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FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT



REPORT

PREPARING THE ASSESSMENT OF HIGH NATURE VALUE FARMING IN RDPs 2014- 2020:

PRACTICES AND SOLUTIONS

GOOD PRACTICE WORKSHOP, BONN 5-6 JUNE 2016

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The Evaluation Helpdesk is responsible for the evaluation function within the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) by providing guidance on the evaluation of RDPs and policies falling under the remit and guidance of DG AGRI's Unit E.4 'Evaluation and studies' of the European Commission (EC). In order to improve the evaluation of EU rural development policy the Evaluation Helpdesk supports all evaluation stakeholders, in particular DG AGRI, national authorities, RDP managing authorities and evaluators, through the development and dissemination of appropriate methodologies and tools; the collection and exchange of good practices; capacity building, and communicating with network members on evaluation related topics.



REPORT

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SUMMARY

The Good Practice Workshop *Preparing the assessment of High Nature Value Farming in Rural Development Programmes 2014-2020* was held in Bonn, Germany on the 7 and 8 June 2016 at the premises of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN). 51 participants, representing 22 Member States and the DG Agri joined the two-day workshop, whose aim was to provide a forum for the discussion and exchange of useful practices in identifying and monitoring the extent and quality of High Nature Value (HNV) farmland.

In particular, the workshop gave the opportunity to debate about:

- Stocktaking of the methodologies used by Member States to identify HNV farming (extent and condition).
- Exploring the systems in place for monitoring HNV farming in the Member States: What systems are in place? How often is the monitoring done? What kind of data is used?
- Identifying advanced methods to assess HNV farming. What criteria indicate an advanced method? What needs to be in place to apply advanced methods for the assessment of HNV farming consistently?

In order to address those specific questions, case studies from Germany, Estonia, Spain (Navarra), Denmark and Italy were presented.

The Good Practice Workshop illustrated the relevance of the assessment of HNV Farming for the CAP and the evaluation of its two pillars. Special importance was given in the discussion to the need for developing tailored evaluation practices, which are based on robust baselines and using solid methodologies. With this regard it was recognized that lack of data, data access limits, and unclear terminology are often constraining factors towards the achievement of HNV assessment. However, there are examples of pragmatic solutions that make use of the best available data or the setting up of a cost-efficient data collection method. Finally, discussions touched also upon the possible link between the HNV Farming indicator and better policy targeting, although this was not really the focus of the workshop.

1. INTRODUCTION

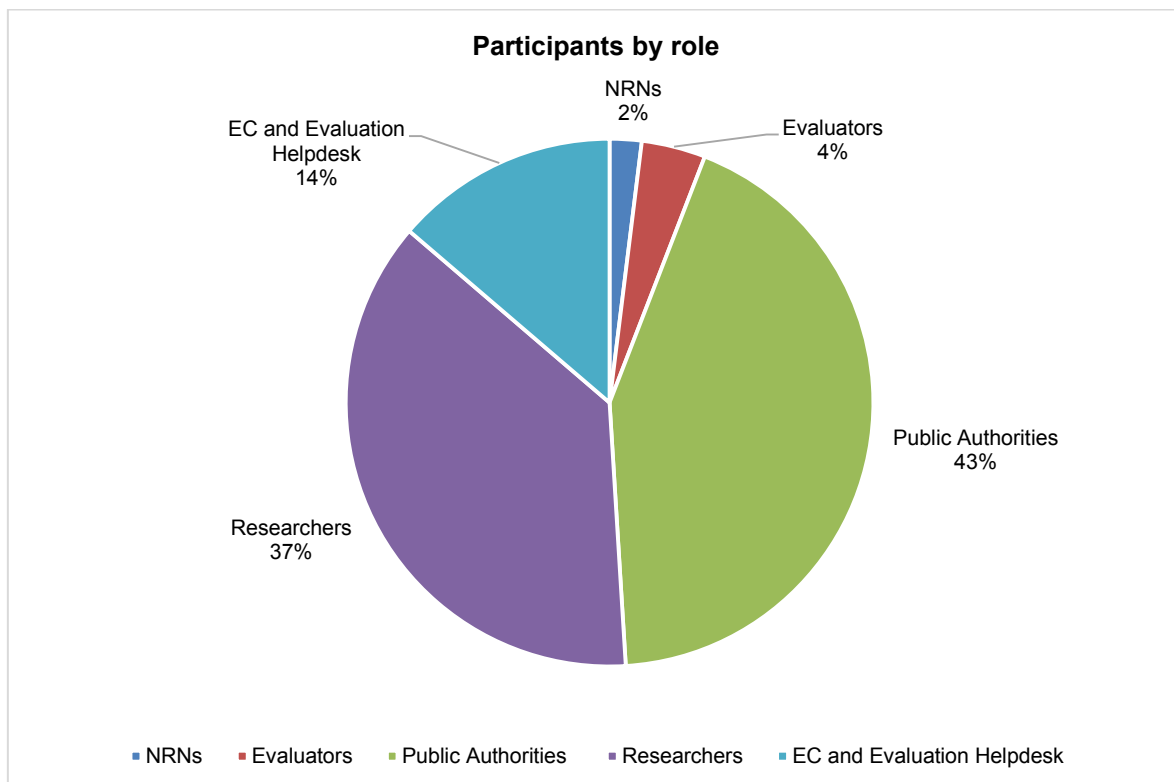
The Good Practice Workshop began with Hannes Wimmer and Zymantas Morkvenas welcoming the participants. Introductory remarks were then provided by Armin Benzler (BfN).

Hannes Wimmer presented the European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, its team, role and responsibilities and provided the participants with the rationale behind conducting Good Practice Workshops.

Hannes Wimmer additionally presented the [agenda](#) and objectives for the two-day Good Practice Workshop, emphasising the importance of the exchange and transmission of best practices to further build capacity between all stakeholders.

