

modern AKIS

Together for Systems' Innovation

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modernAKIS Together for Systems' Innovation

Modernisation of Agriculture through more efficient and effective Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems

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DEC	Websites, patent fillings, videos, etc.	☐			
OTHER		☐			

Project management	**Institution**	
Person in charge	Avion Phillips	Teagasc
Work package	WP3	
Work package leader	Mark Gibson	Teagasc
Author(s)	Avion Phillips	Teagasc
Addition Authors		
Quality reviewers	Marleen Gysen Tiina Hartman	BBP MoAF
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1. Executive Summary

Task 3.1 Being part of the AKIS: Capacity building of actors to conceptualise valuable, relevant and credible AKIS models, was designed to follow a logical workflow aimed at improving the capacity of project partners to understand the AKIS. This report collects the individual member state reports on each of their national workshops. During the period October 2024 (M26) to February 2025 (M30) each project partner was tasked with carrying out a capacity development workshop in their country. The target audience for these workshops was mainly the AKIS coordination body in each country as well as other key actors with a high degree of influence. This target audience is comprised of very busy actors and finding a common time that they were all able to come together was a significant challenge in some member states. This has resulted in a few member states having workshops in late February and even early March 2025 (M31).

Support for this activity was provided through several capacity development camp exercises (D3.5), which were targeted at the facilitators of the national workshops in each member state. A toolkit (D3.3) was also developed and provided to facilitators in addition to content aimed at building capacity among AKIS actors through e-Learning modules (D3.1).

Each member state report included in this deliverable provides a summary of the workshop including the agenda of the day, a summary of the attendees, key lessons learned and the feedback received from attendees. A total of thirteen country reports are presented in this deliverable.

The national workshops received positive feedback from participants across member states, with many reporting a better understanding of AKIS. Interactive approaches and networking opportunities were highly valued, fostering connections among AKIS actors. While there was moderate interest in the e-Learning modules and the AKISconnect.eu platform, some challenges were noted. Participants felt that more time was needed to engage with complex material, and better inclusion of specific AKIS groups, such as farmers and advisors, was suggested.

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2. Introduction

Task 3.1 Being part of the AKIS: Capacity building of actors to conceptualise valuable, relevant and credible AKIS models, was designed to follow a logical workflow aimed at improving the capacity of project partners to understand the AKIS. There are three main components to the workflow for this task.

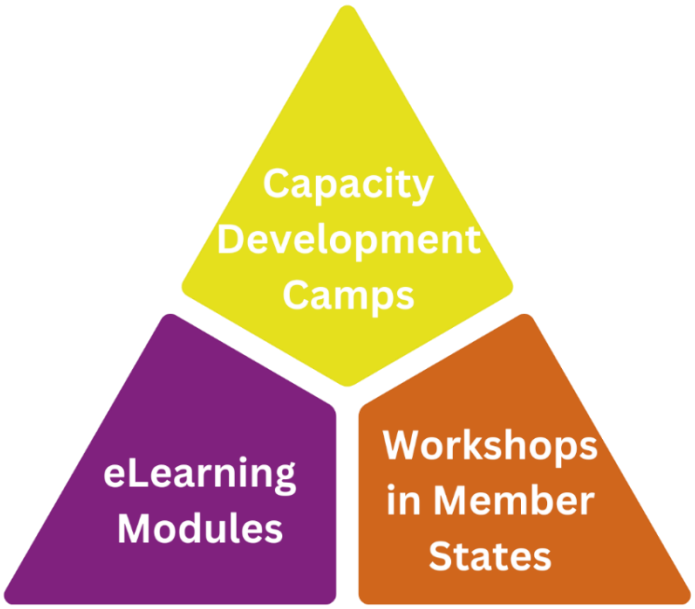

Figure 1 Components of the work flow for Task 3.1

The content of this report (D3.7) is focused on the workshops conducted in the Member States based on the content of the eLearning modules (D3.1) and supported by the capacity development camps (D3.5).

During the period October 2024 (M26) to February 2025 (M30) each project partner was tasked with carrying out a capacity development workshop in their country. The target audience for these workshops was mainly the AKIS coordination body in each country as well as other key actors with a high degree of influence. This target audience is comprised of very busy actors and finding a common time that they were all able to come together was a significant challenge in some member states. This has resulted in a few member states having workshops in late February and even early March 2025 (M31). This has resulted in a slight delay to this deliverable, in an attempt to include reports from as many member states as possible, in order to have a more robust deliverable.

In addition to support through capacity development camps, WP3 also provided a toolkit to facilitators (D3.3) which contained sample agendas and outlines for the workshops as well as different games and activities that could be used to help explain the content of the modules and engage with attendees. A template for reporting on the event was also shared with facilitators.

This deliverable will present these country reports as well as the general feedback from attendees regarding these events. Each country report includes the agenda of the event, the organisations that attendees belong to and key findings or lessons learnt during the workshops. These findings will be essential to improving this process as the second iteration of these exercises begins under Task 3.2 Governance in the AKIS.

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3. Country Reports

3.1. Belgium

Event Summary

The 2025 modernAKIS training day in Belgium was a joint collaboration between modernAKIS partner Boerenbond Projects (BBP), the Flemish AKIS Coordination Body, the Agency of Agriculture and Fisheries (Agentschap voor Landbouw en Zeevisserij), and the Flemish Rural Network (Vlaams Ruraal Netwerk).

Following a request from BBP to organise a modernAKIS training day during a meeting with the aforementioned partners, it was quickly decided to link this event with a training session on the launch of the call for innovation projects (EIP-Agri Operational Groups and VLIF support for innovative investments), focusing on how to write a successful proposal. This approach aimed to attract a broader audience—especially farmers and advisors—by encouraging them to come to Brussels and participate.

The programme reflected this collaboration:

Brussels, Wednesday 26th February 2025

9:30 – 9:45	Welcome Margo Weckx (Flemish Rural Network)
9:45 – 10:45	Innovation funding mechanisms Els Lapage (AKIS Coordination Body) Peter Coucke (Coordinator EIP-Agri Operational Groups) Marleen Mertens (Coordinator VLIF fund for innovative investments) Presentation modernAKIS project Marleen Gysen (BBP, modernAKIS partner)
10:45 – 11:00	Coffee break
11:00 – 12:30	AKIS-in-Play: Role play country game Facilitators Marleen Gysen, Sander Herinckx and Gemma Willems (BBP, modernAKIS partner)
12:30 – 13:30	Network lunch
13:30 – 14:15	Tips & tricks for applying (multi-actor) innovation projects Peter Coucke (Coordinator EIP-Agri Operational Groups) Marleen Mertens (Coordinator VLIF fund for innovative investments) Marleen Gysen (BBP, modernAKIS partner)
14:15 – 15:30	Choice between 2 workshops: • PESTLE Analysis (Sander Herinckx - BBP, modernAKIS partner) • Network Analysis (Marleen Gysen – BBP, modernAKIS partner)

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Invitations were sent by the Flemish Rural Network and widely distributed by Boerenbond Projects via email, the weekly newsletter, and an article in the weekly agricultural magazine of the farmers' organisation Boerenbond. A total of **46 participants** attended the training day, representing key AKIS actors, including farmers, farmers' organisations, advisors, researchers, and policymakers.

This was considered a great success, given that it was the first time the event had been organised and that a 10-day train strike had already been announced when the invitations were sent out.

Some participants attended both morning and afternoon, some only morning or afternoon.

1. During the **AKIS-in-Play** session, Marleen Gysen from Boerenbond Projects first gave an **introduction to both AKIS and the modernAKIS project** (objectives, project activities, AKISConnect platform) and then explained the role-play country game. The participants were divided into two groups and the facilitators explained the game again - but with a more practical approach. After reading the actor cards and getting to know the country they were playing in, the conversations started.

   The participants came from different backgrounds: farmers, farmers' organisations, consultants, (practical) researchers and government (Agency for Agriculture and Fisheries). But during the game they were fully immersed in their assigned roles. Many participants commented afterwards that this provided an interesting perspective. This is certainly a big plus of the game.

   The different groups - although not suggested by the facilitator - chose a specific angle. For example, one group specifically chose the case of hemp cultivation and went quite far in drawing up a roadmap.

   One difficulty in the game was that most of the delegates had little or no knowledge of AKIS or the measures in Art. 74. This meant that the reporting template was not quite as complete as the designers of the game had intended. However, this was not really an obstacle to the discussions and the exchange of ideas.

   At the end of the game, the groups reported back to each other. This was done by the participants in the role of the 'policy maker', who in both groups happened to be a farmer in real life!

2. In the afternoon, Marleen Gysen from Boerenbond Projects again introduced participants to the modernAKIS project, this time focusing on the linkages between AKIS actors and on external factors that have an impact on initiatives, whether as threats or opportunities. This was additional to the tips and tricks provided by the coordinators of the two calls for innovation projects, and also served as an introduction to the two workshops participants could choose from.
3. Boerenbond Projects facilitated two workshops: **PESTLE Analysis**, which explored external factors, and **Network Analysis**, which examined the people, organisations, and connections needed to achieve specific goals.
4. A follow-up email was sent to participants on Monday 3rd March 2025, including the presentations, information on the modernAKIS workshops, a link to AKISConnect.eu, and the evaluation form.

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Figure 2 Photo of actors participating in the AKIS at Play game during the Belgian national workshop

Attendee Summary

Table 1 Organizations represented by attendees at the Belgian national workshop

Organisation	Number of attendees	Role (If any)
Flemish Agency of Agriculture and Fisheries	6	AKIS CB
Flemish Rural Network	2	CAP Network member
Other Agencies	5	
Boerenbond Projects	8	modernAKIS project partner
Advisors (other than Boerenbond)	3	1 of them is national CoP member
Farmers	13	
Farmers organisations (other than Boerenbond)	5	
Researchers	3	
Education	1	

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Key Outcomes or Lessons Learned

Key takeaways include:

Joint collaboration works well: Working together was a great way to spark interest and attract a broad mix of AKIS actors. Farmers and private advisors, who often don't have the time or resources to join these kinds of meetings or training sessions, were more willing to take part in this format.

Knowledge gaps weren't a barrier for interesting discussion: One challenge was that many participants of the Role Play had little or no prior knowledge of AKIS or the measures in Article 74. Because of this, the reporting template wasn't filled in as completely as intended. However, this didn't get in the way of discussions or the exchange of ideas—it just meant the focus was more on learning and sharing perspectives.

The session was a nice opportunity to introduce AKIS actors to the modernAKIS project, AKISConnect.eu, and the services we offer through it.

Feedback from Attendees

The evaluation was organised by the Flemish Rural Network. They sent out a survey afterward, but unfortunately, only a few attendees—just 21%—responded.

However, those who did take the time to fill it out were very positive, both about the sessions themselves and the day as a whole.

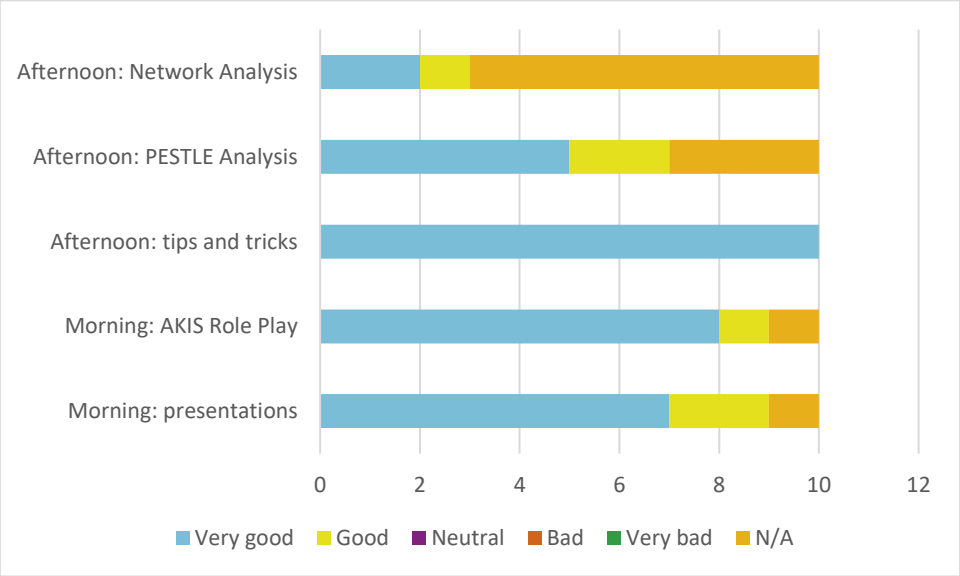

Figure 3 Feedback on content of the Belgian national workshop

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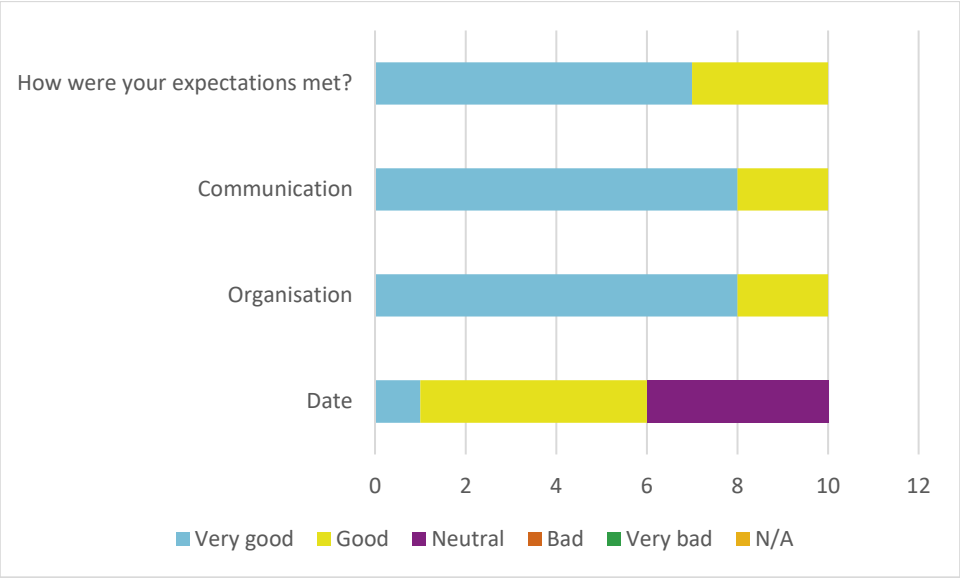

Figure 4 Feedback on organization of the Belgian national workshop

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3.2. Estonia

Event Summary

Main title: **How to achieve a functioning and collaborative AKIS?**

The seminar was held in person, on 12th of December 2024.

Location: Teaduse 4, Saku, Harjumaa Estonia (METK building)

Introduction: The Agricultural and Fisheries Development Plan (AFP) and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) strategic plan envisage the development of a coherent and comprehensive agricultural knowledge transfer and innovation system (AKIS), with the Centre of Estonian Rural Research and Knowledge as the central coordinator. It is not easy to grasp the diverse parties in AKIS, their roles and the multitude of financing instruments for activities. In order to reach a common agreement with the AKIS participants, we have prepared a development vision document, to which we have received feedback in smaller discussions. We invite you to jointly seek working solutions on how we can best fulfil the roles of the parties set out in the AKIS vision, what prerequisites and conditions are necessary for this, and how we can best achieve the targeted coherence.

The materials and documents provided: https://www.pikk.ee/sundmus/koostoine_akis/

Agenda (11:00 – 15:00):

- The Ministry of Regional Development and Agriculture's expectations for the organization of AKIS - Tõnis Tänav, Deputy Secretary General
- The view on the organization of AKIS by METK – Hanna Tamsalu and Katrin Pihor, METK
- Project modernAKIS and the materials from the modernAKIS project (found on akisconnect.eu): systemic approach; AKIS as a system; AKIS diagnosis. – Hanna Tamsalu, METK
- Comparisation of the countries organisations (modernAKIS D1.10). Excerpts from the Estonian report (i2connect)– Hanna Tamsalu, METK
- Lunch
- Discussions in tables: What would work or need correction in the AKIS design?
    - **Table 1**: Strengths of connections.
    - **Table 2 and 3**: Focus topics
- Conclusions and next steps

The seminar was recorded and can be viewed later. https://www.youtube.com/@maainfo/streams The event had a post in Linkedin and Facebook by METK.

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Attendee Summary

Table 2 Organizations represented by attendees at the Estonian national workshop

ORGANISATION	ROLE (IF ANY)	NO OF PERSONS
Ministry of Regional Development and Agriculture	CB	3
Ministry of Regional Development and Agriculture	Government	2
Centre of Estonian Rural Research and Knowledge	CB/ AKIS operation	5
Centre of Estonian Rural Research and Knowledge	CAP Network	3
Centre of Estonian Rural Research and Knowledge	Research	2
University of Life Sciences	Research/ Education	3
Agricultural Registers and Information Board	Paying Agency	3
Organisations, FBO	Farmers and producers	8
Estonian Rural Advisory Service NGO	Advisors	1

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Key Outcomes or Lessons Learned

- The main focus was on the understanding the AKIS – that it is a wide concept, that is not only driven by CAP support. The expectations for the seminar were high as the financing scheme of AKIS related knowledge transfer activities are changing.
- The presentation by MoA gave background representing the local context. This gave the possibility to show connections to the modernAKIS learning modules and theoretical background.

As the time for the seminar was not perfect (in December), the seminar was live-broadcasted through the CAP network YouTube channel.

Feedback from Attendees

The attendees in the first coffee-break recognised that as they do know the words behind the acronym AKIS, the concept is still wide and not clear enough. During the presentation of Ministry of Regional Affairs and Agriculture (MoA), several questions were raised about the scope, focus actors and support possibilities.

During the day, slido.com polls were used. A lot of discussions happened during the table-exercises:

- The scope of AKIS was not very clear (Agriculture and interrelated fields – do we include the tire shops located in the countryside? Forestry? Fisheries? Local government and elementary schools influence farmers a lot)
- MoA should have more focus on research, FB organisations and cooperatives, outside METK
- From the view of METK - innovation ladder, value added and long-term vision – were picked out;
- Based on the answers, the possibility to go into the **AKISConnect website** was rated as 4.0 (on the scale of 1-5 where 5 was most probable: **50% answers were given to 5**) and possibility to go to read country reports was rated 3.0 (on the scale of 1-5: 40% of the answers were given to 3).
- After the table-discussions and presentations, the main question was: How do we go on from here? How these points raised will have influence on policies and support schemes? When do the AKIS start to work in full?
- The overall satisfaction score was 4,1 (38% rated 5, others equally 3 and 4)



Figure 5 Photo of actors participating to the Estonian national workshop

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3.3. Finland

Event Summary

Main title: What can we learn from Estonian AKIS?

