



Assessment of farmers' position in the food chain

Guidelines
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Additional information about the activities of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP is available on the Internet through the Europa server <https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/support/evaluation>.



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List of acronyms

AIR	Annual implementation report	GVA	Gross value added
ATE	Average treatment effect	GO	General objective(s)
APO	Association of producer organisations	IBO	Interbranch organisations
ATT	Average treatment on the treated	INVRE	Investments in tangible and intangible assets
AWU	Annual work unit	ISAMM	Information System for Agricultural Market Management and Monitoring
BISS	Basic income support for sustainability	KNOW	Knowledge exchange and dissemination of information
CMEF	Common Monitoring and Evaluation	LAG	Local Action Group
CMO	Common Market Organisation	MA	Managing Authority(ies)
COOP	Cooperation	OLS	Ordinary least squares
CSP	CAP Strategic Plan(s)	OP	Operational programme(s)
DIB	Database of Interventions and Beneficiaries	PDO	Protected Designation of Origin
DiD	Difference-in-differences	PG	Producer Group(s)
DME	Data for monitoring and evaluation	PGI	Protected Geographical Indication
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development	PMEF	Performance and Monitoring Evaluation Framework
EIP	European Innovation Partnership	PO	Producer organisation(s)
ENVCLIM	Environmental, climate-related and other management commitments	PSM	Propensity score matching
EQ	Evaluation question(s)	RDP	Rural Development Programme(s)
FADN	Farm Accountancy Data Network	SPR	The CAP Strategic Plan Regulation (EU) 2021/2115
FNVA	Farm net value added	SO	Specific Objective(s)
FoS	Factors of success	TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
FSDN	Farm Sustainability Data Network	TWG11	Thematic Working Group 11



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Questions and suggestions regarding the content of the publication can be addressed to the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP at evaluation@eucapnetwork.eu.



1. Introduction

1.1. Objective and scope of the guidelines

The present guidelines, as developed by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP, offer practical guidance for Managing Authorities (MA) and evaluators to **assess how the CAP Strategic Plan (CSP) contributes to integrating farmers within the food chain** and supporting their participation in quality schemes and organic production to increase added value (Specific Objective (SO)) 3 of the CAP.

The guidelines propose concrete methods and tools adapted to two distinct approaches, depending on the scope of the evaluation chosen by the MA. They are therefore intended for evaluations which have the objective to:

- assess the contribution of their CSP and its interventions to farmers' participation in producer organisation(s) (PO) and quality schemes and how this in turn increases value added. **This approach aligns with the minimum legal requirements from the CAP Strategic Plan Regulation (EU) 2021/2115¹** (hereafter referred to as the SPR) **and Commission Implementing Regulation 2022/1475²** for assessing SO3.

OR

- **go a step further by including additional aspects beyond the minimal legal requirements** for SO3 assessment, such as:
 - **assessing other relevant elements that may be influenced by the CSP interventions** and contribute to improving farmers' position in the food chain (e.g. supply concentration, farmers' participation in additional stages of the value chain, improved contractual relationships, etc.).
 - **considering the contribution of provisions under the Common Market Organisation (CMO) Regulation³**, which are expected to play a significant role in strengthening farmers' position in the food chain (e.g. recognition of PO, derogations from competition rules, provisions on written contracts, protection of geographical indications, etc.).

When designing their CSP, Member States targeted specific interventions toward SO3 to support and complement the CMO provisions. **Changes observed in farmers' position are thus expected to arise from interactions between both the CSP interventions and CMO provisions.** Therefore, it is interesting to consider the overall effects achieved by the CAP instruments⁴. On the other hand, evaluators focusing the SO3 evaluation on the CSP contribution will have to isolate the effects of the CSP interventions from the effects of the CMO provisions, which is challenging.

To help MA and/or evaluators structure and carry out the evaluation of SO3, these guidelines focus on:

- **Effectiveness** assessment (see [Chapter 5](#)), which aims to identify and understand *what* effects were achieved, either by the CSP alone or by the CAP instruments as a whole.
- **Coherence** assessment (see [Chapter 6](#)), which aims to understand *how* and *why* the observed effects were achieved. In particular, these guidelines provide practical guidance to examine the **coherence between CSP interventions and CMO provisions**, i.e. how their design and joint implementation contributed to improving farmers' position in the food chain, with the aim to identify synergies (and potential contradictions) between both schemes. This analysis is relevant for all evaluations (whether they focus solely on CSP interventions or also include CMO provisions) as it supports a better understanding of how different CAP instruments interact and complement each other.

As a result, the guidelines do not provide information for the assessment of the efficiency and relevance of the CSP in regard to SO3. Further information on these evaluation criteria is provided in other guidance documents available on the EU CAP Network website: *Use of Factors of Success in Evaluation* and *EU level CAP evaluation framework*⁵.

¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the common agricultural policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1305/2013 and (EU) No 1307/2013. OJ L 435, 6.12.2021, pp. 1–186. ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/2115/oj>.

² Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1475 of 6 September 2022 laying down detailed rules for implementation of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the evaluation of the CAP Strategic Plans and the provision of information for monitoring and evaluation. OJ L 232, 7.9.2022, pp. 8–36. ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2022/1475/oj.

³ Regulation (EU) 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) 922/72, (EEC) 234/79, (EC) 1037/2001 and (EC) 1234/2007. OJ L 347, pp. 671–854. ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/1308/oj>.

⁴ In these Guidelines, the term 'CAP instruments' is used to refer to both the CSP interventions and CMO provisions together.

⁵ European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development – Unit A.3, *Use of Factors of Success in Evaluation*, 2023, https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/publications/use-factors-success-evaluation_en; European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development – Unit A.3, *Assessment of sectoral support within the CAP*, 2025, https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/publications/assessment-sectoral-support-within-cap_en; EU CAP Network, *EU level CAP evaluation framework*, 2024, https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/support/evaluation/evaluation-framework_en.



1.2. How to use the guidelines

The guidelines are structured to enable easy navigation and identification of relevant information, consisting of the main body of text complemented by a set of practical annexes:

- **Chapter 1** gives an overview of the scope and content of the guidelines.
- **Chapter 2** presents the main concepts associated with the agri-food value chain and farmers' position within it. It sets the scene and helps the target audience to understand the different drivers influencing the position of farmers within the value chain.
- **Chapter 3** presents the CAP framework and lists the main CSP interventions and CMO provisions expected to strengthen the farmer position in the food chain. It also provides an indicative intervention logic of the CAP, highlighting the expected effects of the CAP framework and possible interactions.
- **Chapter 4** provides an overview of the legal basis set by the EU regulations when assessing SO3. It presents the evaluation element and corresponding factors of success recommended by the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1475 ⁶.
- **Chapter 5** provides guidance for assessing **the effectiveness** of the CAP with regard to SO3. It helps MA and/or evaluators to define the scope of the evaluation, its evaluation framework, select corresponding indicators and relevant methods, then analyse their findings and draw conclusions.
- **Chapter 6** provides guidance for assessing **the coherence** of the CAP in relation to SO3. It presents the practical steps to consider when analysing how different CAP instruments (i.e. CSP interventions and CMO provisions) interact in their design and implementation. It helps evaluators identify potential synergies, overlaps, and/or inconsistencies between these instruments.
- **Chapter 7** outlines how to formulate recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness and coherence of the CSP in achieving SO3 based on the evaluation's results and conclusions, with the purpose of guiding policymakers and supporting informed decision-making.

The information in these chapters is complemented by practical annexes (see [Box 1](#)) which serve as essential tools for MA and evaluators. **These annexes should be carefully examined, as they provide detailed and specific guidance directly applicable to the evaluation of SO3.**

Box 1. Technical content provided by the annexes

Annex 1 provides a glossary of CAP interventions relevant to SO3.

Annex 2 clarifies the list of available data on sectoral types of interventions that are reported by Member States.

Annex 3 provides a detailed evaluation framework for each evaluation question (EQ). The first section clarifies the question's objective and scope and provides a list of relevant CAP instruments for the analysis. It also provides a list of indicators and data sources for the assessment of the output, results and impact of the CAP. The second section explains how the different quantitative and/or qualitative methods can be used, highlighting their expected contribution to the analysis.

Annex 4 provides practical guidance for implementing the recommended methods. For each method, the practical steps are described, and guidance is provided on how to interpret the findings.

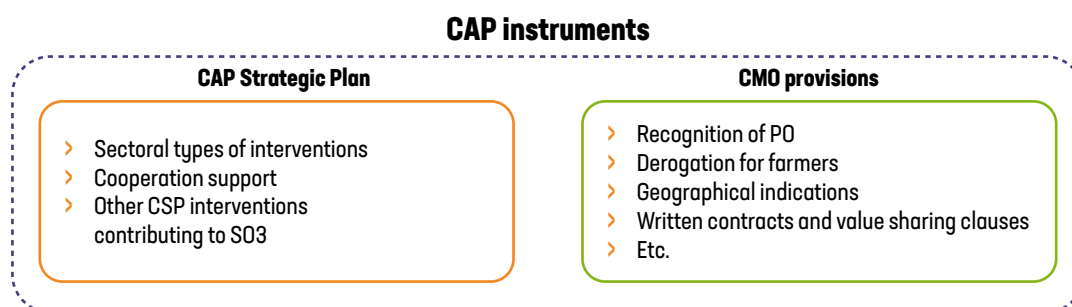
Annex 5 provides templates for stakeholder consultation (i.e. interviews and surveys) and case-study analysis for evaluators. These collection tools can easily be adjusted by evaluators according to the scope and the EQ addressed in their SO3 evaluation.

Please note that these annexes can be found in a separate document in addition to this main report document.

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

Throughout these guidelines, references may be made to methods and indicators used to assess the contribution of the CSP or the CAP as a whole (including both CSP interventions and CMO provisions). For clarity, please note that **any mention of 'CAP' in this document refers to both the CSP and CMO regulations** (see [Figure 1](#) below). Understanding this terminology is essential for interpreting the guidelines correctly.

Figure 1. Structure of CAP instruments in the guidelines



Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

⁶ See [note 2](#), page 1.



2. Farmers' position in the food chain: key concepts

2.1. Definitions of the agri-food value chain and the farmers' position within it

The agri-food value chain⁷ encompasses all stages and stakeholders involved in the agri-food production. It includes the farm, upstream input suppliers (e.g. seed, fertiliser or agricultural machinery manufacturers) and downstream actors (e.g. actors involved in processing, storage, transport, wholesaling, retailing and food services). The term 'agri-food' is favoured over either 'agricultural'

or 'food' because many farms can cultivate both food and non-food (e.g. cotton, tobacco) products. The agri-food stakeholders are linked through transactions carried out at specific prices⁸. The **position of farmers within the food supply chain** is largely determined by **their bargaining power relative to other actors in the chain**.

Box 2. The different roles of the agri-food value chain agents and their potential influence on farmers' position

The agri-food value chain encompasses several stakeholders, the number and types of which vary depending on the sector and value chain considered.

- **Input suppliers:** these agents sell intermediate inputs to farmers, the quality and price of which affect farmers' margins and overall performance.
- **Farmers:** Farmers are the primary producers in the agri-food value chain, cultivating crops and/or raising livestock to supply raw products. These outputs are usually sold to collectors, processors, or directly to markets and consumers.
- **Farmers' organisations and aggregators** (e.g. PO, cooperatives, associations): These groupings of farmers play a key role in strengthening farmers' bargaining power, facilitating access to markets, reducing transaction costs, and improving economies of scale. They may also provide technical services, negotiate better conditions with buyers, and help farmers meet the requirements of downstream actors.
- **Collectors:** Collectors act as intermediaries between farmers and downstream actors by aggregating, storing, and sometimes transporting agricultural products. Their role is particularly important for perishable goods (e.g. milk, meat, fruit, vegetables), where timely collection and proper handling are essential to avoid losses. The availability and proximity of collection services (such as milk collection points, grain silos, slaughterhouses, or oilseed collection facilities) can strongly influence farmers' production decisions, market opportunities, and the overall efficiency of the supply chain.
- **Processors:** Processors buy the raw food products directly from farmers or indirectly through procurement markets or cooperatives. They also set stringent food safety requirements to be met by farmers. Processors generally also pack the food products.
- **Distribution:** Once packed and ready, the food products are shipped from the packaging plant to their final destinations. They can be transported to end-consumer markets or sometimes to other segments of the food industry. Transportation can be ensured by trucks, ships and some products are even transported by air. The distance between the producer and the end-consumer can thus vary significantly and represent a high cost.
- **Retail:** Food retail refers to the sale of food and beverages to consumers for personal or household consumption. These retail activities take place in various settings, such as supermarkets, grocery stores, speciality food shops, and farmers' markets. Retailers handle procurement, storage, and distribution while maintaining food safety standards. Their role is critical in managing inventory, reducing food waste, and responding to consumer demands.
- **Consumers:** Consumers make decisions about the food products they want to buy, based on intrinsic product qualities, expected taste, prices, labels, etc.

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

While the agri-food value chain involves multiple distinct roles and agents, a single entity can consolidate these functions in certain

cases (e.g. producers may sell raw milk to a cooperative that handles collection, processing and distribution to retailers).

⁷ Please note that in these guidelines, the terms 'agri-food value chain,' 'value chain,' 'food chain' or 'supply chain' are used interchangeably.

⁸ European Commission, Commission staff working document, *Analysis of price transmission along the food supply chain in the EU*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2009, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/6240872f-02df-48db-92a2-3180832627a4/language-en>.



2.2. Key characteristics of the agri-food value chain and related challenges for farmers

The agri-food value chain is **complex and heterogeneous**, exhibiting a wide diversity of products, enterprises and markets. In the European Union, there is a variety of value chains that differ depending on the agri-food sectors and/or Member States. At the sectoral level, multiple value chains may co-exist, although one generally predominates (in terms of volume and value of marketed products).

Farmers' position within the agri-food value chain is shaped by several factors, including the value chain organisation and structure:

- The **vertical organisation** refers to the number and variety of stages between farmers and end customers and reflects the flow of goods (e.g. volume, type of processing, different outlets). It also examines the types of agreements between the different agents of the supply chain. By integrating downstream stages, such as processing, packaging, and distribution, farmers can **capture a larger portion of the value generated throughout the supply chain**. Instead of selling raw produce to middlemen or processors at low prices, farmers can market processed products directly to consumers, thereby increasing their profit margins. Vertical integration contributes to **reducing farmers' vulnerability to fluctuations in prices and market conditions**, while strengthening farmers' bargaining power when negotiating with retailers or suppliers.
- The **horizontal structure** relates to the number and type of firms in a market and the ease of entry and exit.⁹ It is often measured by the number and the type of firms at each stage of the supply chain. Horizontal coordination is **the capacity of farmers to join activities** (e.g. through POs, cooperatives and other farmer-led organisations) that promote collective actions. By pooling resources and larger volumes of production, it is expected to **improve the negotiation or market access of farmers**¹⁰.

Despite these opportunities, **farmers often face structural disadvantages both vertically and horizontally**. Vertically, they are typically positioned at the upstream end, with limited influence over pricing and contractual terms, especially when dealing with concentrated processing or retail sectors. Horizontally, fragmentation among producers and barriers to forming effective cooperatives weaken collective bargaining. These challenges can lead to asymmetries in value distribution, making farmers more exposed to market volatility and reducing their ability to invest in innovation or quality improvements.

According to a Commission Staff Working Document¹¹, *"the assessment of **price transmission along the food supply chain**, i.e. how much and how fast price changes are passed through between the different stages of the chain, is often used as an indicator of the effectiveness and efficiency of the chain, as well as of the degree of competition in food processing and distribution"*. In principle, if the retail price of a fruit, vegetable, or other agricultural product increases, part of this increase should be passed back to farmers¹². However, the lack of price data along the supply chain at national level prevents a detailed analysis at the food-product level. As a result, price transmission analysis can only be conducted through ad-hoc data collection from stakeholders within the value chain.

Aside from price transmission, **comparing the added value of farmers to the added value of other agents in the food chain** is also used to assess the functioning of the supply chain (see [Box 3](#) below). However, investigating the price formation mechanism or the distribution of value added in the food chain is a complex exercise, mainly due to limited and unreliable data on prices, profit margins and cost structures at each stage.

⁹ Carlton, D.W.; Perloff, J.M., *Modern Industrial Organization*, Global Edition, 4th ed.; Pearson Education Limited: London, UK, 2015.

¹⁰ It should however be noted that large PO/cooperatives defend production but may end up being important players themselves, with large structures and high costs, over which individual producers have little influence and that impose production prices on farmers.

¹¹ See [note 8](#), page 3.

¹² Key determinants of price transmission include the cost structure of food production and the number of players in each stage of the chain. Other factors affecting price transmission along the supply chain are e.g. the perishable nature of some food products, internalisation of price variation, number of vertical stages along the chain and firm strategies, spatial location and dispersion of the food chain, etc.

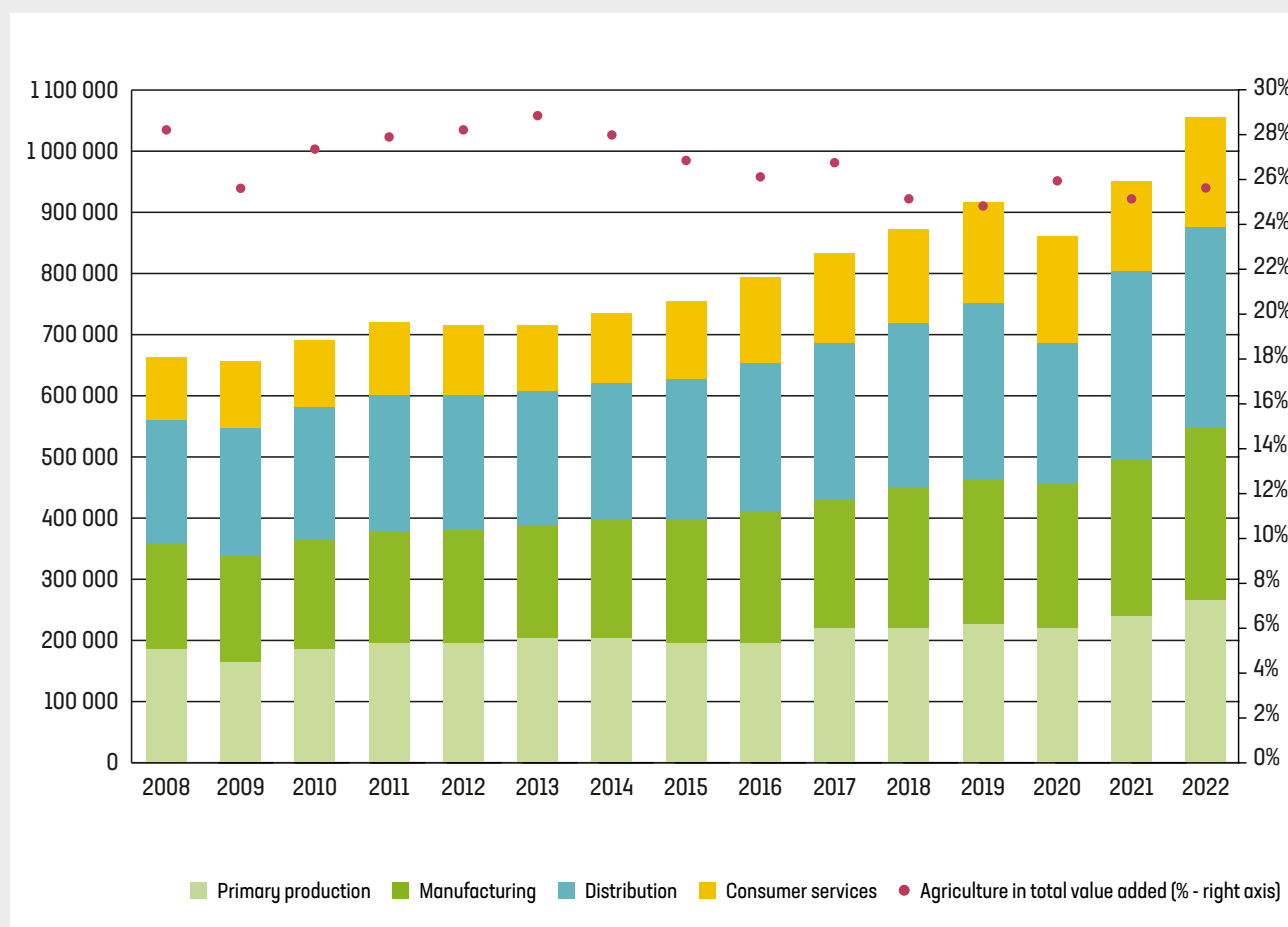


Box 3. Changes in value-added in the EU food supply chain (2008-2022)

One of the most commonly used indicators to assess farmers' position in the supply chain is the added value of farmers (e.g. it increases when input prices decrease or prices received increase). Added value can thus be used to reflect the changes in bargaining power of farmers, although many other factors also affect the added value of farmers, such as their management skills and production decisions. As shown in the figure below, the share of value added captured by the agricultural sector has

progressively declined over the last few decades, while the share of the manufacturing and distribution sector has increased. This trend may indicate growing price pressure on downstream actors. However, value distribution alone is not a direct indicator of bargaining power, and various factors (e.g. technological advancements, cost structures and shifts in consumer demand) affect how value is distributed across the supply chain¹³.

