7TH MEETING OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE CAP

25 June 2015

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Expert Group on Monitoring and Evaluating the CAP met for the seventh time in the European Commission's premises in Brussels on 25 June 2015.

Adelina Dos Reis (Head of Unit AGRI E.4) chaired the meeting, welcomed participants and introduced the draft agenda. The draft agenda was adopted, and the topics addressed during the meeting followed the order summarised below.

2. Introductory Remarks

The meeting started with introductory remarks of the chair, Adelina Dos Reis, who mentioned the following points:

- The **rules of procedure** have been distributed again in its final form as agreed at the last meeting (after deletion of article 4 which mentioned voting procedure).
- The **2nd meeting of the Rural Networks' Steering Group** took place on 12 June. One of the aims of the meeting was to discuss how to progress work on the priority themes of the ENRD, already identified by the RN's Assembly in its first meeting in January 2015. One of these themes is the "**Evaluation of NRNs**" and Hannes Wimmer, Team Leader of the EH, presented a Thematic Fiche on this subject at the meeting. **Evaluation-related topics** that were discussed included the:
    1) Need for thematic work on NRN evaluation (taking into account the works for NRN self-assessment);
    2) Need for guidance on evaluation of Leader/CLLD (e.g. in case of multi-fund CLLD, LAG-level evaluation, etc.);
    3) Evaluation of Pillar 1-Pillar 2 linkages, starting from an overview of what is being done at MS-level in terms of evaluation of Pillar 1;
    4) Following up outcomes of ex-ante evaluations.

- The **Better Regulation Package** was adopted by the Commission on 19 May, with major implications/changes for the whole policy cycle, from the policy design phase to policy implementation and evaluation. Increased transparency and openness to the public, as well as more thorough evaluations of the performance of existing EU regulations are key elements of the package. Evaluations are an essential part of the decision-making process ("evaluate first" principle). Some examples of what is new:
    o 12-week internet-based public consultations for all Commission initiatives subject to an impact assessment and for all evaluations;
    o roadmaps for all new major initiatives (describing the problem to be tackled and the objectives to be achieved, justifying the need for EU action and its added value and outlining alternative policy options);
    o roadmaps for all evaluations (specifying the scope, design and purpose of the evaluation and the issues to be examined in the context of the evaluation);
    o 4-week public consultation on these roadmaps (stakeholders and citizens will be able to provide feedback on them);
    o a Staff Working Document must be prepared for all evaluations, summarising the final results of the evaluation process.

- A revised version of the **Leaflet on the monitoring and evaluation framework** made by DG AGRI is available electronically in all languages, except Gaelic. Hard copies are available only in six languages (English, French, German, Spanish, Polish and Italian) and some copies

were distributed this morning. Hard copies of the remaining languages will be available soon. Experts were reminded to inform Patrizia Ganci by email (Patrizia.ganci@ec.europa.eu) of the address where they want the hard copies to be sent, indicating language and number of copies.

- On 18 June the EC received a list of questions on monitoring and evaluation from Estonia. The replies were sent on 24 June and will be uploaded on the CIRCABC platform.

- Experts were reminded to fill-in and sign the application for reimbursement of travel expenses and leave it on the table before the coffee break.

MS did not raise any comments or questions after the introductory remarks.

3. Presentation of the Study on the competitiveness of European wines

Link to PPT on CIRCA: Study on the competitiveness of European wines

Nuno Vicente (DG AGRI, Unit C.2) presented the results of a study on the competitiveness of European wines. He explained the three themes of the study: development of the competitiveness of EU still wines, finding how to improve their competitiveness and identification of the key factors of competitiveness. Regarding global competitiveness of EU wines with respect to international trade, Mr Vicente highlighted that EU wines improved their competitiveness in value terms, while maintaining their position in quantity, despite an overall loss of market shares (both value and quantity). Mr. Vicente detailed the position of wines distinguishing good competitive performance of bottled wines and negative performance of bulk wine exports. At the end of the presentation, Mr Vicente remarked a series of suggestions for three problems identified: market access, decision-making of economic actors and product adaptation to markets.

MS did not raise any comments or questions after the presentation.

4. Data items list for the Pillar II Operations Database

Link to PPT on CIRCA: RDP Monitoring

Christophe Derzelle (DG AGRI Unit H.3) presented briefly the changes made to the Working Document "Data items list for the Pillar II Operations Database", presented at the last RDC meeting.

Two new data items were added to the data items list for Pillar II Operations Database:

- Type of agricultural branch (relates to the holding receiving the support, not the type of project)
- Size of holding supported (information can be based on application, as proxy).

The first data item has been used also in the CMEF 2007-2013 and turned out to be very useful, e.g. to find out the amount of investments in the milk sector.

Mr Derzelle also informed of the recent updates made to the following three documents:

- WD Rural Development Programming and Target Setting: updated in June 2015
- WD Rural Development Monitoring (2014-2020) – Implementation report tables: updated in May 2015
- WD Target Indicator fiches for Pillar II (priorities 1-6): updated in April 2015

EC informs that the mentioned WD are part of the complete list of updated Guidance and Working Documents that will be mentioned under agenda point 9.

After the presentation, the MS raised the following comments/questions.

Need for final version of data items list

France, Italy, Poland, Germany and Belgium underlined the need for a final version of the data items list, since some MS have already finalised the data collection system and started implementing their RDP's. Each adjustment to the data collection system during implementation is extremely difficult.

The EC understands the need for a final version and does not plan to add more new data items.

Deadline for changes to the electronic data exchange system (SFC)

Germany and Belgium suggested that the new tables should be inserted as soon as possible in SFC2014 to know how the AIR will look like and for actual reporting in AIR 2016.

The EC replied that the IT-services are currently carrying out technical corrections to the tables, after having received comments from some MS. The final version of the tables will be delivered in a few weeks. SFC-modules will be developed later based on the finalized tables. The web-services which will allow MS to send data directly to the EC system will be tested in September 2015. The final system will only be ready by April or May 2016, but already available in test form beginning 2016.

Separate folder with final documents on CIRCA

Italy suggested to put a separate folder on CIRCA with only the final versions of the documents.

The EC replied that final documents will be stored in a separate folder/space on CIRCA. Draft (working) documents will be stored in the folder of the meeting itself. MS will automatically have access to the folder with final versions of documents if they have already access to the Expert Group space on CIRCA.

Job creation, Focus Area 6A (T 20)

Poland repeats the suggestion (made in the 6th meeting of this Expert Group on M&E) to measure the number of jobs only for Focus Area 6A and not for the other focus areas. They cannot find the precise description for this indicator in the Working Document.

The EC replied that they received also a question from Latvia on this subject. The EC will clarify this bilaterally with Poland and Latvia and put the answers on CIRCA.

Consistency between programming and monitoring

Germany noticed that the target values (set in the programming phase) do not fit what is gathered in the monitoring system.

The EC replied that this aspect will be looked at. The indicators need to be consistent; they have to monitor what has been programmed ex ante.

5. Information on the Communication Strategy of the Evaluation Helpdesk

Link to PPT on CIRCA: [Communication Strategy of the Evaluation Helpdesk](#)

Link to Communication Strategy on CIRCA: [Evaluation Helpdesk - Communication Strategy](#)

Hannes Wimmer (Evaluation Helpdesk) presented the Communication Strategy of the Evaluation Helpdesk, whose two main communication objectives are (a) to promote usefulness of evaluation of

EU RD policy and (b) to promote specific activities and services of the Helpdesk. Primary key stakeholders (Pillar 2 evaluators, Expert Group, MA, DG AGRI Desk Officers, NRNs), Secondary key stakeholders (Pillar 1 evaluators, Programme-level policy makers, ministries) and Multipliers (DG AGRI Unit E.4, Desk Officers, consultants, research institutions) will be addressed through different communication channels (website, social media, publications, training). While the roll-out of the communication strategy is still under way, the priorities for 2015 comprise the publication of the first Helpdesk newsletters and working papers, the revamp of the website and the adoption of the new graphic identity.

After the presentation, the MS raised the following comments/questions:

Link with other EU policies

Italy wondered if the Helpdesk will also communicate about the evaluation in other EU policies, e.g. evaluation methodologies used in other ESI Funds. Disseminating the evaluation system of other Funds can be very useful to learn from each other. It is also relevant because there are common EU2020 targets.

Austria suggested that the definitions of indicators (e.g. jobs created) should be the same for all the ESI Funds.

The EC confirmed that, as soon as the Helpdesk has its own website, the relevant evaluation documents from DG REGIO will be available there. Although DG REGIO and DG AGRI are bound to different regulations and budget lines, the evaluation units are starting to collaborate. They disseminate the agendas of evaluation related meetings and they had already three meetings together regarding the harmonisation of indicator definitions. For evaluations of Community-Led Local Development (CLLD), DG AGRI will lead but others will be involved in the team.

Link with previous periods

Italy suggests to the Helpdesk to make the link to the previous programming period.

The Evaluation Helpdesk ensured that the MS will still have access to all the documents of the previous period entering the archived version of the old website.

MS visits

France asked if the Helpdesk is planning to keep the previous "MS visits" system, and if not, what the new arrangement would be.

The Evaluation Helpdesk replied that the MS visits will be in the form of yearly capacity building events. Since most MS already know the Helpdesk, there is no need any more for a formal introductory visit, so the Helpdesk can organise directly this capacity building event focussing on a specific topic the MS is interested in.

6. Information on the outcomes of the stakeholders survey carried out by the Evaluation Helpdesk

Link to PPT on CIRCA: [Preliminary outcomes of the stakeholders survey 2015](#)

Rein Dessers (Evaluation Helpdesk) presented the stakeholders survey carried out by the Evaluation Helpdesk in June 2015. The Geographical Experts of the Evaluation Helpdesk have been interviewing a sample of representatives from MAs and NRNs, to introduce the Evaluation Helpdesk and to better understand their needs. The preliminary results of the survey reveal that MS particularly appreciated

the Helpdesk workshops, the exchange of good practices and the answering of ad hoc questions. They find the guidance documents useful as long as they are published on time and give practical (not too academic) support. MS expect support from the Helpdesk on the following topics:

- Ex post evaluation
- CMES
- Evaluation of Leader/CLLD, LAGs, LDS
- NRN evaluation (external, peer evaluation, self-assessment)
- Assessment of environmental impacts
- Assessment of innovation

The assessment of impacts and the actual usage of the operations database for evaluation purposes seem challenging for most of the MS. Several MS had still open questions concerning the calculation of result indicators, secondary effects and the reporting requirements in the AIR. Some MS suggest to the Helpdesk to show good examples of evaluation plans and to give quality criteria for evaluation reports.

After the presentation, the MS raised the following comments/questions:

Relation to capacity building events

Germany asked how the outcomes of the survey will be used for selecting the topic of the capacity building events in October. How is the Helpdesk going to liaise with the MS?

The Evaluation Helpdesk replied that after finishing the analysis, the Helpdesk will prepare a shortlist of priority topics out of which the MS can choose.

7. Information on the training for LAGs organised in Portugal on 12 and 13 May 2015

Link to PPT on CIRCA: Capacity building for LDS evaluation: Report from Helpdesk training in Portugal

On 12th and 13th May 2015 the Portuguese National Rural Network initiated and hosted a training activity on evaluation of Local Development Strategies (LDS) in Lisbon, in cooperation with the three Portuguese MAs, the Paying Agency, the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Local Action Group Federation "Minha Terra". The training was provided by experts of the Evaluation Helpdesk. The participants were representatives of Portuguese LAGs, the LAG Federation "Minha Terra" and the 3 Portuguese MAs.

Luz Correia from the Portuguese authorities (Portuguese Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation) explained that at the moment of the training the selection process of LAGs was still ongoing. A training on evaluation in this early stage was considered very useful because (candidate) LAGs, who are mostly not familiar with evaluation, could use it in the establishment of their LDS and so take into account the overall objectives of the rural development policy.

Hannes Wimmer (Evaluation Helpdesk) presented how this training fit to the legal requirements regarding
- LAGs: ensure monitoring and specific evaluation activities (LDS should contain a description of monitoring and evaluation arrangements) and provide MA and evaluators with information for RDP evaluation.
- MA: describe the evaluation topics and activities, support evaluation at LAG level and manage RDP evaluations.
- NRN: provide capacity building for LAGs and disseminate monitoring and evaluation findings.

Magda Porta (Evaluation Helpdesk) presented a short summary of the main findings after the training, taking into account the perceived importance of evaluation for LAGs:

- LAGs are not used to follow the evaluation logic (starting with intervention logic and linking to other evaluation elements like evaluation questions and indicators) when preparing LDS.
- Some LAGs perceived evaluation merely as an administrative requirement.
- After the training many LAGs were aware of the need and importance of LDS evaluation.
- Careful planning and preparation of LDS monitoring and evaluation is a condition of its successful implementation.
- Governance, coordination and involvement of stakeholders is important for planning and implementation of LDS evaluation.

The EC thanked Portugal for this initiative. After the presentation, the MS raised the following comments/questions:

Same training in other MS

Belgium (Flanders) is interested to have this training organised in Flanders as well. They also express their interest in a training on evaluation of NRN.

Belgium (Wallonia) asked if the report of this training can be disseminated. Wallonia questioned if the training is rather about self-evaluation or about fulfilling EC requirements. Will the EC impose an evaluation framework at LAG level? This seems not possible.

The Helpdesk replied that summary minutes and other material of the training on evaluation for LAGs will be made accessible for all MS. The legal framework requires from LAGs the description of specific arrangements for evaluation in LDS and provision of information for RDP evaluation. MA are also required to describe in the evaluation plan the evaluation topics and activities to assess the contribution of LDS and planned support for evaluation at LAG level. Also the LEADER-method (added-value of LEADER) should be assessed, although not required by legal framework. LAGs can decide whether they carry out the evaluation activities themselves as self-assessment or they contract an external evaluator."

Evaluation plan in LDS

Greece informed that they require the candidate LAGs to have an evaluation plan for the LDS submitted in the application. Therefore, these candidate LAGs should receive instructions how to draft this evaluation plan.

The Helpdesk replied that the Portuguese candidate LAGs are required to submit a macro-program in the pre-selection phase. In the next selection step the pre-selected LAGs have to submit also an evaluation plan with indicators, which data to use, etc. This stage in the selection procedure seemed to be the right time to give this training on LAG evaluation.

Guidance on evaluation of LAGs

Germany mentioned that, together with the German Network association, they developed guidance on evaluation of LAGs in the document: "Selbstevaluierung in der Regionalentwicklung. Leitfaden und Methodenbox." (Translation in English: „Self-evaluation in regional development. Guidelines and methods.") which is available at the following link: http://www.netzwerk-laendlicher-raum.de/regionen/leader/selbstevaluierung/leitfaden-und-methoden/.

The EC thanked Germany to share this document with the Expert Group.

8. Presentation of the state of play of the Thematic Working Group "Assessment of RDP results: how to prepare for reporting on evaluation in 2017".

Link to PPT on CIRCA: TWG: assessment of RDP results: how to prepare for reporting on evaluation in 2017

Link to background document on CIRCA: Background document TWG assessment of RDP results

Jela Tvrdonova (Evaluation Manager of the Evaluation Helpdesk) introduced the Thematic Working Group (TWG) "Assessment of RDP results: how to prepare for reporting on evaluation in 2017". She explained the TWG context, objectives, working steps and the final product – guidelines for reporting on evaluation in the AIR to be submitted in 2017. She presented the composition of the TWG, highlighting various ways of Member States´ involvement. Among others, the TWG will establish a Sounding Board, where members of the Expert Group will be invited to participate in the guidelines´ review. Finally, she informed about the proposed outline and the content of the guidelines and invited Expert Group´s members to discuss this outline during an interactive session.

After the presentation Jela Tvrdonova introduced the interactive exercise to discuss the TWG guidelines using following key questions:

1. To what extent does the outline of the guidelines cover what Member States need to know for reporting on evaluation in 2017?
2. Which parts of the guidelines are most important and shall be elaborated in more depth than others?
3. What is still missing? What should be excluded from the guidelines?

The members of the Expert Group discussed these questions in small groups and the outcomes of the discussion can be summarised and presented as follows:

Question 1: To what extent does the outline of the guidelines cover what Member States need to know for reporting on evaluation in 2017?

✓ Guidelines should:
  - be useful, concrete and not too long, a balance between utility and length is needed (for example, short texts could be completed with larger background texts for those who want to read more)
  - consider specificities of each RDP
  - take into account what has already been covered by existing guidance

✓ Focus shall be put on reporting
✓ Although focusing on reporting in 2017, guidelines shall be developed with an outlook to 2019
✓ Timing - November is too late for finalising the guidelines
✓ Will they be translated?

Question 2: Which parts of the guidelines are most important and shall be elaborated in more depth than others?

Part I
✓ Chapter 1: how do we interlink AIR with other reports, e.g. reports on the Partnership Agreement, performance framework, etc.. Focus shall be put to reporting.
✓ Chapter 2: special attention should be paid to RDP specific elements,
✓ Chapters 3 and 4 are very important, e.g.:
  - How to prepare a high quality evaluation?
  - How to prepare good data for evaluation?
Part II

- ✓ Chapter 4 on methodologies, e.g. how to assess secondary effects, method for calculation of result indicators
- ✓ Special attention shall be paid to environmental indicators
- ✓ Highlight those parts which are:
  - for evaluators, managing authorities
  - compulsory, non- binding etc.

Question 3: What is still missing? What should be excluded from the guidelines?
- ✓ Nothing shall be excluded
- ✓ Missing parts:
  - Reporting
    - Outline the structure of AIR in the SFC (template), provide example of table to be filled in
    - How to deal with low RDP uptake
    - How to judge and deal with low quality of evaluation report, e.g. to prepare good terms of reference
  - Data
    - How to get precise data from application forms for complementary results indicators – detailed fiches
    - How to link various databases
  - Methods
    - How to choose the best methods (add in tool box an overview of cost-benefits of different methods)
    - How to handle old commitments in calculation of result indicators
    - How to handle secondary effects
    - How to adapt the methodology to RDP at regional level
- ✓ Linkages to other ESI Funds and explanation of Pillar I/Pillar II evaluations.

The EC commented that the section on evaluation in the AIR 2017 is new in this programming period. It is not a mid-term evaluation, nor an ongoing evaluation. If a MS does not have evaluation results yet by 2017, this fact should be reported in the AIR 2017. It is important to have those guidelines at this stage, even if there are no or little results. The evaluation set-up and methodology to be used can be tested.

The EC ensured that there will be a good balance between content and length of the guidelines. To avoid repetition of former guidelines, hyperlinks to other documents will be used.

The guidelines will include support on drafting terms of reference _in order to have good quality evaluations._

9. Updated list of guidance material related to monitoring and evaluation for the programming period 2014-2020

Link to PPT on CIRCA: List of guidance material

Link to folder on CIRCA: Guidance material related to monitoring and evaluation for the programming period 2014 - 2020

Fernando Fonseca (DG AGRI Unit E.4) presented the updated list of guidance material related to monitoring and evaluation for the programming period 2014-2020. This material concerns guidance on programming, indicator fiches and evaluation guidelines. He mentioned that a dedicated space will be created on the CIRCABC platform (under the interest group "Expert Group on Monitoring and Evaluating the CAP") where all the final versions of guidance and other material will be uploaded. This

will ensure that MS will have in one single folder/space all relevant documents on monitoring and evaluation, both related to Pillar I and Pillar II of the CAP.

After the presentation, the MS raised the following comments/questions:

<u>**Deadline for revisions**</u>

Spain asked when the guidance documents, and especially the context and impact indicator fiches, would be in their final version.

The EC replied that the context and impact indicator fiches were updated in June, are being subject to a final proofreading to ensure there are no inconsistencies and will be put on CIRCA in July. The work on the output and result indicator fiches of Pillar I is however less advanced. Maybe it will be finalised in August, but probably only in September. Although clarifications and little changes are still possible, the EC does not plan to revise the fiches anymore afterwards.

10. State of play of the Technical Handbook on the monitoring and evaluation framework of the CAP 2014-2020

Adelina Dos Reis (DG AGRI Unit E4) presented the state of play of the Technical Handbook on the monitoring and evaluation framework of the CAP 2014-2020, mentioning that:

- Some parts of the Technical Handbook are being revised following the adoption by the Commission on 19 May of the Better Regulation Package.
- The annexes of the Technical Handbook are also being finalised.
- The whole Technical Handbook and its annexes will be made available in the next few weeks.
- The Technical Handbook (not the annexes) will be translated into six languages (FR, EN, DE, ES, IT & PL).

After the presentation, the MS raised the following comments/questions:

<u>**Impact of Better Regulation Package**</u>

Germany asked what will be the impact of the Better Regulation Package on the Technical Handbook and on the guidance documents.

The EC replied that the Better Regulation Package *contains guidelines for the EC services, not directly to the evaluation activities of MS. Nevertheless, the Handbook had to be revised to be consistent with the* Better Regulation Package*. The EC will consider putting this issue on the agenda of the next Expert Group meeting because it could be useful for MS too.*

<u>**Content of Technical Handbook**</u>

Finland asked the difference between the Technical Handbook and the list of guidance documents mentioned by the EC under agenda point 9.

Belgium asked what exactly will be the content of the Technical Handbook, if it will include also the guidelines for Pillar I.

The EC replied that the Handbook does not contain elaborate guidelines for Pillar I as Pillar I is the responsibility of the EC. The Handbook describes how the different elements of the evaluation framework fit together and gives the legal basis. Some of the documents listed by the EC under agenda point 9 will also be *annexed to the Handbook.*

Timing for identification data for direct payments

Czech Republic asked for the timing to send the identification data for direct payments. It is an administrative burden to send the same data twice (Eurostat and monitoring).

The EC replied that if the information is already transmitted to Eurostat, the EC will take it from there. It is not necessary to send the same data twice.

CIRCA

Belgium asked where the final guidance documents (for Pillar I and II) can be found on CIRCA.

The EC replied that final documents (for Pillar I and II) will be stored in a separate folder/space on CIRCA, under the interest group "Expert Group on Monitoring and Evaluating the CAP". Draft (working) documents will be stored in the folder of the meeting itself. MS will automatically have access to the folder with final versions of documents if they already have access to the Expert Group space on CIRCA.

11. FADN: its use and role in evaluations

Link to PPT on CIRCA: FADN: its use and role in evaluations

Piotr Bajek (DG AGRI Unit E3) presented the Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN) as an important information source on European farm data. He explained which farms are concerned by FADN, the type of data included in FADN and the way data are collected. Mr. Bajek explained that FADN is used mainly for obtaining information on farm income and farm economics, for ex ante or ex post analysis of CAP and for agricultural research.

Link to PPT on CIRCA: FADN data and Evaluations

Yves Plees (DG AGRI Unit E4) made a presentation on the use of FADN data in evaluations. He showed that the use of FADN data in CAP evaluations carried out by DG AGRI is rising. Since 2000, 22 evaluations have used the 'type of farming' classification directly and 20 evaluations have used FADN standard results. FADN information has been used to evaluate, among others, farm income, importance of subsidies, intermediate consumption, etc. He finished his presentation by highlighting that the use of FADN has evolved over time: initially it was only used for economic analysis but more recently it has also been used to assess the environmental impact of the CAP. It has established itself as an indispensable data source for evaluations, constantly adapting to users' needs.

After the presentation, the MS raised the following comments/questions:

Usefulness of this presentation

MS (e.g. Spain, Portugal and Italy) expressed their appreciation for this type of presentations to the Expert Group on Monitoring and Evaluating the CAP. Italy welcomes the use of FADN for evaluation purposes.

FADN data at national and regional level

Spain asked which FADN data relate to, respectively, national and regional level?

The EC replied that the same information is available at regional and national level. Reg. 220/2015 provides the content of the FADN questionnaire and the data collected. MS and regions are responsible for collecting the required data. However, there are some MS which collect more data than required by (and transmitted to) the EU. Therefore, it is better to contact directly the responsible administration in the MS to know which data are available.

Italy asked which other MS have activated additional samples of farms, like Italy did, to have more information on beneficiary and non-beneficiary groups.

The EC replied that Italy has one of the richest FADN; it has much more data than many other MS.

Representativeness of FADN data

Spain asked for the representativeness of FADN, if it was representative on regional and national level.

Belgium also questioned the representativeness of FADN data for Walloon farms.

The EC replied that FADN data are supposed to be representative at regional and national level. One can browse the results by region, by size, etc. Farms in the FADN sample are carefully chosen (according to a selection plan) to represent other farms. Selection plan and weighting is very important. FADN include the 2% of farms that are representative for the other farms in the population. The results are extrapolated to the whole population.

FADN used for evaluation of Pillar II vs Pillar I

Spain asked which data can be used in Pillar II evaluation for control groups and if FADN data also include the specific subsidies (like those farmers who benefit from measure 4 and those who do not).

Germany mentioned that detailed analysis for the Pillar II is not possible with this FADN data-set. It may be appropriate for Pillar I, but for RD there are more target groups. FADN can be used for the assessment of investment support measures, but not for the assessment of agri-environmental measures where many small farms are included that may not have bookkeeping data. Other problems are time series and the small size of samples. Moreover, jobs cannot be calculated out of FADN. Farm income only partially, since diversification activities are not (fully) taken into account (see next point).

Portugal mentioned that they have experience in using FADN for Pillar I but less for Pillar II (merely for control groups). They have the experience that FADN might be useful in some cases, but not in others. Portugal suggests that the Helpdesk look more closely (in a workshop) at those cases where FADN data were used in Pillar II evaluations.

The EC confirms that FADN is most appropriate for evaluations of Pillar I, but sometimes also appropriate for evaluations of Pillar II, combined with other data sources. FADN gives more information on subsidies for Pillar I. Some of Pillar II subsidies are grouped. The EC welcomes the suggestion of Portugal.

Germany replied that even for Pillar I evaluation, more specific data are needed. The CARPI model allows good conclusions concerning strategic questions at EU-level, but not at programme-level. It would have to be further developed in order to be applicable. Moreover, in Germany there are data-protection issues.

The EC confirms that FADN is not the only source of information. It should be combined with other information sources for the analyses.

Income of diversification in FADN

Germany, UK and Belgium asked if non-farming income will be added to FADN. Since diversification is a reality, minimum information should be available about it. For other sources of income it is justified to have less data available.

The EC replied that FADN is set up to follow a <u>farm</u>. What is off farm will not be followed by this system. If farmers use agricultural resources, FADN will also monitor this. Energy production and tourism are already in FADN. If the activity is really detached from the farm, it is not in FADN. MS have

to bear in mind that FADN is a voluntary inquiry, so farmers probably do not want to give too much data and certainly not this kind of (personal income) data.

Cross-referencing between FADN and other databases

Italy wondered which other MS have experience with cross-referencing between FADN and other administrative databases.

The EC replied that cross-referencing is also done in other countries, e.g. in The Netherlands, where data are taken from other databases without bothering the farmer.

Germany mentioned that some data (e.g. personal data) are difficult to cross-reference with other databases.

12. Presentation on the Member States notifications on greening and monitoring indicators for greening

Link to PPT on CIRCA: Member States notifications on greening and monitoring indicators for greening

Andrea Furlan (DG AGRI, Unit D.2) presented the synthesis of MS notifications on greening and monitoring indicators for greening under the presentation called "The payment for agricultural practices beneficial for the climate and the environment- greening". He showed an overview of the main choices of the MS in 2014, highlighting that equivalence practices have been approved for 5 MS. Details on the decisions on Ecological Focus Areas and Environmentally Sensitive Permanent Grassland were given. At the end, Mr. Furlan introduced the next notifications wave and output and result indicators related to greening.

The MS did not raise any comments or questions after the presentation.

13. Farmland Bird Index: Last developments and challenges

Link to PPT on CIRCA: Farmland Bird Indicator: last developments and challenges

Petr Vorisek (Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme & European Breeding Bird Atlas, Czech Society for Ornithology) introduced the latest developments and the challenges of the farmland bird index produced by this project. He presented the Farmland Bird Indicator (FBI), the rationale for its design, how it is produced and how a MS contributes to the high level EU indicator. Mr Vorisek highlighted the point that appropriate selection of species for national indicators should reflect the aim of the indicator and the biodiversity in farmland habitats characteristic of and specific to each Member State/region. There is a need to standardise the process, particularly on data quality control at national level and PECBMS is planning to develop guidelines for MSs. PECBMS is proposing a different type of 'benchmarking' indicator for the assessment of countries' performance in achieving EU biodiversity targets, to be measured directly by their contribution to the EU farmland bird index, which is different from assessing the state of farmland birds nationally.

Link to PPT on CIRCA: UK experience in the development of Farmland Bird Indicators

David Noble (BTO Breeding Bird Monitoring schemes) presented the UK experience in developing farmland bird indicators. Based on extensive research, it appears that the current farmland bird indicators are robust to objectively-applied variations in definitions of farmland habitat and farmland species. The UK also has considerable experience with developing indicators at sub-national levels

(countries and regions), where data quality and data availability issues can have an impact, especially in regions where fewer volunteers are available.

Ariel Brunner and Trees Robijns from Birdlife Europe provided contextual information on the Farmland Bird Index, related to its current and potential use in assessing agricultural policy.

After the presentation, the MS raised the following comments/questions:

National bird index ⇔ European bird index

Austria asked if it is correct that Birdlife Europe is planning to have two different FBI, one European and one National. If this would be the case, Austria would not agree, as this would be confusing. Austria strongly supports this indicator and has also tested its robustness. However, Austria considers a national selection of bird species as important, as otherwise in Austria important farmland areas in the Alps would not be covered in case one takes only the European species. Concerning the European indicator it has more to do with biodiversity than with farmland birds, as it refers to the whole country and not to farmland. Consequently, one should take a Common Bird indicator and not a farmland bird indicator in order not to create confusion. Two different FBI would however not be comprehensible, as this would lead to 2 different results and everybody would ask why this is the case.

Petr Vorisek replied that the nationally-derived bird index is the best for domestic use. This is because farmland differs across Europe and species use of farmland also differs. Indicators should be tailored to the country or even to the region, using a national or even regional basket of species. Otherwise specificities of the country will be masked. E.g. Italy is very long and diverse in habitats. Wales is also very diverse with upland and lowland farmlands. In order to avoid confusion, PECBMS is developing the proposed 'benchmark' indicator, which measures each country's contribution to the EU-level FBI and would help to assess countries' performance in achieving the EU biodiversity target. The European Common Birds Index is also produced, in addition to the Farmland Bird Index. Volunteers count all birds, although very rare species, and owls which are not active during the day, are seldom recorded. Therefore, indicators based on species selection for other habitats, are also possible to produce.

Migratory birds

Hungary said that species are divided by habitat and asked if migratory and non-migratory birds are taken into account. When more species appear at a certain habitat, doesn't that shift the index?

Petr Vorisek replied that the bird index reports the long term trend; it is a smoothed index which can calculate but doesn't focus on year to year fluctuations. Birds are counted in the breeding season (when they stay in their territory). Influx of individuals, e.g. as a result of high food availability, appears in very few species only (e.g. some raptor or owl species reacting on peak in populations of small rodents) and very few of these are included in the index. The index includes both migratory (i.e. wintering in other areas or continents) and non-migratory bird species.

14. Agri-environmental statistics and the CAP monitoring. The particular case of the Gross Nutrient Balance indicator

Link to PPT on CIRCA: Agri-environmental statistics and the CAP monitoring: The particular case of the Gross Nutrient Balance indicator

Johan Selenius (EUROSTAT, E.1) presented the background of the 28 Agri-environmental indicators (AEI), their different uses depending on the policy purpose, the availability of data and the work being developed by EUROSTAT (responsible for the overall coordination and dissemination of data) and DG AGRI (responsible for the political coordination) with partners such as DG ENV, Joint Research Centre, European Environmental Agency, etc. Mr Selenius compared the indicators of the CMEF and their corresponding AEIs and established the relation between AEIs and the nutrient flows in agriculture. He focused his presentation on the particular case of the Gross Nutrient Balance indicator. In this context, he highlighted that Gross nutrient balance (nitrogen and phosphorus) is a key indicator for assessing the effects of agriculture on the environment. It provides an insight into the links between the use of these nutrients, their losses to the environment and the sustainable use of soil nutrients resources. At the end of his presentation Mr Selenius mentioned the very low response rate from MS in the 2014 data collection exercise, causing Eurostat to estimate the balances based on available data from several sources. Mr Selenius informed that the 2015 data collections for nutrient balances and fertiliser consumption in agriculture have been launched and urged the MS to ensure that their data is sent by 31 October 2015.

Nutrient balance for utilized agricultural area or total agricultural land

Darko Znaor (Geographic expert for Croatia and Core Team Member of the Evaluation Helpdesk) asked to clarify whether the nutrient balance is specified for utilized agricultural area or total agricultural land.

The EC replied that they try to use as much as possible the utilized agricultural area, but for certain types of agricultural land, in certain MS (e.g. grassland in Spain) another methodology has to be used. The EC is still searching for the best methodologies for certain cases, together with the respective MS.

15. AOB

Link to PPT on CIRCA: Thematic Working Group: Evaluation of NRN 2014-2020

Jela Tvrdonova (Evaluation Helpdesk) informed on the ongoing work of the Thematic Working Group in charge of revising the Guidelines for the Evaluation of National Rural Networks 2014-2020 (draft June 2014) and invited experts to express their interest in being part of the Sounding Board.

16. Sources & related meeting documents

All presentations are available on the CIRCA platform.

#	Document (& Hyperlink)	Remark
1	7th meeting of the CAPexperts - 25-06-2015	CIRCA-folder containing all presentations of the 7th meeting of the Expert Group
2	Guidance material related to monitoring and evaluation for the programming period 2014 - 2020	CIRCA-folder with the latest available guidance material

#	Document (& Hyperlink)	Remark
3	Guidelines for the ex post evaluation of 2007 - 2013 RDPs	CIRCA-folder containing ex post guidelines and CEQs
4	Leaflet on the monitoring and evaluation framework of the CAP 2014 - 2020	CIRCA-folder containing the leaflet in all EU languages except Gaelic
5	Guidelines – "Establishing and implementing the evaluation plan of 2014-2020 RDPs	Evaluation Helpdesk's Guidance document on establishing and implementing the evaluation plan
6	Working Document – "Evaluation-related Queries"	Evaluation Helpdesk's Working Document compiling a selection of evaluation-related queries raised by the MS in the period from January to June 2015.
7	Working Paper – "Common Evaluation Questions for Rural Development Programmes 2014-2020"	Evaluation Helpdesk's Working Paper discussing the role of evaluation questions (EQs) in the assessment of impacts and achievements of the RDP and outlining the set of common EQs for RD in 2014-2020.
8.	Publications of the Evaluation Helpdesk 2007-2013	Link to archived publications

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