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Policy Analysis on the European Union Set- Aside Measures

Working with People: Planning
Experiences in Latin America and
Europe

Ana Afonso. Miguel Salvo



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Un método de éxito para el desarrollo



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CASE STUDY

Chapter 5: Policy Analysis on the European Union Set-Aside Measures

The following application case study as a result of a planning on Policy Analysis has been extracted from the experience of the teamwork of the Department of Projects and Rural Planning of the Polytechnic University of Madrid.

5.1. Introduction

This work is carried out by an European interdisciplinary consortium formed by universities and specialized consulting enterprises from seven countries¹. It is outlined within the execution of the "*Evaluation of community measures concerning on land set aside in Spain*" according to a public bidding of the Evaluation Unit of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture.

The evaluation is developed in order to advise the European Commission about the context, in which the **reform of the Common Agricultural Policy** (CAP) applies. This context of reform will be described below. The 1992-year is considered an important turning point for the Communitarian Agricultural Policy due to a **new system of aids for production** was proposed. This system is completely different to other systems such as tariff protection and it was created as an answer to the international situation, which is more reluctant to the maintenance of these systems for production protection.

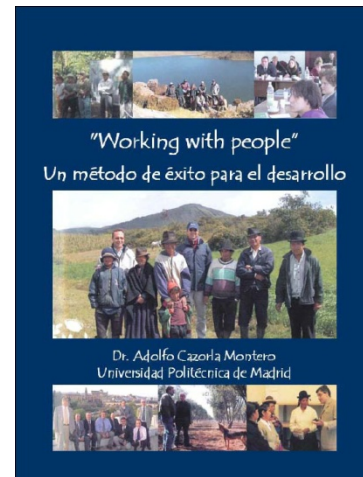
The so-called reform McSharry established a starting point for the new communitarian agricultural policy being in force until 2000. Also, this reform established the new system of compensatory payments concerning to landscape (Council of the EU, 1992)² to replace the traditional aids for agricultural production bound to tariff protections. This regulation as well as further modifications and adaptations were established to regulate all the communitarian agricultural production, including the production of **extensive herbaceous crops**. Within these crops, the subgroup called **COP³ products** was established. With this denomination, it referred to a group of extensive herbaceous crops dedicated to the production of cereals, oilseeds and protein crops. This group of crops constitutes the main communitarian production concerning to the landscape used. Thus, in the new context of CAP budget the compensatory payments bound to landscape acquired great importance in European Commission's decision-making.

Similarly, the system of compensatory payments related to landscape and as way to support a reduction policy for surplus agricultural production, a reduction system for

¹ The examiner team was represented by an European interdisciplinary consortium formed by universities and specialized consulting enterprises from the following countries: **Germany** (REGIONAL ENTWICKLUNG TRIESDORF), **Denmark** (KVISTGAARD Consult ApS), **Spain** (UNIVERSIDAD POLITÉCNICA DE MADRID), **France** (OREADE-BRECHE), **Finland** (INDUFOR OY), **England** (ERM), **The Netherlands** (TERP ADVIES, Consultants for Regional Economic Planning).

² Regulation (EC) N° 1765/92.

³ COP: Cereals, oilseeds and protein crops.



the production was established. This system was based on landscape limitation dedicated to the production of surplus crops: the land set aside policy specified in *land set aside measures* or *set-aside*. With these adopted measures, the people in charge of the communitarian agricultural policy established the compulsory of the production set aside in a small percentage of crop landscape dedicated to the production of a certain number of crops, called COP crops. The reduction of surplus production represented one of the main ideas of the communitarian agricultural policy stemmed from the 1992 CAP reform, being the set of land set aside measures the main instrument for their execution.

Also, the new situation from the Agenda 2000, in which the general lines of the Communitarian Agricultural Policy for the period 2000-2006 were established, recommended to take into account the conclusions obtained in the previous programming period in order to orientate the execution of new policies. In this context of reform, the present evaluation is integrated at European level as a way to help the decision-making process of the European Union's Members States.

The evaluation practice was created in the 50's in the United States as a way to rationalize the resource assignment in the public administration. Then, it was further extending to the European countries (Rist et al., 1990). In this period of time, the evaluation, meant by a support instrument related to planning processes, has gone through different approaches. Initially, the first models came out of the necessity to describe the effects in public interventions on society. Subsequently, the models included the study of cause-effect relationships. A third approach was focused on the evaluation in the validity of objectives that were achieved. Finally, a fourth generation of examiners has developed *pluralist evaluation* models that associate the different actors in the evaluation approach (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). A category of this fourth generation will be the *evaluation approaches as social learning*.

The origin of the evaluation within the European Commission can be established in the management of science and technology programmes in the beginning of the 80's. A decade later, in 1991 more than half of Commission's Directorates-General had their own Evaluation Unit. Finally, the Commission launched the SEM 2000 program to optimize its financing management. This program included among its priorities the generalization of evaluation to increase the budget efficiency (Díaz, 2003). The Commission establishes three main reasons to make the evaluation practice related to the planning processes (EU's Commission, 1999b):

- To verify that public action fulfills the new discovered necessities or other non-satisfied necessities.
- To improve the general efficiency of public interventions.
- To facilitate the process of accounting information and public action control

Concerning to temporary term related to the management of the project cycle, four basic categories of evaluation have been adopted (Trueba et al., 1995):

