



Multi-actor collaboration dynamics and capacity building network inside and between AKIS to foster the upscaling of SFSCs across Europe

Deliverable D.1.2

Title: Database of AKIS key stakeholders in the 27 MS

Responsible partner: UGent



**Funded by
the European Union**

Document Identification

Project Acronym	EU4Advice		
Project Full Title	Multi-actor collaboration dynamics and capacity building network inside and between AKIS to foster the upscaling of SFSCs across Europe		
Project ID	101059911		
Starting Date	01.10.2022	Duration	60 months
H2020 Call ID & Topic	HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-27		
Project Coordinator	INNOGESTIONA AMBIENTAL SL		
Work Package No. & Title	WP 1: Conceptual and strategic foundations: identification of stakeholders and needs		
Work Package Leader	UGent		
Deliverable No. & Title	D1.2 – Database of AKIS key stakeholders in the 27 Member States		
Responsible Partner	UGent		
Contractual delivery date	30 June 2023		
Actual delivery date	30 June 2023		
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Type of Deliverable	Report		
Dissemination Level	PU		
Version	1		

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History of changes

Version	Author	Date	Comments
1	Edelbis López Dávila	20 June 2023	First version
2	Edelbis López Dávila	29 June 2023	Second version
3	Edelbis López Dávila	11 Sep. 24	Third version

Table 1: History of changes

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviation / Acronym	Description
AKIS	Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
MSs	Member States
SCAR	Standing Committee on Agricultural Research
SFSC	Short Food Supply Chain
SWG	Strategic Working Group
UGent	University of Ghent

1. Executive Summary

This document presents the database of the main AKIS coordinating bodies responsible for the implementation of the CAP strategic plans in the 27 Member States + UK & Switzerland. The database also lists other key AKIS actors per member state who collaborate in one way or another or assist in the work and implementation of the strategies of the main AKIS coordinating bodies in each member state. These actors play an important role in networking, advising, accompanying and supporting the implementation of common policies and understandings through the preparation of policy briefs and/or recommendations. In addition, short characterisation of their governance models is also debriefed.

This document will be reviewed and maintained in collaboration with sister projects funded under HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-(24-27). The overall objective of the database is to provide a basis for the subsequent networking actions of the project by identifying key actors and analysing their interactions. The database will be monitored on an ongoing basis and updated annually throughout the lifetime of the project. UGent as the work Package leader will be primarily responsible for updating the main bodies and actors per member states in the database.

2. Introduction

The aim of this document is to present the Database of AKIS key stakeholders in the 27 Member States + UK & Switzerland considering this database as one of the key priorities of the project to facilitate interaction, networking, knowledge sharing and community building among SFSC advisors, AKIS and related stakeholders at the EU level. The scope of this initial database is to get to know not only the AKIS coordinating bodies per MS, but also the other main actors. Who together with the coordinating bodies are in charge of managing, networking, applying and evaluating the implementation of the CAP, elaboration of policies, practical abstracts and the transfer of knowledge, innovation and training of advisors and other stakeholders involved in the SFSC.

In close collaboration with other sister projects funded under HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01 (EU-FarmBook, modernAKIS, ATTRACTISS, and COREnet) this database will be monitored, reviewed and improved on an ongoing basis and updated annually throughout the project lifetime.

3. AKIS Coordination Bodies

The AKIS Coordination Bodies (CBs) represent a significant development within European agricultural policy, serving as the first structured attempt to establish an institutional framework dedicated to fostering an environment conducive to innovation. Unlike more established entities, such as the Managing Authority for the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) Strategic Plan, AKIS CBs are not explicitly defined or assigned specific responsibilities in the European Commission Regulations for CAP 2023. This lack of formalization suggests that their role is still evolving and subject to further policy development.

