Mid-term evaluation of the first priority domain of the European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming
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It does not represent the official views of the European Committee of the Regions.
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>CAP</td>
<td>Common Agricultural Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFP</td>
<td>Common Fisheries Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAFEA</td>
<td>Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONS</td>
<td>Council of the European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoR/CdR</td>
<td>European Committee of the Regions/ Comité européen des régions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORDIS</td>
<td>Community Research and Development Information Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSA</td>
<td>Coordination and Support Actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG AGRI</td>
<td>Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG ENVE</td>
<td>Directorate-General for Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG MARE</td>
<td>Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries</td>
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<tr>
<td>DG RTD</td>
<td>Directorate-General for Research &amp; Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAFRD</td>
<td>European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIP-AGRI</td>
<td>European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMFF</td>
<td>European Maritime and Fisheries Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENRD</td>
<td>European Network for Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESIF</td>
<td>European Structural and Investment Funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUMOFA</td>
<td>European Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture Products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUR</td>
<td>Euro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPP</td>
<td>Green Public Procurement</td>
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<tr>
<td>H2020</td>
<td>Horizon 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFOAM</td>
<td>International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JRC</td>
<td>Joint Research Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LRAs</td>
<td>Local and regional authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSCA</td>
<td>Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPs</td>
<td>Operational Programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDPs</td>
<td>Rural Development Programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIA</td>
<td>Research and Innovation Actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SME</td>
<td>Small and medium-sized enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAA</td>
<td>Utilised Agricultural Area</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Executive summary

The new ‘Action Plan for the future of Organic Production in the European Union’ was published by the European Commission in March 2014. Its preparation was part of the updating process of the regulatory and policy framework for organic farming called for by the Council in May 2013. The Action Plan addresses some of the non-regulatory aspects of the policy and has the overall objective to support the growth of the sector while facilitating its transition to a new legal framework. Contrary to well-acknowledged good practices for the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of organic action plans, the Action Plan released in 2014 does not include targets and timeframes, does not have a dedicated budget, and does not foresee from the outset the undertaking of an evaluation, hence missing the definition of performance and impact indicators.

This study is the mid-term evaluation of the first of the three priority domains addressed by the Action Plan. It is commissioned by the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) on the basis of the evident shortcomings of the Action Plan which were outlined since its publishing. In an opinion adopted in December 2014, the CoR added to these shortcomings the lack of a local and regional dimension which overlooks the role local and regional authorities (LRAs) have in promoting and supporting the development of organic farming and production.

The first priority domain of the Action Plan aims at increasing the competitiveness of European Union organic producers. This is tackled by means of three main strands of EU competency which group nine actions. These actions are reviewed in this study in terms of state of implementation, results and broader impact. The evaluation methodology is based on a combination of approaches, including desk research, selection and analysis of measurable indicators, and consultation with stakeholders. In particular, the consultation was carried out by means of an online questionnaire which was participated by a total of 107 respondents, 68 of whom replied on behalf of their organisations and 39 on an individual basis. These respondents turned out to represent a balanced sample in terms of country of origin, geographical scope of their activity and type of stakeholders. They also reflect a varied and good level of involvement in and/or knowledge of the EU organic sector, hence legitimising the qualitative findings of the survey in terms of perceptions, opinions and experience.

Table 1 shows the state of implementation of the nine actions under review. Overall, progress is apparently good. Still, it needs to be noted that several of the
implemented actions are one-off (e.g. the publication of the guide), administrative (e.g. inclusion of organic farming as a specific theme in a call), or ‘business as usual’ activities (e.g. raising awareness on information and promotion opportunities at meetings and events). The most evident delay is in the revision process of the Green Public Procurement (GPP) criteria for Food and Catering Services, which were due in 2015, and the publishing of specific information material exemplifying the use of organic farming requirements in public procurement.

Table 1 - State of implementation of the nine actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State of implementation</th>
<th>Action (A) - number and short description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strand 1. Increasing awareness of and synergies with EU instruments targeting organic production.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A2/1. Inclusion of organic farming in the 2014 call for proposals for support for information measures intended for farmers and producers within the CAP.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A2/2. Highlighting opportunities for organic aquaculture as part of the guidance on EMFF funding.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A3. Raising awareness on the possibilities offered by the regulation on information and promotion activities through the presentation of the instrument to organic sector stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>A4/1. Conducting periodical surveys on consumers’ awareness on the EU organic logo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A4/2. Conducting a survey on consumers’ awareness, confidence and understanding of the EU organic farming scheme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A5/1. Revising the Green Public Procurement criteria for Food and Catering Services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A5/2. Developing specific information material exemplifying the use of organic farming requirements in public procurement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strand 2. Addressing technical gaps in organic production, with research, innovation, and their dissemination.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A6. Organising a conference in 2015 to identify research and innovation priorities for organic producers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strand 3. Increasing information on the organic production sector, as well as on the market and trade.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A8. Publishing regular reports on organic production in the EU.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A9.1. Analysing the distribution of added value along the food supply chain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A9.2. Analysing obstacles to joining the organic scheme.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: **dark green** = initiated and completed | **light green** = initiated and in progress; **orange** = in preparation; **red** = not initiated.
The assessment of results points to the following:

- The EC guide published in 2014 has not accomplished the expected effect on target stakeholders. According to the results of the consultation, both its effectiveness and dissemination are considered poor. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents representing entities grouping organic producers, retailers or processors are not familiar with it.

- The inclusion of organic farming as a specific theme in the 2014 call based on Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 worked out to be an incentive for stakeholders to consider organic-related information activities in their project proposals.

- The support to the organic quality scheme provided under Regulation (EU) No 1144/2014 has been regularly increased since 2014. It is therefore assumed that EC-led awareness activities had a positive effect on target stakeholders.

- The role of LRAs in boosting public procurement of organically produced food and catering is considered essential according to the results of the consultation. However, LRAs face a series of constraints and none of these is specifically addressed by the Action Plan.

- The effect of the first priority of the Action Plan on consumers is considered poor. The consultation reveals that there is a general perception that consumers are not given enough information (in quantity and, more importantly, in quality) on the EU organic logo and scheme. This is confirmed by the stagnating level of recognition of the EU logo across the EU, as regularly recorded by the EC.

- LRAs have indeed a role in the implementation of the first strand of the priority, for example in terms of awareness raising and information activities. Still, they appear to be importantly unaware of the opportunities provided for at the EU level or of EC activities.

- The organisation of the May 2015 Conference is not, in general, perceived as successful according to the results of the consultation. The most striking indicator is the lack of awareness about the event and its outcomes by the majority (82%) of the respondents.
• The Commission has made the planned use of the formats and instruments available under H2020 to provide for co-funding opportunities for organic-related research.

• The uptake and dissemination of research results are totally overlooked under this strand.

• The structural difficulty of LRAs in taking advantage of H2020 opportunities is confirmed.

• The ‘facts and figures’ reports published by the EC every three years are not deemed satisfactory for monitoring purposes by the majority of the respondents to the consultation.

• The studies undertaken or to be undertaken in order to deepen the analysis of specific aspects are not deemed sufficient by the majority of the respondents to the consultation to adequately support present policy developments.

