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MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
REPUBLIC OF LATVIA



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
REPUBLIC OF LATVIA



EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

Rural and Agricultural Advisory Systems: Best Practices and Experience in the Eastern Partnership



Riga, 15 – 16 April 2015



Ltd "Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre"



Latvian Rural Network

Rural and Agricultural Advisory Systems

Best Practices and Experiences in the Eastern Partnership

Riga, Latvia, April 15-16, 2015

Theories and Models of Advisory Services – Advisory and Extension



**Erich Waldmeier, Delegate of
International Academy of Rural Advisors**

Topics

- Advisory system
- Role of Advisory Services
- Challenges for Agriculture
- How Advisory Services may give Support
- Different players are concerned with Advisory Services
- Contents, Target Groups, Methods
- Organisational Structures and Financing
- An AS is defined through the combination of I-III
- Conclusion
- Proposed tracks for adapting AS strategies by FAO
- Proposed tracks for adapting AS qualification by IALB

Advisory System

An **Advisory System** is defined by:

- | | |
|---|--|
| I. Advisory contents & methods | (which topics, for which target groups, what are the demands/needs and how are they fulfilled) |
| II. Advisory organization | (ownership, service providers, influences/ control, staff qualifications) |
| III. Advisory financing | (who pays and for which reasons, based on which legal framework) |

Role of Advisory Services

IALB's position to the "Role of Advisory Activities" :

- ▶ The system of knowledge exchange and innovation "AKIS" (vocational education, training, information, advice and research) is an accompanying measure of the common (EU) or national policy **to find the balance between individual success and public interest.**
- ▶ Agricultural advisory services are important as an **instrument for the successful implementation of the CAP (EU) or national AP** because not every thing can be regulated by "hard" prescriptions and laws but has to be explained or accompanied.

Challenges for Agriculture

The necessity of change/adaption is the most constant factor !

- ▶ **political priorities** are changing (influences of globalization)
- ▶ **economical surrounding** is changing (local supply/ support system/ competition from import / export opportunities)
- ▶ greater awareness of **agro ecological requirements** (pollution prevention; preservation of resources; energy efficiency)
- ▶ influence of **climate change** is evident (new diseases/pests; water management; new varieties; new farming systems)

How Advisory Services may give Support

Besides the necessary specialized technical advisory support the **farmers need support in strategic thinking and networking!**

- ▶ farmers' concepts must respect the demands of the future; **AS accompanying farmers to and during the change** is more than to be a technical expert
- ▶ to take advantage of the opportunities, farmers are successful if connected within the value chain and if mainly the smallholders act collectively; **AS have to be facilitators of groups and networks in order to reach the different target groups**
- ▶ To face agro ecological challenges and climate change farmers have to innovate and exchange their experiences among themselves and with partners of research and industry; **new approaches have to be initiated/ accompanied/ disseminated by AS**

Different players are concerned with Advisory Services

- Since 2010 the **GFRAS - Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services** has the mission to provide advocacy and leadership on rural advisory services within the global development agenda



- The **FAO with its Extension and research unit** provides expertise and publications about advisory issues



- An European Funded Research Project **PRO AKIS** will present the results in 2015 about the EU 27 different Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems (AKIS)



Contents, Target Groups, Methods

- the **AS** is not independent from other elements of the **AKIS** (the actually used term for Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System)
- If the AS is targeting farmers with **vocational training and good access to information and research** it is not the same as working with semi subsistent farming families **without agricultural background**
- It makes a great difference if AS are focused on **single farms** (-> Advice) or on **working with groups** as well trough **mass media** (-> Extension)
- There is a difference if the **private interest of the targeted single farms** (-> agricultural) has priority or the **group impact in a region** (which is mostly of public interest -> Rural Development)

Contents, Target Groups, Methods

PRO AKIS decided the following differentiation (EU27)

Major target groups of advisory (1 – the most important, 2 – important, 3 – the less important)											Main methods of advisory work		
Large commercial farms (gross margin >48000€)	Medium commercial farms (gross margin < 48000€ and > 19200€)	Small commercial farms (gross margin < 19200€)	Semi-subsistence farms (producing slightly beyond own needs, approx. 1-5 ha)	Subsistence farms (producing mainly for own needs (< 1ha)	Part-time farmers	Agricultural producer groups	Young farmers	Female farmers	Farm-employees	Other	Individual	Group	Mass



