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modernAKIS Together for Systems' Innovation

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Compendium of how advisors can be intensively integrated into the AKIS: First Update

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Project management	**Institution**	
Person in charge	Avion Phillips	Teagasc
Work package	WP1	
Work package leader	Simona Cristiano	CREA
Author(s)	Avion Phillips	Teagasc
Addition Authors		
Quality reviewers	Leszek Zukowski Erika Frankenhuizen	CDR NSU
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1. Executive Summary

The purpose of Task 1.4 was initially to collect, select, and share good examples of the intensive integration of advisors into the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS), particularly in the context of innovation support. The scope of this task was expanded to include identifying barriers to advisor integration within AKIS and co-creating solutions to address these challenges. As a result, additional activities such as workshops and surveys were introduced, enhancing collaboration with advisory organisations and aligning efforts with the WP4 cross-country community of practice focused on advisors (ccCOP 2).

A shift in the work plan led to participation in two key activities in February 2025, which provided critical insights and slightly delayed the deliverable. These included a workshop at the EUFRAS General Assembly to identify key barriers to advisor integration and a survey conducted with multiple advisory networks to assess advisor needs, improve networking, and develop proposals for better support under future EU policies.

This deliverable presents a collection of new examples for the compendium, the results of the workshop held at the EUFRAS General Assembly, and the results of the preliminary responses to the survey collected at this time.

One of the primary barriers identified based on the survey results was a lack of knowledge about AKIS among advisors. A significant proportion of survey respondents who did not consider AKIS relevant cited their limited understanding of the system. This underscores the need to promote awareness and comprehension of AKIS to ensure advisors can effectively engage with other stakeholders within the system.

Networking between research, advisory services, and agricultural practice was another critical factor identified for strengthening advisor integration. Workshop feedback highlighted limited collaboration between advisors and researchers, particularly under the themes of “Perception of Advisors by Other Actors in AKIS” and “Networking & Knowledge Exchange.” Access to up-to-date research findings emerged as another crucial challenge. Both the survey and workshop feedback pointed to a lack of information flow between research institutions and private advisory organisations. Key concerns included inadequate training opportunities to stay current with recent research, isolation of advisors within their organisations and AKIS, and insufficient support structures for knowledge exchange and collaboration. Other emerging themes included the need for continuous skills development, particularly in soft skills, high workload pressures on advisors, and their limited involvement in policy development and research direction-setting. Additionally, the undervaluation of advisors' roles by other AKIS actors remains a significant barrier to their full integration within the system.

The findings from this deliverable provide a foundational understanding of the challenges impeding advisor integration into AKIS. Addressing these barriers will require targeted efforts, including increasing advisor awareness of AKIS, fostering stronger networking opportunities, improving access to research, and enhancing training and capacity-building initiatives. Strengthening collaboration between advisors and other actors within AKIS will be key to achieving more intensive integration and ensuring that advisors play a recognised and valued role in the agricultural innovation ecosystem.

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2. Introduction

Task 1.4 Collection of various ways and good examples for the intensive integration of advisors in AKIS, including for innovation support was originally designed to collect, select and share good examples of integration of advisors into the AKIS. However, the remit of the work plan has been expanded to include identifying barriers to the integration of advisors into the AKIS and eventually co-creating solutions with advisors to overcome these barriers. This shift in the work plan for the task resulted in the need to strengthen collaboration with advisory organisations and also include new activities such as workshops and surveys. There is also great potential to align the work of Task 1.4 with the WP4 cross –country community of practice focused on advisors (ccCOP 2).

This overall change to the task meant it was beneficial to collaborate and participate to two main activities that were both scheduled to take place in February 2025, resulting in a slight delay to this deliverable as the outputs from these activities had to be processed and included in the report in addition to the initially planned work aimed at collecting new examples for the compendium.

The first key activity was the facilitation of a workshop at the EUFRAS General Assembly that was held on 19th February 2025 in Galway, Ireland. There were approximately 40 participants from various advisory organisations across Europe. The aim of the workshop was to identify and prioritise barriers that limit the intensive integration of advisors into the AKIS. The results of this workshop are presented in Section 5 of this deliverable.

The second key activity was a survey developed by the International Academy for Rural Advisory Services (IALB), the European Forum for Agricultural and Rural Advisory Services (EUFRAS), the South Eastern Europe Advisory Service Network (SEASN) and the Horizon Europe project modernAKIS (modernAKIS.eu). This survey seeks to better understand the needs and challenges of agricultural advisors and advisory organisations. The aim is to derive support offers for better networking and further development of advisory services in rural areas. In addition, demands and proposals are to be developed for better anchoring and support of advisory services and vocational training in the EU's Common Agricultural Policy after 2027.

This deliverable presents an overview of the new examples collected for the compendium, as well as barriers that have been identified that limit the integration of advisors into the AKIS.

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3. Barriers to Integration Workshop with Advisors – EUFRAS General Assembly

On Wednesday 19th February 2025, the modernAKIS project facilitated a workshop with the attendees of the EUFRAS General Assembly held in Galway, Ireland. There were approximately 40 participants from various advisory organisations across Europe. The aim of the workshop was to identify barriers that limit the intensive integration of advisors into the AKIS.

3.1. Workshop Agenda

TIME	SUBJECT
10 minutes	**Welcome to the session** **A bit about the modernAKIS project** • Avion Phillips, Teagasc, Ireland
40 minutes (10, 8,6,6,6, 4)	***World Cafe – What barriers have you encountered that limit your ability to engage with the AKIS in your country?*** • *Break into 6 groups* • *Organise 2 rounds: 1 round about barriers, followed by 1 round used for prioritization* • *World Café exploring barriers related to* ○ *Skills – Technical & Soft* ○ *Internal organisation of advisory services* ○ *Engagement with clients* ○ *Networking, Knowledge Exchange, (Access to new Knowledge)* ○ *Perception of advisors by other actors in the AKIS* ○ *Policy, Funding and Administration*
12-15 minutes (2 mins ea)	• *Prioritise the barriers – top three for each topic*
15 minutes	• **Feedback from facilitators**

Barriers that exist within six key areas were explored during the workshop as indicated in the agenda. Feedback was collected by a facilitator at each table. After the first round of the World Café exercise a second round was conducted to allow participants to prioritise their top three barriers under each topic. This was done by placing stickers next to the points that were considered a high priority by participants. The workshop concluded with the facilitators each sharing those barriers that had the highest priorities assigned by the participants.

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3.2. Results of the workshop

The barriers that were identified are presented in this section under each topic area and are sorted based on the votes each option received during the prioritisation exercise. In cases where there was a tied number of votes for the top three barriers, all barriers were included in the top three section.

