer exchange** (branche organisations can help).
- Support establishment and networking of **demonstration farms**.
- **Use these demofarms to draw in and connect researchers and advisors on the topic demonstrated**. The CAP networks could organize this and it would be an incentive for researchers to take part in such activities, together with farmers and other stakeholders.
- Ensure trust and **continuity** besides the project approach. Knowledge transfer requires continuity, which needs a long-term perspective. Only with reliable planning, security and appropriate framework conditions, will organisations adapt their services to the EU objectives.
- Seek ways to connect national, regional and EU level. E.g. H2020 MA projects should foresee a part of their budget to cooperate with related OGs (eg Sheepnet including Romania) [EU level rule or dedicated information action?].
- **Facilitate participation of partners of the EU 13 in consortium building for H2020 calls 2018-2020**. Under the current system MS with low budgetary participation in the project often do **not have sufficient funding for disseminating H2020 project results**, which diminishes the impact of these projects, due to the structural and financial situation of EU 13.
- **Support the preparation of H2020 multi-actor projects with seed funding** for a number of meetings, to gather information on the topic, prepare precise objectives, activities, consortium agreement etc. (as for the setting up of OGs). Make this process transparent on the EIP website, so that all interested multi-actor partners and OGs have the possibility to know what is being developed and can help to build the project (objectives, activities) and maybe join the consortium.
- Organise **knowledge actions and training in particular on innovative results from OGs and research**, including the advisors as specific target group (not only training for farmers).
- **Researchers need to share their work**: networks should organize meetings between research and advisors at national and international level on a regular basis. E.g. **national thematic networks** gathering research, advisors and networks + other stakeholders (farmers, education, administration, ...), discovering needs from practice and sharing best practices and research results. These could at the same time **produce practical output from what they gather** (e.g. French RMT) + produce project proposals for interactive innovation projects
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- **AKIS plans need specific incentives for researchers**: budget-wise; number of publications in dissemination channels for end-users; showing how they reply to practice needs.

An example from the UK:

1) By rewarding academics and researchers under the Research Excellence Framework (REF) as follows: for each submission of a member of staff/team of a research center (such as Rothamsted) or a University:

- the quality of outputs (e.g. **publications**, performances, and exhibitions)
- **their impact beyond academia**
- **the environment that supports research**

This has put impact right at the heart of the review system and is changing behaviour in the academic and research community. More details at: <http://www.ref.ac.uk/about/whatref/>

2) UK Research and Innovation (UKRI, £7billion per year) organisations which are not showing impact or engaging industry, are at risk of being closed down before Easter 2018 unless they create a new business plan. This change to UKRI will align funding for research and innovation projects with the REF assessment framework and put even more emphasis on impact. More details at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/527803/bis-16-291-ukri-case-for-creation.pdf

- **Pay for cross-visits** for advisors and young farmers: an EU wide "Erasmus-Agri" in AKIS: simple framework of implementing, funding and reporting.
- Use **problem based learning in agricultural education**.
- **Mandatory education for young farmers** as a condition to participate in the young farmer scheme.
- Introduce hackathons and start-up methodology into the agricultural sector **to engage also people from outside the sector (citizens, young people) to help solve problems and create new ideas**.
- Soft and informal ways can improve knowledge flows **e.g. co-location of research, advice and networks** (+education, farmers' organization, food cluster, etc.).
- **Keep the AKIS open and evolving** to be future proof (e.g. include the role of food chains, marketing, banks, farmers ... are not well represented in the AKIS system now). We need a dynamic, intertwined system bridging the gap between research and practice: (applied) researchers, education and other actors also play a part in brokerage, knowledge valorization and bridging the gap
- **Improve communication to consumers** and society

Potential indicators for this block:

- 1) participation in activities/networks facilitating knowledge exchange and interactive innovation;
- 2) number of supporting networks producing output for agricultural practice;
- 3) number of selected interactive innovation projects produced by thematic multi-actor networks;
- 4) number of outputs/publications in agricultural dissemination channels for end-users.

