

## **IALB Position Paper on the Implementation of the EU EAFRD Regulation and Horizontal Regulation 2014-20**

**Concerning the following articles in the Commission's proposals of October 2011:**

Knowledge Transfer (EAFRD Article 15)  
Farm Advisory Services (EAFRD Article 16 and Annexe I, as well as HR Articles 12-15)  
Cooperation (EAFRD Article 36)  
Leader (EAFRD Articles 42-45)  
European Network for Rural Development (EAFRD Article 52)  
EIP Network (EAFRD Article 53)  
European Innovation Partnership (EIP) (EAFRD Articles 61-63)  
Interface with the European Social Fund (ESF)

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## 1. Who are the IALB?

Founded in 1961, the International Academy of Rural Advisors (German: *Internationale Akademie für ländliche Beratung* or IALB) is an international platform for sharing information and experience via conferences and seminars for advisory experts who deal primarily with issues such as the future of family farms and rural areas within the context of sustainable development.

Around 700 individual members from 18 different European countries and 15 corporate members hailing chiefly from Germany, Austria, Switzerland and South Tyrol, as well as from other European countries and provinces, take part in our network and in projects on educational and advisory issues.

## 2. The IALB's work on advisory issues in the EU CAP

The IALB believes that, thanks to decades of cross-state cooperation, the IALB network for agricultural and home economics advisors and for consultants in rural areas is eminently able to pool its experience with advisory issues in Europe. Accordingly, it has engaged with the articles of the EU Commission's Draft EAFRD and Draft Horizontal Regulation that deal with advisory services, and compiled the present Position Paper.

In European cooperation, the belief is gaining increasing currency that Community objectives in and with agriculture can be achieved not only with 'hard' measures, i.e. with laws and regulations, but that we must also champion the instruments of information, knowledge transfer with continuing education and training, and (one-to-one) consultation – tools which are suitable for proposing and implementing tailor-made solutions together with stakeholders. The IALB takes 'advisory and/or extension services' (German: *Beratungsdienste*; French: *services de conseil et/ou de vulgarisation*) to mean services which in addition to providing advice, undertake both educational and networking tasks in both the private and public interest. The EU states were obliged to introduce a Farming Advisory System (FAS) in the current period. According to the evaluation the results were less than ideal, given the absence of evidence of satisfactory interaction with farms. Special attention should be given to this aspect in the next funding period.

The IALB believes:

- that the already existing advisory structures must integrate matters of public interest into the technical, economic and socio-economic advisory fields of importance for farmers and their family members, and that an advisory service geared solely to the public interest is not sufficiently able to reach its clientele.
- that the public concerns must simultaneously be brought to the target groups via basic education (initial and continuing education and training), information, one-to-one and group advisory services, working groups and workshops.
- that active elements are needed in order to reach the target groups. Demand-oriented one-to-one advisory measures on their own (even when reduced in price) are neither efficient, nor do they allow sufficient coverage.
- that advisory measures are intended to provide custom solutions and strategies for individual farms, in order to enhance the competitiveness of farms and create an attractive and vital rural area.
- that value-added and innovation targets, or ecological and landscape-design targets can all too often only be achieved in cooperation with several farms, which requires suitable approaches in the advisory work.
- that, seen from an organisational point of view, an EU measure must be set up so that it can be absorbed and implemented throughout AKIS<sup>1</sup> by the Member States, once it has been adapted to the latter's structures.
- that the financing framework conditions must stimulate coordination in the system rather than hampering it.

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<sup>1</sup> AKIS = Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System: encompasses institutions of basic education, training, information, advisory services and applied research

The Position Paper refers to the following documents:

- Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the **promotion of rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)** {SEC(2011) 1153}{SEC(2011) 1154}
- Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the **financing, management and monitoring of the Common Agricultural Policy (Horizontal Regulation)** {SEC(2011) 1153} {SEC(2011) 1154}
- **Thoughts and Proposals of the IALB on the further development of the Farm Advisory System, IALB, 21 January 2011**; this opinion was presented on 2 February 2011 at a workshop in Brussels at COPA (the European agricultural union). Gratifyingly, the above EU October 2011 draft regulations take up a large number of the concerns presented by the IALB in February 2011.

### 3. The IALB's objectives with respect to implementing the above EU regulations

To date, in policy discussion in the Member States, little importance has been attached to advisory issues in terms of agricultural policy after 2013. This is because information, continuing education and training, and advisory services are by definition seen as accompanying functions of the economically far more incisive direct-payment measures.

Meanwhile, the Member States – at least those that previously viewed advisory services as the remit of the individual countries – are increasingly beginning to gear advisory services to EU co-financed measures, or – for those that previously viewed advisory services as a commercial matter – are for the first time beginning to deal with the issues of the goal orientation and coordination of advisory services. These processes were introduced owing to the EU's increasing interest in advisory issues.

For both of these reasons, this position paper is intended to serve the following objectives:

- For **those responsible for the national programmes** (i.e. those responsible for the partnership agreement and concretisation at national level, as well as for the monitoring committees) as well as for the **EU expert panels for the fleshing-out of the Reg** (implementing regulation), the position paper is meant to serve as a stimulus, particularly in those areas where there are indications in the above Draft Regs that conditions and criteria must still be defined.
- To facilitate the access of **those responsible for advisory services and of IALB members** to superordinate EU law in the advisory sphere.

