



**Compatibility of Agricultural Management Practices and
Types of Farming in the EU to enhance Climate Change
Mitigation and Soil Health**

**Overview on current dissemination structures
at regional, national and EU levels**

D6.625

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The CATCH-C project aims at identifying and improving the farm compatibility of sustainable soil management practices for farm productivity, climate-change mitigation, and soil quality. The project is carried out by a consortium of 12 partners, led by Stichting Dienst Landbouwkundig Onderzoek (DLO), The Netherlands.

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Executive summary

The Catch-C project aims at identifying and improving the farm compatibility of sustainable soil management practices to enhance farm productivity, climate-change mitigation, and soil quality. After Analysis of the BMPs, it is crucial to disseminate the knowledge to farmers. An important link between science and practical application is extension service.

In Europe, agricultural extension has had a long tradition in most member states. Today extension services are organized very differently all over Europe. In order to organize an effective dissemination of scientific results it is crucial to use established channels and structures. To enable the Catch-C project to do so, this report aims to investigate current advisory structures in Europe on European, national and regional level. The scope of this report is to focus on the different key actors, their interrelations and the funding schemes in the farm advisory system of all European member states. The report gives an exhaustive overview. There are 6 groups of countries that are presented according to their classification of funding and execution scheme.



Specific part

1 Introduction

1.1 Background, scope and objective of the report

The Catch-C project aims at identifying and improving the farm compatibility of sustainable soil management practices to enhance farm productivity, climate-change mitigation, and soil quality. Therefore, Best-Management-Practices (BMPs) have to be identified that could be used by farmers to fulfill the various demands with respect to agronomic efficacy and economic efficiency. When these BMPs are analysed, it is crucial to disseminate the knowledge to farmers. An important link between science and practical application is farm advisory or, in other words, extension service.

In Europe, agricultural extension has had a long tradition in most member states. Due to different agricultural structure and history in the different countries/regions the agricultural advisory sector developed according to the needs and realities of local conditions. This led to a situation where extension services were organized in many different ways all over Europe. In order to organize an effective dissemination of scientific results it is crucial to use established channels and structures. To enable the Catch-C project to do so, this report aims to investigate current advisory structures in Europe on European, national and regional level. The scope of this report is to focus on the different key actors and their interrelations as well as funding schemes in the farm advisory system of all European member states.

European legislation established that since 1st January 2007 all member states have to operate a system of advising farmers on land and farm management (Farm Advisory System-FAS). The implementation of this legislation is governed by the articles of Regulation (EC) N° 1782/2003. A focus is put on increasing farmers' awareness of material flows and on-farm processes related to areas covered by cross compliance (Angilero 2010).

The European legislative framework sets the main conditions that the farm advisory system has to fulfil (e.g. minimum issues to be covered, confidentiality of personal data etc.), leaving Member States the freedom to design the system in their country most appropriate to meet the needs and characteristics of their respective agricultural sector (Angilero 2010). For an analysis of current dissemination structures it is necessary to first describe the current situation of farm advisory system in all European member states. The report will start with an overview on dissemination at EU level before it will describe the countries according to the classification introduced in chapter 1.3.

1.2 Material and Methods

The methodological approach includes two components:

- a) Desk research
- b) Expert inventory

Desk research

An analysis of literature and documents was conducted to get an overview on current dissemination structures in the EU member countries. Besides scientific publications also grey literature like reports and information material from the advisory bodies, webpages etc. were included in the analysis. An advantage of this approach is the higher complexity of the data obtained that also leads to a more holistic picture of the dissemination structure. A disadvantage may be the fact that it is more difficult to control the quality of the data, as the grey literature documents are often not peer-reviewed. This could partly be overcome by an internal quality check of obtained results through scientists from the respective member states.

Expert inventory

In May 2013 a written expert survey was conducted among all farmer associations that are member in the COPA-COGECA network. Provided that this report's objective is giving an insight into the current farm advisory systems, an expert inquiry seems the method of choice because it allows collecting detailed data on a specific issue in a short time. It was decided to conduct the expert inquiry via written questionnaires with both tick boxes and open questions, sent out per email to the experts. This media seems suitable because the target group has a high acquaintance with email communication and it was assumed to fit into their working style and daily working routines so that compliance can be expected to be high. The inquiry was kindly supported by Antonia Andugar (Senior Policy Advisor at COPA-COGECA head-office) with a letter of recommendation and the sending out of the emails. In the questionnaire it was decided to include open questions as the number of questionnaires for data analysis would not be very high (one-three per country) but this allows to get data on interrelations that would otherwise have been very difficult to obtain. The questionnaire was developed and pre-tested with a German expert (Dr. Jan Freese, BLE-DVS, policy officer for agri-environmental measures at German national contact point for the rural network). The comments of the German expert proved to be helpful for the adjustment of the questionnaire.

The target group of experts in farmers associations was chosen because in many member states farmers associations are deeply involved in (or even conducting) agricultural extension. And even in the member states where farmers' associations are not the main actors in the farm advisory system they still represent the target group of the advisory system and hence it can be expected that they have a realistic overview of advisory services from the viewpoint of farmers.

Data was analysed by extracting the information of the questionnaire and compiling it with the information obtained through the desk research. The advantage of such a twofold approach is the complementarity of data that can be assessed by these two different ways of data collection.

1.3 Classification of Member States

In order to systematize farm advisory services, funding and execution are characteristic criteria (see Figure 1). A wide range of extension organizations can be found in the EU. Private organizations represent a major group of Farm advisory service providers, in which a clear distinction needs to be made between the profit-oriented organizations and the non-profit organizations like associations, cooperatives or union driven organizations that provide services to members, or to geographical areas, specific farm types, etc. Public organizations and chambers of agriculture represent the remaining share, where again a distinction can be drawn between service free from charge for the farmer (and hence is covered by the public) and advisory service provided by public organizations but with a fee that the farmer has to pay.

The following sections use this structure to depict the situations in the respective member states. Please note that the figures only show key actors, it is not possible to show all aspects in one figure. For example advice from input providers assumingly is prevalent in all member states, but in some it plays a major role and there it is depicted in the figure, in other states there may be other more important advisory organizations and in this case input providers are not presented in the figure, due also to the fact that there is no comprehensive overview in the advisory activities of private input sellers as data on these is not collected systematically.

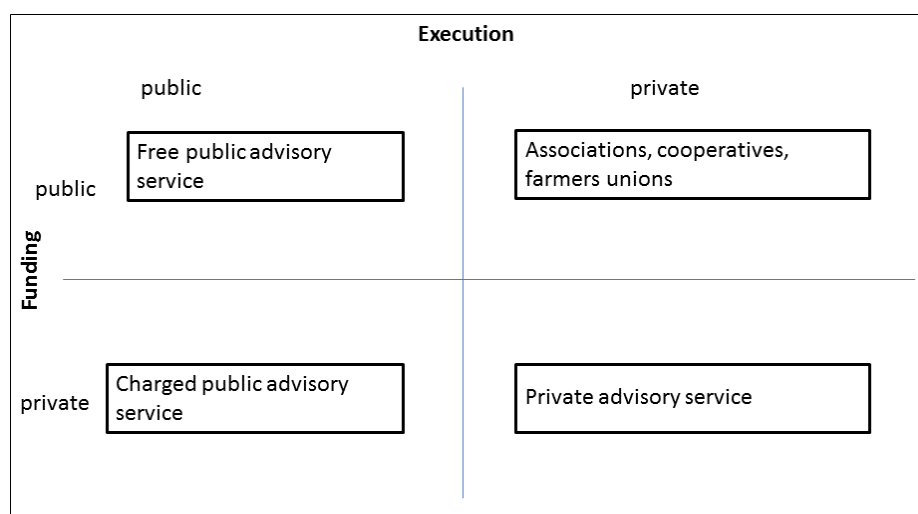


Figure 1: Classification scheme according to funding and execution of extension

Source: own presentation based on (Hoffmann 2004)

According to this categorization the EU Member states can be grouped into 5 groups:

1. Member states that run their farm advisory system through public organizations: BG, CY, RO, SK
2. Member states where chambers of agriculture organize the extension: AT, LU, SL
3. Member states where a mixture of private and public organizations is working in the farm advisory system: CZ, FR, IE, LT, PL, SE
4. Member states that have a high heterogeneity among their regions, there is a FAS of its own in every region: BE, DE, ES, IT, UK

5. Member states with mainly private organizations: PT – private non-profit organization; LV, MT, NL – private profit oriented organizations and DK, GR, EL, FI, HU that have private profit oriented as well as private non-profit organizations

This classification is depicted in Figure 2.

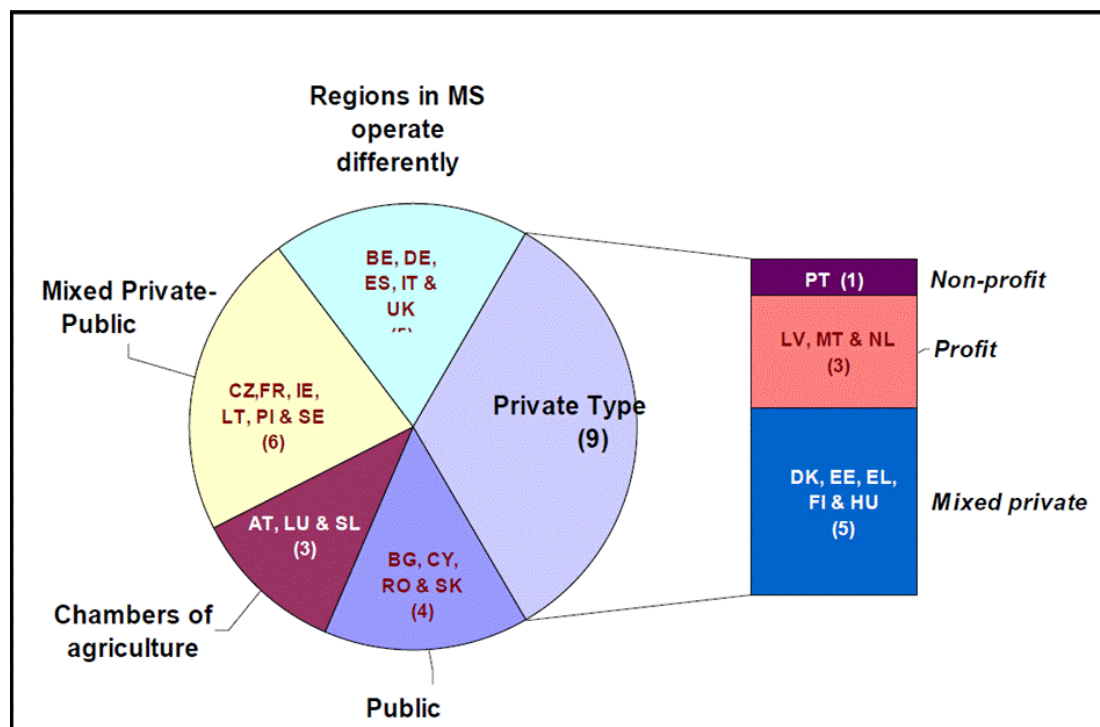


Figure 2: Member States and types of advisory organizations

Source: adapted from (ADE 2009, p. 66)

The Catch-C project has partners in almost every group, except group 1 (only public operating organizations). Hence in the following these partner countries will be treated in more details, and are described in their own chapter 2.7.

