



ENRD workshop

'Preparing the CAP Strategic Plans: Operational Design'

Highlights report

This online workshop discussed some practical aspects of designing the intervention logic and designing interventions under the future CAP Strategic Plans (CSPs), also including financial elements.

The event attracted a large number of representatives of the future CSP Managing Authorities (MAs), Paying Agencies and officials of the European Commission. Participants actively engaged in discussions, exchanging views and concrete experiences regarding key obstacles, possible solutions and support needs.

The event featured three specific breakout working groups focusing respectively on: rural development investment interventions; coupled income support; and aspects related to CSP financial planning.

Event Information

Date: 10 June 2021

Location: Online event

Organisers: ENRD Contact Point

Participants: Over 100 representatives of future CSP Managing Authorities, Paying Agencies and officials of the European Commission's DG AGRI

Outcomes: Exchange of concrete experiences related to the operational planning of the CSPs, the challenges encountered and ideas about practicable solutions and suitable approaches

Web page: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/preparing-cap-strategic-plans-operational-design_en

CSP operational design: key elements

[Gaëlle Marion](#) from the European Commission's DG AGRI opened the workshop recalling key messages from previous ENRD webinars which discussed the [designing of the intervention strategy](#), the [designing of CSP interventions](#) and the [programming of regional-level interventions under the future CSPs](#). She provided further guidance and clarifications with regard to the main operational aspects of the CSPs and elements needed in the design of the interventions, particularly focusing on the planning of unit amounts.

The CSPs **intervention strategy** should be structured and presented by Specific Objectives (SO) and the Cross Cutting Objective (CCO), supported by the SWOT analysis and needs assessment. For each SO and the CCO, MAs should set targets and related milestones for the relevant result indicators, design relevant interventions addressing key needs, and allocate the appropriate financial resources per intervention using a robust intervention logic.

For the purpose of building the strategy, two main options of planning logic could be followed:

- **Option 1** – set the targets first for certain specific needs (e.g. sustainable management of soils), and then select the most appropriate interventions that can contribute to achieve the targets; or
- **Option 2** – design the interventions first which best respond to the identified needs and thereafter clarify their related indicators and targets.

One intervention could be linked to more than one SO/CCO and to more than one result indicator at the same time, but only direct and significant links should be considered. A result indicator can only have one target value for the whole plan.

Whichever option is followed, the building of the strategy will be an **'iterative process'** and the Member States will be able to revisit all elements and balance the needs, the targets, the interventions and the financial allocations.

Information on the forms, intensity rates of support and amounts relevant for the beneficiaries will need to be defined for each intervention. There should be at least one unit amount per intervention and multiple unit amounts are also possible. Unit amounts correspond to the support per output (per hectare, per animal, per project) and will be either uniform or average values.

- A uniform unit amount is needed for interventions such as area- or animal-based payments (IACS interventions) where each output is supported with the same amount.
- An average unit amount should be used when it is not possible to provide a uniform amount and correctly predict the average cost of a project e.g. investment interventions. In such situations, an estimate average is sufficient.

There could be different unit amounts within the same intervention reflecting the differences of the addressed territories, or of the severity of constraints, or the types of operations and category of investment, corresponding to different cost averages.

These differentiations are strategically important as they reflect different needs for support and different elements identified in the SWOT and needs assessment. Flexibility exists within the design of unit amounts including using menus of commitment options and lump-sums. For the purpose of the clearance, the planned outputs are not relevant. However, the realized outputs are relevant for performance review purposes.

Member States' experiences

The French experience



Pierre Poussard from the French Ministry of Agriculture and Food presented the current state of play with designing the French CSP focusing on operational

aspects. In close cooperation with the regional authorities, 115 interventions have been proposed to address 44 out of 48 identified needs. The remaining four needs are proposed to be addressed through other funding streams.

Simplicity of reporting is planned as a guiding principle for designing the intervention logic, avoiding linking interventions to multiple needs and objectives. This aims to facilitate efficient design and future monitoring of the CSP implementation.

Non-IACs intervention proposals are being linked to a single result indicator. IACs proposals in the CSP may be connected to more result indicators in order to capture all their contributions. The proposed interventions are expected to be linked to 33 result indicators agreed by the regional authorities and MA. In some cases a result indicator may become linked to up to six interventions.

The Portuguese experience



Colleagues from the Portuguese MA could not attend the webinar and [provided a presentation explaining key aspects of their CSP planning to date.](#)

In the experience of Portugal, their close collaboration between the national authorities and the European Commission services (particularly the GeoHub) has been very positive and helpful.

In addressing the partnership principle, stakeholders have been involved in CSP preparations on a regular basis through expert groups and a consultation process.

A first part of the wider stakeholder consultation (focusing on the SWOT analysis, identified needs, intervention logic and pre-selected interventions) has now been completed.

Portugal has made a first attempt at addressing the [recommendations of the European Commission related to the expected contribution of the CSP to the European Green Deal objectives.](#) Further guidance, such as recent updates and detail about the SFC platform, was welcomed.

Main outcomes of group discussions

Group 1: Rural Development Investments introduced by: [Stefan Ostergard Jensen and Elena Venturini \(DG AGRI\)](#)



- In the future CAP, Article 68 will cover different investment measures under the current 2014-2020 RDPs, e.g. investments in agricultural holdings, basic services, forestry etc.
- All interventions must have a direct and significant contribution to the SO and, furthermore, a direct and significant link with the selected result indicators. One and only one output indicator is allowed by Intervention.
- A challenge exists for Member States previously using regional RDPs to shift to national level interventions e.g. Spain is aiming to convert 62 different regional investment operations from 2014-2020 into a unified CSP intervention.
- Sweden is considering relying on a limited number of unit amounts as a mean of simplification, merging together different kinds of investments where possible.

Group 2: Coupled Income Support introduced by: [Caroline Cognault \(DG AGRI\)](#)



- Under the new CAP policy framework, in comparison to the existing instrument, the future coupled income support will be further enhanced and simplified. It may be granted in order to help sectors/productions addressing the difficulties they undergo by improving their competitiveness, sustainability and quality.
- One of the major challenges some of the MS expressed they are faced with is to design coupled income support interventions that are more sustainability-oriented. Finding the right balance between the expectations of the civil society and the needs of farmers will be essential to support production and farm viability while also protecting the environment.
- An obvious specific objective of coupled income support appears to be SO 1 (Viable farm income), but other SO can be envisaged provided there is a justified direct and significant link. Actually one MS envisages to link it to SO 6 (Biodiversity conservation).
- The new tool allows for greater flexibility in the differentiation of the unit rate within one intervention (in comparison to the current VCS, for which modulation was only possible for economy of scale reasons).
- It is possible to target the support to a specific type of farming within a sector/production.

- In any case, when determining their CIS interventions, MS shall ensure there is a clear chain from the SWOT/needs/difficulties identified, the targeting/eligibility conditions, the aim and the SO to which the intervention contributes.

Group 3: CSP Financial Planning introduced by: [Marie-Laure Heirebaudt-Danlos and Marina Hadjiyanni \(DG AGRI\)](#)



- During the latest Rural Development Committee meeting, the Commission provided information about the SFC online platform for submitting CSP proposals.
- Independent ex-ante evaluators could provide support to MAs in establishing accurate correlations between the prioritisation of needs and the financial allocations for the selected interventions.
- The financial plan is composed of an overview table and of a detailed financial table. While the overview table will show how MS plan to manage their allocations (binding), the detailed financial plan shall provide the forecast of execution of payments for each financial year (indicative). Member States proposing Simplified Cost Options (SCOs) should clearly indicate in their CSPs the specific type of SCO (unit cost, lumpsum or flat rate) and the methodology envisaged to establish them.
- Further guidance was sought in relation to the planning of non-IACS interventions for which payments are expected over several financial years.



See the [ENRD website's portal on CAP Post-2020](#) for further information and useful material regarding the preparations for the Common Agricultural Policy post-2020 programming period.

