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|  <p><b>AKIS Coordination Body</b></p> | <p><b>AKIS-in-Practice! 1.13</b></p> |  |
| <p><b>AKIS Coordination body in Italy</b></p>  |                                      |   |

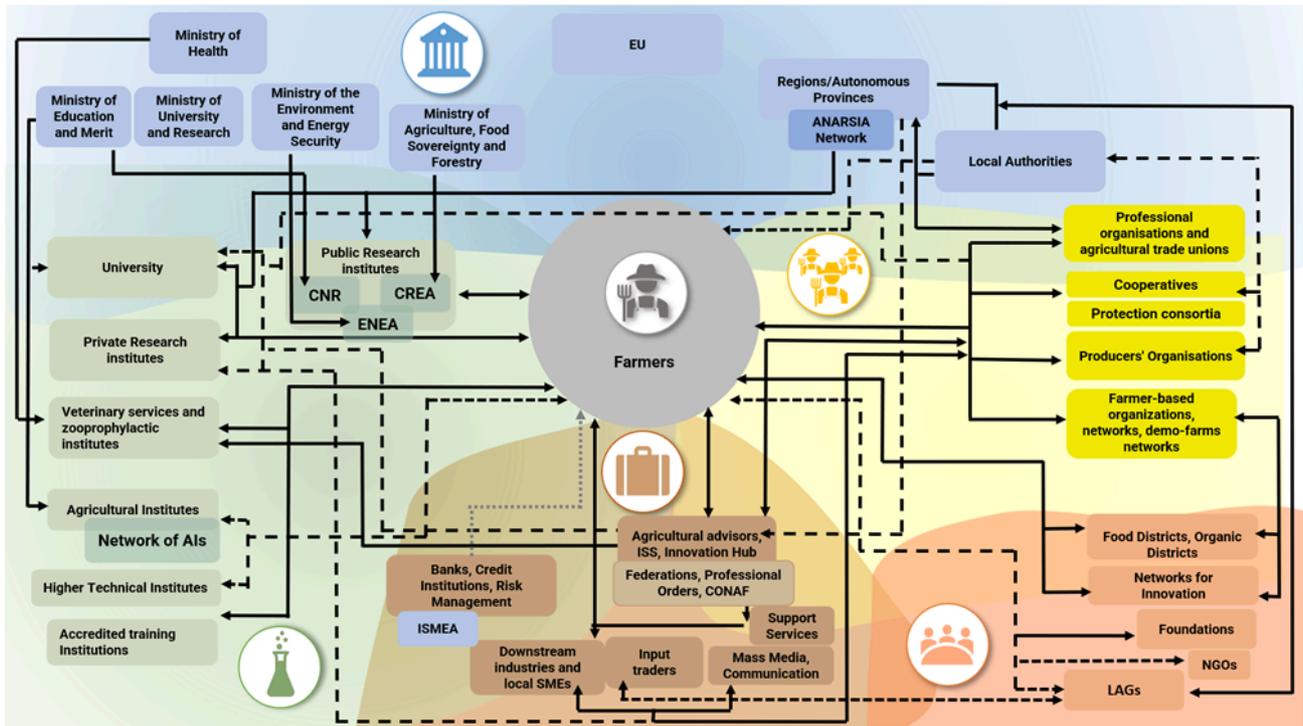
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| <p><b>AKIS context</b></p> |  |
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The Italian AKIS (Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System) is a complex, multi-actor, and multilayered network encompassing numerous entities and governance levels. This structure involves a diverse range of stakeholders who, despite working in overlapping areas, bring specialized expertise to specific fields. The extent of cooperation and integration varies significantly, influenced by the types of actors involved, their regional affiliations, and the policy frameworks guiding them. Generally, local innovation initiatives—supported by past and current CAP funds, as well as local learning and innovation networks—have fostered and strengthened relationships among these varied actors, particularly enhancing collaboration between farmers, advisors, and the research community. At the national level, the Italian AKIS is closely interconnected with regional systems, facilitated by a network of actors and knowledge exchanges that often transcend national or regional boundaries. Typically, numerous organizations—both from the research sector (e.g., CREA, CNR) and the productive sector (such as farmers' unions)—are actively involved across both the national and regional AKIS networks, participating fluidly across these layers.

