

Contact details of the facilitator

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Summary of the pilot project (Max. 1600 characters)

(Including stakeholders, problem/challenge, approach, relevant links)

Széchenyi István University has more than 60 members in its [demonstration farm network](#) such as farmers, financial institutions, food industry enterprises, research institutes, organic farmers, large farms. In recent years, the openness and willingness to cooperate among the demofarms, the university and other regional AKIS actors has been declining.

To manage this challenge, we plan to set up pilot discussion groups (partly based on the university's demo farm network) where regional AKIS actors (researchers, advisors, chamber of agriculture, banking sector, agro-media) will have the opportunity to discuss challenges and to seek co-created answers. After creating a trustful atmosphere through interactive exercises, the facilitators will demonstrate the criteria for the embedding of innovations and participants will practice effective collaboration as a "living lab".

A demo farm event will be held at the end of April 2023, where we will inform demo farms and other AKIS players about the possibility and conduct a preliminary needs assessment. The main topic of the discussion groups will be the **identification of research directions based on farmers/market needs** (bottom up). The participants will "experience" the importance and significance of this through interactive exercises. We consider it decisive that researchers and university lecturers are also involved in the discussion group, so they are closer to the market, they can establish professional relationships of trust, and as a result, innovations will be integrated more effectively into practice.

We also plan to organise topic-specific discussions (e.g.: precision farming in crop production, beef farming, etc.), thus strengthening the exchange of experience between participants and even co-creation.

Motivation for this proposal to be selected as a pilot project (Max. 1000 characters)

Since 2000, the demonstration farm network of SZE has set a good example in the regional agricultural structure. The competences acquired in the i2connect give us the opportunity to further develop the cooperation and even raise it to a new level. An important element of the exchange and flow of information between regional AKIS members is the regular and interactive exchange of experiences.

Advisors who are aware of the i2connect mindset will be important players in the discussions. As a continuation of the pilot project, our goal would be for these advisors to create new discussion groups and to expand and strengthen the spread of interactive innovations. We will ask for regular feedback from the advisors and support them in the compilation and selection of the participants (AKIS members) and in the evaluation of the events.