

## Research for AGRI Committee – Comparative analysis of the CAP Strategic Plans and their effective contribution to the achievement of the EU objectives

### Key findings

- **The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) 2023-2027 framework introduced changes aimed at increasing overall policy coherence of the CAP.** The two pillars of the 2014-2022 period are now combined under single CAP Strategic Plans (CSPs) and Member States (MS) were asked to commit significant resources to green and sustainable objectives, primarily via eco-schemes.
- **EU resources for the 2023-2027 CSPs from the EAGF and the EAFRD amount to € 260.9 billion** (75.4% for EAGF and 24.6% for EAFRD, a proportion similar to the previous programming period). Transfers from the direct payments (DP) to the rural development (RD) envelope concern 11 MS, while 6 MS foresee transfers from the rural development to the direct payments envelope.
- **Economic support to farms via DP remains the dominant feature of the plans.** Basic income support for sustainability represents the largest share of direct payment funding (51.5%). Compared to the previous programming period the main changes include (1) an **increase in redistributive income support** (from 4.3% of direct payments in 2019 to 10.7% for 2023-2027), (2) **the extension of coupled income support** (from 10.8% in 2019 to 12.3% for 2023-2027) and (3) **the introduction of the eco-schemes** (23.8% of direct payments for a total number of 158 eco-schemes). Only 11 MS apply **capping and/or degressivity** and 3 foresee **risk management tools** under DP.



The present document is the executive summary on the study requested by the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development on Comparative analysis of the CAP Strategic Plans and their effective contribution to the achievement of the EU objectives. The full study, which is available in English can be downloaded at: <https://bit.ly/3NoNAkh>

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- **Rural development funding is very diverse across the Member States.** The average contribution rate of EU financing to rural development interventions is 60% (i.e. 40% of national financing), with significant variations according to the type of interventions and across MS. **Environment and climate interventions, risk management tools (implemented by 14 MS) and LEADER have been strengthened, while investments and compensation for natural constraints remain key priorities.** At the level of **young farmers**, there is an overall shift from RD to DP. Support for non-agricultural rural development is increasingly supported through LEADER.
- **According to the ex-ante evaluations of the CSPs, their relevance is high in terms of economic needs and moderate for rural development and environmental needs.** Economic and environmental needs are emphasised across the 28 CSPs, with a focus on targeting economic farm needs which translates into less ambitious environmental and rural development objectives. While the European Green Deal's objectives are mentioned by all CSPs, they are non-binding and the contributions not consistently specific.
- **The new Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (PMEF) is one of the key elements of new delivery model.** However, the proposed system of indicators appears incomplete for evaluating the specific objectives, in particular climate and environmental interventions.
- **Recommendations to the Member States and the Commission** focus on the importance of the evaluation of the CSPs and the assessment of outcomes and the related administrative burden. MS are advised to make active use of the EU CAP network to share best practices, notably to increase the uptake of eco-schemes. The Commission should provide guidance to assess the links between results and impacts and launch an assessment of the implementation of eco-schemes by 2024 within the green architecture.

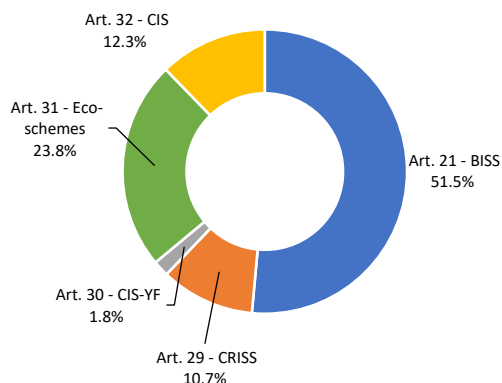
## Objectives and conclusions

- The objective of this study is to provide insights into the implementation characteristics of the CAP 2023-2027 across the Member States and to assess the relevance of the plans and their contributions to the CAP and Green Deal objectives.
- The new CAP framework introduced a common regulation to increase overall policy coherence of the CAP. Member States were asked to commit significant resources to green and sustainable objectives. This was underlined by the introduction of the eco-schemes, strengthened conditionality and significant funding for interventions benefitting climate, natural resources and biodiversity under RD.
- The analysis of the 28 CAP Strategic Plans (CSPs)<sup>1</sup> shows the great diversity and heterogeneity of the approaches adopted by the Member States.
- The overall balance between DP and RD funding is very similar to the previous programming period (see figure above). While direct payments still represent the dominant form of intervention, a number of changes have been introduced and translate into: (1) the significant increase in redistributive income support, (2) the increase in the share of coupled income support and (3) the introduction of new voluntary eco-schemes, with a wide variety of scopes and approaches.
- The distribution of allocations also shows the diversity of approaches at the level of rural development funding (see below). Support to the agricultural sector remains dominant, at times to the detriment of wider rural development stakeholders. However, environmental and climate measures, risk management instruments and LEADER have been strengthened
- The relevance of the CSPs is high in terms of economic needs and moderate for rural development and for environmental needs according to the ex-ante evaluations. Economic and environmental needs are emphasised across the 28 CSPs and are appropriately targeted. Rural development needs, while prominent, are often targeted outside of the CAP.

