



ENRD webinar

‘Getting the CAP Strategic Plans done: the voice of regions and stakeholders’

Highlights report

The event organised by the ENRD Contact Point in close cooperation with the European Commission, brought together various stakeholders, regions, Member States and European institutions to share views and exchange experiences about the preparations of the CAP Strategic Plans (CSPs).

The webinar discussed the role played by regions and stakeholders during the design and delivery of the future CSPs and it shared examples of good practices about involving partners in this process.

The webinar was [web-streamed live](#) and topic and speakers generated strong interest. Viewers actively engaged in the debate by submitting questions and comments.

Event Information

Date: 10 May 2021

Location: Online event

Organisers: ENRD Contact Point

Participants: The event web-stream attracted over 1500 viewers in its first week online, including an audience of around 350 followers during the live webinar

Outcomes: Knowledge transfer of good practices for involving regions and stakeholders in CSP preparations

Web page: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/getting-cap-strategic-plans-done-voice-regions-and-stakeholders_en

High-level opening



Frans Timmermans, European Commission Executive Vice-President opened the event sharing his reflections on the future CAP and its expected contribution to the **EU’s transition to a sustainable food system**, as well as on the crucial role of farmers and of the regions. He observed that: “The CAP will be a key instrument of change to make Europe’s food systems fit for the future”. Under the new CAP, by targeting the aid **we aim to make sure that the distribution of funds, in particular from direct payments, is done in a way that the link to**

achieving the targets is clear. The CAP is there to help farmers to be the custodians of our natural environment and biodiversity, and **it is in the interest of all of us that agriculture reduces its climate impacts** and above all, it is in the interest of farmers themselves to act.

The role of farmers in the transition to a sustainable food system is crucial, there is not going to be a European Green Deal without farmers being on board. Our success depends on agriculture. The Green Deal implies some quite far-reaching changes in all sectors of our society, of our economy and of our lives. Farmers understand this very well as they already experience effects of the climate change – they are on the front line. EU farmers have already made great efforts over past years towards a more sustainable production, but there are still considerable challenges ahead as many farming practices today still hurt the environment. We need to use the opportunity which comes with this transition and learn to live in the planetary boundaries.

Further progress can be achieved if we ensure an effective implementation of the new eco-schemes, nudging farmers towards adopting sustainable farming practices. But **we also need to ensure a more balanced CAP that preserves the environment and biodiversity and at the same time keeps ensuring income stability for our farmers**. The future CAP will have to ensure more equity in the distribution of public aid, as EU support is a very significant part of the income of many small and medium sized farmers. We are still in the situation where 80% of income support goes to 20% of beneficiaries, often not the actual farmers.

The transition to a sustainable food system is a matter that concerns everyone along the entire food chain, this is a key point in the Farm to Fork Strategy and therefore **it is crucial that everyone is involved in the designing of the national CAP Plans**. **This has to be a common project involving the regions as well as all relevant stakeholders**.

We are not going to make this transition without **using the latest possible technology and ensuring broadband access to the farmers**. If applied in the right way, **new technologies can improve farming practices, decrease administrative burden and help create income**.

Further efforts should be dedicated to educating citizens about food quality and health, and about the climate impacts of certain consumption patterns, helping consumers making informed decisions that can reduce our carbon footprint (for instance by encouraging the consumption of regional quality food, contributing to the reduction of GHG emissions generated by transportation or reducing food waste which accounts in the EU for 20% of produced food).



Janusz Wojciechowski, European Commissioner for Agriculture underlined the importance of the involvement of the regions and stakeholders during CSP design and delivery. He also provided updates on the current negotiation process on the CAP reform.

The Commission considers as crucial the role of regions and stakeholders for the implementation of the policy, and it has made this very clear in its legislative proposal and through the negotiations. The proposal for the CSP Regulation requires Member States to consult all stakeholders for the preparation of their Plans and the Commission has underlined the importance of consultations in its Communication accompanying the [CAP recommendations specific for each Member State](#) published in December 2020. **Member States were regularly encouraged by the Commission to actively involve regions and stakeholders and reminded of their responsibilities in that respect.**

Although Member States will establish a single CSP for their entire territory, **regional differentiation will be possible, and the regions can design and implement elements of the CSP within their scope**, while the consistency and coherence should be ensured at national level.

The Commissioner reiterated that: “What is clear is that **we need support from all stakeholders and from the regional authorities** with their regional expertise, knowledge and administrative capacity, to deliver the CAP efficiently to farmers and to rural areas, to ensure simplicity of actions and to succeed in the transition to a more sustainable system. In their future CSPs, Member States will outline the chosen interventions designed specifically for farmers, supporting them in the implementation of sustainable practices related to climate change, environment, biodiversity and plant protection, animal welfare and antimicrobial resistance.”