The IALB argues that, for the actual rural addressees, the differentiations necessary from a higher-level (or administrative) perspective are often difficult to understand. At the level of direct contact with rural stakeholders, said differentiations should therefore mesh in such a way that the stakeholders are able to achieve their own goals as far as possible, whilst bearing in mind the public interest.

### 4. The EU's strategic objectives and their implementation in the EAFRD priorities

The promoted advisory work must be integrated into the EU's superordinate strategy. For this reason, we have set out this superordinate framework in the Annexe *pro memoria*.

#### Comment:

Based on the objectives and priorities listed in Art. 5 of the EAFRD-Reg, it is obvious that great importance is ascribed to the agricultural and rural training and advisory services as regards implementation of the EU measures, particularly within the framework of rural development (for strategic objectives and derived priorities, see Annexe).

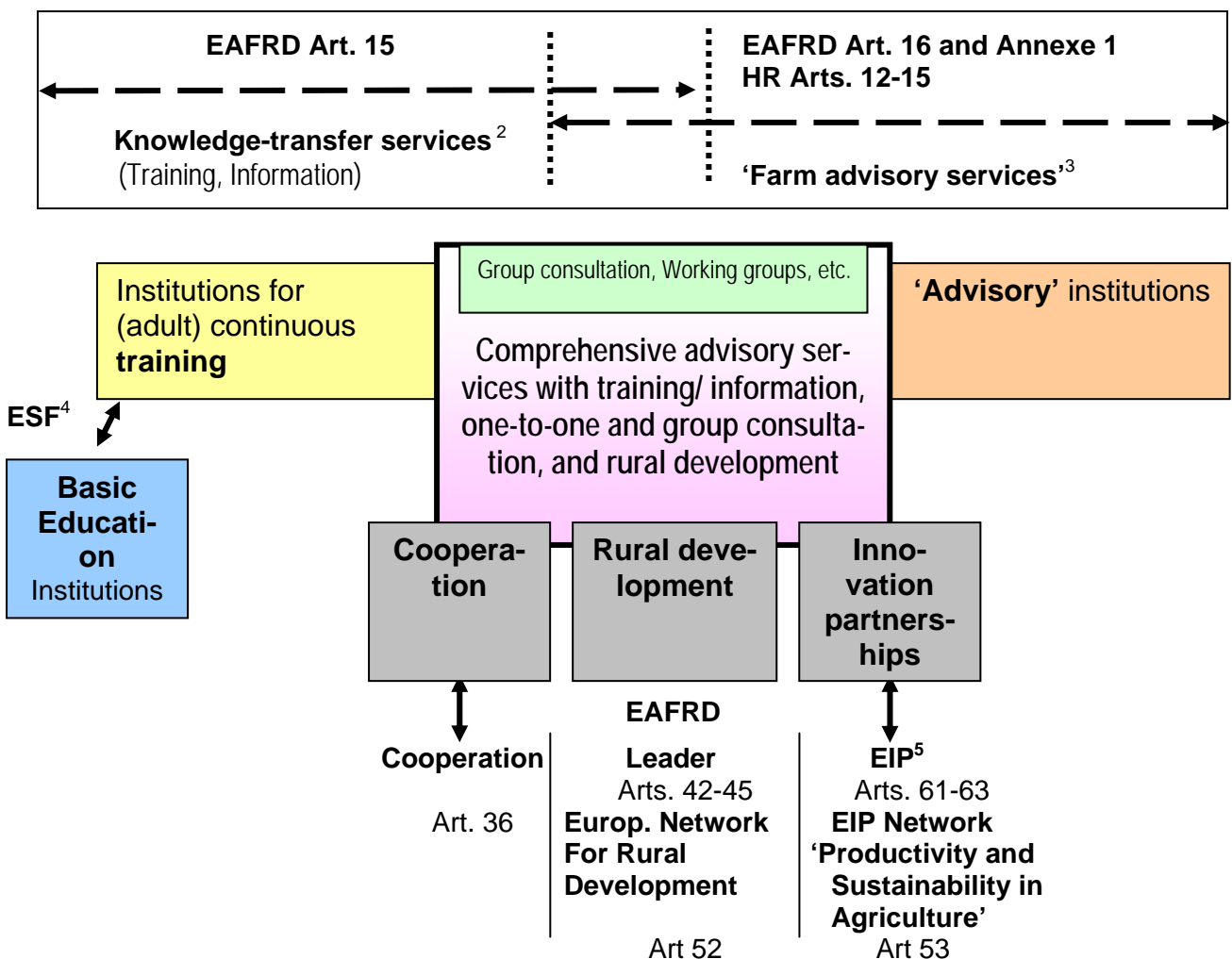
## 5. The IALB’s position on individual topics relating to advisory services

### 5.1. Articles of the regulation dealing with knowledge transfer (training, information) and advisory services

**Articles 15 and 16 of the EAFRD Regulation and Articles 12 to 15 of the Horizontal Regulation (HR)** (see footnotes 3 and 4) draw a distinction between knowledge transfer and advisory measures.

