



Evaluation of the Implementation of the Farm Advisory System

Final Report – Descriptive Part

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Evaluation of the Implementation of the Farm Advisory System

Descriptive Part

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List of acronyms

Acronyms	
AAS	Agricultural Advisory Services (Latvia)
ADASEA	Association Départementale pour l'Aménagement des Structures des Exploitations Agricoles (France)
AE	Agro-environmental
AKIS	Dutch Agricultural knowledge and information system
APCA	Assemblée Permanente des Chambres d'Agriculture (France)
BAS	Bedrijfadvis Systeem (The Netherlands and Belgium -Flanders)
BSc	Bachelor of Science
CAFRE	College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CBA	Cost Benefit Analysis
CER	Centre for Rural Economy (France)
CIFAS	Study on environmental cross-compliance indicators in the context of the Farm Advisory System
COR	Committee of Regions
CR	Country report
DAAS	Danish Agricultural Advisory Services
DARD	Department of Agricultural and Rural Development (UK – Northern Ireland)
DGARNE	Direction Générale Opérationnelle de l'Agriculture, des Ressources Naturelles et de l'Environnement (Belgium – Wallonia)
DG AGRI	Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development
DLO	National Directorate for Agricultural Research (The Netherlands)
DLV	Dienstverlening voor de Landbouw en Verwante sectoren (Services for agriculture and related sectors – The Netherlands)
DRAF	Direction Régionale de l'Agriculture et des Forêts (France)
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EAGGF	European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund
EC	European Commission
EQ	Evaluation Question
ESU	European Size Units
EU	European Union

FADN	Farm Accountancy Data Network
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FAS	Farm advisory system
FAServices	Farm Advisory Services
FAT	Farm advisory tool
FAP	European Forestry Action Plan
FoAS	Forestry Advisory Services
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GAEC	Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions
ha	Hectare
HFCF	Helping Farmers Comply Forum (UK – Northern Ireland)
IACS	Integrated Administration and Control System
IAEI	Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IKC	Information and Knowledge Centres (The Netherlands)
JC	Judgment criteria
JRC	Joint Research Centre
KT	Knowledge Transfer
LAAD	Local Agencies for Agricultural Development (Greece)
LFA	Less Favoured Areas
LNv	Minister van Landbouw, Natuur en Voedselkwaliteit (The Netherlands)
LRA	Local and Regional Administrations
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (Bulgaria)
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (Hungary)
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MS	Member State
MSc	Master of Science
n.a.	Not available
NAAS	National Agricultural Advisory Service (Bulgaria)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NVZ	Nitrate Vulnerable Zone
OB	Operating Bodies
ODR	Regional Agricultural Advisory Centres (Poland)

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PHARE	Poland and Hungary Assistance for Economic Restructuring Programme
RAAS	Regional Offices of the NAAS (Bulgaria)
RDP	Rural Development Programme
REPS	Rural Environment Protection Scheme
SAC	Scottish Agricultural College
SAPARD	Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development
SAPS	Single Area Payment Scheme
SFEDIS	Small Firms Enterprise Development Standards
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SMR	Statutory Management Requirements
SP	Single Payment
SPS	Single Payment Scheme
TAC	Technical Advice Centres (Hungary)
Teagasc	Agricultural and Food Department Authority (Ireland)
ToR	Terms of reference
UAA	Utilized Agricultural Area
WAG	Welsh Assembly Government
Wageningen UR	Wageningen University (The Netherlands)

Executive summary

Subject, objectives and scope of the evaluation

This evaluation commissioned by the DG Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission aims at providing an overall independent assessment of the implementation of the Farm Advisory System. The FAS being mandatory since January 2007, it takes the form of a mid-term evaluation.

The evaluation was carried out between January and October 2009. It is composed of two parts: a comprehensive description of the establishment and implementation of the FAS in the MS and the evaluation part itself, which examines the effectiveness and efficiency of the FAS with respect to achieving the objectives laid down in Regulation (EC) N°1782/2003, and the relevance of the instrument and its coherence with other measures.

The evaluation covers the instrument as foreseen in Regulation (EC) N°1782/2003 and Regulation (EC) N°1698/2005 regarding support from rural development for the setting-up and use of advisory services. Both regulations, complemented by Commission Regulation (EC) N°1974/2006¹ form the legal architecture of the instrument.

The evaluation covers the EU27 and the period from January 2005 until 2009.

Methodology

The evaluation was based on four phases, namely structuring, observing, analysing and judging that combined desk and field work. The descriptive part of the evaluation is mainly based on the desk phase, completed with phone interviews. It is based on three sources of information:²

- the documentation provided to the evaluator during the kick-off meeting in January 2009 and the responses received to a country questionnaire sent out by the Commission (DG Agri) to all MS and related to the implementation of the FAS during 2008;
- additional documentation gathered directly by the evaluator including various studies, research papers, articles, statistics etc.; and
- 27 Country Reports (CR) prepared by the evaluator's country correspondents and based on a set of basic detailed documentation at national or regional level and statistics compiled by the Core evaluation team, as well as phone interviews with at least FAS managers (and sometimes advisors or other stakeholders) in each MS.

¹ Commission Regulation (EC) N°1974/2006 of 15 December 2006 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) N°1698/2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

² See also the bibliography.

Compiling these CR has been constrained by two major elements: i) availability of univocal figures³ and ii) regular staff turn-over, whereby knowledge on FAS is often fragmented and discontinued in time.

Scope and contextual elements of FAS

The overall scope and framework of the FAS is described in detail in the evaluative part (section 1). The Farm Advisory System (FAS) has been mandatory for all MS since January 2007. Its implementation is governed by the articles of Regulation (EC) N° 1782/2003, summarised in the box below.

Following the “Health check revision of the CAP” (2007-2008), this regulation was repealed by Regulation (EC) N°73/2009. It slightly amended provisions concerning SMR and GAEC, especially GAEC. However, these changes have not been taken on board in this evaluation, as MS have planned and implemented FAS (until the end of 2008) using the previous regulatory framework.

Farm advisory system

Article 13

1. By 1 January 2007, Member States shall set up a system of advising farmers on land and farm management (hereinafter referred to as the ‘farm advisory system’) operated by one or more designated authorities or by private bodies.

2. The advisory activity shall cover at least the statutory management requirements and the good agricultural and environmental conditions referred to in Chapter I.

Article 14

1. Farmers may participate in the farm advisory system on a voluntary basis.

2. Member States shall give priority to the farmers who receive more than EUR 15,000 of direct payments per year.

Article 15

Without prejudice to national legislation concerning public access to documents, Member States shall ensure that private bodies and designated authorities referred to in Article 13 do not disclose personal or individual information and data they obtain in their advisory activity to persons other than the farmer managing the holding concerned, except any irregularity or infringement found during their activity which is covered by an obligation laid down in Community or national law to inform a public authority, in particular in case of criminal offences.

A series of contextual elements (relating either to the overall FAS framework or to the EU agricultural sector) need to be kept in mind when reviewing the descriptive part: i) operational implementation of the FAS was delayed and in several MS first concrete actions were undertaken in 2008; ii) average farm sizes, types of farming and management differs widely between MS, directly impacting on FAS; iii) the regulatory framework of the FAS leaves a large margin of discretion to the MS in the establishment of their own FAS. In this respect, two major groups of MS⁴ have been identified: in 14 MS (majority of regions in BE, DE, IT and the UK) advisory activities tend to focus strictly on the statutory management requirements (SMR) and the good agricultural and

environmental conditions (GAEC) included in the scope of cross compliance, while in 12 MS and some regions within four MS advisory activities are broadened to issues going

³ Country correspondents have encountered difficulties in collecting robust data especially in relation to all cost elements (cost of advice, cost for farmers, setting-up costs of the FAS, running costs, etc.) and counting of beneficiaries, of OB and advisors. Figures are often aggregates or refer to different ways of counting, or are expressed in local currencies etc.

⁴ No information is available for MT.

beyond the scope of cross compliance; and iv) private forest holdings according to our findings has not been integrated in the FAS at MS level. This should be explained by the specific needs and realities to be addressed by advisory services for private forest holders.

Overall organisation of FAS in MS

When describing the way in which MS have set-up the FAS, a series of elements related to the preparatory work conducted, the different parties involved in designing the system and the major outputs obtained from the process need firstly to be considered.

Most MS have carried out a form of needs assessment; stakeholders involved were mostly part of the agricultural production sphere of influence and the outputs were heterogeneous, with few MS finalising a detailed FAS implementation plan. The way the FAS was perceived is strongly linked to the manner in which the existing extension and advice systems are structured.

Most MS have moved or are moving towards a greater involvement of private operators in the delivery of extension and/or advisory services, the public services retaining the overall guidance and coordination role. In most regionalised MS, different organisational patterns co-exist. The role of chambers of agriculture remains important in those 11 MS where they are operational.

The overall organisation of the FAS is in general in line with the existing organisational modes and has emphasised a greater involvement of private or independent operating bodies (OB) in the FAS. The existing advisory and extension services in 23 MS have been indicatively grouped under five approaches; publicly-driven approaches, privately-driven approaches, chamber-of-agriculture-driven approaches, mixed approached and new advisory system setting up. The FAS is generally organised around a government coordination unit, an implementation unit (government or out-sourced) and a number of accredited or designated OBs. FAS have usually been designed to be mobilised through contractual agreements between farmers and OBs.

Linkages to other extension or research institutions have not been very developed at this stage even though ad hoc contacts have been promoted when necessary. Targeting specific beneficiaries has at present not been systematic. The initial priority group of those farm holdings receiving more than €15,000 in direct payments has been in some MS opened to other priority groups, in particular when FEADER was used.

Implementation of FAS in MS

The implementation of the FAS in the MS reviews the ways in which the overall organisation of the FAS has been implemented or how it was made operational during 2008⁵. This involves three major partners: (i) the MS FAS coordination (government managing authorities for coordination and day-to-day management sometimes outsourced); (ii) the operating bodies (OBs) and (iii) the advisors.

⁵ Or in the coming years for RO and BG.

Overall, a wide range of OBs can be found within the EU. Indicatively⁶, private OBs represent a major group of FAS operators (almost 90%), in which a clear distinction needs to be made between the business and profit-oriented OB that represent almost two thirds of the private OBs, and the other more member driven non-profit OB (association, cooperative or union) that provide services to members, or to geographical areas, or to specific types of farming, which account for around one third. Public OB (8%) and the chamber of agriculture (3%) represent the remaining share. However, these shares need to be considered cautiously. Indeed, public OB and chambers of agriculture are sometimes much more staffed than private OB⁷.

An open and tendered selection process for OBs has been implemented in 14 MS, whereas in the other FAS, existing outsourced service providers or public services were designated. Regulation (EC) N°1782/2003 does not indicate any specific selection criteria that MS should use. However, if EAFRD funds are mobilised for use by farmers of FAS advice, then Regulation (EC) N° 1974/2006 provides some basic criteria: having appropriate resources in the form of qualified staff, administrative and technical facilities and advisory experience and reliability with respect to SMR, GAEC and occupational safety standards. Selection criteria used during tenders are in line with this regulatory requirement; MS seem however to have emphasised staff and human resource capacity⁸ and overall administrative capacity of the tendering OBs. OBs operate either through their own on-the-staff advisors or through networks or external advisors. Accreditation of advisors is two-fold. It is either considered as part of the overall selection process of the OB or as an additional accreditation of staff or advisors within the accredited OBs.

Most MS have set the threshold for advisors' minimum qualifications at university level (BSc or MSc); only six have foreseen a parallel accreditation of advisors with technical or basic vocational agricultural training.

The costs of implementing FAS cover the specific costs of these selection and accreditation processes, and of course other major cost elements of information and public relations, of overall coordination and monitoring of the activities and of mobilising the necessary facilities to house and operate FAS activities. At present there is no comprehensive assessment of what MS have invested to set up and run the FAS⁹.

EAFRD through its *measure 115*, can provide support to MS to off-set part of this investment to set up the FAS. Six MS are using this measure that also encapsulates other farm services such as relief services and farm management. Within those 6 MS, DE and the UK have used it for other purposes than the FAS. In volumes of mobilised funds under *measure 115*, it is clearly ES, followed by PT and IT that are mobilising the majority of funds. The fourth MS using *measure 115* for FAS purpose is MT.¹⁰

⁶ Figures are indicative and exclude DE and FR. In DE figures are very fragmented at regional level and no comprehensive data are available at federal level. In FR, OB from all status are associated in 103 networks. The exact share by status is not known.

⁷ Public OBs often have much more staff than private organisations (with often more than 100 advisors for the public organisations and frequently less than 10 advisors for private OBs).

⁸ Staff and human resources capacity defined as the capacity to provide the necessary advisors to cover all services requested by FAS in that MS and all other necessary human backstopping resources.

⁹ Country correspondents have faced major problems in collecting this cost information.

¹⁰ Three MS (ES, MT and PT) and some regions in DE, IT, UK and FR (Corsica, Guadeloupe and French Guyana) planned to use *measure 115* for the period 2007-2013 (DG Agri, EAFRD total allocation for *measure 115*). *Measure 115*

FAS approaches and tools

FAS advice operates within a wider overall framework of delivering advice and promoting knowledge and innovation at farm level, where the approach of beneficiaries for the advice as well as the type of beneficiaries remain a driving element.

Within this context, two major types of approaches for delivering FAS advice to farmers have been identified: i) the one-to-one type and ii) the one-to-group. A third, the one-to-all approach includes a number of standard extension approaches and tools that provide farmers with the basic information they require on cross-compliance issues. This is not viewed as being part of FAS, as defined in Regulation (EC) N° 1782/2003, as the provision of this information is a mandatory obligation of all MS. However, this information is an important first step in mobilising the FAS.

Typical FAS approaches are to be found in the two first types: one-to-one and one-to-group. These can either be mobilised on-the-farm or off-the-farm. The latter being very closely linked to standard extension activities, and this way of providing advice has thus more to do with providing general information and is therefore not considered here as a typical FAS approach. ICTs have been used in various MS, but more as an overall information tool or as facilitating the first contact of farmers with FAS, in particular telephone helplines.

Use of the FAS by European farm holdings (2008)

Two major approaches to FAS advice have been implemented by the MS: i) the on-farm one-to-one advice and ii) the on-farm small groups. Concerning the former, advice is provided mainly through the direct farm visits supported by various types of lists of farmers' obligations, called checklists, which were either systematically checked or which guide the advisor in his performance assessment and provision of appropriate advice with recommendations.

Checklists go from "simple" comprehensive checklists in most MS, to integrated check-folders in DE and LU and to modular checklists in BE-FLA. The simple comprehensive checklist includes the entire and comprehensive list of all SMR and GAEC farmers' obligations in the specific MS. The integrated check-folders include the SMR and GAEC together with the prevailing national or regional regulations and decrees as well as other production certification systems that present potential overlaps with the cross-compliance obligations. The modular checklists are used to structure a series of thematic advice modules¹¹ that can be delivered in several steps over a certain period of time (up to 2 years in BE-FLA).

includes farm relief services and farm management along with the setting-up of farm advisory services. Regions in DE, the UK and Corsica and French Guyana have used the measure of other purposes than the FAS. MT planned to use the funds, however, the measure has not been implemented and no funds had been used up until May 2009. Thus, three MS (ES, IT (7 regions), PT) and Guadeloupe did really use the measure for the setting-up of the FAS until May 2009.

¹¹ The modules concerns the environment and GAEC (1), plant and public health (2), animal health and welfare (3), occupational safety (4) and business optimization (5)

The manner in which these checklists are used to support advice is important in building a relationship based on mutual trust with the farmer, which is perceived as essential by advisors and farmers to successful advice. The time devoted to such visits, one-single visit or a succession visits (sometime modular or thematic), directly impact on the perception and success of FAS advice.

On-farm small group advice has been an alternative and complementary approach to one-to-one advice in some MS¹². Small group advice can consist of:

- Asking farmers to organise a group of more or less 10 that would like to deepen a specific issue in relation to one or the other SMR or GAEC related topics and to respond to this demand by mobilising a FAS advisor to attend and support this group meeting (as has been the case in NL)
- Taking the opportunity of other grouped visits of farmers to a specific farm holding, experimental plot, or environmental farm walks or of farm management groups, to provide thematic meeting days or forums to address these groups' specific requirements for FAS advice (as is the case in AT, CZ, ES, IE, IT etc.)
- Creating specific FAS advice related events, such as special farm walks to illustrate good practices and enhance exchange between farmers, or to focus on specific problematic SMRs (as is the case in UK-ENG, where these small groups mobilise up to 40 farmers each and are advertised to farmers).

Small group advice provides more thematic advice, being more focused on one or few specific issues or topics. However, this approach shows some limitations concerning the lower possibility of addressing specific concerns of each of the participants (if groups are larger than 10 participants), as well as in terms of problems of accessibility and possible reluctance by some farmers in participating in such events. As a stand alone FAS approach, small groups may provide insufficient capacity to deal with individual problems at farm level, however they may improve cost-effectiveness of the FAS when integrated with the one-to-one FAS approach.

Currently, outreach of the two approaches is low when compared to the target numbers of farm holding beneficiaries of direct payments. One-to-one advice on the farm has been provided in every MS that implemented their FAS in 2008 and before, except UK-ENG. In EL, MT, PT, PL as well as in some regions in ES and IT the FAS was not yet operational by 2008. The average outreach in 2008 is around 4-5% of the farm holdings having received direct payments in 2006. Few countries had implemented the FAS before 2007. In the case of DE-NSC, 20% of farm holdings were reached in total over the 2005-2008 period; however as in NL, a drop in participation has been observed since 2007. This shows that the outreach is not necessarily increasing over time.

Small groups have been organised in 10 MS and mostly as a complementary approach, except in UK-ENG that operates FAS only through small groups. Outreach ranges between less than 1% up to 20% (UK-SCO).

¹² Several MS planned this approach, and 10 MS had already implemented it by 2008.

The cost to farmers of these two advice approaches varies between MS. For on-farm one-to-one advice, the cost ranges from free of charge to more or less €2,000 depending on MS, content and eventual support by national funds or co-funded by EAFRD. Small groups are mostly organised through existing extension budgets, few countries request a limited participation with the exception of IE, where farmers pay the full cost of small groups.

RDP's *measure 114* has been mobilised by 15 MS to support farmers using FAS services. Together, three MS (PL, IT and ES) mobilise approximately 70% of the total EAFRD contribution at EU level for the period 2007-2013 under this measure. FAS implementation in these three countries has not yet become fully operational and therefore little data on real EAFRD disbursements up until mid 2008 are available.

Monitoring of FAS by MS

Monitoring of FAS is a core coordination task, which falls under the responsibility of the various coordinating bodies in the MS, mainly national or regional Ministries of Agriculture, sometimes Chambers of Agriculture and in a few cases, specific organisations.

A basic monitoring system for FAS can include the following three levels: the monitoring of advice at farm holding level, the monitoring of the OBs and advisors and the monitoring of the system's overall performance. Very few MS have set up a specific formal committee to oversee the implementation of FAS.

The country correspondent investigations in the MS show that these activities are performed within the limits of keeping records of activities, especially if this is mandatory due to the use of EAFRD, including the eventual financial treatment of requests and subsidies. This includes the checking of basic regulatory requirements. Overall, qualitative and content-oriented monitoring (type of beneficiaries, type of advice provided, etc.) is currently very limited.

There is so far little feedback from OBs and advisors in relation to their accreditation or minimum record keeping. MS using EAFRD for the use of advice (*measure 114*) have to record at least the number of farmers (and forest holders) who use advisory services for the improvement of the overall performance of their holding (the record should be done accordingly to the type of advice given to farmers, i.e. by SMR and GAEC, or other issues, and according to the amount of direct payments beneficiaries receive per year). The number of newly set up advisory services are requested from those using *measure 115* for the setting-up of the FAS. Due to the very recent implementation of the FAS, these data were not yet available.

Introduction to the descriptive part

This evaluation, examining the setting-up and the implementation of the Farm Advisory System (FAS) as foreseen by Regulation (EC) N° 1782/2003, is composed of two parts: a description of the establishment and implementation of the FAS in the Member States (MS) and the evaluation part itself. According to section 2.2.1 of the Terms of Reference (ToR), the present descriptive part aims at providing a comprehensive description of the implementation of the FAS in each MS. It highlights different approaches used by the MS, including a description of similarities/differences.

This descriptive part is based on three sources of information: (i) the documentation provided to the evaluator during the kick-off meeting in January 2009¹³ and the responses received to a country questionnaire sent out by the Commission (DG Agri) to all MS and related to the implementation of the FAS during 2008¹⁴; (ii) additional documentation gathered directly by the evaluator including various studies, research papers, articles, statistics etc.; and (iii) the Country Reports (CR) prepared by the evaluator's country correspondents.

The CR are the pivot to the present descriptive part. They were developed and completed in a step wise manner as a tool to collect basic information. They are not short country monographs on FAS. Country report formats were developed in February-March 2009 based on the requirements of the ToR for this evaluation and taking stake of the contents of the Commission questionnaire for 2008. Each country report addresses three distinct parts: i) the setting-up of the system; ii) the implementation of the system; and iii) observations or suggestions from the MS.

The various CR have been completed by the evaluator's country correspondents, who were provided with a set of basic documents and statistics compiled by the core evaluation team and a copy of the completed Commission 2008 questionnaire when available for that particular country. Correspondents were requested to screen this information, collect additional data and to conduct necessary interviews (phone or face-to-face).

This work was sub-divided in two consecutive phases. A first phase aimed at obtaining a baseline picture of the FAS and relevant documentation. It was completed by end of March 2009 and reviewed in April 2009 by the evaluation team. A second phase aimed at compiling a series of additional materials or elements, in line with the overall requirements of the Evaluation Questions (EQ) (of the evaluation report) and pertaining mainly to: i) cross-checking factual numbers (of advisers, of beneficiaries, costs to farmers and to government stakeholders...), ii) initial needs assessments, iii) existing extension approaches and links with FAS, iv) advise on occupational safety standards, v) forestry advisory services and vi) monitoring of the systems established by the MS.

¹³ Excel files on EAFRD total allocations for all MS; the evaluation carried for DG AGRI on cross-compliance in 2005; the study on Farm advisory tools carried out for CIFAS by the University of Frankfurt, presentations from the EC Joint Research Centre (JRC) by MS in 2006, 2007 and 2008 on FAS implementation and the JRC main yearly progress reporting and the two amended 2008 versions of regulations 1782/2003 and 1698/2005 after accession of EU12 countries.

¹⁴ Questionnaire launched by DG Agri, D.3 unit end of 2008 entitled “*Questionnaire: Farm Advisory System pursuant to Articles 13-15 of Regulation N° 1782/2003*”.

Twenty-seven country reports have been finalised. They have however been limited either during data collection or during report compiling by the following:

1. Answers to the DG AGRI 2008 questionnaire have often been quite difficult to cross-check, particularly those relating to figures. The country correspondents have had several telephone contacts or face-to-face meetings with national FAS coordinators and in most cases only minor changes or precisions were possible.
2. The implementation of the FAS remains in its first stages and this has a direct impact on the reporting by MS of FAS achievements.
3. During the second part of CR investigations, correspondents were confronted with a lack of official documents describing the existing extensions services or their framework in the various MS.
4. The same observation stands for official and detailed documents related to the FAS, beyond hand-out brochures for farmers.
5. The absence of FAS content based monitoring or follow-up systems, as most MS are still contemplating how to organise and implement such systems. However, when advices are subsidised, financial elements are collected, but little qualitative treatment of this information is available.
6. There is a constraint due to staff turn-over (regular staff rotations were encountered by correspondents in several MS, whereby knowledge on FAS is often fragmented and discontinued in time).
7. As sections one and two hereafter show, MS have shown a variable interpretation of the scope and objectives pursued by FAS.

The descriptive report refers also to a series of concepts (that are defined in more detail in section 3.1 of the evaluation report) of which the following are essential to the comprehension of this report:

- **Farm Advisory System (FAS):** concerns the system set-up by MS in order to comply with article 13 of Regulation (EC) N° 1782/2003. It includes the overall organization of this system and the various operators (various private and public bodies) contributing to the delivery of the various FAServices to farmers required within a MS.
- **Farm Advisory Services (FAServices¹⁵):** these include the various advisory activities, called services, to be provided to farmers covering '*at least SMR and GAEC*', ranging from information to one-to-one advice to group advice to overall farm advice. If European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) is mobilised by the MS, advisory activities for farmers have also to include occupational safety standards based on Community legislation.
- **Forestry Advisory Services¹⁶ (FoAS):** these include the various advisory activities that are provided for forest holders with support of *measure 114* of Rural Development Program (RDP) (Regulation (EC) N°1698/2005) for the improvement of the overall performance of their holding.

This descriptive report represents a summary view of all CR with additional desk study inputs where necessary. It has to be read and assessed with the above mentioned limitations and concepts in mind.

¹⁵ This definition is wider than the way Regulation (EC) N° 1698/2005 considers farm advisory services, i.e. advisory services in support of measures and activities initiated through the various RDP.

¹⁶ In principal these services are also organized as a system, even though the present regulations only mention Services in respect to Forestry advice and do not refer per se to a Forestry Advisory System.

1. Scope and contextual elements of FAS

The FAS operates within each MS's prevailing advice and extension services and also within the overall European context of agriculture. This chapter tries to sketch a general picture of a number of contextual elements that need to be kept in mind when reviewing how MS have set-up and implemented FAS so far.

1.1 Scope of Farm Advisory System (FAS)

MS were requested to establish a comprehensive system offering advice to commercial farms on land and farm management on a voluntary basis. As referred to in Regulation (EC) N°1782/2003 on the first Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Pillar, the *Farm Advisory System* should be advising on land and farm management (art 13.1). The advisory activity has to cover *at least* the scope of cross-compliance, i.e. the Statutory Management Requirements (SMR) and Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAEC) referred to in the Regulation (art 13.2).

Since 2005, all farmers receiving direct payments (single payments and payments still coupled to production) are subject to cross-compliance (SMR + GAEC). For new MS, a phasing in period was agreed for SMR, GAEC being applicable as from the first year. Since 2007, cross-compliance applies to eight rural development measures of axis 2 of the Regulation (EC) N°1698/2005, and as from 2008 it applies also to measures on grubbing up, restructuring and reconversion in the wine sector.

Farm Advisory Services (FAServices) may be funded by the 2nd CAP pillar (Regulation (EC) N°1698/2005) with possible support from the EAFRD. The two measures of RDP which relate directly to FAServices fall under axis 1, dealing with competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sectors. Farmers and forest holders may be helped to meet the costs arising from the use of advisory services for the improvement of the overall performance of their holding, covering at least SMR and GAEC and occupational safety standards based on Community legislation¹⁷ in the case of farm advisory services (*measure 114*). When this measure is mobilised, national co-funding is always foreseen. The implementation of this type of advisory service to farmers and forest holders may also be supported (under *measure 115*) by covering costs arising notably from the setting-up of farm and forestry advisory services. If EAFRD funding is mobilised by the MS, (utilisation of *measure 114 or 115*) advisory activities for farmers have also to include occupational safety standards based on Community legislation¹⁸.

MS, in setting-up the FAS, have had wide latitude to design the FAS in such a way to meet their own needs and priorities. Instructions to MS about the scope and contents of FAS

¹⁷ Regulation (EC) N°1698/2005 Art 24.1.b

¹⁸ Regulation (EC) N°1698/2005 Art 24.1.b

have remained consistent with the regulatory elements included in both above-mentioned regulations (and their recent modification after the CAP's Health check).

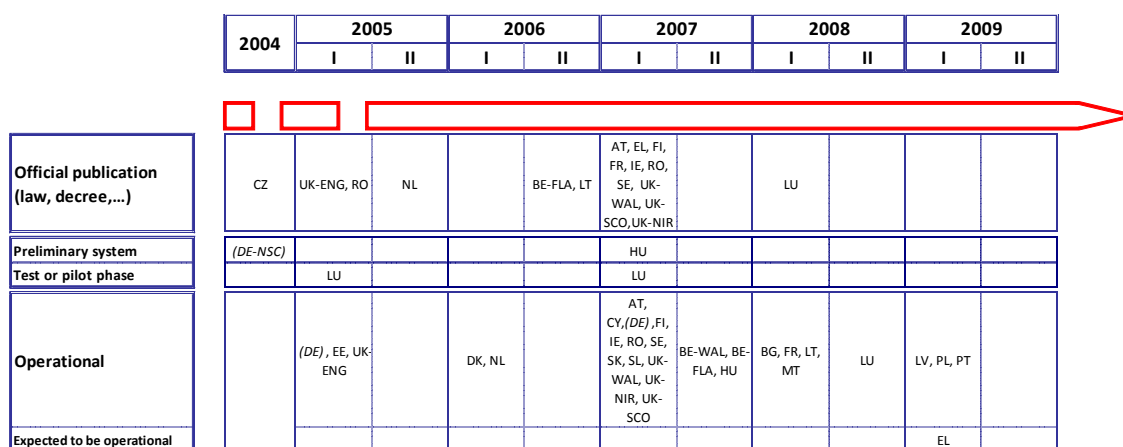
It must however be mentioned, that initial proposals for the instrument (as reflected in internal working documents of DG Agri and in COM 2003(23) communication) contained elements of a farm audit perception. This perception has been removed from the final version of the regulation and replaced by elements centred on advice.

1.2 FAS implementation calendar

Regulation (EC) N°1782/2003 specifies in its article 13 that “*by 1 January 2007, Member States shall set up a system of advising farmers on land and farm management (hereinafter referred to as the farm advisory system') operated by one or more designated authorities or by private bodies*”.

Most MS have installed the FAS officially through a specific law, decree or publication, but others have opted for a direct start-up within a pre-existing legal framework. All MS have reported that they have set-up the FAS at latest by first of January 2007¹⁹ (see appendix 4 for detailed dates and references to official documentation installing FAS in the various MS and the various regions in DE, ES and IT).

Graph 1: Indicative timeline of FAS implementation



For more detailed information for those MS where regions play an important role in agricultural extension and FAS - see table in appendix 3
Source: ADE - country reports

In quite a number of MS, as is shown in graph 1, the FAS has only become operational (i.e. selection of operating bodies (OB) completed, first requests from farmers, etc.) after the second half of 2007. Even most of those MS that reported that their FAS were operational as of 01/01/2007 seem to have only started providing advice to farmers during the year 2008 (see chapter 5). These delays in operations on the ground need to be kept in mind when describing the FAS and its progress until date.

¹⁹ Luxembourg constitutes an exception. The country had started working on its advice tools as early as 2005 and tested these during 2007; however the system was officially installed through the law of April 2008 relating to the instalment of the RDP in Luxembourg.

1.3 National farm advisory systems

Advice does not start from scratch. National or regional extension and advisory systems have a long history in most EU15; in some of which they are more than a century old. Furthermore, complementary to these existing extension services, the 2000-2006 rural development policy (European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) funded), already identified a “...*particular effort...to educate farmers in and inform them of agricultural methods compatible with the environment*” and a need for adequate training in “*new approaches to management, production and marketing*”²⁰. FAServices have also been supported under Article 21(a) of the Commission Regulation (EC) N°1783/2003 (a newly introduced Rural Development measure on “meeting Community standards”). This regulation already gave the opportunity to the MS to co-finance advisory services equivalent to the advisory systems foreseen by Council Regulation (EC) N°1782/2003 at the time of the mid-term revision of the CAP (2003). Advisory services to farmers (co-financed or not) were also provided in some MS in relation to agri-environmental measures and environmental planning at farm level.

Support for vocational training shall contribute to the improvement of the occupational skill and competence of farmers and other persons involved in agricultural activities and forestry activities, and their conversion.

Training shall in particular be designed:

- *to prepare farmers for qualitative reorientation of production, the application of production practices compatible with the maintenance and enhancement of the landscape, the protection of the environment, hygiene standards and animal welfare and acquisition of the skills needed to enable them to manage an economically viable farm, and*
- *to prepare forest holders and other persons involved in forestry activities for the application of forest management practices to improve the economic, ecological or social functions of forests.*

Regulation (EC) N°1257/1999 – art 9

For the EU12, Poland and Hungary Assistance for Economic Restructuring Programme (PHARE) programmes, Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (SAPARD) and the transitional structural funds (2004-2006) have helped shape national extension systems, with a view of integrating the ‘*acquis communautaire*’.

MS therefore have different approaches and organizations of their agricultural extensions services and interactions with what is now called the “Agricultural Knowledge Information System” (AKIS) which facilitates interfacing between innovation-research and end-users²¹.

These different approaches directly impact on the way the MS organise FAS, as will be described in more detail in sections 2.2 to 2.4 in this report.

Advising farmers on how to “*meet the standards of modern, high-quality agriculture*” is thus ultimately also to be seen and appraised in relation to these various existing MS services.

