



Seminar
‘Fostering an effective and integrated AKIS
in Member States’

Vilnius, Lithuania
14-15 June 2023



Funded by
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Integrating advisors in the AKIS

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COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY

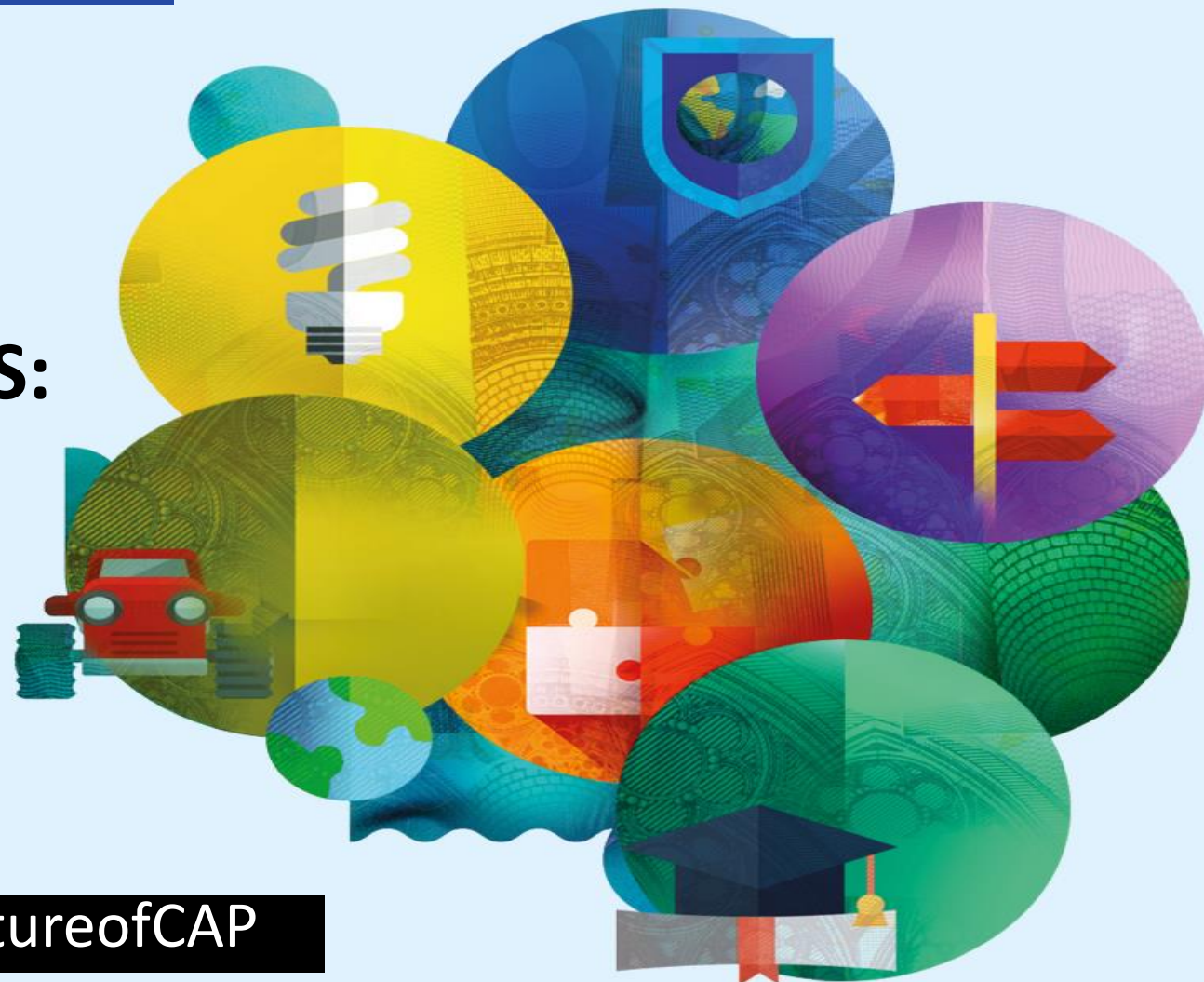
2023-2027



Integrating advisors in the AKIS:

Fostering an effective and integrated AKIS in Member States

Inge Van Oost - DG AGRI
European Commission
Vilnius - AKIS CAP network seminar
15 June 2023



#FutureofCAP

AKIS Coordination Body- Organising advice

The AKIS coordination body should be (inter)acting as the spider in the AKIS web of the country, interconnecting all key AKIS influencers

- It is the task of the AKIS coordination body to **organise the advice and advisors** according to the new advisory approach in the CAP 2023-2027, offering advice in a **transparent** way (website with advisors on public Min. website) – Art 15(1)
- And to ensuring coverage of all (obligatory) **fields in Art 15(2) and (4)** in a smooth way which does **not produce overly administrative burden** (ensure fresh inflow of expertise to cover any aspect of sustainability and competitiveness & limit unnecessary selection/eligibility criteria). – [see ex.](#)
- The AKIS CB should ensure advisory support stays open for **all expertise of impartial public and private advisors**, in particular the most trusted ones.
- Ensure frequent and effective **training of advisors**.

Farm advice organised within the AKIS structures in CAP Strategic plans (art 78 & 15) – fundamental changes

- ✓ *Advising farmers and other beneficiaries of CAP support to be included in the CAP plans (Art 15(1) => importance of showing the public list of impartial advisors and their specialisations / expertise on the Ministry's website (also for synergy with Horizon MA projects, enabling them to find the advisors for their consortium)*
- ✓ **All advisors shall be integrated within the AKIS in an inclusive way (Art 79), to be able to cover **economic, environmental and social dimensions** and to **deliver up-to-date technological and scientific information** developed by R&I (“qualifying” advisors)**
- ✓ *Advisors must be **impartial** and provide Innovation support, in particular for **preparing and implementing Operational Group projects of the EIP AGRI***
- ✓ **Obligatory regular training for advisors**

What activities for AKIS CB in practice:

CAP networks, impartial advisors and researchers at MS level to improve collaboration within the AKIS for increased innovation and knowledge flows:

- 1. Advisors** to become **more competent** on economic, environmental and social issues & **up-to-date knowledge and innovation**. **Simplification** of the administrative system for advisors: no more rules on certification or public procurement, **transparency** via public website on the advisors available, vouchers. MS must have **impartial** advisors and **innovation support services + provide training to advisors**. **The AKIS system must integrate all** advisors, public and private: no more silos or separated FAS (Farm Advisory System). Holistic and interactive advice, **mobility** budget for advisors.
- 2. Researchers more closely involved in the AKIS:** (inter)acting on farmers' needs/opportunities, and **rewarded to do so**. Researchers to join specific "multi-actor" activities and **publish for practice and support & interact with advisors' back-offices too**. "Partnership agreement" of Agri Ministries in particular with research and innovation ministries.

What activities for AKIS CB in practice:

- 3. Advisors are needed in the more frequent and more diverse EIP Operational Group calls because EIP now covers all 9 CAP specific objectives:** mixing bottom-up calls with thematic calls to have a “**family of EIP calls**” (e.g. OGs on bottom-up grassroots ideas + on specific environmental challenges, on piloting digital tools & measures, on social innovation), **new types of OGs:** networks, discussion groups of benchmarking farmers, knowledge hubs, result-based projects, innovation support services, etc. Also initiate **cross-sectorial** and **transnational OGs** and the possibility for **collaboration between OGs within the MS** (national CAP network task in coordination with the Man. Authority).

2 main & linked instruments for AKIS:

1) Innovation support service

Art 15(4): helping single actors which might have difficulties in finding the adequate partners.