An overview of the participation to the workshop in terms of Member States and roles of participants was also given.

FIGURE 1 DISTRIBUTION OF GOOD PRACTICE WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS BY ROLE



>>> Link to the [PPT](#)

2. SETTING THE FRAME

2.1 HNV farming indicator in RDPs 2014-2020: Expectations and use

Caroline Raes, from DG AGRI's Unit E.4 Evaluation and Studies, presented the policy context including expectations, and the use and importance with regard to the HNV indicator for the European Commission. In particular, Ms. Raes highlighted that:

- HNV is not a new concept; the HNV indicator has been an obligation for Member States since 2005;
- High Nature Value Farming is included under Priority 4 (Focus Area 4A) of the Rural Development policy;
- The concept is relevant for the whole CAP; HNV is a context and impact indicator under the new Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF), which now extends to both Pillars;
- There is a common definition, but no common methodology for the identification of HNV: this facilitates Member States to tailor their approaches to the regional context, and make use of the best available data and most cost-efficient data collection methods;
- The indicator should be based on a solid methodology geared towards assessing the trend and capturing its dynamic qualities in terms of extent and condition;
- The importance of an updated 2013-2014 baseline provided in Rural Development (RD) programmes for programme assessment and for the CMEF was stressed;
- The goal of the evaluation is to help make policies more efficient and effective, protect the environment and provide more transparency.

After the presentation, participants raised the following comments/clarifications.

Distinguishing between HNV farmland and HNV farming systems: Approaches, which only use coarse land cover data are not satisfactory because finer-scale data is needed to have a finer view of what is going on in order to understand HNV farming. No specific methodology is prescribed by the EC to account for differences in Member States. It is necessary to review and balance the use of different methods and databases to define and assess HNV farming. The purpose of the survey currently conducted is to get good insights on different methods and data used in defining and assessing HNV farming across the EU.

HNV as a tool for policy targeting: This is not at the core of this workshop, but the identification of HNV areas can be one important source of information for policy targeting and policy design, but other types of information also need to be considered. In some HNV areas, there is less threat of decline because farmers have enough revenues from other sources such as tourism. Additionally, it should be understood that identification of HNV farming is not a designation process, as it is a dynamic concept. Preserving and restoring HNV areas is important, but it is also important to consider the potential for enhancing HNV in areas in decline.

Need to assess policy impacts on HNV across both pillars of the CAP: It is the duty of the Member States to evaluate their RD programmes, while it is the responsibility of the EC to assess the impacts of the overall effects of the CAP. So far the emphasis of evaluating impacts of the CAP on HNV farming has been on the RD programmes. With regard to RDP evaluation, it is not about the assessment of individual measures, but the RDP as a whole, so it is important to have clarity on the potential contributions of

different RD measures to the focus areas. However, with the new structure of Pillar I it is also important that Member States will find a solution for distinguishing between impacts of RD programmes from other instruments such as greening in Pillar I. It is up to Member States to define the term “European Landscapes” in the evaluation question. While more emphasis is typically placed on the biodiversity aspect of HNV farming, it is clear that there are other benefits linked to it (landscape, water, soil, carbon sequestration).

Assessing changes in HNV quality with the HNV indicator: The common context and impact indicator HNV farming measures the extent of HNV as a percentage share of UAA farmed to generate High Nature Value. Consideration needs to be given to allow for capturing dynamic processes of changes to HNV quality. This could include a grading and scoring system to provide a better picture of quality according to certain gradients or the use of additional indicators.

Adequate HNV baselines are a prerequisite for future assessments: Having robust 2013-2014 baseline data to set the context and basis for future assessments of HNV farming is a must for Member States. The successful application of new approaches and methods to assess HNV farming depends on the establishment of robust baselines in the first instance and secondly on ensuring periodic updates. Improving and updating baseline values is important, and the results of the ex post evaluation of the previous programming period can be useful in this respect.

>>> [Link to the PPT](#)

2.2 Identification, monitoring and assessment of HNV farming - current approaches in EU Member States (preliminary outcomes of the survey)

Gerald Schwarz, researcher at the Thünen Institute and a member of the Evaluation Helpdesk’s core team, presented the preliminary outcomes of a survey on HNV Farming in RDPs 2014-2020 (information was collected from 21 Member States) and carried out by the European Evaluation Helpdesk in order to take stock of the approaches chosen by the Member States to identify, monitor and assess HNV farming (extent and quality) in the period 2014-2020. The analysis was carried out by Gerald Schwarz and Zymantas Morkvenas, from the Baltic Environmental Forum Lithuania and a Thematic Expert for the Evaluation Helpdesk.



Additional objectives and purposes of the survey were:

- To provide information and a summary for the Working Document “Overview of current practices to identify and monitor HNV farmland”;
- To provide an introduction for the more detailed presentations and discussions at the workshop.

In his presentation, Mr. Schwarz highlighted the following emerging key issues:

- The baseline calculation is still an ongoing process. Adjustments to methods of defining HNV farming are implemented and (re)calculations of baseline levels are carried out. On-going calculations of baselines utilise – and will utilise – the results of the ex-post evaluations of the previous programming period.
- The assessment of changes in the quality of HNV farming is currently restricted by available environmental monitoring data. Databases and baselines are currently revised and improved in a number of Member States.
- New approaches and methods are emerging to enable the assessment of HNV quality, and will be pursued in this programming period. One particular emphasis is placed on GIS based mapping tools for HNV assessments.
- Often HNV farmland is just residual areas – the question arises how this approach does fit with a systems approach?

After the presentation, participants raised the following comments/clarifications.

Comparability of data based on baseline quality: New data becoming available are often of better quality compared to old and already existing baseline data sets. This raises the questions how new data-sets can be effectively compared to older data-sets, which typically are less detailed. This is indeed a conundrum for the current state of data comparison. However, new and better data sets will continue to become available over a longer timescale and with bigger spatial coverage, which can then be used to assess trends and to set up a new (and more robust) baseline.

