



# MEF4CAP

## Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks for the Common Agricultural Policy

### Policy Brief WP 1: Enhanced Monitoring and Evaluation for a reformed CAP

#### Background

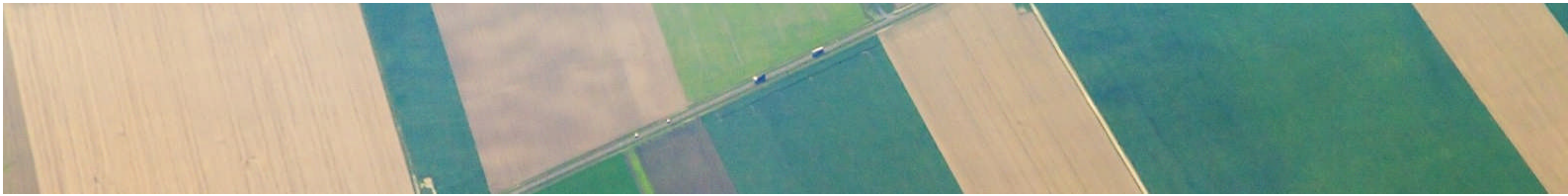
The EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has increasingly evolved to reflect global policy and societal demands. This has resulted in the widening of its objectives to better accommodate the broad sustainability agenda. This is reflected in the most recent developments in reforming the CAP for the period 2023-27. International considerations such as the Paris Climate Agreement and the United Nations SDGs, as well as associated EU policy initiatives have provided some of the motivation for the revision of the CAP's objectives. The modified CAP reflects a widening of its focus to better reflect the core concerns of economic, social and environmental sustainability in agriculture. This extension of its objectives was particularly a reflection of the recognition that the CAP needed to do more in the area of the environment and sustainability generally. As such there has been a shift away from investigating compliance with regulations or required actions, towards the performance or achievement of specific objectives in the form of policy targets or goals through the Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (PMEF). This should facilitate an improved process to track progress towards improved sustainability performance, and the impact of the CAP in this regard.

#### Research approach

The MEF4CAP project set out to identify important themes for future CAP monitoring and evaluation. In particular, the project sought to ascertain how these needs could be better addressed using efficiencies created by technical developments in data collection and management. Informed by a comprehensive literature review undertaken in WP1, recent policy initiatives such as the European Green Deal and the Farm to Fork strategy alongside broad stakeholder engagement resulted in the identification of relevant sustainability themes to help determine the types of indicators that will be needed for future CAP monitoring and evaluation. This resulted in the development of a preliminary wish list of sustainability indicators across economic, environmental and social dimensions. In order to support indicator design the feasibility of collecting relevant data, and the means to collect it, is explored in subsequent work packages. This iterative process was used to inform the development of a project roadmap with proposals on how data collection can be enhanced to better measure agricultural sustainability. This will contribute to an outcome where new data can support the development of more targeted policies and help to refine its objectives and evaluate its implementation.

#### Findings

The new delivery model of the CAP (2023-27) facilitates a more bespoke approach to policy design for EU Member States (MS) through their respective strategic plans (SPs). These SPs set out an assessment of MS needs, the specific CAP objectives to be addressed, and the intervention strategies to be used, including the quantitative targets to measure achievement with respect to these objectives. However, whilst SPs aim to take account of more local conditions, the delivery of the broad overall CAP objectives at EU level still requires some commonality across MS in the design of relevant indicators to track sustainability progress. Therefore, the range of indicators required will need to reflect emerging environmental and societal policy goals.



WP1 details the relevance of data collection for monitoring and evaluation purposes, particularly in the context of changes that are being made to the administration of the CAP and the resulting implications of such changes for administrators, particularly in respect of their data requirements. This work package found that, with a few exceptions, there is already good provision of data collection for economic indicators and that data collection for social indicators will require some further development. However, the greatest effort that will be required is to gather data to develop environmental indicators. This is largely a reflection of the historical emphasis of the CAP on economic and social objectives. The Farm to Fork strategy provides much guidance on emerging thematic areas of importance, in particular indicating the main targets concerning various agricultural practices, which are to be achieved by 2030, namely: a reduction in the use of pesticides; reduction in excess nutrient use; reduction in antimicrobial use as well as popularisation of organic farming.

Achieving behavioural change towards improved sustainability will ultimately require actions at farm level on the part of the EU's 10 million farmers. An assessment of progress in this regard will require the collection of relevant data by national administrators (governments, paying agencies etc.). Developments in remote sensing and in data sharing technologies, mean that data collection, particularly for environmental data should be more feasible than in the past. Similarly, improvements in terms of data management and integration should reduce the cost of data collection and the associated administrative burden faced by those providing data (farmers). Improved data interoperability will be a prerequisite to more efficient data collection. A key element of focus will be the need to secure farmer co-operation in the provision of data. To this end, obstacles to data collection and integration relating to trust, privacy, sensitivity and potential regulatory and legal impediments should be borne in mind.

This scene setting workpackage is important in that it provides a rationale for assembling a more comprehensive set of data representative of farms across the EU. This data will represent an amalgamation of data from a range of sources. The aggregation of these data sources will increase the capacity of policy makers to design, evaluate and refine policies relating to agriculture. The data can also be used to deliver direct benefits to farmers, such as the measurement of the sustainability of their activities and the identification of areas where farmers could target their efforts to improve farm productivity and profitability or deliver further desirable environmental outcomes.

