

**i2connect, WP 1, Task 1.2**



# **AKIS Country Reports GUIDELINE**

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June 2020



## Task 1.2a

# Guideline to conduct the AKIS country report

**Andrea Knierim, Sangeun Bae, Fanos Mekonnen Birke, Maria Gerster-Bentaya**

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This guideline is still a work in progress.

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## Table of abbreviations

AKIS	Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System
AS	Advisory Services
CAP	Common Agricultural Practice
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
UAA	Utilized Agriculture Area



## 1. INTRODUCTION

There is a wide consensus among scholars and policy makers that knowledge is a key resource to support European agriculture in meeting new challenges such as international competition, food safety, health, or environmental and climate change issues. Within this context, the central role that advisory services can play has gained wide attention, which consequently implies the need to have precise and up-to-date information on these services. In 2015, the first inventory on agricultural knowledge and information systems (AKIS) and advisory services (AS) in the EU countries was set up in the context of the PRO AKIS project and systematic knowledge about AKIS infrastructures was compiled. One recommendation from the project was that the AKIS country reports should be updated regularly as national and CAP policies continuously induce institutional and structural changes. With the next CAP reform ahead that envisages a strategic strengthening of member states' AKIS and proposes several policy instruments to encourage knowledge exchange and support to innovations in agriculture and rural areas (COM 2018/392)<sup>1</sup>, a revision and update of the AKIS inventory and a renewed assessment of agricultural advisory and innovation support services will provide useful and timely information for the various AKIS stakeholders operating in the sector.

It is in this context that the i2connect project consortium conceived an update of the AKIS inventory. This time however, the objective is not only to update the existing AKIS descriptions for the EU member states but also to expand the inventory to four new countries, namely Croatia, Switzerland, Montenegro and Serbia. In addition, in the AKIS inventory the term 'agriculture' is used in its comprehensive form to also include forestry, fisheries and horticulture. The rationale is that unlike in crop and livestock production, AKIS actors in other fields such as forestry, are less recognised despite facing growing pressure from fragmentation, expanding urban areas, climate change and loss of biodiversity.

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<sup>1</sup> COM 2018/392 <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2018/EN/COM-2018-392-F1-EN-MAIN-PART-1.PDF>



The country reports will give a comprehensive overview of the AKIS infrastructures and on the predominant agricultural advisory services on national and – if applicable – on regional levels. The intention is that through these reports, essential features of the institutional and infrastructural environment in which advisors in the green sector operate, will be revealed (Knierim et al. 2020:32-34). This information will then serve as a basis for targeted interventions to support different types of cooperation between AKIS actors in solving problems. Ultimately, the reports will provide up-to-date information for policy and practice in the respective countries.

Contextual differences among the European countries where the studies will be conducted is inevitable, and this will make every country report a unique document. Nevertheless, a common and highly unified approach to these reports is what is desired in order to allow comparative assessments and to create a cross-cutting baseline for future studies. Moreover, it is beneficial to provide a general structure that is indicative and serves as terms of reference for consortium partners compiling the country report.

We thus propose the country reports to consist of 5 main chapters, where:

**Section 1: Main structural characteristics of the agricultural sector**, highlights the most important structural characteristics of the agricultural sector of the respective country;

**Section 2: Characteristics of the AKIS**, gives a description of the main AKIS actors, policy frameworks, AKIS governance and coordination structures, as well as national or sectoral agreements about knowledge exchange and coordination;

**Section 3: History of the advisory system in the agricultural sector**, reviews the history of advisory services in the respective country, taking specifically into account significant developments and changes in the advisory system in the last decade;

**Section 4: The agricultural advisory service(s)**, provides an overview of all advisory service suppliers and highlights some key characteristics such as public policy and the provision and funding schemes, human resources and advisory methods, clients and topics, linkages with other AKIS actors, etc. This section will also provide detailed information regarding existing policies, support strategies and coordination infrastructures related to innovation dedicated advisory services at a national or regional level;



**Section 5: Summary and conclusion**, summarizes the key characteristics of the AKIS and advisory services in the respective country, highlighting trends, knowledge needs, gaps, etc.