Overall, the evaluation concludes that the effectiveness of the actions under the first priority domain is importantly hampered by an insufficiently conducive policy environment for organic farming at the EU level; a limited monitoring capacity of the organic sector; a limited ownership of the Action Plan by relevant stakeholders, including LRAs; an insufficient communication of the Action Plan, including to LRAs; and a lack of coordination of the Action Plan with national and regional actions. Among specific areas of interventions, the EU effort on awareness and information is perceived to be insufficient; the delay in finalising the GPP criteria for food and catering services seems a missed opportunity to boost a demand-pull process for organic food; and the lack of actions on dissemination and uptake of research results represents a missed opportunity to provide supply-push support.
Part 1 Introduction

1.1 Policy context

The preparation of a second EU organic action plan was part of the updating process of the regulatory and policy framework for organic farming called for by the Council in May 2013. In particular, with regard to the action plan, the Council’s call on the European Commission (EC) was to ‘review and update the European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming to reflect the prevailing and future development of the sector and provide a vision and policy focus for the future’ (CONS, 2013).

The new ‘Action Plan for the future of Organic Production in the European Union’ (also referred to as ‘Action Plan’ in this study) was published by the Commission on 24 March 2014. The Action Plan defines the strategic framework for organic farming in the European Union (EU) up to 2020. It has the overall objective to support the growth of the sector while facilitating its transition to a new legal framework. In particular, the Action Plan addresses some of the non-regulatory aspects of the policy which were identified by the Commission during the impact assessment of its proposal for a new regulation on organic production and labelling of organic products.

In December 2014, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) adopted an opinion on the ‘Policy package on organic production’ presented by the EC and including the proposal for a new regulation and the new Action Plan. Regarding the latter, the CoR expressed concerns on the lack of a specific objective in terms of expansion of organically cultivated land; of a dedicated budget; and of a reference to the territorial dimension of organic farming, hence overlooking the role local and regional authorities (LRAs) have in promoting and supporting the development of organic farming and production (CoR, 2014).

Similar concerns were expressed by key stakeholders at the EU level. In particular, the European umbrella organisation for organic food and farming, IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements) EU

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1 The first European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming was adopted by the EC in 2004 (COM(2004)415 final).
3 The EC put forward a proposal for repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 on 24 March 2014 (COM(2014) 180). Such proposal has been discussed and debated thoroughly at the institutional and stakeholders’ levels. From the point of view of the legislative procedure, a preliminary agreement on a revised text of the proposal was reached by the European Parliament and the Council only in June 2017. In 2018, the agreed text is to be voted in the Parliament and then adopted by the Council. The new Regulation will enter into force on 1 January 2021. Sources: EC, 2014; EP website.
Group, in an assessment and position paper released on December 2014, underlined the lack in the Action Plan of clear specific objectives, of timeframes and of a dedicated budget. Likewise, it noted that no evaluation of the actions proposed in the plan was foreseen (IFOAM EU, 2014).

1.2 Objectives of the evaluation

The terms of reference of this study ask for the mid-term evaluation of the implementation and impact of the first priority domain of the Action Plan launched in 2014. A further specific request is to highlight the role LRAs have in the implementation of the priority. The geographical scope of the evaluation is the EU28.

The Action Plan is structured around three priority domains and includes a total of eighteen (18) actions. The first priority domain of the Action Plan reads ‘to increase competiveness of European Union organic producers’ (EC, 2014a). This first priority is tackled by means of three main strands of EU competency:

- Strand 1. Increasing awareness of and synergies with EU instruments targeting organic production.
- Strand 2. Addressing technical gaps in organic production, with research, innovation, and their dissemination.
- Strand 3. Increasing information on the organic production sector, as well as on the market and trade.

The three strands encompass a total of nine actions, which are the focus of this evaluation exercise, and of two recommendations.

1.3 Evaluation method

The evaluation method is designed by the Contractor. The method strives to overcome the fact that an evaluation of the Action Plan was not foreseen from the outset and that no targets, baseline and indicators were outlined for monitoring and assessment purposes. An overview of the evaluation framework and rationale is provided in Annex I. Below are summarised the key elements of the process.
The evaluation comprises quantitative and qualitative aspects, including:

A. The review of the **state of implementation**. This part reports on progress achieved in implementing each of the nine actions according to the information publicly available as of November 2017. The exercise also includes the specification of accomplished **outputs** (i.e. tangible products such as publications, events).

B. The analysis of **results**. This part investigates the effects of the actions’ implementation on key stakeholders and on the information and research capacity of the sector. It is considered the core part of the study, adding new insights on the way the Action Plan’s implementation is perceived.

C. The analysis of identifiable broader changes, or **impact**. This is done with respect to the policy goal of increasing the competitiveness of EU organic producers. This analysis is seriously constrained by the lack of data.

In the following parts of the report, the review of the state (A) and the analysis of results (B) are presented by strand of EU competency. Part 5 of the study is dedicated to the analysis of broader changes (C).

The **methodology** is based on a combination of approaches: desk research, selection and analysis of measurable indicators, and consultation with stakeholders. In particular:

- **Desk research** was carried out to collect information on the state of implementation (A) of each action. It was also used to investigate to which extent the two recommendations made by the EC were taken on board by concerned stakeholders (B).

- **Objectively verifiable indicators** were identified and used for the measurement of results (B) and impact (C). Main data sources include DG AGRI, DG MARE, DG RTD, ESIF Open Data Portal, Eurostat and CHAFEA.

- **Consultation** with stakeholders was carried out by means of a survey which took the form of an online questionnaire. The consultation aimed at collecting the perception, opinion and experience of various categories of stakeholders on the effectiveness and relevance of the nine actions under evaluation. Although not required by the technical specifications of the study, the survey was considered essential to analyse effects (B) and gather qualitative insights on the broader impact (C).
The questionnaire was designed with LimeSurvey and made available online at www.organicsurvey.eu from 27 October 2017 to 18 December 2017. Prepared in English only (i.e. the language of the study) due to the limited resources available, it included about 40 questions, the actual number of questions varying according to the type of respondent. The consultation was mainly addressed to a selected group of EU stakeholders involved in the organic sector. These sectoral stakeholders (more than 300 and representing the main organic-related associations at the EU and national level) were sent a direct invitation and a personal link to participate in the survey. Furthermore, the public link to the survey was disseminated through social media (i.e. Linkedin, Twitter) and circulated by the CoR to the members of the Commission for Natural Resources. The questionnaire’s form is enclosed in Annex II. Table 2 describes the categories of stakeholders who were engaged in the consultation. Respondents were given the option to reply on behalf of their belonging entity or on an individual basis.

Table 2 - Description of the categories of stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entities grouping organic producers, retailers or processors</td>
<td>Associations/organisations of organic producers, retailers or processors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other types of entities concerned with organic food and/or farming</td>
<td>Other types of associations/organisations/networks/platforms/think tanks/projects/private entities concerned with organic food and/or farming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entities dealing with agricultural research, training or education</td>
<td>Public/private entities dealing with agricultural research, training or education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National authorities</td>
<td>Public authorities at the national level (e.g. Ministry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local and regional authorities (LRAs)</td>
<td>Public authorities at the regional or local level (e.g. Regions, Provinces, Municipalities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others, including consumers</td>
<td>Others, including consumers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Contractor’s own categorisation.
1.4 Profile of the respondents to the consultation

A total of 107 questionnaires were completed and submitted online, 64% of which were filled on behalf of the entity the respondents belong to, and 36% on an individual basis.

