



European  
Commission

# The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the Common Agricultural Policy

## 2014–2020

*Agriculture  
and Rural  
Development*

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# 1

## Introduction — A new Common Agricultural Policy for 2014–2020

For more than 50 years, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has been the European Union's most important common policy. The main objectives of the CAP set out in the Treaty of Rome have remained relevant over the years. However, the CAP itself has evolved and the reform path introduced in the early 1990s has led to a new policy structure reflecting the changing socioeconomic, environmental and political circumstances affecting EU agriculture, and changes in the agricultural, food and forestry sectors as well as in rural areas.

In 2013, the CAP underwent another important reform. While the primary objective of this reform was to respond to the evolving challenges facing the agricultural sector, the CAP was also adapted to better contribute to the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy by fostering smart, sustainable and inclusive growth <sup>(1)</sup>.

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<sup>(1)</sup> Europe 2020 is the EU's growth strategy for the coming decade. In a changing world, the EU shall become a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. These three mutually reinforcing priorities should help the EU and the Member States deliver high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion.



In this context, three main objectives have been set for the CAP 2014–2020 <sup>(2)</sup>, and the existing CAP instruments had to be adapted in order to fulfil these long-term policy objectives:

- ➔ viable food production: to contribute to food security by enhancing the competitiveness of EU agriculture while providing the means to address the challenges faced by the sector related to market disruptions and the functioning of the food chain;
- ➔ sustainable management of natural resources and climate action: to ensure the long-term sustainability and potential of EU agriculture by safeguarding the natural resources on which agricultural production depends;
- ➔ balanced territorial development: to contribute to the socioeconomic development of rural areas, while fostering the right conditions for safeguarding structural diversity throughout the EU.

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<sup>(2)</sup> Article 110(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 352/78, (EC) No 165/94, (EC) No 2799/98, (EC) No 814/2000, (EC) No 1290/2005 and (EC) No 485/2008 (OJ L 347 of 20.12.2013, p. 1.).





The CAP represents a large, although over the years steadily declining, part of the EU budget — 37.7 % of total EU expenditure planned for 2014–2020 — spent in three different ways.

- (1) Income support for farmers and assistance for complying with sustainable agricultural practices: farmers receive direct payments, provided they live up to strict standards relating to food safety, environmental protection and animal health and welfare. These payments account for approximately 70 % of the CAP budget. Under the 2013 reform, 30 % of direct payments will be linked to European farmers' compliance with sustainable agricultural practices which are beneficial to soil quality, biodiversity and the environment in general, such as crop diversification, the maintenance of permanent grassland or the preservation of ecological areas on farms.
- (2) Market-support measures: in the form of safety-net provisions, these measures come into play mainly when adverse conditions tend to destabilise markets. Payments for these measures account for approximately 5 % of the CAP budget.



Income and market-support measures form the so-called 'Pillar I' of the CAP.

(3) Rural development programmes (RDPs): these measures are based on an in-depth analysis of the programming area and a selection of measures which are intended to help farmers modernise their farms and become more competitive, protect the environment and contribute to the diversification of farming and non-farming activities and the vitality of rural communities.

These programmes form 'Pillar II' of the CAP. They are multiannual, are partly financed by the Member States and account for nearly 25 % of the CAP budget.

As part of the CAP, a new monitoring and evaluation framework has been set up. It will provide to administrations, and to all those interested in agriculture and rural development, key information on the CAP implementation, on its results and on its impacts. It will quantify the actions in the different Member States, describe their achievements, highlight which instruments are most efficient and verify how well objectives have been reached.

# 2

## Why is monitoring and evaluation needed?

During our mandate the Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development shall focus on ‘regularly monitoring the benefit of action at EU level, reviewing the effectiveness of spending programmes and reporting back on the performance of the programmes and the results achieved’.

