

A Common Agricultural Policy post-2027 *for* **GENERATIONAL RENEWAL**

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European Council of Young Farmers



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Executive summary.....	1
Introduction.....	3
<i>Why do we need a CAP?</i>	
<i>A renewed architecture</i>	
<i>Conditionality at Member State level</i>	
Chapter 1: Young farmers at the core of the future CAP.....	5
Chapter 2: A competitiveness agenda for agriculture.....	16
Chapter 3: A reinvented green architecture	28
Chapter 4: A social and territorial contract.....	34
Work methodology.....	38
Table of content	38

Executive summary

For 2 years, CEJA has developed a comprehensive vision for the post-2027 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), aiming to make it fitter for the next generation of farmers. The position paper responds to the demographic crisis in agriculture by placing **generational renewal** at the heart of the CAP reform, with a reinvented architecture and 4 key objectives.

A reinvented architecture

The next CAP will need to bring clarification on its structure. CEJA would be open to the creation of a third pillar with a fund dedicated to environment and climate-related measures, co-financed by Member States. In this architecture, young farmers must be acknowledged with a higher budgetary magnitude.

Conscious of the need to better link CAP objectives with proper intervention logics, a conditionality system on Member States, tied to rule of law and CAP objectives, should safeguard the commonality of the policy and maintain a level playing field across the EU.

1. Young farmers at the core of the future CAP

Generational renewal must be the primary political priority. Young farmers face systemic challenges: limited access to land, capital, knowledge, fair income and attractive rural areas.

Main recommendations

- **Increase generational renewal's funding to €30 billion over 2028–2034** (corresponding to 10% of the current direct payments);
- **Unlock, improve and promote existing CAP instruments for young farmers**, with a better uptake by Member States, business plan flexibility, faster payments, and higher support for challenging production systems;
- **Introduce a “generational renewal toolbox”**: mediation services, farm succession schemes, climate diagnosis, digitalisation support, and a better interlink with national and regional initiatives;
- **Fund and support a broader young-farmer-centric ecosystem**, through young farmers' organisations, the duplication of best-practices between Member States, the Strategy on Generational Renewal and the EU observatory on Farmland.

2. A competitiveness agenda for agriculture

The CAP should ensure that active farmers are the only ones receiving direct payments, apply fairer distribution methods, and reinforce market regulation, risk management tools, and investment support.

Main recommendations

- **Enforce a better "active farmer" definition** across the EU;
- **A better consideration of the pros and cons of potential distribution methods** of direct payments, and towards a mitigation of direct payments' negative externalities, with capping and degressivity;
- **Strengthen risk management tools**, mutual funds, and counter-cyclical instruments' reflections;
- **Support for investment, market regulation**, fair agri-food contracts, and **reciprocity in trade standards**.

3. A reinvented green architecture

Young farmers acknowledge the benefits brought by the green architecture of the CAP, incentivising sustainable practices. However, its rigid framework often results in unfeasible on-farm implementation, while the financial rewards do frequently not cover the costs of the measures implemented.

Main recommendations

- Simplify and **streamline the CAP conditionality**; avoid duplication with national rules and linking it to economic, environmental and social aspects of the future CAP;
- Shift towards **voluntary, incentivised measures** (eco-schemes, AECMs) with sufficient funding (from income foregone approach to intervention);
- Enforcement of EU environmental legislation baseline;
- Develop **hybrid tools** combining practice-based and result-based payments;
- Invest in **AKIS (Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems)** and **green technologies**.

4. A social and territorial contract

The CAP must address the social sustainability of farming: better working conditions, mental health, and access to services in rural areas. However, social security remains the competence of Member States and should be complementary to CAP efforts.

Main recommendations

- Maintain **social conditionality** linked to respect for labour rights;
- Support mental health, rural attractiveness, and access to infrastructure via the accurate policies (CAP, cohesion policy, national policies);
- Improve **LEADER** and **cooperation measures**;
- Align with the **Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas**.

CEJA demands a **more ambitious, funded, and youth-focused CAP**, capable of attracting new generations, and delivering on the EU's economic, environmental, and social goals for agriculture.

Introduction

As one of the most long-standing EU policy, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) **has provided our continent with food security and affordability, territorial development, as well as improved the livelihoods of farmers.** Yet, with only 6,5% farmers below the age of 35 years old in 2020, **the policy must be continuously improved for EU agriculture to thrive in the future** and for all CAP objectives to be achieved. Changes in geopolitical context, such as the entry of new Member States in the foreseeable future, also need to be taken into account in the redesign of the policy. As the EU is building the CAP post-2027, CEJA believes any future reflection on the next programming period needs to start with the insurance of a clear governance and structure for the policy. Based on evaluation of the current programming period, the next reform must be centred around **improving the policy in a forward-looking and practical manner.** Young farmers intend to take a key role towards the reform process, by engaging with institutions and other stakeholders, and looking at the concrete implementation on the ground to inspire policy change.

Why do we need a CAP?

A starting point for further reflections on the future of the CAP must be a common vision on “*Why do we need a CAP?*”. As simplistic as it can seem, such a question calls on going back to what makes farming such a specific activity. In this regard, young farmers want to remind how unique it is to:

- **Face market volatility, fluctuations** in prices, while producing in the long-term cycle of plant and animal production. It means an impossibility to react rapidly to market changes. This difficulty is particularly challenging because farmers are often price takers;
- **Work with nature** and its unpredictability, especially with the acceleration of climate change;
- Invest into the development of **positive externalities that are not always naturally rewarded by markets** (benefits for the environment, rural communities, cultural heritage...);
- **Produce goods that are essential for human living conditions:** primarily food. The CAP was founded in times of food insecurity. Agriculture produces other goods that form the basics to the functioning of our society and standard of living;
- Evolve in a sector with a **large share of small to mid-family-owned businesses**, with a low percentage of farm take-over by the next generation.

A renewed architecture

In the CAP 2021-2027, the programming logic of Strategic Plans **has blurred the lines of the traditional two-pillar structure.** It shows in the complexity most decision-makers and stakeholders faced to understand the ring-fencing architecture for young farmers’ instruments, but also in the organisation of the new green architecture, whose main instruments are divided between the two pillars. The implementation of the latter demonstrates the need for a significant adaptation phase, both for national managing authorities and farmers themselves.

The next reform will need to **bring clarification on the structure of the CAP** to participate in the overall simplification of the policy. CEJA would be open to the creation of a **third pillar with a fund dedicated to environment and climate-related measures**, co-financed by Member

States. In this architecture, young farmers must be acknowledged with a higher budgetary magnitude.

Conditionality at Member State level

CEJA understands the idea that funding delivered by the EU needs to be targeted and efficient. Therefore, it proposes to apply a conditionality at Member State level, starting with the ultimate respect of the Rule of Law across all pillars.

Conscious of the need to better link CAP objectives with proper intervention logics, a dedicated conditionality system on each of the pillars should apply, in the absence of which Member States should be fined on their national budget, as to not create negative impacts for the beneficiaries. All in all, young farmers believe that Member States bear the responsibility to provide adequate means to them to fulfil the objectives set at EU level, including on the front of economic, environmental and social regulations.

Young farmers believe that such a Member State conditionality would help preserve the commonality of the policy. It must be a primary objective to maintain a level playing field in the CAP, so as not to create distortions in competition.

Figure 1 - Objectives of the CAP and conditionality elements

Objectives of the CAP	Conditionality elements
Objective I – Economic competitiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generational renewal – minimum 10% of the current direct payment level in favour of young farmers • Land policy transparency – up-to-date cadastre system • Availability of risk management instruments – existing national subsidised system or use of EAFRD risk management tools • Social conditionality – respect of existing labour rules
Objective II – Territorial development and social inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum use of Cohesion Policy funds for rural services and infrastructure (rural proofing)
Objective III – Environment and Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income foregone approach to intervention • Clear performance logic between territorial needs and interventions (territorial approach) • Enforcement of EU environmental legislation baseline

Chapter 1

Young farmers at the core of the future CAP

CEJA's work addresses young people with limited visibility and specific needs in terms of policy reform. As outlined in the recent reform of the Common Agriculture Policy, one of the key challenges for the agricultural sector is generational renewal (CAP Specific Objective 7). CEJA welcomed the announcement of a Strategy on Generational Renewal, as part of the Vision for the Future of Agriculture and Food. It must show the major role of the CAP, but also its links with policies and instruments that go beyond it, whether at European, national or local level.

1.1. Young farmers' challenges

1.1.1. A well-identified worrying trend

It is time to recognise the urgent need to put young people and their aspirations at the heart of the CAP. With **6.5% of farmers below the age of 35 years old in 2020, 11.9% below 40**, and 33.2% over 65 years old (Eurostat, 2022), EU agriculture is persistently ageing, with all the consequences it withholds for the dynamism of rural territories, the implementation of sustainability objectives – including climate action and mitigation – and the capacity to produce food while keeping the identity of our regions and landscapes. In 2020, the average age of EU farmers was 57 years old. Generational renewal is a challenge for farming, but also one for society as a whole.

Who is a young farmer?

CEJA considers young farmers as active farmer of less than 40 years old.

The current definition of a “young farmer” in the CAP¹ remains relevant and effective. It provides an EU-wide framework that aligns with the approaches of farmers' organisations across Europe.

The age gap doubles with a gender gap. Among all EU female farmers, **only 4.2% are below 35 years old, while 42% are older than 65.**

It is time for better strategizing and action. Numerous institutional and research initiatives already demonstrated the problems, with among others the following documents:

- Strategic Dialogue on the Future of Agriculture (2024), Report “A shared prospect for farming and food in Europe” ([here](#)).
- AGRIFISH Council (2024), *Belgian Presidency conclusions on the future of agriculture in the EU*, points 20, 21 ([here](#)).
- European Parliament (2023), INI Report ([2022/2182\(INI\)](#)) *Generational renewal in the EU farms of the future*.
- European Union (2021), CAP Strategic Plans Regulation ([\(EU\) 2021/2115](#)), Article 6, (1) g), specific objective 7 of the CAP.
- Research for AGRI Committee - The Future of the European Farming Model: Socio-economic and territorial implications of the decline in the number of farms and farmers in the EU, 2022 ([here](#))

1.1.2. A generation full of ideas, projects, and aspirations

Agriculture is and will remain a human-driven activity. Young people have a clear and promising vision. On the one hand, the willingness to work in a profession of passion, one that is meaningful and has a positive impact. On the other hand, being able to make a living out of this professional activity, with pride, ensuring a healthy work-life balance that accommodates both personal and professional responsibilities, and fulfilling social interactions.