To this end, this guideline serves to streamline the methodological steps necessary for preparing the country reports and will consist of the following subsequent chapters where:

**Chapter 2** highlights key conceptual elements to support the methodology for the AKIS inventory

**Chapter 3** describes in detail the methodological steps

**Chapter 4** provides information on additional support plan by the UHOH team.



This current version of the document entails instructions specifically for the first methodological step, **the review phase**. An updated version detailing the concrete steps for the phases that follow - empirical, analytical and reporting - will be provided in due time. **In the meanwhile, national experts are encouraged to proceed with work on the review phase by preparing and compiling the information required for the AKIS country report.**



## 2. KEY CONCEPTUAL ELEMENTS

### AKIS as a theoretical framework

We define AKIS as a system concept that links people and institutions to promote mutual learning and to generate, share, and utilise agriculture related technology, knowledge, and information. The system integrates farmers, agricultural educators, researchers, and advisors to exploit knowledge and information from various sources for improved livelihoods and benefits to society.



In theory, different objectives and perspectives of analysis exist in such a systems perspective that can be different or complementary (e.g. a process-based understanding focusing on innovation support dynamics; an infrastructure-based understanding leading to an institutional diagnosis; a function-oriented understanding guiding performance assessments etc.). In our case of providing a comprehensive **AKIS inventory**, which reflects the institutional environment for interactive innovation in agriculture, **we will adopt the infrastructural concept**. The choice is relevant as it gives a clear focus to the country reports and allows for the systematic analysis on the presence and interaction of corporate actors, as well as the infrastructures and coordinating mechanisms that govern the innovation support processes (Knierim et al. 2017).

### Advisory services

We define advisory services in the context of the agricultural sector as the entire set of organisations that enables farmers and foresters to co-produce farm-level solutions by establishing service relationships with advisors so as to produce knowledge and enhance skills (Labarthe et al. 2013). This implies that all kinds of organizations that support innovation processes in the agricultural sectors may be





included in the AKIS inventory. Within this understanding, in Europe, advisory service providers can be categorized into five types:

- Public authorities - Ministries and subordinate national and regional organisations with administrative, coordinating and controlling functions;
- Public research and education institutes - Universities and education bodies, research institutes, experimental stations etc.;
- Private sector - Consultancy firms, freelancers, private independent agricultural advisory companies, all working with a profit orientation
- Farmer based organisations- third-sector, private or semi-public farmer based groups, cooperatives, chambers of agriculture, professional sector associations etc.
- Third sector non-governmental organisations - Includes other civil society organisations, especially non-profit ones such as foundations, charitable trusts etc.



### Further reading

- Knierim et al. (2020). Deliverable 1.1 Innovation advisors for interactive innovation process: Conceptual grounds and common understandings. Sections 2 & 4
- Labarthe, P., Caggiano, M., Laurent, C., Faure, G., & Ceft, M. (2013). PRO AKIS- Prospect for Farmers' Support: Advisory Services in European AKIS WP2- Advisory services within AKIS
- Klerkx, L., van Mierlo, B., & Leeuwis, C. (2012). Evolution of systems approaches to agricultural innovation: concepts, analysis and interventions. In *Farming Systems Research into the 21st century: The new dynamic* (pp. 457–483). Springer.
- Knierim, A., Boenning, K., Caggiano, M., Cristóvão, A., Dirimanova, V., Koehnen, T., Labarthe, P., Prager, K. (2017). The AKIS Concept and its Relevance in Selected EU Member States. *Outlook on Agriculture*, 44(1), 29–36. <https://doi.org/10.5367/oa.2015.0194>



### 3. METHODOLOGY

The country reports will be done by

1. i2connect project partners themselves
2. or will be subcontracted.

From henceforth, we refer to this person or the team of people responsible for the country reports as the “**national expert**”.

