



FAS implementation in the EU

Setting-up, farm advisory bodies and rural development support

Vincenzo Angileri



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European Commission
Joint Research Centre
Institute for the Protection and Security of the Citizen

Contact information

Address: Via Enrico Fermi 2749, I-21027 Ispra (Italy)
E-mail: vincenzo.angileri@jrc.it
Tel.: +39 0332 789987
Fax: +39 0332 789029

<http://ipsc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>
<http://www.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>

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Report

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1. Introduction

1.1. Report framework

- 1.1.1. By the beginning of 2007 Member States had to set up a system of advising farmers on land and farm management which should cover at least cross compliance requirements, the so-called Farm Advisory System. The Farm Advisory System (FAS) can be operated by one or more designated authorities or by private bodies, but Member States shall give priority to the farmers who receive more than 15.000 EUR of direct payments per year. Farmers may participate in the FAS on a voluntary basis (Council Regulation (EC) No 1782/2003).
- 1.1.2. The use and the setting up of farm advisory services can be funded within the framework of the rural development policy (Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005) by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). If its use is to be financed by the EAFRD, farm advisory services should not only cover Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) and Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAECs), but also occupational safety standards based on Community legislation. A threshold of 80% of the eligible cost for the use of the advisory service has been established, with a maximum of 1.500 EUR. A digressive rural development support can also be granted for five years in order to cover costs arising from the setting up of farm advisory services.
- 1.1.3. The FAS is a core element of the CAP reform in 2003 and recently its importance has even increased as the Commission Regulation (EC) No 1550/2007 of 20 December 2007 establishes that the participation of a farmer to the FAS could be seen as a factor in the risk analysis for the selection of the holdings for on-the-spot checks.
- 1.1.4. In its activity of supporting DG AGRI in the assessment and strengthening of existing policy instruments the Agricultural Unit of the JRC monitors the implementation of the Farm Advisory System in the Member States. Last year JRC carried out a survey on the first year of FAS implementation in Member States whose results were published in the report JRC 42293 "Overview of the implementation of the Farm Advisory System in Member States" (ref. website: <http://mars.jrc.ec.europa.eu/mars/About-us/GeoCAP/API/FAS-implementation-in-MS>).
- 1.1.5. Last year report was followed this year by the report JRC 45383 "Implementation of the Farm Advisory System in Poland" (cfr. website: <http://mars.jrc.ec.europa.eu/mars/About-us/GeoCAP/API/FAS-in-Poland>) that illustrated the results of a technical visit made by JRC in the member state that through its Rural Development Programme devoted the greatest amount of money in the EU in funding the use of farm advisory services by farmers.
- 1.1.6. In order to supply an overview of the current situation in the implementation of FAS in the EU, one of the deliverable of the current year activity for JRC "Action 21102 - Geo-Information Management and Control Methods" is to provide a compendium of Farm Advisory System implementation. This report meets this goal.

1.2. Report objectives

- 1.2.1. The general objective of this report is to provide information on how Member States are currently implementing their Farm Advisory System. As the report follows last year survey, its aim is to focus on some issues that had not been completely fulfilled in last year analysis such as providing a picture of the entities authorised to deliver advice, concrete information and figures of the effective start of the system and the advisory services already delivered in the Member States. As the rural development programmes were generally approved in the period autumn 2007-spring 2008, the report contains also an analysis of the rural development measures for the support of farm advisory services.
- 1.2.2. In order to avoid duplicating information already provided in last year JRC report 45383, topics where no major changes have occurred are not considered in this report.
- 1.2.3. The information in the report has been compiled considering also the need of information that the Commission may require in order to submit a review on the application of the farm advisory system by 31 December 2010 at the latest, according to what it is stated in art.16 of the Council Regulation (EC) No 1872/2003.

2. Description of the workflow for data collection

2.1. Survey based on questionnaire

- 2.1.1. JRC has been monitoring FAS implementation for almost two years. Together with DG AGRI D1, a questionnaire was prepared and sent to Member States the first time in September 2006. The questionnaire was made as a .ppt file and it investigated basic fields such as the organisation of the FAS, the entities authorised to provide advice, the targeted farmers' population, the funding of the FAS. The questionnaire structure was kept simple with questions possibly avoiding ambiguity. In the .ppt file sent to Member States a sample answer was suggested as an example on how each question could be answered in order to avoid misunderstanding.
- 2.1.2. The results of this first survey were presented in the workshop on FAS held in Ispra on 2-4 October 2006 (<http://mars.jrc.ec.europa.eu/mars>). At that time most MSs were taking actions in order to set up their FAS before the deadline of 1st January 2007, but for many of them strategic decisions had not been taken yet. That was the reason why a second survey was launched in May 2007. This second survey, which took the same structure of the first one, was in fact not only an update of the previous one, but it contained questions in fields that were not investigated in 2006 such as the way of providing advice to farmers, criteria for the selection of accredited bodies and advisors, the monitoring of the performance of FAS and main concerns faced by MSs in this first year of FAS implementation.
- 2.1.3. The second survey provided a detailed picture of how Member States have organised their FAS but it also showed that 2007 was often used by Member States to fine-tune their system and that in

many of them effective advice delivery had not started yet as Rural Development Programmes used to fund FAS use by farmers were not operative yet (ref.: JRC 42293 “Overview of the implementation of the Farm Advisory System in Member States”).

- 2.1.4. For that reason in May 2008 a new survey was launched. This survey was mainly an update of the previous questionnaire: the questionnaire as it was completed in 2007 was sent to the Member States that had only to answer the questions they could not answer in 2007 and, if necessary, amend their previous responses. The updated answers described a more advance step in the implementation of FAS in Member States.

	questionnaire 2006	questionnaire 2007	questionnaire 2008
AT	X	X	X
BE_FL	X	X	
BE_WA		X	X
BG	n/a		
CY		X	
CZ		X	X
DE			X*
DK			X
EE	X	X	X
ES		X	X
FI	X	X	X
FR	X	X	X
GR	X	X	
HU	X	X	X
IE	X	X	X
IT			X*
LT	X	X	X
LU	X	X	X
LV	X	X	
MT			X
NL		X	X
PL	X	X	n.s.
PT			X
RO	n/a	X	
SE	X		
SI		X	X
SK			X
UK_EN	X	X	X
UK_NI	X	X	X
UK_SC		X	X
UK_WA	X	X	

Table 1- Member States responses to questionnaires.

n/a: not available, n.s.: not sent to Member States (information already collected), X* response in the form of a summary at national level

2.1.5. The participation of Member States in the survey was very high; complete and accurate answers were often provided. Table n.1 indicates the Member States that answered the three different surveys. For all Member States, except Bulgaria, at least one completed questionnaire was sent during these two years. The high participation allowed JRC to provide a report covering all Member States.

2.2. Rural development programmes

2.2.1. As it emerged from last year survey that many Member States relied on rural development policy to implement and support the use of FAS, an analysis was carried out by the JRC on the rural development programmes approved by the Commission. This analysis, whose results are discussed in chapter 4, focussed on Axis 1 rural development measures related to farm advisory services (measure 114 “Use by farmers and by forest holders of advisory services” and measure 115 “Setting up of farm management, farm relief and farm advisory services, as well as of forestry advisory services”). All national and regional rural development programmes were analysed in this study.

2.3. Other data sources

2.3.1. The information collected through questionnaire surveys and rural development programmes analysis was verified and improved thanks to contacts with Member States officials and experts involved in FAS during workshops held both at the JRC site in Ispra (IT) and in other countries (DE, IT, AT).

2.3.2. Some technical visits were also carried out by JRC staff in Italy, Denmark and Poland and some others are planned in the near future. Technical visits helped to focus on issues that were brought to attention in the questionnaire survey and to fine-tune the answers provided in the questionnaires. In some cases (Italy and Poland) technical visits replaced or improved the completing of the questionnaire. The report put together the information collected by all these sources but the questionnaire remains the main tool used to analyse and compare the results in a homogenous way; rural development programmes represent the main source of information for the part related to the financing of FAS.

2.3.3. The author would like to thank the Administrations of the Member States for their kind collaboration and support in the carrying out of this study.

3. How FAS is implemented in Member States

3.1. Stage of the implementation process

3.1.1. As it is stated in the Council Regulation (EC) No 1782/2003 (art. 13), by the 1st January 2007 Member States had to set up their FAS in order to advise farmers on land and farm management and covering at least SMR and GAECs with the opportunity for Member States to broaden its scope.

