

Review of the State aid instruments for agriculture, forestry and rural areas

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Introduction

The purpose of the present consultation is to invite public authorities and stakeholders to provide comments on the application of the EU State aid instruments for the agricultural and forestry sectors and for rural areas. The comments will be valuable input for the evaluation and review of those instruments.

An undertaking, which receives public support, gains an advantage over its competitors. Therefore, the Treaty generally prohibits State aid. However, the Commission may authorise State aid under certain conditions, notably for reasons of economic development or market failure. The Commission makes use of guidelines and regulations when assessing the aid in order to ensure that the assessment is transparent, consistent and coherent.

To simplify State aid procedures, the Council has empowered the Commission to adopt block exemption regulations exempting certain categories of aid from the notification requirement. A specific framework of rules has been set up for State aid control in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas. For the period 2014 to 2020 this encompasses the following instruments:

- EU Guidelines for State aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas 2014 to 2020 (the "**Guidelines**");
- Commission Regulation (EU) No 702/2014 declaring certain categories of aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the TFEU (known as the Agricultural Block Exemption Regulation; the "**ABER**")

The validity of the agricultural state aid rules expires on 31 December 2020. Therefore they will be revised in view of establishing new Guidelines and new Block Exemption Regulation for the period 2021-2027.

The questionnaire covers five sections. Section I seeks your opinion on the overall performance of the current State aid rules, on the State aid objectives to be pursued and on the challenges for the future, including simplification possibilities. Sections II, III, and IV concern more specifically State aid issues in relation to, respectively, agriculture, forestry and non-agricultural activities in rural areas. Section V raises the question of whether there is EU added value in having detailed rules to steer the Commission's

monitoring of State aid under the Treaty. Section V also allows you to comment on issues that are not otherwise addressed in the questionnaire.

About you

* Language of my contribution

- ☐ Bulgarian
- ☐ Croatian
- ☐ Czech
- ☐ Danish
- ☐ Dutch
- ☒ English
- ☐ Estonian
- ☐ Finnish
- ☐ French
- ☐ Gaelic
- ☐ German
- ☐ Greek
- ☐ Hungarian
- ☐ Italian
- ☐ Latvian
- ☐ Lithuanian
- ☐ Maltese
- ☐ Polish
- ☐ Portuguese
- ☐ Romanian
- ☐ Slovak
- ☐ Slovenian
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Swedish

* I am giving my contribution as

- ☐ Academic/research institution
- ☐ Business association
- ☐ Company/business organisation
- ☐ Consumer organisation
- ☐ EU citizen
- ☐ Environmental organisation
- ☐ Non-EU citizen
- ☐ Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
- ☒ Public authority
- ☐ Trade union
- ☐ Other

* First name

Mark

* Surname

Quinlan

* Email (this won't be published)

mark.quinlan@agriculture.gov.ie

* Scope

- ☐ International
- ☐ Local
- ☐ National
- ☒ Regional

* Organisation name

255 character(s) maximum

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

* Organisation size

- ☐ Micro (1 to 9 employees)
- ☐ Small (10 to 49 employees)
- ☐ Medium (50 to 249 employees)
- ☒ Large (250 or more)

Transparency register number

255 character(s) maximum

Check if your organisation is on the [transparency register](#). It's a voluntary database for organisations seeking to influence EU decision-making.

* Country of origin

Please add your country of origin, or that of your organisation.

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| <input type="radio"/> Afghanistan | <input type="radio"/> Djibouti | <input type="radio"/> Libya | <input type="radio"/> Saint Pierre and Miquelon |
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- Belize
- Benin
- Bermuda
- Bhutan
- Bolivia
- Bonaire Saint Eustatius and Saba
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Botswana
- Bouvet Island
- Brazil
- British Indian Ocean Territory
- British Virgin Islands
- Brunei
- Bulgaria
- Equatorial Guinea
- Eritrea
- Estonia
- Ethiopia
- Falkland Islands
- Faroe Islands
- Fiji
- Finland
- North Macedonia
- France
- French Guiana
- French Polynesia
- French Southern and Antarctic Lands
- Gabon
- Georgia
- Germany
- Ghana
- Gibraltar
- Greece
- Greenland
- Grenada
- Guadeloupe
- Guam
- Guatemala
- Guernsey
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Heard Island and McDonald Islands
- Malawi
- Malaysia
- Maldives
- Mali
- Malta
- Marshall Islands
- Martinique
- Mauritania
- Mauritius
- Mayotte
- Mexico
- Micronesia
- Moldova
- Monaco
- Mongolia
- Montenegro
- Montserrat
- Morocco
- Mozambique
- Myanmar /Burma
- Namibia
- Nauru
- Nepal
- Netherlands
- New Caledonia
- New Zealand
- Nicaragua
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Niue
- Senegal
- Serbia
- Seychelles
- Sierra Leone
- Singapore
- Sint Maarten
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Solomon Islands
- Somalia
- South Africa
- South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands
- South Korea
- South Sudan
- Spain
- Sri Lanka
- Sudan
- Suriname
- Svalbard and Jan Mayen
- Swaziland
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Syria
- Taiwan
- Tajikistan
- Tanzania
- Thailand
- The Gambia
- Timor-Leste
- Togo