Negotiations have reached a decisive moment and getting a compromise is now vital. The Commission is engaged to constructively facilitate a swift agreement on a sustainable and robust CAP. Through the latest trilogues, significant progress was made on a number of issues important to reach a final agreement, notably on the New Delivery Model, confirming the shift to a performance-oriented policy, focusing on results rather than on compliance with detailed eligibility rules. Negotiations are also addressing the priority issue of ensuring a fairer distribution of direct payments, and are advancing on the CMO file, notably, on wine. The co-legislators have shown flexibility to build compromises for the benefit of our farming community. **The Commission remains committed to reaching an overall political compromise during the Portuguese Presidency, to ensure a timely preparation and implementation of the new CAP in 2023.**

CAP Strategic Plans: key elements



Mihail Dumitru, Deputy Director General of DG AGRI [presented key steps in the CSP approval process](#) highlighting: the timeline; CSP assessment criteria; Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategy links; monitoring committees and partnership roles with regions and other stakeholders. He noted that CAP reform will lead to **a new balance between Member States and Brussels when designing the CSP**. The CAP will remain a common policy, but it will also allow for **greater flexibility for national and regional authorities when designing and implementing the CSPs**. Regions fear that their role might be diminished by planning the CAP interventions under one single national CSP, however **for the first time all elements of the CAP will be under one strategic framework and this is meant to improve the policy efficacy, not to weaken regions**. There are a lot of elements that can still be defined at the regional level and included in a coherent way at the national level. Member States have to consider and actively involve the regions in the preparations and in the management and implementation of parts of the CSPs, also in the respect of national constitutions. Managing authorities can indeed set regional targets although the CSPs will have to reflect aggregated values at the national level.

The Commission, taking into consideration that Member States are moving from different starting points, in December last year issued recommendations for all Member States pointing to the main aspects that each national CSP should address, particularly to ensure the coherence with the European Green Deal objectives and targets. **The Commission will assess the intervention strategies, the targets and milestones set by the Member States in their CSPs to make sure they are sufficiently ambitious**. An agreement on the new CAP basic legal acts is expected to be reached soon and, subsequently, delegated and implementing acts could be adopted by the end of the year. The Commission expects Member States to submit their CSPs by the end of 2021 to allow for sufficient time for their review and approval by the end of 2022; **the new CSPs would therefore be in place and ready to be implemented as of January 2023.**

The Commission has accompanied the Member States through the process of the SWOT analysis and needs assessment and supported them by promoting several opportunities for exchanges with the national authorities and stakeholders, through the civil dialogue groups, bilateral talks as well as wider meetings, including networking events organised by the ENRD. **Transparent consultations of all partners are essential**. To be successful, especially in the context of the higher ambition of the new CAP with regard to its expected contribution to the Farm to Fork and the Biodiversity Strategies, a joint work with stakeholders is needed to design sufficiently attractive schemes that can really address the needs for a better management of natural resources to combat climate change. **Stakeholders are expected and encouraged to actively engage in consultations on the CSPs and to tell the national administrations what is working and what is not working.**

Panel discussion: role of stakeholders and best practice

Portuguese Presidency of the EU



Rui Martinho – Portuguese State Secretary for Agriculture and Rural Development

“Only through a participative process, involving all relevant stakeholders, farmers, environmental and social partners, we can successfully integrate our ambitious environmental goals in the future CAP, contributing to a digital and climate transition and ensuring a fair income for farmers and fair prices for consumers.”

GOOD PRACTICE

In Portugal, as of 2017, the stakeholder consultation process was facilitated by the creation of a **Council for the review of the CAP** - composed of agricultural and environmental experts, as well as civil society representatives. This advisory body **provides support to the Ministry of Agriculture for CSP preparations**. The Council meets regularly with environmental entities and regional representatives and it also facilitates cooperation between ministries. **Broader consultations of all stakeholders** on the SWOT analysis, needs assessment and CSP intervention strategy were carried out between November 2020 and January 2021 for each CAP specific objective and cross-cutting ones. Through this process, several contributions were collected and revised CSP documents will be subject to a second round of consultations between August and November 2021.

European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA)



Samuel Masse – President of CEJA

“From the perspective of young farmers, our major priorities for the future CAP will be: supporting different on-farm enablers in a more coordinated fashion (e.g. investments in farm holdings, knowledge transfer and education, and risk management instruments); setting a clear direction to bring more coherence between the CAP and national, regional, and local policy instruments; and making sure that the CAP support is distributed to the actual farmers – to this end the definition of ‘active farmers’ in the CSP regulation will be critical.”

GOOD PRACTICE

At the end of 2019 **CEJA carried out an internal consultation with its members** which led to the creation of a catalogue listing the needs and available instruments identified in relation to CAP Specific Objective 7 on generational renewal. This exercise focused on the actual capacity of the CEJA stakeholders to interact with their respective governments. It also identified interesting instruments available in certain Member States. CEJA can use the survey as a benchmark to **compare how CAP reform** outcomes will match its members’ expectations from 2019.

World Wildlife Fund for Nature



Amaya Sánchez – WWF Spain

“We need a sustainable, healthy, and globally responsible CAP truly aligned with the European Green Deal. The CAP is essential to support the agroecological transition to sustainable and resilient food systems. This can be achieved by paying public money for public goods (e.g. supporting high nature value farmlands, Natura 2000 areas and lands under organic production); and by ensuring a transparent involvement of a broad range of stakeholders in the designing and implementation of the CSPs.”

