

SEASN monthly

NEWSLETTER

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THE FIRST ISSUE OF SEASN MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

SEASN's monthly newsletter is a go-to source for updates on our projects, events, and key developments. It's designed to keep our community informed, share knowledge, and connect members.

INSIDE :

Annual SEASN General Assembly

SEASN held its annual General Assembly in Belgrade, Serbia, where the network's achievements for the year 2024 were presented.

Training on interactive innovation

SEASN held a successful training on interactive innovation for stakeholders from the South Eastern European region as part of the i2connect interactive innovation training.

The ending of i2connect project

The end of October marked the conclusion of the i2connect project. Over its five-year span, the project delivered many significant achievements.

IALB, EUFRAS, SEASN conference 2025

Announcing the European Advisory Service Networks conference, which will take place in Brussels, Belgium, from June 25th to 26th, 2025.

NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHT

The first issue of SEASN Monthly Newsletter: A New Platform to Connect SEASN Members

SEASN is thrilled to announce the launch of our monthly newsletter, a dedicated space for sharing updates on our projects, events, and key developments. Created alongside our new website, the newsletter is designed to keep our community informed and engaged. It will be published every month and delivered straight to your inbox, offering a convenient way to stay connected with SEASN's activities.

The newsletter aims to serve as a hub for knowledge sharing within our network. It will provide the latest updates on SEASN's projects, insights into ongoing activities, and information about upcoming events. Subscribers can look forward to reading interesting articles, reports, and news contributed by members from across Southeast Europe and beyond.

We encourage everyone to get involved and make the newsletter a collaborative success. Subscribing is easy—just visit our website and sign up to receive it directly in your inbox. We also invite all SEASN members to contribute content. Whether it's an article, a report, or news from your organization, your input is invaluable. Don't let language be a barrier; we welcome contributions in any language to ensure everyone's voice is heard.

By subscribing to the SEASN newsletter, you'll not only stay informed but also gain access to a wealth of knowledge and ideas from across the network. Join us in making this platform a vibrant space for sharing, connecting, and growing together. Subscribe today and be part of the conversation!

SEASN GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2024

On October 28, 2024, SEASN held its General Assembly in Belgrade, Serbia, at the Institute for Science Application in Agriculture (IPN). This year's Assembly marked a significant milestone—10 years since plans to establish SEASN began—and brought together 20 participants from seven countries and nine member organizations.

The event started with a warm welcome from Igor Hrovatič and Rade Jovanović, who reflected on SEASN's journey over the past decade. They highlighted the network's achievements in connecting agricultural advisory services across Southeast Europe and beyond, emphasizing the importance of collaboration in addressing the challenges ahead.

Discussions focused on SEASN's activities and accomplishments in 2024, including the completion of the Horizon 2020 i2connect project and ongoing work in other Horizon Europe initiatives. Participants also celebrated the launch of SEASN's new website, the announcement of monthly newsletters, and SEASNFair, a platform for sharing knowledge and fostering connections among members.



Plans for 2025 were presented, with highlights including a conference in Brussels to strengthen ties with EU institutions, further involvement in Horizon projects, and celebrations for SEASN's 10th anniversary, including a commemorative brochure. Increasing member engagement and expanding participation across the network were also identified as key goals.

This year's General Assembly was not only a chance to reflect on all of the progress but also an opportunity to set the stage for an even more ambitious future. SEASN is proud to have organized this important event and looks forward to continuing its mission of supporting agricultural advisors and fostering innovation.

INTERACTIVE INNOVATION IN ACTION: A HANDS-ON TRAINING FOR STAKEHOLDERS IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE

Following the SEASN General Assembly on October 28, 2024, stakeholders from the Southeast European region gathered for a three-day training session on interactive innovation. Hosted as part of the concluding activities of the i2connect project, this workshop provided participants, primarily agricultural advisors, with practical experience in using innovative tools to solve real-world challenges.

The training began with an introduction to interactive innovation tools, where participants learned about their structure, applications, and the situations in which they are most effective. Through an engaging presentation, the trainers explained how these tools could support collaborative problem-solving and foster innovative solutions across diverse scenarios.

Building on this foundation, participants engaged in a series of hands-on exercises to apply these tools to real-life situations. They were encouraged to think of a problem they had encountered, analyze the process of finding a solution, and map out all the actors, milestones, and dynamics involved. This exercise helped them gain a deeper understanding of how interactive innovation tools can dissect complex processes and highlight the importance of collaboration.

To enhance engagement and foster a positive atmosphere, the workshop also incorporated activities such as personality mapping, ice-breakers, and mood-boosting exercises. These activities not only energized participants but also facilitated better communication and teamwork.



The training was led by three experienced trainers: Domagoj Gorup from SEASN, along with Marijana Maslovarić and Vedran Tomić from IPN. Their expertise and guidance ensured that participants left with valuable insights and practical skills they could implement in their advisory work.