The preparation and compilation of the AKIS country report will be operationalized in four subsequent phases as shown and described below. The methodological guide will follow this chronological sequence, detailing concrete steps for each phase. How each phase will be distributed time-wise will depend on the circumstances of the national expert and as such we only propose a suggestion (Fig. 1). Experts are, however, reminded to take note of **the deadline for submission of the final report, which is the 20<sup>th</sup> of September, 2020.**

<b>Implementation phase</b>	<p><b>Review phase</b> Partners take stock of previous AKIS reports and related documents for their country. On this basis, a first draft AKIS structure is developed as a basis for the semi-structured interviews</p>	<b>April</b>
	<p><b>Empirical phase</b> The empirical phase will combine semi-structured interviews and a quantitative survey</p>	<b>May - July</b>
	<p><b>Analytical phase</b> After the survey, the data will be analysed and compiled</p>	<b>August</b>
	<p><b>Reporting phase</b> The report shall be written in English and submitted to the UHOH team</p>	<b>September</b>

Figure 1 The different phases of the AKIS report and a proposed time line



## 3.1 REVIEW PHASE

In this phase, partners take stock of previous AKIS reports for their own country and other related documents.

The goal of the review phase is to

- First, gather background information on the characteristics of the country's agricultural sector.
- Second, structure as much information as possible on the national AKIS and the advisory system that will serve as the basis for the next phase, which is the survey and the expert interviews.

Tip



For the 26 EU countries, country reports are available on the PRO AKIS inventory ([www.proakis.eu](http://www.proakis.eu)), which constitutes an important source of information. In addition, since 2012, the study and the enhancement of AKIS and advisory service systems have gained increased attention, which has led to a significant increase in documentation. A second important source of information on AKIS can be the SCAR SWG AKIS (<https://scar-europe.org/index.php/akis>). National governments are also providing information on advisory services and agricultural knowledge and innovation infrastructures to varying extents.

### Review of the main characteristics of the agricultural sector

The objective in this part is to compile information that will highlight the most important structural characteristics of the agricultural sector in the respective country. The information gathered should provide contextual information on the importance of agriculture in the country that better puts into perspective the role of advisory services and support to innovation.

A narrative text that briefly summarizes the characteristics in a page or less would suffice. If necessary, a table or two can be incorporated to increase clarity.



The following list could serve as a starting point that can be adjusted and complemented depending on the data sources available in the respective country.

### General country information

A brief general introduction to the country. Meaningful data comprises e.g. the total population, GDP per capita, total area of land, etc.

### Information on the agricultural sector

An overview of the agricultural sector should be given, using topical data that characterises well the important agricultural features of the country. Data should encompass:

- The contribution of agricultural sector to employment (percentage of civilian employment)
- Contribution to GDP (Percentage of agriculture to GDP)
- Land used for agriculture (farming, livestock, fisheries, horticulture)
- Numbers and structures of agricultural holdings, Average Utilized Agriculture Area (UAA) per holding, organic farms,
- Farm labour force and employment
- Agricultural output and gross value added, possibly also production of crops, production of vegetables, number of livestock and livestock density, and Animal production (milk, dairy products, cattle meat, pig meat, sheep meat),

### Information on the forestry sector

Also, an overview on the forestry sector should be given, using topical data that characterises well the important forestry features of the country. Data should encompass:

- Contribution of forestry to employment (percentage of civilian employment)



- Land used for forestry, number and structure of forestry holdings
- Forestry output and forestry gross value added; if possible Supply and use of products within forestry.
- Employment in forestry and forest-based industry, labour intensity of the forestry sector



### Data sources

- Eurostat data <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>
- European Environmental Agency <https://www.eea.europa.eu/>
- Other nationally available data

## Review of the characteristics of AKIS

In this part, the ultimate objective is to give an overview of the organisations and institutions constituting the national AKIS.



**Refer to the table on the overview of the organisations creating the AKIS in Annex 1**

### Step 1

Begin by preparing a list of possible organisations making up the AKIS, taking into consideration the classification scheme of organisations as shown in column 2 of Table 1 in the Annex (also cf. D1.1, p. 10). [This list can already be the pool of potential addressees for the survey later.]

### Step 2

Next, sketch out a diagram that shows the different actors, the knowledge flows and the relationships. Figure 2 provides a rough example of how the AKIS diagram can be sketched to visualize the actors and their relationships.



