

Effective Approaches for Simplification within the CAP

Thematic Group - 2nd meeting

The second meeting of the Thematic Group (TG) provided an opportunity for members to further explore existing solutions and new approaches for CAP simplification as well as consider ways to streamline legislation and reduce complexity beyond the CAP.

From challenges to solutions: Presentations of ideas and best practices developed since 1st TG meeting



Between the **1st TG meeting** (2 April) and this meeting, TG members engaged in informal exchanges to continue identifying simplification options in relation to:

- use of digital tools;
- controls;
- calculation and controls of costs for non-IACS interventions; and
- coordination in regionalised Member States (MS).



During this first session, members shared **key insights** from the informal exchanges, highlighting existing solutions, persistent challenges and emerging ideas for overcoming them. Participants then reflected on these elements and prioritised them for further discussion.



Several participants highlighted the broader role of simplification within better regulation. A results-based mindset was encouraged: defining policy objectives and target areas or beneficiaries first, then designing simpler delivery mechanisms to achieve such objectives. Finally, the discussion highlighted the need for better engagement with farmers, improved communication, and smarter use of tools such as satellite data and financial instruments – all of which could contribute to simplification if designed and implemented effectively.

Update on 2nd Simplification package and outlook on 3rd Simplification package from DG AGRI



Philip Powell (DG AGRI) presented the European Commission's proposal for a **2nd CAP Simplification Package**, published on 14 May. He outlined the policy context, highlighting in particular the **Vision for Agriculture and Food** (February 2025), which reinforces the commitment to deliver targeted simplification and greater flexibility for farmers and MS.

Event Information

Date: 12 June 2025

Location: Brussels

Organisers: CAP Implementation Contact Point (CAPI CP)

Participants: 43 participants from 19 EU Member States (MS), including Managing Authorities (MAs), Paying Agencies (PAs), farming organisations, National CAP Networks, other stakeholder organisations, research, advisory services and the European Commission (DG AGRI).

Outcomes: Development of solutions to simplify elements of CAP implementation which cause complexity and administrative burden and identification of areas for simplification beyond the CAP.

Web page: https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/events/2nd-meeting-thematic-group-effective-approaches-simplification-within-cap_en

The package is based on two years of experience with CAP Strategic Plan (CSP) implementation and extensive input from a wide range of stakeholders, including ideas developed by this TG. **Key elements** of the package (detailed in the presentation on the **event page**) concern:

- simplification for farmers;
- support for small farmers; competitiveness and digitalisation;
- crisis management; and
- measures for MS authorities.



Outlook on the 3rd Simplification Package



Gregorio Davila Diaz (DG AGRI) provided an outlook on the forthcoming **3rd Simplification Package**, which is expected to be **published by the end of 2025**. This initiative aims to harmonise rules in relevant regulations affecting agriculture, food, feed industries, and public administrations **outside the CAP**. The **scope** of the package is broad, touching on multiple sectors and policy areas. DG AGRI is currently identifying key areas requiring simplification and consulting with EU stakeholders and Member States to collect proposals and suggestions.

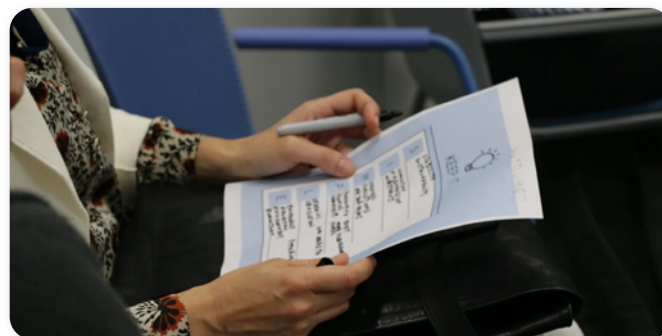
Streamlining legislation – future actions to address complexity beyond the CAP



A dynamic fishbowl discussion allowed participants to identify key areas for simplification and better coherence across regulatory frameworks outside the CAP. Participants stressed the importance of **addressing overlaps and streamlining requirements** between different regulations (e.g. Nitrates Directive, National Emissions reduction Commitments (NEC) Directive). Guidance on how animation costs can be calculated for LEADER should be consistent between the CAP and the Common Provisions Regulation. To help both documentation and controls, **definitions and sampling requirements** should be harmonised between different regulations (e.g. the definition of landscape features in the Nature Restoration Law). The principle of **one single control** per year and farm should be extended to other Regulations. Participants flagged that the **authorisation procedures** of different substances should be simplified and shortened, while keeping safeguarding standards high.



