

Standing Committee on Agricultural Research
working group

Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems

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why this working group?

second SCAR foresight:

- new challenges in food production, agriculture, rural development and the management of natural resources;
- new challenges to build the bio-economy (green growth)

“agricultural knowledge systems are not able to address these challenges”

- AKIS “currently unable to absorb and internalise the fundamental structural and systemic shifts that have occurred”.
- “The remaining publicly funded AKIS appear to be locked into old paradigms based on linear approaches and conventional assumptions.”

SCAR AKIS working group

(still open to participants from member states and associated countries)

- Although many share the feelings expressed in the foresight, more evidence-based analysis is needed to develop adequate policy actions.
 - Study of and reflection on functioning of Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems
 - Drivers , incentives, interaction of the subsystems, best practices, evidence: *understanding* rather than *describing*
- Five work packages (reflection paper, in depth study, social innovation, complexity and case studies)
- reflection paper ‘setting the scene’

reflection paper

- systematization of existing knowledge, state of the art of research in agricultural knowledge and innovation systems
- related to primary production (the whole food system to be addressed later)
- what is AKIS, how is it structured, how is it embedded in broader systems, driving forces for innovation
- recent changes and developments, dynamics
- overview of main concerns and some policy considerations

AKIS?



taming a multi-headed monster

- developing common language and understanding at European level
- AKIS context, scope, concepts, definitions, issues
- reflection paper produced by three experts
- with comments and contributions from working group members
- within only three months, to be finished in September
- we see it as the first shot, far from being perfect or complete (to be rewritten at the end of the project december 2011)

Is AKIS fit for purpose?

- purpose is a moving target: green growth, competition, food and non food production, social challenges, rural development, climate change, CAP after 2013;
- AKIS policies should be seen in a broader context
 - of *national economies* and the position of agriculture in it: a country exporting *cars* would prefer investing in electric cars research rather than investing in AKIS
 - of general research, technology and educational policies at national and European level;
 - in it's capacities to absorb and apply technologies developed elsewhere
 - different sometimes conflicting time frames

main point: is there a *system* (1)?

- *elements* of AKIS are rather clear:
fundamental and applied research, education and training ,
extension, innovation, public and private actors
- interaction between the elements is crucial
- but **elements are driven by different incentives**, e.g.
 - research: publications, citations, ‘excellence’
 - education: funding based on student numbers
 - competition impedes cooperation between actors

Is there a *system* (2)?

- which makes AKIS wishful thinking rather than reality
- if we want there to be an AKIS **we should create and facilitate it:**
 - promote cooperation and interaction
 - allow for (risky) experiments,
 - invest in absorptive capacity&porosity,
 - new institutional arrangements for knowledge circulation and innovation;
- good examples can be seen in Europe (pôles des compétitivité, innovation vouchers for farmers, and others)