²⁰ Recitals 22 & 21 – Regulation (EC) N° 1257/1999

²¹ An AKIS/RD is a system that links rural people and institutions to promote mutual learning and generate, share and utilize agriculture-related technology, knowledge and information. The system integrates farmers, agricultural educators, researchers and extensionists to harness knowledge and information from various sources for better farming and improved livelihoods. This integration is suggested by the “knowledge triangle” displayed here. (Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)-World Bank)

1.4 Variable farm structures throughout the MS

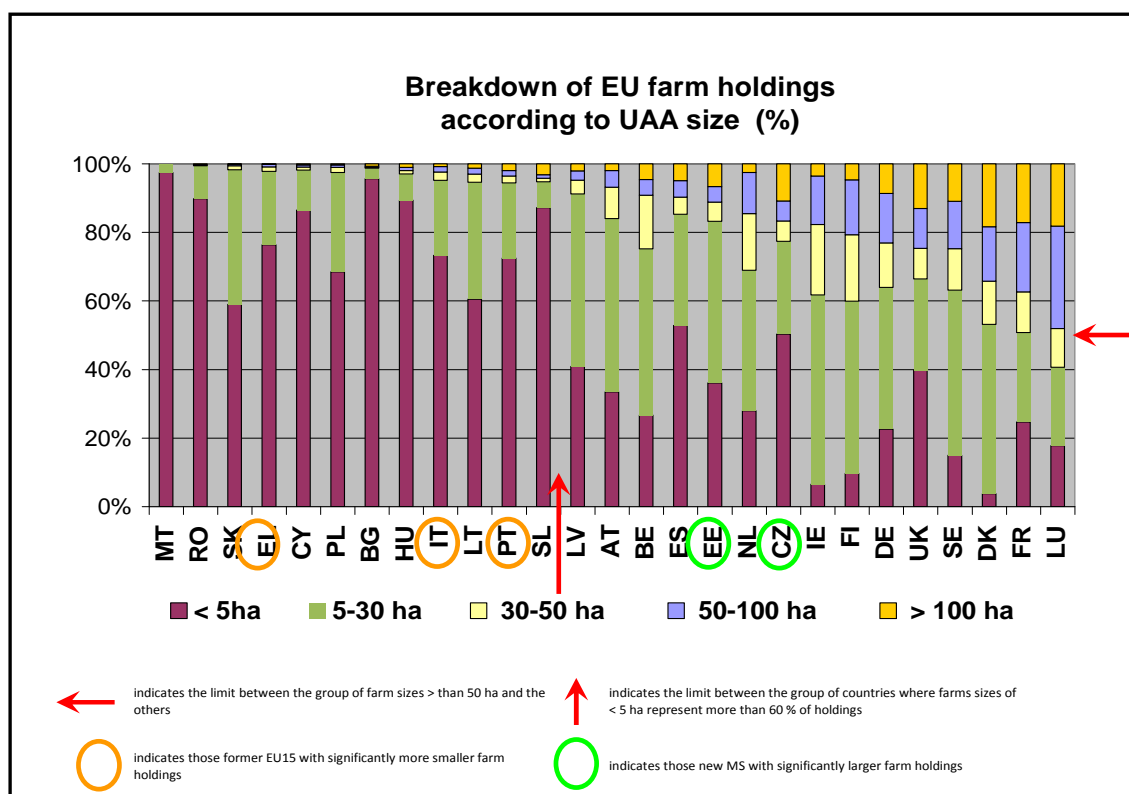
The national (and regional where relevant) agricultural extension services are in fact directly dependent on, *inter alia*: i) the farm holding sizes in each MS; ii) the types of farming; and iii) the legal status of farms.

Farm holding sizes

Based on the statistical data on Utilized Agricultural Area (UAA) sizes in the 27 MS (figures for 2008)²², graph 2 represents MS in decreasing order according to a 50 hectares (ha) farm holding size threshold. The following major observations can be made from this graph:

- A significant presence of large farms (> 50 ha) is mainly registered within the EU15, with the exception of CZ and EE which have higher percentages of bigger production units and EL, IT and PT which have significantly more smaller units (<30 ha).
- In the EU12 and the three above-mentioned Mediterranean countries and Spain (ES) more than 50% of the farms are smaller than 5 ha.
- Quite a number of other countries have significant shares of small farm units (AT, BE, DE, FR, LU, NL and UK). Depending on the local conditions, this can either reflect important numbers of part-time farming or the opposite, intense and specialised farming units (vineyards, greenhouses...).

Graph 2: Breakdown of EU farm holdings according to UAA size



Source: ADE based on the DG Agri MS statistics for 2008

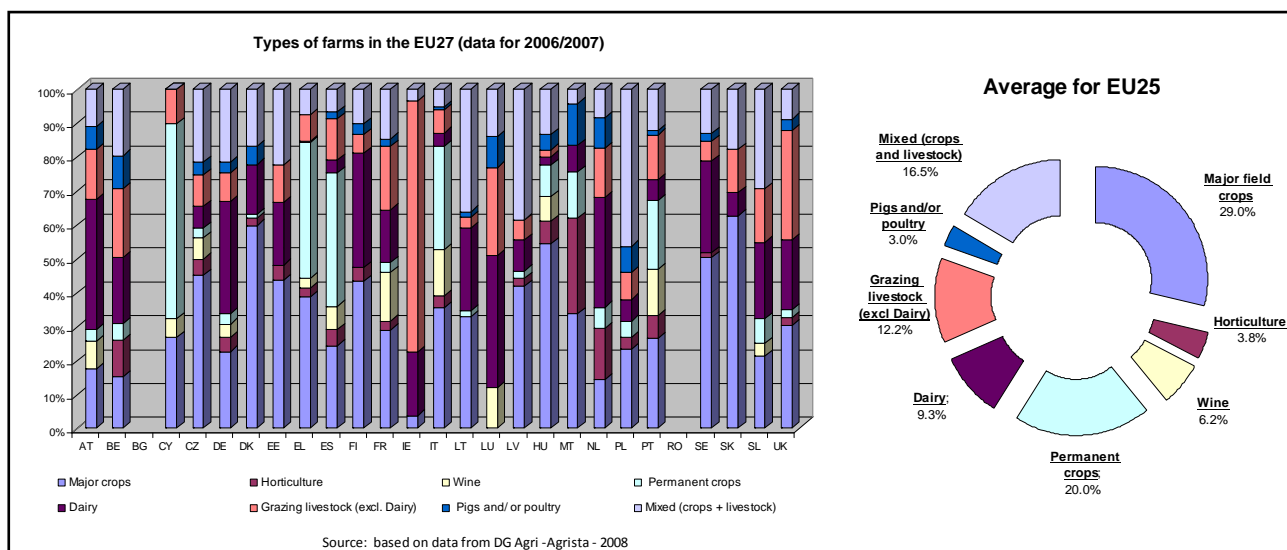
²² http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/analysis/perspec/background/index_en.htm

Types of farming

Types of farming vary significantly from one MS to another and are classified using the types of farming classification (2003/369 (EC)). The 2008 Eurostat pocketbook on agricultural statistics²³, indicates (see graph 3) that the five most frequently occurring types of farming at EU27 level are: i) major field crops (29%); ii) permanent crops (20%); iii) mixed farming (crops & livestock) (16.5%); iv) grazing livestock (excluding dairy) (12.2%); and v) dairy (9.3%).

The same document provides the following snapshot of the geographical distribution: *“Generally the less specialised “mixed” holdings are peculiar to the newer Member States (especially Romania and Lithuania). Holdings specialising in olives are typical of the Mediterranean area (Greece 26%, Spain 20% and Italy 19%). Holdings specialised in cereals, oil seed and protein crops are representative in Slovakia (54%), Denmark (39%) and Finland (38%). In Sweden, 39% of the holdings are engaged in general field cropping. Horticulture is the principal activity for holdings in the Netherlands (12%), Malta (11%) and Belgium (9%). Fruit growing farms are important in Cyprus (33%) and Spain (18%), while holdings specialised in wine growing are common in Luxembourg (15%), France (14%), Portugal (12%) and Italy (12%). Dairy farms are more significant in Luxembourg (29%), Austria (27%) and the Netherlands (25%). Farms specialising in rearing and fattening cattle are a feature of Ireland (50%) and the United Kingdom (20%).”*

Graph 3: Agricultural holdings by main type of farming – EU27 - 2005



Legal status of farms

Overwhelmingly, as shown in graph 4, EU farms are run by the sole holder of the farm. EU farms are rarely set up with a legal status either through a legal person or a grouping or associative form. EU farms remain thus largely operated through self-employed independent operators and labour for doing so is essentially provided by the direct household members and occasionally through the wider family.

²³ Eurostat – Agricultural statistics – Pocketbook edition - 2008

Graph 4: Legal status of agricultural holdings by land use size classes – EU27



Source: Eurostat 2008 pocketbook – Agricultural statistics – main results 2006-2007

Furthermore figures on the mobilisation of the labour force in the agricultural sector during 2007 within the 27 MS show that non-family labour involvement on EU farms is low (EU27 average of 6.9%) and that small units (<1 European Size Units (ESU)²⁴) are important in a number of MS:

- BG, EE, HU, LT, LV, MT, PL, RO & SK (9 MS) have more than 40% of farm structures producing less than 1 ESU. In total, 14.4 million persons are mobilised on all these farms, of which only 2.7 % are recorded as non-family.
- AT, CY, CZ, EL, IT, PT, SE, SI & UK (9 MS) have between 10 and 40 % of farm structures <1 ESU. In total, 6.6 million persons are mobilised, of which 7% are recorded as non-family.
- BE, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, IE, LU & NL (9 MS) have less than 10% of farm structures < 1ESU. They mobilise 3.7 million persons in total, of which 20.5 % are recorded as non-family.

Extension messages therefore need to be fine-tuned in each of the MS in view of the above-mentioned elements. Numbers of farmers to be contacted, priorities according to farm systems, farms operating as sole holder or as small enterprises, size of holdings and intensity of farming practices, all directly influence the MS's overall extension framework. For example, when small farms are predominant, extension priorities and concerns will differ greatly if these small units are operating in an overall context of intensive farm processes or if they are operating within an evolving restructuring of the agriculture towards more economically productive units.

²⁴ The economic size of farms is expressed in terms of ESU. In 2004 the value of one ESU is defined as 1200 EUR/ECU of Farm Gross Margin.

Small intensive to medium-large farms are more likely to be set-up as formal business units than small economically un-sustainable units. This in turn will also directly impact on farmer's capacity and willingness to pay for extension services and advice.

1.5 General understanding of the FAS by MS

When asked to define the overall objective to be assigned to the FAS, all MS²⁵ answered that their FAS was set-up to be compliant with Pillar one as defined in Regulation (EC) N°1782/2003, i.e. emphasising the close link between the FAS and cross-compliance.

12 MS and regions in 4 MS (BE, DE, IT and UK) as indicated in table 1 have opted for wider priorities when setting-up FAS. Nine of these MS have indicated that FAS is perceived and set-up in close linkage with their respective RDP for the 2007-2013 period; this is also shared by Spain (ES), Italy (IT – 17 regions out of 21), UK (Wales) and Luxemburg. Flanders (BE) is the only region that indicated that FAS was an opportunity to revise their advice system and to provide additional elements of farm-business management to farmers, in their drive to bridge farms as SMEs.

There are thus clearly two groups of MS. A first group, is composed of those MS that have designed their FAS in line with the minimum requirements of Regulation (EC) N°1782/2003 which are to *'cover at least the SMR and the GAEC in Chapter 1'* (art 13.2); i.e. AT, BE-WAL, DK, EL, FI, FR, LV, NL, PT, RO, SE & MT; a second group corresponds to the previously cited 12+4 MS, which have seen FAS as an opportunity to go beyond *'at least SMR and GAEC'*. This "opportunity" of enlarging the scope of the FAS needs to be clarified. 2 MS (DE, LU) have widened the scope by including all other regulatory aspects (national, regional) as well as quality insurance systems into their main farm advisory tool. Some MS included specific issues such as quality issues or energy management. 5 MS and some regions (BE-FL, EE, IE, IT, LT, SL, UK-WAL) have set-up a FAS (or integrated it into their existing services) as an overall advisory system integrating a wider range of farm advice and extension services.

²⁵ With the exception of Malta that did not indicate its overall priorities

Table 1: Main focus of FAS in MS

		To comply with regulation 1782/2003	An opportunity to go beyond "at least cross-compliance "	
AT	Austria	X		
BE	Belgium	X	(X)	(Only in Flanders) - expand a series of regional priorities such as business economic advice and environmental planning that were on-going.
BG	Bulgaria	X	X	
CY	Cyprus	X	X	According to RDP programme
CZ	Czech Republic	X	X	Other wider RDP related services
DE	Germany	X	(X)	Energy savings + organic farming are included in FAS in some <i>Länder</i> , checklists should cover all relevant legislation including quality systems even if FAS advice is limited to cross-compliance
DK	Denmark	X		
EE	Estonia	X	X	Through the regional information centres cover the wider range of farm advice
EL	Greece	X		
ES	Spain	X	X	Linked to the various RDP priorities
FI	Finland	X		
FR	France	X		
HU	Hungary	X	X	Longer term priority: to enhance the competitiveness and performance of the farms.
IE	Ireland	X	X	FAS fully integrated into pre existing advisory services and covers other priorities such as REPS, sucklers, ..;
IT	Italy	X	(X)	Linked to the various RDP priorities in 17 out of 21 regions
LT	Lithuania	X	X	Agri-environment; holding accounting & management; preparation of business plans and project administration; on the implementation of 'Leader' method.
LU	Luxembourg	X	X	QM milk, quality labels in the meat sector, demands related to the landscape and natural environment maintenance and safety at work
LV	Latvia	X		
MT	Malta			Information not provided in CR
NL	Netherlands	X		
PL	Poland	X	X	Rural population and public institutions perceive FAS as general advice to farmers on all rural issues
PT	Portugal	X		
RO	Romania	X		
SE	Sweden	X		
SK	Slovakia	X	X	
SI	Slovenia	X	X	Quality issues, landscape and settlement in the countryside, pollution prevention and nature conservation, competitiveness, suitable and the landscape, economically sustainable farm holdings
UK	United Kingdom	X	(X)	Only for Wales - linked to the RDP priorities
Totals		26	12 + (4)	

Source ADE through country reports

1.6 The regional dimension and FAS

The implementation of FAS is also very much related to the various administrative frameworks within the various MS. According to the Committee of Regions²⁶, MS can be grouped according to federal states, states with autonomous regions, states engaged in a decentralisation process, centralised states and small states (one region type MS, where local administrations are often the next level of authority). The boundaries between these categories are often blurred since a significant number of countries are – or have been – in a process of ‘devolution’ (IT), of giving larger autonomy to some specific regions (ES, UK). If the ‘decentralisation trend’ is general, it is often de facto limited by the scarcity of financial resources of regions (FR, SK).

These distinctions between institutional contexts determine the regional dimension that needs to be taken into consideration when dealing with competences relating to agriculture. These competences can be; i) completely devolved to regional entities; or ii) with a certain degree of fine-tuning through secondary laws; or iii) as field implementers of national priorities and legal frameworks; as indicated in table 2.

Table 2: Institutionnal context of MS and FAS responsibilities

Institutional context	Number of MS	Responsibilities for setting SMR & GAEC farmers obligations and implementing FAS
Federal	AT, BE, DE	Agriculture is a Local and Regional Administrations (LRA) competence, so both these duties are devolved
Autonomous regions	UK: Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland	
	ES, [IT], [UK England]	Setting of SMR & GAEC farmers’ obligations are done at central level; However, agricultural extension services and advice are devolved to regional entities
Decentralisation process	SE, [FR], [PL], [SK]	Setting of SMR & GAEC farmers’ obligations and managing the agricultural services is done at central level. Regional entities are mere executing agencies of the defined frameworks
Centralised country	BU, CZ, DK, EL, FI, [FR], HU, IE, NL, [PL], PT (except Azores and Madeira), RO, [SK], [SI]	
Small (one region) countries	CY, EE, LT, LU, LV, MT, [SI]	

Source: adapted by ADE from the Committee of Regions (COR)

In the case of the present evaluation of FAS, this will imply that for the following MS, regional entities are the major stakeholders and implementers: Belgium (BE), Germany (DE), Spain (ES), Italy (IT) and United Kingdom (UK). Austria is a special case; even though it is a federal state, the federal level still retains important competences in the field of agriculture, and the 9 länder act as executing and coordination agencies for the federal level. AT is thus considered in the present evaluation as a ‘non-region’ country.

²⁶ "Study on the division of powers between the EU, the MS and the LRAs – COR – European Institute University of Florence - 2008.

1.7 Forest holding advisory services

“Modern, high quality forestry” needs to be understood in the light of the various national forestry plans and of the European Forestry Action Plan (FAP)(2007-2011)²⁷ which is guided by the following overall approaches: sustainable forest management²⁸ and multifunctional forestry. Regulation (EC) N° 1698/2005 is the main instrument at Community level for the implementation of the FAP. It foresees i.a. the possibility to fund specific Forestry holding advisory services under *measures 114* and *115*. These advisory services can be designed to focus on²⁹:

- plantations and production operations
- forest management plans
- ownership and associative management practices
- management skills
- the role of forests in the ecosystem
- sustainable forestry practices
- the recreational role of forest

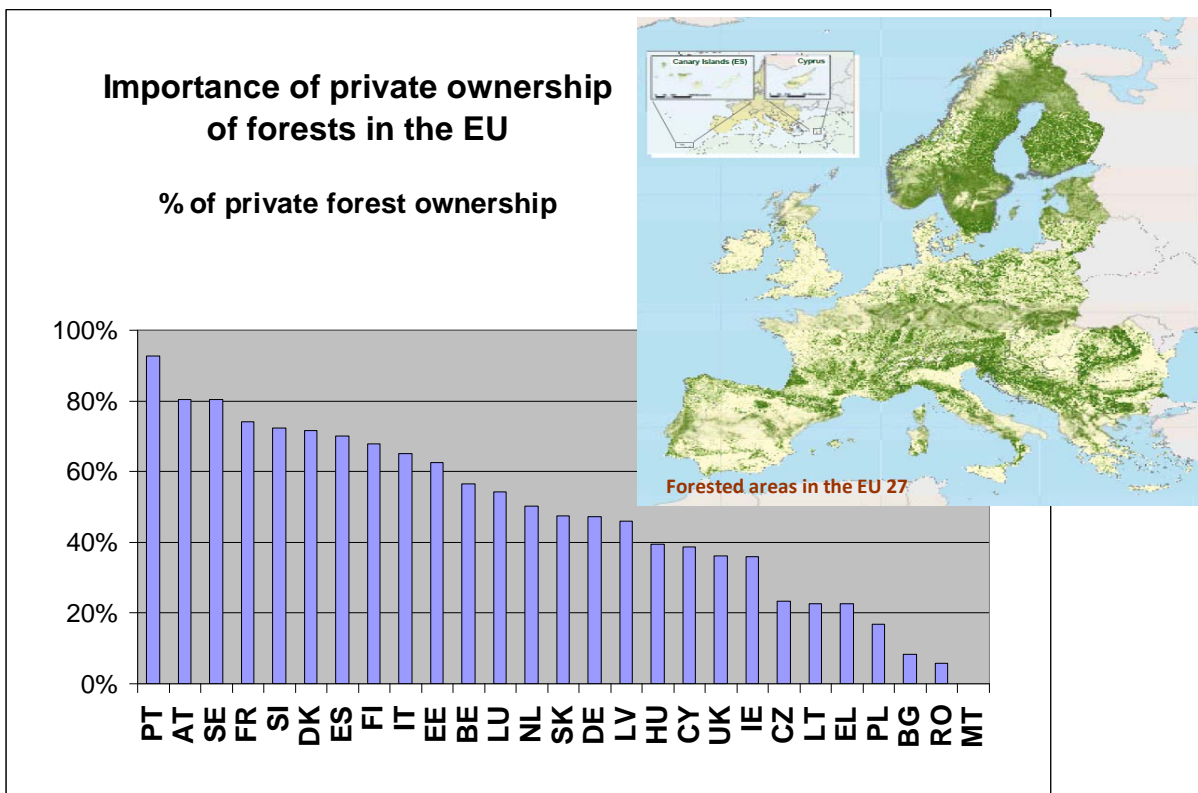
These services have to target private forest holdings. The importance of private forest ownership varies significantly between MS, from Malta (MT) where all forestry is public owned to Portugal (PT) where 93% of forestry is private owned.

²⁷ Communication from the Commission COM(2006) 302 final on an EU Forest Action Plan

²⁸ Which the Ministerial Conference in Helsinki defined in 1993 as: “the stewardship and use of forests lands in a way that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions, at local, national and global levels, without causing damage to other ecosystems.

²⁹ DG Agri H4 – March 2009 - Report on the implementation of forestry measures under the rural development regulation 1698/2005 for the period 2007-2013 – Annex III

Graph 5: Importance of private ownership of forest in the EU



Source: EU forest action plan 2007-2011 & JRC/IES

Forest ownership structures are complex and changing. There are many small sized (in ha) ownerships. One important reason for this stems from inheritances which have over the years further broken up the forest ownership pattern. It has also been driven by the forest restitution operations in the EU12. This fragmented ownership pattern often results in owners not being directly involved in the day-to-day forestry management, plantations of trees and their regular maintenance (clearings, drainage,...) and the final felling and clearing of trees from the plots. Most of the time these operations are carried out by hired casual labour that may be eventually supervised by a professional forester.

Major consequence is that “absentee owners” abound in this sector and in several MS legal frameworks are being designed and extended whereby small owners are encouraged to group themselves into ‘forest ownership associations’ (sort of ‘forest syndicates’) that can then envisage to outsource the management and operations on the area controlled by the “association”.

Around 60% of the EU’s forests are in private hands, with about 16 million private forest owners. Private forest holdings have an average size of 13 hectares, but the majority of privately-owned forests are smaller than five hectares. Nevertheless, the sector is changing. Alongside alterations in the structure of forest ownership in the EU, changes are also taking place in the occupations and lifestyles of private forest owners. Forest owners are becoming less dependent on forestry as a main source of income. Increasingly, the EU’s forests are owned by urban dwellers, who may have different management objectives, compared with traditional rural forest holders. Following recent EU enlargements, the number of private forest holdings has increased by 25% and the number of forest owners rose by nearly three million (estimated). Forest restitution processes, which took place in the new Member States and still continue in some cases, have facilitated private ownership.

In “The EU Forest Action Plan”- Brochure – DG Agri

The mix of ‘absentee’ owners, small size of plots, involvement of hired casual labour to carry out spot operations, ... sets a specific frame for forestry advisory services, which need to include basic forestry and natural conservation awareness building, adequate vocational and elementary forestry training for these owners and operators; in addition to the more technical advices related to improved forest management practices.

Furthermore forestry services³⁰ (and thus the implementing agencies for forestry advisory services) are in all MS organised as independent departments, which are either still within the direct sphere of competence of the Ministry of Agriculture or under different spheres of competence such as natural resources, environment, land-use or territorial development. Management of natural parks and protected areas fall quite often under these same departments. Forest agents are mostly entrusted with policing activities in respect to forest, wild life,... and therefore few forest services have developed specific formal extension and advice type activities.

Although cross-compliance has been extended to farmers and forest holder benefiting from payments of RDP measures under axis 2, forest holders are *stricto sensu*, less concerned than farmers (as only some SMR (environmental and plant health) and some GAEC contain elements that could impact on forestry activities).

Forestry advisory services are therefore quite different in nature from farm advisory services and it is debatable whether or not the “Farm Advisory System” includes these service elements or not. This will be examined more in detail in the second part of the evaluation report which covers the answers to the various evaluation questions and the evaluation’s findings and recommendations.

Nevertheless, according to elements provided in a recent study by DG Agri³¹, the following countries have reported in their RDP documentation to have used *measures 114* and *115* for forestry advisory service:

- *Measure 114* – CY, CZ, DE (3 regions), EE, EL, ES (8 regions), HU, IT (16 regions), LV, LU, LT, PL, PT (2 regions), RO, SK, SE and UK (2 regions)
- *Measure 115* - EE, ES (6 regions), IT (7 regions), PT (2 regions) and UK (2 regions)

During the preparation of the various CR, country correspondents tried to compile relevant information on Forestry advisory services. The information about Germany using *measures 114* or *115* for forestry is not confirmed³². The major observation of these investigations is that there is no formal linkage in MS between FAServices and forestry advisory services. When the latter are provided by the MS, they are perceived as part of the RDP and should therefore be reviewed as an element of the implementation of forestry related actions and packages under each MS or regional RDP.

³⁰ The wood sector (the downstream economic value added chain) is still mostly under the direct competence of the Ministries of agriculture

³¹ Report on the implementation of forestry measures under the RDP Regulation (EC) N°1698/2005 for the period 2007-2013 – March 2009 – DG Agri H4

³² As the case study conducted in DE-NSC shows (see evaluation part)

1.8 Consequences on the description of FAS

The various elements presented under sections 1.1 to 1.7, show that there are a series of contextual elements that need to be kept in mind as they strongly influence both directly and indirectly the various elements reviewed in the following five chapters:

- The regulatory framework of the FAS leaves a large margin of discretion to the MS in the establishment of their own farm advisory systems. As a consequence, two major groups of MS have been identified for the purpose of this evaluation: in 14 MS (depending of the regions in BE, DE, IT, UK) advisory activities tend to focus strictly on the statutory management requirements and the good agricultural and environmental conditions included in the scope of cross-compliance (Group A), while in 12 MS and some regions within four MS advisory activities tend to be broadened to issues going beyond the scope of cross-compliance (Group B).
- MS have all set up their FAS in line with the regulatory deadline, however operational implementation is delayed and in several MS first advisory activities started in 2008.
- Variability of farm size, types of farming and legal status of farms directly impact on the existing extension services thus reflecting the various needs and situations of farm holdings in the MS. FAS operates within similar systems and structures and address similar publics.
- Regional elements of description when available will be limited to the five countries where agriculture advice frameworks and implementation are fully devolved to regions or federal units.
- Private forest holdings are quite different in nature from farm holdings. In this respect, advisory services for private forest holders need to address specific needs and realities. There seems to be little formal link between the Farm advisory system as presented in Regulation (EC) N° 1782/2003 (concerning the farmers), and the forestry advisory services introduced by Regulation (EC) N° 1698/2005 concerning private forest owners.

2. Overall organisation of FAS in MS

MS have been requested to set-up a FAS no later than the first of January 2007. When describing the way in which MS have set-up the FAS, a series of elements need to be considered. First of all how the preparatory work was conducted, who was involved in designing the system and what were the major outputs (section 2.1). Most MS have conducted a form of needs assessment, however stakeholders involved were mostly part of the agricultural production sphere of influence and the outputs were heterogeneous, with few MS finalising a detailed FAS implementation plan. The way FAS was perceived is strongly linked to the manner in which pre-existing extension and advice systems were structured (section 2.2). Most MS have moved or are moving towards a greater involvement of private operators in the delivery of these services, the public services retaining the overall guidance and coordination role. In most regionalised MS, different organisational patterns co-exist. The role of chambers of agriculture remains important in those 11 MS where they are operational. The overall organisation of the FAS is in general perfectly in line with the pre-existing organisational modes (section 2.3) and has emphasised a greater involvement of private or independent OB in the FAServices. The FAS is organised around a government coordination unit, a day-to-day implementation unit (government or out-sourced) and a number of accredited OB. FAServices are to be mobilised through contractual agreements between farmers and OB. Linkages to other extension or research institutions have not been comprehensively developed at this stage, and ad-hoc contacts have been promoted when necessary (section 2.4). Targeting specific beneficiaries (section 2.5) has not been systematic. The initial target group of those farm holdings receiving more than €15,000 of direct payments has been in some MS opened to other priority groups, which often are the same as those targeted by specific RDP measures.

2.1 Preparatory work

This section highlights the preparatory work carried out by the MS in designing the FAS and how the various stakeholders (at various governmental levels, within the MS agricultural extension services, both public and private, and others) were involved. It mainly addresses the way in which needs were assessed, which were the major stakeholders involved and how this was achieved.

2.1.1 Needs assessment

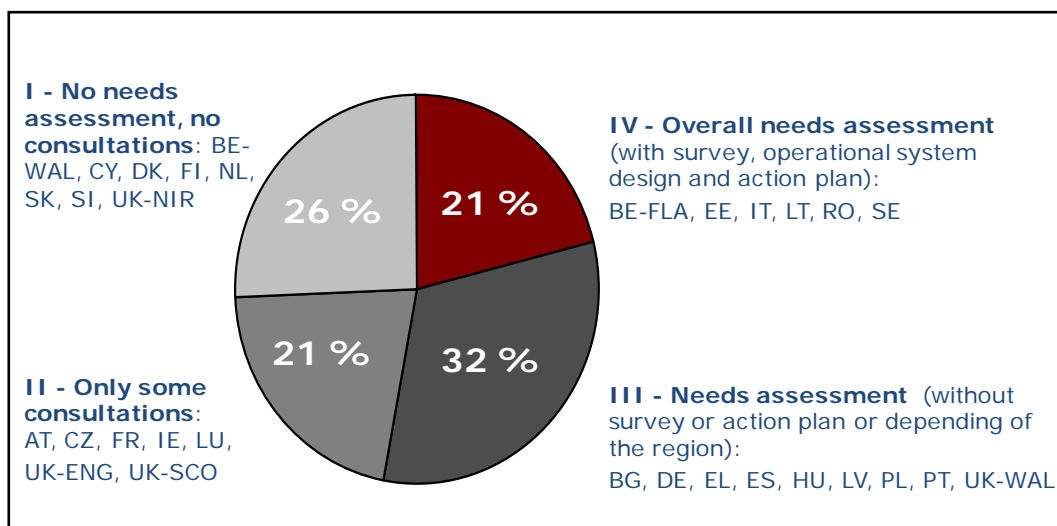
A basic step towards designing the FAS is the assessment of the views and needs of the various stakeholders in relation to the types of services and opportunities that the FAS could address, in line with the overall framework laid out in Regulation (EC) N° 1782/2003. This assessment can then in turn lay the foundations of a specific implementation plan for FAS.

MS have addressed this through four types of assessments:

- No specific assessments were carried out and the implementation of FAS was designated within existing services and OB (group I in graph 6);
- Specific consultations were held with a number of major stakeholders, beyond the government services (group II in graph 6);
- A more detailed needs assessment was conducted, with variable outcomes according to the MS (group III in graph 6);
- The needs assessment provided the overall frame to carry out an operational design of FAS (group IV in graph 6).

Graph 6, which is based on the responses of the MS and documents shared with the country correspondents during field work, shows that three quarters of the MS have conducted a kind of needs assessment. The intensity and final outcome are however very heterogeneous. In six MS and two regions, the FAS was designed on the assumption that it was another service to be provided within the existing extension services and therefore there was no need to consult (group I). In the case of MS of group II, the assumption was more or less similar, but consultations with some stakeholders already involved in other outsourced extension services (such as for example the chambers of agriculture in AT and FR, the in ProAgria Group in FI) were held before adapting the existing services to cater for FAS.

Graph 6: Needs assessment during the setting-up of FAS in each MS



NB: No information on Malta

Source: ADE consortium based on (phone) interviews with responsible of FAS in each MS.

**In Germany, federal states are at the helm of
agricultural advice – FAS needs to blend into
each state**

In 2004, DE carried out a comprehensive study on the existing advisory services in each Federal State. It included an inventory of all existing advisory services, an assessment of farmers' needs in relation to SMR and GAEC, consultations with major stakeholders (farmers organisations, advisers (public, private), workshops were conducted all over the country. A series of thematic documents were published since from 2005; proposals were made for the development of specific advisory systems to cater for the new requirements contained in Regulation (EC) N°1782/2003. No national action plan was however developed since provision of advice to agricultural holdings is part of the sphere of competence of each federal state. Depending on the organisational set-up of the extension services in each state (public-private or outsourced to chambers of agriculture) individual action plans have been developed, within an overall framework defined by a federal strategic plan: "Joint task for the improvement of agrarian structures and coastal protection" (Gemeinschaftsaufgabe "Verbesserung der Agrarstruktur und des Küstenschutzes (GAK)").

As regards the MS for which the CR have reported that a needs' assessment was conducted (Group III), the contents and the outcome of these needs' assessments are quite different. A number of MS have prepared and discussed a design plan, but have not provided details on the consultations and preliminary investigations (EL, HU, LV, PL, PT and UK-WAL).

In ES-CAT and DE, fieldwork was carried out (in ES-CAT to assess the needs of farmers and in DE to highlight the plurality of the extension services within the country). LV and PT have reported that they conducted a needs assessment, but do not provide any details on how this was done and what was the final outcome.