The seminar was held online, on 25th of February 2025.

Location: Microsoft Teams. https://maaseutuverkosto.fi/tapahtumat/mita-voimme-oppia-viron-akisista/

Introduction: In Estonia, the work on the AKIS, which refers to agricultural knowledge transfer, is coordinated by METK. As part of the modernAKIS project, Hanna Tamsalu will tell Finnish actors about their experiences and lessons learned.

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) envisages the development of a coherent and comprehensive agricultural knowledge transfer and innovation system (AKIS). The AKIS framework describes the exchange of information related to and supporting the activities of agricultural and rural enterprises: advice, development of expertise, creation and implementation of innovations, research, administration, and other stakeholders. Information flows between all of these in different ways, and through AKIS, this is intended to be developed to support the renewal of farms and other rural enterprises and strengthen their competitiveness, also in a changing operating environment.

The event is organized by the modernAKIS project, funded by the Horizon Europe program.

Agenda (10:00 – 12:00 EET):

Introduction of modernAKIS project, the materials, training modules and tools - Tiina Hartmann, Maa- ja metsätalousministeriö; Susanna Lahnamäki-Kivelä, LUKE

The funding of Estonian AKIS (*AKIS rahoitus*) - Hanna Tamsalu, METK

A study of the actors and roles of the Finnish AKIS (*Selvitys Suomen maatalouden osaamis- ja innovaatiojärjestelmän toimijoista ja rooleista*) - Tiina Hartmann, Maa- ja metsätalousministeriö;

Discussion

One of the seminar presentations was recorded and the recording will be posted on the AgriHub YouTube account https://www.youtube.com/@agrihubi/videos

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Attendee Summary

The expected attendees were part of a group that meets on several occasions on AKIS matters in Finland. Still, the was open to attend for everybody by the AgriHubi website.

Table 3 Organizations represented by attendees at the Finnish national workshop

ORGANISATION	ROLE (IF ANY)	NO OF PERSONS
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland	Government	4
LUKE, Natural Resources Institute	CB	1
Centre of Estonian Rural Research and Knowledge	CB/ AKIS operation	1
Ruokavirasto	CAP Network	2
HAMK, Hämeen ammattikorkeakoulu	VOC School	1

Key Outcomes or Lessons Learned

There are possibilities to finance AKIS organisation and it's several activities through CAP strategic plan. In this workshop, the way how Estonian AKIS is organised and financed, was be presented. This group was already familiar of the concept of modernAKIS and the general content of modules. Referral to them inbetween presentation/discussion was possible.

The presentation of modernAKIS made participants aware, that this detailed information helps to describe the possibilities of AKIS to newcomers. And there are tools to help innovation support services (ISS): www.AKISconnect.eu.

During the overview of Estonian AKIS funding from CAP SP interventions, emphasis was made to the understanding that AKIS is not only driven by CAP support. Still, in order to deepen collaboration with actors (this takes time and extra effort), support for the organisation (back-office) is essential. Questions were made mostly about practical issues in Estonia: collecting-analysing the needs of stakeholders, training of advisors (incl using CECRA) and organising procurements for knowledge transfer activities.

The study of Finnish AKIS, showed the relationships and importance of actors. The need of constant communication among the actors and stakeholders was clearly stated (links to the module 2: Understanding subsystems & module 3: Diagnosis of the AKIS).

Discussion evolved about the advisory service providers and marketing AKIS as a tool for responding to the needs of knowledge. The participants were well acquainted with the concept of AKIS and modernAKIS training modules content (boundaries, subsystems, connections). This gave the possibility to think deeper – is there a need for farmers or entrepreneurs to know the concept of AKIS as they need rather knowledge and advice to be provided smoothly, timely and on the point (AKIS is needed for the organising the connections and flow).

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The time for the seminar was not perfect (school-holiday week), the presentations were made available to all the formed group members for further discussions.

Feedback from Attendees

Feedback survey sent to attendees via email, responses are still outstanding.

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3.4. Hungary

Event Summary

The workshop was held on November 12, 2024. Participants (21 person) composed of representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture's Agricultural Modernization Department (Coordination Body), the Managing Authority, the paying agency (Hungarian State Treasury), the Rural and Regional Development Support Unit, the Green Support Unit, the National Chamber of Agriculture, and the Innovation and Digitalization Support Unit.

The event was held in person (F2F) in AKI Institute of Agricultural Economics, from 1:00 PM to 4:30 PM. The aim of the workshop was to achieve a common understanding of the complexity of the AKIS system, and the basic concepts related to the implementation of the AKIS strategy.

The e-learning modules provided the methodological basis for the workshop.

The event consisted of 3 main parts:

theoretical background – plenary presentation

exploration of the actors and the relationships between actors of three possible AKIS subsystems - interactive session

reporting and discussion of conclusions – plenary discussion

The workshop agenda was set as follows:

13:00 – 14:00 Registration, networking lunch

14:00 – 14:15 Welcome

14:15 – 14:40 Presentation on AKIS systemic approach

14:40 – 14:50 Introduction to the workshop

14:50 – 15:50 Interactive session

15:50 – 16:25 Wrap up

Welcome (Krisztina Magócs)

objective of the meeting was clarified – understanding AKIS as a system

the level of knowledge of the modules and personal expectations were asked

Presentation on AKIS systemic approach was held by Lívia Kránitz. In the first part of her presentation, Lívia provided a theoretical background on the concept of innovation and innovation systems, the evoluton of the agricultural innovation system concept and its legislative background and the AKIS strategic approach. In the secon part she integrated the introduction of the e-learning module with the results of the research done by AKI on innovation ecosystem in Hungary. This work is in many ways analogous to AKIS diagnosis, collecting and analysing information on AKIS actors, their relations, the subsystems, borders, influencing factors etc.

Interactive session:

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Livia also explained the course of the workshop. World Coffee method was used to analyze the four examined AKIS subsystems (research, education, farming, extension services). Small groups were formed, each spending 30 minutes examining a given pillar, then rotating to analyze another pillar for 20 minutes, and finally switching again to analyze the third and fourth pillars for an additional 5 minutes each.

In the first step, participants identified the key actors of the national AKIS system (from the viewpoint of the CB and the CAP network) and discussed the characteristics of relationships between actors based on the following criteria:

strong-weak (thick-thin);

cooperative-competitive (green-red);

formal-informal (yellow for formal);

direction: mutual-unilateral (arrow)

Interpretation:

strong: decisive for operation (support, resource sharing, regular knowledge transfer)

weak: not decisive

formal: contract-based, institutionalized

informal: not contract-based

direction: indicating the typical direction. If there is regular feedback, then it is bidirectional.

The relationships were defined from the perspective of the AKIS Coordination Body (CB) and the CAP network (Rural and Regional Development Support Unit, Green Support Unit, Innovation and Digitalization Support Unit) to make them visible to the organizations.

Groups then identified gaps and opportunities: isolated actors or underused relationships. At last groups dicussed tools that can help to create missing links and strengthen weak relations.

For the four groups, the facilitators remained the same throughout (education - Eszter Hamza, head of department, scientific advisor, Social Research Department, AKI; research - Lívia Kránitz, group leader, senior expert, Innovation and Digitalization Support Group, AKI; advisory services - Ágnes Jakab, agricultural policy expert, CAP AKIS senior knowledge transfer expert from the National Chamber of Agriculture; farmers - Krisztina Magócs, senior expert, Innovation and Digitalization Support Group, AKI). The examined parameters are listed in Table 4.

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Attendee Summary

Table 4 Organizations represented by attendees at the Hungarian national workshop

ORGANISATION	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	ROLE
Ministry of Agriculture	8	CB (1 from 8)
Innovation and Digitalisation Support Unit (Institute of Agricultural Economics)	5	CAP National Network
Institute of Agricultural Economics	5	Research sub-system
National Chamber of Agriculture	3	Advisory sub-system
Rural and Regional Development Support Unit (Hermann Ottó Institute)	1	CAP National Network

Key Outcomes or Lessons Learned

Within the **research** subsystem, the most influential groups of organizations include universities (especially those offering agricultural education - Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, University of Sopron, University of Debrecen), state research institutes (Agricultural Research Center operating as part of the HUN-REN network, Bay Zoltán Research Institute), private research institutes (Ecological Agricultural Institute), companies, and startups focused on innovation and research and development. Among the universities, special attention was given to institutions playing a significant role in agricultural and related fields.

The analysis of the network revealed that although there are contractual relationships between state and private research institutions and universities, as well as between the CB and universities, these do not effectively support knowledge flow. Further analysis of the relationships highlighted that since universities do not fall under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture, the existing relationships are formal but based on informal connections. In this context, it was suggested that the supervisory bodies of the universities should be included in the advisory board affecting the AKIS-CAP network, with the results of their work being disseminated by dedicated liaisons.,

In terms of research institutes, it can be said that the relationship with state-owned institutes is formal and focused on specific tasks, while no formal relationship can be identified with private research institutions. Monitoring private research institutions could involve tracking the R&D activities of organizations participating in EIP operational groups.

In the **farmer** subsystem, the groups identified as having strong influence include farmer organizations (interprofessional organizations, advocacy councils, advocacy organizations, Forestry Sector Knowledge Center, Producer and Marketing Organizations), food processors, NGOs, and large-scale farmers (KITE)..

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One of the most important findings during the mapping of relationships was that the positioning of the CB is difficult for the actors due to its recent establishment (weak organizational identity) as well as because it operates as part of the Ministry of Agriculture rather than as an independent entity. It would be useful to organize further discussions to clarify and support the concepts, roles, functions, and operational mechanisms of the CB, CAP Network and to present best practices.

As part of the CAP network, the newly established Support Units have many 'inherited' and newly established relationships with all sectors through their parent institutions, but it is important for the Support Units to develop their own identity. The role of interprofessional and other organizations functioning as nodes is very important because their services can embed the services of the CAP network to reach farmers. This is also important because it is necessary to expand the definable circle of farmers willing to innovate. The task is to engage intermediary actors as key players, sometimes formalizing relationships and finding ambassadors.

The main actors in the **education** subsystem are universities, agricultural vocational training centers, other training institutions not maintained by the Ministry of Agriculture, adult education organizations, dual practical training sites, and demonstration farms.

Examining the relationships, it is also evident that although the role of the CB belongs to the Ministry of Agriculture, it has a close relationship with only one of its departments related to education, not with the department responsible for coordination. The same can be said about the National Chamber of Agriculture; the parent institution has a close relationship with dual training sites, but the Green Support Unit (operating under the National Chamber of Agriculture), which is part of the CAP network, does not. It can be suggested that it is important to find and integrate currently less identifiable actors into the network, and it is recommended that the Green Support Unit and the CB strive to integrate the relationship networks of their parent organizations.

The main identified actors in the **advisory services** subsystem are registered independent advisors and market-based advisors, professional and interprofessional organizations (cooperatives), professional chambers (plant doctors, veterinarians, etc.), village agronomists, input suppliers (KITE, SYNGENTA), and NGOs.

During the group work, it was revealed that the relationships between the Ministry of Agriculture and the pillar organizations are strong but tend to be one-way towards the ministry. Regarding advisory services, it was also noted that it is difficult to separate the Support Units from their background institution (Chamber of Agriculture) in terms of the network, but they can be more easily distinguished in terms of their tasks.

Feedback from Attendees

Average score for Q1 How useful did you find the information presented today? : 9

Average score for Q2 How likely are you to recommend this workshop to a colleague? : 9

Average score for Q4 How much has your knowledge grown after participating in this workshop? : 8

Comments and suggestions:

“The structure of the workshop and the group work was good. More time is suggested for summarise the findings.” This latter was mentioned by two participants.

“It was very useful to review the possible actors of AKIS and the links between them, whether AKIS can be called a network at any level. The workshop showed that it is difficult to build a network from existing

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elements, so the tasks are numerous, but taking stock of them will certainly indicate possible directions for development."

"The purpose of the event should have been more emphasized. It was good to work together, it was good to think together. Left with a positive feeling."

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3.5. Germany

Event Summary

Context of the event

This WP3/T3.1 in-country workshop for Germany was held in collaboration with the first AKIS Conference "Wie wird Wissen wirksam", which was organized by the German CAP Network in Hannover and held on the 27th and 28th November 2024.

Event title: Wie wird Wissen wirksam? Bundesweiter AKIS-Workshop zum Wissens- und Innovationssystem in der Landwirtschaft

Date: 27. - 28.11.2024

Location: Wyndham Hannover Atrium, Karl-Wiechert-Alle 68, 30625 Hannove

Setting: Face-to-face

More information about the event can be found under: Wie wird Wissen wirksam?

The goal of the AKIS Event

Knowledge and innovation are crucial for enabling farmers and rural communities to tackle current and future challenges. Improving the organization of knowledge flows helps transfer new insights into agricultural practice. To this end, the networking and collaboration between research, advisory services, and practical application should be strengthened and accelerated. At the same time, questions and challenges from practice should be brought into research more quickly to develop solutions. The EU's Common Agricultural Policy supports this goal through the Agricultural **K**nowledge and **I**nnovation **S**ystem (AKIS).

Key stakeholders from the German AKIS network were invited to the event. Since the federal government, states, (sectoral) research institutions, advisory service providers, and educational organizations possess different competencies and responsibilities, it is important to learn from one another, build connections, and identify and develop synergies.

In-country workshop

Description and purpose: Structure and Competence Development for Coordination and Interventions in AKIS

The workshop presented concepts, activities, and tools developed to support AKIS coordination bodies and other key AKIS stakeholders in EU Member States. These have been created and tested collaboratively with practical applications. Participants will work together to conduct a stakeholder mapping of key AKIS actors in a specific region (or their own). They will discuss their roles, potential conflicts of interest, and approaches to resolving them.

Organizers:

modernAKIS, Andrea Knierim (University of Hohenheim, Germany) and Elena-Teodora Miron (Austrian Chamber of Agriculture, Austria)

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Remark: the workshop was held twice, once on day 1 and once on day 2 of the AKIS Conference

Agenda:

DURATION	TITLE	FORMAT	SPEAKER(S)
10 minutes	Welcome, introduction of workshop leaders and the agenda and objectives of the meeting	PowerPoint	Andrea Knierim & Elena-Teodora Miron
10 minutes	Warm-up exercise: Getting to know the participants **Q1**: Are you active at the regional (state) or federal level? **Q2**: Mountains or beach? **Q3**: Are you involved in interventions/activities related to education, advisory services, rural innovation, or administration? **Q4**: How familiar are you with AKIS?	Post-its with various colours	Elena-Teodora Miron
20 minutes	AKIS Resources from international projects - AKIS Report Germany (including AKIS diagram) - E-learning module on AKIS - AKISConnect and "AKIS in Action"	PowerPoint and/or Live-Demo	Andrea Knierim
5 minutes	Introduction to the Interactive Activity – Stakeholder Mapping	PowerPoint	Elena-Teodora Miron
45 minutes	Interactive Exercise – 3 Groups of 4–5 People **Scenario 1:** Your federal state wants to strengthen the networking of AKIS stakeholders involved in organic farming to bring new scientific findings into practice (to farmers) more quickly. Which stakeholders should you involve to develop a concept for targeted networking activities? **Scenario 2:** Your federal state aims to embed current scientific findings in schools in a clear and age-appropriate way, preparing students for the future challenges of agriculture. Which	Pin board, Cards	

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	stakeholders need to be involved to launch this initiative in at least three pilot schools? **Scenario 3:** At the federal level, cross-state EIP projects are being pursued. Who are the relevant stakeholders (at the administrative level) that need to collaborate to create the conditions for such a call for proposals?		
20 minutes	Reporting the Results of the Interactive Exercise	Pin board	Participants Andrea Knierim (Ltg.)
11 minutes	Event closing		Elena-Teodora Miron

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Attendee Summary

The event was well attended with more than 120 participants. The in-country AKIS workshop was well attended with 25 participants on the first day and 20 persons on the second day.