2. Strengthening farm advisory services within MS' AKISs:

- There is a problem with the terminology "advisory services": 95% of the audience only thinks about 'linear' knowledge transfer => make it clear that **advisory services should be interactive**, this speeds up the reflection and decision in farming families.
- Describe the term "advisors": in the broad sense of the word. It can also be staff from NGOs, farmers' organization, innovation support service etc.

- No public procurement of trainers of advisory services: very limited institutions/training providers have proper know-how and experience meeting the specific requirements of agricultural advisors.
- **Advisors could also be innovation support services** (= brokering, facilitation, promotion of innovation, networking etc). Availability of such services is key.
- Create **innovation brokers** and strengthen their role to **incentivize** interactive innovation projects and **capture needs and ideas**.
- Further develop innovation support tools.
- Enable joint implementation of the measure "use of advice"(art 14) and "knowledge transfer and information actions"(art 14), this would allow for **implementing complex advisory programmes** for a larger group of beneficiaries, linking different forms and methods of advisory work (individual advice, group advice, discussion groups, training, workshop, demonstration etc.).
- Such **advisory programmes could be implemented by joint consortia of advisory services and research centers**, and foresee adequate (higher) support for this.
- The term FAS should be replaced by AKIS.
- Use industrial PhDs in agriculture.
- **Better link the usual technologic farm advice with sustainable agriculture topics** (train and convince the trusted advisor).
- **Strengthen support from the AKIS for advisors** (don't pay for front-office advisors but for areas where the society wants to see progress e.g. environmental issues, public goods, climate change, digitization, food chain, circular economy, animal welfare, water management, nature...) => after the privatization wave, **give advisory services a public role again**.
- **Common education and training: train advisors regularly + in particular on new topics:** e.g. how to broker and facilitate **interactive innovation** projects, digitization, use of digital technologies for fast diagnosis, prognosis and decision-making, on-farm processing, production system advising and business management, start-ups,....
- A **more 'systemic' advice** should be provided, e.g. management of land resources, types of production, expected outputs, recycling of natural resources, quality and uniqueness of products, rural development support, branding and marketing, use of digital equipment and decision-support systems, use of social networks, new machines, local traditional foods, energy production, rural tourism, payments for stewardship of the Natura 2000 sites, etc.
- **Enable creative freedom for new themes and instruments** (e.g. whole value chain approach, bio-based chains, dialogue with society,...).
- **Link research facilities services to advice** (e.g. food pilot BE-FL testing new food processing techniques is linked with advice to the farmer under Art 14).
- **Pay for the time advisors spend with researchers:** sharing ideas and needs from practice and learning about new research results. The most useful (paid) time for an advisor is while giving advice, but the advisor should also spend time on learning and networking.
- Advisors should be given more time for i) collecting new research results, knowledge or other know-how, ii) connecting with national & international networks iii) compiling the data collected, and iv) connecting to their (regional) clients and tailoring all AKI to the farm system and local context for PROVISION AND ADAPTATION of the collected AKI to the specific situations.
- The EU-13 should be especially required to support financially **BSc and MSc programmes for educating and training AKI 'system-oriented' advisers**. Their training programme should address not only the modern extension methodologies, research methodologies and individually-tailored client advice, but also the skills to use large (open-sources) data, systemize knowledge and use digital technologies for prediction, modeling and decision-making, participatory skills, communication skills, etc.
- **Support advisors' internships and placements in experimental research centers and training facilities, in cooperation with international partners.**

- It is important to support advisors' **technological training, as well as methodological and social competences of advisors.**
- **Allow** secondary school students and university **students to join advisors' training**, as well as teachers of vocational schools.
- **Foresee dedicated actions to involve private advisors:** not only training but other information flows e.g. use of common advisory tools (nutrient management planning tool, disease levels weekly info, ...), pay for their contacts with research and for regular info (newsletters) => back-office support for all advisors public and private.
- **Support digitization of advisory work:** fund establishment and maintenance cost of an IT knowledge platform, containing knowledge reservoirs, good agricultural practices, e-learning modules and various instruments used in advisory work. The IT platform could allow for multi-level communication and be shared by several advisory bodies (e.g. regional, national or even international).
- **Simplify administration** for advisors: **for instance a voucher system** for advice and capacity building of farmers, a voucher system for training and skills development of advisors, vouchers for advice accompanying (innovative) investment support, etc.
- Avoid a dense control system for advising, replaced by quality management system (regular training on issues/challenges for agriculture). Make use of best practice examples.