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**Figure 1: Italian AKIS Diagram**



Source: i2connect AKIS country report (2024)

## RATIONALE



The political relevance given to AKIS strategies in the context of the CAP Strategic Plans (CAP 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.

In Italy, as a result of the new delivery model and unlike previous programming periods, the 2023-2027 CAP SP is established solely at the national level. However, as Regions/Autonomous Provinces hold agricultural competency under the Constitution, they have set up Complementary Rural Development Programs (RDCPs), which, under the CAP SP framework, have their own governance structures and implement rural interventions relevant to their specific territories at the local level.

This programming approach means that Italy includes one AKIS strategy and a CAP SP-level AKIS coordination body (Chapter 8 of the CAP SP; General Directorate of Rural Development of the Ministry of Agricultural Policies, Food Sovereignty, and Forestry) along with regional AKIS strategies and corresponding AKIS coordination bodies for each Region and Autonomous Province.

The general model for AKIS coordination bodies in Italy was outlined in the document titled “AKIS Coordination in Italy: Some Operational Proposals,” developed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry (MASAF) in collaboration with the Italian CAP Network. This document aims to propose a framework for the structure, functions, and organization of both the National AKIS Coordination Body and the Regional AKIS Coordination Bodies. This document was developed in a participatory way with the Regional RDCP Managing Authorities to achieve a common vision on the definition of the Coordination Bodies for AKIS.

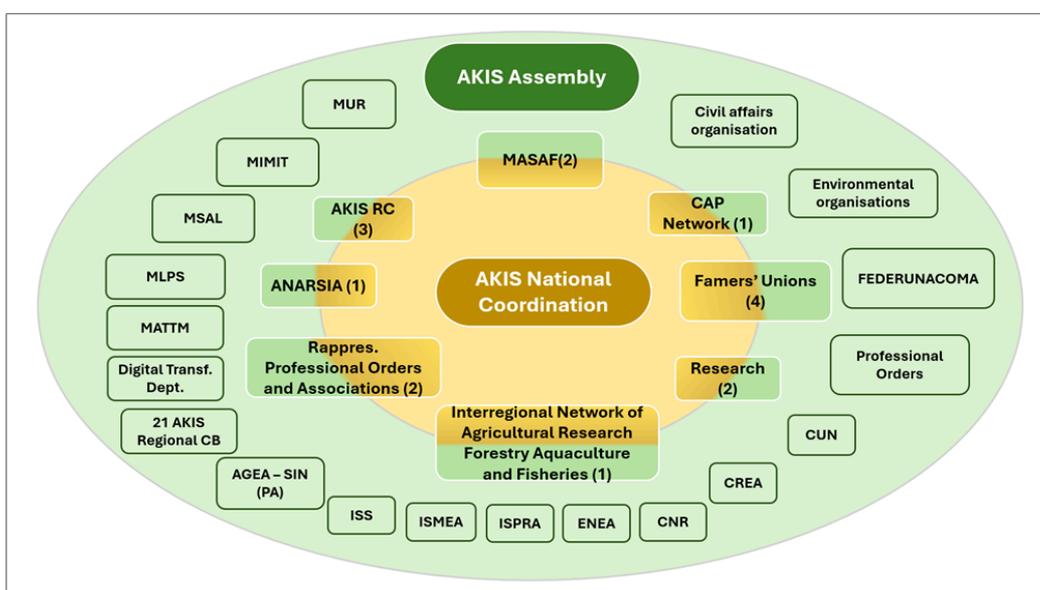


## 1. Who is the AKIS CB

The Italian AKIS Coordination Body for the 2023-2027 CAP SP, set up in 2024, consists of a collective body, namely AKIS National Coordination, chaired by the Director General of Rural Development of MASAF and consists of 18 members with expertise in AKIS and digitization. In carrying out its functions and pursuing its objectives, the AKIS National Coordination is supported by the AKIS Assembly.

The **AKIS Assembly**, chaired by the Director General for Rural Development of MASAF, comprises all the members of the AKIS National Coordination and representatives from institutions whose respective competencies contribute to the Italian AKIS. The Secretariat activities of the AKIS Assembly are provided by the National CAP Network.

