

Evaluating AKIS in the CAP Strategic Plan (CSP)

Modern AKIS webinar

20 March 2025

European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP



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Why evaluate AKIS strategies?

Contribute to the achievement of policy objectives

Demonstrate progress towards the policy objectives

Better target CAP interventions → AKIS and its well-functioning

Develop capacities for a comprehensive understanding of AKIS

Improve quality of design and implementation of CSP

Evidence for design of future policy



The CAP Strategic Plan architecture re AKIS

Art. 6

Cross-cutting objective (CCO) 'modernising agriculture and rural areas by fostering and sharing of knowledge, innovation and digitalisation and by encouraging their uptake by farmers, through improved access to research, innovation, knowledge exchange and training'

Strategic approach to plan CAP Interventions:

Art. 114

Modernisation in CAP Strategic Plans → Well-functioning AKIS:
Research + Advisory + CAP Networks + ... working together.
Digitalisation

Tools = targeted CAP interventions supporting the strategy:

Art. 78

Funding for **knowledge exchange, advice and information**

Art. 77

Cooperation: Funding for preparing and implementing EIP OG projects, innovation model

Art. 15

The organisation of **farm advisory services**

Details on advice and innovation support to be given

Art. 127

EIP-AGRI

Details on **EIP and OGs**
Interactive innovation model

Art. 126

National and European CAP Networks

Fostering innovation and knowledge exchanges

GUIDELINES (2023)

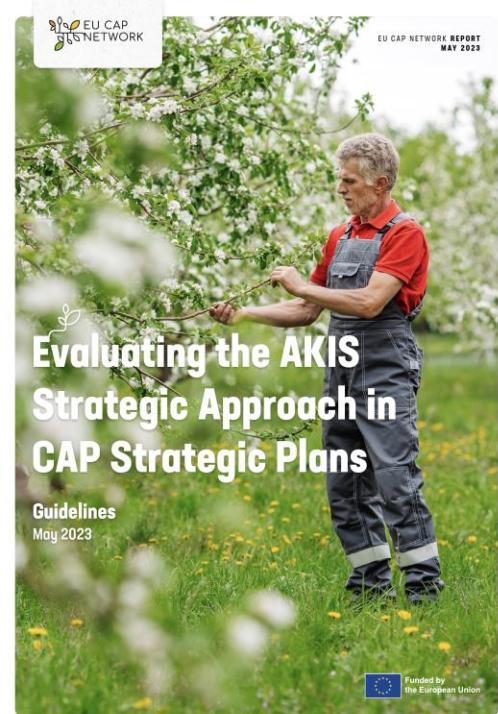
Evaluating the AKIS strategic approach in CAP Strategic Plans

Published on EU CAP Network website: [LINK](#)

(Translated in all EU languages)

Guidelines are non-binding in nature.

Aim to provide examples of evaluation elements that can be further adapted to the needs and AKIS context of the Member States.



Objectives of the evaluation

Primary objective (*main focus of Guidelines*):

- › Contribution of the AKIS strategic approach **to achieve the CCO** relating to the modernisation of agriculture and rural areas, and **to achieve other relevant SOs** addressed by the CAP Strategic Plan concerned

Secondary objective:

- › Contribution of AKIS related CAP interventions (which are more than those under/in the CCO) **to a well-functioning and better integrated AKIS** in the context of the Member State concerned



What is the focus of evaluation?

Key elements to assess

1. **Design** elements of the AKIS strategic approach
2. **Implementation** arrangements related to the AKIS strategic approach
3. **Knowledge flows** and strengthening **links between research and practice**
4. Strengthening **farm advice** and fostering all advisors' **interconnection** within AKIS
5. **Innovations** and innovation support services (ISS)
6. **Digitalisation**, focusing on making effective use of information and communication technologies to improve knowledge sharing
7. Complementarities



How do we evaluate?

Key elements to assess

e.g. Strengthening links between research/expertise and practice

Evaluation questions

To what extent have AKIS interventions contributed to strengthen the links between research and practice?

