



# AKIS-Stakeholder Activation and Engagement Methodology and Tools

Deliverable 6.1

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## List of Abbreviations

<b>AKIS</b>	Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System
<b>ASP</b>	Advisory Service Providers
<b>CAP</b>	Common Agricultural Policy
<b>CoDIE</b>	Co-Design Innovation Experiment
<b>CoP</b>	Community of Practice
<b>CS</b>	Climate Smart
<b>CSA</b>	Climate Smart Advisor
<b>CS-AS</b>	Climate Smart Advisory Service
<b>CSC</b>	Climate Smart Coach
<b>CSF</b>	Climate Smart Farming
<b>D</b>	Deliverable
<b>DEC</b>	Dissemination, Exploitation and Communication
<b>EIP-AGRI</b>	European Innovation Partnership Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GDPR</b>	General Data Protection Regulation
<b>NC</b>	National Coordinator
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>PESTLE</b>	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental
<b>TTT</b>	Train The Trainer
<b>WP</b>	Work Package

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# 1 Abstract

Engagement with key actors within the regional/national Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS), including researchers, policy makers, technology providers, general public, etc. is essential for the successful implementation of climate smart advising and climate smart farming. This engagement fosters co-creation, mutual learning, and knowledge exchange, thereby strengthening advisors' capacity to provide climate smart advice. Furthermore, it facilitates the scaling up of ClimateSmartAdvisors (CSA) project outcomes and contributes to embedding the CSA network and project outcomes within national AKIS both during and after the end of the project.

This document outlines a structured approach, along with associated methods and tools, for identifying, activating, and engaging Climate Smart AKIS (CS-AKIS) actors in a co-creation process at the national level. The primary audience for this document includes National Coordinators (NCs) and Climate smart Coaches (CSCs), who will receive training on implementing these methods and tools at the national level and at the Communities of Practice (CoPs) level.

The first step involves conducting a thorough analysis of the current landscape of climate change mitigation and adaptation in agriculture. Partner countries will need to identify both the levers for integrating climate smart advising and climate smart farming practices, as well as the barriers that may hinder their adoption and implementation. Once these levers and barriers are identified, it becomes easier to identify and map CS-AKIS actors who are likely to have an impact on or be impacted by climate smart practices or the operation of the CoPs. Identifying CS-AKIS actors requires recognising individuals, organisations or institutions actively engaged in practices, research, or policies aimed at promoting climate smart farming. Subsequently, categorising and prioritising these actors is necessary for effectively managing their engagement. CS-AKIS actors may differ in terms of the role and the influence they may have on the project's success. Therefore, the CS-AKIS Actors Communication and Engagement plan, developed annually, must outline specific engagement activities tailored to each stakeholder group, along with the communication channels for effectively reaching them. Engagement activities serve a dual purpose: informing local and national CS-AKIS actors about the project and its results, and encouraging and improving their active participation in the project's endeavours.

This structured approach goes beyond merely listing CS-AKIS actors. It involves analysing and understanding them, which is crucial for developing tailored communication and engagement strategies. Additionally, this approach aids in risk management by anticipating stakeholder impacts, allowing proactive addressing of concerns, risk mitigation, and leveraging opportunities.

## 2 Introduction

In ClimateSmartAdvisors, advisors are recognised as being in a key position in developing and sharing climate smart (CS) innovations and good practices between peers and with farmers. Therefore, ClimateSmartAdvisors works on improving the opportunities, knowledge, and skills of agricultural advisors to support farmers in the implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation actions across Europe. The project aims to boost the role of agricultural advisors and advisory service providers (ASP) across by strengthening their capacity in providing targeted advice on climate mitigation and adaptation approaches, and by sharing solutions for impactful advisory methods. By boosting the role of the EU agricultural advisory community, we aim to contribute to an acceleration of the adoption of climate smart farming (CSF) practices by the wider farming community within and across EU Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKISs).

WP6 works on engaging and empowering key actors within regional/national AKIS and across MS in supporting CS advising and CS farming and creating an enabling environment for their implementation. Connecting to relevant CS-AKIS actors and existing structures, networks and initiatives is crucial for co-creation and mutual learning and to further strengthen the advisor's capacity in providing CS advice. It will stimulate knowledge exchange, out-scaling of the project outcomes and will contribute to the embedding of the CSA network and project outcomes in local AKISs, which will support network sustainability after the end of the project. Through the systematic association and cooperation with all relevant CS-AKIS actors and by using them as powerful multipliers of project results and activities on a daily basis, CSA will generate leverages in all countries and strongly participate to the achievement of the EU and national climate policies and the objectives of the Green Deal and the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

WP6 focuses mainly on the regional/national level, actively connecting Communities of Practice (CoPs) and where applicable co-design innovation experiments (CoDIEs) to other relevant CS-AKIS actors during 4 national CS-AKIS workshops organised by National Coordinators (NCs) to share the development and results of the project. WP6 focuses also on the international level by organising 3 focus groups to learn how to best integrate CS-advisory needs with the AKIS policies and the AKIS strategies. Learnings and good examples from these events can be embedded at the national/regional level. WP7 focuses on connecting with AKIS actors, projects, networks and other initiatives on a European level.

This deliverable presents a 6-step approach and associated methods and tools to identify, activate and engage CS-AKIS actors in a co-creation process. The primary audience includes NCs and CSCs. They will be trained on how to implement the methods and tools at the national and – where appropriate – at the CoPs levels.

WP6 has developed a 6-step approach, which is a core component in the strategic planning of CSA project activities at the national level. It goes beyond just listing who the CS-AKIS actors are; it involves devising strategies to engage with them, align their interests with the project goals and manage the dynamic environment surrounding the CSA project. This approach includes an analysis to identify, categorise and understand the various actors who may be either impacted by or have an influence on the project. Understanding stakeholders' perspectives is crucial for developing tailored communication and engagement strategies. It helps in determining which stakeholders require more focused attention and which communication approaches will be most effective. It therefore links with the development of the communication and dissemination plans (under responsibility of WP8). Moreover, it plays a crucial role in risk management. By anticipating the potential reactions and impacts of various stakeholders, NCs, and the project partners in general, can proactively address concerns, mitigate risks, and leverage opportunities.

