

# Review of the implementation of EU-FAS policy in Member States of EU- Czech Republic

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## I- Executive summary

**Introduction – general overview of EU-FAS implementation:** The EU-FAS was built in times of slow formation of FAS after decades of centrally planned knowledge transfer, which was ceased in 1990. Requirement to implement EU-FAS (initially for cross-compliance implementation) triggered design and implementation of advisors accreditation system; hence the impact on institutional framework was significant. After Council Regulation No. 1782/2003 was issued, strategies for FAS was adopted at the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA). Advisors are accredited in several rather broad areas (plant and animal production, optimisation of business, organic farming, agriculture and nature/landscape management, use of farm produce for energy production, soil management, farm buildings, production technologies and mechanisation, forestry, and plant protection). 200 advisors are accredited (it is regarded as low number), the number is declining.

**“Boundaries” of EU-FAS implementation:** Ministry of Agriculture is in charge of the EU-FAS and implement relevant strategies, design and implement schemes for knowledge transfer supported from national and EU resources. In current programming period only M01 is implemented under Pillar II, thus advice is supported from national budget in form of helpdesk on telephone. Under Pillar I there is supported dissemination of information on the cross-compliance requirements and standards mainly in form of seminars and demonstration farms, through online decision support tools, booklets and other media.. The advice provision across the priority areas: cross-compliance, practices beneficial for the climate and environment, Water Directive covered well, much less are covered farm modernisation and Pesticide Directive. The training (M01) is provided by seminar format or field days/demonstration farms. The advice is expected to be provided as individual advice on/off farm. Given the small size of country, EU-FAS is implemented at national level.

**“Identity” of advisors service providers:** Only individual advisors are accredited, hence if advisory organisation or farming association intend to apply for advice provision support (when this measures is implemented), it should have in staff or hire accredited advisor.

**“Control” of the quality of the services:** The enforcement of the institutions is based mainly on the selection criteria (identities of supplier) and training obligations, but the ex-post advice quality checks is weak and rules/tools agreed in the monitoring are nearly not used (e.g. questioning farmers). The same applies to the quality checks in case of training supported under RDP.

**“Attributes” of the service:** No deep evaluation of advisory services was done yet. There is some form of networking – advisors have Advisory chamber with mission of protecting its members and farming communities by provision of information. Accredited advisors have to attend some minimum training each year.

**“Financing”:** M02 is not implemented this programming period, only M01. The gap is partly covered by support of helpdesk from national resources.

**Effectiveness of EU FAS:** no assessment is provided in this period, because the advice is not supported, hence the evaluation was provided on the previous period. Indirect assessment is therefore provided showing the back-office effort in advisors training. The training is quite intensive especially in areas of Nitrate Directive, GAECs (especially GAEC5) and Agri-environmental-climatic measure and less intensive in the other areas.

## II- Extensive description of the implementation of the EU-FAS in Czech Republic

### A) Introduction – General overview about the EU-FAS implementation

Context: there is rather low trust in Czech society as a result of decades of communism which is mirrored also in the FAS development. It influences cooperation between farmers, which is very low (in contrast to situation before World War II) and even support for collaborative actions does not help short term (e.g. low number of supported cooperative actions under RDP). Centrally planned economy led to development of industrial farming associated with large farms/fields, using large machinery and managed usually well trained managers (e.g. in many cases university education) capable reading scientific articles. After 1990 some large farms were split to family farms, these represent about ¼ of the agricultural land.

Advisory service went through quite turbulent times from 1990s. Before 1990 there was centralised system of science findings dissemination in agriculture and this system was fully abandoned in 1990. In early 1990s new type of advisory system was initiated to facilitate change of ownership and to help in business planning to new or transforming farm enterprises (Advisory programmes DIGIT I and DIGIT II, 1997-1998). The first strategic document “Conception of farm advisory services” was issued by Ministry of Agriculture in 1999. After the EU accession the Czech AKIS was adjusted to relevant EU legislation and in period 2007-2013 the support of advice provision was provided by RDP relying on the advisors certification system. Currently (programming period 2014-2020) the support is not provided by RDP, but the certification system is still in operation and new advisory strategic document was launched for period 2017-2025. The number of certified advisors decreased from 300 (previous programming period) to 202 in this period.

Advisors are accredited for following advice areas – scope of advice accreditation:

- Agriculture: plant production, animal production, optimisation of farm business, organic farming, agriculture and nature and landscape protection, use of the farm produce for energy production, soil management, farm buildings, production technology and mechanisation.
- Forestry.
- Plant protection: in agriculture, in forestry.

