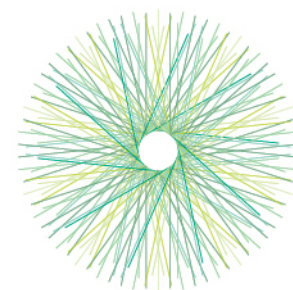


Press article Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation systems

AUGUST 2020



eip-agri
AGRICULTURE & INNOVATION

Press article long

Catalysing innovation across Europe

How can knowledge platforms help agricultural advisers?

Innovation is essential for the agricultural sector to maintain competitive food production and vibrant rural areas. Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) are key to help farmers and rural communities deal with their challenges. A well-functioning AKIS includes advisers to foster knowledge sharing and innovation. Knowledge platforms collecting relevant information at both national and European level, play a key role.

"All Horizon 2020 Multi-Actor projects and Thematic Networks, as well as Operational Groups funded under the EU rural development policy produce, collect and share a wide variety of practical information for farmers and foresters. Unfortunately, it is sometimes hard to find these materials, as they are scattered or even lost, especially after projects have ended. Therefore, we need a sustainable, open-access platform at European level where these materials are easy to find, in an understandable, preferably local, language", explains Sylvia BursSENS. She is working at the Ghent University and involved in the H2020 projects EURAKNOS and EUREKA.

National knowledge platforms also play a key role in a well-functioning AKIS. Sylvia: "These platforms understand the local needs and can also make an inventory of outputs of networks and projects at local, regional, and national levels. If these databases can connect through an EU wide platform we can create more impact for innovation in agriculture. To make them interoperable however, the IT language and standards should be made compatible."

Lithuania is one of the Member States developing a national innovation platform. The Lithuanian Agricultural Advisory Service (LAAS) has created TITRIS to collect all the results from innovation projects of Lithuania and other relevant information in one place. Gintare Kucinskiene, Head of Innovation Support Service in LAAS, explains: "We started the EIP-AGRI Operational Group 'Gate of Innovations' in 2019. This has led to the establishment of TITRIS, which stands for the Applied Innovation Research and Results Information System. Using TITRIS, advisers can find up-to-date information to show farmers and foresters concrete potential benefits of specific innovations. This will also help to create transparency on all Lithuanian and international projects' outcomes."

"TITRIS is a free, open source system in both Lithuanian and English. All the information that we receive from farmers, researchers and project leaders is reviewed by impartial specialists and advisers. They give feedback and then it is translated into English by a professional language editor. As well as being trustworthy, the information must be clear, concise, and have the potential to be directly applied in practice", concludes Gintare.

So, what are the benefits for the advisory community if national platforms like TITRIS are connected to an EU-wide platform? Sylvia: "First, advisers and farmers across Europe will easily be able to find the latest information fast. They can download training modules and contact the experts in their field in the entire European Union. Secondly, it will allow them to get in touch with their peers from other Member States, and help them to enlarge their network. Finally, the link with the education system, especially vocational schools and lifelong training programmes is also essential. These educational institutions can use the newest materials, outputs of European and national projects, to train the advisers, students, and farmers of tomorrow."

Press article short

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Innovation is essential for the agricultural sector to maintain competitive food production and vibrant rural areas. Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) are key to help farmers and rural communities deal with their challenges. A well-functioning AKIS includes advisers to foster knowledge sharing and innovation. Knowledge platforms collecting relevant information at both national and European level, play a key role.

Sylvia Burssens, Ghent University, building an EU knowledge reservoir in H2020 projects EURAKNOS and EUREKA says: "National knowledge platforms play a key role in a well-functioning AKIS. These platforms understand the local needs and can collect outputs of networks and projects at local, regional, and national levels. By connecting these databases through an EU-wide platform we can create more impact for innovation in agriculture."

Lithuania is one of the countries developing a national knowledge platform. The Lithuanian Agricultural Advisory Service (LAAS) created TITRIS to collect all information useful for the Lithuanian agricultural sector in one place. Head of Innovation Support Service, Gintare Kucinskiene, explains: "On TITRIS, advisers can find free up-to-date information in both English and Lithuanian. They can use this information to advise or help farmers and foresters with innovation projects. This will create transparency on relevant project outcomes and more and better connections within the Lithuanian agricultural sector".

How can the advisory community benefit from connecting national platforms like TITRIS to an EU-wide platform? Sylvia: "First, advisers and farmers across Europe will easily be able to find the latest information fast. Secondly, it will allow them to get in touch with their peers from other Member States. Finally, the link with the education system, especially vocational schools and lifelong training programmes is essential. These educational institutions can train the advisers, students, and farmers of tomorrow."