BG on the other hand has indicated that it has conducted a needs'

assessment, which is in fact based on the work done during the final part of a PHARE project in 1999. This resulted in a National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAAS) which was established in 2005-2006. In any event, no specific needs assessment for FAS under Regulation 1782/2003 has been made since.

This seems to be the case also for the other EU12 MS (CZ, HU, EE,...) which have reported the support by PHARE or SAPARD in developing their overall extension networks or systems, on which they are building when designing their FAS (they however have not considered this preliminary work as a FAS needs assessment).

In Italy, the extension framework is intimately linked to the various RDP regulations

The analysis of farmers' needs rests on a series of studies carried out in the context of the implementation of the various Objectives 5 programmes and the RDP working out since 1989. In 2002 the bilateral board for professional training in the agricultural sector (Agriform) carried out a "National survey on formative needs in the agricultural sector." This was complemented in 2007 by a study entitled "The systems of knowledge and innovation in Italy: old problems and new proposals" (highlighting the needs of farmers and the methods and tools used to increase cross-compliance knowledge by the farmers). Furthermore, each region has a specific farm advisory system financed by public institutions (EU, Ministry of Agriculture, Regions) in line with Regulation (EC) N° 270/79, identifying, where necessary, the training needs of farmers through regional surveys, sometimes jointly with regional research institutes. For this reason, no additional surveys have been carried out on setting-up of the FAS, as it was perceived as grafted onto the previous.

Similar situations can also be found in IT, ES and PT where the previous and present rural development programmes have been seen as opportunities to develop an overall system to provide extension services to farmers. IT has explicitly reported this as the frame for its FAS needs assessment.

Elements of a full and more comprehensive needs assessments (Group IV) have been carried out in six countries or regions, namely BE-FLA, EE, IT, LT, RO and SE. These comprehensive needs assessments include surveys and-or direct contacts with farmers and consultations with stakeholders, culminating in an agreed structure and operational system for FAS; plus an eventual medium-term action plan.

An example of this comprehensive approach as it was implemented in BE-FLA is presented as an illustration in the following box.

In Flanders (BE), designing FAS was seen as an opportunity to comprehensively review all advice services delivered to farmers

The preparatory work to designing FAS was carried out between 2004 and 2006, under the direct coordination of a an ad-hoc ministerial Steering Group. Following steps were followed:

- A full inventory during 2004 of the existing agricultural extension set-up (service providers, types of advice, potential clients, trends in sustainable development issues,...);⁽¹⁾
- A comprehensive farmers' satisfaction survey on existing advisory services, combined to an in depth survey of most of the advice providers identified during the first study;⁽²⁾
- A second investigation in close consultation with the farmers organisations in Flanders, led to a second report⁽³⁾ that recommended possible action frameworks for implementing the 'Bedrijfsadviesingssysteem (BAS)' (or FAS);
- This report was reviewed and the Flemish government finally opted for a framework whereby services would be provided through existing private service providers; the regional government maintaining a close involvement in quality follow-up, content training and provision of backstopping training to advisers. This framework also foresaw a close linkage between FAS and previous regional interventions pertaining to economic and farm management advice;
- The regional BAS decree was published in November 2006. During start-up, accredited service providers were regularly consulted and some of their comments and proposals led to an official amendment to the regional decree.

⁽¹⁾ Rapport I- Inventarisatie van voorstellen tot implementatie van BAS in het kader van de maatregel voor Vlaanderen – November 2004

⁽²⁾ Tevredenheidsenquête van de Vlaamse land- en tuinbouwers over de communicatie door het beleidsdomein Landbouw en Visserij – Dimarso – 2005

⁽³⁾ Concrete voorstellen tot een vernieuwd ondersteuningsbeleid voor bedrijfsadviesing in Vlaanderen – Mei 2005

2.1.2 Stakeholder consultations and involvement

As shown in the previous section, most MS (75%) did consult and involve stakeholders. Few MS have indicated how these consultations have contributed to the way FAS was designed. They however provide some general indications as to which stakeholders were involved.

In those MS-regions, where no consultations were carried out (BE-WAL, CY, DK, FI, NL, SK, SI & UK-NIR) two cases can be identified:

- OB were designated by the Governments concerned, based on the pre-existing contracts for advisory services with the Government or public/state enterprises. (BE-WAL, private subsidised organisations that have a framework contract with the Government; CY & SK, state organisations; SI, chamber of agriculture; and UK-NIR, public body: the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise) *or*
- Private bodies were automatically considered as the best stakeholders for the purpose and a direct accreditation process was carried out (DK, FI & NL).

Both cases can be largely considered as the evolution of pre-existing forms of advisory activities.

In the other MS-regions, most stakeholders have been drawn directly from the agricultural production sphere, i.e. farmers' organisations and existing farm advisory services. Stakeholders not immediately in contact with agricultural production (such as: environmental, food safety and animal health departments, Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) operating in these same fields and stakeholders involved with research and innovation) have been drawn in 9 MS and one region, as shown in table 3.

Table 3: Stakeholders involvement in the setting-up of the FAS by MS that carried out a stakeholder consultation

Involvement of various kinds of stakeholders	MS
Stakeholders limited to the agriculture production sphere	
a. Only farmers organisations or representatives were consulted	PT, SE, UK-SCO
b. Only advisory OB were consulted	AT, LU
c. Both "a" & "b" were consulted	BE-FLA, DE(*), ES (**), FR, HU, PL, UK-ENG
Stakeholders go beyond the agricultural production sphere	
d. Environmental and/or food and animal safety/ welfare departments or NGOs are included	BG, IE, UK-WAL
e. All above stakeholders plus research institutes or fellows were consulted	CZ, EE, EL (***), IT, LT, LV, RO

(*) No information is available about the involvement of environmental departments, NGOs or research bodies in DE

(**) (+ research but no NGO)

(***) environment and animal health issues at ministry level only

Source: ADE consortium based on (phone) interviews with responsible of FAS in each MS.

Seven MS involved all stakeholders. Except for CZ, LV and EL, these countries were involved in some form of comprehensive needs assessment. The outcome of these needs assessments was then discussed with farmers' representatives, advisory bodies, environmental bodies, food and animal safety or welfare departments or NGO, and research bodies.

In AT and LU discussions were limited to the local chambers of agriculture, as the government designated, after consulting them, these bodies (and only these) as OB for FAServices.

2.2 Existing advisory/extension systems

This section briefly reviews the main approaches that underpin the various existing extension services in 23 MS³³.

All approaches described in the CR (and briefly summed up in the first column table 5) are consistent with two major overall trends observed worldwide in relation to extension services: (i) systems are moving away from the "Benor linear 'train and visit" approaches³⁴ that favoured close interaction between advice and agricultural research, and (ii) systems are moving away from fully public-driven extension services towards a combined publicly-driven (policy and coordination) and privately-driven implementation system³⁵.

The existing advisory and extension systems in 23 MS can be grouped under five major approaches as described below, namely:

- evolving not-yet-formalised approaches,
- evolving publicly-driven approaches,
- chamber-of-agriculture-driven approaches,
- privately-driven approaches, *and*
- mixed approaches in the more regionalised MS.

▪ **Evolving not-yet-formalised approaches based on farmers' associations, unions and cooperatives (ES, IT, PT).**

³³ Information in the country reports relating to pre-existing extension services for EE, LV, MT and SK are incomplete and do not allow a rapid assessment of the prevailing approaches.

³⁴ Daniel Benor & al. - The Training and Visit System - World Bank - April 1984.

³⁵ The scope of the extension services is therefore evolving from a monolithic system to a more diversified system in which three major blocks or concepts seem to emerge:

- Agricultural Knowledge Information Systems (AKIS), centred on the issues of innovation and knowledge management/dissemination. These systems operate more as networks and remain research- (adaptive and fundamental) centred;
- Extension of techniques and information relating to production is seen much more as a junction between adaptive research, input providers, specialised farming press, farmers associations and networks. This extension is much more 'demand driven' and farmers are seen as the major player. Public services are seen as one partner and no longer the sole operating body;
- Agricultural advice is seen more in relation to farm holdings as a whole. Essential in this setting is the notion of the farm as a business unit. Agricultural advice needs to adapt to this and focus more on economic, marketing and management issues, certification, conformity checks, environmental farm planning, etc.

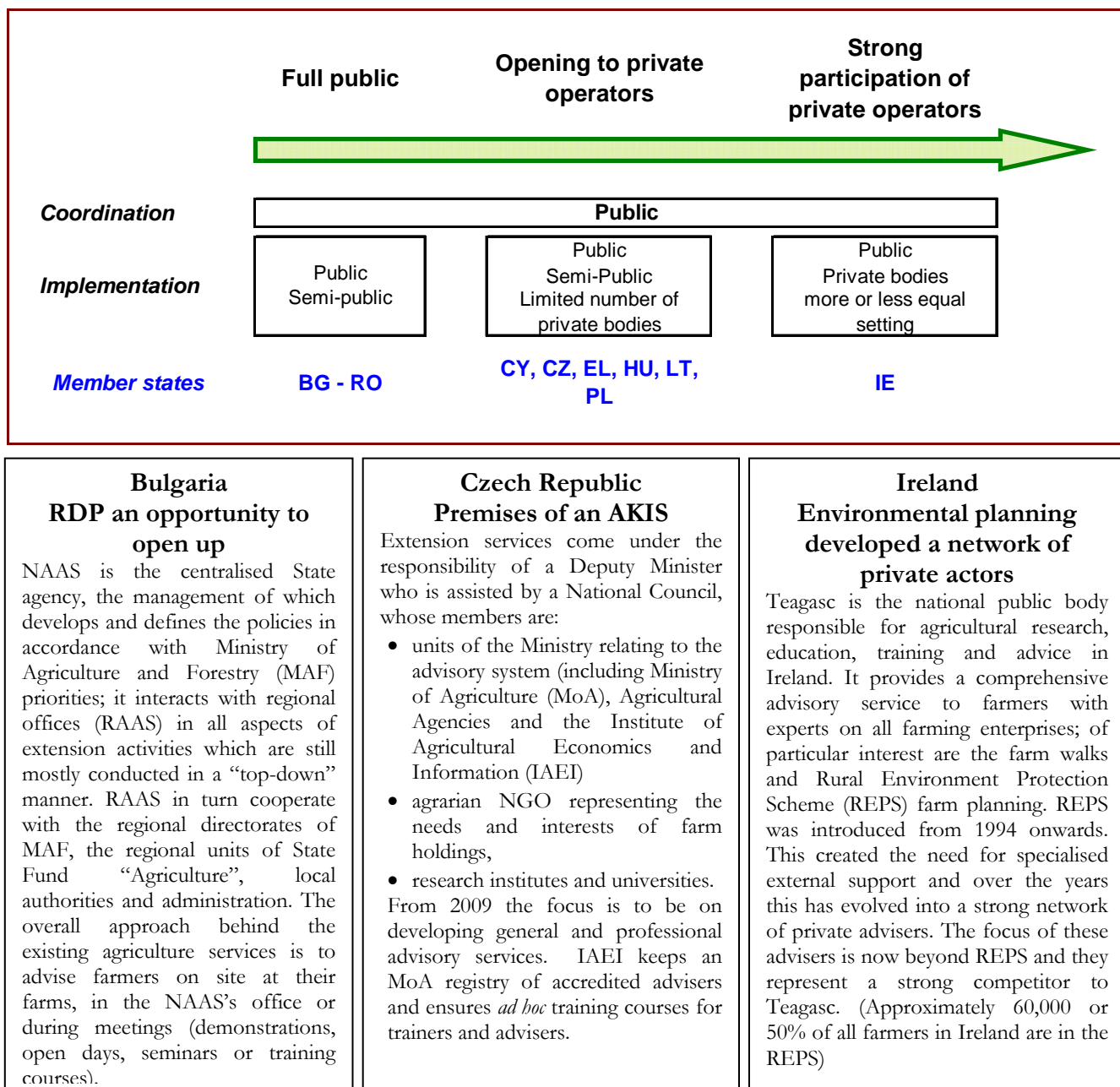
These three countries have a historical background with little tradition of formalised publicly-led extension systems. General farming information was obtainable through the various ministerial departments, but the more structured farmers' advice and "visit" elements were not formally organised and it was mostly left to farmers' associations, farmers' cooperatives and unions to provide this kind of service to their members. All three countries are mobilising EARFD co-funding to try and formally structure their advisory services.

The three countries are at different stages of this process. IT has been using EU rural development funding to initiate this development since 1989, which has resulted in a mix of systems according to the 20 Italian regions (publicly-driven, privately-driven or of mixed nature). The present 2007-2013 period and the obligation to set-up a FAS are seen as opportunities for strengthening and consolidating the various regional systems. ES has been setting-up regional advisory frameworks within the two recent RDP; these frameworks involve a mix of public bodies, cooperatives and unions, but not all are yet operational. PT has been testing a more formalised system with one of the confederations of farmers' associations and is mobilising EAFRD co-funding to expand and develop this system.

▪ **Evolving publicly driven systems**

These systems are characterised by the involvement of public services both in coordination and policy areas and in day-to-day implementation. They are evolving over time as illustrated in the graph 7. Even when opening up to private actors collaborating in the system, public influence is still overwhelming.

Graph 7: Illustration of evolving public driven systems



The logical next step would be to eventually devolve the entire day-to-day implementation to private actors along with associated modifications to the public service providers’ mandates and structures.

▪ **Devolution to the sole networks of chambers of agriculture (AT, LU, SI)**

In this approach the government retains responsibility for overall policy elements and enters into specific contracts with the national network of chambers of agriculture, specifying accreditation conditions and grant systems for specific advice elements which the Government wishes to develop. Chambers of agriculture are governed by specific national legal frameworks that often envisage the chambers as having a coordinating role and an ability to mobilise advice to farmers and provide basic agricultural and vocational training (see further details in section 3.1). Their strength resides in their local sectoral assembly and their capacity to interact with all farming actors at local level.

AT has a complete network of chambers right down to local level. SI has eight “regional” chambers and LU a single national level chamber. Slovenian chambers face major structural funding problems that preclude provision of comprehensive services to all farmers.

Austria

Driven by chambers of agriculture

The chambers of agriculture have two major functions: (i) lobbying to represent and defend their members’ interests and (ii) provision of specialised services to the farmers, which include advisory services and facilitating the preparation of farmers’ request for RDP subsidies and their subsequent handling. The latter is subcontracted to the chambers by the various Länder governments and the former is organised through specific 4-to-6-year contracts from the federal government. Farmers receive general advice free of charge (directly subsidised by the Government). Specialised advice is personalised and is available at full cost to the farmers. The chamber of agriculture is structured around one federal chamber, 9 Länder chambers and 80 local chambers, mobilising a total of ± 2000 persons. They are also in charge of lifelong learning programmes and basic farming education.

The Netherlands

From associative to public and back to private

The decision in 1986 to separate policy formulation and implementation resulted in reorganisation of the public extension service. In the second half of the 1990s the Minister of Agriculture introduced the principles of demand-driven extension and user payment. The user-pays principle implied that end-users are responsible for obtaining technical and social-economic advice concerning their enterprises.

At present the extension system is part of a wider Dutch Agricultural Knowledge Information System (AKIS) composed of the following major actors:

- A series of external services or facilities such as a general agri-window (MoA LNV-Loket) and specialised thematic websites.
- Privately owned and operated advice providers, of which the most important is the privatised and restructured DLV, composed of five Business Units
- Wageningen University (Wageningen UR) jointly managed with the research division, privatised as “Stichting DLO”.
- Two specialised environmental related Information and Knowledge Centres (IKC)

▪ **Privately driven systems (DK, FI, NL, SE)**

These systems still maintain the separation between the policy elements, which remain the prerogative of the Government, and daily implementation which is totally in the hands of private OB. These OB organise and implement advice independently of any Government contract. Minimum quality criteria or good-practice standards can be provided through Government or other channels (such as internal auto-checks in the wider organisations); and need to be considered when determining the nature and the means of providing services. The major criterion however remains the farmers and their effective demand for the services.

In all four countries, the advisory scene is dominated by one major institution. This organisation comes from the former associative organisations (and their apex organisations): DAAS and its network of regional offices in DK; ProAgria and its network of Rural Advisory Centres in FI; DLV in the NL which was nationalised and then re-privatised; and the Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies (Hushållningssällskapen) and its network of societies in SE.

In principle, in all four countries farmers have to pay the full cost for advice received. However, depending on the Government's priorities subsidies can be granted to the farmers in order to promote or support the development of advice on new or specific issues related to the Government's policies.

■ **Countries where different approaches co-exist (BE, DE, UK & FR)³⁶**

These countries are characterised by a major devolution of responsibilities in the day-to-day management of agricultural advice to regional entities (federally-based in BE and DE). The publicly-driven approach, the devolved approach to chambers of agriculture, and privately-driven approaches can all be found in these countries, either between regions or within regions.

In BE-WAL the overall approach can be considered as basically publicly-driven, with opening-up to private (subsidised) operators (some highly focused on environmental issues, food safety, biodiversity,... and other more general); while in BE-FLA the approach is a private-based system driven and coordinated through public incentives.

DE presents the most diversified system as there are basically three scenarios: i) the fully publicly-driven approach in the Southern federal states³⁷; ii) devolution to chambers of agriculture (which in Germany are considered as public bodies - *Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts* - representing the interests of their members and entrusted with public service obligations³⁸), plus privately-driven *Beratungsringe* (circles of agricultural advice) in the other former Western federal states³⁹; and iii) a more privately-driven approach in the former Eastern federal states⁴⁰ with the exception of Sachsen (SAC) which is publicly-driven.

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.

In FR the system is composed of many organisations that have strong geographical ties or else are technically focused (local chambers of agriculture, management centres, *ADASEA* network, technical groups on cereals, dairy production, fruits and vegetables, vineyards ...). These bodies may be semi-public, non-governmental or private. They all interact with farmers within a largely decentralised extension system where regional services (Direction Régionale de l'Agriculture et des Forêts (DRAF)) implement Government policies at regional and departmental levels.

³⁶ One could consider Spain (ES) and Italy (IT) to be part of this group too, as the way their formalisation of advisory systems is taking place, the various approaches (ie the evolving public driven or the private driven approaches) co-exist. As these 'formal' advisory systems are still rather recent, they have been reviewed separately.

³⁷ BDW, BAY, HES, RHP

³⁸ These chambers of agriculture, which are organised more as departments of agriculture, are under pressure for restructuring driven by the need for public savings.

³⁹ HAM, NSC, NRW, SAA, SWH

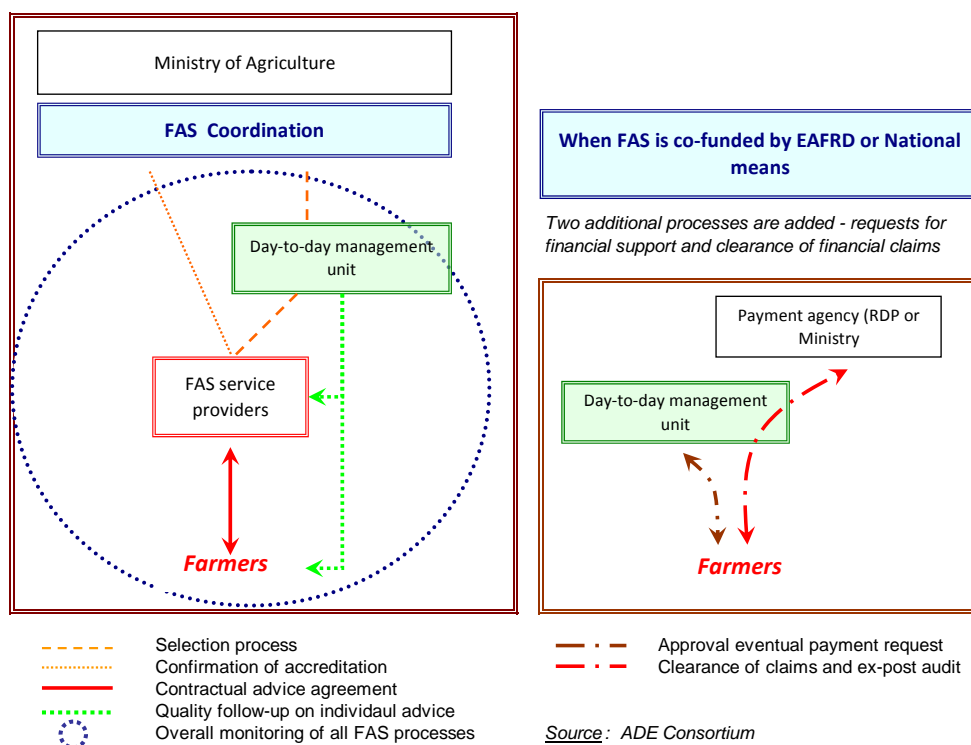
⁴⁰ BDB, MEV, San, THU

2.3 Overall organisation of FAS

The planned overall organisation of the FAS in each MS is briefly summed up in the second column of table 5. In all MS FAS is set up according to the country's overall approach to extension services (as briefly described in the previous section). Consequently, specific OB and authorities have been designated (see section 3 for a more detailed description of the selection and accreditation procedures), with most countries having opted for a publicly-driven approach, to strengthen or expand the trend in their system towards more outsourcing of advice provision.

The overall organisation adopted by most MS combines a public driven coordination-supervision body with a number of OB, designed or outsourced, to carry out the implementation of the advisory services which each MS has planned for under its FAS. These OB either provide direct in-house advisers or coordinate networks of sub-contracted advisers to implement the services at farm level. The functions this organisational frame has to address are (see graph 8): i) to coordinate and supervise the selection, accreditation and eventual regular re-accreditation processes; ii) to reach and implement contractual advice agreements; and iii) to ensure an overall monitoring of services and processes provided. In those MS that provide financial support to farmers in mobilising advisory services, two additional functions needs have to be foreseen: iv) handling farmers requests for financial support; and v) clearing final financial claims submitted by farmers on completion of advice.

Graph 8: General FAS organisation



FAS coordination is most of the time ensured either through the Ministry of Agriculture's cabinet or a ministerial steering group, but sometimes is delegated to a specific administrative service. (Chapter 6 on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) contains a detailed list of the various FAS coordination units in the MS). Major responsibilities at this level are: i) the M&E and steering of the entire FAS within the MS; and ii) the official accreditation of OB and/or individual advisers; and where relevant, the approval of specific financial grants for FAServices to farmers.

Several MS (as indicated in table 4) have assigned the responsibilities for the day-to-day implementation of FAS to a specific unit. Their main tasks are thus: i) to advertise and coordinate the necessary information campaign or materials on FAS; ii) to implement and coordinate the selection process (tendering, tender evaluation and proposals for accreditation); iii) to organise the additional support activities (ad-hoc training of advisers, re-accreditation processes, coordination workshops...); iv) where relevant collect and assess farmers' request for financial support; v) interact with the coordination unit to collect all relevant information; and v) depending of MS the organisation of the quality check of the advice provided.

Table 4: Day-to-day implementation bodies in MS

		Independant or dessignated bodies that ensure the day-to-day follow-up of FAS activities
AT	Austria	Federal level chamber of Agriculture
BE	Flanders	Agriculture and Fisheries Agency
BG	Bulgaria	National agricultural advisory services
CZ	Czech Republic	Institute of agricultural economics and information
DE	Germany	Länder agricultural ministries
DK	Denmark	Danish food industry agency
EE	Estonia	Estonia advsiroy coordinating centre for agriculture and rural economy
EL	Greece	Local Agencies for agricultural development (LAAD) & AGROCERT
FI	Finland	Finish agency for rural affairs and finish food safety authority
FR	France	Regional agricultural departments (DRAF)
IT	Italy	Regional authorities and where relevant provincial authorities
LU	Luxembourg	Grand-ducal chamber of Agriculture
LV	Latvia	Rural support services
NL	Netherlands	Department for regulations
SE	Sweden	Swedish board for agriculture
SK	Slovakia	Agro-institut Nitra
SI	Slovenia	National chamber of agriculture
UK	England	Natural England
	Scotland	Scottish agricultural college (SAC)
	Northern Ireland	College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE)

Source - ADE-consortium - country reports

Payment agencies (EAFRD specific or national-regional-local specific agencies) are only involved in the system in those countries that have foreseen the possibility of a financial support to farmers for FAServices (see list of countries that co-fund FAServices in chapter 5). Its sole responsibility is to ensure that farmers' financial claims are paid in due time after completion of the relevant FAService. In several MS this agency is housed under the same umbrella organisation as the day-to-day implementation unit.

Table 5: Organisation of FAS and links with pre-existing system and extension services in each MS

	Overall typical organisation of pre-existing extension system	Overall organisation of FAS	Linkages and interactions with other services
EU -15			
AT	Organised by and through the chambers of agriculture (national and länder)	- is an integral part of the devolution contract on extension/advice between the Government and the chambers of Agriculture	- no specific coordination and inter-linkages other than the standard interactions within and between the various levels of chambers
BE	FLA - Private driven WAL - publicly-driven, opened to thematic private actors	FLA - setting up of a specific facility to cater for cross-compliance advice WAL - setting up new facility, using already existing specialised outsourced contracts on topics related to cross-compliance	FLA - no coordination beyond the usual administrative follow up - little formal interaction with the knowledge system WAL - no coordination between operating bodies - no formal interactions with the existing extension services
DE	Mixed systems within the country between its länder	- through setting up a specific new facility to cater for cross-compliance advice	- no specific coordination or inter-linkages other than the standard interactions within and between the various actors of the different länder extension operators
DK	Private driven - Farmer associative based	- through setting up a specific new facility to cater for cross-compliance advice	- no formal interaction with the agricultural research community regarding the FAS - linkages with other bodies is ad hoc and informal as operators also provide other non FAS services
EL	publicly-driven, opening up to private sector actors	- FAS is a totally new system, very different and independent from the existing extension service system	- no formal interaction or linkages are foreseen
ES	<i>Informal - based on cooperatives and farmer unions - structuring process through support from the various RDPs</i>	- Through 17 regional advisory frameworks. Two options: i) FAS is concerned with measures integrated in the Rural Development Departments, and limited to relevant services and ii) FAS is broader and addresses the technical improvement and modernization of farms, generally related to research and technology transfer. Overall the approach is to try and streamline the existing extension and advice services	-no specific coordination or inter-linkages as they mostly remain informal and specific to each region
FI	Private driven - Farmer association based	- through setting up a specific new facility to cater for cross-compliance advice	- the interaction with the pre-existing advisory services is ensured through the ProAgria Group - no formal coordination related to the FAS as such
FR	Fragmented system based on chambers of agriculture, private & semi-public actors (either geographically or sector/topic focused)	- directly linked to the pre-existing system, as <i>local organisations have been asked to gather their competences in form of networks called "réseaux de compétences"</i>	- interactions differ from one network to another - also national networks exist (APCA, CER France CER, ADASEA/CNASEA, etc...) - little direct & formal interaction or coordination with the agricultural research community
IE	publicly-driven, with strong private implication as follow up to REPS approach and accreditation	- is an integral part of existing advisory framework	- FAS is inextricably linked with all farming activities and consequently influences all advice given to farmers - Teagasc is the statutory body charged with the responsibility for agricultural research so there is a direct link between research and advice.
IT	Informal - structuring process started through previous RDPs and strengthened with present 2007-2013 RDP	- private driven regions - FAS implemented as a new facility to strengthen and develop private actors involvement - publicly-driven regions - fully integrated to the existing system and approach - most regions are a mix of the above and the two systems run in parallel	- goal of the new FAS system is that links between advisory boards and the research-knowledge community can be developed, in order to facilitate a more efficient transfer of information and innovation - coordination between operating bodies varies widely between regions - and remains rather control-administrative driven
LU	Organised by and through its chamber of agriculture	- is an integral part of the existing advisory services provided by the chamber of agriculture	- no specific coordination as through the chamber of agriculture adviser and farmers have access to relevant research information - it is also more of a one man show and therefore informal networking prevails
NL	Private driven	- through setting up a specific new facility to cater for cross-compliance advice	- coordination with other bodies, services and research community are the responsibility of each of the accredited advisory bodies - as such no formal coordination or linkage are organised by LNV
PT	Informal - structuring process through RDP support	- through setting up a specific new system to cater for cross-compliance advice	- no particular coordination other than the standard interaction between MOA bodies
SE	Private driven - Farmer associative based	- through setting up a specific new facility to cater for cross-compliance advice	- no formal coordination taking place except from the geographical specialization of each of the regional advisory services and regional CBAs
UK	Mixed systems within the country between its four major "regions"	- ENG & WAL - setting up specific new facility to cater for cross-compliance advice - SCO & NIR - integral part of existing advisory framework	- ENG & WAL - specific coordination and interaction between services goes through Natural England or the Farming Connect programme in Wales - in addition to standard interaction between MOA bodies providing backstopping and info-research data to advisers - SCO & NIR - no specific coordination or interactions other than the standard interaction between MOA bodies providing backstopping and info-research data to advisers

Overall typical organisation of pre-existing extension system		Overall organisation of FAS	Linkages and interactions with other services
EU -12			
BG	Fully Public (+ marginally accountants and economic private advising companies)	- within the existing NAAS (& RAAS) - advice is given on different technological issues concerning plant growing and animal breeding, possibilities for financing their activities from national and European funds, requirements and deadlines to apply for direct payments, how to keep accountancy of the farm, terms and conditions for applying GAEC and SMRs standards, etc., even if these latter are not considered as a priority in the framework of the activities of NAAS	- no particular coordination other than the standard interaction between MOA bodies providing backstopping and info-research data to advisers - there are no linkages between NAAS and private operators (accountants mainly)
CY	publicly-driven, opening up to private sector actors	- through setting up a new service within the existing extension system	- no particular coordination other than the standard interaction between MOA bodies
CZ	publicly-driven, opening up to private sector actors	- Advisors are accredited in all SMRs and GAEC, Natura 2000, Agro-environmental measures, environmental measures in forestry and occupational safety and are mobilised through a new facility developed within the original SAPARD supported system	- no particular coordination other than the standard interaction between MOA bodies providing backstopping and info-research data to advisers - 11 universities/research centres participating in the overall extension system provide specialised backstopping
EE		- through the setting up of 15 county level advisory centres	- national coordination through the national chamber of agriculture - guidance of a farmers advisory board - interaction with all services, centres & policy makers - research involved either as specific advisers or specialised trainers
HU	publicly-driven, opening up to private sector actors (use of appointed 'village agronomists')	- through setting up TAC (technical advice centres) which are mostly privately managed and which operate through private advisors	- strongest links are hierarchal (Moa and its extension agency & this agency and the TACs) - the RACs provide occasional training for TACs and advisors. - little if no interactions the broader agricultural research community - the Professional Centres which should have interacted with the knowledge system have not been set up - limited or no cooperation between TACs, competing for clients
LT	publicly-driven, opening to chamber of agriculture and private accounting services	- is an integral part of existing advisory framework	- little interaction with research community (other than training inputs for advisors)
LV		- set up on the basis of the existing Agricultural advisory services (AAS)	- no coordination with research community
MT		- through two private operating bodies under the supervision of the MoA	- no information provided PS one of the two advisory bodies is in a consortium with DAAS (DK) and Essex University
PL	publicly-driven, opening to chamber of agriculture and private actors	- is an integral part of existing advisory framework	- no particular coordination other than the standard interaction between MOA bodies providing backstopping and info-research data to advisers
RO	Fully Public (+ marginally accountants and economic private advising companies)	- within the existing public system - advisory services are mobilized 'system is not clearly described	- no particular coordination other than the standard interaction between MOA bodies
SK		- implementation is delegated to two state enterprises	- these organisations are research-based and therefore ensure inter-linkages with research and other services
SL	Organised by and through the Chambers of agriculture (national and regional)	- through direct integration as an additional service to be provided by the chamber of agriculture network	- Specialist farm advisors have long term links through the chamber to experts that work in research institutions: to solve difficult problems, to notify farmers' problems to researchers and to combine knowledge into practical field recommendations
Legend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal extension advice Chambers of agriculture publicly-driven Private driven Fragmented and mixed Mixed Not enough details provided in CR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific service-facility set up for FAS (separate or complementary of existing extension) Fully interwoven with the existing extension system Idem but with focus on networking of existing services and actors Mixed Not enough details provided in CR 	

Source: Evaluator's rapid assessment based on data provided in the various country reports

OB are the intermediate link with the farmers in relation to FAS. In most MS advice to farmers is provided on the basis on a contractual agreement, which is part of the farmers request for financial support in those countries where this is foreseen. In the other, it is considerer a standard commercial procedure. These agreements cover at least the type of service, requested fees, payment conditions, various disclaimers (confidentiality, adviser's responsibilities ...). Payments to OB are mostly done directly by the farmers.