In practice, however, there are **fuzzy boundaries** between the measures and the providers of training, information and farm advisory services, and in some cases with other areas, such as e.g. basic education. The existence of these fuzzy boundaries is right and proper, and contributes substantially to the acceptance of the knowledge transfer (training, information) and advisory measures, especially since the experts used in the individual countries are often employed in various capacities in AKIS (see footnote 2), or else institutions cover several of these functions.

Further **interfaces are to be expected**, e.g. with the ‘Cooperation’, ‘Leader’, and ‘EIP’ articles in the EAFRD, as well as with the ESF in the field of education.



**Diagram 1**

<sup>2</sup> See also Draft EAFRD page 13, Explanatory Memoranda Nos. 14 and 15

<sup>3</sup> See also Draft EAFRD page 15, Explanatory Memoranda Nos. 16 and 17, and Draft HR pages 12/13, Explanatory Memoranda Nos. 10-12

<sup>4</sup> ESF = European Social Fund

<sup>5</sup> EIP = European Innovation Partnership, 'Productivity and Sustainability in Agriculture'

The above diagram shows that the structure of the **advisory measures** is ambitious for the Member States both in terms of content and organisation, and that a number of articles may apply to them if co-financing by the EU is claimed.

In addition, preconditions must be respected so that both private and public suppliers have access to the 'advisory services market'. This might tempt the Member States to divide up the offers of the public or public-supported services in institutional/organisational terms as well, according to the EU assistance programmes.

This is not expedient in every case, however. Since monitoring a development strategy for agriculture and rural areas requires advisory and training institutions to exercise their duties with a mix of interventions and in a networked fashion depending on target groups and specific problems (*inter alia* those of public interest – see Chapter 3 above), it is advisable and practicable if EU measures can be offered in implementation in a similarly pooled fashion.

Knowledge-transfer and advisory measures in the fields of cooperation, rural development and implementation of innovation partnerships require various types of collective advisory approaches in order to reach farmers and farming families in the first place; even when it comes to developing individual-farm strategies and solutions (farm advice in the proper sense), working in groups is often advantageous, as well as satisfactorily efficient, in the case of small farm structures. It often makes sense to employ the same staff who know their way around the locale and farm, in order to achieve good results. Moreover, group consultations can generate their own momentum and identification with the subject, which also support implementation of the advisory mandate.

Equally fuzzy in practice is the boundary in terms of organisation and staff between knowledge transfer according to EAFRD and basic-education activities according to ESF.

This situation requires common 'rules of the game' as well as an adapted (simple) administration which can also be managed on a day-to-day basis. This must be noted above all in the implementing regulations on both EU and Member-State level.

**Comment:**

The provisions of the EAFRD 2014-2020 clearly aim to expand the farm advisory service beyond the scope of 'advice on provisions concerning cross-compliance obligations' into an instrument of 'sustainable development and innovation of farms'.<sup>6</sup>

This objective is consistent with the understanding of the term 'advisory', not only as it was/is customarily used in the countries of Western Europe, but also as is congruent with the definitions of the FAO<sup>7</sup> or the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS)<sup>8</sup>.

These expectations as regards the future range of use of the advisory service lead to higher demands being placed on the professional as well as the methodological, organisational and social skills of the advisory staff, whose training will be critical for safeguarding the success of the strategy.

**Recommendation to Member States:**

Both multifunctional and multithematic advisory services make sense from the point of view of cross-linking of themes, target-group accessibility and stakeholder networking. The sufficient size of a service guarantees a certain flexibility and specialisation within the service, which is conducive to the quality of the services rendered.

<sup>6</sup> Presentation by Silke Obst, Member of the Cabinet of the EU Agr. Commissioner, IALB conference, June 2012 Seggau AU

<sup>7</sup> In December 2011, the **UN General Assembly** declared 2014 to be the **International Year of Family Farming** and invited the FAO to facilitate implementation of the International Year, in collaboration with its partners. Among its initiatives for the International Year, the **FAO is planning to publish a major study on family farming and agricultural innovation systems (AIS)** in 2014 as part of its **State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA)** series.

<sup>8</sup> [www.g-fras.org](http://www.g-fras.org): For the Rio+20 meetings, GFRAS, together with the FAO, Farming First, IFPRI and WFO, published a position paper entitled '**Building Knowledge Systems in Agriculture**', accompanied by a factsheet on extension services and a selection of case studies.

Recommendations to Member States (continued):

These objectives can also be achieved via the cooperation of various services; this, however, requires sufficient coordination capacity at the level of the responsible body at Member-State level, in order for the cross-linkage to be achieved.

Training of the advisory staff in methodological and social skills, as well as project management and process design skills, are important prerequisites for safeguarding strategy, and should be eligible for grants.

The future scope for deployment of staff in education and advisory services requires an overall picture on Member-State level (see [Diagram 1](#)). To the extent possible, synergies and demarcations (where necessary) at the **interfaces between the various areas of the EAFRD or to the ESF** are to be defined in the partnership agreement, in order to prevent subsequent uncertainties.

