

## **EEAC WG-Agri**

### **Assessing the Environmental Consequences of Major CAP Changes**

#### **Outcomes of the seminar at Scotland House, Brussels, 29 June 2007**

It is important, to be able to make some retrospective judgement of the environmental outcomes, both desired and accidental, of major policy changes concerned with agriculture, land use and the environment. The aim of this deliberately small and informal seminar was to explore what is being done, and what more should be done, to determine the environmental consequences of major changes to the CAP, such as the de-coupling of support payments from production, the introduction of environmental cross-compliance and the shift in emphasis from Pillar 1 to Pillar 2. It was not concerned with arrangements for monitoring and evaluating Rural Development Programmes – these are clearly specified in the Common Framework and are generally well understood.

Thirty-three participants attended from twelve Member States. Besides members of the working group, they included representatives of NGOs, national ministries, OECD and the European Commission. Presentations covered the following aspects:-

Monitoring and evaluation of the CAP, with particular reference to the environment  
*Martin Scheele, European Commission, DG Agri. Evaluation Unit*

EEA involvement in monitoring and assessing aspects of the CAP  
*Elena Cebrian Calvo, European Environment Agency, Copenhagen*

Economic modelling as a first step in environmental evaluation of the CAP  
*Joan Moss, The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute, Belfast, UK.*

Exploring the environmental implications of CAP reform in England  
*Nigel Boatman, Central Science Laboratory, York, UK*

Evaluation and monitoring programmes by the JRC, using spatialisation tools, indicators and modelling (with reference to southern Europe).  
*Jean-Michel Terres, Institute for Environment and Sustainability (IES) of the Joint Research Centre (JRC), Ispra, Italy*

Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of cross-compliance.  
*Vicki Swales. Institute for European Environmental Policy / the European Cross-compliance Network*

How should we prepare for future policy change?  
*David Baldock, Institute for European Environmental Policy, UK*

The main conclusions from the seminar were:-

- The process of evaluation by the European Commission is a sophisticated one involving a clearly defined approach. It is largely designed, nevertheless, to determine whether policies are achieving their intended objectives rather than (in the case of agricultural policies) any environmental side-effects, or (in the case of environmental policies) the environmental outcomes.
- Environmental outcomes should, therefore, receive more attention in the monitoring and evaluation of land use and rural development policy.
- To get a proper picture of the environmental impacts policy changes need to be evaluated both at member-state and EU-level. The Agricultural Change and Environment Observatory for England is an example of a member-state initiative.
- We need environmental indicators that are more precise, more informative and more robust. A lot of work is being done to develop suitable indicators by EEA and the Joint Research Centre, addressing problems of (e.g.) establishing meaningful base-lines, compensating for missing data and the costs involved in monitoring.
- Many of the changes in land use associated with the CAP that might impact, either favourably or unfavourably, on the environment, are unlikely to be simply the result of policy change. Monitoring, alone, is therefore likely to be inadequate as a basis for establishing cause and effect, and a more sophisticated approach is required involving methods such as economic modelling, extrapolation and scenario-building. Economic modelling in particular can provide a strong basis for predicting environmental impacts.
- Remote sensing and digital mapping methods will increasingly provide a basis for evaluating major and longer-term environmental changes, but more emphasis should be given to case studies of individual farms or local areas in order to explain cause and effect.
- Decisions and choices by land managers affect policy outcomes, and these must be taken into account.
- Networks of experts and stakeholders have an important part to play in the environmental evaluation of land use policy.

Possibilities for future involvement in this area by EEAC include:

- 1) Taking further steps to press upon the European Commission and member states the need to assess environmental outcomes, being more specific about which programmes, the types of environmental outcomes and how they should be measured. This might involve producing a 'factsheet' on monitoring and evaluation.
- 2) Analysing and evaluating information from across the EU. This would involve a high level of input and commitment by the WG Agriculture, but it could

perhaps be tackled by commissioning reports on particular issues funded by some of the member organisations, or by organising workshops designed to present the results of national monitoring and evaluation programmes.

- 3) Following up the June 2007 seminar by looking in more detail at a particular policy change or concentrating on a particular outcome, for example by holding a similarly structured event on the environmental consequences of decoupling or the environmental problems associated with agricultural abandonment.
- 4) Developing a more active and specific role for EEAC in relation to the Commission's policy evaluation and contributing to (the proposed) EU Policy Evaluation Network. This would require a clearer focus on certain aspects of environmental expertise (relating to indicators, for example) or on areas of concern (such as cross-compliance, particular commodities – arable, livestock, etc), and a clear idea of what we want to say. There may also be opportunities to contribute to policy evaluation by becoming involved in the Commission's consultative committees, or in networks relating to particular topics – like the cross-compliance network.

No firm decisions have yet been taken about these possibilities, pending the outcome of discussions about its chairmanship and work programme for 2008-9. The intention is, however, to explore further (by means of a short paper) the role of environmental networks in the evaluation of the CAP.