2 Dissemination structures

2.1 Dissemination on European level

The European Union today covers 27 member states, including 15 “old” member states and 12 new states. In half of these countries the agricultural sectors have undergone tremendous change since 1990 as a consequence of the transition from a centrally planned economic system to market economies.

The farm advisory system is regulated in the common agricultural policy according to the articles of Regulation (EC) N° 1782/2003 (see above). But there is no structure explicitly in charge of FAS at the EU level because it is in the responsibility of member states or even their provinces. Adolph (2011) criticises weak coordination between different directorates-general (for Environment, for Agriculture and Rural Development, for Regional Policy) with



regard to FAS. It is possible, however, to identify key actors (like European farmer organizations, private and public-sector FAS providers, and agricultural research institutions) and stakeholders that will be presented in the following section.

Farmer organizations and farmer- to-farmer extension

In 1962 the main farmer organization, the Committee of Professional Agricultural Organizations (COPA) merged with the General Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives (COGECA). Together they form today “Europe’s strongest farming representative organization with 76 member organizations from the EU Member States and from other European countries” (Adolph 2011, p. 22). They are lobbying the EU’s public institutions to represent interests of European farmers and cooperatives in order to influence decisions that affect the agricultural sector (Copa-Cogeca 2013). Farmer unions that are members of the COPA-COGECA network are organized locally, regionally, and nationally as membership organizations, with some focusing on specific commodities or specific production systems (e.g. organic farming) (Adolph 2011). Along the supply and marketing chains of farmers’ cooperatives, advisory services are part of overall support services available for farmers. Hence the role of farmer organizations is to provide information (often including interpretation and advice with respect to current and future legislation) to members and promote exchange between them as a means to empower farmers to demand good-quality advisory services at fair prices (Adolph 2011, p. 22).

Public-sector advisory services

Public extension has a long tradition in some European countries. After the Second World War, all European countries replaced these traditional ways of circulating knowledge and set up national systems of extension services. Although they were organized differently in each country, extension services were everywhere financed to a large extent by public funds and/or by a system of additional taxes on the sales of farm products or on land (Labarthe, Laurent 2013). Since 1990 there has been a movement of disengagement of member states from the funding, implementing and programming of agricultural extension, public funding was transformed into project- or goal oriented packages. Traditional forms of semi-public extension (e.g. chambers of agriculture) are replaced by new forms of contracts between the state, farmers’ unions and extension providers. Focus of state fundings are now on topics like public health and safety (e.g. prevention and control of disease outbreaks), environmental management (e.g. reinforcement of environmental laws and protected areas), facilitating the implementation of the increasing number of regulations that are more and more complicated for farmers to understand, and rural development (Labarthe, Laurent 2013).

Today in many European countries FAS stakeholders demand more and better capacity building for farm advisors. Some exchange and education is happening at regional and European level, but there is no umbrella organization for the national FAS (Adolph 2011).

Private-sector input, marketing, and advisory services

Private-sector FAS today have a high importance, taking over from public-sector extension, providing productivity- oriented advice to larger single farms in most of Western and Southern Europe. Because many national governments consider farming to be a business like



any other, the farmer as the business owner is responsible for investments in knowledge and technology as a private good (Labarthe, Laurent 2013). However, small farms are often unable to pay for private advisory services. Agricultural extension is provided by both small firms providing customized support to farmers in a specific location, sector, or topic, and large corporations providing package technologies or inputs to farmers, with embedded advice (Labarthe, Laurent 2013).

For private FAS providers there is currently no Europe-wide umbrella organization, but there are a number of commodity-focused professional organizations or chambers (e.g. the European Milk Board), in which producers, advisory services, and input providers participate (Adolph 2011).

NGOs providing advisory services

European NGOs are focusing mostly on environmental topics (supporting organic farming or encouraging farmers to develop a wildlife-friendly habitat on their farm, e.g. the Foundation Ecology and Agriculture with headquarters in Germany) or focus on social issues (working with rural communities to address issues related to health, community life, marginalization, disability, etc.) (Adolph 2011).

In parallel to regional or rural development programmes in many countries special local or regional bodies comprised of e.g. representatives of municipalities, regionally active development organizations, NGOs, farmers associations, and state representatives are created. To achieve their objectives, these bodies often depend on FAS to reach farmers and the rural population and motivate them to participate in the joint process. LEADER and other programmes on water resource management or biodiversity-oriented landscapes are good examples for these initiatives (Berglund, Dworak 2010).

Research institutions

Traditionally in Europe there was a large number of research institutions linked to specialized agricultural colleges, universities, and to the state administration. During the past decades the research landscape has become modified, with “some of the traditional agricultural research institutes adapting to new demands and challenges (such as climate change mitigation) and diversifying to include a wide range of socio-economic and biophysical sciences, with the aim of contributing to agricultural development in Europe and overseas, while also meeting academic objectives and standards” (Adolph 2011, p. 24).

In Europe there is a large number of research institutions, but there is a weak link between research and extension in Europe. Also there is only weak research on extension itself. Many research institutions are torn between the challenge to academically compete at international level with other institutions and the need to undertake research that support local farmers in their everyday endeavours (Adolph 2011, p. 24).

The private sector in Europe has also developed in its role as a provider of relevant science and technology (with the disadvantage of property rights forbidding on-farm multiplication of varieties), pesticides and herbicides, fertilisers, and other agri-inputs. The private sector is also a research funder in its own right, for example via its foundations supporting both agricultural research and agricultural education (Adolph 2011).



Networks

There is no European-wide formal network on FAS. For the German-speaking Farm Advisory Systems the International Academy for Agricultural and Home Economics Advisory Services (IALB) is a network that aims to promote the exchange of information and experiences.

In 2004 the Rural Extension Network in Europe (RENE) was initiated with support by the European Union. Its objective is the promotion of exchange of information and experience in rural development, vocational and extension work. Further it aims to strengthen specialized methodological knowledge about extension. However the project has ended and it is not being continued in near future, but the formal and informal contacts of the members still build an informal network (Adolph 2011). More networks like this assumingly are existent, but they are not analysed systematically.

2.2 Member states where public organizations are prevalent

In these member states agricultural extension is mainly organized and financed by the government. However there are always also some private consulting firms and some advisers working as free-lance. In Bulgaria for example, private sector companies are important providers of information on technologies, innovations and marketing as well as extension offices. These are seed providing companies, plant protection companies, machinery dealers etc. Most farmers also make use of their informal network of information and advisory provision that they have. This is largely dependent on the individual farmer's personal relations and contacts with qualified agronomists, veterinary or other specialists living in rural communities. There are also a number of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) established by donors, but they struggle in accessing sustainable incomes from providing commercial services or support to other technical assistance programmes (Marinov 2011).

Bulgaria

In Bulgaria extension is organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and by the Ministry of Environment and Waters. Within the Ministry of Agriculture and Food there are three sub-divisions:

- a) National Agricultural Advisory Service, NAAS
- b) Agricultural Academy (AA)
- c) National Plant Protection and Quarantine Service (NPPQS)

At regional level Regional Agricultural Advisory Services (RAAS) operate within the NAAS system. "The 28 RAAS are equipped with basic office facilities, communication means, transport vehicles for farm visits, etc. The extension officers receive 6-7 monthly agricultural magazines, Internet weekly/monthly bulletins of the RPPQS, books and brochures from the Agricultural Academy and its specialized (commodity oriented) regional research institutes (fruit production, vegetable production, grain production, sheep production, etc.). The RAAS offices provide to farmers extension leaflets and more detailed brochures on specific topics. Usually the leaflets and booklets are provided to producers free of charge" (Marinov 2011).



The services of the RAAS are funded by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and free from charge for farmers.

Regional Departments of Agriculture (RDA) are regional offices of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (Regional Service Agriculture). The RDAs provide information (books/brochures) and additional infrastructure and they also monitor some of the farmers advised by RAAS officers. Further the RDAs provide the advisors with necessary professional backup and training and subject matter expertise. This subject matter expertise in most cases is provided by different Research Institutes within the system of Agricultural Academy.

The regional Scientific Institutes within the Agricultural Academy aim to provide and transfer scientific achievements into practical expertise for farmers through the RAAS system. Although significant research is done every year, the regional institutes still struggle to link the research to small and medium farms, as only large enterprises benefit from new technologies. But they are successful in conducting training for extensionists and farmers, and elaborate extension material and render specific services (soil-, water analysis, feed analysis) to the public (Marinov 2011).

Cyprus

The farm advisory services are provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, with its department of agriculture. The Department of Agriculture is responsible for the implementation of agricultural policies, by preparing and implementing both development and supporting programmes and projects and by providing educational and advisory services to farmers and to rural population (Ministry of Agriculture 2012, p. 7).

The Department of Agriculture is organized into four Divisions. These Divisions include 20 specialized Sections stationed, mainly, in Nicosia. In addition the Department operates six Agricultural District Offices which are sub-divided into branches. Each branch has a specific number of communities. The Department also has government stations and nurseries, aiming at assisting farmers to improve plant and animal production (Ministry of Agriculture 2012).

The Ministry conducts yearly extension programs. The staff of the six district agricultural offices conduct farm visits and group trainings. The district offices also organize training courses which are held in the three agricultural training centres in Agros, Paphos and Limassol (Ministry of Agriculture 2012).

Tools for information dissemination are one-to-one extension, group trainings, education brochures, booklets, articles in magazines and newspapers and radio and television programs on a weekly basis. These are all provided by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Rumania

Since 1998 the Romanian advisory system has experienced frequent changes from a central system to decentralization and back again. In the last three years the process again was reversed again to decentralism. Today the National Agency for Agricultural Consulting (ANCA) has a technical advisory role within the Ministry of Agriculture in a small compartment of consultancy, extension and training. The formerly ANCA internal

departments of County Centers for Agricultural Consulting (OJCA) (in the 41 county's capitals) and Local Centers for Agricultural Consulting (CLCA) (at local level) are detached and put under the responsibility (organizational as well as financially) of the regional councils. The former county OJCA's and local level CLCA's network continue to perform as „Chambers of Agriculture“ [as they are called but the term is not in line with the common usage neither the EU not in this report]. They are subordinated to the local public administration of the County Councils and under the technical and methodological coordination of the Ministry of Agriculture.

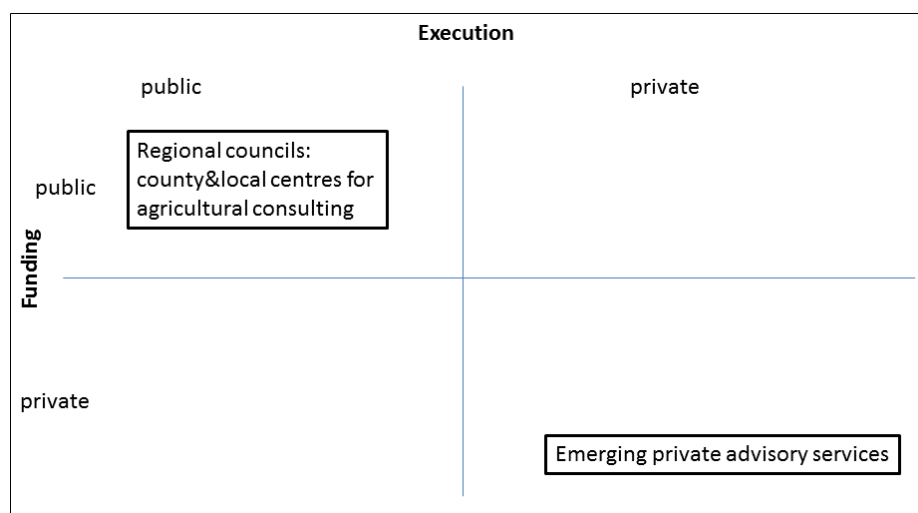


Figure 3: Example for prevalent public FAS - Rumania

„Recently the Romanian Parliament adopted the Law for Agricultural Chambers for agriculture, forestry and rural development (Law nr. 283/28 December 2010), giving green light (since the concept of Agricultural Chambers implies farmer-managed organizations), to the organization of the election process for farmers' representation. The process still lasts (and quite long so), to be launched“ (Stefanescu 2012).