Figure 2. Distribution of value-added in the EU food supply chain (2008-2022)



Source: European Commission, 'Adding value'¹⁴

In this chart, the right axis (red dot) represents the share of agriculture in total value added. The bars show the value generated by each stage of the food supply chain, primary production, manufacturing, distribution, and consumer services, in million EUR (left axis). For example, in 2022, primary production

generated EUR 269 062 million, manufacturing EUR 274 033 million, distribution EUR 328 623 million, and consumer services EUR 180 652 million. During the same year, agriculture accounted for 26% of total value added.

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

¹³ Matthews, A, *Farmers' share of food chain value added*, 2015. <http://capreform.eu/farmers-share-of-food-chain-value-added/>.

¹⁴ European Commission, 'Adding value', version 2022, European Commission, 2022, Accessed on 23 May 2025, <https://agridata.ec.europa.eu/extensions/DashboardIndicators/AddingValue.html>.



2.3. Farmers' strategies to strengthen their position in the agri-food value chain

While various external factors (e.g. market transparency or market concentration) may create challenges for farmers in the agri-food supply chain, there are **multiple strategies farmers can implement to improve their market position** and economic resilience. Unlike external constraints, such strategies represent opportunities that can be leveraged to create a more balanced and competitive agricultural sector. This section explores three main strategies: (i) farmers' cooperation, (ii) the development of short supply chains, and (iii) product differentiation strategies.

2.3.1. Farmers' cooperation

It is widely recognised that **collective action allows farmers to cope more effectively with market challenges** (e.g. concentration of upstream and downstream firms and corresponding difficulties in negotiating terms, increasing consumer demand for food quality and diversity, etc.) than acting individually.

Farmer organisations (e.g. PO, cooperatives, associations and other collective structures) can benefit farmers in multiple ways, by:

- **strengthening farmers' bargaining power** by aggregating supplies, making price setting more transparent, and securing greater stability through sales, price, and payment guarantees;
- **reducing transaction costs and improving market access**, easing both input procurement and product marketing;
- **lowering risks** by diversifying products and outlets or integrating upstream and downstream activities (e.g. mills, genetic services), but also by improving access to risk management tools provided under operational programmes (OP), such as crop insurance;
- **adding value to raw products** through innovation, participation in quality schemes, and product differentiation;
- **enhancing planning security and organisational capacity** by engaging in long-term quality programmes; and
- **helping address market failures** by mitigating risks linked to monopolies, credit constraints, or the holdup problem¹⁵.

In practice, achieving these benefits depends **on the range and quality of the supportive services** provided by farmers' organisations to their members. These services help farmers strengthen their strategic, technical and organisational capacities, enabling them to operate more competitively and securely within agricultural markets. They may include support for strategic planning and business development, legal and contractual assistance, marketing and value chain integration, advisory and training programmes, tools for market coordination and access, and risk-management and resilience measures.

Despite these advantages, **some farmers prefer not to join farmer organisations**, valuing the autonomy and flexibility of direct marketing or long-term trader relationships. Others perceive membership as too burdensome or not sufficiently rewarding. Evidence suggests that PO tend to deliver the greatest benefits for small farmers¹⁶, who gain more from collective bargaining, lower costs, and improved access to markets and risk management tools. In contrast, larger farms may see less incentive to join, as they often have stronger negotiating power, established market channels, and sufficient resources to manage risks independently.

2.3.2. Short supply chain

Reducing the number of intermediaries in a supply chain from the producer of a raw material to the final customer can **increase the share of value added received by those involved** and contribute to improving farmers' position in the food supply chain. Farm-level initiatives involve farmers investing in processing and marketing facilities to produce and sell value-added goods derived from their agricultural products, enabling them to capture higher prices by selling directly to consumers or retailers.

New opportunities are developing related to the increased consumer interest in local food systems and short supply chains. On average, about **15% of EU farms sell more than half of their production directly to consumers**. However, these are mainly small farms (between 1 and 8 economic size units)¹⁷.

2.3.3. Product differentiation

Farmers can improve their position by producing quality products that meet market demand and are generally sold at a **higher price than conventional products** (helping to offset higher production costs).

Food quality products often follow recognised quality schemes and carry distinctive labels guaranteeing their quality.

In the EU, **quality schemes** refer to certain official systems (e.g. labels or registered names) that recognise and protect agricultural products or foodstuffs with specific characteristics (e.g. traditional methods, geographical origin, or special processing) as set up by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 (recently updated by Regulation (EU) 2024/1143)¹⁸ on Geographical Indications (GI) and quality schemes. The main EU quality schemes are Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) and Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG).

¹⁵ The 'hold-up problem' refers to a classic issue in contract theory and transaction economics, especially relevant in agricultural markets and supply chains. It arises when farmers make relationship-specific investments to enter into business relationships with downstream actors (e.g. to meet a buyer's quality standard), and the other party then takes advantage of this dependency (e.g. by renegotiating the price downward, knowing that the farmer can't easily sell those specialised products elsewhere).

¹⁶ Michalek, J., Ciaian, P., Pokrivcak, J., *The impact of producer organizations on farm performance: The case study of large farms from Slovakia*, Food Policy, 75, 2018, pp. 80–92. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2017.12.009>.

¹⁷ European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, *CAP Specific objectives: Farmer position in value chains*, 2019. https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/cap-overview/cap-glance/key-policy-objectives-cap-2023-27_en#documents.

¹⁸ Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 on geographical indications for wine, spirit drinks and agricultural products, as well as traditional specialities guaranteed and optional quality terms for agricultural products, amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) 2019/787 and (EU) 2019/1753 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, OJ L, 2024/1143, 23.4.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1143/oj>.



Organic products are considered quality products because they are produced under strict EU rules that go beyond conventional standards, covering environmental protection, animal welfare, and sustainable farming practices. All operators in the organic supply chain must be certified by an accredited control body, and organic products are identified by the EU organic label, ensuring transparency and consumer confidence. It was found that the organic farmers' share of price formation ranged from 9% to 62% of retail prices, compared with 6% to 40% in conventional supply chains. In general, this would indicate that more value added is created in organic compared to conventional chains, but the price difference does not consider increased costs and therefore does not properly reflect the value added ¹⁹.

In addition to EU quality schemes such as PDO, PGI and TSG, many Member States have established **national quality schemes**, also aiming to recognise and promote products with specific characteristics (e.g. regional origin, traditional production methods, or high environmental or animal welfare standards). Like EU schemes, they often involve official certification, inspection and labelling, but are applied and protected at the national level. National quality schemes complement EU schemes by highlighting local specialities and supporting farmers' market differentiation within domestic markets.

Quality programs often include **specific contract conditions** (e.g. one, five- and ten-year contracts for certain animal welfare programs). PO often play a significant role in their design, as a great deal of consultation and coordination with numerous actors is needed to develop, establish and run such programmes.

3. CAP regulatory framework

The legal basis for the CAP is established in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) ²⁰. Specifically, TFEU Article 39(b) identifies one of the CAP's objectives as **"ensuring a fair standard of living for the agricultural community, in particular by increasing the individual earnings of persons engaged in agriculture."** The 2023–2027 CAP contributes to achieving this objective through the implementation of both the SPR ²¹ and the

CMO Regulation ²² presented below. The SPR establishes rules that allow Member States to tailor their CSP to local needs while supporting EU objectives, including SO3. In parallel, the CMO Regulation sets provisions to encourage producer cooperation through rules for the recognition of PO and specific rules on competition, and defines marketing standards for certain agricultural products.

3.1. The SPR

The CSP shall contribute to improving farmers' position in the value chain, as stated in SO3 ²³. This objective is justified by SPR Recital (25), which explains that *"in order to support viable farm income and resilience of the agricultural sector across the Union to enhance long-term food security, there is a need to improve the farmers' position in the value chain, in particular **by encouraging forms of cooperation that involve and benefit farmers, as well as by promoting short supply chains and improving market transparency**".*

SPR Recital (83) provides further clarification, noting that *"support should enable the establishment and implementation of cooperation between at least two entities with a view to achieving the objectives of the CAP. It should be possible for such support to **entail all aspects of such cooperation, such as the setting-up of quality schemes and information and promotion activities for quality schemes; (...) the promotion of short supply chain and local markets; (...) and the setting-up of producer groups and PO**, as well as other forms of cooperation deemed necessary to achieve the specific objectives of the CAP"*.

The SPR further defines the types of interventions under the CSP that can support cooperation with potential impacts on farmers' position in the value chain. **The sectoral types of interventions and the COOP interventions are the two interventions with direct expected effects on SO3.** These are also the two CAP interventions most commonly linked to SO3 by Member States in their CSP ²⁴.

3.1.1. Sectoral types of interventions

Sectoral interventions are primarily implemented by recognised POs or associations of POs through operational programmes, with the exception of the wine and apiculture sectors. **These interventions represent one of the most relevant CAP tools for achieving the objective of strengthening farmers' position in the food chain.** Notably, 29% of sectoral support interventions were explicitly designed to contribute to SO3, making it the most frequently targeted objective in this context ²⁵.

¹⁹ See [note 17](#), page 6.

²⁰ Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, OJ C 326, 26.10.2012, pp. 47–390, http://data.europa.eu/eli/treaty/tfeu_2012/oj; see Articles 38–44.

²¹ See [note 1](#), page 1.

²² See [note 3](#), page 1.

²³ Article 6(1)(c) of the Regulation (EU) 2021/2115; see [note 1](#), page 1.

²⁴ Chartier, O., Krüger, T., Folkesson Lillo, C. et al., *Mapping and analysis of CAP strategic plans – Assessment of joint efforts for 2023–2027*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.2762/71556>.

²⁵ See [note 24](#), page 7.



While **sectoral support targeted to PO and other forms of farmer collaboration** directly aim to improve the position of the farmer in the value chain, **sectoral support for the wine sector** may also contribute to progress towards SO3. By contrast, interventions for the apiculture sector are excluded from these guidelines because they do not promote collective actions that strengthen farmers' position in the food chain.

According to the SPR, the CSP must link sectoral support to sectoral objectives, in addition to SOs²⁶. The table below lists the relevant sectoral objectives for SO3 per the SPR.

Table 1. Sectoral objectives of relevance in relation to SO3

CAP SO3	Sectoral objectives relevant for sectors supported through OP	Sectoral objectives relevant for the wine sector
To improve farmers' position in the value chain	PROD – Planning and organisation of production, adjusting production to demand, in particular with regard to quality and quantity, optimisation of production costs and returns on investments and stabilising producer prices.	COMPWINE – Improving the economic sustainability and competitiveness of Union wine producers.
	CONC – Concentration of supply and placing on the market of the products, including through direct marketing.	PERFWINE – Improving the performance of Union wine enterprises and their adaptation to market demands, as well as increasing their long-term competitiveness in the production and marketing of grapevine products, including energy savings, global energy efficiency and sustainable processes.
	COMP – Improvement of medium- and long-term competitiveness, in particular through modernisation.	
	REDE – Research into, and development of, sustainable production methods, including pest resilience, animal disease resistance and climate change mitigation and adaptation, innovative practices and production techniques boosting economic competitiveness and bolstering market developments.	MARKETWINE – Increasing the marketability and competitiveness of Union grapevine products, in particular through the development of innovative products, processes and technologies, and the addition of value at any stage of the supply chain.
	MARKET – Promotion and marketing of the products.	
	CONS – Crisis prevention and risk management, aimed at avoiding and dealing with disturbances in the markets of the relevant sector.	

Source: EU CAP Network supported by European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)²⁷

3.1.1.1. Sectoral support targeted to PO

Traditionally, the CAP has supported PO in agriculture to overcome or at least reduce the asymmetries in food supply chains.

During the 2014–2022 CAP programming period, sectoral support was implemented under the CMO regulation through sectoral programmes (e.g. OP for fruit and vegetables PO, national wine programmes). With the CAP reform in 2023, sectoral support was integrated into the SPR. To ensure continuity, a transition period was established: for example, a PO that launched an OP in 2022 could continue receiving CMO-based support until its completion in 2025. Consequently, **during 2023–2025, sectoral support was provided in parallel under both the CMO and the CSP frameworks.**

Under the SPR, specific types of interventions are explicitly aimed at PO in the fruit and vegetable sectors²⁸, hops, olive oil and table olives, or other sectors²⁹. As highlighted in the thematic report on 'Assessment of sectoral support within the CAP'³⁰, Member States may in their CSP include **21 types of interventions to fund OP** in these sectors. For the design of the OP, the PO and associated PO then choose among the types of interventions available in the corresponding CSP. All support targeted to PO (or other forms of collaboration between farmers), fosters cooperation between farmers and as such may improve their bargaining power. As such, **all interventions implemented through OP are recommended to be considered relevant in relation to advancing towards SO3** and to be taken into account for any intervention logic.

Among the 21 types of intervention, those considered particularly relevant for SO3 are presented in the table below.

²⁶ SPR Article 46.

²⁷ European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development – Unit A.3: *Assessment of sectoral support within the CAP. Thematic report*, 2025, https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/publications/assessment-sectoral-support-within-cap_en#section--resources.

²⁸ SPR Article 47.

²⁹ E.g. milk, meat, eggs, rice, cereals, tobacco, banana, etc.; see SPR Article 67.

³⁰ See [note 27](#), page 8.



Table 2. Relevant types of intervention for SO3

Acronym and SPR Article	Description of the type of intervention
Other types of intervention aim at providing advisory services, technical assistance and coaching	
ADVIL; 47(1)(b)	Advisory services and technical assistance, in particular concerning sustainable pest and disease control techniques, sustainable use of plant protection and animal health products, climate change adaptation and mitigation, the conditions of employment, employer obligations and occupational health and safety.
TRAINCO; 47(1)(c)	Training including coaching and exchange of best practices, in particular concerning sustainable pest and disease control techniques, sustainable use of plant protection and animal health products, and climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as the use of organised trading platforms and commodity exchanges on the spot and futures market.
COACH; 47(2)(j)	Coaching to other PO and associations of PO recognised under Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 or under Article 67(7) of this regulation, or to individual producers.
Environmental sustainability interventions that may also increase the commercial value of products	
ORGAN; 47(1)(d)	Organic or integrated production.
TRANS; 47(1)(e)	Actions to increase the sustainability and efficiency of transport and the storage of products.
PROMO; 47(1)(f)	Promotion, communication and marketing including actions and activities aimed in particular at raising consumer awareness about the Union quality schemes and the importance of healthy diets, and at diversification and consolidation of markets.
INVRE; 47(1)(a)	Investments in tangible and intangible assets, research and experimental and innovative production methods and other actions, in areas such as: ➤ soil conservation, including the enhancement of soil carbon and soil structure, and the reduction of contaminants; ➤ improvement of the use of and sound management of water, including water saving, water conservation and drainage; ➤ preventing damage caused by adverse climatic events and promoting the development and use of varieties, breeds and management practices adapted to changing climate conditions; ➤ increasing energy saving, energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy; ➤ ecological packaging, only in the field of research and experimental production; ➤ biosecurity, animal health and welfare; ➤ reducing emissions and waste, improving the use of by-products, including their reuse and valorisation, and the management of waste; ➤ improving resilience against pests and reducing risks and impacts of pesticide use, including implementing Integrated Pest Management techniques; ➤ improving resilience against animal disease and reducing the use of veterinary medicines, including antibiotics; ➤ creating and maintaining habitats favourable to biodiversity; ➤ improving product quality; ➤ improving genetic resources; and ➤ improving the conditions of employment and enforcing employer obligations as well as occupational health and safety requirements in accordance with Directives 89/391/EEC, 2009/104/EC and (EU) 2019/1152.
CLIMA; 47(1)(i)	Actions to mitigate and to adapt to climate change.



Interventions that support the introduction of EU or national quality schemes and contribute to increasing the commercial value of products	
QUAL; 47(1)(g)	Implementation of Union and national quality schemes.
TRACE; 47(1)(h)	Implementation of traceability and certification systems, in particular, the monitoring of the quality of products sold to final consumers.
Interventions to improve the efficient management of volumes placed on the market, notably through collective storage	
INVVO; 47(2)(b)	Investments in tangible and intangible assets make the management of the volumes placed on the market more efficient, including for collective storage.
STORE; 47(2)(c)	Collective storage of products produced by the PO or by its members, including, where necessary, collective processing to facilitate such storage.

Source: SPR Article 47

3.1.1.2. Sectoral support for the wine sector

Furthermore, please see below a table with types of interventions targeted toward the wine sector that contribute to strengthening farms position in the value chain.

Table 3. Relevant types of intervention targeted to the wine sector for S03

Acronym & SPR Article	Description of the type of intervention
Interventions contributing to improving farmers' response to market driven opportunities stemming from new consumer preferences	
RESTRVINEY; 58(1)(a)	Restructuring and conversion of vineyards.
INVWINESUST; 58(1)(m)	Investments in tangible and intangible assets aim to enhance the sustainability of wine production.
INFOR; 58(1)(h)	Information actions concerning Union wines carried out in Member States, encouraging responsible consumption of wine or promoting Union quality schemes covering designations of origin and geographical indications.
Interventions supporting farms transforming grapes into wine and selling it directly to the final consumer	
INVWINE; 58(1)(b)	Investments in tangible and intangible assets in wine-growing farming systems, excluding operations relevant to the type of intervention provided for in point (a), processing facilities and winery infrastructure, as well as marketing structures and tools.
INOVWINE; 58(1)(e)	Tangible and intangible investments in innovation consisting of development of innovative products, including products from, and by-products of, wine making, innovative processes and technologies for the production of wine products and the digitalisation of those processes and technologies, as well as other investments adding value at any stage of the supply chain, including for knowledge exchange and contribution to adaptation to the climate change.
ACTREPUT; 58(1)(i)	Actions undertaken by interbranch organisations recognised by Member States in the wine sector in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013, aiming at enhancing the reputation of Union vineyards by promoting wine tourism in production regions.

Source: SPR Article 58



3.1.2. Cooperation support

Another important intervention targeted toward SO3 by Member States in their CSP is the support for cooperation³¹, which aims to:

- **Promote and support quality schemes** recognised by the Union or by the Member States and their use by farmers³². Beneficiaries of this intervention are groups of farmers, groups of beneficiaries (except farmers) and individual beneficiaries.
- **Support the setting up of recognised producer groups (PG), PO or interbranch organisations**³³. All beneficiaries constitute groups of beneficiaries and groups of farmers, including POs, interbranch organisations and associations. Italy also includes individual beneficiaries.

Member States may only grant support to promote new forms of cooperation (involving at least two actors), including existing ones, if starting a new activity and may cover the costs related to the cooperation and the operations implemented.

3.2. The CMO Regulation

The CMO Regulation is part of the 2023–27 CAP legislative framework. It includes a set of provisions designed to strengthen farmers' position in the food chain. These provisions aim to **provide market stability** through safety-net tools, **allow farmers' cooperation** via legal recognition of PO and specific competition rules, and **establish marketing standards** for certain products. Together, they are expected to enhance farmers' bargaining power, improve access to markets, and support the development of higher value-added products. This section provides an overview of the main provisions.

