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1.2 AKIS Coordination body in Croatia

AKIS contest

The Croatian Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS) is characterized by numerous public and private entities well experienced in education, research or advisory activities, but their connections are weak and there is no systematic and effective exchange of results, knowledge, data or innovation, which limits their impact to the economy. Research and applied research is happening to some extent but there is no system of transforming of acquired knowledge to the farmers or other stakeholders in the system. Although it was envisaged during establishment of Research Council for Agriculture (VIP) in late 90', the system of transfer of the project results, in form of the technical packages to the farm advisors, was never established. Also, except occasional involvement of some educational entities in short trainings, there was no systematic transfer of knowledge towards advisors.

Croatian AKIS is moderately diverse with strong influence of public funded entities and, till recently, strong emphasis on public advisory service. Other significant contributions come from the food industry and input providers, who more and more invest in research and innovation and often include highly specialized advice to their cooperants or customers. Least developed part of the AKIS is the one related to the NGOs and farmers association, which is historically conditioned and typical for Croatia and neighboring countries.

Considering this situation, the overall AKIS strategic approach, based on SWOT and assessed need, is based on:

1. Strengthening links with scientific and other relevant institutions and sources of knowledge
2. Increasing the knowledge of the savjetnika and their interconnectedness
3. Meeting and launching innovation partnerships
4. Effective use of information and communication technologies to improve the flow and dissemination of knowledge



Keywords

Governance, AKIS coordination body



Potential users

Managing authorities of the CAP Strategic Plans, AKIS coordination bodies



Country

Bulgaria



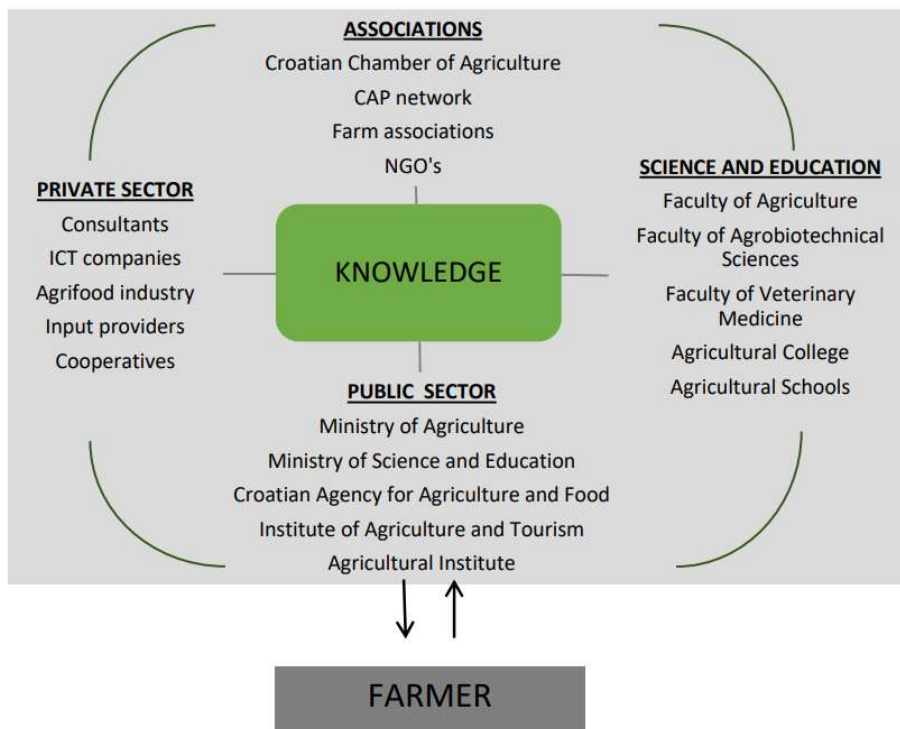
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Figure 1: Croatian AKIS Diagram



Source: i2connect AKIS country report (2020)

Rationale

The political relevance given to AKIS strategies in the context of the CAP Strategic Plans (SPs) 2023-2027 has certainly highlighted the opportunity of defining governance bodies aimed at coordinating the AKIS-related interventions and actors in view of their better implementation and contribution to the cross-cutting and specific objectives of the CAP SPs.

Particularly, the AKIS coordination body is indicated by the CAP SP 2023-2027 as a point of contact of the European Commission and of the European CAP Network.

The lack of a clear definition of role and functions of the institute of the AKIS coordination bodies by the EU regulation has certainly favored the managing authorities of the CAP SPs in identifying the configurations that best fit the needs for governance of the AKISs and the expectations of the respective actors.