3.1.2. The Council Regulation (and following Commission legislation) established some conditions to be fulfilled by Member States in order to set up the FAS but it left them some freedom in designing the system that could be the most appropriate to meet the needs and characteristics of their farming systems.

3.1.3. In order to provide information on if and how Member States have implemented FAS, in this overview the following aspects are investigated:

- approval of specific national legislative acts on FAS,
- definition of procedures for the accreditation of the advisory entities,
- procedures for funding the use of FAS by farmers,
- existence of figures about farmers requests of advisory services and about requests covered.

Each of these features may give an indication of the level of completeness of the implementation process but a definitive judgement if FAS was set-up needs an accurate analysis in the Member State which is not the goal of this study. In fact the existence of a specific legal act does not automatically mean that farmers can receive advice because procedures for the accreditation of advisory bodies may have not been finalised yet. Furthermore all the above aspects shall be analysed taking into account the type of advisory system chosen by the Member State: an advisory system completely free for farmers and based on pre-existent advisory services may require neither specific national legislation nor accreditation procedures (as it happens in Austria).

3.1.4. The existence of figures about requests made by farmers and supported by the advisory services is an evidence that the system is operational; anyway the collection of this data is surely carried out only by Member States funding the use of advisory services by farmers with the Rural Development Programme (the number of farmer supported is a common output indicator for the rural development measure "Use of advisory services" as it is established by the Commission Regulation (EC) No 1974/2006, annex VIII). In Member States where the advice is free for farmers or advisory delivery is not financed, the collection of these data may be considered by the Member States concerned not necessary or redundant. An example on the logical process followed in this study to determine the current state of FAS implementation is shown in figure 1.

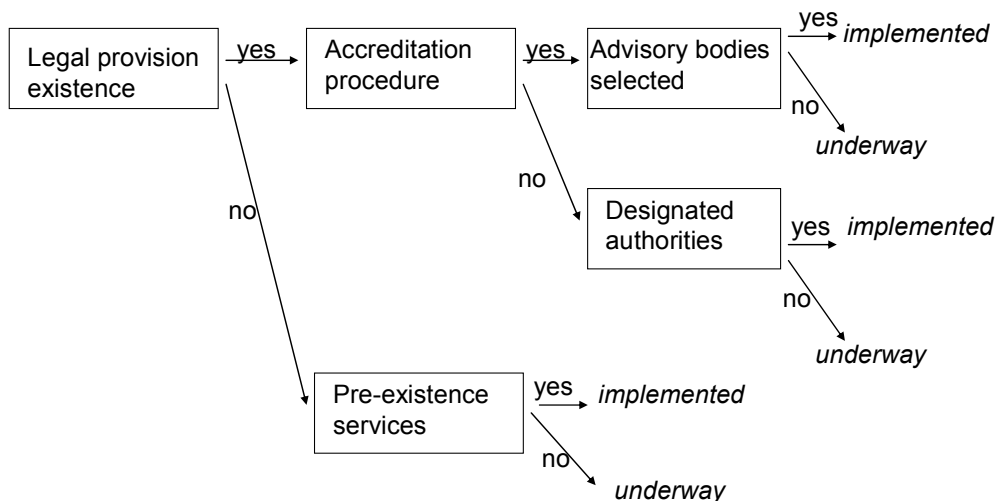


Figure 1- Flow diagram of the logical process followed to assess the current state of FAS implementation

3.2. Existence of legal provisions

- 3.2.1. With the limitations described in the previous paragraph, the existence of a legal provision for the implementation of the Farm Advisory System and the data of its approval can give information about the options chosen by the Member State in the setting up of its FAS and the timing of the implementation process.
- 3.2.2. Legal provisions setting up FAS are different in nature and, according to competency on FAS, approved by different administrative levels of government (national or regional). Some Member States set up FAS with a national law (EE, FI, SI). In some other Member States (PL, CZ) national legislative acts related to the implementation of the Rural Development policy contains specific provisions about FAS and are considered as the reference legal acts for FAS setting up. FAS in Lithuania was established by a governmental decision and in France by a Ministerial directive defining the rules for the accreditation of the advisory services authorised to deliver advice in the framework of the FAS. In Denmark two cabinets regulations established the accreditation system and the financial support for the use of advisory services (the latter only for 2006). Latvia approved a national programme for the "Establishment and development of farm advisory and extension services". Some Member States made the choice not to have specific legal provisions for FAS (BE-

WA, IE, UK). In Luxembourg legal provisions have not been finalised at the moment when this report was written.

- 3.2.3. Not only in Belgium, where Flanders and Wallonia authorities are in charge of agriculture, but also in some other Member States the competence for setting up the FAS belongs to regional authorities (DE, ES, IT). Spain approved a national framework for the setting-up of advisory services by Regional Authorities. In Germany the federal Länder set down concrete support schemes for the use of advisory services in agreement with the criteria in the National Strategy Plan for Rural Development 2007-2013. In Italy there is not a national framework for the setting up of FAS and seventeen out of twenty-one regional and autonomous provincial authorities established the rules of FAS in their Rural Development Programmes. In Belgium Wallonia has not any legal provision for FAS while in Flanders one regional act was approved.

3.3. Date of setting-up

Before 1st January 2007

- 3.3.1. Not many Member States established FAS before the 1st January 2007. Latvia setup FAS in 2005 and so did Estonia, following a national law in 2004 and a ministry regulation in 2005: in Estonia advice requests have been fulfilled since 2005. In Netherlands a national scheme funded FAS in 2005 and in 2006, followed in 2007 by rural development support schemes. In Lithuania FAS was set up in July 2006, but the first 160 applications for supported advice with the rural development programme were collected in the period March-April 2008. In Czech Republic FAS was set up in august 2006, but the support within the framework of the rural development programme was available only from January 2008. Denmark and two regions in Italy (Veneto e Piemonte) funded FAS already in 2006 using the rural development plan of the 2000-2006 programming period, but no funding were available in 2007 (Veneto and Piemonte will start funding FAS again in 2008). In Slovenia the certification of advisors ended in autumn 2006. In the United Kingdom, where FAS is generally based only on national funds (except in Wales where funds are available in the rural development programme), advisory activities took place since 2006: in England around 20.000 farmers in 2005 and 14.300 in 2006 received advice including helpline, face-to-face and small group advice, in Northern Ireland around 8.500 farmers attended training workshops in the period 2005-2007.

After 1st January 2007

- 3.3.2. A major effort in setting up the system was made by most Member States in 2007. Beyond Member States that have already established their FAS before 2007, some other Member States stated in the JRC questionnaire that their FAS has been set up since 1st January 2007: Finland, where supported one-to-one advice effectively started in 2007, Ireland that does not have any funding scheme for advisory services, Romania where a public campaign on GAECs was launched and free training was provided in 2007. Hungary considered that its FAS has been set up in a preliminary form since 1st January: private bodies were selected and they have been operational since July

2007, but the system was improved in 2008 with the implementation of the rural development supported schemes.

- 3.3.3. Poland established FAS in March 2007 when Polish Parliament approved the New Act on support of rural areas by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) containing FAS provisions. In April 2007 France published the criteria for the accreditation of the advisory bodies with a view of having operational advisory services starting from 1st January 2008. In Wallonia supported advice has been available since December 2007.
- 3.3.4. In February 2008 Malta amended the previous regulation on farm advisory services and gave start to supported one-to-one advice. In Luxembourg, even without legal bases approved, some advisory requests were covered in 2007 and in the beginning of 2008. In Portugal in May 2008 a Ministerial decree established the FAS, but the procedures for implementing the rural development schemes are about to be defined. In Italy in April and May 2008 respectively Tuscany and Veneto regions have published calls for tenders for the supported use of FAS by farmers within the framework of their rural development programmes.
- 3.3.5. With the approval of the rural development programmes accomplished at the end of 2007 and beginning of 2008, it is evident that FAS is becoming more operative this year especially for the Member States (and they are many) that have decided to implement the rural development measure 114 "Use by farmers and forest holders of advisory services". For all Member States and Regions concerned, procedures have been or will be defined and supported advice delivery should start in the next few months at the latest.

