

# Project *brief*

Thuenen-Institute for rural studies

2022/10a

## Ex-ante evaluation of the CAP strategic plan Austria

Andrea Pufahl<sup>1</sup>, Norbert Röder<sup>1</sup>

- **The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the European Union will be implemented through national CAP strategic plans in the period 2023 to 2027.**
- **Each CAP strategic plan is subjected to an ex-ante evaluation.**
- **In this project, the ex-ante evaluation for the CAP strategic plan Austria was carried out. Recommendations for its improvement were elaborated.**

### Background and objectives

CAP strategic plans contain all EU co-financed interventions in the agricultural sector in the period 2023 to 2027 (direct payments, organic schemes, sector programmes, rural development). The CAP strategic plans lay down the rules for implementation, financing, monitoring and evaluation.

The aim of the project was to carry out the ex-ante evaluation of the CAP strategic plan Austria. The CAP strategic plan was to be qualitatively improved by revealing gaps in content and inconsistent lines of reasoning between the initial situation, derived needs and planned interventions. The following aspects were among those we assessed:

- the contribution of the CAP strategic plan to the achievement of the specific objectives, considering national needs and other aspects;
- the proportionality of budget allocation to the specific objectives;
- the appropriateness and plausibility of expected outputs and results; and
- planned measures to reduce the administrative burden on beneficiaries.

The project was commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Regions and Tourism Austria. The ex-ante evaluation was carried out by a consortium of (inter-) national experts, in which the Thuenen Institute for Rural Studies was involved.

### Research Approach

In the course of the ex-ante evaluation, we supplemented and operationalised the above-mentioned questions in the form of guidelines. The main phases of the ex-ante evaluation were the following:

Alpine farming in the Death Mountains (Austria)



Photo: Lukas Kühnen ©

1. the assessment of the analysis of the initial situation, the analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) and the derived needs,
2. the evaluation of the intervention strategy, outcome and result indicators; and
3. the evaluation of measures to reduce the administrative burden on beneficiaries.

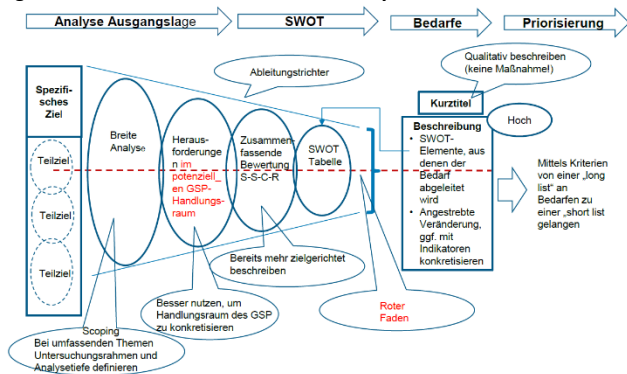
In the ex-ante evaluation, we followed an iterative process: In a first step, we communicated and discussed our recommendations with the client. Thereafter, relevant parts of the CAP strategic plan were revised by the client and finally judged by the ex-ante team.

## Results

The ex-ante team supported the client in capacity building for preparing the GAP strategic plan. This included instructions on how to derive and prioritise needs, how to describe an intervention strategy and how to set target values for outcome and result indicators.

The allocation of financial resources in the CAP strategic plan was done at the level of interventions. As an intervention may contribute to different specific objectives, there was no allocation of funds per specific objective. A key recommendation was therefore to increase the transparency of the CAP strategic plan by clearly allocating funds to each specific objective.

Figure 1: Derivation of needs from the analysis of the initial situation



Source: Bachtrögler et al. (2021)

**SWOT and needs assessment:** The analysis of the situation, the SWOT and the identification of needs were sufficiently well developed. Shortcomings were, for example, missing topics in the description of the initial situation, which should have been the foundation for formulated needs. Further points of criticism concerned a too general description of the initial situation and needs. In these cases, we recommended an analysis differentiated by regions or target groups and the formulation of regionalised needs.

