

NEWSLETTER 20th and 21st September 2011



On 20th and 21st September 2011, 230 representatives of ministries of agriculture, paying agencies, statistic offices, evaluators, NGOs and academics from all 27 Member States (MS) met together with representatives of the European Commission (EC) and other EU institutions at Square Brussels for the first **Monitoring and Evaluation for CAP post-2013 Stakeholder Conference**, organised by the EC's Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI).

The conference was the kick-off of a longer-term development process and had several specific aims: to build a shared understanding around the requirements and expectations for the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the CAP post-2013, to explore the elements and tools needed in order to meet these expectations and to establish a basis for further work on developing a monitoring and evaluation system which responds to the needs of all stakeholders.

True to the purpose, the working methods for the conference were highly participatory, which allowed those present to share experiences, connect and network, as well as explore the next steps to develop the new monitoring and evaluation system.

Conversations revolved around the following strategic questions:

- *What are our experiences of M&E CAP so far? What are our successes or failures?*
- *What would a successful M&E system achieve for us?*
- *What are the criteria or principles we should base a successful M&E system on?*
- *What are the areas we need to focus on to create a successful M&E system?*
- *What do I want to explore now to implement M&E for the CAP post-2013?*
- *How can we ensure good follow-up of the results of this conference?*



Conclusions:

Participants expressed high expectations about the follow-up to the conference and further work on the future CAP monitoring and evaluation system. The following recurring themes and topics were identified as important and necessary:

- The main aims of the M&E system should be to improve policy performance and to demonstrate policy achievements.
- A solid M&E system requires clearly established policy objectives, such as the EU 2020 priorities.
- Closer linkages should be established between Pillar I and Pillar II to optimise M&E effort and usefulness.
- The future M&E system should be based on the existing system. However, a critical review is needed to ensure relevance and optimal use of all elements.
- Fewer, more relevant common indicators are needed which will cover all areas of policy impact. These should be complemented by Member State and/or programme-specific indicators to ensure the relevance of M&E at different levels.
- The cost and administrative burden of M&E should be reduced through better and more creative use of existing data sources, e.g. integration of databases, multiple use of data.
- Both qualitative and quantitative evaluation is important, so that we understand "why" as well as "what".
- The types and timing of evaluations should be reviewed to ensure timely and useful input into policy-making.
- Partnership and participation of all stakeholders is essential for the development of the new M&E system and for its implementation in the future.
- There are a number of points of divergence which need further exploration.

Monitoring and Evaluation for **CAP post 2013** Stakeholder **Conference**

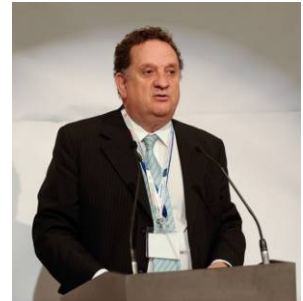
Tuesday 20th September 2011

Opening address by Jose Manuel Silva Rodriguez

Director-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission

While introducing the conference, Mr Silva Rodriguez mentioned that the purpose and strategic focus of the event was to help prepare the future monitoring and evaluation framework of the CAP post-2013.

He explained that the future CAP will be called upon to contribute to Europe 2020 in particular in relation to green growth, balanced territorial development, viable food production and sustainable management of resources, and that this contribution needs to be targeted, measured and assessed in an appropriate way. The future M&E system should help achieve this, and ensure that tax payers' money is well spent.



He underlined the importance of taking advantage of the broad range of stakeholders present to draw on different experiences and opinions, and wished everyone an active and productive conference.

Introduction

Matthieu Kleinschmager introduced the programme and with a show of hands invited the participants to indicate the various stakeholder groups present: Pillar I, Pillar II, evaluators & academics... and not forgetting the statisticians. In a conversational setting at small tables, the participants were asked to reflect on the following question: **Why is it important for me to be here today?**



The following aspirations were expressed:

- learn, debate, discuss and contribute;
- exchange experiences, best practices and information;
- review the existing data, systems, sources, practices, problems, data use;
- build a new system, less costly, effective, efficient, simple and with a low administrative burden.

Sharing experiences

After changing tables and getting to know new people, the participants explored the following question:

What are our experiences of M&E of the CAP so far in the existing structures – what are our successes or failures?

