



TOOL 4.1

EXAMPLES OF GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR THE APPRAISAL OF THE MEASURES PLANNED TO REDUCE THE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN ON FARMERS AND OTHER BENEFICIARIES OF THE CAP STRATEGIC PLAN

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

UPDATE NOVEMBER 2021

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Thematic Working Group: Preparing for the ex-ante evaluation of the CAP Strategic Plan

You can find all the tools for the Thematic Working Group, 'Preparing for the ex-ante evaluation of the CAP Strategic Plan', in the European Evaluation Helpdesk's eLibrary:

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1. Working Package 1: Preparing the ex-ante evaluation;

- Tool 1.1 - Indicative roadmap for the ex-ante evaluation and Strategic Environmental Assessment of the CAP Strategic Plan;
- Tool 1.2 - Indicative outline of terms of reference for the ex-ante evaluation of the CAP Strategic Plan;
- Tool 1.3 - Indicative outline of terms of reference for the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the CAP Strategic Plan;
- Tool 1.4 - Stakeholder mapping checklist.

2. Working Package 2: Appraisal of the SWOT and needs assessment;

- Tool 2.1 – Examples of guiding questions supporting the appraisal of the assessment of needs including the SWOT;
- Tool 2.2 – Analytical tables supporting the appraisal of the assessment of needs including the SWOT.

3. Working Package 3: Appraisal of the intervention strategy, targets and milestones;

- Tool 3.1 – Examples of guiding questions for the appraisal of the intervention strategy, targets and milestones;
- Tool 3.2 – Working steps for the appraisal of the intervention strategy of the CAP Strategic Plan;
- Tool 3.3 – Appraisal of quantified target values and milestones;
- Tool 3.4 – Working steps for supporting the appraisal of the rationale for the use of financial instruments.

4. Working Package 4: Appraisal of the planned monitoring, data collection and implementation arrangements of the CAP Strategic Plan.

- Tool 4.1 - Examples of guiding questions for the appraisal of the measures planned to reduce the administrative burden on farmers and other beneficiaries of the CAP Strategic Plan.

ACRONYMS

AMS	Area Monitoring System
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CPR	Common Provisions Regulation
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GQ	Guiding Questions
GSA	Geo-Spatial Application system
HZR	Horizontal Regulation
IACS	Integrated Administration and Control System
PA	Paying Agency
RD	Rural Development
SPR	CAP Strategic Plan Regulation

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INTRODUCTION

This document addresses the **appraisal of the measures planned to reduce the administrative burden on farmers and other beneficiaries of the CAP Strategic Plan** according to Articles 139.3 (f) of the COM (xxxx) xxx final (SPR).

The CAP Strategic Plan template requires in relation to the simplification and the reduction of administrative burden the following descriptions in its section 3.9:

An explanation of how the interventions and elements common to several interventions contribute to simplification for final beneficiaries and reduce the administrative burden. This includes measures taken in the implementation of the CAP through technology and data that help simplify management and administration of the CAP, and through the simplicity of the design (of interventions in the CAP Strategic Plan).

While the New Delivery Model has reduced the level of detailed legislation at EU level it has at the same time empowered the Member States to set rules and bring forward solutions to simplify the implementation of the CAP. It is therefore vital that the Member States describe the steps taken or planned to ensure simplification of the policy implementation at the level of the final beneficiaries.

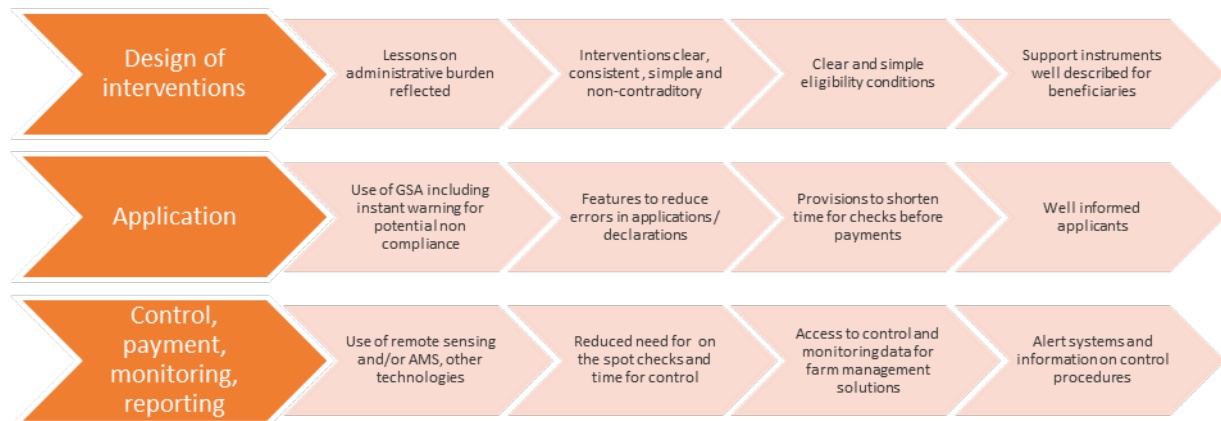
Simplification is expected from the very design of the interventions in the CAP Strategic Plan, with the aim to avoid unnecessary complexities for beneficiaries throughout the implementation cycle. It is understood, that this aspect of simplification is a horizontal aspect, that is strongly related to the intervention strategy of the CAP Strategic Plan (see also Ex-ante tool 3.1 Examples of guiding questions for the appraisal of the intervention strategy, targets and milestones). *In the present document Guiding question 1 covers this aspect of simplification.*

