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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

Agricultural and rural advisory services - challenges for Eastern European partner countries

**Policy recommendations built upon the observation from the PRO
AKIS inventory of European AKIS (agriculture knowledge, information
and innovation system) by Prof. Andrea Knierim & Ulrike Knuth**

How to interact with and govern increasingly pluralistic agricultural advisory systems?

Public actors need to develop competencies and methodologies for an diagnosis in their region

- identifies and describes the relevant actors (education, research, advisory services, public and private knowledge providers and users etc.
 - recognizes strengths and weaknesses
 - searches for gaps and missing interactions among them
 - Special attention should be paid to the divergent knowledge needs within the group of farm managers regarding farm size and education level
 - Small scale farmers need public support to fulfill their knowledge and advisory needs
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Public actors need to provide a minimum advisory services' infrastructure or

public support of private advisory services/consultants

- privatization is trend for advisory services, but public administration often has to maintain certain advisory functions such as for environmental topics or farm investment/development esp. in regions with a high number of small scale farms
 - minimum infrastructures and support should be related to the most important gaps or weaknesses within a specific AKIS
 - public support is necessary to have living knowledge flows between research and farmers, esp. small-scale and/or resource-poor farmers
 - Public support for well-functioning knowledge flows within a region can be realized by a set of governance options including
 - advisory projects (e.g. monitor farms in Scotland),
 - financial support for farmers to use private advisory services or
 - policy-induced innovation or
 - rural networks or maintenance of experimental stations
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The support/initiation of rural multi-actor networks is a potential alternative to classical advisory services and can increase interaction within a regional AKIS

- Multi-actor networks are a successful (new) advisory format
 - Networks have the potential to fill gaps within an AKIS, especially in rather 'weak' AKIS with low level of interaction and/or public AKIS infrastructure
 - policy-induced learning networks should be open to include a diversity of knowledge providers in the region
 - Advisory service providers (public or private) of a region are able to take up the following functions in networks:
 - Clarify knowledge needs of farmers, Brokering, facilitating
 - Promote learning and dissemination
 - Capitalize data, information or knowledge, Monitoring
 - Networks should promote collective learning processes, e.g. leveraged by demonstrations, and provide repeated opportunities to experience and observe
 - Trust among actors is a main driver for successful learning
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The financial support/funding of rural multi-actor networks merits specific attention from an institutional perspective:

- funding schemes will impact the composition of actors
 - there is a risk to support ‘closed shops’
 - to provide a long-term funding perspective has the potential to build up new trustful relations
 - funding ‘projects’ rather than networks tends to strengthen the output side and weakens the relation component
 - In order to enable advisors to fulfill their emerging roles in networks and to assure the quality of advisory services in region, support in training/education and the smart development of certification schemes are necessary:
 - EUFRAS and CECRA have started on the EU level
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In EUFRAS new members are welcome: Details at
<http://www.eufras.eu/>

- EUFRAS connects agricultural and rural advisory services in Europe.
 - The exchange of knowledge, views and working practices serves you to improve the efficiency of your own services offered for farmers or other rural partners.
 - Meet advisors, managers, trainers and other players of your profession from all over Europe at EUFRAS-Events.
 - EUFRAS members benefit from the cooperation in international projects and the information exchange on topics.
 - EUFRAS represents your advisory service on the European level.
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Thank you

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