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## Agricultural Policy Forum 2022

# ***Agriculture and Rural Development in the context of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans: Overcoming the Impact of the Global Challenges***

*Working Group 3: Agricultural knowledge and innovation systems in the Western Balkans*

### ***“Proposed Regional AKIS Plan”***

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Bayerisches Staatsministerium für  
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# The graphic presentation of AKIS



# Set targets of the project

- First, the target of **setting up of a network** bringing together farmers, representatives of governments, research institutions and the private sector to establish a functional AKIS structure that would facilitate the dissemination of knowledge, innovation and technology as an in-between mechanism acting top-down and bottom-up.
- Second, the designation of a **national Roadmap strategic document** and of a **national Action Plan** for the implementation of the specified strategic objectives resulting from a SWOT analysis.
- Third, the development and application of **regional and/or sectoral or thematic AKIS Plans** aiming at fostering knowledge and innovation transfer in defined topic areas.
- Fourth, the development of an **education and communication measure** for scaling up technical innovations and innovative business models with special target groups of young, dynamic farmers and agri-businesses.

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# Achievements and deliverables to date

1. Updated and prioritized **national AKIS focused SWOT analyses for WBCs**
2. **National AKIS map depictions** (and a joint regional AKIS mapping worked by SWG)
3. **National Roadmaps** for the development of functional and integrated national AKIS systems
4. **National AKIS Action Plans**



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# Action Plan key priorities identified

The strategic objectives of the Roadmaps are well projected to specified objectives for action in the National Action Plans.

Where prioritizations differ, they reflect the various country/territory particular priorities set on the basis of their characteristics and the feasibility of the operationalization of their Action Plans.

## Common key priorities

- The **formalization of AKIS and of advisory services** have been defined by most National Experts as top Action Plan priorities.
- **Private advisory services** are considered as a necessary complementary service that needs to be formalized and integrated in the system.

## Common key priorities

- **Training, accreditation and impartiality of advisors** are considered *conditio sine qua non* for the establishment of a trustworthy Advisory Services as integral part of AKIS.
- The **activation of IPARD's measure of Advisory Services** is considered as supplementary and supportive to the system; an increase in its funding has been requested.
- **Capacity building** of all AKIS stakeholders and enhancement of R&D and Research, Innovation & Technology Transfer (RITT), in particular, seem to attract the attention of most Action Plans.

## Common key priorities

- The **introduction of new structures** within AKIS cross-cuts all Action Plans. Proposed structures are differentiated on the basis of each country's needs. The feasibility of their realisation needs further investigation in cooperation with the corresponding state authorities.
- The **Coordination Body** is considered most critical, but its role and functionality need to be foreseen and further elaborated in the AKIS formalization documents.
- **Public and institutional awareness raising for AKIS** is a common requested action, but needs to be seriously adjusted to the particular environment of each country/territory.
- **Digitalization** is acknowledged as a critical tool for the enhancement of advisory services and AKIS, something foreseen in the cross-cutting modernisation objective of the new CAP.

# Observations

- Identification of the corresponding authorities for the implementation of requested actions is considered critical.
- Accomplishment of the Action Plan would need assignments and allocation of roles and responsibilities.
- Consultation with connected public, private and other stakeholders will shape the feasibility of the Action Plan in terms of the specified objectives, their pursuance and operationalization.
- The role and responsibilities of national experts and SWG in the process of consultation would need to be enhanced.

# Towards a Regional AKIS Action Plan

There are two complementary paths of action proposed:

1. The **formalization path** which involves:
  - establishment of AKIS as a system
  - establishment of Advisory Services as a key component of AKIS and RITT
2. A non-formalized/‘**experimental’ sectoral or thematic path** of regional AKIS structures to work as ‘laboratories’ for the implementation of AKIS

- We define formalization as the means to give the process a certain or definite form, to shape it and give it a formal status or approval.
- It takes into consideration the Regulation for the Strategic Plans of CAP ([https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L\\_.2021.435.01.0001.01.ENG](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2021.435.01.0001.01.ENG), Article 114), according to which Member States must include in their Strategic Plans their proposals for AKIS under the horizontal objective of Modernisation.

