

## Event Highlights

Finnish Council Presidency – European Commission Seminar on

### ‘CAP Strategic Planning’

04 December 2019

## BACKGROUND

---

The **seminar** was targeted at national experts in charge of the preparation and drafting of the 2021-2027 CAP Strategic Plans (CSPs) and provided an overview of the state of play of the preparations for the implementation of the CSPs, at EU and Member State level. The event was also the occasion for an exchange of experience between Member States (MS) as well as with the Commission regarding the main bottlenecks and challenges encountered up to now and the potential solutions identified to overcome them.

The seminar focused on the overall strategic approach, from the SWOT analysis and the assessment of needs to the intervention logic. It also provided some early reflections on the possible design of certain types of interventions and included two feedback sessions:

- a) from agricultural and environmental stakeholders on key outcomes of the recent Round Tables on Green Architecture, regarding stakeholder involvement and inputs for implementation of the new CAP;
- b) from the Bulgarian delegate **Marina Brakalova** (Permanent Representation of the Republic of Bulgaria to the EU) on the capacity building CAP Seminar organised in Sofia, bringing together several MS and the Commission to exchange experiences and views on the design of the future CSP from the analysis through to the planning of interventions to be supported under the future CAP.

## INTRODUCTORY MESSAGES

---



**Mr Plewa (Director General of DG AGRI)** introduced the event, expressing appreciation for this initiative of the Finnish Presidency and stressing its importance as a step towards the new CAP. Mr Plewa provided key messages that set the scene for the Seminar.

The new Commission has recently taken office with Mr Wojciechowski as Commissioner for Agriculture, and it will soon propose the European Green Deal, setting out the pathways to a more sustainable and climate-proof EU. The new CAP is called to address a wide spectrum of demands, captured by its three general, nine specific and two cross-cutting objectives, which altogether play an essential role in the future delivery mechanism and future policy orientations.

The Commission's legislative proposals for the post-2020 CAP put performance at the heart of the policy, shifting the focus from compliance to results. The logic of the interventions supported under both Pillars of the CAP within the new CSPs, should be built on the basis of a sound and comprehensive SWOT analysis and needs assessment, essential elements of the new evidence-based delivery model.

The new model poses new challenges for all involved in the policy, since this is a novel experience. The Commission has made arrangements to accompany MS in the preparatory work as partners by setting up Geohubs composed of colleagues from DG AGRI, who will be available to support MS in the preparatory work.

## OVERVIEW OF MEMBER STATES' CAP ROADMAPS



**Gregorio Davila Diaz (DG AGRI)** described the state of play and timeline for the CAP reform negotiations, highlighting the milestones in the process of adoption of the CSPs which is expected to be completed by the end of 2021, taking into account the 1 year transition proposed by the Commission

Based on indicative information provided by the national authorities and subject to developments on adoption of the new legislative framework, most MS currently expect to be ready to share their SWOT analysis and needs assessment with the Commission by the end of 2019/beginning 2020 (see figure 1 below). MS are then expected to develop their intervention logic and the descriptions of the types of interventions they will support.

MS are encouraged to share a draft of their CSPs with the Commission as soon as a sufficiently mature version is ready. Most drafts are expected to be shared with the Commission by the second half of 2020. Informal discussions with the Commission are encouraged to help speed up the approval of the final plans. Most MS will formally notify their CSPs to the Commission by Q1 2021, while some may not be ready until Q2 or even Q3 2021.

Gregorio also stressed that all the relevant stakeholders should be duly informed and involved throughout the entire programming process. 'Monitoring committees should be set up for this purpose at national level before the official submission of the CSPs.

**Figure 1: CAP Plans MS roadmaps overview (No. of MS).**



*Disclaimer: this information is partial and preliminary, based on the replies provided by Member States as of 2 December 2019*

Finally, Gregorio informed that the Commission is proposing the adoption of transitional rules to bridge the gap between the two programming periods for the year 2021.

## THE CAP STRATEGY PLAN: SWOT, NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION LOGIC



**The Austrian experience.** **Veronika Madner** (Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism) presented the work carried out by Austria and their expected next steps. In May 2019, 380 stakeholders gathered for a kick-off event to share ideas on the future CAP. Between May and October 2019, this was followed up by around 60 experts within the Ministry involved in the drafting of the SWOT analysis by Specific Objectives (SO). In a following step, 52 needs were identified, forming the basis for designing the intervention strategy. This process is currently ongoing and will be completed by the end of 2020.

Stakeholders are being involved and informed through several channels, including workshops, expert groups, webinars and online platforms for exchanging opinions.



**The Slovenian experience.** **Jože Ileršič** (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food) shared the experience of Slovenia of preparing a draft SWOT analysis for Specific Objective 6: 'Biodiversity and farmed landscapes', based on the lessons learned from the current period.

As a result of the work carried out so far, new opportunities were identified for tackling the deterioration of habitats – mainly resulting from the intensification of farming, agricultural land abandonment and a lack of awareness and knowledge transfer. These opportunities include: i) the development of new supplementary activities on farms and value-added products; ii) the provision of improved advisory services on sustainable farming practices; and iii) the adoption of advanced technologies allowing for a more sustainable use of natural resources.