Background information

Both projects, EURAKNOS and TITRIS, are presented at the [EIP-AGRI Seminar 'CAP Strategic Plans: the key role of AKIS in Member States'](#) 16-18 September 2020.

Project information

EURAKNOS

Project partner: Sylvia Burssens - Sylvia.Burssens@UGent.be

Videos on EURAKNOS <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vB4usFzC6zg>

Videos on EUREKA https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOr8nXN_xMQ&t=5s

TITRIS

Project coordinator: Gintare Kucinskiene - gintare.kucinskiene@lzukt.lt

Project website: <https://titris.lzukt.lt/en>

EIP-AGRI contact

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Communication officer

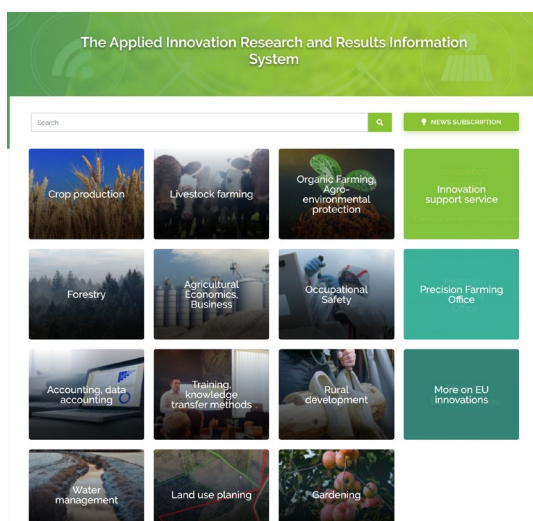
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Pictures

Click on the pictures to download the high resolution version. The pictures are free for use.



Gintare Kucinskiene: "On TITRIS, advisers can use information to advise or help farmers and foresters with innovation projects."



Sylvia Bursens: "By connecting regional databases through an EU-wide platform we can create more impact for innovation in agriculture. Advisers and farmers across Europe will easily be able to find the latest information fast."

More EIP-AGRI information on AKIS

The EIP-AGRI has carried out different activities relevant to AKIS, including:

- [EIP-AGRI Workshop: Enabling farmers for the digital age: the role of AKIS](#) – 26-27 April 2018
- [EIP-AGRI Seminar: 'Promoting creativity and learning through agricultural knowledge systems and interactive innovation'](#). 3-4 December 2015

Next is the online [EIP-AGRI Seminar 'CAP Strategic Plans: the key role of AKIS in Member States'](#), taking place on 16-18 September 2020. This seminar is dedicated to AKIS strategies and interventions which will now form an essential part of post 2020 CAP plans in each Member State.

EIP-AGRI publications relevant to AKIS

- [EIP-AGRI brochure on Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems](#) available in English – Estonian – Greek – Latvian – Romanian – Slovenian
- [EIP-AGRI video: Innovation Support Services](#), supporting innovation in European farming and forestry

Agricultural Knowledge Systems in the future common agriculture policy (CAP)

Knowledge and innovation are essential for a smart, resilient and sustainable agricultural sector. The CAP of the future will both encourage increased investment in research and innovation and enable farmers and rural communities to benefit from it.

Therefore, it is essential to build stronger Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) to connect actors and share existing knowledge, in particular effective to boost setting up of innovation projects, disseminate their results and make them used as widely as possible. "AKIS" concerns the organisation and interaction of all people, organisations and institutions who use and produce knowledge and innovation in

agriculture and rural areas. This includes whatever farming and rural activities automatically relate to: landscape, environment, climate, biodiversity, food and non-food systems including processing industry and distribution chains, consumers and citizens, and much more.

Having national AKIS Strategies as part of the post 2020 CAP plans, as outlined in article 102 of the Proposal for a regulation establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by EU countries under the CAP, will incentivise the structuring and organisation of the national innovation ecosystem. Ensuring that such well-functioning AKISs exist throughout the EU avoids duplication of efforts and saves costs. It increases the impact of EU and national/regional projects and the funding for advice, and speeds up innovation.

Successful AKIS strategies include four main group of actions:

- enhancing knowledge flows and strengthening links between research and practice;
- strengthening all farm advisory services and fostering their interconnection within the AKIS;
- enhancing cross-thematic and cross-border interactive innovation;
- supporting the digital transition in agriculture.