### Links with other work packages and tasks within the project:

The link with WP7 has already been described above. However, WP6 also interacts with the other work packages, both to receive input and to provide input.

WP1 has established the CSA survey and gained insights into the current state-of-play, context, gaps, drivers and barriers for CS advice in all partner countries. Outcomes from this task can be used by national partners as an input for the 6-step approach for stakeholder engagement outlined in this deliverable.

WP2 has designed the TTT for Climate Smart Coaches, during which the Network Analysis tools described in this Deliverable 6.1 were trained to the CSCs in all countries.

WP3 will create a portfolio of Multi-actor Innovation Projects (MIPs) by using input provided by the NCs. This list of MIPs can be used by national partners as an input for the 6-step approach for stakeholder engagement outlined in this deliverable.

Through a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning approach developed in WP4, learning outcomes will be harvested in a structured way and more easily shareable with the AKIS actors inside and outside the consortium and during AKIS meetings.

WP5 will analyse barriers and levers for farmers and advisors. The outcomes of this analysis, reported both in the focus group milestone report (ready by Month 12 – March 2024) and in Deliverable 5.1 Intermediary analysis of barriers and levers for farmers and advisors (ready by Month 36 – March 2026), will be available for use by NCs.

WP6 will collaborate closely with WP8 for national-level communication and dissemination. The CS--AKIS Communication and Engagement Plan will serve as input for the development and implementation of 27 national DEC plans, followed by annual action plans. They will be coordinated by NCs who will receive training to monitor communication activities and to utilize different networks, including national CS-AKIS actors, CAP Networks, partners or third-party social media channels.



## 3 What is AKIS?

### 3.1 Definition of AKIS

Under the EU Regulation relating to the CAP 2023- 2027, Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS) is defined as “the combined organisation and knowledge flows between persons, organisations and institutions who use and produce knowledge for agriculture and interrelated fields” (*Regulation (EU) 2021/2115, article 3 (9)*).

AKIS encompass all agricultural and other actors from interrelated fields and organisations (farmers/foresters, farmers’ and foresters’ organisations and cooperatives, advisors, researchers, trainers, rural entrepreneurs, non-governmental organisations (NGO), public authorities, etc.) that generate, share, and use knowledge and innovation for agriculture and interrelated fields: rural areas, value chains, landscape, environment, climate, biodiversity, consumers and citizens, food and non-food systems including transformation and distribution chains, etc.<sup>1</sup>

Within the i2connect project<sup>2</sup>, AKIS country reports were created for almost all Members States. These reports provide a comprehensive overview of the AKIS and of the predominant agricultural and forestry advisory services on national and – if applicable – on regional levels for the year 2020. They will be updated by the end of 2024. They can be found on <https://i2connect-h2020.eu/resources/akis-country-reports/>.

In the new CAP (2023-2027), farm advisors are considered key factors for sharing new knowledge and ideas as an integral part of a stronger AKIS and contributing to the development of innovation projects and the dissemination of their results<sup>3</sup>. To have an impact on the transition to more climate smart farming systems, advisors thus play an indispensable role in developing and sharing climate smart innovations and good practices between peers and with farmers.

### 3.2 CS-AKIS

The CSA Grant Agreement says: “Climate Smart Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (CS-AKIS) is a system of actors, stakeholders and organisations at regional, national or EU level who interact in support of mutual learning, to generate, share, and use climate smart knowledge and information.”

The CSA project is based upon the multi-actor approach, which is a key principle in EIP-AGRI and Horizon Europe. The underlying idea is that solutions and innovations for the most challenging problems, such as climate change, require the cooperation and collective learning of all relevant actors sharing this complex problem. Those actors are often situated within an AKIS, linking people and institutions engaged in mutual learning and who together generate, share, and use agricultural technology, knowledge and information. CSA focuses on the crucial role of advisors in the development and dissemination of climate-smart innovations in the wider agri-system.

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission (2021): [Tool 8.1. Tool for the CAP CCO: modernisation, AKIS, digital strategy](#)

<sup>2</sup> i2connect is a 5-year H2020 funded project (2019-2024) focused on enhancing the competencies of advisors who will support and facilitate interactive innovation processes.

<sup>3</sup> [https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/cap-overview/cap-2023-27\\_en](https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/cap-overview/cap-2023-27_en)

During **4 national co-creation CS-AKIS meetings**, organised by NCs in their respective partner countries and **linked to each CoP wave**, connections will be made with other CS-AKIS actors:

- to identify challenges, best practices, and solutions needed for CS-AKIS
- to collect input on potential cooperation and exchange activities to foster a better CS-AKIS

The active engagement and empowerment of CS-AKIS actors during these national CS-AKIS meetings and potential other activities will:

- further strengthen the advisor's capacity in providing CS advice and supporting farmers in their systemic transition.
- stimulate knowledge exchange out-scaling of the project outcomes in support of CS-AS
- contribute to the embedding of the CSA network and project outcomes in local AKISs, which will support network sustainability after the end of the project

This deliverable provide a structured 6-step approach to identify and engage the key CS-AKIS actors.

## 4 CS-AKIS Activation

A structured approach to developing a coherent CS-AKIS Actors Communication and Engagement Plan is crucial for leveraging the potential of climate smart advising and climate smart farming in addressing the impacts of climate change on agriculture. To achieve this objective, we have devised a 6-steps approach, as illustrated in Figure 1 and elaborated further in subsequent subchapters. Some steps include descriptions of recommended tools tailored for use by the CSA partners.