Four major trends can be observed throughout the EU27:

- **FAS is set-up as a specific service or facility within or alongside their existing extension system (BE, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, HU, IT, NL, PT, SE)**

In this configuration, the MS consider FAS as an autonomous set-up within the existing extension system. A major consequence is that in so doing these MS consider that there exists a clear distinction between FAS and their extension services. Other more socio-economic or business advisory services or tools remain therefore the focus of the existing extension services and will continue to be developed independently of FAS. This is quite clear in countries such as BE, DK, FI, NL and SE, where several specific tools for management skills development or environmental issues exist but are not considered part of FAS.

For example in BE-WAL, FAS does not formally interact or operate through the extension service's external field agents; in HU the various TACs are set up and operated within a distinct and in parallel with a new system of village agronomists and other general advisory services. This does not exclude informal contacts between the various extension actors.

Some countries such as NL seem to have opted for a facility under which the existing private operators provide a 'new' FAS service to farmers, which the Government supports through an *ad-hoc* grant facility; but, with no further involvement by Government other than relevant financial checks.

- **FAS is intimately interwoven with the existing extension services (AT, BG, IE, LT, LU, LV, PL, RO, SI)**

In these countries FAServices can be mobilised or implemented through most of the existing extension actors or players and also provide farmers with advice that includes other non-FAServices-defined advice. This is clearly the case for those countries that operate directly through their national network of chambers of agriculture (AT, LU, and SI). Several new MS (BG, LT, LV, PL and RO) have basically designed their FAS to operate within their existing extension service, which is

Hungary

FAS and Technical Advice Centres (TAC)

TAC makes advisory service contracts with farmers and completes the service via registered advisors. There is no geographical limit, they can undertake assignments at any part of Hungary. They have to coordinate a network of (on average 12) contracted individual advisers, from anywhere in Hungary as long as they are registered with MARD. Each adviser can work for one or more TACs. Each year, there are random on sight evaluations and approximately 25 percent of the TACs are yearly checked.

Estonia

FAS and County level advisory centres

The Ministry has certified 15 county advisory centres in 2005. Most of these centres are related to producers' and farmers' unions. The basic duty of an advisory centre is to advice on cross-compliance and on other agricultural problems, to offer broader information and trainings, to help finding the necessary information and to "read" legal acts, introduce and distribute printed material and organise information events.

ADE-Consortium – country reports

closely linked to EU co-funding and is still evolving as their farms and agriculture adapt to new challenges. The range of advice and services that the FAS provides in these latter countries also covers many RDP-related topics and priorities. IE is a special case, as its extension system is characterised by one major public actor and over 160 private advisers competing for farming clients. Here too, the FAS is considered to be able to provide a wide range of advice on issues such as management, cross-compliance, environment, quality labels, and specific topics such as sucklers.

▪ **FAS is set-up as a networking system of existing bodies (FR)**

France
Local and regional networks

The pre-existing system is based on very specialised (i.e. crops, cattle, environment, accountancy) bodies, whereas most of farms need more global advice (on cross-compliance, management-strategies,...). Local organisations have been asked to pool their competences into networks called “*réseaux de compétences*”. There are from 0 to 12 accredited “network” per region; however networks can work in one or more regions (as long as all DRAF concerned have accredited them) and for one specific area there can be several networks accredited. A network can be composed of one body to several bodies (till 153 like in Pays de la Loire); they have to provide in-house all competence to address all on cross-compliance issues (and of all agricultural production on the concerned area) and ensure appropriate coordination between network members.

As mentioned previously, France’s pre-existing extension services are very fragmented and very focused or specialised. Setting-up FAS has been the opportunity to try and streamline the existing bodies in order to deliver a complete advice package, however restricted to the various requirements to cross-compliance conformity. This has been achieved by encouraging the emergence of local/regional networks.

▪ **A mixed set-up co-exists within the MS (UK)**

In UK-ENG and UK-WAL, FAS is organised as a separate service

facility whereas in UK-SCO and UK-NIR it is intimately linked to the existing system.

The organisation of FAS also depends on two additional major considerations:

- In most of the EU15, FAS is set up to provide essentially comprehensive and full advice on, or monitoring of, **all** farmers’ obligations in relation to cross-compliance. This requires that the adviser has the capacity to provide all required advice to the farmer. These MS have organised their systems so that advisers are polyvalent (and can obtain backstopping from their OB if needed). In this respect France, with its networking approach, has opted for a more piecemeal delivery of advice (not necessarily all through the same person or at the same time). BE-WAL, DK, EL, ES, UK-NIR have considered that the adviser needs to be more thematically-oriented and therefore have designed systems in which farmers are directed to, or access, specialised OB (which however have to provide full advice on all issues that form part of the FAServices package in their countries).

- PT, ES, IT and most of the EU12⁴¹ have set up wider systems responding to rural development priorities and are mobilising EARFD funding both to this end. In the EU12 the organisation of FAS is clearly linked to the prevailing and past efforts (with SAPARD or PHARE support) to set-up agricultural extension services first aimed at accompanying the transitional period towards privatised farming and now aimed at accompanying the further transformation and structural adaptation of the farm holdings. FAS is often seen in these countries as an opportunity to review, expand or re-focus the existing extension system and as a vehicle for accompanying the sector's transformation processes, of which cross-compliance is only one of the major challenges.

2.4 Linkages and interactions with other services

Linkages and interactions with other services, and i.e. research have been described briefly in the various CR and are summarized in the third column of table 5 on pages 29 and 30.

Linkages and interactions with existing extension services

In those MS where the FAS has been set-up as a specific facility or service, little if any formalised interaction, other than administrative follow-up of FAS activities and administrative relations with existing extension services, is organised. Contacts and interactions between individual advisers or advisory OB remain however possible on an *ad-hoc* and personal basis as and when required.

Most of these countries (BE, DE, EL, ES, HU, NL and PT) have not set up a specific coordination-monitoring body or committee focusing on content and planning of FAS, which could have helped streamline some of the inter-linkages (see also chapter 6). CY has created a special coordination committee within the Ministry to streamline the inputs of the pre-existing departments, but it is not clear whether this committee's remit extends beyond standard administrative issues. In the Nordic countries (DK, FI, SE) where the pre-existing extension services operated under an umbrella lead structure (association, society or company), these structures could stimulate and facilitate these interactions. But in all three countries the FAS is organised as an autonomous independent facility, so that it is doubtful whether any formal inter-linkages are planned through these umbrella structures.

United Kingdom

Ensuring linkages through specialised “panels”

In **England**, regular (at least biannual) meetings are organised through *a special panel* between the key bodies involved to report on progress and discuss priorities. This Panel includes the Momenta (the consortium contractor), Defra, Natural England and the inspection bodies. Momenta is tasked with ensuring there is coordination with the events of other agencies and within its members.

In **Wales**: the *Farming Connect programme* (of which FAS is a part) has four Development Centres (Dairy, Red Meat, Organic and Land Management). These centres have Knowledge Transfer (KT) officers. The interaction is that each region has monthly meetings between Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) Farming Connect staff, KT officers and FLS staff to share information and ideas on delivery and promotion of Farming Connect services, including FAS.

Northern Ireland has set up a *central committee* entitled the '*Helping Farmers Comply Forum (HFCF)*' which co-ordinates the delivery of FAS and brings together staff involved in all aspects of Department of Agricultural and Rural Development's (DARD) work on cross-compliance and ensures that the advisory message addresses issues that arise from control (inspection) activities.

⁴¹ Information relating to MT and SK are incomplete and do not address the existing extension services.

When integrated with the pre-existing extension service, inter-linkages are in most cases the usual ongoing linkages between extension services. CR do not provide sufficient information on how this is planned and implemented. UK has set up in three of its regions ‘specialised panels’ to assist in piloting the implementation of FAS. Through these panels, interactions with other bodies can be organised and stimulated.

Interactions with Research

Most MS have not directly involved their national agricultural research community during stakeholder consultations when designing FAS (see table 3), with the exceptions of CZ, EE, EL, IT, LT, LV & RO.

However elements provided by MS in the various CR and pertaining to the design of the FAS, suggest a more balanced picture (see table 4). BE-WAL, IE and SK, have indirectly involved the research community by selecting OB that are directly research based. CZ and EE have foreseen a special backstopping role for a number of research centres (as specialised resource persons, for ad-hoc training and-or preparation of key documents). In NL, the decision on whether and how to involve research in the FAS, is left to the various private OB which already have or are developing their own knowledge and information networks. IT has designed its FAS in order to foster linkages between advice and knowledge, especially as a means to facilitate transfers of information and innovation.

Involvement of research related OB

BE-WAL: Several OB have particular links with research centres, organisations, or universities (NITRAWAL, CER Marloie, GIREA,...).

IE: Teagasc the major OB is a statutory body responsible for agricultural research.

SK: The two accredited OB are research based organisations.

Two other interesting and particular cases are: (a) FR which, through its local and regional networks, has the potential also to involve national-level networks of chambers of agriculture, management centres, semi-public technical services and so forth, although there does not seem to be any formal system for doing so; and (b) MT, where one of the OB (APS Consult Ltd), has international collaboration or partnership agreements with the Danish Agricultural Advisory Services (DAAS) and Writtle Agricultural College of Essex University.

2.5 Target groups and priority groups

Regulation (EC) N° 1782/2003, stipulates that “*Member States shall give priority to the farmers who receive more than EUR 15 000 of direct payments per year.*” (Article 14.2)⁴². However, Regulation (EC) N° 73/2009 has *de facto* removed this obligation, by stipulating that “*Member States may determine, in accordance with objective criteria, the priority categories of farmer that have access to the farm advisory system.*”. Even before this revision through Regulation (EC) N° 73/2009, the original regulatory obligation (“more than €15.000 of direct payments per year”) has been complemented in some MS by additional target and priorities groups, as is illustrated in graph 9.

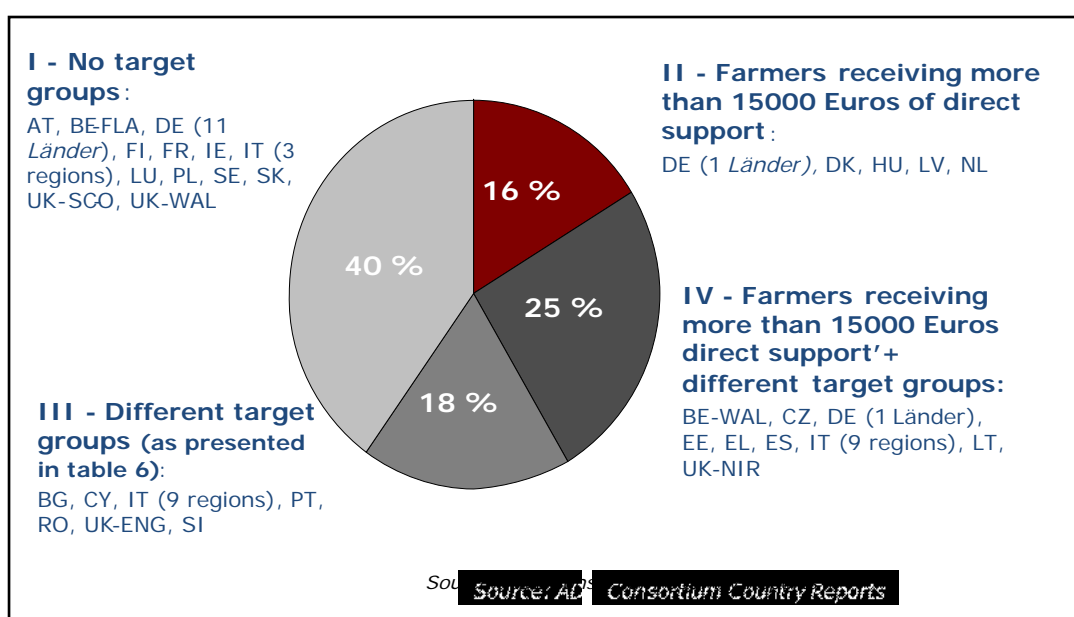
⁴² Although the MS could have established other priorities.

9 MS and 13 regions in 4MS have planned to focus FAS on the regulatory obligatory target group of farmers receiving more than €15,000. Another 8 MS and 17 regions in 4 MS have decided not to focus on any particular target group at all.

Different target groups

A significant number of MS have planned to address other target groups than only “farmers receiving more than €15,000 of direct payment per year”. This is the case in 9MS and 22 regions, of which 5 MS and 12 regions also target the above-mentioned regulatory obligation.

Graph 9: Planned target groups for each MS



CR show that these MS-regions have mostly considered local specificities or the wider context of their RDP to select a series of additional target groups (see details in table 6). Among these, some are quite common (young or female farmers chosen in 8 MS) and others are very specific (BG: target group “Semi-subsistence Farms Undergoing Restructuring”; EL: target group “farmers with tobacco and/or cotton cultivation”; CZ: “farmers who want to get advice on safety at work”; BE-WAL: “farmers that received cross-compliance penalties”).

Table 6: Different other types of FAS target groups

Target groups	MS concerned
Young farmers or women	9 MS BG, CY, CZ, EE, EL, ES, IT (in 14 regions), LT, PT
Farmers in Nitrogen Vulnerable Zones (NVZ) or with phyto-sanitary emergency plans	6 MS EL, ES, IT (in 7 regions), RO, UK(EN, NI), PT
Farmers in mountainous or less-favoured areas (LFA)	6 MS BG, EE, EL, ES, IT (in 6 regions), RO
Farmers receiving agro-environmental support or other payments from Pillar Two Axis 2	6 MS BG, EE, EL, ES, IT (1 region), RO
For a particular production	6 MS: EL: tobacco and/or cotton cultivation DE (NRW): crop production and dairy farms ES (4 regions depending on the production): milk and ovine or wine and livestock; pork farms IT (in 2 regions depending on the production): goat/sheep, vegetable SI: Livestock breeding farms UK(EN): Sheep and Goat
Farmers in semi-natural habitats or Natura 2000	5 MS EE, EL, ES, IT (in 3 regions), PT
Producer Groups or cooperative	3 MS BG, ES, IT
Miscellaneous:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ES (some region) & IT (1 region) Farms with quality system/quality programme - CZ & IT Farms who employ max. 1 employee - BE-WAL & ES Farms that received advice more than 3 years ago - BE-WAL & SI Farms that received cross-compliance penalties - IT (1 region) Organic farm - RO According to size: >8 ESU, >2 ESU, <2 ESU - BG Semi - Subsistence Farms Undergoing Restructuring - CZ for advice on safety at work

Source: ADE based on "DG AGRI questionnaires" and phone or face to face interviews with some stakeholders.

Prioritisation through scaling levels of financial support

Besides the setting-up of target groups, some MS decided on subsidy scales depending on the type of advices as a means to focus on specific farmer groups. This is the case in three MS: CY, EL & LT.

In **Greece**, the public call for expression of interest under *measure 114* differentiates the maximum amount of aid by thematic area as follows:

Theme	Maximum amount (in €)
Environment	350
Public Health – Animal Health	250
Public Health – Plant Health	250
Notification of Diseases	150
Animal Welfare	150
Good Agricultural Practices	350
Total	1500

An important observation, notwithstanding that this section presents the setting-up of the FAS, is that these various target groups and priorities have rarely been implemented so far because the demand were too low.

3. Implementation of FAS in MS

This chapter reviews the ways in which the overall organisation of the FAS (see section 2.3) has been implemented or how it was made operational during 2008⁴³. This involves three major partners: (i) the MS FAS coordination committee, which will be reviewed in chapter 6; (ii) the OB and (iii) the advisers. A wide range of different OB can be found within the EU (section 3.1). Private OB represent a major group of FAS operators, in which a clear distinction needs to be made between the business and profit-oriented OB and the other non profit making organisation like associations, cooperatives or union driven OB that provide services to members, or to geographical areas, specific farm types, etc. Public OB and chamber of agriculture represent the remaining share (section 3.2). An open and tendered selection process for OB has been implemented in 14 MS, whereas in the others FAS existing outsourced service providers or public services were designated (section 3.3). Selection criteria used during tenders are in line with the regulatory requirement⁴⁴; MS seem however to have emphasised human skills and overall administrative capacity of the tendering OB. OB operate either through their own on-the-staff advisers or through networks or external advisers. Accreditation of advisers is two-fold. It is either considered as part of the overall selection process of the OB or as an additional accreditation of staff or advisers within the accredited OB (section 3.4). Most MS have set the threshold for advisers' minimum qualifications at university level (BSc or MSc); only six have foreseen a parallel accreditation of advisers with technical or basic vocational agricultural training. The cost of implementing FAS (section 3.5) need to cover the specific costs of these selection and accreditation processes, and of course other major cost elements of information and public relations, of overall coordination and monitoring of the activities and of mobilising the necessary facilities to house and operate FAS activities. At present there is no comprehensive assessment of what MS have invested in setting-up and running the FAS⁴⁵. EAFRD through its *measure 115* can provide support to MS to off-set part of this investment (section 3.6). Six MS are using this measure. In volumes of mobilised funds, it is clearly ES, followed by PT and IT that are mobilising the majority of funds foreseen under *measure 115*. This measure also encapsulates other farm services such relief services and farm management. Data collected in the CR does not allow differentiating between these services and disbursement of planned funds for FAS has not been reported on, as implementation of FAS in the three major users is just picking up.

⁴³ Or in the coming years for RO and BG

⁴⁴ Art 15.2 of Regulation N° (EC) 1974/2006 – See section 3.3

⁴⁵ Country correspondents have faced major problems in collecting these cost information.

3.1 Types of operating bodies

There are four major types of OB intervening in the various MS to deliver advisory services namely: (i) private bodies (profit-making and non-profit-making); (ii) public bodies; (iii) chambers of agriculture; and (iv) semi-public bodies.

▪ **Private operating bodies**

These OB are fully owned by private concerns or individuals. They therefore offer a wide range of services to their clients, who are mostly but not necessarily farmers⁴⁶. They employ their own staff and advisers, but have the ability to operate as consortia with other service providers or retainer-contracted specialised independent advisers to provide *ad hoc* or specific service packages.

Private bodies are registered companies or associations and as such operate through a general assembly of members or stakeholders and an executive board. They are therefore bound by annual reports and have developed their own strategies and development plans.

Private OB are therefore quite heterogeneous according to size, whether profit-making or non-profit-making, national conditions, or historical development. They embrace very diverse situations:

- The holding- company type, coordinated through the holding's head office which provides guidance and tailored support services to a network of regional or out-posted units or sister companies. This approach increases the scope of the activities and the area coverage of the latter companies.

Quite often former public extension services that were privatised at the turn of the century (for example DAAS in DK and DLV in NL) operate in this way; but this can also be the case of federations of farmers' associations such as ProAgria in FI and the Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies (Hushållningssällskapen) in SE. Noteworthy is that both DAAS and DLV initially evolved from a similar type of federative structure to public service before being re-privatised.

There are also a number of accounting companies structured in a holding fashion such as "Flyght adviseurs" in NL, which operates a complete network of accountants throughout the entire country.

- Standard accounting services, which are small independent companies providing basic accountancy services to small enterprises, or wider services such as: auditing, business and management advice, financial and fiscal advice, general support to handle all official forms and requests, and so on.
- Rural economy centres, which are associative structures that provide a wide range of services to farmers and to the wider rural network of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) (FR). These services combine specific technical services (including administrative elements⁴⁷); but also accounting services including business support and business development services. The simplest forms are those of university-linked rural observation centres (for example the Centre for Rural Economics attached to Newcastle University (UK-ENG)). The more complex forms can be found in BE (for example the CER Group of the Province of Luxemburg or the CARAH of the

⁴⁶ Such as rural SMEs which can also be targeted by these operators, when standard business services are involved.

⁴⁷ Such as various records, registers pertaining to livestock, certified productions,...

Province of Hainaut) and in FR where these centres were first initiated by the chambers of agriculture before merging into a nationwide network of 80 centres.

- Farmers unions or related organisations often provide services to their members, some of which are directly related to technical and small business advice. These seem to be the major driving force in PT and to a lesser extent in ES (according to regions). They are also quite active in other countries such as BE, EE & IT.
- Producer associations and cooperative organisations (whether input- or market-driven) can also provide advice and technical backing (or certification backing when the marketed product so requires). Some more thematic-based farmers associations (regional or quality labels, cereals centres, dairy centres, etc.) provide similar support services. These types of private operator are found in all EU15 and in some EU12.
- Non Governmental Organisations (NGO), mostly specialised in specific environmental fields (bird watch, natural parks, nature conservation, etc.) or non-profit associations set up with public support (that specialise in specific environmental, food, animal, agro-chemical or other issues) provide advice to and co-operate with farmers (such as the advisory circles in DE).
- Last but not least, small private companies providing various direct whole-farm or technical advices have emerged (BE, DE, NL...). Ireland (IE) is a typical case, where many small companies (from one-man units to associations of 3-5 advisers) have emerged in the framework of rural environmental protection schemes. This seems to be the case too in those regions of Italy (IT) that rely on private operators.

▪ **Public operating bodies**

Public OB are mainly represented by the public departments or services that play a role in delivering the various extension messages and advice to farmers. They all come under the same hierarchal authority (often a department or a special committee on extension within the MoA. They operate through their own civil servants, sometimes however sub-contracting or outsourcing specific missions to other actors (mostly semi-public OB). They are complex administrative structures and are organised on a territorial basis throughout the various administrative units of the relevant MS.

▪ **Chambers of agriculture**

Chambers of agriculture are decentralised and independent institutions. They represent the entire profession, through elected colleges that reflect the diversity of farmers and farmers' associations of a given region or area. Their overall objectives are: (i) to voice the profession's views on a series of political issues and local area planning; (ii) to supply members and farmers with market and input information; and (iii) to support members in strengthening their management capacity. These OB represent a kind of go-between as in some respects they operate as public services governed by their own elected college and in others they operate as private bodies in response to their members' needs and requirements. Their income is often derived, depending on MS, from: (i) membership fees⁴⁸; (ii) services provided to their members; and (iii) public contracts with the MoA to deliver specific services or to perform specific duties. Chambers of agriculture are present in 12 MS (AT, CZ, DE, EE, FR, HU, LT, LV, LU, PL, SI and SK).

⁴⁸ Which is compulsory but differs widely between existing chambers

▪ Semi-public operating bodies

Depending on MS, semi-public companies are operating in the agricultural sector; delivering direct services to farmers and specific agricultural commodity chains. These services mostly focus on adaptive research, specialised vocational education and training, water management (though i.e. irrigation & drainage boards), replacement services, and so forth. Representatives of public services, of farmers and their organisations, local governments, private investors, labour unions... are part of the general assemblies which govern these OB. Their mandate is to provide a public service and invest in future development while remaining financially self-supporting. This mandate often allows them to be involved in providing direct advice to farmers, but none seem to have opted to be involved with FAS (see table 7 in section 3.2.).

3.2 FAS operating bodies

3.2.1 Total and types of OB mobilised

A total of 1107 OB, plus 103 networks in France, are involved in providing FAServices in 26 MS⁴⁹. A breakdown of OB according to the above-mentioned four major types of OB is provided in table 7.

Table 7 indicates that an estimated 90% of the 1107 OB are privately-driven, whereas only 8% can be classified as public services. Private OB have been further divided into two major sub-groups: profit-based bodies (holdings, accountants, small companies, cooperatives) and non-profit-making operators (rural economy centres, farmers' unions-associations, NGOs, etc.). More detailed information for each MS can be found in table 8.

Table 7: Status of FAS operating bodies in 26 MS

Status of OB	Number of OBs	%
Private profit	623	56%
Private non profit	363	33%
Public	85	8%
Chamber of agriculture	36	3%
Semi-Public	0	0%
Total	1107	

Figures exclude FR (103 networks of OB) and DE

Source: ADE-consortium country reports

The number of OB per MS varies from one operating body as in BG (National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAAS) to 170 in IE; whereas in FR, 103 networks operate as FAS OB, in total regrouping more or less 1500⁵⁰ advisory services or bodies. In most other MS the number of OB ranges between 1 and 40.

Depending on the MS, the four various types of OB are mobilised either as the only kind of service provider or as a mix of different types, as is shown in graph 10, which is based on the table 8.

⁴⁹ In DE figures are too fragmented at regional level in order to compile a full and reliable federal level picture.

⁵⁰ This figure might present double counting.

Table 8: Type of FAS operating bodies per MS

Operating Bodies (OB)		Type of operating body					TOTAL Number of OB
		Private Profit	Private non profit	Public	Ch of Agr (*)	Semi- Public	
AT	Austria				9		9
BE	Belgium	5	16				21
BG	Bulgaria			1			1
CY	Cyprus			5			5
CZ	Czech Republic		13	14			27
DE	Germany	Aggregated federal level information not available					
DK	Denmark	7	21				28
EE	Estonia	2	14				16
EL	Greece	25	6				31
ES	Spain	21	171	2			194
FI	Finland (**)		19				19
FR	France	FAS is operated through 103 networks of existing advisory OB active throughout the country and its regions and counties					
HU	Hungary	39	44				83
IE	Ireland	169		1			170
IT	Italy	294		11			305
LT	Lithuania			2	1		3
LU	Luxembourg				1		1
LV	Latvia	2					2
MT	Malta	2					2
NL	Netherlands	41					41
PL	Poland	3		16	16		35
PT	Portugal		47				47
RO	Romania			4			4
SE	Sweden	5	12	21			38
SK	Slovakia			2			2
SI	Slovenia				9		9
UK		8		6			14
Total		623	363	85	36	0	1107

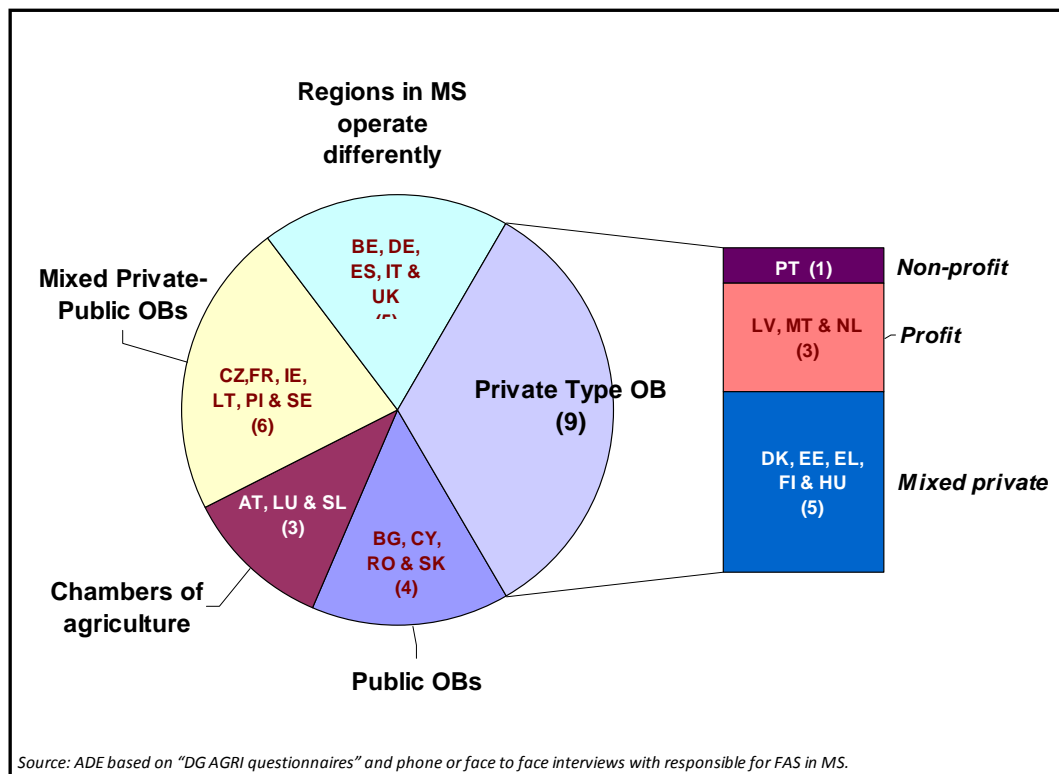
Aggregated figures at federal level are not available for Germany. Rough estimates indicate that at least 500 OB would be involved

(*) Chamber of Agriculture

(**) Finland reports that in addition to the 19 private non-profit bodies that there are a number of other profit driven private bodies; but does not provide further information

Source: ADE based on "DG AGRI questionnaires" and phone or face to face interviews with responsible for FAS in MS.

Graph 10: MS and types of operating bodies



Those MS that rely on a mix of private and public OB are:

- CZ, where the Institute of «Agricultural Economics and Information» (with 14 officials providing methodological support to advisers in all counties) interacts with the non-profit «Regional Informational Centres» (13, one in each region) and 11 research institutes and universities and private profit bodies.
- FR, where over 1,500 OB are organised in 103 networks composed of private or semi-public bodies (cooperatives, farmer's unions, non profit organisations).
- IE, where Teagasc is a public organisation operating throughout Ireland and which competes with 169 private bodies on specific advisory services to farmers.
- LT, where the public establishment «Lithuanian Agriculture Advisory Service» collaborates with the public «Information Centre» and the chamber of agriculture.
- PL, where 16 public regional Agricultural Advisory Centres collaborate with 16 regional chambers of agriculture and three private bodies.
- SE, where 21 regional authorities dealing with general information collaborate with 12 non-profit organisations under the umbrella of the national farmers' advisory society and five private bodies.

In at least five MS (BE, DE, ES, IT and UK), organisation of extension services and implementation of FAS are left to the regional authorities. This of course opens the door to the following diversified situations:

- BE, where one region operates through private profit OB (FLA) and the other through specialised thematic associations and NGOs (WAL).
- DE, where OB range from public services in some regions to chambers of agriculture and /or private advisory services (associations, advisers circles, consultancies,...) in others.
- ES where OB are mainly private non-profit bodies, with the exception of two regions (CAT and NAV).
- IT, where OB are mainly private profit bodies which however interact with established public bodies in those regions where the overall extension approach is publicly-driven.
- UK, where OB are mainly public bodies in NIR & SCO, private in ENG and mixed private-public in WAL.

3.2.2 Major field of activities reported by the OB

In most MS the recorded OB address all SMR and GAEC. Further information on additional services such as management, specific services relating to RDP measures etc. has been included in the investigations by country correspondents.

Data compiled during these investigations are not sufficiently comprehensive to highlight any major trends. However in some MS such as BE, CY, RO & UK-NIR some OB appear to be specialised in specific technical or management topics. This needs however to be interpreted in the light of advice approaches and tools implemented by the various OB in the various MS and which are reviewed in more detail in the next two chapters.

3.3 Selection process of operating bodies

The selection process of the various OB is in line with the MS's respective overall approaches to agricultural extension services. Those purely publicly-driven, those devolved to chambers of agriculture and those that are privately-driven have adhered to their overall approach to agricultural extension when selecting OB; whereas those with an evolving publicly-driven approach have mostly opted for greater involvement of private-type OB or chambers of agriculture.

The selection procedures can be grouped in the following three major types (see details per MS in table 9 hereafter):

- **Accreditation of operating bodies.** This is done through open and published calls for services. This procedure is mostly used in those countries that have decided to involve private (non-profit, profit-making or either) OB, i.e. in those countries that have either "evolving publicly-driven" or "privately-driven" approaches to agricultural extension. This is the case in fourteen MS and three regions (one in BE and two in UK).
- **Designating previously contracted private service providers.** In this case there is no call for candidates as such and the FAServices are included in the providers' overall

mandate through a rider to the contract. This can be done in two ways: (i) by a simple check whether the provider is capable of satisfying the overall criteria provided in Regulation (EC) N° 1782/2003; and (ii) by a direct selection of providers based on their past performances. This approach has been chosen by five MS and one region (BE).

- **Designating public service providers**, using a form of internal accreditation system or by appointing departments which have a mandate covering elements of the FAS. Nine MS and three regions in UK operate in this way. In several of these MS and regions, this designation process is complemented by partial calls for private collaborations. *For example: in PL, the major drive is to operate through the regional extension services, but to enable and encourage the participation of the chambers of agriculture and three private operators; IE combines a strong representation of Teagasc and a wide range of private operators; and EL has considered combining existing extension services and individual out-sourced advisers.*

Table 9: Selection process of each MS⁵¹

		Accreditation of OBs through open tenders - short lists - accreditation procedure	Designation of existing services already providing similar advice	
			Outsourced private service providers	Public service providers
AT	Austria		X	
BE	Belgium - Wallonia		(X)	
	Belgium Flanders	(X)		
BG	Bulgaria			X
CY	Cyprus			X
CZ	Czech Republic	Accreditation of individual advisors mobilised through existing centres selected based on MoA approved projects		
DE	Germany- Private bodies	(X)		
	Germany Public bodies			X
DK	Denmark	X		
EE	Estonia	X		
EL	Greece	X		X
ES	Spain	X		
FI	Finland		X	
FR	France	X		
HU	Hungary	X		
IE	Ireland	X		X
IT	Italy	X		x
LT	Lithuania	X		
LU	Luxembourg		X	
LV	Latvia	X		
MT	Malta			
NL	Netherlands	X		
PL	Poland	X		X
PT	Portugal	X		
RO	Romania	X		X
SE	Sweden		X	
SK	Slovakia			X
SI	Slovenia		X	
UK	UK-England	(X)		
	UK-Scotland			(X)
	UK-Wales	(X)		(X)
	UK- Northern Ireland			(X)
Total		14 + (4)	5 + (1)	9 + (3)
			+ Strong involvement of public service	

Source: ADE-Consortium - Country reports

⁵¹ Detailed information on the selection process of OB is not provided in the CR for MT.