3.2.1. Derogation for farmers and their associations

The CMO Regulation introduces several derogations from EU competition law³⁵ to strengthen farmers' position in the food chain by enabling cooperation that would otherwise be restricted. Recognised POs and their associations may engage in joint economic activities (e.g. production planning, supply concentration, contract negotiations), benefiting from a derogation that allows them to **coordinate supply and secure better trading conditions**³⁶. A broader derogation applies to all farmers and their associations, including non-PO members, permitting **cooperation in production,**

3.1.3. Other CSP interventions contributing to SO3

Other CSP interventions may support farmers' position in the food chain. Member States can use **on-farm productive investments**³⁴ that contribute to improving farmers' position in the food chain, for instance by supporting investments necessary for the processing and marketing of agricultural products on the farm. In addition, **LEADER** is an instrument that often funds the development of short supply chains and local markets as part of their local development strategies. Then, **eco-schemes** and **ENVCLIM** supporting the implementation of environmental farming practices can also be used by Member States, e.g. to support organic farming, thus participating in the development of quality schemes.

marketing or the joint use of facilities for storage, treatment, or processing of agricultural products³⁷. Recognised interbranch organisations (IBO) are also granted exemptions for initiatives that serve collective objectives (e.g. improving market transparency, coordinating product placement or enhancing knowledge of production)³⁸.

Regulation (EU) 2021/2117³⁹ introduces a derogation for vertical and horizontal initiatives aiming to achieve sustainability standards beyond those required by law, encouraging cooperation between producers and other operators along the chain⁴⁰. For instance, in the wine sector, recognised **IBO may issue non-mandatory price guidance indicators** for grapes used in PDO and PGI wines, thereby reinforcing producers' role in quality management and securing better conditions for members⁴¹. Finally, in times of severe market imbalance, the European Commission may temporarily allow farmers, their associations, PO and IBO to cooperate more widely in order to stabilise markets, safeguard incomes and ensure sectoral resilience⁴².

Collectively, **these provisions enhance farmers' bargaining power**, facilitate access to markets and support fairer, more stable conditions across the food chain.

³¹ SPR Article 77.

³² SPR Art. 77(1)(c): the support for information and promotion actions for quality schemes must be limited to one or more rates not exceeding 70% of the eligible costs.

³³ SPR Art. 77(1)(d): The support for the setting-up of producer groups, producer organisations or interbranch organisations must be limited to 10% of the annual marketed production of the group or organisation with a maximum of EUR 100 000 per year; and that support shall be degressive and limited to the first five years following recognition.

³⁴ SPR Article 73.

³⁵ TFEU Article 101.

³⁶ CMO Regulation Article 152.

³⁷ CMO Regulation Article 209.

³⁸ CMO Regulation Article 210(1).

³⁹ Regulation (EU) 2021/2117 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products, (EU) No 1151/2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs, (EU) No 251/2014 on the definition, description, presentation, labelling and the protection of geographical indications of aromatised wine products and (EU) No 228/2013 laying down specific measures for agriculture in the outermost regions of the Union, OJ L 435, 6.12.2021, pp. 262–314, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/2117/oj>.

⁴⁰ Regulation (EU) 2021/2117 Article 210(a).

⁴¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/2117 Article 172(b).

⁴² Regulation (EU) 2021/2117 Article 222.



3.2.2. Recognition of PO

The CMO Regulation also allows farmers to establish PO, which provides a legal framework for cooperation and strengthens their position in the food chain. To be recognised, a PO must be set up by producers, controlled by sector members, submit a request to the Member State, **carry out at least one activity listed by EU law** (e.g. joint processing or marketing) and pursue at least one legal objective (e.g. optimising costs or promoting products). Additional criteria include minimum membership or production volume and statutes allowing democratic oversight ⁴³.

Member States must recognise PO in the fruit and vegetables, olive oil and table olives, silkworm, hops, and milk and dairy products sectors ⁴⁴, while recognition in other sectors is optional. Recognition ensures accountability and proper use of public funds, encouraging transparency and responsibility within POs.

3.2.3. Geographical indications

The CMO Regulation establishes the legal framework for the registration, protection and enforcement of geographical indications and other quality schemes for agricultural products, thereby complementing specific EU regulations governing these schemes. These provisions aim to:

- **Reinforce the preservation of the essential characteristics of wines** with a PDO or a PGI ⁴⁵.
- **Define 'Designations of Origin' and 'Geographical Indications' and corresponding rules** to apply for the protection of names as designations of origin and GI in the wine sector ⁴⁶.
- **Regulate, at the request of producers, the supply of agricultural products** benefiting from a PDO or PGI, wines and olive oils, with the objective of ensuring the quality of such products (in case of wine, particularly by way of decisions taken by interbranch organisations) ⁴⁷.

These provisions **preserve the market value of PDO and PGI products** and thereby enhance the position of their producers in the supply chain by protecting product authenticity, supporting quality standards, and strengthening their bargaining power.

3.2.4. Written contracts and value sharing clauses

There is the possibility for Member States to **make the use of written contracts mandatory** ⁴⁸. This increases predictability and stability of delivery terms for farmers, as market risks related to non-written terms agreed between a farmer and a processor tend to be borne by the farmer. Where the delivery of agricultural products by a producer to a processor or distributor is covered by a written contract or offer ⁴⁹, the **various factors set out in the contract for calculating the price** (e.g. objective indicators, indices and methods of calculation) are easily understandable by the parties.

3.2.5. Market observatories

The CMO Regulation establishes a single legal framework for Union market observatories in milk, meat, sugar, crops, fruit and vegetables, wine, fertilisers and olive oil/table olives sectors. These observatories aim to **restore trust and improve transparency in the agri-food supply chain**, inform the decisions of economic operators and public authorities, and facilitate monitoring of market developments and potential disturbances.

Per CMO Regulation Article 222(a), the observatories are required to provide **statistical data and information** on: production, supply, and stocks; prices, costs, and, where possible, profit margins at all levels of the supply chain; short- and medium-term market forecasts; and imports and exports, including the filling of tariff quotas for agricultural products.

3.2.6. Other relevant provisions

Other CMO provisions not explicitly outlined here might also contribute to improving farmers' position in the food supply chain, depending on the specific context of each Member State ⁵⁰.

⁴³ CMO Regulation Article 154.

⁴⁴ CMO Regulation Articles 159 and 161.

⁴⁵ CMO Regulation Article 83.

⁴⁶ CMO Regulation Articles 92-123.

⁴⁷ CMO Regulation Articles 166 and 167a.

⁴⁸ CMO Regulation Articles 148 and 168.

⁴⁹ Pursuant to CMO Regulation Articles 148 and Article 168.

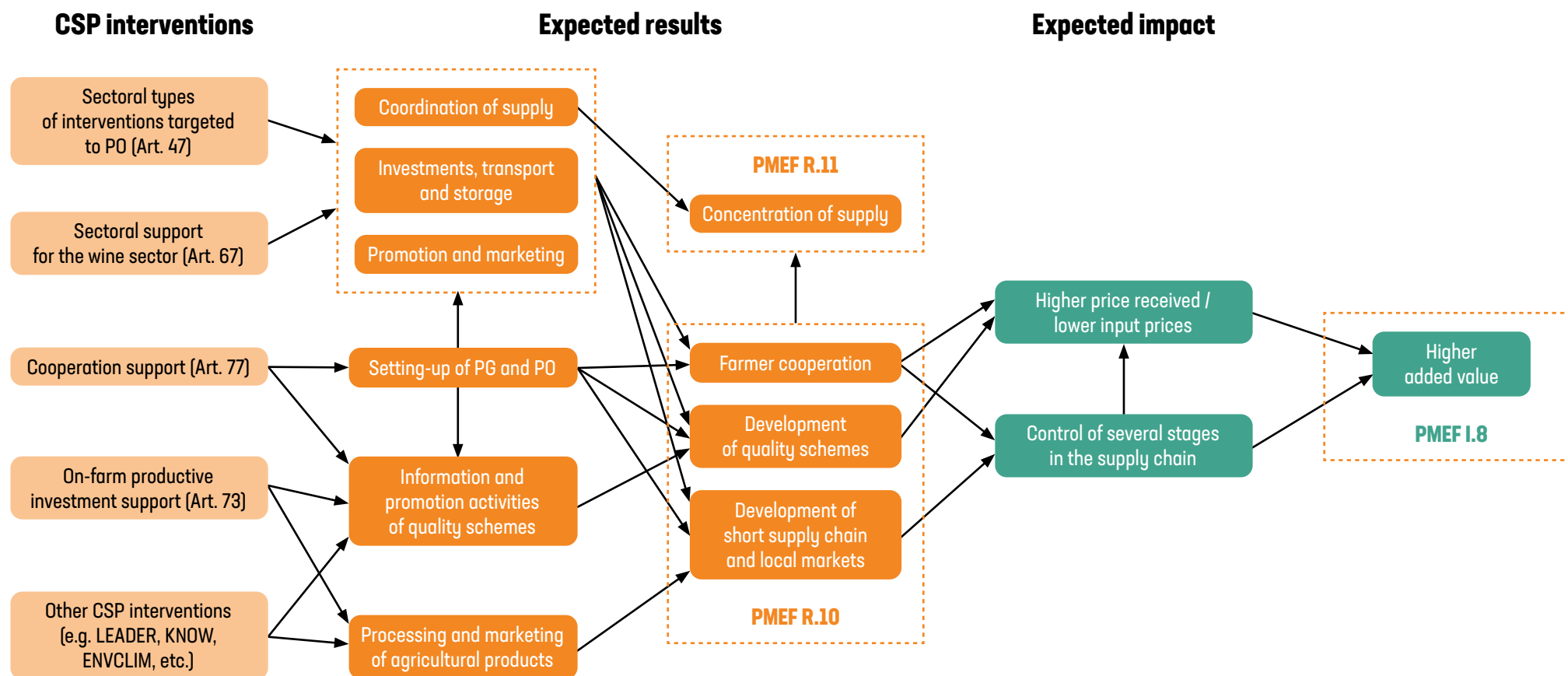
⁵⁰ E.g. the EU school scheme helps promote the consumption of fruit and vegetables and milk products without added sugars.



3.3. Intervention logic for the CAP

The figure below provides an example of an intervention logic illustrating how CSP interventions contribute to SO3. The arrows represent the theoretical links between the CSP interventions, their expected results, and the targeted impact. The Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (PMEF) indicators included in this diagram are described in [Section 5.3.1](#).

Figure 3. Example of CSP intervention logic to improve farmers' position in the value chain

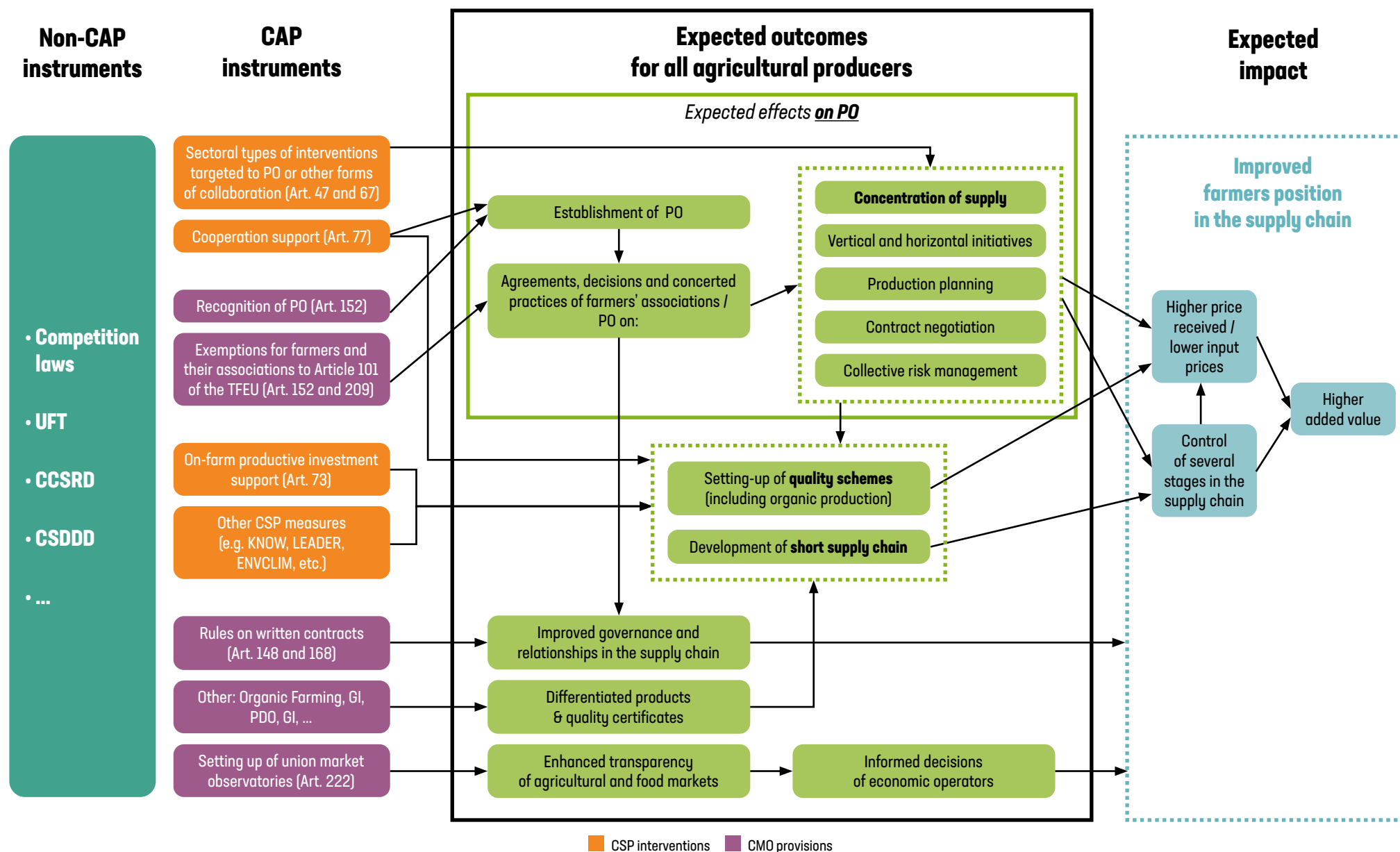


Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

The figure below presents an example of the intervention logic of the CAP aimed at strengthening farmers' position in the value chain. It reflects the expected contributions of the CMO Regulation (i.e. rules) and the SPR (i.e. support), highlighting the interplay between the two regulations when fostering farmers' cooperation or participation in quality schemes.



Figure 4. CAP intervention logic fostering farmers' cooperation and expected impact on farmers' position in the food supply chain



Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)



4. Evaluation elements to assess SO3 according to EU regulations

The **Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1475**⁵¹ requires Member States to examine how their CSP contributes to the “integration of farmers within the food chain and participating in quality schemes and organic production to increase added value”, when assessing effectiveness towards SO3⁵².

To guide this assessment, the regulation recommends three **factors of success (FoS)**, presented in **Table 4** below. These FoS focus on measurable changes in farmers’ participation in quality schemes, POs and improvements in gross added value.

Table 4. Key evaluation elements and recommended factors of success for SO3

SO3	Key element to assess	Recommended FoS
To improve farmers’ position in the value chain	<u>Farmers’ position in the food chain:</u> Integration of farmers within the food chain and participating in quality schemes and organic production to increase added value.	- Share of marketed production by quality schemes and organic production is increasing. - Share of marketed production by POs and other forms of farmer organisations supported is increasing. - Gross added value for farmers in POs and other forms of farmer organisations, or participating in quality schemes and organic production, is increasing.

Source: Annex I of Commission Implementation Regulation. (EU) 2022/1475

In addition, the SPR explains that the assessment of SO shall build on PMEF indicators related to output, result, impact and context as set out in Annex I. For SO3, Annex I⁵³ refers to the **Impact indicator I.8** (improving farmers’ position in the food chain: value added for primary producers in the food chain (see box below)). Additional PMEF indicators useful for the analysis are presented in **Section 5.3.1.1**.

Box 4. Impact Indicator I.8 (improving farmers’ position in the food chain: value added for primary producers in the food chain)

The PMEF Impact indicator I.8 measures the gross value added (GVA) by sector, by type of region, in agriculture and in the food supply chain. As indicated in the PMEF fiche⁵⁴, the total GVA (at basic prices) is defined as the value of output less the value of intermediate consumption.

It consists of five specific indicators:

1. Total GVA.
2. GVA by sector (primary, secondary, tertiary), absolute value and share of total GVA.
3. GVA by type of region (predominantly rural, intermediate and predominantly urban), absolute value and share of total GVA.
4. GVA of the food supply chain, total, absolute value and share of value added by each participant in the food chain (primary production, food manufacturing, food distribution and food service activities)⁵⁵.
5. Impact Indicator I.8 and corresponds to Specific Indicator 4 ‘GVA of primary production’.

Impact indicator I.8 can be calculated as: output of the agricultural industry – total intermediate consumption + subsidies on production – other taxes on production⁵⁶.

The PMEF fiche of the indicator provides information for the calculation of the value added of:

- the food and beverages manufacturing (food manufacturing)
- the food and beverages distribution (food distribution)
- the food and beverage consumer services (food service activities)

The share of value added attributed to primary producers relative to the supply chain’s total value added can be useful for analysing changes over time. However, an increase or decrease in this share should not be interpreted as a straightforward indicator of farmers’ strengthening or weakening position within the supply chain. This metric can be influenced by a wide range of factors (see also **section 2.2**).

The **Agri-data portal** annual national values for Impact Indicator I.8 for each Member State over the 2010–2022 period.

Source: Impact Indicator 8; PMEF⁵⁷

⁵¹ See **note 2**, page 1.

⁵² Annex I of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1475; see **note 2**, page 1.

⁵³ Annex I of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1475; see **note 2**, page 1.

⁵⁴ European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, *PMEF – Cover note on output and result indicators*, 2024, https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/cap-overview/cmf_en#towards-thepmef.

⁵⁵ Eurostat, *Gross value added and income by detailed industry (NACE Rev. 2) (nama_10_a64)* [Data set]. European Commission. Retrieved June 22, 2025, from https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/nama_10_a64.

⁵⁶ Eurostat, *Economic accounts for agriculture – values at current prices (aact_eaa01)* [Data set]. European Commission. Retrieved June 22, 2025, from http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/aact_eaa01.

⁵⁷ See **note 55**, page 15.



Finally, beyond legal requirements, the EU-level evaluation framework⁵⁸ recommended by the EU CAP Network (supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP) proposes an

additional FoS to assess the CSP contribution to SO3 (creation and development of shorter value chains is increasing due to CAP support).

5. Assessing the effectiveness of the CAP with regard to SO3

This chapter provides guidelines for the assessment of the effectiveness of the CAP (or CSP interventions) concerning SO3. Guidance is provided for each phase of the evaluation, e.g. on how to define the evaluation framework, select the relevant indicators and appropriate methodological approaches, and finally carry out the analysis and provide an overall judgment of the CAP (or CSP

interventions) effects on SO3. This chapter is complemented with practical annexes providing examples of EQ, FoS, indicators, data sources and corresponding methods, to be selected according to the specific scope and objectives of the SO3 evaluation (see Annexes 3–5).

5.1. Key considerations for the analysis of effectiveness

5.1.1. A multi-dimensional concept

The concept of farmers' position in the value chain is complex and multi-dimensional. To facilitate the assessment of the CSP's contribution to strengthening this position, these guidelines decompose the concept into several dimensions derived from the CAP intervention logic (presented in [Section 3.3](#)). The framework is structured across three analytical layers:

1. Activities available to farmers

This layer encompasses **strategies implemented at farm level** to improve farmers' position in the value chain. Three different strategies can be promoted by the CAP:

- **Farmers' cooperation**, through participation in PG, PO and cooperatives that enable collective action and shared resources.
- **Product differentiation** through participation in quality schemes and organic farming certifications that add value and market premium.
- **Development of short supply chains** that reduce intermediaries and strengthen direct connections to local markets.

2. Further integration in the value chain

This layer captures **structural changes occurring within the value chain**, resulting in further integration of farmers into the broader supply system, such as:

- **concentration of supply** through coordinated production planning and collective marketing;
- **provision of supportive services** including e.g. technical assistance, contract negotiation support, and marketing expertise;

- **participation in additional stages of the value chain**, expanding farmers' role beyond primary production; and
- **improved contractual relationships** with other supply chain agents, creating more balanced partnerships.

