

Austrian Chambers of Agriculture

Advisory Services & **Linkages with the national rural network**

7th NRN Meeting

15.03.2017, Ponta Delgada, Azores, Portugal



LK-Beratung

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Key facts – Agriculture in Austria

Overview

- **31 %** of area is **agricultural land**, **43 %** is forests
 - **2/3 of farms** located in Less Favoured Areas (LFA)
 - high **share of organic agriculture**: app. 20 % of UUA
- App. **160.000 farm holdings**
 - **55 %** part time holdings
 - High share of **small and medium farms**: **Ø 19,5 ha UUA**

→ **Overall goal of policy (and advisory work) is comprehensive agriculture**

- **2/3** of agricultural expenditure for 2nd pillar - **Rural development**
 - **Agri-Environment** (90 % of area) and **Mountain Farmers Program** (compensation for natural constraints) are key

Challenges & Consequences for advisory work & services

Diverse topography and **large variety of mainly small-scale farm types** that pursue different objectives & business models

- requires advisory service to cover a **wide range of topics**
- **farm-tailored, high-quality, professional and transparent** services required

→ **Focusing on the average farmer`s needs is insufficient**

Rapidly changing external conditions (markets, environm., technology, **policy & legal framework**, ...) require **fast adaptation of services**

- High dynamic on the advisory services / knowledge transfer sector
 - **↑ client needs – ↑ competition – ↓ public funding**

Austrian Agricultural Knowledge & Information System (www.pro-akis.eu)



Prospects for Farmers' Support: Advisory Services in European AKIS (PRO AKIS)



AUSTRIA

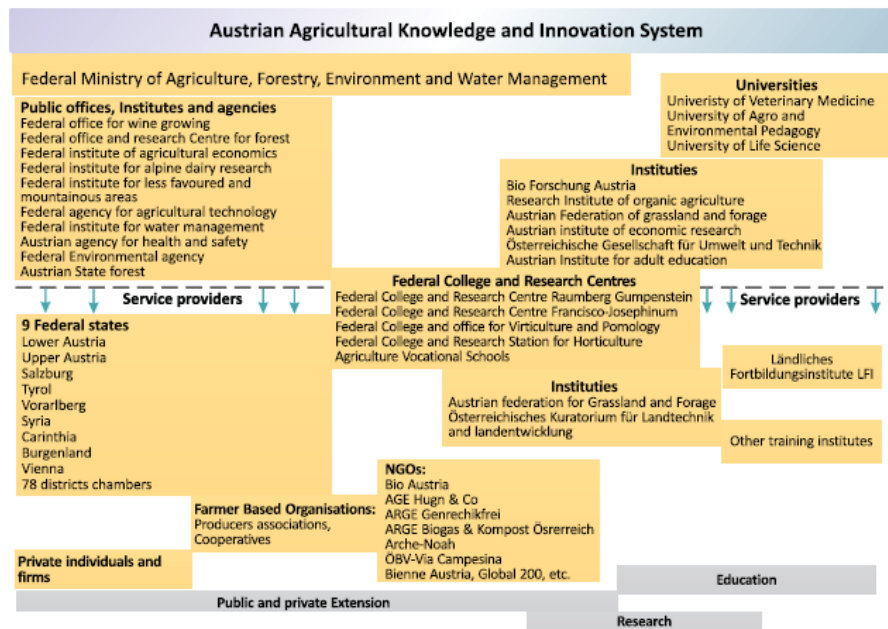
Main actors of AKIS:

- Ministry of Agriculture
- federal offices and agencies
- chambers of agriculture
- research institute, schools and NGOs
- private institutions and commercial organisations
- cooperatives - deliver services only in a very specific topics

Cooperation between AKIS actors:

- going on well but...
- transfer of information is rather slow
- only few organisations have direct contact with farmers (chambers of agriculture)
- however - some institutions are well connected and in some cases even integrated i.e. public research, education and extension bodies

AKIS DIAGRAM



Main supplier(s) of advisory services:

Chambers of agriculture (78% of total farmers' contacts with advisory organisations)

Main clients:

- large
- medium and
- small commercial farms

Main topics of advice:

- plant and animal production
- business diversification
- rural development
- environment and
- cross compliance

Main methods:

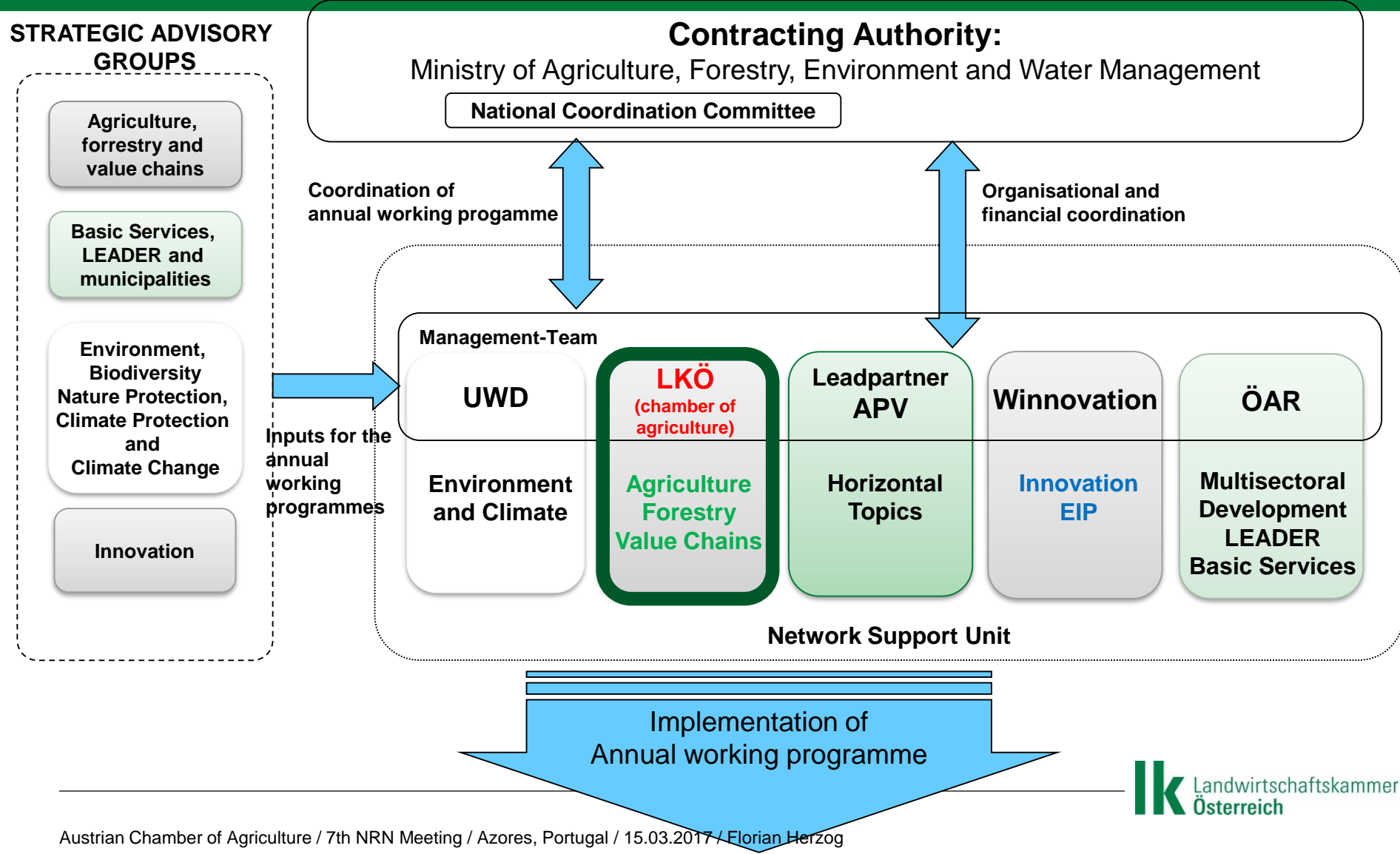
in general: individual methods, group and mass methods

Main sources of funding the advisory services:

1. Public funding constitutes the important share followed by membership contributions and fees;
2. Mixed-funding of advisory services prevails in Austria with both federal and regional governments providing financial assistance;
3. Most organisations depend on several sources of income - public subsidies, membership fees and chamber contributions, EU funding and income from the sale of services and products;
4. Basic services are generally free of charge;
5. Individual advices are directly paid for by the farmers.



Organizational structure of the Austrian Rural Network



Chambers of Agriculture

main tasks

- **Interest representation:** Represent the interests of agriculture and forestry in every respect and in all areas
- **Administrative tasks** (delegated by government to the regions)
 - e.g. formal processing of supportive measures
- **Training**
 - establishment of advanced training centers (Rural institute for further education www.lfi.at) for chamber members and employees of coops
- **Advisory Services**
 - Provide legal, economic, technical and social advice to those involved in agriculture and forestry
 - **official extension service**, institutionalized by federal law

Austrian Chamber of Agriculture Structure & organization of advisory system

Part of NRN =>



supra-regional advisory services
coordination; promote collaboration;
advisor trainings, product /material
development; projects; run QMS;
representation and networking;

**Austrian Chamber of Agriculture
Umbrella Organization**

9 Chambers of Agriculture in Federal States
Comittees, Consortiums, Advisory Council and Organisations

Regional advisory
services coordination, ...