Another difficulty the farm advisory service is facing is the low consultant/beneficiary ratio of 1/1764 (without counting subsistence farmers) which can be assumed to be inadequate to cover “even a minor proportion of Romanian farmers” (Stefanescu 2012). However, this could be overcome by the increasing number of private advisory companies that are currently emerging. According to Stefanescu (2012) these private companies are mainly active in three fields: “(i) backing up the farmers to access EU Rural Development Program funds by identifying the issue, writing up the proposal and take care of the bureaucratic procedures of the application's submission, (ii) technological crop production and livestock keeping advice (carried mostly by the input supply firms) and (iii) consultancy for juridical, cadastre issues, feasibility studies, marketing, management (farm and assets), training etc.”

Slovakia

In Slovakia agricultural extension is planned and conducted by the Agroinstitut Nitra (<http://www.agroinstitut.sk>). Agroinstitute Nitra is a state enterprise of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic. The Agroinstitute as the



educational institution is developing educational strategies and concepts in the agricultural and the food sector. It also coordinates the professional education of secondary schools focusing on agriculture and food processing. Agroinstitute provides a wide range of services especially in the area of lifelong learning education and land management advice but also ensures effective access to the information and resources to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic. It's main tasks are (<http://www.agroinstitut.sk>):

- Implementation of professional services for advisors and farmers in accordance with conceptions of agricultural policy creation and implementation, through advisory services network
- Participation and cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture within submitting of proposals and legislation changes, within sectoral concepts creation in the field of agriculture
- Coordination of advisory centres activities according to approved concept of advisory process within the agricultural sector
- Proposition of educational program in the field of advisory services and its implementation by accredited educational subjects
- Patronage of certificates for advisors or advisory subjects, after fulfilment of given conditions

2.3 Chambers of agriculture organise extension

In Europe there are three countries where chambers of agriculture are the only advisory body. These are Austria, Luxemburg and Slovenia. Since Austria is one of the Catch-C partner countries it will be described in more detail in chapter 2.7, so this abstract will provide information mainly on Luxemburg and Slovenia. There are more countries in Europe that have chambers of agriculture [CZ, DE, EE, FR, HU, LT, LV, PL, SI and SK] but in these countries the chambers are not exclusively providing extension, this is only the case in LU and SL.

Chambers of agriculture generally are self-administrated bodies of farmers who usually are closely connected with the Ministry of Agriculture or other governmental structures. They carry out various tasks that are in interest for farmers, like lobbying and also tasks in training and further education. They often advise farmers on their own behalf as well as for the state government. Some of them have even been transferred responsibility for state duties in the funding and control system of cross compliance. The chambers are bodies with public service and budget rights which can be financed by the chamber contribution paid by each farmer, allocations of the federal state as well as charges for special services.

Slovenia

In Slovenia the chambers organize the extension at national, regional and local level. At national level they mainly publish general information for farmers and interested public. They also provide information that is needed for decision making in the national parliament. Additionally the chambers on national level organize conferences and discussion rounds of various topics with farmers and other stakeholders. At regional level the agricultural

chambers run 8 entities which are coordinating the activities of 60 regional offices that employ advisors. Hence the regional offices are the bodies that provide the actual advisory service to the farmers but they are interconnected through the nation-wide organization of agricultural chambers (Berglund, Dworak 2010).

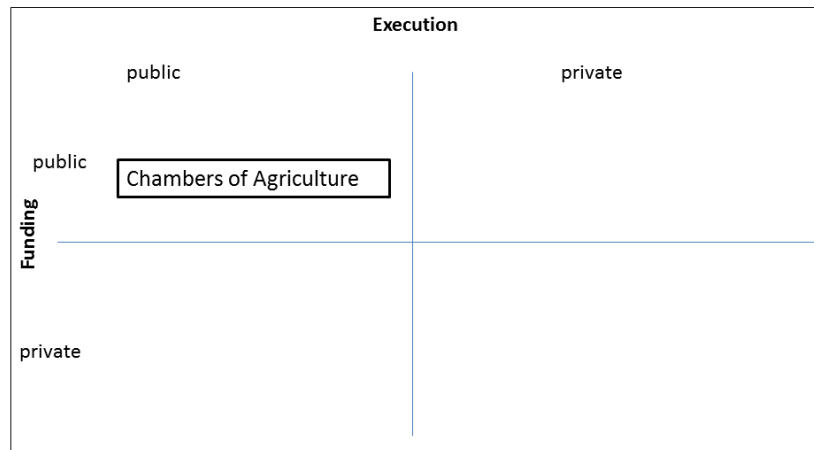


Figure 4: Example for FAS based on chambers of agriculture - Slovenia

Luxembourg

In Luxembourg the task of the agricultural chamber is the coordination of the farm advisory system. The chamber itself offers extension about plant production, quality management, marketing and rural development programs.

Besides this there are 6 state advisory institutions (Technical service, Wine-institute, Veterinary Institute, Technical Lycee, Rural development service and Rural Economy service) that all offer advice, some of them specialized, other on various topics.

Further there are also several farmers association and various thematic groups that offer some extension to farmers.

Farmers can decide freely which kind of extension they would like to use and they can apply for a subsidy of 70% in the first year they make use of the extension, after that the subsidy amount is decreased to 50% of the extension cost (<http://www.lwk.lu>).

2.4 Member states with a mixture of private and public organizations

In Europe six countries can be considered as countries where there is a mixture of different kind of organizations (public and private) involved in agricultural advisory services (ADE 2009). These countries are CZ, FR, IE, LT, PL, SE among which FR and PL which are Catch-C partner countries and will be presented in more detail in chapter 2.7.

All countries have in common that there is one predominant public advisory organization that is operating on national level and coordinating the advisory service of its regional entities in collaboration with private advisory services.



Czech Republic

Extension services in Czech Republic are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture. The National Rural Network is the committee within the Ministry of Agriculture that proposes programs and action plans for all activities related to the farm advisory system. Members in the National Rural Network are (ADE 2009):

- a) Units of the Ministry relating to the advisory system (including Ministry of Agriculture, Agricultural Agencies)
- b) The Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information (IAEI)
- c) Agrarian NGO representing the needs and interests of farm holdings
- d) Research institutes and universities.

The Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information (IAEI) is financed through subsidies and concentrating on education and extension. The Institute also conducts certification and controlling of private advisory services. It elaborates methodical material for advisors and coordinates the technical activities of scientific research institutes (Berglund, Dworak 2010).

At regional level and district level agencies for agriculture and the rural areas are part of the network for rural development. Advisory services are provided by private companies and farmers have to financially contribute, part of the costs is covered through subsidies (Ministry of Agriculture Czech Republic).

Advisory services are also provided by farmers' NGOs, these are financed through member fees, subsidies and through revenues they create by selling of inputs. Also the farmers' association offers extension to its members (own data).

Main content of advice are CAP measures and schemes, changes of legislative frame, efficacy of production, marketing, environment, soil erosion and cross compliance. (own data)

Ireland

Teagasc is the national public body responsible for agricultural research, education, training and advice in Ireland. It provides a comprehensive advisory service to farmers with experts on all farming enterprises; of particular interest are the farm walks and Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS) farm planning. REPS was introduced from 1994 onwards. This created the need for specialized external support and over the years this has evolved into a strong network of private advisers. The focus of these advisers is now beyond REPS and they represent a strong competitor to Teagasc. (Approximately 60,000 or 50% of all farmers in Ireland are in the REPS) (ADE 2009).

Today there are 198 advisory agencies with 242 private advisors and 147 advisors employed by Teagasc. Farmers have to pay the full cost for any advisory service.

The main channel of advice is increasingly group trainings that are very popular within the farming community, other tools are one-to-one advice, farming press, public meetings, training courses, websites, opendays/farmwalks, radio and television (Donald Mullane 13/06/2013).



Lithuania

Lithuania has one main public provider of agricultural advice, the Lithuanian Agriculture Advisory Service (ADE 2009). It was founded in 1993 and is a public non-profit organization. Besides the LAAS there were 70 other private entities certified in 2011 to offer at least bookkeeping advice (Baltic Deal Project 2011, p. 40) but LAAS is by far the biggest and most important advisory organization.

The LAAS is operating in the whole country. It has one head office in Akademija, Kedainiai District with 92 employees (among them also administrative staff) and 48 district offices with 3-9 advisers respectively. The specialists at the Central office take care of advisers' qualification, prepare programmes, provide training and methodical information for the district advisors (Baltic Deal Project 2011). The private entities operate independently and are mostly active on regional level.

Most advisory services charge user fees from the beneficiary farmers. 57% of funds for advisory activities (LAAS and private entities aggregated) were created through user fees. 13% are distributed through national projects and 14% through EU projects. The rest comes from other sources (Baltic Deal Project 2011).

Channels of information are courses, seminars, one-to-one advice and other tools, contents include plant production, animal husbandry, farm accounting, economy, building construction, mechanization, environment etc. (Baltic Deal Project 2011, p. 41).

Sweden

The Swedish Board of Agriculture can be considered as the most important *public* advisory organization. It has Plant Protection stations and Nutrient Management offices. They are giving advice for free to all of the Advisory Services in Sweden.

The Swedish rural and economy agricultural Societies (Huhållningssällskapet) are the most important *private* advisory organization. They have 18 local societies today, most of them established already in the 19th century. They have around 650 employees, and 40000 members (Baltic Deal Project 2011). They work with many areas, e.g. crop & animal production, building construction, cross compliance, EU-subsidy applications and rural development. The income sources for the societies are: fees from farmers paying for advice, membership of the advisory society, contracts with the county boards for giving free environmental advice for farmers and to carry out field trials for the commercial companies. All societies are members of The Swedish Federation of Swedish Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies. But there are also smaller private alternatives, also within input providers (ADE 2009).

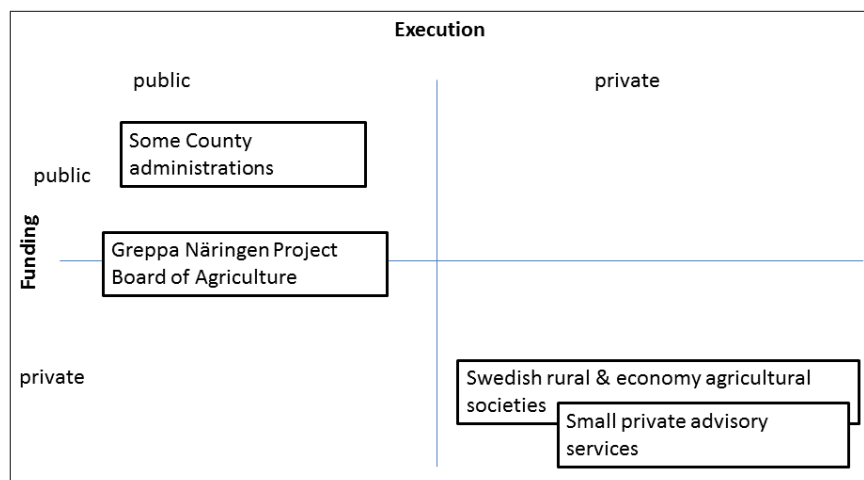


Figure 5: Example FAS with mixture of private and public organizations - Sweden

In the Swedish Rural Development Program there are budgets which are administrated at the County Administrative Boards. Advisory services can apply for budget to arrange environmental advice to farmers. In the middle and south of Sweden this is done mainly within the project “Focus on Nutrients”. The advice on environmental issues is free of charge for farmers but farmers have to pay for the traditional production advice (Baltic Deal Project 2011).