Jean-Claude Juncker  
President of the European Commission

Monitoring and evaluation results generate valuable information which can be used for different purposes. These results:

- ➔ provide a sound analytical basis for future policy design by providing an understanding about the effectiveness of measures and interventions and the achievement of the objectives set, thus supporting policy developments;
- ➔ help in setting policy and programme objectives, and are then used to measure how these objectives are met in the long term;
- ➔ contribute to the accountability of public spending, thereby playing an important role in responding to citizens’ concerns and questions as regards the use of taxpayers’ money.





# What is monitoring and evaluation all about?

Monitoring and evaluation are complementary but different exercises.

- ➔ Monitoring is a continuous task of reviewing information and systematic stocktaking of budgetary inputs and financed activities. It generates quantitative data and gives feedback on the implementation of instruments and measures, facilitating corrections of deviations from operational and specific objectives. Monitoring thus contributes to making public spending accountable and provides valuable information on programme management.
- ➔ Evaluation, on the other hand, involves a judgement of interventions according to the results, impacts and needs they aim to satisfy. It is a systematic tool which provides evidence for decision-making and improves effectiveness, usefulness and efficiency. Evaluation contributes to transparency, learning and accountability. Therefore it allows lessons to be drawn for the future about what works, in which circumstances and why (or why not).

## The purpose of carrying out evaluations

To contribute to the design of interventions  
To assist in the efficient allocation of resources  
To improve the quality of interventions  
To report on the achievements of interventions

—————➔ Performance  
—————➔ Accountability  
—————➔ Efficiency  
—————➔ Transparency

## **Aim of evaluations**

**To provide useful and timely conclusions and policy recommendations**

## **An example**

### **Evaluation of the European school fruit scheme**

According to the evaluation, the school fruit scheme is an adequate tool for increasing children's fruit and vegetable consumption. The analysis of potential success factors of the scheme has shown that a wide range of different fruit, a high frequency of offering fruit and vegetables and free distribution have contributed to the positive impact. It can be concluded that the scheme is highly relevant for increasing children's fruit and vegetable consumption in the short run in order to achieve healthier nutritional choices in the long run.

### **Main recommendations**

- ➔ A high continuity of distribution ( $\geq 35$  school weeks) should be aimed at, as the evaluation analysis has shown that longer participation is more likely to make a higher sustainable impact with respect to improving the eating habits of children.
- ➔ A frequency of offering fruit and vegetables at least three times a week seems to be optimal for the effectiveness of the scheme.
- ➔ A choice of products of at least 5 to 10 different fruit and vegetables should be offered in order to keep the children's interests.

## **Aim of monitoring**

**To demonstrate the progress on the implementation of the policy**

The Commission is monitoring today's developments in agricultural markets, rural development and the use of CAP funds by means of a variety of data sources and instruments, such as:

- ➔ the Common Monitoring and Evaluation System (CMES) for rural development;
- ➔ the Clearance Audit Trail System (CATS); and
- ➔ notifications and reports sent by Member States to the Commission.



# What is new under the monitoring and evaluation framework of the CAP 2014–2020?



For the first time the monitoring and evaluation framework will cover the whole CAP (both pillars). The framework has undergone some changes in terms of promoting simplification and coherence while still maintaining an in-depth coverage of policy interventions.

The monitoring and evaluation framework for the CAP 2014–2020 is set out by EU regulations at different levels.

- ➔ The horizontal regulation (Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013, Article 110) establishes a common monitoring and evaluation framework with a view to measuring the performance of the CAP. It covers all instruments related to the monitoring and evaluation of CAP measures and in particular direct payments, market measures and rural development measures.





More specifically, for Pillar II (rural development), the monitoring and evaluation system is set out by:

- the common provisions regulation (Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013) <sup>(3)</sup>, which defines the common monitoring and evaluation elements for the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI); and
- the rural development regulation (Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013) <sup>(4)</sup>, which addresses the specificities for the rural development programmes.

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<sup>(3)</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 320).

<sup>(4)</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 487).