Potential indicators for this block:

- 1) number of trained advisors;**
- 2) share of farmers using support for advice, training and knowledge exchange;**
- 3) number of advisors involved in EIP OGs;**
- 4) number of shared digital tools supporting advisory work.**

3. Incentivize interactive innovation projects

- **Continue current EIP OG approach, in particular: foresee sufficient funding + enable advance payments.**
 - Clarify that costs related to work of advisors and researchers are eligible and that resources for dissemination shall be reserved.
 - Make clear that **costs of international cooperation** are eligible (e.g. study tour for advisors in other MS, business placement,...
 - Further strengthen the multi-actor approach of **OGs: make them more interactive** (ES) => ensure minimum criteria for the selection: combine relevant complementary knowledge targeted to the project objectives tackling needs/problems from practice.
 - **CAP networks should facilitate cross-border OGs** (within one country and between countries):
 - Take care of planning common timelines for cross-border OG calls by timely coordination between MS/regions Managing Authorities to prepare cross-border OGs (if at EU level, loss of flexibility) or H2020 MA projects.
 - CAP networks should list all finished, running and potential (in preparation) OG projects per theme and organize workshops to develop common themes of interest and capitalize on former projects.
- => MS/regions organize cross-border calls.
- => EU must enable measure for transnational OGs (as a kind of "Interreg").
- Peer-to-peer learning: organize cross-border visits for OGs or for specific actors who can incentivize (ISS, advisors, farmers' groups,): contacts can be found through the EIP website.
 - Help the search for "foreign" experts to join in national/regional OGs as experts.

- Involve education in OGs.
- **Involve young people** (researcher, farmer, etc) in OGs: they push for change.
- OGs should be able to find an "after"-life, e.g. can become start-ups (help from innovation support service connecting with banks etc.).
- **Combine OGs with the new complex advisory programme** (mentioned above), supporting also demonstration of the new production methods on-farm.
- **Ensure sufficient coordination within MSs** and ensure that learning from each other is possible (e.g. NL provinces have different approaches, Spanish diversity between regions requires a national platform with the different actors linked to training, field visits; filtering lessons learnt in the regions to the national platform).

Potential indicators for this block:

- 1) participants in collaborative innovation projects (EIP OGs + innovative cooperation projects);*
- 2) number of innovation support services;*
- 3) number of interactive innovation projects developing generational renewal;*
- 4) number of innovation cooperation agreements;*
- 5) number of young people participating in OGs;*
- 6) number of education actors (students, teachers, trainers) participating in OGs;*
- 7) number of farmers and advisors trained in the innovative results of OGs;*
- 8) number of cross-border OGs and OGs incorporating cross-border expertise.*

4. Support digital transition in agriculture

- Interlink all public data by a consortium of all stakeholders involved (example Estonia: Land Parcel Information System and location of farm building and landscape elements + soil fertility map + environmental monitoring + spread of harmful organisms + areas with environmental restrictions + agricultural statistics, animal movements => incentivize farmers to use it by agro-environmental measure + enable farmers to transmit their machinery data), example BE VLM advice on biodiversity measures, erosion etc., cooperation agreement NL between farmers' organization, dairy, bookkeepers, etc.
- Organise training, OGs and national multi-actor projects on digitization.

Potential indicators for this block:

- 1) share of farms having access to broadband;*
- 2) % of EIP operational groups working on digital innovation;*
- 3) share of farmers using digital technologies (e.g. precision farming).*

5. General remarks related to the Strategic CAP AKIS plans

Financial envelope is needed: a certain proportion of the CAP budget should be spent on the various ways of improving the AKIS (blocks 1-4 above) to ensure that the issue is taken serious and that the plan is implemented with real actions => for instance **"target" a dedicated part of CAP funding to knowledge and innovation, e.g. 10%** (not: "ring-fence", because flexibility is needed).

