



TOOL 1.4

STAKEHOLDER MAPPING CHECKLIST

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

12 JUNE 2019

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The Evaluation Helpdesk is responsible for the evaluation function within the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) by providing guidance on the evaluation of RDPs and policies falling under the remit and guidance of DG AGRI's Unit C.4 'Monitoring and evaluation' of the European Commission (EC). In order to improve the evaluation of EU rural development policy the Evaluation Helpdesk supports all evaluation stakeholders, in particular DG AGRI, national authorities, RDP managing authorities and evaluators, through the development and dissemination of appropriate methodologies and tools; the collection and exchange of good practices; capacity building, and communicating with network members on evaluation related topics.

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ACRONYMS

| | |
|------|--|
| CAP | Common Agricultural Policy |
| CSP | CAP Strategic Plan |
| EC | European Commission |
| EU | European Union |
| MA | Managing Authority |
| 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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RATIONALE

Why is stakeholder involvement important?

The programming of the CAP Strategic Plan (CSP), and the preparation of its ex-ante evaluation and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)¹ in particular, requires the involvement of stakeholders, who can provide very important inputs as well as elements of better coordination and governance to the process. According to Article 111 of the legal proposal *COM (2018) 391 final (hereafter referred to as SPR)*, a Monitoring Committee should be established to involve all stakeholders. In addition, the synthesis of the ex-ante evaluations of RDPs 2014-2020 concludes that stakeholders should be involved in the ex-ante evaluation at an early stage². The importance of stakeholder involvement is also well rooted in the current 2014-2020 period for its value added in terms of enhancing the implementation of ESI Funds³.

Stakeholders are involved in three interlinked processes:

- the design of the CAP Strategic Plan
- the ex-ante assessment
- the Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Stakeholders are defined as "people or organisations that have a 'stake' in a matter, by being either involved in or influenced by it. In the rural development policy context, this covers all the groups concerned with policy delivery from the policy-makers to the (potential) project beneficiaries on the ground"⁴.

Stakeholder involvement in the rural development policy context means "engaging individuals ranging from policy designers to project beneficiaries in all stages of the policy cycle: from policy-making to better implementation on the ground"⁵.

Stakeholders can be involved in the ex-ante evaluation process **in different ways**⁶:

- Minimum recommended role: Providing evidence (data, information, judgements, etc.) for the evaluation via e-mail, interviews, surveys, focus groups, workshop, etc.
- Maximum role: The stakeholders are included in an Evaluation Steering Group as advisors and provide feedback on the suggested approach or invited to participate in the Monitoring Committee to examine the elements of the ex-ante assessment as foreseen in Article 111 (3c) and to provide opinion of the draft CSP Article 111 (4a) of the SPR proposal⁷.

Stakeholders can also be involved **in different stages** of the ex-ante evaluation process according to the needs of the evaluation (see Tool 1.1 'Indicative roadmap for the ex-ante evaluation and SEA of the CAP Strategic Plan') including the:

- appraisal of the assessment of needs, including the SWOT;

¹ Article 6.2 of the Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programs on the environment states that "Authorities with environmental responsibility and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme."

² Conclusions and recommendations of the "Synthesis of ex-ante evaluations of RDPs 2014-2020", https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/evaluation/rural-development-reports/ex-ante-rdp-synthesis-2014-2020_en

³ "Increasing stakeholder involvement in rural development implementation", ENRD Thematic Group Report, 2015, https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/tg_stakeholder-involvement_final-report.pdf

⁴ Definition provided by the ENRD: <https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/publi-enrd-rr-19-2015-en.pdf>

⁵ Definition provided by the ENRD: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/networking/stakeholder-involvement_en. In the context of the SEA, authorities with environmental responsibilities and the public are the stakeholders of the SEA consultation process (Article 6 of the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC).

⁶ According to Interact: <http://wiki.interact-eu.net/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=23756927>

⁷ Proposal for a Regulation COM(2018) 392 final.

- appraisal of the intervention strategy, targets and milestones;
- appraisal of monitoring, data collection and the implementation systems.