In the case of Croatia, the establishment of the AKIS coordination body addressed the specific problem/opportunity of better connection as well as of AKIS stakeholders in accordance with identified needs. With the aim to fulfill its name – Coordination Body Ministry of Agriculture of Croatia decided to create the AKIS Coordination Body as a board with the aim put in the comparable role representatives of all relevant stakeholder types (farmers through their associations, policy makers through representatives of Directorates of the Ministry responsible for the creation of policies in the agricultural sectors, advisors through public advisory service and representatives of private advisors, farmers through farmers associations, etc).

As AKIS analysis created through the H2020 i2connect project and through SWOT analysis for the CAP SP showed that Croatia has strong individual members of the AKIS, with the aim to make all of them work together with the Croatian CAP Network on the XCO objective of the CAP SP the creation of the board was planned.

Official request for nominations of persons (member of the AKIS CB and replacement person) from the Ministry agriculture to the chambers / agencies/ institutions is sent and responses and nominations are coming.

Public advisory services and Managing authority will have 2 members each, and all others one member per stakeholder.

In practice...

AKIS Coordination Body of Croatia is in the final stage of setting up. Ministry of Agriculture is the carrier of the Board and thorough direct connection as a board of experts it is directed towards improvement in the knowledge flow regarding agriculture in the country of Croatia. Several strong individual institutions exist but the level of connection of the overall AKIS is low and the intension is to speed up the connection process by direct contact and influence on decisions as a members of the AKIS board.

1. Who is the AKIS CB

AKIS Coordination Body will be a Board of AKIS stakeholders and it will be set up within the Ministry of Agriculture as. The AKIS coordination body include representatives of all the relevant AKIS actors from Croatia (advisory service, CAP network, Directorate for rural development, etc). Operational activities will be performed by the Secretariat of the AKIS Coordination Body consisting of employees of the Ministry.

2. Composition of the AKIS CB

Final list still does not exist. Members provided in this document originate from the working documents of the Ministry.

The AKIS coordination body encompasses several parts of the Ministry (Directorate for the Professional Support to the development of Agriculture – public advisory service; Directorate for Support in Agriculture and Rural Development -as a CAP SP Managing Authority; Directorate for the Agricultural Policy, EU and international relations), CAP Network of Croatia), universities and other educational institutions (Faculty of Agriculture University of Zagreb, faculty of agrobiotechnical sciences University Josip Juraj Strossmayer Osijek, Križevci University of Applied Sciences; Faculty of Veterinary Sciences). As already mentioned, relevant research institutes (Institute for Agriculture and Tourism Poreč, Agricultural Institute Osijek and Institute for Adriatic Crops and Karst Reclamation) . Croatian Agricultural Chamber as a representative of farmers, agronomic journalist representative, Croatian Agency for Agriculture and Food Farmers, representative of private advisors are planned to be a part of the AKIS Coordination Body.

3. Functions attributed to the AKIS CB

The operational responsibilities of the AKIS CB are:

Overall aim of the body is determination of cross-sectoral goals for the modernization of the agricultural sector by promoting and exchanging knowledge, innovations and digital technologies in agriculture, forestry and rural areas as part of the Strategic Plan of the Joint Agricultural Policy of the Republic of Croatia 2023 – 2027. Additionally, the role of the body is also participating in the process of creating an AKIS plan with defined forms of cooperation and the roles of all actors involved in the transfer of knowledge, application and adoption of innovations and digital solutions in agriculture, forestry and rural areas.

4. Procedures for interplaying with other AKIS actors and with the MA of the CAP SP

The rules and procedures that ensure operationalization of AKIS coordination body and its components' functions are under definition. As soon as AKIS CB is formally set up they will be defined.

Practical implications for replicability

Considering the choice of a boarding body some practical implication might be considered:

- Balanced representation of AKIS actor in the nation (in terms of number of people for each member)
- Nomination through official request (member of the AKIS CB and replacement person) from the Ministry agriculture to the chambers / agencies/ institutions
- Clear definition of role and functions of the members involved, to avoid overlapping or delays in implementing actions.

Benefits

- This configuration of the AKIS CB brings together the actors that are already playing some institutional and operational key functions/activities within the local AKISs.
- Well defined functions and roles at regulatory level give a stronger impulse to the AKIS CB mandate

Watch this AKIS-in-Practice!



Further information

- Croatia CAP Strategic Plan 2023-2027 (HR)
(<https://ruralnirazvoj.hr/files/Strateski-plan-Zajednicke-poljoprivredne-politike-Republike-Hrvatske-2023.-2027..pdf>)

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