## 5.2. Financial aspects

Art. 65 of the EAFRD specifies the financial contribution for the individual measures. The distinction between Art.15 and Art.16 is important: for measures in **Art. 15, a cap of 80% is envisaged in accordance with Paragraph 4 (a)**; for measures in **Art. 16 Paragraph 3, the cap is 50%**. Individual contributions and approaches to support are listed in Annexe 1 of the EAFRD Regulation: **for consultation, a maximum amount of EUR 1,500 per consultation**; for the training of advisors, **max. EUR 200,000 per three-year period**.

The funding guidelines are set by the Commission for:

- **'advisory services' in the sense of Cooperation (Art. 36)** (e.g. Para.1c, Creation and Function of Operational Groups of the EIP; any costs as per Paras. 5a to 5d);
- any services **within the framework of the Leader programme (Arts. 42-45)**; or
- **within the framework of the EIP (Arts. 61-63)**.

### Recommendations for the creators of the implementation regulations of the EU and Member States:

Since education, training and advisory services (see [Diagram 1](#)) are strongly intermeshed, care must be taken to ensure that common implementation rules and as simple an administration for the measures as possible are established (in the support of a measure related to the individual, very small amounts are involved in each case, which only carry weight when totalled). The introduction of minimum charges for billing must also be considered.

Member States will also need to decide whether the final tariffs for clients are to be standardised, regardless of whether they are funded via Art. 15 or 16 of the EAFRD of the EU.

## 5.3. Applying for funding: Arts. 15 and 16 of the EAFRD in the national programme

It should be stated that in principle, the Member States

- (as with the previous FAS) are obliged in accordance with EAFRD-Reg Art. 16 and HR Arts. 12-15 to set up a system for advising the beneficiaries. A new matter to bear in mind in particular is Art. 12 HR-Reg, which greatly broadens the scope, thereby also increasing the requirements made on the advisory services and advisory staff.
- need not necessarily offer knowledge-transfer measures and information measures (training) as per Art. 15. As an incentive, however, these measures are funded to a maximum of 80% (as a departure from the general co-financing level of 50%).

### Comment:

The IALB welcomes the strong signal issued by the EAFRD-Reg and the HR-Reg in terms of expanding a farm advisory system towards a broad, open-ended range of applications.

As the discussion in the IALB showed, not all Member States will wish to lay claim to the funding for these measures, but will nevertheless need to demonstrate that they are providing national funding for an offer (for Art. 16 and HR Arts. 12-15) that meets the minimum requirements.

Acknowledgement of the provision of a self-financed offer is made via the exemption regulation, involving minimum bureaucracy.

#### 5.4. Intermediary services

For measures in accordance with Arts. 15 and 16, a competent body recognising the entitled institutions is required at Member-State level.

The IALB is of the opinion that, because of the fuzzy boundaries between the measures of Art. 15 and Art. 16, **this same body should assume the lead within the administration.**

It is to be assumed that the **minimum qualifications** (although not yet set) to be required of the suppliers of such measures and of their staff, **are similar** – all the more so since we may well be dealing here with the same institutions or bodies, as well as with the same skilled employees. It is conceivable that, in addition to the extended professional skills, it is primarily also the methodological and social skills, as well as project management and process design skills, that will be crucial (for Art. 36, 'Cooperations', Arts. 42-45, 'Leader', and Arts. 61-63, 'European Innovation Partnerships for Productivity and Sustainable Development').

#### Recommendation to the Member States:

For the recognition and coordination of the bodies or institutions for measures in accordance with Arts. 15 and 16, the Member States shall as far as possible use the same body within the administration.

It is to be assumed that the Member States will on the one hand establish similar or the same criteria for the qualifications of the institutions and staff, and will in other cases have to offer special training measures in order that the extended requirements may be met.

#### 5.5. Target groups

Die IALB would impress upon the responsible bodies that the measures **may** (in Art. 15) and **must** (in Art. 16) **extend far beyond 'farmers'**. In the field of innovation partnerships and their **operational groups**, the range of use is also moving towards the networking of partners in upstream and downstream sectors and research, which requires additional **resources in accordance with Art. 36.**

#### Comment:

This has the following **consequences for the Member States:**

To control these measures, the intermediary administrative bodies must **cooperate with stakeholders in various professional fields** and recognise suppliers as well as their staff in terms of qualifications.

In these measures, the resources traditionally made available for agriculture are made accessible to further reference groups. Either **the resources are increased accordingly**, or a deduction is made from resources in the agricultural sector for further sectors (forestry, SMEs, food industry, operational groups). Alternatively, the Member-States decide to limit the number of beneficiary groups.

With respect to the training of the newly involved services or the expansion of the range of use, additional deliberations e.g. in terms of the **competencies of the staff in the training institutions** must also be carried out. Here, both **professional and methodological qualifications will become essential for staff.**



## 5.6. A great deal of subsidiarity; ease of billing

In Art. 15, the Commission provides for further specific indications of the eligible costs and the minimum qualifications of knowledge-transfer providers (or their staff), as well as the duration and content of the exchange and visiting schemes for farmers. Article 16 also provides for a further concretisation of the minimum qualifications of the implementing authorities or bodies (or their staff) by the Commission.