The following factors were seen as successes and/or necessary for success:

- The Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for rural development (CMEF)
- Good networking at all levels (EU/NRN/local)
- Availability of data and capacity
- Motivation and commitment at national level
- Communication between policy makers, implementation bodies and evaluators
- Awareness of purpose
- Active involvement of stakeholders

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The following factors were identified as challenges:

- Providing continuity whilst ensuring relevance to new policy priorities
- Simplification & proportionality at the same time as
 - Extension to Pillar I
 - Harmonisation between funds
 - Link to targets & policy objectives
 - Improved data quality & data integration
- Methodology

In summary, this session concluded that "we're all in this together", with networking, constant communication and stakeholder involvement important keys to success; we need a clear common framework, including elements established in the legal framework; and we must avoid the "data graveyard" and ensure that all M&E results are used.

Reflecting on our shared purpose

The next conversation continued at the small tables around the questions:

What would a successful M&E system achieve for us? and

What are the criteria or principles we should base a successful M&E system on?

The first question identified two overarching objectives for the monitoring and evaluation system:

- A net improvement in policy performance (through better design and implementation)
- Demonstration of policy achievements (at EU and national levels, across the whole spectrum of impacts)

And the following subsidiary requirements to achieve these two objectives:

- Assessing impact and effectiveness
- Establishing "Why" as well as "What" and generating clear recommendations
- Providing information at the appropriate time
- Wide communication of findings

The following key principles for a good M&E system emerged from the discussions:

*Simplification of the existing M&E system, based on:

- Clear common objectives and intervention logic
- Fewer common indicators (EU level)
- Reduced administrative burden
- Stability and continuity
- Cost effectiveness of its implementation

*Effective use of evaluation results, based on:

- Comparability and transparency of results using harmonised methodologies
- High quality and consistency of data to support common indicators
- Proper timing to ensure the use of results in policy design
- Proportionality across MS and flexibility for MS

*Ownership of monitoring and evaluation activities, based on:

- Partnership and participation, involvement of all stakeholders
- Building evaluation capacity



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Collective mind map

The implications of the previous conversations were then captured in a collective mind map, the preparation of which was conducted by Maria Scordialos and mapped by Matthieu Kleinschmager.

The guiding question for the mind map was:

What are the areas we need to focus on to create a successful M&E system - post 2013?

After the mind map was created, participants voted to indicate the most important areas. The voting revealed the following top priorities:

- Simplification and proportionality - 86 points
- Good and better integrated data - 62 points
- Methodologies - 50 points
- Timing - 42 points
- More harmonised system across policies - 19 points
- Identification of net impacts of Pillar I - 19 points
- Indicators linked to targets and policy objectives - 17 points
- Gain an understanding of what is happening - 14 points
- Democracy and participation - 13 points
- Focus on territorial effects - 12 points
- Estimation of the net effects of intervention - 11 points
- What should be measured at MS level & EU level - 11 points



Wednesday 21st September 2011

The day began with a recap of key points from the previous day, and establishing the focus for the following sessions. Whereas the first day was about creating common clarity on what we need to focus on, the second day's task involved getting more focused, going into more depth and making specific recommendations for future work.

Open space

Ursula Hillbrand from the EC Secretariat General explained the process and introduced the session by inviting all those present to participate actively in the workshops and make full use of this unique occasion, with so much expertise gathered from so many diverse backgrounds, to generate creative ideas to improve monitoring and evaluation of the CAP in the future. Before the whole group split into smaller working groups to address individual topics, Rob Peters from DG AGRI encouraged everyone to think about cross-cutting elements and stressed that monitoring and evaluation of the CAP should be linked to EU 2020 priorities. We should not forget to ask the following questions: Why? What? How? do we want to monitor and evaluate. This event provides an opportunity to look at the whole spectrum of M&E activities from a range of perspectives. DG AGRI had previously identified eight topics, and the others were proposed and hosted by the participants themselves.

The overall question for the workshop was:

What do I want to explore now to implement monitoring and evaluation of CAP post-2013?