3.4. Advisory bodies

- 3.4.1. In general in most Member State the Ministry of Agriculture has the main responsibility for the setting up and the coordination of the FAS. Detailed information on the organisation of FAS in Member States with regard to the functions of coordination, accreditation of operating bodies and control is provided in the last year report JRC 42293 "Overview of the implementation of the Farm Advisory System in Member States" (par. 3.2).
- 3.4.2. According to Community legislation the FAS shall be operated by one or more designated authorities or by private bodies (art. 13 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1872/2003)
- 3.4.3. The authorities and bodies selected to provide advisory services to farmers shall have appropriate resources in the form of qualified staff, administrative and technical facilities and advisory experience and reliability with respect to the requirements, conditions and standards related to cross-compliance and occupational safety standards based on Community legislation (art. 15 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1974/2006 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of the rural development policy).
- 3.4.4. Within the framework established by the legislation above, Member States have the freedom to identify the operating entities that better meet the demand of their farming systems. An accreditation

procedure is generally established, but some Member States (or competent regions) that chose to have only designated bodies, such as Austria, Scotland and Northern Ireland, identified only criteria that operating bodies shall fulfil without setting an accreditation process based on the selection of candidate bodies. Accreditation process typically regards the selection of private bodies while designated authorities are chosen on the basis of the fulfilment of criteria. Accreditation based on a selection process have not been completed in all Member States especially if it relates to the implementation of the measure 114 "Use by farmers and forest holders of advisory services" as in this case it follows the approval of the rural development programmes that have just been finalised. In some cases accreditation is a temporally open procedure that allows private bodies to continue to be accredited. The current picture of operating entities in the Member States is therefore incomplete in particular for accredited operating private bodies because many more of them may be accredited in the future.

- 3.4.5. A common situation in the Member States is to have both designated (mainly public) bodies and accredited private companies or individual advisors. In this case the designated body may be in charge of general advisory activity such as providing training, organising workshops and publishing publications (leaflets, booklets etc.) and the accredited entities deliver one-to-one advice.
- 3.4.6. Mixed systems (designated and accredited bodies with different duties) are found in many Member States. In Denmark the Danish Agricultural Advisory Service (DAAS) is in charge of small group advice, meetings, training, internet based advice and a decision support system at farm level; one-to-one advice is delivered by DAAS, local advisory centres in partnership with DAAS and other private companies. In Poland the State Advisory Centre (Centrum Doradztwa Rolniczego- CDR), is responsible for training for advisors, information activities, production of training material and of a check list for farm visit and quality control of the service provided by advisory bodies; 16 Regional State Advisory Centres (Ośrodek Doradztwa Rolniczego- ODR) and 16 Agricultural Chambers are entitled to deliver advice to farmers; 120 private advisory bodies delivering advice are expected to join the Polish FAS when the accreditation procedure will be running. In Ireland TEAGASC the national agricultural research, training, education and advisory service with offices in every county organises trainings, workshops and farm walks on demonstration farms; private REPS (Rural Environment Protection Scheme) Planning agencies deliver one-to-one advice on farm and some other activities (trainings, farm walks and workshops) together with TEAGASC. In Wallonia (BE), in addition to coordinating activities, the Directorate General Agriculture of the Regional Ministry is in charge of publications and internet based and telephone advice; 8 private companies are accredited to deliver one-to-one advice. In Veneto Region (IT) a regional advisory centre provide trainings for advisors and information and advisory material; private companies such as farmers unions, farmers trade-unions or consulting firms, deliver one-to-one advice on farm (22 were accredited in 2006).
- 3.4.7. In some Member States the FAS is operated only by designated authorities. In Austria Agricultural Chambers have been designated and funded by the Ministry to deliver a basic advice free of charge for farmers. In Cyprus Ministry services (department of agriculture, veterinary and environmental services) are in charge of delivering free cross compliance advice to farmers. In Romania ANCA (the

National Agency for Agricultural Advisory) provides information material and standardised power point presentations, manage the website and deliver advice and organises vocational training and workshops (the latter activities are done also by the County Offices for Agricultural Advisory). In Slovenia all advisory activities on cross compliance are dealt by the Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia. In Scotland and in Northern Ireland the Scottish Agricultural College and the Department of Rural Development for Northern Ireland (DARD) through its college (CAFRE) are respectively designated as the only FAS operating bodies. In the southern German Länder (Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg, Hesse) there are government-authorized consulting services and consulting is provided by the Departments of Agriculture: these departments are differently structured in each federal Land and for the most part encompass divisions for “animal production,” “plant production,” “business management,” “horticulture” etc. In the northwest German Länder (Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia) consulting is provided by the Chambers of Agriculture.

- 3.4.8. There are Member States where advisory services are provided only by bodies (generally private) that are selected after an accreditation procedure. In France a total of 101 “advisory networks” formed by different professionals (such as professional organisations, agricultural trade unions, cooperatives, agricultural traders and distributors) and each of them covering all fields of cross compliance have been accredited in each region so far. In Hungary 84 Territorial Advisory Centres (TACs) including educational institutions, agricultural chambers, advisory enterprises, research institutions were selected and started operational FAS activities in July 2007. In four of the eastern German Länder (Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia) in the advisory services newly established following German unity, the task of farm consultancy is carried out to a large extent by private consulting organisations. In Portugal an accreditation procedure will be set up in order to accredit farmers unions, farmers associations with more than 3.000 farmers and cooperatives. After the approval of their rural development programmes Italian Regions that have planned to activate the measure 114 are now starting the procedures for the accreditation of FAS operating bodies that can be private or public entities (only Sardinia Region in its rural development programme have already explicitly excluded public bodies from delivering supported farm advisory services).
- 3.4.9. In some Member States accredited individual advisors can deliver advice to farmers without being part of a consultancy company. In Czech Republic in December 2007 the list of accredited advisors that could be used by farmers in the framework of the supported advisory consultancy of the rural development programme included 234 private advisors. In Finland around 50 private individual advisors were accredited.
- 3.4.10. A list of advisory bodies currently operating in the FAS in Member States is contained in table 1.

	designated authority	accredited private bodies
AT	Chambers of Agriculture (semi-public)	
BE-F	n/a	n/a
BE-W	DGA Ministry of Agriculture	8 private companies
BG	n/a	n/a
CY	Ministry services	
CZ	Institute of Agricultural and Food Information (IAFI)	234 private accredited advisers
DE	government-authorised consulting services (some Länder), Chambers of Agriculture (northwest Länder)	private advisers and/or consulting firms (eastern Länder)
DK	Danish Agricultural Advisory Service (DAAS) and local advisory centres in partnership with DAAS	33 private companies
EE	Estonian Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce as coordinating centre (private)	16 private regional advisory centres
ES		96 operating bodies in 5 regional areas (updated 25/4/2008)
GR		969 private bodies and cooperatives
FI		19 Pro Agricola rural advisory centres + 50 advisors
FR		professional organisations, agricultural trade unions, cooperatives, agricultural traders and distributors etc for a total of 101 advisory networks accredited at regional level
HU		84 Territorial advisory Centres (TACs) that include educational institution, agricultural chambers, advisory enterprises, research institutions
IE	TEAGASC- National Agriculture Advice, Education and Research Agency	private REPS (Rural Environment Protection Scheme) Planning agencies
IT		accreditation process not started in all regions
LT		Lithuanian advisory service (private with 30% public control) + Chambers of Agriculture (private) + 2 colleges (public)

Table 1 (part 1)- Farm Advisory bodies in the Member States (n/a: not available)

	designated authority	accredited private bodies
LU		<i>presumably</i> : Chamber of Agriculture, Convis (livestock husbandry crop production)
LV	Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre	private companies (in future)
MT	Ministry services	2 private companies
NL	Agency of MoA	20/30 private advisory services
PL	CDR advisory Centres + 16 regional state advisory centres + 16 agricultural chambers	private companies (in future)
PT		farmers unions, farmers association with > 3000 farmers, partnership unions/associations
RO	Paying agency, Agricultural Advisory Centre	
SE	21 County Administrative Boards	
SI	CAFS (Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia)	
SK	Agroinstitut Nitra, National Forestry Centre	
UK-E	DEFRA	private (i.e. ADAS, farm Business Advice, Momenta)
UK-NI	DARD operating through its college	
UK-S	Scottish government, Scottish Agricultural College (private)	
UK-W	Welsh National Assembly	external deliverers

Table 1 (part 2)- Farm Advisory bodies in the Member States (n/a: not available)

4. Financing FAS through rural development programmes

4.1. Financing advisory services

4.1.1. Most Member States fund the use of FAS by farmers. Only in France and Ireland the use of advisory services is entirely paid by farmers. A minority of Member States finances the use of FAS only with national funds, but it is most common to implement the rural development measure dedicated to the use of advisory services by farmers and forest holders. Details on the way Member States have chosen to fund FAS (national or European community funds) can be found in the chapter 3.8 of the

JRC report 42293 “Overview of the implementation of the Farm Advisory System in Member States”. As the process of approving rural development programmes was not completed when the previous survey was carried out, this report focuses on the funding of FAS through the rural development programmes. JRC carried out an analysis of the approved rural development programmes whose results are discussed in this chapter.

