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Interim report: achievements, issues, gaps

Charalambos Kasimis

Professor Emeritus

Agricultural University of Athens



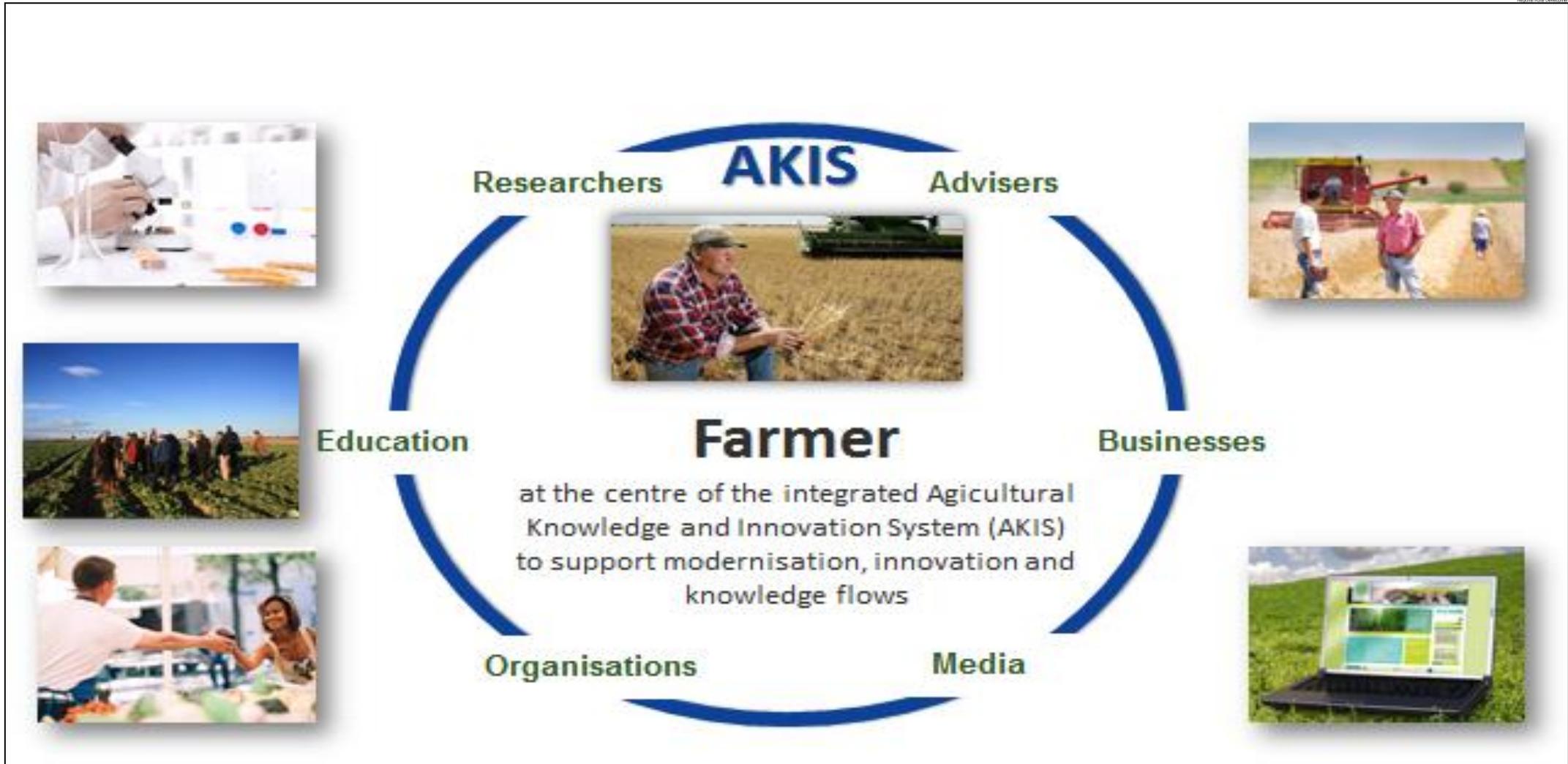
Bayerisches Staatsministerium für
Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Forsten



Declared targets of the project

- Develop one regional and six national policy strategic plans aiming at fostering knowledge and innovation transfer in defined topic areas.
- Develop at least five virtual further education and communication measures for scaling up technical innovations and innovative business models (special target group: young, dynamic farmers and agri-businesses)
- Set-up an AKIS network for knowledge and innovation transfer, bringing together representatives of governments, research institutions and private sector from the Western Balkans and Germany.

The graphic presentation of AKIS



What we have learned about AKIS from the RITT project ¹

- There have been pending issues like the finalization of regulatory, legislative framework for the RITT - related strategies and policies like:
 - the finalization of the Smart Specialization Strategies
 - the legislative and regulatory formalization of AKIS
 - the formalization of the advisory services and their integration in AKIS.
 - in particular, the definition of roles for the advisors and the involvement of human capacity building and certification to improve the credibility of the system

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What we learned about AKIS from the RITT project 2



- **AKIS is not a formalized entity/structure nor a functional system** in most WB countries. It rather functions as a 'weak linkage structure' between various **fragmented, disconnected and non-coordinated subsystems.**
- **Farmers**, mostly holders of small size fragmented farms with low level of cooperative/collective organisation and representation, **remain a weak link in the AKIS structure**, despite their central positioning in the theoretical concept.