Policy, Funding and Administration

High priority

- No or limited input from advisors towards policy development [15 votes]
- Farmers expect to get all the CAP funding to themselves which leaves less for skills [12 votes]
- Overly bureaucratic schemes focus on audits and reporting to the EU [9 votes]

Advocating for Farmers

- Advisory organizations are invisible; they are not seen as an important piece of the puzzle by government and AKIS coordination bodies [5 votes]
- Recognition that advisers are taken for granted by policy makers [4 votes]
- Lack of discussion and continuity of policies (changes every 4 years), lack of trust in policies in general, lack of flexibility to achieve the goals and lack of knowledge flow, why the changes happen [4 votes]
- Deadlines of support schemes are not divided logically over the year. For example, lot of schemes are due on 15th of May [3 votes]
- There are requirements for farmers to attend lectures to get the support. Administrative burden for organisations as an expectation to organise seminars and help to prepare applications [1 vote]
- Farmers need to know a high degree of detail with respect to policy requirements, which puts pressure on advisors [No votes]
- No consistency in dealing with applications in Paying Agency; appeals are not independently dealt with (perception of bias treatment) [No votes]

Organising the advisory system / AKIS

- Certification of advisors to be able to work [3 votes]
- Advisors are in isolation [2 votes]
- Education is not included in CAP, (*only knowledge transfer is*). Difficulties to find funding for training advisors and their trainers [2 votes]
- Force majeure for advisory organizations [1 vote]
- Reporting farming details to the system takes time what the advisor cannot bill from the farmer [1 vote]
- Collaboration takes time and money from each actor, support is needed for organizations of advisory services [No votes]
- No or low national funding and high dependence on CAP [No votes]

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- "AKIS", "innovation", "Living labs" are popular words, treated more like and objective instead of being an instrument; No consistency regarding innovation brokering (will this trend continue in new period?) [No votes]
- Recognition by advisory organisations, that advisers are taken for granted by policy makers to make all the policies understandable for farmers [No votes]
- And from the other hand - Low input from advisors towards policy development [No votes]

Perception of advisors by other actors in the AKIS

High priority (The first four points tied based on votes for first and second)

- Silo thinking between actor groups within the AKIS [9 votes]
- Research doesn't understand the value of "ready to use" information that is an advisor's "bread and butter" [9 votes]
- Other actors think that they can do what advisors do [8 votes]
- Clients don't perceive the economic value of advisors, the true cost of advice is hidden [8 votes]
- Research overlooks advisors [7 votes]

- An advisor's usefulness is tied to the area of help or advice that is provided with priority given to economic benefits for farmer [5 votes]
- Better information flow from public research to private advisors is required [4 votes]
- Perception that advisors only do paperwork and their other jobs are not necessarily valued [3 votes]
- There is a grey area regarding who is allowed to be an advisor/ give advice with respect to qualifications necessary, particularly with respect to industry representatives who are aiming to sell a product [3 votes]
- Negative perception and competition between private and public advisors as well as different advisory organizations [2 votes]
- Advisors work in isolation and more collaboration is needed [2 votes]
- Confidentiality exists between advisors in an organization [1 vote]
- Farmers don't respect the private time of advisors, no work-life balance [1 vote]
- "Information flow & Connections" are used to determine the best advisors and not other more suitable metrics [2 vote]
- Perception that advisors have a lot of time to engage, and are well payed for engagement activities [No votes]
- Advisors "should" look for new research and digest the findings [No votes]
- All the responsibility for the new CAP reporting is on advisors [No votes]
- Established organizations might be perceived to be resting on the reputation of the organization and recycle information [No votes]
- Public opinion is that "advice should be free" and so funding from Media organizations and farming organizations largely goes to the public sector [No votes]
- Cooperation between competing organizations is needed [No votes]
- How can advisors be incentivized to participate in Horizon Europe [No votes]

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Engagement with clients

High Priority

- High workload of advisors [14 votes]
- Need to define the boundaries of advisory and work service [12 votes]
- Lack of experience and fear of making mistakes, Lack of knowledge and skills especially on new topics especially soft skills, Advisors are afraid to go out in the field [8 votes]

- Lack of experience and fear of making mistakes, Lack of knowledge and skills especially on new topics especially soft skills, Advisors are afraid to go out in the field [8 votes]
- High workload of farmers [7 votes]
- Lack of understanding of unconscious needs of farmers [7 votes]
- Lack of a good support network, isolation even in bigger organizations [5 votes]
- Lack of holistic approach [5 votes]
- Lack of respect from clients for diverse advisors including young, female, non-European origin [4 votes]
- Lack of funding for mentorship [4 votes]
- Lack of sensitivity to the diversity of farming community [2 votes]
- Acceptance by advisors that farmers are the final decision makers [1 vote]
- Lack of mentorship [1 vote]
- A lack of understanding and sometimes a lack of respect of cultural context
- Differences in age between advisor and farmer [No votes]

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Internal organisation of advisory services

High priority

- Lack of direction from management and/ or the ministry in terms of support [11 votes]
- Lack of communication within the company/organization this is a vital need to improve networking and information flow [10 votes]
- Commercial pressure hindering involvement [9 votes]

- Lack of professional leadership [7 votes]
- Lack of funding for administrative support [3 votes]
- Funding model for activities varies from region to region [2 votes]
- Trying to engage with non-connected advisors or consultants [2 votes]
- Lack of cooperation between advisory providers [1 vote]
- Involving the correct or interested people in the AKIS [1 vote]
- Lack of official support for advisory services including within the AKIS [1 vote]
- Developmental time is hindered or limited by scheme pressure provision
- Lack of innovation brokers [No votes]
- Lack of training especially with respect to soft skills sharing practical knowledge and continuous professional development (CPD) for advisors [No votes]
- Research priorities & direction should to a greater extent, come from farmers and be informed by farmers [No votes]
- Lack of support from management and/or the ministry due to not seeing the value of AKIS [No votes]
- More focus on the specific role of advisors within the AKIS [No votes]

Skills (Technical & Soft Skills)

High priority

- Training on soft skills including motivation, navigating the way your advice is received by the client, giving and receiving feedback, listening. These skills require acceptance by advisors that the farmer is the owner of the decision process. [18 votes]
- Sources of new expertise and not from commercial companies but from science, from farmers. Demonstration acts are useful for skills training [11 votes]
- Technical skills important expertise is changing quickly [10 votes]

- Time and funds are very limited [8 votes]
- Learning how to facilitate, moderate, animate and self-reflect. [5 votes]
- Lack of funding for advisors and trainees as well as providers of training [5 votes]
- Knowing which skills are needed and access to training [3 votes]
- Continuous Professional Development, Life Long Learning [3 votes]
- Training is not equal in member states, attending training is not necessarily mandatory everywhere. [No votes]

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Networking & Knowledge Exchange