1.1.3. Barriers to entrepreneurship

Young people willing to set up an activity in the sector are confronted to a difficult access to entrepreneurship, caused, among others, by:

- Difficult **access to land** (low availability, high prices);

- Complexified **access to credit and investment**;
- Inadequate **educational and training programs**;
- **Low income and higher risks** due to **climate change** and the emergence of **new pests and diseases**, as well as **highly volatile and unpredictable markets**;
- **Working conditions** – for farmers themselves and to have access to employees;
- **Intergenerational imbalances** – Cultural and societal barriers prevent young farmers from taking on leadership roles early enough, including within their family farms due to conflicting mindsets. This hinders innovation, limits timely investment decisions, and can delay the implementation of sustainable practices.

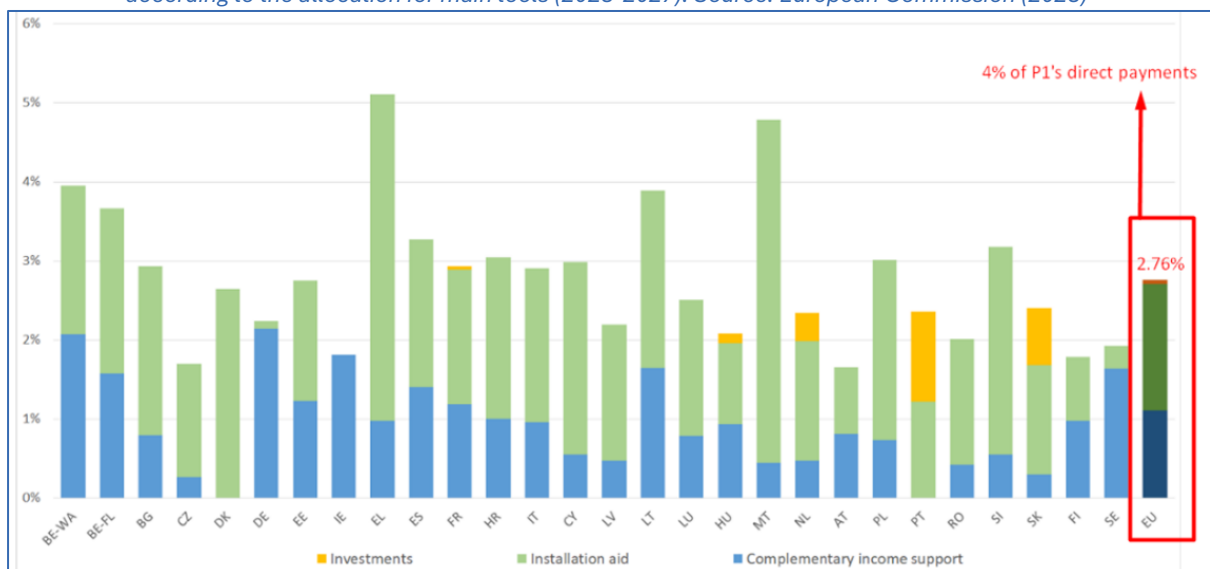
The attractiveness of the sector and of rural areas must be at the centre of our preoccupations to prevent them from being depopulated and reverse the curve of the number of farmers.

1.2. Recommendations

1.2.1. An increased EU budgetary ambition for young farmers.

The next CAP must show a bigger commitment for young farmers instruments. The current ring-fencing with minimum 3% of the overall amount of EAGF¹ to be spent on young farmers instruments (either through pillar 1 or pillar 2) was an improvement compared to the previous programming. However, Member States must be forced to set a unified and higher minimum ambition, with the possibility to use various instruments for young farmers, but also for farm transmission. This means a reflection on the intergenerational aspect of generational renewal and accompanying the older generation exiting the sector, with the condition that a young farmer sets up in business.

Figure 2 - Total public expenditure on generational renewal as a share of total public expenditure under each CSP according to the allocation for main tools (2023-2027). Source: European Commission (2023)



¹ European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (Pillar 1 of the current CAP)

Investing into generational renewal: 10% of the current direct payments²

Compared to 8.5 billion for young farmers instruments in 2023-2027 (5 years), **the period 2028-2034 (7 years) should foresee 30 billion for young farmers** (corresponding to 10% of the expenditure for direct payments in the period 2023-2027). Such an increase can be justified by the following elements:

- **Generational renewal remains unachieved** – Despite existing measures, the EU has not yet met its generational renewal objectives. A more ambitious financial commitment is necessary. The EU should have an ambition to increase the number of young farmers. However, between 2005 and 2020, the number of farmers has declined by about 37%³;
- **The benefit is for all farmers and society at large** – Supporting young farmers is not just an investment in individuals but in the resilience and future of European agriculture. A thriving new generation of farmers contributes to food security, environmental sustainability, and rural development. Investing in young farmers is a complement to other EU investments for cohesion, competitiveness, sustainability, security;
- **Young farmers support should go further than current instruments** – Existing support mechanisms focus primarily on direct payments and installation aid. The next financial period must expand its scope to include targeted support for farm succession, structured assistance for retiring farmers, improved financial incentives for land transfers, more advisory, mediation schemes (see [part 1.2.3.](#));
- **Insufficient funding for individual projects** – Many young farmers receive an amount of funding, limiting their capacity to invest, modernise, or scale up their activity;
- **National envelopes show applicants not accessing grants** – In some Member States, demand for financial support exceeds the available funds (e.g., Sweden for installation aid), leaving numerous eligible applicants without access to grants. Increasing the overall budget would address these gaps and ensure that more young farmers receive the support they need;
- **Inflation** – CEJA’s recommendation to allocate 10% of direct payments in the 2023–2027 CAP (€26.5 billion) should be adjusted for inflation, bringing the target to €30 billion in 2028 prices, based on a projected annual inflation rate of 2.5%.

Figure 2 - Increased budgetary ambition for generational renewal (EU + cofinancing) – CEJA proposal

10% of the Pillar 1’s direct payments current level			
to support generational renewal across Pillar 1 and Pillar 2			
	2023-2027 EC information	2027-2034 CEJA recommendation	
		In 2023 euros	In 2028 euros (2,5% inflation)
Total (EU + co-financing)	8.5 b. € ⁴	26.5 b. € ⁵	30b €
Average expenditure per year (EU + co-financing)	1.7 b € ⁶	3.8 b. € ⁷	4.2b€

² 0.10 * 189 billion (Direct payment 2023-2027) /5 * 7 (to translate from 5 years to 7 years).

³ Eurostat (2022), Farm and farmland in the European Union – statistics. Eurostat states that putting a precise figure on farm losses should be treated indicatively, as the threshold for farm definition has increased in the given period.

⁴ European Commission (2023), Approved 28 CAP Strategic Plans (2023-2027), June 2023. The European Commission states that Member States will dedicate 8.5 billion euros to young farmers between 2023 and 2027 ([here](#), page 87) – EU + national co-financing.

⁵ 0.10 * 189 billion (Direct payment 2023-2027)

⁶ 8,5 billion euros divided by 5 years of programming.

⁷ 26.5 billion / 7 years

The broader use of the young farmers' envelope

This envelope should be spent on the following instruments:

- **CISYF;**
- **Installation aid;**
- **Investment support;**
- **Cooperation measures for farm succession;**
- **Generational renewal “toolbox” (new), including:**
 - *Business plan testing instrument;*
 - *Mediation services;*
 - *Support for training;*
 - *Advisory services for young farmers;*
 - *Climate diagnosis;*
- **Support to young farmers organisations (new);**
- **Specific risk management support for young farmers (new).**

Budgetary management

In the next Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), it is crucial to ensure better budgetary management of the funding envelopes, including the young farmers' installation aid. Effective budget planning is necessary to avoid situations where, due to an overwhelming number of applicants each year, some farmers are left without access to the grants. By improving the allocation process and ensuring sufficient resources are available, we can provide a fairer and more reliable framework for young farmers. Moreover, any unspent funds from young farmers' instruments should remain earmarked for generational renewal and not be reallocated to the general pool of CAP direct payments.

1.2.2. Unlock, improve and promote existing CAP instruments for young farmers

1.2.2.1. General EU framework assessment

In the current framework of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), one building block is dedicated to the EU's action for generational renewal, including the Complementary Income Support for Young Farmers (CISYF), installation aid, and investment support. These tools offer significant support to young farmers, but appear limited on several fronts:

- **Limited in scope** – The measures are sometimes too narrowly focused or not comprehensive enough to cover all the aspects of farming that are crucial for young farmers' success. For instance, while financial support like CISYF can be helpful, it may not be enough to tackle barriers such as access to land, training, access to knowledge;
- **Not used to its full potential by Member States** – Choices made by certain Member States' Strategic Plans prove that more or better can be done, by:



Figure 3 - Specific Objectives (SO) of the CAP 2023-2027, European Commission

- Going further than the minimum allocation (3% of P1 ring-fencing) for young farmers instruments shows that more can be done (14% in Malta, 8% in Greece, 5% in Lithuania, Hungary, BE-Flanders);
 - Improving the design and implementation of supporting instruments (amount of support per individual young farmer, eligibility criteria, availability of envelopes despite the multiannual budgetary management). Some regions have more effective programmes than others, bringing disparities across the EU;
- **Limited in reach** – Not all young farmers have equal access to the available support. The support may not reach young farmers in certain sectors under certain choices of Member States (e.g., a fruit farmer if a Member State only applies a direct payment top-up on hectares). On installation aid, certain farm structures face incompatibilities to benefit from the grant (see figure 4). In family businesses undergoing generational change, the new manager – despite being a young farmer – cannot always access the aid. To qualify, they must resort to artificial arrangements such as leasing land or livestock from the company or hiring existing workers part-time. It would be simpler and fairer to grant access under equal conditions, regardless of the legal form of the succession;
- “I turned down the start-up aid of €80 000 because I could not have diversified my business in the way I wanted to. It would have been too constraining, due to a 10-year commitment related to the application to receive the support”.*
- Figure 4 - Testimony, young farmer from Italy*
- **Limited in timeliness** – Young farmer support schemes sometimes suffer from delayed payments, limited annual envelopes, or eligibility criteria that prioritise already established young farmers. As a result, support frequently arrives too late in the farm take-over or start-up phase, missing the critical window when young farmers face the highest risks and investment needs. Moreover, young farmers do not always take over the entire farm immediately, but rather in several steps. It should be possible to be able to get support no matter what stage of takeover you are in.