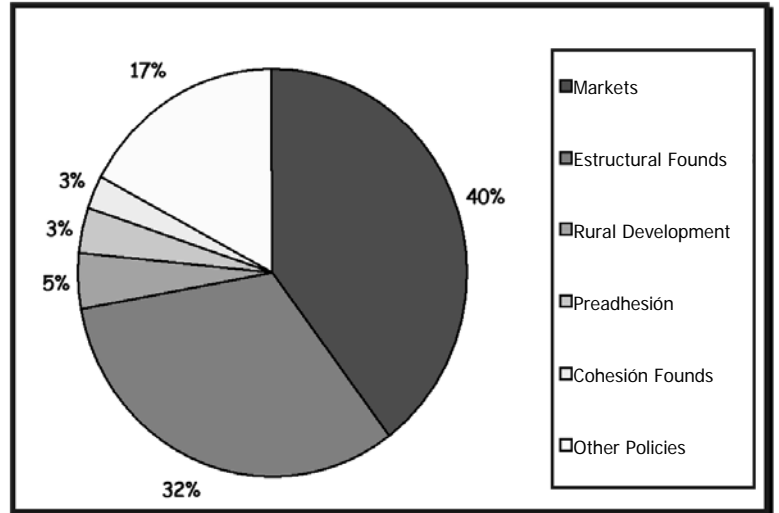
- *Ex ante* evaluation used before the intervention.
- *Intermediate* evaluation executed in a certain period of time during the execution.
- *Follow-up* evaluation executed simultaneously with the intervention.
- *Ex post* evaluation executed after the intervention.

The following case belongs to a fourth generation's *pluralist* evaluation. It has a social learning approach and is situated on an intermediate phase of Communitarian Agricultural Policy's implementation about European Union's land withdrawal.

Image 5.1: Founding Level of European Union Policies

The attached graphic shows the importance of Agricultural Policies and Agricultural Markets opposite to other policies financed by the European Union representing 40% of EU's expenses distribution.

The European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF), set up by Regulation N° 25 of 1962 about the financing of Common Agricultural Policy, constitutes an important part of European Union's general budget.



5.2. Case Study Context



As mentioned before, this case is within the framework of the evaluation process' resolutions adopted with the 1992 CAP reform and in the pursuit of experiences in order to implement these policies in the 2000–2006 programming period. In this particular case, the Evaluation Unit of European Union's Directorate-General for Agriculture and the examiner team have started a methodology by choosing 20 producers regions, in which this measure had a strong importance. These regions were spread out in seven communitarian states: France, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Denmark, United Kingdom and Belgium according to the attached map.

Image 5.2: Regions Involved

The objective of this evaluation is to establish the more accurate conclusions about the consequences of the measure implementation adopted during the

considered period in order to infer conclusions to orientate the decision-making process through the new programming period. The Team of the Department of Projects and Rural Planning of the Polytechnic University of Madrid in collaboration with

other seven European research groups carried the evaluation in different chosen regions out.

The 20 European regions, in where the regional case studies were carried out, were chosen at geographic level of NUTS-2 Statistics Territory Units, as a kind of Autonomous Community. The selection of these regions depends basically on the importance related to COP production and were also affected by the land set asidemeasure in the European Union. In the Spain case, the autonomous communities such as Aragón, Castilla La Mancha, Castilla and León and Extremadura were chosen.

5.3. General Characteristics

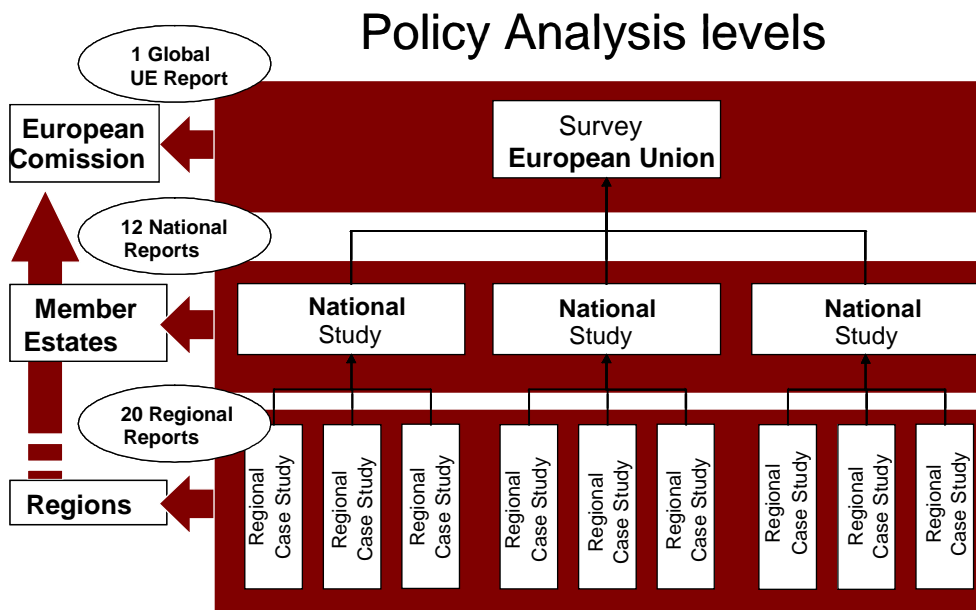
The general characteristics about the execution of evaluation works for the analysis of *set-aside* communitarian policy effects were summarized in the document of the reference terms set by the Commission's Evaluation Unit. These general characteristics can be summarized as follows:

- Constitution of an organizing committee to supervise the evaluation works. This committee is made by representatives of each region, officers of the Evaluation Unit and other European Commission's Directorates-General.
- Choosing a group of regions to execute the case studies at regional level.
- Defining a series of matters that the European Commission is interested in. These matters must be responded on final evaluation report to analyze the impact of analysis adopted on the EU.
- Establishing a common methodology at EU level to standardize the case analysis and structure of key answers for each group of EU's Member States. This common structure - in terms of method and used data sources - allowed facilitating the answer integration to elaborate final evaluation reports and its further evaluation at level of Commission's politicians responsible for decision-making.
- Common regulations for regional works. The common survey model favored the homogeneity in order to make the data integration at European level. Establishing of a group of surveys by region, in which each survey is adapted for each region, so that they reflect a specific reality.
- Procedures of qualitative and quantitative outcome integration to elaborate common answers.
- Procedures of regional report integration to elaborate national reports (from each Member State) and finally, the integration of national reports for EU's global report. In this way, this integration allowed analyzing the policy impact defined by the European Commission at different levels: regional (in Autonomous Communities or NUT-2)⁴, national (Member States)⁵ and in all European Union.