What we learned about AKIS from the RITT project 3

- With the exception of advisory services/extension, research, education and input suppliers, the majority of the remainder **component parts of AKIS are either missing or having a weak presence and functionality** for the system.
- **Advisory services** –a key component of AKIS - are **defined by different levels of formalization and organisational composition** in the WB countries. They are mostly public but attention has been placed to the need for the formalization of private services too.

The methodological steps and project tasks ¹

- Revisit RITT **SWOT matrices to update an AKIS SWOT analysis** to lead us to the map depiction of the AKIS elements
 - involving additional material focused on AKIS from the RITT project (Focus Group analysis, other secondary qualitative information etc.)
- Develop **national maps** of the existent/missing, functioning/non-functioning AKIS actors
 - involving both the depiction of crude evidence concerning the existence or absence of AKIS elements/actors and an evaluation of their interaction, coordination, functionality and governance.
- Construct a National **Roadmap** for the development of functional and integrated national AKIS systems

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The methodological steps and project tasks 2

These steps were reflected in two interconnected **end objectives**:

- The evaluation, promotion and monitoring of the formalization process of the National AKIS systems
- The projection to and the preparation of national and regional sectoral or thematic AKIS Action Plans



The methodological steps and project tasks 3

In the Roadmap guidelines we requested a rough presentation of:

- Objectives
 - Milestones
 - Deliverables
 - Resources available (if possible to know) and,
 - Project timeline
-
- The Roadmap, essentially, takes all the information generated in the SWOT analysis and the map depiction and simplifies it into a national structured strategy roadmap which is available to all actors/stakeholders to be involved in the implementation and operation of the action plan to be designed next.
 - The Roadmap attempts to show the interactions between the various stakeholders and variables and how they can lead to successful results.

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First set of deliverables so far

1. Updated and prioritized national SWOT analysis
2. National AKIS map depiction (and a joint regional AKIS map)
3. Constructed draft national roadmaps for the development of functional and integrated national AKIS systems



Further findings in the updated SWOT analysis and the national mapping ¹

- Apart from the role of the public structures and actors involved in the process of research, knowledge and innovation transfer to the farming sector, **input trading companies and their local suppliers** have developed a role in the transfer of knowledge and new technologies to farmers providing after sales advisory services.
- **Agro-based cluster-like areas and large, commercial farms** emerge, in some countries, and accumulate knowledge, innovation and new technologies generating new methods of production.
- **EU and international organizations** alignment processes are considered important in speeding up reform processes in the management of knowledge, research and technology transfer.

Further findings in the updated SWOT analysis and the national mapping 2

- Top down and centralized approaches are mostly involved in the attempted reforms on technology and innovation transfer. **AKIS, however, requires a reversal towards a bottom up approach.**
- Interlinkages, coordination and functionality of existing AKIS actors, especially in the public sector, are considered weak and insufficient.
- **Absence of some AKIS structures/actors** is identified like:
 - an AKIS coordination body/board,
 - the institutionalisation of private advisory services,
 - the development of a demonstration farm network and of other structures like monitor farms and focus groups of farmers for the exchange of knowledge.

Further findings in the updated SWOT analysis and the national mapping ³

- **Private advisory services** are considered necessary to complement the activities of public advisory services, widening the numbers of beneficiary farmers and empowering them in additional fields.
- **Informal networks** need to be exploited to serve as ground for the development of new AKIS structures.
- Fragmented strategies and legal structures exist to support various AKIS parts, but still **missing is the legislative and regulatory framework** to support new AKIS structures and the functioning of the system as a whole.
- Newly established networking through innovation centres presents a new business climate and offer more opportunities for job creation in rural areas.
- The finalisation of **Smart Specialisation Strategies and the integration of formalised AKIS** is at the heart of a holistic policy approach to the issue.

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Common key objectives set for AKIS in the National Roadmaps 1



- Finalization of Smart Specialization Strategies
- Legislative and regulatory formalization of AKIS
- Legislative and regulatory formalization of key components of AKIS like the advisory services
- Formalization and integration of private advisory services in the system
- Enhancement of stakeholder human resources and capacity building (advisory services accreditation system, training, educational and research upgrading etc)



Common key objectives set for AKIS in the National Roadmaps 2

- Farmer awareness raising in the use of knowledge, technology and innovation
- Science internationalization and external fund raising
- Establishment of **new AKIS structures** like:
 - National Coordination Board, new institutional structures (innovation centres, centres of excellence, hubs), AKIS local structures (operational groups EIP like and joint local government structures)
 - New forms of networking and exchange (Focus groups, demonstration and monitor farms, mentoring)
 - Upgrading of new forms of linking between the various AKIS stakeholders (bottom up organisational structure and networking)

Issues and gaps 1

- The updated SWOT analysis has been the basis for the construction of the Roadmap and the setting of strategy priorities. However, it remains unclear, in some cases, what the level of prioritization of the SWOT analysis elements is. Various elements are, in cases, unequally presented.
- Map depiction of AKIS is generally in a good shape. Weaknesses in the structure of the presentation and the definitions/classification of certain structures of the AKIS system have been attended after reviewing.
- Map depiction is being technically homogenised with the assistance of SWG and presented for all countries/territories.

Issues and gaps 2

- ‘Importance’ and ‘feasibility’ are provided in the National Roadmaps but, in some cases, the prioritization is not satisfactorily justified.
- An improved visualization of roadmapping is considered necessary.
- A misunderstanding appears as to the different characteristics and role of the Roadmap and the Action Plan. But more on this will be discussed in my next presentation.