Current strategic document (Conception of advisory system for 2017-2025<sup>1</sup>) distinguishes three forms of advice:

1. Consultation (on telephone, e-mails, personal, on spot, web based) usually provided by research institutes/universities, farmers associations, and institutions governed by Ministry of Agriculture.
2. Individual advice provision (advisors accredited as individuals, accredited for particular advice area)
3. Specific advice provision. Usually provided research organisation using results of research.

The national support is in place to support of 1. Consultations and 2. Specific advice provision but not the 2. Individual advice provision. The national support also target demo-farms, providing field days and similar events. EU-FAS played an important role in the support of implementation and institutional framework creation for the advisory system. Mentioned strategic documents and the Ministry Directive related to accreditation of advisors were initiated by Council Regulation No. 1782/2003 and were designed to be in harmony with the Regulation. The amendments of the accreditation rules were carried also in line with later EU legislation (current Ministry Directive in line with Council Regulation

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of agriculture, Praha 2016.

No. 73/2009). The institutional framework allows for accreditation in defined quite broad areas and requires from accredited advisors to attend at least once a year training event provided by state. With the support not renewed in this programming period the accreditation suffers declining advisors numbers. Advisors are also involved in supported education/information spreading events (usually seminars) for farmers, foresters and food processors (supported under RDP as M01).

## B) “Boundaries” of the implementation of the EU-FAS regulation

The main difference between previous and current period is that in previous period was advice provision (in a sense of “individual” advice provision, see above the meaning) supported under RDP measure but in current period it is not. The effect is considerable and it is decrease of accredited advisors as the accreditation is the condition to receive support under RDP. The individual advice provision is not support neither from national sources. There is limited knowledge about the rest of advisors who are not accredited (neither number nor their specialisation). The accreditation process of advisors did not change significantly. Geographical boundaries: The policy is implemented on the national level. Regarding coverage of the mandatory or voluntary areas in advice provision under EU-FAS it should be mentioned again that currently there is no individual advice support (both from national and RDP sources) and therefore it is not possible also to indicate who provides particular advice on what topic and how much. The only is possible to show the accreditation of particular areas. To explain further the accredited are individual advisors, not organisations, therefore it is not possible to indicate particular advice provider in the table.

### Scope of EU-FAS advice support

It needs to be pointed out, that after the previous period, when the individual advice provision was supported under RDP, currently the individual advice provision is not supported from RDP. Only introductory/one off advice (e.g. on telephone) is supported but from national sources. The only way how the EU-FAS scope is covered is by targeted accreditation of advisers for defined advice areas (mentioned above).

**Table 1: Numbers and areas of advisors accredited**

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017
Plant production	92	91	76	75
Animal production	71	68	59	59
Optimisation of enterprise economics	26	23	18	18
Organic farming	33	31	25	23
Farming and nature/landscape protection	18	17	17	16
Agricultural produce as source of energy	7	7	6	6
Soil management	52	51	53	52
<b>Agriculture total</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>155</b>

<b>Plant protection in agriculture</b>	20	20	19	20
<b>Plant protection in forestry</b>	1	1	1	1
<b>Plant protection total</b>	21	21	20	21
<b>Forestry</b>	47	47	43	41
<b>Advisors total</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>207</b>

Nb.: the total numbers are not result of summing of the advisors from particular areas as some advisors are accredited in more than one area.

Source: UZEI 2019<sup>2</sup>

In the table below it is indicated in which area there is training of accredited advisors and emphasis expressed in effort in the training (priority). At the same time to fill the gap in advice provision (individual advice is not supported), RDP supports Training under M01 and there are these areas/topics also supported with the same emphasis and simple advice (e.g. simple answer to one question on telephone called “general or informative advice”) is supported by national resources.

When different providers of advice are mentioned it means that either individuals provide the advice or organisations have individually accredited advisor as part of their staff, or hire independent accredited advisor for the service (because organisations are not accredited, individuals only).

**Table 2: Information about which kind of advisory suppliers were selected to cover the various domains of cross-compliance** (Priority: 3=highest priority, 1=lowest priority)

<i>Scope of EU-FAS</i>		<i>Accredited supplier Individuals</i>	<i>Research bodies,</i>	<i>Farmers representatives and Platforms</i>	<i>Priority</i>
<i>Mandatory</i>	<b>(a) CROSS-COMPLIANCE Standards for Good agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAEC)</b>	<i>X Accredited advisors provide advice and training</i>	<i>X Accredited advisors provide advice and training</i>	<i>X Accredited advisors provide advice and training</i>	<i>Very well covered (3)</i>
	<b>(b) PRACTICES BENEFICIAL FOR THE CLIMATE AND THE ENVIRONMENT (chap. 3 – Reg. No 1307/2013) Crop diversification, Permanent Grassland, Ecological areas</b>	<i>X Advisors are trained and provide further training to farmers</i>	<i>X Advisors are trained and provide further training to farmers</i>	<i>X Advisors are trained and provide further training to farmers</i>	<i>Well covered (2)</i>
	<b>(c) FARM MODERNISATION,</b>	<i>x Limited training</i>	<i>x Limited training</i>	<i>x Limited training</i>	<i>Very limited</i>

<sup>2</sup> UZEI (2019). Podkladove analyzy pro přípravu SZP v programovém období 2021+: průřezový cíl – Přenos znalostí (Supporting analysis for CAP design for programming period 2021+: Cross-cutting objective – Knowledge transfer). Praha (nepublikováno).