Policy design targeted to support HNV farming: The survey has not addressed the question, if EU Member States design measures to support HNV. But a robust baseline can provide the context for targeting policy measures to supporting HNV farming and the environmental socio-economic benefits it delivers.

>>> [Link to the PPT](#)

3. SHARING EXPERIENCES

3.1 Mapping HNV farmland in Germany 2009 to 2015

Armin Benzler, from the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, presented a case study from Germany, in collaboration with Daniel Fuchs, from PAN (Planungsbüro für angewandten Naturschutz GmbH).

The presentation was focused on the assessment and monitoring of HNV farmland in Germany, highlighting the criteria for mapping HNV farmland, the types of HNV farmland in Germany, the data procurement on the national level in a federally structured country, the evaluation method using character taxa for a regional classification of grasslands, arable fields and set aside and the results of the monitoring regarding condition and quality of HNV farmland.

Results of the HNV farmland monitoring show among others a consistent and statistically significant decline of biodiversity within the HNV categories grassland, arable fields and set aside since 2009.

The presenter denoted the current drawbacks:

- "Type 3" HNV farmland is probably under-represented since some species have their habitats in intensely used agricultural landscapes, which are not considered as HNV farmland;
- Regional analyses done on a finer-grained scale than NUTS-1 (Länder) would only be possible with additional random sampling due to restrictions in size of the existing sample.

Key points highlighted in the presentation:

- The practised methodology delivers statistically sound results. The HNV indicator supplies solid data on the status and development of biological diversity in the agricultural landscape, including qualitative and quantitative changes, in an economical manner on NUTS 0 and NUTS1 level.
- Due to regular annual updates, changes in HNV farmland conditions can be detected quickly.
- By using standard statistical methods for sampling programmes, confidence levels for estimates and trends can be calculated.
- The key for mapping HNV farmland can be used on all scales, e.g. for estimating HNV farmland for single holdings or smaller administrative units.
- With the implementation of the HNV farmland monitoring, a new, valuable data basis with a high potential for various advanced research approaches and queries on biological diversity within the agricultural landscape is available. Meanwhile the HNV farmland indicator is integrated within the National Strategy on Biological Diversity of the German government.
- To date the HNV farmland monitoring is purely descriptive and has limited potential concerning an impact assessment. The most important methodological extension for the next years would be the inclusion of IACS data in order to better evaluate the impact of CAP funding on the HNV quality of the agricultural landscape.

After the presentation, participants raised the following comments/clarifications.

Underestimation of HNV Type 3 areas identification: In Germany some rare species of Community interest have their habitats in intensely used agricultural areas, which are not assessed within the HNV farmland monitoring scheme. They are usually quite well surveyed already through protected species surveys and therefore it seems not vital to implement an additional extensive survey of Type 3 HNV.

Cost of monitoring HNV. The actual costs of surveying the plots is 400-500 Euro per plot. The survey to date comprises 1200 plots. The applied 4 years cycle for surveying thus leads to costs of the HNV

monitoring in Germany of approximately 120.000 – 200.000 Euro annually. These calculations cover the fieldwork and the digitizing of mapping results. Costs for coordination, data management and extrapolation must be added (approximately 50.000 € per year). It is intended to enlarge the sample to a dimension of 2.600 plots at maximum.

Decline in HNV farmland in Germany: In many cases it appears that the decline of agrobiodiversity is caused by farming intensification. The rest of the degrading is a result of more radical land use changes (renewables, urban development, etc.). However, it must be taken into account that detailed conclusions on the reasons of decline are to be considered preliminary, e.g. due to uncertainties in the interpretation of loss of indicator species or availability of only small subsamples for some specific questions.

>>> [Link to the PPT](#)

3.2 Defining High Nature Value farming areas in Estonia

Tambet Kikas, from the Agricultural Research Centre, presented the case study from Defining High Nature Value farming areas in Estonia.

The presentation was focused on HNV farmland in the frame of the Estonian RDP. The semi-natural habitats and the process of defining the HNV areas for Estonia were based on 4 groups of HNV characteristics with scores, e.g. land use management; nature conservation indicators, landscape diversity indicators and landscape structure (natural quality indicators).

The main practical challenges and data gaps with regard to HNV identification and assessment where:

- Finding the right source of spatial datasets;
- Developing a technical solution for data analysis;
- Not enough background information (UAA versus other land use, not supported agricultural land, spatial information about use of pesticides and fertilizers, etc.);
- National Topographic Data is not renewed fast enough (orthophoto using vector datasets);
- Currently quality of the farmland under HNV can be only indirectly monitored via the general monitoring in semi-natural habitats in Natura 2000 areas, which is not related to RDP or any kind of management information. General Natura 2000 semi-natural habitats monitoring is carried out under the Ministry of Environment, by the Estonian Environmental Agency;
- Although there is relatively good quality spatial information about agricultural and environmental subsidies in UAA land, which can be assessed and monitored in terms of changes, additional information is still needed.

Key points highlighted in the presentation:

- The proposal is to use HNV squares for a more complex monitoring system in the future (indicator species and landscape change, fieldwork, remote sensing and/or drones).
- A grid based approach enables showcasing variations of HNV farmland and identifying more valuable areas, updating and adding new data operationally, using aggregated and analysed grid cell information by different stakeholders, combining different data spatially (e.g. nature values & agricultural statistics), developing a monitoring system.
- Importance of HNV tool based on real situation in HNV grid cells → provides possibilities to search deeper and define regional needs and adapt policies accordingly. Such a tool helps to define areas not automatically eligible for support, and to provide a basis to work out measures if needed. The proposed methodologies and calculations have been finalised and given over to the MA in spring 2016.

