



Second European *fi-compass* conference on financial instruments under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

Brussels, Friday, 25 November 2016

Programme





Context

The Europe 2020 strategy for growth and jobs called for a stronger role of financial instruments in 2014 - 2020. The European Council subsequently gave a mandate to the European Commission that the programming of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) should be used to significantly increase the overall EU support from these funds to leverage-based financial instruments, in particular for SMEs. An increase of the use of ESIF financial instruments, to a level almost double that of the 2007-2013 programming period, is also set out in the Investment Plan for Europe. To achieve this, the new legal and policy framework has widened the scope of financial instruments to include all thematic objectives and all five ESI funds. The framework also gives more implementation options to Member States.

Within this framework, the European Commission Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) has the objective to increase the use of financial instruments under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) in terms of budget, territorial coverage and types of investment. To support the achievement of this objective, DG AGRI undertook a set of activities such as:

- the setting up, together with other Commission Services responsible for ESIF, the *fi-compass* integrated advisory platform on financial instruments, which provides comprehensive advice and learning opportunities to the benefit of Member States, their Managing Authorities but also for the wider public. The *fi-compass* platform has been set up in partnership with the European Investment Bank (EIB).
- the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the EC and the EIB on co-operation in the field of agriculture and rural development within the EU. This MoU paves the way for closer co-operation between the two institutions in various fields, including financial instruments and research & innovation.

Financial instruments can be co-funded by the EAFRD to support the investment priorities outlined in the Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) of the Member States. They can potentially support the implementation of many measures covered by the EAFRD, provided that they address an identified market gap, i.e. areas where banks are unwilling to lend and/or where the private sector is unwilling to invest or finds access to financing difficult, for instance in young farmers, new agricultural businesses without sufficient credit history or assets as collateral, new technologies and products entering the market, energy and climate efficient investments, etc.

To allow the use of EAFRD resources for financial instruments, Member States have to programme these in their RDPs and implement them in their programme areas. Financial instruments may have various forms (such as loans, guarantees, equity) and cover either all economic sectors supported by the programmes or those parts of them, or types of investments, which face restricted access and/or unfavourable conditions for funding from private resources.



Mr Phil Hogan, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development



Background of the conference

We are pleased to announce the Second EU *fi-compass* conference on financial instruments under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). The aim of the conference is to raise awareness on how financial instruments can help deliver the objectives of the EAFRD, especially in the fields of agriculture and agri-business.

European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Mr Phil Hogan and Mr Jyrki Katainen, European Commission's Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness will open the conference together with Mr Pim van Ballekom, Vice-President, European Investment Bank, Mr Pier Luigi Gilibert, Chief Executive, European Investment Fund and Mr Gabriel Csicsai, State Secretary, Slovak Presidency of the Council of the EU. Following the high-level opening statements, key topics related to financial instruments under the EAFRD will be presented in five sessions by further distinguished speakers.



Audience

The target audience for this conference are:

- EAFRD managing authorities
- Financial institutions directly involved in the design, implementation and promotion of financial instruments established under the EAFRD rural development programmes (RDP) as well as their associations
- Farm unions
- Forestry associations
- Business angels, business associations having rural entrepreneurs as their members
- Agricultural and rural development representatives of EU Member States and regions in Brussels

Also welcome will be:

- Local or (macro-)regionally operating bodies implementing or considering implementing fund of funds
- Financial intermediaries such as banks or specialised agencies
- Capital investors
- Representatives of Local Action Groups, and, if capacity allows
- Final recipients and other actors supporting financial instruments' implementation

Costs

Registration is free. Participants are expected to finance their own travel and accommodation costs. In case of unforeseen circumstances such as force majeure or low participant numbers, the event might be moved to a different date or cancelled. In this case, registered participants will be informed immediately via email. The reimbursement of travel and accommodation expenses or work hours lost will not be possible.



Objectives

The conference will:

- outline the major EU rural development policy objectives in relation to use and implementation of financial instruments under the EAFRD;
- stimulate exchange and discussion on advantages, features, and the general suitability of financial instruments in delivering RDP objectives;
- inform stakeholders about the *fi-compass* advisory platform support to Member States and managing authorities and about further support available from cooperation between the European Commission and European Investment Bank Group for agriculture and rural development.