As the final training session of the i2connect project, this workshop marked the culmination of efforts to equip advisors in the region with the tools and knowledge needed to drive innovation. The hands-on approach and collaborative spirit of the training underscored the importance of interactive innovation in addressing agricultural challenges and fostering sustainable solutions.



I2CONNECT: CELEBRATING FIVE YEARS OF INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION

As October 2024 came to a close, so did the transformative journey of the i2connect project, an ambitious initiative funded under the EU Horizon 2020 program. Over five years, i2connect united advisors, researchers, policymakers, and farmers from across Europe to enhance Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS). Through its focus on interactive innovation, the project empowered advisory services to address the evolving challenges of modern agriculture and forestry.

The final conference, held from October 1st to 3rd in Varna, Bulgaria, marked the culmination of the project's remarkable achievements. Organized by Bulgaria's National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAAS), the event brought together 95 participants from 16 countries, offering a platform to showcase outcomes, exchange knowledge, and celebrate the project's legacy. Key sessions featured interactive workshops, practical tools, success stories from pilot projects, and field visits to innovative agricultural enterprises.



i2connect's accomplishments are impressive and enduring. Over 700 advisors from 24 countries were trained in interactive innovation practices, creating a robust pool of professionals capable of driving change. Thirteen pilot projects were launched across Europe, addressing diverse agricultural challenges, while over 30 cross-visits enabled knowledge exchange and networking among AKIS actors. The project also organized three summer schools in Greece, Germany, and Ireland, where university students gained practical experience in innovation processes and collaboration.

The project introduced groundbreaking tools, including the Spiral of Initiatives, Eco-Analysis, and the Circle of Coherence, which provide advisors with practical methodologies to foster collaboration and enhance innovation. Additionally, the AKIS Toolbox and comprehensive reports on 30 European AKIS systems have inspired improvements and adaptations at national levels, serving as invaluable resources for ongoing development.

Looking to the future, i2connect's legacy will continue through sister projects such as Modern AKIS and ATTRAKTISS. These initiatives aim to sustain and expand the networks, tools, and practices established, ensuring that interactive innovation remains at the forefront of agricultural advisory services.

I2CONNECT ACHIEVEMENTS AT A GLANCE

Project Duration: 5 years (2019–2024)

Partners Involved: 42 from 21 countries, including 4 European networks

Advisors Trained: Over 700 across 24 countries

Trainers Developed: 73 trainers in the "Pool of Trainers"

Pilot Projects: 13 implemented across Europe

Cross-Visits: 30+ organized in 10 countries

Summer Schools: 3 held in Greece, Germany, and Ireland

AKIS Reports: 30 country reports published

Practical Innovation Cases: 282 collected, including 40 reviewed in-depth

Good Practices Identified: 57 examples documented

Among all its achievements, the most impactful is the vibrant network of AKIS actors that i2connect has built across Europe. This network, a cornerstone of the project's success, will serve as a foundation for many future endeavors. Projects to come will not only build upon but also “worship” the groundwork laid by i2connect, continuing to foster collaboration, innovation, and shared learning in agriculture. SEASN and its members are proud to have been part of this transformative journey, which has set a lasting benchmark for excellence in agricultural advisory systems.



KEY TOOLS DEVELOPED BY I2CONNECT

The i2connect project has developed several innovative tools to enhance agricultural advisory services and promote interactive innovation:

Warm and Cold Processes: Helps identify participatory (“warm”) vs. technical (“cold”) processes for better stakeholder engagement.

Spiral of Initiatives: Visualizes the stages of an initiative, highlighting the non-linear nature of innovation.

Circle of Coherence: Assesses network interactions, improving collaboration by identifying positive and negative behaviors.

Triangle of Co-Creation: Defines the roles of initiators, managers, and suppliers to ensure balanced collaboration.

Network Analysis: Optimizes network communication by analyzing key actors and relationships.

Eco-Analysis: Evaluates network dynamics using ecological metaphors to identify supportive or harmful influences.



EVENT: IALB EUFRAS SEASN CONFERENCE

The 64th IALB, 14th EUFRAS, and 11th SEASN Conference, held on June 25th–26th, 2025, in Brussels, will focus on the theme “Strengthening the Role of Advisors and Educators in the CAP – Now and in the Future.” The conference will explore how advisory services and education can address the major challenges faced by agriculture, such as cost pressures, climate change, fluctuating food prices, and the loss of biodiversity. With the EU’s ambitious goals, including the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the Green Deal, and the Farm-to-Fork Strategy, there is an increasing need for professional advisory support to drive sustainable and climate-neutral agricultural practices. The event will feature workshops, case studies, and discussions on the evolving role of advisors and educators in implementing these policies, fostering innovation, and ensuring the integration of diverse knowledge areas. This is a valuable opportunity for SEASN members to participate in the event and share their experiences from the South Eastern region, contributing to the ongoing discussions on the role of advisory services and education in shaping the future of agriculture in the European Union.