Factors of success

The cooperation of farmers with specialised researchers/experts has increased in comparison to the past

The main collaboration pathways to exchange and co-create knowledge make farmers, researchers/experts, advisors and CAP Networks work better and more regularly together

Indicators

Nr. of new cooperation activities based on practical innovation-oriented research approaches applied between farmers and researchers

Share of different actors included in OGs, by types (e.g. advisors, farmers, researchers, 'hard to reach' farmers)

Nr. of interactive forms of exchange organised connecting farmers, advisors, researchers, etc. (e.g. demonstration farms, cross-border activities, thematic knowledge hubs, cooperation to prepare demonstration events, knowledge exchange events, innovation projects)



How do we evaluate?

Key elements to assess

e.g. Wider use of knowledge exchange models and tools

Evaluation questions

To what extent have AKIS interventions contributed to increased knowledge flows?

Factors of success

The use of knowledge exchange models and platforms has increased (in terms of frequency of use and/or diversity)

Peer-to-peer learning as well as the inclusion and the interaction of all AKIS actors in the knowledge-exchange and knowledge-building process has increased as a result of the AKIS Coordination bodies activity

Indicators

Nr. of interactive forms of exchange and events interconnecting the AKIS actors (e.g. networking activities, demonstration farms)

Nr. of actors involved in interactive forms of exchange, events or processes by types

Nr. of AKIS actors involved in peer-to-peer learning activities, by types

Nr. (and type) of Coordination Bodies activities supporting knowledge sharing



Possible evaluation methods

(See 4.4 in Guidelines)

Methods that help co-construct the theory of change

Contribution analysis

Outcome mapping

Most Significant Change

Methods based on the actor-network theory

Stakeholder mapping and analysis

Social network analysis

Knowledge mapping

Actor network analysis

Visualised AKIS mapping

System analysis methods

Innovation system analysis

Rapid Appraisal of Agricultural Innovation Systems

Institutional mapping and analysis

Force Field Analysis

Reflexive monitoring in action

Transversal methods and tools

Case studies

Innovation histories

Focus groups and interviews

Surveys

MAPP

Innovation scoring tool



Get in touch

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Good Practice Workshop:
How to assess direct payment interventions in the new CAP

[Read the report](#)



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EU CAP Network explores ingredients for a successful evaluation