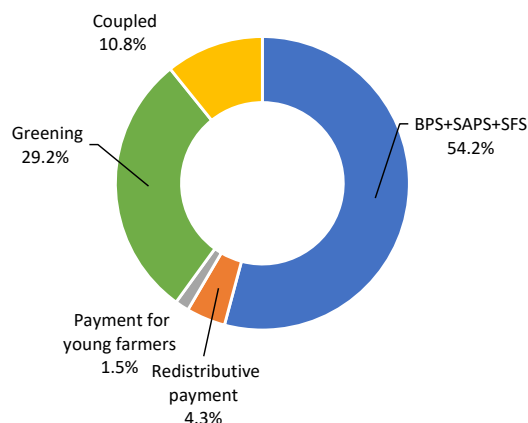
<sup>1</sup> One per Member State and two for Belgium.

## Share of planned distribution of direct payments (EAGF) in CSPs 2023-2027 compared to 2019

Direct payment planned 2023-2027 – EU-27



Direct payment expenditure in 2019 – EU-27

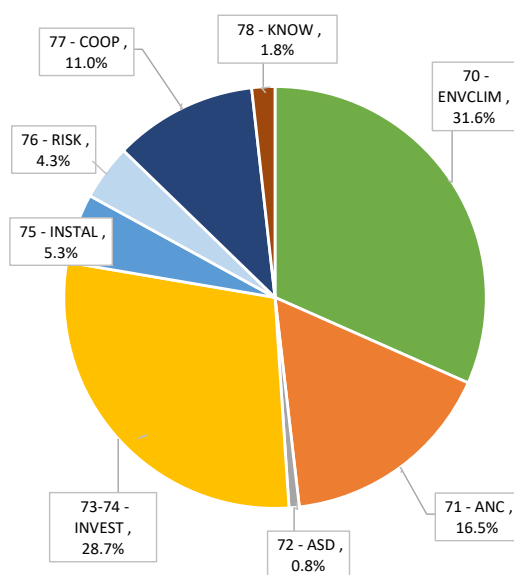


Source: Project team, based on SFC2021 data (January 2023)

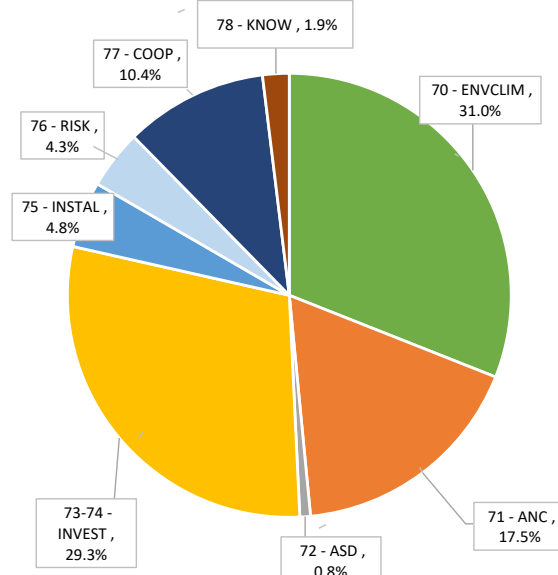
- The interventions of the CSPs target identified needs, however the extent of dedicated funding varies. An emphasis is on targeting economic needs of the agricultural sector in terms of dedicated funding. Environmental needs are targeted by the interventions of the CSPs, however, target setting is not consistently ambitious across all CSPs

## Share of planned rural development interventions

In EAFRD



In total public funding (EAFRD & national)



Source: Project team, based on SFC2021 data (January 2023)

- Member States target significant needs outside the framework of the CAP. This is often the case for rural investment needs (broadband and infrastructure) targeted by the Resilience and Recovery Facility, and also for forestry, risk management and the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System via national policies.
- Contributions to European Green Deal objectives are included throughout the CSPs, but are largely unquantified and unspecified. The eco-schemes, together with the agri-environment and climate measures including organic farming and strengthened conditionality, are likely to contribute to the objectives. The extent of contribution, however, will depend on the uptake and implementation of the eco-schemes.

- The new PMEF is a key element of the new delivery model, covering the entire CAP. However, the proposed system of indicators appears incomplete for evaluating the specific objectives, requiring additional data collection. This is the case especially for the climate and environmental result indicators.
- Member States are provided with significant increased flexibility in their evaluations, with fewer common requirements. However, this may result in heterogeneous evaluations, produced too late to support adaptation of the current period and even the post 2027 period.
- The CAP reform introduces changes for a simpler and more flexible implementation, particularly via single audit, simplified application procedures and higher levels of digitalisation in administrations.

## Key recommendations

- To achieve the CAP's environmental and climate goals, the project team recommends to carefully assess the MS green architecture and, based on this assessment, to foresee the necessary adaptations including in some MS more ambitious eco-schemes.
- As the new evaluation framework gives Member States more flexibility over when and how they assess the CAP interventions, the project team recommends an initiation of activities by 2025.
- The result indicators in the PMEF do not consistently capture intervention results or outcomes. Evaluations at EU and Member State level should feature significant ambition in the assessment of results and link them to the related interventions.
- Member States opted to target a number of significant needs specified in the CAP Strategic Plans with other policies and tools outside of the CAP. It is recommended that evaluation efforts are conducted, covering not only the CAP Strategic Plans, but also the national and EU policy instruments contributing to these goals.
- In order to assess whether the foreseen administrative simplification has resulted in actual changes in administrative burden perceived by beneficiaries and authorities, a systematic EU-27 assessment of administrative burden is recommended.

## Further information

This executive summary is available in the following languages: English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. The study, which is available in English, and the summaries can be downloaded at: <https://bit.ly/3NoNAkh>

More information on Policy Department research for AGRI: <https://research4committees.blog/agri/>



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