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The topics of the sessions were posted and discussed in two rounds:

First Round		Second Round	
1	Evaluating Pillar I: methodology, criteria, stakeholders	14	Linkages between M&E of the two Pillars (and the structural funds when useful)
2	LEADER approach and Local Development M&E	15	Why don't you use baseline indicators as result?
3	Environmental Services	16	How to evaluate resource efficiency, climate change & renewable energy?
4	Indicators and data availability	17	Simplification
5	Competitiveness – viability	18	How we make use of M&E data in the policy and programming cycle?
6	On-going evaluation: concept / approach	19	Collection system integration, interoperability
7	Employment & development in rural areas	20	Better use of biodiversity/environmental data for monitoring both Pillars
8	Links between the M&E system and the impact assessments by the Commission	21	Interaction and links among environmental objectives
9	How to focus CMEF more on why things happen instead of just "what happened"?	22	Research in evaluation and ministerial evaluation function
10	General changing of the methodology / evaluation design	23	How best to involve stakeholders?
11	Roles, responsibilities and supporting activities (capacity building for M&E)	24	Cost-effectiveness of M&E for measures in very small MS or Regions
12	Reporting: What do we want? When do we want it?		
13	How to involve consumers?		

Sharing our results



Each of the Open Space hosts provided short feedback on the discussion and conclusions of their own session. These more detailed individual reports with their concrete recommendations are included in the full record of the conference (see below). Here we summarise some of the main themes that emerged from across the sessions, highlighting common areas and links between topics.

The objectives of the M&E system should be to improve the policy and demonstrate policy achievements.

First of all, clear policy objectives must be set up, providing a sound basis for defining relevant indicators to capture all outcomes including impacts. Clear baselines must be established at the ex-ante stage to allow effective policy evaluation. The future M&E system should be built on the basis of existing elements. In terms of data and indicators, a critical look into what is needed and why is necessary. Only data which will be used should be collected. Also, the cost-effectiveness of collecting data needs to be assessed. Existing data should be used and IT systems should be integrated as far as possible to reduce costs and administrative burden.

Sufficient flexibility in conducting evaluations and indicators should be provided so that the evaluations would be meaningful for different levels (regional, national, EU).

Linking the evaluation of Pillar I more closely with that of Pillar II is needed for the new programming period. For example rural development evaluations could also cover territorial and environmental aspects of Pillar I. The timing and focus of the intermediate and ex-post rural development evaluations should also be reconsidered to ensure maximum input into policy-making.



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All this will require the production of good guidance, covering data, methodology, and qualitative evaluation, in sufficient time before the implementation of the new policy framework. A key requirement throughout the whole process is to maintain good communication with all stakeholders.

The whole process of developing a new M&E system should be done through partnership and participation of stakeholders, which would also ensure wide ownership of the new system. There is also a need to foster and develop an evaluation culture in Europe.

Reflecting on our follow-up

How can we ensure a good follow-up of the results of this conference (e.g. using existing structures, fora, networks, working groups)?

At both EU and MS levels:

- *Communicate the results* of the stakeholder conference quickly, clearly and in a transparent way.
- *Use existing structures* to continue further technical discussions and exchange of practices (e.g. Evaluation Expert Committee, European Evaluation Network, National Rural Networks etc.).
- *Continue an open dialogue* with stakeholders (e.g. discussion forums, thematic working groups, peer groups, 2nd stakeholder conference etc.) to identify further potential for simplification and to develop the new monitoring and evaluation system.
- *Raise awareness* on the purpose and use of monitoring and evaluation.

Specifically at EU level:

- *Take into account the results of the conference (and possible further specific recommendations)* when drafting the future legislation on monitoring and evaluation.
- *Improve the institutional collaboration* while preparing for the new framework. Ensure coordination, dialogue and feedback between relevant DGs, funds, Council working groups, Eurostat, OECD etc.
- *Provide clarity on the future monitoring and evaluation system* for Pillar 1 and 2 as early as possible in order to give Member States sufficient time for preparation.

Specifically at MS level:

- *Improve monitoring and evaluation* by further investing into ongoing evaluation, capacity building and participatory approaches.
- *Critically analyse and reflect on the EC proposals* on the future monitoring and evaluation systems and their implications at national level.



Closing address by Tassos Haniotis

Director of the Directorate for Economic analysis, perspectives and evaluations, DG AGRI

During his closing remarks, Mr Haniotis summarised the various needs which had emerged in relation to the new M&E system of the CAP. *"Firstly, we need clear policy definition because this is what we have to evaluate. Secondly, we will have to better communicate the results of our evaluations to those willing to use those results. Thirdly, we need feedback and continuity in our evaluation. And finally, we will have to link our conclusions to the 2020 targets."*

He recognized that we had fun during the conference at the same time as learning and meeting people with different perspectives and viewpoints on the CAP. He identified building a common language and establishing what worked so far, and what did not work and should be improved, as the main benefits of the event. Mr Haniotis agreed that we will have to build a common framework with some flexible elements, fewer but more meaningful indicators (clearly linked to the priorities) and that this framework should be ready before the start

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of the new period. We also have to recognize that there is a mass of available data, but that we need to find innovative ways to use it and we should focus on what we need.