1.2.2.2. *A better use of existing young farmers instruments*

➤ **Mandatory top-up on direct payments for young farmers (CISYF)**

Young farmers believe that the Complementary Income Support for Young Farmers is:

- **A key instrument for direct payments’ better targeting** – Providing direct financial support to young farmers during the first few years of activity after setting up, which are the most difficult. It is during this period that the reimbursement costs associated with start-up loans are the highest, creating even more exposure to risks associated with price fluctuations. A budget for young farmers is key for the sustainability of agriculture. It is a societal emergency that calls for a strong commitment in terms of EU policies and budget (see [part 2.1.4.](#) on direct payment top-ups);
- **Not a response to structural barrier** – Like access to land, credit, education and knowledge, higher and volatile incomes, risk management and lack of attractiveness;
- **Very diverse in its implementation and success** - As the level of support varies significantly across Member States;

- **Not adapted to all sectors** – The design of the CISYF, whether implemented as a per-hectare top-up or a fixed lump sum (e.g., FR), does not adequately reflect the diversity of farming systems across the EU. For young farmers in high-value but low-land-requirement sectors, the support received can be low compared to their actual investment and income needs (e.g., higher investment per hectare for greenhouses in horticulture; for barns in livestock; for perennial crops planting).

Therefore, CEJA believes that direct payment cannot be a single solution for Member States to fulfil what is currently their Strategic Objective 7 (Generational renewal).

The system of Complementary Income Support for Young Farmers (CYSIF) should be mandatory for all Member States and accessible for all young farmers, as long as considered “active farmer” but regardless of the legal form of their farm.

Member states should be given the possibility to adapt the duration of the support, in collaboration and with the agreement of their young farmers associations (e.g., FJA from BE-Wallonia would prefer the aid to be granted for a minimum of 7 years instead of the current 5 years). A budget increase for young farmers instruments (recommendation [part 1.2.1.](#)) would help achieve this objective.

➤ **Well-funded and mandatory installation aid**

Installation aid plays a crucial role in supporting young farmers as they establish their businesses. However, several areas require improvement:

- **Flexibility in business plan**
 - *Adaptations* – The possibility for young farmers to adapt and modify their business plans after receiving installation aid should be allowed. This flexibility is essential to account for changing market conditions, unforeseen challenges, and strategic shifts in farm development;
 - *Hours counting* – The strict requirements on working hours in business plans can be rigid. Allowing for more flexibility would acknowledge the realities of agricultural work, which fluctuates seasonally and is influenced by various external factors. (i.e., Sweden: over half of Swedish farms are currently not large enough to reach the hours required for support).
- **Strengthened support for certain production systems** – Given the nature of certain agricultural investments, production system, or disadvantaged areas (particularly for perennial crops, mountainous or remote areas...) the support could be strengthened to align with the additional effort needed for these systems to become productive and profitable;
- **Addressing delays in payment** – often linked to bureaucratic inefficiencies (e.g., In Flanders, this can take between 1 and 3 years. Young farmers cannot bridge this capital and be supported by banks). The same is true for young farmers asked to return the funds in case of management mistakes (e.g., Slovakia). In cases where administrative delays and errors in payments occur, compensation should be considered for young farmers.

➤ **Investment support targeted to young farmers**

While the measure is generally well received, significant disparities exist in its implementation at Member State level.

- **Overall positive perception** – Despite differences in implementation, investment support remains a well-appreciated measure by young farmers. Providing a financial top-up specifically for young farmers is a positive aspect of investment support and should be reinforced across Member States;
- **Uneven implementation across Member States** – The instrument is not present in all Member States, but also the criteria and conditions for investment support differ widely, leading to inequalities in access and effectiveness;
- **Installation aid/investment support package** – Member States should foresee the possibility to link installation aid and investment support in a package of measures allocated to young farmers – in compliance with the business plan and the respect of eligibility criteria. This would help to redirect more resources to young farmers, increase the investment capacity of young farmers’ start-up and ensure a more resilient business of their farm;
- **Eligibility barriers**
 - *Age-related barriers* – In some Member States, young farmers receive fewer points for investment aid if the previous farm owner is under 64 years old, creating unnecessary limitations (e.g., Slovakia);
 - *Rigid rules* – which do not accommodate regional differences in farming practices, business models, and economic contexts;
- **Integration of Financial Instruments (FIs)** – Investment support should be complemented by financial instruments such as loans and guarantees. Awareness campaigns are necessary to ensure Member States authorities and private banks fully understand and implement these. CEJA welcomes the progress already made in the CAP 2023-2027 compared to the previous one, but calls on further improvement to make them available in all Member States, with more than the current 1 billion euros;
- **Treasury issues** – Young farmers often struggle with upfront investment costs, when CAP support is provided only as a reimbursement after expenses have been paid. This system forces them to rely on private bank loans, where interest rates add to their financial burden. Instead, investment support should be made available directly to young farmers, reducing the need for costly credit.

For additional elements on investment support, see [part 2.3.2](#).

➤ **Better uptake of cooperation measures for farm succession**

Cooperation measures aim to foster knowledge-sharing, resource pooling, and innovative farming models among young farmers, but also farm succession⁸. However, uptake remains limited.

- **Limited adoption by Member States** – According to the European Commission, only “a few Member States make use of the new tool in the policy framework to incentivise generational renewal through support for succession and farms transfer via the cooperation intervention (including ES, IE and NL)”⁹;
- **Absence of harmonised approach** – making it difficult to evaluate best practices and ensure equitable access;
- **A potential to fund other existing initiatives:**

⁸ Article 77 of the CAP Strategic Plans Regulation (EU) 2021/2115

⁹ European Commission, *Approved 28 CAP Strategic Plans (2023-2027) Summary overview for 27 Member States Facts and figures*, June 2023, [here](#) (page 87)

- Land Mobility Service (e.g., in Ireland) – A program that facilitates land access for young farmers through improved matching and transition mechanisms;
- Groene Kring “Landmobility” (Belgium) – It aims to match established farmers without successors with aspiring young farmers who lack the opportunity. Despite its potential to foster generational renewal, the project faces challenges in securing support (highly dependent on national legal frameworks). In Flanders, the strategic plan does not include cooperation measures;
- Pension incentives – Certain pension schemes encourage older farmers to transfer their land earlier, thereby improving generational renewal. The introduction of temporary supplementary aid for farmers nearing retirement age is a critical policy tool to facilitate generational renewal. This measure aims to support both the outgoing farm owner and the incoming young farmer by offering financial compensation for the outgoing farmer as well as tax benefits for both the transferor and the young entrant.

These measures highlight the potential of cooperation initiatives and should be expanded to more Member States to enhance the overall support framework for young farmers. Entities such as the EU CAP Network can help identify and spread best practices.

➤ **Knowledge transfer and training for young farmers**

In relation to the Rural Development Programmes of Member States, in accordance with the cross-cutting objective of the CAP 2023-2027 regarding knowledge transfer in agriculture, particular attention has been given to the provision of advisory services. Within this framework, special focus should be placed on young farmers who require specialised advisory services to start their agricultural businesses, by creating differentiated and targeted services based on young farmers’ needs and farms’ structures:

- **Young farmers tutor’s network** – Young people who want to enter the agricultural sector can find local support from a young farmer acting as a mentor, helping the newcomer to navigate the industry and connect with the right contacts and services. The relationship with another young farmer (mentor) operating in the same region or territory can facilitate the initial contact with agricultural associations that will support the young farmer in starting their business;
- **Bureaucratic advisory service** – The young farmer may require more specialised support both for the CAP administrative requirements and for the business startup process;
- **Innovation and investment advisory service** – Planning a business plan and targeted investments based on an analysis of the young farmer's business situation and needs, aimed at maximizing the use of CAP resources and seeking alternative funding channels complementary to the CAP. This could enhance resilience and improve the long-term prospects of the agricultural business.

All these services should be included within an EU portal for information exchange between Member States, to support the dissemination of best practices in business advisory services.

1.2.3. A new generational renewal toolbox

Existing support mechanisms focus primarily on direct payments and installation aid (see [figure 2](#)). The next financial period must expand its scope to really create a “generational toolbox” in the Common Agricultural Policy. The current gaps could be filled by measures such as:

➤ **Farm transmission schemes**

Funded by the CAP and providing financial incentives, advisory support, and land transfer mechanisms. Such scheme could take the form of “farm transmission centres” ran by farmers organisations.

➤ **Business plan testing instrument**

As in France, proposed by *Jeunes Agriculteurs*. Such instrument would cover the costs of assistance with the transfer of the farm (human support).

➤ **Risk management for young farmers**

With better coverage for young farmers via:

- Adaptation / anticipation measures;
- Flexible repayment for credit lines in case of adverse events;
- A top-up for young farmers for the cost of insurance policies and mutual fund contributions for young farmers and the cost of insurance.

➤ **Climate Diagnosis**

For young farmers when they start, to help take strategic decisions for the resilience of their farm.

➤ **Support for digitalisation**

Focused on the acquisition of precision technologies, such as sensors, drones and intelligent management systems, which optimise resources and improve the sustainability of farms.

➤ **Mediation services**

Helping to resolve conflicts and properly tackle the emotional facet of generational renewal. Such system could help on the relationship with parents, siblings, neighbours, and other people involved in the farm transfer (advisors, legal services...).

1.2.4. Beyond CAP money, stimulation of a broader young-farmer-centric ecosystem

Member States should be required to demonstrate how their national policies align with the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Specific Objective 7 (SO7) on generational renewal, as well as their articulation with the upcoming Strategy on Generational Renewal, which should be developed at national level of each Member State.

➤ **Support to young farmers organisations**

Young farmers’ organisations contribute to the representation of young farmers, the animation of rural areas, and to the building of a knowledge ecosystem by providing training opportunities, building capacity, acting as a platform of knowledge exchange and understanding young farmers’ needs. They play a key role at local, national and international level and need to be appropriately supported by the EU, Members States and regional authorities.

➤ **Forthcoming work of the EU Observatory on Farmland**

The observatory should have the following objectives: (1) Transparency and data harmonisation; (2) Cooperation and sharing of best practices (land mobility schemes, land governance, land

portage¹⁰, valuation of certain land plots¹¹...); (3) Recommendations for more informed policymaking, including for the CAP.