Functions and Roles of AKIS Coordination Bodies

The primary reference to the role of AKIS CBs is found in Instrument 8.1 for the Cross-cutting Objective of the CAP (EC, 2021). This document outlines several key functions that these bodies are expected to perform:

1. **Act as the Commission's Contact Point:** AKIS CBs are envisioned as the main point of contact for the European Commission on matters related to the governance and coordination of the AKIS strategic approach. This involves liaising with both European and national entities to align policies, strategies, and actions.
2. **Organize Boards, Advisors, and Interventions:** The CBs are responsible for organizing various boards, advisory groups, and interventions related to AKIS. This includes facilitating dialogue and collaboration among different stakeholders, such as researchers, farmers, advisors, and policymakers, to ensure a coherent and integrated approach to agricultural innovation.
3. **Enhance Knowledge Exchange and Innovation:** A critical function of AKIS CBs is to maintain regular contact with the main (regional) coordinators and AKIS actors within each country. They provide suggestions and support for promoting more effective knowledge exchange activities, such as advisory services, training programs, and workshops. In particular, they focus on generating and co-creating innovations (through European Innovation Partnership Operational Groups - EIP OGs) and ensuring the broad dissemination of these innovations across the agricultural sector.

By facilitating these roles, AKIS CBs aim to create a more dynamic, inclusive, and responsive agricultural innovation ecosystem that better meets the needs of all stakeholders, from farmers and researchers to policymakers and rural communities.

Identification of Key AKIS Actors of Change

Key actors of change within the AKIS framework are those individuals or organizations that either currently play or have the potential to play a leading role in driving knowledge flows and fostering innovation. These actors can include researchers, extension services, advisors, agricultural consultants, farmer organizations, cooperatives, private companies, and civil society organizations. Their involvement is crucial for the successful implementation of AKIS strategies, as they serve as intermediaries who can bridge gaps between research, policy, and practice.

Criteria for Identifying Key Actors and Methods for Effective Engagement in AKIS

To effectively identify and engage key actors within AKIS, it is essential to apply a set of criteria and methodologies that promote inclusivity, collaboration, and adaptability:

- **Inclusive Approach:** Ensuring that a diverse range of stakeholders, including small-scale farmers, women, young people, and marginalized groups, are actively involved in AKIS activities and decision-making processes.
- **Dynamic Relationships Among Actors:** Building and nurturing dynamic relationships among various AKIS actors to facilitate continuous knowledge exchange and collaboration. This may involve creating networks, platforms, and forums for regular interaction and dialogue.
- **Win-Win Benefit Approach:** Designing engagement strategies that offer tangible benefits to all involved parties. This helps in creating a sense of ownership and motivation among stakeholders to participate actively in AKIS processes.
- **Plurality of Levels:** Recognizing the importance of interactions at multiple levels (from field-level engagements to high-level policy discussions) and ensuring that insights and feedback from grassroots actors are incorporated into strategic planning and policy-making.
- **Flexibility and Adaptability:** Promoting flexibility in approaches to accommodate the varying needs, contexts, and capacities of different stakeholders. This may include tailoring advisory services, training modules, and innovation support to local realities.

Potential Impact of Strengthening AKIS Coordination Bodies

By strengthening AKIS Coordination Bodies, European agricultural policy can better address challenges such as climate change, food security, and rural development. Enhanced coordination and knowledge exchange can lead to the more efficient adoption of innovative practices and technologies, contributing to sustainable agricultural growth and resilience.

4. Database

EU4Advice foresees the identification of AKIS coordinating bodies from all Member States responsible for the development of CAP strategic plans and other related policies in their respective countries which could function as a network of public institutions committed to the improvement of national AKIS, the integration of advisors in them, as well as the support to SFSC. Once these actors have been identified, close interaction between them could take place through their inclusion in data collection activities on current public support to SFSCs in the different MS. They will be invited to participate in meetings to discuss the main barriers,

opportunities and differences between the regulatory frameworks in the different MS. With the help of the key stakeholders collected in this database, EU4Advice will pave the way for formulating a more sustainable food policy in Europe by proposing innovative regulations on SFSCs applicable to all MS.

