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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Directorate C. Strategy, simplification and Policy Analysis  
**Director**

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## **MINUTES**

### ***Meeting of the EXPERT GROUP FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE CAP***

***10 MAY 2017***

Chair: Ms Adelina dos Reis

Delegations present: All Member States were present, with exception of Bulgaria, Croatia and Sweden.

#### **1. Approval of the agenda**

The Chair proposes two changes of the agenda:

- Adding point on “questions and current experiences with Rural Development Programmes evaluations” and “filling Chapter 7 of the Annual Implementation report” (Finland, Germany, and Spain);
- Moving Point 6 on the FLINT project to the afternoon.

Furthermore:

- France asks to discuss about the SFC table for the Annual Implementation Reports (2017 and 2019);
- Spain asks to consider in the plenary meeting the question sent in writing to the Commission;
- Belgium asks if no documents have been uploaded on CIRCA before the meeting.

The Chair proposes to address the requests from France and Spain before the lunch break, or if not possible, directly in the afternoon. Finally, she confirms to Belgium that no documents have been uploaded on CIRCA.

No further changes are proposed, and the agenda is adopted.

#### **2. Nature of the meeting**

Expert group meeting was non-public; open only to appointed representatives of the Member States. The meeting documents and presentations are available on <https://circabc.europa.eu>

#### **3. List of points discussed**

##### **3.1. Information**

The Chair informs about the **Good Practice Workshop No. 5** on “*How to report on evaluation in the Annual Implementation Reports: experiences and outlook*” which will be held on 19-20 September 2017 in Latvia. It aims to exchange on the experiences and good practices in assessing RDP results in the AIR 2017 and draw lessons for the future.

The Chair thanks the Latvian representatives for their availability to host and support the organisation of this workshop in Latvia. She invites all delegates to share their comments and experiences with reporting on evaluation in 2017 to make the meeting as practical as possible for improving reporting in 2019. Simplification comments can be sent by email to: [agri-evaluation@ec.europa.eu](mailto:agri-evaluation@ec.europa.eu).

**a) State of play of the synthesis of ex-post evaluations of Rural Development Programmes 2007-2013:**

The Chair informs that almost all ex-post evaluation reports have been received and that the roadmap for this evaluation is being prepared. The Commission does not intend to launch a call for tenders, but will use one of its Framework Contracts. The summary of the ex-post evaluations should be completed by the end of 2017 and some Managing Authorities might be contacted by the contractor to provide specific information on RDPs 2007-2013 during the evaluation work. The Commission would appreciate the Member States' cooperation.

**b) Methodological factsheets on High Nature Value Farming indicator sent to Member States:**

The Chair reminds that the HNV farming indicator has no common methodology at European Union level. It is a CMEF CAP common indicator and the European Commission therefore needs detailed information from the Member States to be able to assess their approaches for identifying, monitoring and assessing HNV farming and to be able to use the indicator for evaluations covering the whole CAP. On 16 March a methodological factsheet "Approaches on High Nature Value farming indicator for RDPs 2014-2020" has been sent to all Member States requesting information in a comparable format. The deadline for replying to this was 21 April. The Commission asks for the Member States' cooperation, thanks those regions / Member States which have replied on time and remind the others to make an extra effort and send the information by the end of this month.

Member States delegates raised the following questions/comments:

France asks to have a clear time plan for the next surveys requested by the Commission.

France highlights that in their country, studies had been conducted on the HNV farming indicator, but the final indicators have never been validated at National level because of several political, organizational, and methodological challenges. For this reason, France has not been able to answer the methodological factsheet on HNV farming sent on 16 March 2017. Also, it had not been clear to them for which purpose the Commission was asking this information.

Germany agrees with France on the existing methodological challenges to validate the HNV farming indicator. Germany has filled in the factsheets as best as it could as different approaches are used by each region and reported about misgivings about possible use of the indicator in the future CAP post 2020.

Spain informs that it carried out a specific training on 27 April with all Spanish regions, focusing on agri-environmental measures and thanks Blanca Casares, from the Evaluation Helpdesk, for her participation and input given during this training. Spain also asks if the Commission could clarify whether the HNV farming indicator will be used as a tool for designing future policies, and whether it will influence measures and programmes in the next financing period. Spain considers that the Common Context Indicator no. 37 on HNV farming has weaknesses in its definition. The indicator is defined as percentage of HNV farming area of Utilized Agricultural Area (UAA). Therefore, changes in the UAA can change the result of the HNV indicator. In the opinion of Spain, the methodological factsheet goes beyond the given common definition of the CCI 37 by asking questions regarding the "quality" of HNV Farming.