➤ ***Pre-retirement and tax measures to encourage land mobility***

Facilitating the gradual retirement of ageing farmers through incentives—such as phased retirement schemes and favourable tax treatment for land transfers—can ease generational renewal

➤ ***Better understanding of the EU direction, strategy, figures, targets***

Young farmers need a realistic and honest assessment of the sector's future — how many new farmers the EU intends to install, what support mechanisms will be mobilised, and how value is expected to be distributed across the supply chain. A coherent vision from EU institutions, backed by clear figures and timelines, is essential to build trust and ensure that the younger generation can make informed decisions about entering and investing in farming.

¹⁰ Land portage (from French “portage foncier”, also referred to as temporary land holding or land stewardship schemes) is a mechanism whereby a third-party organisation—often a public body or a land trust—temporarily acquires agricultural land with the aim of making it available to a future farmer, typically a young or new entrant. The land is held for a transitional period during which the future farmer can gradually build their capacity to eventually purchase or lease the land independently.

¹¹ E.g., acquisition of disadvantaged land or valorisation of wasteland

Chapter 2

A competitiveness agenda for agriculture

Article 39 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) states very clearly that the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) aims at achieving a range of socio-economic objectives: ensuring a fair standard of living for agricultural producers, stabilising markets, guaranteeing food supplies, and ensuring affordable food for EU consumers.

Although other objectives have been added, those abovementioned remain central and have not been entirely fulfilled more than 60 years after introducing the CAP. The CAP must remain central to the actions of the EU and its Multiannual Financial Framework, **with a budget in line with inflation and strengthened to deal with ever-increasing constraints**, particularly environmental constraints. Beyond supporting farmers and generational renewal, it is crucial to ensure food security and food safety globally, for which the CAP has a role to play.

The socio-economic interventions, such as income support (2.1.), risk and crisis management (2.2.), investment support (2.3.) or market regulation (2.4.) must support the competitiveness of EU farms, therefore reinforcing the resilience and sustainability of EU agriculture.

2.1. Income support: a relevant safety net that needs better distribution

CEJA acknowledges **the relevance of direct payments as a safety net for farmers**. They help they provide to face uncertainties or cover regular annual expenses are good reasons to keep such a minimum support for farmers. However, this **requires a fairer distribution**, with a mitigation of the hectare-based system, as well as the proper implementation of the active farmer definition.

2.1.1. A stronger and stricter “active farmer” principle

CEJA reflections on the definition of an active farmer are not new. They are based on the observation of a long-standing and very concrete problem, which has not been resolved by previous reforms, or in a non-uniform way across the Member States: **CAP subsidies continue to be distributed to illegitimate beneficiaries**.

Therefore, CEJA continues to call for CAP subsidies to be distributed to active farmers only, which requires a more rigorous enforcement. It is unacceptable to see other actors such as **supermarkets, investment funds, banks, “couch farmers”, pensioners or any other organisation which do not comply with the active farmer definition** (see [part 2.1.1.1.](#)) **continue to directly receive aid** from a budget that is supposed to support the revenue of farmers.

2.1.1.1. A better, harmonised, and enforced definition of active farmer

In CEJA’s view, active farmers are those who cumulatively:

- **Take the financial and organisational responsibility** for managing the farm business and production;
- **Generate income from agriculture**, by selling products individually or through cooperatives;
- Are **recognized as such** by the public administration, with a **minimum level of education or experience required**;
- **Deliver public goods or services** from their agricultural activity;

- **Do not receive a pension.** CEJA acknowledges that this implies and urges for the development of better retirement policies for farmers and agricultural workers at national level.

Such a definition **must be applied by all Member States.**

Member States should be able to add specific national criteria needed to maintain the coherence of an agricultural policy supporting farmers and generational renewal, according to local specificities of agricultural activities. At national level, Member States shall, for example, include further criteria within the negative list and could specify percentages of income levels, labour time or more precise education and experience criteria. When national social security systems are not adapted to ensure a dignified standard of living, the exceptional eligibility of retirees to receive CAP support should only be possible on the condition to engage in the mentoring of a young farmer, with support ending upon the transfer of the farm.

2.1.1.2. Active farmer definition - a prerequisite for the evolution of the CAP

At a time of in-depth rethink of the future CAP, making better use of the definition of active farmer is vital if we are to succeed in rethinking the distribution of CAP funds. It is an anticipation against fraud and mistargeting in the case of the creation of new incentive mechanisms for agricultural employment, rural development, or environmental externalities. More concretely, it would prevent distributing CAP subsidies to landowners who are not engaged in agricultural activity, but whose sole aim is to make their hectares eligible for subsidies or for example mobilise land only to benefit from carbon offset mechanisms.

CEJA notes that the lack of a strong definition of active farmers is an issue on itself and not specifically related to a hectare-based system.

2.1.2. Towards a decreased share of income support

Income support must be less prevalent in the distribution and leave more space to risk management and market regulation. This should be done by limiting it as a share of the overall direct income support thanks to a mandatory implementation and reinforcement of capping (on the total of CAP subsidies received) in all Member States, with possibly different capping levels, as well as through degressivity.

2.1.3. The distribution of direct payments – pros and cons of distribution methods

The distribution of direct payments is under discussion, influenced by many considerations such as:

- The fairness of the distribution system;
- Policy efficiency, with an implementable system which limits the administrative burden for farmers and managing authorities;
- Future EU enlargements;
- The EU Multiannual Financial Framework and budget ambition dedicated to the CAP;
- The international context, including WTO rules and global market trends (costs, prices).

In the midst of the many discussions on the potential evolution of the distribution of direct payments, CEJA young farmers highlight certain reflections on the possible distributions.

2.1.3.1. The hectare-based distribution

Advantages

- **Simplification** – It is easy to implement and monitor, not only for paying agencies but also for beneficiaries;
- **Considers the size of the farm** in an efficient way;
- **Stability and predictability** – As a rampart against uncertainties of farming or to cover regular annual expenses;
- **Absence of productivity incentive** – Compared to the pre-2003 logic of the CAP, hectare-based payments do not incentivise to produce more intensively, hence can be more positive for the environment.

Disadvantages

- **It favours farmers with more land and the race for land acquisition** – making it unfair when a farmer is starting its activity with only very little surface. On top of that, it creates unequal treatment for certain productions requiring less land: livestock (poultry, pigs), horticulture, herbs, etc.;
- **It negatively impacts young farmers' already difficult access to land:**
 - by attracting players from outside agriculture when CAP support is not distributed to “active farmers”;
 - with the capitalisation of the subsidies in the price of land; or with the correlation between the level of payment per hectare and the level of the rents set by landowners.
- **It creates a bad perception of the CAP by society** – There is a need for a discussion on the reframing of direct payment, which cannot be perceived as “free money for farmers”; they are not.

CEJA recommendation

Hectare-based direct payments could be kept as a safety net but mitigated in the distribution to the benefit of other distribution methods and top-ups. It would need to be combined with a better use and enforcement of degressivity, capping, and active farmer definition.

2.1.3.2. A minimum payment per farm

Advantages

- **Rebalancing the unequal distribution of subsidies**, with a bigger lump-sum support for young people willing to start in agriculture. It would be a more efficient tool to serve the purpose of the current redistributive payment;
- **A CAP more fit to future EU enlargements**, contrary to a major hectare-based distribution.
- **A minimum safety net for farmers** – direct payments would keep their objective of providing a minimum safety net for farmers.

Disadvantages

- **Need further reflections and the integration of certain prerequisites** such as a more rigorous definition of active farmer eligible for a minimum payment. One obvious drift

that needs to be avoided is a situation where all landowners declare themselves to be farmers simply to be entitled to the CAP, without even really being active in agriculture or with the creation of fictitious farm entities;

- **Difficulty to define fair criteria across the EU** to set up a minimum payment per farm. It should consider national average costs of production, national tax systems, national average farms structure;
- **No consideration of the farm size.**

CEJA recommendation

A minimum payment per farm could serve as a basic payment to be complemented by distribution of other top-ups (see below), including a share of direct payment distributed according to the farm size (hectare-based).

2.1.3.3. Rewarding of positive environmental externalities.

Advantages:

- **Possibility to reward positive externalities not remunerated by the market.**
- **Setting up of a clear direction for the sustainability transition.**

Disadvantage:

- **Risk of a lack of incentive** – Certain eco-schemes are not providing enough support, which, in some cases, do not even cover the cost of it. The rewarding of positive externalities must be incentivising (see [chapter 3](#));
- **Administrative burden**, especially if the system looks at results;
- **Capacity to account for extreme climate events** – When it affects green schemes, the process of getting persistent weather events recognised as natural disasters such as droughts, for example, takes a long time, is political, and consequently generate additional concerns for farmers so that they be judged by unmet targets;
- **Tapping into the CAP for nature conservation measures.** Nature conservation should be financed outside of the CAP.

CEJA recommendation:

- **It must be based on agronomical reality and provide flexibility**, whether it is for conditionality or rewarding purposes;
- **Green direct payments must be financially incentivising**, on top of covering cost and income forgone (see [part 3.3.3. A pathway to better, incentivising, voluntary measures](#));
- **The remuneration of farmers' actions** rather than the results appears more realistic in terms of practical implementation, provided that the support can be commensurate with the efforts of farmers;
- **A result-based system could top-up practice-based remunerations**, to let farmers get back to the driving seat when it comes to the agronomical and environmental management of their activities. However, this should not oversee the uniqueness of the agricultural sector, with very diverse situations and a high number of uncontrollable parameters. Particular attention is needed regarding the administrative burden and difficulties in measurement it would bring – at a time of highly needed discussion on policy simplification.

2.1.4. Direct payment top-ups

2.1.4.1. A higher top-up support for young farmers

A budget for young farmers is key for the sustainability of agriculture. It is a societal emergency that calls for a strong commitment in terms of EU policies and budget. Providing enhanced income support to young farmers is essential. (See [part 1.2.2. Unlock, improve and promote existing CAP instruments for young farmers](#))

2.1.4.2. Top-ups for disadvantaged areas

They are still necessary for farmers facing specific disadvantages such as:

- Area-specific disadvantages, from the definition of article 72 of the CAP Strategic Plans regulation (*reference CAP 2023-2027*) (resulting from certain mandatory requirements, such as Habitat and Birds Directive, water restriction, or Natura 2000);
- Natural constraints: such as mountainous areas, remote areas, islands, etc.