**Figure 2: Italian National AKIS CB**



Source: CAP Network, MASAF (2023), AKIS Coordination in Italy: some operational proposals



## **2. Composition of the AKIS CB**

The AKIS National Coordination consists of 18 members who are experts in AKIS and digitalization, including:

- Two members of MASAF.
- Three members of the AKIS Regional Coordination Bodies.
- One member representing the Interregional Network of Agricultural Research Forestry Aquaculture and Fisheries.
- One member representing the Network of Regional Development Agencies (ANARSIA).
- Two representatives from research institutions/university.
- Four representatives from farmers' unions
- Two members representing professional orders.
- One member representing Council for agricultural research and economics (CREA-PB).
- One member representing Agricultural Food Market Services Institute (ISMEA).
- One member representing the Paying Agency AGEA.

The AKIS Assembly is composed of the following representatives:

- Ministry of University and Research (MUR).
- Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy (MIMIT).
- Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (MLPS).
- Ministry of Environment and Energy Security (MATTM).
- Ministry of Health (MSAL).
- Department for Digital Transformation.
- 21 AKIS Regional Coordinations Bodies.
- Interregional Network of Agricultural, Forestry, Aquaculture and Fisheries Research.
- ANARSIA.
- AGEA – Paying Agency.
- CUN (National University Council).
- CREA.
- CNR.
- ENEA.
- ISPRA (Institute for Environmental Protection and Research).
- Superior Institute of Health.
- ISMEA.
- Professional orders and colleges.
- FEDERUNACOMA (National Federation of Agricultural Machinery Manufacturers).
- Professional organizations.
- Environmental organizations.
- Organizations dealing with social issues.
- National CAP Network.

## **3. Functions attributed to the AKIS CB**

The National AKIS Coordination performs the following functions:

- Identify new needs or existing needs that have not been sufficiently addressed.
- Assess the level of integration of AKIS stakeholders based on information provided by members, with particular focus on advisory services.
- Propose actions aimed at improving the implementation of AKIS initiatives and the digitalization strategy, to be carried out also through the National CAP Network and/or technical assistance to the CAP SP, and/or with support from the Interregional Network for Agricultural, Forestry, Aquaculture, and Fisheries Research.
- Propose changes and adjustments to the national AKIS and digitalization strategy.

- Promote support and development actions, particularly aimed at integrating AKIS stakeholders, through the National CAP Network and/or CAP SP technical assistance.
- Propose actions to be implemented in response to urgent and emergency situations.
- Identify activities needed to coordinate the AKIS actions within the PSP and the national digitalization strategy with similar activities promoted by other European, national, and regional funding instruments.
- Maintain ongoing relationships with the Regional/Autonomous Province AKIS Coordination Bodies.
- Establish methods of collaboration and coordination with the EC.

The AKIS Assembly's role is to facilitate discussions among the national AKIS stakeholders, promote the identification of any issues and challenges, and propose solutions.

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

The composition of the AKIS National Coordination and the AKIS Assembly facilitates relationships among the key actors of the Italian AKIS. The Coordination communicates directly with EU bodies, particularly with the Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission. The information flow is bilateral and pertains to the current status of the national AKIS system and strategies for its improvement, with a particular focus on integrating advisory services. Additionally, through MASAF, the AKIS Coordination maintains direct communication with the Monitoring Committee of the CAP SP.

The Coordination meets at least once a year with the AKIS Assembly, which serves as a privileged interlocutor, ensuring regular dialogue and collaboration. Also, AKIS Assembly meets at least once a year.

A specific Operating Regulation will define in detail the operating procedures of the AKIS Coordination.

## PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR REPLICABILITY



To replicate this practice, the following needs to be followed objectives:

- A formal act to establish the Regional AKIS Coordination.
- A general regulatory framework recognized by all AKIS coordinating body members.
- A clear separation of responsibilities, clear definition of duties, and mutual recognition of respective roles (such as technical assistance, research, innovation support services, administrative controls, monitoring and evaluation) by AKIS coordination members.
- Defined internal procedures for coordination meetings and joint decision-making on action plans for AKIS strategy implementation (internal regulations).



## BENEFITS



- Improvement of governance and participation among various stakeholders.
- Wide representation of the national AKIS actors.
- Integration of regional AKIS strategies ensuring that local needs and conditions are addressed within the national one.

## FURTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION



- Italian CAP Strategic Plan 2023-2027.
- i2connect AKIS Country Report 2020 – Italy.
- i2connect AKIS Country Reports.



Italy



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Watch this AKIS-in-Practice!