After the presentation, participants raised the following comments/clarifications.

Eligibility for agri-environmental payments outside HNV Type 1 areas: According to the current framework in Estonian RDP only inventoried semi-natural areas in Natura 2000 are eligible for certain RDP agri-environment support (Support for semi-natural habitats), within the new proposed methodology valuable semi-natural areas also outside Natura 2000 could be eligible for RDP support.

Inclusion of HNV forest: There are many differences between the approaches dealing with HNV forests in the Baltic States, and it is often difficult to clearly distinguish between HNV farming and forests, because these systems are often overlapping and appear in conjunction. It is also highlighted that while in the previous programming period HNV forests appeared as a separate indicator, in the current period HNV forests are no longer specifically flagged.

>>> [Link to the PPT](#)

3.3 Approach to implementing the HNV indicator in Navarra (Northern Spain)

Uxue Iragui Yoldi, from Gestión Ambiental de Navarra S.A., presented a case study related to the approach identification, characterisation and monitoring of High Natural Value Farming systems in Navarra.

Ms. Iragui Yoldi framed the two studies implemented with the aim of monitoring the Rural Development Programme of Navarra 2007-2013:

- The first study made in 2009 was to calculate the indicator for the year 2008;
- The second study was made in 2016 to recalculate the indicator for the year 2013 (currently in progress, using the same methodology of 2008).

The presentation addressed the identification of HNV Farming in Navarra using the typology defined in the documents from the European Evaluation Network for Rural Development (2008): Type 1: areas with a high proportion of semi-natural vegetation; Type 2: areas in a mosaic structure with a low level of intensification and Type 3: areas that support rare species or a high proportion of European or World populations. A land use map was created specifically for this study, at a 1:5000 scale, using sources of information that are updated every year. The exposition further described the selection of the most valuable areas and the cluster analysis (from HNV areas to HNV farming systems).

The presenter indicated the main challenges and gaps of the study:

- There is no common methodology at the European level, so the data between countries or regions are not comparable at the moment;
- The study found HNV areas / plots / systems, but it is still too difficult to characterize the farms that support HNV;
- Additional studies have been made at a farm level, and currently a pilot project is taking place to maintain the HNV through a Results Based Payment Scheme approach.

Key points highlighted in the presentation:

- Monitoring several years allows one to assess changes. To compare data from two different years, the same methodology should be used (assess trends).
- Spatial distribution of the information in all the territory allows to know WHAT changes WHERE. In Navarra, it will be known how much the semi-naturalness changed in which cells (Type 1), and how the mosaic values evolved in the last years.
- The Type 1, 2, 3 approach is suitable to Navarra.
- A non-complicated methodology is preferable to understand and interpret the results. For example, in Navarra the combination of 3 indexes in Type 2 identification worked well, but in some cells the results were difficult to interpret.
- Using data that is updated frequently for all the territory allows evaluators to repeat the process whenever needed. In Navarra, the data used is updated every year for the whole territory.

After the presentation, participants raised the following comments/clarifications.

Missing HNV trend evaluation: Spain has not yet applied a trend evaluation for the presented case. However, there is some additional data collected at the regional level and in future (when 2013 data access will be complete) they will begin to compare them and look if any trends manifest.

Pragmatic and workable approach: The case study from Spain looks pragmatic and highlights a workable approach developed in the context of region-specific conditions in Navarra. The approach is currently not used for the targeting of RD measures, since RDP support distribution does not depend on HNV distribution.

>>> [Link to the PPT](#)

3.4 High Nature Value (HNV) in Denmark: Targeting biodiversity

Jesper Bladt, from Aarhus University and Martin Brink, from the Danish AgriFish Agency, presented the case study of High Nature Value in Denmark: Targeting biodiversity.

The presenters described the attributes of the HNV map developed for Denmark, highlighting its relevance for several purposes:

- To point out HNV areas, and make it possible to prioritize the best areas if budgets are limited;
- To achieve the best possible targeting of semi-natural areas rich in biodiversity;
- To focus support for grazing and cutting (conservation of grasslands) under the Rural Development Programme;
- To support measures with the sole purpose of promoting biodiversity;
- The HNV indicator consists of a set of parameters with documented relation to

- biodiversity;
- The HNV map is automatically connected to the farmers application form;
- Yearly updates make it trustworthy.

The main challenges are the lack of knowledge in species (birds, butterflies) in some HNV areas and the difficulty of including mobile species, like birds and butterflies. The approach aims at including all available species observation data collected by Danish authorities and by volunteers, but only from data sources with a high level of quality control. Still, it was necessary to also include a number of biodiversity proxies to evaluate areas with no species data.

Key points highlighted in the presentation:

- The Danish HNV map is based on existing knowledge on biodiversity, and on that basis, it points out the most important high nature value areas in Denmark. The aim of the developed HNV map is to target means for biodiversity in the most cost effective way, especially rural development (RDP) support for grazing or cutting of semi-natural areas outside Natura 2000. The application of the map has shown that it is possible to target support for biodiversity to the areas with the highest nature value.
- The HNV map has increased discussion and awareness of biodiversity's value due to the incentive for the farmer to increase their HNV score (e.g. register red listed/annex species, or to influence local municipalities to register character plants). All 14 parameters are updated on a yearly basis. Only data that are official and have undergone a quality check in the respective data source is included in the map.
- There is a "value for money" argument to show politicians when RDP means are shared between different priorities (biodiversity, water, climate, investments etc.), and to argue for the spending of means outside Natura 2000.

After the presentation, participants raised the following comments/clarifications.