Moreover, simplification and the reduction of administrative burden is expected to come from using innovative systems to handle beneficiaries' applications, payments and controls. The aim is to use IT developments to possibly reduce the paperwork for beneficiaries, avoid the duplication of activities and information to be provide by beneficiaries, reduce the need for on-the-spot controls, but also to avoid unnecessary controls or risks of non-compliances with a view to move to a preventative control approach. It is evident, that this aspect of simplification has to be materialized during the set-up and implementation of the CAP Strategic Plan. The ex-ante evaluator will however check, to what extent the CAP Strategic Plan makes reference to such simplifications or envisages their introduction in the near future. *Guiding questions 2 to 4 of the present document refer to this aspect of simplification.*

Overall, ex-ante evaluators will take an external, critical look to how the administrative burden perceived by beneficiaries has been analysed and reflected in the specifications in the CAP Strategic Plan and will give further recommendations how to simplify and reduce possible complexities for the beneficiaries.

The following figure outlines some of the simplifications aspects that are considered throughout the implementation cycle of an intervention.

Figure 1 The ex-ante assessment of the appraisal of the measures planned to reduce the administrative burden on farmers and other beneficiaries of the CAP Strategic Plan



Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, November 2021.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

With a view to support the ex-ante evaluator in their evaluation tasks, it is proposed to examine the following examples of **non-mandatory guiding questions (GQ) and judgement criteria**.

Evaluators can draw on the following information sources:

- Descriptions provided in the draft CAP Strategic Plan (specifically in section 3.9, but horizontally touching upon all parts of the CAP Strategic Plan)
- Lessons learned from previous implementation experiences, evaluations and audit recommendations.
- Other relevant sources

GQ 1 To what extent has the simplicity of the design of the interventions in the CAP Strategic Plan been respected?

Examples of criteria (see also Tool 3.1):

- a) interventions are well described, consistent, non-contradictory and allow to assess their delivery against the objectives
- b) evaluations, audit recommendations and conclusions from past experience are used when designing similar types of interventions
- c) the number of interventions in total and with a specific focus on the Green Architecture (conditionalities, eco-schemes, AECM) is adequate and not triggering unnecessary complexities for implementation and monitoring,
- d) eligibility conditions are adequate, well justified, non-contradictory and easy to implement in view of achieving the objectives of the interventions
- e) the support instruments (incl. Financial Instruments) are clearly described in the CAP Strategic Plan and it is envisaged that they are explained in an understandable way (e.g. in brochures, webpage etc.) to beneficiaries and that relevant information is made easily accessible for potential applicants.
- f) definitions provided in chapter 4 of the CAP Strategic Plan consider simplification and reduction of administrative burden

GQ 2 To what extent are the objectives of simplification and reduction of administrative burden through the use of a geo-spatial and animal-based application system (see Art. 69 of HZR) reflected in the CAP Strategic Plan?

Examples of criteria:

- a) a geo-spatial application system (GSA) is used (mandatory)
- b) beneficiaries have the possibility to submit one-single application for all possible schemes/interventions and to submit all document electronically
- c) a claimless system for area and/or animal based schemes mentioned in HZR Art. 65(2) is used.
- d) simplified procedures for beneficiaries are described (e.g. alerts for non-compliances, missing/incomplete data etc.)
- e) beneficiaries have the possibility to adapt the applications in case of errors

- f) simplified declaration procedures for specific schemes (e.g. small farmers) are described
- g) it is envisaged that beneficiaries will be provided with information to understand the rules/conditions for receiving aid when applying
- h) the most recent cartographic/imagery/sentinel data are presented to the beneficiary for their application for aid
- i) beneficiaries are provided with user-friendly GIS tools to modify information (boundaries) on parcels during the application for aid.

GQ 3 To what extent is simplification in IACS controls reflected in the CAP Strategic Plan?

Examples of criteria:

- a) remote sensing and/or area monitoring system (AMS) is used for controls of eligibility conditions and conditionality
- b) it is envisaged that sufficient information on control procedures will be provided to farmers
- c) other technologies than remote sensing/Sentinel data are used for control (e.g. geotagged photos)
- d) communication with farmers is envisaged during all steps of the IACS procedures to prevent errors and penalties

GQ 4 To what extent is simplification in non-IACS application and control procedures reflected in the CAP Strategic Plan?

Examples of criteria:

- a) other technologies (e.g. geotagged photos, videos) are used to verify the realisation of an operation/investment
- b) online procedures for beneficiaries to submit an application are introduced
- c) simplified cost options are used to an adequate extent

GQ 5 To what extent does the CAP Strategic Plan envisage the introduction of other solutions to achieve simplification and reduction of administrative burden on farmers and other beneficiaries?

Examples of criteria:

- a) Area monitoring systems (AMS) collect evidence in cases such as the recognition of cases of force majeure
- b) Cost-efficient access to data (e.g. from AMS) is provided to farmers for possible use in farm management solutions (e.g. precision farming)
- c) Farm advisory services, research and rural networks work together to support the simpler implementation of the CAP
- d) Technical Assistance is used to achieve simplification and the reduction of administrative burden
- e) the CAP Network is envisaged to offer accompanying activities fostering simplification and the reduction of administrative burden

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