Generally these regulations should be considered together since the respective provisions complement each other <sup>(5)</sup>. The performance of the CAP measures shall be assessed in relation to the three general objectives of the CAP (i.e. viable food production, sustainable management of natural resources and climate action, and balanced territorial development) and, in the case of Pillar II, in relation to the thematic objectives for the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

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<sup>(5)</sup> See, for further details, Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 834/2014 of 22 July 2014 laying down rules for the application of the common monitoring and evaluation framework of the common agricultural policy and Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 808/2014 of 17 July 2014 laying down rules for the application of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

# 3

## Approach to monitoring and evaluation



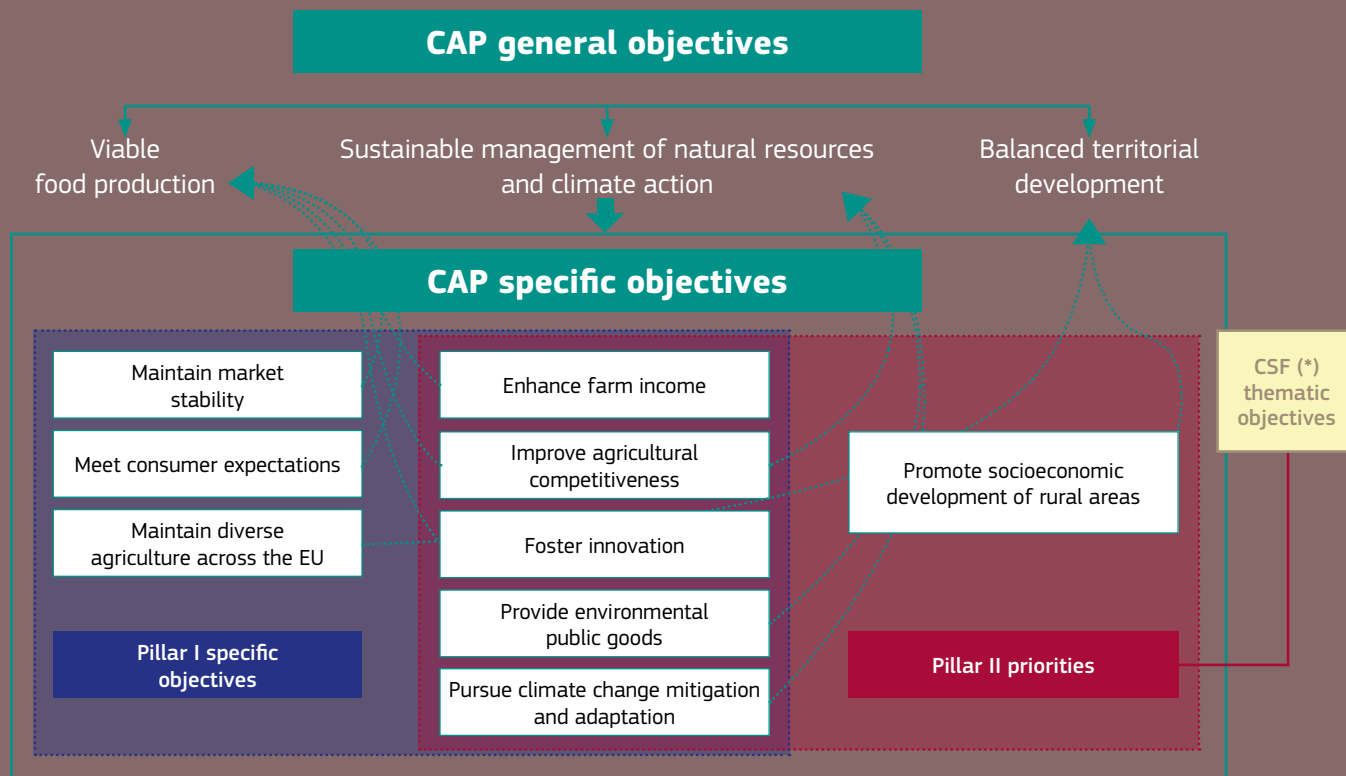
In order to allow proper monitoring and evaluation, the objectives of the policy need to be linked to the measures envisaged. In this context, the general objectives of the CAP are broken down into specific objectives, some of which are common to Pillar I (income support and market support) and II (rural development), whereas others are linked either to Pillar I or to Pillar II. A picture on how the general objectives are related to specific objectives is presented in Figure 1.