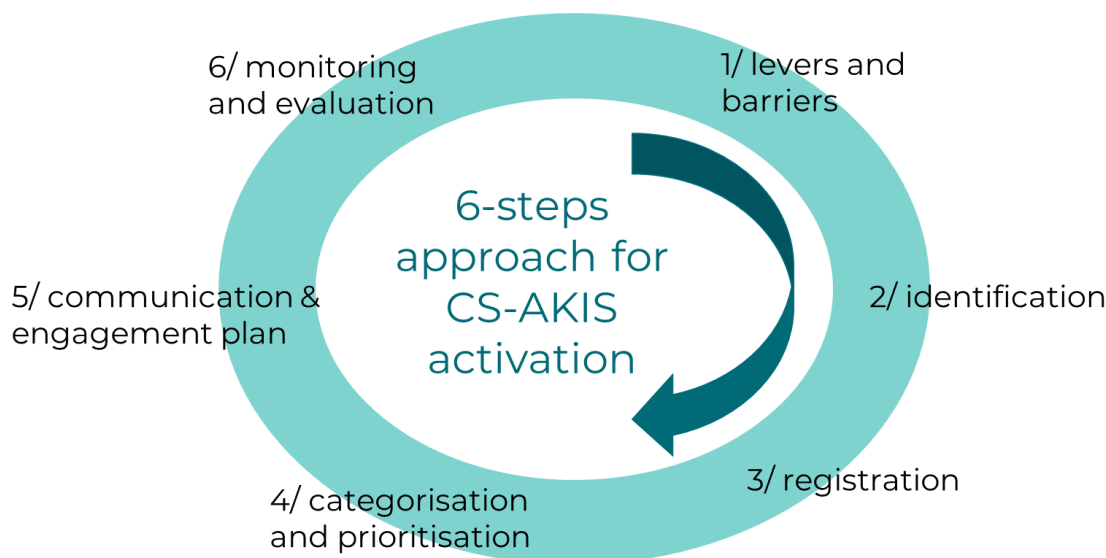


Figure 1: 6-steps approach for activating and engaging CS-AKIS actors

A first draft of the national CS-AKIS Actors Communication and Engagement Plan will be developed during the first annual national meeting (January-March 2025) and subsequently refined or adjusted during subsequent annual national meetings. **NCs will receive training on how to implement this 6-steps approach and how to utilize the associated tools and methods on their national level.** Two online training events will be scheduled.

### 4.1 Analysis of levers and barriers

Before identifying the CS-AKIS actors, a careful analysis of the current climate change mitigation and adaptation landscape in agriculture should be carried out. Partner countries will need to identify levers or opportunities for integrating climate smart advising and climate smart farming practices. Additionally, they should address barriers such as policy constraints, financial limitations, knowledge gaps, etc., which may hinder the adoption and implementation of climate smart advising and climate smart farming practices. What are the external factors that should be taken into account? What factors impact the enabling environment?

This analysis has a strong link to Task 5.1 Analysis of barriers and levers for farmers and advisors. Within this task, information will be collected in focus groups discussions on levers and barriers for changing farming and advisory practices. Results will be presented in the focus group milestone report M39 Collecting data on barriers and levers for farmers and advisors (ready by Month 12 – March 2024) and in Deliverable 5.1 Intermediary analysis of barriers and levers for farmers and advisors (ready by Month 36 – March 2026 ). Furthermore, the country reports developed as part of Deliverable 1.1 (State-of-play, gaps, barriers and drivers of CS-advisory services across the EU) also provide interesting insights on barriers and drivers for CS-advice.

A tool that can be used for identifying and evaluating the factors that may affect CS advice and CS farming in the present and in the future is the PESTLE analysis tool (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental).

## TOOL: PESTLE framework

Due to the complexity of the external environment, the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental (PESTLE) framework can be a helpful tool for structuring external factors that may have an impact on CS advising and CS farming. It focuses on identifying key external elements - political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental - that may influence desired outcomes. Recognising these factors is crucial as they can significantly impact CS practices, over which there is little control. With a careful analysis of these factors, it is possible to take action to avoid potential pitfalls and, on the other hand, exploit new opportunities.

By conducting the analysis, elements are identified that provide a clearer view of such factors and conditions that may affect CS practices. Knowing them helps to identify and select the conditions that need to be met in order to achieve your objectives, including the stakeholders to be involved (Step 2 of the CS-AKIS plan).

Table 1 shows a table that can be used for analysing and structuring levers and barriers. Under each of the six categories (PESTLE), partner countries can list the specific factors that they identified as relevant for their specific situation. Some barriers that were mentioned in the CSA proposal text are already listed as examples. The CSA country reports (especially section 4.5) can also serve as valuable inspiration.

The outcomes of this exercise will provide input for the Network Analysis in Step 2.

<b>P</b> Political	<b>E</b> Economical	<b>S</b> Social	<b>T</b> Technological	<b>L</b> Legal	<b>E</b> Environmental
Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political delays in implementation of proposed climate strategies</li> <li>Funding measures</li> <li>Bureaucracy</li> </ul>	Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost of implementing CS practices and technologies</li> <li>Market opportunities for CS products or services (carbon markets, eco-certification schemes)</li> </ul>	Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fragmented AKIS</li> <li>Poor awareness of climate change</li> <li>Public opinion</li> </ul>	Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uncertainty regarding what are effective climate smart practices</li> <li>Availability and adoption of climate-smart technologies and innovations in agriculture</li> </ul>	Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permits and other regulatory frameworks</li> </ul>	Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agriculture and food related crises may steer priorities away from climate change actions</li> </ul>

Table 1: PESTLE framework, including some CSA related examples

## 4.2 Identifying CS-AKIS actors

Once the results of the levers and barriers analysis are specified, it becomes easier to identify and map CS-AKIS actors who are likely to have an impact on or be impacted by CS practices or the operation of the CoPs.

Identifying CS-AKIS actors involves recognizing individuals, organisations or institutions that actively engage in practices, research, or policies aimed at promoting climate smart farming. Who needs to be activated? Which actors can actively contribute or have an impact on your CoP’s activities?

We therefore use the Network Analysis tool<sup>4</sup> from the i2connect project.

### TOOL: Network Analysis

The Network Analysis tool offers a visual representation that facilitates the identification of diverse stakeholders essential for the successful implementation of an initiative. Who are the interested parties, who stands to gain from the initiative, who do you have to take into account and who else is involved?