⁴ In the case of Spain the regional reports belonged to the Autonomous Communities of Castilla and León, Castilla La Mancha, Aragón and Extremadura. These four regions constitute more than 70% of the COP national surface.

⁵ The national report is a document, in which the regional reports are summarized that include at the same time a global analysis about all measurement effects with aggregate data at Member State level.

Image 3.3: Analysis Levels of Communitarian Policy for Land Set Aside



Source: Own elaboration.

5.4. Involved Actors

It can be established a relationship among the involved actors in the structures to adopt measures and the policy analysis model. In this case, three types of actors are perfectly recognized:

- The **political core responsible for decision-making of the measures**, constituted by Commission's Directorates-General. The actors of this political group are responsible for the decision-making process related to a group of different activities (communitarian regulations, guidelines, measures and programmes) intended for a general goal or objective: to achieve social and economic cohesion in the European Union. These activities within social and economic cohesion's European policy and specially the CAP measures⁶ are scheduled within a strict agenda and have an assigned pluriannual budget. This is not the case of other type of policies at a traditional way, in where political actors can have more freedom in order to make things.
- The **political managers and financial authorities**. The managers are the agents responsible for basic units of policies defined by the decision core. This

⁶ For example, the implementation of the Community Policy about Land Withdrawal since 1992 in Spain is carried out through a specific rule that is published in **Ministerial Orders** and **Royal Decrees**. In the period 1992-1997, three types of ministerial orders are: 1^a to regulate the withdrawal of land crops that benefit for the compensatory payments and the use of agricultural lands that were withdrawn for the production of agricultural raw materials for non-food purposes; 2^a to determine the indexes of traditional fallow dry lands used for herbaceous crops; and 3^a to regulate the procedure for aim request and awarding for surface in certain herbaceous crops. Subsequently, (in the period 1997-2000) other two **Royal Decrees** were published that enlarged the Land Withdrawal Policy: 1^o about the basic rules of community aims in agricultural sector and 2^o about the payments for surface in certain agricultural products.

means a proper application of the **measures**⁷. In fact, these measures are a series of interventions or similar projects and are provided with an approved and defined budget. Each measure has its own management structure and it generally consists of several interventions or projects. Many of the measures are made through the announcement of projects. Within this group of actors, it also includes the **financial authorities** constituted by people who participate in behalf of the institutions in the management process: European Commission's officers, officers belonged to a country's Ministry, representatives chosen in a regional or local authority. When the intervention subsidizes individuals or private organizations, they can also contribute with a part of the funds (co-financing); however, these individuals or organizations are not financial authorities, but also a target group.

- The **expert team** represented by people who is in charge of the evaluation of policies adopted. This group of experts chooses and interprets secondary data, then gathers primary information and makes analysis and produces evaluation reports. The evaluation team could be internal or external and it could be represented by the association of several organizations (consortium of many countries)⁸. The *set-aside* expert team adopted a pluralist and democratic evaluation approach, by giving a final judgment on the basis of the work made by the group and answering to a set of questions to orientate future decisions. Within this expert core, the Evaluation Unit of European Union's Directorate-General for Agriculture can participate as an element of management⁹ and support to policy analysis. Also, it is responsible for hiring the external examiner teams.
- The **beneficiaries** or **direct receivers** of the policies. They receive the assistance or services and use the facilities created with the aim of intervention as a consequence of policies adopted. In our case, beneficiaries are European farmers under the application of land set asidemeasures and their families that receive *set aside's* public aids, or an enterprise that has received CAP subsidiaries. The concept of beneficiary is often used as direct beneficiary and it is associated as a positive idea. However, in the policy analysis process could identify negative impacts by researching undesirable effects in direct beneficiaries as well as it happened with EU's Land Set AsidePolicy¹⁰.

⁷ In the case of Spain, the Special Fund of Agricultural Guarantee (FEGA) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is the organism in charge of making the payments on CAP measures.

⁸ This is the case of the evaluation of the Land Withdrawal policies, in which the **external examiner team** was constituted by an **European interdisciplinary teamwork** formed by universities and specialized consulting enterprises from Germany, Denmark, Spain (UPM), France, Finland, England and the Netherlands.

⁹ This management task is made by an **organizing committee** or limited management committee that is integrated by Commission's officers – they are the administrations more directly involved in the intervention – and by examiner team's experts. The organizing committee often gets together and acts as an intermediary among the political core, evaluation team and among the different actors affected by the intervention policies.

¹⁰ In the case of *set-aside*, two elements that currently take part in the withdrawal payment process – surface and historical production performance – have caused that most of the aims are concentrated in big agricultural exploitations situated in more intensive production regions, while the farmers that have small size of agricultural exploitations or in marginal regions receive a small amount of the payments by contributing - in a negative way - to the achievement of the priority objective, which is the economic and social cohesion.

5.5. Developed Processes

The scheme of developed tasks elaborated during the evaluation establishment that gathers the processes developed during the evaluation (European Commission, 1999b) are showed as follows. These six concepts are summarized on:

- The **political core** authorities, future users of policy evaluation outcomes. They formulate some short guidelines to the organizing committee of the Evaluation Unit in order to put in actions these guidelines.
- The **organizing committee** develops the reference terms on the basis of guidelines received. The communications between the organizing committee and examiner team must be so often as far as possible to ensure the correct comprehension of the instructions given in evaluation's reference terms¹¹.
- In the longest evaluation process, the examiner team gathers secondary and primary information¹² that thinks important. Then, it processes in order to answer these questions¹³ made by the organizing committee.
- After the analysis and integration of information, the examiner team obtains outcomes and finishes its work by elaborating regional, national and global reports. These reports are made by conclusions and recommendations. The global report includes an executive summary for political core and it refers to key questions of the evaluation.
- If the organizing committee deems it appropriate, it approves the conclusions and then the committee gathers the information by elaborating a final report that shows to the authorities responsible for the evaluation.
- The receiver authorities of final report integrate this information in their own making-decision process about the lines of policies to be followed.