All this will require a cost/benefit analysis to ensure that what could be seen as simplification is not just transferring the workload to another level, but actually does bring a global decrease in the administrative burden.

He also referred to the need to link M&E for the two pillars of the CAP by bringing people and ideas together, and that the assessment of impacts needed to include qualitative analysis, themes which emerged clearly from the debates.



Mr Hanotis concluded by saying that it is inevitable that we should address M&E better and that we should see the CAP as one common policy which has a range of different objectives. Furthermore we need to find ways of better integrating existing knowledge and resources in an overall context of less financial resources. This could be achieved through a variety of channels, by using existing structures e.g. expert committees, management committees, by bringing together smaller groups, and finally at least one more broad gathering of stakeholders, like this one.

Finally, he acknowledged and thanked everyone who had worked on the preparation of the conference and thanked all the participants: *"Thank you all for coming and contributing!"*

More pictures of the conference are available at:

http://web.aimgroupinternational.com/2011/monitoring_evaluation_cap-post2013/

Many participants, coming from EU institutions, Member States and NGOs were positively surprised by the participatory practices used for this conference, expressed their appreciation of the approach, and wanted to explore them for use in their area of work. Information about the methodology used is available at: www.artofhosting.org

Some quotes on the process / organisation of the conference:

"A great way of sharing knowledge and high-productive results! Especially the mind mapping was a great job."

"Very impressive conference, good to see that there is room for innovative concepts & participative methods."

"It has been very helpful. I admired the courage that you have had in putting on this conference"

"Good interactive approach but on technical issues we still need to hear from the experts."

"Good possibility for constructive communication."

More detailed notes of the conferences can be found in the full record of the conference, which will be available at: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/eval/index_en.htm

Hosting/facilitation team: Matthieu Kleinschmager, Rainer von Leoprechting, Ursula Hillbrand, Maria Scordialos, Monica Nissen, Rob Peters, Gaëlle Lhermitte, Christophe Derzelle, Sari Rannanpaa, Leo Maier, Dorota Nadolna, Leen Vandenbussche, Zélie Peppiette, Hannes Wimmer, Jela Tvrdonova.



Monitoring and Evaluation
for **CAP post 2013**
Stakeholder **Conference**
Brussels, 20-21 September 2011

Tuesday 20 September

	Time	Activity	Room
	10:00	Registration desk opens	Registration area (Glass Hall / Level -1)
	12:00	Buffet lunch	Hall 100 / Level +1
	13:30	Welcome: this conference and the strategic decision-making process	Plenary room (Grand hall 1 / Level -2)
	14:30	Sharing current experiences of monitoring and evaluation of the Common Agricultural Policy	
	15:15	Coffee break	
	15:40	Reflecting on our common purpose: why do we need a monitoring and evaluation system for the CAP, what would it achieve, and on what principles should it be based?	
	16:45	Identifying key focus areas for the development of the monitoring and evaluation system post-2013: issues, challenges, opportunities and questions	
	17:50	Closing day 1 (ends at 18:00)	Hall 100 / Level +1
	19:30	Dinner	

Wednesday 21 September

	Time	Activity	Room
	9:00	Opening, welcome, recap of key insights from day 1	Plenary room (Grand hall 1 / Level -2)
	9:15	Introduction of workshop topics and process	
	9:50	Parallel workshop session 1: Choice of topics covering a range of thematic and practical areas linked to development and implementation of a successful monitoring and evaluation system	Breakout rooms (studios 206, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215 and 216 / Level +2)
	10:50	Coffee break	Hall 100 / Level +1
	11:10	Parallel workshop session 2: Choice of topics covering a range of thematic and practical areas linked to development and implementation of a successful monitoring and evaluation system	Breakout rooms (studios 206, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215 and 216 / Level +2)
	12:20	Feedback of key results from workshop sessions 1 and 2	Plenary room (Grand hall 1 / Level -2)
	13:00	Buffet lunch	Hall 100 / Level +1
	14:30	Taking the work forward: follow up to the conference, identification of next steps in the process	Plenary room (Grand hall 1 / Level -2)
	15:30	Key outcomes of the event and closing remarks (ends at 16:00)	