The IALB argues that **a great deal of freedom should be granted to the Member States for this arrangement**. The minimum qualifications should not be measured against the Member States with the highest standards within the EU. The more-extensive systems used in individual Member States may play a role as **examples of a recommendatory nature**, but not as minimum conditions. On the other hand, this should of course not result in a downwards-levelling of standards.

### Recommendations to the EU:

The **criteria for prioritising the themes/content** within the list of topics of importance for the Community should be left up to the Member States.

For billing of the **eligible costs (Art. 15 Para 5)**, **lump-sum payments per person or per measure should be introduced** in order to keep administrative costs within appropriate limits.

In terms of documentation of the **results of the consultation (Art. 16)**, **limitation to the basics for purposes of evidence and billing is essential** – the minutes of the consultation will suffice.

## 5.7. Dealing with interfaces with other areas of support

**No bureaucratic hurdles** should be erected **between group advisory services within the meaning of Art. 16 Para. 7 (problem- and solution-oriented groups) as well as knowledge transfer (training) in groups in accordance with Art. 15 (learning-oriented groups)**. The different co-financing provided for should not lead to these services being artificially separated at Member-State level.

In the practical work of training and advisory services, there are so-called methodological chains for achieving and penetrating the customer segments which, starting with basic education (for preparation of a topic) and progressing via the practice-oriented training of the active generation in the professional field (for motivation and for automatic interpretation and implementation), range all the way to individual advisory services (for complex situations and at the request of individuals) as well as in working groups (for implementation monitoring and the safeguarding of success with benchmarking).

A target-oriented advisory programme with the appropriate thematic campaigns employs this mixture of methods as a matter of course, leading to synergies in preparation as well as to reinforcement effects in implementation, at the same time as it optimises the use of funds and resources.

It is both essential and advantageous for fuzzy boundaries to arise between the **educational measures of knowledge transfer and educational measures in accordance with the ESF**. For customers, it is important to be able to access in one place and in accordance with the one stop shop principle the services which, viewed logically, belong together.

### Recommendations to the EU and to the Member States:

The billing of the various measures in accordance with EAFRD Arts. 15 and 16 and the ESF, which objectively and in terms of implementation merge, should be designed so that de facto unity measures can be billed and submitted for co-financing in a single place.

In any event, the demarcations in the partnership agreement should accordingly to be designed so that there are no subsequent difficulties.

(See also Chapter 4.2.)

## 6. Minimum requirements for suppliers and staff qualification

### 6.1. Recommendations for minimum requirements for suppliers

The Commission will specify by legislative act the minimum qualifications of knowledge-transfer suppliers (Art. 15) and of advisory authorities or bodies (Art. 16).

#### **Recommendation to the Commission or to the Member States:**

The following criteria may be of use for specifying the minimum qualifications of bodies or institutions for measures in accordance with Arts. 15 and 16:

- evidence of the capacities, technology, logistics and qualifications required for the proper implementation of measures, particularly of a consultation involving the entire farm, within the Member State or the responsible region, if need be with the cooperation of services;
- economic independence of third-party enterprises and of sales and brokerage activities;
- evidence of at least two years' activity and of a quality-management system.

### 6.2. Recommendations for minimum requirements for staff qualification

In accordance with the range of use of the advisory services (or knowledge-transfer services) as described in 4.1, it is to be expected that – in addition to the requirements pertaining to professional qualifications – qualifications in the fields of methodology/didactics, communication, social skills and personal skills, as well as project-management and process-design skills, will be of increasing importance.

Whereas evidence of professional skills is generally ensured via the educational institutions (e.g. university or university of applied sciences degree, training as a technician, master craftsman certification), evidence of suitability for adult-education, advisory, network and project activities is not included in individual educational qualifications.

For years now, the IALB has pointed out this circumstance in its own training programmes, as well as collecting its own experience with the IALB seminar. Together with institutions of training and qualification of advisory staff represented in the IALB, a joint skills development chain of modules was created which supports advisory staff in meeting the demands now made of them as well as giving them the opportunity to bridge gaps and obtain a certificate. Developed by the IALB in cooperation with the institutions, the CECRA<sup>9</sup> system is available to the Member States for use. The participating institutions are also in a position to support the Member States where the relevant offerings or degrees are not yet available in the introduction of such a system for the provision of methodological skills.

#### **Recommendation to the EU and to the Member States:**

The IALB recommends the CECRA system to the EU and the Member States for testing the methodological<sup>10</sup> qualifications of staff used in rural advisory services (-> recommendatory nature).

### 6.3. Staff training

Both Art. 15 Para. 3 and Art. 16 Para. 1c of the EAFRD-Reg make reference to the (regular) training of the staff deployed in both measures.

<sup>9</sup> CECRA = Certificate for European Consultants in Rural Areas; see also [www.CECRA.net](http://www.CECRA.net)

<sup>10</sup> 'Methodological' used as an umbrella term for the skills described in Chapter 6.2 Paragraph 1

**Recommendation to the EU:**

In the drafting of the corresponding acts, the possibility of cross-border training (Art. 15 Para. 3 and Art. 16 Para.1c) should be stated

- since the small number of professionals embarking on the role of multiplier/advisor means that their training can in some institutions not be performed efficiently in one country only; and
- since the cross-border sharing of experience represents an important learning or dissemination effect for good practices.