Pillar I instruments contribute to the achievement of specific objectives and finally of the CAP's general objectives. The direct payments support and stabilise farmers' incomes, improve competitiveness and contribute to the provision of environmental public goods, climate change mitigation and adaptation. Market measures allow for a safety net in times of market disturbances or crises, hence maintaining market stability, and help meet consumer expectations.

For Pillar II there are six priorities under which the measures are programmed in order to contribute to the objectives of the policy. There is an overall priority, i.e. fostering knowledge transfer and innovation, and three cross-cutting objectives (innovation, environment, climate change mitigation and adaptation) relevant to all the other five priorities.



**FIGURE 1:** General and specific objectives of the CAP



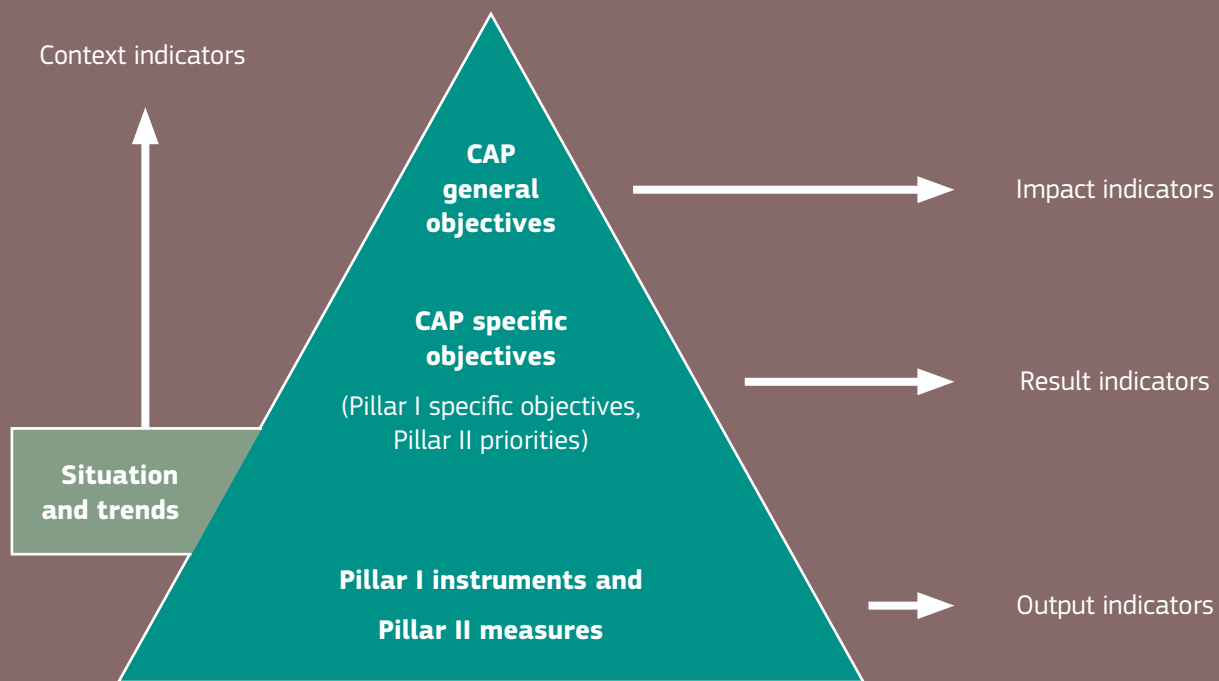
(\*) CSF: Common strategic framework including the European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund, Cohesion Fund, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and European Maritime and Fisheries Funds.