### **Indicator wish list**

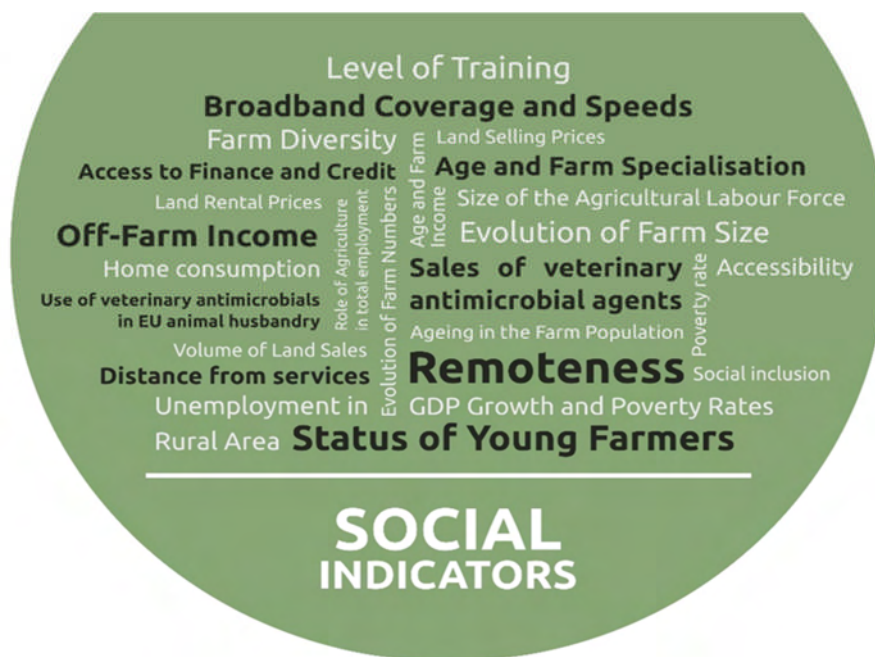
A list of close to 90 indicator topics was developed. They are categorised in a number of ways. Firstly, they are associated with each of the three strands of sustainability. Secondly, they are associated with the CAP objective to which they are most relevant (bearing in mind that the indicator may be cross cutting). Thirdly, they are classified as input, output, result, context or impact indicators. And finally, informed by policy developments and stakeholder perspectives, indicators are categorised in terms of priority needs. Those indicators deemed to be of a lower priority are considered as such for a number of reasons, i.e., they may already be in existence or conversely may be considered too difficult to calculate given existing data structures and mechanisms. A refined indicator list is thus proposed. An assessment of data needs and the feasibility of collection through e.g. FADN/FSDN, administrative sources, remote sensing techniques and/or; other digital technologies is contained in subsequent project work packages. Further detail on the preliminary indicator wish list is contained in the following infographics across environmental, economic and social dimensions. Those displayed in black text reflect the shortened indicator list with those in white reflective of the longer indicator list.

Pollinators  
 Renewable energy  
 Desertification  
 Grassland Butterflies Index  
 Precision Farming  
 Soil Compaction  
 Farm landscape features and their loss  
 Sealed Soils  
 Crop Rotation  
 Salinisation  
**GHGs**  
 Tillage Management  
 P Balance  
 Against Erosion  
 Soil Biodiversity Loss  
**Soil Cover**  
 Farmland Bird Index  
**Ammonia**  
 Soil Organic Matter Loss  
 Soil Adoption of biocontrol  
 Erosion  
 Presence of Soil Contamination  
**N Use Efficiency**  
 high-nature-value farming  
 N Balance  
 Pesticide Use  
 P Use Efficiency  
 Soil Degradation  
**Carbon Sequestration**

## ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS

Generational Renewal  
 Use of futures markets  
 Farm workForce Non-Salaried  
**Co-operation among farmers**  
 Farm incomes relative to incomes in the broader economy  
 Age structure of farm employees  
 Market transparency  
**Volatility in farm income**  
 Concentration in the farm sector  
 Farm Labour Productivity  
 Farm Employment by Gender  
 Use of blockchain in the foodchain  
**Technology Adoption**  
 Agricultural Productivity Growth  
 Share of support in farm income  
 Farm Employment by Gender  
 Distribution of farm income support  
**Farm Assets and Liabilities**  
 Short supply chains (local processing)  
 Use of contracts by crop  
 Farm workForce Salaried  
**Non-farm Income of farmers**  
 Total Factor Productivity and Sectoral Productivity Growth  
 Farm Structural Change and Income  
**Organic Production**  
 Geographical Indications  
**Skills and qualifications of farm employees**  
 Underemployment  
 Distribution of value added in the food chain

## ECONOMIC INDICATORS



## WP1 Recommendations

- Consideration should be given to the design of appropriate sustainability indicators to comprehensively assess the broadening CAP environmental and social objectives. This is an iterative process and should be reflective of emerging stakeholder needs and cognisant of expert input and ongoing technological developments.
- An exploration of the feasibility of adopting new technologies and processes to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of data collection and integration to improve sustainability metrics is required to increase the capacity of policy makers to design, evaluate and refine the CAP and meet the needs of MS administrators and stakeholders.
- It is imperative that further consideration be given to the potential costs and benefits of collecting additional data from the perspectives of both providers and administrators for sustainability measurement, including an investigation of challenges around trust, privacy and potential regulatory and legal impediments, and potential solutions.

**MEF4CAP**

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