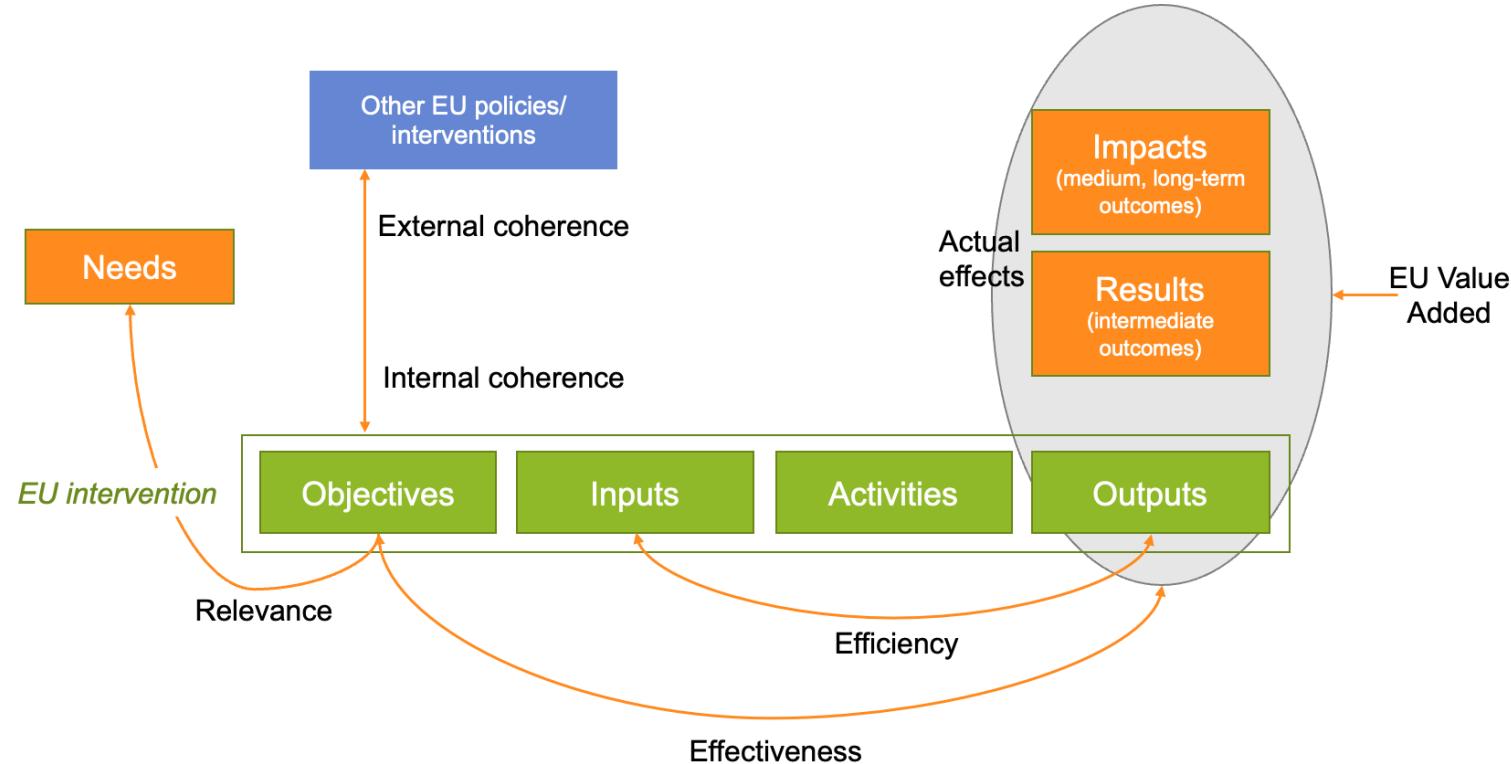
Evaluating AKIS strategic approach

(Implementing Regulation (EU) No 2022/1475)

- › AKIS is a specific evaluation topic and an integral part of the CCO to be evaluated (Art. 2(d))
- › AKIS and the digital strategy are the mandatory evaluation element for the CCO (Annex 1)
- › The CCO including AKIS and digital strategy will be evaluated once during the implementation period (2023-2029) and once ex-post (2031) (Art. 2 and 3)
- › For the evaluation of the CCO & AKIS & digital strategy, MS define evaluation questions and factors of success covering the five evaluation criteria (Art. 1(1))
- › Initial evaluation results should be available in time to be able to prepare the subsequent CAP Strategic Plan's period (2028-2035) (Art. 2(e))



Evaluation framework



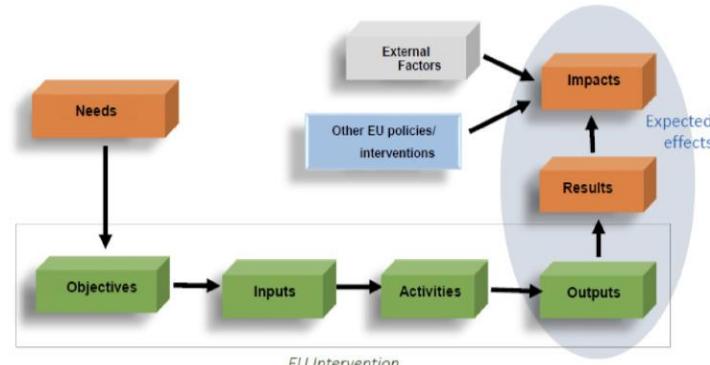
Evaluating AKIS strategic approach

The evaluation of CCO & AKIS & Digital Strategy is intended to cover all national needs of the CSP for CCO and at least take into account the following recommended factors of success

Evaluation criterion	Recommended factors of success	Interpretation
Effectiveness (operational objectives)	CSP expenditure supporting creation of innovation and knowledge sharing is increasing	Share of CAP budget for knowledge sharing and innovation (Indicator I.1)
	<i>An increasing number of farmers are supported for digital farming technology through CSP</i>	<i>Digitalising agriculture: Share of farms benefitting from support for digital farming technology through CAP (Indicator R.3)</i>
	An increasing number of farmers participate in training programmes and/or make use of farm advice	The number of participants and the number of training, advice and awareness actions reach the target values for 2029 (Indicators R.1, R.28, O.33)
Effectiveness (impact objectives)	Farmers change farming practices after participating in training programmes and/or making use of farm advice	Challenging to assess, needs to be operationalised

Evaluation framework to assess AKIS strategic approach

- Establishing the intervention logic is useful in identifying specific and robust evaluation questions linked to the initial expectations of the policy intervention.