Basic statistics of replies are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3 - Basic statistics of replies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessing source</th>
<th>Submitted questionnaires</th>
<th>On behalf of the belonging entity</th>
<th>As an individual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public link – open</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal link – invited</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>107</strong></td>
<td><strong>68</strong></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Contractor’s consultation.

Replies were received from 21 EU countries and one non-EU country (label ‘Other’). Shares of the geographical origin of respondents are shown in Figure 1. The geographical scope of respondents (excluding ‘Others’, who were not asked this question) ranges from local (5% of respondents) to regional (27%), national (37%), European (17%), and international/global (14%).

Figure 1 - Geographical origin of respondents (%)

Source: The Contractor’s consultation.
Figure 2 shows the types of respondents replying on behalf of their organisation.

**Figure 2 - Types of respondents replying on behalf of their belonging entity (%)**

![Pie chart showing types of respondents.]

- **Entities grouping organic producers, retailers or processors**: 29%
- **Other types of entities concerned with organic food and/or farming**: 25%
- **Entities dealing with agricultural research, training or education**: 21%
- **Public authority at the national level**: 18%
- **Public authority at the regional or local level**: 7%

Source: The Contractor’s consultation.

The most represented category (29%) includes ‘Entities grouping organic producers, retailers or processors’. These entities are from 13 EU countries, namely Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and the UK. The second most represented category (25%) includes ‘Other types of entities concerned with organic food and/or farming’. These entities are from 12 EU countries, namely Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the UK. The prevailing geographical scope of these two categories is ‘National’ (54%) and ‘European’ (22%).

Figure 3 shows the shares of those replying on an individual basis. Respondents involved in agricultural research, training or education prevail (28%).
Figure 3 - Type of respondents replying on an individual basis (%)

Source: The Contractor’s consultation.

Regarding the participation of public authorities, seventeen respondents classify as local (2) and regional (15) authorities (LRAs). They represent thirteen administrations from eight EU countries (Austria, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Spain). In particular, twelve of these respondents replied on behalf of their administration while the other five respondents participated as individual civil servants. Public servants at the national level participated from five EU countries (Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland and Portugal). Five of these public servants replied on behalf of their entity, and two of them as individual civil servants.
With regard to the respondents’ level of participation in EU organic-related activities, more than one third of the respondents (36%) were involved in the consultation process led by the EC over the period 2012-2013 on the review of the EU policy on organic agriculture, while about one fifth of them (20%) have been participating in the meetings of the EC-led Advisory Group/Civil Dialogue Group on Organic Farming. In terms of knowledge of the subject under evaluation, 62% of the respondents are familiar with the EU Organic Action Plan and the nine actions outlined in the plan to tackle the increase of competitiveness of EU organic producers. Finally, over two thirds of respondents (68%) received some type of EU support since 2014 (Figure 4).

Figure 4 - Level of involvement of respondents (%)

![Figure 4 - Level of involvement of respondents (%)](source: The Contractor’s consultation.)

The type of organic-related support received by respondents since 2014 is specified in Figure 5 while the distribution of organic-related EU support among the stakeholders engaged through the questionnaire is summarised in Figure 6.

Notably, entities/individuals dealing with organic production, processing or retail benefit the most from support under the CAP. Entities/individuals dealing with organic research, training or education stand out for the support received under the EIP-AGRI, H2020 and other EU programmes. Public authorities, and in particular LRAs, benefit from all types of support although to different extents. The emphasis is on CAP-related funding, participation in other EU programmes and support under the school schemes. Instead, public authorities’ involvement in EIP-AGRI, H2020 and organic-related information and/or promotion activities is limited.
**Figure 5 - Type of organic-related EU support the respondents benefitted from (%)**

- Common Agricultural Policy: 38%
- Horizon 2020: 30%
- Other EU programmes: 28%
- EIP-AGRI: 21%
- School Schemes (Fruit and Vegetables & Milk): 14%
- EU co-funding for organic-related information and/or promotion activities: 13%
- Common Fisheries Policy: 4%

Source: The Contractor’s consultation.
Note: Among the ‘Other EU programmes’, the most frequently mentioned is Interreg⁴.

**Figure 6 - Type of organic-related EU support, by type of stakeholders**

Source: The Contractor’s consultation.
Note: replies from individuals have been aggregated to those replying on behalf of their belonging entity.

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⁴ One example of Interreg project is the [SME-ORGANICS](#) (2016-2020).
Overall, it is concluded that respondents engaged through the questionnaire represent a balanced sample in terms of country of origin, geographical scope of their activity and type of stakeholders. They also reflect a varied and good level of involvement in and/or knowledge of the EU organic sector, including the EU Organic Action Plan and the nine actions of the plan which are the subject of this evaluation. Furthermore, a satisfactory number of associations participated, including those having a European, or international/global, geographical scope.
Part 2 Increasing awareness of and synergies with EU instruments targeting organic production (strand 1)

In the Action Plan, increasing awareness and synergies of EU instruments and ensuring awareness of the EU organic scheme and logo is tackled by means of five actions (see Table 4). Basically, these actions relate to awareness raising, information dissemination and monitoring of consumers’ knowledge and confidence.

Table 4 - Actions 1 to 5 under the first priority domain

| Action 1. | The Commission will publish an informative document in 2014 intended for organic farmers, processors and retailers, presenting the rules applicable to organic production, processing and trade, including the rules applying to conversion as well as support measures in the CAP. |
| Action 2. | The Commission will include organic farming as a specific theme in the forthcoming call for proposals for support for information measures intended for farmers and producers relating to the common agricultural policy (CAP). As part of the guidance on EMFF funding, the opportunities for organic aquaculture will also be highlighted. |
| Action 3. | The Commission will continue to raise awareness on the possibilities offered by the regulation on information and promotion activities in favour of agricultural products in internal market and third countries, in particular on the promotion policy objectives and the rules and procedures to apply by presenting the instrument to organic sector public, Member States (Standing Committee on organic Farming), stakeholders (Advisory Group on Organic farming), or organic farming specialised events like BioFach. |
| Action 4. | The Commission will conduct: (i) periodical surveys on consumers’ awareness of the EU organic logo; (ii) a specific survey on consumers’ awareness, confidence in and understanding of the EU organic farming scheme. |
| Action 5. | The Commission will revise its Green Public Procurement criteria for Food and Catering Services by the end of 2015 and develop specific information material that would exemplify the use of organic farming requirements in public procurement. |

Source: extracted from EC (2014a). Bolding is added to give emphasis to keywords.

This first strand targets several stakeholders, from individual organic farmers, processors and retailers to their associations and other entities reaching out to them with dissemination and awareness raising activities, to public authorities and consumers.
2.1 Overview of the state of implementation of Strand 1

State of implementation of Actions 1 to 5 as of November 2017 is indicated in Table 5 using a coloured coding. Some of the actions are split into two sub-actions as they clearly refer to two distinct types of initiatives.

Table 5 - State of implementation of Actions 1 to 5 on awareness and information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State of implementation</th>
<th>Action (A) - number and short description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A2/1. Inclusion of organic farming in the 2014 call for proposals for support for information measures intended for farmers and producers within the CAP.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A5/2. Developing specific information material exemplifying the use of organic farming requirements in public procurement.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: dark green = initiated and completed; light green = initiated and in progress; orange = in preparation; red = not initiated.