Local and Regional offices of the Chambers of Agriculture

Provide legal, economic,
technical and social
advice to those involved in
agriculture and forestry
(institutionalised by
federal law)

FARMERS

**RURAL
ENTREPRENEURS**

**FOREST
OWNERS**

> **700 advisors**
> **70+ reg./local offices**

~ 190.000 Members (compulsory Membership)



LK Advisory Services www.lk-online.at comprehensive range of topics covered



- One-stop shop
- incl. areas of public interest and supporting policy priorities & initiatives

LK Advisory System

Costs of & Financing the advisory system

- **LK advisory system offers**
 - **affordable** (still largely free of charge)
 - and **independent** (no economic interest) advice!
- **Advisory Services is financed by:**
 - Membership fees (compulsory membership)
 - Public Funding
 - by Federal states (institutionalized as official agr. extension service by federal law)
 - cofinanced by Federal States, national, EU (**Rural Development Programme – EAFRD Art. 15**)
 - Fee-based advisory offers (<10 %)



Results

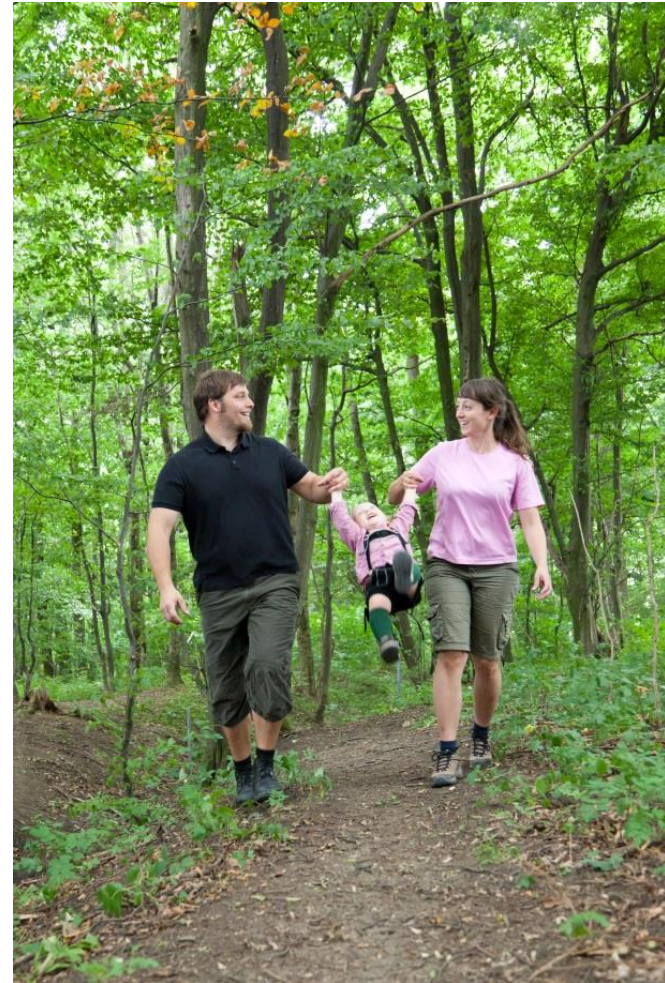
high customer satisfaction & broad coverage

Broad customer coverage

- **88% of farmers** reached in 2 yrs.
- **620k+ farm contacts / year**
(Ø 3,7/farm/year)
- **300k+ participants** with info, training
& education activities

Highly satisfied clients:

- Customer survey: Ø grade 1.6
- Best rated: staff competence



Success factors I

highly skilled & trained staff – technical, methodological and social competence-driven agricultural advisory system

- Advisory work intends to generate stimuli for agricultural development
- Only **technical & methodological** trained advisors can meet clients needs



focus on advisors skills

- Basic qualification and periodic training requirements defined
- Quality target: > **25 hrs./year**