HNV scoring system not linked to payments levels: The HNV scores are distributed to farmers' application for support to individual fields based on the developed HNV scoring. If 0,1 ha of the field has a HNV score above a certain number (minimum 5) then the whole field is considered HNV. Fields with higher HNV score have a higher priority. Moreover, the HNV score is only linked to entering the scheme and not to payment levels. Therefore, if there is a reduction in species over a monitoring period, farmers that have complied with the commitment do not lose their agri-environment payment based on a lower HNV score.

Expert-based approaches for data gathering (red listed and Annex species): Data is gathered from existing data sources managed by Danish authorities or by volunteers (citizen science data). Only data sources with a high level of quality control are used. Some of the available data is either of poor geographic precision or is difficult to interpret because they regard highly mobile species. In some cases, species experts are used to manually evaluate these data. In this way the experts are often able to specify the likely extent of suitable habitat for mobile species that else way could not be included in the HNV map.

Taxonomic groups considered in the scoring approach: In principle, all species on Denmark's 'red list of species' (NT, VU, EN, CR, RE) and all species on Annex II and IV are included in the scoring approach. However, not all taxonomic groups are covered by the available high quality data sources. Therefore, the number of species included in the map is mainly limited by the available data, and by the possibilities for using species experts to interpret data on highly mobile species.

Link between HNV and Natura 2000 areas: Areas with the highest HNV scores are generally also designated as Nature 2000 areas. In Natura 2000 the HNV map is not used for targeting of RDP support in the same way, because there are areas with a low HNV score which need support, in order to upgrade other more valuable areas. Inside Natura 2000, where the knowledge of the state of habitats and species is good, a simple GIS layer with appointed areas is used.

>>> [Link to the PPT](#)

3.5 Assessing HNV farms from FADN. Linkages between HNV level of farming intensity and farm support (Italy)

Andrea Povellato, from the Centre for Policy and Bioeconomy CREA, presented the case study of assessing HNV farms from FADN. Linkages between HNV level of farming intensity and farm support in collaboration with Davide Longhitano.

The presentation addressed biodiversity and farming intensity including the process for identification of HNV farmland to farm-level analysis; the transition from HNV farming systems; the classification of farms in terms of “HNV degree”; the choice of FADN; the methodology for the classification of HNV farming systems and the criteria for contributions of HNV farms.

Andrea Povellato highlighted the main topics of the explorative analysis:

- Use of already existing database (e.g. FADN) for classification and assessment purposes of HNV farming systems;
- Comparison of alternative HNV classifications (approach followed by Anderson et al. 2003 vs. approach based on score);
- Description of the evolution of HNV farming through panel data (FADN over 6 years) with spatial distribution;
- Analysis of the correlation between farm support and intensity of farming;
- Analysis of the trade-off between less accuracy and more record-keeping in using proxy indicators:
 - further potential database development through links with IACS/ LPIS;
 - request for additional information from FADN sample.

Key points highlighted in the presentation:

- Integrated data collection on the micro level has large advantages
→ FADN provides a basis for the collection and sustainability of information.
- Potential access to relevant databases (FSS, FADN, IACS/LPIS) with detailed information could facilitate monitoring of sustainability.
- Increasing availability of new and more detailed data (e.g. semi-natural features). This could however require additional data collection and processing.
- Be aware of the difficulties to depict the full range of effects in complex fields of environmental phenomena of biodiversity loss.
- Challenge of up-scaling from the micro level (e.g. georeferencing FADN, how to create representative spatially explicit distributions?).

>>> [Link to the PPT](#)

3.6 HNV Farming in Italy - Context indicator CI 37 Land Cover approach

Antonella Trisorio, from the Centre for Policy and Bioeconomy CREA, presented a case study on HNV Farming in Italy – Context indicator CI37 land cover approach.

Ms. Trisorio reviewed, in relation to the programming period 2007-2013, the understanding of the HNVF concept, the method of identification and the data availability at the regional level and the impossibility to consistently aggregate indicator values and the need to have a national framework for the comparability among regions at the national level. In 2014 the National Rural Network provided a national framework based on a common method and a preliminary identification of official data sources. Antonella detailed the units of analysis, data, indicator components and typologies used. She also explained the outlook for the new period.

The presenter, finally, pointed out the main weaknesses and challenges stemming from her study:

- Data updating (uncertainty due to financial constraints);
- Possible instability of sample design (size of sample, new parameters, different stratification of sample, etc.);
- Need of multiple types of data/data sources;
- No links to farms;
- Level of geographical detail of results (possible need of further regional efforts);
- New parameters linked to RDPs interventions will be introduced from 2017;
- Integration of AGRIT survey data with territorial (LPIS) and agronomic data from the National Agriculture Information System (SIAN) with linkage of land cover data with farm data/RDPs farms and use of information available from IACS, also from 2017.

Key points highlighted in the presentation:

- This case study aimed at providing the Ministry of Agriculture with a consistent estimation of HNVF at national level (with a regional detail) in order to overcome the problem arising from the aggregation of the different type of estimates provided by the RDPs.
- The summary map obtained, in which the cells containing potential HNV farmland are highlighted, is an overall representation of the biodiversity and seems to have captured the main peculiarities of rural Italy.
- In order to improve estimates, a refinement of the method based on new and improved data is carried out. In particular, AGRIT survey on land cover has been enriched by some parameters allowing a better distinction between intensive and extensive farming. In addition, spatialized and more detailed data on species and habitats on Natura2000, on new ecological data on meadows and permanent grasslands and on farmland birds will be integrated.
- The instability of the indicator values in case of changes of methodologies/new data (trends vs more accurate estimates) remains an issue.
- It is a complex indicator and its development is resource and time consuming. It requires different type of data, and the latter implies the involvement of many data providers introducing respectively many possible constraints to the work. The implementation and the update of the HNV indicators make it necessary to work on the governance of the whole system, and assure the provision of adequate resources.
- Linkages between HNV farming systems/farms to HNV farmland is the challenge. This would enable at the same time targeting measures, monitoring HNVF trends and assessing impacts. To this aim key HNVF characteristics should be integrated into agricultural statistics (i.e. Agricultural census, Farm Structure Surveys, FADN) and LPIS-IACS databases.