Advice for farmers is mainly concerning direct production measures like crop leys, crop residues, minimum tillage, manure management, catch crops, crop rotation. The most frequented instruments are group trainings, personal conversations with advisors on site, articles in specialized press, newsletters, hints from fellow farmers, also used are phone calls or emails at advisory service, farm checks with formalized checklists, booklets, internet information portals, authorities webpages, inquiries at extension providers (own data 2013).

2.5 Regions operate very differently

To this group belong BE, DE, ES, IT, UK. The first four countries will be explained in more detail in the chapter 6 because they are all Catch-C partner countries. So only UK will be presented in this section.

United Kingdom

The extension landscape in the UK is increasingly fragmented. In the UK, England has a fully privately-driven extension approach, whereas Wales uses a strong publicly-driven approach supported by various private advisory networks, while Scotland and Northern Ireland operate through a fully publicly-managed system, even though some of their services are outsourced to advisers accredited according to subject.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, DEFRA is the main governmental organization that coordinates and executes extension. It is the UK government department responsible for policy and regulations on the environment, food and rural affairs. DEFRA activities are state funded and free from charge for farmers. The DEFRA launches the farm advice program in UK.

The second important advisory organization is the Agricultural and Horticultural Development Board (AHDB) who provide extension through a levy board. The AHDB finances its advisory service through member fees and is additionally supported by the state. The National Farmers' Union also offers extension. This extension is mainly in the scope of natural resource management, enhancing uptake of best practices and soil protection measures and is funded through member fees (own data 2013). They also set contents for the DEFRA extension program.

Additionally there are private extension companies that offer advice which is mainly financed through user fees. Among them ADAS is the UK's largest independent provider of advice. As a private company all ADAS extension related activity is provided under contract mostly directly to government or to one or other government agency.

The DEFRA offers free expert advice in the form of farm workshops, walks, newsletters, text messages and a comprehensive helpline where farmers can speak to experts in the field. This is provided by their contractors AEA in partnership with ADAS and a consortium of advisers.

The countries additionally have other main actors:

- *England*: Natural England is the organization that ensures the day-to day management of farm advisory sector. Natural England is a government agency and carries out publicly funded extension activity (IFPRI 2013)
- *Scotland* : The Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) carries out significant extension activity (IFPRI 2013)
- *Northern Ireland*: College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise CAFRE carries out significant extension activity (IFPRI 2013)
- *Wales*: The Knowledge Transfer Development Centres funded by the Welsh Assembly Government carries out significant extension activity (IFPRI 2013)

Figure 6 gives an overview on the main actors in UK and specifically in England. The purple circle show the example for England, in the other Countries of UK this circle will look differently.

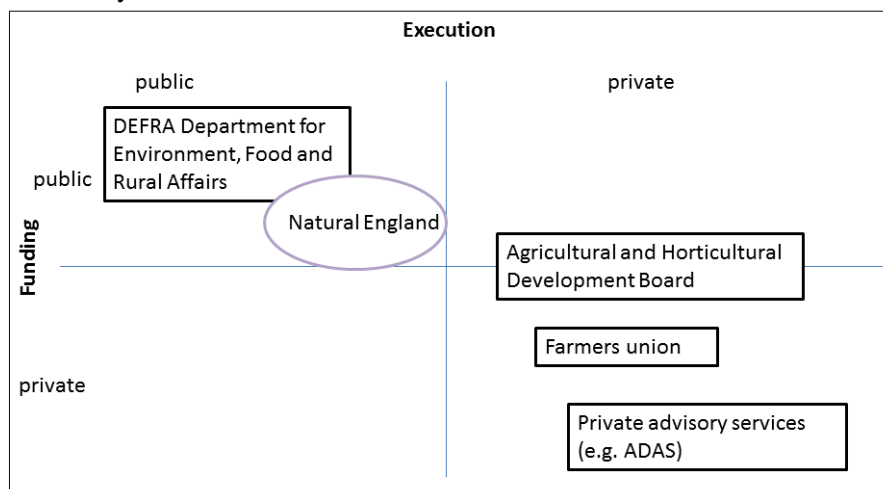


Figure 6: Example where FAS are very heterogeneous between regions – England

2.6 Member states with mainly private organizations

This group of member states with mainly private organization can be divided again in three sub-groups.

First there is Portugal where private organizations run the Farm Advisory System but as a non-profit organization. Second there are LV, MT and NL (NL is described in chapter 2.7) where the FAS is based on private organizations, but profit seeking ones and thirdly there are DK, EE, EL, FI and HU where we find a mixture of profit oriented and non-profit private organizations.

Portugal

In Portugal the FAS is based on the LEADER Initiative of the EU. Today there are 53 regions and Associations (Local Development Association animated by the Local Action Group). These Associations are organized in a national federation called “minha terra” (my land). These LEADER Associations among other projects provide agricultural extension in Portugal. They are co-funded by the European Union (Baptista, Cristóvão 2011).

Further the farmers associations are important actors in Portugal. There are four associations: Confederação Nacional da Agricultura (CAN), Confederação Nacional de Cooperativas Agrícolas (CONFAGRI), Conferederação dos Agricultores de Portugal (CAP) and Associação Portuguesa de Agricultura Biológica (AGROBIO). These associations provide extension services directly to their members.

Latvia

In Latvia the advisory organization “Latvian Agricultural Advisory and Training Centre” (LRATC) is formally a private organization, but it is state owned: “99% of share capital of LRATC is owned by the State represented by Ministry of Agriculture and 1% of share capital is owned by the Farmers’ Federation of Latvia” (Baltic Deal Project 2011, p. 37). Thus the LRATC works profit oriented: it creates 40% of its incomes by services provided to farmers and 60% of its funding from the state and EU programs through annual contracts.

The LRATC runs the training centre in Ozolnieki and 26 regional offices. The regional offices employ advisors according to topics like plant production, animal production (not in every region), economics, crop farming, book-keeping, veterinary medicine, rural development and technical matters respectively. These are also the main contents of extension.

Additionally LRATC coordinates and supports through the elaboration of advisory methods the work of municipal specialists in promoting rural development in 110 local municipalities of Latvia (Baltic Deal Project 2011).

Malta

Malta has undergone a process of restructuring and privatizing its FAS. Until 2008 there had been a public free of charge extension service offered by the Ministry of Agriculture. Today the Ministry still regulates, monitors and supports the FAS, but the advisory services are conducted by private companies (Attard 2009). Furthermore there are farmers’ cooperatives

that also offer advice to their members, but according to (Attard 2009) only 6% of farmers were members in one of the seven cooperatives in 2009. The cooperatives finance their advisory service through member fees and with state subsidies. Farmers are fully funded if they seek advice from private companies.

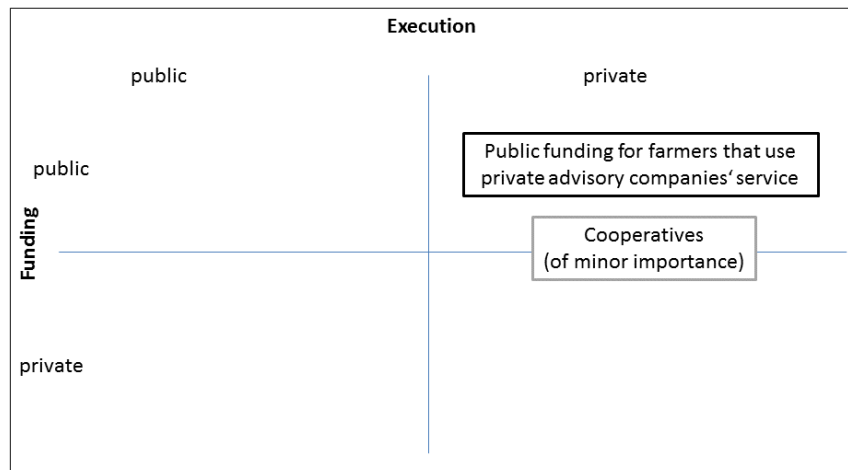


Figure 7: Example FAS with mainly private organizations - Malta

Mixed private profit and non-profit organizations

Denmark

The main actor in Denmark is the Danish Agricultural Advisory Service (DAAS), a partnership among 31 local advisory centres and one knowledge centre (Knowledge Centre for Agriculture) at Axelborg in Copenhagen. "This unique two-level advisory system is both owned and used by Danish farmers." (Baltic Deal Project 2011, p. 44)

Advisory services are financed through membership fees and payment for services rendered. The membership is voluntarily, but non-members pay 50% more for any advisory service (Mis 2007). The state does not support the advisory system, but the DAAS works at cost price because it is eventually owned by the farmers (Ehlers et al. 2005).

Estonia

In Estonia, there are 15 advisory centres, one in each county (EU Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR) 2012). 7 of them are private companies and 8 are non-profit organizations related to producers or farmers unions (Baltic Deal Project 2011). The Rural Development Foundation (belongs to the Ministry of Agriculture) coordinates the Estonian farm advisory system and controls if the centres fulfil their requirements (e.g. number of advisors, fields of services provided, action plan for the future etc.) (EU Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR) 2012). Besides direct on-farm advice the advisory centres also offer extra services for farmers like nutrient and soil analyses, financial advice, fertilization plans, advice for filling field books, accountancy, etc.

The state supports the advisory system by providing trainings to the advisors and farmers are subsidized up to two hours advice per farmer/year (Baltic Deal Project 2011).



Greece

Greece has a tradition of public extension that was dismantled during the last 20 years. Today extension is mainly conducted by input providers and private extension companies. Farmers' cooperatives also provide some advice, but this is also mainly focusing on inputs and their correct use (Alexopoulos et al. 2009).

Finland

In Finland the Pro-Agria group is the biggest provider of agricultural advice. It is a member owned organization. Over 80% of finish farms belong to their customers (EU Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR) 2012). Across Finland there are 16 ProAgria Centres (Baltic Deal Project 2011). Pro-Agria offers one-to-one advice on the farm as well as a rapidly increasing number of e-service. Pro-Agria creates it's income by 16% through the state, 65% are client fees, 18% project funds and 1% other sources (EU Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR) 2012).

Besides ProAgria, there is the Association of Private Rural Advisors in Finland. This association has 55 independently working members. The association supplies general information and information material for it's members (the advisors). The member advisors work on a variety of topics (e.g. cultivation plans, support with applications of agricultural subsidies) (Baltic Deal Project 2011). Further there are also private advisors that are not members of the association.

Farm advice has generally to be covered by the beneficiary but advice services related to cross compliance rules are subsidized up to 165 € Farmers can apply for the subsidy two times a year (Baltic Deal Project 2011).