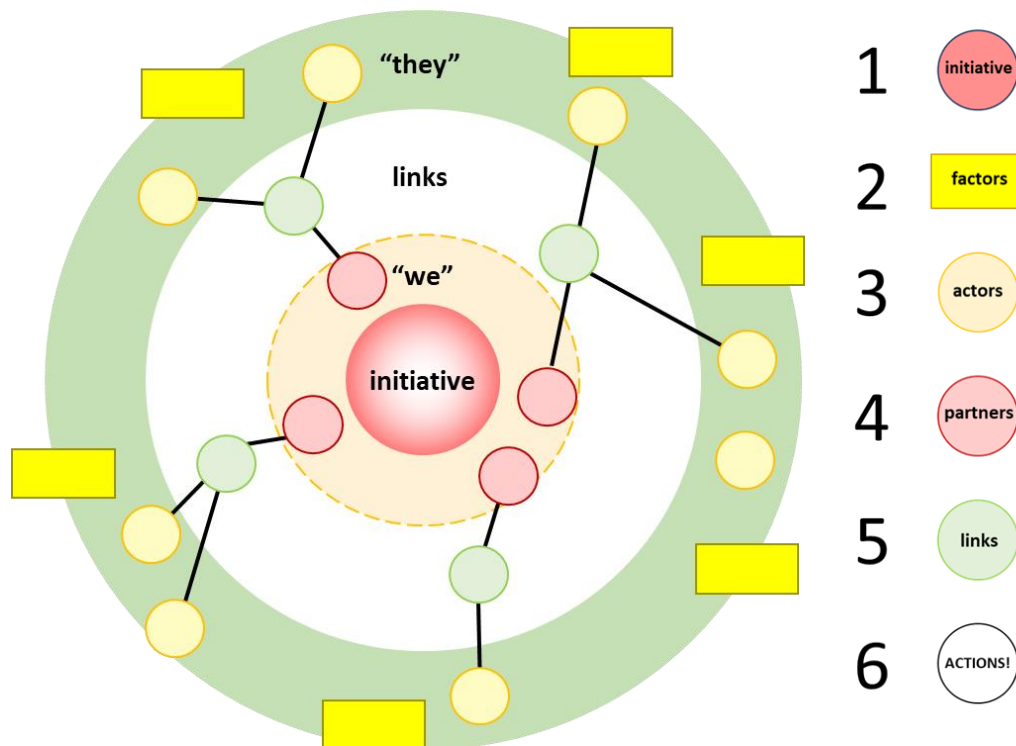


Figure 2: Visualisation of a network

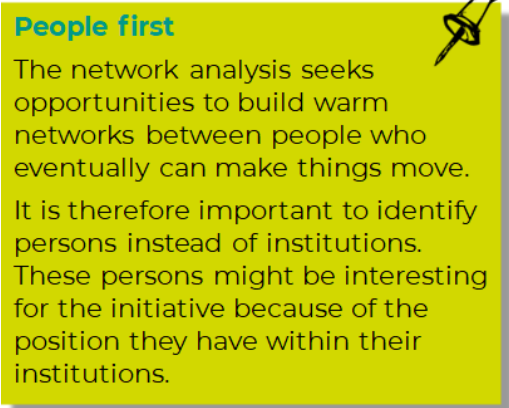
1. The Network Analysis tool starts with defining the **initiative**. What is it intrinsically about, what are we trying to achieve? **The initiative in ClimateSmartAdvisors for this exercise is “CS advising and CS farming in their country”.**

<sup>4</sup> [i2connect-h2020.eu/resources/learning-platform/](http://i2connect-h2020.eu/resources/learning-platform/)

2. In a circle drawn on a large sheet, the **factors** that are crucial for the success of CS farming, CS advising or CoP's activities (e.g. funding, regulation, expertise, public opinion) should be listed. For this the outcomes of the PESTLE analysis (Step 1) can be used.
3. Additionally, alongside these factors, the relevant **actors** required to manage each of them (e.g., end-users, regulatory authorities, knowledge institutions, journalists) are recorded. Those actors can actively contribute or have an impact on CS farming, CS advising or CoP's activities.

They can be either **suppliers**, providing essential building blocks such as finance and expertise or **users** who benefit from the initiative. Who should be involved? Who may be either impacted by or have an influence on the project? Whose potential reactions should be anticipated? It is important to identify individuals rather than institutions, as people have the ability to drive progress.

#### People first



The network analysis seeks opportunities to build warm networks between people who eventually can make things move.

It is therefore important to identify persons instead of institutions. These persons might be interesting for the initiative because of the position they have within their institutions.

4. **Partners** or initiators of the initiative are grouped around the initiative. They feel ownership towards the initiative, they feel responsible for bringing the initiative further: NC, CSCs, CSAs, other partners.
5. Finally, the participants look for **links**: people who can provide access to the actors. These individuals may not actually be involved in the initiative (yet). However, they are in a position to provide a useful service. Who can make connections? Which connections should be improved?

When conducting this Network Analysis, the AKIS country reports developed within the i2connect project can serve as valuable inspiration and support for the discussion.

This Network Analysis was introduced during the online training session for the National Coordinators (NCs) on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024 in preparation for the national kick-off meetings scheduled for February 2024. Detailed guidelines for this session were provided and the Network Analysis part can be found in Annex A.

Additionally, the Network Analysis will be covered in the train-the-trainer (TTT) sessions for Climate Smart Coaches (CSCs) in Dublin, Ireland (March 2024).

## 4.3 Registering CS-AKIS actors

After identifying the pertinent CS-AKIS actors, relevant information about each identified CS-AKIS actor, such as their name, organisation, email address, areas of expertise or interest, and their role within or in relation to CS farming or the agricultural sector needs to be gathered.

Contact details can be efficiently managed using tools like Excel. Excel is a powerful tool due to its spreadsheet format, which allows organising, storing and manipulating data in rows and columns. Excel also allows to sort and filter data based on specific criteria. This feature can be handy for organising contacts alphabetically by name, filtering contacts by organisation or location, or any other criteria.

When registering stakeholders, NCs or CSCs need to consider their data protection and ensure compliance with regulations such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Main guidelines to take into account when registering contact details:

- In order to comply with the data minimisation principle (limit the collection and processing of data to what is necessary for the purposes specified), it is essential to form a clear idea about the specific data that is required for engaging CS-AKIS actors.
- Contact details in the database will not be made publicly available. They will not be shared with third parties, but only used for serving stakeholder engagement in the CSA project.