- The awareness of MAs with respect to data needs and required studies needs to be improved to assure the provision of adequate resources.

After the presentation, participants raised the following comments/clarifications.

Classification of farms and collection of relevant HNV information: For classification and assessment purposes farms were divided according to the FADN database and compared using panel data and spatial distribution. There was and still remains a big obstacle for the collection of certain data points and 80% of the information was selected using pre-existing databases. This fact forced the study to use proxies, which at times complicated the interpretation of end results.

>>> [Link to the PPT](#)

4. REFLECTION ROUND: END OF THE FIRST DAY

Hannes Wimmer and Zymantas Morkvenas introduced an interactive exercise for the participants to identify key challenges and possible solutions in light of the case studies presented. The working groups were asked to answer the following questions (see outcomes in annex 8.1):

- *What highlights of good practices did you observe from the presented case studies?*
- *What are the challenges (emerging from the case studies) to be further discussed?*

Working groups: Emerging topics and key points

The emerging issues after the presentations and discussions from day one primarily focused on three topics: (1) Data collection and management (2) Challenges of assessing HNV over time and (3) link between monitoring and evaluation activities related to HNV and policy design¹:

1. **Data collection and management** was highlighted in all presentations and discussions as being a vital part of both understanding HNV farming systems for their future sustainability and preservation, but also in order to allow policy makers to make better judgments on future policy action. The identification of data gaps and systematic data collection and management enables a robust baseline calculation.
2. **Assessing the dynamic changes in the quality of HNV farming** over time is essential in order to know what has changed and where. Many of the presentations suggested using a map breaking land plots into cells/squares in order to monitor this change. The Good Practice Workshop groups exchanged views on different approaches to update the baselines and fill data gaps between older data and newer more detailed data in order to facilitate better comparisons over time. The need to frequently update data and add further detail in order to allow for the evaluation process to be repeated in a successful and meaningful manner was viewed as essential by participants and presenters alike.
3. **Possibilities and challenges of targeting HNV areas for support** were discussed. While several workshop participants believed this was an admirable idea, implementation and design of such a policy is difficult to achieve fairly. Only the Danish case study underscored some aspects of targeting in their approach.

After this interactive exercise, the Evaluation Helpdesk team and members of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) convened to formulate critical questions based on participants' answers to be presented to the working groups on day two.

¹ For an extensive list of issues stemming from the working groups see Annex 8.1



5. DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS

5.1 Introduction to the second day

Hannes Wimmer introduced the second day of the workshop by welcoming the participants, and re-introducing the clusters of challenges and solutions formulated by the participants at the end of day one (See Annex 8.1).

Participants were broken up into four integrated groups of European Commission representatives, public authorities, researchers, evaluators, national rural network and Evaluation Helpdesk team members. For each working group topic (see below A and B) 3 related questions were assessed. The working group topics were: A. Data and coordination, B. HNV from targeting to evaluate policy. See outcomes of group work in Annex 8.2 and 8.3.

Questions for working groups

- What can you use from the good practices to address the challenges?
- What are remaining challenges which were not addressed in the presented good practices?
- Can you identify possible solutions for the remaining challenges?

5.2 Outcomes and key points of the group work exercise

The challenges and their potential solutions discussed by the working groups can be summarised in three concurrent categories (1) Data use, collection and coordination (2) Challenges during the evaluation (3) Defining critical terms related to HNV²:

1. **More advanced approaches are exceptionally data dependent.** Many evaluators and Member States are challenged most often by either an outright deficiency in data, or diversified data outside of Natura 2000. In both situations cost is an intrinsic factor in data availability. Often monitoring costs are high and even when new data is available for time-series comparisons the new elements are difficult to integrate without a high cost. These factors have led to wide discrepancies in the quality and extent of data in different Member States, as each Member State takes an ad hoc approach to their data gathering.
 - a. **Solutions:** While initial costs may be higher, simplification and automatization of updating data sets could be used to reduce costs in the long run. Evaluators and Member States should work together to calibrate data from different sources and agencies so that it can be combined to make it more robust and used for the evaluation of HNV. Moreover, participants suggested the possibility of both collecting and using previously collected data used for other purposes, after minor adjustments are made, for HNV. This could be facilitated by closer coordination between universities, evaluators, and governments (as well as intergovernmental coordination), which would benefit all through increased data availability and expertise, particularly with regard to environmental monitoring.
2. **Challenges during the evaluation of HNV**, was a widespread topic of conversation during the group work of day one. Most prominently discussants raised concerns for linking monitoring to the wider CAP impact assessments, as well as capturing impact measures of RDPs at different levels and ultimately how to harmonize values at the EU level. Further discussion focused on the flexibility of various methodologies and how they could be used in conjunction to achieve triangulation for better results.
 - a. **Solutions:** Participant stressed the trade-off between simplicity and complexity and the advantageous and disadvantageous of both. It was stressed that above all the approach needs to be practical and tailored for the specific region/country, for which they are being applied. While simplicity and flexibility were underscored, the capability of capturing dynamic change was also emphasised and suggested that a multidimensional approach though more challenging, could yield new insights as shown in the case of Denmark. Different groups of sub-indicators, linked to various landscapes and farming systems, as well as scoring HNV quality, and the use of a criterion selection method are all useful for the integration of farmland and farming systems concepts and ultimately for connecting more broadly the HNV assessment with the CAP/RDP evaluation.
3. **The definition of HNV and its respective typologies** was a further subject of debate. Participants agreed that there was a need for future clarification especially between HNV farming and HNV farmland. Often these two definitions were used interchangeably in discussions causing confusion about what to assess and how to assess it (Are we looking at field/plot or whole farms? Do we stick with farming systems or not?) and ultimately the purpose and worth of the identification (What do we want from the use of the HNV assessment in the end? What is it for?). Without further clarification of these terms participants agreed it is difficult to enhance biodiversity through HNV. Furthermore, some participants questioned if Type 2 HNV is really HNV at all or simply small bits of non-farmed land with high ecological value.

