



TOOL 2.1

EXAMPLES OF GUIDING QUESTIONS SUPPORTING THE APPRAISAL OF THE ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS INCLUDING THE SWOT

THEMATIC WORKING GROUP No 7
'PREPARING FOR THE EX-ANTE EVALUATION OF THE CAP
STRATEGIC PLAN'

JULY 2019

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Recommended citation:

EUROPEAN COMMISSION – Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development – Unit C.4 (2019): Examples of guiding questions supporting the appraisal of the assessment of needs including SWOT. Tool 2.1 - Thematic Working Group no 7 'Preparing for the ex-ante evaluation of the CAP Strategic Plan'.

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ACRONYMS

AKIS	Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CSP	CAP Strategic Plan
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FADN	Farm Accountancy Data Network
FAS	Farm Advisory Services
GAEC	Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GQ	Guiding Questions
RDP	Rural Development Programme
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SPR	Proposal for CAP Strategic Plan Regulation, COM/2018/392 final
SWOT	Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats Analysis

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INTRODUCTION

About this tool

This tool aims to **build capacity on appraising the assessment of needs including the SWOT of the CAP Strategic Plans 2021-2027**. It contains examples of guiding questions (GQ) and criteria to support the ex-ante evaluators of the CAP Strategic Plans 2021-2027 (CSP) in their task to appraise the assessment of needs including the SWOT.

Specifically, the questions and criteria help to check if the assessment of needs and SWOT are comprehensive, complete and coherent and based on evidence specific to the territory concerned.

These examples of **guiding questions and criteria are not mandatory**. However, they can be useful to:

- foster the discussion between actors involved in appraising the assessment of needs and the SWOT;
- identify issues that need further consideration and/or clarification;
- achieve a common understanding of what makes a good SWOT and assessment of needs;
- build capacity among stakeholders newly involved in the ex-ante evaluation of the CAP Strategic Plan.

The assessment areas covered in this tool include:

- Appraisal of the SWOT analysis of the current situation (Article 103(2)).
- Appraisal of the assessment of needs (Article 96).
- Appraisal of how lessons learned from the implementation of the CAP in previous programming periods have been taken into account (Article 125(3)(a)).

Working process

This tool has been prepared by evaluation experts taking into account the legal proposal for the CAP Strategic Plans *COM(2018) 392 final (hereafter referred to as SPR)* and the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC).

The drafting of this tool has been carried out as part of the Evaluation Helpdesk's [Thematic Working Group no. 7](#).

The suggestions and comments of evaluation stakeholders from the Member States have been collected through a written Sounding Board consultation process in June 2019 and used to further clarify the tool.

Outlook

A further set of guiding questions to support the analysis of the other assessment areas mentioned in Article 125 of the SPR proposal (i.e. intervention strategy, milestones, targets) are under preparation and will be shared in a draft version in August/September 2019.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

The SWOT

GQ 1.1 To what extent is the SWOT comprehensive, complete and coherent?

Explore if the following criteria are fulfilled:

- a) The SWOT is structured around each specific objective.
- b) The SWOT is based on the current situation of the area covered by the CAP Strategic Plan and gives a comprehensive picture covering all the relevant information available in the country (regional, national, European, international).
- c) The SWOT includes all relevant territorial, sectorial, economic, social, structural, environmental information and trends.
- d) The SWOT takes into account the external shifts and trends that affect the CAP and the Member State (e.g. international commodity prices, primary input prices).
- e) There is a clear distinction between internal and external factors that influence the current situation in the Member State.
- f) There is a clear distinction between 'strengths' and 'opportunities' as well as between 'weaknesses' and 'threats' and the respective SWOT items are placed under the right headings.

GQ 1.2 To what extent is the SWOT specific?

Explore if the following criteria are fulfilled:

- a) National and regional specificities have been reflected and analysed under the specific objectives for which they are relevant.
- b) Sectoral aspects have been analysed where relevant.

Examples may include, provided relevant data exists:

- *The importance of the sectors from a social, economic, environmental point of view;*
- *Identification of the difficulties undergone by the sectors, e.g. decline of the production, decline of the number of farmers/farms/hectares/animals in the sector concerned, in terms of profitability;*
- *The viability of the sectors;*
- *Identification of weaknesses/potential for improvements in terms of competitiveness, quality and sustainability;*
- *Within a sector, identification of sub-populations with a potential for improvement, etc.*

GQ 1.3 To what extent does the SWOT take into account the specific requirements for certain objectives?

This GQ refers only to those SOs that according to the SPR proposal have some specific requirements to address. Therefore, here explore if the following criteria are fulfilled for the following Specific Objectives (as per Article 103(2) of the SPR proposal):

a. Specific Objective 1:

The SWOT contains an analysis of issues related to agricultural income.

Examples may include, provided relevant data exists:

The risks of income or price volatility, evolution of agricultural area prices, evolution of average farm income, including its comparison with average incomes in the MS economy, farm debts, value of agricultural productions, focus on small farms,

b. Specific Objectives 4, 5 and 6:

The SWOT contains analyses drawing on explicit references to relevant elements of national plans emanating from environmental and climate legislation (covering at least the 12 Directives/Regulations listed in Annex XI of SPR proposal as well as any pertinent national level legislation).

The SWOT considers, where relevant, specific characteristics including:

- soil,
- water,
- air,
- biodiversity and climate conditions,
- existing farming systems and practices,
- land use and farm structures.