The good practice workshop, 'Getting prepared for the ex-ante evaluation of the CAP Strategic Plan', concluded that continuous interaction and coordination between evaluators, policy makers and other relevant stakeholders throughout the ex-ante evaluation process is a key factor for the success of the ex-ante evaluation⁸. The involvement of stakeholders as an iterative process from the beginning of the ex-ante process can serve to achieve better results. The workshop also highlighted the need to deal with multiple stakeholders and governance levels potentially through the creation of national steering groups for the purposes of both programming and evaluation. The SEA process can also strategically ensure active stakeholder engagement through dialogues and collaborative processes towards conflict reduction and win-win achievements.

This tool is part of the planning stage of the ex-ante evaluation and SEA. It aims to help Managing Authorities and evaluators in planning the involvement of relevant stakeholders by identifying who can be involved and how, as well as why this is vital for the process.

Therefore, this tool focuses on 4 specific aspects:

- **the basics:** understanding who is doing what in the ex-ante evaluation and SEA (Table 1);
- **the expertise:** how to set up an evaluation and SEA team which covers all of the required expertise (Table 2);
- **the process:** how to set up an interactive and participatory ex-ante evaluation process (Table 3);
- **the planning:** how to plan the stakeholder involvement related to the ex-ante process (Tables 4 and 5).

⁸ Good practice workshop report 'Getting prepared for the ex-ante evaluation of the CAP Strategic Plan': https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/evaluation/publications/getting-prepared-ex-ante-evaluation-cap-strategic-plan_en

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT

The basics: understanding who is doing what during the process of the ex-ante and SEA

The roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in the ex-ante evaluation and SEA process should be clearly defined and discussed. All parties should be aware of their roles and responsibilities from the beginning of the process.

The following table offers a non-exhaustive checklist of the key roles and responsibilities of potential stakeholders. Some of these responsibilities are stipulated in the SPR proposal and references to the relevant articles are provided in brackets. The rest are recommended roles and responsibilities for effective stakeholder involvement.

Table 1. Stakeholder checklist: roles and responsibilities

| Who is involved | What does the involvement entail |
|--|--|
| The Managing Authority | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carrying out the ex-ante evaluation to improve the quality of the design of the CAP Strategic Plan (Article 125 (1) SPR proposal). This would include the tendering and contracting tasks of the ex-ante evaluation. Ensuring that the ex-ante evaluation conforms to the evaluation and monitoring system and that it is accepted and submitted to the Commission (Article 110 (2d) SPR proposal). Organising and facilitating a transparent consultation process with socio-economic, environmental and institutional partners. This entails: the overall responsibility for providing information and organising adequate consultations on the draft plan, documenting the consultation process and taking the results of the consultations into account when preparing the CSP (before the adoption). Ensuring the CSP includes a summary of the ex-ante evaluation and the SEA (Article 103 (1) SPR proposal). |
| Relevant Implementing Agencies and Ministry departments, and Paying Agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing specific knowledge for the design of the CAP Strategic Plan, as well as serving to assist the Managing Authority in the design phase. The SEA Directive requires Environmental Authorities to be informed and consulted on the CAP Strategic Plan and the SEA environmental report from a very early stage (scoping). |
| Ex-ante evaluators and SEA experts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experts functionally independent of the authorities responsible for the CAP Strategic Plan design and implementation shall carry out evaluations (Article 126 (2) SPR proposal). Carrying out the ex-ante evaluation and SEA, ideally engaged from an early stage to make recommendations throughout the programming process. Devising stakeholders' consultation strategy appropriate to the chosen ex-ante evaluation method. |
| Economic, social and environmental partners including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - competent regional, local, and other relevant public authorities; - economic partners: sectoral representatives /organisations; - social partners: bodies representing the civil society, and where relevant - bodies responsible for promoting social inclusion, fundamental rights, gender equality and non-discrimination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involvement as partners in the preparation of the CAP Strategic Plan (Article 94 (3) SPR proposal). Involvement as partners (Article 94 (3) SPR proposal) in the CAP Strategic Plan and SEA stakeholder consultation (Article 95 (2) (c) SPR proposal), in working and/or focus groups, or getting involved in consultation and dialogue processes via forums, meetings, seminars, web blogs. Examining elements of the ex-ante assessment when included as members of the Monitoring Committee (Article 111 (2) and (3c) SPR proposal). Representing the views and interests of other significant stakeholders. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Territorial partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing information about specific territorial needs, constraints and perspectives. |
| Authorities of other EU funds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially providing support to ensure coordination and coherence with other European Union funds active in rural areas. |
| The European Commission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evaluation team can help to better understand and meet the European Commission's requirements or recommendations while the evaluation report can help the European Commission to better understand the CAP Strategic Plan's content. |
| Rural Networks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing knowledge, experience and access to/represent diverse groups of stakeholders. • Ensuring coordinated feedback/knowledge from advisory services and research in order to support the interactive innovation model. |
| Actors involved in the implementation of past/current rural developed programmes/ policies (e.g. project partners, ex-post evaluators, LAGs...) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing lessons from current/previous experiences, especially for the analysis of the current situation and the SWOT. • Providing experience on the needs and solutions that work best. |
| Broader public | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public consultations. |
| Authorities/actors from neighbouring countries | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transboundary consultations might be needed where the implementation of a plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment of another Member State. • Contributing information to the CSP environmental architecture so that the CAP delivers on key dimensions of sustainability challenges such as climate change, water use, air quality and biodiversity. |