² For an extensive overview of what arose from working group of day two see Annexes 8.2 and 8.3.

- a. **Solutions:** While a broader clarification of HNV terminology was not concluded on, participants agreed that listening to case studies and discussions in workshops allows for the HNV community to begin to refine their definition and understanding of these terms.

6. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS AND KEY MESSAGES

The points below reflect major overall conclusions and key messages derived from the discussion forum.

- (I) Presented case studies highlighted the **importance of developing practical approaches**, which need to be tailored to the specific context and characteristics of the region/country. The capability of capturing dynamic change in the extent and quality of HNV farming requires particular attention in the future. The presented mapping tools and scoring approaches can serve as a positive example and starting point for future work in this field. These presentations further indicated that many Member States are already on the correct path and are beginning to further expand their capacity concerning the evaluation of HNV quality.
- (II) **Constraining factors of future developments** are, insufficient baselines, lack of data and data access, and uncertainty and differing interpretations of the terminology (unclear terminology) with respect to the definition of HNV farming and HNV Farmland. Robust baselines are essential for achieving robust evaluation results. Considering this, the European Commission expects that for the 2014-2020 financial period evaluations, Member States should have built sufficient capacity to be in a position to deliver evaluations made based on robust baselines. It is envisaged that the results of the 2007-2013 ex-post evaluation can and will be used to fill data gaps and update these baselines. Some of the data issues can be addressed through the close collaboration between Managing Authorities, evaluators and scientific institutions, to improve data access. The workshop provided a starting point for further clarification and refinement of the HNV terminology. Participants emphasized that the continuation of this process is an important follow-up activity.
- (III) During the workshop some extensive discussion was held on the **use of the HNV indicator for better policy targeting towards the preservation and improvement of biodiversity**. This seems to be an area for further consideration. Previous experiences are available in this regard (e.g. the HNV maps developed in the case study from Denmark) and have been highlighted during this workshop. However, it was highlighted that policy targeting also needs to consider other types of information, addressing issues, which cannot be reflected with HNV data (e.g. economic situations and income structures of farms).
- (IV) The presented case studies emphasised the need to **consider the uptake of relevant policy measures in the design of the developed approaches** in order to enable their proper application for the evaluation of CAP impacts on HNV farming. Participants agreed that one important step would be the integration of IACS data. Discussions at the workshop highlighted that the overall purpose of developing approaches for the assessment of HNV farming is first of all to improve the ongoing knowledge of the processes and changes in biodiversity of HNV farmland. The assessments can also improve the understanding of how policy and the design of measures can better contribute to HNV farming to facilitate further preservation and improvement of biodiversity.

7. PARTICIPANT'S FEEDBACK – SUMMARY

The **feedback form** was filled by **74.5% of the participants** and included both **closed and open questions**.

Closed questions were focused on the overall assessment of the meeting and were appraised using a scale of one to four as a rating tool (very good-4; good-3; fair-2 and poor-1). The average score of the overall assessment of the meeting, for each of the closed questions, are summarized in the following table:

| Closed questions Overall assessment of the workshop | Average score (4- Very good / 3-Good / 2-Fair / 1-Poor) |
|---|--|
| Relevance of the content of presentations | 3.76 |
| Usefulness of the exercises for understanding the content | 3.55 |
| Facilitation of the workshop | 3.68 |
| Overall organization of the workshop | 3.78 |
| Overall participation by the attendees in the discussion | 3.63 |
| Level of knowledge of the attendees before the workshop | 2.54 |
| Level of knowledge of the attendees after the workshop | 3.37 |

Open questions explored strengths and weaknesses of the workshop as well as the most relevant comments, suggestions and expectations.

Main strengths of the workshop identified by participants:

- Relevant case studies
- Composition of a wide variety of stakeholders and good geographical representation
- Possibility to put in common experiences from different countries
- Good facilitation of the training

Main weaknesses of the workshop identified by participants:

- Timing of the event
- Need of more information on how to evaluate impacts
- Not enough reflections at policy level
- Few concrete recommendations

8. ANNEXES

8.1 Table 1: Day 1 reflection round's outcomes - Key challenges and possible solutions in light of the case studies

| Challenges | Good practices/solutions |
|---|---|
| <p>Coordination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coordination of environmental monitoring needs ○ Bringing actors/government departments together to work cooperatively <p>Data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Data dependence of certain approaches, big data handling errors? Cost effectiveness? ○ Lack of good data ○ Lack of data on HNV outside Natura 2000 areas. Monitoring costs more. ○ Have we got good quality data in all cases/countries? ○ Comparing time-series data is difficult if new elements are added later on to improve data sets used to identify HNV ○ Different countries different data for each = different assessment of HNV ○ Why is there not a use of IACS data? ○ How robust are the data and the scores in the variables used <p>Costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Surveying cost (e.g. DE approach is rather expensive) ○ Cost-effectiveness of the approach + monitoring ○ Cost of monitoring ○ Payment calculation (case study DK) <p>Evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Robustness of the methodology ○ Linkages between monitoring + CAP impact assessment ○ Levels of capturing the impact measures of RDPs ○ How to harmonize values at the EU level ○ Additional monitoring needs, if HNV approaches developed for ex-ante policy targeting are also to be used for ex-post impact evaluation ○ Common methodological needs for EU level assessment ○ How do we use these demarcation principles for evaluation purposes? | <p>Coordination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Listening to case studies reinforces confidence in developing own approaches ○ Close work between universities and government benefits both through better joint data/expertise ○ Federal countries adopting similar approach across all regions <p>Data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Simplification and automatization of updating (some of) the data sets used (makes it dynamic) ○ Depends on the availability of good data (look for all possible sources) ○ Fine-tune data from different sources/agencies so that it can be combined ○ Combining data on HNV with data on the implementation of the RDP (socio-economic) ○ Collecting data for other purposes. Think of small modifications for HNV ○ Regular monitoring of quality on HNV farmland ○ Data quality management ○ Case studies made on available data and specific needs ○ Most of countries had data on species diversity <p>Trade off Simplicity – Complexity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Approach needs to be practical for specific region/country ○ Simplicity & flexibility ○ Capability of capturing dynamic change ○ Dynamic model vs. static model approach ○ Multidimensional approaches may be challenging but they offer new insights ○ Integration of farmland and farming systems concept ○ The Danish multifaceted approach was broadly effective <p>Purpose and use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Suitable ex ante tool for policy targeting |