	Competitiveness, Market, Entrepreneurship				coverage (1-2)
	<b>(d) WATER DIRECTIVE</b> Article 11(3) of directive 2000/60/EC	X Accredited advisors provide advice and training	X Accredited advisors provide advice and training	X Accredited advisors provide advice and training	Well covered (2)
	<b>(e) PESTICIDE DIRECTIVE</b> Good practices for pesticide use & Integrated pest management. Article 11(3) of Directive 2000/60/EC and article 14 of directive 2009/128/EC	- (Provided mainly by suppliers, not by independent advisors)	-	-	Not covered sufficiently (1)
Optional	<b>(a) DIVERSIFICATION OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES</b> and conversion of farms (to organic farming??)	-	-	-	Very limited (1)
	<b>(b) RISK MANAGEMENT</b> Vis-à-vis natural disasters; catastrophic events, animal & plant diseases	-	-	-	Very limited (1)
	<b>(c) AGRI-ENVIRONMENTAL SCHEMES &amp; ORGANIC FARMING</b> Articles 28(3) and 29(2) of Regulation No 1305/2013			X (Some advice is provided)	Well covered (2)
	<b>(d) INFORMATION related to CLIMATE CHANGE, BIODIVERSITY, WATER</b>	X Accredited advisors provide advice and training	X Accredited advisors provide advice and training	X Accredited advisors provide advice and training	Not covered sufficiently (1-2)

Table 1 – the different domains defining the scope of the EU-FAS (o Reg. (EU) No 1306/2013 Art. 12)

### Targeting of advice to specific groups of farmers

There is not specific target group of farmers for advice provision. Indirectly when the farmers' association is supported to provide advice (e.g. on telephone), it is targeted to the farmers represented by this particular farmers' association (e.g. association of individual farmers represents only family farmers), but this is not caused by intentional targeting.

**Table 3: The table shows the original planned budget per priority area in RDP in 2015 (now there is no budget for M02)**

Priority	P1 Knowledge transfer & innovation			P2 Competitiveness		P3 Food chain & risk management		P4 Ecosystems management		P5 Resource efficiency & climate				P6 Social inclusion & local development							
Focus Area	1A - Innovation & cooperation	1B - Links with research & innovation	1C - Lifelong learning & vocational training	2A - Farm's performance, restructuring & modernisation	2B - Entry of skilled/younger farmers	2C - Forestry	3A - Agri-food chain integration & quality	3B - Risk prevention & management	4A - Biodiversity's restoration, preservation & enhancement	4B - Water management	4C - Soil erosion & soil management	5A - Water use efficiency	5B - Energy use efficiency	5C - Renewable sources & waste management	5D - Greenhouse gas & ammonia emissions	5E - Carbon conservation & sequestration	6A - Diversification & job creation	6B - Local development	6C - ICT - information & communication technologies	Total	Planned expenditure (million EUR)
M01 - Knowledge transfer & information actions				22%	2%	2%	12%		62%							1%				100%	3.3
M02 - Advisory services				15%					85%											100%	4.5

Source: ENRD (2015). 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme: Key facts & figures – Czech Republic. Downloaded from: [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rural-development-policy-figures/rdp-summaries\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rural-development-policy-figures/rdp-summaries_en)

The planned budget under M02 for priority 2A was 666667 EURO and for priority 4 (Ecosystem management) 3804311 EURO.

The M02 was not finally implemented and the budget was transferred to M01.

### Methods and content of advisory services

The “Conception of farm advisory services” (MoA 2009) defines three forms of advice: general/informative advice as a response to question (e.g. on telephone), individual advice provision and professional/specialised and group advice provision aimed at transfer of research outputs to farming. This document is focused mainly to the individual advice provision (according to the national definitions), which is defined as service, which is needed for help with more complex issues, where it is needed to go deeper to the problem, than can be provided by general/informative and professional/specialised advice. The main aim of this service is in support of sustainable businesses in relation to environment, climate adaptation, support of competitiveness and innovation adoption support.