High priority (The second and third points tie with 5 prioritisation votes)

- Knowledge sharing needed between public and private advisors [12 votes]
- Lack of combined communication tools for information [5 votes]
- No dedicated space for sharing [5 votes]
- Limited time [4 votes]

- No organized space to share and exchange [3 votes]
- Terminologies and differences in language and approaches [3 votes]
- Main technical knowledge often comes from sellers or industry [3 votes]
- Generational gap between actors [3 votes]
- Lack of centralized date exchange platform for planning [2 votes]
- Lack of internal platform for networking [2 votes]
- Strengthening knowledge exchange between scientists and advisors in response to lack of transfer opportunities between advisors and research [2 votes]
- CAP as a bridge within the theme result in challenged-based meetings and targeted surveys for farmers [2 votes]
- Funded training [2 votes]
- Lack of knowledge exchange between competing organizations [1 vote]
- Information overload too much general and not enough detailed important information [1 vote]
- Need for the back office [1 vote]
- Limited money [1 vote]
- Potential participants do not see the benefit of networking [No votes]
- Informal spaces [No votes]
- How to motivate advisors to participate [No votes]
- Advisors bridge the gap and work to create an interpretation of research [No votes]
- Relevance of knowledge to the farmers and advisors [No votes]
- Inclusion of farmers in the exploration of hot topics [No votes]
- Using networks for knowledge and skills exchange [No votes]
- Networking between peers & managers not only advisors within same projects, same people doing the same things [No votes]

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3.3. Thematic Analysis of Workshop Results

3.3.1 Methodology

The feedback collected at the workshop was digitized and sorted based on topic and priority. A thematic analysis[1]was then performed on the data collected[2]. The first step was to codify the data collected followed by the identification of common themes across all feedback collected.

Chat GPT was used to do an initial analysis of the word count across all feedback collected during the workshop. The results of this word count (Table 1) were used to codify the data so that themes could be identified across the entire dataset.

Initial codes were created based on the words with a high frequency including “funding”, “policy”, “skills”, “support” and “training. The terms *"advisors"* and *"lack"* were deliberately excluded from the analysis, as the discussion primarily focused on barriers faced by advisors. The high frequency of these words was expected as well as their strong association with multiple points. Therefore, their inclusion would not contribute effectively to identifying common themes within the data.

Chat GPT Prompt: Please provide a word count for each of the words used in the text provided. Exclude the words "of" "the" "to" "and" "is" "in" "are" "not" "from" as well as punctuation and numbers.

Table 1 Frequency of words used in the feedback provided at the EUFRAS workshop

Frequency	Words
28	advisors
21	lack
13	funding
12	policy, skills, knowledge
11	farmers, training
10	research, information
9	support, time
8	organisations, perception
7	work, economic
6	engagement, exchange

[1] Virginia Braun & Victoria Clarke (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology, Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3:2, 77- 101

[2] Moira Maguire & Brid Delahunt (2017) Doing a thematic analysis: A Practical, Step-by-step Guide, All Ireland Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education,8:3, 3351-33514

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5	development, communication, collaboration, respect
4	direction, bureaucratic, important, understanding, awareness, recognition, services, experience
3	requirements, public, discussion, limitations, isolation, networking, professional, holistic
2	education, deadlines, mentorship, cooperation, direction, motivated, generation, technical

The next step in the process was to identify common themes across all the feedback collected. This was done in two stages.

Stage One – Identification of themes across feedback that was considered a high priority by participants i.e. feedback that received the most votes during the prioritisation exercise and was outlined in Section 2 Results of Workshop as being high priority.

Stage Two – Identification of themes across all feedback collected during the workshop. This was to ensure that if other themes that were not within the high priority feedback were present, that they were identified.

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3.3.2 Results

There were five key themes identified after stage one was carried out. These themes are outlined in Figure 1 below.