In diagram of image 5.4, the methodological scheme of evaluation is shown by indicating the different actors that are involved in and their relationships. These processes developed in the analysis of EU's Land Set Aside Policy Analysis are mentioned as follows.

5.5.1. Reference Terms: Formulation of Evaluation Questions

The organizing committee of the evaluation and the administrations of political core that will be the receivers of outcomes are those that establish previous guidelines. This

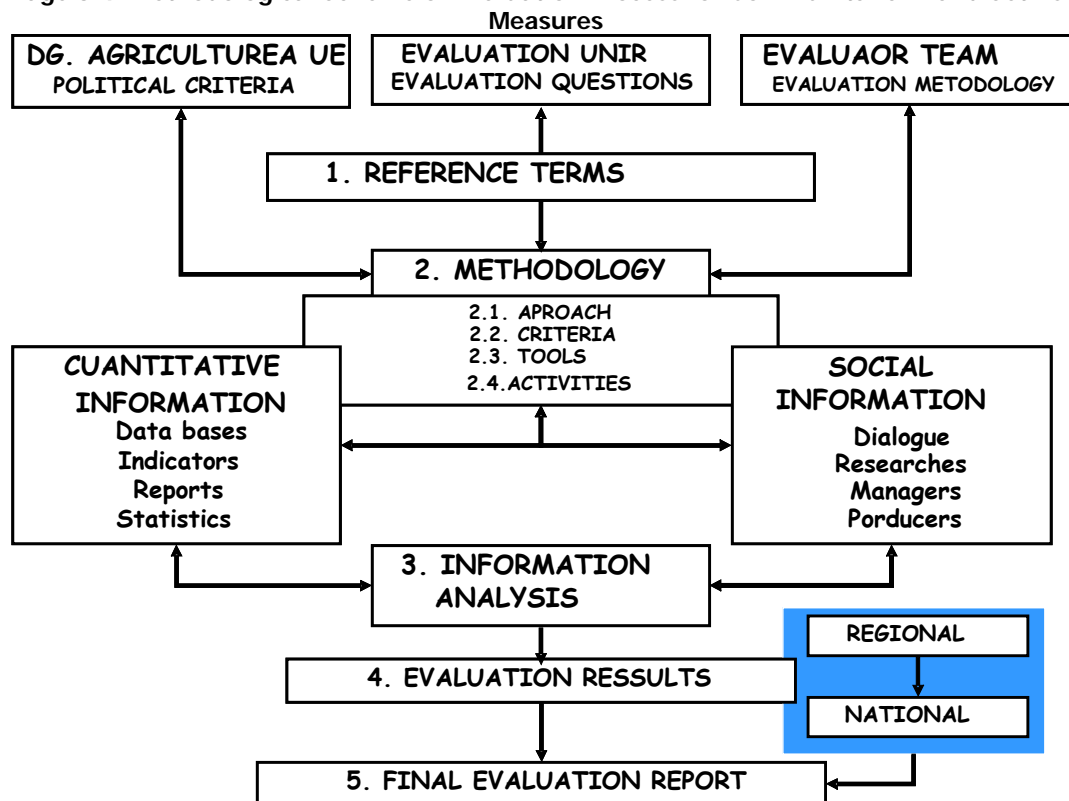
¹¹ Proceedings and explanations that give in detail and complement the evaluation matters to specify their understanding and the approach of the answers required.

¹² In the case of *set-aside*, the **quantitative base** of information is constituted by: databases and statistics published by official organisms and official publications that are both reports and studies and statistics at regional and national level. The **qualitative base** was obtained based on a participative process lead mainly on two groups of officers: 1) Producers questionnaire made to all community regions and producer sampling within each region; 2) Interviews to managers and experts with: managers at national level (Central Administration) and Regional (Regional Administration); 3) Research experts in agriculture sector belonged to different organisms and representatives from farmers' associations. Finally, a **complementary base** of information was made: gathering of bibliographical research (studies made, analysis and documents) that constituted a third source of information in order to answer the evaluation questions.

¹³ Set of questions that the organizing committee formulates to focus the labor of the examiner team on a group of specific aspects, in which the evaluation is summarized.

process involves a discussion made by this group about the policy matters that they are likely to evaluate. That is, to re-orientate the criteria of political system during this process. In this case, the discussion concluded with the formulation of a series of key questions that summarize the chosen criteria¹⁴.

Image 5.4: Methodological Scheme of Evaluation Process for Communitarian Land Set Aside



Source: DPRP. *Set Aside Communitarian Measures evaluation*. www.europa.eu.int

5.5.2. Methodology Design: Answer Mechanisms

This stage belongs to authorities responsible for the implementation of the evaluation. A **first analysis** of measures was made – a cabinet work with secondary information of data source in order to obtain a preliminary evaluation of matters.

Subsequently, this analysis ended through a participative process and **case studies**: primary information about interviews and questionnaires. The regions to be evaluated were chosen as a result of competitiveness of final data given by the process as well as to the importance of this primary information.