**Evaluation of the intervention strategy, result indicators and set targets:** The intervention strategies were mostly well elaborated. The ex-ante evaluation recommended supplements for some intervention strategies, e.g. to better understand the contribution of an intervention to the needs targeted. We checked result indicators and their target values for their plausibility. Tackled questions were, whether result indicators adequately reflect the effects of interventions and whether set target values are plausible.

**Evaluation of measures to reduce the administrative burden on beneficiaries:** With respect to the Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS), an online application system already exists and is being developed further. In the non-IACS area (sector and project measures), a new digital funding platform is currently under development, through which all projects are to be processed from 2023 onwards. The possibilities of lump sums and unit costs will be used extensively to reduce administrative burden for beneficiaries.

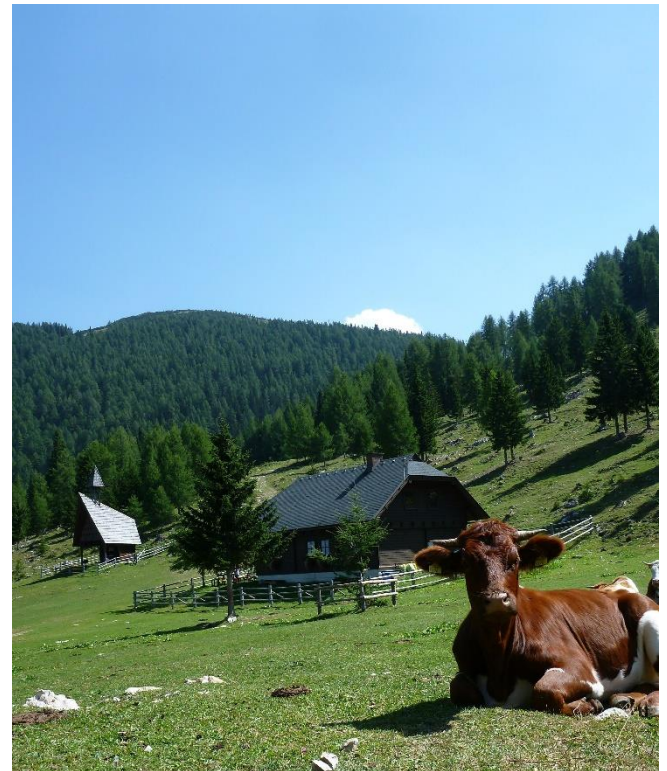


Photo: Daniel Wuttej ©

Recommendations of the ex-ante evaluation were implemented to varying degrees. Recommendations with respect to formal aspects of the CAP strategic plan, e.g. regarding appropriate outcome and result indicators, were mainly taken on board. Recommendations on the modification of interventions and financial allocation between specific objectives were considered to the minor degree.

## Further information

### Contact

<sup>1</sup> Thuenen-Institute for rural studies  
Andrea.Pufahl@thuenen.de  
www.thuenen.de/LV

### Duration of the project

1.2020-12.2021

### Projekt-ID

2256

### Publikations

Bachtrögler J, Bock-Schappelwein J, Kattelhardt J, Kügler A, Niedermayr A, Pufahl A, Pfefferkorn W, Resch A, Schönhart M, Sinabell F, Steinwidder A, Tasser E, Weber N (2021) Ex-Ante Bewertung des Strategieplans für die Gemeinsame Agrarpolitik im Zeitraum 2023-2027 (GAP-Strategieplan) :

Zusammenfassung der Ex-Ante-Bewertung (Annex I). Wien: Rosinak & Partner ; WIFO, zu finden unter: [https://info.bmlrt.gv.at/dam/jcr:973337ee-c095-480a-a288-32512fd3a0e1/Anhang%20I\\_GAP\\_SP\\_ExAnte\\_Eval\\_Zusammenfassung\\_Final.pdf](https://info.bmlrt.gv.at/dam/jcr:973337ee-c095-480a-a288-32512fd3a0e1/Anhang%20I_GAP_SP_ExAnte_Eval_Zusammenfassung_Final.pdf) (Zugriff 7.3.2022) 115 p

DOI:10.3220/PB1646743998000