## Indicators

In general, an indicator is a tool to measure the achievement of an objective, e.g. a resource mobilised, an output accomplished or an effect obtained, or to describe the context (economic, social or environmental). The information provided by an indicator is a datum used to measure facts or opinions. Indicators are aggregates of data that allow quantification (and simplification) of phenomena.



**FIGURE 2:** Indicator hierarchy







Indicators exist at three different levels: output indicators give the direct ‘product’ of the measure (e.g. 50 energy-saving investments funded through a measure); result indicators give the direct, immediate effect of the measure/programme (e.g. 500 jobs created as a result of the investment measure). Impact indicators go beyond the direct, immediate effect but look at the longer term (e.g. rural unemployment rate). Overall, impact indicators are linked to the general objectives of the CAP, result indicators to the specific objectives and output indicators to individual policy interventions. Finally, there is a set of context indicators, which provide information on general trends of economy, state of the environment, general climate indicators, agricultural and rural statistics, etc. Together the indicators can be considered as the ‘dashboard’ of the CAP policy, giving a set of essential information. But like the speedometer in our car, which does not indicate whether driving at 50 km/h is too much or not, the CAP indicator values also need to be judged against their context. In other words, the indicators are the starting point from which the evaluators judge the CAP policy. Using this system, together with the Member States, the Commission will be able to measure the size of the CAP and assess if it is well designed. Member States and the Commission will regularly meet to exchange experiences and good practices in the first and second pillars.

# 4

## Carrying out monitoring and evaluation

Who is actually involved in monitoring and evaluation?

The monitoring and evaluation framework includes different actors, e.g. Member States, managing authorities and paying agencies (acting by/on behalf of the Member States) and Commission services with various responsibilities.

Evaluations of Pillar I measures are carried out by independent external contractors under the responsibility of the Commission services on the basis of a multiannual evaluation plan. The independent external contractor carries out the evaluation according to the terms of references under supervision of a steering group in a given, contractually fixed time period.


For Pillar II, evaluations are carried out by/on behalf of the Member States while the synthesis of these evaluations at EU level is done under the responsibility of the Commission services.



This organisational set-up largely corresponds to the practice of the period 2007–13, with the exception of the novelty of measuring the impact of the CAP as a whole (i.e. both pillars combined to provide a clear picture). In order to organise future evaluations in the most efficient way, they have been structured thematically according to the general objectives of the CAP.

The CAP is implemented in shared management. This means that the information used is largely obtained from Member States. When designing the monitoring and evaluation framework, particular attention was paid to the issues of proportionality, simplification and a reduction of the administrative burden. As a result, the total number of indicators has been limited, and emphasis has been put on the use of indicators based, to the extent possible, on existing, well-established data sources, as well as reuse of information already provided by Member States. The use of these well-established data sources also contributes to the reliability of the indicators.





## Collection of information and data sources

As part of the monitoring and evaluation framework for the CAP 2014–2020, a set of indicators has been defined to support the assessment of the performance of the CAP. There is a wide range of data sources used for the overall CAP monitoring and evaluation framework, e.g. communications and notifications from Member States, official Eurostat statistics, data collected by the European Environmental Agency, World Bank data, etc.

For each of the indicators used, a detailed information sheet has been produced explaining the exact data definition, data source, level of geographical detail, reporting frequency and delay, etc. to make sure that all data providers work on the same basis and that data users understand what the data represent.





# 5

## The outcomes of the monitoring and evaluation framework for 2014–2020

### Reporting

In order to monitor the policy's effectiveness against its objectives and to obtain accountability and transparency throughout the process, the Commission will report to the European Parliament and to the Council in accordance with Article 318 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

#### **Article 318 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union**

'The Commission shall also submit to the European Parliament and to the Council an evaluation report on the Union's finances based on the results achieved, in particular in relation to the indications given by the European Parliament and the Council pursuant to Article 319.'