Hungary

Advisory service in Hungary is provided by territorial advisory centres. The TAC were selected in 2007 via tender from private advisory bodies like vocational schools, universities, research institutes, agricultural chambers, private advisory companies. They employ the registered advisors that do the advisory work (Berghlund, Dworak 2010). Advisors can come from any region in Hungary as long as they are accredited. Each adviser can work for one or more TACs. For most of the TAC advisory activity is not their main branch of business. Now there are 82 TACs and 800 licensed advisors (Berghlund, Dworak 2010). The TAC are under the surveillance of Regional advisory centres that are coordinated by the Ministry of Rural Development (ADE 2009).

TACs made advisory service contract with the farmers, and after fulfilling the contract and paying the advisory fee the farmers can apply for reimbursement up to 80% of the advisory fee. The TAC determine their own advisory fee and it is their only source to finance their advisory activity. So they are within their own structure a mixture of profit and non-profit organization: they have to make profit with the advisory services, while other branches of their activities can be non-profit activities (ADE 2009).

2.7 Catch-C Partner countries

2.7.1 Austria

The farm advisory system in Austria is heavily based on public advice offered by the chambers of agriculture throughout the whole country. There are nine regional chambers (in every federal state) with their district farmers' chambers with altogether 600 advisors in 78 district offices (Neubauer 2012, p. 91). The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management is responsible for the planning, coordination and supporting of the chambers. The Austria-wide focuses and programmes of consulting are agreed upon in co-operation with the chambers of agriculture (Bohn 2011). Additionally there are public and private agricultural information provided by the governments of the federal states, associations (e.g. for organic farming, water management), the Austrian committee for agricultural engineering and rural development, the board of agricultural machinery, cooperatives based on one commodity and some other small providers (Berglund, Dworak 2010). The proportion of solely private advisory companies is small and they focus mainly on legislative and tax issues.

Advice by the chambers of agriculture is mainly free from charge for farmers. Membership fees are levied for working group advice and for some special consulting offers. The chambers of agriculture are funded through compulsory membership fees and through the ministry of Agriculture as well as by means of the provinces, a certain number of advisory projects are also subsidized through the EU financed programs within the framework of rural development (Bohn 2011). Other advisory providers also receive funding from the Ministry (e.g. Bio Austria) (Neubauer 2012, p. 94).

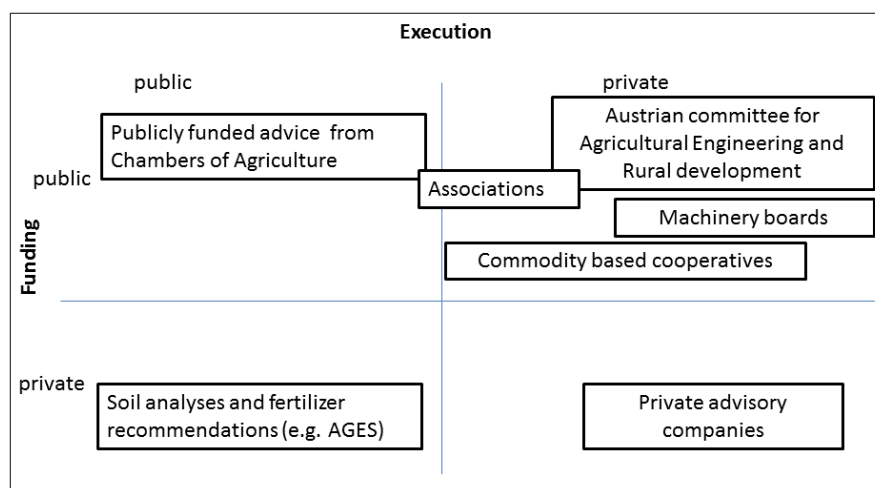


Figure 8: Farm advisory system in Austria

According to (Neubauer 2012) the content of advice according to the number of hours was (in this order): Plant production, Animal production, Business management, Legislation, taxes, social issues, Forestry, Other sources of income, Construction, Environment, Housekeeping, Organic farming, Renewable energies, IT-Services and marketing.

2.7.2 Belgium

Belgium is one of the countries where responsibilities of the day-to-day management of agricultural advice are undertaken by regional entities. (ADE 2009). Belgium basically has two main regions where the agricultural advisory system is organized differently, namely Wallonia and Flanders. Besides the public sector and the private companies, Farmers unions are quite active in the whole of Belgium, providing services to their members (ADE 2009).

a) Flanders

The Flanders' approach is a private-based system, driven and coordinated through public incentives. The main responsible body is the Agriculture and Fishery Agency who runs the coordination of the farm advisory system whereas the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries sets the legislation. The advisory services are composed of five modules that are offered to farmers (module 1-3: statutory management requirements and cross compliance; Module 4: occupational safety standards; Module 5: business optimization)

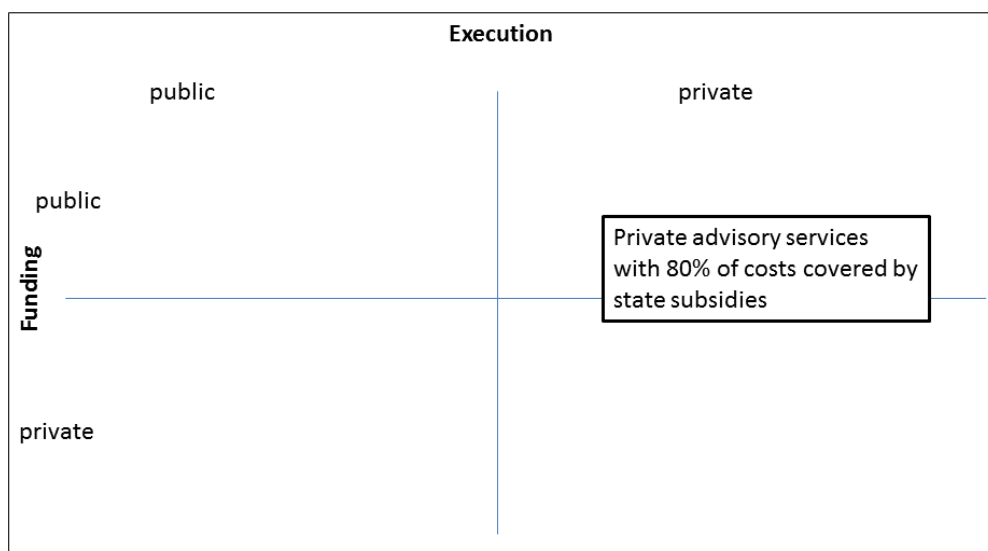


Figure 9: Farm advisory system in Flanders (Netherlands)

The advice is conducted by private firms that have to be certified by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. Advice is subsidized, farmers make a contract with the certified advisory body and then they can apply for 80% of the cost at the Agriculture and Fishery Agency. The advisory service is financed by the Flemish government (70%) and the EU (30%) (ADE 2009).

b) Wallonia

The overall approach can be considered as “publicly driven with opening up to private (subsidized) operators” (ADE 2009, p. 48). It is run by the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural resources and Environment. The general direction provides advisory service for farmers free from charge. The Ministry of Agriculture manages a helpdesk which directly answers farmers' questions if the requested information is general. If the required information is more specific a demand for advice is then addressed by Ministry to one of the 11 accredited

specialized advisory bodies according to the topic. They then address the farmer to fix a meeting for a farm visit (ADE 2009). Advisory bodies are specialized thematic NGOs and associations.

2.7.3 France

France organized its farm advisory system with a mixture of public and private advisory bodies. Interestingly in France the public, semi-public and private organizations build local networks, “each with their own set of specialized areas of competencies” (The Scottish government 2012, p. 3). The networks are accredited and proved with structural support by the DRAAF (Directions régionales de l’Alimentation, de l’Agriculture et de la Forêt) which are the regional offices of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (Ministère de l’agriculture et de la pêche 2009). The networks are coordinated by the local agricultural chambers and include different organizations like technical centres, farmers cooperatives, agro-food industries, environmental NGOs etc., respective to the local conditions (The Scottish government 2012). These organizations are actually conducting the advice, including the agricultural chambers. In 2012 there were 103 accredited networks across the country, “representing a total of 1500 advisory bodies”. There are 0 to 12 networks per region, some networks covering more than one region. (The Scottish government 2012, p. 3)

There is a wide range of advisory bodies, but it is possible to identify two key actors (The Scottish government 2012). Figure 7 shows the service provided by the main actors in black boxes and the several other network partners in purple circles. The situation in France is special (this is why here these circles are introduced): Please note that the network partners (the purple circles) may be very different according to regions, as well as their place in the graph, because in some regions there may be public funding for farmers’ cooperatives advice, that may be not the case in other regions.

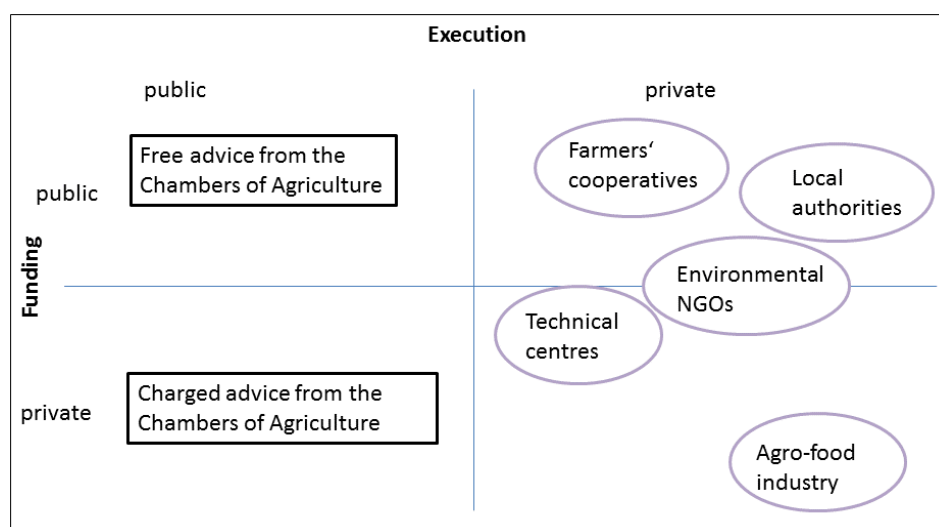


Figure 10: Farm advisory system France

Agricultural chambers

are the leading organization with 7800 employees across the country : in local offices close to the farmers, departmental and regional structures and in a national association. Agricultural chambers offer different advisory services. Generally they include the following list (The scottish government 2012, p. 4):

- Agronomy: soil testing, fertilization plan, application mapping, crops and grassland diagnosis.
- Livestock management
- Farm building (business advice and advice on regulations)
- Business strategy: e.g. diversification, conversion to organic farming, marketing, agrotourism
- Resource use efficiency, carbon footprint, renewable energies
- Advice to local authorities in rural areas: advice on rural development, support to the development of local urbanism plans.
- Assistance in preparing/submitting “Déclaration PAC” (Single Farm Application form)
- Whole-farm agri-environment plans: only proposed by some Agriculture Chambers, often in partnership with conservation organizations (e.g. Natural Parks) in relation to the implementation of the Natura and Water Framework Directive agri-environment measures. When provided, this advice is offered for free.
- Compulsory and voluntary training

Funding of agricultural advice is quite diversified. One-to-one advice may be free from charge or farmers are required to pay a contribution, this depends on the region, the providing organization and the nature of the advice. Group advice is usually free from charge, but may also be charged (The scottish government 2012). Advice provided directly by the agricultural chambers can be partly funded by taxes and European/National/regional funding. The level of public funding “is determined by the elected board of the agricultural chamber and depends on the relative level of public interest expected from the service” (The scottish government 2012, p. 5).