## 4.4 Categorising and prioritising CS-AKIS actors

Stakeholder categorisation is necessary for managing their engagement. Stakeholder engagement is a time-consuming activity, and stakeholders differ in terms of the role and the influence they may have on the project's success. Therefore, it is essential to prioritise some groups over others.

An effective tool for prioritising stakeholders or stakeholder groups is the Stakeholder Analysis Matrix (Mendelow's matrix<sup>5</sup>). It analyses stakeholders according to two main characteristics: their interest in the project and their influence on the project outcomes. As a result, four different priority groups will emerge: (1) key stakeholders, (2) influencers, (3) interested stakeholders and (4) passive stakeholders.

This tool was successfully tested by CSA partners ProAgria, Consulai and Boerenbond Projects during the joint ATTRACTISS<sup>6</sup>-ClimateSmartAdvisors workshop at the EUFRAS General Assembly meeting in Helsinki, Finland (27<sup>th</sup> February 2024). The participants' group consisted of about 35 representatives of European agricultural and advisory services. See Annex B for the template that was used and some impressions of the workshop.

### **TOOL: Stakeholder Analysis Matrix**

A Stakeholder Analysis Matrix helps categorising stakeholders based on their interest and influence (or power) in an initiative:

- Interest refers to the degree of involvement or concern that a stakeholder has in the initiative.
- Influence refers to the ability to make decisions or allocate resources that affect the initiative.

Member States can plot their CS-AKIS actors – as identified by the Network Analysis tool - on the matrix (Table 2). This exercise entails an assessment of interests, levels of influence, and the potential impact each CS-AKIS actor may have on CS advising and CS farming. Which of the CS-AKIS actors are selected most and least influential? Which CS-AKIS actors are found important but do not yet interact with the CS advisors? By doing this, it becomes visible who are the most important and influential ones, and who are the least relevant or interested ones.

Some example questions are included in this table to clarify the exercise. And like with the PESTLE analysis, the CSA country reports (particularly section 4.5) can also serve as valuable inspiration.

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<sup>5</sup> Mendelow A. Stakeholder Mapping. *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Information Systems*. Plenum Publishers: Cambridge, MA; 1991.

<sup>6</sup> ATTRACTISS– AcTivate and TRigger ACTors to deepen the function of Innovation Support Services – is a 6-year Horizon Europe funded project (2022-2028). Its main goal is to improve competencies, approaches, instruments & governance for Innovation Support Services (ISS).

		<b>HIGH INFLUENCE</b>			
<b>LOW INTEREST</b>	<p><b>INFLUENCERS actors</b></p> <p>Who are the individuals or organisations with significant influence or expertise in climate smart farming? In promoting sustainable practices, advocating for policy changes, or raising awareness?</p>	<p><b>KEY actors</b></p> <p>Who is fully and actively involved and has a decisive interest and influence regarding climate adaptation and mitigation strategies? Who is actively involved in adopting and promoting climate smart techniques?</p>			
	<p><b>PASSIVE actors</b></p> <p>Who has little interest in climate smart actions? Are there (agricultural) actors that have been slow to respond to climate change impacts?</p>	<p><b>INTERESTED actors</b></p> <p>Who needs to be involved to have a high influence in how climate smart farming is implemented in their ecosystem?</p>	<b>HIGH INTEREST</b>		
		<b>LOW INFLUENCE</b>			

Table 2: CSA Stakeholder Analysis Matrix – plotting CS-AKIS actors

Once the CS-AKIS actors have been categorised into priority groups, the matrix enables the definition of the objective and the degree of interaction with each group. Special attention must be paid to those CS-AKIS actors who belong to the first two groups, i.e. influencers and key actors.

		<b>HIGH INFLUENCE</b>			
<b>LOW INTEREST</b>	<p><b>INFLUENCERS actors</b></p> <p>Objective: To keep this group’s needs satisfied. Efforts need to be made to ensure that they become key stakeholders. Communication actions stressing the project’s benefits and raising curiosity.</p>	<p><b>KEY actors</b></p> <p>Objective: to collaborate with this group. Engage at the earliest possibility. Continuous communication built by sending project updates, consulting their opinions, inviting them to events, etc.</p>			
	<p><b>PASSIVE actors</b></p> <p>Objective: to monitor this group with minimum effort. No specific actions need to be taken to address this group. Might be informed through general communication actions of the project (e.g., website, newsletter).</p>	<p><b>INTERESTED actors</b></p> <p>Objective: to keep this group informed. Continuous communication to inform them about project progress, actions, and results. Potential consultation regarding areas of stakeholder interest (especially regarding specific questions).</p>	<b>HIGH INTEREST</b>		
		<b>LOW INFLUENCE</b>			

Table 3: CSA Stakeholder Analysis Matrix – objective and degree of interaction



## 4.5 CS-AKIS Actors Communication and Engagement Plan

After mapping and prioritising the CS-AKIS actors, the next stage is to devise the CS-AKIS Actors Communication and Engagement plan. This plan is designed as a strategic document that will facilitate the management of CS-AKIS actors engagement throughout the lifespan of the project.

A comprehensive plan needs to outline all the specific engagement activities tailored to each stakeholder group and the communication channels for effectively reaching them. Engagement activities serve a dual purpose: to effectively inform local and national CS-AKIS actors about the project and its results, and to encourage and improve their active participation in the project's endeavours.

Because the nature of involvement is not the same for each priority group, different strategies and media tools must be adopted to reach and engage them. For example, for key actors, only targeting them with newsletters will be insufficient and other strategies should be added and implemented to keep them on track, such as inviting them for demo events or workshops. Conversely, for passive actors, providing info on the project via a newsletter might be adequate. The greater the stakeholder's interest and influence or power, the greater the interaction should be. Table 4 provides some examples for inspiration (including some outcomes of the ATTRACTISS-CSA workshop at the EUFRAS General Assembly meeting, February 2024 – ANNEX B).

Communication and dissemination tools need to be in line with CSA's communication strategy (D8.1 Draft dissemination, exploitation and communication plan at EU & national levels).