## 7. European Innovation Partnerships

With the innovation partnership, the EU takes on a brand-new instrument in the promotion of rural development. The so-called '**operational groups**' are the principal focus at Member-State level.

Within these operational groups, which may include a wide variety of stakeholders, stages of the supply chain, service providers, the general public, and AKIS stakeholders (institutions of basic education, training, information, consultation, applied research), the EU anticipates a fostering of innovations and innovation transfer, as well as the implementation or setup of the latter.

**In order to be viable, these operational groups require suitable “advisors, activity coordinators, mediators, project leaders, networkers and process engineers”.** These roles can be assumed by the advisory services staff, or by one of the stakeholders in the operational group.

Experience shows that in an initial phase, in order to launch such networks, there is a need for **initiators who are well anchored and networked in the region**, as well as being sufficiently networked on a supra-regional or national level, e.g. with research. Advisory services can play a decisive role here.

As a support instrument, and in order to enable the **dissemination of good practices, lessons learnt, and experience from pilot projects**, an **EIP network** working closely with the national coordinators is being created **at EU level**. The said coordinators can be e.g. the coordinating bodies for consultation and knowledge transfer (see also Chap. 4.4., Intermediary Services), which also assume the coordination of the operational groups at Member-State level.

The EAFRD Regulation provides for various financing options for the work of the operational groups, provided that the Member States build these instruments into their rural development plan:

- Support for the direct counselling of farmers, the setting up of advisory services, and advisor education (50% co-financing in accordance with Art. 16 and Annexe 1 of the EAFRD-Reg)
- Support for knowledge transfer and information (80% co-financing in accordance with Art. 15 of the EAFRD-Reg)
- Support for cooperative ventures (networks, pilot projects) (80% co-financing in accordance with Art. 36 of the EAFRD-Reg)
- Direct support of collective investments (40% and increase by 20% in accordance with Annexe 1 of the EAFRD-Reg)

Participating research institutions can benefit from 'Horizon 2020' financing.

**EIP – recommendation to the Member States:**

Participation in the Innovation Partnership Network offers many advantages for the Member States. If they wish to make use of the co-financing instruments provided for this purpose, they must **incorporate them in their rural development plan**.

Important stakeholders for the EIP are the training and advisory institutions and the intermediary services for their coordination, as well as the connection to the recently created EIP Network at the European level. When specifying the institutional jurisdictions, Member States should be aware that the **coordination and handling of the measures with the same (or similar) rules, if at all possible in the same place**, is becoming a 'must' for on-the-spot work, since the measures either exhibit a great many interfaces, or merge into one another.

If the advisory services are to assume a role in the operational groups, **qualifications must also be adapted accordingly** (see also Chapters 5.2 and 5.3).

## 8. Evaluation

IALB and the suppliers of advisory services note that there is still a shortfall of widely disseminated standards for the evaluation of training and advisory measures, although considerable public funds are involved in many countries. The IALB and the suppliers of advisory services agree that the interventions of advisory services contribute substantially to the successful implementation of agricultural policy measures, but are not solely responsible for the same. The basic training of stakeholders in rural areas, the relevant research activities, and of course the 'hard facts' such as funding assistance, commandments and prohibitions all contribute their important share to success.

The difficulty in evaluating individual measures in AKIS consists in reliably establishing the cause-and-effect relationship. The effects of social networking activities are hard to grasp, since a whole set of influences exist. At best, the overall effect of an entire raft of measures can be observed.

The Commission's proposals for the evaluation provide for the elaboration of a joint monitoring and evaluation framework for measuring the performance of the Common Agricultural Policy. This framework will encompass all relevant instruments for the monitoring and evaluation of the CAP measures, particularly for the direct payments, market-related measures, rural-development measures, and application of the cross-compliance requirements.

The effects of the CAP measures are evaluated with a view to the following objectives:

- a) viable food production, with a focus on agricultural income, agricultural productivity, and price stability;
- b) sustainable management of natural resources and climate measures, with a focus on greenhouse-gas emissions, biodiversity, soil and water;
- c) balanced spatial development.

Moreover, they are also assessed with respect to the EU 2020 strategy targets, as well as with reference to GDP and unemployment.

In addition to this, an enhanced common monitoring and evaluation system has been proposed to promote rural development. This system aims to accomplish the following:

- a) to identify the progress and achievements of rural-development policy and to assess the impacts, effectiveness, efficiency and expediency of rural-development policy interventions;
- b) to make a contribution to the more purposeful promotion of rural development; and
- c) to support a joint learning process by means of monitoring and evaluation.

The Commission will draw up a list of common indicators for the policy priorities in the form of implementing acts. It is anticipated that the Commission will issue corresponding directives.

In the opinion of the Commission, the Member States should make the resources available for evaluation, and support the collection of data relevant for the evaluation, as well as data on common and programme-specific indicators.

