



Advisory organisation's role in AKIS learning community - National and European perspective

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Differences in promoting AKIS in the EU countries

- The presentation is based on a comparative cross-analysis of national AKIS reports (i2connect, 2019–2021) with special focus on **advisory services (AS)** as the AKIS subsystem closest to farmers
- The cross-analysis synthesises **28** national reports (country experts, 2020/2021) and a **511-response** advisor survey across **21** countries; results are **comparative** and **descriptive**; some country-level aspects reflect expert perspectives and available documentation.

https://i2connect-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2022-12-02-AKIS-cross-analysis_update_d.pdf

What is AKIS & why advisory services matter?

- **AKIS**: the system linking people and institutions to generate, **share** and **use** agricultural knowledge/innovation.
- Six lenses used in the study:
governance; actor diversity;
supporting policy/resources;
coordination mechanisms; linkages;
advisory organisations reaching farmers



Governance differences: centralised vs. decentralised

- Most countries: centralised (national) AKIS governance
- Decentralised (regional) AKIS: Italy, Spain, Germany, Belgium; tendencies in Austria & Switzerland; regional differentiation also noted (e.g., Denmark, Sweden)
- Governance level shapes coordination intensity and resource allocation.

Actor diversity (pluralism) across Europe

- **Five categories:** public authorities; research & education; FBOs; NGOs; private companies
- **High pluralism:** Western EU (e.g., **Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Switzerland**)
- **Moderate** diversity in roughly half (e.g., **Austria, Spain, Hungary, Latvia, Denmark, Finland, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, etc.**)
- **Low** diversity: a few highlight 1–2 categories (e.g., **Greece, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Croatia, Serbia**).

Who reaches the farmers? (dominant providers)

- **Public-led: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Croatia, Serbia, Switzerland** (e.g., Serbia/Croatia: ministry + subordinated agencies are sole farmer interface)
- **FBO-led: Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Portugal, Sweden, Poland, Slovenia, Belgium–Flanders**
- **Private-led: Netherlands, Greece.**
- **Mixed: Germany, Italy, Spain, Slovakia; other mixes in Belgium–Wallonia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Luxembourg, Malta, Hungary**
- In countries like **Portugal** (and some **German** states), public agencies coordinate/regulate while technical advice is often **private/FBO**

Services: clients, topics, and methods (what's similar?)

- **Clients:** small/medium farms are most served (**≈80.8%**)
- **Top demand topics:** farm management/entrepreneurship (**57.3%**); rural diversification (**55.6%**); grants & compliance (**54.0%**); agri-environment/nature conservation (**52.6%**); production technologies (**47.7%**)
- **Methods:** individual advice is most frequent (**81.6% freelancers; 58.6% organisations**); organisations use group and mass-media formats more than freelancers



Human resources & capabilities (how providers differ)

- **Largest staffing:** government/ministry and university/research providers
- **Share of advisors:** highest in **NGOs (67%)** and **private (61.7%)**; women well represented across types
- **Education/experience:** majority engineers or higher; **>10 years** experience common (esp. freelancers)
- **Training:** average **≈9.6 days/year** (range 0.5–80)
- **Time use:** private & FBOs emphasize targeted **consultations**; NGOs spend relatively more on **facilitation/networking**

Financing & budget dynamics (who pays for the advice?)



Public funds dominate **government/ministry** and **university/research** providers



Private/commercial rely mainly on **cost-recovery** from farmers ($\approx 68.8\%$)



FBOs show a **balanced mix** (public funds, membership fees, cost-recovery each $\sim 54\text{--}56\%$)



Budget changes (2018–2020) reported by $\approx 47\%$ of organisations: increases tied to subsidies/projects/demand; decreases tied to crises, reduced funding, rising costs

Coordination & linkages (common strengths/weaknesses)

- **Common mechanisms:** CAP-related National Rural Networks, plus councils/platforms/working groups; strength varies by country
- **Strong overall linkages** reported in **Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France**; close farmer–advisory ties in many countries
- **Frequent gap:** research–practice interface; private advisors in some countries are weakly connected to wider AKIS; freelancers less connected than organisations
- **Examples of national platforms:** DAFA (Germany), TEAGASC (Ireland as integrator of research–advice–education), SEGES (Denmark’s practice-oriented knowledge centre) and AgriHubi (Finland)
- **Need to Invest** in advisor capabilities (facilitation, networking, digital skills) and **better integrate freelancers** into AKIS networks.

Finnish AKIS – Structure & Coordination

- **Key actors:** ProAgria (main advisory org, regional presence), Faba, MTK/SLC (farmers' unions), Natural Resources Institute Finland (LUKE), universities, vocational schools, food industry, and input suppliers
- **Coordination:** AgriHubi (Farmers' Competence Network) focuses on agriculture/horticulture; CAP Network Finland covers broader rural innovation. Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is the managing authority.
- **Distinctive features:**
 - Strong integration of research, advisory, and education (e.g., joint projects, demonstration farms).
 - Advisory services have a long tradition (since the year 1797), with ProAgria as a central player.
 - Digital platforms and data-driven advisory are increasingly emphasized

Finnish AKIS – Concrete Activities & Innovations

- **Multi-actor projects:** ProAgria and partners run projects linking farmers, researchers, and advisors (e.g., demonstration farms, digital tools for farm management, peer learning)
- **Innovation support:** AgriHubi and the CAP Network organize training, workshops, and study trips (e.g., AKIS study tour to Austria, 2024)
- **Examples of collaboration:**
 - Joint events and working groups (e.g. AKIS workshops, innovation workshops)
 - Integration of well-being and financial sector actors into advisory networks
 - Use of “Tuottajalle kiitos” stipends (funded by Vaasan, delivered by ProAgria) to foster innovation and network-building between farmers and the industry.

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Thank you!