2) Back-office for (specialist) advisors –

"knowledge hub" Art 114(a)

section 4.2 of the SCAR AKIS 4 report

More info:

- An animated infographic on innovation support services: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTV6kLH0ykg>
- A practical example of an innovation support service on page of the SWG SCAR AKIS report **page 105-106**: https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2019-10/report-preparing-for-future-akis-in-europe_en_0.pdf
- Brochure on innovation support services: <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/publications/eip-agri-brochure-innovation-support-services>



E.g. Simplified administrative burden for knowledge exchange and advice :

- 1) **Vouchers for knowledge actions** (R.2021/2115 - Art. 78): see examples BE & NL at the June 14-15 AKIS Seminar in Vilnius day 2
- 2) **Work to build knowledge reservoirs for practice:**
use :
 - Technical Assistance (up to 4% of EAFRD total amount Art. 94),
 - An OG building a knowledge hub (Art 127)
 - A knowledge exchange intervention (Art 78 – e.g. setting up of advisory services)

Simplified administrative burden for knowledge exchange and advice : Innovation support services:

- Often part of EIP interventions (Art 77 & 127): using simplification = lump sums for preparation: 4000-9000 Euro depending how big the group. Still very much OK and frequently used, but in combination with indicating who is responsible for capturing ideas
- **Advisory interventions (Art 78): the CAP plans in this period now more and more include innovation advice as a separate advisory package**
- Technical assistance budget (Art. 94) is also used, possibly for outsourcing, because the task is too intensive for the national CAP networks. Typically also for regions in regionalized MS.

Legal basis for the obligation to provide **innovation support services** starting by capturing individual grassroots innovative ideas:

- ✓ *Art 15(4)(e): Advisors must be ... able to provide innovation support, in particular for preparing and implementing Operational Group projects of the EIP AGRI*
- ✓ *Recital 50: ...Advice should also be available on ...innovation support for preparing and implementing emerging EIP operational group projects, whilst capturing and making use of grassroots innovative ideas*
- ✓ *Art. 114: “Describe... how advice and innovation support are provided”*

So far, many MS have often worked topdown in the choice of themes for OG calls. Now this will be complemented with **grassroots entrepreneurial innovative ideas, which ISS will capture**



I'll be happy to give you innovative thinking.
What are the guidelines?



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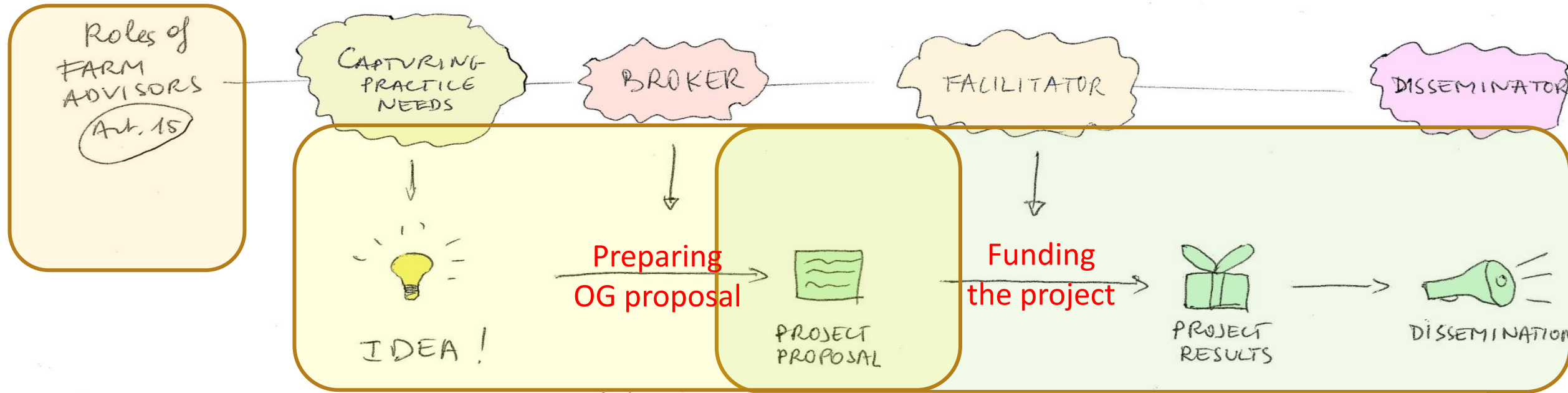
To complete the innovation ecosystem : an obligation for all MS to organize dedicated **innovation support service**