These changes alter the organisation and structure of the supply chain and can shape farmers' relationships with upstream or downstream actors. They are also influenced by the strategies implemented at the farm level.

3. Expected outcomes and impact:

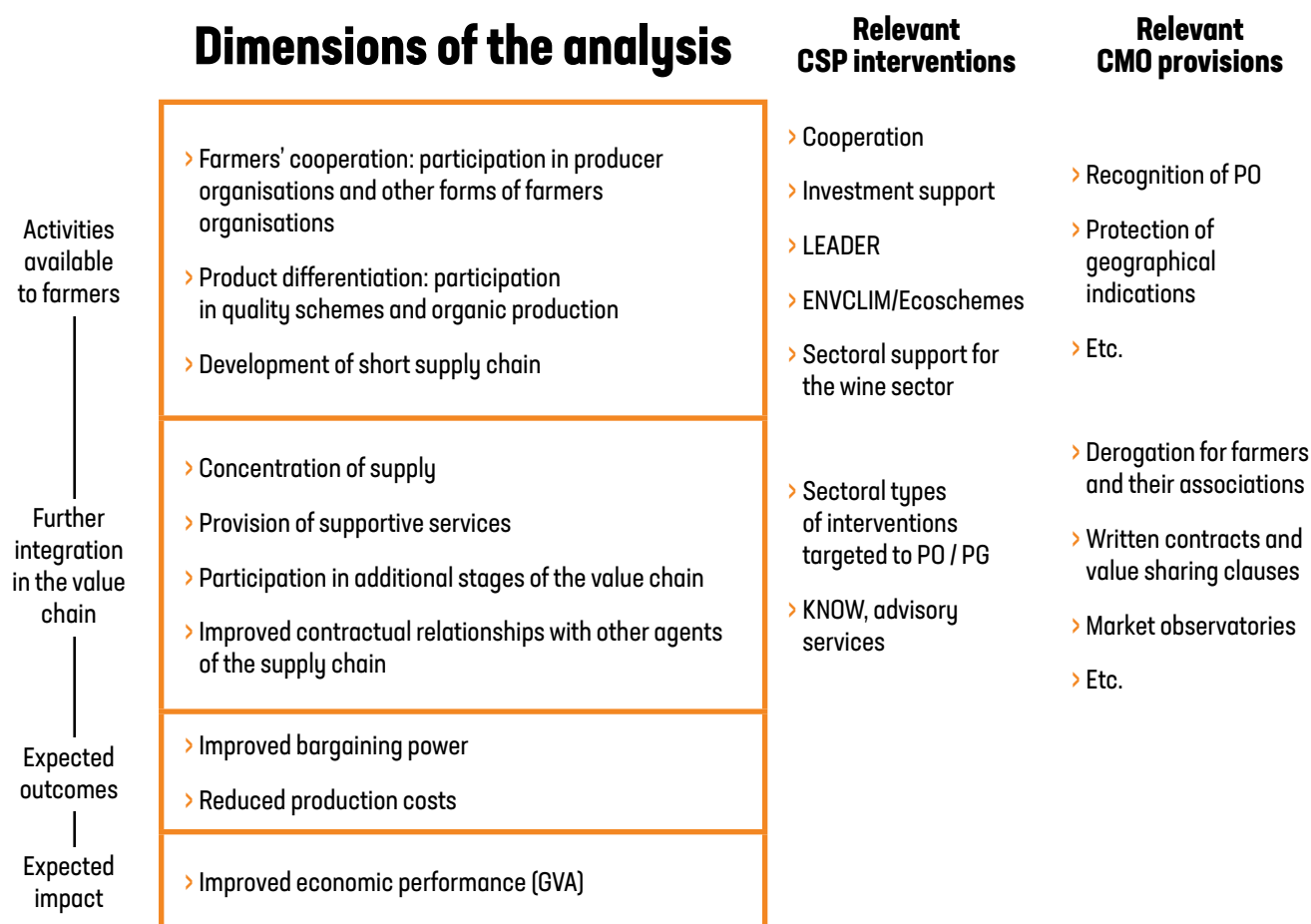
Strategies adopted by farmers (i.e. Layer 1) and structural changes in the organisation of the value chain (i.e. Layer 2) are expected to strengthen farmers' **bargaining power** and/or reduce **production costs** (also see [Sections 2.2](#) and [2.3](#) to better understand the theoretical relationships between these various dimensions). These improvements collectively enhance **farmers' economic performance**, which serves as the primary indicator of a strengthened position in the food chain.

This analytical approach recognises that improvement in farmers' value chain position results from complex interactions spanning **individual farm strategies to systemic changes in supply chain organisation and structure**. It is illustrated in [Figure 5](#) below, which also maps the main CSP interventions and CMO provisions expected to support farmers' strategies and further value chain integration.

⁵⁸ EU CAP Network, *EU level CAP evaluation framework*, 2024, https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/support/evaluation/evaluation-framework_en.



Figure 5. Analytical framework for assessing the effectiveness of the CAP in relation to SO3



Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

The CAP is expected to influence farmers' strategies and further value chain integration through both CSP interventions and CMO provisions:

- > **Relevant CSP interventions** generally support strategies at farm level (e.g. cooperation). However, sectoral interventions delivered through PO are specifically designed to catalyse supply chain-level changes, e.g. by supporting production planning and coordination activities (also see [Section 3.1.1](#)).
- > **Relevant CMO provisions** operate at the market level, providing regulatory frameworks such as derogations for farmer associations and rules governing written contracts that facilitate improved value chain integration. However, by offering some regulatory guarantees, they are expected to influence farmers' decisions.

5.1.1.1. Evaluation implications

Assessing the effects of the CSP implies considering how the CSP interventions have affected these dimensions and **establishing the causal links between CSP interventions and their ultimate impact on the economic performance of agricultural holdings**. This involves examining the specific role of the CSP's interventions on relevant dimensions, but also considering how interventions function as a coherent whole, accounting for cumulative effects throughout the value chain transformation process.



Important note: Not all dimensions presented in this framework need systematic consideration for every SO3 evaluation. [Section 5.2](#) offers detailed guidance to select the relevant dimensions and ensure the analysis remains proportionate and focused.

5.1.2. Interconnections between dimensions

While this framework breaks down the complex concept of farmers' value chain position into distinct dimensions to facilitate analysis, **evaluators must recognise that these dimensions do not operate in isolation**. The analytical separation is a practical tool that helps demonstrate how different activities influence farmers' market position, but it represents a simplified version of real-world mechanisms.

The strength of this framework lies in acknowledging the dynamic interconnections between dimensions and understanding how they mutually influence each other. Changes in one dimension typically trigger cascading effects across others, creating a web of interactions that ultimately determines the overall impact on farmers' position.



A critical challenge in this evaluation approach is **that inter-connections vary significantly across contexts, sectors and Member States**. The influence of one dimension on others is not uniform and depends heavily on local circumstances.

Box 5. Examples of context-dependent interconnections

Participation in PO may enable farmers to:

- Engage in additional stages of the supply chain.
- Benefit from improved contractual relationships.
- Access enhanced supportive services.

However, these outcomes depend on the specific PO strategy, farmers' characteristics, market structure and sectoral organisation within the given context.

Similarly, participation in quality schemes can sometimes transform contractual relationships between producers and processors, but this effect varies considerably across sectors and Member States depending on market maturity, consumer demand and regulatory frameworks.

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

Box 6. Example of sector-specific contexts and issues

The diversity of sectoral contexts can be illustrated through two contrasting examples:

The fruit and vegetables sector is well structured. Farmers' cooperation has been fostered by the CMO regulation and the setting-up of PO. In this sector, improving farmers' position in the value chain depends on factors such as: PO size and market coverage, operational effectiveness and strategic focus, degree of downstream integration, etc.

In contrast, farmers from **the livestock sector** may face significant structural challenges (although that vary considerably across sub-sectors, regions and Member states), including low farm-gate prices controlled by concentrated buyer networks, limited processing infrastructure with scattered and distant slaughterhouses and weak bargaining power due to fragmented supply structures.

In this sector, farmers may seek alternative solutions to improve their market position, including short supply chain development through direct-to-consumer sales, organic certification to access premium markets, collective marketing initiatives to strengthen negotiating power, etc.

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

5.1.2.1. Evaluation implications

Given these complex interdependencies, **assessing CSP effectiveness requires a dynamic approach** that examines:

1. **Direct changes** supported by CSP interventions across the various analytical dimensions.
2. **Cascading effects** – How these initial changes influence other dimensions within the value chain.
3. **Ultimate achievement** – The combined effect of direct and indirect changes on farmers' overall value chain position.

To capture the dynamic effects and understand how the CSP interventions have influenced changes along the supply chain, with subsequent impact on farmers' position, **these guidelines recommend adopting a mixed-method evaluation approach, involving both quantitative and qualitative methods**. This integrated approach facilitates richer insights and provides a more robust understanding of causal relationships, enabling evaluators to trace the pathways through which CSP interventions ultimately strengthen farmers' position in the value chain.

5.1.3. Sector-specific contexts and issues

The assessment of the CSP contribution to SO3 can be carried out at different levels, i.e. the national, the regional and/or the sectoral level. Whatever the scope of the evaluation, it must be noted that farmers' position in the food chain varies significantly across agricultural sectors, with each sector exhibiting unique strengths, vulnerabilities, and market dynamics.

5.1.3.1. Evaluation implications

When assessing CSP contributions to SO3, **evaluators must recognise that baseline conditions vary significantly across sectors and regions**. A careful description of the specific issues of the sector(s) and the objectives of the CSP interventions should precede any evaluation of CAP effects, as it will influence the evaluation choices and methodological approach. When possible, context indicators (e.g. organisational participation rates, short supply chain prevalence, etc.) should be provided at sectoral level.

SO3 evaluations can accommodate sectoral diversity through several approaches:

- **National evaluations** can capture the diversity of issues associated with farmers' position in the different agricultural sectors by including a focus on specific key sectors targeted by the CSP interventions. This can be achieved by including sector-specific case studies in the evaluation, looking at diverse pathways and impacts, or by developing EQs tailored to different sectoral contexts.
- **Sector-focused evaluations** can focus on a single sector (e.g. livestock) to provide in-depth insights, examine how CSP interventions address specific sectoral challenges and offer a detailed understanding of context-specific causal mechanisms and outcomes.

The choice of evaluation approach should align with the significance of sectoral challenges within the national/regional context. This sector-sensitive approach ensures that SO3 evaluations capture the nuanced ways in which CSP interventions affect farmers' value chain positioning across diverse agricultural contexts.



5.2. Defining the evaluation framework

The **evaluation framework must align with the scope and objectives** of the evaluation. It serves as the foundation for the evaluation by defining:

- Evaluation criteria
- Evaluation questions
- Factors of success (i.e. what expected outcomes or changes indicate progress toward SO3)

A well-designed evaluation framework ensures the analysis remains focused, relevant, and able to generate meaningful conclusions about what the CAP has achieved and how.

This section provides guidance to help MA and evaluators build a consistent evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of CSP interventions in relation to SO3.

5.2.1. Deciding the objective and scope of the evaluation

Evaluating SO3 can be approached in multiple ways, depending on the context. **MA must determine the scope and objectives of their evaluation based on policy learning priorities, stakeholder information needs and available resources.** Clarity on the intended use of the evaluation findings enables the formulation of concrete objectives and provides a clear mandate for evaluators.

The guiding questions presented below serve as practical tools to help delineate the scope of the evaluation study.

1. What dimensions of farmers' position in the value chain do you wish to examine?

The analytical framework presented in [Section 5.1.1](#) breaks down this concept into ten dimensions derived from the CAP intervention logic (i.e. farmers' cooperation, product differentiation, development of short supply chain, etc.).

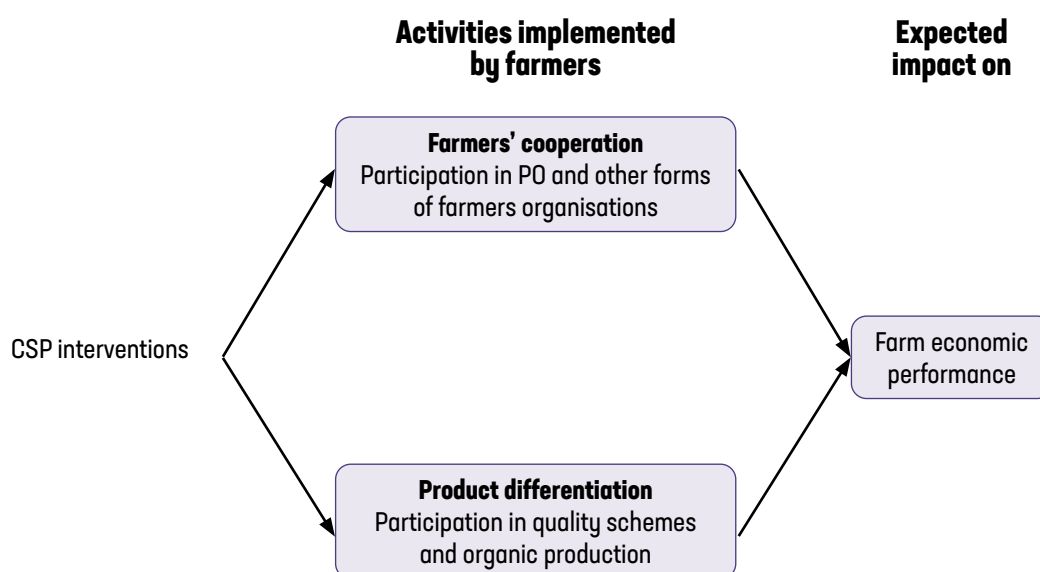
It is important to note that not all dimensions of the suggested analytical framework are covered by Annex I of Commission Implementation Regulation (EU) 2022/1475⁵⁹. This regulation focuses on **one key element to assess**: «Farmers' position in the food chain: Integration of farmers within the food chain and participating in quality schemes and organic production to increase added value» and recommends FoS on quality schemes and organic production, producers organisation and gross added value for farmers in PO and other forms of farmers' organisations or participating in quality schemes and organic production (see also [Chapter 4](#)).

Based on these regulatory requirements, **MA can choose between two distinct approaches.**

Option 1: Narrow scope focusing on minimum requirements

MA following the minimum requirements from the SPR will focus their evaluation on the assessment of CSP effects on farmers' participation in POs, quality schemes and organic farming, and subsequent changes in their added value. The figure below shows the three dimensions to be considered in this approach.

Figure 6. Scope of evaluation covering the minimum requirements



Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

⁵⁹ See [note 52](#), page 15.

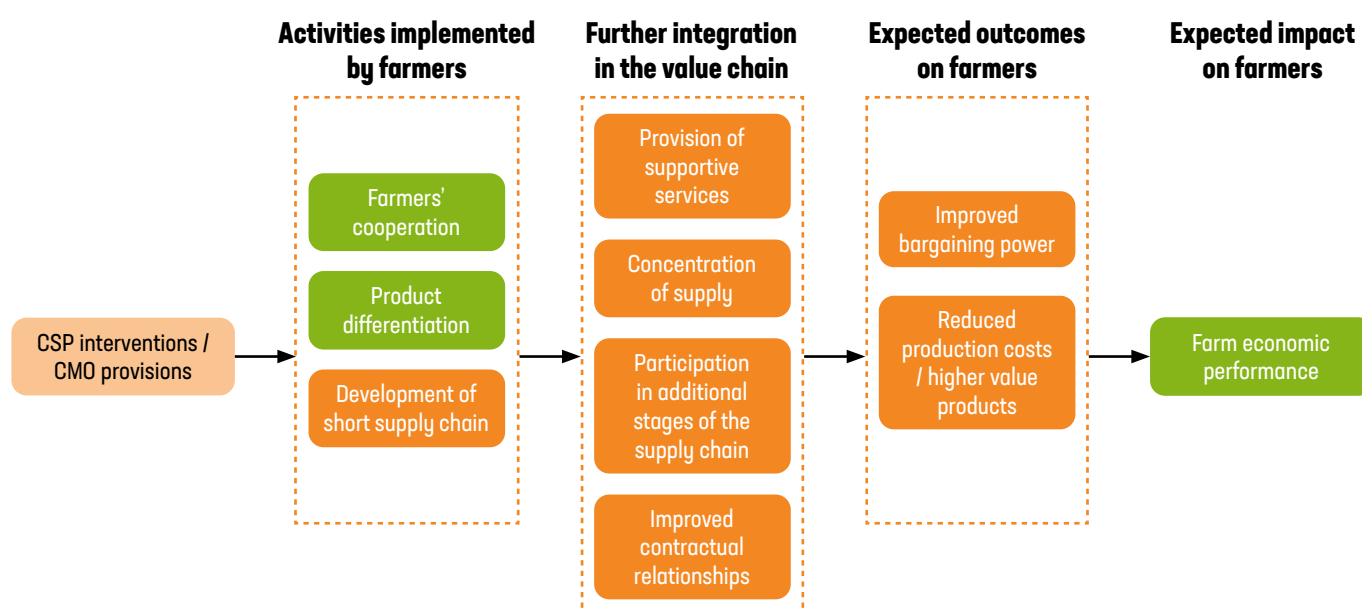


Option 2: Enlarged scope including additional analytical dimensions

Establishing causal pathways between CSP interventions and their ultimate impact on the economic performance of agricultural holdings may require considering intermediate steps. The analytical framework presented in [Section 5.1.1](#) can help untangle complex interactions, from individual farm strategies supported by the CSP to systemic changes in supply chain organisation and structure.

The figure below shows an example of an enlarged scope of SO3 evaluation, covering a more comprehensive set of analytical dimensions. **MA are advised to adapt the evaluation scope to reflect the specific design and priorities of their national CSP and to select the relevant dimensions according to the evaluation objectives.** In the diagram below, green boxes represent the three dimensions associated with the minimum approach. Additional analytical dimensions are represented in purple boxes.

Figure 7. Enlarged scope of SO3 evaluation covering additional dimensions



Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

This enlarged scope may include consideration of CSP effects on the development of a short supply chain at farm level (only relevant in Member States where CSP fostered this strategy) and the structural changes occurring within the value chain. It examines the possible outcomes on farmers' bargaining power and/or reduced production costs, which could explain an observed change in farmers' economic performance.

2. Do you wish to focus the evaluation exclusively on the CSP contribution to SO3 or consider the broader CAP framework, including the effects of the CMO provisions?

MA may want to decide whether to evaluate CSP interventions in isolation or within the broader CAP context. This decision significantly impacts the evaluation's scope, methodology, and findings.

Option 1: CSP-focused evaluation (narrow scope): MAs can **focus their SO3 evaluation exclusively on their CSP's contribution to SO3**⁶⁰. However, this does not take into account that farmers' position in the food chain is strongly influenced by the whole CAP framework, including both SPR and CMO regulations, and that clearly distinguishing the specific contributions of CSP interventions from those of CMO provisions to farmers' position in the food chain is difficult.

Option 2: CAP-oriented evaluation (enlarged scope): MA may also opt for a broader scope by evaluating the **combined effects of the CSP interventions and the CMO provisions** on farmers' position in the food chain. This integrated approach acknowledges the substantial influence of CMO provisions on SO3. It also enables to consider how the SPR and the CMO regulation, each offering distinct but complementary tools (such as sectoral support and market measures), contributed to strengthening farmers' position. Such a broader view can provide a more complete picture of CAP's contribution to SO3 and support future policy alignment.

While Option 1 offers administrative simplicity, Option 2 provides greater analytical value and policy relevance.

5.2.2. Developing EQs by considering the intervention logic

Reviewing the intervention logic can be a starting point for the development of specific EQ linked to the initial expectations of the policy intervention⁶¹. The intervention logic is generally translated into a diagram that describes the expected logic of the interventions (or the different steps) that should lead to the intended change (see [Section 3.3](#)).

⁶⁰ SPR Article 140.

⁶¹ European Commission, *the Better Regulation guidelines and toolbox*, 2023, https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/planning-and-proposing-law/better-regulation/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox_en.