Table 5 Organisations represented by attendees at the German national workshop

Organization	
agrathaer GmbH	LAG Mittleres Ostfriesland
Andreas Hermes Akademie	LAND & FORST
Aufsichts- und Dienstleistungsdirektion (ADD)	Landesanstalt für Landwirtschaft, Ernährung und Ländlichen Raum (LEL)
Authority for Environment, Climate, Energy, and Agriculture	Landesbetrieb Landwirtschaft Hessen
Bavarian State Ministry for Food, Agriculture, Forestry, and Tourism	Landesbetrieb Landwirtschaft Hessen - LLH
Bioland	Landwirtschaftlicher Betrieb
Chamber of Agriculture Lower Saxony	Lausitzer Agrar-Informationszentrum (BTU Cottbus)
Chamber of Agriculture of Austria	Leibniz-Zentrum für Agrarlandschaftsforschung
Chamber of Agriculture Saarland	Leibniz-Zentrum für Agrarlandschaftsforschung (ZALF) e.V.
Chamber of Agriculture Schleswig-Holstein	Lower Saxony Ministry for Environment, Energy, and Climate Protection
Demeter e.V.	Lower Saxony Ministry for Food, Agriculture, and Consumer Protection
Deutsche Agrarforschungsallianz (DAFA)	Lower Saxony Rural Women's Association
Deutsche Vernetzungsstelle Ländliche Räume (DVS)	Ministry for Climate Protection, Agriculture, Rural Areas, and Environment of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
Deutscher Bauernverband e.V.	Ministry of Agriculture and Consumer Protection of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia
Dialognetzwerk zukunftsfähige Landwirtschaft	Ministry of Agriculture, Environment, and Climate Protection of the State of Brandenburg
Die Senatorin für Umwelt, Klima und Wissenschaft	Ministry of Economy, Tourism, Agriculture, and Forestry of Saxony-Anhalt
Dienstleistungszentrum Ländlicher Raum Rheinhessen-Nahe-Hunsrück	Ministry of Economy, Transport, Agriculture, and Viticulture of Rhineland-Palatinate
Elxlebener Feldfrucht KG	Ministry of Food, Rural Areas and Consumer Protection
entera	Ministry of Food, Rural Areas and Consumer Protection Baden-Württemberg
ERSA-FVG Italy	Netzwerk Ackerbau Niedersachsen e.V.
EU Komission DG Agri D1	Niedersachsen.next
EU-GAP-Netzwerk	NKS Bioökonomie & Umwelt

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Fachagentur Bodenbearbeitung-Saat-Pflanzenschutz (Wolfgang Nürnberger GmbH)	Öko-BeratungsGesellschaft mbH
Federal Ministry for Food and Agriculture	ÖLAF - Ökolandbau trifft Forschung
Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Regions, and Water Management (Austria)	ÖLAF -Öko-Landbau trifft Forschung / EurA AG
Federal Office for Agriculture and Food	Saxon State Ministry for Energy, Climate Protection, Environment, and Agriculture
FH Kiel - FARMWISSEN	Seedhouse Accelerator GmbH
Fördergemeinschaft Ökologischer Landbau Berlin-Brandenburg	State Ministry for Food, Agriculture, Forestry, and Tourism
Forschungsinstitut für Nutztierbiologie (FBN)	STMELF und IALB
Geschäftsstelle der Steuerungsgruppe Forschung für die ökologische Land- und Lebensmittelwirtschaft	Technische Zentralstelle, DLR R-N-H
Hessisches Ministerium für Landwirtschaft und Umwelt, Weinbau, Forsten, Jagd und Heimat	Thünen Institut für Betriebswirtschaft
Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg - EU-FarmBook	Thünen-Institut für Lebensverhältnisse in ländlichen Räumen
Hochschule für nachhaltige Entwicklung Eberswalde - EU-FarmBook	Thüringer Landesamt für Landwirtschaft und Ländlichen Raum
Hofgut Klein Schneen	Thüringer Ministerium für Infrastruktur und Landwirtschaft
IfLS Beratung und Projekte GmbH	University of Hohenheim - modernAKIS
Institut für Ländliche Strukturforschung	University of Leipzig, Smart Farming Lab
Institut für Lebensmittel- und Umweltforschung (ILU)	Verband der Chamber of Agriculturen e.V.
Julius Kühn-Institut, Institut für Strategien und Folgenabschätzung	Westrup-Koch Milch GbR

A full list of all participants is available on the modernAKIS SharePoint under Teilnehmerliste_Wie wird Wissen wirksam.pdf

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Key Outcomes or Lessons Learned

- The exercise on Task 3 showed a rather interesting result: on the first day the group which worked on the task was composed exclusively of public administration actors. Their solution was a "quick and simple" one, which was that the cross-regional EIP OGs just needed the agreement and work of the "EIP responsible" in the ministry and the co-ordination between the "EIP responsible" in the different regions. There was no perspective of the other actors groups, nor supporting services inclusion like "paying agencies" etc. It was interesting to observe the mindset of the participants. They basically expressed thoughts like "it would be no problem to do it, but it will never happen as "so and so" will never go for it". During the second round of the workshop the group of actors working on the task was more diverse, which was reflected on the perspectives included in the discussion. However where in the first group there was an implicit and clear understanding on the processes which needed to be in place to make the solution feasible, the second group had little to no understanding on how the operational and tactical activities influenced the potential for execution of the task. A reflection of this task was that in modernAKIS there is a need to understand how to approach mindsets, understand motivators and how to trigger them, but also to create a methodical approach for a series of workshop which allow a challenge/task to develop with different groups of experts.
- Among those actors attending the meeting there was a basic understanding of the meaning of AKIS as a concept, however there was no clear vision on what the benefits of working in a systemic are, nor what methods are suitable and how they can be applied in practical work
- While the exercises showed the complexity of the topic, they are too high level to yield a "meaningful" (i.e. concrete) result which is actionable; this might need to be reconsidered in a future workshops and aim to find a balance between a more specific example, which is however understandable to different groups of key AKIS stakeholders.
- The geographical delimitation of a workshop, might be also relevant when dealing with a regional country. During one session of Task 2 it became clear that schools in different regions might work quite differently in terms of administration and decision making processes at all levels, but especially those levels which are outside the schools. Thus it might be more meaningful to bring together actors from one region, especially when the AKIS interventions addressing the specific topic of the task, are decided at regional level.

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Feedback from Attendees

The overall feedback from participants was positive, with the event being well-received and considered a valuable experience. Participants appreciated the opportunity to engage with the content, methods, and group exercises. Below is a detailed breakdown of the feedback collected through a short questionnaire and written comments.

Feedback from day 1

Statement	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Adequate	poor
Content / topic selection	**5**	**6**	**2**	**0**	**0**
Speakers	**5**	**7**	**1**	**0**	**0**
Concept (method, format, duration)	**5**	**4**	**3**	**1**	**0**

Written Feedback:

- Some participants found the content too general or abstract
- The time was perceived as too short for the workshop's aim of introducing and testing a method, which left participants wanting a deeper experience
- Suggestions were made for improving the preparation of materials, such as better-prepared flipcharts (e.g., adding central questions and concentric circles) and providing suitable moderation card formats
- Participants appreciated learning about the modernAKIS offering, calling it an enriching experience
- The group exercises for AKIS diagnostics were well-received, with a comment suggesting that all participants at the conference should have received such a workshop
- The output of the workshop was not entirely clear to some participants

Feedback from day 2

Statement	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Adequate	poor
Content / topic selection	**1**	**5**	**1**	**0**	**0**
Speakers	**3**	**3**	**1**	**0**	**0**
Concept (method, format, duration)	**0**	**6**	**1**	**0**	**0**

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Written Feedback:

The topic was described as highly interesting, but some participants wished for more support and guidance from the speakers during group work

The workshop included an actor analysis exercise, which effectively illustrated the complexity of the topic

In summary, while the event was generally appreciated, participants provided valuable suggestions for improving time management, material preparation, and support during activities to enhance the overall experience.

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3.6. Ireland

Event Summary

3rd AKIS Coordination Group Meeting - Ireland

Date: Tuesday 21.01.2025 (09.30am–3.30pm)

Location: AgTech UCD Innovation Centre, UCD Lyons Farm, Celbridge, Co. Kildare, W23 ENY2

Agenda

Introduction Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine
AgriTech & Agri-Digitalisation Information Session
Presentations • AgNav – Jonathan Herron, Teagasc • Data Analytics in the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Catherine Dempsey, Data & Analytics Division • Standards and platform development enabling innovation in agriculture – an ecosystem perspective, Kevin Doolin, Walton Institute, SETU
Tea/coffee & Networking
Panel Discussion Kieran Donoghue, AgriTech Ireland Cluster– Working together to grow the impact of the Irish AgriTech industry sector Gary Ryan, Director AgTechUCD
Lunch
Irish AKIS Development - Feedback
Review of the workshop undertaken in the 2nd meeting - presentation on developing & enhancing flow paths of knowledge and information. Update of the AKIS Steering Group Cormac McGann, DAFM CSP Division
Agriculture of Data EU Research Partnership & Innovation (e.g. European Digital Infrastructure Consortium on Agri-food), Patrick Barrett DAFM Research Division
Presentations • Overview of EU CAP Network, Alistair Prior, Policy Analyst, EU CAP Network CAP Implementation Contact Point • Update on the AKIS Farmer Survey, Róisín Fitzgerald, ERINN Innovation, CAP Network • Introduction of modernAKIS Project & Demonstration of E Learning Modules (ModernAKIS), Avion Phillips, Teagasc

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Attendee Summary

Overall, there were 41 persons in attendance from a range of key organisations involved in the Irish AKIS.

Table 6 Organizations represented by attendees at the Irish national workshop

ORGANISATION
Teagasc
National Parks and Wildlife Service
Irish Cattle and Sheep Farmers Association
Irish Organic Association
National Organic Training Skillnet
Irish Local Development Network
Agricultural Consultants Association
CAP Network Ireland
EU CAP Network
Environmental Pillar
University College Dublin AgTech UCD
University of Galway
Walton Institute SETU
Munster Technological University
Atlantic Technological University
ABP
Agriland
Irish Farmers Journal
Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine

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Key Outcomes or Lessons Learned

This capacity development exercise will continue in Ireland in a follow up event. This initial workshop was included in the 3rd Irish CB meeting to begin to build a relationship between the modernAKIS project and the actors involved in the Irish CB.

While the agricultural system in Ireland is understood by members of the CB, it was clear that there is still limited knowledge of the word AKIS and of the language used to communicate about AKIS among actors in the Irish system. This is a good opportunity to further develop capacity among Irish actors for systems thinking and understanding the AKIS as a system.

Feedback from Attendees

General feedback from attendees to the event were that they were happy to hear from a range of presenters, however would have enjoyed an even more interactive and discussion focused sessions throughout the day. The most positive feedback was given about the opportunity to network with other actors at the tea and lunch breaks.

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3.7. Lithuania

Event Summary

Lithuania, represented in the modernAKIS project by the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, aims to enhance the competencies of the AKIS coordinator and key actors, reduce fragmentation among AKIS system participants, and disseminate knowledge about AKIS and its benefits. To fulfil these objectives and implement the Capacity Development Workshop planned within modernAKIS WP3, a tiered model for AKIS participant information and engagement was adopted.

Considering the workshops' objectives of enhancing AKIS participants' competencies, these goals were implemented in Lithuania through several levels:

1. The first face-to-face meeting invited the academic community of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences Veterinary Academy, representing the modernAKIS project in Lithuania, to provide feedback on the presented information.

2. To enhance AKIS knowledge competencies regarding project activities, detailed modernAKIS reports prepared by the AKIS CB body were presented, along with three training modules and other AKIS results from Horizon Europe-funded projects. The project's modernAKIS plans were discussed. The AKIS-related topics were directly linked to the activities and priorities outlined in Lithuania's Agricultural and Rural Development Strategic Plan 2023-2027, Chapter 8: Modernization, AKIS and Digital Transformation, approved by European Commission Decision No. C(2022) 8272 of November 21, 2022.

3. For other key AKIS stakeholders, aiming to secure their engagement and enhance their AKIS competencies, a workshop was organized. This workshop included an introduction to AKIS and its operational mechanisms, discussion of modernAKIS reports, presentation of three training modules, and other AKIS results from Horizon Europe-funded projects. The modernAKIS project plans were discussed, and participants were invited to join the modernAKIS network. This group's participants were surveyed regarding the workshop's utility for their activities using a questionnaire developed by the project task leader.

The report data for all three events are presented sequentially according to the report template approved in the project documentation plan. For each event (of which there were three), the methodological materials were adapted according to the participating audience.

1 Organization of an AKIS informational and educational seminar at a partner organization

Best practices in project management and dissemination demonstrate that it is typically beneficial to initiate all proposed dissemination and competency-building activities within one's immediate environment - specifically, the institution implementing the project. It should be noted that while scientists from the Veterinary Academy of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences had previously been actively involved in EIP projects and assisted the Ministry of Agriculture with policy

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formation in livestock-related matters, there had been no recorded engagement in more active AKIS activities. Therefore, competency development in AKIS-related matters began with them, aiming to increase their interest in AKIS operational and management issues. Additionally, this "home ground" approach was intended to demonstrate which elements work effectively in such workshops and what should be avoided or modified when presenting to workshop participants.

The event's date, time, and content were coordinated with the Chancellor of the Veterinary Academy, Professor Mindaugas Malakauskas. The Veterinary Academy (VA) chancellery of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (LSMU) distributed invitations to all VA staff members for the planned event.

Event Details
The event was conducted in a face-to-face (further – F2F) format at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences Veterinary Academy premises, located at Tilzes str. 18, Kaunas.
Duration: 1.5 hours

Agenda:
1. Opening remarks (LSMU VA Chancellor prof. Mindaugas Malakauskas, Head of Veterinary Continuing Education and Consulting Centre Dr Giedrius Palubinskas)

2. AKIS in Lithuania and EU (structure, objectives, operational principles, actors, linkages and cooperation), 40 minutes

3. modernAKIS connections with other HE flagships (EU Farmbook, Attractiss), up to 15 minutes

4. Presentation and discussion of competency development modules:
* Module 1: The need for a systemic approach in agriculture and related fields (review), up to 10 minutes
* Module 2, Part 1: Understanding the AKIS system (review), up to 10 minutes
* Module 2, Part 2: Understanding the AKIS system and Module 3 - AKIS diagnostics (discussion), up to 10 minutes

5. Opportunities for engagement in AKIS activities in Lithuania and international operations, up to 20 minutes.
The main informational and educational topic of the meeting - the AKIS system, its development prospects in Lithuania, international projects addressing AKIS themes and their potential benefits for scientists - was presented by the modernAKIS coordinator in Lithuania, Dr Gintare Kucinskiene, Project Manager at the Development Service of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences.

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2 A comprehensive educational presentation on modernAKIS deliverables and training modules was presented to the AKIS Coordinating Body

By decision of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania, the AKIS coordinating function is performed by a collegiate AKIS coordinating body - an organizational entity comprising representatives from key AKIS stakeholders with the most significant roles: higher education institutions, consultants, research centres, farmers' associations, and other public organizations - specifically, the Agricultural Science Council (hereinafter referred to as the Council). In Lithuania, the Council is responsible for AKIS policy coordination, participates in its planning, monitors AKIS activities implementation, and provides recommendations to the Ministry regarding the Strategic Plan and related intervention measures.

The Council's work is based on the principles of collegiality, impartiality, transparency, and publicity. It consists of representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, and the Ministry of Economy and Innovation, along with heads of agricultural science, studies, vocational training institutions, and delegated representatives of agricultural organizations and other institutions. The Council's primary purpose is to advise the Ministry and other interested institutions on strategic issues concerning agriculture, food economy, and rural development, as well as science, studies, innovation policy, and education, to promote development in these areas. The Council meetings are convened quarterly.

To inform the Lithuanian AKIS CB about the knowledge created during the modernAKIS project and to present the open-access training modules, participation in the Council meeting was undertaken. During the session, all deliverables obtained through modernAKIS were comprehensively presented to the participants, linking them with the main areas of Measure 8 Modernization of the Rural Development Strategy. To ensure that information enhancing AKIS participants' competencies reaches AKIS CB-affiliated personnel (various agricultural professionals), the presentation with active links was distributed to senior managers serving on the Council.

Event Details

Date: Monday, November 25, 2024, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Location: Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania, College Hall No. 399, Gediminas Ave. 19, Vilnius

Table 1: Agricultural Science Council (AKIS CB) Meeting Agenda

12:40 – 1:00 pm	**Registration**
1:00 – 1:10 pm	**Foreword** Kazys Starkevičius, **Minister of Agriculture** Zenonas Dabkevičius, **Vice-President of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences**, Chairman of the Agricultural Science Council
1:10 – 1:30 pm	**On the concept and further actions of the Lithuanian Bioeconomy HUB** **Speaker**: Prof. Dr Astrida Miceikienė, Chancellor of the Academy of Agriculture of Vytautas Magnus University
1:30 – 2:30 pm	**On the first results of the Project "Modernization of Agriculture through the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System" (modernAKIS)**

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Speakers: Prof. Dr Mindaugas Malakauskas, Chancellor of the Veterinary Academy of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, and Dr Gintarė Kučinskienė, Project Manager of the Development Service of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (duration of the Presentation 1:30–2:20 pm)
Discussion (2:20–2:30 pm)

2:30 – 3:00 pm

On the establishment of the Advisory Working Group on Partnerships for Horizon Europe Projects and Programmes, its composition and the guidelines for the organisation of its activities (Annexes 1 and 2)
Speaker: Dr Virginija Žoštautienė, Director of the Strategic Planning Department of the Ministry of Agriculture (presentation duration 2:30 – 2:50 pm)
Discussion and decision-making (2:50 – 3:00 pm)

The presentation “Agricultural Modernization through the Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System" (modernAKIS): Initial Results” aimed to provide methodological information about AKIS in various countries, practices related to advisory work, AKIS CB, and the implementation of various interventions.

The modernAKIS project was first introduced to Council members in March 2023 (when a presentation was delivered to inform about the project and potential engagement opportunities for other AKIS participants in project activities). During the second modernAKIS presentation (November 25, 2024), a detailed analysis of modernAKIS deliverables was provided to AKIS CB, highlighting specific content elements and their potential utility for agricultural sector policy makers, researchers, and farmers. The analysis demonstrated how Lithuanian AKIS participants are engaged in the modernAKIS network and what facilitates network expansion. The presentation emphasized how all project deliverables specifically align with the objectives of Measure 8: Modernization in Lithuania's Agricultural and Rural Development Strategic Plan 2023-2027, explicitly indicating how project deliverables correspond to specific priorities.

It should be noted that following the presentation, several AKIS CB members highlighted that no previous H2020 or HE project in the country had been presented in such detail to the AKIS CB (Council) or disseminated so widely among AKIS participants. In the ensuing discussion, questions were raised regarding more detailed presentations of other HE projects at such meetings, especially for projects where an institution represents the country at a national level. Open-access training modules about AKIS were presented and briefly discussed.
Other AKIS-related HE projects, including EU Farmbook and Attractiss, were also presented to meeting participants. AKIS CB representatives were invited to engage more actively in international activities to promote the exchange of relevant knowledge and innovations, with emphasis placed on opportunities to participate in online events organized by the modernAKIS project.

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3 Organization of an Informational Event for Key AKIS Stakeholders - Kaunas College Community

The idea to organize an informational event at Kaunas College emerged following the presentation of the AKIS topic and shared report at the Agricultural Science Council. Dr. Živilė Juknevičienė, a lecturer from the Department of Food and Agro-technologies at Kaunas College, contacted me requesting a presentation of this topic to their community.

Consequently, we formulated the following invitation to the Kaunas College community (students & lectures):

"Dear Kaunas College Community,
I am writing to cordially invite you to participate in an informational seminar on December 18th of this year, during which I will present a comprehensive analysis of the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (hereinafter - AKIS). The presentation will cover system elements, operational principles, and its practical implementation in Lithuania and other European Union countries.
The primary objective of the seminar is to strengthen the professional competencies of AKIS participants by promoting a deeper understanding of system operations and initiating enhanced collaboration oriented towards more sustainable and effective communication.
During the event, I will present current HE projects on AKIS topics, which will provide valuable and up-to-date information across various agricultural sectors.
To ensure constructive participant preparation, I recommend familiarizing yourself with additional methodological materials in advance. I invite you to visit the website "Training materials for all AKIS actors" and, selecting Lithuanian language, explore three comprehensive training modules about AKIS. For those who prefer more interactive learning formats, I suggest visiting the "Game materials for all AKIS actors" platform, which provides educational resources on AKIS topics.
The informational seminar "Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System in Lithuania and the EU, Presentation of Initial modernAKIS Project Results" will cover the following topics:

1. *AKIS concept and development stages;*
2. *New knowledge and innovation dissemination projects: scientific analysis conclusions from H2020 projects conducted at EU level;*
3. *National models of AKIS implementation;*
4. *AKIS significance for agricultural sector participants;*
5. *Initial results of the modernAKIS project;*
6. *AKIS perspective.*

I look forward to your active and constructive participation.