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Organisational Structures and Financing

PRO AKIS decided the following differentiation (EU27)

COUNTRY	Type of dominant advisory organisation	
		public organisations
		research institutes
		chamber of agriculture
		farmer-based organisations
		private organisations
		NGOs

For financing the AS functions there are almost as many different systems as countries; public/ public-private/ completely private

Organisational Structures and Financing

Another approach to systemise the was presented at the GFRAS annual conference in Berlin 2013

In this table you find 13 different models

Institutional arrangements for rural advisory services

	Financing of the service				
Provision of the service	Public sector	Private sector: Farmers	Private sector: Companies	Third sector: NGOs	Third sector: FBOs
Public sector	Public extension	Fee-for-service extension	Private or third sector contracting extension agents from public sector		
Private sector: Companies	Publicly financed contracts or subsidies to service providers from private or third sector	Privatized extension, farmers pay fees	Information provided with sale of inputs	Extension agents from private company hired by NGOs	FBO contracting extension agent from company
Third sector: Non-governmental organizations - NGOs		Extension agents hired by NGO, farmers pay fees		Extension agents hired by NGO, service provided free of charge	
Third sector: Farmer-based organizations (FBOs)		Extension agents hired by FBO, farmers pay fees		NGO financing extension agents who are employed by FBO	Extension agents hired by FBO, service free to members

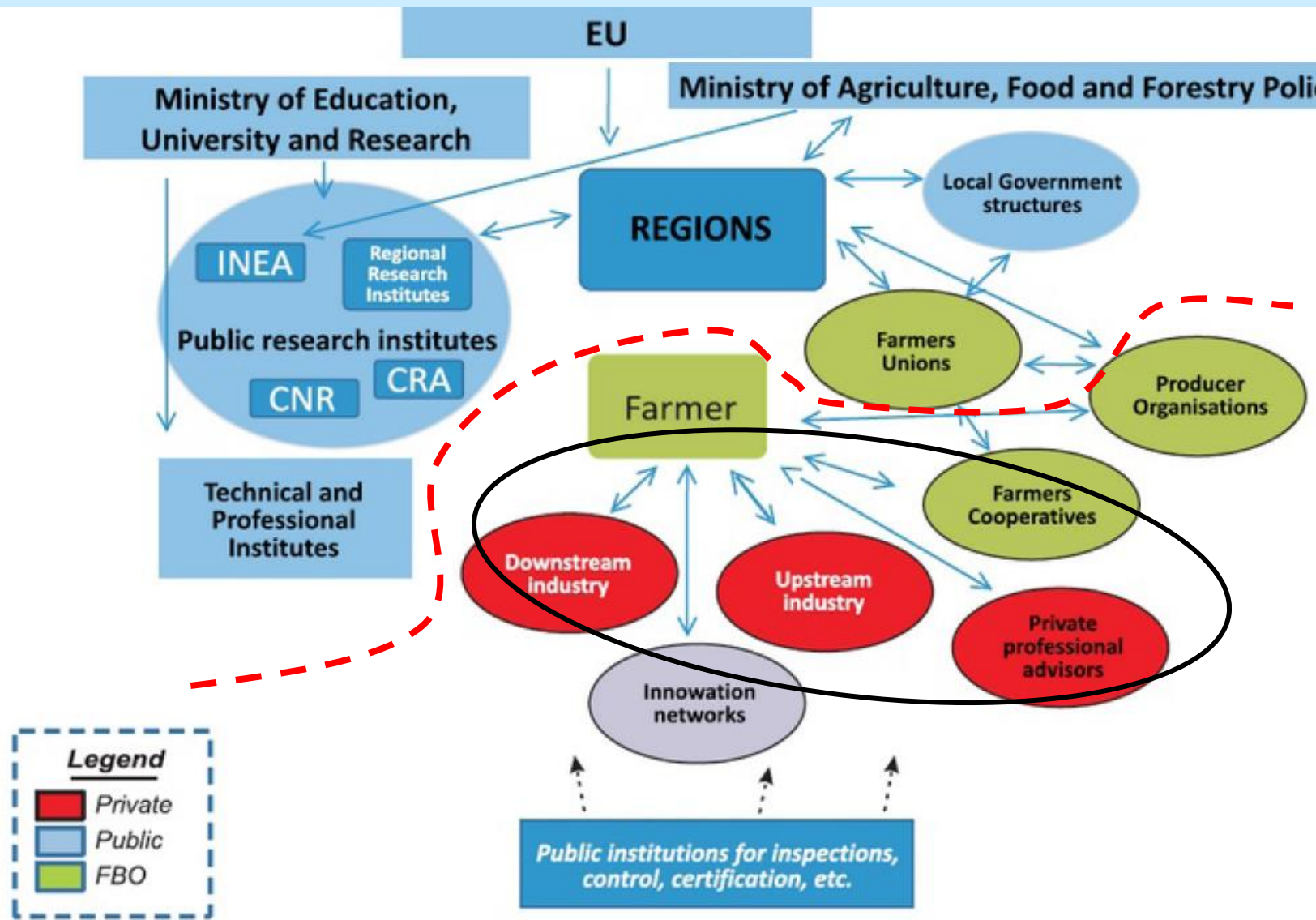
An AS is defined through the combination of I-III

