

Study on ‘Simplification and administrative burden for farmers and other beneficiaries under the CAP’

Marco Mazzei, European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP

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Context

- **Study on simplification and administrative burden for farmers and other beneficiaries under the CAP**
 - conducted between 03/2024 and 03/2025 by the EU CAP Network supported by the [European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP](#), under the guidance of DG AGRI's Unit A.3 (Policy Performance) of the European Commission (EC).
 - Coordinated by Marco Mazzei & Carlotta Valli
 - Contact: evaluation@eucapnetwork.eu



Background

The study drew from the results of the EC's '**Targeted Consultation on simplification**' (TC) and ran in parallel with the EC's '**simplification package**'.

Objectives:

1. Capture beneficiaries' and advisory services' perspective on key sources of administrative burden and difficulties related to compliance with CAP requirements.
2. Assess the burden for beneficiaries and identify burden stemming from EU level CAP legislation and MS implementation choices, including possible gold-plating.
3. Draw conclusions on the **most important simplification actions/areas** from the CAP support beneficiaries' perspective.

Simplification: a definition

Simplification is “The minimisation of costs that are not strictly necessary for the achievement of the objectives of the CAP and the adoption of measures that reduce administrative burden for the administration and beneficiaries” (source: Use of factors of success in evaluation).

To be considered that

- ✓ Simplification actions illustrated in the study are **based on the perception and experience of respondents** at a specific point in time
- ✓ MS authorities and stakeholders more frequently discussed **solutions pertaining to their area of competence** (CSP implementation) rather than proposing changes to EU regulatory framework