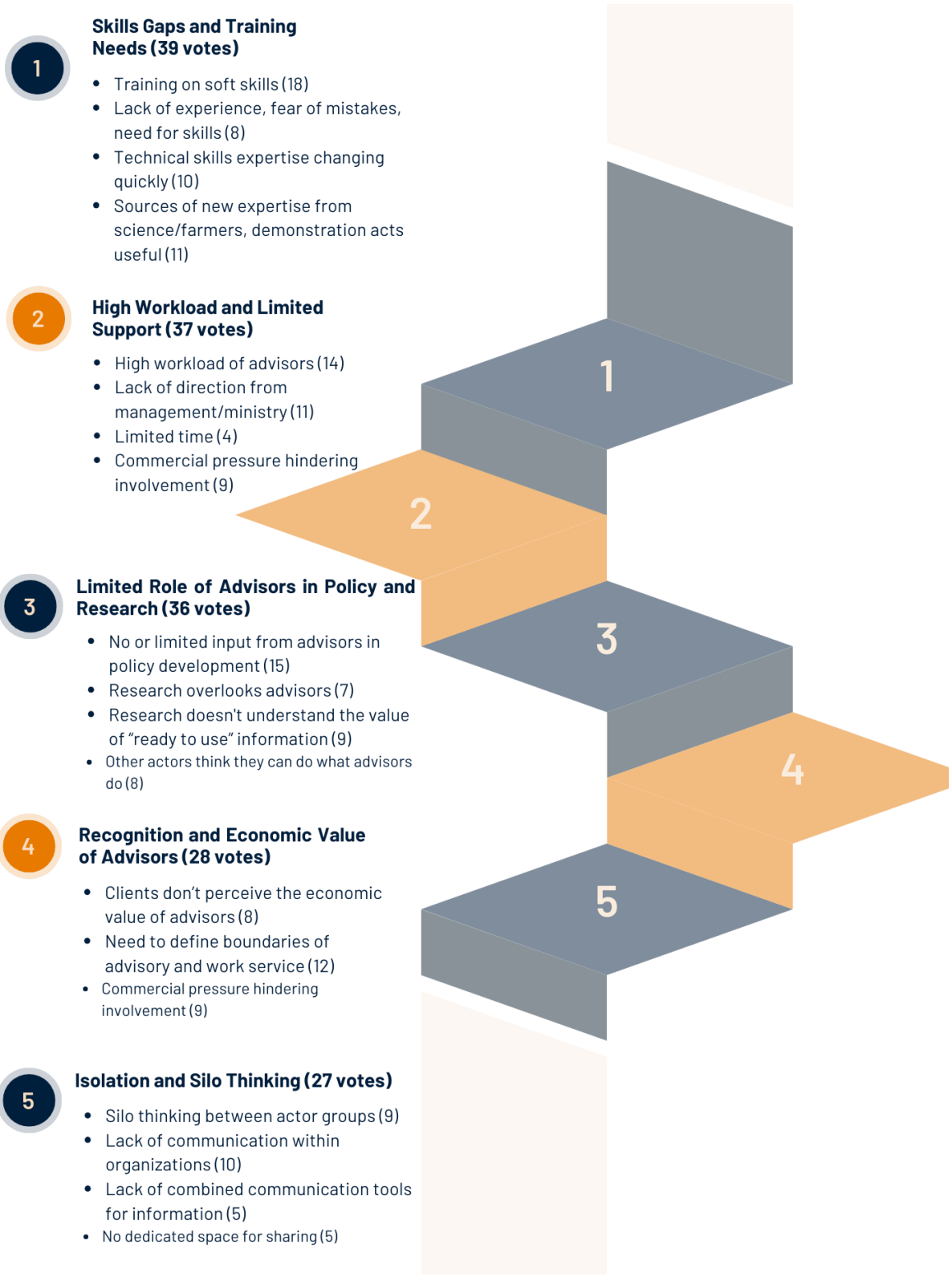

Figure 1 Themes emerging from the analysis of the prioritized feedback received at the workshop.

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During stage two of the analysis, many of the themes identified across all the feedback were already identified during stage one. In addition to the previously identified five high priority themes, two other themes were identified during stage two of the process.

Bureaucratic and Funding Barriers Restricting Advisory Services	Advisors have little input in shaping policies that affect them.
	Funding is inconsistent, often dependent on CAP, with little national support.
	Bureaucracy creates excessive administrative work, reducing time for actual advising.
	Support scheme deadlines are usually inflexible and add to advisors' burdens.
Need to change the mindsets of actors within the Advisory Services	Motivation is needed for actors to promote, participate and network with each other.
	Shift within advisory organisations needed to prioritise mentorship, training and support for advisors.
	Help other actors (research, policy) to understand the value of advisors and seek out their input.
	General approach to more collaborative working needed not only between advisors but also between advisors and other actors in the AKIS.

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4. Advisory Survey

4.1. Methodology

This survey is a joint effort between the International Academy for Rural Advisory Services (IALB), the European Forum for Agricultural and Rural Advisory Services (EUFRAS), the South Eastern Europe Advisory Service Network (SEASN) and the Horizon Europe project modernAKIS (modernAKIS.eu). This survey seeks to better understand the needs and challenges of agricultural advisors and advisory organisations. The aim is to derive support offers for better networking and further development of advisory services in rural areas. In addition, demands and proposals are to be developed for better anchoring and support of advisory services and vocational training in the EU's Common Agricultural Policy after 2027.

All answers to the survey are anonymous and confidential. The survey required about **15 minutes** to complete, on average. It did not have to be completed in one sitting, participants could begin to fill it out, take a break and come back to it at a later time.

This survey is still open and ongoing, however preliminary results are included in this deliverable as the feedback collected is very relevant to the content of the deliverable.

The survey can be accessed here: https://form.jotform.com/250362037422346

The full survey is available in the Annex of this deliverable.

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4.2. Results of survey questions on integration into AKIS

The analysis of results presented in this deliverable will not extend to all questions asked in the survey. Instead it will focus on the responses to the section of the survey specifically on "Integration into the AKIS" as this is the key focus of Task 1.4 Intensive integration of advisors into the AKIS and is within the scope of this deliverable. A total of 241 responses were analysed in this report.

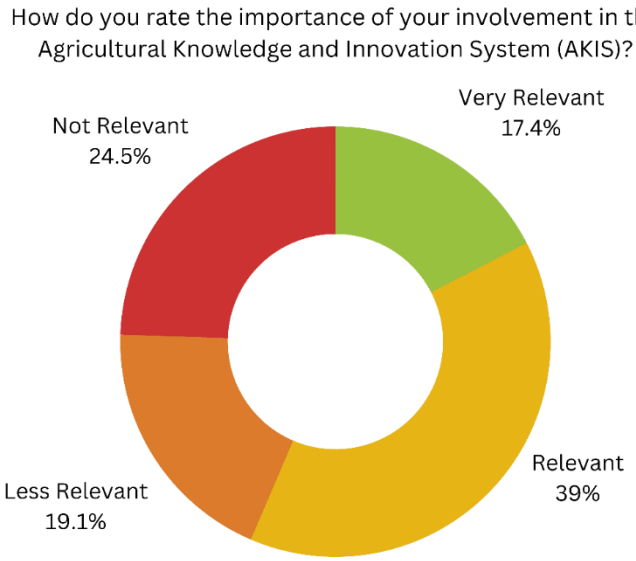

Figure 2 Responses from the survey ranking the relevance of respondents' involvement in the AKIS in their country.

Overall, more than half the respondents (56.4%) rated their involvement in the AKIS as relevant to very relevant. Roughly a quarter of respondents believed that involvement in the AKIS was not relevant to them at all. Those that gave a response of "Not Relevant" were asked a follow up question on why they are not included or involved in their country's AKIS. Of this proportion of respondents the majority (83.1%) said it was because they did not know AKIS (Figure 3), 8.5% indicated it was because they do not have access to AKIS and approximately 5% said it was the role of their colleagues.

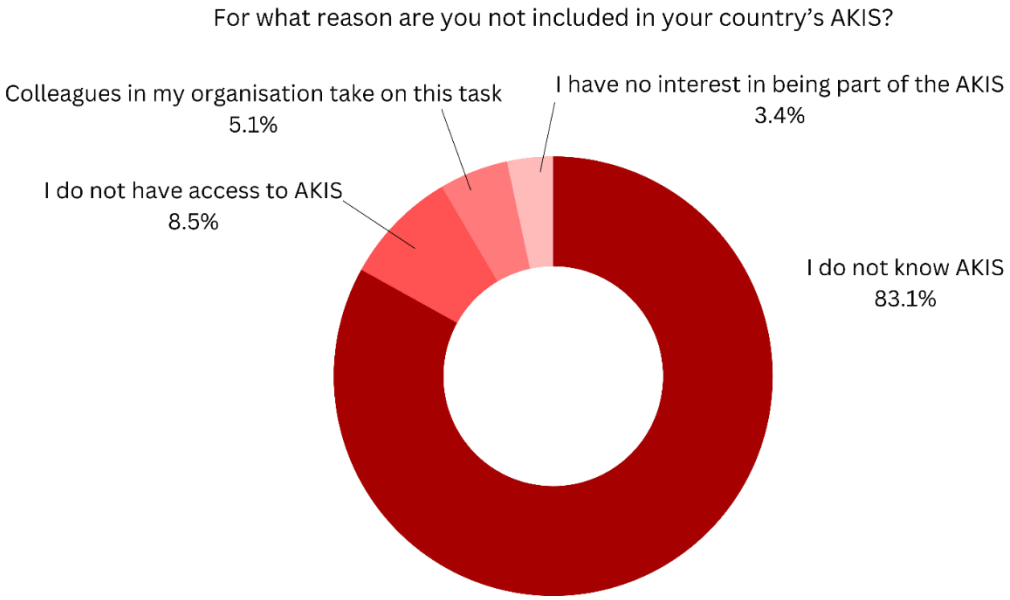

Figure 3 Reasons why respondents who indicated involvement in the AKIS was "not relevant".