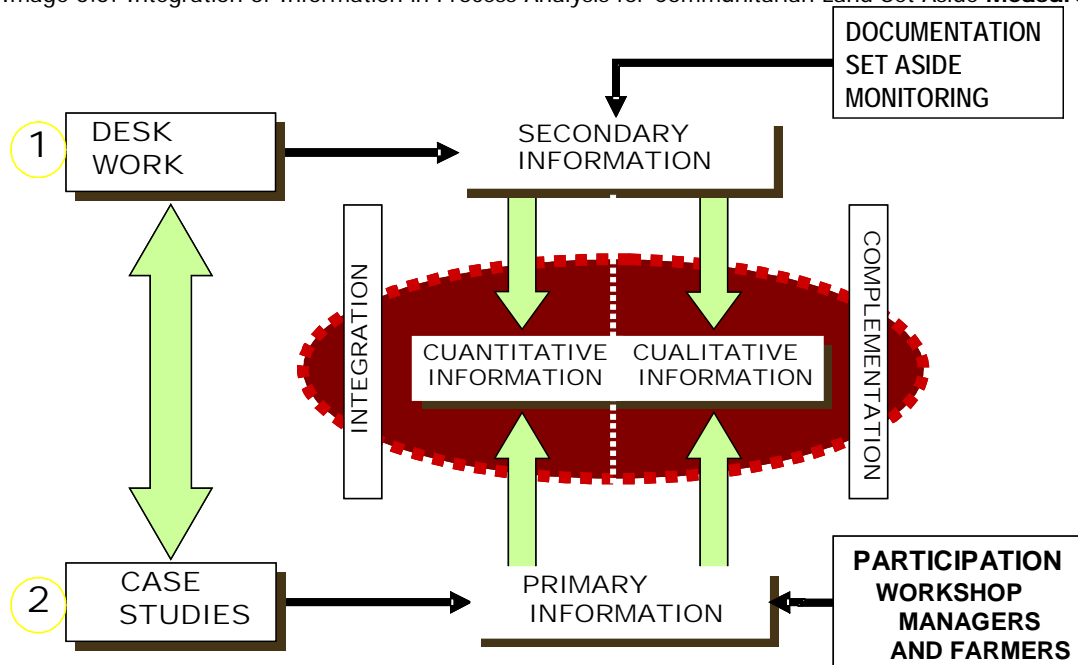
For the selection of case studies, a series of regional criteria were established:

- A region, where the production COP tends to be the majority.
- The agricultural region must be integrated in a wider geographical area that lets assume the characteristics of this region similar to a wider territory.

¹⁴ The key questions determine how the establishment of the land withdrawal policy has caused a significant impact about: the improvement of land management, improvement of water management, improvement of landscape management, improvement of production control, cultural practices and socioeconomic aspects, Regulation and management, multifunctionality of agriculture, economic and social cohesion, food safety and production sector competitiveness on herbaceous crops.

- Zones without environmental differences related to other producers zones.
- Zones without socio-cultural differences related to other producers zones.
- Presence of special elements that can contribute with complementary information about the interaction of the land set aside measure with other agri-environmental measures to be adopted.

Image 5.5: Integration of Information in Process Analysis for Communitarian Land Set Aside Measures



Source: Own elaboration.

With these criteria, a classification was made to orientate the different regions that are considered more capable to execute the surveys in EU's different regions. In Spain, this classification was an object of a first confrontation at three levels of actors as primary information source:

- National managers of the measure.
- Regional managers of the measure.
- Representatives of agricultural professional organizations.

Through the contacts with national managers of the measure, it tried to understand their vision and global situation concept of each region as well as their opinion about the future development of the measures of the Communitarian Agricultural Policy. The contact with regional managers was established with the same objective. Also, it is important to point out that in these two types of meetings, more complementary material did not were used; only the classification of the agricultural regions was used due to its main objective was to enrich this classification with manager's contributions

The contacts with the representatives of the main agricultural professional organizations responded to another objective due to a few number of producers that is going to be surveyed compared to all EU's farmers, it preferred that these farmers were involved to main agricultural professional organizations of each region. Besides, it was considered that the fact the surveyed producers were associated to some of these organizations and it would suppose an increase of their opinions due to it counted at the beginning with the participation of people who is aware of the problematic related

to agricultural policy of their regions. With these three contacts, the previous analytical work to the selection of regions was enriched.

5.5.3. Questionnaire Formulation

The questionnaire to producers was elaborated by the organizing committee and translated in different languages. Then, it was analyzed in collaboration with a group of chosen producers in order to facilitate their comprehension, clarify the concepts and adjust them to the reality of the different countries. This phase of the process resulted necessary due to it was about a questionnaire written by technicians, who did not know the different overviews of countries well. Also, it obtained a lot of experience about the understanding of the questionnaire and its functionality, obtaining the enough experience for speeding up its application.

In the Spain case, a second questionnaire was made as fusion of evaluation questions with survey matters, especially formulated for its treatment with the different managers considered. The main objective was to obtain an empirical validation of conclusions reached by the analytical study of secondary information sources, as well as the outcome validation contributed by the survey system. The adaptation of this second questionnaire was contrasted to the judgment of several technicians and professionals of the Community of Madrid.

5.5.4. Questionnaire Implementation

The questionnaires to producers were implemented in chosen regions according to the criteria established by the organizing committee. For the application of second questionnaire, a support material was prepared. It was about graphic synthesis of more relevant data as well as a brief exposition of first conclusions reached.

5.5.5. Analysis of Information and its Outcomes

The integration of both primary and secondary information analysis processes and the analytical study of outcomes including the participation process was a later methodological process. A real social participation process was simultaneously generated with the interchange and the indicators analysis achieved by the secondary information study. In this way, new information showed on a participation phase came to previous conclusion revision by incorporating to the starting point of next phase. In this way, the next mechanisms were adopted:

- Staggering of the survey phases: first making interviews to managers and representatives and then to producers, managers and representatives with the objective that the gathered information obtained at first level could be integrated in the next level.
- Staggering of the regional analysis processes to make possible the incorporation of experience acquired for the execution of regional study in the execution of future studies.