Thus, to prepare the evaluation of SO3, it is recommended to list the CAP instruments likely to influence the different dimensions considered in the evaluation (e.g. participation in POs, development of quality schemes, types of agreements between the agents in the supply chain, etc.). **EQ and FoS can be formulated so as to explore the expected effects of the relevant CAP instruments implemented.**

The table below presents different EQ for assessing the CSP (or CAP) contribution to SO3. It provides one EQ for each dimension, as presented in the previous [Section 5.1.1](#). The green dimensions reflect

the FoS recommended by the regulation to assess the contribution of the CSP to SO3 and are considered as the minimum requirements for MA willing to limit the scope of their evaluation on the CSP contribution. The purple boxes represent additional, complementary dimensions influenced by the CAP, that also contribute to improving farmers' position in the food chain. **It is up to the MA and evaluators to select the EQ that the evaluation will focus on, according to the specific design and priorities of their own national CSP and evaluation objectives.**

Table 5. Suggested EQ and FoS to assess the CSP (and CMO provisions) effectiveness toward SO3

Dimensions	EQ	FoS
Farmers' cooperation	EQ1: To what extent have the CSP interventions (and CMO provisions) effectively contributed to promoting farmers' participation in PO?	<i>Share of marketed production by PO and other forms of farmer organisations supported is increasing due to CAP support.</i>
Product differentiation	EQ2: To what extent have the CSP interventions (and CMO provisions) effectively contributed to promoting participation in quality schemes and organic production?	<i>Share of marketed production by quality schemes and organic production is increasing due to CAP support.</i>
Development of short value chains	EQ3: To what extent have the CSP interventions (and CMO provisions) effectively contributed to promoting farmers' participation in short supply chains?	Creation and development of shorter supply chains is increasing.
Improved economic performance	EQ4: To what extent have the CSP interventions (and CMO provisions) effectively contributed to promoting farm economic performance for farmers in PO, farmers participating in quality schemes and organic production and/or farmers participating in shorter supply chains?	<i>Gross value added for farmers in PO, farmers participating in quality schemes and organic production and/or shorter supply chain is increasing due to CAP support.</i>
Provision of supportive services	EQ5: To what extent have the CSP interventions (and CMO provisions) effectively contributed to promoting the provision of supportive services delivered through PO or cooperatives?	The provision of supportive services delivered through PO or cooperatives has increased due to CAP support.
Increased farmers participation in additional stages of the value chain	EQ6: To what extent have the CSP interventions (and CMO provisions) effectively contributed to promoting farmers participation in additional stages of the value chain?	Farmers participation in additional stages of the value chain has increased due to CAP support.
Concentration of supply	EQ7: To what extent have the CSP interventions (and CMO provisions) effectively supported the concentration of supply among farmers?	Concentration of supply has increased due to CAP support.
Improved contractual relationships	EQ8: To what extent have the CSP interventions (and CMO provisions) effectively contributed to promoting beneficial contractual relationships for farmers?	Contract conditions for farmers have improved due to CAP support.

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

NB. FoS recommended by the Commission Implementation Regulation (EU) 2022/1475 are highlighted in italics.



5.3. Selection of indicators, data sources and methodological approaches

5.3.1. Identification of suitable indicators and data sources

A well-constructed intervention logic helps define **what should be measured at each level (outputs, results, impacts) and the type of data required (quantitative, qualitative, etc.)**.

The data collection in practice draws from multiple sources which include PMEF indicators (outputs, results, impacts) reported through CSP monitoring and Information System for Agricultural Market Management and Monitoring (ISAMM)⁶² notifications for sectoral support, Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN)/Farm Sustainability Data Network (FSDN) microdata on farm structure and performance, Eurostat (EAA)⁶³, national accounts, structural statistics), Managing Authority's administrative registers (payments, beneficiaries, PO registries, etc.), surveys, interviews, focus groups and case studies.

Both quantitative and qualitative indicators are indeed essential to:

- **describe the baseline situation;**
- **measure changes supported** by the CSP interventions and/or CMO provisions; and
- understand the **influence of external factors** to better isolate the net effect of the policy.

Find more in Annex 3

For each dimension (e.g. farmer cooperation, product differentiation, etc.), **a list of indicators is provided in Annex 3 for each EQ and corresponding FoS**, together with information on the level of analysis (e.g. farm, sectoral), relevant data sources and notes on feasibility/data availability.

5.3.1.1. Relevant PMEF indicators

The PMEF is the common EU system established to monitor and evaluate the performance of the CSP across all Member States. PMEF indicators are grouped into four categories: output, result, impact and context indicators.

In the context of an evaluation, PMEF output indicators can reflect the extent to which the CSP interventions were implemented by highlighting their achievements. Several output indicators are directly linked to the CSP interventions of relevance for S03 and can reflect when the support was granted to support farmers' participation to POs, quality schemes (including organic farming) and shorter value chains.

Table 6. Relevant PMEF output indicators for assessing S03

Type of intervention	Output indicator	Potential use for S03 evaluation
Environmental, climate-related and other management commitments ⁶⁴	0.17 'Number of hectares or number of other units benefiting from support for organic farming'	Can be used to measure the total number of hectares with received support for organic farming under ENVCLIM.
Cooperation ⁶⁵	0.28 'Number of supported producer groups and PO'	Can be used to assess the contribution of the cooperation support to the setting up of PGs and POs.
	0.29 'Number of beneficiaries receiving support to participate in official quality schemes'	Can be used to assess the contribution of the cooperation support to quality schemes.
	0.32 'Number of other supported cooperation operations or units'	Can be used to assess the contribution of cooperation support to other collective arrangements that strengthen farmers' position in the food chain (e.g. short value chain initiatives, joint processing/marketing/logistics, collective branding or advisory services), by tracking the scale and diversification of cooperation beyond PO/PG set-up and quality schemes.

⁶² ISAMM provides the official channel for Member States' sectoral data under Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1475 Annex V.

⁶³ EAA are 'Economic Accounts for Agriculture', a satellite account of the European System of Accounts tailored to agriculture, used to analyse production, intermediate consumption, subsidies/taxes and income/value added in the agricultural industry. EAA underpin indicators like value added for primary producers and align with national accounts concepts while adapting to sector specifics (e.g. intra-farm feed use, own-account production).

⁶⁴ SPR Article 70.

⁶⁵ SPR Article 77.



Type of intervention	Output indicator	Potential use for SO3 evaluation
Sectoral interventions in all sectors, except for the wine and apiculture sectors ⁶⁶	0.35 'Number of supported operational programmes'	Can be used to assess the contribution of sectoral interventions to POs' OP.
Types of intervention in the wine sector ⁶⁷	0.36 'Number of actions or units supported in the wine sector'	This indicator doesn't distinguish between the type of actions supported, reducing attribution precision for SO3.

Source: European Commission, Towards the PMEF ⁶⁸

In addition, the following **PMEF result indicators** are very relevant for the assessment of CSP contribution to SO3:

- Result indicator R.10 (better supply chain organisation: share of farms participating in producer groups, PO, local markets, short supply chain circuits and quality schemes supported by the CAP): **This indicator can only reflect the contribution of the cooperation or the sectoral types of interventions** (when specific requirements or conditions linked to the intervention can justify it). It includes all farmers and non-farmers that are members and take part in recognised PO with OP supported by sectoral interventions, and all farms participating in cooperation interventions with the aim e.g. to promote local markets, short supply chains and quality schemes or to set up PO.

Important note: Evaluators should, where possible, have access to disaggregated data under R.10 to allow separate analyses of the CSP's contribution to (i) farmers' cooperation, (ii) participation in short supply chains, and (iii) participation in quality schemes.

- Result Indicator R.11 (concentration of supply: share of value of marketed production by PO or producer groups with operational programmes in certain sectors): **This indicator can only reflect the contribution of the sectoral types of interventions** under SPR Article 47. It is calculated for each sector supported (e.g. fruit & vegetables, hops, olive oil and table olives, etc.).
- Result Indicator R.29 (share of UAA supported by the CAP for organic farming with a split between maintenance and conversion): **This indicator can reflect the contribution of eco-scheme, ENVCLIM and sectoral types of interventions aimed at supporting organic farming** (in some cases, only certain operations within an intervention may be relevant). Therefore, it is essential to clearly identify which interventions or operations are linked to this indicator when using it for evaluation purpose (also see [Box 8](#) below) ⁶⁹.

Box 7. Results indicators and SO3

The result indicators establish the link between an intervention and its purpose ⁷⁰. They are used for **target setting** and to measure progress towards those targets. In their CSP, Member States must **link interventions to the result indicators** to which they contribute directly and significantly and set a specific target to achieve.

Member States should also clearly establish a link between result indicators and SO. In Member States where R.10 and R.11 were linked to SO3, **interventions linked to R.10 and R.11 can be considered as interventions of relevance for achieving SO3**, through reinforcing the value chain organisation and concentration of supply.

All sectoral types of interventions in sectors (other than wine and apiculture) should always be linked to R.10 and R.11, because all interventions implemented by the beneficiaries contribute to better value chain organisation and concentration of supply. Member States may also plan and report the contribution of sectoral interventions to another result indicator if the contribution is direct and significant.

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

Quantified **targets and milestones** must be established by Member States for each result indicator relevant to the specific objectives and interventions set out in their CSP. Member States are required to define only **one target per result indicator**, except for R.11, for which separate targets and milestones must be planned and reported for each sector covered by OP. Accordingly, the analysis of the CSP effectiveness toward SO3 should examine the extent to which **the targets associated with R.10 and R.11** have been – or are in the path of being achieved ⁷¹.

As highlighted in [Chapter 4](#), Annex I of the SPR refers to the **Impact Indicator I.8** 'Improving farmers' position in the food chain: Value added for primary producers in the food chain' for assessing SO3.

⁶⁶ SPR Article 47.

⁶⁷ SPR Article 58.

⁶⁸ European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, *Towards the PMEF*, 2024, [CMEF – Agriculture and rural development – European Commission](#).

⁶⁹ More information on interventions linked to a specific indicator across MS is available on the [Catalogue of CAP interventions](#) (European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, 2024).

⁷⁰ European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, *PMEF – Cover note on output and result indicators*, 2024, https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/cap-overview/cmef_en#towardsthepmef.

⁷¹ Given the difficulty in planning the contribution of sectoral interventions to result indicators, in particular at the beginning of the period, targets and milestones planned may need to be modified after the submission of the CAP strategic plans by Member States. See also note 71, page 41.



5.3.1.2. Other indicators on sectoral support interventions

Data for monitoring and evaluation: As part of the PMEF, Member States have to report on specific information and data for sectoral support interventions⁷², referred to as data for monitoring and evaluation (DME)⁷³. These data requirements are described in Annex V of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1475. In accordance with these requirements, Member States report annually on administrative and expenditure information⁷⁴ for all sectors supported. The type of data reported concerns, for example, the **expenditure per type of intervention and sector, the total area supported per type of intervention, the number of beneficiaries supported**, the total area under production for PO/APO in a given sector, etc. ISAMM provides the official channel for Member States' sectoral data under Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1475 Annex V.

Through separate reporting, Member States also have to report on the value and volume of production marketed under the supported PO, including the **number of members of the PO supported** as required per Article 5(1) of Delegated Regulation 2016/232 as modified per Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/2092⁷⁵.

Overall, the data collection and notification requirements related to sectoral support are maintained in the current CAP programming period (2023–2027) compared to the previous CAP programming period (2014–2022). For the fruit and vegetables sector, some information is no longer requested to be reported (i.e. number of people who completed training, the total value of insured risk and some environmental data⁷⁶).

Find more in Annex 2

Annex 2 provides a table with an overview of all the data that is to be notified per the DME notification requirements per sector and per EU regulation.

Data possibly available via MA: This concerns relevant data that MA (could) have access to and can share with evaluators, such as the data underlying DME notifications, FADN data, Eurostat data, information from national or regional statistic offices, etc.

5.3.1.3. Qualitative indicators

Qualitative indicators, derived from literature reviews, focus groups, case studies and stakeholder interviews, are very useful for understanding the **underlying mechanisms of change**, given that farmers' position in the food chain is influenced by many factors. This type of information helps **interpret observed trends** and assess how the **design and implementation** of CAP instruments may have enhanced (or limited) policy effectiveness. See [Section 5.3.2](#) for more information on qualitative analysis.

5.3.1.4. Other indicators used to assess the position of farmers in the food chain

The position of farmers can be assessed considering various economic and structural indicators that reflect farmers' ability to influence market outcomes:

- A farm-specific approach involving **analysing price-cost margins**, which reveals how much revenue farmers retain relative to marginal production costs, offering insights into their negotiation leverage. However, such analyses may be sensitive as they indirectly reveal information about farm-level profit margins, which many farmers consider confidential. As a result, collecting or disseminating this type of data could be met with reluctance.
- **Contractual agreements** that include duration, price guarantees and payment conditions also provide a measure of farmers' negotiating strength as it is the result of contract negotiation. Because they are secret and include many terms, they are however difficult to observe and when observable, difficult to interpret as an indicator. However, satisfaction ratings for these conditions can be obtained through questionnaires.
- The **Transaction Cost Index** can be used to assess the costs farmers incur when negotiating, enforcing and fulfilling transactions (e.g. search costs, legal fees, compliance costs). Sources to calculate this indicator might include farm surveys asking about time and expenditures on each cost component, cooperatives or PO records and case studies in value chains (contract farming, supply chains).
- Another perspective comes from **self-reported bargaining power**⁷⁷. The farmers' own perceptions of their bargaining position can serve as an important indicator, particularly when objective market data is limited or incomplete. Self-reported assessments provide insights into how farmers evaluate their ability to negotiate prices, secure contracts, and influence value chain decisions, complementing traditional economic metrics.

⁷² SPR Article 42 per Article 8(c) of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1475.

⁷³ Detailed rules on the content of the data that Member States have to report on are stated in Annex V of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1475; see [note 2](#), page 1.

⁷⁴ Article 8(c), Article 15(3) and Annex V of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1475 instruct Member States for which sectors which specific Form(s) should be used. See also European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, *Explanatory Note relating to Annex V to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1475 on Data on interventions in certain sectors as referred to in Article 12(2)*, 2023. https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/sustainability/economic-sustainability/cap-measures_en#explanatory-note-on-data-monitoring-and-evaluations.

⁷⁵ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/2092 of 25 August 2022 amending Delegated Regulation (EU) 2016/232 and Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/891 with regard to notifications by Member States of recognised producer organisations, associations of producer organisations and interbranch organisations, *OJ L 281*, 31.10.2022, pp. 18–20, http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2022/2092/oj.

⁷⁶ Such as fertiliser use, water use, energy use and waste generated.

⁷⁷ Malak-Rawlikowska, A., Milczarek-Andrzejewska, D., Falkowski, J., Farmers' bargaining power and input prices: What can we learn from self-reported assessments?, *Social Sciences*, 8, 2019, 63. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci8020063>.



Several studies⁷⁸ have used these indicators to assess farmers' bargaining power within the EU food value chain, emphasising the need for a multidimensional approach that considers economic, structural and perception-based factors.

Other useful indicators include data on **unfair trading practices (UTP)**, such as the number of officially reported cases per Member State or the number of cases brought before national courts, where available. However, a key limitation is that these figures are likely underestimated, as many cases may go unreported to the competent authorities due to farmers' or suppliers' fear of retaliation.

5.3.2. Overview of recommended methods and their relevance to the evaluation scope

CAP evaluations generally combine quantitative and qualitative analyses to respond to EQ and address FoS. Assessing how the CAP

has influenced farmers' position in the food chain benefits from a **mixed-method approach** that integrates both quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis.

Such an approach **strengthens the robustness of findings while also deepening understanding of causal links** between CAP instruments and observed effects. Quantitative analysis reveals measurable changes, while qualitative analysis captures essential information, e.g. on market dynamics, organisational models and contract arrangements that influence farmers' position.

The table below outlines the **recommended methodological approaches to each dimension within the evaluation's scope**, showing how different methods work together to provide a complete and credible assessment. Evaluators can decide which method(s) to implement according to their specific context and needs.

Table 7. Recommended methods for each key element

Dimensions	Quantitative analysis		Qualitative analysis	
	Trend analysis based on indicators	Econometric analysis	Stakeholder Consultation	Case study analysis
Farmers' cooperation	X	X	X	X
Product differentiation	X	X	X	X
Development of short value chains	X	X	X	X
Improved economic performance	X	X	X	X
Provision of supportive services	X		X	X
Increased farmers' participation in additional stages of the value chain	X		X	X
Concentration of supply	X		X	X
Improved contractual relationships between agents of the value chain	X		X	X

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

Find more in Annex 4

For each dimension (e.g. farmer cooperation, product differentiation, etc.), **Annex 4** outlines how the different methods can be applied and illustrates the types of information and outcomes they are expected to generate.

5.3.2.1. Trend analysis based on indicators

Trend analysis based on indicators is a quantitative descriptive approach that examines how quantitative metrics, such as the number or share of farms in PO, participation in quality schemes, or GVA, evolve over time.

⁷⁸ Sorrentino, A., Russo, C., Cocchiarelli, L., Strengthening farmers' bargaining power in the new CAP, *International Journal on Food System Dynamics*, 2017, pp. 123-127. <https://doi.org/10.18461/pfsd.2017.1713>; Michalek, J., Ciaian, P., & Pokrivcak, J. (2018); see [note 16](#), page 6; Malak-Rawlikowska, A., Milczarek-Andrzejewska, D., & Fałkowski, J. (2019); see [note 78](#), page 43.



Within the three-step analytical framework, this method can be structured to document:

1. Direct effects of CAP support on farmers' strategic choices and provision of supportive services.
2. Secondary effects on market organisation and structure.
3. Resulting consequences on farm economic performance.

By systematically tracking indicators aligned with each level, trend analysis provides a comprehensive, though primarily descriptive, overview of progress towards SO3 objectives. In SO3 evaluations, this method monitors key indicators linked to CAP instruments (e.g. CSP, CMO) to assess whether target outcomes (e.g. increased PO membership or higher value addition) are being achieved.

This approach offers several advantages:

- > Simplicity and transparency in its design and interpretation.
- > Rapid identification of positive developments, emerging challenges and areas of stagnation.
- > Clear entry point for further analysis, indicating 'where' and 'what' is changing, and providing justification for more in-depth causal or qualitative investigation.

This approach can be used as a first analytical step to provide a systematic picture of the implementation and results associated with SO3-relevant strategies.

Box 8. Example of trend analysis for quality schemes

In a Member State, the analysis reveals a positive trend in quality scheme participation:

- > Organic farming area (C.33) increased from 120 000 ha in 2020 to 165 000 ha in 2024 (+37.5%)
- > Number of beneficiaries receiving support to participate in official quality schemes (O.29) grew from 1 200 to 1 680 (+40%)
- > Share of UAA under organic farming support (R.29) rose from 8.2% to 11.7% over the same period
- > Value of organic production (I.29) increased from 67M to 99.2M (+48.9%)

These trends suggest strong growth in quality schemes and organic farming adoption, with organic farming showing particularly robust expansion supported by CSP interventions.

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

Limitations

Trend analysis provides valuable insights into the evolution of indicators over time, but several limitations need to be considered when interpreting the results:

- > **Confounding factors:** Trend analysis shows *what* is changing but not *why*. It cannot attribute changes solely to the CAP or separate the effects of overlapping interventions and external influences.
- > **Causality issue:** Tracking indicators across direct effects, second-stage effects, and economic outcomes provides a structured view of progress. Nevertheless, while time-trend patterns suggest potential impacts consistent with the analytical framework, causal attribution to CAP instruments should be confirmed through econometric or qualitative methods.

In addition, when working with trend data, evaluators should pay attention to the following issues:

- > **Aggregation risk:** Sectoral or regional averages can hide variation at sub-sector, farm-type, or territorial levels.
- > **Data comparability:** Differences in indicator definitions or reporting methods can distort trend interpretation.

Find more in Annex 4 and 3

Annex 4 guidance on the methodological step for applying trend analysis and explains how to interpret findings. In addition, **Annex 3** illustrates the application of these methods for the analysis of each evaluation dimension.