CS-AKIS actor profile	Engagement activities	Communication channels
<b>INFLUENCERS actors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National AKIS meeting</li> <li>• Demo activities</li> <li>• Dissemination of project results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal contact; customised communication</li> </ul>
<b>KEY actors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National AKIS meeting</li> <li>• Demo activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal contact</li> </ul>
<b>PASSIVE actors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissemination of project results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner organisation's website</li> <li>• Newsletter</li> </ul>
<b>INTERESTED actors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National AKIS meeting</li> <li>• Dissemination of project results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner organisation's website</li> <li>• Newsletter</li> </ul>

Table 4: CS-AKIS Actors Communication and Engagement Plan

After listing engagement activities and communication channels, it is time to focus on planning the activities. This will be part of the national DEC plans (WP8) that each partner country will need to formulate on a yearly basis, aligned with the project activities for that respective year. Scheduling activities on a timeline will facilitate their timely implementation and allow for appropriate priority to be given to each CS-AKIS actors group to be contacted and engaged, in line with the project schedule and deadlines.

Partners will connect with their national CAP Networks to increase communication in the national AKIS and to advertise on the regular events that will take place along the project.

## 4.6 Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of the CS-AKIS Actors Communication and Engagement Plan is crucial to ensure that the plan is effective in achieving its objectives and meeting the needs of the partners and the CS-AKIS actors involved. Some steps and considerations for monitoring and evaluating the plan are:

- Have the right stakeholders been reached?
- Does the prioritisation of stakeholders need to be modified?
- Are there new external factors to consider?
- Does the plan need to be revised?

WP8 has designed templates to monitor the implementation progress and success of the national DEC plans (Deliverable 8.1).

# ANNEX A: GUIDELINES NATIONAL KICK-OFF MEETINGS: STAKEHOLDER MAPPING EXERCISE

The text below is part of the guidelines for NCs as part of their online training on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

## Objective of the session

The stakeholder mapping exercise is a core component in the strategic planning of the CSA project activities at the national level. This exercise involves an analysis to **identify, categorise and understand the various actors who may be either impacted by or have an influence on the project**. This critical process entails an assessment of interests, levels of influence, and the potential impact each stakeholder may have on the project's trajectory and outcomes at national level.

Stakeholder mapping is also a strategic tool for managing the CSA project more effectively. Understanding stakeholders' perspectives is pivotal for developing **tailored communication and engagement strategies**. It helps in determining which stakeholders require more focused attention and which communication approaches will be most effective. Furthermore, this exercise plays a crucial role in **risk management**. By anticipating the potential reactions and impacts of various stakeholders, NCs, and the project partners in general, can proactively address concerns, mitigate risks, and leverage opportunities. Prioritizing stakeholder engagement based on their influence and interest ensures that the project can navigate the complex web of relationships and dependencies effectively. Thus, **stakeholder mapping is not just about understanding who the stakeholders are, but also about strategizing how to engage with them, align their interests with the project goals, and manage the dynamic socio-political environment surrounding the ClimateSmartAdvisors project**.

This exercise could also involve **the identification of CS advisors**. Especially when there is not yet a clear view of who these CSAs are and for those CSCs who don't have concrete people in mind yet.

## Time needed

1 hour

## Materials and requirements:

- Introductory presentation by WP6, to translate if required (SharePoint: [4 Session stakeholder mapping](#))
- AKIS country report (developed in i2connect project): <https://i2connect-h2020.eu/resources/akis-country-reports/> - slides included in the supporting ppt presentation (SharePoint: [4 Session stakeholder mapping AKIS country reports](#))
- CSA country reports, section 4.5 - included in the ppt presentation (also on [SharePoint](#))
- Template for reporting [4 Session stakeholder mapping reporting template](#)
- Big papers, coloured post-its, pens

### Outline of the activity:

Timing	Activity	Requirements
15'	Introduction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is AKIS?</li> <li>• Objective and guidelines of the session</li> </ul>	Presentation, provided by WP6 (to translate if required)
30'	Group work: stakeholder mapping exercise of CS-AKIS actors + identification of potential CS advisors (using the "Network Analysis" tool) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WHO should be involved? (both internal and external)</li> <li>• HOW to reach other AKIS actors?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• i2connect AKIS country report</li> <li>• CSA country report</li> <li>• Guiding questions (provided by WP6)</li> <li>• Big papers, coloured post-its, pens</li> </ul>
15'	Formulation of main action points	

### Reporting on the output of the activity

To upload on to the folder "national kick off meeting" in your country folder on [SharePoint](#).

- Picture of the diagram (later on we will provide also a digital version)
- Formulation of minimum 3 action points on how to reach other AKIS actors (and also potential CSAs in case they hadn't been selected yet): template provided on SharePoint ([4 Session stakeholder mapping reporting template](#))