2.7.4 Germany

Due to the federal structure of Germany the agricultural farm advisory system is organized very differently in the 16 different federal states. The agricultural farm advisory systems in the respective states have partly far reaching historic roots – for example the foundation of the chamber of agriculture in Northrhine-Westphalia in 1899. On the other hand there are also radical structural changes going on – for example the change from state run extension that was free from charge to privatized extension in 1998 in Thuringia. Common in all federal states is that they reacted with restructuring and adaptation to changing demands and scarce budgets (Ehlers et al. 2005).

In general the federal states can be grouped into three groups that have a comparable advisory system. In the following abstract these three groups will be presented with their general structure followed by a short abstract to the specialties of one state exemplarily.



a) The Northwest and Saarland

In the northwestern federal states, some of the chambers of agriculture have been well-established organizations for more than 100 years. The agricultural chambers are self-organized farmers' organizations. They conduct education and extension of farmers, partly on their own responsibility as well as for the federal governments. Some of them have even been transferred responsibility for state duties in the funding and control system of cross compliance. The chambers are bodies with public service and budget rights which can be financed by the chamber contribution paid by each farmer, allocations of the federal state as well as charges for special services (Ehlers et al. 2005).

The chambers of agriculture take over tasks of official extension service, such as educational training and socio-economic advice for farms that fear for their survival. Furthermore, they offer management consulting in economic and production questions. As the transitions are fluent, and the financial pressure increases, the allocations for agricultural extension services from the federal state declined, or were even withdrawn completely, except for some narrowly defined tasks. In addition to farmer's contributions, the chambers finance the advisory services increasingly by fees.

However, chambers of agriculture are not the only provider of agricultural extension. In addition, especially in Schleswig Holstein and Lower-Saxony, advisory circles in the legal form of a registered association, are established.

Lower-Saxony is the largest state in this area. Here the formerly two chambers fused to one in 2006. The chamber offers advice in the field of application for subventions and legal questions, socio-economic and management consulting, as well as for professional questions in animal husbandry, plant protection etc. The chamber is also responsible for the training and education of farmers. Therefore, educational establishments and experimental stations are maintained.

Advisory circles are the second, well-established pillar for agricultural extension in Lower-Saxony. They are only financed by member fees since the state subsidies were dismantled. The chamber and the circles are in contact through joint locations and professional exchange. Most of the circles are organized in corporations, to have a broader spectrum for advice. Furthermore, the association of professionals is offering social, legal and tax advice.

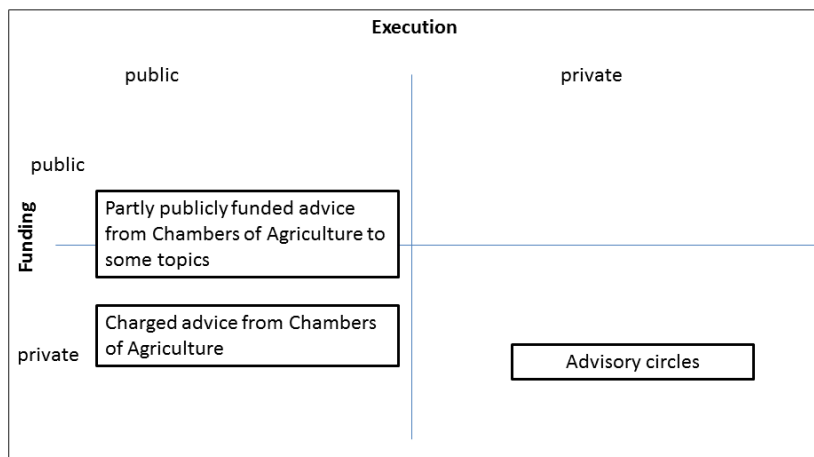


Figure 11: Farm advisory system in Lower-Saxony (Germany)

b) The Northeast and Thuringia

After the German reunification, the three federal states Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Saxony-Anhalt decided for a private agricultural extension. The reasons were the dissolution or restructuration of former institutions on the one hand, combined with a high demand for advice after the privatization of the large farms, the former agricultural cooperatives. The high demand for advice of new and resettled farmers could be only covered through private advisory companies in the short term.

When developing the structures for agricultural extension, the federal states followed different paths. Thuringia as another new federal state first gave official advice and then shifted to a private system. Saxony is the only new federal state that had an official advice system right from the start. In the following Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania will be explained in more detail, it can be considered as a more or less exemplary case (Ehlers et al. 2005).

Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania has an advice system under private law since 1991. Thereby there is the special case that the state has set up its own business in the form of a limited liability company “Landwirtschaftsberatung Mecklenburg-Vorpommern/Schleswig Holstein: LMS GmbH”. 64.8 % of the company are owned by the federal state, 25.2% are owned by the farmers’ union and 10% are owned by the association of horticulturists. LMS takes over tasks of agricultural extension and responsibilities for state duties. It offers free consulting for farmers in difficult economic and social situations, including debt advice service. Furthermore, the fee-based advice service includes business and management consultation as well as advice regarding agricultural production and quality systems certification. Expert reports and chemical analyses are also carried out (Ehlers et al. 2005).

For fulfilling public duties the LMS is receiving subsidies from the state, but in the field of farm advice the LMS competes with other providers of advice and is based on economic principles. It provides information to the Ministry of Agriculture and the to the farmers’ and horticulturists unions. LMS further is linked to research institutions and professional associations.

Besides the private advisory bodies, advisory circles have been founded by farmers in the legal form of a registered association. These associations are grouped according to topics (e.g. cattle breeders, pig producers, sheep breeders etc). Their activities are financed by membership fees, charges and grants (ADE 2009).

The ministry of agriculture promotes continuing training for farmers. Training and further education of advisers is done in cooperation with other federal states.

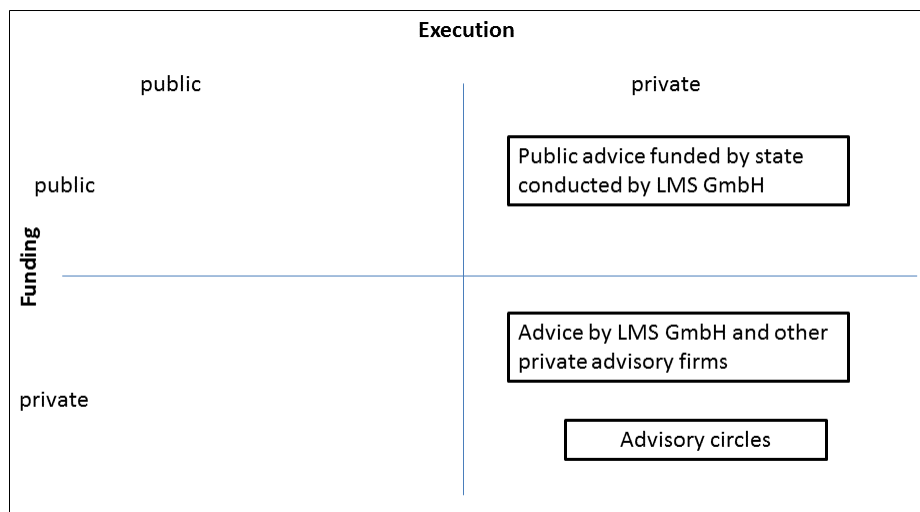


Figure 12: Farm advisory system Mecklenburg - Western Pomerania (Germany)

c) *The Southern federal states and Saxony*

In Baden-Wuerttemberg, Bavaria and Saxony, public advice is offered by the states. It is conducted by different administrative bodies being under the control of the ministry of agriculture. It is characteristic that the competent authorities and departments exert state duties like administration, control and education, but offer free technical advice for farmers as well. The agricultural professional schools are normally associated with these departments to make use of synergy effects due to the insight of the advisers into agricultural practice.

In Rhineland-Palatinate, positions at the state authorities were cut and advice was given to the chamber of agriculture. Hesse does not have a chamber of agriculture, but founded a self-regulatory professional institution with a similar structure.

Baden-Wuerttemberg has a public advisory service organized by the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry has 35 agencies under the management of the district administration. The district agencies are responsible for the implementation of public tasks in agriculture, e.g. administration, training and education of farmers and advice. Advice is free of charge for farmers (ADE 2009).

Another group of actors are semi-public advisory services that are similar to advisory circles. They were established in addition to the official advice. Farmers partake in the costs through member fees and can make use of intensive advice on various topics. They are subsidized up to 50% by the state.

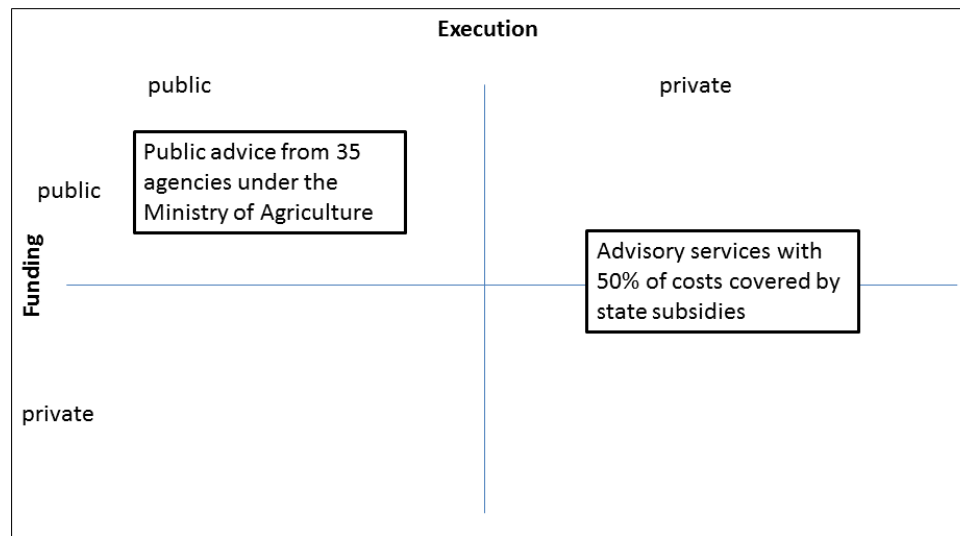


Figure 13: Farm advisory system in Baden-Wuerttemberg (Germany)

2.7.5 Italy

Since 1972 almost all issues concerning agriculture are in the responsibility of the 20 Regions. Hence structure and organization of the farm advisory system today differ widely between the Italian regions. In general there are three important players active in the field of agricultural extension and they are here mentioned in the order of relative importance for Italy. One is private organized by input providers, one is the farmers associations service, (farmers associations were an important player in Italy for the provision of agricultural extension and advisory services and now are the main player for farm administration services and for influencing agricultural policy), and thirdly is the system of public services for farmers connected with national and regional Institutions for agriculture (Vagnozzi 2010).

Input providers deliver agricultural advice together with their product advice. They operate within the structure of their respective company as a private profit seeking enterprise, hence their funding usually is also covered by their own revenues. Farmers are mainly influenced by the information they receive by them.