5.5.6. Final Reports

The evaluation process ended with a synthesis and documentation stage, in which the different final reports were elaborated in order to show them to European Commission's responsible persons. The document included the formulation of recommendations for the politicians justified after the studies gathered on the evaluation's final reports. These recommendations were joined in two main groups:

Specific recommendations about the Land Set Aside Policy in relation to the following aspects:

- Production control
- Cultural practices and socio-economic aspects
- Environmental Impact
- Regulations, management and put in practice

General recommendations in relation to Common Agricultural Policy and they tried to cause a reflection about the role of land set aside measure in CAP context and particularly concerning on three aspects:

- Multifunctionality of agriculture and land withdrawal
- Social and economic cohesion and land set aside
- Food safety and land withdrawal
- Competitiveness of producer sector of herbaceous crops

Finally, the activity of the examiner team ended and the political authorities responsible for decision-making were in charge of the reformulation of EU's land set aside policy.

5.6. Planning Practice

The planning practice is a good example of planning within the system of Policy Analysis. Four main characteristics of planning system as Policy Analysis that justify the appropriateness of the relationship established with this case are explained as follows. These four criteria are:

- Planning from above
- Focused on decision-making process.
- Establishing differences between experience and decision-making.
- Outcomes orientate the making-decision process.

5.6.1. Planning From Above

In the process, we can see a clear **top-down approach** directing from decisions adopted by the European Commission's competent authorities until the farmers affected by the measures. In this case, it refers to land set aside occurred inside the CAP.

All the planning process is inside of a descendant organization structure belongs to the process of European Commission's Policy Analysis. So, the decision origin is in the highest level of European Commission that proposes the application of new agricultural policies within the new programming period. The European Union establishes the

design of measures of the Communitarian Agricultural Policy¹⁵. Then, the Member States through their belonging Ministries¹⁶ adopt the start-up of mechanisms and execution of guidelines established by the European Commission.

The Evaluation Unit is useful for the knowledge of the policy effects applied for the EU. In this case, the Evaluation Unit of the EU's Directorate-General for Agriculture is in charge of hiring the corresponding works.

The future application of new policies obtained by the decisions can be orientated by the evaluation outcomes. However, the process of measure planning follows the same top-down approach with adopted decisions represented as Communitarian Regulations. Then, they will be integrated within the legislations of each of their Member States and then within each of their regional rules. The implementation of these policies depends on the administrative structures at different levels (National, Regional and Local).

The EAGFF committee, integrated by representatives of EU Member States and European Commission, is in charge of the Fund management within the cooperation framework between the Commission and EU Member States. The Member States choose the accredited services and organisms in order to pay the expenses. These organisms are the services or organisms authorized by Member States that provide enough guarantees of fulfillment in procedures established by EU such as:

- Prior to issue the payment order, they verify that the applications fulfill with the necessary requirements and are adjusted to community dispositions;
- The payments to be made are recorded in the books in an accurate and exhaustive way;
- The compulsory documents are submitted within the established periods and as indicated in communitarian rules.

5.6.2. Focused on Decision-Making Process

The planning process for CAP measures is integrated in the decision-making process at level from European Commission's authorities in order to answer the EU's cohesion policy priorities. In this way, with the objective to promote social and economic cohesion, all programmes co-financed by EU must consider the EU's priorities and guidelines: the regional competitiveness, social cohesion and employment, rural and urban zone development.

In this way, the CAP planning model as Policy Analysis does not provide any positive outcomes from the point of view of social and economy cohesion faced with the true convergence of EU's different regions. Some conclusions about the CAP gathered from

¹⁵ The European Union establishes the Common Agricultural Policy and particularly the Regime for herbaceous crops aids through the Regulation (EEC) 1765/92 and its successive modifications. This is the beginning of the process.

¹⁶ In Spain, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is the organism that suggests and executes the Government's general guidelines about agricultural, fishery and food policies. Among its tasks are the elaboration of basic public rules and the coordination of activities related to the agricultural production and performance of agricultural markets; to cooperate with the Autonomous Communities in these matters and to elaborate the proposals that allow establishing the Spain's position on agricultural matter before the European Union.

the Second Report of Social and Economic Cohesion made by the European Commission on January 2001 are the following:

- In summarize, the 1992 reform has not totally changed the distribution of aids between European regions.
- The distribution of transfers in relation to GDP per capita shows that the CAP effect is negative in smaller development areas that represent ca. 20% of EU's population.
- The CAP is still supporting the development of large-scale, specialized units at the cost of small-to-medium land units that play an important social and economic role in some regions.

Concerning on decisions made by the land set asidemeasure in herbaceous crops, we can affirm that even though this measure contributes to cohesion between economic sectors and social groups of the European Union, the measures, same as other CAP aids; have not essentially contributed to the cohesion between production units and regions¹⁷.

5.6.3. Separation Between “Expert Knowledge” and “Decision-Making”

Although, the Evaluation Unit of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture tries to approach the knowledge “experience” and the knowledge “decision-making”, these concepts are finally considered after the considerations of “Policy Analysis”, without being directly involved the main actors: farmers and their professional associations. Thus, the Evaluation Unit becomes a simple support element to the Commission's teams responsible for decision-making, requiring special attention to the justification of the origin of data given by the external examiner team as well as the logic of processes established for its execution.

Although, the evaluation process is made through a participative, learning approach and supported by case studies, a gap between “experience” and “decision-making” is still being produced.