### Detailed script

#### 15' Introduction

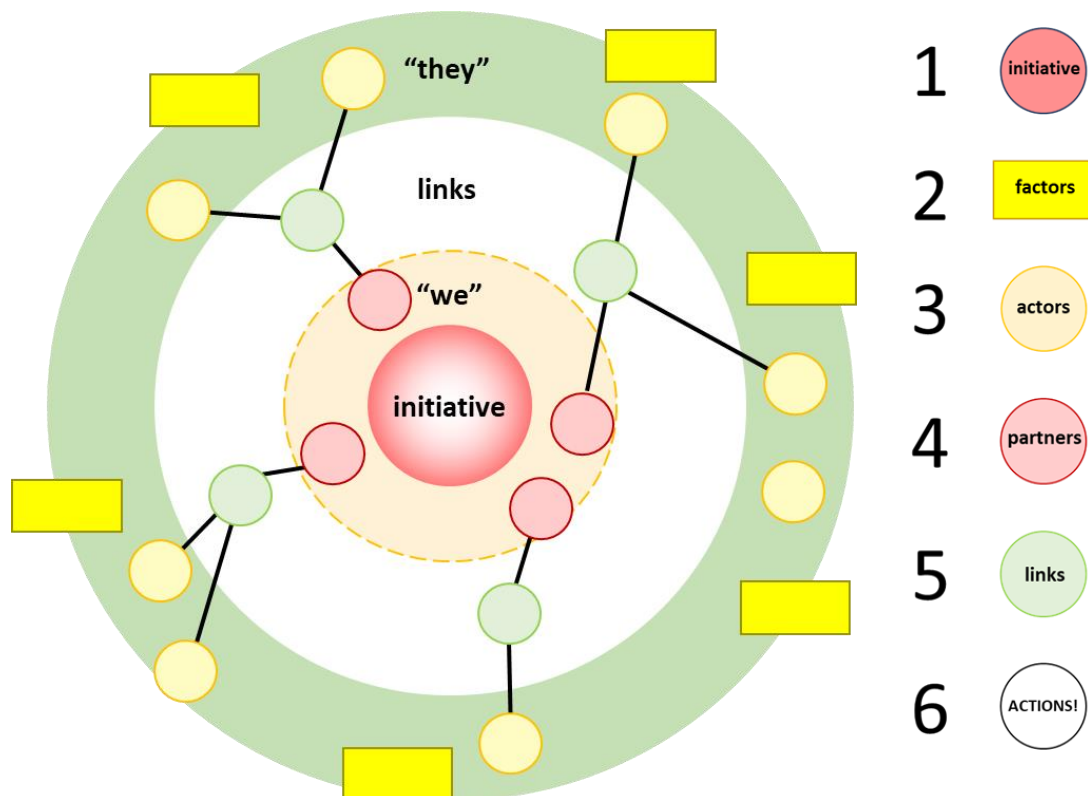
A presentation is provided by WP6: *Session\_stakeholder mapping.pptx*

This presentation can be translated by the partner organisation in local language.

- Objective of the session
- Outline of the session
- What is AKIS?
- AKIS in your country - based on the i2connect outcomes (select the slide for your country in the presentation *Session\_stakeholder mapping\_AKIS country reports.pptx*)
- Outcomes of the CSA survey – Chapter 4.5 (copy the results of your country report Chapter 4.5 in the presentation)
- Stakeholder mapping exercise: guidelines and discussion questions

#### 30' Group work: stakeholder mapping exercise of CS-AKIS actors + identification of potential CS advisors, using the Network Analysis tool

For this mapping exercise, we use the Network Analysis tool.



The participants of the kick-off meeting start with defining the **initiative**. What is it intrinsically about, what are we trying to achieve? For this kick-off meeting we do not go into detail in the CS-AKIS actors of the specific thematic or regional CoPs of the different waves, but focus rather on the CS activities in your country and the functioning of your CoPs in general.

Who are the interested parties, who stands to gain from the initiative, who do you have to take into account and who else is involved? In a circle on a large sheet, the participants identify all the **factors** that are important for the success of the CS activities and the functioning of the CoPs in general (e.g. funding, regulation, expertise, public opinion), along with the **actors** needed to manage each of them (e.g. end-users, regulatory authorities, knowledge institutions, journalists). Those actors can actively contribute or have an impact on your CoP's activities.

Those actors can be i) suppliers who provide building blocks (such as finance and expertise) or ii) users (for whom the initiative is useful).

In case there is not yet a clear view of who the CS advisors are or for those CSCs who don't have concrete people in mind yet, this exercise could also involve the **identification of CS advisors**.

Each factor and actor (suppliers, users, potential CS advisors) are written on a separated coloured post-it note and placed on the circle.

**Partners** or initiators of the initiative are grouped around it. They feel ownership towards the initiative, they feel responsible for bringing the initiative further: NC, CSCs, other partners.

Finally, the participants look for **links**: people who can provide access to the actors. These individuals may not actually be involved in the initiative (yet). However, they are in a position to provide a useful service.

### Inspiration and discussion questions:

Participants will have their AKIS country report available (included in the presentation). This can be used as inspiration and support for the discussion.

They have also the results of Chapter 4.5 of their country report available (included in the presentation). Some reflection questions regarding these survey results can be used when performing the exercise:

- Which of the stakeholders are selected most and least important?
- Which stakeholders are found important but do not interact yet with the advisors?
- How could the national activities stimulate the interaction?

Guiding questions for the network analysis (as described above):

- INITIATIVE: CSA project or thematic/regional CoP?
- ACTORS: Who should be involved? Who may be either impacted by or have an influence on the project? Whose potential reactions should be anticipated?
- CSAs: Which potential CS advisors can be identified?
- LINKS: Who can make connections? Which connections should be improved?

### 15' Reporting

To upload on SharePoint:

- Picture of the diagram (later on we will provide also a digital version)
- Formulation of minimum 3 action points on how to reach other AKIS actors (and also potential CSAs in case they hadn't been selected yet): template provided on SharePoint

#### People first

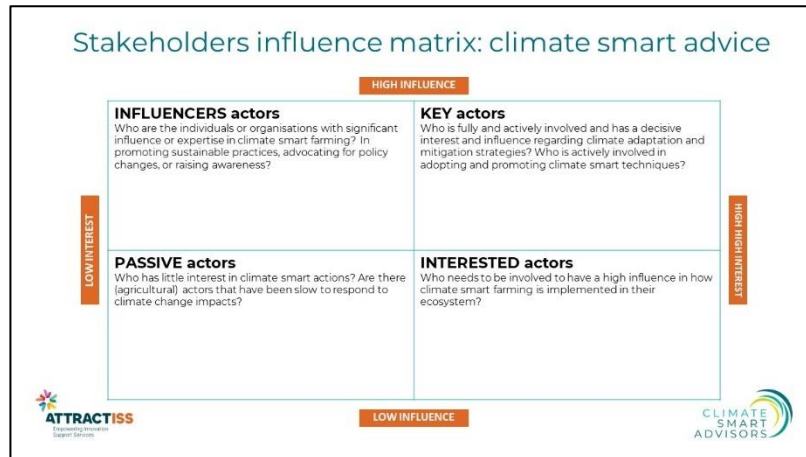
The network analysis seeks opportunities to build warm networks between people who eventually can make things move.

It is therefore important to identify persons instead of institutions. These persons might be interesting for the initiative because of the position they have within their institutions.