In this regard, the following will explain what is meant by AKIS coordination bodies and AKIS actors. The AKIS coordination bodies represent the first attempt, within European policies, to identify an institutional structure in charge of creating an enabling environment for innovation, but yet it is not configured or given specific responsibilities in any of the EC Regulations for CAP 2023, as is the case, for example, with the Managing Authority for the CAP Strategic Plan.

On the other hand, AKIS actors or key actors are those protagonists in their AKIS and they actively participate in AKIS dynamics by helping knowledge flows and innovations. The criteria for their identification and selection were their effective participation in the AKIS considering their inclusive approach, the dynamics of the relationships between the actors, the mutually beneficial approach, the plurality of levels (in particular field/fund), the individuals and the flexibility.

For the success of the database (the main core of the deliverable) is shown in Annexe 1, the participation list of the last 3 meetings of the SCAR AKIS SWG under the 6th mandate held this year and the other last four under the 5th mandate were consulted. Those materials are hosted in the share point of the UGent main coordinator of the project FRAMEWORK CONTRACT FOR SERVICES - Strategic analysis and support for enhanced research cooperation in agriculture and food (<https://www.ugent.be/en/research/explorer/eu-trackrecord/other/scar.htm>). A project that establishes support for SCAR to enhance cooperation in food and agriculture research within its various Strategic or Collaborative Working Groups (SWG/CWG), among these the SCAR AKIS SWG. At the same time, direct interviews with SCAR AKIS SWG co-chairs and Member States' representatives were held to fulfil and update the database working document. In addition to the consultation of the participant list of the European CAP Network seminar 'Fostering an effective and integrated AKIS in Member States, and the 2023 EU AgriResearch Conference organized by the EU CAP Network, in addition to other workshops organized by the EU-FarmBook and modernAKIS projects.

4.1. AKIS governance models

On the basis that the CAP 2023-2027 has been established as a mandatory requirement, the reinforcement of AKIS in each Member State is required. Member States will establish their AKIS strategic approach which will contribute to the achievement of the Cross-cutting Objective of modernization, knowledge sharing, innovation and digitisation. The Cross-cutting Objective must also address the 9 specific objectives of the CAP. To this end, each Member State will describe its AKIS organisational structure and how **CAP advisory services**, research and national networks will cooperate to provide advice, knowledge flows and innovation services.

As of today, most European countries have centralized governance system infrastructures to manage and coordinate their AKIS at a national level. Just in fewer countries (Belgium, Germany, Italy and Spain), regional governments are responsible, particularly the education, research and advisory services systems and therefore, can be considered as a decentralized AKIS governance. Moreover, some countries such as Austria and Switzerland, although in theory have centralized AKIS, in practice, the regional governments are responsible for governing their AKIS, and therefore decentralized system.

As far as advisory service providers are concerned, despite the pluralism of service providers in many countries, the predominance of public advisory organisations, closely followed by farmers' organisations, as the main actors reaching out to farmers continues to be most abundant. The reason for this situation could be the fact that public funds allocated to advisory services are mainly managed by public organisations.

On the whole, more effective AKIS is key to closing the gap between science and practice, and to developing the right skill set. AKIS today uses diverse tools that rely on place-based innovation and encourage knowledge

exchange yielded from R&I activities. These include the well-tested and successfully applied multi-actor approach, EIP-AGRI operational groups, thematic and **advisory networks**, and new tools such as **living labs** and lighthouses/demo farms.

Advisory networks is a completely new tool introduced first under Horizon Europe. It is expected that this tool will facilitate the exchanges between **farm advisors** across the EU, in an EU network to share experiences on how to best tackle challenges/seize opportunities on farms, in forests and in rural villages. In this sense, EU4advise together with his sister project COREnet, in the future five more will join, representing the two advisory networks' ongoing project that will strengthen advice on how to improve consumer-producer relations.