The expertise: how to set up an ex-ante evaluation and SEA team covering all the required expertise

The ex-ante evaluation and SEA require several fields of expertise in order to cover all nine specific objectives of the new CAP. Therefore, both thematic and policy making knowledge is necessary, while coordination of all these fields of expertise is also important.

The following table offers a non-exhaustive checklist of the relevant expertise for the key evaluation actors, notably the Managing Authority (MA), evaluators and SEA experts. The checklist may be of use when starting to set-up the ex-ante evaluation and SEA process.

Table 2. Stakeholder checklist: the key actions for evaluation actors (MA, evaluators and SEA experts)

| Do not forget | Why |
|---|---|
| Establish an overall coordinator of the ex-ante evaluation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This ensures accountability and makes the whole process more manageable. In some cases, the Managing Authority and a relevant Ministry are jointly responsible for the ex-ante evaluation, but only one (usually the MA) should have the overall coordination. |
| Evaluators should include experts with thematic knowledge (e.g. linked to the nine specific objectives) as well as knowledge of policy making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new CAP is structured around nine specific objectives, the analysis of which may require specific thematic expertise (e.g. on food security, competitiveness, climate change, the environment, employment, social inclusion, entrepreneurship, food health). Since the ex-ante evaluation feeds into the programme design, knowledge of national and EU policy are important for interpreting the evaluation findings into useful recommendations for evidence-based policy making. |

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| SEA experts should include environmental experts as well as environmental policy specialists | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both thematic and policy making skills are required, the former for analysing the environmental effects of proposed interventions and the latter for linking the results of the SEA with the policy implications and drawing policy related conclusions. Environmental specialists are easier to find than environmental policy specialists. It can be two profiles or one person with both profiles. |
|--|---|

The process: how to set up an interactive and participatory process

Experience has shown that a participatory ex-ante evaluation process increases the ownership and the acceptance of the results by relevant stakeholders and helps to improve evaluation capacities. This can be realised through the integration of expertise and views of all relevant stakeholders, ensuring interaction and mutual learning at all stages of the process.

The following table offers a non-exhaustive checklist of useful aspects to consider in the ex-ante evaluation process.

Table 3. Stakeholder checklist: a participatory approach

| Suggested tips | Why |
|---|--|
| Establish a national/central Steering Group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To obtain input from different regions in multi-regional countries. To obtain input per CAP specific objective. |
| Start the ex-ante and SEA process as early as possible | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It takes time to organise the involvement of multiple stakeholders into the process. SEA environmental actors are required to be involved from the scoping stage (SEA Directive). |
| Make sure the ex-ante evaluation is an iterative and cooperative process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the tendering stage, cooperation between relevant departments and ministries can help to prepare more comprehensive tendering documentation. Throughout the process, continuous interaction between the Managing Authority and the evaluators/SEA experts (working as one team) can contribute to the: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing of common objectives for the development of the best possible CAP Strategic Plan; the evaluators' understanding of the needs of the territory and the perspective of the MA; the MA's understanding of the perspective and approaches of the evaluators; sharing the evaluation findings and developing solutions for improve the design of the CAP Strategic Plan. |
| A participatory evaluation approach is adopted with <u>all</u> stakeholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This helps to better integrate the CAP Strategic Plan with the views of environmental, economic and social partners. |
| The ex-ante evaluation adopts an empowerment approach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An evaluation team that acts as a 'trainer' for key CAP Strategic Plan stakeholders can help improve their capacity to plan, implement and evaluate their own interventions. |