2.1.4.3. Top-ups for certain productions

For when the existing support mechanism are still disadvantaging certain farms to access CAP support or with specific vulnerabilities. This takes the form of coupled payment which must contribute to the structuring of sectors with the use of operational programmes (OP). Nevertheless, particular attention is needed to keep a level playing field and avoiding any double support in the overall coherence of the CAP.

2.1.4.4. Top-up for socio-economic externalities

For farmers making a specific contribution to the socio-economic attractiveness of their local area. Such a contribution could be:

- Job creation;
- Educational and communication efforts around farming and rural areas;
- Rural community engagement and social cohesion.

While there could be a willingness to link the CAP directly to the level of workforce of the farm, further consideration on how to define and calculate the workforce would be necessary, as well as measures to avoid fraud, disincentivising of machinery investments or productivity gains, or discrimination when a problem of workforce availability already penalises farmers. CEJA would rather advocate for the support of apprentices as an alternative.

2.2. Risk management as a stronger priority

2.2.1. The need for risk management...in a world becoming uninsurable

The essence of agriculture is to deal with risks: climate, prices, cost volatility, animal diseases, pests, geopolitics, economic conditions. Risk management is already part of the Common Agricultural Policy, mostly in the Pillar 2 (risk management tools), but also in the Pillar 1 (direct payments as safety net to decrease income risks; pillar 1 contribution to risk management tools under Article 19 of the CAP Strategic Plans regulation) as well as the CMO regulation (market and crisis measures). This shows that decision-makers are already aware of the need to make the CAP a risk management tool.

Nevertheless, CEJA members stress that **risk management should be a bigger objective of the CAP**, especially in the face of increasing uncertainties (e.g. related to increasing climate

change and climate adverse events, geopolitical threats, market volatility). The flexibilities granted to Member States in this area show a failure to better equip all EU farmers with risk management. Some farmers find themselves without sufficient public support, either from the CAP or from national measures.

In parallel, a more recent trend has been observed: the higher frequency and intensity of adverse events makes farming less and less attractive to rely on a fully private insurance system. In other words, certain insurance companies refuse to cover certain risks in agriculture, and farmers are facing insurance premiums that are higher and higher.

2.2.2. On-farm tools to cover normal risks

To cover normal risks, the first layer of action is at the farm level in the form of:

- **Day-to-day financial management** and savings in treasury and stocks. Farm business models should facilitate private savings and reserves. However, developing savings and reserves is more complex for young farmers whose level of investments on the farm is high, and income is not always stable;
- **Farm multifunctionality**, enabling farmers to guarantee additional income channels and build resilience, it also brings additional risks. For this, the COVID-19 crisis was particularly illustrative: on the one hand, direct selling helped many farmers in the face of the closure of their usual selling channels. On the other hand, agritourism structures were impacted by sanitary restrictions;
- **Non-subsidised insurances**, although key to farm management, tends to fuel mistrust due to the assumption it does not always align to farmers' needs.

The CAP has a role to play in those on-farm actions. Risks are increasing, and productions are sometimes no longer adapted to the regional conditions. The CAP must contribute to the adaptation of productions and practices, a condition for risk management tools to play their role properly.

2.2.3. Subsidised tools from the CAP and national frameworks to cover marketable or insurable risks

Subsidised tools from the CAP to cover marketable or insurable risks are essential. With the current CAP 2023-2027, CEJA regrets the **low uptake by Member States** of the possibility to support the adoption of risk management tools, only used by France and Italy. The CAP must ensure further integration of risk management instruments. CEJA calls on the EU to make it mandatory for Member States to align available risk management tools, and voluntary for farmers. The uptake of risk management instruments by farmers should be supported financially, but also with a better communication and knowledge development around the functioning of those instruments.

Mutual funds and the income stabilisation tool are perceived as an opportunity to have a risk management strategy better tailored to farmers' needs. Such instruments can be used to increase guarantees to subsidised insurance or could be merged into a single, simplified tool, covering all types of risks, and working on a countercyclical basis.

In addition, crop, animal and plant insurances must be purposeful and enlarged in their scope to **cover all sectors and a more diverse range of risks**. There is an interest of farmers to be supported to set-up mutual funds for sanitary risks (plants and animal) as well as for economic risks.

When it comes to Protected Designations of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indications (PGI) and Traditional Specialties Guaranteed (TSG), a methodology should be found for **insurance funds to cover the added value costs**.

Finally, there must be **stricter criteria for insurance providers to operate within such schemes** and better control on speculations.

2.2.4. Investigate counter cyclical instruments

Beside risk management instruments (*current article 76 of the CAP, pillar 2*), **counter-cyclical instruments** would be helpful to balance out fluctuations caused by climate events and market adversity. Such mechanism must be further investigated, with ways to implement it as part of income support in the framework of Common Market Organisation (CMO). It should be open to cross-sector solidarity. CEJA calls for an independent study of this specific counter-cyclical aid tool at the EU level.

2.2.5. Catastrophic risks and crisis response

To cover the most catastrophic risks, CAP support is fundamental. Such support can take the shape of:

- **Advances on CAP direct payments** at EU level;
- **Support to producer organisations, interbranch organisations, and cooperatives**—given their role in implementing crisis management tools in all sectors. Cooperation with farmers' economic groups, for example, through flexibility in competition rules, is essential to the efficiency of public responses;
- **Crisis reserve** - Budgets allocated to the reserve should not be used for other markets measures, such as public intervention or private storage aid, which must have their own budget. A clear definition of crises needs to be laid down so that the triggering of the reserve is guaranteed when needed the most.

Learning from previous experience is an essential element to boost preparedness for crises affecting agriculture. From this perspective, **pace, budget and accountability** remain legitimate questions at the institutional level. Arrangements must be made to acknowledge the role of sectoral regulator of the European Commission. A performance framework must be established to assign the EU's executive with greater responsibility and accountability when it comes to the proposal and unlocking of market measures. CEJA asks to implement an effective and ambitious crisis management system (i.e. storage and aid for production reduction), defined upstream **at the EU level and triggered automatically**.

Financial means should also be increased and better managed throughout the programming period, as budget shortages in the context of the COVID-19, war in Ukraine and recent extreme climate events have painfully shown. The logic of the last few years in the CAP 2023-2027 avoiding a decrease of direct payments must be continued. Additional funds should finance this reserve from budgetary margins available in the Multiannual Financial Framework.

2.3. Young farmers' competitiveness and investment capacity

2.3.1. The competitiveness of EU young farmers

Young farmers play a significant role in enhancing the competitiveness of EU agriculture and in meeting emerging challenges. Competitiveness is particularly hindered for young farmers by:

- Low income combined with long investment cycles and a weak position in the value chain;
- Difficult access to credit¹², even more difficult for young women;
- The challenges to finance, regulate, or uptake new technologies;
- The challenges to access knowledge and skills;
- The lack of attractiveness of farming to get more young farmers and farm workers;
- Uncertainties linked to productions, costs, and prices risks;
- Trade and high EU requirements compared to third countries.

This specific nature of agriculture makes it a sector whose competitiveness must be boosted by a CAP's ambitious intervention.

2.3.2. Investment support

Investment support is a key feature of the CAP. It must support young farmers for:

- **Productive investments:** Supporting investments that contribute to increasing resilience, modernise practices, the use of new technologies and precision agriculture tools, and in general to remain competitive on the market;
- **Innovative investments:** Aid for investments aimed at innovation of products, services, processes, techniques and organisational structures;
- **Investments related to sustainable processing and marketing** of agricultural products (e.g. short supply chain);
- **Non-productive investment:** Support for investments on farms that primarily have a social or environmental benefit.

However, within existing investment supports, CEJA identifies some issues;

- **Implementation at national and regional level**, leading to competition distortion due to different rules between Member States or between regions (e.g., management at regional level in France);
- The **duration of the investment support through grants is often not adapted** to farming cycles. Young farmers investment support should open the possibility for longer-term support, beyond 5 years (up to 10 or 15 years depending on the instrument);
- **Farmers are pushed to make investments not adapted to their needs** when the scope is not accurately defined;
- **Advisory services** are not always separated from investment authorities;
- **Investment support leads to price increases**, especially when supporting the purchase of machinery;
- **The support must include investments to comply with regulatory requirements** – Currently, when EU law results in the imposition of new requirements on farmers, support may be granted for investments to comply with those requirements for a

¹² Fi-compass survey (Oct. 2023), "Financing gap in the EU agricultural and agri-food sectors" ([here](#))

maximum of 24 months from the date on which they become mandatory for the farm. However the particular difficulties face by young farmers to access credit should be a reason for greater flexibility¹³;

- **The scope of eligible investment;**
- **The level of support.**

Beneficiaries should continue to benefit from a possibility to get an extra top-up for being young farmers, in all Member States.

2.3.3. Competitiveness through farmers' knowledge and skills

Enhancing farmers' competitiveness hinges significantly on the continuous improvement of their knowledge and skills.

In a highly technical profession, upskilling is key. Knowledge transfer must remain a central element of the future CAP. In England where farming support has moved away from the EU's CAP and is now being delivered through the Agricultural Transition, knowledge transfer has not been prioritised. This is to the disappointment of NFU NextGeneration, an associate member of CEJA, who considers that training for farmers is paramount. A high ambition must be set at EU level, still providing flexibility to adjust knowledge transfer to local situations. This means support and promotion of:

- **Tailored advisory services** – The European Parliament has introduced the idea of tailored advisory services to cover the support and assistance for young farmers during the five years following the launch of their business. Such advisory services should include, among other elements of importance: farm management; public support schemes (identification and application; training to better understand the CAP and related administrative tasks); accountancy and financial instruments; information technology (IT) and artificial intelligence (AI); environmental sustainability and climate action; soils, land, and water management; marketing and negotiation; multifunctionality; innovation and new technologies. Farmers being the face of an entire sector, it is important that they also acquire communication skills to give them the ability to story-tell the importance of their activity. The use of Pillar 2 should be considered, as it is designed to support rural development and address the specific needs of farmers and rural communities, with a more flexible framework for financing rural development. In general, options for receiving advisory services before installation and beyond the 5-year period should be explored.
- **Participation in mentorship and knowledge exchange networks** – A share of rural development funds is allocated to Advisory Knowledge Exchange and Information Systems (AKIS), which aims at encouraging peer-to-peer learning and facilitate the uptake of innovation. Young farmers involvement into these networks should be supported. Such involvement could also be financially incentivised to remove as many barriers to take part in such networks as possible.
- **Intergenerational knowledge transfer**, with a tool that encourages the coexistence of the outgoing and incoming generations, including the transfer of practical experience.
- **Life-long learning opportunities** – which are still perceived as too rare or not attractive, either because specific training is not accessible in all regions, or because private-

¹³ At the time of the publication of this document, the European Commission made a proposal to replace “24 months” by “36 months” in its simplification package of the 14th of May (Proposal for a regulation 2025/0236 (COD))

funded advisory services require additional budget which young farmers do not necessarily have or want to allocate to. Thus, the benefits of education are still not always fully valued. The resources mobilised by farmers (time, expenses) to attend learning sessions should be compensated. A system of “Education vouchers” could be one of the options to support farmers.