Spain asks whether the factsheet will serve to validate the methods used to calculate the HNV indicator, and on which criteria the Commission will validate the methodology. Spain reminds that the Spanish regional MAs are responding to the methodological factsheet for courtesy and that the factsheet is not considered mandatory. Validation of the indicator is acceptable when the criteria and the conditions to accept a methodology are known in advance, because the investment of the regions for the calculation of the indicator is expensive.

Spain highlights that in regionalised countries like Spain, data for Common Context Indicator is not available at the regional level. Spain highlights also that, contrary to what is reported in the methodological factsheet, the purpose of this indicator is not for DG AGRI to publish them, but to include them in the RDPs, in compliance with Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 808/2014. Moreover, as

concerns the reliability of the data provided by Member States on the HNV farming indicator, Spain informs that the data provided by the Spanish RDPs is obtained from expensive studies supported by public institutions.

The methodological factsheet on the High Nature Value Farming indicates that Member States should provide detail information on their specific methods adopted, in accordance with Article 110 (4) of the Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013. Spain highlights that this regulatory reference is not correct and argues that Art. 110 (4) does not ask for detailed information on the methods used by Member States to calculate "common" indicators without a common definition. Finally, Spain recalls Article 69(2) of the Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013, which establishes that "*Common indicators shall be based on available data*".

The Commission services reply that it is important to know about the Member States' experiences with the HNV farming indicator because they represent an important feedback in order to improve the situation. Therefore, Member States are invited to share the difficulties that are experiencing on the ground. The Commission asks delegates to send their feedback via written procedure.

Belgium explains that the collection of the HNV indicator leads to higher administrative burden for the Managing Authority and asks predictability of these information requirements. Belgium reminds that the methodology to calculate this indicator is very sensitive and it has been discussed for more than ten years.

The Commission services remind that DG AGRI Unit C.4 is gathering information on the problems and methods used by RDP Managing Authorities to calculate the values of the HNV farming indicator. The Commission reminds that the HNV farming indicator is a CAP common indicator and therefore it needs to have an overview of the state of development of the indicator. This will also be an input for internal discussions on the future framework.

#### **Ex post evaluation of RDPs 2007-2013**

Germany thanks the Commission for undertaking the synthesis of the ex post evaluation of RDPs 2007-2013 by the end of 2017. Germany informs to have invested considerable resources into the ex post evaluation and asks when the Commission will provide feedback to the Member States and what instructions will be given to those Member States that have not submitted their ex post evaluation report. Finally, Germany believes that the feedback given by the Commission on the ex post evaluation report should be based on a more substantial assessment.

The Commission services remind that it's a legal requirement for Managing Authorities to send the ex-post evaluation of the RDP at the end of the programming period. The Commission has the legal obligation to publish a synthesis of the ex post evaluations. Once the ex post evaluations are synthesized, the Commission intends to give a presentation on the major conclusions and recommendations to the Member States. Moreover, another layer of feedback exists between Managing Authorities and DG AGRI's Desk Officers for Rural Development, which provide feedback to each ex post evaluation report.

Germany points out that the ex post evaluation findings from other programmes financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds (i.e. social, regional) are communicated more quickly. It asks if the Commission will revise its Evaluation Plan to get results from the ex post evaluations earlier than only 2 years after the end of the programming period.

The Commission services understand the comments from Germany, but reminds that other European Structural and Investment funds have different rules and deadlines. DG AGRI agrees that the communication of CAP results could be improved.

Spain asks if the Commission is planning to make a "measure by measure" synthesis of ex post evaluation of RDPs 2007-2013.

The Commission services inform that the roadmap for this evaluation is being prepared. The Commission services ask Spain to send the questions via written procedure.

#### **Challenges in filling SFC tables**

France shares some problems encountered by Managing Authorities to collect data for the indicators to report in the SFC tables. IT services of Managing Authorities at regional levels are facing several challenges to extract electronically data for any new indicators requested by the Commission. Some regions do not have the capacity to fulfil the expectations of the Commission for new indicators. Moreover, continuous changes in the SFC tables on the collection of indicators can affect the reliability of the

evaluation findings. Therefore, France asks if the Commission can keep the SFC tables stable over the current RDP programming period. Moreover, France asks what is the utility of collecting new indicators for agricultural development in EU regions.

The Commission services understand France's concerns. The Commission's IT services try to adapt the SFC tables to the challenges and problems encountered by the Managing Authorities to simplify and reduce the administrative burden. Delegates are invited to share their problems with the Commission. Finally, the Commission services explain that indicators are useful to take better decisions during the policy negotiation process.

### **CAP reform post 2020**

Slovakia highlights that the ongoing discussion on the CAP reform post 2020 will give more emphasis on delivering environmental benefits. Slovakia asks which indicators will be used to so that the political representatives can be better prepared. Moreover, Slovakia asks for more simplification of the CAP.

The Commission services cannot reply to this question because it is difficult to foresee how the CAP will look like in future.

### **3.2. Thematic Working Group 3 "Guidelines Evaluation of Leader / CLLD": presentation**

The Chair informs that the draft guidelines on the evaluation of LEADER/CLLD in RDPs 2014-2020 are being revised since the 10<sup>th</sup> Expert Group meeting on November 2016. It has been clarified that Local Action Groups do not have to carry out an evaluation. LAG can carry out a self-assessment of its community-led local development strategy. The legal requirement in Article 54 of R1303/2013 for evaluations to be carried out by internal or external experts that are functionally independent of the authorities responsible for programme implementation does not apply to CLLD strategies. This article 54 applies to "operational programmes" and "rural development programmes", not to "community-led local development strategies". The revised draft Guidelines have been sent to the Expert Group members and to the Sounding Board on 20 February 2017 providing one month for written feedback and the Commission thanks for the comments to the draft text. All comments are being analysed and considered in the revision of the Guidelines. The final text of the guidelines will be published soon. The Commission will provide the translations of the Guidelines in all languages after the summer.

The Chair passes the floor to Jela Tyrdonova and Hannes Wimmer (Evaluation Helpdesk) for the presentation of the draft guidelines. Powerpoint uploaded in CIRCAbc.

After the presentation, Member States delegates raised the following questions/comments:

Italy asks in how far the evaluation activities undertaken by LAGs will be monitored by the Commission and whether there will be a time schedule or obligation of reporting for LAGs, such as an annual implementation report, or enhanced reporting in 2017, 2019 or ex-post evaluation.

The Commission services confirm that Local Action Groups are not obliged to do an Annual Implementation Report every year. LAGs need to evaluate their CLLD strategies. In the ex post evaluation, the RDP evaluation shall include LEADER/CLLD as whole, as well as LAG level evaluation activities. The Commission invites Italy to send the question in written procedure to clarify any misunderstandings.

Luxemburg asks whether the Local Action Groups are obliged to define evaluation questions in their CLLD strategies.

The Commission services confirm that Local Action Groups are not obliged to define evaluation questions in their CLLD strategies. Defining evaluation questions is however useful, but not obligatory. The guidelines clarify what is mandatory and recommended.

Spain highlights that there is no legal basis for the requirement to quantify secondary contributions of LEADER. Neither is there a requirement to assign each LEADER project's contribution to other FAs than 6B (under which LEADER is usually programmed).

The Commission services remind that what needs to be done for answering LEADER-related Common Evaluation Questions in the Annual Implementation Reports is to comply with the Regulations, namely with Commission Implementing Regulation 808/2014. Article 14 of R808/2014 requires to identify the secondary contributions to other Focus Areas, but not for all. However, it is recommended to include this

information in the Annual Implementation Report, in the assessment section, and to be able to indicate what is the contribution of LEADER towards other Focus Areas. This is not an obligation, but a recommended practice to better show the added value of LEADER.

### **3.3. Thematic Working Group 4 "Evaluation of Innovation": state of play and presentation**

The Chair informs that the Thematic Working Group on “Evaluation of innovation in RDPs 2014-2020” met for the first time in December 2016, and aims at developing Guidelines for answering the Common Evaluation Questions on innovation. So far, 13 members of the Expert Group have registered for the Sounding Board to provide feedback on the Guidelines. The first Sounding Board meeting took place on 22 March 2017. Expert Group members are welcome to still join the Sounding Board to provide feedback on the full draft guidelines.

The Chair passes the floor to Jela Tvrdonova and Marili Parissaki (Evaluation Helpdesk) to present the state of play of the guidelines. Powerpoint uploaded in CIRCAbc.

After the presentation, Member States delegates raised the following questions/comments:

France asks if the Commission expects from Managing Authorities to evaluate innovation as a self-standing (separated) exercise or as part of the evaluation to be conducted in the context of the Annual Implementation Reports.

The Commission services remind that the Guidelines are meant to support Managing Authorities when answering the Common Evaluation Questions related to innovation, i.e. CEQs No 1, 2, 21, 23, 30. The Evaluation Helpdesk explains that guidelines on [“Assessment of RDP Results: How to Prepare for Reporting on Evaluation in 2017”](#) are already available to support Managing Authorities to answer the CEQs from 1 to 21. However, specific guidelines on innovation will provide support to answer also the other innovation-related CEQs (no. 23 and 30), which need to be answered in the AIR to be submitted in 2019 and in the ex post evaluation in 2024.

Spain asks what is the legal basis for the evaluation of innovation in RDPs 2014-2020. Without a legal basis, the evaluation of innovation shall be considered as optional good practice. Managing Authorities consider that the draft TWG-04 Working Document distributed for the Sounding Board meeting of the Thematic Working Group (22 March) is already too ambitious.

The Commission services remind that these guidelines suggest how to answer the Common Evaluation Questions related to innovation. The Commission thanks Spain for the comments, and reminds that the text shared is only a draft version. Compulsory indicators are defined in the Regulations. Additional indicators are only recommended because they might be useful to answer the Common Evaluation Questions related to innovation. Managing Authorities can develop new indicators if necessary, or use only the ones defined in the Regulation.

Germany considers that the guidelines give a greater role to “innovation” than what was reflected in the Rural Development Programmes in the programming phase (with exception of the European Innovation Partnership). Germany has investigated to what extent the RDP measures are supporting innovation, and concluded that innovation does not play a big role in the German RDPs.

The Commission services clarify that the guidelines are produced to address the specificities of innovation-related evaluation questions, as well as to provide guidance for the evaluators. Delegates are invited to express their views and opinions on the guidelines during the Sounding Board meetings. The registration to the Sounding Board is still open. If the guidelines are considered not useful or do not clarify how to answer the Common Evaluation Questions related to innovation, the Commission can decide not to produce the guidelines anymore. Since the work has already started and intends to be useful, the Commission believes it is important to finalize the document with the inputs of the Member States. Any repetitions with other approaches proposed in other guidelines to evaluate RDPs measures will be avoided.

### **3.4. European Innovation Partnership for agricultural productivity and sustainability" evaluation study: presentation**

The Chair introduces the presentation of the evaluation study on the European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-AGRI). The EIP – AGRI was launched in 2012 to speed

up innovation and foster a competitive and sustainable agricultural and forestry sector that “achieves more for less”. In 2016, the independent consultants Coffey International Development conducted this evaluation study commissioned by the European Commission. The Chair passes the floor to Mr. Bradford Rohmer (Coffey International Development) to present the evaluation study. Powerpoint uploaded in CIRCAbc.

After the presentation, Member States delegates raised the following questions/comments:

Italy considers this evaluation study interesting, but too early compared to the state of EIP AGRI implementation in the Member States. Since the evaluation study, as well as the study on the [Farm Advisory System](#) conducted in 2009, is *ex ante*, Italy suggests that the Commission should produce some follow-up actions to improve the delivery of these instruments. These studies show several critical factors to be addressed for the benefit of agriculture. Italy asks if there is some parallel process to change the Regulation based on the conclusion and recommendation of the evaluation study on EIP – AGRI.

The Commission services clarify that this evaluation study was launched because the Commission needed some early feedback on the implementation of this new initiative. It is a formative evaluation to gather information about how EIP AGRI is practically implemented among RDPs and to identify which aspects could be changed or improved. The Commission will consider the information collected through this study, either in this programming period or in the next one.

Poland asks if the Commission has undertaken any *ex ante* evaluation for the EIP AGRI and how it has been used.

Mr. Bradford Rohmer clarifies that this evaluation study gets close to an *ex ante* evaluation. The Commission services confirm that EIP AGRI was launched without any *ex ante* evaluation because it was part of the wider European Innovation Partnership initiative. The Commission adds that this evaluation study is conducted to assess whether EIP AGRI is a working, viable, and suitable instrument for boosting innovation in agricultural sectors and rural areas. The results obtained from the study have shown that EIP – AGRI is an instrument on which the Commission will keep working and spread it more widely.

### **3.5. AOB**

#### **3.5.1. Self-assessment of the European Rural Networks**

The Chair informs that the Rural Networks Steering Group is carrying out a self-assessment on the effectiveness and efficiency of the activities of the European Network of Rural Development and of the EIP network, in compliance with legal requirements under the Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013. During this summer, the members of the Rural Networks Assembly, of its two permanent subgroups (LEADER and the innovation for agricultural productivity and sustainability) as well as of the Expert Group on Monitoring and Evaluating the CAP will be asked to fill in the self-assessment questionnaire on-line. The focus of the questionnaire is to provide an understanding of the achievements of the EU Networks in terms of results. The results of the self-assessment questionnaire will complement a report which focuses on the output indicators linked to the strategic framework of the EU Rural Networks during calendar years 2014 – 2016. Both documents will be presented in the 8th Rural Networks Steering Group in October 2017. At that event, a specific self-assessment session will be dedicated to discuss the results achieved, and draw preliminary conclusions and recommendation. All the above elements will be summarised in a final self-assessment report, which will be presented in the 4th Rural Networks Assembly meeting in December 2017. The Commission invites delegates for their cooperation this summer to fill in the on-line questionnaire.

#### **Evaluation study on forestry measures**

The Chair passes the floor to Mr Andreas Lillig (European Commission, Unit C.4) to talk about a European evaluation study on forestry measures in rural development programmes.

Mr Andreas Lillig announces that the Commission is conducting an evaluation study with a focus on forestry measures in Rural Development Programmes. The study was launched in January 2017 and will be finalized by November 2017. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the environmental, economic, and social contributions of forestry measures to the CAP objectives and EU 2020 strategy. The study is focusing on RDP measures, but it is not ignoring other measures useful for forestry. The study will be based on EU evaluation criteria, such as effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, and EU added value. The study is based on the monitoring data from CAP, and other environmental policies, such as Natura 2000, water quality, the European Forestry Associations, etc. A public consultation will be

conducted and Managing Authorities will be contacted to provide further information. The Chair reminds that this evaluation study is conducted under the DG AGRI general framework and invites delegates for their collaboration with the contractor. The results of the study will be presented in a plenary meeting, as it has been done for the evaluation study on EIP AGRI.

Germany asks why the evaluation study on the contributions of forestry measures towards the CAP objectives had been launched at this stage of RDP implementation. Germany believes that this study should have been part of an ex post evaluation.

The Commission services remind that the financial regulation obliges DG AGRI Unit C.4 to conduct an evaluation study on expenditures measures every five to six years. Moreover, there is a long-lasting need to conduct an evaluation of the forestry measures since the last study was conducted several years ago. The evaluation of the forestry measure is not linked to a specific programming period. It considers also the previous programming period and looks at the changes brought by the RDPs about. While this study can be considered too early, it should be reminded that forestry policies by their nature often deliver results only at a later stage.

### **3.5.2. Questions and current experiences with RDP's evaluations and filling Chapter 7 of the AIR – point requested by MS**

The Chair provides the answer to a question that was sent by Spain to the Commission on Monday 8 May. Spain asked if the Commission can confirm that it is acceptable if the Common Evaluation Question are answered by MAs in the way they consider most adequate, and that the methodologies included in Annex 11 of the Guidelines "*Assessment of RDP Results: how to prepare for reporting on evaluation in 2017*" are non-binding. Spain is particularly concerned about the proposed assessment in Annex 11 of Common Evaluation Question No 14 "*To what extent have RDP interventions contributed to reducing Greenhouse Gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture? (Focus Area 5C)*".

The Commission services confirm that each RDP should answer the Common Evaluation Question to the best of their knowledge and ability, and that the methodology included in Annex 11 of Guidelines "*Assessment of RDP Results: how to prepare for reporting on evaluation in 2017*" is only a guidance. In the Annual Implementation Report to be sent by the end of June 2017, RDPs must respect the requirements defined in the Regulations: "reporting and quantification of programme achievements, in particular through assessment of the complementary result indicators, and relevant evaluation questions". The guidelines are non-binding. The Commission agrees that the proportionality principle should be considered and if other adequate cost-benefit options exist at Member State / regional level to reply to the evaluation questions, they can be used. To ensure clarity, the methods used to reply to the questions should also be described (summarised).

The Chair passes the floor to Finland and Germany to share their experiences with RDP's evaluations and filling the Chapter 7 of the AIR.

Finland asks how other Member States are tackling the problems related to the evaluations in the AIR to be submitted in 2017. In Finland, the RDP evaluation has been organized in four independent evaluation projects, each one addressing different themes: 1.) Advisory services; 2.) Environmental effects and results; 3.) Priority 4 and 5, and the role of National Rural Network; and 4.) Competitiveness of Agricultural sector (Priority 2 and 3). The overall evaluation answers 20 evaluation questions.

Germany stresses the importance of having an online interface for MAs which allows data to be directly imported to fill the SFC templates. Germany asks whether the Commission is working on a web-service for filling the SFC template. Germany strongly encourages the Commission to create this web service by the end of 2018. Germany informs that this year, Managing Authorities had to transfer data manually, which created a huge source of errors. In Germany, a pilot project will be set up for regions by using Excel or csv format for importing data into the SFC. This is considered to be very helpful for regionalized Member States. Germany would consider it also helpful if the values filled into the SFC tables could be exported into another format (e.g. Excel) in order to aggregate data from different regions.

For the Annual Implementation Report to be submitted in 2017, Germany is interested in the assessment of readability of the huge volume of data and information made available through the SFC tables. This report should be used for a wider audience and committees. Member States cannot submit the SFC-reports to the monitoring committees because it is not understandable in this format. Germany asks whether the Commission is working to change the structure of the report. Germany indicates that one issue to be



addressed in the next Good Practice Workshop on 19-20 September 2017 in Latvia is the coordination between Chapter 2 (Evaluation Plan) and Chapters 7 and 8. Germany considers that these chapters overlap. Germany points out technical problems on the data entry of SFC2014 Chapter 7. Values inserted in the wrong place cannot be deleted. This problem needs to be urgently tackled.

The Commission services thank Germany and Finland. The Commission confirms that Germany has proposed a document in the last Rural Development Committee to simplify the reporting. The Commission reminds of the next Good Practice Workshop in Latvia, which offers the opportunity to discuss the problems encountered and to identify which concrete proposals can be designed to improve the SFC template. The Commission invites delegates to write down and send out any other technical problems encountered when filling the SFC tables.

### **3.5.3. Information by the Evaluation Helpdesk**

The Chair passes the floor to Mr Hannes Wimmer and Myles Stiffler (Evaluation Helpdesk), who inform that:

- The Good Practice Workshop No. 6 on the evaluation of National Rural Networks will take place in November 2017. Member States are welcomed to host the event.
- The Yearly Capacity Building events in autumn 2017 will focus on: *“Follow-up of the AIR submitted in 2017: What are the stakeholder’s main lessons learnt from answering the CEQs (methods, data, coordination needs).”*
- The Evaluation Helpdesk has built a searchable [Evaluation e-library](#) with more functions (e.g. filter) to search more rapidly material and information;
- The Evaluation Helpdesk website presents more content: information on the Thematic Working Groups; Factsheet on evaluation (e.g. Productivity effects of the CAP investment support in Sweden);
- The Evaluation Helpdesk’s Twitter account: ENRD\_evaluation is the fastest and easiest way to be in contact with the activities and news of the Evaluation Helpdesk
- Member States are invited to share with the Evaluation Helpdesk any evaluation related experiences or practices to be published in Factsheet or newsletter’s article (contact person: [myles@ruralevaluation.eu](mailto:myles@ruralevaluation.eu) or [info@ruralevaluation.eu](mailto:info@ruralevaluation.eu)).

### **SFC tables**

France asks when the definitive SFC tables for the Annual Implementation Report will be ready.

The Commission services confirm that all SFC tables are operational and Managing Authorities can already fill the Annual Implementation Reports, including chapter 7. The Commission will try to solve the technical problems mentioned by Germany as soon as possible. The Commission services remind that when filling the SFC tables for Chapter 7 of the AIR, the reporting can be completed even if some data or information is missing.

### **3.5.4. FLINT (farm level indicators for new topics in policy evaluation) project: presentation**

The Chair passes the floor to the coordinator of the FLINT project. This FP7 project has been guided by DG AGRI to explore if the CAP has appropriate indicators to monitor several issues such as: climate change, innovation, rural development programmes. Over the last three years, the project has collected a data set from 1100 farmers in 9 countries. This data set is not yet adequate for the evaluation of the CAP, but it shows that the collection is feasible, particularly for data related to sustainability issues. The objectives of the FLINT project are to demonstrate the feasibility of collecting policy-relevant data in different administrative environments. It also shows how new farm level indicators can be used to evaluate policies and to improve the targeting of policy initiatives. The list of sustainability indicators collected during the project was based on the identification of future policy evaluation needs and the review of literature on farm level indicators.

After the selection of sustainability indicators, the team of the FLINT project established a dialogue between researchers, providers of information, and users to discuss which indicators are relevant, feasible and useful. The FLINT project identified possible solutions to connect the FLINT data with FADN and conducted several case studies to analyze the potentials for more precise recommendations for policy makers, to better understand the performance and data collection at farm level, and finally to fill the gaps in terms of research methodologies. The project has delivered a set of sustainability indicators at farm level;



IT infrastructure for collecting, managing, and using data; and a list of cases evidencing the added value of sustainability results for policy making and research. Among the recommendations, the need to understand the relation between policy measures and farm management's input, outputs and income is stressed.

After this introduction, individual researchers briefly explained the main issues related to the FLINT data collection and the potential benefits of the FLINT data (see Powerpoints uploaded in CIRCAbc).

Before opening the floor for questions and discussion, Mr Tassos Haniotis (Director of DG AGRI Strategy, simplification and policy analysis) informed that here is an ongoing debate on synergies and tensions in the CAP. The tensions concern the economy and environment because in the short term, the market does not pay off the environmental costs. The other tension concerns subsidiarity and simplification of the CAP. Moreover, there is a tension between jobs and growth.

There is a need to anticipate the future. Climate change will be shaping the future of the CAP. Agriculture is in a transition period, and having information to inform decisions on the future of the CAP will be more important than ever. The CAP reform post 2020 needs to overcome the natural resistance to change existing in bureaucracies at EU and National level, but also in the academia. We need to clarify to identify what information is available at European level, what can be collected at national and regional level, and what can be collected at farm level, which is the focus of the FLINT project. Farmers are important actors in this and should be convinced by seeing the benefits of collecting this additional information. Different stakeholders need to see the utility of integrating different information systems. FADN is a precious data warehouse, but its potential has not been yet exploited.

#### **Farm economic size used in FLINT data**

FADN collects data at commercial farms above a certain economic size. Greece asks if this approach is maintained also in the FLINT data.

The researchers confirm that FADN collects data from commercial farms above a certain economic size. He reminds that FLINT collects data from a sample to evaluate policies, if the policy would target smaller farms, a discussion on adaptation of the FLINT sample would be needed.

#### **Output of data at aggregated level**

Greece asks whether the output of data at aggregate level is the standard figure such as in FADN or something else.

The researchers explain that the output of data is in line with the FADN. At aggregated level is more useful for reporting than for making policy decisions. The major added value of the FLINT project is to use data at microlevel for policy analysis.

#### **Benefits of the FLINT at farm level**

Greece asks what are the benefits of the FLINT data for the participants in the system.

As an example, the researchers explain how in the Netherlands participating farmers get feedback, allowing benchmarking themselves with eg the 20 % top performing farmers. This comparison can go very deep, eg. regarding pesticides farmers are not only interested in the broad categories (herbicides insecticides...) , but also what exact products the top performing farmers use.

#### **FLINT data on CAP Pillar II**

Germany remarks that it would have been good if the material about this presentation could have been made available in advance. Moreover, Germany asks about examples related to the second CAP pillar, given the often occurring difficulties related to finding a control group in second pillar evaluations.

It was answered that traditionally FADN focused more on Pillar I. Yet, FLINT data includes also many indicators useful for Rural Development, such as risk management, innovation, farm advisory services. There is a study in the Netherland and Flanders which used the FLINT data to measure innovation. The types of innovation identified are based on the OECD and OSLO manual. For the farm advisory services, it was recommended to see the PPT presentation on Indicator Selection from Teagasc (Ireland). However, FLINT data does not help for evaluating all aspects of Rural development such as LEADER. FLINT is not the answer to all questions.

#### **Animal welfare indicators in FLINT data**

Germany asks why the FLINT data does not include any indicators on animal welfare.

It was confirmed that there has been a lot of discussion among the researchers about the inclusion of animal welfare indicators, but finally it was decided to leave this indicator out because it was not considered relevant for all Member States.

#### **Data collection in FLINT data**

Germany asks whether the FLINT project has a different approach to collect data from farmers (e.g. distinguishing which specific RDP measures have farmers benefitted from).

It was clarified that FADN collects data only from a restricted sample. If the sample is very small (e.g. share of farmers producing organically), it is very likely that the FADN will collect only few data. Furthermore, the trend in the data collection is moving more and more towards shared ownership among actors. Analysis work should be increasingly developed from the perspective of multiple stakeholders (farmers, paying agency, retailers) to gain their consensus and merge the data collected.

Mr Tassos Haniotis reminds that, along the process of impact assessment for the future of the CAP post 2020, the Commission has already organized a workshop on the use of new technologies to better monitor best practices, make the list of greening measures more flexible, and improve the control of certain criteria. He reminds that the CAP reform will focus increasingly more on the delivery of public goods and, for the future post 2020, we need to take into account the widespread use of technology, such as the fact that most of the farmers will have a smartphone. One of the challenges is to provide applications that are pertinent to the farmers' job. The European Union is on the front line in satellite technology and its multiple uses, including uses in agriculture. Satellites can generate data downloadable for free. The debate about big data and data ownership is different in EU compared to the situation in USA. In the USA, data from precision farming caused a lot of concerns because it was being mainly transferred to big corporations. In the EU, we can avoid this data concentration if we use publicly available information with a forward-looking approach. To be able to do so, we need to take stock of the existing information in the administrative sources, which can be used without violating the requirements of confidentiality.

He stresses that FADN data is very important since it collects all the economic elements on the farmer's performance (output production and prices). However, FADN still had room for improvement on the input side because the data on quantity and price was not available. Nonetheless, information on the policy instruments is now available. Policy makers can know if farmers receive coupled or decoupled support or which agro-environmental scheme they adopt. If a limited, but very targeted number of environmental indicators is added in FADN (e.g. practices related to land management), satellites can give images and information about what type of land or which challenges farmers face. This can be useful to understand if the adoption of certain agro-environmental schemes is due to the land characteristics or to the farmers' own behaviour, by comparing farms with the same economic features. This analysis allows making the necessary changes in future policies. Farmers will be convinced to provide information only if we monitor what farmers are doing - not what farmers are complying with - and if this information can be useful to them for the day-to-day economic and environmental practices. Moreover, this information is also important for the farm advisory systems, which are legally required in all Member States, but which in practice differ widely from one Member State to another. He invites Member States to share examples of best practices or challenges in the use of data in farm advisory system.

Finally, he highlights that the FLINT project was not meant to solve all data problems, especially problems of representativeness. If the number of variables to add in FADN is limited, the representativeness of data can however be tested better.

#### **4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions**

Not applicable. No specific decision or conclusion was taken as the nature of the meeting does not require this.

#### **5. Next steps**

Unit C.4 will upload in CIRCAbc a Memo summarizing the main action points mentioned during this Expert Group meeting.

#### **6. Next meeting**

The Chair announces that she will change to a new job in another DG this Autumn. DG AGRI Unit C.4 will therefore get a new Head of Unit. Finally, she thanks the interpreters and all the participants, and concludes the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Expert Group on Monitoring and Evaluating the CAP by informing the

participants that the next meeting is envisaged by the end of 2017. The official date will be communicated after the Summer.

## **7. List of participants**

In annex

< e-signed >

Tassos HANIOTIS

Annex - List of participants

***Expert group for Monitoring and Evaluating the CAP***

Date: 10 May 2017

MEMBER STATE	MINISTRY OR ORGANISATION	NUMBER OF PERSONS
BE	Région de Wallonie	2
BG		
CZ	MZE P.R.	2 1
DK	Danish Agrifish	1
DE	BMEL Thünen-Institut	1 1
EE	MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE	2
IE	Ministry of Agriculture	1
EL	P.R.	3
ES	MAPAMA MAGRAMA	1 2
FR	Ministère de l'Agriculture odarc	1 1
HR		
IT	Ismea Ministry of agriculture Crea	1 1 1
CY	Ministry of Agriculture	2
LV	AREI Ministry of Agriculture	1 1
LT	ZUM	2
LU	Ministère de l'Agriculture	1
HU	Prime Ministers' office	2
MT	Ministry of Agriculture	2
NL	R.B. Agro	1
AT	BMLFUW	1
PL	Ministry of Agriculture ARIMR	2 1
PT	GPP	1
RO	Ministry of Agriculture APIA	2 1
SI	Ministry of Agriculture	2
SK	P.R.	1
FI	MMM	2
SE		
UK	DEFRA	1
PRIVATE EXPERTS		
	Oxford Research	1
	Cork University Business School	1
	INRA – UMR SMART	1
	Universität Hohenheim	1
	Agricultural Economics Research Insitute	1
	INTIA S.A.	1

	Natural Resources Institute	1
	Research Institute of Agricultural Economics	1
	Wageningen Economic Research	2
	TEAGASC	1
	Administration local del Gobierno de Navarra	1