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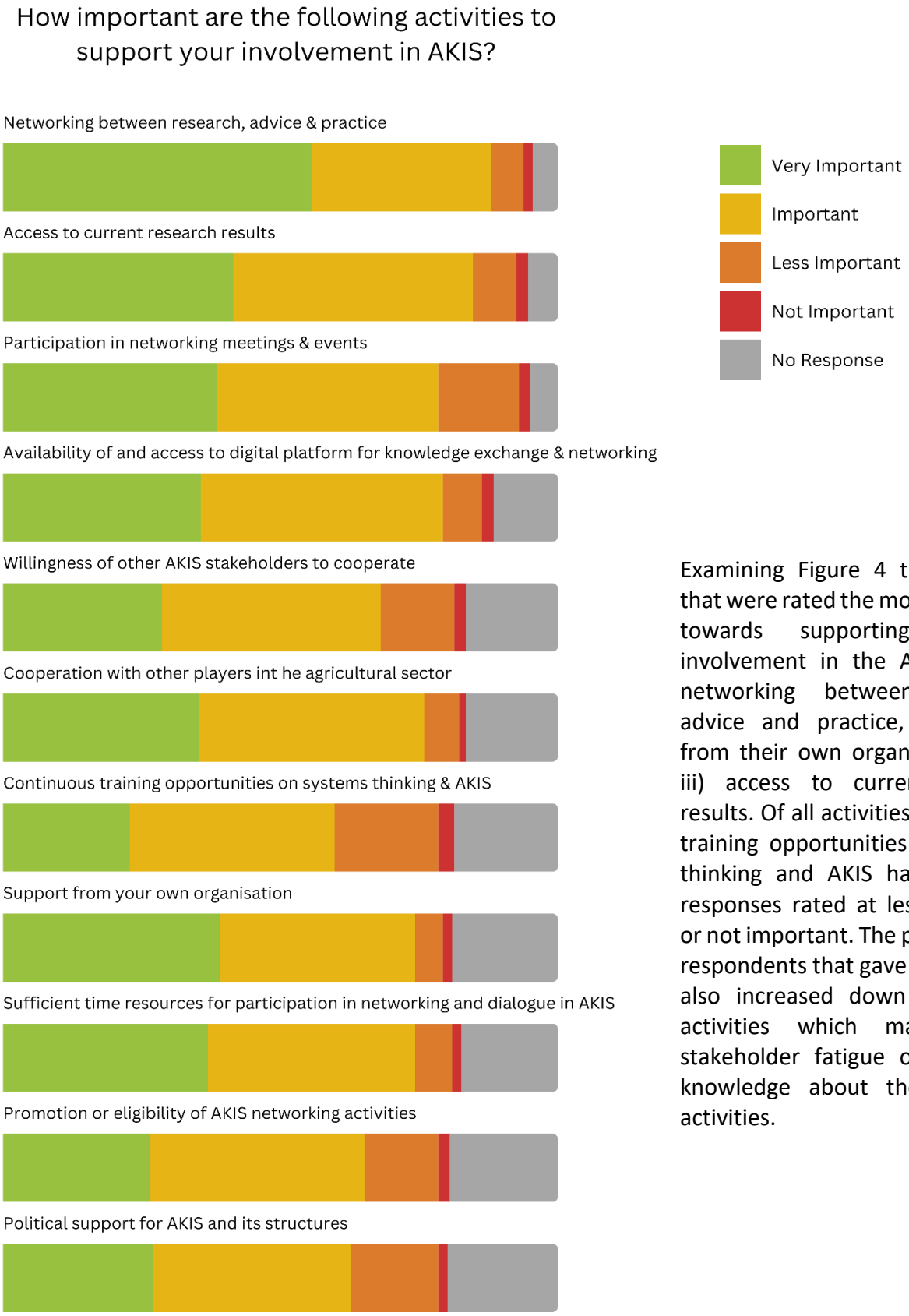

Figure 4 Responses indicating the importance of specific activities towards supporting advisors' involvement in the AKIS

Examining Figure 4 the activities that were rated the most important towards supporting advisors' involvement in the AKIS were i) networking between research, advice and practice, ii) support from their own organisations and iii) access to current research results. Of all activities, continuous training opportunities on systems thinking and AKIS had the most responses rated at less important or not important. The proportion of respondents that gave no response also increased down the list of activities which may indicate stakeholder fatigue or a lack of knowledge about those specific activities.

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5. Update to the compendium of examples

These examples were collected using the same methodology and survey as previously described in Deliverable 1.12. There was a slight change in that the survey form was moved from Microsoft Forms to the EU Survey platform so that it was able to be translated and available in all EU languages.

Deliverable 1.12 previously presented a framework that was developed by the Task 1.4 team which aims to capture essential information about each example that is collected. The framework was developed based on the experience of other EU projects. It was decided that a short set of criteria is preferable. This helps ensure a greater number of examples and allows the team to follow up with individual examples if further information is required. The questions in Table 1 were developed to be used when capturing examples via the online form.

Table 2 Framework for identifying examples of intensive integration of advisors.

Question	Rationale
Name of person providing example	In case further information is required
Email address	In case further information is required
Title of example	Identified for the example
Country where the example is from	Location and environment
Is this example included in your country's/region's CAP Strategic Plan	Enables tracking of examples appearing in CSP's
Please describe the example (100 words)	Rich picture of example.
What were the positive impacts of the action taken in this example	
What was the level of impact of this example	Local, Regional or National
What weakness in the AKIS were addressed in this example	Motivation for the action.
What funding model and costs were involved	Cost and understanding of how funding was directed.
Type of service involved	Public Advisory Service, Private Consultancy Service, Innovation Support Service
What other AKIS actors were involved?	

5.1. Inner-Austrian networking event for advisors on education and consultation topics

Issue/Barrier tackled
Weak client data use, poor marketing, limited cross-selling of advisory & education

Narrative
Inner-Austrian networking event for advisors on education and consultation topics. ~€88,800 total, €221/participant, employer-covered fees Provided by Public Advisory Service; Innovation Support Service. Key AKIS actors involved include chamber directors, advisors, education managers, tourism ministry, HAUP agri college representatives.