The planning: how to plan stakeholder involvement related to the ex-ante and SEA process

To have an overview of each stakeholder, their role, approach, etc. one can develop a matrix using input from the checklists provided above. The matrix can help one to plan the involvement of stakeholders, including the phase/stage at which their involvement is required, the nature of their involvement (engagement), how they get involved (engagement methods) and the frequency of their contribution(s).

The matrix template is provided below and a non-exhaustive example of how to fill it follows. The matrix can be used with the following objectives:

- 1) To determine stakeholders (groups of stakeholders) (column 1);
- 2) To assess their involvement by mapping their interests/concerns (column 2);
- 3) To define the engagement strategy (approach, methods and frequency) (columns 4-6);
- 4) To measure the effectiveness of the strategy - the evaluators can compare the matrix with the actual involvement of stakeholders to assess whether the engagement strategy worked, i.e. whether stakeholders were involved as planned and the extent of their commitment;
- 5) It can also be adapted to include further elements as considered useful by the MA/evaluators, such as costs, expected outputs, gender representation, etc.

Table 4. Stakeholders matrix - template

| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
|--------------|--|--|---|--|-----------|
| Stakeholders | Area of expertise/influence (interests/concerns) | Phase/stage (e.g. CSP design, SEA, Ex-ante, all) | Engagement approach (e.g. inform, consult, collaborate) | Engagement methods (e.g. Steering Group, focus group etc.) | Frequency |
| | | | | | |
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Table 5. Stakeholders matrix - non exhaustive example