5.6.4. Orientation to Decision-Making Process

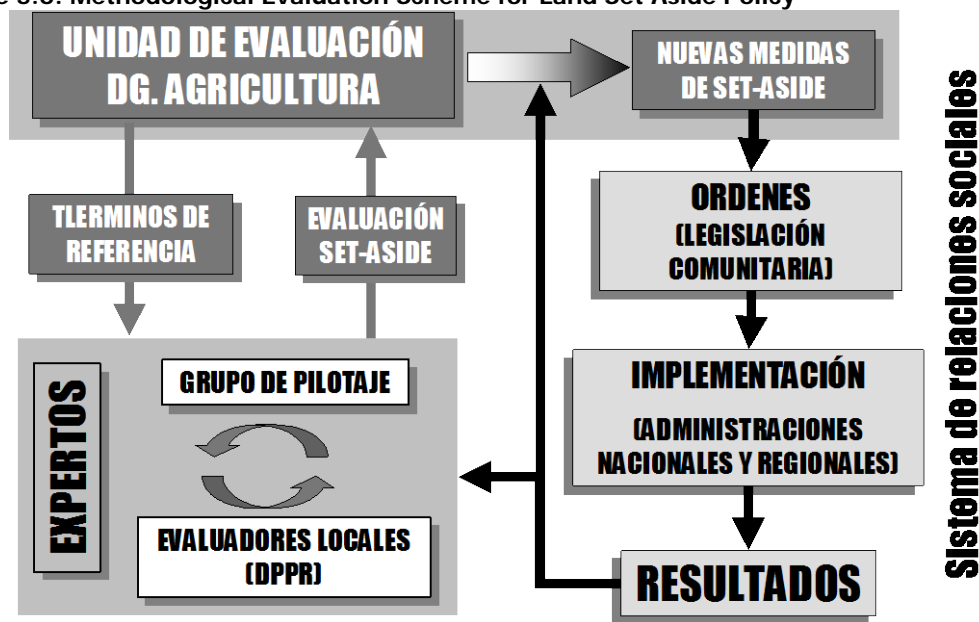
The planning model as Policy Analysis is focused on decision-making by emphasizing in associated processes of information for decision-making instead of the decision itself. In this case, this particularity is evident due to the Evaluation Unit of European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture - through the hiring of land set aside evaluation process - because it gives a series of answers to a certain number of suggested key questions and some recommendations to different levels of management at communitarian, regional and national levels of measures considered. It does provide neither definitive nor linked decisions.

¹⁷ Two elements that currently take part in the withdrawal payment – surface and historical production performance – have caused that most of the payments are concentrated in big exploitations situated in more intensive production regions, while the small size of agriculture exploitations or in marginal regions have received a small amount of the payments of this measure by contributing - in a negative way - the achievement of the priority objective that is the economic and social cohesion.

5.6.5. Graphic Chart of the Case Model

The analogy between the established model and application case can be graphically established through Image III-12, in which the different elements involved in the process of policy analysis are represented. The reference terms, defined by the European Commission, set out the guidelines in order that the evaluation team defines its own methodology for the execution of works during the evaluation. The participative evaluation method developed by the Department of Projects and Rural Planning of the Polytechnic University of Madrid provides local information in a series of cases.

Image 5.6: Methodological Evaluation Scheme for Land Set Aside Policy



Source: Own elaboration.

5.6.6. Planning Domain of the Case

The conjunction of the exposed factors as well as the participation of different implied actors shows up a **planning field** typical of the **policy analysis** processes. In these cases, the field of political community in the European Union acquires special relevance within the system of social relationships.

In this case, it concerns on a **process began and led by the political community** related to the organized aspects of EU regions. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has important consequences in European territories as well as in the protection of farmers and their rural livelihoods. The rural development policies are more related with their priorities and they will be more related in the future, due to the importance of agricultural sector in potential candidate countries that will be joined to European Union after the enlargement. The CAP and European regional policy try to support the rural development policies.

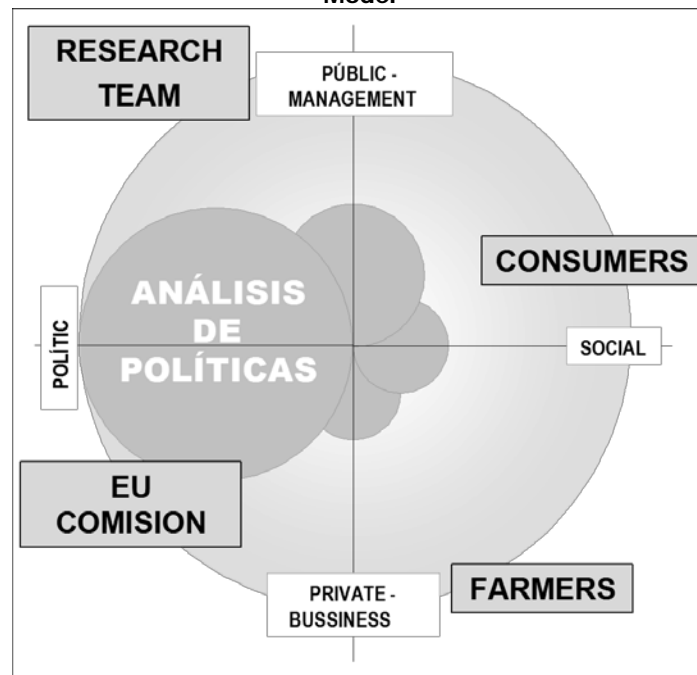
That is why, in the face of system representation, the **political sector** acquires great importance (Image III-18); the importance of administrative public sector represents an intermediate size. It is responsible for the management and put into practice of the

adopted decisions. The two remaining sectors do not have a significance importance due to their role in the process has hardly great importance.

A political organism leads the evaluation supported by the obtained conclusions. The political sector is related to other society fields through the re-orientation of their decisions that summarize in new dispositions. On the other hand, the civil society and its organization stay in the background due to they participate in the described process as a consulting and information element, after decisions already adopted in political sector¹⁸. With this objective, this kind of surveys or polls made by the European Commission in relation to its adopted policies is very common. Currently, a majority of European wants to make a change in the way on how the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) supports EU farmers¹⁹.

Finally, the planning field represents a hierocracy administrative structure. Although, the information integration mechanism has a bottom-up approach, **the decision-making process is from EU's authorities to farmers**. In this case, the integration of participative processes does not determine future decisions. It is about independent processes, in which the only connection belongs to the minority responsible for decision-making and represents the political core.

Image 5.7: Planning Domain of European Union Set Aside Measures as a Policy Analysis Model



Source: Own elaboration.