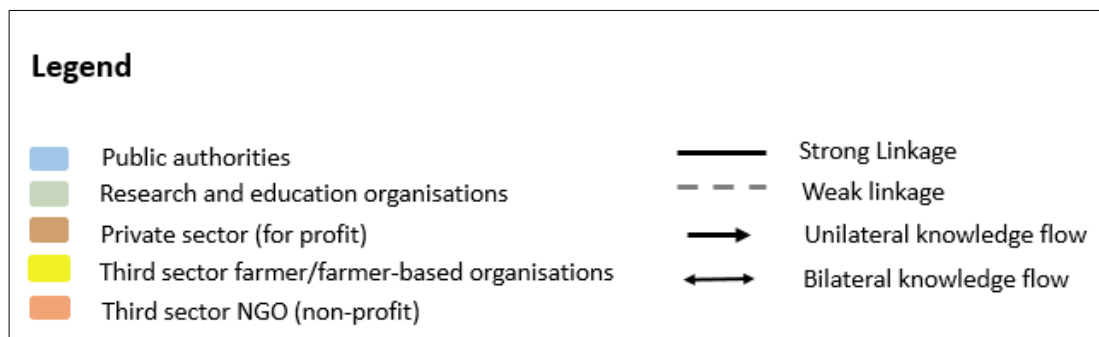
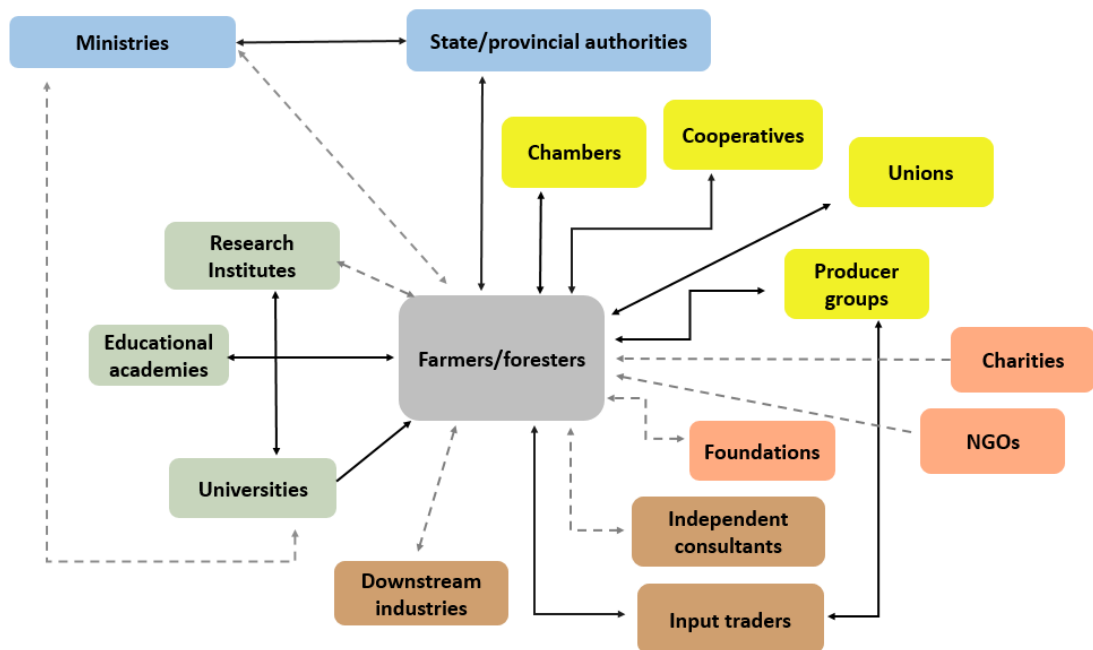


Figure 2 An example of a draft AKIS diagram based on a hypothetical example

For the sake of having a unified approach, we propose the following suggestions for compiling the AKIS diagrams for the respective countries:

- All AKIS actors identified should be classified into one of the five categories of knowledge and advisory actors, as shown in the legend above. If two categories apply (e.g. a farmer cooperative is at the same time private), pick the dominant one (e.g. farmer-based instead of private body). Use the colors



suggested for each category (see figure 2) for the sake of consistency. Other shapes can be used if considered more effective in visualizing the AKIS actors.

- Regarding the linkages, solid lines show a strong linkage of the AKIS actors and broken lines weaker linkages.