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Implications for policy makers/administrations
Improved networking, shared best practices, strategic insights, innovation exchange

Location: Austria - National

Example provided by: Stephanie Bürger (s.burger@lfi-oe.at)

5.2. The CasDAR fund (Special allocation account for agricultural and rural development) and its calls for projects (AAP)

Issue/Barrier tackled
Provide support for the massification of transfer (development) and multi-actor approaches x innovation

Narrative

CasDAR is a fund from levies on farms (% turnover and fixed amount) It uses a funding model of "fixed amount 90€/farm + turnover <350k€ = 0.19%; >350K€ = 0.05% >> contract and AAP. Key actors involved include Public Advisory Service; Private consultancy Service; Innovation Support Service.

Implications for policy makers/administrations

The AAPs are with agris researchers, advisors and education and like the contracts, they relate to current events.

Location: France - National

Example provided by: Myriam Gaspard (myriam.gaspard@occitanie.chambagri.fr)

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5.3. Service Innovation Recherche Développement (IRD) régional (développement = transfert)

Issue/Barrier tackled

Common approach to what innovation is from its detection to its implementation in multi-partnership

Narrative

The regional IRD of the chambers of agriculture is built with 1 referent / department and 1 / CRAO service CasDAR financing via the regional State-Chambers of Agriculture contract. Time spent and pooling resources. It included AKIS actors involved in Public Advisory Service; Private consultancy Service; Innovation Support Service.

Implications for policy makers/administrations

Common culture + action training on the use of a tool - the spiral of innovation for all

Location: France - Regional

Example provided by: Myriam Gaspard (myriam.gaspard@occitanie.chambagri.fr)

AGLAE Project - Farmers share their agroecological practices

Issue/Barrier tackled

The detection of innovation in farms & its characterization shared by the chain of actors

Narrative

This involves bottom up innovation from farms. It employs a funding model in which uses national CasDAR funds, Advisors' time + videos + practical summary sheets. Key AKIS actors involved include Public Advisory Service; Private consultancy Service; Innovation Support Service.

Implications for policy makers/administrations

The innovation is validated by a group of experts from across the SCIA chain.

Location: France - Regional

Example provided by: Myriam Gaspard (myriam.gaspard@occitanie.chambagri.fr)

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5.4. Innov'Action Journey

Issue/Barrier tackled

Multi-actor relationships (research, advisors, education, farmers), information transfer.

Narrative

The Innov'action days can be duplicated in the regions. These are sector days. Funding is obtained via the CasDAR fund and within the framework of the regional PRDA, including investments (advisor days) videos. Key AKIS actors involved include Public Advisory Service; Private consultancy Service; Innovation Support Service.

Implications for policy makers/administrations

All stakeholders share recent data on a current topic (collective work).

Location: France - Regional

Example provided by: Myriam Gaspard (myriam.gaspard@occitanie.chambagri.fr)

5.5. National funding for AKIS multi-actors

Issue/Barrier tackled

Multi-actor approach to solve farmers problems in a bottom up approach: advisors, research, education

Narrative

The CasDAR fuelled by farmers finances through calls of proposals 'AKIS' projects with advisors. The funding model used involved taxes paid by farmers on their income + 90€/farm = casDAR funding >> use for contract and call. Key AKIS actors involved include Public Advisory Service; Private consultancy Service; Innovation Support Service.

Implications for policy makers/administrations

As all the main actors of the AKIS need to be involved to be funded the bottom up approach is done.

Location: France - National

Example provided by: Myriam Gaspard (myriam.gaspard@occitanie.chambagri.fr)

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5.6. Policy tool - CasDAR funding

Issue/Barrier tackled

Knowledge flow and bottom up approach based on the needs of the farmers.

Narrative

Funding for multi approach actor project from taxes coming from farmers. Contract between the ministry and actor, In total 130 million and huge leverage effect by plurennial/ proposal. It involved Public Advisory Service; Private consultancy Service; Innovation Support Service as well as Reserchers farmers educationnal schools , farmers unions

Implications for policy makers/administrations

Multi actor approach is mandatory in the call of proposal with research education farmers advisors

Location: France - National

Example provided by: Myriam Gaspard (myriam.gaspard@occitanie.chambagri.fr)

5.7. Case Study – Lower Saxony

At the 4th AKIS Co-ordination Bodies General Assembly that was held online on 14th – 15th November 2024, Dr. Michael Schrörs presented valuable examples of ways in which work was being done to improve and strengthen the AKIS in Lower Saxony, Germany. These measures focus on strengthening existing AKIS structures rather than creating new structures / institutions as well as improving the cross institutional visibility. Lower Saxony's AKIS is built on a strong foundation of competitive agriculture, advanced research institutions, efficient vocational training, and a lively environment that supports the development of start ups.

The region benefits from a diversity of research institutions such as universities, applied science institutions, and private research centres and vocational training institutions which ensure continuous skill development. Advisory institutions, both public and private, provide essential support for farmers and agribusinesses.

Centers of Competence (CoC) play a crucial role in knowledge dissemination and thematic innovation, covering areas like crop farming, renewable energy, and ecological farming. Key networks such as the EIP Regional Network connect research institutions, agribusiness stakeholders, and advisory bodies to promote strategic research and transformation.

Important annual events also contribute to strengthening the AKIS, examples of such events include the Beraterhochschultagung, which facilitates collaboration between advisers and researchers, and Innovate!, an agricultural and food start up fair that connects entrepreneurs, young farmers, and investors.

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6. Conclusion

Integrating advisors into the AKIS is a task that requires a great deal of work, the first steps of which are to identify the barriers to integration. Results from both the workshop and survey provide a clear starting point in identifying and understanding these barriers.

A large proportion of respondents to the survey that considered involvement in the AKIS to be not relevant, indicated that they did so because they did not have knowledge of the AKIS. The first step here is to then promote knowledge and an understanding of the AKIS to advisors so that they are aware of the system in which they work and can communicate with other actors in the AKIS using the same language.

One of the activities that were considered very important to supporting advisors' involvement in the AKIS was networking among research, advisory and practice. This was also reflected in the feedback from the workshop that highlighted the limited interactions and collaboration between advisors and researchers. This was especially elaborated on in the feedback received under the topics of "Perception of advisors by other actors in the AKIS" and "Networking & Knowledge Exchange".

Another activity identified as important in the survey results was access to current research results. This lack of access was also strongly reflected in feedback across all topics discussed during the workshop with prioritised feedback points highlighting the need for training to keep up to date with the most recent research, a lack of information flow from research to private advisory organisations, isolation of advisors both within their organisations and within the AKIS. This lack of access is further compounded by insufficient support and spaces that allow for collaboration and information exchange between advisors and other actors in the AKIS.

Several themes also emerged from the analysis of the workshop results including the need for continued skills and training especially "soft skills", the high workload of advisors, limited collaboration with advisors on policy development and the direction research should take based on the needs of the farmer. In general, the work and role of the advisor is undervalued by other actors in the AKIS which makes it especially difficult for them to fully integrate into the AKIS as they are not recognised by other actors as key players.