- **Transnational networking and capacity building**, however not in the CAP but with the Erasmus+ programme, which can be used to finance actions in respect of transnational mobility of young people in the field of agricultural and rural development through cooperation with specialised higher education structures and young farmers’ organisations.
- **Young farmers’ organisations** – Young farmers’ organisations contribute to the building of a knowledge ecosystem by providing training opportunities, building capacity, acting as a platform of knowledge exchange and understanding young farmers’ needs. They play a key role at local, national and international level and need to be appropriately supported by the EU, Members States and regional authorities.

2.4. Market regulation

Market measures are an essential feature of a Common Market Organisation. Nevertheless, rather than acting as reactive public instruments, these **should aim at anticipating crises** by acting for:

- **Market Stabilisation** – Implementing measures to protect and regulate agricultural markets can ensure fair prices for farmers and prevent overproduction.
 - Derogations from competition rules are an important feature of the sector’s adaptability, not only to limit production but also to create new markets.
- **Better harmonisation of rules within the EU** – for a proper functioning of the EU single market preventing unfair competition. In a single market, action at Member State level would affect differently concerned farmers.
- **Reciprocity in trade** – which means ensuring that trade agreements and regulations are fair and balanced for European farmers. This is more likely to succeed at the EU level rather than at the Member State level. Imported agricultural products must comply with the sanitary (food safety), social and environmental production standards in force at EU level. Strict control rules to check compliance with commitments must be laid down to avoid any failure to comply¹⁴.
- **Support to cooperatives** – which allow farmers to get more power in the value chain.
- **Promotion of short value chains** – where relevant for the farm business model and local situation.
- **Promotion of “fairer” long value chain** - Agri-food supply chain contracts – which can be concluded for several sectors – can help build relationships of trust between farmers and other partners in the agri-food supply chain. They can also be initiated and entered into by farmers’ organisations and associations. These contracts allow farmers to collectively trade with food business operators (FBOs) with more bargaining power and generate a positive effect along the agri-food supply chain, from farm to fork. They lead to higher, stable and fair prices paid to farmers, clear contract conditions and

¹⁴ CEJA (2021) “From threat to opportunity: an EU Trade Policy fit for young farmers” ([here](#))

engagement rules, quality productions' assurance for FBOs, and increased transparency, which is beneficial for all the actors.

- **Construction of the price** according to the cost of production, and traceability of prices across the agri-food chain. Such measure must be implemented in every Member State to avoid differentiated rules. A stronger role of farmers' organisation in the contracts' negotiation with industry and supermarkets is necessary, especially where producer organisations and cooperatives are not well established in a region and farmers risk to be left alone against their more powerful counterparts. CEJA asks for a CAP supporting a better position of farmers in the value chain, together with a better enforcement of the UTP Directive, rather than looking at what would appear to be minimum prices.
- **A European market observatory** with increased competence should be created.
- **Private storage** measures must have their own budget.

Chapter 3

A reinvented green architecture

3.1. Assessment of green conditionality

The approach to green conditionality has been heavily criticised in the past years with many of the GAECs coming under intense scrutiny during the EU-wide farmer protests in early 2024. While also from an environmental perspective, conditionality is also often target of criticism due to the **limited visibility of environmental impacts** achieved by the measure, mostly due to measurability issues. The final report of the strategic dialogue even opted for a complete removal of green conditionality, favouring instead: a combination of (1) **stricter enforcement of existing environmental legislation** and (2) the **introduction of more effective incentive-based payments** for voluntary environmental measures. In light of the ongoing discussions, young farmers face a distinct choice for their position towards the future of conditionality in the post-2027 CAP.

The current green conditionality frameworks brings both benefits and disadvantages, which young farmers would like to address here:

3.1.1. Benefits

- **Clarity and direction** – The current framework provides a clear set of rules and direction to the sectors and encourages farmers to partake in sustainable practices, even in the absence of formal education or training opportunities;
- **Public support and environmental baseline** – The current set of rules establishes a minimum standard of environmental practices. The framework demonstrates the sector's commitment to sustainability and helps justify CAP support to the public and policymakers;
- **Clear motivation to adapt** – By conditioning the receiving of direct payments to alignment with sustainable practices you encourage a high level of participation in sustainable practices, something that also benefits farmers in the long run. With removing this link and relying on voluntary tools, less farmers might participate.

3.1.2. Disadvantages

- **Lack of flexibility and adaptability** – The rigid nature of some of the conditions (e.g. GAECs) currently do not account well enough for regional or sectoral differences leading to a situation where conditionality often feels disconnected from the reality on the ground, resulting in a vast list of annual derogations;
- **Double regulation** – Due to national transposition of EU laws, many of the areas covered under conditionality overlap with, and sometimes go beyond, existing national, regional or local legislation, leading to confusing or even conflicting requirements that complicate compliance for farmers;
- **Administrative burden and double reporting** – Compliance and reporting of conditionality requirements adds to a farmer's administrative workload, especially in cases of double regulation. Additional to this, market-driven sustainability requirements can introduce additional, more advanced reporting obligations, leading to duplication of the workload and inefficiencies;
- **Risk of losing income support** – Non-compliance results in farmers losing income support;
- **Risk of disengagement** – In some places of Europe, self-sufficient farms already opt out of the CAP altogether due to the low perceived benefits for the effort to comply to the rules;
- **Lack of measurable outcomes** – Conditionality often lacks visible concrete environmental results, mostly due to measurability issues.

Young farmers would like to propose a restructuring of **the current conditionality framework**, linking it to economic, environmental and social aspects of the future CAP.

3.2. Simplification and streamlining of environmental legislation

Many limitations of the CAP green conditionality are interlinked with the difficulty to implement environmental legislation due to its complexities and lack of coherence. CEJA advocates for the streamlining and simplification of the environmental legislation baseline, as it should be an EU-wide set of sustainability requirements, promoting **further simplification efforts**, and not leading to a rigid one-size-fits-all set of rules. It should instead result in an **adaptable system** that aims to **minimise administrative burden** while **maintaining a set of minimum sustainability standards**. To this end, CEJA makes the following recommendations:

- **Simplification of minimum sustainability requirements** – Efforts to simplify the minimum requirements should continue across environmental legislation. Pursuing a more streamlined and realistic approach to sustainability requirements, would increase clarity and predictability while at the same time reducing complexities in the regulatory framework, aiding the reporting and administrative burden for both farmers as well as reporting authorities.
- **Better targeted environmental conditions** – Further tailored environmental reporting requirements to regional or national contexts could further help reduce administrative burden. Farmers should not have to report on environmental baselines that are clearly already met across their entire region or Member State. In such scenarios, exemptions for reporting should be granted to irrelevant reporting obligations.
- **Tailored approach** – Instead of having a pre-defined set of rules applying to each farm under conditionality, farmers could instead concentrate on specific voluntary environmental measures better suited to their unique farm, improving efficiency and adaptability.
- **Guaranteed applicability of force majeure** – Additional flexibility when minimum requirements are not met due to situations beyond the control of the farmer, such as due to unusual climatic conditions.
- **Where possible, during Member State implementation, alignment with performance-based sustainability requirements** should be allowed. This could ultimately eliminate the need for double sustainability reporting on requirements clearly already met. However, on Member State level, the minimum level of sustainability standards should still be met.
- **Shifting the reporting point of obligation to national authorities** – Transferring the point of reporting to national authorities would eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy for farmers. Innovative reporting methodologies through remote sensing, samples or modelling could streamline monitoring and data collection efforts.
- **Environmental agency reporting** – Pre-existing environmental legislation (Nitrates Directive, Water Framework Directive, etc.) would continue to apply to farm managers on national level outside of the CAP framework, often requiring reporting. Instead of

reporting two times to both the CAP authority and environmental agencies, farmers would only have to report to the latter, which would reduce administrative burden. However, this shift could also lead to a loss of agricultural-specific expertise and understanding traditionally provided by dedicated agricultural reporting authorities.

- **Co-financing** – More co-financing efforts would be needed from Member States to maintain the environmental and climate-related efforts of farmers.

3.3. Viable voluntary measures

In general, **voluntary tools are praised for their ability to offer farmers the freedom to select tools best suited to their local farm reality**, provided they have access to enough viable tool options. These tools offer additional income and compensate farmers for adopting nature-friendly practices that enhance synergies between agricultural production and environmental goals, such as increasing biodiversity or mitigating climate impacts. Young farmers furthermore identify voluntary as a great starting point for fostering a change in mindset among farmers and send a positive signal to consumers about the sector's commitment to environmental sustainability.

However, voluntary tools are not without challenges. Farmers often report a high level of administrative burden associated with applying for, and implementing, voluntary measures. Additionally, some of the proposed measures on national level seem to lack solid scientific basis, which can hinder their effectiveness and hurt their credibility.

3.3.1. Eco-schemes

Eco-schemes are a voluntary payment scheme introduced in the CAP 2023-2027 which reward farmers who go beyond mandatory requirements to implement ecological practices. Funding for eco-schemes originates from Pillar 1. Specifically on Eco-schemes as a policy tool, young farmers make the following assessment:

Specific strengths:

- Only farmers can apply for eco-schemes;
- Freedom of choice to select measures best suited to your farm;
- Flexibility of many options through eco-schemes.

Specific weaknesses:

- Budgetary constraints when experiencing high demand;
- Lack of flexibility in unique conditions (e.g., animal welfare and antibiotics use);
- Some Member States offer a low number of eco-schemes to choose from for certain sectors.