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| <input type="radio"/> Cyprus | <input type="radio"/> Latvia | <input type="radio"/> Saint Helena Ascension and Tristan da Cunha | <input type="radio"/> Yemen |
| <input type="radio"/> Czechia | <input type="radio"/> Lebanon | <input type="radio"/> Saint Kitts and Nevis | <input type="radio"/> Zambia |
| <input type="radio"/> Democratic Republic of the Congo | <input type="radio"/> Lesotho | <input type="radio"/> Saint Lucia | <input type="radio"/> Zimbabwe |
| <input type="radio"/> Denmark | <input type="radio"/> Liberia | <input type="radio"/> Saint Martin | |

* Publication privacy settings

The Commission will publish the responses to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would like your details to be made public or to remain anonymous.

☐ **Anonymous**

Only your type, country of origin and contribution will be published. All other personal details (name, organisation name and size, transparency register number) will not be published.

☒ **Public**

Your personal details (name, organisation name and size, transparency register number, country of origin) will be published with your contribution.

☒ I agree with the [personal data protection provisions](#)

I. General questions

0. To identify what is your interest in State aid, please indicate the stakeholder category to which you belong:

- ☒ Public authority responsible for granting State aid in an EU Member State
- ☐ Beneficiary of aid for the agricultural sector
- ☐ Beneficiary of aid for the forestry sector
- ☐ Beneficiary of aid for non-agricultural activities in rural areas
- ☐ Farmers' organisation
- ☐ Foresters' organisation
- ☐ Undertaking active in downstream sectors to agriculture or forestry
- ☐ NGO or other civil society organisation
- ☐ Academia, think-tank, consultancy or other expertise
- ☐ General public
- ☐ Other

1. Based on your experience, how well have the current State aid rules responded to the following purposes?

	Not at all	To some extent	To a large extent	Fully	Don't know
Useful spending of taxpayers' money	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Market failures addressed	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A level playing field for undertakings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transparent, consistent and coherent handling of State aid cases	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coherence with Rural Development objectives under the CAP (i.e. fostering competitiveness, sustainable management of natural resources and climate action and balanced territorial development)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clear rules	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Legal certainty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Reduction of administrative costs for public authorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reduction of regulatory burdens for aid beneficiaries	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Based on your experience, how coherent are the current State aid rules with other EU policies and legislation?

	Not at all	To some extent	To a large extent	Fully	Don't know
Horizontal State aid instruments	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
EU Cohesion Policy	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
EU Environmental Protection Policy	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
EU 2030 Climate and Energy Framework and the long-term vision for a climate-neutral economy by 2050	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
EU Veterinary and Public Health Policy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
EU Research and Development Policy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
EU Policy on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. From your perspective, how important are the objectives pursued by the granting of State aid?

	No importance	Low importance	Average importance	Very high importance	Don't know
Competitiveness and economic viability of undertakings in the agriculture and forestry sector	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Viable food production	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Socio-economic development in rural areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Growth of the bioeconomy sectors (including food and non-food use)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sustainable forest management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sustainable use of natural resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ecosystem services and biodiversity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Climate change mitigation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Climate change adaptation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Protection of public and animal health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Animal welfare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access to knowledge and new technologies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

4. From your perspective, which are the most important challenges to be addressed by the future State aid rules?

	No importance	Low importance	Average importance	Very high importance	Don't know
Competitiveness, resilience and economic viability of undertakings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jobs and growths in rural areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Generational renewal in rural areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Changes in the production conditions, including technological progress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Market developments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Societal demands on food and health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Avoidance of harmful impacts on environment (water, soil, air etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Biodiversity loss	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and enhancement of carbon sinks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adverse climatic events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Animal diseases	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Plant pests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Damage caused by wild animals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Administrative costs and burdens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Useful spending of taxpayers' money	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

5. The State aid rules set out various conditions that are meant to limit undue distortive effects of aid on the internal market. Based on your experience, how important are the following conditions?

	No importance	Low importance	Average importance	Very high importance	Don't know
Limitation of eligible costs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maximum aid intensities/maximum aid amounts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The form of the aid (e.g. loans or guarantees instead of direct grants)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
For large undertakings, stricter conditions for granting aid as compared to SMEs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
For undertakings active in processing and marketing of agricultural products, stricter conditions for granting investment aid as compared to undertakings active in primary agricultural production	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Based on your experience, what is the potential for simplification under future State aid rules?