Event Details
Informational Seminar: Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System in Lithuania and EU, Presentation of Initial modernAKIS Project Results
Project title: Modernisation of Agriculture through more efficient and effective Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (modernAKIS)
Project number: No. 0264/0019
Date: 9th of January 2025
Time and venue: 10:00 - 11:30 am, Kaunas College, 5 auditorium, 22 premises, Kaunas.

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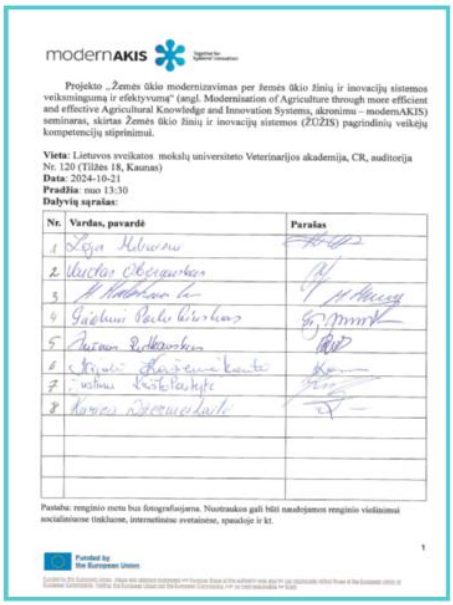
Attendee Summary

Partner Organization's Interest and Engagement

The Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (hereinafter - LSMU) Veterinary Academy (hereinafter - VA) is the sole higher education institution in the country that trains veterinary doctors and animal husbandry specialists. It is important to note that prior to the inception of the modernAKIS project, university scientists had not been actively involved in the AKIS subject matter. For many of them, AKIS is a novel topic. For this specific reason, the LSMU VA community was selected for the first informational seminar. As practice demonstrated, the AKIS subject matter received a reserved and cautious reception at the event. Seven participants attended. Their level of engagement and interest in acquiring new knowledge about the AKIS system indicated their baseline understanding and potential prospects for incorporating this topic into their scientific work.

At the conclusion of the informational event, the VA Chancellor expressed a desire to encourage VA researchers' involvement in the AKIS subject matter and invited those present to jointly participate in modernAKIS project events. This suggestion was noted and taken into consideration.

Figure 5: Lithuanian University of Health Sciences Veterinary Academy Community's Interest in AKIS Topic (List of Participants on October 21, 2024)



modernAKIS

Projekto „Žemės ūkio modernizavimas per žemės ūkio žinių ir inovacijų sistemos veiksmingumą ir efektyvumą" (angl. Modernisation of Agriculture through more efficient and effective Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems, akronimu – modernAKIS) seminaras, skirtas Žemės ūkio žinių ir inovacijų sistemos (ŽŪŽIS) pagrindinių veikėjų kompetencijų stiprinimui.

Vieta: Lietuvos sveikatos mokslų universiteto Veterinarijos akademija, CR, auditorija Nr. 120 (Tilžės 18, Kaunas)
Data: 2024-10-21
Pradžia: nuo 13:30
Dalyvių sąrašas:

Nr.	Vardas, pavardė	Parašas
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

Pastaba: renginio metu bus fotografuojama. Nuotraukos gali būti naudojamos renginio viešinimui socialiniuose tinkluose, internetinėse svetainėse, spaudoje ir kt.

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AKIS CB Engagement in AKIS Subject Matter and Initial Deliverables of the modernAKIS

The Council's meeting agenda is coordinated in advance, taking into consideration Council members' availability to participate. In Lithuania, the Council also functions as a Community of Practice (CoP). Essentially, at present, the Council, which performs the AKIS Capacity Building (CB) role, operates predominantly as a CoP. AKIS governance matters are discussed less frequently. AKIS CB serves as an excellent knowledge conduit for employees of their respective institutions, contingent upon the leadership participating in AKIS CB (Council) meetings.

Table 2: The list of members who attended the Council meeting, where the Council serves as AKIS Capacity Building (AKIS CB) in Lithuania

Table 7 Organizations represented by attendees at the Lithuanian national workshop

NO	ORGANISATION	OFFICIAL POSITION	ROLE (IF ANY)
1	Ministry of Agriculture	Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania	CB
2	Ministry of Agriculture	Vice Minister	CB
3	Ministry of Agriculture	Director of Strategic Planning Department	CB
4	Ministry of Agriculture	Head of the Division of Science, Innovation and Knowledge Development, Strategic Planning Department	CB
5	Ministry of Agriculture	Chief Advisor to the Ministry of Agriculture	CB
6	Ministry of Agriculture	Senior Advisor, Science, Innovation and Knowledge Development Division, Strategic Planning Department	CB
7	Ministry of Environment	Advisor to the Waste Policy Group	CB
8	Ministry of Energy	Advisor to the Energy Efficiency Policy Group	CB
9	Ministry of Education, Science and Sport	Head of Science Division, Department of Studies, Science and Technology	CB
10	Ministry of Economy and Innovation	Chief Specialist of the Innovation Policy Group	CB
11	Environmental Protection Agency	Head of the Water Status Assessment Division, Environmental Status Analytics Centre	CB
12	Vice President of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences	Chairman of the Agricultural Science Council	CB
13	Lithuanian University of Health Sciences	Chancellor of the Veterinary Academy, Deputy Chairman of the Council	CB
14	Lithuanian Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry	Director	CB
15	Lithuanian Agricultural Advisory Service (Public Institution)	Director	CB
16	Farmer	Farmer	CB
17	Chamber of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania	President	CB
18	Lithuanian Farmers Union	President	CB

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19	Lithuanian Agricultural Council	Delegated Member	CB
20	Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences	Deputy Director, Head of the Institute of Economics and Rural Development	CB
21	Vytautas Magnus University	Chancellor of the Agriculture Academy	CB
22	Kaunas University of Technology Food Institute	Director	CB
23	Institute of Animal Science, Veterinary Academy of Lithuanian University of Health Sciences	Director	CB
24	State Food and Veterinary Service	Director	CB
25	National Food and Veterinary Risk Assessment Institute	Director	CB
26	Nature Research Centre	Head of Flora and Geobotany Laboratory	CB

Kaunas College's Interest in the AKIS Topic

Kaunas College (hereinafter – KC), established on September 1, 2000, as part of Lithuania's transition to a binary higher education system, has emerged as a leading institution of applied sciences. The College has particularly distinguished itself in the field of Biomedical Sciences, offering a comprehensive range of professional study programs.

The Biomedical Sciences Department delivers an impressive array of healthcare and agricultural programs, combining theoretical knowledge with practical skills. KC's Agricultural and Food Sciences programs include:

- Agribusiness Technology
- Sustainable Farming
- Public Catering.

These programs are primarily offered as full-time studies, with select courses available in part-time format, ensuring flexibility for diverse student needs. The College emphasizes hands-on experience and practical training, preparing graduates for immediate entry into their chosen professions.
The institution's commitment to excellence in applied education has established it as a vital contributor to Lithuania's healthcare and agricultural sectors, producing skilled professionals who meet the evolving demands of these essential fields.

Each year, 120-150 students whose study programs are directly related to agriculture study here. These are predominantly children from medium and large-scale farming families who plan to take over farming operations from their parents.

It was attended by 21 persons.

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Key Outcomes or Lessons Learned

The seminar organized by LSMU VA demonstrated that scientists show reluctant response and engagement in new areas of activity. They do not perceive themselves within the AKIS system and currently fail to identify their role in the overall AKIS operational framework. During the seminar, questions predominantly focused on what AKIS could contribute to their ongoing research and how it could enhance their current activities. In essence, scientists currently identify the AKIS system not as a collaborative platform for expanding connections and sharing new knowledge, but rather as a funding opportunity, which they perceive as ambiguous. This explains their hesitancy to engage in project activities based on collaboration and knowledge sharing.

The few farmers who participated in the seminar viewed the modules' benefits with considerable reservation. Indeed, it is challenging to convey the target group of the modernAKIS project, which is AKIS CB rather than farmers, as there is a widespread belief that farmer involvement is essential. Evaluating the informational seminar's benefit to AKIS CB, it is worth noting that many leaders (approximately 40%) engaged with the material only formally. However, some participants (about 20%) actively participated in discussions and expressed interest in information accessibility and utilization opportunities. Since it is difficult to present project deliverables in detail during such seminars, feedback on results remains limited. Notably, many are deterred by lengthy documents. It would be beneficial if each document began with a clear statement of its target audience, specific benefits, new insights, and their potential applications.

It is noteworthy that farmers' representatives show the lowest engagement in AKIS CB-focused seminars. Interestingly, well-known organizations abroad that participated in H2020 and HE projects, such as Vytautas Magnus University and PI Lithuanian Agricultural Advisory Service, do not hesitate to express scepticism not only about project results but also comment that "nothing is happening at the national AKIS level." This refers specifically to AKIS CB activities.

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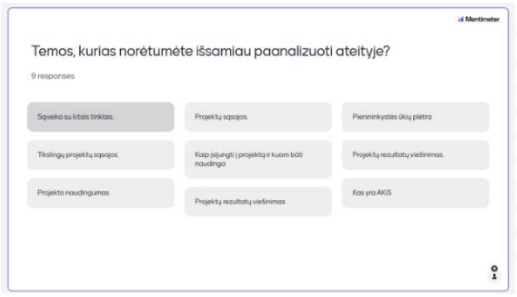
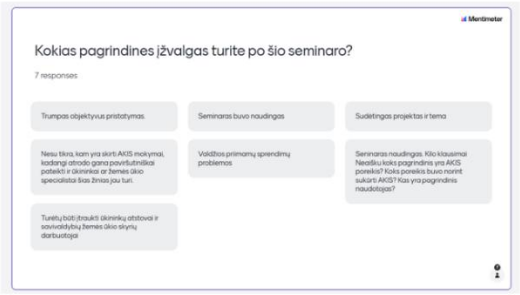
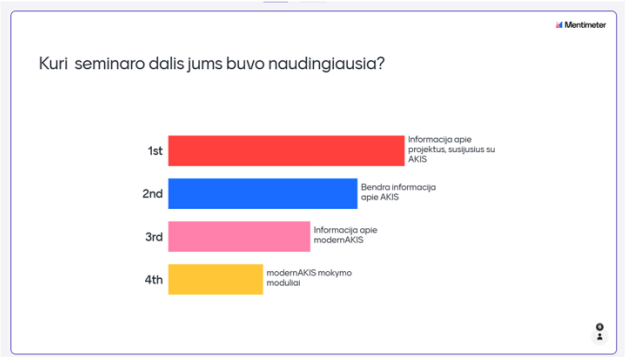
Feedback from Attendees



Topics you would like to explore in more detail in the future?
•Interaction with other networks
•Project synergies
•Targeted project synergies
•Project benefits
•How to join a project and be useful
•Dissemination of project results
•Dissemination of project outcomes
•Development of dairy farms
•What is AKIS?



What are your main insights after this seminar?
•A brief presentation of objectives
•The seminar was useful
•I'm not sure who AKIS training is for, as it seems to be presented rather superficially, and farmers or agricultural specialists likely already possess this knowledge
•Problems with decisions made by authorities
•The seminar was useful. However, questions arise: it's unclear what the main need for AKIS is. What was the need for creating AKIS? Who is the primary user?
•A complex project and topic
•Farmers' representatives and employees of municipal agricultural departments should have been involved



Which part of the seminar was the most useful for you?
1st: Information about projects related to AKIS
2nd: General information about AKIS
3rd: Information about modernAKIS
4th: modernAKIS training modules

It is important to note that the Kaunas College community issued certificates of participation to the lecturers who attended the informational seminar.

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3.8. Luxembourg

Event Summary

Title: modernAKIS Capacity Building Workshop, Luxembourg

Date: January 15, 2025

Duration: 11:30 AM – 4:00 PM

Format: Face-to-face (F2F)

Location: Tero House 17

Facilitators and Speakers:

The event was facilitated by Martine Claus (Administration of technical services for agriculture, ASTA)

Agenda:

Welcome, Objectives, and Agenda Overview (5 min)

The session began with a warm welcome, a presentation of the workshop's objectives, and an outline of the agenda for the day.

Warm-Up Exercises (20 min)

Participants were invited to share their thoughts on the national AKIS, and the challenges faced by the agricultural sector through a round of brainstorming.

Capacity Building with the modernAKIS Project

- Presentation and Update on modernAKIS (15 min)

Overview of the project and its tools and methods.

- modernAKIS Learning Modules (45 min)

A presentation of the 3 online learning-modules and its main objectives.

Discussion (15 min)

Participants provided feedback and discussed the intended use of the online modules.

Lunch Break

Building the AKIS in Luxembourg

- Status Quo (15 min)

Recap of the key takeaways from the SWOT on the Luxembourg AKIS (ADE) and the national AKIS diagram.

- Updates on New Developments (45 min)

An interactive session where participants exchanged insights and updates related to Luxembourg's AKIS.

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- AKIS Transformative Journey (45 min)

A collaborative exercise on future ambitions for AKIS in Luxembourg, including ideas for effective collaboration, activity coordination, and the establishment of a Coordination Body and a Community of Practice.

Conclusion and Next Steps (15 min)

The workshop concluded with a summary of key outcomes and an outlook on upcoming actions.

Main Objectives

The workshop provided a platform for knowledge exchange, strategic planning, and collaborative discussions, fostering advancements in Luxembourg's AKIS. It was based on the following objectives:

- Sharpen the participant's understanding of AKIS.
- Enhance awareness of the modern AKIS project and introduce its tools.
- Improve and sustain collaboration and knowledge flow.
- Discuss the structure and objectives of the national AKIS.
- Identify opportunities for future collaboration in the network, including the use of communities of practice and the implementation of the modernAKIS learning modules.

Attendee Summary

Table 8 Organizations represented by attendees at the Luxembourg national workshop

Organisation	**Role (If any)**	
Ministry of Agriculture	CB	7
CAP Network member		3
Administration of Technical Services for Agriculture (ASTA)		3
Total		10

Key Outcomes or Lessons Learned

- Introduction of learning modules
- The workshop participants had not completed the learning modules beforehand but were all familiar with the topic. The majority were already involved in the national AKIS SWOT analysis carried out in 2020 and its subsequent workshops.

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The first three modernAKIS modules provided valuable input for sharpening the participants' definition of AKIS and dealing with current challenges in agriculture. As an introduction, two warm-up exercises were carried out with the participants. The content of these exercises was then deepened during the presentation of the learning modules.

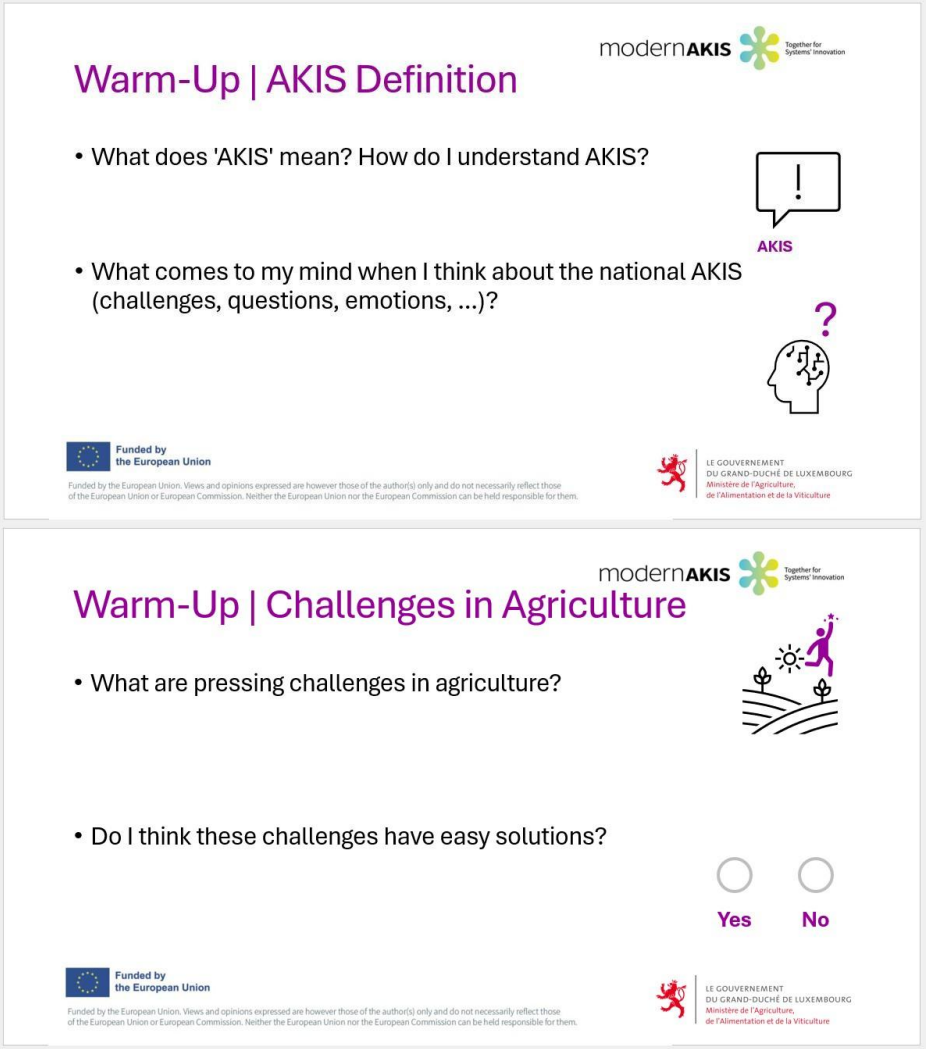

Figure 7 Warm-up exercise during the Luxembourg national workshop

The results of the first warm-up exercise show that participants understand AKIS as an interactive, dynamic and future-oriented network in which knowledge is **actively** shared and disseminated.