Action 1 and Action 2

Action 1 and Action 2 aim at the prompt increase of awareness of the new instruments introduced with the reformed CAP. They were both implemented in 2014. While Action 1 and Action 2/2 were directly meant to inform organic farmers, processors and retailers, Action 2/1 aimed at strengthening the potential of third parties in informing and reaching out to organic farmers and producers.
Action 1 [initiated and completed] envisages the publishing of an informative document on EU policy instruments for organic farming. The output of this action is the production of ‘A guide on support opportunities for organic producers in Europe’ (EC-DG AGRI, 2014). The guide was published by DG AGRI in late 2014\(^5\). It is a 16-page document made available in paper and in electronic format (PDF file) in 23 languages of the Union. The file is downloadable from the website of the Publications Office of the EU as well as from the website of DG AGRI.

Action 2/1 [initiated and completed] envisages the inclusion of organic farming as a specific theme in the call for proposals ‘Support for information measures relating to the common agricultural policy (CAP)’ for 2015. The call is based on Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy (CAP). Such a call is published once a year and is for the co-financing of information measures related to the CAP. The one published on 29 October 2014 referred to organic farming as a specific theme in the following terms: ‘For rural actors, actions should focus on the implementation of the measures introduced in the framework of the recent reform of the CAP and on specific issues related to policy initiatives initiated after the reform of the CAP, such as ‘organic farming’’ (EC, 2014b). This text specifically inviting information measures on organic farming is the output of Action 2/1.

In terms of providing information on opportunities for organic aquaculture through the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) (Action 2/2, initiated and completed), the only public informative document in this sense is the DG AGRI’s guide on support opportunities for organic producers in Europe (see Action 1) where a section on organic aquaculture is developed. No evidence is found on other specific initiatives or documents, with the exception of the text of Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 of 15 May 2014 on the EMFF, in particular Article 53 (support for conversion and participation in audit schemes), Article 68 (marketing measures) and Article 69 (investments for processing).

Action 3

Action 3 [initiated and in progress] aims at increasing awareness of organic sector stakeholders on existing instruments for information and promotion of organic products. In particular, the reference is to the opportunities provided for

\(^5\) The Publications Office of the EU reports 19 January 2015 as the publishing date.
by Regulation (EU) No 1144/2014 on information and promotion activities in favour of agricultural products in the internal market and in third countries. The action is meant to be implemented by the Commission in an unstructured manner, namely by means of presentations made at specific events or meetings such as those of the Regulatory Committee on Organic Production/Standing Committee on Organic Farming. This makes the monitoring of the implementation of the action unfeasible.

The screening of the summary records of the meetings of the Regulatory Committee on Organic Production held from 2014 onwards shows that Regulation (EU) No 1144/2014 was never discussed\(^6\). Instead, according to the review of the agendas, promotion activities were presented by the Commission in at least one of the meetings of the Civil Dialogue Group on Organic Farming, i.e. the one held in November 2016\(^7\). If the state of play of Action 3 is without doubts ‘on-going’, the extent of the efforts undertaken by the Commission to reach out to stakeholders in the organic sector is unknown and the corresponding outputs (e.g. type and number of people reached) are not quantifiable.

[Action 4](#)

Action 4/1 [initiated and in progress] aims at monitoring consumers’ awareness of the EU logo as part of broader investigations commissioned by DG AGRI every two years. The Special Eurobarometer 440 on ‘Europeans, Agriculture and the CAP’ is the only survey published over the period herewith evaluated. It was released in January 2016 and reports on the field work carried out in October 2015. The publicly available output of this action is a single piece of information (i.e. a percentage) on the level of recognition by respondents of the EU organic logo. More precisely, the survey indicates that in 2015 23% of Europeans could recognise the EU organic logo. This share was 25% in 2013 and 24% in 2012 (EC, 2016).

Action 4/2 [not initiated] refers to the carrying out of a specific survey focusing on the awareness, knowledge and confidence of consumers with respect to the EU organic logo and farming scheme. As at November 2017, such a specific survey was not implemented.

[Action 5](#)

Action 5 [in preparation] envisages the production of information material on the use of organic farming requirements in public procurement. This is supposed

\(^6\) These records are available at [https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/committees/organic_en.](https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/committees/organic_en)

\(^7\) These records are available at [https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/civil-dialogue-groups/organic-farming_en.](https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/civil-dialogue-groups/organic-farming_en)
to follow the revision of the EU Green Public Procurement criteria for Food and Catering Services which is, in fact, still on-going as at November 2017⁸. The revision work of the criteria is under the management of DG ENVE with the support of the Joint Research Centre's Directorate B - Growth and Innovation⁹.

2.2 Analysing results in terms of awareness and information

Regarding the first action (Action A1) related to the publication of an informative document on EU support opportunities for organic farmers, processors and retailers, only 37% of the respondents are familiar with the guide published by the EC in 2014. These respondents are fairly well satisfied with the guide’s clearness (average score of 6.7 on a scale from 1 to 10) but are less satisfied with respect to its usefulness (average 6.1) and effectiveness (average 5.3) (Figure 7). In addition, only 25% of these respondents believe that the guide was properly disseminated to the target groups (i.e. organic farmers, processors and retailers) in their respective country.

Figure 7  Respondents’ opinions on the EC guide

Source: The Contractor’s consultation.
Note: the horizontal lines in the blocks indicate the average.

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⁸ Applying GPP criteria may be found at http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/eu_gpp_criteria_en.htm.
⁹ See http://susproc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/Food_Catering/. The work of JRC is based on a wide consultation process which resulted in the publication of a third technical report on the ‘Revision of the EU GPP criteria for Food procurement and Catering services’ in July 2017.
The low level of familiarity with the guide of those representing entities grouping organic producers, retailers or processors is particularly striking. LRAs are also mostly unaware of it. Reference is to Figure 8.

**Figure 8 - Familiarity with the EC guide of those replying on behalf of their entities**

![Familiarity with the EC guide of those replying on behalf of their entities](image)

Source: The Contractor’s consultation.

**Half of the respondents (50%) provide suggestions on how the EC should create awareness on EU support measures at the supply level.** The most recurrent replies in this sense are summarised in Box 1. Notably, several respondents consider the need for some pre- or concurrent conditions to raising awareness. These include:

- Enhancing farmers’ technical knowledge of organic farming through, for example, practical experience (e.g. demonstration projects), training (or teaching for young farmers and future generations of farmers), farm advice and/or extension services.

- Giving positive messages at the policy level to ensure that farmers (as well as consumers) have a clearer understanding of the advantages and value of organic farming. Among the deterrents to the uptake of EU support for organic farming, the following are mentioned more than once: bureaucracy; the issue of double funding under Measure 10 and Measure 11 of rural development programmes; and the lack of a CAP that i) strongly prioritises organic development, ii) provides unambiguous incentives and rewards for organic farming, and iii) creates a level playing field for organic farmers with respect to conventional farmers.
Among the recurrent suggestions proposed by respondents are:

- Implementing a promotional strategy for organic farming with a dedicated budget.
- Strengthening the reach out capacity of farmers’ associations, or facilitating the set-up of alternative and new support/information channels, especially with a view to involve the next generations of farmers.
- Improving the efficiency of intervention through better coordination between the EU and the national levels as well as between the national and the regional levels where interventions may be adapted in order to address specific farmers’ needs.
- Providing direct information to farmers on success stories; organising campaigns/information programmes – in particular at the regional level; supporting the farmers’ participation in agricultural fairs and exhibitions where opportunities for EU support on organic agriculture are presented; or creating a European platform for the exchange of good practices.