Programming:



Evaluation:



Recommended topics / key elements to assess AKIS strategic approach

Key elements to assess	Examples from Guidelines (Table 2)
1. Design elements of the AKIS strategic approach	Mix of AKIS-related interventions; devoted CSP budget
2. Implementation arrangements related to the AKIS strategic approach	Efficiency of implementation arrangements, including the AKIS coordination body; simplification, etc.
3. Knowledge flows and strengthening links between research and practice	Strengthening links between research/expertise and practice; wider use of exchange models and tools; the role of the CAP Network, etc.
4. Strengthening farm advice and fostering all advisors' interconnection within AKIS	Vocational training and peer-to-peer learning for advisors and farmers; quality of training / advice received, etc.
5. Innovations and innovation support services (ISS)	EIP OG projects; functioning of ISS; linkages with Horizon Europe multi-actor projects, etc.
6. Digitalisation , focusing on making effective use of information and communication technologies to improve knowledge sharing	Development of tailored/ready-to-put-in-practice innovative digital technologies and tools; development of skills and competences in digital technologies
7. Complementarities	Linking of AKIS interventions with other CSP interventions and with other national/EU plans/programmes

AKIS guidelines: proposed evaluation framework

For each key element to assess (Table 4 in Guidelines)

Recommended key elements to assess (detailed)

Reference to regulations

Recommended evaluation questions

Evaluation criteria

Recommended factors of success

Evaluation phase

Recommended methods and tools for evaluation

Possible indicators (assessed in comparison to a baseline or to a target or evolution over time)





Theory of change approach to evaluate AKIS

- Highly suitable for evaluating complex contexts like AKIS due to its ability to capture the interconnectedness of various interventions and their effects.
- The AKIS strategic approach is closely tied to the specific context of each Member State, making it crucial to design and conduct evaluations that generate evidence-based knowledge.
- Evaluation can delve into the multi-dimensionality and multi-level nature of AKIS in the Member State, enabling comprehensive reflections on its various aspects.



Applying Theory of Change for Evaluating the AKIS Strategic Approach (steps)

› **(1) Orientation Phase**

- › Selecting the evaluator early on to understand AKIS interventions and their combination.
- › Identifying interventions related to AKIS, such as cooperation measures, advisory services, and knowledge exchange.

› **(2) Identifying and Engaging Relevant AKIS Actors**

- › Creating a list of AKIS actors, including institutional bodies, potential beneficiaries, and influential actors.
- › Involving key actors throughout the evaluation process to implement the Theory of Change approach.



Applying Theory of Change for Evaluating the AKIS Strategic Approach (steps)

› (3) Introductory Qualitative Analysis

- › Co-reviewing the pathway of change of the AKIS strategic approach.
- › Reviewing planned interventions and identifying potential problems, constraints, and influential factors.
- › Analysing the expected implementation of interventions and mapping pre-conditions, interim outcomes, and ultimate goals.
- › Estimating the magnitude of change by linking expected effects with the intervention logic of the AKIS strategic approach.
- › Considering factors like the intensity of interventions and the budget allocation to interventions.



Applying Theory of Change for Evaluating the AKIS Strategic Approach (steps)

› **(4) Co-reviewing the 'Variables of Observation'**

- › Selecting indicators proposed in the evaluation elements.
- › Assessing indicators against a target or baseline to determine the degree of performance of AKIS interventions.