This ideal definition contrasts with the second question: How is the national AKIS perceived? The responses reveal a disparity and the need to ask: **how can we get closer to our ideal?**

The second warm-up exercise on the challenges in agriculture set the mood for Module 1 but was also designed to prepare the participants for the subsequent discussion on the priorities and fields of action in the national AKIS

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Feedback on modules

The **Module 1** approach of describing the complexity of AKIS through the complexity of agricultural challenges is very relatable and easy to understand for stakeholders. The different definitions in **Module 2** help to simplify communication on this complex topic and the different perspectives on AKIS diagnosis presented in **Module 3** offer many new approaches to take a closer look at one's national AKIS.

However, it is important to combine the theoretical content with practical exercises so that it becomes tangible for the participants. There is general agreement that AKIS needs to become more **practical and hands-on**. An AKIS analysis is a good first step. But deciding on and implementing subsequent actions remains a challenge (even with a good analysis) and needs some capacity building too. So, more support for this step would be desirable.

Regarding the usability of the tool, it is noted that the modernAKIS learning modules should be presented to a wider audience during a forthcoming meeting of the Monitoring Committee for the National Strategic Plan (**Comité PSN**) and could also be used for a workshop at the national agricultural school (**Lycée Technique Agricole, LTA**) to introduce them to a younger audience.

Key Learnings

In the second half of the capacity building workshop, the ambitions in dealing with the national AKIS and the priority areas for action were discussed. Where do we want to go? How can we work together effectively? How do we want to organise our AKIS? What challenges are ahead? The following key learnings were identified.

1. **Knowledge sharing and collaboration are essential to tackle complex challenges. However, as knowledge is not always readily shared, it is important to illustrate the benefits of a collaborative mindset and show stakeholders what can be achieved.**

Exclusive knowledge can set me apart and give me an edge. So why share my knowledge? Making stakeholders aware of the added value of a collaborative way of working and showing them the opportunities and possibilities of such an approach is important and contributes to a vibrant and well-functioning AKIS. Sharing is a way of learning together, developing creative and innovative solutions, and building a richer understanding through considering multiple perspectives and approaches. This needs to be made tangible for stakeholders through real life situations and best practices: "Showcasing what can be achieved together!

Recommendation for a national follow-up:

Highlighting a Showcase Project in the national context: Take a close look at a **mini-AKIS** (e.g. AKIS in the national water protection area) and shed light on it. How are solutions sought, found and shared here? Which actors work together, how and with what results? What has been/is being achieved together? Let the actors speak!

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2. **AKIS needs to become more practice-oriented to engage all actors (especially farmers) in a common process.**

Knowledge exchange and innovation can only work if they are supported by practitioners who identify with the challenges and fields of action. The AKIS dialogue should be concrete and relevant to the national agricultural sector. The benefits for and impact on the sector must be clear to stakeholders (what will it achieve/prevent, why is it important for me to get involved). Priority should be given to issues that directly affect farmers to ensure their cooperation and to increase their participation in finding solutions and acquiring knowledge. No passive stakeholders, but autonomous agents of change: farmers should be given more responsibility to actively seek solutions themselves!

Recommendations for relevant fields of action in the national context (and to be addressed in a CoP):

- **Climate-smart agricultural practices** (opportunities and potential to reduce critical substances and products in and from agriculture, such as ammonia, methane, chemical fertilisers, PFAS)
- **Generational change in agriculture** (alternative forms of farm succession, forms of financing, strengthening of professional image)
- **Digital transformation in agriculture** (use and availability of modern technology for animal welfare, resource and environmental protection, operational efficiency and productivity)
- **Diversification and new pillars** (identifying potential areas for Luxembourg and facilitating their development)

3. **Effective coordination is needed to make AKIS visible and tangible.**

Participants note that AKIS activities are being implemented at different levels and in different groups, including in the context of various EU projects (Resilience4Dairy, i2connect, modernAKIS, Climate Smart Advisors, Climate Farm Demo). However, the projects mostly work independently and there is limited exchange and transfer of knowledge at national level, which is far from reaching all potential users.

Recommendation for a follow-up at national level:

The coordination and management of AKIS-related activities (**AKIS Coordination Body**) is clearly seen as part of the Ministry's agenda. In fact, it is already in place. However, it does not currently have a clear profile (no official contacts and missions) and is therefore more reactive than active. There is a need to further establish and strengthen the national coordinating body by giving people responsibility and defining tasks.

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At the same time, a non-governmental partner (ideally from the field of advisory services or knowledge transfer) is seen as an important link in the AKIS network, which, due to its good networking in the agricultural sector and its proximity to practice, should help to bundle information and innovative knowledge and disseminate it in the sector and among other institutions, as well as stimulate knowledge exchange and cooperation in AKIS (**AKIS animation/facilitation**). However, finding a "neutral" partner able to co-ordinate the national AKIS in cooperation with the Ministry is still challenging (Capacity building needed?).

4. **A strategic vision provides guidance and facilitates communication with stakeholders.**

There is no vision for the Luxembourg AKIS. This makes communication and public discussion more difficult as it is not clear where the journey is heading. Defining priorities and important areas for action and assigning concrete tasks is an important step that should take place but could not be covered during the event. However, many good directions for follow-ups have already been gathered and participants are positive about continuing the discussion.

Feedback from Attendees

Usefulness of the information:

The participants gave this point an average score of **7.8** out of a possible 10 points.

Workshop Recommendation:

The participants gave this point an average score of **9** out of a possible 10 points.

Acquisition of knowledge:

The participants gave this point an average score of **7.4** out of a possible 10 points.

Highlights:

Exchange of knowledge and information and plenty of time for discussion.

Notes:

The learning content of the AKIS modules was well suited to this round but may be too theoretical for practitioners.

The discussion topics raised during this workshop should be continued in the future (especially to specify the objectives for the national AKIS

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3.9. Netherlands

Event Summary

An external facilitator was hired for the event.

Invitation: AKIS Academy

On the way to the perfect Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System!

What did AKIS look like in the past, and what can we learn from it?

How do we view today's AKIS? What lessons can we learn to create the perfect future AKIS?

This is a modernAKIS meeting, in collaboration with i2Connect. This meeting is an invitation for "key actors of change": a small group of 15–20 people. We look back, for example, at conclusions from the last 16 years via the "AKIS photo". We work together to create a shared vision of the current AKIS, using short "learning materials":

1: The need for systems approaches in agriculture and interrelated fields

2a: Understanding AKIS as a system - Part 1 and 2b: Part 2

3: Diagnosis of AKIS

Together, we "design" the perfect future AKIS. The first steps will be taken immediately in 2025.

The GLB regional organization is a partner in the Horizon Europe project modernAKIS. Through this, we build on the lessons learned from the i2Connect project. We invite you to join us for this workshop.

Date, Time, and Location

Date: Thursday, January 23

Time: 15:00 - 20:15

Location: www.pastoe-foodbar.nl

Rotsoord 7b, 3523 CL, Utrecht

For whom?

AKIS "key actors of change"; government, academia, education, advisors.

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Program

15:00 Arrival and networking

Meet and connect with AKIS coordination team members.

15:30 Opening and session objectives

Clear goals and expectations for the session.

15:45 The past of AKIS – Reflecting on its development

Reviewing the evolution of AKIS in recent years.

16:45 AKIS today – Current situation and challenges

Mapping the current AKIS together.

17:45 Dinner

Networking and enjoying a meal from another perspective.

19:00 The future of AKIS – Innovation and sustainability

Brainstorming about future developments in AKIS and the "perfect AKIS".

19:45 - 20:15 Future-oriented action points – From theory to practice

Formulating concrete steps toward the perfect AKIS.

The GLB regional organization organizes this AKIS Academy workshop in collaboration with i2Connect and is funded by the European Union.

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Attendee Summary

There were a total of 21 attendees present from the following organisations.

Table 9 Organizations represented by attendees at the Netherlands national workshop

ORGANISATIONS REPRESENTED	
TKI agrifood	DAW
Groen	i2Connect/zLTO
Kennisnet	i2Connect/zzp
Agrivaknet	HBO, Aeres
vab	CIV-groen/aeres
Flynth	Ministry LVVN
Facilitation Company	ROGLB
P Limburg	WUR/i2Connect

Key Outcomes or Lessons Learned

AKIS is not a choice but a way of looking at innovation in agriculture. It is a system where the power of networks, collaboration, and knowledge exchange is central. The challenge for the future is to make this system more robust, responsive, and inclusive. By making strategic choices in 2025, we can lay the foundation for a sustainable and effective AKIS that strengthens the innovative capacity of the agricultural sector.

To be continued in approx. six months, adding more diverse (young) stakeholders:

- Modules 3 and 4 of *ModernAKIS* are in development, also in project planning.
- Possibly link to Brussels' study tour to be planned in September '25.

1. What did AKIS look like in the past and what can we learn from that?

(presented by Jos Verstegen, WUR / i2Connect)

AKIS, or the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System, is not a new concept. Its origins date back to the late 1980s, when Professor Niels Röling from Wageningen University introduced it as an alternative to the traditional knowledge transfer model. In that model, knowledge flowed from researchers through extension officers to farmers. Röling argued that innovation is not just a matter of better information provision but primarily depends on the quality of interactions between different actors in the system.

During the 1990s, this approach changed drastically under the influence of market-driven thinking. Knowledge became a tradable commodity, and the traditional R&E triangle (Research, Extension,

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Education) lost its coherence. Public agricultural extension services disappeared, leading to a fragmented system. The government's role shifted to that of a commissioner of knowledge products, further straining the coherence and connections within the system.

Two PhD dissertations exposed the issues of the fragmented AKIS: Laurens Klerkx (2008) introduced the concept of the 'knowledge broker,' a mediator between knowledge supply and demand. Wielinga (2001) advocated for the role of 'free actors,' who function as catalysts in networks to stimulate knowledge exchange and innovation.

A key lesson from the past is that innovation cannot be imposed through top-down knowledge transfer but emerges through collaboration and interaction within networks. This was demonstrated in experiments such as 'Networks in Livestock Farming,' where farmers initiated projects themselves and received support from knowledge institutions.

- Jos' report *Innovation in the Agricultural Sector: We Can't Get Enough of It!* Innovatie in de agrarische sector : we kunnen er niet genoeg van krijgen! en presentatie
- and Jos' presentation (separate file).

2. Current AKIS diagnosis

The current AKIS is characterized by a great diversity of actors: knowledge institutions, advisory services, agricultural businesses, governments, and NGOs. Since the revival of the AKIS concept and the introduction of the European Innovation Partnership (EIP-AGRI), over 4,000 'Operational Groups' have been established to foster interactive innovation. However, fragmentation remains a problem, and coherence is not always a given.

Today, policymakers recognize that an effective AKIS is more than just a collection of separate initiatives; it requires well-functioning connections between actors. A healthy AKIS is responsive and capable of adapting to changing circumstances. Innovation emerges where networks function well, and actors are willing to share knowledge and experiences.

Critical points in the diagnosis of the current AKIS:

- Much knowledge and many innovations remain confined within specific networks and do not always reach the broader sector.
- The role of intermediaries, such as knowledge brokers and network coordinators, is still undervalued.
- The risk of fragmented funding and short-term projects hinders sustainable innovation.

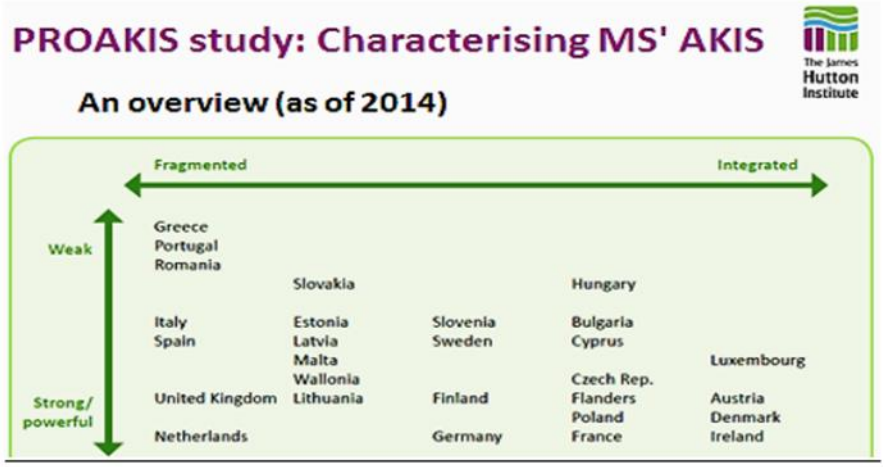

Figure 8 AKIS SWOT analysis (2029). Source: Tool 8.1 Tools for the CAP Cross-Cutting Objective (CCO) - AKIS Strategy.

OECD report (+presentation)Policies for the Future of Farming and Food in the Netherlands | OECD

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3. Lessons for a future 'perfect AKIS'

To develop an optimally functioning AKIS in the future, we must learn from both the past and the present. A perfect AKIS meets the following criteria:

- **Strengthening networks and intermediaries:** Innovation thrives where active networks and independent facilitators support knowledge exchange.
- **Long-term vision and stability:** Projects and initiatives should not rely solely on short-term funding but must be structurally embedded in the knowledge system.
- **Active involvement of farmers and entrepreneurs:** Innovation originates from practice. Therefore, knowledge development should be demand-driven rather than purely science-driven.
- **Utilizing digital technologies:** New communication tools and digital platforms can help disseminate knowledge more quickly and widely.
- **Flexibility and adaptability:** The AKIS must be responsive and able to address societal challenges such as climate change, sustainability, and market developments.

First Steps in 2025

Short-term (2025-2027):

- Establishing regional AKIS coordination hubs to support innovation and knowledge sharing.
- Strengthening the role of knowledge brokers and network coordinators in practice.
- Encouraging cross-sector collaboration, for example, between agriculture, technology, and sustainability.

Long-term (up to 2035):

- Integrating AKIS into national and EU policy strategies with structural funding.
- Creating a learning system where knowledge development and implementation go hand in hand.
- A cultural shift towards collective learning processes in which the farmer's role as a knowledge partner is recognized.

Feedback from Attendees

Question 1 How useful did you find the information presented today?

Average response 7.9

Question 2 How likely are you to recommend this workshop to a colleague?

Average response 8.1

Question 4 How much has your knowledge grown after participating in this workshop?

Average response 7.5

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3.10. Portugal

Event Summary

On 19 September 2024, the DGADR held a training session on AKIS, as part of WP3 of the modernAKIS project.The Focal Points of the National CAP Network were invited to take part, i.e. from the 7 regions of Portugal, 5 from the mainland and 2 autonomous regions, Madeira and the Azores.Part 1 of the meeting focussed on providing information on the changes to the Governance Structure of the CAP National Network and Focal Points, which is directly reflected in the National AKIS, since the DGDR and the CAP National Network will be responsible for evaluating and monitoring the National AKIS.

It became important to sensitise the Regions to their fundamental role in this process.

AKIS face-to-face workshop and meeting: 19 September 2024

- Facilitators
  - Maria Custódia Correia – Coordinator of the National PAC Network (CB)
  - Ana Maria Ribes – Member of the technical structure of the PAC National Network and AKIS Technical Team
  - Vanessa Campos – Member of the technical structure of the PAC National Network, manager of the AKIS platform in Portugal and AKIS Technical Team

Agenda:
09h00: Reception of Participants

09h30: Opening speech
Maria Custódia Correia: RNPAC Coordinator (DGADR)

09h45: Presentation of the CAP National Network and its framework in the CAP
Maria Custódia Correia: RNPAC Coordinator (DGADR)

10h15: Individual introductions of participants
2 minutes for each participant (about 25 minutes)
Mentimeter (Icebreaker)

10h40: RN PAC Action and Activity Plan
General analysis and Focal Points contributions
Maria Custódia Correia and AKIS Technical Team

12h00: AKIS
Ana Ribes: AKIS Technical Team (DGADR | RNPAC)
Mentimeter (AKIS)

12h30- 13h30: Lunch

13h30: Individual work (2h30min)
Module 1: 25 minutes

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Discussion
Module 2 part 1: 25 minutes
Discussion
Module 2 part 2: 25 minutes
Discussion
Module 3: 30 minutes
Discussion

16h00min: Back to Mentimeter AKIS
Compare the answers given in the morning and a5ernoon:
Different AKIS actors
Connections between these
Identification of opportunities
Identification of challenges

16h30min: AKIS platform as an AKIS tool
Vanessa Campos: AKIS Technical Team (DGADR | RNPAC)

17h00min: Conclusion of the working day

- Next steps
- Suggestions
- Others

Session summary

The meeting took place in the library of the Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development, a space that was recently renovated and where all the equipment to hold an event of this kind can be found. The coordinator of the National PAC Network (RNPAC) emphasised the activities of the different divisions of the DGADR, the key role of RNPAC and the path it has travelled so far. The first part of the session focused on RNPAC, its evolution and the changes due to the implementation of the new CAP.

In this part of the meeting, questions were clarified, such as the financing of the Focal Points, the contribution to the RNPAC Action Plan, including indicators and results. The participants were informed about the evolution of National AKIS since the first study carried out in Portugal by UTAD (2017), including the characterisation of the different AKIS actors and the links between them. Bearing in mind the main objective of AKIS, it was made clear that National AKIS has already evolved very positively in recent years, with the main contributors to these results being the PEI-AGRI Operational Group Projects, the creation of the Competence Centres and the Collab's. In 2022/2023, the possibility of PRR funding for projects has also given new impetus to innovation in the sector's research. These projects will have to finalise their work this year, with a strong transfer of the knowledge produced to all AKIS players expected.Also, in the first part of the meeting, a Mentimeter was held to determine the participants' knowledge of AKIS. After this brief introduction, a networking lunch was held for all the participants in the RNPAC technical team's new space, where the opportunity was taken to show off some of the uses of the AKIS Platform.

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Lunch was followed by the AKIS training modules produced by the project. All the participants managed to complete the modules, although those who were already more familiar with AKIS managed to complete them more quickly. Those who had more difficulty had to access the modules later in order to consolidate their learning. After the modules had been finalised and the participants had had a brief discussion about this tool, it was time to present the AKIS Platform as an AKIS tool.