The first report to the European Parliament and to the Council on monitoring and evaluation of the CAP 2014–2020 in 2018 will focus on policy implementation and first results. A more complete assessment of the impact of the CAP is expected by 2021. A timeline with all key dates for reporting is presented in Figure 3. Specifically for Pillar II, Member States will submit each year, starting from 2016 and until 2024, an annual implementation report (AIR) on the RDP implementation of the previous calendar year. In 2017 and 2019, an enhanced AIR will be submitted covering additional information on the RDP in relation to the implementation of the partnership agreement, the document set at Member State level covering all ESI Funds in order to ensure alignment with the Europe 2020 strategy as well as the fund-specific objectives <sup>(6)</sup>.

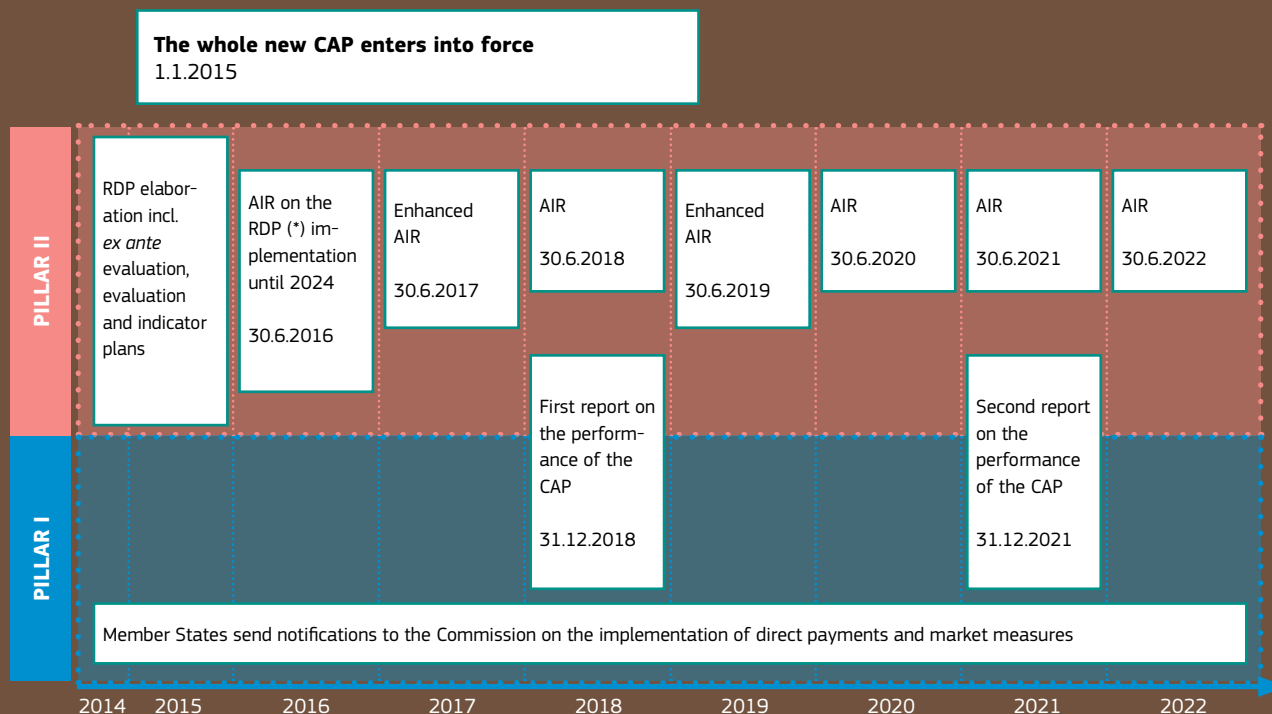
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<sup>(6)</sup> 'Partnership agreement' means a document prepared by a Member State with the involvement of partners in line with the multilevel governance approach, which sets out a Member State's strategy, priorities and arrangements for using the ESI Funds in an effective and efficient way so as to pursue the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, and which is approved by the Commission following assessment and dialogue with the Member State concerned.

In parallel, it is envisaged that the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development will regularly publish indicator information on the state of the CAP.