	No potential	Low potential	Average potential	Very high potential	Don't know
Clearer rules and definitions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Streamlined approach to interventions included in CAP Strategic Plans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Simplified cost options (i.e. lump sum or flat rate payments)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alignment of maximum aid intensities with Rural Development support rates	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Simplified incentive effect requirements for subsidised services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Simplified approach to aid for cooperation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Simplified approach to aid for local development (LEADER)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Extension of the scope of the ABER to new aid categories	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Higher notification thresholds under the ABER	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

7. What are your specific suggestions for simplification?

1500 character(s) maximum

- Decreasing the time necessary for pre-notification and full notification of schemes would be beneficial. The length of time currently is too long.
The facility to use simplified notification more frequently instead of full notification would alleviate some of the burden associated with renewal of schemes.
Clearer and more transparent rules for what is required for the notifications process and clearer explanation of the "guidelines", some aspects of the guidelines are open to interpretation and this in turn leads further delay with the notification process as clarification is then sought by the Commission.
- State Aid rules should be aligned as closely as possible with other relevant policy instruments, such as the CAP 2021-2027 Regulations. As far as possible, the State Aid rules should not include stricter requirements than the original policy instrument referred to (e.g. CAP 2021-2027).
The scope of the ABER should be extended to include the forestry sector which is not co-financed by the EAFRD, but granted as additional national financing for activities that follow the same regulatory principles underlying the CSP.

Questions 8 to 10 are only for public authorities.

8. a) Based on your experience, how burdensome are the following procedures?

	Not burdensome	Sometimes burdensome	Mostly burdensome	Always burdensome	Don't know
Notifying State aid to the Commission on the basis of the Guidelines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Submitting an information sheet under the ABER	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. b) If possible, please provide estimates of the administrative costs for these two procedures: in working hours/in EUR/in full time employment.

Average number of working hours per notification:

hour(s)

Average cost per notification:

EUR

Average number of working days for a full time employee per notification:

day(s)

Average number of working hours per submission of information sheet under ABER:

hour(s)

Average cost per submission of information sheet under ABER:

EUR

Average number of working days for a full time employee per submission of information sheet under ABER:

day(s)

Number of notifications:

Number of submission of information sheets under ABER:

9. State aid rules must ensure transparency, consistency and equal treatment. At the same time, they must not be overly constraining. The level of detail of state aid rules determines the balance between both aspects. Based on your experience, do you think that the current rules strike the right balance?

- ☐ Right balance
- ☒ Too detailed
- ☐ Too general
- ☐ Don't know

10. Have you ever had difficulties to apply the current State aid rules to certain costs/activities/objectives, which were not explicitly ineligible but which did not fit within the scope of any specific aid category?

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No
- ☐ Don't know

II. Aid for the agricultural sector

Current specific provisions:

Part II, Chapter 1 of the Agricultural State Aid Guidelines

Chapter III, Sections 1 to 3 of the Agricultural Block Exemption Regulation (ABER)

11. Are you, or have you been, a beneficiary of State aid for the agricultural sector?

- ☒ Yes
☐ No

12. Based on your experience, do you agree with the following statements on State aid granted to the agricultural sector under the current State aid rules?

	Agree strongly	Agree	No strong view	Disagree	Disagree strongly
The aid has helped to achieve viable food production.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The aid has fostered competitiveness in the agri-food sector.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The aid has fostered sustainable growth in the agri-food sector.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The aid has helped the development of the bioeconomy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The aid has helped to achieve a sustainable use of natural resources in agriculture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The aid has contributed to climate change mitigation and/or adaptation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The positive effects outweigh the potential distortive effects of the aid on competition and trade in the internal market.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. Regarding State aid for investments in the agricultural sector: Do you have views on what could be the potential distortive effects on competition and intra-EU trade?

- ☒ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't know

If yes, please substantiate and give concrete examples (i.e. did the aid crowd out investments of competitors or attract activity away from neighbouring regions?).

1500 character(s) maximum

- It is important to identify situations where the market itself can address or has the potential to address any failures that might exist.
Economic operators within a MS, in the sector in question must have equal access to any State aid funding that may be on offer.

14. Have you experienced any particular difficulties in complying with the current State aid rules on aid for the agricultural sector?



- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't know

If yes, please substantiate your reply and give concrete examples.

1500 character(s) maximum

- It was difficult to come up with the paperwork from large companies to substantiate the claim that there was an incentive effect. IE sought internal minutes and correspondences to support the position that the economic operator would not have undertaken the action if it wasn't for the State aid.
If there was some other way of verifying the incentive effect to make it easier that would be good. If we could eliminate this requirement that would be better.