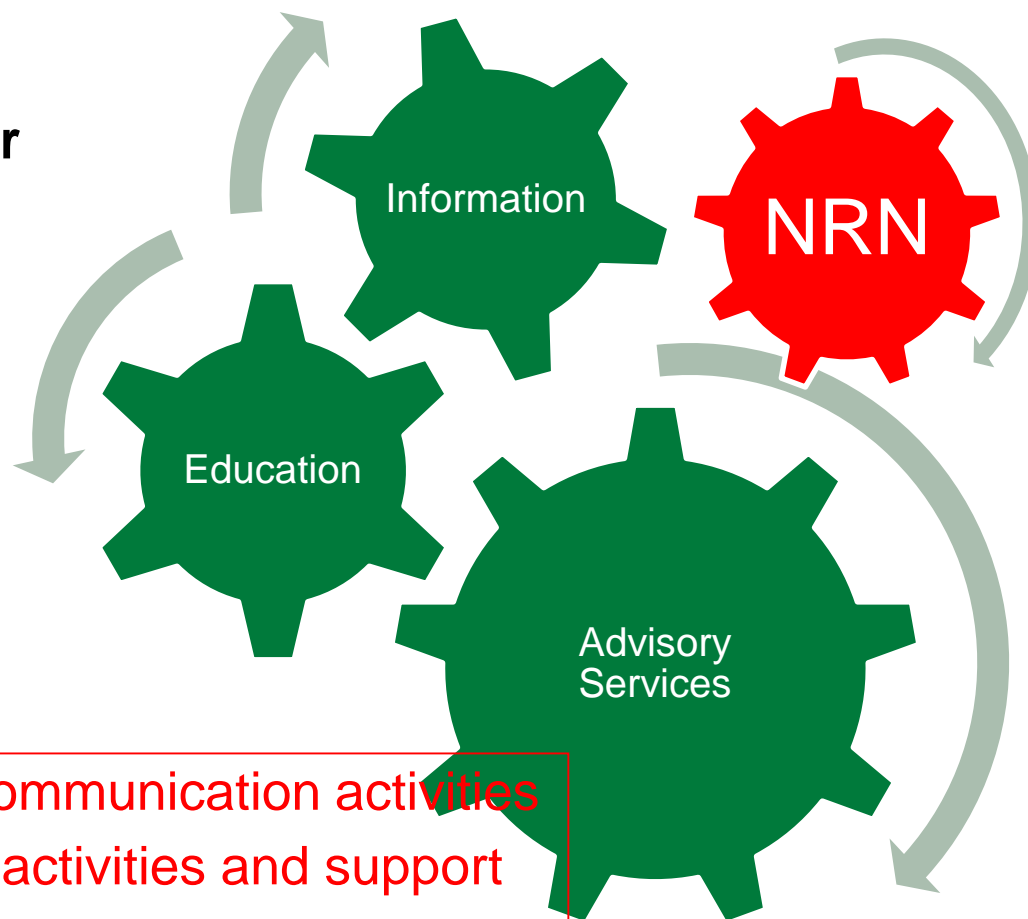
- NRNs activities & events provide excellent learning opportunities and deliver important input & fresh ideas

- LK experts provide inputs and support to NRN events

Success factors II

cross-linking: Advisory Services – Information – Training/Education

- **mix of methods as fundamental success factor**
- Best use of **synergies** and **cross connections!**
- **Intertwining** of advisory & education services



LK's Knowledge transfer & communication activities are coordinated with NRNs activities and support promotion & dissemination of NRN-activities & results

Success factor III

high quality services - effectively meeting farmers needs

Being close to farmers and their needs - geographically and personally!

- **70+ regional & local offices**

ISO 9001 **quality-certified advisory system is constantly evolving:**

- Direct communication & intense and systematic evaluation of farmers current and future needs



- LKs network and country-wide infrastructure is open to NRN
- Farming communities' needs directly fed into NRNs working prog

Linkages NRN – Advisory Services in Austria

Chamber (LK) is part of the NRN

- **LK offers expertise, network & direct access to farmers**
 - Farmers & Advisory Services demands are directly fed into NRNs work
 - support in planning & implementation of annual working program
 - Experts from chamber and its network as speakers and target group
 - Promotion & dissemination of NRNs work through LK-network
 - LK network multiplies efforts of NRN and vice versa
- **LK provides services NRN can not** (e.g. innovation promotion beyond EIP, events not covered in work progr., ...) and vice versa
- NRNs networking activities & events offer **fresh new ideas** and important input for advisory work (training opportunities for advisors)
- NRN platform to **broaden network** in other sectors & outside the mainstream/LK-network (e.g. ICT companies, NGOs, innovation support, ...)

Thank you for your attention!

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Rural Development, & Agricultural Support

4.2 Education, Advisory Services

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