› **(5) Identification of Methods, Tools, and Data Sources**

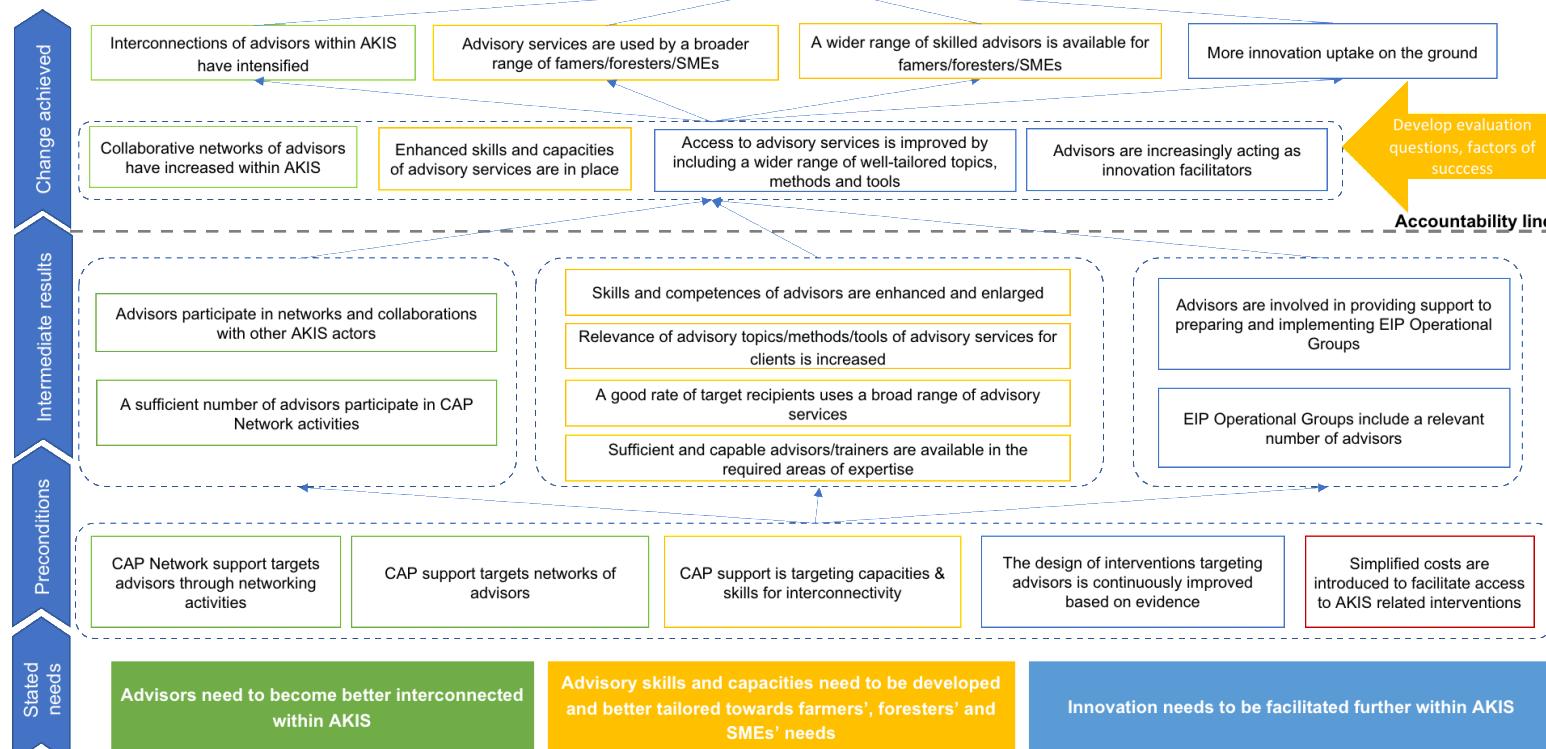
- › Choosing methods based on AKIS key elements to assess, evaluation questions, and related factors and indicators.
- › Developing evaluation criteria and indicators for every element of the expected change.



Theory of change approach (example)

Theory of Change on how to strengthen farm advice and foster all advisors' interconnections within AKIS

(a) More consolidated interconnections of advisors within AKIS; (b) Increased skills and capacities for farmer-led approaches, through enlarging the scope (topics), methods and tools of advisory; (c) Increased capacities to facilitate innovation



Example of evaluation framework: Knowledge flows

Key elements

- Wider use of knowledge exchange models and tools
- The role of the CAP Network in supporting peer-to-peer learning as well as supporting the inclusion and the interaction of all AKIS actors in the knowledge-exchange and knowledge-building process

EQ

- To what extent have AKIS interventions contributed to increased knowledge flows?