| Challenges | Good practices/solutions |
|---|---|
| <p>Definition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is type 2 HNMF really HNMF or just bits of non-farmed land with high ecological value? ○ Farming system vs. farmland ○ Connecting clearly the RDP framework with the HNV indicators ○ Are we looking at field/plot or whole farms? Do we stick with farming systems or not? ○ How to enhance biodiversity through HNV? ○ What do we want from the use of the HNV designation in the end? What is it for? ○ Easier to identify and target support in countries with (relatively) small proportion of HNV ○ Differentiate the mix of farming systems is a challenge for certain parameters (e.g. LU) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Connect HNV evaluation with CAP/RDP support for targeting support ○ Use as a context indicator ○ Different groups of sub-indicators used. Linked to various landscapes and farming systems ○ Scoring HNV quality ○ Awareness raising. Transparency of indicator ○ Use as a criterion for selection ○ Raising awareness of farmers of HNV systems through monitoring |

8.2 Table 2: Day 2 working groups' outcomes - Data and coordination

| Working Groups Data and coordination | Use of the good practices to address the challenges | Remaining challenges which were not addressed in the presented good practices | Possible solutions for the remaining challenges |
|--|---|--|---|
| Group 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usefulness of IACS data: detailed data of paying agencies (PA) at parcel level, annually updated, standardized at EU level. Currently not integrated in HNV monitoring, as monitoring was often not developed to assess policies Necessary for monitoring the impact of CAP polities on HNV farmland and farming systems Collected and maintained by PA, (possible difficulties in the collection and incorporation of data into the datasets, if it is not required by regulation). Regional management/ maintenance of existing HNV values Development of HNV potential → monitor progress (small scale). Where is there potential to improve HNV areas? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of confidential/private data Clarification of terminologies (HNV Farmland, HNV farming system, HNV farms, etc.) Scale: 1. Farm; 2. Landscape | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the collaboration of Paying Agencies Environmental data is stored and could be combined with PA's data Instruction from EC could facilitate bringing these datasets together Clearer definitions from the EC could help clarify terminologies Further coordination within the policy cycle and not just for the evaluation (coordination of data, policy design, and monitoring and evaluation reporting) |
| Group 2 | <p>Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use existing data (during budget cuts) Find the right balance between data requirements and costs Availability of volunteers <p>Coordination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination at an earlier stage is needed Better selection of quality data sources Close working data/expertise | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparison of data (series and trends) Drafting the tender and sorting out the technicalities of the procurement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of proxies when budgets constrain the contracting of gathering new data or purchasing of new data sets Data access (INSPIRE) MAs need to ensure that the data is available for future use and not just the final report Expert bodies can be used at the stage of drafting the tender, if additional expertise is required |

8.3 Table 3 Day 2 working groups' outcomes - HNV from targeting to evaluate policy

| Working Groups HNV from targeting to evaluate policy | Use the good practices to address the challenges | Remaining challenges which were not addressed in the presented good practices | Possible solutions for the remaining challenges |
|---|---|--|---|
| Group 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeting HNV support= step forward (DE, ES, IE) Need to identify driving forces behind HNV → helps to build intervention logic keeping HNV in a high position and will facilitate the inclusion of other parameters (socio-economic, other CAP Pillar I and Pillar II) Prioritisation → most threatened HNV areas Having a solid intervention logic and then you have prioritisation then you can use this for the design of measures: → Field/farm/landscape (NL) → Combining HNV with other measures (quality schemes, value adding, diversification-tourism) Baseline → vital for assessment, targeting, design Approach: income foregone vs. payment by result → bonus? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definition of the baseline How sure can a farmer be in contributing in all efforts done to preserve HNV when they cannot deliver results? → Need to engage farmers → Cultural context (farming cultures) → Knowledge, understanding, increase the awareness Possible negatives of targeting → farmers on the wrong side (outside of priority area) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeting HNV support Identification of driving forces Prioritisation To have a solid intervention logic Definition of the baseline Existing commitments could limit new measures design → design of measures, sometimes does not support HNV → <u>use enhanced AIR to pilot schemes for new programmes/adjust existing ones</u> |
| Group 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The key species that the DE has identified can be transferable to other countries Species detailed good for defining HNV (DK), georeferenced them (EE) Some of the approaches presented working with a good scale of data. Micro level vs macro level (in which context micro and macro-level are adequate?) → impacts Using a mix of information (different data sources) e.g. Italy (although complex) → field work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data access covering all country → further need of communication Sometimes the solutions can apply depending of the country Defining: proper evaluation framework → dynamic system? (net effects)) Design of targeting intervention Availability of good practices/experiences in considering HNV evaluation from the design stage, which could then also be used to develop guidelines. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteers Preliminary research studies/ literature/ scientific papers Internal and external communication Enhance communication between authorities and evaluators Foreseen in the Evaluation Plan |

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