5. Conclusions

This deliverable will be updated throughout the project. At the time of submission (M9) only basic and current data has been collected or generated according to the records of the SCAR AKIS SWG activities.

However, it has been established as a procedure to review in collaboration with the SCAR AKIS SWG co-chairs the current status of the main representative bodies of each member state in the group and the possible variation of main actors per member state. New versions of the database will be presented during the project process (annually).

On the other hand, the initial analysis of the literature and the reports of the member states presented at past AKIS group meetings showed that most European countries have infrastructures in place to coordinate and manage their AKIS on a national level, which constitutes a centralised system of governance. However, in a smaller number of countries (Belgium, Germany, Italy and Spain), regional governments are responsible in particular for research, training and advisory services systems, and in these cases, decentralised AKIS governance is observed. In addition to Austria and Switzerland, which only show a trend towards decentralisation of AKIS governance.

In concrete, the data of this deliverable will be as open as possible and as closed as necessary. In correspondence with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of individuals concerning the processing of personal data and the free movement of such data.

6. Annexes

5.1. Annex 1: Database of AKIS coordinating bodies and AKIS actors in the 27 Member States

No.	Member State	Coordination bodies Affiliation	Other key actors' Affiliation
1	Austria	Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management	Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Regions & Tourism. Department Innovation, Local Development & Cooperation
		Directorate General II – Agriculture and Rural Development	Austrian Chamber of Agriculture. Agricultural & regional policy, education & extension, Knowledge transfer & innovation
2	Belgium	Flemish Rural Network, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries	Flemish Government, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
		Coordinator Walloon Network Support Unit	Service Public de Wallonie
3	Bulgaria	Ministry of Agriculture and Food	National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAAS)
			Min Ag, Food & Forestry, Rural Development Directorate
			National Agricultural Advisory Service
4	Croatia	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Administration for the Development of the Agricultural Sector	Head of Service for Development of Agriculture and Forestry Competitiveness
		Institute for Agriculture and Tourism. Centre of Excellence for Biodiversity and Molecular Plant Breeding	
5	Cyprus	Ministry of Agriculture, National Rural Network	
		Agricultural Research Institute, Rural Development Section	
6	Czechia	Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic, Research Department	Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic, Project Measures Unit II
		Director of the Department of Precision Agriculture, Research & Education	Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic, Education & Advisory Services Division
7	Denmark	Research Centre Foulum, Aarhus University	Institut for Agroecology, Aarhus University
		Danish Agricultural Agency, AKIS CB	SEGES - Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Centre.
8	Estonia	Ministry of Rural Affairs, Research and Development Department	Rural Development Foundation (Head Advisory Services); Agricultural Research Centre (Director)
		Põllumajandusuuringute Keskus // Agricultural Research Centre	
9	Finland	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry ; Unit of Research and Legal Affairs	Natural Resources Institute Finland Luke Farmers' competence network AgriHubi;
10	France	European Partnership for Innovation Officer	French Chambers of Agriculture (APCA)
		HoU coordination office, DGPE MASA	INRAE French Ministry of Agriculture Food and Sovereignty