CZ has an unique procedure, which is to request existing public or non-governmental centres to submit projects for implementation of FAS. These projects are then reviewed and accepted by MoA. Advisers are then further accredited through these centres.

Accreditation or designation of OB has been carried out by MS using **various OB selection criteria**. Regulation (EC) N° 1782/2003 does not indicate any specific criteria MS should use. However, if EAFRD is mobilised to the use by farmers of FAServices, then Regulation (EC) N° 1974/2006 provides in its article 15.2 some basic selection criteria (see opposite box).

Legal provisions

Regulation N° (EC) 1974/2006 (when EAFRD is used for co-funding FA Services)

Art 15.2: ... *the authorities and bodies selected to provide advisory services to farmers shall have appropriate resources in the form of qualified staff, administrative and technical facilities and advisory experience and reliability with respect to SMR, GAEC and occupational safety standards.*

CR indicate that most MS that use open calls for services have indicated using specific selection criteria. However, when direct designation of previously contracted private service providers and of public service providers, details on the selection criteria used are not provided by the MS in the relevant CR.

The various criteria used by those MS using open call for services have been screened in more detail in table 10 on the following page. Selection criteria have been regrouped according to six major headings: (i) financial capacity to implement the requested services; (ii) administrative capacity, defined as the administrative set-up and necessary software needed to follow up the advice provided; (iii) technical capacity, defined as the necessary logistics (training, mobility, etc.), hardware, testing and laboratory facilities to support the provision of advice; (iv) staffing and HR capacity, defined as the capacity to provide the necessary advisers to cover all services requested by FAS in that MS and all other necessary human backstopping resources; (v) absence of conflict of interest, defined as potential conflicts between commercial activities and advice or conflicts of interests between staff and advice services, (vi) others. The table also briefly presents, based on the data provided through the CR, how MS have ensured these criteria are checked.

Table 10: Additional administrative and technical criteria

Major criteria headings	Number of occurrences
Financial capacity	7
Absence of conflict of interest	3
Administrative capacity	9
Technical capacity	7
Staff and HR capacity	10
Other (additional criteria)	9

Source: ADE Consortium, CR

The following ranking (see table 11) between criteria shows that MS have clearly emphasised staff and HR capacity and that this is on an equal footing with the additional administrative and technical criteria:

The footnotes to the table indicate a number of interesting additional criteria; for example those on collaboration with other services and research (in EE), and the obligation to be registered (BE-FL & HU) which is left open in other MS.

Noteworthy is the totally different approach used by the UK-ENG, where the applicants are requested to submit a full methodological note, including time charts, and proposals on how to reach farmers; and are also requested to substantiate their experience and capacities. Only one company was selected and it turned out to be a consortium.

Table 11: Criteria for operating bodies in each MS

Education Level		Experience and trustworthiness	Special courses	Other	Formal accreditation	Re-accreditation
MS & regions that have foreseen a formal accreditation						
AT		X	X		X	no
CY	BSc + valid and up to date professional registration	3 years experience	completion on a special course on cross-compliance	(2) (3)	copy of CV	
CZ	X University secondary school	3 years experience 4 years experience	X on natura 2000, agri-environmental measures, occupational safety, cross-compliance and advisory methodologies			no
DE	Germany private bodies X BSc Technical professional school	2 years experience 5 years experience	X cross-compliance training		X	
DK	X BSc + valid and up to date professional registration	2 years experience	X attendance DAAS course		X copy of CV and attendance Cross-compliance course	X first one planned in 2009
EE	X need to have advisor levels IV or V		X on cross-compliance on occupational safety further retraining of minimum 18h a year		X copy of CV and attendance of both special courses	no
EL	X BSc + valid and up to date professional registration	2 years experience	X training certificate as farm adviser	(3) (4)		
FI	X at least intermediate vocational education in one of the fields of cross-compliance	have experience in advisory activities			X written examination	X every three years
HU	X MSc-BSc	5 years experience	X Yearly compulsory training courses on cross-compliance issues have to be attended (min 8h)		X copy of CV and credentials and certificate of first year special course	no
IT	X at least secondary school in selected field	2-5 years experience in selected field and advice			X copy of CV and credentials + <u>self-certification</u>	no
SE	X BSc	one year advisory experience	X special two day course			
SK	X MSc secondary school	agric - 10 years; forestry - 5 years agric - 5 years; forestry - 3 years	X attendance of introductory course and basic training by Agroinst. Nitra		X copy of CV, mim references on advice given + 2 recommendations	no
ENG	X BSc and SFEDIS (Small Firms Enterprise Development Standards) accredited		X for those providing fertiliser advice - attendance of specific certification		X copy of CV	no
UK	WAL Higher National diploma or degree in selected fields part of FAS advice	3 years of consulting with farmers resulting in Business plans or technical advice			X copy of CV	no
Other MS & regions that have provided indications on staff criteria within OB accreditation process						
BE	FLA X MSc-BSc but also secondary school + 5 yr experience			(1)		
PT	X at least BSc	proof of previous experience of providing advice				
SCO	X Degree agriculture or veterinary	2 years experience				
UK	NIR X at least BSc		X specific courses on issues they will have to advice on			



No detailed information provided in CR

X

(1) for those advising on occupational safety - need to be certified level III safety or successful completion certification course on safety at the farm

(2) not been judged for unethical practices - fraud

(3) no personal conflict of interest or commercial conflict of interest

(4) not working for the state or state owned companies or a permanent staff of a university, nor a state farm inspector

Source : ADE-Consortium - based on DG Agri questionnaire - country reports

3.4 Selection of FAS advisers

Selection processes⁵². Three scenarios can be identified from the various ways in which MS seem to have implemented their selection processes of advisers:

- **Further accreditation of advisers within these selected OB** (i.e. a kind of double selection-accreditation system) whereby, within the selected OB's staff or associates, only a limited number of advisers can provide the FAServices after they have been official endorsed by the government (AT, CY, CZ, DK, EE, EL, FI, HU, IT, SE & SK, and in UK-ENG, UK-WAL and some federal states of DE).
- **Accreditation of individuals as independent operators** who are then mobilised through the extension services directly to provide the FAServices. This only seems to operate in Northern Ireland (UK-NIR) and in Scotland (UK-SCO) where extension services operate on specific issues through existing networks of independent advisers. In delivering FAServices they can call on these advisers, but there does not seem to be formal accreditation of these advisers per se.
- **No specific individual accreditation process.** The final decision of mobilising the appropriate advisers is left to the OB. This is quite often the case when public services are designated for providing FAServices, as they already have a network of 'civil servant' advisers and they can assign new tasks to them. It has also been the case in MS that operate through open calls for services, which consider that the selected OB has the capacity to provide the required services and it is its responsibility to mobilise its human resources to do so. (BE, BG, FR, IE, LT, LU, LV, NL⁵³, PL, PT, RO & SI)

Various selection criteria for individual advisers have been used to conduct the accreditation processes in those MS and regions where it is foreseen. They are based on the requirements set out for the OB, i.e. mainly that OB have the qualified staff and the experience in providing advice of SMR, GAEC and occupational safety. The various criteria used for individual advisers are screened in more detail in table 12. They have been regrouped according to six major headings: (i) educational level, defined as the adviser's specialisations and level of formal education;

(ii) experience and trustworthiness, defined as the adviser's effective professional experience with a specific focus on advice to farmers; and (iii) attendance of special courses, defined as the requirement for applicants to prove attendance (and success) of specific training packages, workshops or refresher courses and iv) others. The table also briefly presents, based on the data provided through the CR, how MS have ensured these criteria are checked.

The table also shows the selection criteria for UK-SCO and UK-NIR that select independent advisers outside the existing public services; and for BE-FLA and PT that have provided information on the staff requirements. CR do however not provide further information on how other MS that do not foresee a specific adviser accreditation process have defined OB staff requirements.

⁵² Detailed and reliable information on how advisers are selected is not provided in CR for ES and MT

⁵³ NL requests the OB to provide a list of advisers capable of providing the FAS services. It is thus in the OB's own interest to provide a good and satisfactory service to the farmers, who are paying for the service; and thus also to provide all necessary indoor training and knowledge-sharing to support this service.

Basic training or education requirements have been set in most MS as at least a university BSc level degree in one of the subjects covered by the cross-compliance major themes or in agricultural or veterinary sciences. However at least six MS (BE-FLA, CZ, DE, FI, It & SK) have provided an option for advisers without a university degree; they have to demonstrate a proven track record of effective advisory services over 5-10 years.

Table 12: Criteria for advisers

Education Level		Experience and trustworthiness	Special courses	Other	Formal accreditation	Re-accreditation	
MS & regions that have foreseen a formal accreditation							
AT							
CY		X BSc + valid and up to date professional registration	3 years experience	X completion on a special course on cross-compliance	(2) (3)	X copy of CV	no
CZ		X University secondary school	3 years experience 4 years experience	X on natura 2000, agri-environmental measures, occupational safety, cross-compliance and advisory methodologies			no
DE	Germany private bodies	X BSc Technical professional school	2 years experience 5 years experience	X cross-compliance training		X	
DK		X BSc + valid and up to date professional registration	2 years experience	X attendance DAAS course		X copy of CV and attendance Cross-compliance course	X first one planned in 2009
EE		X need to have advisor levels IV or V		X on cross-compliance on occupational safety further retraining of minimum 18h a year		X copy of CV and attendance of both special courses	no
EL		X BSc + valid and up to date professional registration	2 years experience	X training certificate as farm adviser	(3) (4)		
FI		X at least intermediate vocational education in one of the fields of cross-compliance	have experience in advisory activities			X written examination	X every three years
HU		X MSc-BSc	5 years experience	X Yearly compulsory training courses on cross-compliance issues have to be attended (mim 8h)		X copy of CV and credentials and certificate of first year special course	no
IT		X at least secondary school in selected field	2-5 years experience in selected field and advice			X copy of CV and credentials + self-certification	no
SE		X BSc	one year advisory experience	X special two day course			
SK		X MSc secondary school	agric - 10 years; forestry - 5 years agric - 5 years; forestry - 3 years	X attendance of introductory course and basic training by Agroinst. Nitra		X copy of CV, mim references on advice given + 2 recommendations	no
UK	ENG	X BSc and SFEDIS (Small Firms Enterprise Development Standards) accredited		X for those providing fertiliser advice - attendance of specific certification		X copy of CV	no
	WAL	X Higher National diploma or degree in selected fields part of FAS advice	3 years of consulting with farmers resulting in Business plans or technical advice			X copy of CV	no
Other MS & regions that have provided indications on staff criteria within OB accreditation process							
BE	FLA	X MSc-BSc but also secondary school + 5 yr experience			(1)		
PT		X at least BSc	proof of previous experience of providing advice				
UK	SCO	X Degree agriculture or veterinary	2 years experience				
	NIR	X at least BSc		X specific courses on issues they will have to advice on			



No detailed information provided in CR

X

(1) for those advising on occupational safety - need to be certified level III safety or successful completion certification course on safety at the farm

(2) not been judged for unethical practices - fraud

(3) no personal conflict of interest or commercial conflict of interest

(4) not working for the state or state owned companies or a permanent staff of a university, nor a state farm inspector

Source : ADE-Consortium - based on DG Agri questionnaire - country reports

Except for UK-NIR and BE-FLA, all other countries seem to have specified minimum professional experience after leaving university (ranging from 2 to 5 years). Education and relevant professional experience have to be substantiated by the applicant's Curriculum Vitae (CV) and in the case of IT, HU and SK credentials have to be provided, while in SK an additional two recommendation letters are required.

Attendance of specific additional courses are requested in various MS: (i) occupational safety in Belgium-Flanders (BE), applicants have to be able to produce certification to minimum level III according to prevailing ministry of labour standards in Belgium; (ii) special courses on cross-compliance and occupational safety provided by the MS Ministry of Agriculture are stipulated and indeed compulsory in Cyprus (CY), Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DK), Estonia (EE), Hungary (HU), Sweden (SE), Slovakia (SK) and Northern Ireland (UK-NIR); (iii) additional and regular updating courses are planned in the following MS: Germany (DE), Estonia - at least 18 hours per year (EE), Hungary – at least 8 hours per year (HU) and MT.

Formal accreditation seems to take place in eight MS (CY, CZ, DK, EE, FI, HU, IT, SK) and two regions (in the UK). Only two MS seem to envisage a regular re-accreditation procedure (DK planned in 2009 and FI).

As regards additional conditions, only two countries (CY, EL) seem to have explicitly requested a statement of absence of conflict of interest, and as they both require valid registration with a professional body, this also implies that applicants have not been excluded from these bodies for unethical behaviour.

In order to have the same nationwide criteria for advisors deployed in cross-compliance advisory services, the German Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer protection laid down common basic selection criteria in 2006 together with the federal states. These include requirements of professional qualification, regular continued training and knowledge seminars and experience of delivery of individual so-called farm management systems.

Numbers of advisers. Based on the above criteria, a very rough estimate of the available number of advisers throughout the EU (see table 13) indicates that:

- 176 advisers (in equivalent full-time occupation) are available in 88 OB and can be mobilised to deliver FAServices.
- 11,641 farm advisers (not full-time equivalents) are available in 684 OB and can be mobilised to deliver FAServices. (DE has 2450 farm advisers that can be mobilised, but the total number of OB is not available at federal level and can be roughly gauged at about 500).
- 12,300 farm advisers can be mobilised through 103 networks in the sole FR.

The figures provided by the MS in table 13 must be considered as indicative and used with caution, as they: i) do not always distinguish between accredited advisers and other farm advisers; ii) report in some MS equivalent full-time advisers and not exact numbers; iii) do not provide a precise figures on those advisers that are truly operational in the field⁵⁴.

⁵⁴ For example, in NL out of 41 accredited OB only 11 had effectively been active in supplying advice during the 2006-2008 period. Figures for farm advisers in NL have been accordingly reduced.

Table 13: Number of advisers

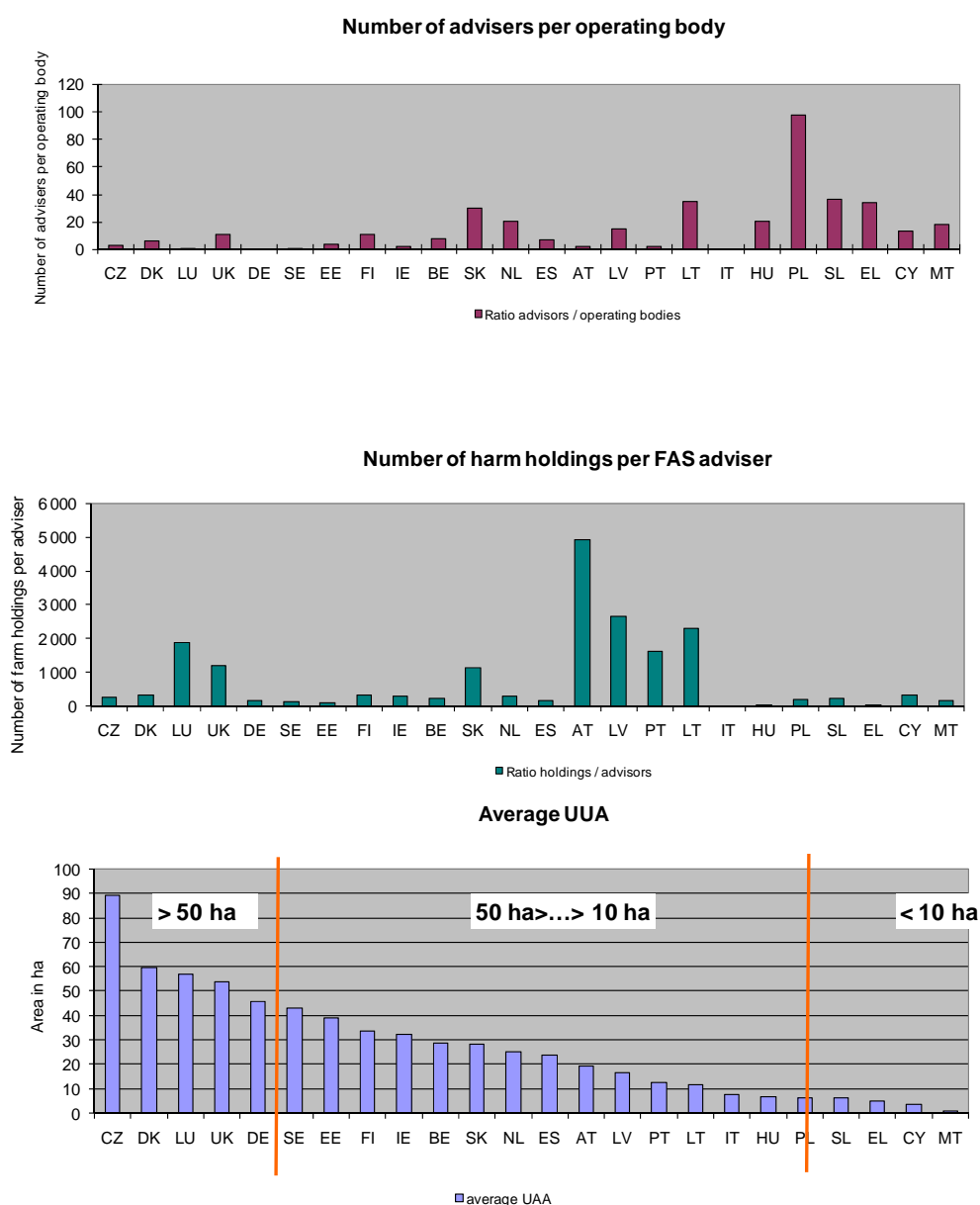
		Numbers of FAS advisers full time equivalent (FTE)			Numbers of advisers OBs could mobilise for farm advice		
		Number of OBs	Number of FAS advisers (FTE)	Ratio advisers to OB	Number of OBs	Number of advisers for FAS	Ratio advisers to OB
AT	Austria	9	25	3			
BE	Belgium	11	8	1	10	161	16
BG	Bulgaria				1	700	700
CY	Cyprus				5	67	13
CZ	Czech Republic				27	93	3
DE	Germany (1)				na	2,450	na
DK	Denmark				28	187	7
EE	Estonia	16	63	4			
EL	Greece				31	1,055	34
ES	Spain				194	1,417	7
FI	Finland				19	208	11
FR	France				103	12,300	119
HU	Hungary				83	1,706	21
IE	Ireland				170	441	3
IT	Italy	Information not available as most regions are still tendering			Information not available as most regions are still tendering		
LT	Lithuania				3	104	35
LU	Luxembourg	1	1	1			
LV	Latvia				2	30	15
MT	Malta				2	37	19
NL	Netherlands				11	225	20
PL	Poland				35	3,409	97
PT	Portugal				47	107	2
RO	Romania				4	1,200	300
SE	Sweden	38	31	1			
SK	Slovakia				2	61	31
SI	Slovenia				9	328	36
UK	United Kingdom	13	49	4	1	105	105
Total OBs		88	176	2	684	11,641	17
Total networks (FR)					103	12,300	119
DE						2,450	

Source: ADE-Consortium - based on DG Agri questionnaire - country reports

NB: The total of OB differs from table 8 where 1107 accredited OB are reported because in this table only active OB are considered (in the Netherlands 11 OB instead of 41), because OB for Italy are not mentioned (total numbers of OB are available for IT but no detailed and reliable figures on advisers have been provided) and because figures for DE are incomplete

Two indicative ratios have been calculated with the exceptions of FR (the setting-up through networks differs from all other MS) BG & RO: i) ratio of advisers (combining FTE and available farm advisers of table 13) to OB; and ii) ratio of farm holdings⁵⁵ to adviser. Results are shown in graph 11 where MS have been regrouped in three average UUA size groups (>30 ha; between 30 and 10 ha and < 10 ha).

Graph 11: Ratios between advisers, operating bodies and farm holdings in EU 23(excluding BG, FR, IT and Ro)



Source: ADE-Consortium - based on country reports and DG Agri statistics for 2007 (UUA and holding receiving direct support in 2007)

⁵⁵ For the EU15 + 2, farm holding considered are all those that received direct support during 2007 –for the other EU 10, number of farm holding correspond to the total beneficiaries indicated in the respective RDP for measure 114.

Most MS seem to operate with an adviser to OB ratio well within the EU average of 15 (calculated for 22 MS see graph 11). It seems however that in the group of MS with an average UUA of less than 10 ha, ratios of advisers to OB tend to be more important. The ratio of farm holdings to adviser remains under 1 to 300 in almost all MS with the exceptions of AT, LU, LV, PT, SK and UK. As already mentioned, some of these MS (AT, LU, UK) did indicate FAS advisors in Full Time Equivalent (FTE) whereas data from other MS concern accredited FAS advisors, independently of the time they spend on FAServices compared to other activities.

3.5 Cost of implementation of the FAS

Cost for implementing FAS cover at least the following major cost elements:

Indicative list of MS costs related to implementation the FAS

1. Potential costs linked to the setting-up, such as for example:
 - Conducting needs assessment
 - Tendering and selection process of OB/advisers
 - Setting up a specialised coordination
 - Developing (or amending) specific Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools or other tools related to advice
 - Training workshops for advisers and other staff, etc.
2. Public relations and advertising on the FAS to farmers
3. Coordination and monitoring costs
 - Costs of steering meetings and events
 - Coordination and follow-up of advices rendered
 - Quality and satisfaction monitoring
 - Workshops and accreditation (renewal or updating)
 - Others

A fourth element of cost will be covered in chapter 5, as it is directly related to delivering the advice to farmers in those MS where this is either partially or totally subsidised.

During the in-country investigations, country correspondents worked on the basis of the answers provided by the MS to the DG Agri 2008 questionnaire; either by cross-checking the information in this questionnaire, either by requesting more information or by trying to expand on some specific cost elements. During the investigations conducted in the framework of the five case studies, the same elements were once more examined.

Some difficulties encountered

BE-WAL Implementation costs were embedded in several on-going out-sourced contracts for other advices services to farmers. Separating FAS from other streamlined advices services was only possible by estimating possible contributions

DE-NSC No specific time schedules and time records were used by the staff from chamber of agriculture and MoA during the setting-up activities. Support was considered as part of on-going activities; making it quasi impossible to provide any reliable costs elements.

Table 14 presents an overall view of the data collected so far. Data collected is in most case piecemeal, and lacks the level of expected detail which would allow for detailed analysis and conclusions. Few MS have recorded their costs related to the implementation of FAS. The major finding from the CR suggests that: a) MS consider/considered the costs related to setting-up, advertising and coordinating FAS as limited and that they have been covered as a part of the overall ministerial budget or b) comprehensive advisory services were established long time ago and these services can cater for the incremental costs due to FAS.

Table 14: Cost of implementing FAS until 2008

		Costs linked to the setting-up	Public relations and advertising on FAS to farmers	Coordination and monitoring costs
in Euro				
AT		250 000 (2005-2006)*	-	125 000/year (2005-2008)*
BE	FLA	-	-	-
	WAL	-	-	450 000 Euro per year (1)
BG		-	175 000 (information workshop)	-
CY		-	-	-
CZ		26 073 (accreditation cost - 15% paid by advisory bodies)	3 704 (information workshops)	14 813
DE		-	-	-
DK		75 000 (2006); 40 000 per year (2007,2008)*	-	-
EE		430,853	-	143 241 (in 2008)
EL		1 310 000 (EARDF 2000-2006)	-	system not implemented yet
ES		-	-	-
FI		10 000*	-	60 000*
FR		-	about 27 full time equivalent (for information workshop and animation by the leading body of the network)	about 5.4 full time equivalent (with accreditation cost)
HU		-	-	208 600 (+ 50 750 advisor's further training)
IE		-	-	-
IT		-	-	-
LT		17 956 (accreditation cost)	240 000	-
LU		169 800/year (two years)	-	-
LV		-	-	-
MT		100 000 (75% EU)*	-	-
NL		-	300 000*	-
PL		-	183 679	-
PT		15 416 271 (foreseen)	Not implemented yet	Not implemented yet
RO		-	-	Not implemented yet
SE		300 000 yearly (2005 and 2006 - 25% EU funding)	-	-
SK		-	-	-
SI		1 000 000 (accreditation cost)*	-	-
UK	ENG	-	-	-
	SCO	-	-	-
	WAL	-	-	-
	NIR	-	-	-

* Estimated

(1) includes the full amount of one FAS outsourced service contract, 10% of the other outsourced FAServices contracts, the costs of a half-time assigned civil servant and the cost of the helpdesk

(2) covers costs of advisers, elaboration of advisory tools, tendering, training and information days and publications

Source: ADE-Consortium - based on DG Agri questionnaire - country reports

The following problems complicate the interpretation of collected data: i) discrepancy in CR information, such as indication of cost/expenditures (e.g. CZ); ii) the use of aggregated figures, such as aggregating several years (e.g. AT) or FAS and other extension costs (e.g. SI, UK); iii) currency in local currencies (e.g. EE, UK) and thus fluctuations make it difficult to convert exactly to euro. With this in mind, when reviewing the three major cost elements, table 15 clearly shows that:

- **Costs for setting-up FAS** have been reported in AT, DK, EL, FI, LU, MT & SE, as shown in the following table. No detailed breakdown of these costs was communicated by these MS.
- **Costs for public relations and advertising on FAS to farmers** have not been reported by MS and regions.
- **Costs for coordination and monitoring during 2008** have been provided by AT, BE-WAL, DK, FI, SI, UK-ENG, UK-SCO & UK-NIR; except for BE-WAL, no detailed allocations of these budgetary figures have been provided.

3.6 EAFRD contribution to setting-up FAS

MS can mobilise *measure 115* from Regulation (EC) N° 1698/2005 to support the setting-up of the FAS. It is foreseen that this support shall be gradually reduced, in equal steps, over a maximum period of five years from setting-up. MS need to establish this mechanism in their respective RDP.

Overall this measure has not been widely mobilised by MS, as can be seen from graph 12. Three MS (ES, MT, PT) and some regions within DE, IT & UK have indicated in the overall programming for their RDP that they intend to use it. Strikingly, none of the EU12 has drawn on this measure.

Mobilising *measure 115* does not necessarily mean that funds will go supporting FAS setting-up, as other services such as farm relief and management services can also be supported. CR for UK and investigations during the case study in DE, have indicated that none of the regions in these two countries have or intend to utilise *measure 115* to support setting-up of FAS.

In volumes of mobilised funds, it is clearly ES, followed by PT and IT that have mobilised this measure as can be seen in the first part of the graph⁵⁶. From the information gathered through the CR, all three countries support the setting-up of FAS services, it is not possible to determine at this stage the exact amounts that will be engaged on projects relating to farm relief services and farm managements services; and therefore to estimate a precise contribution of EAFRD to setting-up FAS. This is further complicated by the fact that

Regulatory provisions

Regulation (EC) N°1698/2005

Article 25: *Support provided for in Article 20(a)(v) shall be granted in order to cover costs arising from the setting up of farm management, farm relief and farm advisory services as well as forestry advisory services and shall be degressive over a maximum period of five years from setting up.*

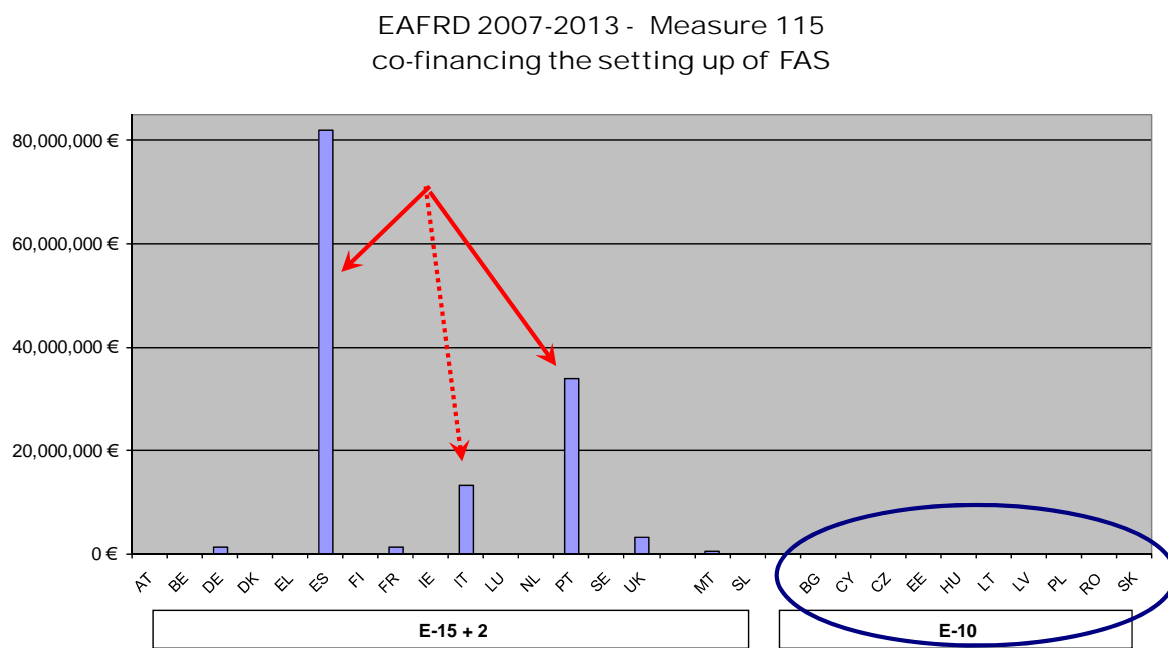
Regulation (EC) N° 1974/2006

Article 16: *A degressive rate of support for setting-up of management, relief and advisory services as referred to in Article 25 of Regulation (EC) N° 1698/2005 shall be established in the rural development programmes, providing for a reduction of support in equal amounts from the first year of support, in such a way that support is completely phased out in the sixth year at the latest from the setting-up of those services.*

⁵⁶ No information for Malta

these MS have planned FAServices go beyond 'at least cross-compliance', and FAS can at least include elements of farm management services.

Graph 12: Planned use of *measure 115* for the period 2007-2013



Source : DG Agri: EAFRD total allocation for measure 115

In Italy, *measure 115* has been implemented in 7 regions (see illustrative box). Major cost elements that are covered in the respective RDP by *measure 115* are related to expenditures for registration of OB; purchasing, renting and maintenance of the technical equipment; renting and maintenance of the offices; and specialized training for the staff. EAFRD funds allocated to *measure 115* for the 2007-2013 period amount to €13.3 million. Support goes to a wide range of OB: in Centre-North Italy (professional organisations, producers associations, associated consulting organisations) and more public in the South (Agriculture Departments of the Region, public service agencies, Associations of Mountain areas “Comunità Montane”, etc).

In ES, all regions have planned to use *measure 115* (see illustrative box on following page). The details on the funding of this measure for each region and for the period 2007-2013 are presented in the box; however, no information is available regarding the way these funds have been used.

In PT, all three RDP foresee support (see illustrative box on following page). Calls for projects have so far not been completed in all regions, as in the Azores and Madeira, supportive legislation is still pending and on mainland, legislation has only recently been published (Ordinance n° 481/2009 of the 6th May). The intention of the RDP is to provide support to service providers.