- In Europe the **AS** developed from 100% public advisory services and funding (or basic fees in Chambers of Agriculture) more and more to models where **state funding was reduced**.
- In some countries the advisory task was delegated from state **to province/regional level** with the obligation for financing themselves
- In this case it was a little step to retire completely and delegate to **private advisory companies paid for delivered services**.

Result:

- Target group are the **economically strong farms**
- The focus lays on **single farm advice** (fragmented)
- The **up-stream suppliers'** position in specialised advice is important
- The **distance between researchers and farmers is larger**
- Topics of **public interest are not implemented** (no extension)
- No interest in **rural development** (if problems -> new actors/funding)

Example 1: Italy



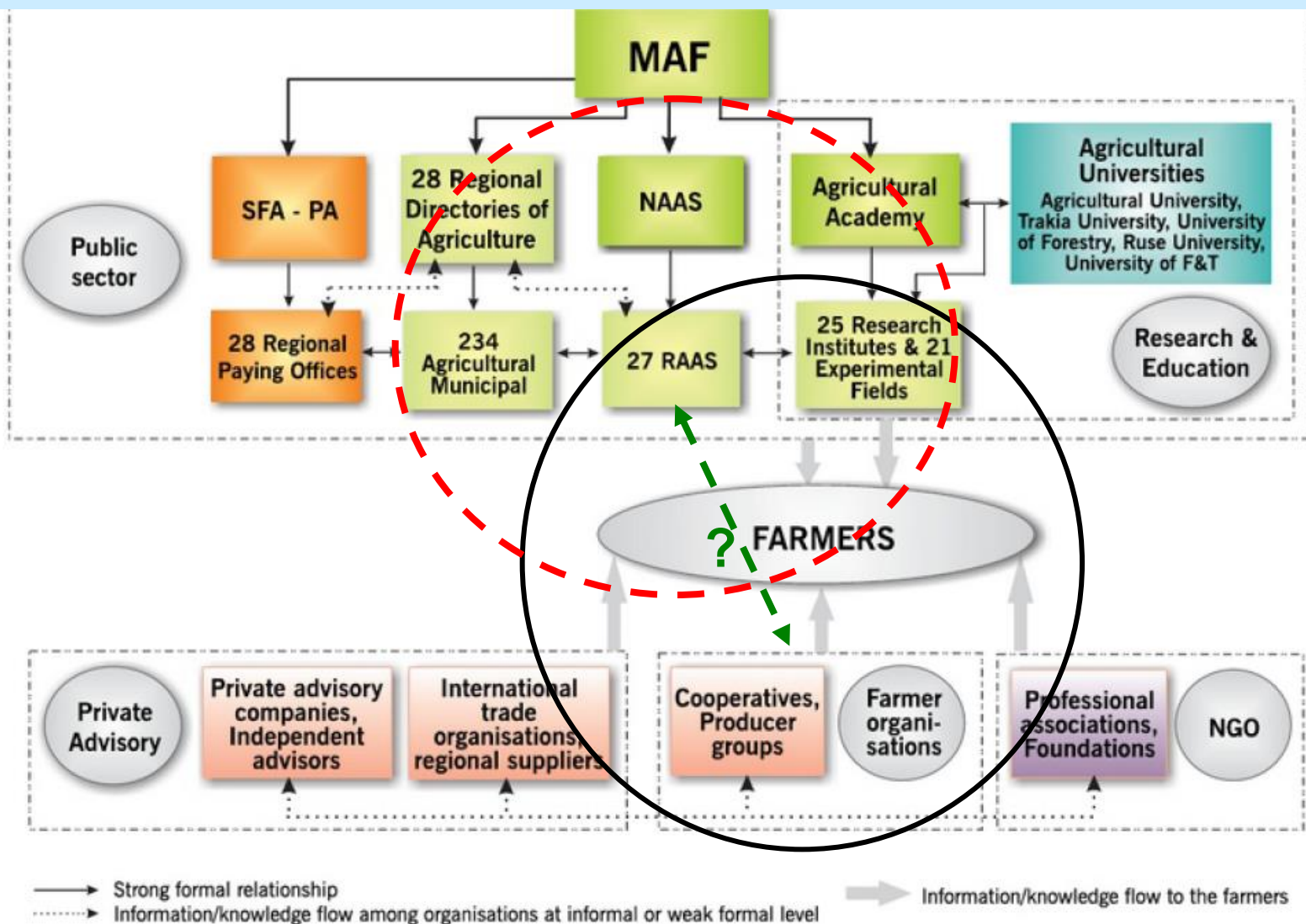
An AS is defined through the combination of I-III