Strong linkage is:

- when there are influential actors or organisations at the national level that support (parts of) the knowledge system;
- dedicated resources are allocated to the AKIS, for example, public investment is available to enhance advisory services, knowledge production and exchange,
- Farmers and foresters are being reached by and benefit from advisory services.

Regarding the direction of knowledge flow, a one way arrow represents a uni-directional flow of knowledge whereas a two way arrow represents a bilateral flow of knowledge.



**Note:**

The diagram drafted at this stage will be a preliminary one, which will be used as a basis for the discussion in the expert interviews. This can further be elaborated after the semi-structured interviews and a survey. Annex 2 presents an example of the final AKIS diagram from PRO AKIS country reports.

## Review of advisory services history

This section aims to give an overview of the history of advisory services in the respective country.



Start by reviewing documents that take into account significant developments and dates of changes in the advisory system. The review should include:

- the processes of restructuring, commercialisations or privatisation since roughly the 1980s.
- years of establishment of new organisations and the most important dates of changes since the early 2000.
- the involvement of the state in advisory service(s) provision and financing, whether and how this has changed in the last 10 years.

For those countries that have the previous PRO AKIS report, the existing information can be supplemented with the latest details on the changes in the last five years.

The preliminary information gathered will be complemented and finalized through the semi-structured interviews with experts.



### **Resources for reference**

Resources that may be useful for the review (other than the AKIS country reports) include SCAR SWG AKIS documents, consultancy reports, published and grey literature on advisory services.





## 3.2 EMPIRICAL PHASE

In this phase, semi-structured interviews and surveys will be conducted to further explore the AKIS features, to consolidate and extend the information gathered in the review phase and to obtain recent facts and figures on the country's advisory services.



**Semi-structured interviews (SSI)** will be conducted with approx. 3 to 8 AKIS experts from ministries, advisory and research organisations, etc. The number of interviewees depends on the size and complexity of the national AKIS.



**A survey** (document or online link) will be sent out to a broad range of agricultural advisory organisation(s) [as many as possible, but at least 1-3 from each type of the main advisory service organisations identified]. For most of the countries, the English survey has to be translated by the national expert to the official language of the respective countries. The questionnaire may either be filled out by representatives of advisory organisations independently, or (short) telephone interviews may be conducted by the national experts.

Tip



In the reports of the SCAR SWG AKIS regular meetings, one can find a list of experts and their role in the AKIS of their respective countries. It might be worthwhile to communicate with some of these experts when conducting the semi-structured interview. The reports can be found on the following link <https://scar-europe.org/index.php/akis-reports-meetings>



## Conducting the semi-structured interviews

The primary purpose of conducting the semi-structured interviews is to gather expert knowledge about the respective country's AKIS that will guide the characterisation of the infrastructures and coordinating mechanisms. Additionally, knowledge about policy frameworks, as well as on challenges and knowledge gaps will be identified.



Refer to the guideline questions to the semi-structured interviews in ANNEX 3.

In conducting the semi-structured interviews, the information gathered in the review phase, in particular, the draft AKIS diagram will be used as a point of reference for the interviews and also for some questions on the AKIS overall structure. The information then will be verified and complemented as comprehensively as possible through the interviews. In the guideline for the semi-structured interviews in ANNEX 3, we have provided a set of questions to guide the process. One should note that the questions are only indicative and thus should be adjusted according to the person interviewed.



Note that before starting the interview, it must be explained to the interviewees, how the interview data will be used in the project and permission for the use and processing of data should be requested. Refer to the draft informed consent letter on Annex 6.



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**Step 1** Confirm and enrich the preliminary AKIS structure with expert's comments after asking Q1 and 2

**Step 2** Ask experts to describe the linkages in the AKIS and the knowledge flows with the help of the guideline (questions 3 – 6). Make the necessary adaptations to the preliminary AKIS diagram from the review phase. Here, potential addresses for the survey can also be identified with the help of the expert.

**Step 3** Gather knowledge on the policy frameworks and challenges and knowledge gaps respectively with questions 7-12 as a guide. Complement and complete information gathered in the review phase.

## Conducting the survey

The survey forms the basis for a detailed characterisation of the main or major advisory organisations in the respective country, previously identified in the review phase.