SEASNFair



SEASN is thrilled to introduce SEASNFair, a new monthly online event designed to bring our members and the wider community together to share knowledge and foster connections. Each event will last 1 to 1.5 hours, featuring 2-3 short presentations by members on a range of topics, from project achievements to innovations and research. After the presentations, there will be plenty of time for active discussion, where participants can share their thoughts, ask questions, and network with others. This platform offers a relaxed yet engaging way to stay connected, gain fresh insights, and inspire new ideas. We encourage our members to get involved by giving a presentation or providing feedback to help us improve the format and content of SEASNFair. If you have an interesting topic to share, reach out and let us know, and we’ll schedule you for an upcoming session. SEASNFair is an exciting opportunity for collaboration and knowledge exchange—join us and be part of the conversation!

JOIN US!

We are announcing

SEASNFair



We are pleased to announce the launch of SEASNFair, an online event organized by SEASN.

WHAT IS SEASNFair ?

- A platform for agricultural innovators and advisory professionals to **share ideas**.
- An opportunity to showcase innovative projects and **engage in dynamic discussions**.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Selected **speakers** will present their work.
- Open forum for knowledge exchange and **networking**.



Get ready to connect,
collaborate, and inspire others!

SEASN



NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

39TH TRADITIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE PUBLIC AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY SERVICE: SOIL, OUR IRREPLACEABLE RESOURCE

Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia has organized its annual Traditional Agricultural Advisors' Conference in Bled. It brought together over 400 participants, including advisors, policymakers, researchers, and international representatives. The event provided a platform for sharing knowledge, presenting new findings, and strengthening connections within the agricultural sector.

The central theme of this year's conference was soil conservation. Anton Jagodic, Head of the Agricultural Advisory Service, emphasized the critical role of advisors in protecting fertile soil for future generations. He called for sustainable financing and a long-term vision to address pressures from urbanization and societal development.

Dr. Jože Podgoršek, President of the Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia, stressed the value of Slovenian farmland for producing safe, high-quality food. He praised farmers for their sustainable practices and highlighted the need to integrate digitalization with traditional farming knowledge, ensuring agriculture adapts to modern challenges.

State Secretary Ervin Kosi emphasized the importance of protecting fertile soil, which forms over millennia but can be destroyed in moments. He called for stronger legal protections and state-led efforts to preserve farmland for future generations.

Presentations from experts at the European Commission, Biotechnical Faculty, and the Ministry of Agriculture focused on strategic initiatives like the 2023-2027 CAP Strategic Plan and projects supporting sustainable farming. Discussions highlighted the vital role of agricultural advisors in ensuring soil conservation and the sustainability of Slovenian agriculture.



*Traditional public
advisory service
conference in Bled,
Slovenia*

CAFS RECOGNIZED AT AGRO HI-TECH 2024 CONFERENCE FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING TOOL

At today's 9th Agro Hi-tech Conference, the Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia (CAFS) was proudly announced as a finalist in the Agro Hi-tech 2024 competition for its innovative SMT Strategic Management Tool. The award recognizes the significant contribution of the tool in advancing long-term strategic planning for agricultural development.

The award was accepted by Darja Pipan, Head of the Entrepreneurship Department at CAFS, who expressed the team's pride in the achievement. "This award means more than just recognition. It is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the team that spent years developing and successfully implementing the SMT tool," said Pipan. She emphasized the collaborative effort, which involved both the CAFS headquarters in Ljubljana and the eight regional offices across Slovenia.

The team's goal was to address the critical need for long-term strategic planning in agriculture. The SMT tool, designed for use by agricultural advisors, allows

farmers to create their own strategic plans for the future of their farms. This innovative approach to empowering farmers to plan effectively was seen as a significant challenge, but the team's commitment paid off.

Pipan also highlighted the positive response from farmers, noting that while initially hesitant, many participants expressed high levels of satisfaction and confidence after completing the tool's three-day workshop. "The boost in their self-esteem and enthusiasm after leaving with their own strategic plan is priceless," she added.

The SMT tool was developed as part of the FairShare project, an EU Horizon 2020 initiative aimed at improving agricultural advisory services and fostering strategic planning. This recognition at the Agro Hi-tech Conference further solidifies the tool's value in transforming the way agricultural planning is approached in Slovenia and beyond.

Congratulations to CAFS for this well-deserved recognition! For more information about the SMT Strategic Management Tool, visit [CAFS Website](#).



The award was accepted by Darja Pipan, Head of the Entrepreneurship Department at the Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia.



SOUTH EASTERN ADVISORY SERVICE NETWORK