**Comment:**

The IALB and providers of advisory services consider it essential for the **advisory and training activities** to be monitored **from the start with a common set of evaluation criteria across the different Member States**. Since evaluation and monitoring often tie up considerable resources, the **criteria and scope of the survey are to be laid down with a sense of proportion**, in order not to limit the actual advisory work unduly.

This issue has exercised the IALB and the suppliers of advisory services for some time now, and not least of all the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS), which has published a corresponding code of practice<sup>11</sup>.

In the present situation in the run-up to the new CAP period, it would be helpful if the Member States could agree on a **minimum basic format for evaluating the training and advisory measures**, so that the importance of these functions which were obviously reinforced in the 2014-20 proposal can be better grasped and evaluated.

The IALB **sees the urgency of such a plan, and offers support in this issue (see below)**.

Article 54 of the EAFRD Draft Reg provides for a **European Evaluation Network for Rural Development** which is meant to promote the networking of those involved in the evaluation of rural development programmes. The intention here is to facilitate the exchange of professional knowledge and good practices vis-à-vis evaluation methods, to develop evaluation methods and instruments, and to support the evaluation processes as well as data collection and administration.

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<sup>11</sup> **[www.G-FRAS.org](http://www.G-FRAS.org); Guide to Evaluating Rural Extension**. This Guide to Evaluating Rural Extension was developed by the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS). Its purpose is to support those involved in extension evaluation in choosing how to conduct more comprehensive, rigorous, credible and useful evaluations. The Guide supports an understanding of different types of evaluation, decision-making as to what is most appropriate in the circumstances, and access to additional sources of theoretical and practical information. It is used primarily by the following:

- those commissioning and managing evaluations;
- professional evaluators and staff responsible for monitoring systems;
- professionals involved in training and educating evaluators;
- researchers looking for ways to synergise their efforts with evaluation initiatives.

The process of preparing this Guide began in 2010 with the production of a Review of Literature on Evaluation Methods Relevant to Extension and a Meta-evaluation of Extension Case Studies. These materials, combined with extensive consultation with a range of stakeholders, were then used as background for developing a draft version of this Guide. The Guide was finalised in 2011 based on feedback received.

**Recommendation to the Commission:**

Because of the multifactorial effect of interventions in social systems, the suppliers of training and advisory services are concerned about the monitoring and evaluation of the measures and activities which they perform. The effect of these measures and activities is difficult to ascertain, although they are of great importance for the implementation of the objectives and priorities of the EU CAP.

In addition, the different baseline situations, objectives and priorities in the national programmes make it difficult to obtain an overview.

Thus, it is all the more urgent to review ideas and previous experiences when evaluating the training and advisory measures in the designated European Evaluation Network for Rural Development. The Member States and suppliers of training and advisory services expect relevant methodological support from this network.

IALB is interested in bringing the experience of its members into such a network.

## **9. Conclusion**

The executive board of the IALB approved the position paper at its meeting on 8 October 2012 in Landshut, and cleared it for publication. The position paper is to be made available to the interested parties in German and English.

## Annexe

### The strategic objectives of the EU and their implementation in the EAFRD priorities

#### The 'Europe 2020' strategy defines five core targets (Lisbon 2010)

##### 1. Employment

- 75% of 20-to-64-year-olds should be employed.

##### 2. Research and Development

- 3% of the EU's GDP should be spent on research and development.

##### 3. Climate Change and Energy

- Reducing greenhouse-gas emissions by 20% (or even by 30%, provided that the conditions are right) vis-à-vis 1990 levels;
- Increasing the share of renewable energies to 20%;
- Raising energy efficiency by 20%.

##### 4. Education

- Reducing the school dropout rate to under 10%;
- Raising the percentage of 30-to-34-year-olds with a tertiary degree to at least 40%.

##### 5. Poverty and Social Exclusion

- The number of people affected by or threatened with poverty and social exclusion should be reduced by at least 20 million.

#### The priorities in the EAFRD derived from the EU strategy

(Art. 5 of the EAFRD Draft Regulation)

Achievement of the rural development targets contributing to the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, shall be pursued via the following six EU priorities for rural development, which implement the relevant Thematic Objectives of the Common Strategic Framework (CSF):

**(1) Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas**, with a focus on the following areas (**cross-section priority**):

- (a) Supporting innovation and the knowledge base in rural areas;
- (b) Strengthening the links between agriculture and forestry, and research and innovation;
- (c) Supporting lifelong learning and vocational training in agriculture and forestry sectors.

**(2) Enhancing the competitiveness of all types of agriculture and enhancing farm viability**, with a focus on the following areas:

- (a) facilitating the restructuring of farms facing major structural problems, notably farms with a low degree of market participation, market-oriented farms in specific sectors, and farms in need of agricultural diversification;
- (b) facilitating general/generational renewal in the agricultural sector.