5.3.2.2. Econometric analysis

Econometric analysis is a fundamental quantitative approach providing science-based content/evidence to better evaluate how CSP interventions are affecting farmers' positions in the food chain. This approach allows evaluators to isolate and quantify policy effects on observed outcomes while controlling for a wide range of factors (e.g. farm size, sector, region) that may otherwise confound simple trend associations. Through robust statistical modelling, econometric analysis provides strong evidence to guide policy decisions, complementing both descriptive analyses (such as trend analysis) and qualitative stakeholder and expert consultation.

Key advantages of this approach include:

- > Providing quantitative estimates of the magnitude and direction of policy impacts on farmers' participation in PO, quality schemes, and short value chains.
- > Distinguishing the effects of CSP interventions from other simultaneous market, economic or sectoral changes.
- > Utilising hypothesis testing to ensure transparent and evidence-based evaluations.
- > Some econometric methods are suitable for conducting causal analyses when adequate data are available.

Econometric analysis is recommended for EQs that require assessment of causality or estimation of marginal effects, particularly when direct attribution of observed changes to CSP interventions is needed. It is especially valuable when advanced micro-level data (e.g. FADN, PO registries, CAP payment databases) are available and is essential for impact evaluation on farm economic performance, market structure or strategic behavioural change.



Box 9. Example of econometric analyses applied to SO3 evaluation

To estimate the causal effect of CAP-supported PO participation on farm incomes, researchers used panel regression models with FADN data, accounting for farm characteristics and regional effects.

Michalek et al. (2018)⁷⁹ used PSM to show that PO members in Slovakia had 23% higher GVA than similar non-members. Duvalleix-Tréguer & Gaigné (2015)⁸⁰ applied difference-in-difference to find that vertical PO integration improved French hog-farm margins by 18%.

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

Limitations

While econometric methods provide powerful tools for assessing CAP impacts, several limitations should be kept in mind when interpreting the results:

- **Data and modelling requirements:** Econometric analysis depends on detailed panel or cross-sectional data and specialised technical expertise. Incomplete, inconsistent, inadequate or low-quality data can undermine the reliability of results.
- **Causality caveats:** Despite employing advanced identification strategies, unobserved confounding factors may lead to bias results. Causal attribution to CAP interventions cannot always be definitively established.
- **Aggregation issues:** Average effects may conceal important heterogeneity, as impacts can vary substantially across sectors, regions or farm types.
- **Interpretation boundaries:** When multiple CAP instruments operate simultaneously (e.g. CSP and CMO), disentangling their separate effects is challenging unless specific models or program identifiers are employed. In some cases, this is impossible e.g. when all market participants benefit from the availability of up-to-date market information.
- **External validity and cross-Member State comparability:** Results obtained in one Member State, region or sector may not be directly generalised to others across the EU due to contextual differences. A standardised, 'one-size-fits-all' evaluation design is often not feasible, as each Member State has specific characteristics requiring tailored analytical approaches. However, different designs across Member States may necessitate different estimators, making cross-country comparisons and generalisations methodologically problematic and potentially misleading.

- **Quality assurance concerns:** to ensure methodological rigour and avoid weak or biased causal identification, it is essential to clearly document how the chosen method is implemented. Transparency in methodology is necessary to guarantee reproducibility and to enable validation by independent evaluators who were not involved in the original evaluation process.

Econometric methods offer a powerful toolkit for quantifying the impact of CAP interventions on farmers' position in the food chain, providing the most convincing evidence for policy design when data and methods are used appropriately. However, it is helpful to complement econometric findings with descriptive analyses and qualitative insights to ensure a comprehensive and nuanced evaluation.

Find more in Annex 4 and 3

Annex 4 provides guidance on the methodological steps for applying econometric analysis and explains how to interpret findings. **Annex 3** illustrates the application of these methods for the analysis of each evaluation dimension.

5.3.2.3. Stakeholder and expert consultation

Stakeholder and expert consultation refer to the use of interviews and/or surveys with observers and actors directly involved in, or affected by, CAP implementation. It is recommended to integrate such consultations with trend and econometric analyses to provide complementary perspectives on how CAP instruments are implemented and experienced in practice. This method is especially valuable for:

- Validating and interpreting observed trends (e.g. increases in PO or quality scheme participation or downstream activities, or changes in farm economic indicators) and clarifying whether they reflect real improvements or hidden costs and distributional effects.
- Explaining variations in effectiveness and uptake across organisational/farm types, sectors or regions, and identifying the mechanisms through which CAP support influenced outcomes, especially where multiple tools overlap.
- Clarifying stakeholder views on relevance, design, effectiveness and coherence of CAP instruments.
- Capturing perceived drivers, enablers and bottlenecks e.g. administrative burdens, funding adequacy and market dynamics.
- Supporting triangulation⁸¹ of evidence and strengthening the robustness and credibility of conclusions.

Interviews are ideal for in-depth exploration of causal mechanisms and challenges, and for capturing nuanced stakeholder experiences. Surveys enable the collection of standardised, comparable, perception-based data across a wider sample.

⁷⁹ See [note 16](#), page 6.

⁸⁰ Duvalleix-Tréguer, S., Gaigné, C., *Producer organizations and members performance in hog production*, paper presented at the Agricultural & Applied Economics Association and Western Agricultural Economics Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, United States, 26-28 July 2015.

⁸¹ Methodological triangulation is a strategy that increases its validity using multiple approaches, which can be, as in this case, trend analysis and quantitative and qualitative approaches. The main objective is to corroborate the results from different angles, reduce potential biases and provide a more complete and balanced understanding of the research topic. See also [Section 5.4.1](#) on analysis of evidence and triangulation.



Table 8. Interviews vs. surveys in stakeholder and expert consultation

Aspect	Interviews	Surveys
Purpose	Explore mechanisms, bottlenecks, causal factors and stakeholder experiences in depth	Collect structured, comparable feedback from a broader respondent sample
Respondent profile	Key informants such as PO managers, managing authority staff and service providers	Farmers, PO members, and other stakeholders across multiple regions/sectors
Format	Semi-structured or structured interviews	Structured questionnaire with closed- and open-ended questions (online or in-person)
Key outputs	Narrative insights, timelines, explanations of change	Aggregated response patterns, summary statistics, perception trends, thematic clustering
Best used for	Triangulating findings, explaining variation, drivers and bottlenecks, mapping support pathways and providing context-sensitive interpretation	Measuring perceived effectiveness, outreach and barriers at a larger scale, systematic comparison across stakeholder types, sectors or territories
Analysis techniques	Thematic analysis, matrix coding and cluster/typology construction, sequencing and timeline reconstruction	Frequency analysis, cross-tabulation

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

Box 10. Example of stakeholder and expert consultation applied to S03 evaluation

Analysis of CAP effects on the development of shorter value chain

- **Interviews with local advisory bodies** suggest that individual farmers often refrain from applying to CSP interventions due to complex procedures and limited outreach - especially in mixed farming areas where direct sales are uncommon and support is not tailored to their context.
- **Surveyed PO members** emphasise the importance of collective investments (e.g. mobile market stalls, shared processing facilities) but reveal that short value chain initiatives often face limited scalability and are rarely prioritised within overall commercial strategies.
- **Independent farmers**, particularly in remote areas, report difficulties accessing local markets due to a lack of advisory support and compliance costs (e.g. labelling requirements, delivery frequency, traceability systems).
- **Interviews with PO representatives** suggest that STORE and ACTREPUT interventions have been used for joint storage and branding initiatives, but their relevance to short value chains is often under-assessed during planning phases.
- **Interviews with experts** (among them analysts in banks, researchers in academia and statistical officers) can be conducted in similar ways as consultations with stakeholders. The main difference is that experts are usually well acquainted with quantitative methods, which allows the use of more advanced approaches, such as fuzzy logic systems, in the evaluation process⁸².

These insights clarify the mechanisms through which CAP tools affect short value chain participation and explain variation in outcomes that may not be captured in indicator data.

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

⁸² Fuzzy logic allows these qualitative assessments to be quantified mathematically, so they can be incorporated into analyses in a structured and reproducible way.



Limitations

Stakeholder and expert consultations are a valuable source of qualitative insights, but several limitations need to be considered when interpreting findings:

- **Perception-based evidence:** Findings reflect stakeholder perceptions, which may be subjective or influenced by strategic interests. Triangulation with quantitative or case study evidence is recommended.
- **Variation in roles and knowledge:** Differences in stakeholder roles and knowledge may affect the depth or accuracy of responses. For example, farmers may provide first-hand insight into effects but not into policy design.
- **Selection bias:** There is a risk that more visible or organised actors dominate the consultation. This can be mitigated through targeted sampling strategies.
- **Representation balance:** Ensuring a balanced mix of small producers, newer PO, and regional actors helps capture context-specific needs or constraints that might otherwise be overlooked.

Find more in Annexes 4, 3 and 5

Annex 4 provides guidance on the methodological steps for conducting stakeholder consultation and explains how to interpret the findings. In addition, **Annex 3** illustrates the application of these methods for the analysis of each evaluation dimension. **Annex 5** offers examples of templates for stakeholder consultation (interviews and surveys) in the context of SO3 evaluation, which can be adapted and used by MA and evaluators.

5.3.2.4. Case-study analyses

Case study analyses offer an in-depth, contextualised understanding of how CAP instruments have influenced farmers' position in the food value chain in specific settings. Examining real-life examples reveals how measures are implemented, how actors respond to them, and how outcomes are shaped by national, sectoral or local conditions.

The method is particularly suited to capturing:

- **The institutional and sectoral context** shaping intervention outcomes (e.g. national legal frameworks for PO recognition, key features of the value chain and market structure, governance capacity, and farmers' specific issues and needs).
- **Strategic positioning of farmers** within value chains, including strategies to improve bargaining power or added value, and investments in collective planning, branding, processing, or logistics.
- **Organisational trajectories** in the value chain, such as the formation, consolidation, or transformation of PO or cooperatives over time.
- **Interaction of CAP instruments implemented** (e.g. CMO and CSP interventions) and how their combination supports structural or strategic changes.
- **Effects achieved over time** and the underlying mechanisms influencing different dimensions examined by the evaluation (e.g. PO participation, development of quality schemes, concentration of supply, etc.).
- **Barriers and enablers** in national or local contexts (e.g. administrative burdens, availability of advisory support, access to services), as well as other external factors influencing policy outcomes.

By delving into individual support pathways and the organisational evolution of supported entities, case study analysis explains the 'how' and 'why' behind observed impacts and highlights practical lessons that can guide the refinement of CAP interventions.

Box 11. Example of case-study analysis applied to SO3 evaluation

A case study of a PO in a diversified agricultural region examined the evolution of its service offer between 2022 and 2025. Initially focused on logistics and aggregation, the PO introduced three new supportive services with support from CAP sectoral interventions: basic legal advice for member contracts, collective promotion materials and tailored planning tools for seasonal crops.

Analysis of operational documents and interviews showed that:

- The new services addressed internal gaps, particularly benefiting smaller members with limited access to legal or planning support.
- Promotional tools were widely valued, enhancing the PO's visibility in local and regional markets.
- Participation in training and use of planning tools rose sharply in the second year as awareness and perceived usefulness increased.
- Only about 60% of the planned budget was mobilised, partly due to delays in clarifying eligibility rules.
- Advisory services remained concentrated among larger members already accustomed to such tools.

Effective coordination with local advisory bodies was critical for the successful rollout of the new planning services.

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)



Limitations

Case studies provide valuable in-depth insights, but several limitations should be kept in mind when using them in evaluations:

- **Context-specific findings:** Results are tied to the particular setting studied and therefore cannot be generalised to all situations.
- **Dependence on documentation and access:** The quality of a case study relies heavily on the availability of relevant documentation and the degree of access to stakeholders.
- **Attribution challenges:** It can be difficult to disentangle the effects of the intervention if multiple overlapping supports are in place, or if national and regional policies also play a role.
- **Resource requirements:** Case studies are time-intensive and require careful planning, sufficient resources, and case access.

Find more in Annex 4, 3 and 5

Annex 4 provides guidance on the methodological steps for conducting case-study analysis and explains how to interpret findings. In addition, **Annex 3** illustrates the application of these methods for the analysis of each evaluation dimension. **Annex 5** offers a template for case study analysis in the context of SO3 evaluation, which can be adapted and used by MA and evaluators.

5.3.3. Challenges foreseen and possible solutions

Evaluating the effects of the CAP on farmers' position in the food value chain involves methodological and practical challenges, stemming from overlapping policy instruments, limited data availability, time lags in observable impacts and the influence of external shocks.

To support evaluators in navigating these complexities, the matrix below summarises the **key challenges and practical approaches to address them**. The aim is to ensure that evaluations remain robust, context-sensitive, and capable of producing findings that are both credible and useful for policy design.

Table 9. Examples of challenges and recommended approaches

Challenge	Description	Recommended evaluator approaches
Attribution difficulties	Farmers often receive overlapping CAP supports (e.g. cooperation aid, sectoral programmes like STORE/PROMO and benefit from CMO provisions). These overlaps make it difficult to know which measure drives outcomes such as increased PO membership or farm income growth.	Use robust econometric methods and high-quality data to separate effects. Sequence interventions to see if cooperation support leads to PO participation before sectoral funding. Apply sensitivity checks (e.g. placebo groups).
Data limitations	Farm-level and scheme participation data often incomplete, inconsistent, or lacking detail. FADN may record farm economics (e.g. FNVA/AWU) but not whether a farm sells through short value chains or the type of PO services used.	Triangulate across datasets: link FADN to administrative data; collect PO-level membership records; use surveys to capture missing details (e.g. direct marketing channels, services provided by PO). Improve monitoring of farm participation in certification schemes and short chains.
Temporal considerations	For example, a new PO may not increase membership or services until after its establishment phase; farm benefits from quality scheme participation or short value chains often emerge only after several years.	Use longitudinal or panel data to track changes in PO membership and farm economic performance over time. Distinguish between early-stage vs. mature POs, or short-term vs. long-term effects of certification. Make time lags explicit in evaluation design.
Contextual and external factors	Sectoral and regional differences shape outcomes: e.g. quality schemes may boost dairy exports in one Member State but have little effect in fruit/vegetables elsewhere. External shocks (e.g. droughts, price volatility, demand shocks such as observed in the EHEC crisis in 2011) can distort farm income and participation trends in short value chains.	Conduct sector- and region-specific case-study analyses (e.g. dairy vs. horticulture PO). Control for shocks like input price spikes or weather events when evaluating farm economic performance. Interpret results cautiously, linking effects to local market and institutional conditions.

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)



5.4. Analysis of outcomes and interpretation

This section guides evaluators through the process of analysing, interpreting and drawing conclusions from the evidence generated through the methods described in [Sections 5.2](#) and [5.3](#). It explains how to move beyond raw data to extract **meaningful policy insights**, illustrating the types of results that different methodological approaches may produce for each key element of the evaluation (e.g. participation in PO, development of quality schemes).

Practical advice is offered on how to use these results to explore and understand the often complex relationships between CAP support mechanisms and changes in farmers' position within the food chain. The aim is to support evaluators in turning diverse evidence into **robust, actionable insights** that can effectively inform policy decisions.

5.4.1. Analysis of evidence and triangulation

The analysis will determine the quality of the evaluation, ensuring that it is evidence-based and free from bias. It will guarantee robust and reliable results.

During the analysis, transparency is an important point (e.g. in terms of collection and use of data, analysis and results). Any limitations to the method applied or the data collected should be clearly discussed over the course of the evaluation, addressed where possible and described in the final report (e.g. are the survey questions clear and simple? Do they cover a sufficient time period and identify any trends? Can the modelling be repeated?).

5.4.1.1. Identifying baseline assumptions and a baseline scenario consistent with other assessments

The effectiveness analysis must demonstrate how the situation has evolved over the evaluation period and assess to what extent the farmers' position was improved due to CAP support.

This requires identifying **the baseline scenario that represents the starting point against which the contribution of the CSP is assessed**. It describes the state of farmers' position in the food chain *before* or *without* the implementation of the CSP and provides a reference to measure change.

The baseline assumption is an expectation about how the situation would have evolved in the absence of the CSP intervention (the counterfactual). Assumptions need to be realistic, evidence-based and consistent with other assessments (e.g. impact assessments at EU level, national ex ante evaluations or monitoring data).

The combination of baseline scenario and assumptions helps evaluators answer:

- Where were farmers positioned at the start?
- How would their position have evolved without the CSP?
- How has the CSP contributed to any observed changes?

Step 1. Define the baseline scenario clearly. When answering to each EQ, use the situation at the start of the CSP (2023) as the baseline year and describe key indicators related to farmers' position in the food chain (e.g. percentage of farmers participating in PO, percentage of agricultural output marketed through quality schemes, market share held by the top ten PG, existence and uptake of written contracts between farmers and processors/retailers).

Box 12. Example of baseline scenario for S03 evaluation

At the start of the CSP in 2023, only 18% of fruit and vegetable producers in a Member State were organised in PO, compared to an EU average of 45%. Just 6% of dairy farmers were participating in quality schemes, and less than 10% of farms sold more than half their products via short supply chains.

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

Step 2. Identify baseline assumptions (the counterfactual trend):

Establish how these indicators would likely have evolved without CSP support. Base assumptions on historical trends (e.g. PO participation had been stable at ~15–18% for the last 5 years), external drivers (market trends, retail concentration, consumer demand for quality schemes) and other policies (e.g. competition law, national quality labels, digitalisation initiatives).

Important note: Baseline assumptions should align with other assessments (e.g. ex-ante evaluations of the CSP, European Commission impact assessments, sectoral reports from OECD, FAO or national statistical offices, etc.)

Box 13. Example of baseline assumptions for S03 relevant dimensions

- Without CSP support, **participation in PO** was unlikely to increase significantly, given a history of stagnation and lack of incentives.
- **Quality schemes** might have grown modestly (+1-2 percentage points by 2027) due to consumer demand, but without structured support, uptake would remain fragmented.
- **Contractual relationships** might have improved slightly because of a new EU or national law on contract transparency, but without CSP training/support, uptake would be limited to larger farms.

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)



Step 3. Compare evidence against baselines and assumptions. Evidence must be interpreted relative to the baseline scenario and baseline assumptions defined earlier.

Box 14. Example of analysis comparing the evidence against the baseline assumption

- > **Baseline assumption:** Without CSP, PO participation would remain at ~18%.
- > **Collected evidence:** Administrative data shows participation increased to 25% by 2027.
- > **Interpretation:** The +7% increase exceeds the baseline trend, suggesting CSP contributed.

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

5.4.1.2. Critically assessing the collected evidence (including triangulation)

The goal of evidence assessment in CAP evaluations is to **move from raw information to validated insights** about how the CSP contributed (or not) to improving farmers' position in the food chain. This requires checking quality, comparing with baselines, triangulating across sources, and synthesising findings.

Step 1. Assessing the quality and reliability of evidence – Evaluators should start by questioning the credibility, relevance, and robustness of each piece of evidence. This might include questioning their representativity (e.g. administrative data on PO participation is highly reliable for membership numbers, but it might underreport informal cooperation outside official PO) or bias risks (e.g. a farmer survey may suggest ‘improved bargaining power,’ but responses could reflect perceptions rather than actual contractual improvements).

Step 2. Apply triangulation to strengthen validity – Results should be interpreted by examining convergence across different data sources and methods to confirm or challenge findings. This avoids over-reliance on a single piece of evidence.

Box 15. Examples of triangulation in the context of SO3 evaluation

- > **Comparing multiple data sources:** Cross-check administrative data on PO with farmers' survey responses and PO annual reports.
- > **Comparing different methods:** Use both statistical analysis of contracts and stakeholder interviews to assess whether contractual practices really improved.
- > **Comparing perspectives from different actors:** Farmers may report better prices due to short supply chains, but retailers may highlight logistical inefficiencies. Both views need to be reconciled.
- > **Comparing findings with theory or literature:** Literature suggests quality schemes usually benefit larger farms. If your evidence shows small farms benefited most, you need to explain why (national branding strategy, subsidies for smallholders, etc.).

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

Triangulation requires identifying consistency and divergences. Consistent findings across sources and methods will give stronger confidence in conclusions. However, contradictions will require evaluators to investigate further or explain the context.

Table 10. Example of contradiction across findings from different methods and sources

Trend analysis based on indicators	Qualitative analysis (inc. stakeholder consultation and case study analysis)	Conclusion
Administrative data shows an increase in short supply chain participation.	Stakeholder focus groups reveal that small farmers still face barriers to develop short supply chain (lack of logistics support).	Effects are uneven: strong for better-connected farms, weaker for smaller producers facing barriers.