4.2. Rural development support for the use by farmers and by forest holders of advisory services

4.2.1. Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 establishes that in their rural development programme Member States may support:

- the use by farmers and by forest holders of advisory services (Measure 114, as it is codified in annex II of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1974/2006);
- the setting up of farm management, farm relief and farm advisory services, as well as forestry advisory services (Measure 115, as it is codified in annex II of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1974/2006).

4.2.2. Support may be granted to farmers only if the advisory service covers SMRs, GAECs and occupational safety standards based on Community legislation as a minimum (art. 24 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005). Commission Regulation (EC) No 1974/2006 (art.15) outlines that the advisory service for which support may be granted shall be in accordance with the provisions of Council Regulation (EC) No 1782/2003 establishing FAS.

4.2.3. Rural development programmes were mainly approved in the period summer 2007-spring 2008. Measure 114 “Use of advisory services by farmers and by forest holders” is implemented in 19 Member States with different budget allocations.

4.2.4. For Member States where rural development programmes are at regional level, the measure is implemented in:

- all the autonomous communities of Spain;
- 17 out of 21 regions in Italy (all but the mountainous regions of Valle d’Aosta, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano);
- 5 out of 14 Länder in Germany (Lower Saxony and Bremen, North Rhine-Westphalia, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia and Baden-Württemberg);
- Wales;
- Flanders.

4.2.5. The spread of the measure 114 in the Member States shows the important role played by rural development policy in the effective implementation of the FAS.

4.2.6. Also in Sweden farm advisory services will be funded through the rural development programme. The funding of the use of advisory services by farmers is included in the measure 111 “Vocational

training and information actions” and only aggregated data are provided. For that reason Sweden is not considered in this report.

- 4.2.7. In BG and RO the implementation of Measure 114 “Use by farmers and forestry holders of advisory services” will start only in 2010 and it will replace the measure “Provision of farm advisory and extension services” which will be implemented in the first three years of the rural development programme in line with the provisions of Annex VIII to the Act of Accession of Bulgaria and Romania. This measure supports the provision of farm advisory and extension services to agricultural producers intending to take part in restructuring schemes for semi-subsistence farms, to young farmers, to groups of farmers intending to participate in the setting up of producer groups schemes and to farmers intending to apply agri-environmental schemes. Therefore the main aim of the measure is not only to provide support for the use of advisory services on cross compliance, but, for instance, it can be used also to fund the drawing up of business plans. For this reason comparison with measure 114 is not correct and therefore BG and RO are not considered in the analysis that follows.
- 4.2.8. In Estonia measure 114 includes the budget devoted to the setting up of advisory services, but as disaggregated data are not fully available and the financial commitment of the setting up is smaller than the one for the use of advisory services, the analysis in this chapter does not make any distinction between the two actions.
- 4.2.9. During the whole programming period (2007-2013) at European level the total cost of the rural development measure for advisory services is estimated in 1.414 MEUR, of which 1.060 MEUR come from public expenditure (both EAFRD and national funds). It must be noted that the available data include the cost for advisory services for forest holders whose impact is generally limited compared to advisory services for farmers (60.574 forest holders are expected out of 1,136 Million farmers, which means about 5% of the total of the beneficiaries).
- 4.2.10. Some analyses were carried out using figures and information provided in the rural development programmes for measure 114, notably budget allocation and common output indicators (number of farmers supported and number of forest holders supported).
- 4.2.11. Chart 1 shows the total cost of the measure 114 in each Member State in the programming period 2007-2013. The greatest amount of funds is allocated by three Member States (PL, IT and ES) and the total amount of three Member States accounts for more than 70% of the total cost (public and private expenditure) of the measure in the EU.

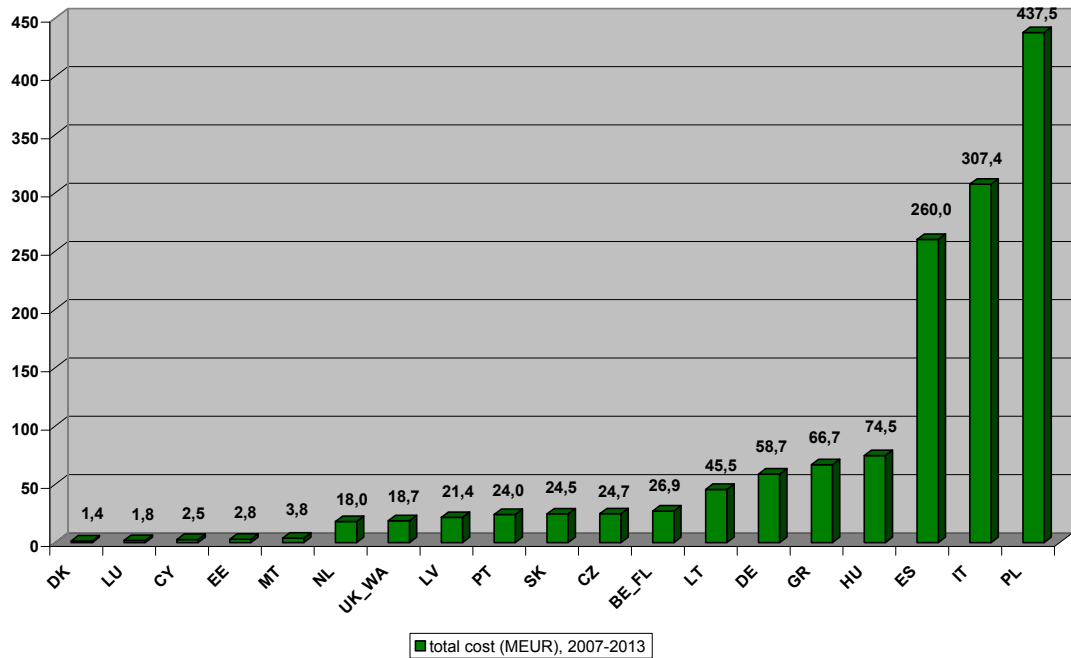


Chart 1 – Total cost of the Measure 114 “Use by farmers and by forest holders of advisory services” in the period 2007-2013

4.2.12. The total number of farmers in EU that are expected to be supported through rural development programmes is 1,136 Million farmers. In chart 2 the total cost of the measure is represented together with the number of farmers supported for each Member State and this shows that a linear correlation between the two figures does not always exist. This can be due to different factors such as the type of services provided (in terms of number, issues covered and tools used), the average size of the holdings, the number of times that the farmer can access the service and also the number of forest holders supported because the available data does not allow to calculate the cost for advisory services for forest holders separately from the costs for farmers.

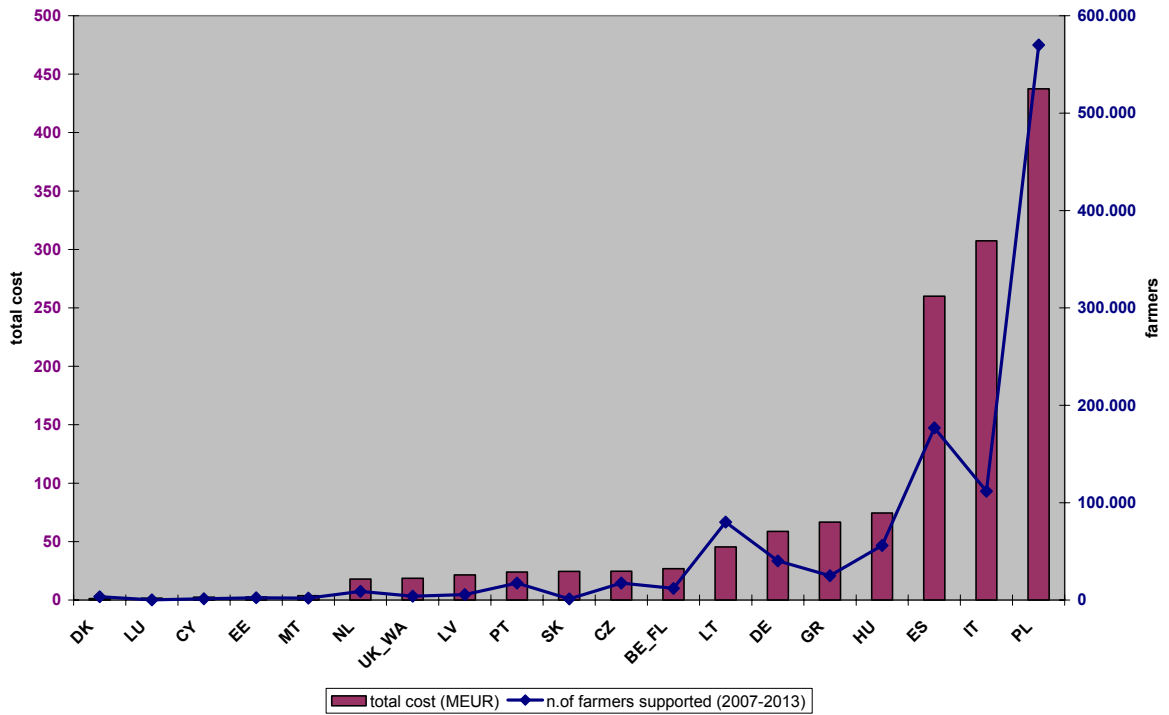


Chart 2- Measure 114: Total cost and total number of farmers supported in the period 2007-2013

