

The expected EAFRD contributions to the EU 2020 Strategy

The ex ante perspective and planned steps in the Member States

Minutes

Participants

See Annex 1

Background

One task of the Ex Ante evaluation of EAFRD 2014-2020 was to examine the RDP's 'contribution to the EU2020 Strategy and its overarching goals of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, fostering innovation and alleviating the pressure on environment and climate'¹.

The event was aimed at giving the opportunity for an exchange of views and approaches between Member States and to identify common issues for the upcoming discussions. Guiding questions and topics for the meeting were:

- What are the main expected contributions of the RDPs to the EU2020 Strategy in the different Member States?
- Which methods have been used to assess the contribution? Which methodical problems have been solved and which are still open?

The meeting was organized by the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) and the Monitoring and Evaluation Network Agrarian Structure and Rural Development Germany (MEN-D) in the Liaison Office of Lower Saxony to the European Union (Agenda see Annex 2).

After the welcome by Jens Mennecke from the Liaison Office of Lower Saxony to the EU, Silvia Dietz from BMEL (Unit "EU Rural Development Programmes – EAFRD") gave an introduction to the event.

The technical discussion on the subject was initiated by Andreas Lillig (DG AGRI, Unit E.4, "Evaluations and Studies") presenting the 'EU concept of Monitoring and Evaluation for the rural development policy 2014-2020' (see Annex 3) followed by presentations prepared by different Member States:

¹ see Guidelines for the Ex Ante Evaluation of 2014-2020 RDPs. Getting the most from your RDP, p. 61.

Main Points of discussion

The different presentations were followed by questions from and discussions between the 31 participants from 16 Member States, DG AGRI and EU Evaluation Helpdesk. The main points of discussion can be summarized as follows:

- The question of the contributions of EAFRD to the EU2020 Strategy was seen as an important one. However, the level of detail this question was addressed in the ex ante evaluations differed. Also, the methods used to assess the contribution of the EAFRD to the EU2020 Strategy are different not only between Member States but also within Member States.
- One of the most often applied approaches was to use the Partnership Agreement in combination with the EU intervention logic to link the EAFRD measures to the EU2020 Strategy to calculate the financial contribution. This approach was regarded only as a first step. It was pointed out that there is a need to collect additional information (beside budgeted) to show the different contributions (e.g. concrete project results not only overall figures).
- The approach of a so called ‘Global Evaluation’ was presented by Portugal and expressly welcomed by several participants. The aim behind this approach is to evaluate the ESI-Fonds together.
- Discussions have shown that in general there seems to be different aims of EU2020 addressed (based on planned financial allocation in the Partnership Agreements). For example:
 - DE: around 50% for Sustainable Growth and 25% for Smart as well as Inclusive Growth
 - IT: one third for Sustainable Growth, around 40% for Smart Growth and 25% for Inclusive Growth
 - FR: EAFRD focusses on thematic objectives 1,2,3,4, 5 and 6 (Smart and Sustainable Growth)
 - UK (RDP England): 87% for Sustainable Growth, 13% for Smart and Inclusive Growth
 - In the other presentations it seems that there is mainly a focus on Sustainable Growth.
- To improve comparability and to provide an option to aggregate results from different RDP’s/Member States there might be a need for coordinating different approaches of Member States.
- Another discussed issue was the structure and needed content for SFC. It was noticed that the SFC reporting needs will determine the information needs. As a result it could be questioned if the SFC information is the right one to meet the information needs of the expected discussions in 2017/2018.

Participants expressed the expectation that the Annual Implementation Report 2017 will also feed into the general discussion on strategic orientation of EU funding policies and the Multi-annual Financial Framework expected in 2017/2018.

It was agreed that thinking result based would be a good step towards improving the preparations of the discussions in 2017/2018. The event gave a first insight into the experiences and results of the different Member States showing the existing information.

Participants favored the idea of organizing some kind of “follow up” to the event to deepen the discussions and to try to define the information needed as well as the methods to deliver this.

Thanks to all participants for their valuable contributions and especially to all who have prepared a presentation!

Annexes

- Annex 1: List of Participants
- Annex 2: Agenda
- Annex 3: Presentation DG AGRI (Andreas Lillig, Unit E.4, “Evaluations and Studies”)
- Annex 4: Presentation **Germany** (Dr. Sebastian Elbe, Monitoring and Evaluation Network Agrarian Structure and Rural Development Germany (MEN-D)).
- Annex 5: Presentation **Italy** (Simona Cristiano, National Institute of Research on Agricultural Economics (INEA)).
- Annex 6: Presentation **France** (Marc Longhi, Ministère de l'agriculture, de l'agroalimentaire et de la forêt).
- Annex 7: Presentation **Portugal** (Luz Correia, Ministério da Agricultura e do Mar - GPP).
- Annex 8: Presentation **United Kingdom** (John Place, United Kingdom, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs).
- Annex 9: Presentation **Romania** (Mioara Mot, Romania Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development).
- Annex 10: Presentation **Finland** (Eero Pehkonen, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Rural Development Unit/Department of Food).
- Annex 11: Presentation **Poland** (Artur Wojciechowski, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development).

Silvia Dietz (BMEL) & Dr. Sebastian Elbe (MEN-D)