Conditionality is OK for the approval of the AKIS plan, as a sign that actions need to be taken and will be followed up. This is an important sign to our national policy makers. Different ministries need to

coordinate: sign a collaboration agreement between the institutions involved (that gives responsibility and also visibility).

A CAP strategic AKIS plan is good for the future and will trigger improvement, step by step and helps to understand what kind of AKIS each country has. We need public knowledge and the flexibility to make it happen. Develop the strategic AKIS plan in a transformative process together with different stakeholders, by means of a participatory process with skilled facilitators. Ideally the plan would have a longer term perspective (longer than the programming period, e.g. 10 years). The content of the plan should use project planning and management tools like SWOT, Gant Charts, scenarios, key performance indicators + reflect on how to blend in the finance (national, regional, various EU resources, e.g. also Cohesion Funds, regional funds). Beyond researchers, advisors and networks, also have farmers and rural actors participate in the formulation of the plans, as well as the younger generation of researchers (up to 10 years after PhD). They are more enthusiastic about transition.

The Commission should **request that all the relevant Ministries are involved in the plan together**, to make them cooperate and to share responsibilities for the implementation (e.g. Min of Agr, Min of Education, Min of Research, Min of Rural Affairs, Min of Innovation, Min of Food/Economy, Prime minister, etc. ...). Adopt a National Partnership Programme of all AKIs related organisations, promoted and financed by the MS' respective ministries. A coordination unit could be made responsible for AKIS' stakeholder relations and for supporting large scale national implementation of innovations.

There is a need for a **specific framework for reporting, evaluation** and control practices (not reporting as investment measure or as area-based payments), adapted to R&I. Regarding training, education: human capacity is difficult to measure.

Setting specific result indicators, is needed (see the potential indicators per block).

Annex 1: Participants' list		
Austria	1. Florian Herzog	Advise
Belgium	2. Els Lapage	Policy
Belgium	3. Sylvia Burssens	Research/advise
Belgium/Germany	4. Michael Kuegler	Advise
Croatia	5. Horvje Ivan Horvat	Advise
Estonia	6. Helena Parenson	Policy
Estonia	7. Annika Suu	Policy
Estonia	8. Leho Verk	Advise
Estonia	9. Külli Kaare	Policy
Estonia	10. Pille Koorberg	Research
Estonia	11. Konstantin Mihhejev	Advise
EU DG AGRI	12. Inge Van Oost	EC policy/EIP
EU DG AGRI	13. Marc Duponcel	EC policy
France	14. Adrien Guichaoua	Research
France	15. Valerie Dehaudt	Policy
Germany	16. Emilie Gaetje	EIP Agri
Germany	17. Elke Saggau	Research
Germany	18. Arno Krause	Advise
Germany	19. Anna Häring	Research
Greece	20. Evi Arachoviti	Policy
Hungary	21. Anikó Juhasz	Research
Hungary	22. Timea Reszketo	Advise
Ireland	23. Tom Kelly	Research/advise
Latvia	24. Talis Tisenkopfs	Research
Lithuania	25. Edvardas Makelis	Advise
Lithuania	26. Rimtautas Petraitis	Advice
Lithuania	27. Rasa Pakeltiene	Research
Netherlands	28. Floor Geerling-Eiff	Research
Netherlands	29. Martijn Plantinga	Policy
Poland	30. Ewa Grodzka	Policy
Poland	31. Jenna Dyszariki	Advise
Poland/Hungary	32. Anna Augustyn	Advise
Portugal	33. Jose Matos	Research
Slovakia	34. Michaela Töröková	Advise
Slovenia	35. Jana Erjavec	Policy
Spain	36. Andres Montero	Policy
Sweden	37. Nilla Nilsdotter-Linde	Research
Sweden	38. Lena Lind	Policy
Turkey	39. Canan Göksu Sürücü	Policy