Source: The Contractor’s consultation.

Regarding Action 2/1 related to the inclusion of organic farming in the 2014 call for proposals ‘Support for information measures relating to the CAP’, such an inclusion had **positive effects on the number of co-funded projects entirely or partially focussed on organic topics**. Under the 2014 call, out of the sixteen selected projects, two fully focussed on organic themes and four had a few information activities related to the organic sector (Figure 9). None of the projects had LRAs involved.

**Figure 9 - Co-funding under the 2014 call for proposal for support for information measures (Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013)**

![Graph showing co-funding under the 2014 call for proposal for support for information measures.](image)

Source: Elaborated by the Contractor. Raw data on projects are from the project sheets made available at the dedicated [webpage](#) of DG AGRI, accessed on December 2017.

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**Box 1 - What would you suggest to be implemented by the EC to create awareness on EU support measures at the supply (e.g. farmers) level?**

Regarding Action 2/1 related to the inclusion of organic farming in the 2014 call for proposals ‘Support for information measures relating to the CAP’, such an inclusion had **positive effects on the number of co-funded projects entirely or partially focussed on organic topics**. Under the 2014 call, out of the sixteen selected projects, two fully focussed on organic themes and four had a few information activities related to the organic sector (Figure 9). None of the projects had LRAs involved.

**Figure 9 - Co-funding under the 2014 call for proposal for support for information measures (Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013)**

![Graph showing co-funding under the 2014 call for proposal for support for information measures.](image)

Source: Elaborated by the Contractor. Raw data on projects are from the project sheets made available at the dedicated [webpage](#) of DG AGRI, accessed on December 2017.
It has to be noted that the lack of a direct reference to organic agriculture in the text of successive years’ calls was not a deterrent itself for accessing funding for information measures related to the organic sector (Figure 10).

**Figure 10 - Organic-related information activities in the 2014 and 2015 calls (Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013)**

Still, under the 2015 call, the number of funded projects fully or partially dealing with organic-related information measures was significantly lower than in the previous year and so was their budget share (Figure 10).

Regarding Action 3 related to awareness raising on the possibilities offered by Regulation (EU) No 1144/2014 on information and promotion activities in favour of agricultural products in the internal market and in third countries, half of the respondents (51%) to the questionnaire are familiar with it. Proportionally, among those representing their entity, the most aware are representatives of national authorities while the least aware are once again LRAs (Figure 11).
Still, only 24% of the respondents were reached by any EC awareness raising initiative (e.g. events, presentations within committees/groups) related to the funding opportunities provided for in the Regulation. Whether due to the effect of these awareness raising initiatives or not, the analysis of the projects granted since 2014 under Regulation 1144 and related to the organic quality scheme shows a slight decrease in the number of projects awarded over the period 2014-2016 but a robust increase in the amount contributed by the EU over the same period (Figure 12). The increase of financing is particularly significant for the internal market support as it passed from 4.4 million EUR in 2014 to 11.4 million EUR in 2016. Only one project saw the participation of one regional public authority as a shareholder of a company (i.e. the Region of Crete, Greece).
Notwithstanding the absence of LRAs in taking advantage of the opportunities provided for by Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 and Regulation (EU) No 1144/2014, most of the LRAs participating in the consultation are involved in awareness raising activities. In particular, **59% of the LRAs participating in the survey are involved in awareness raising on EU funded support measures for organic producers, processors and retailers; and 71% are involved in consumers’ awareness raising activities** with regard to organic food and farming.

Still regarding awareness but of consumers (reference is to Actions 4/1 and 4/2), **only 31% of the respondents believe that consumers, in their country, are given enough information on the EU organic logo and scheme.** Consumers, rather than institutions, are at the focus of most of the suggestions given by 53% of the respondents on how the EC should create awareness on EU organic food and farming at the demand level. The most recurrent replies in this sense are summarised in Box 2.

**Box 2 - What would you suggest to be implemented by the EC to create awareness on EU organic food and farming at the demand (e.g. consumers, institutions) level?**

There is a general call for the implementation of massive/large scale information and promotion campaigns as part of a coherent EU strategy which for some respondents should have a dedicated budget. Common messages at the EU level (e.g. on food safety aspects, on the sustainability of the organic food chain, and on the EU logo) are believed...
to add value to the action of Member States. Greater focus on products of EU origin is also invited in some replies. In addition, there is a clear general request for passing on to consumers **quantitatively more and qualitatively better information** (i.e. not only simple or simplistic messages but possibly science-based and objective facts). Clarity for consumers is deemed necessary on several aspects, among which are: the fact that organic products internalise more costs than conventional products; the holistic nature of organic farming; health, socio-economic and environmental benefits of organic farming and food; characteristics of the production method; implications of the control/certification systems and of the presence of the EU logo on products. Emphasis in replies is also put on the need to specifically target schools and educate children and youth in general.

*Source: The Contractor’s consultation.*

When mentioning institutions, respondents link the creation of awareness on EU organic food and farming to the introduction of organic food in public procurement. This is the topic area covered by Actions 5/1 and 5/2. The level of involvement of respondents in the area of public procurement is generally limited. Some 16% of the respondents are actively involved in the on-going review process of the GPP criteria for Food and Catering Services. Most of these respondents (15 out of 17) represent an entity. Almost a double share of respondents (28%) is involved in public procurement of organically produced food and catering in various forms (e.g. as producers, retailers, purchasers). Figure 13 reports on the level of involvement, by type of stakeholders.

**Figure 13** Type of involvement in organic public procurement, by type of stakeholders

Source: The Contractor’s consultation.

Note: replies from individuals have been aggregated to those replying on behalf of their belonging entity.
The **majority** (87%) of the respondents believe that local and regional public authorities have a special role in boosting public procurement of organically produced food and catering. Respondents put ‘**Lack of awareness**’ at the top of the main constraints faced by LRAs in developing organic public procurement. This is followed by economic constraints. Figure 14 shows the cumulative number of selections for each constraint and by type of stakeholder.

**Figure 14  Opinions on the main constraints faced by LRAs in developing organic public procurement**

Half (50%) of the respondents provide suggestions on what the EC should do to exemplify the use of organic farming in public procurement and boost its uptake. Most of these opinions emphasise the need for guidance and showcasing of good examples. More details are provided in Box 3.

**Box 3 - In your opinion, which type of activities shall the European Commission implement to exemplify the use of organic farming in public procurement and boost its uptake?**

There is a general call for the EC to have a role in disseminating good examples and in providing practical guidance. In particular, among the recurrent opinions proposed by the
respondents are:

- Accompanying the issuing of the final GPP criteria with guidance and best practice examples for the integration of such criteria in public procurement. The request for providing cases and examples which are country-tailored is common.
- Show-casing of successes as well as of failures for lessons to be learnt and mistakes to be avoided by others.
- Provision of education and training of the staff in charge of public procurement.
-Facilitating knowledge transfer and development of competences, the latter also through the use of competition-based initiatives (e.g. competition among chefs working in public entities).
- Developing practical guidance material, also on the legal possibilities LRAs have in including organically produced food and locally produced food in public procurement procedures.
- Conducting awareness raising campaigns targeted to public servants.
- Leading by example and hence introducing high shares of organic food in EU institutions canteens and catering.