**FIGURE 3:** Reporting requirements in the CAP

## Key steps in reporting on the performance of the CAP 2014–2020



(\*) Each year Member States will submit the AIR, starting from 2016 until 2024, on the RDP implementation of the previous calendar year. The report submitted in 2016 shall cover the calendar years 2014 and 2015.



# Evaluations

Evaluation results are communicated in such a way that they ensure the maximum use of the results and meet the needs of stakeholders, e.g. the European Parliament, the Council and the European Court of Auditors. Evaluation results are communicated effectively to all relevant decision-makers and other interested stakeholders. Moreover, the evaluation results are also made publicly available <sup>(7)</sup> and targeted summary information facilitating communication with the general public is published on the following websites of the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development.

## **Evaluation reports — Market and income policies**

[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/evaluation/market-and-income-reports/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/evaluation/market-and-income-reports/index_en.htm)

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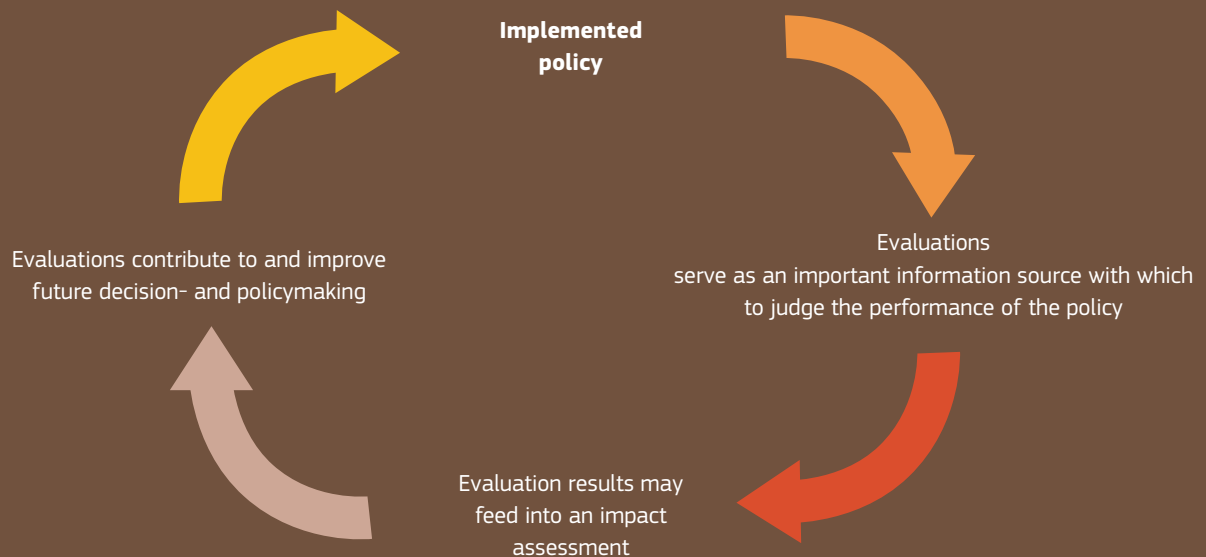
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<sup>(7)</sup> Unless a case for confidentiality can be made under one of the exceptions provided for in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of Council of 30 May 2001.

# Use of evaluation results

Evaluations serve as an important information source with which to judge the performance of the policy. The conclusions and recommendations from conducted evaluations may feed into an impact assessment as well as contribute to and improve future decision- and policymaking (see Figure 4).