Table 15: Contributions of measure 115 in ES, IT and PT

EAFRD contribution 2007-2013 period <i>in Euro</i>			Cost sharing Public/Private	Gradual reduction	Who
ITALY					
Bolzano	140,800	1.1%	80/20	max no details 20% yearly	Farmers' NGO
Calabria	2,875,000	21.6%	100/0	max 100,000 € 20%/year	Cooperatives, associations & private companies
Campania	5,470,818	41.2%	60/40	max 100,000 € no details	no details
Lazio	542,162	4.1%	100/0	max 16,000 € 15 %/year (*)	Cooperatives, associations & private companies
Liguria	240,000	1.8%	60/40	max 150,000 € 20%/year	OBs supporting Forestry Holdings
Piemonte	540,000	4.1%	100/0	max 100,000 € 20%/year	Associations, cooperatives & regional admin.
Umbria	3,485,120	26.2%	80/20	max 60,000 € 20%/year	FAServices & FoAS
Total RDP documents		13,293,900			

EAFRD contribution 2007-2013 period RDPS <i>in Euro</i>	
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SPAIN			Portugal		
Andalucia	38,321,482	55.5%	Azores	1,747,500	5.2%
Aragon	329,000	0.5%	Mainland	31,000,000	91.5%
Asturias		0.0%	Madeira	1,147,500	3.4%
Baleares	175,000	0.3%	Total RDP documents 33,895,000		
Canarias	1,000,000	1.4%	Funds engaged under measure 115 but not for FAS in		
Cantabria	75,000	0.1%	DE-NWR are 1 244 750 €: UK 3 100 600 €		
Castilla-la-Mancha	800,000	1.2%	MT has foreseen 450 000€ but indications have been provided		
Castilla y Leon	1,920,000	2.8%			
Catalunya	3,450,000	5.0%			
Exteradura	10,712,570	15.5%			
Galicia	9,780,401	14.2%			
Madrid	600,000	0.9%			
Murcia	100,000	0.1%			
Navarra	150,000	0.2%			
Pais Vasco	782,676	1.1%			
La Roija	62,500	0.1%			
Valencia	748,000	1.1%			
Total RDP documents		69,006,629			

4. FAS approaches and tools

The FAS operates within a wider overall framework of delivering advice and promoting knowledge and innovation at farm level, where the influence of time and beneficiaries remain a driving element. Within this context, two major types of approaches for delivering FAServices to farmers have been identified: i) the one-to-one type, and ii) the one-to-group type, when this goes beyond the provision of general information on cross-compliance related matters. One to all approaches includes a number of standard extension approaches and tools that will provide farmers with the basic information they require on cross-compliance issues. This is not viewed as being part of FAS, as defined in Regulation (EC) N° 1782/2003, as the provision of this information is a mandatory obligation of all MS. Information is of course a useful support for carrying out FAServices activities. However, some of these approaches, providing information, are part of the FAServices for some MS.

Typical FAS approaches are therefore to be found in the two first types: one-to-one and one-to-group. These can either be mobilised on-the-farm or off-the-farm. The latter being very closely linked to standard extension activities, and this way of providing advice has thus more to do with providing general information and is therefore not considered here as a typical FAS approach. ICT have been used in various MS, but again more as an overall information tool or as facilitating the first contacts of farmers with FAS.

4.1 Overall framework to delivering advice to farmers

The FAS is operating within a wider overall framework for delivering extension and advice to farmers, which is characterised by knowledge and information flows aiming at supporting existing holdings through innovation and improved organisation and management. Farm advice can therefore be delivered in different ways and approaches, each of these bearing its own and focused definition which cover the following three elements:

- **Information** as the provision of facts that clarify issues without involving any personal interaction between farmers and advisers, and not requiring any individual follow-up actions. The provision of general information on cross-compliance requirements should be ensured independently from the FAS (article 4(2) of Council Regulation (EC) N° 73/2009). Therefore, in the context of the FAS, this approach should at least involve a minimal degree of interaction with the farmer and concern the provision of specific information targeting specific problems and specific farmers, (e.g. an advice in the context of warning systems for integrated pest management for a specific crop in a specific zone);
- **Advice** as the provision of a technical skilled opinion on a specific subject (on or off-farm) to assist the farmer in his decision making (product/process-advice or overall farm advice) (e.g. an advisor helping a farmer to calculate the necessary manure storage capacity in the framework of the Nitrates Directive for that farm);
- **Training** as the acquisition of competences to solve things through short thematically focused training opportunities (short workshops or farmers' meetings led by specialised trainers, which can be combined with real one-to-one advice to the participants in or

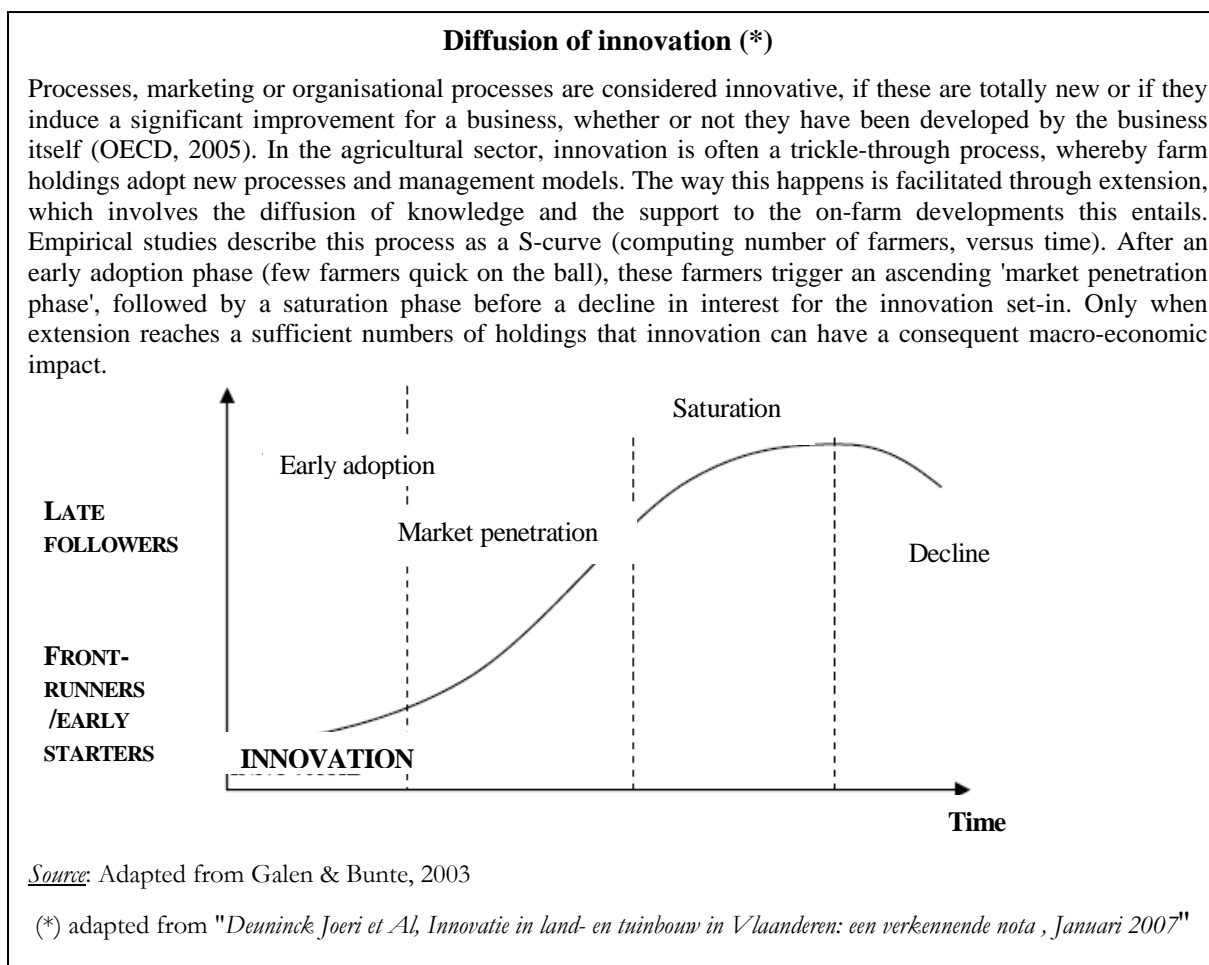
after the meeting) (e.g. a farm walk targeted on a Natura 2000 management plan followed by individual sessions on the farms of participants).

In doing so, one has to keep in mind that agricultural extension and advice operate like any innovative action and are directly influenced by time and response from beneficiaries (see box below). There is a common understanding that uptake is gradual and stepwise, first driven by a number of front-runners who in turn might or will spark off a further uptake or demand by the other slower followers.

A further two major factors that underpin extension and advice delivery, are: i) that the content of what has to be extended directly influences the manner in which this has to occur and ii) that it is a relational matter and therefore has to be voluntary based.

4.2 Delivering advice and FAS

The FAS as designed in most countries, focuses on the delivery of advice in relation to the SMR and GAEC as defined in Regulation (EC) N° 1782/2003. In a number of MS (see section 1.5) advice on additional elements are provided. If EAFRD support from rural development (Regulation (EC) N°1698/2005) is provided for the use of advisory services by farmers, these services should also cover, as a minimum, occupational safety standard at Community level.



This is done mainly by mobilising advice and occasional training through specialised workshops. The provision of general information remains available to farmers, but is organised through the existing extension services, and thus not considered to be part of the FAS. The FAServices can be delivered on a one-to-one basis, and on a one-to-group basis. The CIFAS study⁵⁷, published in 2006, aimed at contributing to the development of suitable farm advisory tools (FATs and farm level indicators addressing environmental cross-compliance requirements. The CIFAS study set up an inventory of the farm information & advisory tools and systems developed in 14 MSs and differentiated between:

- **Approaches to provide information & advice:** face-to-face advice, small group advice, field days, training, internet, dissemination of printed documents (booklets, newsletters, newspapers etc.), etc.
- **And tools to provide information & advice:** booklets/brochures/leaflets, newspapers/periodical news/newsletters, standardised PowerPoint presentations, plans/maps, checklists/combined tools based on checklists, software models/computer tools/web-based information systems, manuals, templates, help lines, etc.

Based on this inventory and on the various types of approaches referred to in the 2008 DG Agri questionnaire, table 15 has regrouped the various approaches as follows: i) typical interactive FAS approaches; ii) FAS approaches operated using IT tools; and iii) other wider approaches closely integrated with traditional extension. Linking possible advisory tools with the various FAS approaches, table 15 further distinguishes between approaches delivered directly on-farm and off-farm.

Table 16: FAS and information – envisaged approaches and tools

Approaches referred to in DG AGRI questionnaire	Types of advice tools
Typical 'whole' farm on site FAS approaches One-to-one & one-to-group	
1. One-to-one on the farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Checklist with an advisor ▪ Preliminary auto-check by farmer followed by specialised farm visit ▪ Thematic focussed farm visit and addressing technical problems ▪ Farm diagnostic (economic & environmental) ▪ Plans/maps on paper support - manuals, templates for farm plans
2. One-to-one outside the farm (e.g. consultation/sitting days of advisors in each region, etc...)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cross-compliance handbook & templates ▪ Hand-outs ▪ Standardised Power Point presentations
4. Small group advice on the farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Checklist with an advisor ▪ Farm walks (possibly followed by one-to-one advice in a second stage) ▪ Thematic focussed farm visit and addressing technical problems
5. Small group advice outside the farm (e.g. workshops – field days, ...)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Specialised interventions in workshops, field days...(possibly followed by one-to-one advice in a second stage) ▪ Hand-outs ▪ Standardised Power Point presentations

⁵⁷ Study on environmental cross-compliance indicators in the context of the Farm Advisory System (CIFAS), IfLS - Institut für Ländliche Strukturforchung, (2006). A two-year project financed by the European Commission that was carried out by the European Environment Agency.

Approaches referred to in DG AGRI questionnaire	Types of advice tools
ICT based approaches (some of which may be FAServices)	
3. Telephone helpdesk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Telephone helpline▪ Dedicated internet websites and internet helpline
6. Advice by way of the internet (general information) ⁵⁸	
7. Advice via website tool, tailored to farmers' questions	
Wider Extension type approaches One-to-all (some of which may be FAServices)	
8. Publications (paper copies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Booklets/brochures/leaflet/manuals▪ Newspaper/periodical news bulletins
9. Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Computer software (including farm diagnosis software, computer assisted identification system, crop growth model, farm practices recording software, environment management GIS assisted tools)▪ Wider certification processes

Source: "DG AGRI questionnaire" and Joint Research Centre (JRC) PowerPoint 2006, 2007 and 2008

The two latter groups of ITC approaches and of wider extension based approaches basically address the obligations that MS have to inform farm holdings on the issues and contents of the various cross-compliance obligations as transposed in each MS. They are therefore not really to be considered as advice delivery approaches, but as essential first entry points for farmers to the FAServices.

4.3 Major approaches/tools planned by MS for FAServices

Depending on the existing extension systems and on the way FAS has been designed, each MS has planned its own mix of approaches. These are reviewed in table 17 on page 66 based on the above major groups.

As regards the approaches to FAS, all MS seem to have emphasised the use of on-farm one-to-one advice (with the notable exception of UK-ENG). As for the other FAS approaches, more than half of MS proposed using off-farm one-to-one or small group advice (on or off the farm).

As concerns the provision of general and specific information, all MS envisaged using the internet. Nearly all MS (with the exception of DK) envisaged publications for general information (paper information). The description of the tools below will specify the kind of paper publications envisaged.

⁵⁸ This is not viewed as being part of FAS, as defined in Regulation (EC) N° 1782/2003, as the provision of general information is a mandatory obligation for all MS. However, this information is an important first step in mobilising the FAS.

Farm advisory tools that seem to have been envisaged are:

- Checklists are one of the major tools used through the FAS. They have been used by nearly all MS (except BG, CY and MT) even if they were not originally planned by all MS (section 5.1.2 gives further explanation).
- Internet tools such as newsletters, e-magazine, etc.

Farm nutrient calculators in UK-NIR

Five programs called the “Farm Nutrient Management Calculators” are designed to help northern Ireland farmers with various aspects of the Nitrates Action Programme including Nitrogen loading, slurry and manure storage, maximum Nitrogen levels for grass, Phosphorus balance and nutrient management planning. These programs are available on the website: www.ruralni.gov.uk

- Appropriate computer software seems to have been planned in some MS. Whether this software was developed under FAS or just used by FAS (and developed previously by extension departments or bodies) is not clear.
- Publications (paper copies) such as newspapers, periodical news and bulletins (used in most countries which planned it except LT, NL, PT,

RO and SK), or via booklets, manuals, brochures, or leaflets.

Typical interactive FAS approaches

On-farm one-to-one advice has been the major approach planned and also implemented by MS during 2008. On-farm small groups have also been mobilised in several MS, as a way of increasing the numbers of farmers reached. Both these approaches are therefore described in more detail in chapter 5 (use of FAS by European farm holdings in 2008).

The off-farm versions of these two approaches have been considered by MS as a means to integrate FAS within other on-going extension events: i) off-farm one-to-one advice being considered as a personal appointment of a farmer with a particular FAS body⁵⁹ or as a personal visit during field days, agrarian fairs, regional exhibitions, ; and ii) off-farm small groups as technical seminars, training courses, public meetings, information days, workshops, conferences or other events where SMR, GAEC and other mandatory FAS themes can be raised and examined. These two off-farm approaches are therefore viewed in the present description as basically providing general cross-compliance information and are therefore not further examined.

⁵⁹ Sometimes a check list can be used in CZ and UK-ENG

Table 17: Planned approaches by the different MS to deliver advice to farmers through FAS and other approaches

Used approaches		One-to-one approaches		One-to-group approaches		One-to-all approaches				
		Typical FAS approaches				FAS through ITC			Wider extension approaches	
		1. One to one on the farm	2. One to one outside the farm	4. Small group advice on the farm	5. Small group advice outside the farm	3. Telephone helpdesk	6. Advice by way of internet (general information)	7. Advice via website tool	8. Publications (paper copies)	9. Others
AT	Austria	X		X	X		X		X	
BE	Belgium	X				X (in Wallonia)	X		X	
BG	Bulgaria	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
CY	Cyprus	X	X				X		X	
CZ	Czech Republic	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
DE	Germany	X				X	X	X	X	
DK	Denmark	X			X		X			
EE	Estonia	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
EL	Greece	X	X				X		X	
ES	Spain	X	X (in 6 regions)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FI	Finland	X					X		X	
FR	France	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
HU	Hungary	X				X	X		X	
IE	Ireland	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
IT	Italy	X	X (in 6 regions)	X	X	X (in 6 regions)	X	X	X	X
LT	Lithuania	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
LU	Luxembourg	X				X	X		X	
LV	Latvia	X				X	X		X	
MT	Malta	X		X	X	X	X		X	
NL	Netherlands	X		X		X	X		X	
PL	Poland	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
PT	Portugal	X	X			X	X		X	
RO	Romania	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
SE	Sweden	X			X	X	X	X	X	
SK	Slovakia	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
SI	Slovenia	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
UK	United Kingdom	X (except in England)	X	X	X	X	X	X (except in Scotland)	X	
Totals		27	16	16	17	22	27	13	26	6
In % of MS		100%	59%	59%	63%	81%	100%	48%	96%	22%

Source: ADE consortium based on "DG AGRI questionnaire" and meetings with some stakeholders. JRC PowerPoint 2008 for Hungary and Denmark.

FAS approaches operated using ICT tools

Websites and cross-compliance in CZ

The website of the Czech Ministry of Agriculture as well as websites of the Institute of Animal Science, the Crop Research Institute and the Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information, are providing general and specific information on all cross-compliance issues. A helpdesk for cross-compliance is located on the Ministry of Agriculture website, which gives access to frequently asked questions and a database, a forum to raise questions, assistance to send an email to cross-compliance@mze.cz (it also provides the info-line phone number for fast answers on cross-compliance).

In **Bulgaria**, the experts of the National Agency for Advisory Services (NAAS) participate in media events at central and regional level (radio, TV and local cable TV) in order to provide information to farmers regarding cross-compliance and other issues. In 2008, NAAS produced 130 radio presentations and interviews and 111 TV presentations.

Telephone helpdesk have been used either to dispatch the call received by the farmers (i.e. the first contact for farmer and then redirected to other body or advisor), as is the case in 12 MS, or as an overall helpdesk for all cross-compliance information in 14 MS. Some regions in Spain and Sardinia in Italy also provide specific information via text messages.

Internet is mobilised by all MS⁶⁰ but not all of them are applying it in the same way. All Ministry of Agriculture websites provide general information on cross-compliance (therefore outside the scope of FAS) and sometimes some technical information (as part of FAS activities). Thirteen MS specified the use of advice via website tools (e-newsletters/e-bulletins, not always FAS). ES-NAV suggested using SMS and EE to connect with the Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN)-database.

BG, CY, IE and some regions in ES have mobilised **other media** tools such as TV and the radio.

Other wider approaches closely integrated with traditional extension

Publications. In order to deliver information on:

- all cross-compliance requirements:
 - AT, EE, ES, EL, IT, LT, LV, NL, RO, SK & SI used handbooks or manuals
 - BE & SE disseminated brochures; FR, SK & UK notes or leaflets; IT & UK bulletins (UK, IT; FR folders).
 - AT, BE-W, CY, CZ, IE, IT, MT, SK & UK published specialised articles in technical or professional magazines
 - CY and BE-WAL prepared specific PowerPoint presentations.
 - In PL a personalised letter to young farmers was sent to inform them about cross-compliance issues.
- RDP issues taken up by FAS:
 - CZ, IT, HU, IE, UK-WAL used articles or thematic publications
 - BG & LT prepared brochures; SI & SK articles in newspapers or leaflets.

⁶⁰ No information for Hungary

5. Use of the FAS by European farm holdings (2008)

Two major approaches to FAS advice have been implemented by MS during: i) the on-farm one-to-one advice and ii) the on-farm small groups (section 5.1). In the context of the former, advice has been provided mainly through the direct farm visits supported by various types of lists of farmers' obligations, which were either systematically checked or which guided the adviser in his performance assessment and provision of appropriate advice. Checklists go from "simple" comprehensive checklists in most MS, to integrated check-folders in DE and LU and to modular checklists in AT and BE-FLA. The manner in which these checklists are implemented is essential to building a trust or confident relation with the farmers, which is perceived as essential by advisers and farmers to successful advice. The timing of visits, one-shot visit or a succession of modular or thematic visits, directly impact on the perception and success of FAS advice. Small groups are generally organised around specific issues or topics, either as response to group requests or as special advertised FAS events. They involve a significant number of farmers, and generally provide a case based-good practice approach to answering farmers' needs or problems. Currently outreach of the two approaches is presented in section 5.2. Small groups have been organised in few countries and mostly as a complementary approach, except in UK-ENG that operates FAServices only through small groups. Cost to farmers of these two advice approaches (section 5.3) varies between MS. EAFRD's *measure 114* has been mobilised by 15 MS to support farmers (section 5.4) Three MS (PL, IT & ES) together mobilise approximately 70% of the total allocated funds under this measure. FAS implementation in these three countries has not yet fully operational and therefore little data on real EAFRD disbursements until mid 2008 are available.

5.1 Advice mobilisation

Two major FAS approaches have been implemented in the various MS during 2008 (and for some MS since 2005) as indicated in table 18.

Table 18: On-farm FAS approaches implemented by MS in 2008

On farm one-to-one	All MS
	<u>Except UK-ENG</u>
Small groups on the farm	AT, BG, CZ, EE, ES (6Reg), FR, IE, IT(6reg), LT, MT, NL, RO,SK & SL
	EL & PL (planned but not implemented in 2008)

Both are geared directly at on-farm interventions: i) one-to-one advice between the farm holding manager and the accredited advisor; and ii) small groups of between 20 to 40 farmers meeting on the farm holding of one of the group's participants. All those MS that

have engaged in on-farm small groups have also provided on-farm one-to-one advice, with the only major exception of UK-ENG, where small groups were seen as the only approach that would ensure flexibility and at the same time a wide outreach to farmers.

5.1.1 On-farm one-to-one approach

This approach involves the "visit on the farm holding by an adviser". These visits in principal address the various farmers' obligations as defined in each MS in respect to all SMR and GAEC. Additional elements of advice can be provided and these are assessed in more detail in the evaluation part⁶¹. The on-farm one-to-one approach has mostly been mobilised to provide farmers with advice on the above-mentioned issues. Various forms of checklists are the main tools supporting this type of advice. Not surprisingly different forms of "checklists" and manners of interacting with farmers have evolved around these lists as shown in table 19.

First contacts with the OB and its advisers are implemented through three distinct channels:

- i) Farmers get in touch directly with an accredited OB, agree and arrange a FAS visit.
- ii) Farmers first carry out an auto-check of their holdings based on a web-posted checklist or a hardcopy version; and define their advice needs before arranging thematic farm visits in accordance
- iii) Farmers need to go through a telephone helpdesk which transfers their demand to an OB with which a FAS agreement is finalised.

In **BE-WAL**, the website of the Ministry of Agriculture in Wallonia (D GARNE) provides 10 thematic checklists (called "Fiche auto-tests") of between 5 and 18 questions enabling the farmer to identify himself if he requires advice from the FAS (one-to-one advice) and on which themes.

In **FR, Poitou Charentes** developed an online software checklist to let farmers make their own diagnosis in 2008. However, it seems that only a very small number of farmers have used it so far.

In **BE-WAL**, a helpdesk is managed by the coordinating body (MoA). It directly answers farmers' questions. If the information requested is general, the helpdesk provides the answer. If it is more specific, a demand for advice is then addressed by the coordinating body to the concerned OB (i.e. one of the 11 accredited specialized bodies), who in turn contacts the farmer to fix a meeting for a farm visit.

In **UK-WAL**, a free telephone service is at the disposal of farmers. This is the first point of contact for a farmer seeking advice on the FAS.

⁶¹ EQ 1.1 in relation to awareness raising of farmers on environmental, food safety and animal health and welfare issue; EQ 1.3 on occupational safety, minimum requirements for fertilisers, plant protection products and other standards based on Community legislation; and EQ 1.4 on additional services to improve management skills.

Table 19: On-farm one-to-one approach tools used by MS in 2008

	Preliminary telephone helpline	Preliminary Auto-check	Simple check list (with an adviser)	Integrated folder check list (with an adviser)	Modular farm management and cross-compliance	Thematic advice
AT			X			
BE		~	X		X	
FLA						
WAL	X	X				X
BG				n.a.		
CY				n.a.		
CZ			X			
DE	R	R		X		
DK						X
EE			X			
EL			X			
ES			X			
FI			X			
FR	R	R				X
HU			X			
IE			X			
IT			R			R
LT	X		X			
LU				X		
LV			X			
MT				n.a.		
NL	X		X			
PL			X			
PT			X			
RO			X			
SE	X		X			
SK			X			
SI	X		X			
UK						
ENG						
SCO			X			
WAL	X		X			
NIR			X			
Total	11	4	22	2	1	4

Source: ADE-Consortium Country reports

In response to these first contacts, MS have more or less provided the following alternatives, whereby farm advisers are required to assess how the farm holding performs and to provide ad-hoc advice if eventual shortfalls are observed:

▪ **The 'at least' SMR and GAEC advice**⁶².

- Simple comprehensive 'checklists'

An adviser, as is explained in the box for the NL, goes through the entire and comprehensive list of all the SMR and GAEC farmers' obligations in the specific MS. The adviser is supposed to advise the farmer of the reasons, modalities and obligations for his farm holding of each of the SMR and GAEC.

The advice provided is either a simple ticking of the various farmer's obligations on a comprehensive list plus a verbal (non written) advice in some MS or a more formal advice report including an outline of the advice provided to the farmer in other MS. No clear instructions for a given advice have been found but it is more in the form of assisting the farmer in getting further adequate knowledge to try and solve his problem.

- Integrated and stepwise 'check-folders'

DE has taken the opportunity of developing FAS to address the whole set (Community and national) of obligations that the farmers are requested to comply with. SMR and GAEC obligations were first put in parallel with the prevailing federal and *Länder* regulations and decrees, which quite often impose additional or stricter obligations. Other production certification systems which presented potential overlaps with the cross-compliance obligations were also considered. Advisers and farmers are thus provided with a complete folder where all these obligations are compiled and their various linkages highlighted.

During the farm visit(s) the adviser (who is expected to be able to address all issues), has to explain the why and how of each farmers' obligation and assess the farm holding's compliance in regards to each. In some *Länder* using EAFRD funds, a written advice report has to be delivered to the farmers, indicating the time spent on each major item. This report mainly supports control of advice delivered.

Simple checklists

In **NL**, the advisor visits the farmer who has officially requested a FAS advice through the 'regulation services' of the MoA. Together they go through a formalised list of 193 farmers' obligations referring to the following themes:

- Environment	43
- Food safety & health	14
- Animal health and welfare	105
- Good agricultural and environmental conditions	9
- Occupational safety (<i>focused on standard risk plans and security plans</i>)	22

The advisor must provide the farmer with specific technical-economic advice for those issues of the list that are problematic (and where the farmer could be non-compliant in case of an official check). The entire list of obligations has to be checked (three options: (i) not relevant, (ii) holding is compliant, or (iii) holding is not compliant). There is no obligation to record the advice provided, which is considered a private matter between farmer and adviser. The entire list however has to be ticked and returned by the farmer to the National Regulation Agency with the paid invoice for the advice.

In **Slovenia** one-to-one advice is provided by the advising departments in eight regional agriculture and forestry institutes (these are part of the chambers of agriculture). A protocol was established for the one-to-one advisory procedure for the country as a whole. The farmer calls the field advisor for a meeting on the farm. At the meeting they go through the checklist on all the cross-compliance issues.

⁶² and occupational safety standards at Community level when EAFRD support is mobilised by the farmer

Integrated check-files and advice

In **DE**, various "check-folders" (called overall cross compliance) are in use, differing from each federal state ("KKL criterion compendium agriculture" in North Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony, or "GQS overall farm quality assurance" in Baden-Wuerttemberg, Hesse, Bavaria, Saxony and Rhineland-Palatinate, "LABSCAUS" in Schleswig-Holstein, "Mein Biohof" for organic farms, etc.), but all accredited OB of a state are using one. The checklists include all possible requirements applying for a farmer (cross-compliance, regional/national legislation, various quality standards or specific certifications for crop production or livestock production, agro-environmental requirements). Organic farms have a specific checklist folder system. Farmers can benefit from these check-folders through payments.

In **LU**, a first visit which lasts 1 to 2 hours, during which an auto-check folder is handed over and appropriate information concerning the file and its operative procedure provided. There is a possibility for a more in depth second visit at farmer's request, should the farmer have identified specific problems areas or if the farmer is in need of complementary specialised advice. The farmer will then pay a second more in depth visit (6 to 8 hours) during which a full examination of the farm conditions is carried out and all relevant advice provided. The adviser will complete a detailed farm visit report, which will include a prioritised (now, short term and longer term) 'to do it list'. The farmer can then still ask for specialised advice, which is then tailored and budgeted according to his needs by the adviser.

LU has used a similar approach and developed its own cross-compliance folder on the basis of the system used in a German federal state (*Baden-Wuerttemberg*). But LU has tailored its delivery differently, using a three step approach, combining auto-check, farm visit and additional thematic advice if required.

- Farm management advice and modular 'checklists'

In one particular region, BE-FLA, checklists are used to structure a series of advice modules, that can be delivered stepwise over a certain period of time (up to 2 years). A fifth module centred on the economic performance of the holding has been added, as a follow up to the support provided by the region before FAS to boost the performances of farm holdings and to provide relevant ad-hoc support. It is an essential part of the FAServices and tries to implement a more holistic approach to farm holding management.

Modular advice over two years as means of mobilising FAS

In **BE-FLA**, FAS is closely linked to business advice or Analytical Accounting Services; this is a key element of FAS, which is subdivided into modules structured on lists of obligations set out in the regional decree pertaining to FAS:

- Module 1 Environment and good agricultural and environmental conditions
- Module 2: Plant and public health
- Module 3: Animal health and welfare
- Module 4: Occupational Safety Standards
- Module 5: Business optimisation which covers two sub-modules
 - 5.1 Business economic advice
 - 5.2 Marketing advice

All modules 1 to 4 and 5.1 are compulsory for all farmers. The adviser has the obligation to provide the farmer at the end of each module with an overview of holding's performance and improvement proposals where necessary.

FAS advice is provided over a two year period and is implemented stepwise by most OB:

- Collection of all relevant economic (accounting) and environmental parameters
 - Centralised result calculation and holding benchmarking
 - First visit and exchange on holding's overall economic performance
 - Preparation of documentation for all other modules – or initial self-evaluation of the holding's situation in regards to modules 1-4
 - Centralised assessment of the holdings responses
 - Second farm visit focused on modules 1-4 (and eventual additional visit by an occupational safety adviser)
- Updating the holding's economic and environmental performance for the second year.

- Thematic visits

A limited number of MS (DK & FR) and regions (BE-WAL & IT-LAZ) have opted for thematic driven visits to farmers, focusing on one issue at a time and eventually using a specific thematic checklist of issues that need to be addressed. Farmers have the flexibility to decide which issues advice is needed for and to organise the necessary thematic visits (one or several) to ensure that they have the necessary specific information and advice in order to improve their awareness and the performance of their holdings in relation to cross-compliance related issues.

In BE-WAL, advice is provided in relation to specific SMR and GAEC and is organised around thematic checklists, which are used to structure the visit and the advice. In the other three MS, the advice focuses more on specific issues and needs that the farmer has identified. It can cover one or several elements of cross-compliance. For those MS where advice is invoiced, this is done on an hourly basis.

▪ The going beyond 'at least' SMR and GAEC' advice.

Concerning the provision of additional advice services to the farmers (i.e. those going beyond the 'at least SMR and GAEC' in Group B in the evaluation part), this is done in DE by enlarging the topics of the checklists, to include energy and other elements of production processes, or in BE-FLA by including additional advice modules on business advice based on analytical accountancy. Other MS providing this kind of additional advice seem to have used or mobilised other standard extension approaches. CR do not provide any indications that these MS have developed other specific tools to do so.

Quality of the advice relationship

During farm visits, the advisers and farmers interact directly, and therefore this interaction influences the quality of the relationship between the farmers and the advisers. Interviews with farmers and advisers during the case studies have highlighted one major element of appreciation by farmers, which was that advisers were able and willing to build up trust and confidence with the farmer. This of course depends fundamentally on the advisers' skills, but also on the way the checking of the various types of lists of obligations is implemented.

Building a trust relation and interface

The check-list file approach in DE and LU has had as side effect of addressing with farmers a wide range of other similar or complementary national or federal obligations and opening up a trust relation between the adviser and the farmers. The BE-FLA and BE-WAL even if they operate differently also strongly involve this relationship. The farmers are often confronted with a number of different regulations and obligations. Some MS seem to value that FAS serves as a first attempt to create an interface between farmers and advisers.

In most cases, the visits combine a farm walk, continued by a rapid scanning through the lists of farmers' obligations followed by a more in depth discussion on those points where better performances can be achieved.

This way of operating has its limits depending on whether or not all SMR and GAEC have to be covered during the visit or if this can be achieved through a succession of visits.

Trust and confident interaction between adviser and farmer is easier to attain when the advice can be limited to a more specialised advice (one theme, a series of technical issues, link with accountancy) or when the adviser and farmer can meet through a series of successive visits or if they have already operated as a team previously under different circumstances.