Finally, as one respondent puts it, ‘GPP should not be limited to procedures, but should extend to policy. It is no use to have procedures if there is no policy choice for organic (or sustainable) procurement’. Several respondents call for the setting of minimum shares of organic food in public procurement to be made compulsory.

Source: The Contractor’s consultation.

As mentioned, under the first priority of the Action Plan, the EC also included two recommendations. Box 4 reports on the first of these recommendations.

**Box 4 - The EC recommendation number 1**

The Action Plan recalls the responsibility of Member States in promoting organic farming in the following terms: ‘The Commission recommends Member States to use the opportunities and tools to support organic farming available in the new legal framework for rural development, in blue growth and in the Common Fisheries Policy’ (EC, 2014a). The response of Member States to this recommendation varies greatly. Support for organic farming is provided through different measures of the Rural Development Programmes (RDPs). Looking at Measure 11 (M11) which refers to area payments for conversion (M11.1) and maintenance (M11.2) of organic farming, the share of organic farming expenditure in total (i.e. including EU and national contributions) rural development expenditure varies from a minimum of 0% in the Netherlands and Malta to a maximum of 14% in Greece. This is represented in the figure that follows.

The contact Point of the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) further specifies that this commitment is thoroughly taken at the regional level. In fact, ‘All RDPs except the Netherlands and FR-Mayotte and the three National Programmes for FR, IT and ES provide support for organic farming under M11. Three RDPs, being AT, EE and DE-Saxony-Anhalt, did not programme sub-Measure M11.1. All the rest of the RDPs that
programmed Measure 11 are using both the conversion sub-Measure (M11.1) and the maintenance sub-Measure (M11.2)” (ENRD, 2015). Additionally, a brief review of on-going action plans for organic farming highlights that at least 14 EU Member States have active plans, with three countries having plans detailed at the regional level (Belgium, Spain and the UK).

Source: Elaborated by the Contractor. Data are from OECD (2017).

According to the EU Data Portal on ESIF, progress of commitments taken under the EAFRD since 2014 is good. Against a planned total area of 10.327.514 hectares to be supported, support for almost 8 million hectares was already ‘implemented’ over the period 2015-2016. With regard to the CFP and blue growth, the planned support to organic aquaculture production is progressing slower. Against a planned total supported volume of production of 15.122 tonnes, only 3.900 tonnes were ‘decided’ (i.e. not yet implemented) in 2016.

Part 3 Addressing technical gaps in organic production with research, innovation and their dissemination (strand 2)

In the Action Plan, the overcoming of technical obstacles to the development of organic farming is tackled by means of two actions (see Table 6).

Table 6 - Actions 6 and 7 under the first priority domain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand 2. Addressing technical gaps in organic production, with research, innovation, and their dissemination.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action 6.</strong> The Commission will <strong>organise a conference in 2015 to identify research and innovation priorities for producers</strong> in relation to the challenges that may result from the future organic production rules.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Action 7:</strong> The Commission will take into account in the relevant <strong>Horizon 2020</strong> formats: (i) the need to strengthen research, exchange and uptake of research results through specific measures such as research and innovation actions, thematic networks and other types of &quot;Cooperation and Support Actions&quot; that address synergies between, on one hand, research outputs of other production sectors and, on the other hand, conventional and organic research; (ii) to support <strong>ERA-Net</strong> or other types of instruments to improve coordination of research among research funding bodies in the EU, in view of presenting joint research calls.</td>
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</table>

Source: extracted from EC (2014a). Bolding is added to give emphasis to keywords.

Overall, the two actions are meant to strengthen organic research and its innovation impact. This is considered by the Commission to be a prerogative for addressing existing and future needs of organic farming. Also this second strand targets several stakeholders. If the ultimate targets are organic producers, the actions are mostly meant for those intermediary organisations which represent the scientific community (e.g. universities), associations or other entities voicing the innovation needs of their members, and public authorities.

### 3.1 Overview of the state of implementation of Strand 2

State of implementation of Actions 6 and 7 as of November 2017 is indicated in Table 7 using a coloured coding.
Table 7 - State of implementation of Actions 6 and 7 on support to organic research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State of implementation</th>
<th>Action (A) - number and short description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A6. Organising a conference in 2015 to identify research and innovation priorities for organic producers.</td>
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</table>

Note: dark green = initiated and completed; light green = initiated and in progress.

➤ Action 6

Action 6 [initiated and completed] is meant to support the identification process of research and innovation priorities for organic producers through the organisation of a conference. The ‘Organic production, Research and Innovation: setting priorities for the future’ conference was organised on 28-29 May 2015, in the context of the Universal Exhibition in Milan. According to the outcomes report released by the Commission in September 2017, ‘All actors of the Research and Innovation chain were involved: farmers, farm advisors, researchers, and members of the Standing Committee on Agricultural Research, members of the Expert Group for Technical Advice on Organic Production and representatives of industries’ (EC-DG AGRI, 2015). The output of Action 6 is one event which gathered some 183 people from 24 EU Member States and other non-EU countries (EC-DG AGRI, 2015).

➤ Action 7

Action 7 [initiated and in progress] envisages the use of the formats (e.g. the work programmes) and instruments (e.g. research and innovation actions, ERA-NET) made available under the Horizon 2020 programme to strengthen organic research, including coordination in the domain as well as exchange and uptake of innovation and results.

The review of past (i.e. 2014-2015, 2016-2017) and current (2018-2019-2020) work programmes of H2020 provides evidence that the Commission’s intention has been achieved, the outputs being a number of calls specifically targeting organic topics and a number of calls aimed at benefitting both the conventional and organic sectors. In particular, nine calls are specific for organic agriculture, or organic aquaculture, or address specific challenges of the organic sector such as the need to increase the availability of organic seeds and varieties. About 20 calls were/are aimed at benefitting both conventional and organic sectors.

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farming/agro-food chains, where the benefit for organic farming is explicitly mentioned in the description of the call.

The organic-specific calls fall under the societal challenge ‘Food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine and maritime and inland water research and the bioeconomy’. Still, organic-related research is carried out also by means of other actions/instruments such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCA) and the SME Instrument. A few relevant calls addressing organic topics to some extent, may also be found under ‘Cross-cutting activities’ or the societal challenge ‘Climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials’.

3.2 Analysing results in strengthening organic research

Regarding the event envisaged under Action 6, only 7% of the respondents attended the conference on ‘Organic production, Research and Innovation: setting priorities for the future’ organised by the EC on 28-29 May 2015 in the context of the Universal Exhibition in Milan. This corresponds to 4% of the people who actually attended the conference. They include the representatives of three entities grouping organic producers, retailers or processors; the representatives of three other types of entities concerned with organic food and/or farming; and one individual working for entities dealing with agricultural research, training or education. A slightly higher share of respondents (17%) is familiar with what was discussed at the conference. These stakeholders are shown in Figure 15. The prevalence of people representing or working for entities dealing with agricultural research, training or education is evident.