4.2.13. Obviously data related to the total budget allocation and farmers supported are strictly related to the dimension of the agricultural sector of the Member State concerned and therefore they are not sufficient to show the grade of interest that Member States devoted to the measure. Some indications can be obtained comparing the total cost of the measure and the number of farmers receiving direct aids as it is shown in chart 3. The result highlights a high commitment especially in five Member States (SK, CZ, UK-WA, BE-FL and LU). The commitment by the Member States can be perceived in a different way if we compare the total cost of the measure and the utilised agricultural area declared in 2007. With the only exception of Malta where the very small dimension of the holdings plays a big role in the result, the commitments of the different Members States are less dissimilar. Anyway, as the advisory service is more related to the human capital than to the dimension of the farm, the comparison between costs and number of farmers seems to be more significant.

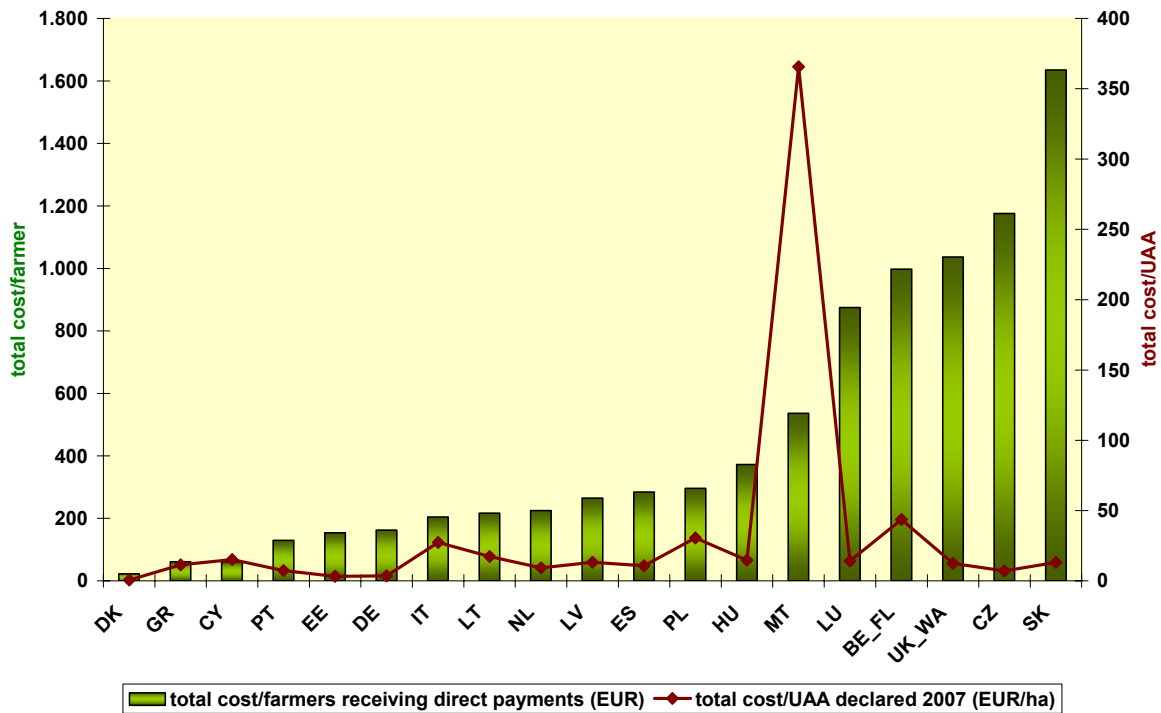


Chart 3- Total cost of the measure in the period 2007-2013 per number of farmers receiving direct payments and per utilised agricultural area declared

4.2.14. In order to have a hint of the expected impact of the supported advisory services on all farmers receiving direct aids, the number of expected farmers to be funded for the use of advisory services (rural development output indicator “Number of farmers supported”) was compared with the total number of farmers receiving direct aids. The results are shown in chart 4. In 7 out of 19 Member States less than 10% of the farmers may benefit supported advice. In LT, PL and BE-FL around 40% of farmers are expected to be supported, while in Czech Republic more than 75% of farmers receiving direct aids may benefit supported use of advisory services. The average of this data shows that an average of 18,5 % of the farmers in the Member States that implement the measures, are expected to benefit for this rural development scheme. In the whole EU, rural development supported advice can be obtained by around 15% of European farmers receiving direct payments (BG and RO are excluded from this calculation as their farmers can get rural development support thanks to the specific measure on advisory and extension services not restricted to cross compliance advice).

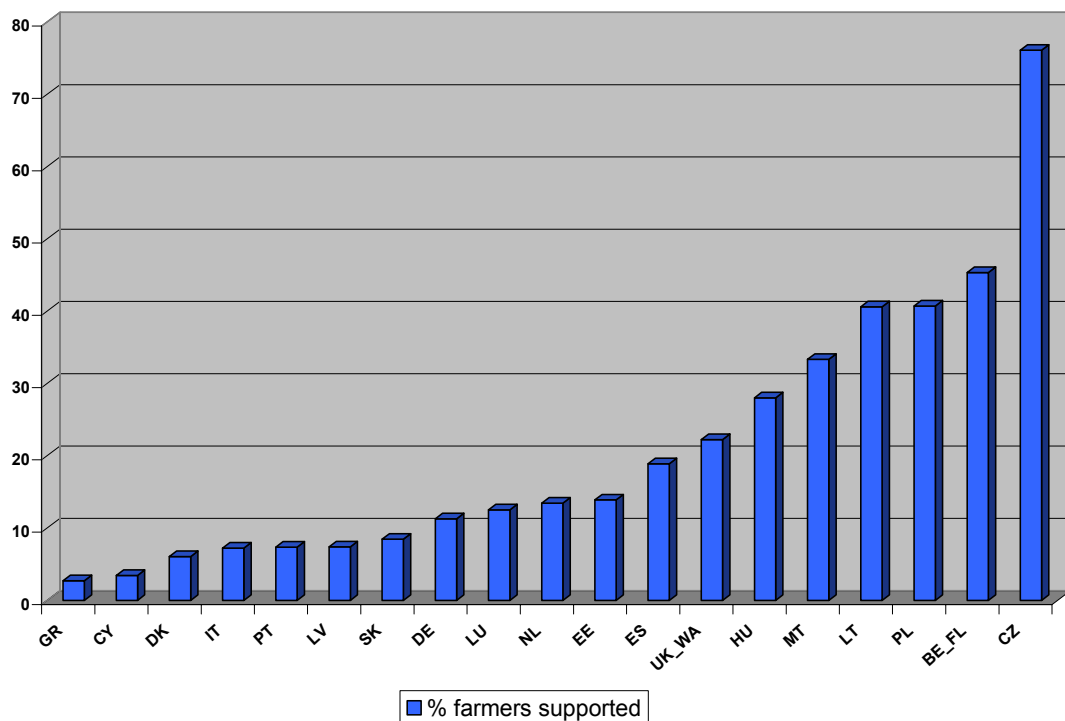


Chart 4- Expected percentage of farmers supported in the period 2007-2013

4.2.15. The Annex to the Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 establishes that 80% is the maximum rate of the eligible costs that can be refunded of the occurred costs for the use of advisory services. Of a total cost of the measure of 1.414 MEUR in EU, private expenditure accounts for 353 MEUR which corresponds to 25% of the total cost. Therefore in average the rate of support that is foreseen in the rural development programmes is 75% of the eligible cost (5% less than maximum threshold established by the Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005). This is the results of different thresholds applied by the Member States as shown in chart 5. The rate of support rising from this calculation which takes into account budgetary plans may be slightly different from the one established in the description of the measure in the Member State rural development programme. In fact it must be considered that:

- The percentage established in the rural development programme is the maximum percentage allowed, but in the implementation of the measure a smaller percentage can be defined according to budget availability;
- in Member States with regional programmes the value in the chart is the result of data contained in the different regional rural development programmes.