15. Based on your experience, would you agree with the following changes to the State aid rules?

	Agree strongly	Agree	No strong view	Disagree	Disagree strongly
No aid shall be granted for purchase of land unless it serves environmental and climate objectives, or installation of young farmers.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The conditions for granting aid for irrigation investments should be better targeted towards protection of water bodies, taking into account projected climate conditions.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The scope for granting aid to prevent, control and eradicate animal diseases and to make good damage should be extended to emerging animal diseases	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Compensation for damage caused by animal diseases or plants pest should cover loss of value of products also where those products are not destroyed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Compensation for damage caused by protected animals should cover indirect costs for damage to plants (such as treatments costs and additional labour costs).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Compensation for damage caused by protected animals should cover indirect income losses (such as reduced production capacity).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

III. Aid for the forestry sector

Current specific provisions:

Part II, Chapter 2, of the Agricultural State Aid Guidelines

Chapter III, Sections 4 to 5 of the Agricultural Block Exemption Regulation (ABER)

16. Are you, or have you been, a beneficiary of State aid for the forestry sector?

- ☐ Yes
☒ No

17. Based on your experience, do you agree with the following statements on State aid granted to the forestry sector under the current State aid rules?

	Agree strongly	Agree	No strong view	Disagree	Disagree strongly
The aid has helped to achieve a viable forest area development.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The aid has helped the development of the bioeconomy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The aid has increased the resilience and protection of forest ecosystems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The aid has contributed to carbon sequestration.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The aid has contributed to the recreational or ecological function of forests.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The positive effects outweigh the potential distortive effects of the aid on competition and trade in the internal market.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. Regarding State aid for forestry investments: Do you have views on what could be the potential distortive effects on competition and intra-EU trade?

- ☒ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't know

If yes, please substantiate and give concrete examples (i.e. did the aid crowd out investments of competitors or attract activity away from neighbouring regions?).

1500 character(s) maximum

- State aid could result in overall prices exceeding the market rate that would be charged in the absence of State aid.
It is important that investors are not overly incentivised in forestry to the extent that investors become dominant at the land sales auctions, as in countries like Ireland, in terms of land availability, increasing farmer engagement is a main requirement for achieving the afforestation targets.

19. Have you experienced any particular difficulties in complying with the current State aid rules on aid for the forestry sector?

- ☒ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't know

If yes, please substantiate your reply and give concrete examples.

1500 character(s) maximum

See Attachment 1 for Question 19

20. Based on your experience, would you agree with the following changes to the State aid rules?

	Agree strongly	Agree	No strong view	Disagree	Disagree strongly
No investment aid should be granted for purchase of land unless it serves environmental and climate objectives.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Investments in afforestation must be consistent with climate and environmental objectives as governed by sustainable forest management principles.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In case of cooperation: The maximum aid intensity for non-productive investments should be 100 % of the eligible costs.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The scope of the ABER should be extended to forestry measures that are currently only covered by the Guidelines.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

IV. Aid for non-agricultural activities in rural areas

Specific provisions:

Part II, Chapter 3, of the Agricultural State Aid Guidelines

Chapter III, Section 6 of the Agricultural Block Exemption Regulation (ABER)

21. Are you, or have you been, a beneficiary of State aid for non-agricultural activities in rural areas?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

22. Based on your experience, do you agree with the following statements on State aid granted in rural areas under the current State aid rules?

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	Agree strongly	Agree	No strong view	Disagree	Disagree strongly
The aid has led to employment and growth in rural areas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The aid has been useful to boost the creation and development of SMEs in rural areas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The aid has strengthened the economic and social fabric in rural areas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The aid has contributed to cultural and recreational activities in rural areas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The positive effects outweigh the potential distortive effects of the aid on competition and trade in the internal market.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. Regarding State aid for the processing of agricultural products into non-agricultural products: Do you have views on what could be the potential distortive effects on competition and intra-EU trade?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

24. Have you experienced any particular difficulties in complying with the current State aid rules on aid for non-agricultural activities in rural areas?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

V. Final

25. Based on your experience, do you agree that there is EU added value in having a common framework of detailed rules for assessing the compatibility of State aid with the internal market?

- ☐ Agree strongly
- ☒ Agree
- ☐ No strong view
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Disagree strongly

26. Do you have other comments than those covered by the previous questions?

3000 character(s) maximum

See Attachment 2 for Question 26

You may attach supporting documents for your replies to the questions above.

The maximum file size is 1 MB

Only files of the type pdf,txt,doc,docx,odt,rtf are allowed

a195fd1d-66b4-4b65-ab94-8697a408f43a/Attachment_1_for_Question_19.docx

bb90a6ad-2b95-46a0-84b1-19e367c8fc4d/Attachment_2_for_Question_26.docx

Useful links

State Aid website (https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/stateaid_en)

Contact

AGRI-STATE-AIDS-CONSULTATION@ec.europa.eu