Refer to the survey template in ANNEX 4



### 3.3 ANALYTICAL PHASE

The purpose of the analytical phase is to compile and synthesize all the information gathered in the review and empirical phases in preparation for writing the final report.



The qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews will be analysed using qualitative and codified content analyses.



The quantitative data from the survey will be analysed using descriptive statistics where frequencies and percentages and averages are presented. Compare the results with the semi-structured interview and see if there are surprising information and missing elements.



**Refer to the detailed analysis guideline for the empirical data gathered in Annex 5**



### 3.4 REPORTING PHASE

The report shall be written in English and a word.doc format. A word template for the document can be found on meteoDocs. Some tables shall be added as excel sheets as well as other diagrams that are deemed relevant.

#### Structure of the report

The country report will consist of 5 chapters and will comprise of approximately 15 – 20 pages. We propose the structure of the report as follows.

SECTION	Number of pages (approx.)
1. Main structural characteristics of the agricultural sector	1 page
2. Characteristics of the AKIS 2.1. AKIS description 2.2. AKIS diagram	4- 5 pages
3. History of the advisory system	1 page
4. The agricultural advisory service(s) 4.1. Overview of all service suppliers 4.2. Public policy, funding schemes, financing mechanisms, advisory service providers 4.3. Human resources, and methods of service provision 4.4. Clients and topics / contents 4.5. Linkages with other AKIS actors/knowledge flows 4.6. Programming and planning of advisory work 4.7. Advisory organisations forming the FAS and evaluation of their FAS implementation	6 - 10 pages
5. Summary and conclusions 5.1. Summary and conclusions on section 1 – 3	2 – 3 pages



5.2. Summary and conclusions on section 4	
6. Acknowledgement of partners, information sources, gaps, etc.	1 page
7. References	
8. Appendices	

Tip



In the case where the country reports will be done by a subcontractor, the structure of the report can be used as the terms of reference.



## 4. INFORMATION ON SUPPORT PLAN

To support national experts throughout the preparation of the AKIS country reports, the UHOH team will provide support at two levels.

1

### Interactive online session



**Purpose:** To gain common understanding and to mutually address questions and concerns

3 interactive online sessions are planned.

**Session 1:** General Overview, introduction to the review phase.

**Session 2:** Introduction to conducting the semi-structured interviews

**Session 3:** Introduction to conducting the surveys.

**We will organize more sessions if useful**

\*\* We highly encourage national experts to participate in these sessions. However, for those who will not be able to make it, all sessions will be recorded and sent out.



# 2



## Messaging platform

**Purpose:** To ask questions anytime and receive answers from UHOH team as well as experts responsible for the AKIS country report.

We will set up an interactive online platform where national experts and those involved can interact and share information on AKIS.

UHOH team will announce further information in due time.



## Supplementary information and templates

- All country reports can be found on the web page [proakis.eu](http://proakis.eu)
- See **AKIS Inventory and Advisory services database - An Introduction to the tasks** for more information
- All other supplementary info and templates for writing the report will be available on meteodocs



WP.1 – T1.2







### **Further information and contact**

Should you have feedback, questions, or concerns, please contact us without any hesitation.

#### **Contact:**

Sangeun Bae ([s.bae@uni-hohenheim.de](mailto:s.bae@uni-hohenheim.de))

Fanos Mekonnen Birke ([fanosm.birke@uni-hohenheim.de](mailto:fanosm.birke@uni-hohenheim.de))