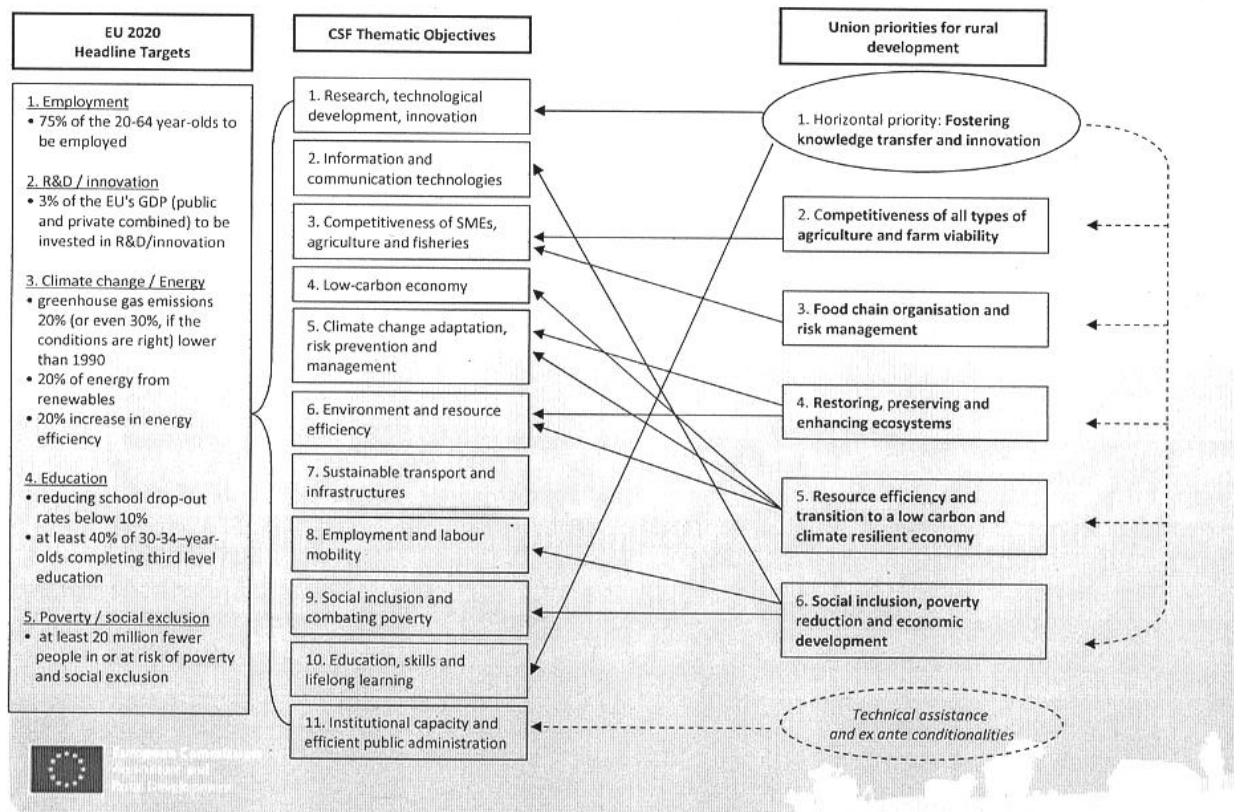
**(3) Promoting food-chain organisation and risk management in agriculture**, with a focus on the following areas:

- (a) better integration of primary producers in the food chain via quality schemes, promotion in local markets and short supply circuits, producer groups, and branch organisations;
- (b) supporting farm risk management;

**(4) Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems dependent upon agriculture and forestry,** with a focus on the following areas:

- (a) restoring and preserving biodiversity (including in Natura 2000 areas and high-nature-value farming systems) and the state of European landscapes;
- (b) improving water management;
- (c) improving soil management.

**The link between the EU2020 and the EAFRD**



Source: Josefine Loriz-Hoffmann, Head of Unit – Consistency of rural development, Brussels, 14 March 2012

**(5) Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the agricultural, food and forestry sector in the transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy** focusing on the following areas:

- (a) improving water-use efficiency in agriculture;
- (b) improving energy-use efficiency in agriculture and food processing;
- (c) facilitating the supply and use of renewable energy sources, by-products, waste, residues, and other non-food raw materials for purposes of the bio-economy;
- (d) reducing nitrous oxide and methane emissions from agriculture;
- (e) promoting carbon sequestration in agriculture and forestry;

**(6) Promoting social inclusion, the fight against poverty and economic development in rural areas** with a focus on the following areas:

- (a) facilitating diversification, creation of new small enterprises and job creation;



(b) fostering local development in rural areas;

(c) promoting access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies (ICTs) in rural areas.

All of the priorities shall contribute to the cross-cutting objectives of innovation, environmental protection, and climate-change mitigation and adaptation.

### **SWOT analysis and strategy in relation to EU priorities in Member States' programming**

Article 5 of the EAFRD Draft Reg outlines the six EU priorities (as listed above) for the development of rural areas.

The SWOT analysis<sup>12</sup> to be outlined in the Member States' programming document must refer to these EU priorities. In addition, the areas of climate change and innovation shall be dealt with at the level of each priority, and suitable reactions shall be identified.

The ex ante evaluation and the SWOT analysis are intended to yield the appropriate combination of measures for each EU priority.

The strategy shall also include targets for each of the focus areas of the EU priorities included in the programme. These targets shall be supplemented by the common indicators in accordance with Art.76 in the EAFRD Draft Reg.

End of the Position Paper

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<sup>12</sup> SWOT analysis = Analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses/Limitations, Opportunities and Threats involved in a project