The discussion also raised concerns about **social conditionality** since, depending on the situation in each MS, some requirements are already covered by national legislation. This needs to be carefully assessed to streamline the approach, as for recent proposals for environmental conditionality.



Development of solutions to address key areas for simplification

During two consecutive interactive sessions, participants discussed specific outstanding issues requiring simplification, shared national experiences, and proposed concrete solutions. The aim was to fine-tune the most promising solutions, explore their feasibility, and identify key actors responsible for their implementation.

Key points included:

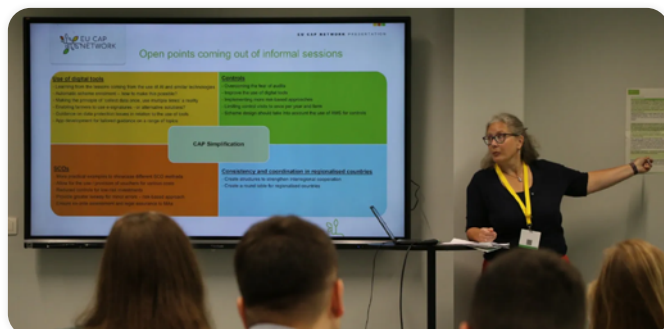
CAP Governance:



Improving the design of incentives to ensure coherence. Outcomes should be considered from the start and a coherent intervention logic created, demonstrating how different interventions work together to achieve the desired outcomes. Testing and piloting can improve uptake and acceptance; stakeholder engagement is key. For environmental issues in particular, the focus should be on interventions that are most effective, including results-based approaches. Sound performance management to assess impacts must be considered during the design phase.



Enabling stability and continuity requires the right conditions to be put in place from the start, including a robust needs analysis and stakeholder engagement. Changes to the CSP (including for simplification purposes) should follow a predictable planning timeline (e.g. mid-term review). The impacts of simplification should be properly assessed against CAP goals to ensure that benefits are properly understood and to avoid perverse effects. Time is required for Managing Authorities (MAs) and beneficiaries to understand the different elements within the CSPs and how they work in practice. The focus should be on positive experiences and approaches that prove successful, to build trust. A strong supporting environment can facilitate this (see below). To ease work for MAs and Paying Agencies (PAs), new rules should also apply to remaining funds from previous periods. A harmonised structure and template could help MS better target their CSPs.



Supporting environment:



A key proposal was the creation of a dedicated **EU-wide platform to facilitate knowledge exchange**, share best practices and foster partnerships—particularly with researchers and auditors. This platform could serve as a space for collecting and disseminating examples of different approaches, such as Simplified Cost Options (SCOs), as well as lessons learnt from the use of digital and AI-based tools. While some favoured new platforms, others suggested expanding existing networks, such as the one for PAs.

Controls:



Some MS impose stricter requirements than necessary due to a **fear of audits**. To overcome this, MAs and PAs would like legal assurance on the acceptability of different approaches. Proposals included widening the application of ex-ante assessments of rules and calculation of costs, involving auditing bodies from the start so the intervention logic and desired outcomes are properly understood. **Shifting the control system to more risk-based approaches** was seen by participants as a way forward to ease the burden of controls for both beneficiaries and administration. The approach also needs to be suitable for the different interventions. The guidance and the various tools already available (e.g. point systems, weighting based on past experience) could be adopted more widely.



Conclusions

This was the last meeting of the TG. The outcomes will feed into a document setting out existing examples that have the potential for replication and new proposals for the different key areas for simplification.

Digital solutions:



A key step towards simplification is the principle of **'measure once, use multiple times'**. Public and private sectors should work together to enable greater interoperability between systems. Data sharing between different organisations remains a challenge. Identifying all available datasets would be a good starting point. An EU-wide initiative could help support the design of digital tools in a more harmonised way, while taking into account MS specificities and building on existing solutions as much as possible. The end users of the tools should be involved from the start.



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