GOOD PRACTICE

In Spain, WWF and BirdLife coordinate the initiative **‘Por Otra PAC’**, which is a coalition bringing together almost 50 organisations ranging from farmers’ associations to environmental organisations and rural stakeholders. Similar coalitions exist in other parts of Europe. **Thanks to these alliances and joint efforts, several organisations across Europe are improving their skills and capacity to act and to advocate around the CAP**. Working in alliance is a good practice because by involving more stakeholders the coalitions can be more effective through common actions. For instance, organising workshops on the CAP green architecture helped to network experts and representatives from public administrations and NGOs in order to build more collective understanding regarding requirements for conditionality and eco-schemes.

AGRIREGIONS Coalition



Begoña García Bernal – Regional Minister for Agriculture, Rural Development, Population and Territory of Extremadura, Spain

“The Coalition of European Agricultural Regions represents 16 regions from seven Member States, concerned by the limited role of regions in the CAP proposals and in the future CSPs. Regions should be fully involved in the drawing up of the future CSPs in order to better tailor the policy to their local reality. The CSP regulation should set a clear legal framework to allow interventions to be defined at the regional level, in a bottom-up approach.”

GOOD PRACTICE

An Iberian good practice approach to protecting **multifunctional agricultural and pastoral systems** demonstrates how regions can apply local actions to help achieve European Green Deal objectives concerning the environment and biodiversity. Known as **‘Dehesas’** in Spanish and **‘Montados’** in Portuguese, this bottom-up rural development model operates within an awareness of local needs and it **allows regions to design CAP interventions relevant to their territories**.

Investments carried out by LEADER Local Action Groups (LAGs) are another good example of how local authorities can successfully respond to local needs. LAGs can help to: animate the social and economic fabric of rural areas; preserve the environment; improve rural services; and promote social inclusion.

European Parliament



Herbert Dorfmann – Member of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

“Besides its important contribution to Europe’s ecological transition, the CAP must remain an economic policy, supporting farmers and the Member States’ overall economy. For instance in my own country, Italy’s food industry is extremely important. It accounts for hundreds of thousands of jobs and the CAP should support it particularly at this difficult time, through investments that can be attractive for young entrepreneurs.”

GOOD PRACTICE

Experience from several Italian regions during the past programming periods indicates that **regional paying agencies proved to be a good practice in facilitating more efficient and timely management of CAP payments**. The active involvement of regional authorities is crucial to better address local needs, especially in larger Member States, where interests can be very diverse between territories. In addition to consulting and involving regions during CSP monitoring, **regions can also provide useful roles and competences during CSP design and delivery**. The **role of the regions and regional authorities need to be clearly defined in the CAP regulation**, as regional authorities take a different place in design and implementation of the CSPs if compared to stakeholders in a broader sense.

Committee of the Regions



Guillaume Cros – Vice-president of the Occitanie region and CoR rapporteur for CAP reform and for agroecology

“Today many regional authorities are responsible for the implementation of Rural Development Programmes as close as possible to the territory, ensuring that local problems of areas left behind are taken into account. The co-legislators should ensure the involvement of regional authorities also in the management of the future CAP funded interventions, in order to achieve our common goals. Implementing an agroecological approach cannot occur without an effective and active support of the regional authorities.”

GOOD PRACTICE

The **COVID-19 emergency and the climate crisis have motivated Occitanie region to implement a regional version of the European Green Deal**. This plan was adopted in 2020 to build a new and more resilient regional model focusing particularly on the food chain. Through EU funds, Occitanie region intends to: promote generational renewal of farmers; reduce the use of pesticides; and strengthen organic farming, short supply chains and the production of local plant proteins to achieve protein autonomy by 2040. The successful experience of the Covenant of European mayors for climate and energy offers other good practices to learn from in terms of **coordinating and facilitating a network of municipalities at EU level promoting resilient sustainable agriculture and food systems**.

Slovenian Incoming Presidency of the EU



Andrej Vizjak – Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning

“For the first time we are creating a Strategic Plan which will include the whole range of CAP funded interventions. We need to find suitable answers to economic, environmental and social challenges, getting the right balance between all needs and responding to the expectations of all stakeholders. More has to be done to support sustainable agricultural practices, preserving and restoring our environment, while providing safe food.”

GOOD PRACTICE

Slovenia’s Ministry of Agriculture is leading CSP preparations, but **all relevant ministries as well as stakeholders have been widely involved and consulted through this process since 2018**. The **partnership approach brings added value to all parties, especially farmers and consumers**. The Ministry of Environment has been particularly involved with work on specific objectives for environmental protection and climate changes. It is a partner for discussions on resilience, competitiveness and rural development as well as on horizontal objectives. Ministries are also working in close cooperation to address the Commission’s recommendations for Slovenia, such as measuring contributions to the Farm to Fork and the Biodiversity strategies.