The advisory methods are defined in the relevant official documents only for the general/informative advice (e.g. seminars, workshops, demonstration farms, excursions and field days). For the professional/specialised and group advice provision there are defined the outputs of research as relevant means of the research transfer to praxis (e.g. publications, new varieties, methodologies) and also seminars, workshop, excursions and field days. These could be provided by research institutions, MoA employees and farmers associations. For the individual advice (the most relevant for AgriLink project) there is no definition of the methods.

**The costs of the service** is not regulated because there is no public support (initially was based on the 1500 EURO ceiling provided by relevant EU Regulation).

As mentioned in previous sections, the advice is not targeted to specific group of farmers/foresters. The aim was to put most of the budget to the nature protection area, but because the support was not implemented the targeting to particular topic is not relevant.

### C) “Identity” of the suppliers selected for the implementation of the EU-FAS regulation

#### Definition of advisory service suppliers

In general the provider of individual advice (for definition see sections above) could be individual advisor (self-employed), advisory organisation, farmers association, research/education institutions

(e.g. research institutes and universities). In case they would like to apply for public support (which is not now available), the advice should be provided by certified advisor (only individuals are certified, not organisations), who can be individual, staff of advisory organisation or staff of research/education institutions or farmers' association.

There is not definition of advisory service in case of individual advice provision (see previous sections for details).

Because the advisory services support was not implemented under RDP there were not selected any organisations for EU-FAS advice. As indicated above (see table 1) there are certified individual advisors who are certified for relevant EU-FAS topics. They are mostly individual advisors (self-employed) and just a few of them are also employees of some advisory organisation.

As a typology we can identify mostly **independent advisors**, small number of the certified advisors are staff of **farming association** or providing service for them based on contract, and some accredited advisors are part of **advisory organisations** (also relatively small number).

#### D) “Control” of the quality of the services implemented under the EU-FAS regulation

EU-FAS has two ways of implementation (training and advice provision) and because the EU-FAS topics are quite broad it is difficult to distinguish that from other subjects of information provision (e.g. general environmental topics).

Concerning **training** (supported by M01) there is not strong monitoring. There are questionnaires at the end of training events used to collect feedback from participants, but this is regarded as rather weak control mechanism (interviewees). Also selection process of training providers is in several cases quite weak and it is quite easy to comply with the selection criteria.

#### **Advice provision: Accreditation of individual advice providers**

Service suppliers are accredited according to Directive issued by Ministry of Agriculture (next. MoA) and the Directive sets the rules for accreditation.

Advisors accreditation has aim to ensure the accredited advisors has competences and knowledge in following areas (Ministry of Agriculture, 2013<sup>3</sup>):

- Cross-compliance (SMR and GAECs).
- Agricultural operations favourable to climate and environment.
- Requirements or measures for:
  - o climate change adaptation and farmland management,
  - o biodiversity,
  - o soil management,
  - o water protection,
  - o sustainable farm management of small holdings,
- Czech legislation
- Work safety based on legislation.

#### **Competences and education of advisors**

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<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Agriculture (2013). Directive about advisors accreditation and their Register. Praha (in line with Council Regulation No. 73/2009 and Council Regulation No. 74/2009)

The advisor should provide following documents for agriculture proving:

- professional qualification in given accreditation area (e.g. agriculture)
- finished university degree
- finished middle school
- lengths of practical experience (provide employer of is based on business certificate document if advisor is self-employed).

For forestry the document should cover:

- finished university degree in forestry
- finished middle school in forestry
- professional qualification in given accreditation area
- lengths of practical experience (provide employer of is based on business certificate document related to forestry if advisor is self-employed).

For plant protection area:

- professional qualification and praxis according to § 85 Law No. 326/2004 Coll. about plant protection.
- Certificate on the praxis lenght (minimum 3 years).
- lengths of practical experience (provide employer of is based on business certificate document related to plant protection if advisor is self-employed).

Professional qualification is based on examination provided by authorised bodies (e.g. universities) and this should be carried out before the accreditation process to allow presenting relevant certificate to accreditation board. This process is quite demanding and of high quality.

### **The accreditation process:**

Accreditation board carry out introductory interview with applicant to decide to accept her/him to the accreditation process. Approves the applicant competences related to the advice area. And decide whether to provide accreditation to applicant based on test results and examination carried out by the board.

The test knowledge covers: professional knowledge in given advice area, carrying out the basic evidence of the enterprise of farm/forest business, knowledge in CAP and Czech national policies related to farming and forestry, knowledge in Cross-compliance, rules limiting land management, competence in work with databases and IT systems in agriculture/forestry, work safety rules.

After successful test the applicant draft an accreditation project related to specific advisory sub-area (see table 1). The project is assessed by two reviewers and the applicant defends the project in front of the accreditation/examination board. If all steps are successful the applicant is added to the advisors register. The applicant sign affirmation of his administrative and technical capacities to provide advice (e.g. PC, printing possibilities, internet access) and sign the Ethical codex before he/she is put to Register. Applicant has to pay a fee for the accreditation process.