To strengthen existing AKIS to become real national innovation ecosystems, Member States have the obligation to put in place innovation support services (ISS) in the post 2020 CAP period. Learn all about innovation support services with the [EIP-AGRI video on ISS](#).

The Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR) has a Strategic Working Group of AKIS experts from about 24 MS. These experts discussed AKIS policy and practical approaches to improve national AKISs during 3 years. The result is the 2019 4th SWG SCAR AKIS report, based on Member States' exchanges and practical experiences. The report explains much about AKIS and gives a long series of possible types of interventions to improve AKIS' knowledge flows, including a new approach for advice, advisors and innovation services. It is available on the "Future CAP" website and is called "[Preparing for future AKIS in Europe](#)".

The European Commission has proposed to set aside €10 billion from the [Horizon Europe programme](#) for research and innovation in food, agriculture, rural development and the bioeconomy. The agricultural [European Innovation Partnership \(EIP-AGRI\)](#) will continue to pool funding sources from Horizon Europe and CAP Rural Development to foster competitive and sustainable farming and forestry. A dedicated part of this funding will go to AKIS' related projects and networks in the next 7 years, to support the CAP post 2020 plans with concrete information and organisational support for AKISs, knowledge reservoirs, thematic networks and multi-actor projects.

More information:

- the [future of the common agricultural policy](#)
- A dedicated AKIS brief explains in particular [how stronger AKISs will boost innovation in the post 2020 CAP](#)

Operational Groups working on AKIS

Two Operational Groups working on AKIS are available in the EIP-AGRI Operational Groups database (update 15 July 2020)

EIP-AGRI inspirational ideas on AKIS

- [Operational Group Sustainable and efficient silviculture for Brittany](#) - France
- [Operational Group ECOPIONET](#) (nominee Rural Inspiration Awards 2020 – knowledge exchange network on drought) - ES
- [How farmers and researchers across Europe learn from each other](#) - EU
- [A network to fight grapevine diseases](#) – EU

- [Operational Group “Gate of Innovations” -The Centre for knowledge accumulation, transfer, development of agricultural technologies and their demonstration](#) - Lithuania
- [Innovative farmers platform](#) – UK
- [Increasing farm profitability while cutting carbon emissions, a toolkit developed by farmers for farmers](#) – UK

Knowledge exchange and innovation are supporting digital knowledge flows in the farming sector. [Some Examples](#) from the EIP-AGRI workshop 'Enabling farmers for the digital age: the role of AKIS'

1. [State supported services for digitalisation of Estonian agriculture](#) - Estonia
2. [IBERS Distance Learning](#) - UK
3. [Focus group on digitisation and big data in the Agri-food & Forestry sectors and rural areas](#) - Spain
4. [The Single Application](#) - Belgium
5. Precision Farming with Elements of Geoinformatics "[AGRO e-learning](#)" - Poland

EIP-AGRI

The European Innovation Partnership 'Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability' (EIP-AGRI) has been launched by the European Commission in a bid to promote rapid modernisation of the sectors concerned, by stepping up innovation efforts. The EIP-AGRI aims to foster innovation in the agricultural and forestry sectors by bringing research and practice closer together – in research and innovation projects as well as via the EIP-AGRI network. Also grassroots ideas from farmers get developed into innovations through the so-called Operational Group innovation projects.

The EIP-AGRI aims to streamline, simplify and better coordinate existing instruments and initiatives, and complement them with actions where necessary. Two specific funding sources are particularly important for the EIP-AGRI: the EU Research and Innovation framework, Horizon 2020, as well as the EU Rural Development Policy.

[EIP-AGRI Brochure on the EIP-AGRI Network](#)

(EN – BG – DE – ES – FR – GR – HU – IT – PT – RO)

EIP-AGRI Operational Groups

- 98 Rural Development programmes provide support to EIP Operational Group innovative projects *
- Over 3200 Operational Groups are planned to be established under the approved RDPs (2014 – 2020)
- Over 1500 Operational Groups projects have been selected for funding and are currently ongoing (or already finished)*. Member States will still start more Operational Group projects which may run until 2024.

* Information officially submitted to the European Commission by RDP managing authorities (May 2020)

EIP-AGRI Operational Groups **are groups of people who work together in an innovation project funded by Rural Development Programmes** (RDPs). They bring together partners with complementary knowledge. The composition of the group will vary according to the theme and specific objectives of each project. Farmers, advisers, scientists, businesses or other relevant partners work together to find practical solutions for specific problems or opportunities for European farmers and foresters. Farmers and foresters need to be cooperating throughout the project to ensure that the innovative solutions are practical and likely to be quickly applied in the field. Read the [basic principles](#). [Innovation support services](#) (including advisers with a focus on innovation), and in particular innovation brokering, can therefore play a crucial role in getting worthwhile projects off the ground by facilitating contacts.