¹⁸ In this case, the participation of the affecting people takes place on the basis of the reference terms about measure evaluation that foresee a social participation process within the evaluation process. But in this case, the participation is reduced by simple additional information in the recommendation processes and subsequent to a decision in a political sector, but it does not provide a more effective participation directly to the affecting population.

¹⁹ In the last opinion survey - the so-called *Eurobarómetro* - more than 58% of EU's inhabitants consider that is «very positive» or «quite positive» that the agricultural subsidies are assigned to the protection and development of general rural economy and aids lead directly to farmers instead of production. According to this survey, EU's citizens consider that CAP priorities should be to guarantee some healthy and safe agricultural goods (90%), to promote the environment conservation, protect small and medium agricultural exploitations and help farmers to fit their production to consumers' expectations.

5.7. General Conclusions

The process of policy analysis made by the examiner team - consortium of experts - allowed elaborating a judgment about the value of public interventions made with the objective to the Land Set Aside Policy, according to some criteria and specific standards and objectives.

The value judgments were based on information that was specially gathered and interpreted in order to answer the matters that the EU's political core responsible for decision-making was interested in.

On the basis of information trusted and accepted by all, the value judgments as an answer to each formulated question brought the following recommendations to politicians:

5.7.1. Specific Recommendations About the Set-Aside Policy:

- Increase on percentages of compulsory set aside and decrease of volunteer withdrawal.
- Promotion and development of non-food productions assigned to biofuels elaboration.
- Regulation of techniques about labor concerns in land set aside depending on particularities of each region as well as cattle breeding.
- Promotion of forage production in land withdrawal.
- Establishing of maximum percentage of unproductive land that is less than the arable land.
- Establishing of relationships between the Images of environmental protection existing in each territory with the Images of land set aside management.
- To extend the criteria of simplified payment system concession in order to facilitate the producers management.
- Recognizing of agricultural areas multifunctionality at the time to establish the criteria of support concession.

5.7.2. General Recommendations Related to Other Policies:

- Replacement of compensation criteria for multifunctionality to disconnect the payments of historic productions and to incorporate criteria that favor other functions and services offered by the land.
- To incorporate to the land set aside measures, the criteria aimed at achieving more social and economic cohesion as the separation of the amount of compensatory payments for the performances or the establishing of a common performance rate for all EU's Member States.
- Promotion of the land set aside use to produce vegetable protein for animal feeding.
- Modification of support concession system by establishing amounts based on size and performance of set aside area that would be able to modify depending on other services that these lands could offer.
- Change of general criteria system in order to focus on the producer, not the land through a system of concession of rights for personalized support, for instance.
- Promotion of productivity and competitiveness in regions with higher potentials.

In conclusion, it is suggested to **modify the policy** of land set aside by **incorporating a new support system** through payments, whose amount was established according to the set aside area and a general communitarian performance (economic cohesion principle) could be fixed according to other functions different to strictly productive that this land could offer (multifunctionality concept). This allows favoring the production of "safety" vegetable protein assigned for animal feeding (contribution to food safety).

This general recommendation pretended a deep modification of land set aside policy towards to a new measure that at the same time establishes the following:

- Control of surplus productions,
- Concept of multifunctionality on agriculture,
- Principle of economic and social cohesion, and
- Food safety and quality on animal feeding.

5.8. Experiences Obtained in the Planning Domain

Next, the main conclusions reached on the execution of this evaluation work related to EU's Policy Analysis are gathered below. These conclusions refer to the conclusions obtained after the evaluation of land set aside policy as well as the more remarkable aspects concerning to integration in a participation process:

- The examiner team's approach is integrated in the **management of public interventions**, that is in EU field. It addresses to **orientate changes** related to the decision-making process about policies. The model of Policy Analysis fulfills unavoidable to a process of political decision-making about criteria and objectives subject to political analysis.
- The policy evaluation processes at EU level must consider the **different facts** and the behavior of different actors responsible for the implementation of measures in Member States. Only in this way, the recommendations can be adopted.
- The political dimension of the evaluation was clear and obvious and it must base on two main principles: **independence** of the evaluation teams and the **objectivity** of analysis and outcomes.
- The planning model of Policy Analysis has caused a disconnection between the participation processes to be developed and the final resulting decisions.
- The **approaches** adopted in policy analysis must be **pluralist** and **participative** by designing collective processes of policy analysis and involving all actors, from final beneficiaries to managers. During the evaluation, democratic discussions must be generated to orientate quality improvement and process transparency as well as a better and logical understanding and effects caused on public interventions. The participation processes developed during the evaluation allow gathering information from the different involved actors, even though they can be in a certain way co-authors of the evaluation, but never participate in political decisions.

- It is important to mention, how a process of Policy Analysis causes breaking points in the information treatment and integration at the time that political representatives, who manage the process or experts, who advise them assume the decisions on the basis of objective criteria.
- It can be introduced elements belonged to a social learning planning model at the time to formulate the evaluation methodology, but this innovative process assumes only a part of all this planning process, in which the evaluation is integrated. For that reason, it can not be considered a variation of planning model. However, this enrichment of the process causes extreme interest due to it brings a connection between these two models of planning, by showing the complementary of the documents themselves.
- The participation process as a learning process allows decreasing little by little the importance of expert opinions and the bias produced by them. Also, it allows increasing the number of people and groups affected by the analysis policy.
- The Policy Analysis belongs to the concept so-called "of classic cut" which bases its concept in the decision-making on a problem. It represents a necessity or opportunity by the political power, before this problem occurs at the time. First, make decisions, and then put into action: that was the basic model (Friedmann, 1986). The execution of intermediate evaluation or follow-up with a social learning approach can contribute to alleviate disconnection existing in decisions and actions.
- The lack of real implication of people affected on evaluation process can cause mistakes in matter valuation and finally the complete ineffectiveness of measures that are adopted on the basis of the recommendations. In this case, we would probably face with a "design planning that does not respond to the expectations of beneficiaries to these actions because they are simply not involved" (Cazorla and Friedmann, 1995).