Overall, the workshop concluded that the AKIS ecosystem in Portugal should focus on more peer-to-peer knowledge, fostering stronger connections and trust. It was also agreed that the Advisory Service has an important role to play in AKIS, and that technicians need to understand the importance of their work with farmers and producers. Participants were clearer about AKIS and their role in this system, which is so important for the sector. It was clear that the Focal Points have a fundamental role to play in their region's AKIS, as they are closer to and more involved with all the AKIS actors in that region and have greater knowledge of and involvement with that region's difficulties and weaknesses, particularly when it comes to identifying the region's capacity-building needs.

Attendee Summary

Table 10 Organizations represented by attendees at the Portuguese national workshop

Organization / Role
Regional Coordination and Development Commission of the Centre, I. P. (CCDR Alentejo, I. P.) & Centre Region Focal Point
Regional Coordination and Development Commission of the Centre, I. P. (CCDR Alentejo, I. P.) & Centre Region Focal Point
Regional Coordination and Development Commission of the Centre, I. P. (CCDR Alentejo, I. P.) & Centre Region Focal Point
Lisbon and Tagus Valley Regional Coordination and Development Commission, I. P. (CCDR Alentejo, I. P.) & Focal Point Lisbon and Tagus Valley Region
Lisbon and Tagus Valley Regional Coordination and Development Commission, I. P. (CCDR Alentejo, I. P.) & Focal Point Lisbon and Tagus Valley Region
Lisbon and Tagus Valley Regional Coordination and Development Commission, I. P. (CCDR Alentejo, I. P.) & Focal Point Lisbon and Tagus Valley Region
Lisbon and Tagus Valley Regional Coordination and Development Commission, I. P. (CCDR Alentejo, I. P.) & Focal Point Lisbon and Tagus Valley Region
Alentejo Regional Coordination and Development Commission, I. P. (CCDR Alentejo, I. P.) & Alentejo Region Focal Point
Algarve Regional Coordination and Development Commission, I. P. (CCDR Alentejo, I. P.) & Algarve Region Focal Point

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	Algarve Regional Coordination and Development Commission, I. P. (CCDR Alentejo, I. P.) & Algarve Region Focal Point
	Algarve Regional Coordination and Development Commission, I. P. (CCDR Alentejo, I. P.) & Algarve Region Focal Point
	Regional Directorate for Rural Development of the Azores and Focal Point for the Autonomous Region of the Azores

Key Outcomes or Lessons Learned

- **Improved understanding of system thinking in agriculture:**

The workshop successfully introduced participants to the fundamental concept of systems thinking, adapted to the agricultural sector. This foundation was fundamental to the participants' ability to approach AKIS from a systemic perspective

- **Enhanced collaborative environment**

Carrying out the training models online, for all participants at the same time, promoted better 'discussion' among the participants, addressing the most pertinent issues for each of them.

- **Next Steps**

On the AKIS platform, AKIS in Practice has already been created for each region. The challenge now will be for each Focal Point to 'bring to life' its Regional AKIS

On the AKIS platform, a group has been created where RNPAC and all the Focal Points can communicate and exchange experiences - it will be considered a means of communication between everyone

The Focal Points have been asked to contribute to the AKIS Action and Activity Plan.

Feedback from Attendees

- All the participants believed we still have a long way to go, but that they came away with more knowledge about AKIS and how to approach the topic in their region.
- The online training modules were an excellent tool for 'demystifying' AKIS for all actors-AKIS and even the community in general

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3.11. Spain

Event Summary

This first in-country WP3 workshop for the Spanish AKIS network brought together a diverse range of AKIS actors, including coordination bodies (CBs) and other key stakeholders. This workshop was conducted in two distinct sessions: an online session held on October 21st, 2024, and an in-person session on October 30th, 2024. To maximize impact and synergy, the event was integrated with the activities of the Spanish AKIS Community of Practice (CoP), a forum that convenes some of the principal players within the AKIS ecosystem of the country. These include coordination bodies (CBs), advisors, regional managers, agrotech entities, professional associations, universities, research institutes, NGOs and other relevant entities. This strategic merging of efforts ensured a focused and comprehensive engagement with the primary audience for this event.

Online Session – October 21st 2024

- **Facilitators**
  - **Juan Pedro Romero Trueba** – Head of Training and Technology Division. Subdirectorate of Innovation and Digitization (Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación, MAPA).
  - **Óscar Bernárdez Pérez** – EU Project Manager (Fundación Universidad-Empresa Galega, FEUGA).
  - **Rebeca Díez Barca** – EU Project Manager (Fundación Universidad-Empresa Galega, FEUGA).
  - **Víctor Falguera Pascual** (External collaborator) – General Coordinator of the Digital Agroforestry Innovation Centre of Catalonia (CIDAF-CAT). General Coordinator of the Bioeconomy Hub of Catalonia (BioHubCat).

- **Agenda**

12:00 – 12:50 *Conceptualization of Systems Thinking: connection to agriculture and understanding AKIS as a system*.
- *Introduction to the session of the IV National CoP* - Juan Pedro Romero Trueba, Head of the Training and Technology Division (MAPA).
- *Progress of the European ModernAKIS project and module I introduction* - Rebeca Díez Barca, European Project Manager (FEUGA).
- *Systems thinking as a key to complexity: tackling future challenges in agriculture and forestry* - Víctor Falguera, General Coordinator of the Digital Agroforestry Innovation Centre of Catalonia (CIDAF CAT) and the Bioeconomy Hub of Catalonia (BioHubCat).

12:50 – 13:00 Coffee Break.
13:00 – 13:45 *Mural* Group activity (FEUGA).
13:45 – 14:00 Closing remarks (MAPA).

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- **Session summary**

This first session focused mainly on Module 1: *The need for systems approaches in agriculture and interrelated fields,* as it established the theoretical foundations of systems thinking applied to agriculture. It highlighted the importance of using this concept to solve complex problems that will affect the future of agriculture.

To achieve this, we provided a brief explanatory introduction to the modules, which had already been sent to participants for review before the event. We emphasized the importance of reflecting on these issues collaboratively from all perspectives of the AKIS profiles.

Subsequently, the guest speaker, Víctor Falguera, explained the theoretical concept of "*systems thinking"* and how it applies to agriculture, the types of systemic challenges facing agriculture, the multi-level perspective on innovation (MLP), the *two loops model* of co-creative innovation, and the model of shared agendas between global and regional challenges. He also provided instruction on systemic mapping, using Catalonia (Spain) as an example, and concluded with an analysis of what systems thinking contributes to AKIS, reinforcing the idea of capacity building and collaboration.

In the final part of the session, the knowledge shared during the session was put into practice through a hands-on exercise using the Mural interactive tool (Anex I). Participants were divided into four groups, each guided by a moderator, and were led through three sets of key questions, with 15 minutes allocated for each group of questions:

1. **What is your understanding of the "systems approach" in agriculture? Which actors play a central role in the sustainability and connection of the system?**

The conclusions from the participants revealed that the systems approach in agriculture is understood as a way to analyse and manage agri-food systems by considering their interconnected nature, where subsystems must be addressed in an integrated manner to achieve more efficient and sustainable functioning. This approach emphasizes the value chain, from the foundations to the higher levels, promoting a holistic vision that integrates both the resolution of immediate problems and the pursuit of ethical, long-term sustainable solutions.

Participants identified key actors as farmers (small, medium, and family-run), large companies, cooperatives, consumers, academics, innovation hubs, and various levels of public administration, from local to national. They highlighted the essential role of technical advisory associations and independent advisors, who can connect different parties and articulate solutions. The importance of including diverse perspectives, identifying gaps in the system, and improving communication and coordination among actors to foster innovation and systemic change was also emphasized.

Finally, they stressed the need to distinguish roles between legislators and administrators and to include traditionally marginalized sectors, such as local agents and cooperatives, in systemic strategies. Overall, participants concluded that it is essential to strengthen the network as a whole, beyond the isolated interests of individual actors.

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2. **What are the bottlenecks in the Spanish AKIS system that hinder better connectivity between actors? What practices or processes within the current agricultural system do you think should be reconsidered to improve its efficiency?**

The group's conclusions regarding bottlenecks in the Spanish AKIS system highlighted numerous challenges that hinder effective connectivity among actors. Key issues identified include differences between autonomous communities (CCAA), lack of trust and accessibility toward advisors, regulatory rigidity, and overregulation in certain sectors. Additionally, there is a significant disconnection between research and practice, exacerbated by the lack of support structures and platforms for knowledge and idea exchange.
Another critical issue is the fragmentation of end users, such as family farmers and SMEs, as well as dependence on unsustainable inputs. Participants also noted maladaptive red tape that does not align with the pace of innovation, lack of coordination among actors, and the absence of a cohesive national strategy to unify regional realities.
Participants emphasized the importance of reconsidering knowledge transfer systems, promoting a balance between public and private approaches with a demand-driven model. They proposed strengthening advisory services, encouraging knowledge transfer, improving digitalization, and ensuring the sustainability of innovation projects. They also advocated for developing a clear co-governance framework and promoting territorial models of integrated management that value family farming and small-scale operations.
Finally, they suggested drawing inspiration from simplified systems in other countries and fostering experiences of cooperative management and direct relationships between producers and consumers. Strengthening communication among actors, overcoming territorial disparities, and facilitating idea exchange were seen as key actions to improve system efficiency.

3. **How can small and medium-sized agricultural operations contribute to strengthening the system, and what support do they need to fulfil this role more effectively?**

Conclusions from the exercise indicated that small and medium-sized agricultural operations play a vital role in strengthening the agricultural system as hubs of innovation and sustainability, although their potential is limited by inadequate support and structural barriers. Participants highlighted that these operations could contribute by actively engaging in innovation activities, adopting sustainable practices like regenerative agriculture, and optimizing resource use through technological and digital tools. Their capacity to generate locally adapted knowledge and solutions was also noted.
However, to effectively fulfil this role, significant support is needed. This includes economic incentives, ongoing training, simplification of bureaucracy, and more direct and reliable access to technical advice. Cooperation and association through cooperatives and local networks were identified as key mechanisms for sharing knowledge, addressing common challenges, and accessing technological and financial resources.
Additionally, participants emphasized the importance of tailoring research and innovation to the specific realities of these operations, avoiding generic approaches. They proposed fostering knowledge transfer through close advisory systems that build trust, as well as facilitating direct exchange routes among farmers to promote practical and applicable learning.
Finally, the need to better connect small producers with consumers was recognized, raising awareness of the value of their products and improving prices through fair and sustainable practices. Long-term vision, contextualized support, and data sovereignty were highlighted as priorities to ensure the resilience and sustainability of these operations.

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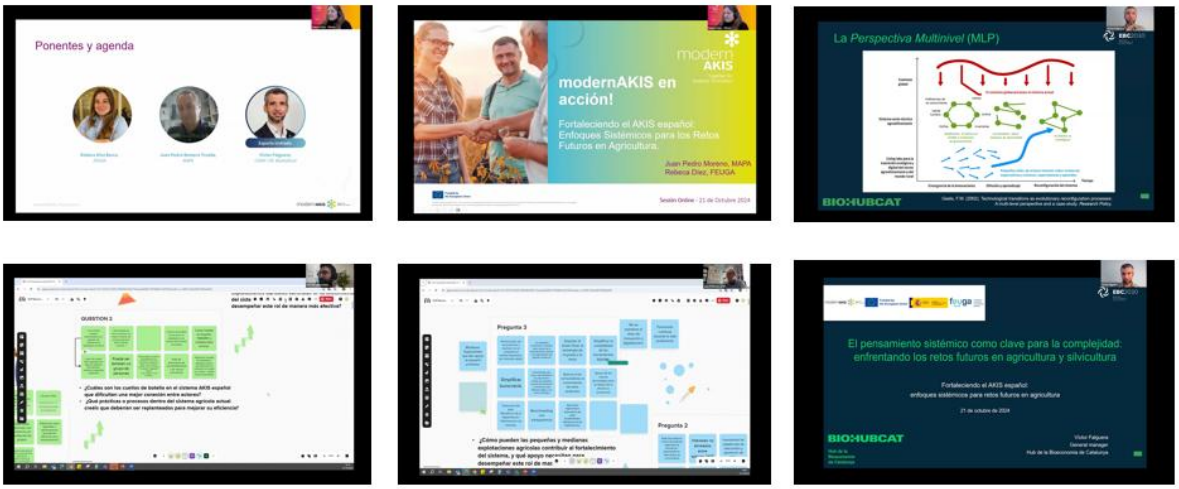

Figure 9 Online session screenshots from the Spanish national workshop

In-person Session – October 30th 2024

The in-person session took place at La Vega Innova (Madrid), the iHUB for innovation and entrepreneurship in the AgriFoodTech sector, which is part of Spain's Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food. This space serves as a hub for co-creation, fine-tuning technologies tailored to the agri-food value chain, and hosting sector events. At this iHub, cooperatives, SMEs, and professional agricultural organizations can experience technology firsthand, test it, present their needs as challenges to be addressed and also receive training.

- **Facilitators**
  - **Juan Pedro Romero Trueba** – Head of Training and Technology Division. Subdirectorate of Innovation and Digitization (Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación, MAPA).
  - **Carlos Salamanca Fresno** – Head of Service (Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación, MAPA).
  - **Óscar Bernárdez Pérez** – EU Project Manager (Fundación Universidad-Empresa Galega, FEUGA).
  - **Rebeca Díez Barca** – EU Project Manager (Fundación Universidad-Empresa Galega, FEUGA).

- **External collaborators**
  - **Javier Alejandre -** Agricultural Technician at the Union of Small Farmers and Ranchers (UPA).
  - **José Miguel Altelarrea –** National Project Coordinator in CESEFOR. Partner at GO Tuber Label.

Some of the attendees took a bus at 8:30 close to MAPA's headquarters in Madrid's downtown to get to La Vega Innova space located in San Fernando de Henares (Madrid).

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- **Agenda**

9:00 – 9:20 Reception and tour of iHUB La Vega Innova space (MAPA/La Vega Innova).
9:20 – 9:30 Presentation of the iHUB La Vega Innova (La Vega Innova).
9:30 – 11:00 *Diagnosis of the AKIS, understanding how to identify it and recognize roles within the Spanish AKIS.*

- **Configuration of the AKIS: Identification and role of the actors in the Agricultural Innovation System.**

- *Introductory presentation, Modules IIA, IIB and III* - Rebeca Díez Barca, European Project Manager (FEUGA).

- *Evolution of Agricultural Extension Services towards the AKIS* - Javier Alejandre, Agricultural Technician at the Union of Small Farmers and Ranchers (UPA).

- **The Spanish Case.**

- *The AKIS in Spain: Key Actors and Governance* - Juan Pedro Romero Trueba. Head of the Training and Technology Division (MAPA).

- *The AKIS Spanish Advisors Platform as a Core Element of the System* - Carlos Salamanca Fresno. Head of Service (MAPA).

- *Successful Case of Interactive Innovation from the Tuber Label GO*. José Miguel Altelarrea. National Project Coordinator in CESEFOR.

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee Break
11:30 – 14:00 Facilitation Session with Mediators: LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY (ENSO Mediación).
14:00 – 15:00 Lunch
15:00 – 16:00 Innovation Showroom + THE CENTER (alternate field visits).
16:00 – 17:00 Networking space (Mentimeter).

Session Summary

La Vega Innova team showed what are the main activities of this iHub and welcomed all the attendees into the facilities.
The in-person session focused on the remaining AKIS modules (IIA, IIB, III) with a practical approach designed to deepen participants understanding of AKIS as a system. The activities included presentations and hands-on dynamics aimed at diagnosing the Spanish AKIS, identifying key actors, and learning from successful cases where a strengthened AKIS fostered collaborative and interactive innovation.
At the beginning of the session, an overview was provided to connect the content of the online sessions with the in-person discussions. This ensured continuity and alignment of the topics covered.
Javier Alejandre provided a historical overview of AKIS in Spain, explaining how it evolved into a structured system. His presentation traced the formation of connections among various actors and discussed the current state of the system, emphasizing its importance in fostering agricultural innovation. He highlighted the efficiency of the old agrarian extension and remarked the importance of involved of the actor in the current AKIS system with multiple knowledge flows.

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Juan Pedro Romero offered an in-depth analysis of the structure of the Spanish AKIS, highlighting the multilevel governance and mentioning some of the active initiatives promoted by the Ministry of Agriculture to strengthen the system.

Carlos Salamanca introduced the official AKIS Advisors Spain website and the advisory platform, tools that aim to enhance the integration and efficiency of key actors in the Spanish AKIS with a suitable advisor's approach.

The final presentation centred on the GO Tuber Label operational group, a success story demonstrating collaboration within the AKIS framework. The project brought together multiple actors to develop a business plan for black truffle production and commercialization, which has contributed to regional growth in the black truffle subsector. The initiative showcased how strengthened networks and shared efforts can result in tangible advancements for the agri-food sector.

Following the presentations, an interactive session was held to apply the concepts and insights discussed. This was facilitated by *ENSO Mediación*, a professional facilitation company, using the World Café methodology combined with LEGO® as a facilitation tool. Participants were guided through a process of collective reflection and collaborative construction, allowing them to explore practical ways to enhance their contributions to AKIS.
The methodology structured the workshop into three rounds of questions. After each round, participants moved to new tables to engage with different groups, enabling broader interaction and the building of collective knowledge. Each round served as a stepping stone to the next, encouraging participants to deepen their insights and create a more comprehensive understanding of the system.

1. **First and Second Rounds**

The first two questions prompted participants to reflect on their roles and interactions within the AKIS ecosystem:

- *What does belong to the Spanish AKIS bring to me as an agent?*
- *What types of agents would I like to collaborate with and what systemic challenges or barriers might limit these collaborations?*

These rounds focused on individual and group reflections about the ecosystem's dynamics, challenges, and opportunities. Participants were encouraged to create models that represented their thoughts and experiences.

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2. **Third Round**

The final question asked: *What can I contribute to the AKIS ecosystem through networking and strengthening the system?*

Using the insights from the previous rounds, participants worked to build more concrete and strategic answers. They focused on identifying their contributions to a robust AKIS, forming models and strategies to enhance collaboration.
After the third round, the participants reconvened in a plenary session to share their models and group reflections. This session allowed for the consolidation of ideas, prioritization of strategies, and extraction of shared conclusions.

