

Enabling the farm advisor community to prepare farmers for the digital age

Proposals should aim to collect best practice ICT applications and share them in a network of independent advisors. Proposals should be based on existing ICT advisory tools on biological, physical and economic processes that provide added value to current advisory techniques. Projects are furthermore expected to develop advisors' ability to support farmers on novel on-farm technologies (e.g. robots, internet of things (IoT) technologies, artificial intelligence), including the related costs and benefits and the role and position of farmers in a digital environment. Activities should ensure sufficient coverage of various cropping and livestock systems and farm sizes across all EU Member States. Activities should follow up on the key trends in digitisation of agriculture and make sure these are reflected in work on ICT advisory tools and the facilitation of farm-level uptake. Projects shall seek synergies with the national or regional EIP networks and EIP Operational Groups, and provide input to and coordinate their strategy with the SCAR-AKIS Strategic Working Group. Dedicated attention should be given to Member States where knowledge sharing attitudes and interconnectivity within the AKISs are still limited. Liaison should be made with concurring EU projects on agricultural digitisation.

Consortia should bring together public and private advisors that have day-to-day on-farm advisory experience, and may further include other relevant players such as farmers, farmers' organisations, etc. In order to achieve the objectives of the call, projects should have a minimum duration of four years and should fall under the concept of the multi-actor approach[[See definition of the 'multi-actor approach' in the introduction to this Work Programme part.]].

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU up to EUR 7 million would allow the areas to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

Digitisation represents a huge opportunity to leverage the information and day-to-day knowledge generation on farms. While the more technology savvy farmers may be

able to benefit from their data immediately, the majority of the EU's 12 million farmers will need support from intermediaries such as farm advisors to take up technologies and to make decisions on ICT use adapted to their specific farm context. The best way to motivate independent advisors to embrace the upcoming digital revolution is to build on tools that are already familiar to farmers and advisors. Rethinking the use of data within regional and national agricultural knowledge and innovation systems should be a top priority for existing advisory bodies, but awareness is often lacking. Many existing and new data flows could fulfil multiple uses and be brought to a higher level by improved ICT applications if supported by independent advisors. The challenge is to connect advisors in order to share ICT tools and create spill-overs across different regions on digital transformation processes. The future role of farm advisory services should include facilitating and supporting farmers in orienting themselves in the digital landscape.

A farm advisor community ready to actively use the possibilities of digital technologies and help farmers orient themselves in the new digital landscape. Projects will contribute to:

- networking farm advisors across the EU serving a systematic delivery of knowledge and resources to support digital innovation and making advisors able and eager to spread application of digital advisory tools;
- spill-over effects of digital tool infrastructures between agricultural advisors across Member States;
- developing new types of advisory activities with a focus on making farmers better able to handle involvement and investments in digital technologies.

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