

 <p><b>CAP networks and Knowledge hub</b></p>	<p><b>AKIS-in-Practice! 4.3</b></p>	
<p><b>An AKIS Platform as a driver of Innovations and collaboration in agriculture</b></p>		

<p><b>Keywords/Tags</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Knowledge hubs</li> <li> Advisory services</li> <li> Innovation support services</li> </ul> 	<p><b>Potential users</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Managing Authorities/AKIS coordination bodies</li> <li> Cooperatives and farmer organizations</li> <li> Advisory services provider</li> <li> Farmers</li> <li> Researchers institutions and academics</li> <li> Agricultural suppliers and technology providers</li> <li> ISS</li> <li> CAP Network</li> </ul>
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**RATIONALE** 

The need for a centralized point of reference for AKIS (Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System) actors is crucial for improving the flow of knowledge within the agricultural sector. Currently, in Portugal, information is often scattered across various organizations, research bodies, advisory services, and educational institutions, making it challenging for farmers, advisors, and other stakeholders to access the relevant knowledge at the right time. To this aspect the same European Commission (EC) also recommended, for the purpose of the CAP Strategic Plan (SP), investments in coordinating and increasing knowledge flows (especially between farmers, researchers, advisors, education and the CAP network) to strengthen the impact of EU and national funding for research and innovation.

In fact, establishing a central knowledge platform can help streamline fragmented information, ensuring that innovations, best practices, and research findings are easily accessible to those who need them.

Digital platforms offer an effective means for knowledge sharing by consolidating research data, innovation initiatives, skill-building resources, and networking opportunities.

Moreover, they have a great potential to make new agricultural methods and technologies more accessible to the wider public and to boost innovation scaling across the agricultural sector.

Often these platforms are established within the scope of the CAP networks to facilitate communication and outreach, creating centralized hubs where farmers, researchers, and advisors can access valuable information and practical solutions. With features like databases, discussion forums, and networking tools, they promote real-time knowledge exchange and cross-sector collaboration.

## SOLUTION



The AKIS Platform was launched in later November 2023 by the managing authority of the Rural Development Program 2014-22, together with the national CAP Network and under the framework of the Portugal 2030 strategy. This is a digital platform that integrates and centralizes knowledge and innovation in place within the agricultural sector, through facilitating better coordination among various system actors, such as farmers, researchers, advisors, and policymakers. Its primary aim is to address the fragmentation of information across regional and national systems, promoting efficient and accessible data sharing for all stakeholders.

In fact, the platform enhances the interoperability of diverse information systems by consolidating technological innovations, best practices, and ongoing research projects into a single interface. Designed to ensure that all users can access reliable and up-to-date information, it supports informed decision-making and the adoption of more sustainable and innovative practices.

In addition, the platform includes capacity-building tools and collaborative networks that enable users to participate in webinars, access documents, and connect with other professionals in the sector. This interactive component not only promotes the dissemination of knowledge but also encourages innovation through the exchange of experiences and practical solutions.

The digitization of knowledge and the integration of a collaborative system will increase the efficiency of information dissemination and empower actors in the Portuguese agricultural sector to adopt more sustainable, innovative, and resilient practices.

### **Box 1: Portugal 2030 Strategy**

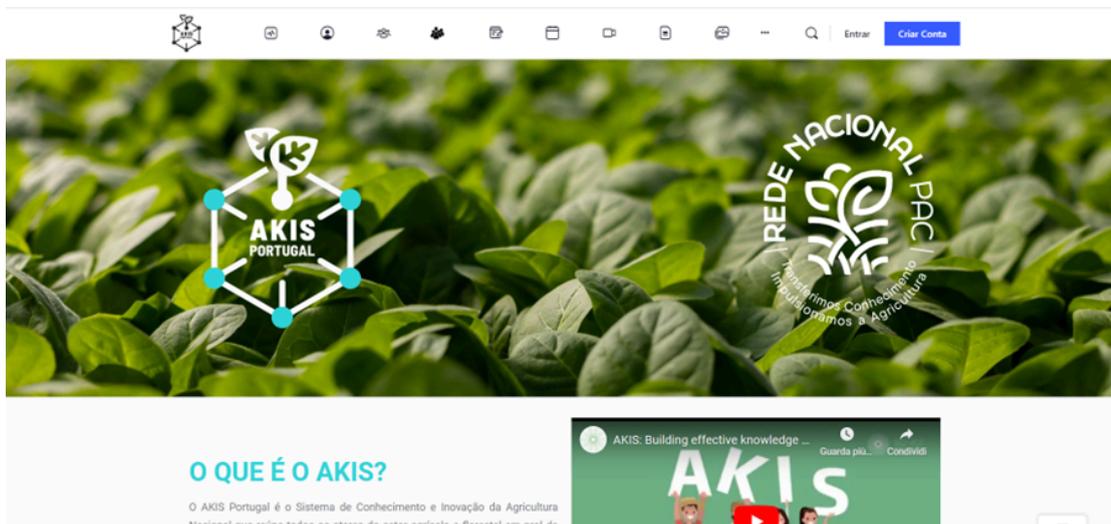
Portugal2030 is a strategic framework aimed at guiding Portugal's economic and social development from 2021 to 2027, in alignment with the European Union's multi-annual financial framework. It focuses on leveraging EU funds to promote sustainable growth, innovation, and social cohesion in the country based on key Programmes, organised by topics and regions. Key priorities include enhancing competitiveness, boosting digital and green transitions, improving infrastructure, and addressing social inequalities, with the ultimate goal of fostering a resilient and inclusive economy that meets EU climate and digital goals.