But it can also be secondary when the advice is limited to a simple ticking of farmers' obligations and a limited dialogue exercise with an adviser perceived more as an outside controller than a go-between, who spends time explaining the why of obligations and helping finding ways forward when problems have been identified.

Timing and frequency of FAServices

FAServices can be delivered as a one-shot intervention, in one single visit (which seems to be the case of most MS using simple checklists), where all obligations and elements of advice are taken up. Some MS (DE, FR, NL ...) seem to have a more pragmatic approach, whereby some individual OB/FAS advisers have the latitude to deliver the on-farm one-to-one advice through a number of successive visits, needed to go through the various requirements. Two interesting cases are: i) LU on the one hand, where the advice is organised according to three steps (see previous box), which farmers are free to mobilise; and ii) BE-FLA on the other hand, where FAServices are organised over a two years period and includes a number of individual elements (see previous box).

Depending on the way FAServices are paid for by the farmers (see section 5.3) MS have foreseen different frequencies for obtaining FAServices, as shown in table 20.

Information is not available for BG, CY, CZ, EL, ES, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, PL, & PT. Access to the FAServices in the other MS is:

- Unlimited (26% of the MS: EE, FR, HU, IE, SE, SI, UK),
- Only once (9% of the MS: AT, BE-W, DK),
- Once a year (FI, RO), or
- Once every two years (BE-F, SK) or once every three years (NL)
Several times (DE) (with five times maximum over the 2005-2010 period in DE-NSC)

Table 20: Frequency of FAServices on-farm one-to-one advice

		Frequency of on-farm one-to-one
AT		Once
BE	FLA	Once every two years in Flanders
	WAL	Once
BG	Bulgaria	na
CY	Cyprus	na
CZ	Czech Republic	na
DE	Germany	Several depending on federal states
DK	Denmark	Once
EE	Estonia	No limitation
EL	Greece	na
ES	Spain	Navarra: weekly ; NA for other regions
FI	Finland	Once a year
FR	France	No limitation
HU	Hungary	typically 8-10 occasions
IE	Ireland	No limitation
IT	Italy	na
LT	Lithuania	2 periods of application collecting in 2008 were organized
LU	Luxembourg	na
LV	Latvia	na
MT	Malta	na
NL	Netherlands	Once within a three year period
PL	Poland	na
PT	Portugal	na
RO	Romania	One a year
SE	Sweden	No limitation
SK	Slovakia	Once per 2 years
SI	Slovenia	No limitation
UK	ENG	
	SCO	
	WAL	
	NIR	No limitation

Source : ADE Consortium country reports - figures for 2008

5.1.2 On-farm small groups approach

Small group advice on the farm has been an alternative approach to the on-farm one-to-one FAS advice. It has been the sole approach used in UK-ENG to deliver FAServices. Other MS have mobilised this approach more as a complementary approach to the on-farm one-to-one approach. It was seen by these MS as a rapid and effective means of addressing farmers' queries and needs in relation to cross-compliance, thereby expanding the outreach to farmers of FAServices.

Small group advice can consist of:

- Asking farmers to organise a group of more or less 10 that would like to deepen a specific issue in relation to one or the other SMR or GAEC related topic and to respond to this demand by mobilising a FAS adviser to attend and support this group meeting (as has been the case in NL)
- Taking the opportunity of other grouped visits of farmers to a specific farm holding, experimental plot, or environmental farm walks or of farm management groups, to provide thematic meeting days or forums to address these groups' specific requirements for FAServices (as is the case in AT, CZ, ES, IE, IT....)
- Creating specific FAS advice related events, such as special farm walks to illustrate good practices and enhance exchanges between farmers, or to focus on specific problematic SMR (as is the case in UK-ENG, where these small groups mobilise up to 40 farmers each and are advertised to farmers)

On-farm group walks focus on some issues of concern to the groups

In **UK-ENG**, much of the more detailed FAS advice is delivered through a small group approach (drop-in clinic/open days, workshops and farm walks), where individuals can see on-farm examples of how farmers meet the requirements of cross compliance. The topic depends largely on the geographic area, covering sector specific and general requirements of cross compliance. A key element of delivery is to offer as much opportunity for questions and answers as possible in order to meet the requirements of individual farmers within the group environment. The audience is targeted using Defra statistics with approx. 1000 mailshots for each farm walk (25 farmers) as well as through the cross compliance website and press articles. The speaker is a trained cross compliance adviser. Feedback is collected from all farm walks – in excess of 90% of attendees have rated all metrics (event delivery, content, improved understanding etc) as good or excellent. As such, they are deemed to offer good value for money.

In **NL**, farmer groups have to be initiated by farmers themselves and they have to submit a topic request to be examined as a group with the FAS adviser. The groups share the costs of mobilising the adviser and they will meet on one of the member's farm holding. The topic has to be agreed on in advance and be part of the issues raised by cross-compliance.

Environment and sustainable farming pave the road to small groups in IE

In **Ireland**, farm walks including on cross compliance issues (these concerning one or all SMR and GAEC) are organised by the two public OB, Teagasc and DAFF. Teagasc holds farm walks on demonstration farms to discuss and highlight cross compliance issues. This is part of a consultancy, as requested by farmers and it is fully paid by farmers as part of a contract fee. Also, Teagasc and some private FAS bodies provide public meetings or seminars on all SMR and GAEC (for example, training courses on animal welfare schemes or environmental schemes). A key feature is the link between support payments and attendance at training events, leading to a very high coverage of FAS. Approximately 60,000 or 50% of all farmers in Ireland are in the Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS) while approx. 54,000 farmers are in the suckler cow welfare scheme. They must all attend for relevant FAS training e.g. animal welfare and the bovine identification and registration SMR for the suckler cow welfare scheme.

In **UK - N Ireland**, small groups of farmers (approximately 12 – 15) are also used to deliver advice under FAS. Workshops are held locally throughout the country and are delivered by a team of 20 farmers/advisors. Workshops are free of charge and last for approximately 2 hours.

Small group meetings can eventually rely on the above-mentioned (in section 5.1.1) thematic list of farmers obligations, but they are not bound to examine the entire list and seem to be therefore more flexible, farmer driven and cross-linked to other on-going extension services.

5.2 Number of farmers reached by FAS type approaches

Information on the number and type of FAS beneficiaries has been extremely difficult to gather. Calculations of numbers of farmers reached remain indicative as:

- There is an overall absence of monitoring of FAServices in most MS. Numbers of requested or delivered advices are available in most countries that have supported advice to farmers (either through their own budget or through co-funding by the EAFRD), however monitoring of type of beneficiaries and contents of advice is still under design in most MS. For those few states and regions, where services are directly and fully paid by farmers, figures of farmers receiving advice have been estimated in the CR. The same applies to those MS where FAServices are fully embedded in the on-going extension services and where FAS advice tends to be included in other extension activities.
- Several MS have so far not yet started on-the-ground implementation of FAS (EL, PL, PT, some regions in ES and IT) or have not provided any detailed figures (CY & some regions in DE, ES and IT)
- Different ways of accounting FAS beneficiaries within MS (see opposing examples for FR and BE-WAL in the box below), which can lead to problems of double-counting benefiting farmers.

Example of different methods for counting FAS beneficiaries (FR and BE-WAL)

In **FR**, 103 networks were accredited in 2008 in the framework of the FAS. These networks represent 1,500 advisory bodies (private or public). Each piece of advice (individual or collective) which regards one or several SMR/GAEC, and that is defined as a diagnosis on cross compliance requirements with recommendations or alternatives propositions, is considered as FAS advice. Most networks have reported what they consider to be FAS advice related within their usual activities. The total number of farms reached in 2008 is around 332 000; but if a farmer received one-to-one advice, went to a workshop, participated in a conference or received some publications, has not been differentiated as all these activities are reported as FAS advice. As a consequence, double counting of FAS beneficiaries is to be considered.

In **BE-WAL**, only farmers who go through the process of asking for advice through the coordinating body on a particular SMR/GAEC and then receiving one-to-one advice on the farm from one of the 11 thematic OB, are considered as FAS beneficiaries. There are many other farmers receiving similar kind of advice from the OB, but who have not mobilised a request for FAS advice and are thus not considered to be an FAS beneficiary. The total number of 'official' beneficiaries in BE-WAL in 2008 was 44 (for a total of over 4,000 advices delivered through the OB), but this represents an underestimation, for the reasons given above.

The following section presents the number of farmers reached by one-to-one advice on the farm. These figures are compared to the beneficiaries of direct payments, which represent the target group for FAServices. First, figures for the year 2008 are shown, followed by some figures since FAS implementation for some of those MS/regions where the FAS was already operating before. Finally, indicative figures of the number of farmers reached through small group advice are presented, also for the year 2008.

5.2.1 Coverage of farm holdings through the on-farm one-to-one advice approach

Figures, about the number of farmers reached through one-to-one on-farm advice are available for a large number of MS for the year 2008 (see table 21). The number of farmers reached is compared to the **beneficiaries of direct payments** shown in the third column⁶³. The outreach is calculated by the ratio between the number of farmers reached and the beneficiaries of direct payments (except for BG and RO – for which the target group is that indicated in the RDP).

If one excludes FR (because of the way beneficiaries are counted) and remembers that UK-ENG does not use one-to-one on-farm advice, **a very rough estimate of the number of farmers reached throughout the EU during 2008, can be framed at 152,056 farmers.**

⁶³ Source: Annex 1, Indicative figures on the distribution of aid received in the context of direct aid paid to the producers according to Regulation (EC) N°1782/2003, financial year 2007, all direct payments, (except for regional data (data about direct payments from regions) and BG and RO for which the target group is the target indicated in their RDP).

Table 21: Outreach to farmers of on-farm one-to-one advice during 2008

		One-to-one advice on the farm Number of beneficiaries	Number of farmers receiving direct payments in 2007	Outreach to farmers in 2008 %
AT		1.000	129.430	0,8%
BE	FLA	1.084	41.570	2,7%
	WAL	44		
BG		12.238	91542 (3)	13,4%
CY		n.a.	38.990	n.a.
CZ		1.172	21.120	5,5%
DE (2)	BAY	5.000	122.000	4,1%
	NSC	2.314	50.000	4,6%
	RHP	232	26.000	0,9%
	THU	75	5.000	1,5%
	Total	n.a.	366.700	n.a.
DK		600	63.200	0,9%
EE		803	18.560	4,3%
EL		n.a.	942.250	n.a.
ES (2)	CAT	3.500	52.117	6,7%
	CLM	3.000	122.378	2,5%
	NAV	1411 (on and off-farm)	16.652	8,5%
	Total	n.a.	899.940	n.a.
FI		1.000	68.130	1,5%
FR	(1)	332.129	405.950	81,8%
HU		3.299	197.980	1,7%
IE		25.000	126.720	19,7%
IT (2)	EMR	400	35.882	1,1%
	PIE	1.328	40.856	3,3%
	TOS	2.817	42.630	6,6%
LT		153	212.280	0,1%
LU		45	1.920	2,3%
LV		36	80.360	0,0%
MT		n.a.	4.000	n.a.
NL		547	69.660	0,8%
PL		n.a.	1.452.620	n.a.
PT		n.a.	228.660	n.a.
RO		56.400	1248000 (3)	4,5%
SE		598	81.380	0,7%
SI		4.000	51.810	7,7%
SK		n.a.	15.310	n.a.
UK (2)	ENG	Adv. Not used	106.500	Adv. Not used
	SCO	7.500	20.020	37,5%
	WAL	60	17.800	0,3%
	NIR	15.240	38.700	39,4%

(1) problem of double-counting

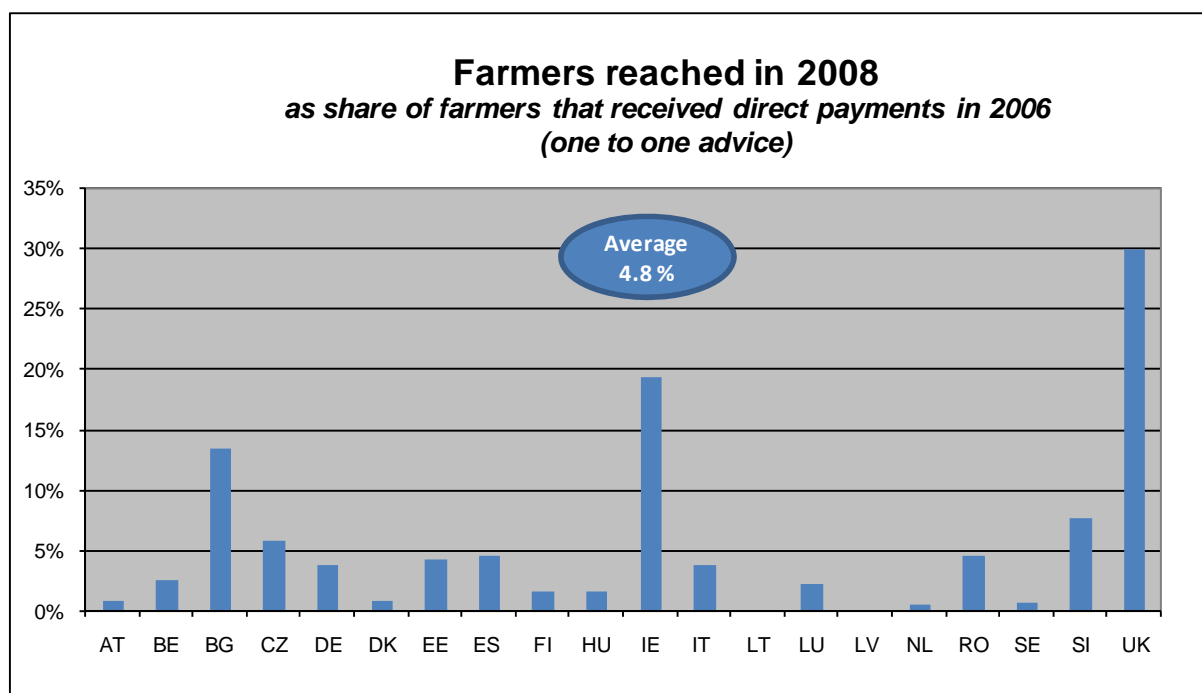
(2) the target group is 'farmers that received direct payments in 2008' for the concerned regions

(3) the target group is the one indicated in the RDP

Source: ADE Consortium country reports; EC Indicative figures about the distribution of aid received in the context of direct aid paid to the producers according to Regulation (EC) N°1782/2003, financial year 2007, all direct payments.

Graph 13, illustrates the average outreach for 2008 of on-farm one-to-one advice in each of the MS based on the above mentioned figures. No data is available in 6 MS (CY, EL, MT, PL, PT, SK) and some regions in DE, ES & IT due to the very recent implementation. The FAS was being set-up but not yet providing advice in 2008 especially in CY, EL, PL and PT. **The average outreach is 4.8%.**

Graph 13: Outreach in % of on-farm one-to-one FAServices during 2008



For BG and RO, the target group is not beneficiaries of direct payments in 2006 but target group mentioned in RDP; For DE, ES, IT and UK, the outreach concerns only some regions (DE: BAY, NSC, RHP, THU; ES: CAT, CLM, LRI, NAV; IT: EMR, PIE, TOS, UK: SCO, NIR, WAL)

Source: ADE-Consortium Country reports

Few MS have provided comprehensive figures in relation to farmers reached since they implemented their FAS, with data about years before 2008. They concern seven MS and six regions (four in DE and two in IT). These include figures from 2005 on for NL and DE-NSC, from 2006 onwards for DK, and since 2007 for other regions/MS as shown in table 22.

Table 22: Percentage of farmers reached by on-farm one-to-one advice from 2005 to 2008

	Farmers reached by one-to-one advice from 2005-2008					Farmers receiving direct payments in 2007	% of farmers reached
	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total		
AT	-	-	2,000		2,000	129,430	1.5%
DE-BAY	-	-	10,000		10,000	122,000	8.2%
DE-NSC (1)	5,298	4,569	2,825	2,314	10,000	50,000	20%
DE-RHP	930				930	26,000	3.6%
DE-THU	300				300	5,000	6%
DK (2)	-	3,886	600	600	5,086	63,200	8.0%
FI	-	-	800	1000	1,800	68,130	2.6%
HU	-	-	8,834	3,299	12,133	197,980	6.1%
IT-EMR	-	-	800		800	35,882	2.2%
IT-PIE	-	3,984			3,984	40,856	9.7%
NL (3)	750	750	1,200	547	3,247	69,660	4.7%
SE	-	-	1196		1,196	81,380	1.4%
SI	-	-	485	4000	4,485	51,810	8.6%

- (1) Several farmers introduced more than one request for advice. The MoA estimates the number of beneficiary farmers at around 10,000 since 2005 leading to a reach of around 20%.
- (2) FAServices were co-funded through RDP during the 2000-2006 programming period, since 2007, farmers have to pay the full cost
- (3) During 2005 and 2006, advice was co-funded through the national budget, from 2007 onwards RDP intervention has been mobilised. In 2007, an additional 2000 farmers were reached through 300 to 350 small groups (of ± 7 farmers)

Source: ADE-Consortium Country reports

5.2.2 Coverage of farm holdings through the on-farm small group advice approach

Few countries have indicated the numbers of groups that have been advised (as it is shown in table 23). Sizes of groups vary essentially from approximatively 10 farmers in NL and those MS using farm management groups, to 20 – 40 farmers in UK-ENG. **A rough estimate of the number of farmers reached throughout the EU can be framed at 187 566 farmers with however 53% coming from RO only.**

Table 23: Outreach to farmers of on-farm small groups advice in 2008

		Small group advice on the farm	Number of farmers receiving direct payments in 2007	Outreach to farmers during 2008 %
		Number of farmers involved		
AT		3,500	129,430	2.7%
BG		750	91,542(2)	0.8%
CZ		40	21,120	0.2%
EE		na	18,560	
EL		not yet implemented	942,250	
ES	2 regions (1)	3,106	139,030	2.2%
FR		28,810	405,950	7.1%
IE		5,000	126,720	3.9%
IT		na	1,425,370	
LT	(3)	52	212,280	0.0%
MT		2,000	4,000	50.0%
NL		1,280	69,660	1.8%
PL		not yet implemented	1,452,620	
RO		100,100	1,248,000 (2)	8.0%
SI		na	51,810	
SK		na	15,310	
UK	NIR	1,000	38,700	2.6%
	WAL	526 (by FLS)	17,800	3.0%
	ENG	7,678	106,500	7.2%
	SCO	4,250	20,200	21.0%

(1) Castilla -la-mancha: 1000 farmers & Navarra 2106 farmers
(target correspond to these two regions)

(2) Target is the planned target group in RDPs

(3) 5224 farmers of which approximatively 1% on the farm, the rest off-farm

Source: ADE Consortium country reports - figures for 2008

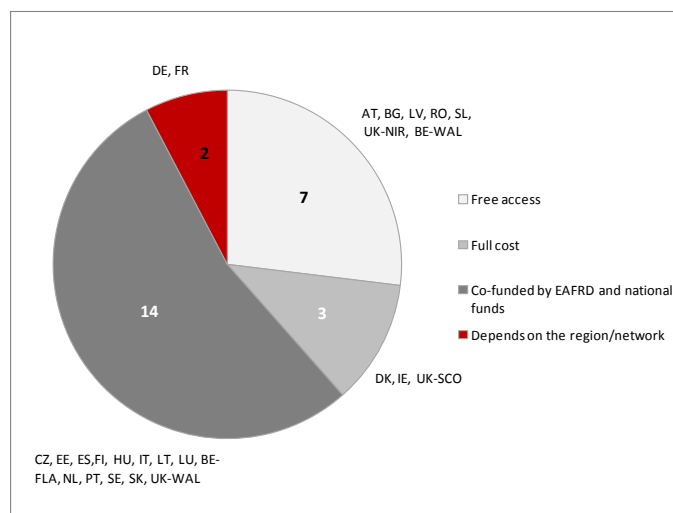
5.3 Cost of FAServices to farmers

5.3.1 Cost of the one-to-one advice in 2008

The cost for the farmer for on-farm one-to-one advice varies from free to full cost. Graph 14 indicates that the approach is totally free in 5 MS⁶⁴ and in some regions of MS (including BE-WAL, UK-NIR and some regions in DE). Farmers have to pay the full cost in DK, IE and UK-SCO. For other MS, the percentage that the farmers have to pay ranges from 20% to 50% of the total cost. DE represents a special case as it depends on the federal states (for example in DE-MEV farmers have to pay the full cost, in BV and SAC advice is free and in most other states farmers have to pay a fee).

⁶⁴ In AT, advice is either for free or, in some minor cases, a flat rate of €10-20 has to be paid.

Graph 14: Cost of one-to-one advice on the farm for farmers*



* No information for Malta and Poland, no reliable information for CY and EL
 ** In Finland, the advice is only co-funded by national funds
 Source ADE-Consortium Country reports

Available data has been summarized in table 24, which shows that when advice is not free, farmers' either have to pay a flat rate or the amount of a contract fee. Quite often the contract fee is based on hourly fees in the range of 70 to maximum €100.

As is shown in the answer to EQ 2.1 (cf. the evaluation part) costs to farmers vary from €275 to €300 in some regions of ES to around and even more than €2,000 in NL and a few other MS/regions. The most expensive region is ES-NAV with a cost to farmer of €2,400.

Table 24: Cost to farmers for on-farm one-to-one FAServices

On-farm one-to-one		
<i>Cost in EURO or local currency</i>		
AT		Free or flat rate flat rate (10-20 euros) if not free
BE	FLA	20% of ± 2000 euro in Flanders (cost part exceeding 1875 euro are to be born by the farmers)
	WAL	free
BG		free
CY		free
CZ		Average: 32% of 50 mil. CZK (max. 80 % of total cost co-funded; up to 1,500 EUR per farmer/year)
DE		Depending of the länder and of the field concerned: from free up to 100% for the farmer (if co-funded between 20 to 50% for the farmer)
DK		full cost
EE		Full cost or 25% of 20000 kroons depends on the service and the need of farmer
EL		farmer: (25.00%)
ES		20% to be paid by the farmer (i.e. depending of the regions: from 55 euros to 484 euros)
FI		21 % of 380 euros
FR		free or farmers have to pay partly, depending of the organisation and of the advice
HU		20% ...
IE		Can be free or 100% paid by farmers. Normally part of contract fee or costs vary depending on nature of advice and size of farm : from 30 to 250 euros
IT		About 327 euros for farmers (from 20 to 35%)
LT		20% of 508,633 EUR
LU		75 euros for the agro-check folder, more or less 200 euros (30% of the cost) or 50% of the cost of the advise
LV		free
MT		Co-funded with RDP
NL		50% (if total cost of advice > 250 euros)
PL		free
PT		na
RO		free
SE		Farmer pay 30% (170 EUR) of 572 EUR
SK		375 EUR (= 20 %)
SI		free
UK	ENG	
	SCO	Full cost
	WAL	50% (80% for young entrants) up to a maximum of 1,500 EUR over programme period or 100% paid by farmers
	NIR	free
From free to full cost		

Source : ADE Consortium country reports - figures for 2008

5.3.2 Cost of the small group advice in 2008

Country reports do not provide detailed information of the costs incurred by farmers for small group advice. In most MS using on-farm small groups it is free for farmers and considered thus as part of the existing extension budgets. However, in IE small groups are fully paid by farmers; and in NL and some regions of ES and IT partly paid by farmers (20 to 50%) as is shown in table 25.

Table 25: Cost to farmers for on-farm small group FAServices

On-farm small group advice	
Cost in EURO or local currency	
AT	Free or % 15% if not free
BG	free
CZ	free
EE	Mostly free, Depends on the event
EL	not yet implemented
ES	not planned or no info or free or 20% to be paid by farmer
FR	Usually free but can be charged depending of the organisation and the advice
IE	100% paid by farmers, Normally part of contract fee or costs vary depending on nature of advice and size of farm : from 30 to 1600 euros
IT	Depending of the region: not planned or free or 20% to 50%
LT	free
MT	100% farmers
NL	50% (if total cost of advice > 250 euros)
PL	na
RO	free
SK	na
SI	free
UK	ENG free
	SCO free
	WAL free when provided through FLS, otherwise co-funded 50% (80% for young entrants) up to a max. of 1500 EUR
	NIR free
From free to full cost	

Source : ADE Consortium country reports - figures for 2008

5.4 Use of EAFRD co-funding

Regulation (EC) N° 1698/2005 has foreseen in its articles 24 (*measure 114*), that support from RDP can be provided to farmers requesting FA Services.

Based on the information from the various national and regional RDP programming documents for the 2007-2013 programming period and compiled by DG Agri, graph 15 shows that:

- 15 MS have foreseen the mobilisation of *measure 114* at a national level,
- 4 MS have foreseen the mobilisation of *measure 114* in some regions only, and
- 8 MS have not foreseen its mobilisation.

Regulatory provisions

Regulation N° (EC) 1698/2005

Art 24.1: *Support provided for in Article 20(a)(iv) shall be granted in order to help farmers and forest holders to meet costs arising from the use of advisory services for the improvement of the overall performance of their holding. As a minimum the advisory service to farmers shall cover:*

- (a) *the statutory management requirements and the good agricultural and environmental conditions provided for in Articles 4 and 5 of and in Annexes III and IV to Regulation (EC) No 1782/2003;*
- (b) *occupational safety standards based on Community legislation.*

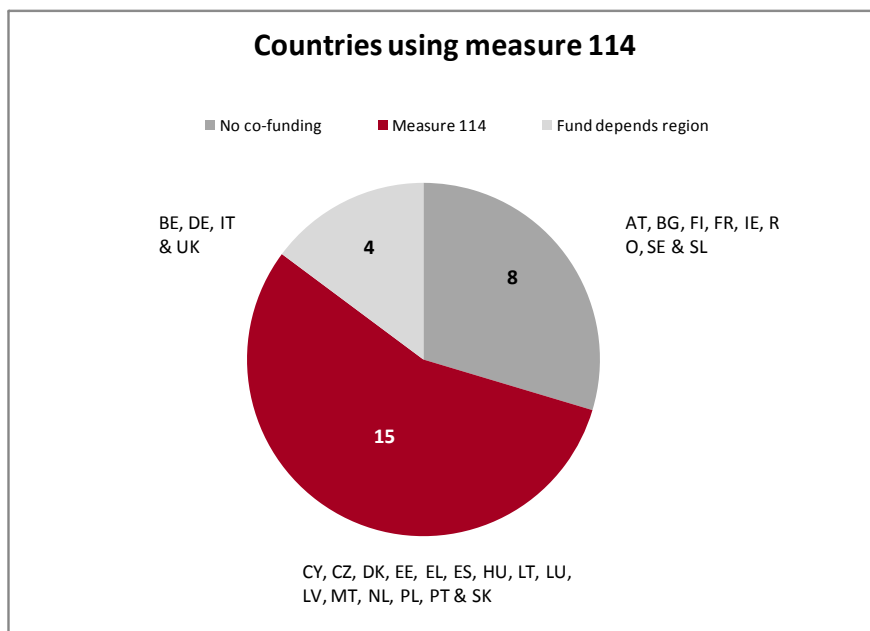
Art 24. 2. *Support for the use of advisory services shall be limited to the maxima laid down in the Annex.. i.e. 80% of the eligible cost per advisory service and 1500 euro maximum eligible amount.*

Regulation N° (EC) 1974/2006

Art 15.1. *The advisory services to farmers for which support may be granted under Article 24 of Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 shall be in accordance with Chapter 3 of Title II of Council Regulation (EC) No 1782/2003 (6) and implementing provisions thereof.*

Art 15.2. *The authorities and bodies selected to provide advisory services to farmers shall have appropriate resources in the form of qualified staff, administrative and technical facilities and advisory experience and reliability with respect to the requirements, conditions and standards referred to in points (a) and (b) of the second subparagraph of Article 24(1) of Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005.*

Graph 15: Countries using measure 114 for the period 2007-2013



Source: DG Agri -B-EAFRD commitments according to RDPS

In FR: Measure 114 funds were mobilised for the Métropole

In BE: one region (FLA)

In DE: 5 länder out of 16 (BDW, NRW, NSC, SAN & THU)

In IT: 17 regions out of 21 (ABR, BAS, CAL, CAM, EMR, LAZ, LIG, LOM, MAR, MOL, PIE, PUG, SAR, SIC, TOS, UMB & VEN)

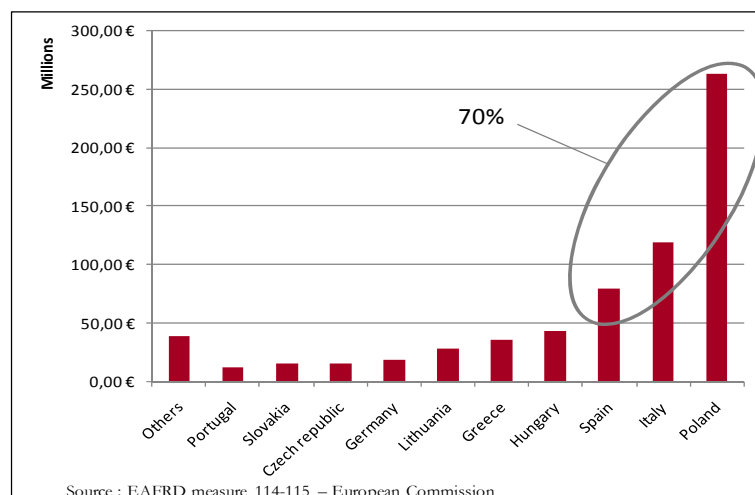
In UK: ENG, WAL & NIR

PS: in DK, although there is a measure planned, it will not be implemented; idem in UK-ENG & UK-NIR

in SE, measure 114 was planned but it seems that measure 111 is mobilised.

The volume of EAFRD contribution for the period 2007-2013 mobilised by MS varies significantly between MS as shown in graph 16. It is notable that three countries together mobilise approximately 70% of the total allocated funds under this measure, namely, PL, IT and ES in order of importance.

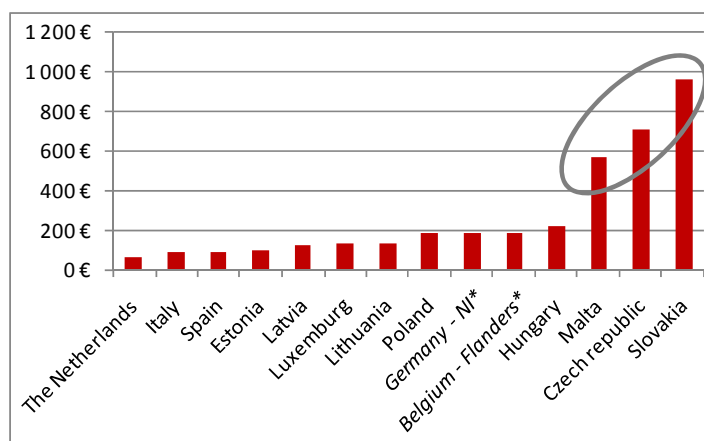
Graph 16: Measure 114 – EAFRD contribution for the period 2007-2013



Source : EAFRD measure 114-115 – European Commission

While this graph is instructive, it does not take into account the particular characteristics of each country in terms of number of farm holdings. Therefore, the amount of EAFRD contribution dedicated to the measure was further divided by the number of beneficiaries of direct payments⁶⁵. Graph 17 illustrates that countries benefiting from higher levels of funding per beneficiary of direct payment do not correspond to the same countries as in the previous graph. Three countries receive especially high amounts of funds per beneficiary (SK, CZ and MT receive more than €400 per beneficiary of direct payment from *measure 114*).

Graph 17: Measure 114: EAFRD contribution per beneficiary of direct payments for the period 2007-2013



* At regional level

Source: EAFRD - measure 114-115 and beneficiaries of direct payments - European Commission adapted by ADE

However, regarding real disbursement figures for 2007-2008 (first semester, as figures for the second half of 2008 are not available), few MS (5, and for 4 of them only one or two regions) have declared their expenditure:

Table 26: Declarations of expenditure for measure 114

EAFRD - Measure 114		
EAFRD contribution 2007-2013		Declarations of expenditure Q4 06 to Q2 08
		% of expenditure
BE	FLA	5 692 962
	NSC	756 563
		13%
DE	THU	9 050 000
		774 736
		9%
EE		2 625 000
		675
		0%
ES	CAN	1 729 400
		203 644
		12%
IT	PUG	800 000
		161 752
		20%
		6 000 000
		116 511
		2%
Total		25 897 362
Total EU 27		2 013 880
		7.8%
		662546667
		2 013 880
		0.3%

Source: DG Agri -B-EAFRD commitments according to RDPs

⁶⁵ Source of statistics: Indicative figures on the distribution of aid, by size-class of aid received in the context of direct aid paid to producers according to Regulation (EC) N°1782/2003, financial year 2007. Source : http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/funding/directaid/distribution_en.htm consulted on 26 November 2009.