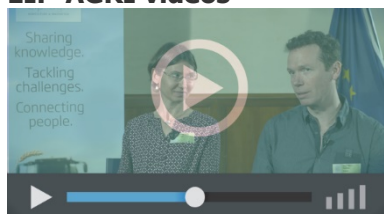
Find out more in the [EIP-AGRI brochure on Operational Groups](#). The brochure on Operational Groups is available in English, Bulgarian, Czech, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian and Spanish.

Operational Groups can benefit from networking and collaborating with organisations from outside their partnership and from other regions and countries, such as other Operational Groups, research projects, farmers' organisations or local authorities and European knowledge networks. Read the [EIP-AGRI Brochure 'Operational Groups – Collaborate to innovate'](#). It shows some examples of successful collaboration. It provides Operational Groups with inspiration and tools for further knowledge exchange within the EIP-AGRI network. This brochure is available in English, Latvian, Romanian and Slovenian.

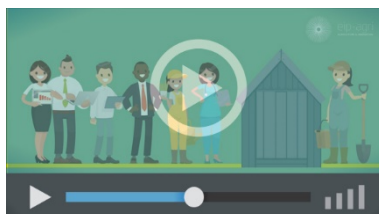
Check out the '[Operational Groups](#)' dedicated section on the EIP-AGRI website, including:

- More than 1300 Operational Groups available in the database
- detailed information on how to set up Operational Groups, on supporting networks and relevant EIP-AGRI seminars and workshops
- links to results and contact details of ongoing Operational Groups in the [EIP-AGRI database](#)
- a [list of all RDP Managing Authorities](#)

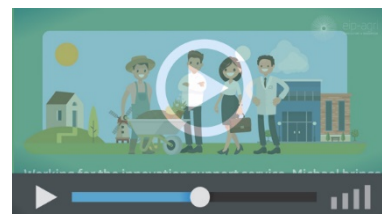
EIP-AGRI videos



[Operational Groups – first experiences](#)



[Operational Groups – collaborate to innovate](#)



[Innovation Support Services, supporting innovation in EU farming and forestry](#)

Horizon 2020 projects working on AKIS

[Multi-actor projects](#) are projects in which end users and multipliers of research results such as farmers and farmers' groups, advisers, enterprises and others, are closely cooperating with researchers throughout the whole research project period.

[Thematic networks](#) are multi-actor projects which collect existing knowledge and best practices on a given theme to make it available in easily understandable formats for targeted users such as farmers, foresters, advisers etc.

- FAIRshare - FAIRshare. Farm Advisory digital Innovation tools Realised and Shared: [website](#) - [CORDIS](#) (11/2018-10/2023)
- EURAKNOS - Connecting Thematic Networks as Knowledge Reservoirs: towards a European Agricultural Knowledge Innovation Open Source System: [website](#) - [CORDIS](#) (Thematic network – 01/2019-12/2020)
- i2connect - Connecting advisers to boost interactive innovation in agriculture and forestry: [website](#) - [CORDIS](#) (11/2019 – 10/2024)
- EUREKA - European Knowledge repository for best agricultural practices: [CORDIS](#) (01/2020 – 12/2021)
- AGRISPIN - Space for Agricultural Innovation: [website](#) - [CORDIS](#) (03/2015-08/2017)
- AgriLink - Agricultural Knowledge: Linking farmers, advisers and researchers to boost innovation: [website](#) - [CORDIS](#) (06/2017-05/2021)
- InnovAfrica - Innovations in Technology, Institutional and Extension Approaches towards Sustainable Agriculture and enhanced Food and Nutritional Security in Africa: [website](#) - [CORDIS](#) (06/2017-05/2021)

- NEXTFOOD - Educating the next generation of professionals in the agrifood system: [website](#) - [CORDIS](#) (05/2018-04/2022)
- LIAISON - Better Rural Innovation: Linking Actors, Instruments and Policies through Networks: [website](#) - [CORDIS](#)(06/2018-11/2021)

- [EIP-AGRI Brochure on Horizon 2020 Multi-actor projects](#) (EN – BG – DE – FR – SI)
- [EIP-AGRI Brochure on Thematic Networks under Horizon 2020](#) (EN – BG – DE – ES – FR – HU)

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