

ENRD workshop

# 'Preparing the CAP Strategic Plans: Programming Regional-Level Interventions'

## Highlights report

The workshop discussed possible approaches to address regional needs and specificities through the designing and implementation of interventions under the future CAP Strategic Plans (CSPs), as the policy is moving from 118 national and regional Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) to 27 national CSPs.

The event attracted a large number of representatives of the future CSP Managing Authorities, as well as of regional authorities, the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions. Participants actively engaged in discussions on the practical aspects of involving regions and addressing regional level specificities in the programming, implementing and monitoring of interventions under the future CSPs. They exchanged views and experiences regarding key challenges encountered as well as ideas about concrete solutions to overcoming them.

### Event Information

**Date:** 9 February 2021

**Location:** Online event

**Organisers:** ENRD Contact Point

**Participants:** Over 100 representatives of future CSP Managing Authorities, Paying Agencies, regional authorities and EU institutions.

**Outcomes:** Exchange of experiences, challenges encountered and ideas about practicable approaches to address regional specificities through the design and implementation of CSP interventions.

**Web page:** [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/preparing-cap-strategic-plans-programming-regional-level-interventions\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/preparing-cap-strategic-plans-programming-regional-level-interventions_en)

## Addressing regional specificities through the CSP: the legal proposal perspective

[Gregorio Dávila Díaz](#) from the European Commission's DG AGRI opened the workshop explaining how a single national CSP can address regional specificities. In the CSP intervention strategy, Member States (MS) are expected to describe the interaction between national and regional levels and can designate regional authorities to be responsible for the coordination, management and implementation of parts of the CSP. This 'regionalisation' is in principle possible under all types of CSP interventions. The following three main approaches could be adopted to address regional specificities in the definition and implementation of the interventions: 1) **Uniform at national level:** interventions defined at the national level, with one single description, and with features valid for the whole national territory (same set of eligibility conditions and same unit amounts), but implemented at the regional level; 2) **National scale with regional differences:** main eligibility conditions are defined at the national level while some choices (e.g. unit amounts, aid intensity,...) are left for the regions (e.g. 'pick and choose menu'); however the intervention fiche in the CSP should provide information regarding all possible combination of choices made by the different regions (this could be easily done through a table); and 3) **Regional specific:** different regional interventions with a different set of eligibility conditions, different targeting and beneficiaries; in such cases DG AGRI would expect to see all the independent regional interventions described in the CSP to assess them properly.

## Member States' perspective and approaches

### The Spanish experience

[Isabel Aguilar Pastor](#) from the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food presented the Spanish approach to address regional specificities, shifting from 18 RDPs to a single CSP. Spain is considering including an aggregated description of regional interventions in Chapter 5 of the CSP while presenting details of each regional intervention in annexed documents. The CSP intervention fiche would provide a set of eligibility conditions allowing the regions to choose other elements and fine tune them according to their needs. Unit amounts, support rates and premia would directly depend on the elements chosen by the Regions. Aggregated monitoring and reporting data from all regions would be presented at the national level.

### The German experience

[Denise Sroka](#) from the German Ministry of Food and Agriculture shared their insights. As in Spain, the key challenge is to put all the content from the 13 federal states into one single strategic document. This means that the level of detail cannot be the same as previously. The German CSP will provide an overall framework at the national level and a 'pick and choose menu' for the Länder. The Länder will not be able to go beyond what is described in the intervention fiche but could set more restrictive conditions at their own level. In the CSP, an overview of the possible 'options' would be presented providing information about the specific choices made by all Länder in table format. For the purpose of the performance review, aggregated data will be presented in the CSP at the national level.

## The Dutch experience

[Carlo Vromans](#) from the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality presented the Dutch approach to addressing territorial needs in partnership with the Dutch provinces. Although the Netherlands is not a regionalised country, the Dutch provinces play a central role in the implementation of the different policies. They have been responsible for the implementation of interventions programmed under the current Dutch RDP and will have certain autonomy for the implementation of some CSP interventions. The Dutch government promoted a participatory process bringing together all the people in a region/province to develop an area/regional 'deal', through a 'bottom-up' approach. This deal will serve as a basis for all the interventions supported through the different EU and national policies, ensuring synergies and coordination among the different available funding tools. This 'area specific approach' is driven by the principle that single interventions alone cannot solve complex problems of a regional area, rather a multitude of coordinated interventions is needed. Under the CSP, a 'pick and choose menu' will be available for the provinces, particularly for agri-environmental measures and eco-schemes.

## Main outcomes of group discussions

### Group 1: Preparation and drawing-up of CSP

- In regionalised Member States<sup>1</sup>, a process has been carried out to complete one single ex-ante evaluation to identify the needs of the entire national territory, including the regions and different interest groups. For instance, in France, 48 generic needs were identified in the national CSP, while further details regarding the regional specificities are proposed to be provided in CSP annexes.
- The ex-ante evaluators played a key role in synthesising the information and data collected, ensuring there was a workable balance between presenting the content needed to set the CSP strategy, and at the same time, being generic enough.
- Regions and other territorial authorities and stakeholders have been, and continue to be, involved in the CSP preparation process to different extents using means such as: working groups, steering groups, consultations, meetings and round tables at the different levels (national and local).
- Where specific expertise and good practices have been developed over the current/past programming periods at the regional level through the implementation of CAP-funded interventions, it would be advisable to build on them and preserve the know-how.

### Group 2: CSP implementation, monitoring and reporting

- Overall, it is clear that greater cooperation efforts between the national and regional levels are required in the process of defining the CSP interventions due to the shift in regionalised MS from several RDPs to one single CSP covering all the national territory and the different needs. In some cases, further clarity is needed from central governments with regard to the allocation of responsibilities and the possible delegation of powers to the regional authorities.
- Where regional structures were already in place for the monitoring and implementation of the 2014-2020 RDPs, these could be retained as using their experience could provide added value.
- The reporting and monitoring of the implementation of regional-level interventions, will have to be consistent with the design of such interventions in the CSP.
- To ensure participation of regional stakeholders, in the monitoring of the implementation of the CSP, regional monitoring committees / sub-committees could be set up and work in parallel with the national one (as for example in the case of Germany) to discuss regional issues and report back to the national level.

### Group 3: Design of regional interventions in the CSP

- A robust SWOT analysis and a sound assessment of needs, covering both national and regional levels, should provide a solid basis for the design of interventions, including regional ones.
- Some MS already know the specific interventions that should be implemented at the regional level and those that will be implemented at the national level. Others are still considering how these choices should be made. Again, the SWOT analysis and needs assessment could provide a lead for their decisions.
- DG AGRI pointed out that there is no obligation to cluster interventions to keep the content of the CSP as short as possible. If there is a need to have different interventions for different regions, then all of them should be clearly described and included in the CSP.
- When different aid rates are foreseen for the same intervention in different regions, a matrix/table providing an overview of aid rate per region could be a practicable solution to keep the CSP content simple and exhaustive.
- Going beyond regions, all CSP interventions could also be targeted at certain territories with similar characteristics.

<sup>1</sup> Within this context 'regionalised Member States' refers to those countries where several regional Rural Development Programmes were implemented during the past programming periods.