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

Not all evidence carries the same weight. When applying triangulation, evaluators should rank findings based on strength (e.g. strong, moderate, weak) and explain why. For instance, verified administrative data on PO membership can be considered as strong,

survey evidence on perceived improvement in bargaining power as moderate, while anecdotal interview quotes not supported by other data should be considered as weak.



5.4.2. Interpretation of findings

Interpreting findings means moving from collected evidence to **clear, balanced and policy-relevant insights**. This requires integrating results from the different methods, weaving together multiple strands of evidence (i.e. econometric estimates, trends, consultations, case studies) into a coherent story that is explicit about the role of CSP vs. other factors, transparent about the strength of evidence, and focused on actionable lessons for policy.

Therefore, to provide sound conclusions on the effects of the CSP on SO3, evaluators can follow a six-step process.

5.4.2.1. The six-step process for interpreting findings

1. Confirm the change – What happened?

Before drawing conclusions, evaluators should clearly state what the evidence shows. It is recommended to always separate 'what happened' from 'why it happened' to keep the interpretation transparent.

E.g. Triangulation of quantitative and qualitative evidence confirmed that PO participation increased or contractual prices improved.

2. Explore plausible causal mechanisms – How could CSP interventions have contributed to the observed change?

Particular attention should be paid to distinguishing between correlation and causation when attributing outcomes to specific interventions because broader market or structural factors also affect the farm sector. The use of econometrics helps isolate the impact of specific interventions from other factors. Hence, cross-checking the outcomes of the econometric analysis with other findings will reinforce the attribution of effects observed to specific CSP interventions. Where evidence sources point in the same direction, confidence in the interpretation increases. Where they diverge, explain the reasons (e.g. national law explains most change, CSP explains additional improvements among small farms).

3. Check alternative explanations – What else could explain the change?

The comparison with the baseline assumptions (i.e. what would have happened without the CSP), together with the analysis of other factors (e.g. market trends, national laws, consumer demand, etc.) should provide insight into the role of the CSP on the observed change.

4. Make the interpretation explicit – What is the evidence?

When presenting findings, evaluators should clearly state the link between evidence and interpretation. Always distinguish between CSP as the *main driver*, CSP as a supportive factor and CSP as having little or no effect.

Table 11. Examples of interpretation of findings

Topic	Evidence	Interpretation
Farmers' cooperation	- PO membership rose by 7 percentage points. - Econometric analysis shows CSP support increased participation probability by 5 points. 60% of surveyed farmers cite CSP incentives as decisive.	CSP support was a key driver of PO membership growth, though other structural barriers persist.
Contractual relationships	- Contracts increased after a new national law. - Econometric analysis shows CSP training added a 5-7% uptake among small farms. - Interviews confirm training improved negotiation skills.	The main driver was national regulation, but CSP measures had a complementary effect, especially for smaller farms.

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)



5. Check that results support the interpretation – How strong is the evidence?

Before finalising, evaluators should ensure that:

- › Interpretations are directly backed by evidence (no assumptions without data).
- › Contradictions are acknowledged rather than ignored (e.g. survey results differ from econometrics).
- › The balance of evidence is fairly presented (not only the strongest or most convenient results).

When drafting conclusions, the evaluators must use phrases like “The evidence suggests...”, “Econometric estimates indicate...”, or “Stakeholder perceptions highlight...” to make the strength of evidence clear.

6. Keep policy relevance in focus – What conclusions on the CSP contribution?

The ultimate goal of interpretation is to provide **useful insights for decision-making**. Therefore, evaluators should:

- › Highlight whether CSP measures were effective, complementary or insufficient.
- › Indicate which groups benefited most or least (e.g. small farms, specific sectors).
- › Point out emerging barriers or unintended effects (e.g. eligibility rules excluding some farmers).
- › Provide concrete implications for future CSP design or adjustments.

5.4.2.2. Interactions between policy instruments

When concluding on the effects of the CSP, evaluators must recognise that the combined impact of different interventions often differs from the sum of their individual effects. **Policy instruments interact, generating both synergies (reinforcing effects) and trade-offs** (contrasting or offsetting effects). Ignoring these interactions risks oversimplifying findings and misrepresenting CSP’s true contribution.

In the context of SO3 evaluations, two main types of interactions are expected:

- › **Between CSP interventions:** Each CSP intervention can generate its own effects, which may accumulate and reinforce one another. In some cases, their interaction may create synergies (e.g. coupling cooperation support with sectoral measures to both support the setting-up of PO and expand their service offer). However, in some cases, the effects could also be contrasting (e.g. an intervention supporting short supply chains might work against interventions supporting participation in PO).
- › **Between CMO provisions and CSP interventions:** MAs may deliberately design their CSP interventions to complement the framework set by the CMO regulation. While the CMO establishes the overarching rules (e.g. criteria for recognising PO, their objectives, and the scope of OP), the CSP provides the financial and technical support needed to encourage specific actions. For instance, CSP cooperation intervention can facilitate the creation of new PO, which can subsequently benefit from CMO recognition and access to OP funding under sectoral interventions.

Several options exist for evaluators to address interactions, including:

- › **Comparison groups:** Evaluators should analyse outcomes for farmers who received only one type of support against those who benefited from a combination of interventions (e.g. comparing farms that received only investment aid with those that also received advisory support can reveal whether combined support leads to stronger development of short supply chains).
- › **Econometric models:** Evaluators may include interaction terms in models to test whether joint effects of interventions (e.g. KNOW + INVEST) are larger or smaller than the sum of their individual effects.
- › **Stakeholder consultation:** Evaluators should use surveys, interviews and case studies to identify situations where one measure reduces the effectiveness of another (e.g. stakeholders report that marketing standards under CMO provisions improve supermarket access but make participation in short supply chains harder).

Find more in Annex 3

Annex 3 illustrates how to conduct triangulation and interpret findings for each EQ. Practical guidance and specific examples are provided for each SO3 relevant dimension.

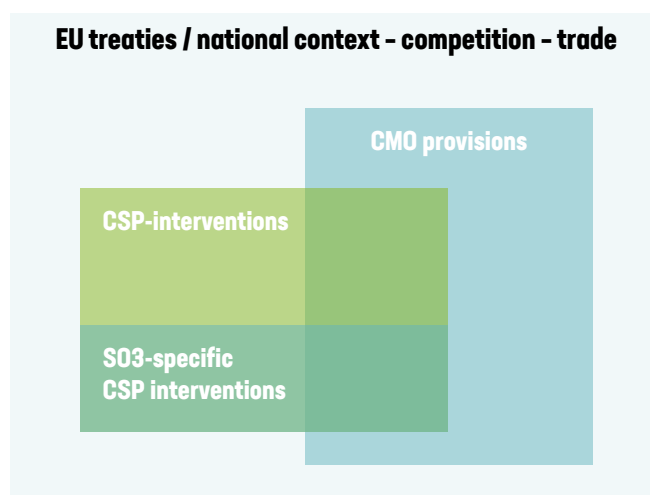


6. Assessing the coherence of the CAP with regard to SO3

6.1. General considerations when assessing the CAP's overall impact on the improvement of farmers' position.

This chapter examines the internal coherence of CSP interventions and their interaction with CMO instruments in achieving SO3. The analysis covers all CSP interventions (including those not specifically targeted at SO3) as well as relevant CMO provisions expected to influence it (see also [Section 3.2](#)). Other regulations with potential influence on SO3 (e.g. the EU Regulation on Unfair Trading Practices or competition and trade rules) fall under the assessment of external coherence, which is not addressed in these guidelines. [Figure 8](#) visualises the thematic scope of the analysis, with the topics covered highlighted in red.

Figure 8. Conceptual approach on the scope of the coherence assessment



Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

6.2. Context and scope of the analysis

The analysis of internal coherence is a mandatory element of the evaluation of SO⁸³. It is recommended to be carried out after the effectiveness analysis because it uses some of the results as inputs for further analysis. This step complements the effectiveness analysis by showing **how CSP and CMO provisions interact in contributing to SO3**.

The scope of the coherence analysis is defined in the Better Regulation Toolbox⁸⁴. It offers guidance on how to assess *internal coherence*:

“checking ‘internal’ coherence means looking at how the various components of the same EU intervention operate together to achieve its objectives, e.g. the different articles of a piece of legislation, different actions under an action plan.”

This chapter focuses on *internal coherence* and provides guidance for **an integrated assessment of how and why CAP instruments have supported or hindered progress towards SO3**, considering interactions between CSP interventions and CMO provisions, as well as possible overlaps and factors that might reduce effectiveness.

Evaluating the external coherence is a complementary task to be undertaken when assessing the coherence of a policy or programme. The table below shows which instruments should be examined as part of the *internal coherence* and which could be part of the *external coherence* analysis. An overview of the legislative provisions and new initiatives aiming at strengthening the farmers' position in the food supply chain was published by the European Commission in early 2025⁸⁵.

⁸³ The assessment of coherence is mandatory in the interim and the ex-post evaluation; see SPR Article 140–141.

⁸⁴ European Commission, *Better Regulation Toolbox, Chapter 6 ‘How to carry out an evaluation and fitness check’*, 2023, pp. 377–442, [Better regulation toolbox](#).

⁸⁵ European Commission, Commission staff working document – Strengthening the position of farmers in the food supply chain, accompanying the document Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) 2021/2115 and (EU) 2021/2116 as regards the strengthening of the position of farmers in the food supply chain. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d5403e37-3631-11f0-8a44-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>.



Table 12. Instruments considered in the coherence analysis as regard SO3

	Internal coherence for SO3	External coherence
Interventions	SO3 specific and all other interventions of the CSP	› Unfair Trading Practices Directive (EU) 2019/633 › (National) competition laws
Other instruments/ regulation(s)	CMO Regulation 1308/2013 provisions	› other relevant EU regulations and directives e.g. CCSRD, CSDDD › State-aid for agriculture and Member State specific regulations and instruments (e.g. value chain fairness ombudsman)

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

The internal coherence analysis examines how interventions and instruments interact with each other, classifying these interactions across four dimensions:

- › **Synergies:** In this case, CSP interventions and CMO provisions should reinforce each other to promote the implementation of farmers' strategies and ultimately achieve SO3 objectives. These positive interactions amplify the effectiveness of individual measures when implemented together.
- › **Complementarities:** CSP interventions and CMO provisions are designed to complement each other by filling distinct roles that together create a complete policy framework. Each intervention addresses different aspects of the same challenge or serves different functions within the policy system, ensuring comprehensive coverage while avoiding conflicting incentives with other economic, environmental, and social CSP interventions.

- › **Trade-offs:** CSP interventions and CMO provisions are designed in ways that achieve one objective through certain interventions diminishes the attainment of another objective. These inevitable tensions require careful balancing to optimise overall policy effectiveness.
- › **Overlaps and gaps:** Overlaps occur when two or more interventions target the same objective with very similar outcomes, which can lead to inefficient use of resources. Gaps arise when no adequate interventions are in place to achieve stated objectives, leaving critical areas unaddressed.

The assessment of internal coherence requires examining both **planned coherence** (how interventions are designed to interact according to the CSP) and **observed coherence** (how they actually interact in practice and which implementation approaches were used). Planned coherence can be assessed through desk research of CSP documentation, while observed coherence requires evidence-based analysis that draws on findings from the effectiveness analysis and additional data collection (see [Section 5.4](#)). This dual approach ensures that the evaluation captures both the theoretical soundness of policy design and the practical realities of implementation.

6.3. Carrying out the evaluation of the internal coherence

The evaluation of the internal coherence can be carried out in three phases:

- › **Phase 1: Defining the evaluation framework.** This phase involves clarifying the scope and objectives of the evaluation, identifying key questions, and setting the overall approach.
- › **Phase 2: Selecting criteria, indicators, methods and data sources.** Evaluators choose the most relevant criteria and indicators, determine appropriate analytical methods and identify reliable data sources to ensure a robust assessment.
- › **Phase 3: Analysing and reporting.** In the final phase, data are analysed according to the chosen methods, findings are interpreted, and results are presented in a clear and structured report.

Practical guidance for implementing these phases and their corresponding tasks is provided below.

6.3.1. Phase 1: Defining the evaluation framework

The first phase consists of establishing a comprehensive intervention logic of the policy that captures all mechanisms potentially affecting SO3, ensuring the evaluation framework is both complete and contextually relevant. This involves:

- › **Step 1:** Verifying that the CSP intervention logic remains comprehensive and reasonable in light of contextual changes since its design.
- › **Step 2:** Amending the intervention logic, if necessary, to ensure completeness and current relevance.
- › **Step 3:** Specifying evaluation questions and factors of success for the internal coherence analysis.



Together, these steps provide the basis for a consistent evaluation framework to assess how well CSP interventions and CMO provisions contribute to SO3, ensuring that the subsequent analysis is both rigorous and meaningful. Each step is described in more detail below.

Step 1: Review and map CSP or CAP intervention logic

As defined in the Better Regulation Toolbox ⁸⁶, an intervention logic “provides a narrative description and usually a diagram summarising how the intervention was expected to work describing the expected logic of the intervention or chain of events that should lead to the intended change”.

This step requires identifying **all interventions** that influence SO3, categorised as follows:

- **Direct SO3 interventions:** Some interventions are explicitly targeted toward SO3, in particular, those that have been designed in the CSP to address this objective (e.g. ‘cooperation for the setting up PO’, ‘aid for farmers in quality schemes’ and ‘promotion and support of quality schemes’).
- **Indirect SO3 interventions:** Other interventions from the CSP are expected to have effects on SO3 and other SOs simultaneously, even if they are not primarily targeted toward SO3 (in intervention logic diagrams, these may be indicated by dashed arrows showing weaker or uncertain links). These interventions may include direct payments, agri-environment related interventions and investment support.
- **CMO provisions:** CMO provisions that are likely to influence the SO3 and the different sub-components contributing to improve the farmers’ position in the food chain should also be included in the intervention logic (e.g. derogation for farmers and their association, recognition of PO, rules on written contracts, geographical indications, etc.).

Step 2: Distinguish planned vs. observed coherence

The **planned internal coherence** analysis focuses on the intervention logic as documented in the CSP prior to implementation. This analysis should document explicit linkages and stated relationships between interventions. However, it’s important to recognise that CSPs contain many interventions with implicit or unexpected SO3 effects that may not be explicitly articulated in the original design.

Box 16. Example of an intervention that may have an unexpected effect on SO3

Basic income support (BISS) affects farmer decision-making through multiple channels:

- It contributes to farmers’ income stability, providing a predictable baseline that can influence production and investment choices.
- It is often capitalised into land values, affecting land markets and shaping decisions on farm expansion or tenure.
- It provides liquidity security, ensuring access to cash that supports both short-term operations and longer-term investment decisions.

Since BISS provides *certain* income compared to volatile market revenues, high BISS payments relative to market income may reduce farmers’ propensity to cooperate with other farmers (e.g. by joining COOP interventions) because cooperation outcomes are uncertain.

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

The analysis of **observed internal coherence** involves verifying that the intervention logic remains complete and reasonable in light of contextual changes since CSP design. Where necessary, the intervention logic can be amended to accurately reflect the policy as implemented. This validation establishes the theoretical framework for distinguishing planned internal coherence (as documented in CSP materials) from observed internal coherence (assessed during the implementation phase using evidence).

Step 3: Defining the evaluation framework

The table below presents an example of an EQ for assessing the internal coherence, derived from existing EU CAP Network publications ⁸⁷ and adapted for the evaluation of SO3.

Table 13. EQ and FoS for the analysis of internal coherence of CAP instruments regarding SO3

	EQ	FoS
Internal coherence	To what extent and how are the various CAP instruments coherent in achieving the improvement of farmers’ position in the food chain?	The various CAP instruments affecting farmers’ position in the food chain show high complementarity and synergy and avoid overlaps and gaps as well as trade-offs .

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

⁸⁶ See page 392 from the European Commission, Better Regulation Toolbox, Chapter 6 ‘How to carry out an evaluation and fitness check’, 2023, pp. 377–442; see [note 85](#), page 35.

⁸⁷ See [note 5](#), page 1.



As discussed in more detail below, the EQ should be answered in quantitative terms whenever feasible. Given the complexity of interactions among instruments, qualitative assessments will also be necessary to complement the quantitative analysis.

6.3.2. Phase 2: Selection of criteria, indicators, methods and data sources

This phase builds the evidence base for assessing both the intended and real-world coherence of interventions by selecting appropriate criteria, indicators, methods, and data sources.

Step 1: Selection of criteria and indicators (and suggestions for reporting)

The analysis of planned and observed internal coherence relies on four criteria that enable structured measurement and evaluation:

- **Objectives and rationale:** Examine the objectives of instruments as described in CSPs or CMO regulations, their underlying rationale and potential unexpected effects revealed through the effectiveness analysis. Quantitative information, such as intervention unit amounts, may complement qualitative assessment. This criterion is evaluated along five dimensions and should be quantified if the effectiveness analysis yields quantitative results:

- *Synergies:* interventions and provisions reinforce each other. If yes, how strong is the amplifying effect? The quantitative analysis may show that the combination of interventions is more effective than each of the interventions under consideration when it is applied in isolation.
- *Trade-offs:* interventions and provisions counteract. If yes, to what extent? The quantitative analysis may show that the combination of interventions is reducing the effectiveness of interventions when they are applied in isolation.
- *Complementarities:* interventions and provisions ensure comprehensive coverage. This dimension is best assessed in qualitative terms.
- *Overlaps:* potential redundancies (count the number of interventions aiming at the same objective).
- *Gaps:* objectives left unaddressed (count the objectives not addressed with adequate interventions; provide a qualitative explanation for interpretation).

Depending on the number of relevant interventions and provisions, results may be very detailed and given by the nature of the different dimensions. It may be advisable to apply an ordinal or nominal scale, e.g. trade-offs from -3 (strong) to 0 (no trade-off) or synergies from 0 (no synergy) to +3 (excellent synergies), complemented by qualitative judgements.

- **Eligibility:** Assess targeting criteria used to support specific beneficiary groups, identifying whether important groups are excluded and how criteria interact across interventions. The dimensions to assess this criterion are:
 - *Overlaps:* potential redundancies (count the number of interventions addressing the same groups; describe partial overlaps qualitatively).
 - *Gaps:* areas left unaddressed (count the groups not covered; provide a qualitative explanation for interpretation).
- **Financial allocation:** Review financial allocations in combination with the effectiveness analysis to reveal the relative significance of interventions and their capacity to achieve objectives or reach target groups. Where amounts are not available, this should be explicitly noted.
- **Enabling and hampering factors:** Identify factors that affect dimensions, such as synergies, trade-offs and eligibility. Such factors can be information availability about CSP, administrative procedures, training programmes or other elements. Whereas the other criteria focus on *how* coherence is affected, this criterion focuses on *why*. These factors will generally be described qualitatively.

Step 2: Selection of methods to quantify and describe the criteria and their dimensions

Both qualitative and quantitative methods are recommended, depending on available data and analytical requirements:

- **Desk research** can be conducted through systematic review of CSP documentation and legal texts, examination of evaluation reports on effectiveness and efficiency, review of scientific literature on CMO provisions, and analysis of CAP textbooks and regulatory reviews.
- **Quantitative analysis** may involve descriptive statistical analysis of financial allocations, trend analysis using administrative indicators, and econometric analysis (i.e. outcomes of the effectiveness analysis), where appropriate data are available.
- **Qualitative approaches** include consultations with experts and stakeholders, case studies with regional or sectoral focus, focus groups with beneficiaries and stakeholder interviews.

The methods align with those described in [Section 5.4](#) of these guidelines. The table below provides an overview of which indicators can be analysed using each method.

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches are needed to answer *how* and *why* interventions contributed to achieving SO3. Quantitative approaches are preferred as they enable comparisons across SOs and Member States and allow for the use of measurement scales, for example:

1. **Ratio and interval scales** (concrete figures) – Most robust and preferred.
2. **Ordinal scales** (rankings) – Acceptable where data are limited.
3. **Nominal scales** (classifications) – Use only when no other option is available.



