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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION

of the CAP's impact on knowledge exchange and advisory activities

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The evaluation **assessed the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU value added** of relevant CAP instruments and measures¹ and their impact on knowledge exchange, advisory activities and innovation in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas in the EU-28 from 2014-2020.

The evaluation faced a number of inherent **challenges and limitations**, in particular given the lack of certain data (e.g. on the uptake of measures) and the lack of impact indicators (e.g. on changes in agricultural practices). Its focus was thus on policy outcome in terms of trainings, advisory and cooperation activities rather than on the impact on farming sustainability and innovation.

The evaluation shows that the relevant CAP **instruments and measures are effective in addressing the objective** of creating knowledge exchange, fostering advisory activities and innovation and helping build knowledge, in particular on technology, cross-compliance and environmental sustainability. The level of basic training farmers received increased from 12% in 2010 to 23% in 2016. Advisory services contribute to farmers' lifelong learning, but Member States' responses to the obligation to establish a Farm Advisory System have varied in scale and over time. The evaluation confirms that CAP instruments and measures contribute to Member State Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS).

A **considerable drawback of the policy is its limited uptake**, reaching about 10% of EU farm holdings. 1.22 million farmers were trained up to 2020 (42% of the target) and the number of farmers receiving advice increased from 178 500 in 2007-2013 to 643 741 in 2014-2020, 54% of the target.

Implementation of the CAP measures for knowledge exchange, advisory activities and innovation suffered from delays and low spending due to administrative burden. The average execution rate for all measures combined amounted to 27% at the end of 2020. Spending rates excluding national top-ups at the end of 2020 stood at 24% for knowledge transfer, 31% for advisory services and 29% for cooperation. Uptake of the measures was low due to farmers' lack of interest and the lack of opportunity costs for them, but participating farmers considered the measures useful.

The CAP policy on knowledge exchange and advisory activities is relevant as it enables the identified needs to be met in the various areas covered. The policy is deemed to have a significant role in helping farmers make the transition towards a green and sustainable agricultural sector.

Coherence between the EU measures on knowledge exchange, advisory activities and innovation is lacking. Advisory services supported through the Farm Advisory System and rural development are managed by different authorities and, in regional Member States, by authorities with different jurisdictional powers and objectives. This produces a lack of coherence between the two policy instruments. As a result, AKISs are not functioning as they should do.

By fostering knowledge exchange, advice and innovation, the CAP provides EU added value, thus enabling additional achievements (above and beyond what would have been achieved with national budgets alone) and extended services. CAP instruments and measures have created considerable added value in relation to innovation, for example EIP-AGRI, through the approach allowing to co-create bottom-up innovation.

¹ Set out under Regulations (EU) No 1305/2013, No 1306/2013, No 1308/2013 and No 1307/2013.