The accredited advisors have following duties (MoA Directive on the accreditation process, 2013):

- To provide advice in accredited area (based on written contract with client).
- To offer a service to client based on Cross-compliance and Czech legislation check-list.
- To elaborate detailed report on the service with recommendations. Keeping the record in confidence. Asking the client for written approval of the report acceptance, which is the part of advisors "Day-book". The responsibilities division is part of the written contract.

- To carry out records in the “Advisors Day-book” (the lay-out is provided) with description of the services.
- To provide all records of the service provided and the Day-book to the Register administrator<sup>4</sup> for checks.
- Avoiding the conflict of interest and providing the service by him/her self.
- Provide advice at least once a year.
- Participate on the advisors training at least once a year (but because a minimum credits should be collected usually they visit 2-3 training events).
- On request of Register administrator provide in advance timing of the planned services and the expected date of the advice outputs.

As an context: the minimum activity for demonstration farm is at least two open days per year, for group advice it is minimum 10 people per year.

Accreditation is valid for 5 five years in case all conditions are met (e.g. one service provided per year as minimum, training visited and minimum credits collected). After that re-accreditation should be carried out.

Call for tender was considered for the advice provision support and this requirement (call for tenders) was one of the reasons, why the M02 was not implemented finally (difficult to carry out in Czech institutional environment). So the only selection procedure is the certification process.

**Concerning the back office**, the training requirements are one of the duties of accredited advisor. He should collect a minimum credits from training events (covering the advice area of particular advisor). Register administrator (UZEI) attributes particular number of credits to different training events and finally count the credits. Advisors should collect also certificates of attendance of the training events. UZEI follow the numbers of credits for each advisor.

The networking requirements are not part of the duties of the advisors. There are not more requirements like knowledge base/platforms/ICT use, but some of them are part of accreditation process (e.g. ICT capacity).

### **Requirements in terms of monitoring of services**

The procedure is described in the MoA Directive on the accreditation. Detailed rules are in Appendices of the Directive: Ethical code, Rules for monitoring and quality control, Rules associated with training and credits associated with particular training type, Day-book form, Board principles and rules of work during the accreditation process and other administrative documents. The body responsible for monitoring of service is Register administrator (Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information - ÚZEI). ÚZEI can ask for help relevant research institutes or MoA staff. The set of Rules for the Advisors control advisors receive them together with accreditation certificate. Advisors should carry out record of the service provided (Day-book) and have it ready for inspections. Also outputs of advice and contract with beneficiary should be ready for inspection. The monitoring of the advisor performance could be also carried out as a questionnaire survey among clients. If rules are not complied with, the board can decide to take out the advisor from the register. In case of dispute MoA is the authority to take decision (kind of conflict resolution rules). Interviewees expressed opinion the quality control mechanism is rather weak (advisor, Register administrator).

The important difference to the first period of EU-FAS implementation was in support of advisory provision, because it was supported in previous period while in current it is not. Till 2011 there were

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<sup>4</sup> The Register administrator is UZEI (Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information, Praha)

2-3 state advisors per NUTZ 3 level under Research institute of plant production and Research institute of animal production (coordinated by Institute of agricultural and food information - ÚZPI). Most of these advisors became private advisor by 2011 and ÚZPI merged with Research Institute of Agricultural Economics and formed UZEI. The previous Directive (issued 2008) was nearly the same as current Directive with mostly minor changes in specialised areas and minimum number of services per year (from 2013). Only substantial change was that applicants for accreditation should pass professional qualification exam at the Czech Agricultural University in Prague (which is quite demanding) before applying for accreditation.

#### E) “Attributes” of the services implemented under the EU-FAS regulation

There are no official reports describing the real outputs of the EU FAS advice provision and because there is no financial support of advice provision there is no data source to report that.

In terms of networking; several advisors take part in the Advisory chamber. The main mission of the Advisory chamber is to support and protect its members and farming community by provision of information (e.g. organising seminars, helping in quick and easy to resolve situations by providing information to farmers); (source, Advisory chamber web-site: <http://kzpcr.cz>). But the main source of advice provision is individual advisors (the Chamber website name 34 advisors participating with chamber activities). The newest seminars announced at the website are related to 2018. The members meet about four times a year.

There are other groups of advisors linked to particular professional associations, such as oil crops association, fruit growing farmers or advisors working for particular farmers representative (e.g. Agricultural chamber or Farmers association).