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## Annex 1

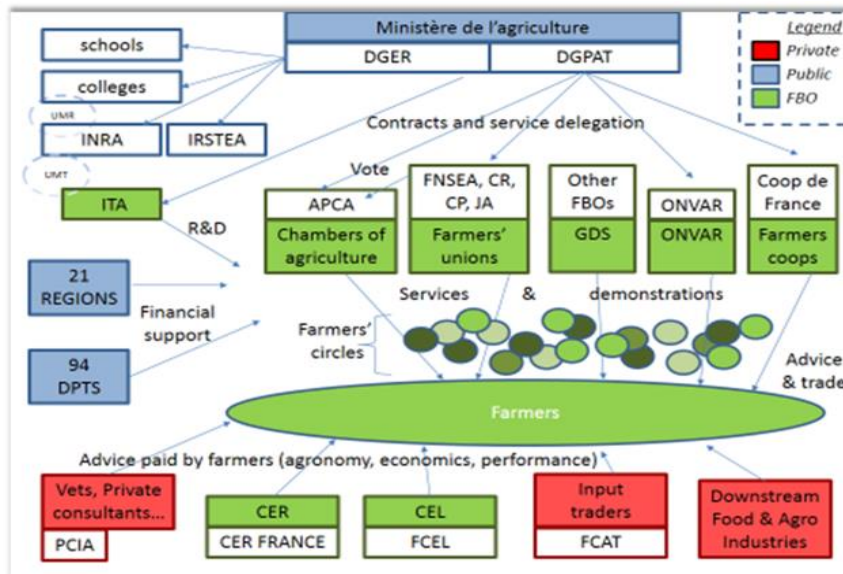
Table 1: Overview of the organisations creating the AKIS

Provision of service				Source of financing								
Status of the organisation	Type of organisation	Number of organisations	Number of advisors	Public funds			Farmers			Private	NGO	Other (specify)
				EU funds	National funds	Regional funds	Farmers' levies	Farmers' contribution	Billing services	Other products (inputs, outputs)	foundation	
Public authorities	Advisory department of the Ministry of agriculture											
	Local/regional agencies											
	Other (specify)											
Research and Education	University											
	Research Institute											
	Other education bodies (specify)											
Private sector	Upstream industries											
	Downstream industries											
	Independent consultant											
	Private agricultural advice company											
	Farmers' owned advice company											
	Other (specify)											
Farmer based organisations	Farmers' cooperative											
	Chambers of agriculture											
	Farmers' circles/groups											
	Other											
NGO												



## Annex 2

Example of an AKIS diagram from PRO AKIS country report



### The French AKIS (2013)

- Dominance of farmer-based organisations
- Active farmers
- Private and public actors at distance
- Multi-level governance in the AKIS

Figure 2 Example of an AKIS diagram (Knierim et al. 2015)



## Annex 3

### Guideline questions for the semi-structured interviews

#### Overview of service suppliers

1. What is your perception/impression regarding the current agricultural knowledge and innovation systems in your country?
2. Please comment on and complement the AKIS diagram sketch: Does it reflect your point of view, and where do you deviate? Which organisations are missing or redundant in the diagram?

#### Networks, knowledge flows, linkages with other AKIS actors

3. Where is knowledge in this system created, processed/ transformed, applied, etc.?
4. How are the organisations linked? Specify which linkages are strong, weak, and do not exist.
5. How do you assess the capability of advisory services to bridge research and knowledge needs of farmers? Where in the diagram can bridges be found, where are gaps?
6. How do you perceive the ability of knowledge networks in enhancing innovations?

#### Public policy, funding schemes, financing mechanisms

7. Please comment on the policy framework (national level) with regard to a functioning AKIS: e.g.
  - How does the policy framework support on setting strategic goals for agriculture and rural development?
  - How does the policy framework support innovations in agriculture?
8. Which national agreements exist on knowledge exchange; what governance and coordination structures today and in the future in this regard? Are there particular financial instruments?

#### Challenges, knowledge gaps

9. What are key challenges for the agricultural sector? Consequently, what are key concerns of the current AKIS in your country?



10. Which (future) trends do you observe within AKIS / advisory services in your country?
11. Which knowledge needs do you perceive:
  - for farmers?
  - with regard to the new CAP period?
12. Are you aware of topical literature about relations and knowledge flows between advisors and farmers?



## Annex 4

### Survey template (work in progress)



## Annex 5

### Guideline for conducting the analytical phase (work in progress)



## Annex 6

### Information sheet and consent form



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#### INFORMATION SHEET

*Version 1: 31 May 2020*

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**Title of Project:** Connecting advisers to boost interactive innovation in agriculture and forestry.