| Stakeholders | Area of influence (interests/concerns) | Phase/stage (e.g. CSP design, SEA, Ex-ante, all) | Engagement approach (e.g. inform, consult, collaborate) | Engagement methods (e.g. Steering Group, focus group etc.) | Frequency |
|---|---|--|--|---|--|
| National Office for Climate Change Sub-Directorate for the Environment of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Development of regional governments | Knowledge of environmental issues/challenges Consistency with environmental policy goals | SEA CSP design (Objectives 4, 5, 6) | Consult in CSP design Collaborate in SEA | SEA Steering group Consultations | Throughout the ex-ante process |
| The Spanish Network for Rural Development (REDR) and The National Network for Rural Development (REDER) | Representing the 252 LAGs and thus the interests of the local territories Bringing in information on local aspects related to innovation, competitiveness, employment, environment | CSP design, in particular in the SWOT and needs analysis (all Objectives) CSP design (design of interventions related to local development) | Inform on the situation analysis and the SWOT Consult on the assessment of needs Consult on the design of interventions related to local development | Thematic working groups in the CSP design Focus groups in the ex-ante Consultations | Thematic working groups meet once a month throughout the design process Two focus groups during the ex-ante |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <p>The National Institute of Agricultural Research and Technology</p> <p>The Regional Institute for Research and Innovation</p> | <p>Knowledge of research and innovation situation and challenges</p> <p>Bringing in information on regional aspects related to innovation</p> <p>Contributing information to the cross-cutting objective of fostering knowledge, innovation and digitalisation in agriculture and rural areas</p> | <p>CSP design, in particular in the SWOT and needs analysis (in particular the cross-cutting objective)</p> <p>Ex-ante assessment of internal coherence of interventions in relation to the cross-cutting objective</p> | <p>Consult in the CSP design</p> <p>Inform the ex-ante evaluators</p> | <p>Thematic working group on Research, Innovation and ICTs in the CSP design</p> <p>Focus groups in the ex-ante Consultations</p> | <p>Thematic working groups meet once a month throughout the design process</p> <p>Two focus groups during the ex-ante</p> |
| <p>The National Women's Institute and its 10 regional offices</p> | <p>Knowledge, experience and information on gender issues and gender equality</p> <p>Representing the interests of women in rural areas</p> <p>Knowledge of gender equality policy and related challenges</p> | <p>CSP design, in particular in the SWOT and needs analysis</p> <p>CSP design (consideration of gender issues in the design of interventions)</p> | <p>Consult in the CSP design</p> <p>Inform the ex-ante evaluators</p> | <p>Thematic working group on employment, education and social inclusion (members)</p> <p>Other TWGs (observers)</p> <p>Focus groups in the ex-ante Consultations</p> | <p>Thematic working groups meet once a month throughout the design process</p> <p>Two focus groups during the ex-ante</p> |
| <p>The Union of Small Farmers</p> <p>The Regional Institute of Research and Agrifood Development</p> <p>The Regional Agrifood Technological Institute</p> | <p>Knowledge, experience and information on issues related to the competitiveness of agriculture</p> <p>Representing the interests of main regional sectors (oil, wine, ovine and bovine)</p> | <p>CSP design, in particular in the SWOT and needs analysis</p> <p>CSP design (design of interventions related to SOs 1, 2 and 3)</p> | <p>Consult in the CSP design</p> <p>Inform the ex-ante evaluators</p> | <p>Thematic working group on Competitiveness of SMEs, including the agricultural sector (agri-food, forestry, livestock)</p> <p>Focus groups in the ex-ante Consultations</p> | <p>Thematic working groups meet once a month throughout the design process</p> <p>Two focus groups during the ex-ante</p> |
| <p>The National Association of Young farmers</p> | <p>Knowledge on issues related to youth unemployment in rural areas and other youth related issues</p> <p>Representing the interests of young farmers</p> | <p>CSP design, in particular in the SWOT and needs analysis</p> <p>CSP design (Objective 7)</p> <p>Ex-ante</p> | <p>Consult in CSP design</p> <p>Inform the ex-ante evaluators</p> | <p>Thematic working group on employment, education and social inclusion</p> <p>Focus groups in the ex-ante Consultations</p> | <p>Thematic working groups meet once a month throughout the design process</p> <p>Two focus groups during the ex-ante</p> |
| | | | | | |

Further information on stakeholder involvement

Some examples and recommendations of stakeholder involvement in the ex-ante and SEA processes are provided below:

Early involvement of stakeholders in the Welsh RDP 2014-2020

SEA and ex-ante of the Welsh Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 is notable for the early and effective engagement with stakeholders during the scoping stage. This led to the consideration of all relevant stakeholder interests, including environment and climate change, across the SEA. At the same time, the ex-ante evaluation process was grounded on solid co-operation between the ex-ante evaluation team and key officials in the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) and the Welsh Government.

<https://gov.wales/strategic-environmental-assessment-environmental-report-rural-development-plan-wales-2014-2020>

Good practice recommendations on public participation

Good practice recommendations on how to improve public participation in SEA is provided by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Protocol on SEA) to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention).

https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/eia/Publications/2016/Good_Practice_Recommendations_on_Public_Participation_in_Strategic_Environmental_Assessment/1514364_E_Espoo_web.pdf

Good practice identified in the synthesis of ex-ante evaluations of RDPs 2014-2020

A **participatory approach** involving stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation planning and implementation promoted ownership and supported the necessary data collection inter alia in Spain (RDP Aragon), Malta and Germany (Brandenburg & Berlin, Baden-Württemberg RDPs).

Close coordination between ex-ante, SEA and RDP preparation in Estonia enabled an engagement of the ex-ante evaluator in the preparation and drafting of each part of the RDP. Chapters were completed and evaluated as an on-going process. Also, in UK-England there was close coordination of the ex-ante evaluation, the SEA and the RDP from the start through regular team meetings, workshops, stakeholder meetings and regular written feedback. This contributed to make the ex-ante process smooth and effective while including the opinions of all relevant stakeholders on a timely basis.

https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/evaluation/rural-development-reports/2015/ex_ante_rdp_synthesis_2014_2020/fulltext_en.pdf

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