Step 3: Selection of data sources

Data for the analysis can be obtained from both existing materials and complementary data collection:

- **Existing sources** include CSPs and evaluation reports on effectiveness and efficiency, administrative databases, such as the Database on Interventions and Beneficiaries (DIB), and registers of PO, all of which can be accessed from administrative sources without further collection.

- **Complementary data collection** may be employed when existing documents do not provide sufficient detail, such as beneficiary surveys, expert and stakeholder focus groups, and regional or sectoral case studies.

Table 14. Recommended data sources and methods for each criterion

Criteria	Planned coherence	Observed coherence	Methods
Objective and rationale	CSP/CMO documentation review	Evaluation report analysis	Desk research, effectiveness analyses, qualitative approaches
Eligibility	Regulatory text analysis	DIB data exploration	Desk research, quantitative analysis
Financial allocation	Budget document review	DIB/PO register analysis	Quantitative analysis, descriptive methods
Enabling and hampering factors	CSP/regulation analysis	Surveys/interview data	Qualitative methods, focus group and stakeholder consultation

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

During the analysis, special attention should be paid to identifying members of PO across different interventions and to ensure a comprehensive coherence assessment.

Box 17. Using the proposed criteria to assess internal coherence step by step

The **objective and rationale** are defined in the CSP. Information on the electronic platform of a paying agency may provide the same or additional information for potential applicants. Overlaps (interventions aiming at the same objective) or gaps (objectives not addressed adequately) can be identified. The effectiveness analysis of a specific intervention may reveal that other interventions/provisions amplify (= synergy) or diminish (= trade-offs) the planned outcomes. That information may be quantitative. Otherwise, a qualitative assessment based on desk research can reveal synergies, trade-offs and complementarities between this intervention and other interventions.

The assessment of **eligibility** may reveal that only specific groups may apply to be supported by a given intervention. Administrative data, such as the DIB, can be used to clarify whether this is indeed the case. The analysis is quantitative and may reveal gaps. Based on further explorations with stakeholders, it may turn out that the eligibility criteria hamper the effectiveness of reaching SO3. Such an assessment needs qualitative evidence.

Information on **planned and actually realised financial allocations** needs to be assessed.

The focus of internal coherence is on the interactions with other CSP interventions and other relevant CMO provisions. The quantitative analysis will show cross-tabulations of expenditures of interventions for beneficiaries based on administrative data. Such an analysis can be carried out for the plans as well as on findings of realised outcomes. The comparison may yield insightful views on how a given CSP is actually working. The results will be quantitative.

Carrying out case studies and surveys may provide insights that are useful for identifying **enabling and hampering** factors. The analysis is quantitative if possible and amended by qualitative explanations.

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)



6.3.3. Phase 3: Analysing and reporting

The application of the methodological approaches should generate evidence on how interactions between CSP interventions and CMO provisions favoured or hindered the achievement of SO3. Where possible, outcomes from the effectiveness analysis should be used to clarify the role of each instrument, alone and in combination.

Step 1: Identification of analytical tasks

The internal coherence analysis is carried out in two stages:

The **planned internal coherence** analysis focuses on how interventions were originally designed to interact. Using desk research, the analysis should:

- Document stated objectives and rationales of CSP interventions and relevant CMO provisions.
- Identify anticipated synergies and potential conflicts in policy design.
- Map eligibility criteria to identify target group alignment or possible exclusions.
- Analyse planned financial allocations and their relative significance.
- Identify how hampering and enabling factors identified in the needs analysis (or SWOT-analysis) are addressed in the design of the interventions.

The **observed internal coherence** analysis examines how interventions interact in practice. It combines quantitative and qualitative methods to understand real-world interactions:

Step 2: Reporting

The internal coherence report should provide a clear overview of the types of interactions identified. A concise summary can be presented using a screening matrix, such as the one presented in [Table 16](#):

- The **rows** show the **criteria** capturing the various types of interaction between CMO provisions and/or CSP interventions (e.g. objectives and rationale, eligibility, financial allocation, enabling/hampering factors).
- The **columns** contain all **CMO provisions** and **CSP instruments** covered in the analysis. Depending on the scope of the analysis, there may be more than two columns under each heading.
- The **cells** of the matrix represent the outcomes of the internal coherence analysis, with **dimensions** covering synergies, trade-offs, complementarities and overlaps/gaps. They may contain either a short textual description, visual symbols (e.g. arrows indicating direction, plus/minus signs, or a dash), a ranking from best to worst or another adequate classification of key findings (e.g. -3 for very bad, 0 for neutral, +3 for very good – as shown in the example). Not all cells need to be filled (e.g. financial allocations may not be relevant in every case). All symbols, classes or rankings must be clearly explained in the study, e.g.
 - synergies can be rated from 0 (not observed) to +3 (strong synergies);
 - trade-offs can be rated from 0 (not observed) to -3 (strong trade-offs); and
 - complementarities, overlaps and gaps can also be indicated, reflecting how many were found.

Table 15. Analysis of the observed internal coherence

Interactions across CSP interventions	Interactions between CSP interventions and CMO provisions
➤ Use DIB data to track interventions distribution and identify beneficiaries accessing multiple interventions ➤ Analyse actual financial flows and participation patterns ➤ Assess whether planned synergies materialised or unexpected trade-offs emerged	➤ Evaluate how mandatory CMO frameworks (e.g. market information, quality schemes) actually support or hinder uptake of CSP interventions ➤ Identify enabling factors and barriers through stakeholder consultations

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)



Table 16. Example of a screening matrix for assessing either the observed or the planned coherence of relevant CSP interventions and CMO provisions

S03 intervention	Criteria	Relevant CAP measures and provisions and dimensions of findings			
		CMO quality scheme	CMO market Information	...	...
Setting up of PO (COOP)	Objectives or rationale	+3 synergy	+2 synergy		
		0 trade-off	0 trade-off		
		3 complementarities with CSP interventions	0 complementarities with CSP interventions		
	Eligibility	1 overlap	0 overlaps		
		1 gap	3 gaps		
	Financial allocation	n.a.	n.a.		
	Hampering factors	Cumbersome administrative processes	Price information delay of 2 months		
	Enabling factors	EIP project on alternative practices	Available digital tools and APIs at EU dashboard		
Promotion and support for quality schemes (COOP)	Objective or rationale	+3 synergy	+3 synergy		
		0 trade-off	0 trade-off		
		Complementarity with 4 CSP interventions	Complementarity with 2 CSP interventions		
	Eligibility	0 overlaps	0 overlaps		
		0 gaps	0 gaps		
	Financial allocation	n.a.	n.a.		
	Hampering factors	Lack of expertise in specialised market among beneficiaries	Missing price information for quality X		
	Enabling factors	clear product specification	Information on input costs		
...	Objective or rationale				
	Eligibility				
	Financial allocation				
	Hampering factors				
	Enabling factors				

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

NB. n.a. ... not applicable; notice figures in row "eligibility" indicate the number of overlaps/gaps; other figures indicate rankings in discrete classes: -3 for worst, 0 for neutral, +3 for best



Box 18. A hypothetical example of how planned and observed internal coherence may deviate

An intervention may aim to improve the innovativeness in the food value chain. The **objective and rationale** are defined in the CSP. Information on the electronic platform of a paying agency may provide the same or additional information for potential applicants. How this is done and how burdensome it is for potential beneficiaries can be assessed by desk research. The analysis is qualitative.

Information on **planned and actually realised financial allocations** needs to be assessed. The focus of internal coherence is on the interplay and the interaction of other CSP interventions and other relevant CMO regulations. The quantitative analysis will show cross-tabulations of expenditures of interventions for beneficiaries based on administrative data. Such an analysis can be carried out for the plans as well as on the findings of realised outcomes. The comparison may yield insightful views on how a given CSP is actually working. The analysis is mainly quantitative.

The **eligibility criteria** may require that only non-farmers may apply to be supported by this intervention. Administrative data, such as the DIB, can be used to clarify whether this is indeed the case. The analysis is quantitative and amended by qualitative explanations. Based on further explorations with stakeholders, it might turn out that the eligibility criteria may hamper the effectiveness of reaching SO3. Such an assessment needs qualitative evidence.

Data from DIB does not contain data on **failed applications**. Therefore, it may be useful to request application data on failed applications from administrative authorities. Exploring individual cases may provide insights that are useful for identifying **enabling and hampering** factors. The analysis is quantitative and amended by qualitative explanations.

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

6.3.3.1. How to read the screening matrix and how to report on it

Given the large number of CSP interventions and CMO provisions that may interact, **screening matrices** provide a compact way to present the findings of the internal coherence analysis. However, to facilitate the analysis, the criteria should not be assessed all at once. Instead, a step-by-step approach is recommended:

- Step 1: Assess the coherence of the objective/rationale (e.g. whether the measures are designed to work in synergy or complementarity).
- Step 2: If the objective/rationale is deemed coherent, examine how the measures are implemented by checking whether the eligibility criteria and financial envelope can actually support the expected synergy.
- Step 3: Consider whether the expected synergy was achieved in practice and identify the relevant enabling and hampering factors.
- Step 4: Conclude on the overall level of coherence achieved between the two measures.

Practical guidance on how to conduct the coherence analysis and interpret the results is available on a dedicated [Learning Portal](#).

To ensure clarity, the **indicators of the criteria must be well defined**. This helps prevent misinterpretation and makes the results comparable. Ordinal or nominal scales are particularly intuitive for summarising results in the matrix, but they should always be complemented by more detailed explanations in the **explanatory notes** of the evaluation. A colour-coded rating system, to indicate the level of coherence between measures, can also make the overall interpretation easier.

The structure of the matrix provided above can be used both for the *planned* and the *observed* internal coherence.

- For the case of planned coherence, objectives and rationale of the CSP are summarised based on the CSP itself and supporting documents. Intervention logics and planned financial allocations are key elements to be reflected in the cells. The matrix thus provides an alternative representation of the CSP design, structured around the proposed criteria, dimensions and indicators.
- For the case of the observed coherence, information, findings and data of the implementation period of the CSP will be presented in the matrix. Main sources include effectiveness and efficiency analyses of CSP interventions, as well as studies on simplification, administrative burden, digitalisation and other cross-cutting activities.



Box 19. Example of interpretation of the screening matrix

Table 16 illustrates how specific CSP interventions align with the relevant CMO measures and provisions. The first row refers to cooperation support for establishing POs in sectors such as fruit and vegetables, and other eligible sectors. Coherence is assessed in relation to the CMO provisions on quality schemes.

The **objectives and rationale** of both instruments are strongly aligned, as shown by significant synergies (+3) and three complementarities between the CSP intervention (supporting the creation of PO in fruit and vegetables, olives and wine sectors) and the CMO's legal framework for registering, protecting, and enforcing GI and other quality schemes. This positive interaction enhances the effectiveness of individual measures, supporting the implementation of farmers' strategies and ultimately contributing to the achievement of SO3 objectives.

The analysis found that the **eligibility criteria** for cooperation interventions support groups of farmers producing quality products targeted by CMO provisions. One overlap was identified due to two sub-interventions focusing specifically on PO in the fruit and vegetable sector. Additionally, a gap was noted because the CSP intervention does not target PO in the dairy sector.

Interviews with PO and farmers' representatives revealed some **hampering factors**. Cumbersome administrative processes can hinder farmers' application for cooperation support, which in turn affects the actual synergies between the two instruments. The interviews also highlighted that a group of vegetable farmers benefited from an EIP project on alternative practices for managing wireworm infestations, which helped reinforce the quality of the products (**enabling factor**).

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

The report on internal coherence should not only provide a clear summary of its findings but also outline actionable recommendations to improve the internal coherence of interventions aiming at SO3 if significant trade-offs, gaps, overlaps and hampering factors have been identified. If the analysis showed that synergies, well designed eligibility criteria and enabling factors contributed to enhancing the internal coherence, such findings should be summarised.



7. Recommendations

7.1. General considerations and recommendations on the evaluation approach

Drafting recommendations is the final stage of the evaluation process. It should only take place once the necessary analyses are complete and all EQs have been answered. **Recommendations are derived from the results and conclusions of the evaluation, with the aim of guiding policymakers and informing their decisions.**

Evaluators should therefore wait until all findings are available before formulating recommendations. At that stage, they will be able to assess **whether the CSP has been successful in achieving**

S03 and explain why. While these guidelines focus primarily on effectiveness and coherence, other evaluation criteria should also be taken into account when judging the overall success of a policy ⁸⁸.

The conclusions of the evaluation should include a presentation of **credible, evidence-based lessons and, where possible, highlight areas for improvement.** This section provides practical guidance on how to build on the evaluation findings to produce clear, actionable recommendations that can enhance the CSP contribution to S03.

7.2. Recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the CSP with regard to S03

For MAs, the effectiveness analysis provides reliable evidence to analyse the effects and impacts of the CSP on S03 and to justify any necessary adjustments to policy initiatives. Conclusions should be explicit, offering a judgment of the success (or failure) of CSP interventions, and identifying the critical factors behind them. These insights can then feed into lessons learned and suggestions for improving future policy design.

Improving the effectiveness of the CSP with regard to S03 requires both consolidating positive effects and addressing areas where results have been weaker. To this end, the list of interventions implemented, along with their design, targeting, delivery and

allocated budget, should be reviewed to enhance policy effects, without compromising other intended outcomes, while drawing on the lessons learned from the evaluation.

Recommendations should therefore highlight the policy changes most likely to generate the desired effects. In line with the analytical framework set out in these guidelines (see [Section 5.1.1](#)), they may include proposals to strengthen support for farm-level activities (e.g. farmers' cooperation, quality schemes or short supply chains), improve integration into the wider supply chain or enhance the overall impact on farmers' economic performance.

Table 17. Examples of moving from findings on effectiveness and recommendations to actions

Examples of findings from the effectiveness analysis	Recommendations from evaluator	Example of potential action by MA
Over the programming period, the cooperation support contributed to the setting up of 12 PO in the dairy sector and 25 PG in the meat sector. The share of farms in PO is significant in the dairy sector (>60%) but remains weak in the meat sector (<20%).	Scale up successful cooperation interventions in sectors/regions with low PO participation. Raise awareness on existing support to foster PG/PO in the meat sector and increase incentives for farmers joining PO/PG in this sector.	➤ Redesign the cooperation intervention to target farmers in the meat sector. ➤ If needed, re-allocate or expand budget dedicated to the setting up of PG/PO in the meat sector.
Quality scheme participation increased by 15% overall, but uptake remains below 10% among small farms (<20 ha) despite representing 65% of total farms. Administrative burden and certification costs were cited as the main barriers by 78% of non-participating small farmers surveyed.	Reduce barriers to quality scheme participation for small-scale producers through targeted support addressing both financial and administrative constraints.	➤ Introduce differentiated support rates with higher co-financing (up to 90%) for farms under 20 ha. ➤ Target regional advisory services toward small farms, offering technical assistance for quality scheme applications.

⁸⁸ The Better Regulation guidelines underlines that 'success' is assessed in terms of the extent to which an intervention achieves its objectives effectively, efficiently and in a coherent way.



Examples of findings from the effectiveness analysis	Recommendations from evaluator	Example of potential action by MA
In a given territory, the case study revealed that direct sales initiatives supported through LEADER increased by 40%, but that geographical coverage remains concentrated in peri-urban areas (75% of projects). Rural and remote areas show minimal uptake (<5% of eligible farms). Digital infrastructure and logistics were identified as key gaps.	Expand short supply chain development to underserved rural areas through the setting up of a PO that will deliver infrastructure, digital tools, and collective logistics solutions.	› Support farmers' organisations and sectoral types of interventions for joint distribution and marketing. › Dedicate specific support to fund shared logistics platforms and collection points in remote areas. › Launch dedicated calls for rural short supply chain projects with enhanced support rates.
Farmers in established PO (>5 years) show 22% higher average income compared to non-members, but newly formed PO (<2 years) show negligible economic benefits. Analysis reveals that 45% of new POs cease operations within three years, primarily due to insufficient initial scale and weak management capacity.	Strengthen the sustainability and economic impact of PO through enhanced start-up support, professional management development, and minimum viability thresholds.	› Provide legal/administrative support for the creation of a PO or inter-branch structure. › Mandate business planning and feasibility studies before PO recognition. › Require collective training of relevant stakeholders as an eligibility criterion to receive support. › Establish minimum membership/ volume thresholds for PO support eligibility.
While 68% of supported farms now have written contracts with buyers, only 35% report improved bargaining position. Contract terms remain largely dictated by buyers, with 80% of contracts containing unilateral price revision clauses. Farmers in sectors without PO report the weakest negotiating positions.	Strengthen farmers' bargaining power through collective negotiation support, contract standardisation and enhanced market transparency mechanisms.	› Establish price monitoring observatories to improve market transparency. › Support the development of sector-specific standard contract templates with balanced terms. › Support legal advisory services for farmer organisations during contract negotiations.

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

7.3. Recommendations to improve internal coherence of CSP interventions and CMO provisions

The evaluation of internal coherence will show whether synergies and complementarities among CSP interventions and CMO provisions are at work or whether trade-offs or hampering factors reduce the effectiveness of achieving SO3. **Recommendations will concentrate on measures to avoid trade-offs, gaps and overlaps, to strengthen enabling factors and to enhance synergies.** The recommendations are based on the findings, which are summarised in the screening matrix (see [Section 6.3.3](#)).

An example of how the findings from the internal coherence assessment can be translated into an actionable, process-oriented set of recommendations is provided in [Table 18](#). **Where sufficient quantitative evidence from the effectiveness analysis is available, it may be possible to prioritise recommendations.** A suitable benchmark for prioritisation is the expected value added that could be achieved by implementing each recommendation. If both the expected costs and benefits can be quantified, a ranking of recommendations can be produced.



Table 18. Examples of moving from findings on internal coherence and recommendations to actions

Internal coherence findings	Recommendations from evaluator	Examples of potential action by MA or Paying Agency
The price reporting system under market transparency measures does not provide quality-differentiated price information for products produced under quality schemes. This undermines investment support for PO by developing quality schemes, as the benefits of quality improvements are unclear to producers.	➤ Strengthen coherence between market transparency instruments and PO support schemes. ➤ Ensure price monitoring systems reflect quality standards promoted through investment support for PO. ➤ Motivate farmers to join PO by developing new quality schemes by highlighting higher prices for better quality. ➤ Support PO investments in quality improvement equipment to reduce entry barriers for new members.	➤ Update price monitoring system to include quality differentiated prices. ➤ Inform market participants about quality differentiated prices for quality schemes.
Ambiguous eligibility criteria make the application process cumbersome, hindering effective support for investments of PO engaged in quality schemes.	➤ Reconsider the implementation of eligibility criteria to foster participation of PO engaged in quality schemes.	➤ Review and clarify eligibility criteria for investment support targeting PO engaged in quality schemes.
Investment support to a PO producing premium product Y is not coordinated with training and advisory measures. New farmers cannot join the PO due to insufficient technical skills and equipment.	➤ Enhance coherence between PO investment support and Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) measures by creating explicit linkages. ➤ Improve technical skills of producers with a focus on young farmers. ➤ Facilitate complementary investments.	➤ Develop training programmes for producers. ➤ Provide administrative support for PO purchasing specialised machinery for new members. Launch an EIP project focusing on product Y.
CSP interventions supporting PO participation for supply concentration in product Z directly conflicting with on-farm investment support for individual processing and marketing facilities promoting short supply chains.	➤ Address the structural trade-off between PO support and on-farm investment aid.	➤ Define eligibility criteria to prevent simultaneous support for PO participation and competing on-farm processing investments in the same value chain. ➤ Create incentives favouring collective processing facilities linked to PO.
Support for independent marketing channels reduces volume available for PO-led concentration.	➤ Set clear strategic priorities for product categories and territorial contexts.	➤ Prioritise collective over individual farm-level investments where supply concentration is a strategic priority.

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025)

Both the **efficiency and relevance assessments** have repercussions on the internal coherence evaluation, notably on the **observed coherence evaluation**. Efficiency is evaluated by putting the effectiveness into the context of costs (which include not only public expenditures such as premiums and administrative costs but also

private costs of compliance and transactions costs). In the context of evaluating relevance, an assessment is made whether framework conditions of the CSP have changed since it has been conceived. It is therefore advisable to carry out the evaluations of efficiency and relevance in parallel to the evaluation of coherence.



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