The workshop emphasized the unique and indispensable role each agent plays within the AKIS ecosystem to ensure its strength, adaptability, and sustainability. Organizations emerged as pivotal connectors within the system, facilitating collaboration among diverse actors and maintaining vibrant networks. Their capacity to link producers, consumers, and other stakeholders is crucial for creating a dynamic and responsive ecosystem that can adapt to changing demands.

Advisors were recognized as essential intermediaries, bridging the realities of the agricultural field with broader systemic objectives. Their deep understanding of the sector allows them to effectively communicate the needs and challenges faced by farmers and ranchers to policymakers and researchers. By translating innovation into actionable, field-ready solutions, advisors ensure that progress within the AKIS leads to tangible benefits on the ground.

Researchers contribute by generating and validating knowledge that keeps the AKIS ecosystem at the cutting edge of innovation. Their work is most effective when aligned with the real-world needs of producers, ensuring that technological advancements are both relevant and impactful. Additionally, by fostering international collaborations and facilitating the exchange of ideas, researchers enrich the ecosystem with diverse perspectives and solutions.

The role of the government (at national, regional and local level) was identified as the structural backbone of AKIS. By providing resources, streamlining processes, and shaping regulatory frameworks, administrative bodies enable an environment conducive to collaboration and innovation. The workshop also highlighted the importance of the administration maintaining a strong connection to the realities of the agricultural sector to ensure that policies remain focused on those who need them most, particularly farmers and ranchers.

Overall, the workshop concluded that the AKIS ecosystem in Spain must aspire to be not only strong and resilient but also inclusive and adaptable. Each participant recognized the importance of contributing their unique expertise to a collaborative framework that ensures sustainable and innovative solutions. This collective effort is essential for addressing current challenges in the agri-food sector while establishing a solid foundation for future growth and readiness to tackle global challenges. The final vision of the workshop underscored that a thriving AKIS ecosystem benefits all stakeholders and lays the groundwork for a more connected, innovative, and sustainable future.

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Attendee Summary

Table 11 Persons responsible for facilitating the Spanish national workshop

Organisation	Name	Role
Fundación Universidad-Empresa Galega (FEUGA)	Díez Barca, Rebeca Bernárdez Pérez, Óscar	Partner
Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y alimentación (MAPA)	Romero Trueba, Juan Pedro	Partner, CB

Table 12 Organizations represented by attendees at the Spanish national workshop

Organisation	Role
Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y alimentación (MAPA)	National CB
Unión de Pequeños Agricultores y Ganaderos	Farm Based Organization (FBO)
CDTI	Technological Development and Innovation Centre
DataLife	Regional DIH
RFEAGAS	Ranchers Based Organization
Colegio Oficial de Ingenieros Agrónomos (COIA)	Professional Organization
SGCHIAO - DGPMA (MAPA)	National CB
IMIDRA	Regional Research Institute
LURSAIL	Cooperative
Abere Zerbitzu Teknikoak	Bask government (regional) and advisory council
INIA-CSIC	National Institute of AgroFood Research and Technology
ASEGAR	Advisory Service
Carna S.L.	SME (with an advisory approach)
JUNTA DE EXTREMADURA	Extremadura government (regional)
AMETIC AGROSLAB	Agro-Tech Company with huge expertise in DATS (Digital Advisory Tools and Services)
GANECA	NGO
Fundación Cajamar	Financial agro-bank entity
Centro de Innovación Digital Agroalimentario y Forestal de Cataluña	Regional DIH
AVEBIOM	Biomass Spanish Association
WWF	Environmental NGO

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ICIA	Canarian Agro-Research Centre
UPM	University
IFAPA	Andalusian Agro-Training and Research Centre
ECOVALIA	Professional Association of Organic Production
DARPA	Catalonian Government
FAFCYLE-FEDEHESA	Forester Based Organization (regional)

Key Outcomes or Lessons Learned

- **Improved understanding of system thinking in agriculture:**

The online session successfully introduced participants to the foundational concept of system thinking, tailored to the agricultural sector. This groundwork prepared attendees to approach AKIS with a systemic perspective, facilitating a smoother transition to the practical applications explored during the in-person session.

- **Enhanced collaborative environment**

The in-person session built upon the online discussions, allowing participants to engage more deeply with AKIS dynamics through hands-on activities and case studies. The interactive workshop using the World Café methodology proved effective in fostering active collaboration and collective problem-solving.

- **Strengthened network connections**

Both sessions reinforced connections among AKIS actors, enabling participants to understand each other's roles and contributions more clearly. This networking aspect was crucial for aligning efforts and building trust within the ecosystem.

- **Balanced integration of formats**

Combining an online session to establish conceptual foundations with an in-person workshop for practical application proved highly effective. However, ensuring that all participants have equal access to and understanding of the online content is critical for consistency. Adding external experts to the events is highly recommended, as their thematic contributions enrich the content, and their presence is often valued by participants. These experts often understand the ecosystem deeply and provide credibility, clarity, and a clear perspective.

- **Facilitation tools**

The use of professional facilitation tools (e.g., LEGO®, World Café) significantly enhanced interaction and creativity. However, participants needed clear instructions on using these tools to ensure that their contributions aligned with session objectives.

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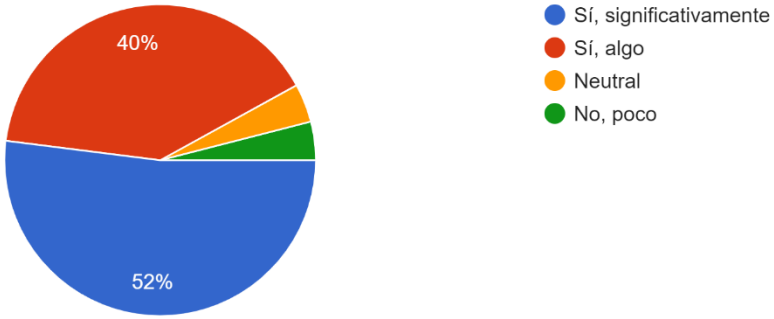
Feedback from Attendees

The event's follow-up, feedback and satisfaction survey received 25 responses. Questions with its answers where:

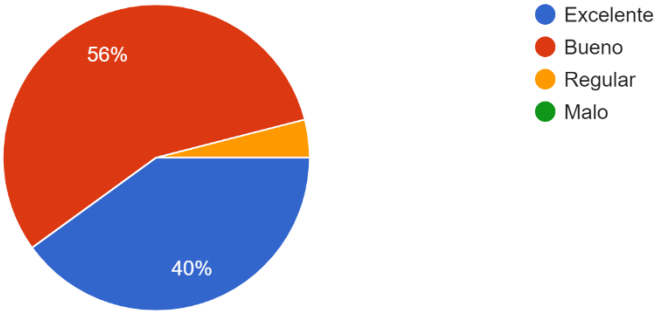
1. **Do you consider that you have expanded your knowledge of systems thinking and its application in agriculture?** 52% answer Yes, significantly. 40% answered Yes, some. 8% Neutral/No

¿Consideras que has ampliado tu conocimiento sobre el pensamiento sistemico y su aplicación en la agricultura?
25 respuestas



2. **How would you rate the overall content of the event in relation to the framework of systems thinking applied to agriculture?** 40% answered: Excellent. 56% answered: Good.

¿Cómo calificarías el contenido general del evento en relación con el marco del pensamiento sistémico aplicado a la agricultura?
25 respuestas



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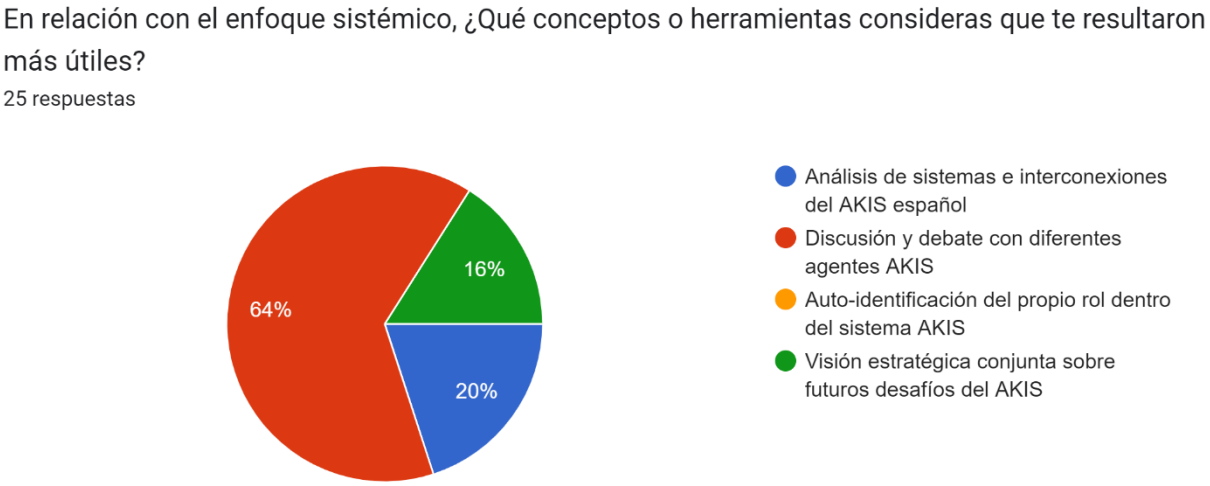
3. **In relation to the systems thinking approach, which concepts or tools do you consider to be the most useful?**

Answer options:

- System analysis and interconnections of the Spanish AKIS – 20% of the answers
- Discussion and debate with different AKIS actors – 64% of the answers
- Self-identification of one's own role within the AKIS – 0% of the answers
- Joint strategic vision on the future challenges of the AKIS – 16% of the answers



4. **How would you rate the content and quality of the speakers' presentations?** 56% answered: Excellent. 40% answered: Good.



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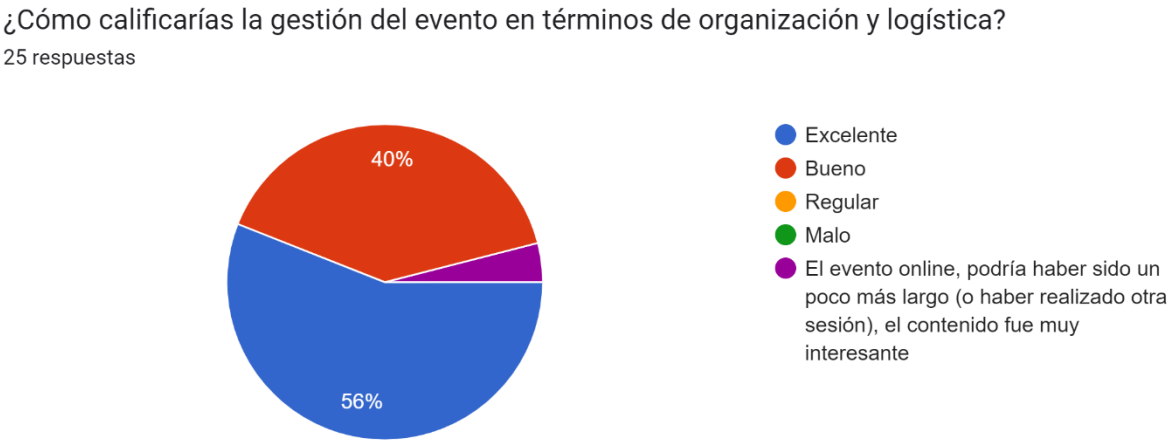
5. **How would you rate the event's management in terms of organization and logistics?** 56% answered: Excellent. 40% answered: Good. One person said he would prefer a longer online event or one more extra session as the topic of "*System thinking*" was very interesting and dense to be only one session.



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3.12. Slovakia

Event Summary

The workshop titled **"AKIS – A Tool for Connecting Research, Advisory Services, and Farmers"** was held **on March 6, 2025**, from **9:00 to 11:00 AM online**.

The workshop was organized by MARD SK, moderated by Iveta Marková, while the expert segment was led by Ing. Marta Mrnuštík Konečná (IAEI), who presented the e-learning modules.

Agenda:

- **Introduction:** Welcoming participants and presenting the modernAKIS project agenda, invitation to register on the **AKIS Connect** platform.
- **E-learning Modules Presentation:** Detailed presentation of the online modules, including their practical applications and benefits for improving knowledge sharing within AKIS.

Attendee Summary

- **IZPI**: The Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Institute
- **NPPC**: National Agricultural and Food Centre
- **PPA**: Agricultural Paying Agency

Table 13 Organizations represented by attendees at the Slovakian national workshop

ORGANISATION	ROLE
Department of IT Strategy and Implementation, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic	
nasefarmy.sk (advisory organization)	FG Advisory (Focus Group Advisory)
Agricultural advisor	FG Advisory
Director of the Department of Evaluation and Specific Program Activities, Rural Development and Direct Payments Section, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic	AKIS coordination body
Director, Department of Knowledge Transfer and Innovation, IZPI (Institute of Agricultural Information and Rural Development)	
Officer, Department of Knowledge Transfer and Innovation, IZPI	
Officer, Department of Knowledge Transfer and Innovation, IZPI	
Program Manager for Digital Transformation of the Department, IT, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic	
Officer, Department of Knowledge Transfer and Innovation, IZPI	
Professor, Technical University in Zvolen, Department of Environmental and Forestry Technology	Bioeconomy AKIS SC (Knowledge and Innovation)
Rural Platform	

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National Forest Centre, Knowledge Transfer and Forest Pedagogy Centre	FG Education
Officer, Forest Management and Wood Processing Section, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic	
Ekotrend Slovakia - Union of Ecological Agriculture	FG Demo Farms
Rural Parliament	FG Demo Farms, Advisory
Expert Worker, Department of Knowledge Transfer and Innovation, IZPI	
Director, National Agricultural and Food Centre, Research Institute of Plant Production	FG Advisory
Department of Knowledge Transfer and Innovation, IZPI	
RIZPI Manager, Department of Knowledge Transfer and Innovation, IZPI	
EIP Coordinator, IZPI	
Professor, Institute of Electrical Engineering, Automation, Informatics and Physics, Faculty of Engineering, Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra; 1 Rural Parliament in Slovakia	FG Education
Director, Food Research Institute, NPPC (National Agricultural and Food Centre)	FG Education
Methodology Department, PPA (Paying Agency)	FG Advisory, Education, Demo Farms
Deputy General Director for Science, Research and Cooperation with Practice, NPPC	AKIS SC
Chairman of AKS-DS, Agrarian Chamber of Slovakia	AKIS SC
Association of Young Farmers in Slovakia - ASYF	FG Education
Head of the Department of Animal Nutrition and Husbandry, University of Veterinary Medicine and Pharmacy in Košice	AKIS SC, FG Education
Methodology Department, PPA	FG Advisory, Education, Demo Farms
Professional Education and Training, Slovak Chamber of Agriculture and Food	FG Education
Department of Forest Economics and Policy, Faculty of Forestry, Technical University in Zvolen	
Central Director of the Chamber Office, Slovak Chamber of Agriculture and Food	
ASYF	
Methodology Department, PPA	
Department of Evaluation and Specific Program Activities, Rural Development and Direct Payments Section, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic	AKIS Coordination Body
Department of Strategies and Cross-cutting Activities, Strategies, Analyses and Cross-cutting Activities Section, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic	

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Key Outcomes or Lessons Learned

In this section, please describe any lessons learned or key outcomes and possibly also any recommendations for future events.

- Participants' interest: participants expressed interest in topics related to improving information sharing and the link between research and practice in agriculture.
- Better understanding of the linkages between AKIS actors.
- Simplify communication to make the topic more understandable to a wider audience.

Feedback from Attendees

Key Highlights:

•Presentation of the akisconnect.eu platform.

•Better understanding of AKIS: Information on how AKIS functions as a system and its main benefits for knowledge sharing. Participants appreciated the overview of the e-learning modules that help to better understand the concept of AKIS.

•Use of AKIS in various areas: Participants recognized the potential of AKIS for broader applica-tions.

Suggestions for Improvement:

•Link to Slovak practice: Participants suggested more reflection on the current situation in agriculture in Slovakia and practical examples of how AKIS could be applied.

•Simpler presentation: Some information was too complex. It is recommended to simplify the communication and include more practical examples.

Complexity of the AKIS system:

•Some participants expressed doubts about the practical use of AKIS in Slovakia due to its complexity and the lack of functioning basic support systems.

Lack of connection between research and practice:

•There was a call for research to function as an advisory body for agricultural advisors, given their specialized expertise.

Overall Assessment:

•**Useful information:** Most participants appreciated the usefulness of the information provided.

•**Room for improvement:** It is recommended to focus on simplifying the presentation and enhancing the practical part of the workshop.

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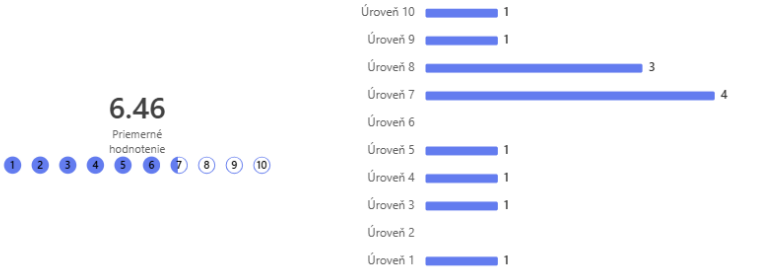
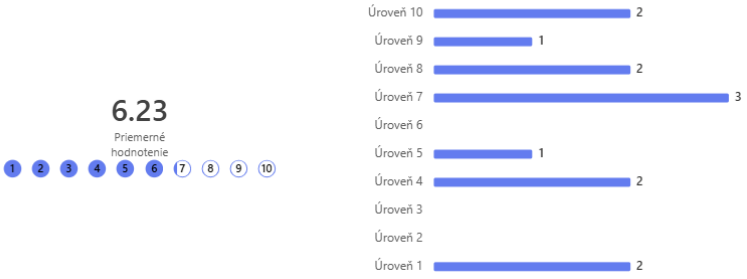
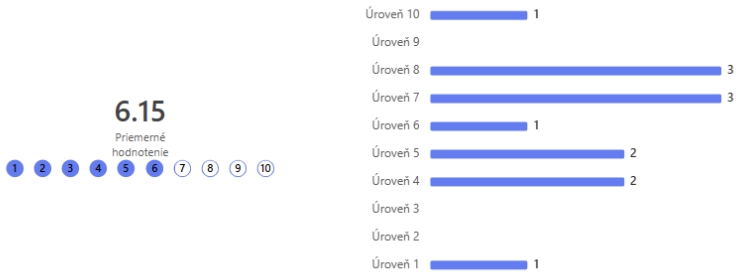
1. Ako užitočné boli pre Vás dnešné informácie? / How useful did you find the information presented today? Ďalšie podro



2. Odporučili by ste toto školenie / How likely are you to recommend this workshop to a colleague? Ďalšie poc



4. Do akej miery sa rozšírili vaše vedomosti o AKIS po tomto seminári? / How much has your knowledge grown after participatin g in this workshop? Ďal podrot



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3.13. Slovenia

Event Summary

Focus group: AKIS working group inside the ministry Date:

December 4th and 11th, 2024

Duration: 2 x 3 hours

Format: Face to face

Location: Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Ljubljana

Facilitators and speakers: Joži J. Cvelbar, Tanja Gorišek, Tina Šetina, Matej Štepec

The Capacity Development Workshop was conducted live in two parts for two target groups. Firstly, in December 2024, we held a workshop for the AKIS Working Group, which operates within the Ministry. The members of the working group come from different sectors of the Ministry and it is very useful that all members have the same starting point on AKIS, with the AKIS training modules playing an important role. The workshop also discussed the possibilities of strengthening the different sub- systems of the AKIS within the Ministry.