Overall, this deliverable provides a good starting point to further develop this task and begin to work towards collaborating further with advisors and other actors in the AKIS in order to more intensively integrate advisors into the AKIS.

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7. References

Deliverable 1.12 Compendium of how advisors can be intensively integrated into the AKIS

Moira Maguire & Brid Delahunt (2017) Doing a thematic analysis: A Practical, Step-by-step Guide, All Ireland Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education,8:3, 3351-33514

Virginia Braun & Victoria Clarke (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology, Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3:2, 77- 101

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8. Annex

Introduction and background to the survey

Welcome!

The International Academy for Rural Advisory Services (IALB), the European Forum for Agricultural and Rural Advisory Services (EUFRAS), the South Eastern European Advisory Service Network (SEASN) and the Horizon Europe project modernAKIS are jointly conducting this survey to better understand the needs and challenges of agricultural advisors and advisory organisations. The aim is to derive support offers for better networking and further development of advisory services in rural areas. In addition, demands and proposals are to be developed for better anchoring and support of advisory services and vocational training in the EU's Common Agricultural Policy after 2027.

Your answers will remain anonymous and confidential.

Participation takes about 15 minutes. You can interrupt the survey at any time and continue later. Thank you for making an important contribution with your knowledge and experience! If you are interested in the results of this survey, you can enter your contact details at the end before the submission.

Socio-demographic data

- Gender (m/f/x/not specified)
- Age (groupe)
    - <21 years
    - 21-30 years
    - 31-40 years
    - 41-50 years
    - 51-60 years
    - >60 years
- Country (selection) (drop-down) (ENGLISH)
- I am active ...
    - in public administration
    - in agricultural education and training
    - in research
    - as an independent advisor
    - as an advisor in a public advisory organisation
    - as a advisor in a private advisory organisation
    - in the coordination of advice in a public advisory organisation
    - in the coordination of advice in a private advisory organisation
- In which specialist area(s) do you work? (Selection - multiple choice)
    - Business Administration/Corporate Management
    - Plant production
    - Animal production
    - Housekeeping (professional, responsible economic management in the company household)
    - Diversification including direct marketing
    - Law
    - Energy
    - Forestry
    - Promotion
    - Innovation and process support

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  - Natural resources (environmental, climate, resource protection, ...)
  - Organic farming, organic agriculture
  - Digitalisation, agricultural technology
  - Psychosocial counselling
  - Other (free text)
- How many years of professional experience do you have in providing advice?
  - 0-5 years
  - 6-10 years
  - 11-15 years
  - 16-20 years
  - More than 20 years
- Do you also work in (continuous) education / as a trainer?
  - Yes/No
- What methods do you use in your work in advice / education?
  - Individual advice
  - Group advice
  - Online advice
  - On-site advice
  - Telephone advice
  - Peer-to-peer advice (e.g. stable schools, working groups, discussion groups)
  - Coordination and management
  - Classroom courses (seminars, workshops, etc.)
  - Webinars
  - Farminars
  - Online courses
  - Excursions
  - Demonstrations on the farm
  - Other educational events (e.g. specialist days)
  - Other:
- Are you or is your organisation a member of one of the following advisory networks: IALB, EUFRAS, SEASN?
  - Yes/no/don't know
- If yes, which one? (multiple choice)
  - IALB
  - EUFRAS
  - SEASN
- Are you or is your organisation a member of one of the following advisory networks funded by Horizon2020/Horizon Europe?
  - i2connect
  - ClimateSmartAvisors
  - Organic Advice Network
  - ATTRACTISS
  - AdvisoryNetPEST
  - LiveNet
  - Stratus

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- COREnet
- EU4Advice
- NBSoil
- FORADVISE
- none
- other (please insert name + link):

Expertise and knowledge

Professional qualification and access to up-to-date expertise

1. How would you rate your professional qualifications?
   - Very good
   - Good
   - Sufficient
   - Insufficient
2. How would you rate your access to the latest expertise?
   - Very good
   - Good
   - Sufficient
   - Insufficient
3. Where do you get most of your expertise?
   - In my country
   - Abroad
   - Both
4. Which language do you prefer to use to obtain up-to-date expertise?
   - Own mother tongue
   - English
   - No preference
5. What are the biggest obstacles for you in obtaining up-to-date expertise?
   - Too little time
   - Costs too high
   - Lack of availability of continuous training programmes that meet my needs
   - Lack of knowledge about available offers/sources
   - Lack of technical know-how, e.g. to use online sources
   - Lack of clarity of existing knowledge platforms and knowledge sources
   - Language barriers
   - Lack of support within my own organisation
   - Lack of support through funding
   - Other (free text)

Methodological and didactic skills and competences

Methodological-didactic competences are skills that help advisors to convey their knowledge effectively. They include the selection and application of suitable methods and techniques to prepare and present advisory content in an understandable and appealing way. Examples include skills for visualising content, conducting conversations and communication, presenting content and digital skills, i.e. the ability to use digital tools effectively.

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6. Which methodological and didactic skills and competences will be particularly important in providing advice in the coming years? (open question)
7. How important are methodological and didactic skills and competences for you in your work?
    - Very important
    - Important
    - Less important
    - Not important
8. How would you rate your methodological and didactic skills and competences?
    - Very good
    - Good
    - Sufficient
    - Insufficient
9. Do you have any methodological-didactic training or further training? (Yes/No)
10. Are you familiar with the CECRA programmes (www.cecra.net) for methodological and didactic skills development? (list all modules for your information)
    - Yes, already used.
    - Yes, but not yet used.
    - No, I don't know it.
    - Personal Development / My Profile as a Consultant
    - Communication and Building Relationships in Advisory Work
    - Teamwork and Team Leadership
    - Rhetoric / Presentation
    - Self-Management and Time Management
    - Project Management
    - Shaping Advisory Processes
    - Change management
    - Moderation and Facilitation
    - Marketing of advisory services
    - Event Management
    - Advising and Supporting Groups
    - Basics of Mediation
    - Advising and Supporting Enterprises in Strategic Issues
    - Introduction to Coaching
    - Shaping Innovation Processes - Supporting networks
    - Basics of Participation
    - Individual Company Consulting Online
    - Working with Groups Online
    - Reflection and further development of own consulting practice
11. Where do you currently or preferably obtain your specialist knowledge or your knowledge of methodological and didactic skills and competences? (selection)
    - Online events (webinars, online seminars, online workshops, online lectures)
    - Face-to-face events (courses, seminars, etc.)
    - Specialist meetings/conferences
    - Exchange with professional colleagues (peer-to-peer)