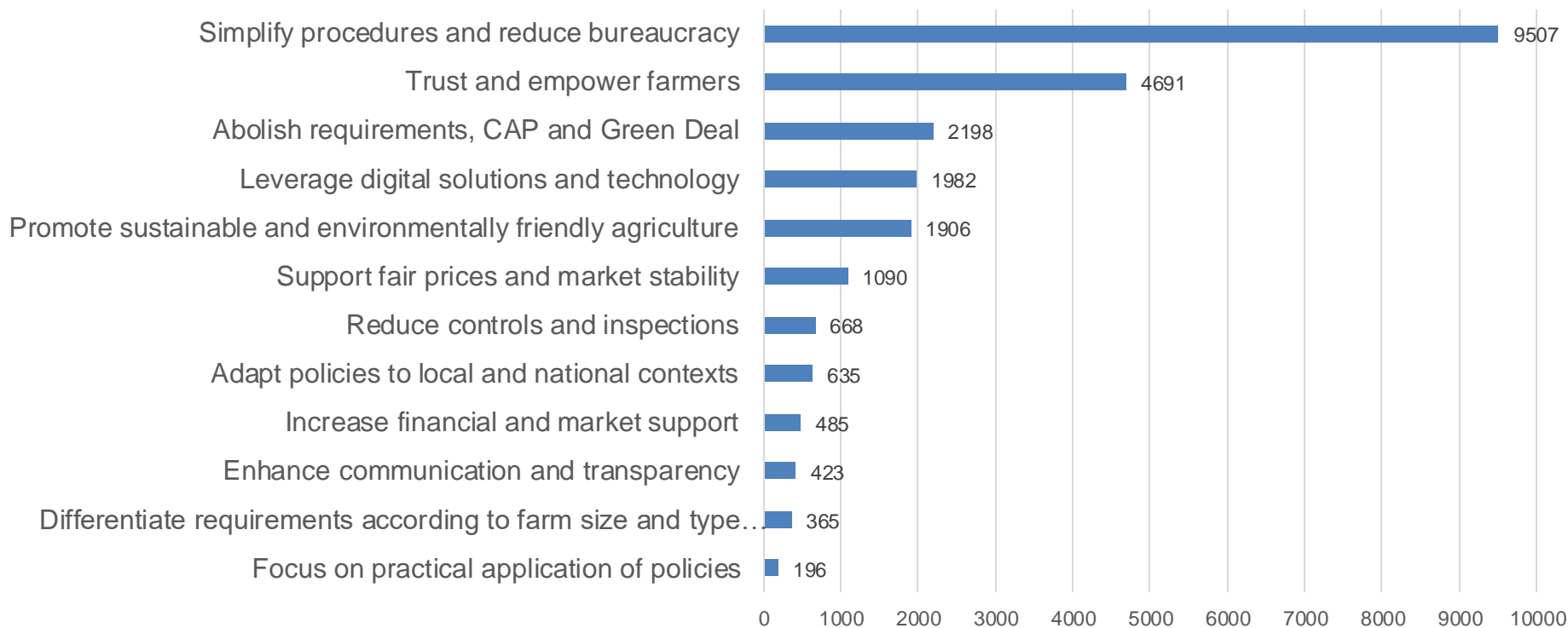
Simplification: data sources

Data collection tool	Description	Type of information collected
Targeted Consultation on simplification (TC)	Launched by the EC in March 2024. Almost 27 000 respondents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggestions to simplify administrative burden linked to CAP financial support Suggestions to help farmers comply with conditionality and other requirements outside the CAP
Follow-up interviews with farmers	298 interviews with farmers (selected from participants in TC) in 27 Member States	
Surveys to CAP beneficiaries	Surveys directed to LAGs, POs, EIP-OGs wine growers/producers	
Survey to advisory services	Survey directed to national advisory services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most effective simplification actions
Interviews with MAs, PAs, and MS stakeholders	144 interviews in 27 MS (28 CSPs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value of 'complementary actions' (e.g. training and advice, better communication) Awareness of good practices in other MS

Simplification in the perspective of CAP beneficiaries: Targeted Consultation

Distribution of TC responses according to categories of simplification suggestions

Source: own elaboration of TC data (N=10 196)



Simplification in the perspective of CAP beneficiaries: Interviews and surveys

Area	Suggestion
Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ pre-filled templates (re-using data from previous year if nothing changes) ✓ unified application systems and portals ✓ better guidance and support from authorities ✓ self-certification of compliance ✓ proportionality for small projects (less requirements and documentation)
Recording and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ centralised data storage to eliminate multiple reporting of the same information ✓ automated notifications of deadlines and updates ✓ shift focus from input monitoring to output assessment
Controls and inspections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ provide advance notice and allow flexibility in scheduling on-site inspections ✓ shift focus from rule enforcement to technical support ✓ adopt risk-based control models focusing on high-risk areas

Simplification actions planned or implemented by MS

- **Advanced digitalisation practices:** Many countries implement **centralised platforms** for application, tracking and communication. **Integration with public databases** to pre-fill forms reduces repetitive data entry and allows **automated verification of eligibility and compliance**.

Success cases (mentioned by MS stakeholders and advisory services)

- ✓ Advisory services leverage **precision agriculture** tools to automate data collection for compliance, minimising manual reporting (NL)
- ✓ **Mobile apps** and portals aiming to provide interactive, user-friendly interfaces for farmers to manage applications and receive updates (DK, EE).

Simplification actions planned or implemented in MS

- **Streamlined implementation:** Increased use of **SCOs** is commonly cited as an action reducing administrative burden linked to proof gathering and cost justification.

Success cases (mentioned by MS stakeholders and advisory services)

- ✓ Use of **draft budgets**, by which a LAG may analyse an application project based on data already gathered for a previous similar application (AT, EE).
- ✓ **Umbrella projects**, by which an entity makes itself responsible for a group of very small projects. This allows for the beneficiaries to be exempt of demonstrating compliance with many criteria (PL).

Simplification actions planned or implemented by MS

- **Simplification-driven programming:** Some countries seek to design simpler programmes **reducing number of interventions**, **aligning CAP and national requirements** and **involving stakeholders** in the programming phase to create practical and user-centric solutions

Success cases (mentioned by MS stakeholders and advisory services)

- ✓ **Aligned application periods and conditions** across multiple interventions to reduce complexity for beneficiaries (AT, BE)
- ✓ **Coordinated dialogue** between Member State authorities and beneficiaries, related to olive oil sectoral interventions (IT)

Simplification actions planned or implemented by MS

- **Communication, support and transparency.** ‘Complementary solutions’ to simplification (i.e. actions that do not require regulatory changes) are highly valued by all respondents.
- **Implemented or suggested actions** include:
 - Early information campaigns
 - Video-based guidance to the implementation of GAECs
 - Early warning systems (e.g. FI, HR) in case of non-compliance or when certain actions from beneficiaries are required
 - Proactive education, such as pre-filled forms (EE) and electronic guidance (FI), helps reduce errors and improve application quality

➤ Publication of the study is envisaged by the end of April 2025

➤ [Publications | EU CAP Network](#)

➤ Contacts:

marco.mazzei@bip-group.com

evaluation@eucapnetwork.eu