In case of Estonia, the amount exceeds 80% because, in measure 114 the budget for the setting up of advisory services is included, as already explained in paragraph 4.2.8. With regard to the maximum rate established in their rural development programmes, most Member States set a

maximum support of 80% of the eligible cost per advisory service (within a threshold that in any case cannot exceed 1.875 EUR of eligible costs according to the Regulation). Anyway, rural development programmes of NL, DK and UK-W fixed a maximum rate of 50% (but in Wales support for young farmers may attain 80%). In LV the maximum rate is 60% with a maximum eligible amount of 1.000 EUR; in LU is 70% in the first year and decreases to 50% in the following years.

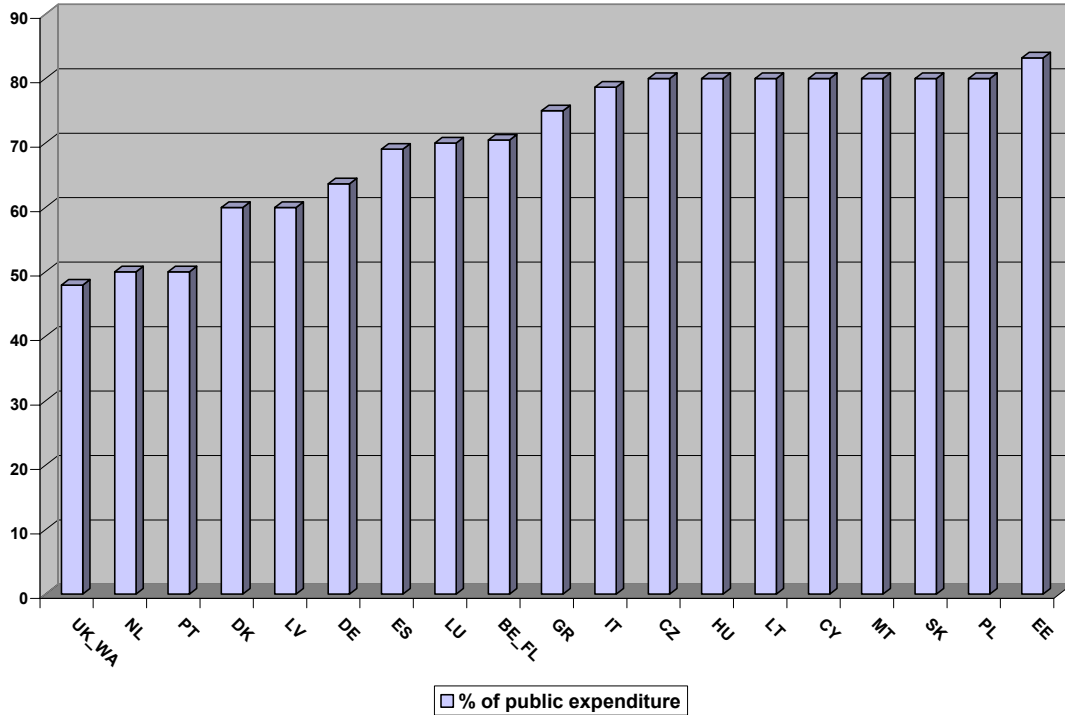


Chart 5- Public expenditures (expected percentage of eligible costs refunded to farmers)

4.2.16. According to Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 the maximum eligible amount that each farmer can receive per advisory service is 1.500 EUR for a maximum eligible cost of 1.875 EUR. Anyway in the total programming period 2007-2013 using more than one advisory service allows farmer to receive a total reimbursement higher than this amount. The total cost of the measure (public support plus private expenditure) and the output indicator regarding the total number of farmers and forest holders supported are data that can be found in all rural development programmes. The comparison of these figures indicates different levels of support that farmers and forest holders can receive in average in the whole programming period. As the total cost of the measure is not differentiated in the use of advisory services by farmers and by forest holders, only aggregate figures can be analysed. As it is shown in chart 6, in most Member States (10 out of 19) the total cost of the supported advisory service to each farmer/forest holder in the total programming period accounts from 1.400 EUR to 2.300 EUR in average. Anyway in Wales the average supported advice should reach around 4.400 EUR (but farmers are entitled only to a 50% reimbursement) and in Luxembourg 7.000 EUR. Much higher than in all other Member State, Slovakian farmers can use supported

advisory services of around 15.000 EUR of total cost in average. At the opposite end of the rank, in Denmark farmers will use supported advice services of less than 400 EUR (but in DK the measure is dedicated only to fund the participation of farmers in training activities), in Lithuania of around 550 EUR and in Poland of 730 EUR in average.

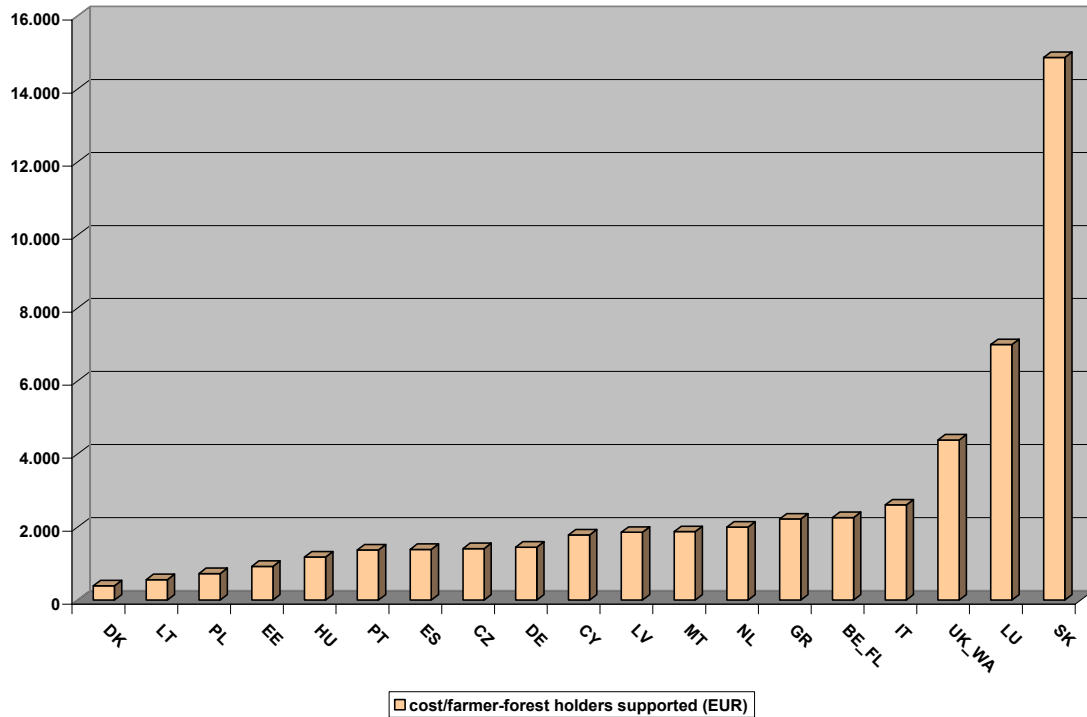


Chart 6- Average cost of supported advice service for each farmer-forest holder in the whole programming period 2007-2013

4.3. Rural development support for the setting up of advisory services

- 4.3.1. Not as popular as the support of the use of advisory service, the rural development measure for the setting up of management, relief and advisory services is implemented only in PT, in MT, in all the Autonomous Communities of Spain and in some Regions of Italy. In LV this measure, aimed at creating a forest advisory service, will be notified in 2008 for Commission approval; in EE the budget for this measure is integrated in the one related to the use of advisory services.
- 4.3.2. It is not always possible to identify how much money will be dedicated to the setting up of advisory services by Member States as in general the budget of the measure and the output indicator regarding the number of newly set up services do not differentiate among management, relief and advisory services for farmers and forest holders.
- 4.3.3. Taking into account the budget dedicated by all the Autonomous Communities in their rural development programmes, Spain is the Member State that invests the greatest amount of money for this rural development scheme in the European Union (almost 263 MEUR for an estimated number

of 365 newly setup management, relief and advisory services). In Portugal the total cost of the measure is planned to be of almost 83 MEUR for 50-70 newly expected setup advisory services and 150-180 managing services. In Italy the measure is implemented in 6 Regions with a total cost of almost 30 MEUR and 111 expected newly setup management, relief and advisory services. In Malta the total cost will be 600.000 EUR and newly 6 setup services are expected. In Estonia the budget for the setting up of advisory services is included in the measure 114: it accounts for 938.333 EUR for 16 newly setup services expected.