Factors of success

- An increasing number of AKIS interventions are implemented to foster knowledge sharing and innovation (*uptake*).
- The use of knowledge exchange models and platforms has increased (*in terms of frequency of use and/or diversity*).
- Peer-to-peer learning as well as the inclusion and the interaction of all AKIS actors in the knowledge-exchange and knowledge-building process has increased as a result of the CAP Network activity.

Indicators

- O.33 Nr. of supported training, advice and awareness actions or units.
- R.1 Nr. of persons benefitting from advice, training, knowledge exchange or participating in EIP OGs supported by the CAP in order to enhance sustainable economic, social, environmental, climate and resource efficiency performance.
- Nr. of interactive forms of exchange and events interconnecting the AKIS actors (*e.g. networking activities, demonstration farms*).
- Nr. of actors involved in interactive forms of exchange, events or processes by types.
- Nr. of AKIS actors involved in peer-to-peer learning activities, by types.
- Nr. of collaborations/joint actions between the CAP Network and the Horizon National Contact Point/the RIS3 contact point/other relevant networking bodies.
- Nr. (and type) of CAP Network activities supporting knowledge sharing.
- I1. Share of CAP budget for knowledge sharing and innovation.

Example of evaluation framework: Strengthening links between research/expertise and practice

Key elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wider use of collaboration models of farmers with experts/researchers and advisors. Main collaboration pathways/organisation that make experts/researchers, advisors and CAP Networks work better and more regularly together to exchange and share knowledge, co-create innovation and build common projects.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent have AKIS interventions contributed to strengthen the links between research and practice?
Factors of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cooperation of farmers with specialised researchers/experts has increased in comparison to the past. The main collaboration pathways to exchange and co-create knowledge make farmers, researchers/experts, advisors and CAP Networks work better and more regularly together.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O.33 Nr. of supported training, advice and awareness actions or units. Nr. of new cooperation activities based on practical innovation-oriented research approaches applied between farmers and researchers. Share of different actors included in OGs, by types (e.g. <i>advisors, farmers, researchers, 'hard to reach' farmers</i>). Nr. of interactive forms of exchange organised connecting farmers, advisors, researchers, etc. (e.g. <i>demonstration farms, cross-border activities, thematic knowledge hubs, cooperation to prepare demonstration events, knowledge exchange events, innovation projects</i>). R.2 Number of advisors receiving support to be integrated within AKIS. I1. Share of CAP budget for knowledge sharing and innovation.
Indicators	

Example of evaluation framework: Innovation and innovation support services

Key elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EIP OG projects, their characteristics and effects, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> methods to ensure the real implementation of multi-actor approach and interactive innovation model; choice of relevant partners; sufficient budgets; degree of participation of farmers, advisors, ISS and other practitioners in OGs and Horizon Europe Multi-actor projects; capacity to develop long-term collaboration
EQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent does the EIP support to AKIS through OGs contributes to speed up innovation (1) creation and (2) implementation (e.g. <i>different types, models and stages of innovations</i>)?
Factors of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OGs have improved links between research and practice. OGs have encouraged a wider use of available innovation measures, by adapting them to the local context. Innovative methods/tools for dissemination/scaling innovations.
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O.1 Nr. of EIP OG projects. O.2 Nr. of advice actions or units to provide innovation support for preparing or implementing EIP OG projects. R.1 Nr. of persons benefitting from advice, training, knowledge exchange or participating in EIP OGs supported by the CAP in order to enhance sustainable economic, social, environmental, climate and resource efficiency performance.
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role of farmers, advisors, ISS and other practitioners participating in OGs supported by the CAP. Nr. of farmer-led OG projects. Degree of interactions within OGs (e.g. density, degree centrality, reciprocity). Qualitative assessment of EIP OG activities (e.g. sharing results, providing demonstrations, communicating), based on a Likert scale Evidence of long-term collaborations established, including numbers of new collaborations if relevant. I1. Share of CAP budget for knowledge sharing and innovation.