3.3.2. AECMs

Agri-environmental-climate measures (AECMs) are similar voluntary programmes under the CAP that reward farmers to adopt practices that deliver environmental and climate benefits beyond mandatory requirements. Funding originates from Pillar 2, meaning that Member States and the EU both pay for these measures. Young farmers identify the following strengths and weaknesses:

Specific strengths:

- Long-term commitments (5 – 7 years) provide farmers with extended periods of income and administrative certainty.

Specific weaknesses:

- AECMs are non-exclusive to farmers, weakening their impact on agricultural sustainability;
- Long-term commitments may be less beneficial for farmers who do not own the land;
- Funding for AECMs is sometimes inadequate when Member States, responsible for co-financing, do not allocate sufficient financial resources.

3.3.3. A pathway to better, incentivising, voluntary measures

While voluntary tools are generally well received among young farmers, various points of improvement can still be made. To increase the attractiveness and effectiveness of voluntary measures as a viable business case for primary producers, young farmers recommend the following changes:

- **Incentivisation over cost-coverage** – To increase uptake and drive important environmental progress, remuneration should move beyond cost incurred and income foregone. Instead it should focus on systematically creating economically incentivising opportunities for farmers to adopt environmental positive practices, without unnecessary compromising productivity.
- **Flexibility and optimisation** – While equal conditions are important, it should not come at the expense of much-needed flexibility. Voluntary schemes based on rigid “calendar farming” should be given leeway in case of climate-related disruptions. CEJA also calls for greater flexibility when managing measures, such as the ability to terminate AECMs early if results are unsatisfactory, the ability to apply for measures as farmer collectives or the ability to better combine multiple measures.
- **Better advisory support and training** is required to assist farmers in deciding which measures work best for their farm. Synergies with knowledge transfer- and cooperation measures should be used more by Member States.
- **Administrative simplification** – Administration should be kept to a minimum. Innovative approaches such as further digitalisation and remote sensing should be considered an ally in this context. Furthermore, simplifying efforts for end-users, through a centralised entry point or a flexible ‘menu’ approach could empower decision-making.
- **Sharing best practices** – Several member states have created highly successful voluntary green programmes within their national framework. Better experience sharing, coupled with more comprehensive impartial evaluations can help improve the situation of farmers across the EU.
- **A new hybrid policy instrument for rewarding nature conservation efforts**, is proposed that combines income certainty through **annual practice-based** payments with accountability through result-based top-ups when measurable outcomes are achieved. This

system should incorporate (1) multi-year trends to account for natural variances, and (2) indicators at farm-level to prevent inaccuracies. A science-based methodology that considers regional conditions and on-farm realities, along with active farmer involvement is crucial during design. Other actors should be held similarly accountable to results.

3.3.4. Additional tools in the CAP toolbox: green investments, knowledge exchange and cooperation measures

In addition to the core green architecture policy measures, several additional tools within the CAP framework can be used to support farmers in achieve environmental and climatic objectives, including, but not limited to:

- **Knowledge exchange** – With 72% of farm managers solely rely on practical experience on the farm (Eurostat, 2020), additional training, innovation and independent advisory services are essential to equip farmers with the tools needed to address environmental and climatic challenges. The *Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS)* supports this by boosting innovations, aiding in data collection and research, while also strengthening the network. Specifically on AKIS, CEJA argues in favour of:
 - Enhancing information transfer to farm level, in order to ensure that theoretical insights translate into practical, actionable knowledge;
 - Shifting the focus from an exchange of views to an exchange of concrete examples, tool and solutions which can benefit a farmer directly.

- **Green investments under investment aid** – Access to finance remains a key barrier for young farmers, who are two to three times more likely to see their loan application rejected than farmers in other age-categories. Investment aid is crucial for the funding of machinery and infrastructures that support the CAP’s environmental and climate objectives and increase farm resilience. On green investments, CEJA argues:
 - Sufficient budget should be allocated to this tool, preventing early depletion of funds due to high demand;
 - More funding options should not only be provided towards climatic mitigation efforts, but also climate adaptation to better address the increasing impacts of climate change;
 - Investments into on-farm energy production, such as solar farms and wind turbines, should prioritise dual land-use and unused sites in order to protect valuable agricultural land and rich soils.

- **Cooperation measures** – Despite low uptake by Member States, cooperation measures hold untapped potential in supporting collective green actions. Especially EIP-AGRI and LEADER projects can bring together a variety of actors, often on a local level, to approach the environmental challenges from a bottom-up approach, using local knowledge.

Chapter 4

A social and territorial contract

4.1.A social CAP without overlapping Member States' duties

The decline in the number of farmers, the increasing difficulty of finding labour and the malaise of some people in this profession clearly demonstrate the urgent need to act on the social pillar of our sustainability. For certain areas, the question remains as to what form of governance should be applied to a subject with multiple competences at local, national, and European level.

4.1.1. Numerous challenges with multi-level responsibilities

The social challenges of agriculture are numerous, starting with the low attractiveness of the sector and rural areas. Yet the younger generation is keen to get involved in such a crucial and fascinating sector, to make a positive impact and to enjoy a good work-life balance on the countryside.

- **Parental leave, pensions, accidents and health insurances** are key social rights for farmers and farm workers.
 - **The CAP** can create leverage thanks to social conditionality (see [part 4.3.](#));
 - **The EU** can strive for better harmonisation where it has competence;
 - **Member States** have or must develop their competence, expertise, and infrastructures to:
 - Provide better pension systems and social security. It is not up to the CAP to pay for the shortcomings of social policies in Europe, as it is the case for the sad lack of proper pensions in our sector, thus making young farmers' access to land even more difficult;
 - Facilitate social dialogue¹⁵.
- **Mental health** is a real subject for the sector, which needs to be discussed to better understand the ins and outs.
 - **The CAP** must consider it in terms of policy simplification; support to cope with financial uncertainty and the capital-intensive nature of farming; attractiveness of rural areas; trade and competition. These are some elements identified as factors impacting farmers' mental health¹⁶. The CAP can also contribute when it comes to improving the sector's image;
 - **Member States** must provide support tools, including through social security systems. Securing long-term funding and integrating mental health support into agricultural policies are critical for ensuring sustained accessibility and effectiveness of mental health services for farmers. Strong cooperation among stakeholders is key to addressing mental health challenges comprehensively.
- **Workforce availability and accessibility** are central concerns for many farmers. The low attractiveness of the sector certainly calls for action from farmers. However, it also calls for public authorities to consider better what prevents farmers from providing more

¹⁵ CEJA is the coordinator of the project CORE, Coalition for social studies in rural and agricultural youth in Europe, youth employment, which has a focus on social dialogue in agriculture.

¹⁶ FARMRes (2022) *European young farmers social and labour situation and its relationship with mental health and wellbeing*, Summary Report ([here](#))

attractive conditions, starting with low income. This might call on further reflections about:

- *Capping or covering labour taxes/costs to ease the financial burden on farmers;*
- *Supporting young farmers who hire young people to work on their farms.*
- **Working conditions** – Agriculture is a sector where reflecting on fair employee wages across the EU and considering social inclusion for migrants, seasonal workers, disabled individuals and other vulnerable groups is necessary.
- **Engagement in young farmers organisations** is essential so that young people can make their voices heard, organise themselves, create social links and learn through peer learning.
 - **The CAP** should encourage individual farmers involved in their local young farmers association, a key element for knowledge transfer and the attractiveness of rural areas;
 - **Member States** have a role to play in ensuring young farmers' involvement and public funding, especially at a time when public authorities rely on these organisations to collect data, provide training, and communicate about new legislative requirements.

Nevertheless, the CAP should not be a social security system. It is the responsibility of Member States to ensure social policy. If they are initiatives under the CAP programming, they should be voluntary and co-financed by Member States, to avoid any overlapping in countries where social policy is already functioning properly. Also, the Cohesion Policy must be prioritised before looking at the Common Agricultural Policy for such actions.

4.1.2. The risks of extending actions at EU level

The risks of having more actions at EU level on social inclusion are:

- **Cutting an already limited CAP budget** which has already many ambitions. The CAP's social action must be focused on young farmers;
- **Double funding** when national instruments are already in place;
- **Complexifying** the CAP and its potential National Strategic Plans.

4.2. Rural development

The CAP should aim to include and uplift disadvantaged rural areas, addressing their specific challenges and opportunities. Ensuring rural areas have access to necessary services and infrastructure, such as parental care, schools, and healthcare, to improve social inclusion. Additionally, rural development involves various actors to address social inclusion in rural areas beyond the agricultural sector. Working and living in rural areas can be a source of isolation. The Common Agricultural Policy has had a key role thanks to its second Pillar, but further reflections are needed on:

- **The lack of clarity on institutional competences** – between different Directorate Generals in the European Commission, but also between EU, national and regional level.

- **The collection of data on rural development** – so that challenges are clearly identifies as well as improvements following policy actions.
- **Communication on what the funding are concretely supporting** – There is a necessity to make more concrete and visible what is being done thanks to rural development support.
- **The uptake of instruments and projects by farmers** – The bigger problem of rural development is the number of farmers and people. Money cannot work alone, without people, with time to work on projects. Without farmers, the use of CAP funds, Cohesion funds, or EU projects for rural development do not work, which leads back to the broader issue of generational renewal.
- **A better use of Cohesion Policy to support rural areas** – In this regard, the possibility to transfer LEADER¹⁷ from the CAP to cohesion policy funds should be explored. Young farmers witness limitations to the good management of LEADER by Local Action Groups (LAGs).
- **A better use of LEADER** (e.g. not to paint pedestrian crossings...).
- **The effectiveness of EU-project-based actions** – The uptake of EU projects by farmers is often perceived as complex and bureaucratic, with many administrative tasks related to the application, administration, and reporting.
- **A better use of CAP cooperation measures** – through a better uptake by Member States, and best-practices sharing.
- **Maintenance of other rural professions**, which are, for some of them, directly necessary for agricultural activity (e.g. veterinary services...).
- **A better alignment with the Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas**, to tackle the demographic challenge, lack of connectivity, low-income levels, and low access to services.

THE PROMOTION OF FARMING!

To attract more people to farming, the CAP should promote the profession through various means, with communication actions such as:

- Organising more *farm visits, school trips or communication campaigns* to connect people with agriculture.
- *Bridging the gap between urban and rural areas*, highlighting the significance of farming to society

4.3. Social conditionality

Social conditionality should be maintained in the future CAP as a way to create leverage for the respect of existing labour legislations. However, the CAP cannot be a policy to define additional requirements in terms of working conditions and labour force, not because the objective is not relevant, but for the sake of legal coherence and clarity.