Public institutions also play an important role. Due to the high regionality there are 20 different organizations that provide agricultural extension. “All Regions have their own legislation in this field and independently distribute the funds to the different organizations” (Vagnozzi 2010, p. 2). Public institutions however make up a share between 46% – 64% (center – south) of advisory organizations, and hence can be considered the most important players in all Italian regions.

The political and administrative institutions have no technical tasks, but only a role of direction and coordination. Instead the technical input is provided by the agencies of agricultural services. Often these agencies are “delegated by the official agricultural institutions to manage funds to realize the calls for tender and choose the firms able to supply extension service to farmers.” (Vagnozzi 2010, pp. 4–5)

Finally farmers associations are also important. The three main farmers' associations are the Coldiretti (National Small Farmers Confederation), the Confcoltivatori (Small Farmers Confederation) and the Confagricoltura (General Confederation of Italian Agriculture), an organization who represent mainly the large agricultural entrepreneurs. The Cooperatives and some larger individual farmers also belong to the Confagricoltura (Ascione et al. 2010).

All three of these organizations are farmer driven and decentralized to all the twenty regions in Italy. They have regional offices in most of the main towns. Services delivered to farmers by the decentralized offices includes mainly administrative services such as assistance with tax returns, administration of pensions and other social services on behalf of the Department of Social Services, legal services and administration of finances and farm recordkeeping. They also offer market information and other related information needed by the agricultural sector. Farmer members can link up to the webpages and intranet services of the different confederations or visit the decentralized offices to obtain up-to-date market and other information. Each of the confederations also offers some extension services free of charge through the technicians employed by them. Today the extension service activity is marginal in the interest of the three Confederations. Furthermore, they also might offer consultancy services to its members on specific matters through specialists and consultants (Santucci, 2003; Trivellizi, 2003).

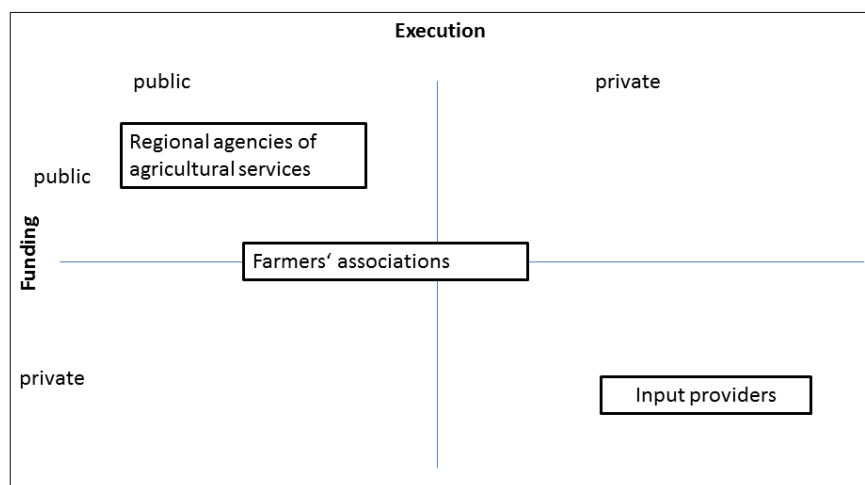


Figure 14: Farm advisory system in Italy

The Italian government through its Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for many research stations belonging to CRA (Counsel for Research and Experimental activities in Agriculture) to support the farmer driven organizations with new technologies and information (Jordaan 2004). The CRA provide information to the Ministry, not the farmers. A strategic role is also played by the Departments of Agriculture of the Universities (there is at least one Department in each Region). The University system often runs applied research and it is frequently responsible for delivering information to farmers, farmer's organization, regions or national ministry.



Funding

Funding of the advice delivered by the associations is partly funded by the government which covers the cost of provided services. Additionally there are member fees, but most of the associations' income is generated through paid services such as bookkeeping, legal services and administration of the rural development plans of the European Union and the national government.

The framework of farm advisory system in Veneto

The system of agricultural extension services in Veneto Region is characterized by the presence of many public and private subjects, where the role of associations is quite significant. These associations collect the needs of farms and territory, in order to direct them to regional agricultural innovation system, in accordance with the activity of the Regional Agency for agriculture, agro-food and forestry "Veneto Agriculture". The agency is established by Regional Law (RL) n. 35/1997 and plays an important role of public support for the implementation of agricultural extension services.

The main actors in Veneto are: Farmers associations (as explained above), advisory firms, advice from the regional government as well as from the provinces; Chambers of commerce, cooperatives, producer associations, and also private professionals (Ascione et al.2010)

2.7.6 Netherlands

The demand for advice today in the Netherlands is satisfied uniquely by private providers. The main dominating advisory service is *De Landbouwvoorlichting* (DLV) which had formerly been public but is today fully privatized (ADE 2009). The formerly public technical advisory service DLV was privatized in 1990 and independent from state funding. Today DLV consists of five independent operating departments (plant production, animal production, economy, construction, renewable energies) of which DLV Plant and DLV Animal are the two departments that work as extension agents mostly (www.dlv.nl). The privat funded organization DLV Plant is an independent advisory and research organization with approximately 200 employees. DLV Animal is also an independent consulting firm with approximately 115 employees. Their advice entails farm visits mostly as well as educating farmers through field days, meetings, farmers' projects and internet or paper information.

Secondly the *Land- en Tuinbouw Organisatie* (LTO), the Netherlands farmers association, also offers advisory services (Ehlers et al. 2005). The LTO consists of a partnership of the LTO North, the Southern LTO and the LTO in North Limburg and has almost 50.000 members (www.lto.nl) divided in two divisions: animal production and plant production. Each division is split into departments related to products. The company is financed through their members by member fees. The mission of the LTO is to promote the economic and social position of their members. In term of farm advisory services to their members, LTO participates in projects financially to improve the production, welfare and interests of the members. LTO has a farm advisory service which offers specialized services on different agricultural disciplines (arable, horticulture, dairy farms etc) or different topics (strategic development, personnel and farm, energy, legal advise, etc). So LTO it is concentrating on

social and economic advices, like strategic development of the farm, succession process and advices on legal issues while DLV is focussing on the rather technical aspects of production (Timmers 2005 in: Ehlers et al. 2005).

Advice is also provided by product processing companies that focus on one commodity and provide information to their supplier farmers on how to produce the quality that they demand. One example would be FrieslandCampina. It is one of the world's largest dairy co-operatives. They have 14,132 member farmers in the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium. The FrieslandCampina member farmers own and supervise the company (<http://www.frieslandcampina.com/english/about-us/cooperation-and-farmers.aspx>). The member dairy farmers in the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium are the joint owners of Koninklijke FrieslandCampina N.V. through Zuivelcoöperatie FrieslandCampina U.A. Members have a vote in company decisions and receive advice on milk production, sometimes as guidelines to comply to.

Additionally advisory services exist in The Netherlands which are joint cooperatives of farmers. They buy inputs together and have employed advisors, but the expertise is mainly on inputs. As these cooperatives are independent from the input producers they are slightly more objective than the producers themselves. An example of this type of advisory service is *Agrifirm* (<http://www.agrifirm.com>).

Lastly, advice is also provided by input producers which is coupled to the product recommendations. Hence it is questionable whether this can be regarded as advisory service in the narrow sense of the term as it is not an advice in an open and unbiased way. Additionally there are several smaller private advisory companies of minor importance. Figure 12 gives an overview of the funding as well as the execution of the farm advisory system in The Netherlands.

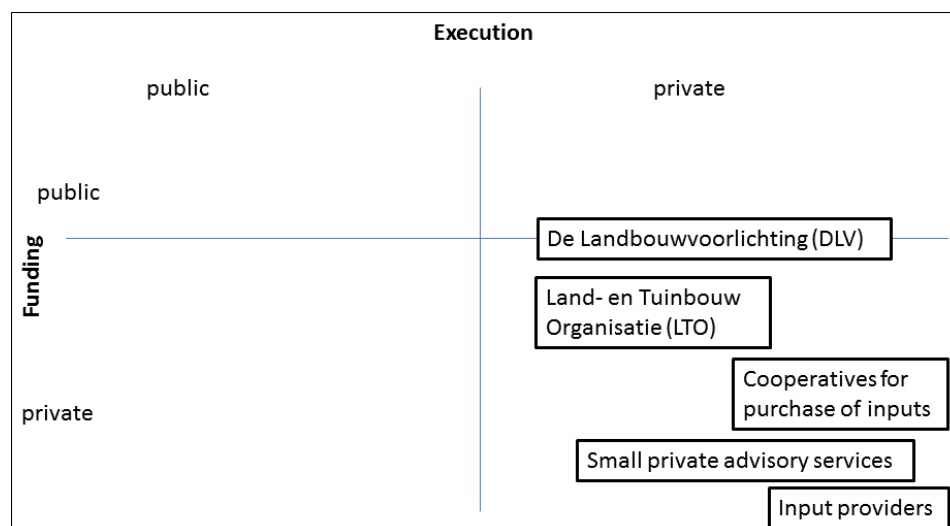


Figure 15: Farm advisory system in The Netherlands

As most of the private advisory services DLV is essentially financed through its' charged advisory services. The DLV services are fully user paid and 100% covered by the beneficiary farmer. Around 30% of DLV incomes are generated through project based public subsidies.



Such publicly funded projects are mostly advisory services that are of public interest, such as environmental measures on farms etc. (Ehlers et al. 2005). These kind of advisory services are co-financed for the farmer up to 50% for one-to-one advice and up to 100% for group trainings.

2.7.7 Poland

Poland is one of the countries with a mixture of private and public farm advisory service. Due to European Legislation in 2005 the Agricultural Advisory Centre in Brwinów (the CDR) was established, as well as its branches in Kraków, Poznań and Radom. Additionally 16 Provincial Centres of Agricultural Advisory (Wojewódzkie Ośrodki Doradztwa Rolniczego – ODR) were founded, one in each Polish province, with a total of 312 regional offices (Skórnicki). Today there are several more advisory bodies that offer advice to farmers.

Firstly there is the Agriculture Advisory Centre (Centrum Doradztwa Rolniczego - CDR) in Brwinów with its three branch offices in Kraków, Poznań and Radom. The main center had been established in 1947 and reorganized in 2005 and is today part of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. It is a governmental unit and reports directly to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. Its scope covers the whole country. The CDR is managed by a director, appointed by the Minister of Agricultural and Rural Development (Kania 2010). The CDR with its 3 branches carry out tasks connected with: preparation and handing over information and training materials, analysis and prediction about development of agricultural advisory, staff training (including agricultural school teachers), creating and running the information system, coordination of tasks connected with ecological farming undertaken by the ODRs, putting research results into practice, inspection of private advisory units (Baltic Deal Project 2011).

The CDR sets an advisory program on annual basis as well as the priorities for action for the whole year. The plans are prepared at state level and they take into accounts the needs of both agricultural advisors and farmers (Kania 2010). The main sources of funding for the CDR are subsidies from the state budget (about 50% of its budget) and from business operations (45% of the budget) (Kania 2010).

Secondly the Provincial Centres of Agricultural Advisory (Wojewódzkie Ośrodki Doradztwa Rolniczego – ODRs) are an important player in the agricultural advisory sector. These ODRs are self-governed organizational legal entities. In each of the 16 provinces in Poland there is one provincial ODR. The priority for the ODRs is to assist farmers and their families in making decisions that will help them achieve their goals. This is achieved by: actions taken to improve the level of qualifications of farmers and rural inhabitants, implementing the instruments of the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy, promotion of the multifunctional development of rural areas, promotion of environmentally-friendly management methods and environmental protection, assistance in implementing new requirements relating to agricultural production, the so-called mutual conformity principle (cross-compliance), implementation of new production technologies, protection and cultivation of cultural heritage at the village level and the assistance in the creation of production groups.