Then, in January 2025, a joint workshop was held for members of the two CoPs (crop production and livestock) and innovation brokers. The main focus of both workshops was to discuss how to strengthen the different AKIS subsystems and how to better link the systems together.

Workshop on 4 and 11 December 2024 for the AKIS Working Group (within the Ministry)

A two-part workshop was held for the members of the AKIS Working Group - the first part (4.12.2024) focused on group discussions by AKIS subsystems, and the second part (11.12.2024) on the AKIS Operational Plan.

A total of 19 participants attended the workshop.



Figure 10 Actors participating to the Slovenian national workshop on 4 December 2024 for members of the AKIS Working Group

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Workshop 4 December 2024
Agenda:

1. Introduction
   - The modernAKIS project and the AKIS system, the links between the e-learning modules (brief overview), the AKIS chapter in the CAP Strategic Plan and the AKIS Action Plan (Jožo J. Cvelbar)
   - Summary of findings from the implementation of the training sessions under the three e-learning modules - overview of participants' findings (Matej Štepec)
   - Discussion and grouping
2. Workshops by subsystems:
   - Science (moderator Matej Štepec)
   - Education (moderator Tina Šetina)
   - Public agricultural advisory services and other public services (moderator Jožo J. Cvelbar)
   - AKIS interventions (moderator Tanja Gorišek)
3. Closing debate:
   - Which links between subsystems are most needed, what is missing?
   - What to address with an AKIS Action Plan?

Workshop 11/12/2024

1. Presentation of a good practice example on a systemic approach to addressing challenges in agricultural and rural development (involving farmers, experts and institutions e.g. in strengthening short food chains) - Rural Development Cooperative, Jarina, Lili Mahne
   - Discussion
2. Summary of findings from the workshop 4.12.2024 (Matej Štepec)
3. Review of the draft AKIS Action Plan for strengthening the AKIS system in Slovenia (Jožo J. Cvelbar)
   - Discussion on the AKIS Action Plan
   - Concluding discussion

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Attendee Summary

Table 14 Organizations represented by attendees at the Slovenian national workshop

	Organisation	Role (If any)	Participated
1	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food	AKIS Coordination Body, Head of Division for Climate Policy and Knowledge and Innovation System in Agriculture	4. and 11. 12. 2024
2	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food	AKIS Coordination Body, Head of Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System Section	4. and 11. 12. 2024
3	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food	AKIS Coordination Body	4. and 11. 12. 2024
4	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food	AKIS Coordination Body	4. and 11. 12. 2024
5	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food	Responsible for CAP intervention Knowledge exchange and advisors training	4. and 11. 12. 2024
6	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food	Responsible for CAP intervention EIP	4. and 11. 12. 2024
7	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food	Responsible for CAP intervention Intergenerational knowledge transfer	4. 12. 2024
8	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food	Responsible for Public services in plant production	11. 12. 2024
9	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food	Responsible for Public services in animal husbandry	4. 12. 2024
10	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food	Public services in animal husbandry	4. and 11. 12. 2024
11	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food	Responsible for Public services in plant genetics	4. and 11. 12. 2024

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Key Outcomes or Lessons Learned

Workshop on 4 and 11 December 2024 for the AKIS Working Group (within the Ministry)

The e-learning modules were solved by the majority of the members (9) of the AKIS Working Group, who gave very positive feedback on the design of the modules. The participants appreciated the systematic, transparent and interactive nature of the modules. However, they made some comments on language and content, which will be passed on, especially in the context of the development of the next 3 modules.

In the introduction to the workshop, Joži J. Cvelbar gave a brief presentation:

- the characteristics and challenges of the AKIS system in Slovenia,
- the modernAKIS project and the link with the implementation of the online training modules; and
- the starting points for the preparation of the AKIS Action Plan.

Matej Štepec then gave a brief summary of the three online training modules.

The main part of the workshop was devoted to discussions in four groups on the individual AKIS subsystems:

- Education,
- Science,
- AKIS interventions under the CAP Strategic Plan
- Public services in agriculture.,

- As a starter to the second part of the workshop (11/12/2024), we have included a good practice example on a systems approach to addressing challenges in agricultural and rural development. We invited the Rural Development Cooperative, Jarina (Lili Mahne), which has extensive experience in engaging farmers, experts and institutions, for example in strengthening short food chains. They have been involved, among others, in LEADER projects and pilot projects under measure M16 Cooperation of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.



Figure 11 Photo: Lili Mahne, Rural Development Cooperative, Jarina, as an example of good networking practice at the Slovenian national workshop

Programme was followed by an overview and discussion of the draft AKIS Action Plan to strengthen the AKIS system in Slovenia.

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Discussion:

- In the AKIS Action Plan we need to specify the time aspect of the Action Plan's duration.
- The activities in the Action Plan need to be made more concrete - priorities, timelines, processes, stakeholders, risks.
- In the Action Plan we need to update the foreseen tasks of the AKIS Coordination Body and foreseen tasks of the AKIS working group

→ The Action Plan will be updated by the AKIS Coordination Body and sent to the AKIS Working Group members for further refinement.



Figure 12 Actors participating to the second Slovenian national workshop on 11th December 2024

Feedback from Attendees

Results:

Question 1 – How useful did you find the information presented today? Score: 8,5

Question 2- How likely are you to recommend this workshop to a colleague?

Score: 9

Question 4- How much has your knowledge grown after participating in this workshop? Score: 8,5

Feedback:

- excellent that we are talking to each other, listening and exchange of opinion
- e-modules gives me in-depth knowledge of different AKIS sub-systems

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3.14. Sweden

Event Summary

Two workshops were held in Sweden during November. The first was a workshop with a unit at the Swedish Board of Agriculture, followed by a workshop with the two AKIS Communities of Practice (CoPs) coordinated by the Swedish CAP Network.

Date: November 19, 2024

Duration: Half a day

Format: Face to face

Location: Swedish Board of Agriculture, Jönköping, Sweden

Facilitators and speakers: Jennie Cederholm Björklund

Agenda for the day:

What is AKIS?

Film about AKIS (produced by the Swedish CAP Network)

Illustration and overview of the AKIS circles - a model for understanding AKIS

Presentation of interviews with AKIS stakeholders – the article series "I Develop AKIS"

Presentation of the LinkedIn profile "EIP-Agri and AKIS in Sweden"

Presentation of the updated i2connect report on AKIS in Sweden, as well as an article about questions and answers regarding AKIS

Review of the Vision 2030 for AKIS in Sweden

Information about AKIS Academy (current and upcoming modules)

Introduction to the Train-the-Trainer concept

Workshop on the following questions:

How has your perception of AKIS changed or developed after completing the digital training?

What perspectives of AKIS could be useful for you in your work?

What benefits can you gain from understanding the systems perspective, AKIS, and being able to delineate or identify different AKIS?

Share practical cases that illustrate collaboration within some perspective of AKIS.

The workshop was conducted through discussions in small groups, followed by presentations of the results in the larger group and subsequent discussions with the entire group. This process was repeated for each of the above questions.

Practical work on mapping AKIS from different perspectives.

Participants practiced mapping AKIS stakeholders from various perspectives relevant to their daily work.

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Date: November 26, 2024

Duration: One day

Format: Face to face

Location: Swedish Agricultural University at Ultuna in Uppsala, Sweden.

Facilitators and speakers: Jennie Cederholm Björklund

Agenda for the day:

What is AKIS?

Film about AKIS (produced by the Swedish CAP Network)

Illustration and overview of the AKIS circles - a model for understanding AKIS

Presentation of interviews with AKIS stakeholders – the article series "I Develop AKIS"

Presentation of the LinkedIn profile "EIP-Agri and AKIS in Sweden"

Presentation of the updated i2connect report on AKIS in Sweden, as well as an article about questions and answers regarding AKIS

An illustration of how the two CoPs contribute to the development of AKIS and the shared vision. Highlighted also the 28 AKIS stakeholders participating in the groups and emphasized the strength of working together.

Review of the Vision 2030 for AKIS in Sweden

Information about AKIS Academy (current and upcoming modules)

Introduction to the Train-the-Trainer concept

Workshop on the following questions:

How has your perception of AKIS changed or developed after completing the digital training?

What perspectives of AKIS could be useful for you in your work?

What benefits can you gain from understanding the systems perspective, AKIS, and being able to delineate or identify different AKIS?

Share practical cases that illustrate collaboration within some perspective of AKIS.

The workshop was conducted through discussions in small groups, followed by presentations of the results in the larger group and subsequent discussions with the entire group. This process was repeated for each of the above questions.

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Attendee Summary

Outline in this section the number of attendees present and their organisations and roles if any e.g. CB member, CAP Network member, Focus Group Member etc.

All participating actors are CAP Network members, since the structure of the Swedish CAP Network builds on membership. The network has about 120 member organisations (AKIS actors).

One workshop was held with a unit at the Swedish Board of Agriculture, hence all the 15 participants were from the Swedish Board of Agriculture. Some of them have the role as AKIS CB.

Table 15 Organizations represented by attendees at the Swedish national workshop

Organisation	Role (If any)
AKIS CoP (system perspective)	
AgroÖst	Green clusters/ regional innovation hub)
The Sami Parliament	
Research Institutes of Sweden (RISE)	Knowledge hub livestock production
Swedish Board of Agriculture	Knowledge hub environment & climate
Sweden Food Arena	Member organisation covering the agrifood chain
Swedish CAP Network office	AKIS CB
Swedish farmers' foundation for agricultural research	
The Federation of Swedish Farmers	
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences	Knowledge hub management & entreprenurship
Swedish Board of Agriculture	AKIS Coordination Body
Industry council for agricultural advisory companies	
Linköping University	
CoP Sustainable Agriculture (business perspective)	
The Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies	
Ethnic organizations in Sweden	
The youth committee of The Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry	
Local Development Sweden	
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences	

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Ultuna Student Union	
Swedish Board of Agriculture	
Organic farmers	
WWF - World Wide Fund for Nature	
Rural Sweden	
Swedish CAP Network office	AKIS CB
Swedish Federation of Green Employers membership	
Swedish Association of Agriculture Colleges, SAAC	
The County Administrative Board	
The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation	
The Federation of Swedish Farmers	
15 persons from Swedish Board of Agriculture	Some of them are AKIS CB

Key Outcomes or Lessons Learned

It became clear that the workshop needs to be tailored to the participants so that they discuss cases, boundaries, and perspectives that they can immediately see the benefits of through their daily work.

It was valuable to practice mapping AKIS stakeholders in a hands-on manner. This activity increased understanding within the group that had the least knowledge and awareness of AKIS and the systems perspective.

The strength of the two CoP groups lies in their differences, which complement each other well. The Sustainable Agriculture group is broader and more general, with a business-oriented perspective, while the AKIS CoP group focuses on the overarching development of AKIS as a system in Sweden. These two perspectives complement each other exceptionally well.

An increased understanding of the systems perspective broadens horizons and provides new perspectives on complex challenges.

A key takeaway was that the systems perspective is not something new - it is about understanding the whole picture. At the same time, it was noted that a systems perspective is often lacking in political contexts, both in Sweden and at the EU level.

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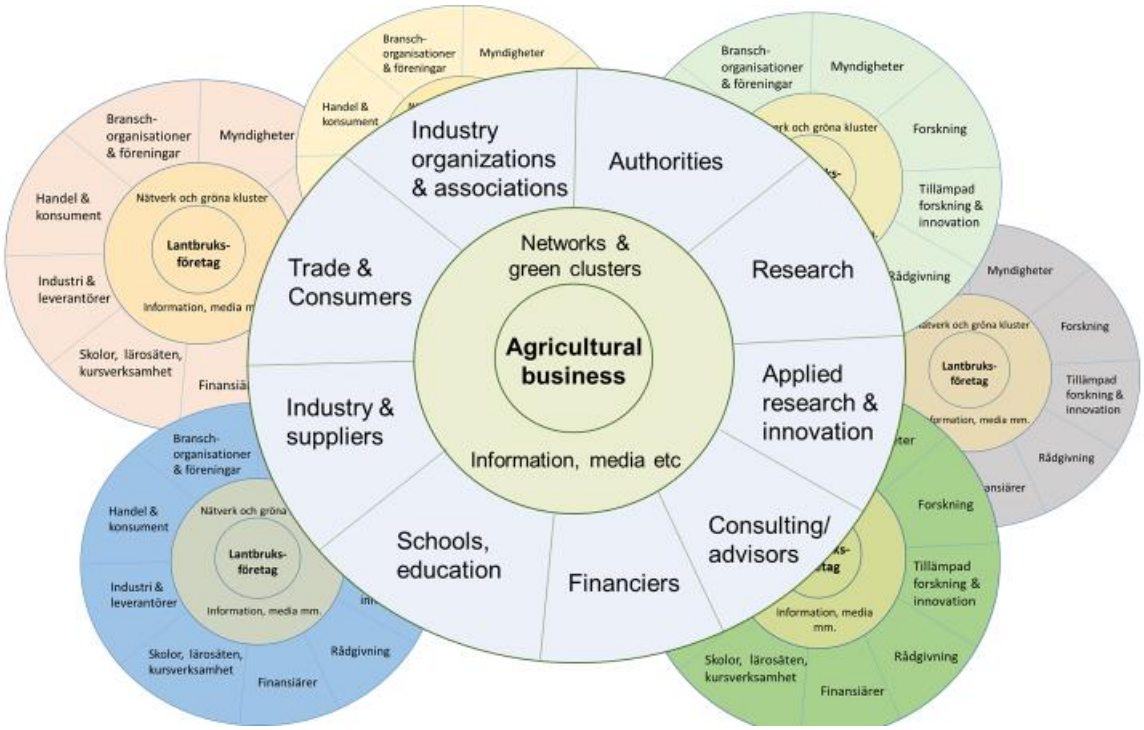

Figure 13 Illustration of the AKIS circles used during the Swedish national workshop

The circles of the AKIS model were a central topic of discussion and a good model to engage with. They can be used when assembling different groups. This way, we are reminded to include stakeholders from relevant segments of the circles - based on the chosen perspective and scope.

The AKIS circles make it easier to see who needs to be involved in various processes. No one can make the transition alone, and it's important that we all feel included in AKIS.

An important insight from this workshop was that every activity within AKIS must be linked to the benefit it creates for farmers - even if farmers are not the direct target group of the activity.

A lot of knowledge is produced in Sweden and internationally, but we need to organize how we share and disseminate it.

An article about learnings from the workshop was written and presented e.g. at the web of the Swedish CAP Network.

Målbild för AKIS i Sverige – gör det enkelt att driva det bästa lantbruket - Landsbygdsnätverket

Feedback from Attendees

We included reflections and feedback in the workshop. Hence, we didn't send the feedback survey. Reflections from the attendees are included also in the previous section about key outcomes and lessons learned.

To answer the questions in the survey, I can summarize that they found the workshop and information very useful, and they expressed a greater understanding of AKIS (see examples above).

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They also wanted to recommend the workshop to some colleagues – those who are mentally open for change and new learnings. They did see a challenge with old structures and cultures in some of the organisations.

They appreciated the cases and good examples of AKIS with different perspectives. The group who practiced mapping AKIS stakeholders from various perspectives relevant to their daily work found that practice very useful.

Virtually everyone found the workshop useful and felt that it had enhanced their knowledge.

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4. Conclusion

Generally, the national workshops were met with an overall positive reception by actors that participated to them across the different member states. Many persons reported a better understanding of AKIS and an increase in their knowledge on the topic after attending.

Overall feedback indicated that interactive approaches and dedicated time for networking with other attendees were highly valued as components of the workshops as these provided an opportunity for a diversity of AKIS actors to come together and build relationships informally. There was also moderate interest by participants in the e-Learning modules and the AKISconnect.eu platform. In member states where games or highly interactive activities were included in the workshop such as in Spain and Belgium there was very positive feedback from attendees specifically about these elements of the workshops.

Attendees also highlighted some challenges associated with the material and content of the workshops. In some cases, attendees felt that more time was needed to address and engage with the material presented due to its complexity. Another challenge identified was the need to engage better with specific groups of AKIS actors such as farmers and advisors.

Feedback from multiple facilitators within the project also indicated a strong need to provide practical examples to illustrate the complex ideas. Such examples are essential for understanding the AKIS within the context of participant's own member states. Facilitators appreciated having the flexibility to use a mixture of face to face events and online events and the option to choose which type best suited the time constraints and availability of their attendees. They also indicated the benefits of being able to include or link the workshops to other events as this was one of the best ways to incentivise attendance and also to not overwhelm actors with multiple events. Many facilitators also indicated that the toolkit produced (D3.3) was not heavily used when planning their workshops except for the section which proposed suggested agendas and timings for the workshops.

Several countries are still working to establish AKIS coordination bodies and so have struggled to bring actors together to attend these workshops. In some cases such as in Lithuania, Slovenia and Slovakia these capacity development workshops really focused on introducing actors to the concept of the AKIS and the modernAKIS project. This is an important first step that will benefit these countries going forward particularly when planning their second national workshops throughout 2025.

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