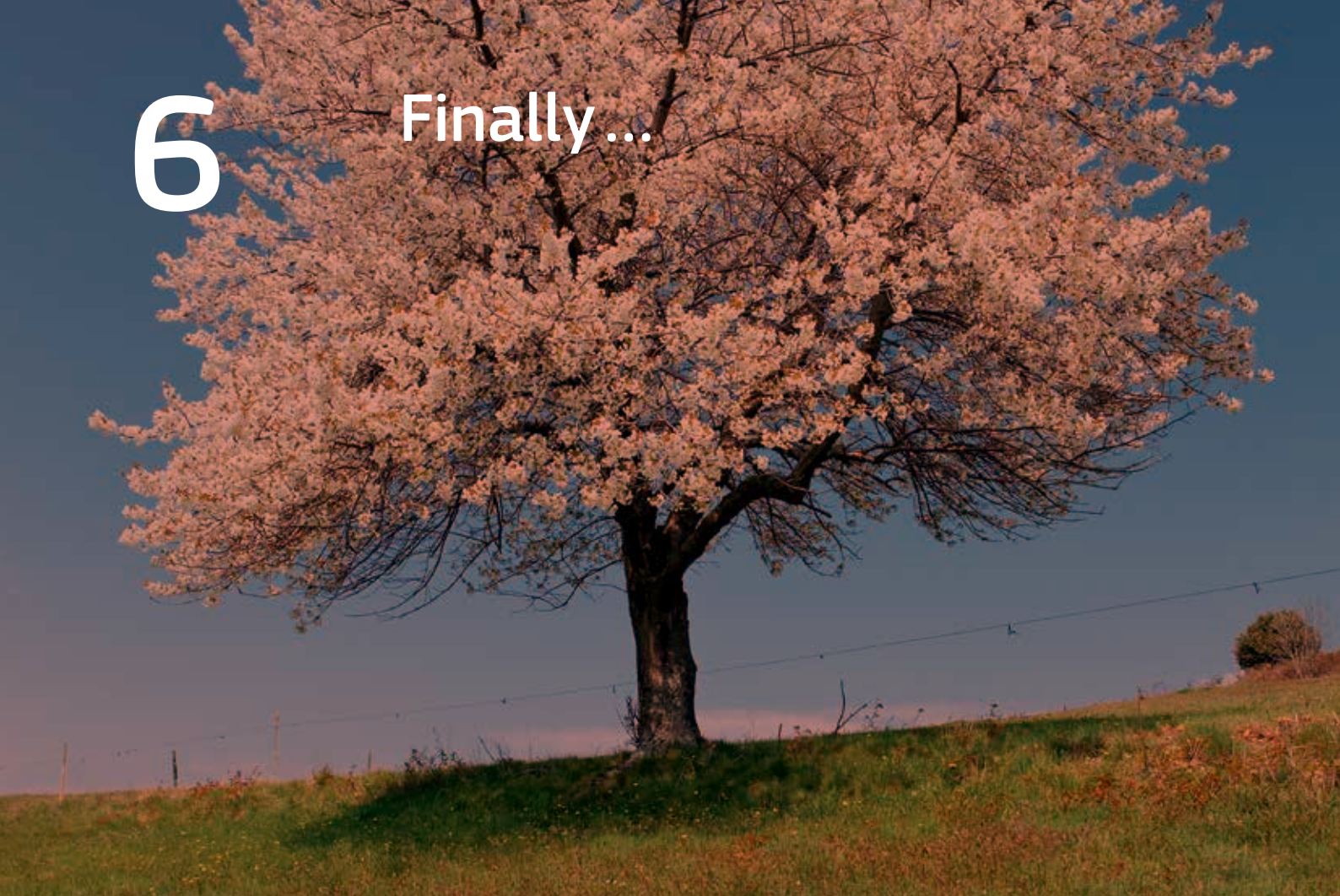
**FIGURE 4:** Use of evaluation results





# 6

## Finally ...



... monitoring and evaluation are not mere legal requirements but also vital contributions to improving future decision- and policymaking. Hence the monitoring and evaluation framework of the CAP 2014–2020 has been designed to provide useful guidance which should help all the actors involved, on the basis of their responsibility, to maintain a high standard of policy implementation to contribute to the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy.

The framework presents the state of play with regard to the currently applicable legislation. Since policy is constantly evolving, the framework will improve in parallel and adapt to tackle future challenges. Nevertheless, the efforts required need to be proportional, timely and used effectively to improve policy and programme design and implementation.



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