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- Cross-visits (visits to farms in other European regions to exchange technical knowledge and innovative agricultural methods)
- (professional) Newsletter
- Trade journals (print or digital)
- Continuous training and provision of knowledge by my own organisation
- Knowledge platforms (e.g. Organic eprints, i2connect)
- Online courses, tutorials, videos
- Podcasts
- Job shadowing
- Mentoring
- Other: [Text field]

Requirements for advisor training

12. Does your country / organisation have minimum requirements for the methodological training of advisors? (Yes/No/Don't know)
13. If 15 = yes: The minimum requirements for methodological and didactic training are...
    - an internal quality specification of the organisation
    - a legal/subsidy law requirement
    - both
    - I don't know
14. If 15 = NO: Do you think it would be important to have minimum requirements for methodological and didactic training? (Yes/No)

Framework conditions for advice

15. Please rate how satisfied you are with the following organisational framework conditions for your advisory activities:
    - Information and knowledge management
    - Good IT equipment (laptop, mobile phone, tablet, open internet access, etc.)
    - Sufficient human resources
    - Appreciative working atmosphere
    - Access to continuous training and up-to-date expertise
    - Good back-office support (infrastructure, support from specialised advisors)
    - Availability of digital advice tools
    - Flexible working time organisation
    - Home office regulation
    - Provision/availability of means of transport (e.g. company cars)
    - Less time required for documentation and administration
    - Support through cross-regional cooperation (e.g. contact and exchange with expert advisors from other federal states/provinces)
    - Digital customer management
16. Are your advisory services financially supported by a national, regional or EU co-financed funding programme?
    - Yes, funding from national or regional funds
    - Yes, support from CAP funds
    - No, no financial support.

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- I don't know.

17. If 27=yes: Support for your advisory services: To what extent do you agree with the following statements (1 strongly agree - 4 strongly disagree)
    - Support for my advisory services is important, without it I would not be able to provide my advisory services, or at least not in the appropriate quality.
    - Support for my advisory services is particularly important in the area of public goods issues; without it, these would not be transported to the farmers.
    - My advisory services cannot be financed on the market, so I need financial support.
    - The support for my advisory services is unbureaucratic and easy to access and process.
    - The support for my advisory services is sufficient and covers the actual costs.
    - There is more demand for advice than there is financial support available.
    - The relevant topics of agricultural and forestry operations are covered by the support for advisory services.
18. If 27 = no: No support for your advisory services: To what extent do you agree with the following statements (1 strongly agree - 4 strongly disagree)
    - There is no support for advisory services that I/my organisation could make use of.
    - My advisory services are not financially supported, but I would need funding.
    - My advisory services can be financed on the market, I don't need any financial support.
    - The support for advisory services is too bureaucratic and therefore not feasible for me/my organisation.

How can advice be better supported by the CAP from 2027? (For all, but then filterable by group)

19. How helpful do you find the CAP tools for your work in advice?
    - Very important
    - Important
    - Less important
    - Not important at all
20. How could the CAP better support your advisory activities after 2027? (free text)
    - Description: Please name ideas, concrete suggestions for improvement and simplification, measures or instruments that you consider useful and that could improve the CAP's support for advice!

Integration into the AKIS (Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System)

The Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS) refers to a network of organisations, institutions and actors that create, disseminate and apply information, knowledge and innovations for agriculture. These include research institutions, educational institutions, agricultural advisory services, companies, rural communities, foresters and farmers themselves.

Agricultural advisory services play a central role within AKIS, as they act as a bridge between research and practice. Advisors translate scientific findings into practical solutions, support farmers in decision-making processes and promote the transfer of knowledge and innovation. Advisors who are heavily involved in AKIS are actively involved in knowledge generation and knowledge transfer and are well networked with other actors in AKIS.

21. Which topics, new knowledge and innovations are requested by farmers in the advisory service? (free text)
22. How do you rate the importance of your involvement in the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS)?

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- Very relevant
- Relevant
- Less relevant
- Not relevant

23. If 36 = is not relevant: For what reason are you not included in your country's AKIS? (selection)
    - I do not know AKIS.
    - I'm too busy.
    - I have no interest in being part of the AKIS.
    - I do not have access to AKIS.
    - Colleagues in my organisation take on this task.
    - Other:
24. How important are the following activities to support your involvement in the AKIS?
    - Networking between research, advice and practice
    - Access to current research results
    - Participation in network meetings and events
    - Availability of and access to digital platforms for knowledge exchange & networking
    - Willingness of other AKIS stakeholders to cooperate
    - Cooperation with other players in the agricultural sector
    - Continuous training opportunities on systems thinking and AKIS
    - Support from your own organisation
    - Sufficient time resources for participation in networking and dialogue in AKIS
    - Promotion or eligibility of AKIS networking activities
    - Political support for AKIS and its structures

Requirements and expectations of European networking

25. How important are the following networking opportunities with colleagues outside your organisation for you? (1= very important - 4 = not important)
    - Participation in specialist conferences and workshops
    - EUFRAS/IALB/SEASN Annual Conference
    - Regional network meetings or regular roundtables for advisors
    - European networking meetings
    - Cooperation in projects or working groups
    - Excursions and practical visits to farms
    - Cross-country visits to other advisory organisations
    - Continuous education and training with personal exchange
26. Do you use digital networking platforms for advisors, such as AKISconnect.eu or the i2connect advisors database? (Yes/No)
27. If 42 = yes: Which digital networking platforms for advisors do you use?
    - Please insert name and link!
28. What requirements do you have for digital networking platforms for advisors? Please rate the following statements with (1 = very important to 4 = not at all important)
    - Possibility of direct communication with other advisors, e.g. through chats or video calls
    - Functions such as discussion forums for exchanging experiences among advisors
    - Personalisation options - adapt content and notifications to your own interests and needs.
    - Mobile-friendliness - accessibility via smartphones and tablets

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- Interactive learning opportunities - access to webinars, training courses or tutorials directly on the platform.
- In addition to networking with professional colleagues, the platform is also intended to provide access to specialist knowledge.
- Calendar of relevant activities and events from European projects
- a European platform for all advisors and other AKIS stakeholders instead of many isolated solutions on different websites

29. You have indicated that you or your organisation are a member of an advisory network. Which networking activities and services would you like to see more of from IALB, EUFRAS or SEASN? (Selection)
    - Increase the representation of interests and visibility of education and advice
    - Specialist training (online and/or face-to-face)
    - Methodological training (online and/or face-to-face)
    - Networking events (presence)
    - Networking activities (online)
    - Other (free text)
30. What ideas or expectations do you have for improving the work of these advisory networks?
    - Free text

Final question (open question) and feedback

Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

Contact details: yes/no - Conditionality

Check and delete send --> send immediately after entering your e-mail address

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