		Director of European and Regional Affairs, The Agricultural Technical Institutes	International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies
11	Germany	Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL))	Federal Agency for Agriculture and Food - German Network Agency for Rural Areas Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development (HNEE)
		Innovation Office, EIP Agri Schleswig-Holstein, Association of Chambers of Agriculture, Chamber of Agriculture Schleswig-Holstein	
12	Greece	Ministry of Agricultural Development and Food. Directorate-General for Rural Development. Implementing Authority for CAP SP	Agricultural University of Athens, Dept. of Agricultural Economics & Rural Development; Dept of Natural Resources Management & Agricultural Engineering
			Q-Plan International, Head of Research & Innovation Projects
13	Hungary	Ministry of Agriculture, Depart for Agricultural Research & Agri-Environmental Management. AKIS CB	NAK (Chamber of Agriculture)
		Ministry of Agriculture, Deputy State Secretariat of Agricultural Economy.	Research Institute of Agricultural Economics (AKI) Social Research Department.
14	Ireland	Ministry of Agriculture, Bioeconomy, Agriculture Knowledge & Innovation Systems	Teagasc
		Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	
15	Italy	Council for Agricultural Research and Analysis of the Agricultural Economy (CREA)	Ministry of Agricultural Food & Forestry Policies. Department of European & International Policies & Rural Development
		Council for Agricultural Research and Economics, Research Center for Agricultural Policies and Bioeconomy	Policy and Bioeconomy Centre, CREA
16	Latvia	Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre	Baltic Studies Center, Latvia.
		Ministry of Agriculture, Republic of Latvia	
17	Lithuania	Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania	Development Service of Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (LSMU)
		Aleksandras Stulginskis University	Lithuanian Agricultural Advisory Service
18	Luxemburg	Ministry of Agriculture, Viticulture and Rural Development	National Rural Network
			Institute for Organic Agriculture Luxembourg (IBLA)
19	Malta	Agriculture and Rural Development Expert, Agrinnova Malta Ltd	Funds and Programmes Division; Managing Authority of the National Rural Network
20	Netherlands	Province of Limburg, Department for Economy & Innovation. Senior Advisor EU Public Affairs on Food, Agriculture & Horticulture	ZLTO
		Directorate of Strategy Knowledge and Innovation. Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality	
21	Poland	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	Agricultural Advisory Centre in Brwinów (CDR) / Polish Rural Network

		Head of Unit, Knowledge Transfer & Advisory Unit. Innovation	
22	Portugal	Instituto Nacional de Investigação Agrária e Veterinária	Head of Division A - Building up a Well-functioning EU AKIS Stakeholder Management and Facilitation
		Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development Department, NRN	Instituto Nacional de Investigação Agrária e Veterinária ANI - Agência Nacional de Inovação
23	Romania	Deputy Director General of the National Rural Development Programme	University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Banat Timisoara
		Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	Highclere Consultancy National Research-Development Institute for Animal Biology and Nutrition
		National Institute of R&D for Food Bioresources, IBA Bucharest	Vice Director Department of Economic Sciences, University of Agricultural Science and Veterinary Medicine Cluj-Napoca
24	Slovakia	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic. Department of the Managing Authority of the Rural Development Programme	Managing Authority of Rural Development, Section of Rural Development and Direct Payments Director General of Section of Rural Development and Direct Payments
		Department of Project Management and External Relations. National Agricultural and Food Centre	Head of the unit of RDP – project support Bioeconomy Cluster.
			Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Institute. National Support Unit. National Rural Network Slovakia
25	Slovenia	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food. Agriculture Directorate	Agricultural Advisory Services
		Chamber of Agricultural and Food Enterprises	Agricultural Institute of Slovenia
26	Spain	Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Environment. Directorate General for Rural Development, Innovation and Agri-Food Training.	Department of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries & Food. Generalitat de Catalunya. Directorate-General of Food, Quality and Agri-food Industries; Sub-directorate General for Agrifood Innovation & Knowledge Transfer.
		Directorate General for Rural Development, Innovation and Forest Policy	
		Subdirector General for Innovation and Digitalisation.	
27	Sweden	Deputy Director at the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Department of Rural Affairs	Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation
		Responsible EIP-Agri at Jordbruksverket, Swedish Board of Agriculture.	Swedish Rural Network
28	UK		Knowledge Exchange Programme Manager
			Head of Training and Knowledge Transfer Unit
			James Hutton Institute
29	Switzerland	Scientific Assistant by Swiss Federal Office for Agriculture	Swiss Association for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas.