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FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT



REPORT

GETTING PREPARED FOR THE EX ANTE EVALUATION OF THE CAP STRATEGIC PLAN

GOOD PRACTICE WORKSHOP
BRUSSELS, 21 MARCH 2019

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The Evaluation Helpdesk is responsible for the evaluation function within the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) by providing guidance on the evaluation of RDPs and policies falling under the remit and guidance of DG AGRI's Unit C.4 'Monitoring and Evaluation' of the European Commission (EC). In order to improve the evaluation of EU rural development policy the Evaluation Helpdesk supports all evaluation stakeholders, in particular DG AGRI, national authorities, RDP managing authorities and evaluators, through the development and dissemination of appropriate methodologies and tools; the collection and exchange of good practices; capacity building, and communicating with network members on evaluation related topics.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 10th Good Practice Workshop 'Getting prepared for the ex ante evaluation of the CAP Strategic Plan' took place in Brussels on 20 March 2019. It had the overarching objective to raise awareness for evidence-based policy making by identifying and discussing good practices of ex ante evaluations.

The workshop brought together 84 participants from 26 different EU Member States and focused specifically on the key issues and lessons from carrying out the ex ante evaluation in 2014-2020 and from preparing it for post-2020.

The workshop benefited from various presentations from the European Commission, that set the frame in relation to the legislative context and the new policy elements that will determine the scope and content of the ex ante evaluations of the CAP Strategic Plans. It also offered insights into the preparation of the ex ante evaluations through case studies from seven Member States from both the current and the new programming period. Lessons from preparing the first stages of the ex ante evaluation of the CAP Strategic Plan, notably the appraisal of the SWOT and needs assessment were also discussed. The key lessons from the evaluation stakeholders are summarised as follows:

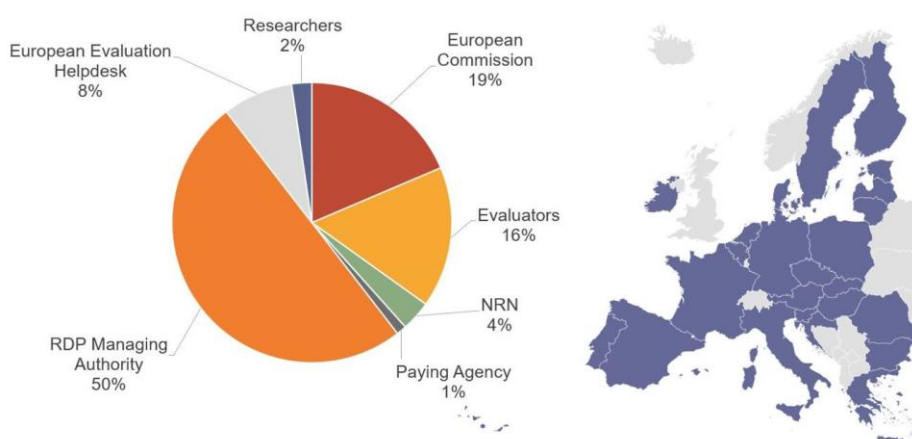
- **The objectives of the ex ante evaluation should be clarified and shared from the beginning and resources planned accordingly to achieve these goals.** The objectives of the ex ante evaluation are defined by the Managing authority (MA) in the Terms of Reference (ToR) and are the cornerstones for the whole process. They need to be understood and shared between the programming and evaluation teams through a targeted dialogue. Adequate resources should be dedicated to the ex ante evaluation and foresee mixed teams (internal/external, evaluators/MA, thematic/policy expertise), including, if necessary, capacity building for the MA/PA/policy makers.
- **Continuous interaction and coordination between evaluators, policy makers and other relevant stakeholders throughout the ex ante evaluation process is a key success factor.** The presented cases show that, when the ex ante evaluation is organised as an iterative process from the beginning, it can achieve better results. In practical terms, this can be seen at the tendering stage through cooperation between relevant departments and ministries; at the SWOT analysis stage through the coordination between those who develop the SWOT and those who draft the ToR for the ex ante; moreover, through the close cooperation between ex ante evaluation/SEA and programming teams throughout the evaluation process.
- **Good preparation of the ex ante evaluation requires the involvement of knowledgeable and experienced evaluation teams from the start.** The programming activities benefit from the institutional memory that is fed in from the ex ante evaluation (and from past evaluations) to inform evidence-based policy making. From the evaluation perspective, a flexible approach is needed to adapt to new and changing circumstances (legislative and procedural), while good knowledge of EU and national policy making complements the evaluation and thematic (e.g. environmental) expertise. This knowledge and expertise should be available from the early stages (appraisal of SWOT, needs assessment).
- **The appraisal of the SWOT is a critical stage of the ex ante evaluation as it builds a solid basis for the CAP Strategic Plan.** Evaluators and MAs do recognise the SWOT as the starting point for the participation of stakeholders in the development of the CAP Strategic Plan, for instance through establishing multi-stakeholder Steering Groups. Organisational and methodological support can be beneficial for establishing common elements/approaches to facilitate the elaboration and subsequent appraisal of the SWOT and needs assessment taking into account regional specificities as well as Pillar I and Pillar II specificities.

1 SETTING THE FRAME

In 2019, Member States will start preparing their CAP Strategic Plans. They will establish an intervention strategy based on the SWOT analysis and assessment of needs¹. In this process, the ex ante evaluation plays an important role in improving the quality of the design of their CAP Strategic Plans². One of the elements that the ex ante evaluation will appraise is the contribution of the CAP Strategic Plan to the CAP specific objectives, by considering national and regional needs and potential for development. For this purpose, the ex ante evaluation will appraise the needs assessment and SWOT analysis, as well as their logical inter-linkages.

84 participants from 26 different EU Member States attended the event, including RDP Managing Authorities, evaluators, EU level representatives (e.g. European Commission, ENRD Evaluation Helpdesk), Researchers, National Rural Networks, and other actors.

Figure 1. Participants of the Good Practice Workshop by role and Member State



Mr Hannes Wimmer (ENRD Evaluation Helpdesk) introduced the roadmap of the ex ante evaluation. After the presentation, participants were encouraged to write down open questions in relation to each of the three presented steps of the ex ante evaluation roadmap: the appraisal of the needs assessment and SWOT analysis, the appraisal of the intervention strategy, targets and milestones; and the appraisal of monitoring, data collection and implementation system (the transcription of the questions raised by the participants is available in Table 1 (Annex). Following, Mr Yves Plees (DG AGRI, Unit C.4 – Monitoring and Evaluation) presented the key messages and lessons learned from the Impact Assessment for the ex ante of the CAP Strategic Plans, which can be found in the PPT: '[Main focus and legal framework for the ex ante evaluation of the CAP after 2020](#)'. Then, Ms Louise Deering (DG ENV, Unit D.1 – Land use and Management) and Mr Wojciech Włodarczyk (DG ENV, Unit E.1 - Mainstreaming and Environmental Assessments) gave an overview on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and its key elements, retrievable in the PPT: '[Strategic Environmental Assessment and its application to the CAP Strategic Plan](#)'. Subsequently, Mr Petr Lapka (DG AGRI, Unit F.3 – Financial Instruments) outlined the approach and requirements of the ex ante evaluation in relation to the financial instruments, in the PPT: '[Financial Instruments in the CAP Strategic Plans 2021-2027](#)'.

This workshop report is structured as follows: Chapter 2 illustrates the case-studies presented and discussed with participants. Chapter 3 provides the main conclusions and recommendations derived from the workshop. Finally, the outcomes of the group works are summarised in the Annex to this report.

¹ Article 91 of [COM/2018/392 final - 2018/0216 \(COD\)](#)

² Article 125 of [COM/2018/392 final - 2018/0216 \(COD\)](#)

2 SHARING EXPERIENCES

2.1 Lessons learned from the ex ante evaluation of RDP 2014-2020

Ms Marili Parissaki (ENRD – Evaluation Helpdesk) moderated the sharing of experiences gained by Sweden, Spain, and Latvia in the ex ante evaluation of RDP 2014 – 2020. The overarching lesson gained from the three experiences is to build a close cooperation between evaluators (ex ante and SEA) and the MA along the whole ex ante process, towards a common final objective.

Ms Maria Coto (Evaluator, Red2Red) was involved in the ex ante evaluation of five Spanish RDPs. She stressed that the most important result of ex ante evaluation is not the final evaluation report, but **the process itself**. She also highlighted that clear definition of the final objectives is a key factor for the successful execution of this process. She encouraged Managing Authorities to go beyond the minimum requirements established in the legislation and build a cooperative and constructive relationship with evaluators. The ex ante evaluation was a long-term process (i.e. almost 2 years), which often went back and forth between process steps. One way to smooth this process is to plan it in terms of partial deliverables and carefully coordinate the feedback loops between the Commission, Managing Authority, and evaluators.

Link to the PPT: [Lessons learned from the ex ante evaluation process in Spain](#)

Mr Eric Markus (Analyst, Swedish Board of Agriculture) presented the outcomes of an internal study recently undertaken by the Swedish RDP Managing Authority on the experience gained in the ex ante evaluation of RDP 2014-2020 with a view to prepare the ex ante for the CAP Strategic Plan. The ex ante evaluation of RDP 2014-2020 followed an iterative approach with continuous feedbacks between evaluators and programming authorities. Key lessons for the future include inter alia the planning of SEA and its consultation phase from the start, in parallel to the ex ante process. The planning of the entire process and tendering/contracting of the evaluator were among the longest steps in terms of time. Political aspects also play a role in the process and might delay deliverables. It is important to make evaluators aware that flexibility is needed due to political and legislative aspects.

Link to the PPT: [Lessons learned from the ex ante evaluation process of Sweden's RDP 2014-2020](#)

Ms Elita Benga (Independent evaluator, Institute of Agricultural Resources and Economics) explained the success factors and challenges faced during the appraisal of the SWOT analysis and assessment of needs. The appraisal of the SWOT analysis can entail several revisions and require direct access to data. In Latvia, this is possible because the evaluation team has direct access to the FADN and the Paying Agency databases and also have a good cooperation with the CSB and the State Revenue Service to access relevant information. The volume of information contained in the SWOT analysis might be difficult to handle and to align with the specific policy objectives.

Link to the PPT: [Process of ex ante evaluation for RDP 2014-2020 in Latvia](#)

'The delivery of the ex ante will be a complex exercise because of the inclusion of Pillar 1. Partial delivery in phases may be one way to deal with it, with different teams working on the different phases.'
Maria Coto



'For us Pillar I is a big question mark for this period. The cost of the ex ante may increase because of this.'
Elita Benga

'Try to identify who are the responsible people in the MA (for P1 and P2) to be included in preparing the ex ante and ensure they see things from the same perspective.'
Eric Markus

After the presentation, participants posed the following questions to the presenters:



Could you provide an indicative budget range allocated for the ex ante evaluation of RDPs 2014 – 2020?

In Spain, there are strong differences between the 17 RDPs. Ms Coto explains that in the five RDPs in which she was involved, the budget ranged between 15,000 to 100,000 Euro.

In Sweden, the budget allocated was around 180,000 Euro and in Latvia, around 100,000 for both ex ante evaluation and SEA. In the future, Mr Markus explains that this range might increase to consider both CAP Pillars I and II.

How will the ex ante evaluation deal with CAP Pillar I, considering that this is also a highly political matter and that the budget for basic income payments is more or less fixed?

Mr Markus explains that in Sweden, there is a clear distinction of responsibilities between the Ministry and the Managing Authority, with the former more involved in the political decisions.

Ms Coto sustains that different decisions can be taken vis-à-vis payments supported by CAP Pillar I. The ex ante evaluation can apply different modelling techniques to forecast the impacts of each scenario.

What needs to be considered when planning the timeline?

Ms Benga highlights that some time needs to be dedicated to build the evaluation capacity of the staff responsible for CAP Pillar I. Mr Markus explains that the drafting of the ToR might also take long. Ms Coto suggests planning the ex ante evaluation with partial deliverables to move the process continuously forward.

2.2 Preparing the ex ante evaluation and SEA of the CAP Strategic Plan

Mr Eero Pehkonen (Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry) presented the roadmap for the ex ante evaluation and SEA prepared by the Managing Authority for the programming of the CAP Strategic Plan. The roadmap shows the milestones and outputs along the entire iterative process. Ex ante evaluation and SEA are planned as a tool to improve the SWOT analysis, assessment of needs, and programming of the CAP Strategic Plan.

Link to the PPT: [Preparing the ex ante evaluation of the CAP Strategic Plan and SEA in Finland](#)

Ms Alena Kubů (Czech Ministry of Agriculture) shared the Czech Republic's experience in preparing the tender for the ex ante evaluation and SEA of the CAP Strategic Plan. The planning of the ex ante evaluation process took more than six months and started with an understanding of the legislative proposal. Different stakeholders were involved, while close cooperation between the public procurement unit and the legal department was important for preparing the tender. The most important decision taken was to select three evaluation teams to cover elements appraised by the ex ante evaluation (i.e. SWOT analysis, assessment of needs), SEA and financial instruments individually.

Link to the PPT: [Tendering ex ante evaluation of CAP Strategic Plan -Czech Republic's experience](#)

'The evaluator selection requires a comprehensive planning of the process from the Managing Authority. Price is not enough. More criteria and face-to-face interviews with evaluators can ensure evaluation quality and skills.'
Alena Kubů



'Ex ante evaluation and SEA shall be planned to support the quality of programming the CAP Strategic Plan and explore the potential impacts in different scenarios. It is important to clarify what is expected from these ambitious exercises.'
Eero Pehkonen

After the presentation, participants posed the following questions to the presenters:



How will you deal with the uncertainties in the timing?

The Czech Ministry of Agriculture is planning to submit the CAP Strategic Plan by the end of 2019, including also the ex ante evaluation and SEA. We are doing the best to get the ex ante evaluation ready by September or October 2019. However, the feasibility of this plan will depend on many factors.

Why will Finland plan to explore four policy scenarios in the SEA (slide 6 of PPT)?

In Finland, the SEA will be planned as a strategic tool to make policy decisions. We decided to consider all possible policy scenarios for the programming of the CAP Strategic Plan, including also increasing national environmental legislation and addressing mainly CAP economic and social objectives. The feasibility and relevance of this plan will however be consulted with several stakeholders (e.g. environmental experts, farmer groups, evaluator).

After the question and answer session, the main challenges identified by the participants in relation to the ex ante evaluation of the CAP Strategic Plans were discussed in group work. The group works outcomes were discussed in plenary and are summarised in Table 2 (Annex).



2.3 Preparing the appraisal of SWOT analysis and assessment of needs of the CAP Strategic Plan

Mr Valdis Kudins (ENRD – Evaluation Helpdesk) introduced the role of the ex ante evaluation in appraising the SWOT analysis and needs assessment necessary for setting up the CAP Strategic Plan. The appraisal of the SWOT can consist of several activities, such as assessing the completeness of the SWOT analysis or checking the consistency with other evidences. Following, Mr Ricard Ramon I Sumoy (DG AGRI, Unit C.1) gave a presentation on the key steps for carrying out the SWOT analysis of the CAP Strategic Plans.

Link to PPT: [The SWOT analysis: A key step of the future CAP Strategic Plans](#)

Ms Simona Cristiano (CREA) provided an overview on the role of the CREA – *Council for Agricultural Research and Economics* (as part of the National Rural Network) in supporting the preparation of a participatory SWOT analysis and assessment of needs in Italy. She highlighted the importance of networking actors to mediate the interactions among multiple stakeholders and inclusion of regional specificities in the co-development of a single SWOT analysis and assessment of needs at national level.



'To develop a national SWOT analysis and assessment of needs with a bottom-up approach, substantial efforts must be made to provide common elements across regions: e.g. templates, methods, definitions, references to data sources.'

Simona Cristiano

Link to the PPT: [Preparing the appraisal of the SWOT analysis and needs assessment for the CAP Strategic Plan in Italy](#)

Mr Dirk Schubert (German Monitoring and Evaluation Network MEN-D) described the state of play of preparing the SWOT analysis and assessment of needs in Germany. In his country, the steering of the entire process lies within the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) at the national level and is supported by MEN-D and the Thünen Institut.



'One of the main challenges for the next programming period is to provide a single SWOT analysis and assessment of needs that balances the level of abstraction required at national level with concrete references to regional specificities.'

Dirk Schubert

Link to the PPT: [The SWOT as a solid basis for the CAP Strategic Plan](#)

After the presentation, participants posed the following questions to the presenters:



How many pages do you expect to write for the SWOT analysis and needs assessment of the CAP Strategic Plan?

In Germany, we currently have around 200 pages only for the drafted SWOT analysis. This number might change after completing the assessment of needs.

How will you rank the assessed needs?

In Germany, we have not yet conducted the ranking of needs. An idea could be to rank around 10 needs for each CAP specific objective.

Why should the SWOT analysis be structured around each CAP specific objective?

The Commission - DG AGRI explains that the structuring around each CAP specific objective makes the analysis more linear and consistent with the target setting. It allows also to comprehensively address the several rules established in the legislative proposal.

After the questions and answers, participants engaged into group work to identify the main issues related to the appraisal of the SWOT analysis and needs assessment of the CAP Strategic Plan. The outcomes of the group work were shared in plenary and are summarised in Table 3 (Annex).



Photo: Participants of the Good Practice Workshop 10 'Getting prepared for the ex ante evaluation of the CAP Strategic Plan'. 21 March 2019. Brussels

3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The workshop brought together the issues and challenges of Member States for preparing the ex ante evaluation. Participants furthermore developed practical suggestions for addressing these issues, as summarised below.

Practical suggestions for preparing the ex ante evaluation taking into account Pillar 1 and 2

- Define clear and precise **objectives and targets** of the ex ante evaluation and include them in the tender specifications.
- Define **coordination mechanisms** between the MA, the PA, relevant Ministries, evaluators and other relevant stakeholders.
- Define the **resources** and foresee joint evaluation teams covering both Pillars with skilled evaluators that have knowledge on all relevant themes.
- Define a **timeline** for producing a coordinated ex ante evaluation report covering both Pillars in a thorough manner.

Practical suggestions for a successful ex ante evaluation in a multi-actor and multi-level context

- Start the ex ante evaluation **as early as possible** as it takes time to organise multiple actor involvement.
- Involve **stakeholders** on one hand through a national/central steering group to obtain input from the regions in multi-region countries (bottom-up approach) and, on the other hand, by CAP specific objective.

Practical suggestions for developing ToR for a good quality ex ante evaluation

- Build on **past experience** as there is a breadth of tendering experience from previous periods and incorporate similar experience from Pillar 1.
- A good **balance between selection criteria, budget and timeline**. First, precise selection criteria to address all specificities, second, a realistic (according to the context) timeline with milestones and third, a budget that reflects selection criteria and timeline.
- **Incorporate the SEA into the ex ante evaluation** either as a combined tender (if legally possible in the country) or, if as separate tender, specify the overarching role of the ex ante to include also SEA results.
- Ensure relevant **skills and working methods**, including expertise in all aspects covered by the ex ante evaluation (inter alia evaluation skills, knowledge of policy and Pillar 1, financial instruments and environmental expertise). Working methods may include national steering groups or working/focus groups.
- **Keep flexibility** in terms of planning the evaluation process and deliverables in well-defined parts.

Practical suggestions for linking the ex ante evaluation and SEA to the programming process

- Establish a **single steering committee** including all aspects (P1, P2, SEA, ex ante) and all relevant stakeholders (MA, evaluators, environment and climate authorities), ideally from the start of the programming and evaluation.
- Establish a **common and prompt timing**, meaning that the ex ante, SEA and programming ideally start at the same time, allowing to continuously include ex ante and SEA recommendations into the CAP Strategic Plan (rather than at the end).
- **Clearly define the most relevant data** to be used in the SWOT to facilitate the ex ante and SEA processes.

Practical suggestions for the methodological approach of the ex ante evaluation

- **Focus also on appraising clear and logical links** between specific objectives, interventions and indicators and between interventions, results and impacts.
- **Develop** evaluation questions for the ex ante evaluation, if any, at an early stage.
- **Ensure a good evidence basis for the indicators**, including data from common databases to fill data gaps.
- **Select independent and skilled evaluators**, e.g. bringing in past experiences and skills for cost-benefit analysis of outcomes per intervention.

The workshop also identified a significant number of key issues for the appraisal of the SWOT and needs assessment, which were ranked by participants according to their relative importance. These issues concerned the process, structure and scope of the SWOT and needs assessment as well as the methods and skills required. Finally, a number of issues relate to the use of the SWOT and needs assessment for programming the CAP Strategic Plan. Workshop participants identified suggestions for addressing some of these issues, notably:

- It is essential that the appraisal of the SWOT and needs assessment focuses also on the question if **regional and sectoral specificities have been taken into account**.
- The ex ante appraisal of the **prioritisation or ranking of needs** should also look at the methods used, e.g. if done with the use of matrices that cross multiple elements such as needs, targets and potential impacts emerging from addressing or not addressing those needs.
- Analysing the **link between the SWOT and needs assessment** should be a concern from the very start of the ex ante evaluation and be considered already when drafting the terms of reference, when seeking evidence and input from stakeholders. The overarching driver of this process is an evidence-based ranking of needs.
- The **appraisal of the SWOT** is an iterative process and for this purpose a checklist or guiding questions could be of help for the evaluators/MAs.

ANNEX

Table 1. Questions posted by participants on the roadmap of the ex ante evaluation of the CAP Strategic Plan

<p>Preparing the ex ante evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is 1 January 2020 the deadline for submitting the ex ante evaluation of the CAP Strategic Plan? • How to plan and contract an evaluator in case of changing timeline and uncertain legislative process? • Is the ex ante evaluation of the CAP Strategic Plan 2021-2027 for Pillar I eligible under Technical Assistance 2014-2020?
<p>Preparing the Strategic Environmental Assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent should the SEA be incorporated in the CAP SP? • Should the SEA provide special procedure in terms of process and time for catastrophic events intervention planned in RDP? • Are two separate public consultations needed for: 1.) SEA and 2.) CAP Strategic Plan? • What is the budget weight of SEA in the overall ex ante evaluation? • Did any SEA of the 2014-2020 period apply the Espoo-convention process on transboundary impacts? Does the Commission DG ENVI foresee that this might be more likely to happen for the next period?
<p>Appraisal of assessment of need and SWOT analysis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it mandatory to involve stakeholders during the SWOT analysis? • Some interventions are obligatory (F.I. redistributive payment). How do you deal with this if there is no need justified by the SWOT analysis and NA? • The preparation of a SWOT analysis by specific objective sounds difficult with some overlapping issues. Could we prepare a classic SWOT analysis (by sectors)?
<p>Appraisal of intervention strategy, targets milestones</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the most appropriate methods to be included in ex ante evaluation and SEA for checking the consistency of set up targets with SWOT analysis and ranking of needs, as well as for estimating the expected results and impacts?
<p>Appraisal of monitoring, data collection, implementation system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which types of evaluations should we expect (on adequacy of human resources/suitability of procedures for monitoring and evaluation)? • The governance structure is part of the CAP-SP including design of the intervention. How does this change the ex ante process?
<p>Other issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should Member States define ex ante evaluation questions? • Will technical guidelines for the ex ante evaluation related to Pillar I be provided for the Member States?