- First focus on **capturing the individual grassroots ideas**, then maybe also help **facilitating** the project during its **implementation**
- Who? A **close connection with and understanding of agriculture and rural areas** is important, also because EIP OGs now cover all 9 CAP objectives.
- **Visibility** of the innovation (personal) service is important.
- What can help too? Networking, a **cross-cutting approach** beyond existing sectors, regions, initiatives and institutes may bring added value
- Different **simplified cost** approaches may be useful e.g. lump sum or vouchers for easier use and reduction of administrative burden

Take care not to mix concepts of innovation support and innovation networking

- **Do not underestimate the efforts and budget** needed for the ISS process from idea to project proposal (4.000 -9.000 Euro per project)
- We appreciate synergies but understanding the difference between the following 2 approaches is essential:
 - 1) individual “innovation support services” (as in some MS already funded in this period, activities more oriented to the individual idea owner and its emerging OG, mostly done by advisors)
 - 2) broader group “innovation networking” mostly done by the **CAP networks/NRNs/regional innovation networks** as already is happening in this period: are more group actions to incentivize innovation, support calls, bring together OGs etc

New roles for farm advisors in interactive projects, e.g. EIP OGS



Farm advisors/innovation support services' role in interactive innovation processes:

- **Capture** practice needs
- **Broker** to set up interactive innovation projects (look for knowledge and experts, design plan of activities and roles of actors, draft cooperation agreement and project proposal)
- **Facilitate** interactive innovation projects and help communication along the project
- **Disseminate** newly generated knowledge
- **Bridge** between CAP and Horizon programmes as innovation support service?

Skills for Innovation brokers

1. Be able to **listen** to understand exactly the problem/opportunity and the context
2. Be capable to **analyse** the problem/opportunity: how can it be tackled in the best possible way (costs, actors, funding source etc)?
3. Have a good **network to find** people and information
4. Have **intermediating skills** to seek compromises where needed
5. Be **quality orientated**: plans made have to work out eventually, responsibilities taken, don't create audit problems
6. Where useful, **think out of the box** and do not defend your own position/research

Delivering innovation support services means:

1. Capturing individual grassroots innovative ideas (recital 50),
2. Refining them,
3. Connecting relevant partners with useful expertise for the objective of the project,
4. Preparing a project proposal on which all actors want to engage and agree that it will bring what they expect (find win-win)
5. Drafting a cooperation agreement and a final project proposal

If through the innovation support service a good innovation project plan is born, it will have a better chance of passing a selection process for innovation projects.

Possible financing of ISS in the CAP plans:

- Usually part of EIP interventions in the former period: using simplification = lump sums for preparation: 5000-8000 Euro depending how big the group. Still very much OK and frequently used, but in combination with indicating who is responsible for capturing ideas
- **Advisory interventions: more in the CAP plans in this period + now more and more include innovation advice as a separate advisory package**
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A plan & team for an innovation project



Searching for possible support program



Searching for adequate partners



Capturing the grassroots innovative idea & refine it

The innovation support/brokering process:

innovation support services acting as a mediator

Matchmaking, including the marriage contract

Consequence: more frequent (annual) OG calls needed. A farmer cannot wait years before his idea/problem is tackled.

Tool on AKIS + ANNEXES

CAP tool on CCO: AKIS + Annexes

[8.1 tool for modernisation - akis and digital technologies - on circabc 7 oct 2021.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

- Annexes – very useful !!!

I. Background information on AKIS

II. Why do we need well-functioning AKIS?

III. Basics on EIP Operational Groups

IV. Innovation related **CAP networking elements** to be brought to the MS' attention when developing their CAP plan

V. **Good practices to integrate advisors in the AKIS**

VI. Links to Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe projects

VII. Common format for the output of EIP OG projects

AKIS Coordination Bodies, Managing Authorities, Advisors, Innovation support services: **You are not alone....**



Questions?



Thank you for your attention

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EU CAP Network seminar

‘Fostering an effective and integrated AKIS in Member States’

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Vilnius, Lithuania

All information on the seminar is available on the event webpage:

https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/events/fostering-effective-and-integrated-akis-member-states_en