**The Spanish experience.** **Ignacio Atance** (Paying Agency) highlighted the efforts made by the Spanish administration to provide new datasets for each CAP SO in order to ensure more accurate SWOT analysis and assessment of needs. Ignacio outlined that it is challenging for a large regionalised country to produce a SWOT analysis and a needs assessment at the national level while capturing all regional specificities. Designing national interventions capable of responding to these specific local needs is one of the key difficulties faced. Also, he highlighted that all regions and main stakeholders are actively involved in this process, through meetings organised by SO and through digital platforms.

Finally, Ignacio outlined that the Spanish CSP will prioritise action to address two specific issues: gender inequality and rural depopulation.

## STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVE: HOW THE CAP PLANS CAN SUPPORT BOTH HIGHER CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL AMBITION AND FARM VIABILITY

**Agricultural and environmental stakeholders** presented the key outcomes of the three Round Tables on the Green Architecture of the CAP organised by the European Commission in partnership with the International Union for Conservation of Nature. The aim was to provide stakeholders with opportunities to come together, build partnerships and examine how the CAP legal proposal could be implemented to increase agricultural competitiveness and environmental sustainability simultaneously.

The representatives demonstrated how stakeholders can contribute to making the development and implementation of the CSPs more effective, and presented examples of how the policy framework could be used to improve the management of peatlands/wetlands and to improve biodiversity on farmland. Stakeholders expressed their willingness to participate and contribute to the design of the policy and be part of the solutions, stressing the value of their involvement at national and regional levels through initiatives such as round tables and facilitated dialogues with MS administrations. They asked to be kept regularly informed of the work in progress. Policy development and implementation can benefit from the active involvement of stakeholders, who can provide feasible and innovative solutions and increase the acceptance and attractiveness of the proposed interventions to the beneficiaries.

## MS EXPERIENCES AND REFLECTIONS ON DESIGNING INTERVENTIONS



**DENMARK: CAP Pillar 1 vs Pillar 2: the case of organic farming.** **Susanne Harder Gabrielsen** (Danish Agricultural Agency) explained that the organic farming payment scheme has been very successful in Denmark and was identified as a likely intervention for the future CSP. To date the government is deciding whether to design the intervention as an annual eco-scheme under the CAP Pillar 1 or to continue planning it on a multiannual basis under Pillar 2. The first option would allow for more flexibility to adjust payment levels to uptake; and eco-schemes in general are seen as less burdensome for the administration and the farmers. The ultimate decision, however, is yet to be made.



**LATVIA: Design of interventions in the CAP green architecture.** **Inese Pastare-Irbe** (Ministry of Agriculture) provided some insights into the work carried out by the Latvian government for the selection and design of interventions under the new green architecture of the CAP.

Current ideas for possible eco-schemes include: farming without plant protection products (beyond GAEC 9); four-meter-wide green buffer strips; organic farming; less disturbing soil tillage; preservation of permanent grassland for livestock.

Rural Development measures would mainly compensate for the costs and income foregone resulting from the implementation of GHG and ammonia emissions reducing production practices. Discussions with stakeholders are ongoing.



**THE NETHERLANDS: A new green-blue architecture for the future CAP.** **Aard Mulders** (Ministry of Agriculture, Nature, Food Quality) described the key features of the intervention logic for eco-climate measures in the new CAP being developed by the Dutch government.

Their new model of more sustainable growth involves three levels of implementation – bringing together the two CAP Pillars:

- 1) Pillar 1 basic income support, decreasing over time, in exchange for no backsliding;
- 2) A regionally differentiated sustainability rating system (SRS) support via Pillar 1 eco-scheme, broadly accessible by farmers and increasing over time;
- 3) Pillar 2 AECM implemented through the collective approach successfully applied in the Netherlands since 2016.



**GERMANY: CAP Strategic Planning.** **Gisela Günter** (Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture) provided an overview of the preparatory activities for the implementation of the future CSP in Germany. Their work required close cooperation between the Federal government, 13 regional authorities, Paying Agencies, administrative agencies, certification bodies and stakeholders.

Four working groups have been created around the following key topics: area-related measures; non-area related measures; LEADER; sectoral programmes. The Federal government is leading the work especially on direct payments. However, Germany is of the opinion that Länder can enjoy greater autonomy in relation to the design of regionally differentiated EAFRD interventions, linking them to different SOs, setting levels of premia, and defining beneficiaries and eligibility conditions at their level.

## MAIN OUTCOMES FROM WORKING GROUP DISCUSSIONS ON CSP PREPARATION

### KEY CHALLENGES FACED

- Prioritising needs;
- Identifying objective criteria and using them to support the ranking of needs;
- Engaging stakeholders;
- Lack of data or identifying the relevant datasets and expertise;
- Coordination and integration of Pillars 1 and 2;
- Differences between stakeholders and their level of knowledge and influence;
- Linking interventions and indicators.

### PROPOSED SOLUTIONS AND IDEAS

- Addressing some of the assessed needs through other policies than CAP;
- Using networks to help to understand and engage stakeholders;
- Using existing platforms to improve the flow of information and understanding; improving communication between MS, within MS and with the EU;
- Designing interventions which motivate stakeholders;
- Piloting new initiatives.