Venue

Charlemagne Building, European Commission
Rue de la Loi 170, Brussels, Belgium

> [How to get here](#)

Language

Simultaneous translation will be ensured from and to all EU official languages.

Registration

The deadline for registration is Tuesday, **22 November 2016**. Places for up to 420 participants are available.

[Click here to register to this event](#)

We advise registering as soon as possible to the conference. After registering online through the www.fi-compass.eu website, registrants will receive an automatic email acknowledging receipt of their registration. This message is not a confirmation of participation. Within two weeks after application the registrants will be informed by a separate email whether or not they can attend the conference. The decision will be based on available seats, targeted audience and balanced representation of Member States and organisations.

With the confirmation email, participants will be also asked to provide additional information which is needed to arrange that the person can enter the European Commission's Charlemagne building on the date of the conference. When entering the venue, participants need to have the printed out confirmation email and their valid national identification document (ID) at hand. Participants who registered but will not be able to attend the conference are kindly asked to inform the organisers at events@fi-compass.eu.



Agenda

Brussels, 25 November 2016 (Friday)

Address: Charlemagne Building, European Commission, Rue de la Loi 170, Brussels, Belgium

Moderator: Cathy Smith, *fi-compass* expert

08:00 Doors open, registration and coffee

09:00 **Welcome and introductions**

Opening statements from

Mr Phil Hogan, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development

Mr Jyrki Katainen, European Commission's Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness

Mr Pim van Ballekom, Vice-President, European Investment Bank

Mr Pier Luigi Gilibert, Chief Executive, European Investment Fund

Welcome statement from

Mr Gabriel Csicsai, State Secretary, Slovak Presidency of the Council of the EU

10:30 *Coffee break*

11:15 **Farm policy statements on the future of EU and Belgian farms and their investment needs**

Mr Miklos Zsolt Kis, Vice-President of COPA, COPA – COGECA

Mr François Huyghe, Flemish Farm Union "Boerenbond"

Ms Isabelle Jaumotte, Walloon Farm Union (FWA)

Followed by Q&A

12:00 **Financial instruments and support for EU agriculture**

EAFRD support through financial instruments, the omnibus proposal and the future

Mr Mihail Dumitru, Deputy Director-General, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission

Role of EIB in supporting EAFRD financial instruments

Mr Simon Barnes, Director of Advisory Services, European Investment Bank

EIF experience with EAFRD financial instruments and the SME Initiative

Mr Hubert Cottogni, Deputy Director, European Investment Fund

Followed by Q&A

13:00 *Lunch and coffee*

14:30 **Case studies on financial instruments and price volatility**

EAFRD *fi-compass* Price volatility study – first results and conclusions

Mr Frank Lee, Head of Financial Instruments Advisory Division, European Investment Bank

The Irish "MilkFlex" Fund in practice

Mr Cathal Fitzgerald, Head of Food and Agriculture Investments, Ireland Strategic Investment Fund MilkFlex

Followed by Q&A and discussions

15:00 **Financing agriculture and agri-food industry**

EBRD support for EU agriculture

Ms Zsuzsanna Hargitai, Director, EU Funds Co-Financing & Financial Engineering, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)

EU Guarantee Institutions in support for agriculture

Ms Katrin Sturm, Secretary General, EU Association of Guarantee Institutions

Continued overleaf



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EAFRD Loan Funds for agriculture in Estonia: results so far and future policy options

Mr Marko Gorban, Deputy Secretary General for Agricultural and Rural Life Policies, Ministry of Agriculture, Estonia

Access to credit for agricultural and agro-food processing enterprises

Mr Michel Cottet, SIAGI, France

Followed by Q&A and discussions

16:10 *Coffee break*

16:40 **COSME and agriculture**

Introduction to the EU programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises - COSME

Ms Astrid Bartels, Director, DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission

COSME support for Danish young farmers

Mr Rolf Kjærgaard, Senior Vice-President of VÆKSTFONDEN, Denmark

Support for German agriculture under COSME

Mr Siegfried Pöpperl, Project Manager COSME Agrar, Bürgschaftsbank Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany

Followed by Q&A and discussions

17:15 **Closing remarks**

Mr Aldo Longo, Director, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission



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