Provincial ODRs are part of the public sector. They receive purpose subsidies from the state budget to carry out their tasks and specific subsidies for the remuneration of employees and maintenance of the centres.

The advisory services of the agricultural chambers are also entitled to deliver advice to farmers. There are 16 agricultural chambers, one for each region. The agricultural chambers are quite new organizations as they did not exist during the previous economic system. The tendency is to give them certain relevance in advice delivery but the advisory services within the chambers do not have the same level of experience as the ODR advisors have (Vincenzo 2008).

Finally the farm advisory system is completed by private bodies that have to be accredited by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

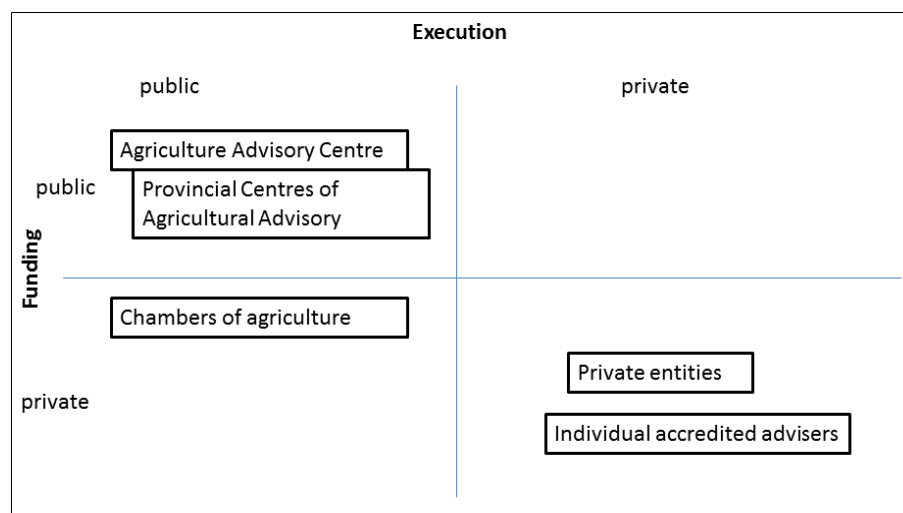


Figure 16: Farm advisory system in Poland

Public advice is free from charge for farmers. Private advice has first to be paid by the farmer but in general Farmers that use advisory service can be refunded by 80% (for a maximum of 1.500 Euros).

Main topics of agricultural advice are agricultural economies and marketing, as well as the development of entrepreneurship in agriculture, multifunctional development of rural areas and agriculture, alternative sources of income and environmental methods of management in agriculture (Kania 2010).

2.7.8 Spain

The farm advisory system in Spain is largely derived from initiatives of the public administration which are today accomplished by a few private initiatives (Muñoz-Cañavate, Hípola 2010). Generally the farm advisory system is regionally differentiated in Spain. The following paragraph will present some general information and then focus on one example region, Murcia.



The responsibility for extension rested until 1979 with the Ministry of Agriculture. From 1979 to 1985 the extension services were decentralized among the country's 17 regions, resulting in regionally autonomous but still public extension services. Advice provided by these services remains free. The central services no longer define either the overall policy for extension or the management of its resources. Instead, the centre provides training and greater coordination than the regional centres do and has strengthened specialized services. The ministry of agriculture offers some 30 to 40 training sessions annually. A coordination committee, including the national director for rural development and the 17 regional directors for extension, plays an important role in the exchange of information, supporting the autonomous regions, improving operations and training, and managing staff. The country also operates with chambers of agriculture which are funded by the Institute for Rural Relations. There are mainly three farmers associations: *Asociación Agraria de Jóvenes Agricultores* (ASAJA), can be considered as the follower organization of the Agrarian Unit and the Brotherhood of Farmers and Stockbreeders (Muñoz-Cañavate, Hípola 2010); the *Coordinadora de Organizaciones de Agricultores y Ganaderos* (COAG - I.R.) that is the umbrella organization for the regional Unions of agrarian cooperatives and the Union of Small Farmers (*Unión de Pequeños Agricultores*, UPA) (Muñoz-Cañavate, Hípola 2010). These associations together total some 200000 members. The ASAJA has some 350 technicians who work in close collaboration with the public extension service. Hence besides the lobby work the associations have some informational services at their disposal (Muñoz-Cañavate, Hípola 2010). In addition to professional associations and cooperatives, there is another type of organization with a more technical character. It is comprised of fruit and vegetable producers (created by Royal Decree, R.D. 1972/2008) and the inter-professional agroalimentary associations (Muñoz-Cañavate, Hípola 2010).

The main topics of farm advice are pest dispersal and control, new plant varieties, some management practices to be required by the CAP, like cover crops, biodiversity, and the market tendencies (Giraldez, J.-V. 2013, Personal communication).

Murcia

In Murcia Region there are 10 regional bureaus of agriculture. They are integrated in the Murcia local Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Water and form part of the Directorate General of Research and Technology Transfer. The Local Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Water, in collaboration with the farmer associations and Cooperatives, establishes yearly the Regional Training Programme which is developed in the Agricultural Training and Experimentation Centers. The structure of the Training Program is made of a series of specific programmes, among them the farm programme, which include, on the one hand, the matters being experimented on and investigated on Local Ministry farms and those in the process of being transferred to the sector on collaborating farms and, on the other, the activities of counselling, diffusion and technological training (Falagán A. 1999).

Advisory service for farmers in Murcia according to this program is then provided by the Regional Bureaus of Agriculture, by Agricultural Training and Experimentation Centres and by Agro-Food Research and Development Centre (CIDA) and Chambers of Agriculture. All

advisory service is financed by the autonomous community Murcia, farmers do not have to pay for it (Falagán A. 1999).

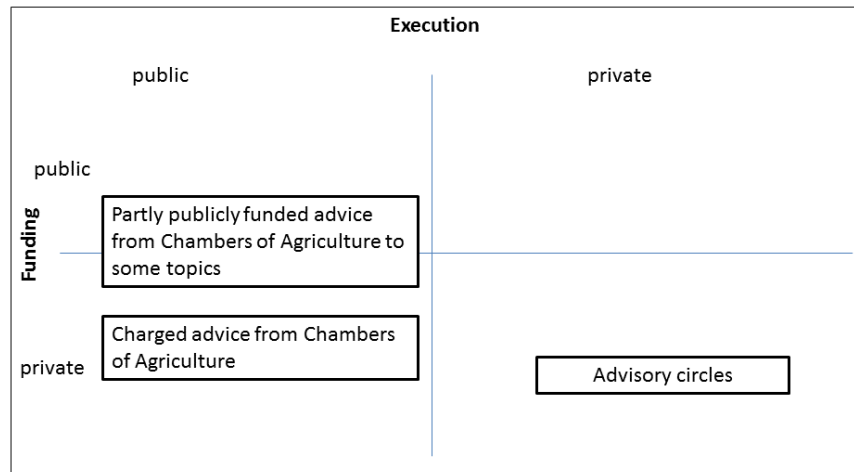


Figure 17: Farm advisory system in Murcia (Spain)

The general aims of the Program can be summarized as follows (Falagán A. 1999):

- a) To transfer to farms the technological innovations arising from R&D projects in order to improve production processes.
- b) To incorporate innovative avant-garde technologies which improve farmers' revenue and are compatible with environmental protection.
- c) To improve the quality of production.
- d) To rationalize the use of inputs in production processes.
- e) To improve technical business assistance.
- f) To train young farmers.
- g) To impart technology.



Final remarks

This report shows how European farm advisory systems are organized heterogeneously at the country and even the regional level. In Central and Northern European countries FAS are mainly organized with public actors, with agricultural chambers (semi-public) or farmer organizations. There used to be more public funding, but it can be observed that public funding of FAS in general has decreased over the years. In other regions, such as Eastern and Central Europe the private sector has filled the gap where no public system was in place or where the system has been disrupted. In these countries the tendency is observable that governments put in place publicly co-funded FAS. Different FAS structures exist, based on historical developments, and there is no clear conceptual framework at the EU level to guide policymakers on designing and regulating FAS programmes.

For the Catch-C project, this report offers an extensive baseline for designing targeted activities of dissemination. It became clear that each partner has to address to those partners that might give best results and broadest scope. Also, instruments that promise high dissemination efficiency without being part of historical regional structures, such as farmers groups can be seen as a fruitful instrument. It is worthwhile to develop and to study these instruments in more detail.

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Abbreviations

AA	Agricultural Academy (Bulgaria)
AGROBIO	Associação Portuguesa de Agricultura Biológica (Portugal)
AHDB	Agricultural and Horticultural Development Board (UK)
ANCA	National Agency for Agricultural Consulting (Rumania)
ASAJA	Asociación Agraria de Jóvenes Agricultores (Spain)
BMP	Best Management Practice
CAFRE	College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (Northern Ireland)
CAN	Confederação Nacional da Agricultura (Portugal)
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CAP	Confederação dos Agricultores de Portugal
CDR	Agricultural Advisory Centre (Poland)
CIDA	Research and Development Centre (Spain)
CLCA	Local Centers for Agricultural Consulting (Rumania)
COAG	Coordinadora de Organizaciones de Agricultores y Ganaderos (Spain)
COGECA	General Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives
CONFAGRI	Confederação Nacional de Cooperativas Agrícolas (Portugal)
COPA	Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations
CRA	Counsel for Research and Experimental activities in Agriculture (Italy)
DAAS	Danish Agricultural Advisory Service
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (UK)
DLV	De Landbouwwoorlichting (Netherlands)
DRAAF	Directions régionales de l'Alimentation, de l'Agriculture et de la Forêt (France)
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FAS	Farm Advisory System
IAEI	Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information (Czech Republic)
IALB	International Academy for Agricultural and Home Economics Advisory Services
LAAS	Lithuanian Agriculture Advisory Service (Lithuania)
LEADER	Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale
LMS	Landwirtschaftsberatung Mecklenburg-Vorpommern/Schleswig Holstein (Germany)
LRATC	Latvian Agricultural Advisory and Training Centre
LTO	Land- en Tuinbouw Organisatie (Netherlands)
NAAS	National Agricultural Advisory Service (Bulgaria)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPPQS	National Plant Protection and Quarantine Service (Bulgaria)
ODR	Ośrodku Doradztwa Rolniczego (Poland)
OJCA	County Centers for Agricultural Consulting (Rumania)
RAAS	Regional Agricultural Advisory Services (Bulgaria)
RDA	Regional Departments of Agriculture (Bulgaria)



RENE	Rural Extension Network in Europe
REPS	Rural Environment Protection Scheme (Ireland)
SAC	Scottish Agricultural College
TAC	Territorial Advisory Centres (Hungary)
UPA	Unión de Pequeños Agricultores

EU-Member States

AT	Austria
BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CY	Cyprus
CZ	Czech Republic
DE	Germany
DK	Denmark
EE	Estonia
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FI	Finland
FR	France
HU	Hungary
IE	Ireland
IT	Italy
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
LV	Latvia
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SE	Sweden
SK	Slovakia
SI	Slovenia
UK	United Kingdom