- In some farming systems the history is quite another: Always or at once there are **a lot of semi-subsistent family farms**
- With a privatised advisory system you do not reach the target group; there must be an **intermediary** between state policy, research, value chains, credit facilities and the multitude of little farms
- Without public funding this **extension** or newly wished **innovation brokering task** cannot be provided (but that needs a policy)

Result:

- Target group are the **economically weak farms**
- The focus lays on **group advice** (common action, FBO)
- The **down-stream value chain** can play a integrative role
- The **researchers and farmers** are brought together in **networks**
- Topics of **public interest are implemented** (multi-actor-groups)
- The approach is **rural development** in disadvantages regions

Example 1: Bulgaria



Conclusion

- To give general recommendations is difficult. But clear is, that you need an **intermediary** between state agricultural and rural policy and the actors in the field (EU CAP, FAO, GFRAS, EUFRAS, IALB)
- Without public funding this **extension** or newly wished **innovation brokering task** cannot be provided
- Advisory systems **need to evolve**
- In the advisory system you need **qualified staff with soft skills**

Proposed tracks for adapting AS strategies by FAO

Dr. Magdalena Blum, Extension Systems Officer

Promoting pluralistic advisory systems

- demand orientation
- market orientation

Reinforcement of innovation systems

- Creation or strengthening the networks between actors
- Promoting the ability to innovate
- Institutional, social, financial... innovations are needed

Changes in management and ways of intervention

- Management of AS has to react on challenges and has to adapt the delivered service and approaches continuously
- The institutions have to stay flexible and need to be adapted due to

Proposed tracks for adapting AS qualification by IALB

CECRA qualification system



Training Modules considered relevant for the advisory work:

- My advisors' profile/ my advisory attitude/ personality development
- Communication / customer relation
- Working in and leading a team
- Rhetoric, presentation skills
- Self and time management
- Project management/ project advising
- Designing of consulting processes
- Dealing with difficult consulting situations/ change management
- Moderation and meeting management
- Marketing/ public relations
- Education and event management
- Facilitation and accompanying groups
- Essentials of mediation
- Consulting and assisting enterprises and groups in strategic questions
- Coaching - Introduction

Thank you for your attention

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IALB Network's past (www.ialb.org)

- 1961 founded, 54 years of networking,
54 annual conferences
- 1991 start ***summer-seminar on advisory methods*** and
exchange visits (24 seminars done)
- 2003 –08 initiative for ***European Interreg project R.E.N.E.***
- 2007 ***starting point project CECRA***
- 2011 IALB is participating in ***policy dialogue on RAS in EU***
(preparation of CAP 2014- 2020)
- 2011 IALB is ***participating in GFRAS' activities*** and
takes the initiative for a larger Network in Europe
- 2013 on IALB's ***initiative EUFRAS*** is founded
- 2015 actually about ***600 individual /15 institutional*** members

GFRAS Regional Network Members 2015 (www.g-fras.org)