Table 2. Group works' outcome: suggestions to address the main challenges in the ex ante evaluation of the CAP Strategic Plan

Addressing both CAP Pillar I and II	Dealing with multiple stakeholders/ governance levels	Tendering and contracting evaluators and SEA experts	Linking ex ante, SEA and programming	Working with methods, data and indicators
Actions	Good practices	Key aspects to consider	Good practices	Success factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define the ex ante evaluation process together with RDP MAs, Agricultural, and Environmental Ministries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create national steering groups to coordinate and collect inputs from stakeholders at regional level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear selection criteria and tender specifications Realistic timeline, objectives, and budget allocation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ex ante, SEA and programming of the CAP Strategic Plan should ideally start at the same time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low number of common target indicators helps to simplify the analysis Additional indicators give a more detailed picture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide who will coordinate and lead the whole ex ante process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan the ex ante with a view of identifying baseline situations and reducing disparities between regions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering group and expert meetings shall be set up to integrate findings and discuss recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEA findings should be included along the decision process and provide concrete improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1:1 link between result indicators and intervention to simplify the estimation of target values
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select one single team of skilled evaluators to cover the topics/themes related to both CAP pillars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide common tools, methods, definitions, and templates for the SWOTs and need assessments carried out at regional level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncertainties with timing should be dealt carefully (e.g. approval of legislative proposal) Draft Term of Reference considering flexibility along the process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The list of common indicators should be available in advance for starting ex ante evaluation, SWOT analysis and needs assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independency of evaluators Evaluators' involvement in different stages Availability of updated data and resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide on how many specific themes shall the ex ante evaluator focus on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise stakeholders by CAP specific objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse and use the experience gained in RDP 2014 - 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider pros and cons in conducting ex ante and SEA separately or together with the same evaluation team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills in methods able to estimate also impacts of each intervention (e.g. cost-benefit analysis)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the right balance and exchange of knowledge between experts in each CAP pillar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start early and dedicate enough resources to an effective stakeholder involvement 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a single SC for P1, P2, SEA, ex ante, involving all stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early availability of common evaluation questions

Table 3. Main issues identified by participants in relation to the appraisal of the SWOT analysis and assessment of needs of the CAP Strategic Plan (transcription)

	Issues
Organising the process for carrying out the SWOT analysis and assessment of needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to ensure transparency along the process? • How to coordinate stakeholders and analyses at national and regional levels? • What comes first between SWOT analysis and assessment of needs? • How and when to involve all relevant stakeholders in the process?
Structuring the SWOT analysis and assessment of needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to avoid overlaps and keep balance between the single SWOT analysis carried out per each CAP specific objectives? • How to keep balance in the analysis of sectorial aspects? • How to simplify the structure of the SWOT analysis? • How can regional specificities be highlighted in the SWOT analysis per each CAP Strategic Plan?
Defining the scope of the SWOT analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to consider too many things while keeping the SWOT analysis short and concise? • How deep and detailed should the analysis of sectorial aspects be? • Shall the SWOT analysis focus also on forestry and in which section? • Shall the SWOT analysis focus also on national policies and objectives (e.g. supporting animal welfare)? • Shall the SWOT analysis focus also on modernisation and simplification? • Shall the appraisal of the SWOT analysis look at the consistency across the CAP specific objectives (internal) and across other policies (external)? • Shall the appraisal of the SWOT analysis check the consistency with the assessment of needs?
Using the elements for carrying out the SWOT and assessment of needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which methods can Managing Authorities use to rank needs and justify adequate budgetary allocations to each intervention? • What are the necessary skills and competences expected from evaluators and Managing Authorities to carried out these tasks? • How to find updated data at regional level or solutions for filling data gaps?
Using the SWOT analysis and assessment of needs for programming the CAP SP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What policy options are available when SWOT analysis and assessment of needs do not justify the inclusion of 'mandatory' interventions in the CAP Strategic Plan? • How can the SWOT analysis and assessment of needs be relevant for policy making if based on existing common context indicators? • How can SWOT analysis be used to plan specifically innovation?

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