6. Monitoring of FAS by MS

Monitoring of FAS is a core coordination task. This is the responsibility of the various coordinating bodies in MS, which are listed in table 27.

Table 27: List of FAS coordinating bodies

		Coordination bodies
AT	Austria	Ministry of Agriculture
	Belgium - Wallonia	Regional minister of agriculture
BE	Belgium Flanders	Regional minister of agriculture and the Paying agency (Agentschap voor Landbouw en Visserij - Afdeling Structuur en Investerings)
BG	Bulgaria	NAAS State Institution
CY	Cyprus	Service Designated body for cross-compliance
CZ	Czech Republic	Ministry of Agriculture & Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information
DE	Germany	Regional Authority & designated bodies
DK	Denmark	Danish Food Industry Agency
EE	Estonia	Estonia advisory coordinating centre for agriculture and rural economy
EL	Greece	Ministry of Agriculture
ES	Spain	Ministry responsible for agrarian affairs, through the <i>Dirección General de Desarrollo Sostenible del Medio Rural, Subdirección General de Programas y Coordinación</i> . This task is implemented through Monitoring Committees, but no specific Authority has been created at the national level for this task (<i>Real Decreto 520/2006, April 28th</i>). At regional level, coordination is the regional councils for agriculture and rural development or the regional departments of agriculture and rural development.
FI	Finland	Advisors and Finish Agency for Rural affairs
FR	France	Ministry of agriculture and fisheries and its regional DRAAF offices (Direction Générale des Politiques Agricole, Agroalimentaire et des territoires- Service de la Production Agricole-Sous-direction des Entreprises Agricoles)
HU	Hungary	National advisory service
IE	Ireland	Ministry of Agriculture
IT	Italy	Regional authorities and the Regional Agency for agricultural development and innovation (IT-TO)
LT	Lithuania	Ministry of Agriculture
LU	Luxembourg	Ministry of agriculture and the Chamber of agriculture
LV	Latvia	Ministry of Agriculture
MT	Malta	
NL	Netherlands	Ministry of agriculture - Beleidsdepartement and the Dienst evelingen (also payment agency)
PL	Poland	Ministry of Agriculture
PT	Portugal	Ministry of Agriculture
	Azores and Madeira	Regional Authority
RO	Romania	Ministry of Agriculture & ANCA
SE	Sweden	Swedish Board for Agriculture
SK	Slovakia	Agroinstitut Nitra
SI	Slovenia	Chamber of Agriculture
UK	UK-England	Defra (Department of Environment, Fisheries and Rural Affairs)
	UK-Scotland	The Scottish Government
	UK-Wales	Welsh Assembly Government
	UK- Northern Ireland	Department of Agricultural and Rural Development (DARD) through a central committee entitled the 'Helping Farmers Comply Forum' (HFCF)

Very few MS have set-up a specific formal committee to oversee the implementation of FAS. This is however the case in CY where an internal coordination committee between departments has been established; in EE which has foreseen a specific advisory centre to support and coordinate the 15 regional advisory centres; and in SI, where the national chamber of agriculture coordinates all advice activities.

In the other MS, this coordination is left to the MoA or one of its departments. The same applies for those countries that have devolved extension and FAS to regional authorities. Coordination there is ensured by the relevant regional authority, with the exception of UK-ENG and UK-NIR. In UK-ENG, Natural England has been designated as contract manager and entrusted with the overall coordination between the OB (Momenta consortium), public agencies and other bodies; this is done through regular steering meetings to decide on the workload and priorities for the coming months. In UK-NIR a specific internal committee “the Helping the Farmers Comply Forum” (HFCF) streamlines activities and inputs of all the public services involved in providing FAServices.

In NL and BE-FLA the hands-on coordination is basically provided through the paying agency, while Minister’s cabinet or management office ensures an overall streamlining which seems however to be limited to financial and budgetary aspects.

A basic monitoring system for FAS should include: the monitoring of advice at farm holding’s level, the monitoring of the OB and advisors and the monitoring of the system’s overall performance.

The country correspondents’ investigations in the MS show that records of activities is generally performed, as well as the monitoring of possible financial treatment of requests and subsidies, including the checking of basic regulatory requirements. Qualitative and content-oriented monitoring could be further improved, however taking into account that the monitoring systems are not designed for this purpose. So far, the feedback obtained from CR concern mainly breaches by OB and advisors’ in relation to their accreditation or minimum record keeping. Planning ahead and assessing the system’s on-going achievements is not comprehensively addressed; with the major exception of UK-ENG. However, one has to consider that the advisory bodies may not disclose outside the concerned holdings any personal or individual information that they collect during their advisory activities.

The various CR provide the following overall picture in respect to these three major levels:

- PL, PT, RO & SK have reported that their monitoring system is under construction.
- LT, LU, LV & MT have not provided any elements in regards to monitoring.
- All other countries have provided some indications of how they operate or intend to operate. Most of these countries concentrate on the archiving/follow-up of advice records, with little pro-active treatment of the collected information.

The following monitoring activities reported by MS are presented in table 28.

Table 28: Overview of FAS Monitoring Practices in MS – using EAFRD and not using EAFRD

		Monitoring in MS using EAFRD		
		Monitoring of farmers	Monitoring of operators	Monitoring of the system
BE	Belgium		Direct check at farm level of the number of modules carried out and relevant invoicing documentation of at least 5% of the total number of applicants.	Records of activities given by bodies with an evaluation of the quality of the advice (not implemented yet: only 5 applicants claimed their subsidy)
FL	Flanders			
CY	Cyprus		Control once a year with the aim to ensure that all terms and conditions regarding the accreditation still hold	
CZ	Czech Republic		Control to monitor the advisor's technical and administrative facilities and his/her participation in further education (on at least 20% of the overall nber of advisors)	
DE	Germany	Some Länder additionally record performance quality, for instance by speaking with the farmers who receive the service		Records of activities
DK	Denmark	A questionnaire survey among approved organizations, asking about the satisfaction of the farmers of the advice. The results are not yet available (not much detail).		
EE	Estonia	survey on farmers' satisfaction was carried out in 2006 (completed in 2007: Research report "Satisfaction of the agricultural producers' with the quality of advisory services");		Records of activities with an evaluation of the quality; latest research report (Development opportunities of Estonian Farm Advisory System. Final report. Kera OÜ, April 2009, Tartu. In Estonian) + research into compatibility of Estonian FAS with the goals of rural development strategy, which was completed in April 2008; monitoring is carried out via phone interviews, on a sample 12% of total beneficiaries
EL	Greece		Regular inspections (AGROCERT) are taking place once a year, on the basis of a 5% sample selected. During the inspection under consideration are: ☐ the compliance with the certification and registration requirements, ☐ the fulfilment of obligations against the farmer and ☐ the reliability of farm advices provided.	Record of advice activities
ES	Spain	In many cases, survey at farmer's level about their satisfaction	Controls: Visit directly bodies and sometimes farmers, generally yearly from 10% to 20% of accredited bodies (In some cases, the opinion of the advisers is also taken into account through surveys, interviews and meetings)	Generally record of activities
HU	Hungary		VKSZI makes site visits on a yearly basis (about 20% of private bodies visited in 2008 - no evaluation of the advisors' performance); Advisors' feedback is collected and discussed at regular meetings held by VKSZI for TACs, and also on advisors forum on VKSZI's website	Record of advice activities, yearly evaluation by MoA
IT	Italy			Record of activities
LT	Lithuania		n.a.	
LU	Luxembourg		n.a.	
LV	Latvia		n.a.	
MT	Malta		n.a.	
NL	Netherlands			Only quantitative data on FAS performance are collected: the number of advices given per year and the number of farmers asking for advices/year; eight page checklist, for small group advice participants deliver a list of each meeting and the subjects discussed
PL	Poland		System under construction	
PT	Portugal		System under construction	
SK	Slovakia		System under construction	
UK (except NIR)	UK	Feedback surveys by independent parties have also been carried out across the whole contract on a yearly basis; Feedback forms are gathered and reviewed following each type of event, which are collected after every event.		The monitoring of the Momenta (AEA) contract is done via Monthly. Quarterly and Yearly reports direct to Natural England.

		Monitoring in MS not using EAFRD		
		Monitoring of farmers	Monitoring of operators	Monitoring of the system
AT	Austria	In the first quarter of 2008, the LK Upper Austria conducted a customer survey. 5,000 farmers were contacted, 1,216 questionnaires were evaluated (24,3% return rate). The appraisal of the services resulted in a 2,0 (1,0 best and 6,0 worst)		Record of activities, analysis of the record of activities and the elaboration of an activity report; work planning and employee interviews/evaluations on yearly basis
BE WL	Belgium - Wallonia	Farmers are invited to fill a satisfactory questionnaire (17% feedback for the moment - example in annex). Every semester an information letter is send to every operating body with the output of the different satisfactory questionnaires.		Records of activities given by bodies with an evaluation of the quality of the advice
BG	Bulgaria	Records of advices given by experts		
DE	Germany	Some Länder additionally record performance quality, for instance by speaking with the farmers who receive the service		Records of activities
FI	Finland	voluntary user satisfaction survey is conducted among the users of the FAS		
FR	France			Record of advice activities
IE	Ireland	Feedback from farmers is collected through Farmer Representative Bodies		Record of activities
IT	Italy			Record of activities
RO	Romania	System in construction		
SE	Sweden			will be a part of the M&E system for the RDP 2007-2013.
SI	Slovenia	Feedback data from farmers and advisers is collected through CAFS regional units (13) and the branch committees (60) (elected farmers' representatives) and other Chamber authorities.		each advisor daily report about daily activities, then integrated in a software system, The evaluation of effectiveness is made by the number of violations of set indicators (not specific to FAS?)

▪ Overall monitoring of the system.

The recording of activities is mandatory for MS that are using EAFRD. However, most of other MS do record activities as well.

Indeed, MS using EAFRD are supposed to record, at least:

- Number of farmers (and forest holders) who use advisory services for the improvement of the overall performance of their holding (the record should be done accordingly to the type of advice given to the farmers, i.e. by SMR and GAEC, or other issue, and according to the amount of direct payments beneficiaries receive per year)
- Number of newly set up advisory services, for those using *measure 115*.

No single CR includes these data that were not made available to the evaluator.

In the fact, most countries record activities of the advisors (farmers' obligation lists checked and outlines of the advice provided, signed by the advisor and the beneficiaries). They are mainly quantitative data on the advice provided, but can come with a quality evaluation of the advice provided (either by the OB or the farmer). This is often used for the elaboration of activity reports (generally annual report). No systematic content assessment seems to be made for monitoring purposes, or correlation between advices and types of farms, a fact which might be due to the respect of the rules concerning non disclosure of private data by the OB.

However sometimes complementary ad-hoc random interviews/evaluations are done in some countries on a yearly basis, but this is often related to controls by the paying agency.

EE took a step further in the monitoring and analysis of the system. In 2008 MoA tendered a special research on the work of FAS over the past years. The evaluation provided evidence that FAS in EE was able to fulfil the duties and functions of a compulsory advisory system in compliance with the requirements of the CAP of EU. However this evaluation indicated that there was a clear need for implementing some changes⁶⁶.

▪ Monitoring of operators

In MS where EAFRD is not used, we could not find evidence of the monitoring of operators.

In others, regular inspections can be carried out at OB level, through direct visits and checks on a selected sample of the OB (from 5% to 20%). These inspections aim at verifying: i) if terms and conditions regarding the accreditation still hold⁶⁷; and ii) if the advice provided through FAS is adequate (reliable advice and correctness of invoices and substantiating documentation). This control can be done by the organisation in charge of the FAS or can be outsourced. In EL, for example, AGROCERT is the FAS certifying agency as well as the agency responsible for the day-to-day management and inspection of farm advisors. Regular inspections are carried out once a year, on the

⁶⁶ Development opportunities of the Estonian Farm Advisory System. Final report. Kera OÜ, April 2009, Tartu. (In Estonian)

⁶⁷ As for example: the compliance with the certification and registration requirements, the OB or advisor's technical and administrative facilities and the OB's advisor's participation in further education

basis of a 5% sample⁶⁸. In addition extraordinary inspections at random are also foreseen. In case a penalty is charged to a farmer for non-compliance, AGROCERT inspectors can investigate whether the advisor is in anyway responsible for improper advices offered.

▪ **Monitoring of farmers**

There is no regulatory obligation for MS, using or not using EAFRD, to record farmers' satisfaction, however about 10 MS do or plan to do it. Feedback and satisfaction information from farmers can be collected through three channels: i) satisfaction survey or tracer studies; ii) speaking to the farmers during events, meetings and iii) farmers' representative bodies. Some spot satisfaction surveys have been carried out in some MS. For example, in AT, in the first quarter of 2008, "LK Upper-Austria" conducted a customer survey. 5,000 farmers were contacted and 1,216 questionnaires were evaluated (24.3% return rate). The appraisal of the services resulted in a 2.0 rating (1.0 best and 6.0 worst).

⁶⁸ Based on the following criteria: the yearly amount of remuneration from farm advising contracts, the elapsed time since the first certification or the previous inspection, the number of previous breaches

7. Suggestions and recommendations made by MS

The DG Agri questionnaire included three open questions to MS on their suggestions and recommendations for the future, namely (1) MS observations on implementation, (2) suggestions for the coming 5 years at MS level and (3) suggestions at EU level. All MS made written observations and these have been included as such in the various country reports. Table 29 reflects our interpretation of the most relevant proposals made by the MS by theme (setting-up, OB, co-funding...). They are also displayed in a more detailed table in Appendix 5.

Table 29: Most frequent observations made by MS

Suggestions	Nber of MS	MS
Priorities/voluntary versus compulsory access/beneficiaries* FAS should not be compulsory for farmers	10	AT, BE, DE, CZ, IE, IT, LU, RO, SE, UK(WAL)
EAFRD funding To improve the administrative procedures for mobilising the funds	7	DE, HU, LT, MT, SE, UK (WAL), CZ
To reduce the delays for the reimbursement of the advice	3	EE, HU, LT
To reduce the financial participation of farmers	3	PL, MT, UK (WAL)
To increase the EAFRD funds and reduce the farmers' contribution	3	Comunidades Autonomas (ES), HU, LT
Scope of the FAS FAS should not necessarily cover all SMR and GAEC, possibility to focus on specific SMR or GAEC	5	AT, IT, NL, SE, UK(WAL)
Cross-compliance advices should be integrated into broader advice (overall farm advice, economic advice, organic farming, ...)	4	AT, BE, LV, PT
Linkage with the existing advisory framework Agricultural extension is a national prerogative/Existing system already provide info on all SMR and GAEC (farmers know them: no need of FAS)	4	NL, DK, FI, FR
Interest from farmers Low FAS uptake by farmers	4	LT, NL, SL, UK (WAL)
Advisory bodies To enhance FAS advisors capacities and knowledge	3	LT, NL, PL
Various Network at European level for sharing the experiences and information	5	BG, LT, NL, RO, UK (ENG)

* 4 countries (EE, Cantabria - ES, RO, CZ and UK(WAL)) stated that priority on holdings receiving more than 15000 euro of direct payment should be removed. This has already been taken into account as this condition was recently removed (in Regulation (EC) N°73/2009).

Priorities/voluntary versus compulsory access/beneficiaries

The most recurrent observation made by MS consists is that FAServices should continue to be mobilized on a voluntary basis by farmers. 10 MS have made this comment (AT, BE, DE, CZ, IE, IT, LU, RO, SE, UK-WAL).

EAFRD funding

This theme has been particularly commented by MS. Two kinds of remarks can be observed, namely:

- **EU funding mechanism.** 7 MS (CZ, DE, HU, LT, LT', SE & UK (WAL) consider that the administrative procedures to receive EU payments are too heavy and that funding the FAServices through RDP is too complicated. 3 other MS (EE, HU, LT) stated that the period of time needed for receiving the reimbursement of the advice is too long and it is therefore a major constraint on the cash-flow of smallholder farmers.
- **Financial participation of farmers and EU.** 6 MS⁶⁹ (ES, HU, LT, MT, UK-WAL) consider that the contribution of farmers should be reduced. (In ES, the contribution of the farmer is between 20-25%, in HU, MT and LT: 20%, but in UK-Wal there is no EAFRD).

While these comments reflect the opinion of the MS, it is also possible that part of the criticisms concerning the heaviness of the EU funding mechanism could be due to problems incurred by the MS/regions in implementing the Community framework. However, this issue has not been analysed in this evaluation.

Scope of the FAS

4 MS (AT, BE, LV & PT) specified that advice on cross-compliance requirements should be linked with an overall business advice service approach and developing this latter component as a holistic farm holding service/comprehensive advice (including economic and accounting aspects). BE-FLA explained that the first results of their on-going internal evaluation suggest that the system is very attractive to Flemish farmers, especially because of module 5, the wider economic advice. This module acts as a catalyst for farmers to apply for the subsidy. On the contrary, the demand for modules 1-3 related to SMR and GAEC seems rather low as it is perceived as checking (or costing money) more than assisting the farmer in his overall management (providing with concrete development perspectives).

Five MS (AT, IT, NL, SE & UK-WAL) claimed that, for several reasons, the FAServices should not cover all SMR and GAEC. AT, IT, NL, SE argue that it is more relevant to focus on thematic advice which corresponds to the need of farmers. AT and SE further stated that it is far too costly to cover all the themes. Finally AT declared that it is not possible for a single advisor to have sufficient knowledge to cover all SMR and GAEC.

Nb: When MS choose not to use the *measure 114*, the FAServices proposed have to cover all SMR and GAEC. However one advice might be focused on one or a few themes. On

⁶⁹ 3MS (MT, PL, UK-WAL) word it as contribution of farmers should be reduced and 3 other MS (ES, HU, LT) word it as percentage of EAFRD to finance the use of the FAS should be higher.

contrary, if *measure 114* is used, according to art.24 of Regulation (EC) N°1698/2005, the advice has to cover all SMR and GAEC.

Linkage with the existing advisory framework

Four MS (DK, FI, FR & NL) consider there is no more need for FAS in their country either because it is considered to be a national prerogative and/or because the existing extension services already cover all themes of SMR and GAEC (these same countries have designed FAS in the minimum ‘at least’ configuration and do not see FAS as going beyond this minimum requirement).

Farmers’ interest

Four MS (LT, NL, SI and UK-WAL) experienced a low use of FAServices by farmers. NL is wondering if the regulatory obligation to cover all fields of SMR and GAEC under co-funded FAServices is still required. Indeed, it experienced a drop and a low demand by farmers for advice.

Advisory bodies

Three MS (LT, NL, and PL) declared that FAS advisors’ knowledge and capacity should be enhanced. More specifically, NL experienced difficulties during first years of implementation (2005 and 2006) because advisory services did not have sufficient knowledge of SMR and GAEC. In PL, there was a growing demand for detailed information on agro-environment and cross-compliance requirements amongst agricultural advisors and farmers.

Various

Five MS (BG, LT, NL, RO and UK-ENG) suggested setting-up a network at European level at the level of OB and authorities responsible for the FAS, for sharing experiences and information on tools and methods. BG also suggested using international experience and educational institutions of other MS for additional education of agricultural advisors.

Some other instructive MS’ remarks which are not displayed in the table 29 are highlighted hereafter:

- Integration of occupational safety in FAServices is too expensive (BE) or already satisfactorily covered by other organizations (DE).
- BE and NL are suggesting an “insurance system”: farmers who requested FAServices should benefit from an increased tolerance when controlled (insurance system) similar to the systems developed in some quality certification systems.
- CZ and DE highlighted the problem of limited uptake by small holder farms and part time farms. Indeed, these smaller farms lack time and financial capacity to be able to use the FAServices.
- IT and UK-WAL insisted that the information collected during FAS advice should not be used for control.
- CY and EL experienced problems of coordination.

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- <http://www.crosscompliance.org.uk/cms> (Cross Compliance, England)
- <http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/wholefarm/index.htm> (Whole Farm Approach, England)
- http://www.ruralni.gov.uk/index/ruralni_news-current/ruralni_news-current-2/ruralni_news-06-02-2008.htm (Northern Ireland)
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- The Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013
- The Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) 2007-2013

Appendix 2: MS abbreviations

Abbreviation	MS' name
AT	Austria
BE (FLA)	Belgium (Flanders)
BE (WAL)	Belgium (Wallonia)
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 (ENG)	United Kingdom (England)
UK (SCO)	United Kingdom (Scotland)
UK (NIR)	United Kingdom (Northern Ireland)
UK (WAL)	United Kingdom (Wales)

Appendix 3: Abbreviations of regions in DE, ES and IT

Abbreviation	Region's name
Germany	
Baden-Württemberg	BDW
Bayern	BAY
Brandenburg + Berlin	BDB
Hamburg	HAM
Hessen	HES
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	MEV
Niedersachsen + Bremen	NSC
Nordrhein-Westfalen	NRW
Rheinland-Pfalz	RHP
Saarland	SAA
Sachsen	SAC
Sachsen-Anhalt	SAN
Schleswig-Holstein	SWH
Thüringen	THU
Spain	
Andalucía	AND
Aragón	ARA
Asturias	AST
Baleares	BAL
Canarias	CAR
Cantabria	CAN
Castilla La Mancha	CLM
Castilla y León	CYL
Cataluna	CAT
Extremadura	EXT
Galicia	GAL
La Rioja	LRI

Madrid	MAD
Murcia	MUR
Navarra	NAV
País Vasco	PVA
Valencia	VAL
Italy	
Abruzzo	ABR
Basilicata	BAS
Bolzano	BOL
Calabria	CAL
Campania	CAM
Emilia Romagna	EMR
Friuli Venezia Giulia	FVG
Lazio	LAZ
Liguria	LIG
Lombardia	LOM
Marche	MAR
Molise	MOL
Piemonte	PIE
Puglia	PUG
Sardegna	SAR
Sicilia	SIC
Toscana	TOS
Trento	TRE
Umbria	UMB
Valle d'Aosta	VDA
Veneto	VEN

Appendix 4: FAS Start-up date

FAS Start-Up		Official start-up date	Official publication	Operational since	Comments
AT	Austria	1/01/2007			
BE	Belgium - Wallonia			12/12/2007	
	Belgium Flanders	17/11/2006	17/11/2006 concerning the set up of FAS + addendum decision of 14/09/2007	17/11/2006	
BG	Bulgaria			3/04/2008 (measure 143)	Beginning of 2010 measure 114
CY	Cyprus			1/05/2007	
CZ	Czech Republic	12/02/2004	12 th February 2004, based on the approval of the Conception of Farm Advisory System for the period 2004-2010		
DE	Germany	See regional table			
DK	Denmark			1/01/2006	
EE	Estonia			17/06/2005	
EL	Greece	1/01/2007	Joint Ministerial Decision (JMD) 303894 September 14th 2006 (13758/14-9-2006); JMD 223490 November 24th 2006 (17258/24-11-2006); JMD 233629 September 5th 2007 (12308/18-7-2007); JMD 267630 December 13th 2007 (23728/13-12-2007); and JMD	Expected to be fully operational mid 2009	
ES	Spain	See regional table			
FI	Finland	1/01/2007			
FR	France		Circulaire DGPE/SSAI/C2007-4031 DGER/SDRIDCI/C2007-2010 + Circulaire DGPAAT/SDEA/C2009-3003 and for		
HU	Hungary	1/01/2007	Preliminary form	01/07/2007 fully operationnal	
IE	Ireland	1/01/2007			
IT	Italy	See regional table			
LT	Lithuania	11/10/2006	Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania No 987 of 11 October 2006	01/01/2008 1st participation of farmers	
LU	Luxembourg	18/04/2008	Grand Duché du Luxembourg, loi du 18 avril 2008 concernant le renouvellement du soutien au développement rural, Chapitre 5	Dec 2008	tools developed in 2005, pilot project implemented on 01/01/2007 and full from 2009 onwards
LV	Latvia			1/01/2009	
MT	Malta			1/02/2008	
NL	Netherlands	since 2006	Regelingen van de Minister van Landbouw, Natuur en Voedselkwaliteit, houdende regels inzake de verstrekking van subsidies door de Minister van Landbouw, Natuur en	1/11/2005	
PL	Poland			1/03/2009	
PT	Portugal			29/12/2008	
RO	Romania	1/01/2007	Ordinance 22/2005, Law 77/ 2005 see in annex		
SE	Sweden		National Reg. SFS 2007:481, 6:3 Swedish Board of Agriculture Reg. SJVFS 2007:43, 3:11-13	1/01/2007	01/02/2005 (group advices and training courses) - 06/09/2007 one-to-one
SK	Slovakia			25/01/2007	
SI	Slovenia		Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry Act (OJ RS No 41/99 and 25/04) & Agriculture Act (OJ RS No 45/2008).	1/12/2006	
UK	England	2005		2005	
	Scotland	1/01/2007		1/01/2007	
	Wales	1/01/2007		1/01/2007	
	Northern Ireland	1/01/2007		1/01/2007	

Spain		Germany	
CC.AA.	Date	Federal Länder	Date
<i>Andalucía</i>	16/01/2007	<i>Bayern</i>	January 2007
<i>Aragón</i>	1/01/2008	<i>Baden-Württemberg</i>	2005
<i>Asturias</i>	8/03/2007	<i>Hessen</i>	Not available
<i>Baleares</i>	18/09/2008	<i>Rheinland-Pfalz</i>	2005
<i>Canarias</i>	2/09/2008	<i>Sachsen</i>	2005
<i>Cantabria</i>	1/01/2007	<i>Niedersachsen</i>	2005
<i>Castilla y León</i>	30/12/2006	<i>Nordrhein-Westfalen</i>	January 2007
<i>Castilla - la Mancha</i>	10/03/2007	<i>Saarland</i>	January 2007
<i>Catalunya</i>	1/01/2007	<i>Schleswig-Holstein</i>	2005
<i>Extremadura</i>	30/05/2008	<i>Brandenburg</i>	Not available
<i>Galicia</i>	13/02/2008	<i>Mecklenburg-Vorpommern</i>	Not available
<i>La Rioja</i>	11/10/2006	<i>Sachsen-Anhalt</i>	Not available
<i>Madrid</i>	2009 (planned).	<i>Thüringen</i>	2005
<i>Murcia</i>	15/11/2008		
<i>Navarra</i>	23/12/2006		
<i>Basque Country</i>	15/02/2008		
<i>Valencia</i>	2009 (planned).		

Italy	
Regional Authority	Month / Year
<i>Abruzzo</i>	August/2008 - Regional Council Resolution n.749 of 7 August 2008
<i>Bolzano Province</i>	April/2007 – n.a.
<i>Basilicata</i>	March/2009 - Regional Council Resolution n.425 of 10 March 2009
<i>Calabria</i>	n.a.
<i>Campania</i>	July 2008 – Regional Council Resolution n. 1218 of 18 July 2008
<i>Emilia Romagna</i>	January/ 2007 – Legislative Resolution n.99 of January 2007
<i>Lazio</i>	July/2008 - Regional Council Resolution n.508 of 11 July 2008
<i>Liguria</i>	February /2009 - Regional Council Resolution n.124 of 12 February 2009
<i>Lombardia</i>	May/2008 - Decree n. 5348 of 23 May 2008
<i>Marche</i>	August/2008 – Regional Decree n.256/S10 of 8 August 2008
<i>Molise</i>	n.a.
<i>Piemonte</i>	February/2006 – Regional Resolutions n.1-1133 of 21 february 2006 and
<i>Puglia</i>	February/2007 – Regional Council Resolution n.141 of 26 February 2007
<i>Sardegna</i>	August/2006 – Regional Law n.13 of 2006
<i>Sicilia</i>	January/2007 – n.a.
<i>Toscana</i>	March/2008 - Regional Council Resolution n.242 of 31 March 2008
<i>Umbria</i>	May/2008 - Regional Council Resolution n.550 of 19 May 2008
<i>Veneto</i>	March/2006 - Regional Council Resolution n. 825 of 21 March 2006

Appendix 5: Relevant suggestions by MS

Suggestions	Nber of MS	Name of Member States
Setting up		
The setting of a FAS cannot be done without being integrated in the already existing advisory system.	1 FI	
Too important personal influence of different interested organisations	1 EE	
Insufficient administrative capacity	1 BG	
Operating bodies		
Involve more institutions/ bodies into the installation of the FAS.	1 LT	
Lack of interest from private organizations	1 CY	
Advisory bodies		
To enhance FAS advisory bodies' employees capacities and knowledge	3 LT, NL, PL	
Insufficient number of advisory bodies and advisors	2 LT, BG	
Need of trainer in Occupational safety	1 IT	
EAFRD funding		
Too heavy administrative burden/ funding the FAS through RDP too complicated	7 DE, HU, LT, MT, SE, UK (WAL), CZ	
Reduce the financial participation of farmers	3 PL, MT, UK (WAL)	
Increase the EAFRD funds; increase % paid by EAFRD	3 Comunidades Autonomas, HU, LT	
Reimbursement of advice takes too long which is heavy for the cash-flows of smaller farmers	3 EE, HU, LT	
Aid must go the advisory bodies, not the farmers	1 Castilla la Mancha	
The support for "setting up" the advisory services could be financed for a period of time longer than planned now.	1 EE	
Prepayment possibilities (for example 20%) as the trainers do not have enough liquidity and they have to take loans for organising their activities	1 EE	
So far insufficient national funding to set up the FAS for the forestry sector.	1 SK	
Priorities/voluntary versus compulsory access/beneficiaries		
FAS not compulsory for farmers	10 AT, BE, DE, CZ, IE, IT, LU, RO, SE, UK(WAL)	
Priority on holdings receiving more than 15000 euro of direct payment should be removed	4 EE, Cantabria, RO, CZ, UK (WAL)	
FAS should be compulsory for direct payment > 30000; all farmers	1 Castilla y leon; castilla la mancha	
Make the FAS voluntary for the MS	2 DK, FI	
Holdings receiving more than 15000: no need of FAS; small holdings: administrative burden, too complicated, no money	1 CZ	
Obligation to receive FAS advice if breached in CC control	1 LT	
Advice versus control		
Info collected during advice should not be used for control	2 IT, UK(WAL)	
Confusion between advice and control	2 AT,SL	
Occupational safety		
Release the obligation to cover occ. Safety for RDP	1 LT	
Change in rules about Occupational safety to make it less expensive/ occ safety is already covered to satisfaction by social insurance organisation	2 BE(WAL), DE	
Interest from farmers		
Give the FAS Certificate more prominence.	1 MT	
Low FAS uptake of farmers	4 LT, NL,SL, UK (WAL)	
Growing interest in CC advice	1 PL	
Problem of accessibility of small holdings, part time	2 CY, DE	
Incentive for farmers to make use of a FAS: holding certified by a FAS would have a guarantee to full funding to his aid application	1 MT	
To increase tolerance about CC if farmers received an advice (release control - insurance system)	2 BE, NL	
Coordination/certification/monitoring/control		
Lack of coordination, problems of coordination (setting up)	2 CY, EL	
Problems in the appointment of the certifying/inspection agency	1 EL	
Cost of adviser accreditation and training is high.	1 UK (SCO)	
Criteria for accreditation should be set by a regulation at EU level	1 PT	
Control system by the MA is too expensive in relation the financial support to farmers	1 HU	
Monitoring of impact of the FAS is difficult.	1 UK (SCO, NI))	
Clearer definition of cross-compliance control criteria	1 PL	
Existing advisory framework		
Rules at national level stricter	2 AT, NL	
FAS advisory requirements are not described in sufficient detail by the COM.	1 DE	
Too many changes in the policies	2 EE, PT	
Simplify the regulatory framework, to be relevant for agricultural activity and reasonable for farmers	2 RO, SE	
Agricultural extension is a national prerogative/Existing system already give info on all SMRs and GAECS (farmers know them: no need of FAS)	4 NL, DK, FI, FR	
To define single support scheme for all member states (not differentiated by country)	1 LV	
Scope of the FAS		
Should not cover all SMRS and GAECS but possible focus some	5 AT, IT, NL, SE, UK(WAL)	
Cross-compliance advices should be integrated into broader advice (overall farm advice, economic advice, organic farming, ...)	4 AT, BE, LV, PT	
FAT		
Completely new tools are required, especially in terms of internet support.	1 SL	
Greater use of internet as communication method.	1 UK (SCO)	
Various		
Raise farmers' awareness can contribute to increase effectiveness of FAS and Cross Compliance.	1 UK (NI)	
Concern about consultancy concerning plant protection	1 DE	
Concern about animal identification	1 DE	
Difficulty in creating a common image and culture of FAS	1 BE (WAL)	
Network at European level for sharing the experiences and information	5 BG, LT, NL, RO, UK (ENG)	
To increase the visibility of the FAS towards farmers - decentralize	1 BE(WAL)	