- The **formalization path** presupposes the adoption and endorsement of the National Action Plans and the regional WB Plan by the State authorities, prescribed in the submitted Workplan of the project, following the presentation of their final versions in the Agricultural Policy Forum of October 2022.
- However, probable delays in the finalization of these formalization processes give us the opportunity to opt for more **‘experimental’**, specific and targeted sectoral or thematic interventions which would work as laboratories and maturation processes for the implementation of AKIS.

# Sectoral or thematic AKIS interventions 1

Some such interventions have come out of the NEs reports. In this respect, the following actions are proposed to be adopted and implemented with the **high supervision of SWG**:

- The adjustment of the REAWG on **Wine** to an AKIS Operational Group (OG) with the aim to bring together all related stakeholders for the interactive exchange of research, knowledge and innovation.
- The establishment of a Regional **Organic farming** OG to bring together all related stakeholders for the exchange of Research, knowledge and innovation in an interactive manner.
  - ✓ **Organic honey**, proposed as a micro AKIS case

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# Sectoral or thematic AKIS interventions 2



- Establishment of a Regional **Dairy farming** AKIS OG
- The initiatives above, will involve, amongst other activities, capacity building of different stakeholders in the sectors (wine, dairy and organic farming), digitalization training and cross-border demonstration visits.



# Sectoral or thematic AKIS interventions 3

- Adjustment of **REAWG on Soil to an AKIS OG** to bring together all related stakeholders for the exchange of research, knowledge and innovation in an interactive manner.
  - a **‘living laboratory’** [example: Soil living labs working together to obtain healthy soils by 2030, The Walloon Agricultural Research Centre (CRA-W) in Belgium]  
<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?tab=rm#inbox/FMfcgzGqQcsMcFXRgNpmSvTxSgcZCchV>
- Establishment of a **Regional Educational, Training and Certification Centre** for the theoretical and practical training and accreditation of farm advisors.

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# Other interventions



- Identification of model **monitor/demo farms** and establishment of WB **region-wide network of host farms** for the exchange of organized visits of same-field farmers for the sharing of knowledge, practices, challenges and solutions.
- Cross-border and bilateral cooperation for the identification and **prioritization of specific climate and green agenda issues.**



# Method, tools and structures for focused AKIS related interventions 1

## Methodological steps:

- Depiction of all **stakeholders involved** in the sectoral or thematic group
  - Establishment of OG's agenda of actions
  - Selection of OG coordinator
- Adoption of the **interactive knowledge and innovation exchange system** which brings together specific actors to work together in multi-actor projects to give answers to specific questions or to develop concrete opportunities.
- AKIS will function as a **'systems approach'**, to help bridge the gap between science and practice.

# Method, tools and structures for focused AKIS-related interventions 2

## Tools:

- **Operational Group** approach; sectoral or horizontal. It makes the best use of different types of knowledge (practical, scientific, technical, organizational, etc.) in an **interactive manner**, involving producers, researchers, advisors, administrators, the private sector and other possible AKIS stakeholders.
- New insights and ideas are generated and existing **tacit knowledge is built into focused solutions** quicker put into practice.

## Other possible structures:

- **Innovation** support services
- **AKIS center**, for mapping and managing the existing and future needs for the Advisory Services and other RITT structures.
- **AKIS 'one stop shops'**
- **Agri-food Centers of Innovation and Entrepreneurship** involving University/Research Institutions, Regional authorities, Farm organizations and the private sector.

# In conclusion

- With the proposed sectoral and thematic AKIS interventions, we more or less fulfill the last two set targets of the project presented in the beginning of this presentation concerning the implementation in practice of:
  - the development and application of **regional and/or sectoral or thematic AKIS Plans** aiming at fostering knowledge and innovation transfer in defined topic areas, and, partly,
  - the development of an **education and communication measure** for scaling up technical innovations and innovative business models with special target groups of young, dynamic farmers and agri-businesses.

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- In the APF AKIS Working Group meeting we can prioritize the proposals in terms of maturation and feasibility and with the high supervision of SWG plan the next steps of implementation of the regional, sectoral or thematic AKIS interventions.
- Additionally, further clarification and elaboration on the measure of education and communication, can be organized.



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