**Work package and task:** Work page 1, Task 1.2- Expand and update the AKIS inventory and the AS database

**Funding for this activity:** This activity is funded by the H2020 programme under GA N°: 863039

#### National expert's/investigator's name

The i2connect project is an H2020-EU project on fuelling the potential of advisors for innovation. Its objective is to fuel the competencies of advisors who will support and facilitate interactive innovation processes responding to multiple challenges in European agriculture. One very concrete result of the project will be updating the existing (Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS) descriptions for the EU member states as well as an expansion of the inventory to Croatia, Switzerland, Montenegro and Serbia. As confirmed by the European Commission, this output is especially interesting for the public with regard to the upcoming EU policies on innovations in rural areas where advisory services are considered as one key factor for rural development activities.

In order to build this inventory, we are conducting interviews with key resource persons in 30 European countries. The purpose of the interviews is to gather experts' knowledge about the respective country's AKIS that will guide the characterisation of the infrastructures and coordinating mechanisms. Your participation in the interview will significantly add to the resulting comprehensive picture of advisory services in the above mentioned countries.

The interview will last (enter amount of time) and you have the right to stop the interview or withdraw at any time. For participating in the interview, you are kindly requested to sign a consent form that is attached to this information sheet.





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**INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM**

*Version 1: 31 May 2020*

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**Title of Project:** Connecting advisers to boost interactive innovation in agriculture and forestry.

**Work package and task:** Work page 1, Task 1.2- Expand and update the AKIS inventory and the AS database

**Funding for this activity:** This activity is funded by the H2020 programme under GA N°: 863039

**National expert's/investigator's name**

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated [DATE] for the interview.
2. I understand that I am voluntarily taking part in this interview and can stop the interview at any time.
3. I understand that all information collected in the interview will be recorded and a transcript will be produced. The actual recording of the interview will be kept until the end of the project and destroyed soon after.
4. I understand that the transcript of the interview will be analysed by (name of national expert) as research investigator. Access to the interview transcript will be limited to the investigator and colleagues with whom he/she might collaborate as part of the research process.
5. I understand that any summary interview content, or direct quotations from the interview, that are made available through publications or reports will be anonymised so that I cannot be identified, and care will be taken to ensure that other information in the interview that could identify me will not be revealed.
6. I understand that any variation of the conditions above will only occur with my further explicit approval.

*Informed Consent:* I have read the description, including the purpose of this interview, the procedures to be used, the confidentiality, as well as the option to withdraw from the study at any time. The national expert answered all of my questions regarding the purpose of this interview. My signature below indicates that I freely agree to participate in this interview and that I have received a copy of this agreement.



Your contact details (optional): Email

---

Please check this box to confirm that you agree to receive communications from the i2connect consortium regarding future updates and events.

---

Name of Participant

---

Date

---

Signature



## Annex 7

### Master Draft for accompanying letter to the questionnaire

#### DRAFT LETTER – to be adjusted according to your needs and context!!

Your organisation's header



Address of advisory service

Or

General Address

xx.xx.2020

Dear Sir or Madame,

The i2connect project is an H2020-EU project on fuelling the potential of advisors for innovation. Its objective is to fuel the competencies of advisors who will support and facilitate interactive innovation processes responding to multiple challenges in European agriculture. One very concrete result of the project will be an update the existing (Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS) descriptions for the EU member states as well as an expansion of the inventory to Croatia, Switzerland, Montenegro and Serbia.

As confirmed by the European Commission, this output is especially interesting for the public with regard to the upcoming EU policies on innovations in rural areas where advisory services are considered as one key factor for rural development activities.

In order to build this inventory, we are conducting a survey in the mentioned 30 countries. We depend on your cooperation to make this inventory as complete and reliable as possible. Your participation in the survey will significantly add to the resulting comprehensive picture of advisory services in the above mentioned countries. Therefore, we would very much appreciate if you could spare the time to fill out the attached questionnaire / the questionnaire available at the following link ....

In September 2020, we will present the final results. If you are interested to be informed about our interim results, please send an e-mail to [andrea.knierim@uni-hohenheim.de](mailto:andrea.knierim@uni-hohenheim.de)

Thank you very much for your cooperation. If you have any questions regarding the survey, please call ... or send an e-mail to ...

Sincerely yours,



## Summary

**Project number:** 863039

**Project:** i2connect – Connecting advisors to boost interactive innovation in agriculture and forestry

**Duration:** 5 years

**Start date of project:** 1/11/2019

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