In terms of back office: the main sources are training seminars for advisors supported by educational documents produced for particular topic. As mentioned above the training events cover the key topics corresponding to advisors area of accreditation. Every advisor should attend at least one seminar a year but in most cases more than that because they should collect minimum credits by attending those seminars as a condition of accreditation. The main topics correspond to the main topics under EU FAS: cross-compliance, pesticides use, work safety, climate/environmental topics, diversification, risk management, agri-environmental measure, water Directive, biodiversity, water and climate. But the intensity of training differs in these topics (see table2). The seminars are supported by quite a lot of books and booklets and about 30-50 pages long syllabus (usually on each seminar).

The high level of farmers education, the large size of farms (allowing to have specialists) and lack of advisors led to development of web based tools as an important source of knowledge transfer.

Farmers get high number of brochures on key EU-FAS topics (available on websites of MoA, Paying agency and research institutes/Universities. There are online web based advisory tools such as:

- Erosion calculator (farmers can calculate erosion on their plots),
- organic matter calculator,
- decision support tool for Nitrate sensitive zones (based on LPIS platform, specific to each field),
- fertilisers use accounting tool,
- cross-compliance checklist.

In addition Central Institute for Supervising and Testing in Agriculture has on its website Phytosanitary portal as a part of NAP (National Plan for Pesticides).

## F) “Financing” of the services implemented under the EU-FAS regulation

The M02 was not implemented and intentional budget was presented in previous section. The budget was shifted to M01. Therefore the section 2.1 and 2.2 is not elaborated.

## III- Effectiveness of EU-FAS

There are not any reports assessing the EU-FAS effectiveness. As mentioned in previous sections the mostly covered are GAECs and SMRs, especially related to Water/Nitrate Directive, soil protection, agri-environmental topics including Agri-environmental measure. Some topics are covered not so well or nearly not at all (e.g. risk management, pesticide management, diversification, competitiveness).

### A) Facts and figures about EU-FAS implementation

It was possible to assess the farmers’ access to advisory services in the previous programming period, but not in current (2013-2020), because there is no support of advice and hence no statistics of advice provision to farmers.

Therefore only situation in the previous programming period (2007-2013) could be described<sup>5</sup>. The support of advisory services was in the previous programming period targeted mainly to cross-compliance to meet the requirements of Council Regulation No. 73/2009. It was compulsory to include cross-compliance topics to any service supported by RDP (M 114). As a result advisors reported that they payed attention to cross-compliance during provision of the service in 85-90 % of services provided.

The target (7000 farmers to be reached by the advice support) was achieved by 59 % (4140 farms) and this group of farms represented about 10% of all farms. Farmers up to 50 ha were not reached sufficiently (only 4 % of all farms up to 50 ha), but about 43 % of farms above 1000 ha benefited from advice support. The distribution of supported advice was quite uneven also across NUTZ 3.

About 90 % of respondents (farmers and foresters) mentioned that the knowledge transfer was carried out in some way and 80 % stated that there has been some effect as a result. Beside cross-compliance the effort in advice provision on climate, water protection and innovation was quite low.

### B) In-depth analysis of one domain

The effect of EU-FAS is despite some gaps significant, because it contributed to the creation of the institutional set up for advice provision, its targeting and ensuring quality (training). But still the capacity of advisor has gaps in topics and in numbers (personal capacities). Therefore from the structural point of view it is regarded as not effective. Also some advisory methods are not covered sufficiently; therefore several aspects of advisory process are not well covered (e.g. advisory soft skills such as facilitation, leadership supporting strategies creation, conflict resolution support, farmers’ cooperation support). It means also process effectiveness has significant gaps. Both types of effectiveness gaps are partly stemming from relatively short history of advisory system development

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<sup>5</sup> Source: Ex-post evaluation of RDP 2007-2013. Ministry of Agriculture, Praha, 2016.

in democratic society after the previous centrally planned system was abandoned (source: analysis carried out for CAP design for period 2020-2027 for Ministry of Agriculture, not published).

The outcomes of the EU-FAS could be demonstrated on the Water Directive and other environmental topics in a sense of the training effort. As mentioned above in pesticides domain the information provision is left mainly to input providers and occupational health is required as a basic knowledge during advisors accreditation process.

#### **Water/Nitrate Directive related topics**

This topic is quite well covered by training of advisors, by information provision to farmers on seminars supported by brochures and by web based decision tools and checklists.

The effort in the advisors and farmers training could be demonstrated as follows:

The goals of the advisors training was amended each year and for example in 2019 the main focus were changes in implementation of Nitrate Directive as part of cross-compliance, explanations of the Government Decree on revised Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) and new Action program for NVZs.

Second group of topics were amendments of the RDP measures and their implementation related to nitrates issues and especially to Nitrate Directive.

The main part of advisors was composed from specialists in plant production. Trainers came from Research Institute of Plant Production and Ministry of Agriculture staff.