Figure 15 - Types of stakeholders being familiar with what was discussed at the May 2015 Conference (%)

Source: The Contractor’s consultation.
Note: replies from individuals have been aggregated to those replying on behalf of their belonging entity.
Stakeholders who are familiar with the May 2015 Conference score **not sufficient the appropriateness of the conference towards the scope** of identifying research and innovation priorities for producers in relation to the challenges that may result from the future organic production rules (average score of 5.8 on a scale from 1 to 10). They have **similar opinions with regard** to the fact that the conference was **attended by the right stakeholders** (average score of 5.9) and that it **led to important conclusions** (average score of 5.7) (Figure 16).

**Figure 16 - Respondents’ opinions on the May 2015 Conference (provided by those who are familiar with what was discussed at the conference)**

The same respondents believe that the event principally highlighted the need of EU support to research and innovation in the organic sector. This is followed by the identification of research and innovation needs of the sector. Shares of these respondents’ selections on the type of contribution given by the May 2015 Conference are shown in Figure 17.
Finally, only **18% of respondents are familiar with the outcomes** of the conference, and hardly any of these respondents is aware of a follow-up implemented by the EC on the basis of the conference’s outcomes.

Independently from the May 2015 Conference, the general opinions of respondents on the weak aspects of the European research and innovation approach for organic food and farming give almost equal importance to the lack of instruments for systematic dissemination/uptake/exploitation of research and innovation results, and the lack of adequate funding. Shares of the respondents’ selections on the type of weakness are shown in Figure 18.

**Figure 18 - Opinions of respondents on weak aspects of the European research and innovation approach for organic food and farming (%)**

- Lack of instruments for systematic dissemination/uptake/exploitation of research and innovation results: **60%**
- Lack of adequate funding: **59%**
- Insufficient involvement of end-users/stakeholders (e.g., organic farmers/ producers): **53%**
- Lack of coordination among the academic institutions/research bodies: **41%**
- Lack of sharing of best practices: **36%**
- Other: **15%**
- None: **3%**

Source: The Contractor’s consultation.
Among the ‘Other’ weak aspects mentioned, relevance is given to the lack of a fixed budget share earmarked to the organic sector within the overall budget for agricultural research. In particular, two respondents require that ‘A ring-fenced budget of 10% of the total budget for agricultural research should be dedicated to the organic sector. This percentage corresponds to the short-term potential of the organic sector in terms of agricultural land within the next 5-10 years’.

Regarding Action 7, envisaging the use of the relevant H2020 formats for promoting research and innovation, the analysis of the database of H2020-funded projects downloaded from CORDIS on 7 December 2017 reveals that since the inception of the programme at least eight of the funded projects focus on organic and/or low input agriculture/aquaculture. An additional twelve funded projects benefit the organic sector but do not entirely focus on it. The eight projects include one ERA-NET, two Research and Innovation Actions (RIA), two Coordination and Support Actions (CSA), one MSCA, and three SME Instrument. None of these projects started in 2014. Since 2015, there is evidence of an improvement in terms of the number of organic-related funded projects combined with the size of EU co-funding (Figure 19).

**Figure 19 - H2020-funded projects addressing organic topics**

Source: Elaborated by the Contractor. Raw data on projects are from CORDIS. Notes: the 2016 data include the CORE ERA-NET project. ERA-NET projects are usually characterised by a low share of EU co-funding.

In terms of the participating stakeholders’ belonging countries, participants from Spain are indeed the most active, taking part in six out of the eight projects. They are followed by participants from Denmark and Italy with five participations each. The participation level is shown in Figure 20, where the area of the blocks is proportional to the number of participations.
Figure 20 - Number of participations in H2020-funded projects addressing organic topics, by country

Source: Elaborated by the Contractor. Raw data on projects are from CORDIS.

None of the projects is participated by LRAs with the exception of the CORE Organic Cofund where the Government of Flanders takes part. The CORE Organic Cofund was approved in 2016 and is the continuation of the ERA-Nets CORE Organic I which started in 2004 under the 6th Framework Programme (FP6), and continued under FP7 II (CORE Organic II and CORE Organic Plus). CORE Organic stands for ‘Coordination of European Transnational Research in Organic Food and Farming Systems’. Coordinated by Aarhus University (Denmark), the project runs from 1 December 2016 to 30 November 2021 and receives a 5 million EUR contribution from the EU. It brings together a network of 25 national ministries and/or research bodies from 19 countries and according to the project’s description ‘will continue, to update and consolidate the series of transnational research calls that support a focused and coordinated research and innovation effort covering the most important challenges along the organic value chains, for example: increasing the organic production potentials, enhancing resource efficiency, and improving animal welfare. In addition this research and innovation plays a key role in adapting to the new EU regulations on Organic Farming.’ (CORDIS website).

The low level of participation by LRAs in H2020 is not a surprise. This situation was thoroughly documented in a study carried out in 2017 by the Contractor for the European Committee of the Regions (CoR, 2017). The study quantifies the actual participation of LRAs in the whole H2020 Programme with the aim, among other scopes, to understand and overcome the reasons that prevent LRAs from applying to the programme. With regard to agriculture and rural development, the study finds that these thematic areas are neglected by LRAs while participating in H2020. As this is clearly in contrast with the ‘evidence of an interest at the territorial level to innovate in agriculture, as the European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-AGRI) has been taken up in 26 Member States and by the majority (95 out of 118) of the Rural Development Programmes for 2014-2020 (EP, 2016)’ (CoR,
2017), the study concludes that the weak point is the lack of communication to LRAs of the existence of relevant opportunities in H2020.

As mentioned, under the first priority of the Action Plan the EC also included two recommendations. The second recommendation relates to the set-up by concerned stakeholders of a database at the EU level on the availability of organic seeds (EC, 2014a). The implementation of this recommendation is facilitated by the EC through the granting of co-funding under H2020 (Box 5).

**Box 5 - The EC recommendation number 2**

In the Action Plan ‘The Commission recommends to the concerned stakeholders, to set up a data base at European level on availability of organic seeds. The Commission encourages stakeholders – in particular in the framework of the Aquaculture Advisory Council – to consider similar initiatives in relation to the availability of organic fish juveniles and organic seed of bivalve shellfish’ (EC, 2014a). The set-up of a database by each Member State was a requirement of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 and of the Commission Regulation (EC) No 889/2008. Each database had to contain information on available organic seed and seed potatoes. However, existing national databases are not harmonised, neither are they made available on a unique platform. A common access to the national databases of Ireland, Germany, Switzerland, UK, Belgium, Luxemburg and Sweden is possible through [https://www.organicxseeds.com/international/](https://www.organicxseeds.com/international/). This gateway was set up and managed by the Forschungsinstitut für biologischen Landbau (FiBL) - Switzerland, in collaboration with stakeholders of the participating countries, and is apparently kept updated over time by the same stakeholders.

The H2020-funded project LIVESEED ‘Improve performance of organic agriculture by boosting organic seed and plant breeding efforts across Europe’ is expected to fill the gap of a European level database. The project is coordinated by IFOAM EU and runs from 1 June 2017 to 31 May 2021. It has a total cost of almost EUR 9 million, out of which EUR 7.5 million are co-funded by the EU. The project networks a wide range of stakeholders (35 partners, 13 linked third parties and about 30 other actors) from 16 EU countries and Switzerland (the project also receives Swiss funding). Among the several actions foreseen to increase the availability and choice of organic seeds is ‘harmonize the implementation of legislative requirements and develop an EU-wide router database tool for seed suppliers’ (CORDIS project fact-sheet).