Work methodology

The involvement of stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation of the CAP and agricultural policies in general is currently held in two types of fora; on the one hand, Civil Dialogue Groups (in which CEJA is sitting), and on the other hand, the EU CAP Network (where CEJA is part of the steering group).

- **Civil Dialogue Groups (CDGs):** In their current design, CDGs are not promoting dialogue, but rather emphasising the polarisation between stakeholders. Reforming the system would require thinking out of the box and propose a different work methodology, more inspired by workshop configurations. This would avoid being left with a series of statements based on individual positions and increase the quality of feedback provided to the European Commission. The latter must draw conclusions, demonstrate how the feedback of stakeholders is considered in its action and that young people are listened to in the process. To avoid draining too many resources from participating stakeholders, management rules should be simplified and the division of tasks between different dialogue groups made clearer.
- **EU CAP Network and national CAP networks:** The EU CAP Network and national CAP networks, beyond constituting a forum of exchange on best practices, must also give the opportunity to all stakeholders, including youth representatives from agriculture and rural areas, to interact with authorities and provide feedback.

CEJA, as the main representative of youth in agriculture, intends to be proactive and act as a facilitator of dialogue in the road towards the next CAP reform. It will do so while promoting the objective of generational renewal and remain exigent towards other actors involved, whether decision-makers, farm organisations or civil society representatives.

Annex 1 – Objectives and future CAP instruments for young farmers and generational renewal.

Objectives	Instruments
<p style="text-align: center;">ACCESS TO LAND</p> <p>Although private property and rural law are recognised national competences, the CAP must undeniably pay attention to the difficulties linked to the transfer of farms and access to land¹⁸, the cornerstone of generational renewal. This means a CAP that fosters land mobility, and which encourages older people to hand down their farms to younger ones. It also means a CAP offering specific tools for the installation of young farmers, as well as a better enforcement of the active farmer definition.</p>	<p>Installation aid (<i>improve</i>)</p> <p>Investment support (<i>improve</i>)</p> <p>A better definition of an active farmer (<i>enabler</i>)</p> <p>Uptake of recommendations linked to the forthcoming work of the EU Observatory on Farmland (<i>enabler</i>)</p> <p>Pre-retirement and tax measures to encourage land mobility (<i>young farmer ecosystem, incl. national level</i>)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">FARM SUCCESSION</p> <p>Generational renewal is an inter-generational challenge that requires rethinking the agricultural sector as a whole. This includes addressing the needs of the outgoing generation, ensuring they can leave the sector under good conditions, with a decent pension, and enabling a smooth transfer of farms to the next generation – whether they come from a farming background or not, and whether they are able to own the land they use or not.</p>	<p>Farm succession schemes (<i>new</i>)</p> <p>Mediation services (<i>new</i>)</p> <p>Business plan test instrument (<i>new</i>)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">ACCESS TO CAPITAL</p> <p>Young farmers are more likely to see their loan applications rejected by the bank. The main reasons for rejection are the perceived higher-risk profiles of young farmers, as well as their lack of capital and collaterals.</p> <p>As demonstrated by fi-compass, in collaboration with the European Commission's DG AGRI and the European Investment Bank (EIB), there is untapped potential in setting up financial instruments, whether with the EAFRD or the EIB's dedicated envelopes. The recent approval by the EIB board of a 3 billion euros facility programme for agriculture and agribusiness across Europe, with specific targeting at young farmers, very much goes in the right direction.</p> <p>A strengthened collaboration with banks is needed. Banks must offer financial products that are specifically tailored to the needs of young farmers and the sustainable transition. It includes, for instance, a better consideration of the long-term cycles of farming;</p>	<p>Public financial instruments (<i>improve and increase the uptake</i>)</p> <p>Investment support (<i>improved and increase the uptake</i>)</p> <p>Advisory services (<i>including specifically on financial management</i>)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">RISK MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Young farmers are often more vulnerable to financial instability due to limited experience, recent investments and higher reliance on external financing. This makes them more exposed to market fluctuations, climate change, and other unforeseen challenges. Providing targeted risk management tools would help young farmers build resilience, secure their income, and ensure the long-term viability of their farms, enabling them to invest for their – by essence – long term projects.</p>	<p>Better coverage of Young Farmers risks</p> <p>Climate diagnosis</p> <p>Advisory services (<i>on risk management and insurance schemes</i>)</p> <p>Stricter criteria for insurance providers to operate within such schemes and better control on speculations.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE</p> <p>Young farmers tend to be more educated and benefit from more training. However, in 2020, more than 72% of farmers were still relying solely on practical experience on the farm, without any specific agricultural education (Eurostat, 2020). In parallel, CEJA has already pointed out the decreasing subsidies for farmers' education, the low ambition on skills delivery in starter courses, the difficult accessibility and affordability of high education and life-long training classes as</p>	<p>Tailored advisory services</p> <p>Specialised training in agricultural technology</p> <p>Mentorship and knowledge exchange networks (AKIS)</p>

¹⁸ CEJA (2023) *Access to Land: Are we loosing the European plot?* February 2023 ([here](#))

<p>well as the suboptimal bridges with research, reinforced with nonformal methods to acquire knowledge.</p>	<p>Support for digitalisation</p>
<p>LONG TERM SUPPORT, PROSPECTS, PREDICTABILITY</p> <p>Farming is a high-risk, capital-intensive sector that requires years of planning, investment, and resilience, therefore a safety net in terms of income.</p>	<p>Support to young farmers organisations</p>
	<p>Training courses for young farmers</p>
	<p>Direct payment top-up for Young Farmers (CISYF – see part 1.2.2.2)</p>

Table of content

Executive summary	1
Introduction	3
<i>Why do we need a CAP?</i>	3
<i>A renewed architecture</i>	3
<i>Conditionality at Member State level</i>	4
Chapter 1: Young farmers at the core of the future CAP	5
1.1. Young farmers' challenges	6
1.1.1. A well-identified worrying trend	6
1.1.2. A generation full of ideas, projects, and aspirations	6
1.1.3. Barriers to entrepreneurship	6
1.2. Recommendations	7
1.2.1. An increased EU budgetary ambition for young farmers	7
<i>Investing into generational renewal: 10% of the current direct payments</i>	8
<i>The broader use of the young farmers' envelope</i>	9
<i>Budgetary management</i>	9
1.2.2. Unlock, improve and promote existing CAP instruments for young farmers	9
1.2.2.1. <i>General EU framework assessment</i>	9
1.2.2.2. <i>A better use of existing young farmers instruments</i>	10
➤ <i>Mandatory top-up on direct payments for young farmers (CISYF)</i>	10
➤ <i>Well-funded and mandatory installation aid</i>	11
➤ <i>Investment support targeted to young farmers</i>	11
➤ <i>Better uptake of cooperation measures for farm succession</i>	12
➤ <i>Knowledge transfer and training for young farmers</i>	13
1.2.3. A new generational renewal toolbox	13
➤ <i>Farm transmission schemes</i>	14
➤ <i>Business plan testing instrument</i>	14
➤ <i>Risk management for young farmers</i>	14
➤ <i>Climate Diagnosis</i>	14
➤ <i>Support for digitalisation</i>	14
➤ <i>Mediation services</i>	14
1.2.4. Beyond CAP money, stimulation of a broader young-farmer-centric ecosystem	14
➤ <i>Support to young farmers organisations</i>	14
➤ <i>Forthcoming work of the EU Observatory on Farmland</i>	14
➤ <i>Pre-retirement and tax measures to encourage land mobility</i>	15
➤ <i>Better understanding of the EU direction, strategy, figures, targets</i>	15

Chapter 2: A competitiveness agenda for agriculture 16

2.1. Income support: a relevant safety net that needs better distribution	17
2.1.1. A stronger and stricter “active farmer” principle	17
2.1.1.1. <i>A better, harmonised, and enforced definition of active farmer</i>	17
2.1.1.2. <i>Active farmer definition - a prerequisite for the evolution of the CAP</i>	18
2.1.2. Towards a decreased share of income support	18
2.1.3. The distribution of direct payments – pros and cons of distribution methods.....	18
2.1.3.1. <i>The hectare-based distribution</i>	19
2.1.3.2. <i>A minimum payment per farm</i>	19
2.1.3.3. <i>Rewarding of positive environmental externalities</i>	20
2.1.4. Direct payment top-ups.....	21
2.1.4.1. <i>A higher top-up support for young farmers</i>	21
2.1.4.2. <i>Top-ups for disadvantaged areas</i>	21
2.1.4.3. <i>Top-ups for certain productions</i>	21
2.1.4.4. <i>Top-up for socio-economic externalities</i>	21
2.2. Risk management as a stronger priority	21
2.2.1. The need for risk management...in a world becoming uninsurable	21
2.2.2. On-farm tools to cover normal risks.....	22
2.2.3. Subsidised tools from the CAP and national frameworks to cover marketable or insurable risks.....	22
2.2.4. Investigate counter cyclical instruments.....	23
2.2.5. Catastrophic risks and crisis response	23
2.3. Young farmers’ competitiveness and investment capacity	24
2.3.1. The competitiveness of EU young farmers.....	24
2.3.2. Investment support	24
2.3.3. Competitiveness through farmers' knowledge and skills	25
2.4. Market regulation	26

Chapter 3: A reinvented green architecture 28

3.1. Assessment of green conditionality	29
3.1.1. Benefits.....	29
3.1.2. Disadvantages.....	29
3.2. Simplification and streamlining of environmental legislation	30
3.3. Viable voluntary measures	31
3.3.1. Eco-schemes	31
3.3.2. AECMs	31
3.3.3. A pathway to better, incentivising, voluntary measures	32
3.3.4. Additional tools in the CAP toolbox: green investments, knowledge exchange and cooperation measures	33

Chapter 4: A social and territorial contract34

4.1. A social CAP without overlapping Member States' duties 35

4.1.1. Numerous challenges with multi-level responsibilities..... 35

4.1.2. The risks of extending actions at EU level..... 36

4.2. Rural development..... 36

4.3. Social conditionality 37

Work methodology..... 38

Annex 1 – Objectives and future CAP instruments for young farmers and generational renewal. .
..... 39

Table of content..... 41



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