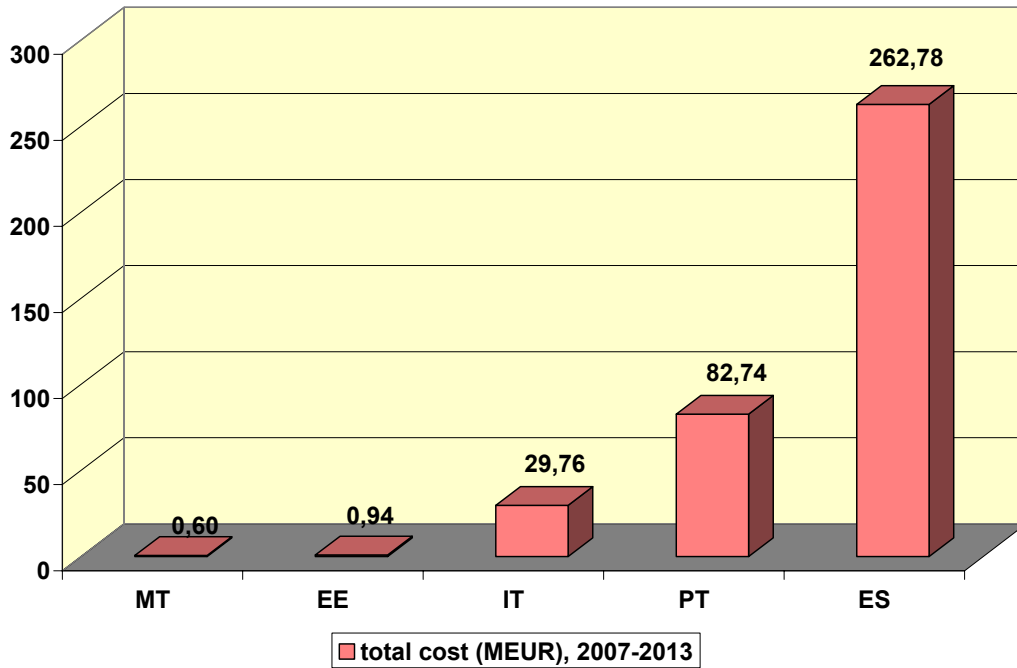


Chart 7- Total cost of the Measure 115 “Setting up of farm management, farm relief and advisory services for framers and forest holders” in the period 2007-2013 (for Estonia the budget is allocated within measure 114)

4.4. Type of support approach

4.4.1. In order to make some considerations on the way Member States decided to support FAS through their rural development policy, a comparison among Member States was carried out using the following criteria:

- total cost of measure/numbers of farmers receiving direct payments,
- percentage of farmers expected to be supported,
- expected cost of supported advice per farmer in the whole programming period,
- refunded percentage of the eligible costs of the advisory service.

4.4.2. The value of each type of criteria was aggregated in the classes “very high-VH”, “high-H”, “medium-M” and “low-L” according to table n. 2.

	<i>very high-VH</i>	<i>high-H</i>	<i>medium-M</i>	<i>low-L</i>
total cost/farmers receiving payments (EUR)	> 1700	1200-600	600-200	<200
percentage of farmers supported (%)	> 50	25-50	25-10	<10
total supported advice cost /farmer (EUR)	>7000	7000-3000	1000-3000	<1000
refunded percentage of eligible costs (%)	/	80	75-51	<51

Table n.2- Definition of classes for the retained criteria

4.4.3. Table n.3 shows the results of the analysis in the Member States. CZ and SK seems to invest much in rural development supported use of FAS, but while Czech supported advisor services are intended to involve as many farmers as possible (holdings in CZ are large), the Slovak one is designed to support a limited number of farmers but with reimbursements covering also comprehensive and costly services. In Wales the quite high amount of money which is available to refund the use of advisory services is based on a high share of the cost of the services by the farmer (at least 50% of the costs shall remain at his/her own expenses). In Luxembourg the amount of support available and the total support for each farmer using advisory services is remarkable. The analysis confirms the limited importance that rural development supported advice has been given in Denmark, Portugal, Cyprus and Greece.

4.4.4. All the above considerations are expressed on the basis of planned budget and expected indicators. It will be important to follow the implementation of these rural development measures in order to monitor the effective execution of rural development supported advice.

	total cost/farmers receiving payments	% farmers supported	total support/farmer	refunded % of costs	importance/impact
BE_FL	H	H	M	M	medium/high
CY	L	L	M	H	low
CZ	H	VH	M	H	high
DE	L	M	M	M	medium
DK	L	L	L	M	very low
EE	L	M	L	H	low
ES	M	M	M	M	medium
GR	L	L	M	M	low
HU	M	H	M	H	medium/high
IT	M	L	M	H	medium/low
LT	M	H	L	H	medium/high
LU	H	M	H	M	medium high
LV	M	L	M	M	medium/low
MT	M	H	M	H	medium/high
NL	M	M	M	L	medium
PL	M	H	L	H	medium/high
PT	L	L	M	L	very low
SK	VH	L	VH	H	high
UK_WA	H	M	H	L	Medium/high

Table n. 3- Reclassification of the data on supported advisory services (VH- very high, H- high, M- medium, L- low)

5. One-to-one advice

- 5.1.1. Direct contact between the farmer and the advisor constitutes the so called face-to-face approach in advice delivery. This approach can be characterized by one-to-one (one advisor, one farmer) or group (one advisor, many farmers) delivery. Advice can be delivered on the farm or in other places such as the advisor's office. One-to-one advice on the farm represents the core of Farm Advisory System and seems to be considered by the Member States as the most common and useful way to provide advice (see paragraphs 3.5 and 3.6 of the report JRC 42293 "Overview of the implementation of the Farm Advisory System in Member States").
- 5.1.2. As seen in the previous chapter, one-to-one advice on the farm represents the advice delivery approach that can be funded within the framework of the measure for the use of farm advisory services of the rural development programmes.
- 5.1.3. In order to have a complete view on how many farmers will be possibly involved in one-to-one advice at European level, it is worth to consider not only rural development supported advisory services, but only one-to-one advice supported by national funds.

- 5.1.4. In fact seven Member States use only national funds in order to sustain their Farm Advisory System. Generally in this case, funds are used to fund advisory activities and provide one-to-one advice on the farm free for farmers. Only in Finland governmental aid for one-to-one advice on the farm has a threshold of maximum 300 EUR/farmer.
- 5.1.5. For Member States not implementing rural development measures for farm advisory services, figures about the number of farmers expected to receive advice were acquired from the answers to the JRC questionnaire. In these Member States in the period 2007-2013 one-to-one advice on the farm (generally provided free of charge for farmers) it is expected to cover around 40% of farmers receiving direct payments as shown in table 4.

Member State	farmers expected to receive advice	% farmers	Type of advisory service
AT	5.950	4,6	one-to-one at the farm (free for farmers)
BE_WA	700	4,5	one-to-one at the farm (free for farmers)
FI	21.000	31,8	one-to-one at the farm (government aid max 300 EUR/farmer)
SI	51.786	82,2	one-to-one-at-the farm (free for farmers)
UK_EN	70.000	66,0	one-to-one at farm (free for farmers)
UK_NI	9.772	24,5	small group workshop at the farm (free for farmers)
UK_SC	21.000	100,0	one-to-one at the farm and in SAC office (free for farmers)
total	180.208	40,8	

Table n. 4- Farmers expected to receive advice in the period 2007-2013 in Member States where advisory services are funded only with national funds

- 5.1.6. If we consider both rural development and national funds, in the period 2007-2013 a total of 1.346.012 holdings are expected to receive supported or free advisory services consisting in one-to-one advice (BG and RO are excluded from this calculation because data are not comparable and so are FR, IE where advisory services are totally paid by farmers and SE for which no data were available). This accounts for 21 % of farmers receiving direct payments in the Member States, but with different percentage in the Member States as it is shown in chart 8. It is interesting to note that two Member States that use only national funds (UK-SC and SI) expect to cover the highest percentage of farmers.