Examples of relevant elements for conditionality (taking in account that interventions will build up on conditionality) could be:

- *national requirements for the implementation of environmental directives (such as Nitrate, Water, Natura 2000) relevant to establish the baseline for GAEC and environmental interventions such as eco schemes and management commitments;*
- *specific needs for training and advice (e.g. linked to the Integrated Pest Management principles in the Sustainable Use of Pesticides directive);*
- *national targets on GHG emission reductions.*

c. Specific Objective 7:

The SWOT contains for Young Farmers a short analysis of access to land, land mobility and land restructuring, access to finance and credit and access to knowledge and advice as well as comprehensive information on socio-economic aspects.

Examples may include, provided relevant data exists:

The share of young farmers to the total number of farmers, their revenue and income levels, their level of training and skills, average age of farmers, evolution of age of heads of holding, physical and economic size and type of farming in comparison to other farmers, the share of owned land in all land managed by young farmers and comparison of this figure with the respective figure for all farmers, etc.

d. Cross-cutting objective on knowledge and innovation:

The SWOT contains relevant information about the functioning of the Farm Advisory Services (FAS), AKIS and related structures as well as existing initiatives on innovation and digitisation in the agriculture sector.

GQ 1.4 To what extent is the SWOT based on evidence?

Explore if the following criteria are fulfilled:

- a) The SWOT is based on the most recent, relevant and reliable evidence.
- b) The SWOT is based on common context indicators and relevant indicators coming from other statistical sources (e.g. EUROSTAT and national statistical institutes)
- c) The SWOT is based on and supported by recent, relevant and reliable quantitative information (Eurostat statistics, FADN, analytical factsheets and national/regional databases).
- d) In the SWOT data gaps are clearly identified and where quantitative information is not available, the analysis is based on qualitative information.
- e) The SWOT is based on solid evidence from studies, evaluations, sectoral analysis, and lessons learned from previous experience across all CAP instruments covered by the CAP Strategic Plan (experiences at EU, national and regional level).
- f) The SWOT analyses the access to finance by taking into account all available information on financial instruments (e.g. figures on market gaps).
- g) Quantitative evidence has been triangulated with the experience/input of relevant stakeholders.

ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS

GQ 1.5 To what extent is the assessment of needs based on evidence and on the SWOT analysis?

Explore if the following criteria are fulfilled:

- a) The needs identified for each specific objective are clearly shown to be derived from the SWOT (e.g. through a matrix, cross-reference).
- b) The needs identified are not repetitions from the SWOT (e.g. a weakness rephrased as a need).
- c) The trajectory from the SWOT to the assessment of needs is logical.
- d) All the assumptions to justify that the assessment of needs is based on the SWOT are valid and plausible.
- e) The access to finance is considered in the needs, where relevant evidence on market gaps exists in the SWOT (relevant for financial instruments).

GQ 1.6 To what extent is the assessment of needs transparent, specific and complete?

Explore if the following criteria are fulfilled:

- a) All the identified needs are described, regardless of whether they will be addressed by the CSP or not.
- b) There is a sound justification of the choices made and if relevant, why certain identified needs are not addressed or are only partially addressed in the CSP.
- c) The described needs are specific and detailed (rather than generic) and avoid repetitions (e.g. the same need repeated but phrased differently).
- d) For the Specific Objective 1: 'supporting viable farm income and resilience', an assessment of needs in relation to risk management is provided.
- e) The assessment of needs takes into account specific needs of vulnerable geographic areas where relevant (e.g. outermost regions).
- f) The national, regional and local specific needs should be addressed in a comprehensive and complementary fashion with conditionality (Article 11) and payments for the schemes for the climate and the environment (Article 28).
- g) The assessment of needs should take into account the national environmental and management plans required by the legislative instruments of Annex XI (Article 65).
- h) In relation to AKIS, the institutional capacity needs to make sure AKIS work has been considered.

GQ 1.7 To what extent are the needs prioritised?

Explore if the following criteria are fulfilled:

- a) A clear description of the prioritisation of needs is provided, including a justification of how the negative and positive priorities have been defined.
- b) There is a clear description of how the prioritised needs are linked to the specific objectives.
- c) The process and the approach for prioritising the needs are clearly described.
- d) Analysis of how to achieve increased ambitions with regard to the environment and climate related objectives should be considered in the prioritisation of needs.
- e) For each specific objective, there is an analysis of AKIS elements for the identification and prioritisation of needs.

EX-ANTE PROCESS

GQ 1.8 To what extent has the process of the SWOT and assessment of needs been well prepared and inclusive?

Explore if the following criteria are fulfilled:

- a) The process for elaborating the SWOT and assessment of needs has started as early as possible in order to account for the time to organise multiple actors' involvement.
- b) The SWOT and assessment of needs process has actively involved, at a minimum, the partners stated in Article 94 of the SPR proposal (competent authorities for the environment and climate, relevant public authorities, economic and social partners, relevant bodies representing civil society promoting social inclusion, fundamental rights, gender equality and non-discrimination) from all relevant territories.
- c) The relevance of stakeholders' opinions have been taken into account in the SWOT and assessment of needs.
- d) Frequent meetings and workshops have been held to ensure the participation of stakeholders in the SWOT and assessment of needs process and the views of key stakeholders and outcomes are clearly documented.
- e) Extensive research on data sources and information was part of the preparatory activities.
- f) The overall SWOT exercise is consistent and coherent (specifically the contracting of different institutions/organisations to conduct the SWOT).

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