**Table 4: Effort in training advisors**

Year	Number of seminars	Trained advisors
2015	40	
2016	70	97
2017	35	97
2018	35	85

Source: Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information (UZEI) Praha, figures not published

As supporting documents were disseminated 2000 booklets, of which : «Methods of farming in NVZs (1000) » and « Methods of right manure storage on land – second amended edition » (500), « Methods of use of waters coming from different technologies » (500). These were issued in 2017 and as second edition in 2018 (the same numbers).

**Table 5: Effort in training farmers in Nitrate Directive matters**

Year	Trained farmers
2015	2423
2016	3059
2017	1261

2018	1171
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Source: Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information (UZEI) Praha, figures not published

### Qualitative assessment of the FAS effects in Nitrate Directive implementation

Implementation of Nitrate Directive rules in NVZs is supported also by online portal where farmers can see the needed management and limitations on each field and which is specific to the local conditions (based on LPIS platform). The tool provides also additional functions supporting farmers decision making regarding compliance to Nitrate Directive.

In past quite massive information campaign was carried out to bring knowledge about the Nitrate Directive principles and rules (e.g. several publications and number of seminars across the country in early stages of the first Action Plan for NVZs).

When taking into account the effort in information campaign on this issue and quite extensive training of advisors/farmers combined with other advisory or knowledge transfer tools (e.g. online tools, booklets) the effect of EU FAS can be seen as quite significant both from the structural and process effectiveness point of view. Most of the effort was initiated by requirements to start FAS to support farmers compliance to cross-compliance requirements and obligations to to EU legislation. It means without the FAS requirement in the knowledge transfer in this topic could be marginal.

### Erosion prevention

In relation to water protection also erosion prevention topic was subject of training of advisors and farmers (also part of GAEC). Erosion prevention is also one of the requirements of the Action Plan of NVZs, but the FAS on this topic is traditionally developed in relation to GAEC 5 implementation. Advisors were trained to help farmers to work with erosion calculator, «Czech Erosion prevention Directive» and GAEC 5 and its implementation. Related tools are online available and farmers can use them directly on their virtual fields on LPIS. The training of advisors (two days) and later also farmers was carried out at the Research Institute for Soil and Water Conservation on PCs and all could use the tools directly under supervision of the trainers on real plots of farmers (their own fields). The training was carried out also in regions in advance to the single application for CAP support (where relevant declarations of soil management on sensitive soils is needed).

**Table 6: Effort in training advisors in erosion prevention matters**

Year	Number of seminars	Trained advisors
2017	70	98
2018	80	58

Source: Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information (UZEI) Praha, figures not published

**Table 7: Effort in training farmers in erosion prevention matters**

Year	Trained farmers
2017	1158
2018	1232

Source: Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information (UZEI) Praha, figures not published

**AECM:** The training was provided to advisors also in agri-environmental-climatic measure (AECM) topics to support its delivery and hence effectiveness. The training on the meaning and purpose of each scheme, principles of payment calculation in AECM and Organic farming support schemes was provided to 43 advisors in 2018 and they had to pass the test of the knowledge gained at the end.

## IV- Discussion

EU FAS implementation requirement came in time of slow new born of FAS in the Czech Republic, after decades of centrally planned/coordinated knowledge transfer which was ceased in 1990. Therefore advisors were at that time in numbers and professional competences focused mainly to those areas, in which farmers were willing to pay the service. Given the size of farms and education of their managers the demand was (and still is) quite low given also low trust in such source of knowledge (part of social context of the Czech society).

The EU FAS had a considerable impact to the FAS regime in Czech Republic. The requirement to start EU FAS to support implementation mainly cross-compliance and several areas in legislation initiated design and implementation of accreditation system with several rules defining who and with which competences may receive public support for advice provision in those areas. At the same time strategies for knowledge transfer including FAS strategy were designed in relevant period. EU FAS requirements and targeting are integrated in these documents. The enforcement of the institutions is based mainly on the selection criteria (identities of supplier) and training obligations, but the ex-post advice quality checks is weak and rules/tools agreed in the monitoring of the advice provision are nearly not used (e.g. questioning farmers). The same applies to the quality checks in case of training supported under RDP.

The effort in the priority areas of EU FAS is not balanced, some of them are covered quite well (e.g. Nitrate Directive, Erosion prevention under GAEC 5) and advisors are trained in relevant topics systematically and in periods of time when advisors were supported by RDP the support was tailored to them. But in this programming period without RDP support of advisors, the effort is limited in a sense of numbers of advice provision regarding priority areas (e.g. cross-compliance) and the effort stayed only with training of advisors in those areas or is not known (no statistics when no support in place). Training of farmers is carried out on selected cross-compliance topics.