% farmers supported (2007-2013)

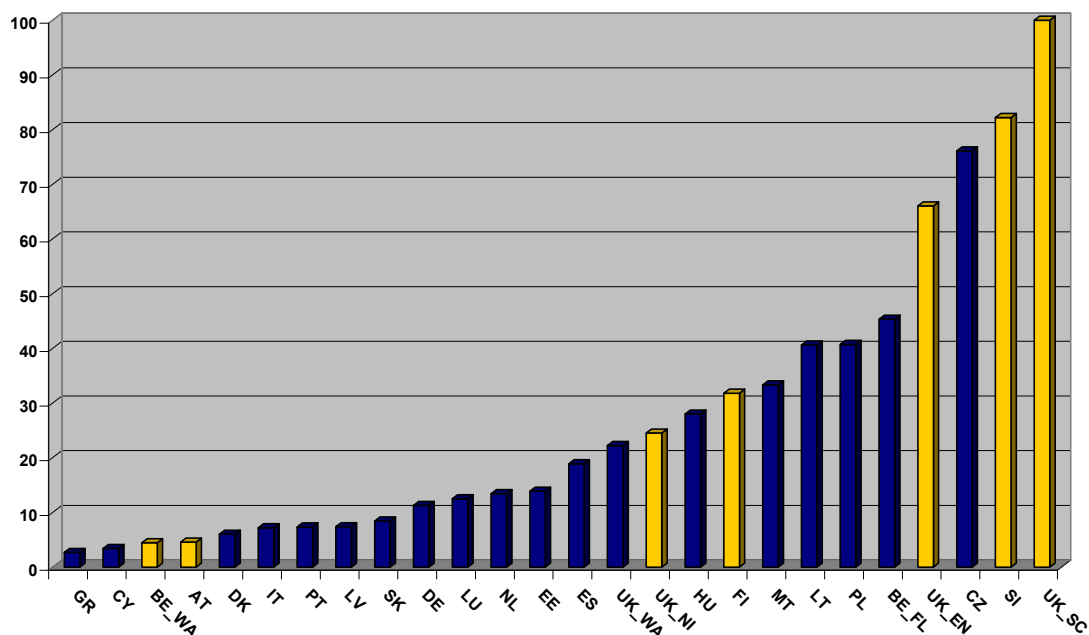


Chart 8- Percentage of farmers receiving direct payments expected to receive advice in the period 2007-2013 (in blue: rural development supported advice; in yellow: only national funds)

6. Conclusions

- 6.1.1. This year survey has confirmed that progress has been made by the Member States in the implementation of FAS (see paragraphs 3.3. and 3.4). In general, strategic decisions on how to build-up the Farm Advisory System were taken between the end of 2006 and the beginning of 2007. During 2007 designated authorities started working on the FAS and training courses for advisors were delivered; first advisory services to farmers started in few Member States. After the approval of the rural development programmes, in 2008 one-to-one advice delivery should become effective in all Member States.
- 6.1.2. There is no single approach chosen by the Member States. In some cases a decentralisation process makes Regions totally responsible for the implementation of FAS and therefore investigations at regional level are necessary since national surveys are not sufficient like in ES or in IT.
- 6.1.3. Depending on the Member State or Region, advice can be provided by public authorities, private bodies or by both. Quite often different goals can be assigned to different type of bodies, with designated public authorities more involved in publishing advisory material and in training advisors and private bodies delivering one-to-one advice. Anyway one-to-one advice on the farm is recognised by all Member States as the core approach to be followed in the FAS, sometimes together with small group advice on the farm.

- 6.1.4. One-to-one advice is funded or free of charge for farmers in the majority of the Member States. The rules for rural development support give some kind of homogeneity in the funded advisory services. Anyway great differences in the Member States remain due to different budget commitments, percentage of refunds for farmers and possibility of repeated supported advisory services. In some cases advisory services provided to farmers free of charge can cover only basic advice. In addition a lack of data in Member States where advisory services are not funded can reduce the availability of information necessary to assess the impact of FAS.
- 6.1.5. Even with the limitations and differences mentioned above, the number of farmers expected to use advisory services gives a first indication of the expected impact of FAS on agriculture at least in quantitative terms. The percentage of farmers receiving direct payments that are expected to use advisory services (co-funded or free of charge services) accounts for about 21%, but it is in the Member States not implementing the rural development measure for advisory services where farmers are expected to be involved in a higher percentage (40%).
- 6.1.6. The survey has confirmed the important role that rural development support plays in the effective implementation of the Farm Advisory System. Indications on the possible impact of advisory services have been derived from output indicators provided in the rural development programme. Monitoring the implementation of the rural development schemes for the use of advisory services in terms of budget use and of number of farmers claiming for these services is necessary to assess the effective use of these schemes by the farmers compared to expectations. Negative discrepancies can be the sign of an unexpected unenthusiastic reaction of the farmers towards the services provided whose reasons should be investigated in order to suggest the necessary corrections. The confidence of the farmer in the advisor has already been reported by some Member States as one of the main obstacles that only a long term relation with the advisor can help to overcome.
- 6.1.7. In some Member States different approaches than the supported one-to-one advisory service are already very popular such as group advice (par 3.5 of JRC 42293 "Overview of the implementation of the Farm Advisory System in Member States"). This activity is currently not included in the type of actions that can be funded by the rural development schemes for the use of advisory services, but could be considered in more appropriate terms as training or information activity and therefore possibly supported by other more suitable rural development measures.
- 6.1.8. The impact of the use of advisory services must be evaluated not only in quantitative terms (as it is currently possible on the basis of planned strategies), but it should be determined also by assessing if farmers have improved their awareness of material flows and on-farm processes related to the environment, food safety, animal health and welfare and have achieved global objectives in meeting the standards of modern and high-quality agriculture. This appraisal, that is also the object of an evaluation process started by DG Agriculture and Rural development of the European Commission (call for tender N° AGRI-2008-EVAL-06, launched in September 2008, deadline for submission 27th October 2008), can be carried out as soon as a significant number of advisory services will be

delivered. At this regard JRC intends to carry out a specific study at regional scale with a view of assessing the farmers' interest in FAS participation and FAS effectiveness and performance.

6.1.9. These very first years of FAS implementation have already raised some issues that would be advisable to analyse deeper in future studies among which the following ones can be pointed out:

- Attitude of farmers towards advisory services: traditional behaviour, previous experiences, use of alternative ways (magazines, website, software etc.);
- Interest of farmers for advisory services focused on cross-compliance and other main fields of interest for farmers (economics, crops etc.);
- classification of FAS use by farmers types: area of CC and requirements for which FAS is used; area of CC and requirements for which farmers are most interested;
- FAS tools used and proposed: advisory tools used when farmer receives FAS advisory services; efficiency of FAS tools; other/supplementary tools expected by farmers to be used when receiving FAS advisory services;
- Impact of FAS: to what extent the implementation of the Farm Advisory System improves the management skills of farmers; to what extent the implementation of the Farm Advisory System help farmers to meet the standards of modern, high quality agriculture; to what extent FAS makes farmers more aware of material flows and on-farm processes related to the environment, food safety, animal health and welfare;
- Geo-information supporting FAS: what kind of geo-information can be collected during advisory activity and can be shared and used by advisory bodies in order to make advice more efficient and effective; possible use of dedicated software
- Overall perception of FAS performance and proposition of improvements.

European Commission

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Abstract

In 2008 the Farm Advisory System (a system of advising farmers on land and farm management which should cover at least cross compliance requirements) is becoming operational in all EU Member States.

JRC has been monitoring its implementation since 2006 with questionnaire based surveys, workshops and technical visits in the Member States. This report focuses on issues that had not been completely fulfilled in previous surveys: it provides a picture of the entities authorised to deliver advice, concrete information and figures of the effective start of the system and of the advisory services already delivered in the Member States. As the rural development programmes were generally approved in the period autumn 2007-spring 2008, the report contains also a detailed analysis of the rural development measures for the support of farm advisory services and of the related targeting indicators in terms of financial investments and farmers supported for the period 2007-2013.

The report confirms that progress in the implementation of FAS has been made by the Member States and that in most of them a great importance is attributed to the support provided by the rural development programmes for the use of farm advisory services by farmers. At the European level different FAS approaches have been chosen by the Member States and in some cases a decentralisation process makes Regions totally responsible for the implementation of FAS. One-to-one advice is recognised by all Member States as the core approach to be followed in the FAS, sometimes together with small group advice on the farm. In the period 2007-2013 supported or free one-to-one advice is expected to involve around 20% of the European farmers.

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