For further info please visit <https://portugal2030.pt/>.

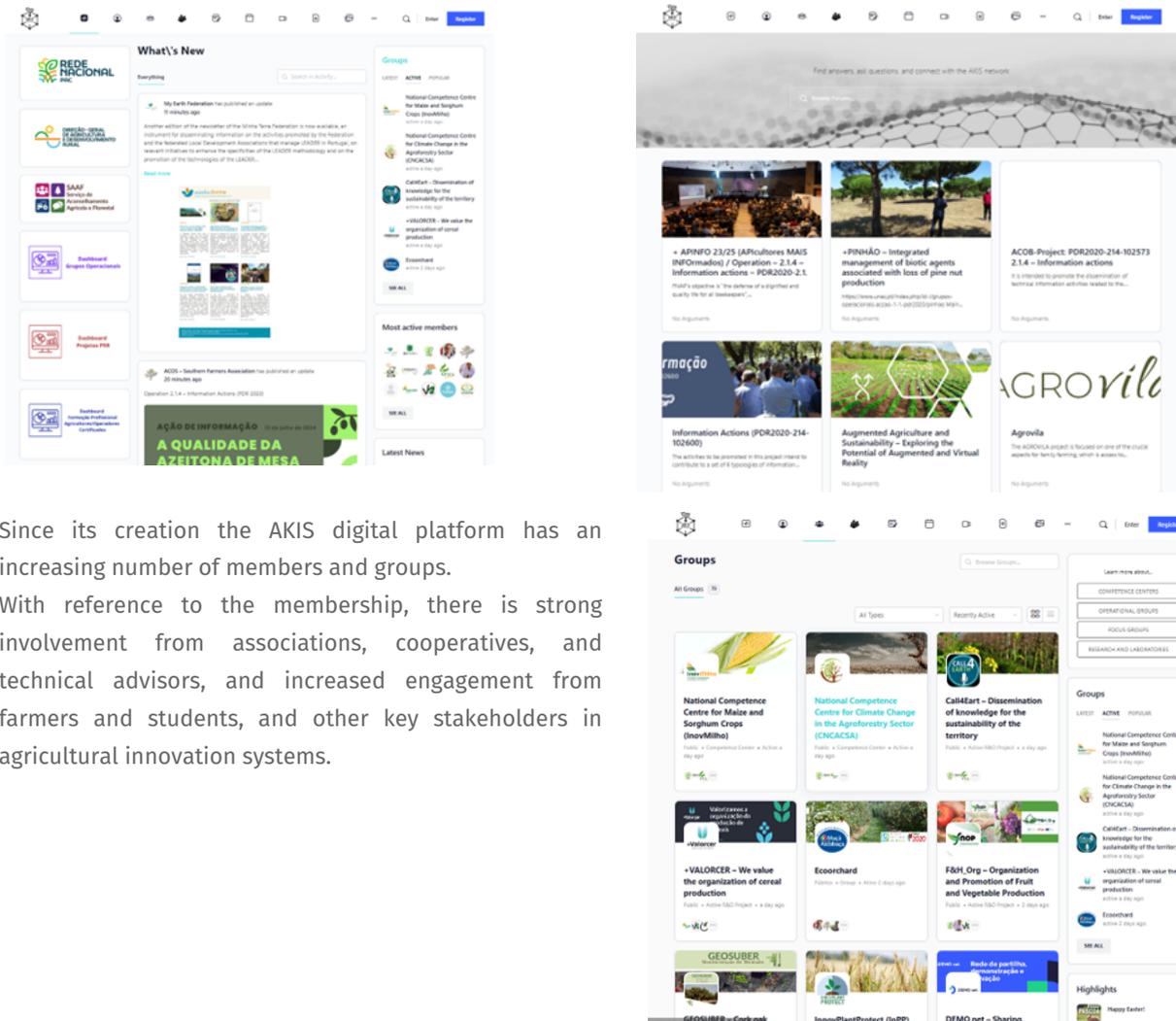


The Portuguese AKIS Platform offers several key features designed to foster collaboration and knowledge sharing:

- **Publicizing training and workshops:** it allows advertising training courses and workshops and freely disseminate relevant news for members.
- **Discussion forums:** Spaces for discussion on various thematic areas, promoting the exchange of ideas and good practices between members. It is possible to cross-pollinate various thematic areas, enriching the discussion.
- **Interaction groups:** Creation of thematic groups where members can interact, collaborate, and share documents in their resource centers. These documents can be made available publicly or privately.
- **Events calendar:** a public agenda where all the members can post relevant events for the agricultural sector. This serves giving accessibility to the events to the wider public and easier coordinating their dates and times.
- **Networking:** Connects all stakeholders in support of innovation, promoting co-creation with research and development organizations (R&D).
- **Projects and good practices repository:** Bring together information, projects and good practices, facilitating access to knowledge and innovation.
- **Interactive platforms and e-learning:** An interactive module will soon be launched to allow e-learning training to be carried out both synchronously and asynchronously, helping farmers and advisors improve their skills and stay updated on the latest trends and innovations. By doing so, it plays a key role in promoting sustainable agricultural practices and improving the resilience of the sector in response to challenges such as climate change.
- **Mobile app:** The platform will soon have a mobile app up and running, expanding access to and usability of the platform.

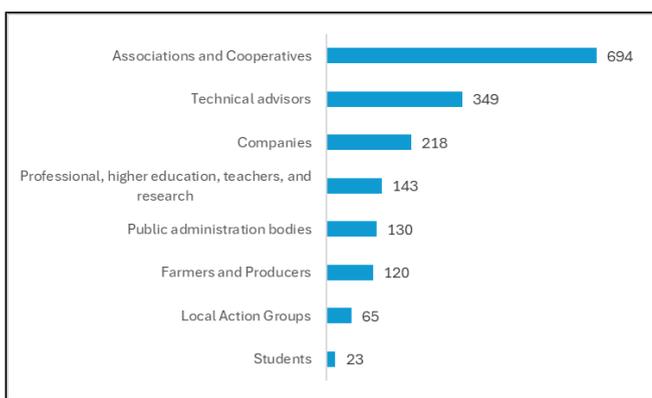


**Figure 1: Some sections of the AKIS platform**



Since its creation the AKIS digital platform has an increasing number of members and groups. With reference to the membership, there is strong involvement from associations, cooperatives, and technical advisors, and increased engagement from farmers and students, and other key stakeholders in agricultural innovation systems.

**Figure 2: Members of the AKIS Digital platform by categories**



Source: Elaboration on Consulai data - July 2024

Overall, there is a strong focus on Competence Centers and R&D initiatives, while smaller, more specialized groups like Focus Groups and PRR-related projects are less prominent within the AKIS framework. This highlights a potential area for growth and more targeted inclusion of niche and emerging agricultural themes.

## PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR REPLICABILITY



Replicating this platform would require a well-structured approach to integrating various stakeholders from agriculture, research, and policy sectors. Key considerations include:

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** early involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, including farmers, academic institutions, and public bodies, is fundamental to success in a prompt membership and collection of relevant knowledge to share through the platform.
- **Digital Infrastructure:** A robust digital infrastructure along with a skilled ICT team is crucial for managing large volumes of data, members, and resources.
- **User-Friendly Interface:** To ensure widespread adoption, the platform must be designed with a user-friendly interface that is easily accessible to all stakeholders, including farmers, advisors, researchers, and policymakers. A seamless user experience is vital for engagement and regular usage.
- **Training and Support:** Adequate training and support systems should be in place to ensure that platform users can fully utilize its functionalities, especially for farmers unfamiliar with digital tools.
- **Customization:** The platform should be adapted to the specific needs of the agricultural sector in the target region, including local languages, agricultural practices, and sustainability challenges.
- **Interactivity and Collaboration:** Platforms that encourage interactivity, such as discussion forums and networking tools, are particularly effective in driving knowledge exchange. Replicating the Portuguese model would benefit from including tools that promote real-time collaboration, webinars, and capacity-building initiatives.
- **Funding and Policy Support:** Strong government backing and funding will be required to maintain the platform and ensure its sustainability over the long term.

## BENEFITS



The Portuguese AKIS Platform offers numerous benefits that enhance collaboration and knowledge dissemination across the agricultural sector such as:

- Systematization of all the research and innovation projects' information and materials in one point of access for all the potential users.
- Dissemination of up-to-date research results and innovations.
- Strengthen linkages between digital infrastructures and exchanging of R&I knowledge and experiences.
- Facilitation of knowledge sharing by enabling discussions across multiple thematic areas, enriching dialogue and the cross-pollination of ideas between diverse groups of stakeholders.
- Document sharing.
- A common and generally accessible events calendar.

## FURTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION



- AKIS Digital Platform website: <https://akisportugal.pt/>
- Portuguese AKIS Platform tutorial video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4kkOv54x7b0>



### Portugal



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Watch this AKIS-in-Practice!