# ANNEX B: ATTRACTISS-CSA WORKSHOP

During the joint ATTRACTISS-CSA workshop at the EUFRAS General Assembly meeting in February 2024, CSA partners ProAgria, Consulai and Boerenbond Projects provided brief presentations on both projects and identified common grounds between the two projects. After that, 2 working sessions were organised. A first session focused on the essential skills required for advisors involved in innovation support and providing climate-smart advice. A second session was dedicated to mapping and categorising AKIS actors, as well as discussing questions related to engaging these actors:



Based on your experience, what communication channels have proven most effective for engaging relevant actors?

Logos: ATTRACTISS (Engineering Innovation Support Services) and CLIMATE SMART ADVISORS.

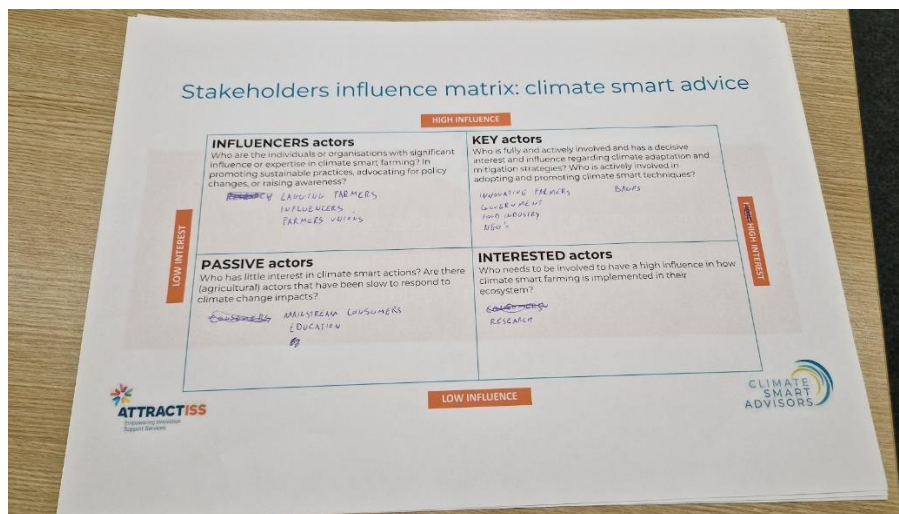
What are some good practices of involvement that you have experienced related to innovation support or climate-smart advice that you particularly appreciated? Or not?

Logos: ATTRACTISS (Engineering Innovation Support Services) and CLIMATE SMART ADVISORS.

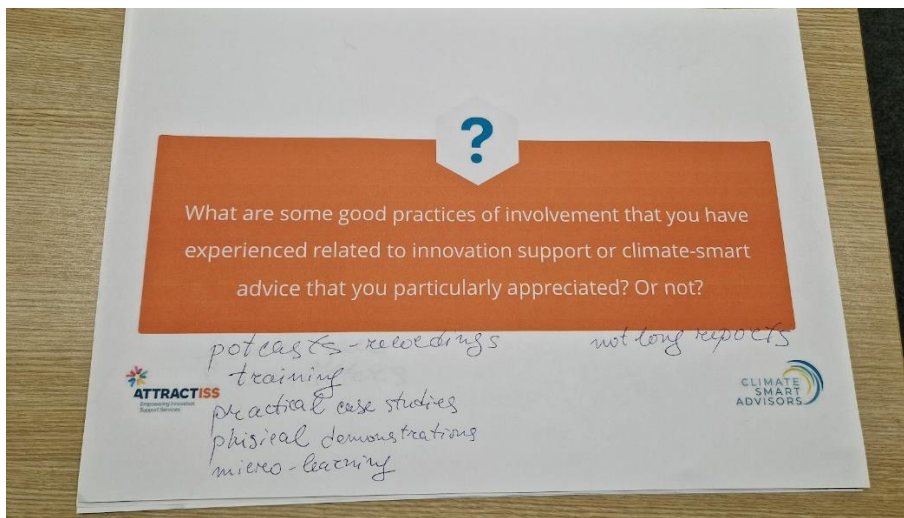
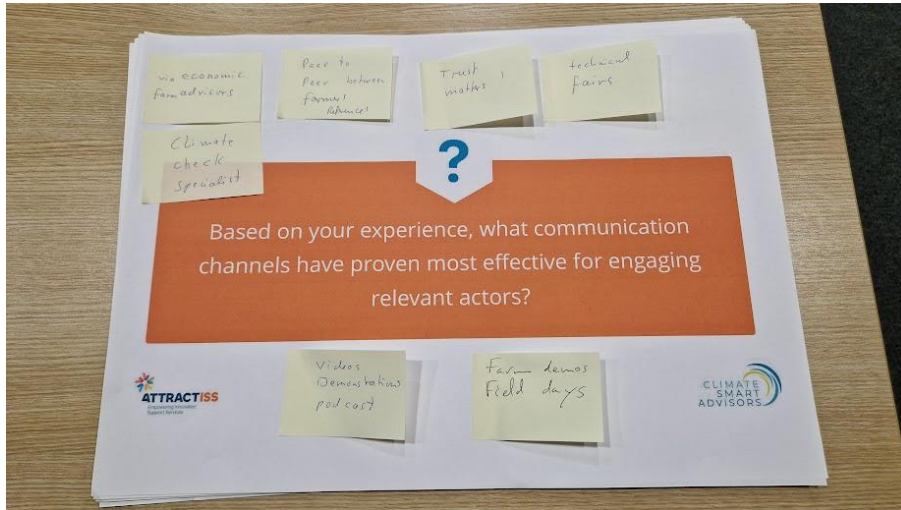
## Outcomes of this second session:

- Stakeholder influence matrix:
  - Influencer actors: lagging farmers, farmers unions
  - Key actors: innovative farmers, government, food industry, NGOs
  - Passive actors: mainstream consumers, education
  - Interested actors: research
- Communication channels that have been proven most effective for engaging actors:
  - Study groups
  - Personal contact
  - YouTube videos
  - Newsletters
  - Podcasts
  - Technical fairs
  - Demonstration activities and field days
- Good practices of involvement:
  - Demonstration activities
  - Presentation of results: visual information, economic measures, practical case studies

## Some impressions of this second session:











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