There are priority topics which are left to market and the public effort is lower (e.g. advice in competitiveness, pesticides use, or partly also in health safety at work).

Another effect is growing awareness in relevant areas, to which the EU FAS is targeted, in farmers' community and also public administration, which were not a main focus before EU accession (e.g. "public goods topics" like environmental issues and animal welfare).

When considering the effectiveness of EU FAS, the knowledge transfer support currently prefers mass methods like internet, seminars with high number of attendees, online tools supporting decision making and similar ways. There are signals that the seminars and other group activities of knowledge transfer reached its saturation level and farmers reports there is too many of such events (analysis for the new CAP Strategic document for Ministry of Agriculture, not published). On the other hand farmers report that individual advice provision represents a small proportion of ways how to get information – i.e. the demand for advice provision is rather small and is in contrast to actual need of agriculture and forestry (which is much bigger).

Czech FAS has in general two types of gaps: 1. personal capacities - there is not sufficient number of advisors; and 2. in particular topics or arenas. There are gaps in the capacities of advisors to provide advice to facilitate changes on farms with high level of complexity (e.g. in farm restructuring in all aspects), to facilitate cooperation (e.g. advisors not trained for relevant skills and have a limited experience in such work), to help in conflict resolution and other social type of skills (analysis for the new CAP Strategic document for Ministry of Agriculture, not published). These general conditions influence finally the effectiveness of implementation of EU FAS.

But there is awareness that the individual advice should be supported and enhanced and such support and extended advisors training in missing competences is planned for the next programming period (analysis for the new CAP Strategic document for Ministry of Agriculture, not published).

To complete the picture, some of the gaps in advice provision are partly covered by support of "helpdesk on telephone" from national resources, which also covers to a large extent the priority areas such as cross-compliance. But this does not substitute for the added value of individual advice. The individual advice is in current programming period mostly left to market.

The farm managers on large farms are usually well trained and have personal capacities (e.g. are hired to deal with CAP) to get the large proportion of necessary information directly from websites and other media, but family farmers does not have usually such capacities and are reached much less by seminars and other means of knowledge transfer, than large farms, and this applies to general knowledge transfer and also to EU FAS priority areas.

## Factsheet about FAS assessment in 2014-2020

### Some Key facts about CAP implementation in Czech Republic

- Number of farmers in the country.....	<b>23530 farmers</b>
- Share of 2 <sup>nd</sup> pillar in CAP expenditure.....	<b>36.9%</b>
- Share of Knowledge measures (M01&M02) in the 2nd pillar of CAP.....	<b>0.36%</b>
- Planned expenditure per farmer (M01&M02).....	<b>544 euros / farmer</b>

### Some Key facts about the implementation of the EU-FAS in Czech Republic

#### Pillar one (Regulation n°1782/2003)

#### *Level of application*

Regional  National

#### *Domain selected for the EU-FAS regulation*

##### **Mandatory**

- Cross-compliance
- Payment for environment & climate
- Modernisation
- Pesticides directive
- Water directive

##### **Optional**

- Diversification
- Risk management
- Organic
- Information on climate

#### *Types of suppliers accredited*

##### *Indicate the type of suppliers accredited*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Private independent consultant/firms</b></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> SME or start-ups</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Public extension organisation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> NGO</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Charities</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Chambers of agriculture</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Farmers' rings or associations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Farmers' cooperatives</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Private firms or retailers (inputs/outputs)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bookkeepers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify).....</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

#### *Method required for advisory services*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One to one on the farm | <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone helpdesk |
|--|---|

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One to one outside the farm <input type="checkbox"/> Small group advice on the farm <input type="checkbox"/> Small group outside the farm	<input type="checkbox"/> General information via Internet <input type="checkbox"/> Publication (paper copies) <input type="checkbox"/> No requirement
<b>Conditions required to be accredited for advisory organisation</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Competences of advisors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Training of advisors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Data base	<input type="checkbox"/> Networks <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Monitoring of advice activities <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge platforms
<b>Target public (categories of farmers or farm workers)</b>	
Target group specified..... <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Farms with more than 15000 € direct support <input type="checkbox"/> Smaller farms..... <input type="checkbox"/> Other farms' criteria .....	<input type="checkbox"/> Zoning criteria..... <input type="checkbox"/> Other criteria.....
<b>Pillar Two</b>	
Use of measure M02..... <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
Number of beneficiaries.....	
Average expenditure per farmer.....	
Domain selected <input type="checkbox"/> Cross-compliance <input type="checkbox"/> Payment for environment & climate <input type="checkbox"/> Modernisation <input type="checkbox"/> Pesticides directive <input type="checkbox"/> Water directive <input type="checkbox"/> occupational Health <input type="checkbox"/> Farms setting up for the first time	

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