Sources: Commission Regulation (EC) No 889/2008; FiBL Switzerland - Organic Seed; CORDIS database.
Part 4 Increasing information on the organic production sector as well as on the market and trade (strand 3)

In the Action Plan, the effort to improve the monitoring and evaluation of the organic sector is tackled by means of two actions (see Table 8).

Table 8 - Actions 8 and 9 under the first priority domain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand 3. Increasing information on the organic production sector, as well as on the market and trade.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action 8.</strong> The Commission will publish regular reports on organic production in the EU, containing in particular information on surfaces, holdings involved in organic production as well as main production sectors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action 9.</strong> The Commission will: (i) analyse the distribution of added value along the food supply chain; (ii) analyse obstacles to join the organic sector through a survey on the attractiveness of the organic scheme, in particular for small farms, and small and medium sized enterprises in the food manufacturing sector.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: extracted from EC (2014a). Bolding is added to give emphasis to keywords.

In practice, the two actions envisage the undertaking of regular reporting on the sector and of two studies to deepen the analysis of specific aspects.

This third strand targets those who are called to shape the policy of the sector, hence from representatives of associations and other entities investigating the dynamics of the sector, including universities, to policy makers (i.e. governments at all levels).

4.1 Overview of the state of implementation of Strand 3

State of implementation of Actions 8 and 9 as of November 2017 is indicated in Table 9 using a coloured coding. One of the actions is split into two sub-actions as they clearly refer to two distinct types of initiatives.

Table 9 - State of implementation of Actions 8 and 9 on monitoring and analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State of implementation</th>
<th>Action (A) - number and short description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>A8. Publishing regular reports on organic production in the EU.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>A9.1. Analysing the distribution of added value along the food supply chain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>A9.2. Analysing obstacles to joining the organic scheme.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: dark green = initiated and completed; light green = initiated and in progress; red = not initiated.
Action 8

Action 8 [initiated and in progress] aims at continuing with the reporting on sectoral facts and figures which was initiated in 2013 and contained data up to year 2011 (EC-DG AGRI, 2013). Since October 2013, one report on ‘Facts and Figures on Organic Agriculture in the European Union’ was published in December 2016 (EC-DG AGRI, 2016). The report contains organic data up to year 2015 and represents the current output of Action 8.

Action 9

Action 9 envisages the undertaking of two studies, one on the distribution of added value along the food supply chain (Action 9.1, initiated and completed), and another one on obstacles faced by small farms and microenterprises in joining the organic scheme (Action 9.2, not initiated). The study on added value was prepared for DG AGRI and released in November 2016. As at November 2017, the study on obstacles is not yet available.

In fact, a report on ‘EU Organic Aquaculture’ was also prepared by the European Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture Products (EUMOFA) and published in 2017 by DG MARE, while the same market observatory also delivers yearly editions on the EU fish market which include some information on organic aquaculture.

4.2 Analysing results in the monitoring and evaluation of the organic sector

With respect to the publishing of regular reports on organic production in the EU (Action 8), there is a prevailing partial satisfaction (47% of respondents) of the monitoring capacity of the organic sector undertaken by the Commission through its ‘facts and figures’ reports. Only 15% of the respondents believe that these reports are sufficient to regularly monitor the implementation of the EU policy for organic production. The rest is either not satisfied or has no opinion (19% each) (Figure 21).
By analysing replies by type of stakeholders, those representing or working as organic producers, retailers or processors are both the most (‘Yes’) and the least (‘No’) satisfied, indicating the existence of very different views within the same group of stakeholders (Figure 22). Furthermore, the lack of opinion of several LRAs and of several of the people representing or working in entities dealing with agricultural research, training or education is surprising.
The undertaking of specific studies by the Commission as envisaged under Action 9 – in particular, the study on the distribution of the added value in the organic food chain and the survey on obstacles faced by farmers/processors to join the organic scheme – is also partially considered sufficient to adequately support present policy developments (54% of respondents) (Figure 23). Only 6% of the respondents believe that these initiatives adequately support present policy developments. The rest is either not satisfied (21%) or has no opinion (19%).

Figure 23 - Respondents’ opinion on the sufficiency of the specific studies undertaken by the EC to adequately support present policy developments (%)

Source: The Contractor’s consultation.

By analysing replies by type of stakeholders, once again, the lack of opinion of several LRAs is surprising (Figure 24).

Figure 24 - Respondents’ opinion on the sufficiency of the specific studies undertaken by the EC to adequately support present policy developments, by type of stakeholders

Source: The Contractor’s consultation.
Note: replies from individuals have been aggregated to those replying on behalf of their belonging entity.
As pointed out by several of the respondents in an open question, the data issue is crucial to the monitoring exercise and more and better quality data are indeed required. Some 26% of the respondents provide suggestions for improving the monitoring of the Action Plan. Most of these opinions emphasise the need of having comparable and up-to-date sectoral data across the EU but also the necessity to build the monitoring and evaluation elements into the plan from the beginning (Box 6).

**Box 6 - What do you deem necessary in order to improve the monitoring of the EU Organic Action Plan?**

There is a general call for updated and more comprehensive statistics on the organic sector. Data on production, trade, consumption, import and export are considered essential for monitoring purposes. The call is for the Commission to institutionalise the data production/reporting process through Eurostat. One respondent underlines that two EU-funded projects (i.e. EISfOM - European information system for organic markets, funded under the 5th Framework Programme; and OrganicDataNetwork - Data network for better European organic market information, funded under the 7th Framework Programme) have already analysed the key issues involved but that the necessary institutional actions have not been undertaken to address the problems, both at the EU and the Member State levels.

Regarding monitoring, a couple of respondents refer to the opportunity to use the knowledge and instruments (e.g. toolbox, manual) developed by the project ‘ORGAP - Development of criteria and procedures for the evaluation of the EU Action Plan for Organic Agriculture’, funded under the 6th Framework Programme. Other respondents believe that the monitoring exercise would benefit from the EU Action Plan being linked with national and regional plans or by the set up of specific, measurable goals and of a concrete plan to implementation.

*Source: The Contractor’s consultation.*
Part 5 Analysis of broader impact versus the policy goal of increasing the competitiveness of EU organic producers

Increasing the competitiveness of organic producers in a territory means improving the productivity of the sector. This may require achieving a critical mass at the production level and/or an effective organisation of the supply chain. Available data indicate that since 2014 the pace of growth of the supply side of the organic sector improved if compared to previous years.

In 2016, there were 11.9 million fully organic, or under conversion to organic, hectares. Over the period 2014-2016, organic area in the EU increased by 18.5% or 1,860,950 hectares. Positive trends characterise all Member States with the exception of Poland, Romania, UK, Greece and Luxemburg where organic farming land decreased (Figure 25). In percentage terms, the greatest increase over the period 2014-2016 is found in Malta, Bulgaria and Croatia. In absolute terms, the greatest growth of organic land is found in Italy (+ 479,156 ha) and France (+ 476,596 ha).

Figure 25 - Change of organic land since 2013, by country

Sources: Elaborated by the Contractor. Raw data are from Eurostat table_orgcropar.
Note: the decrease in Luxembourg (173 ha) does not show up in the chart.
As organic production comes from fully converted areas, according to Eurostat the potential for growth in the organic sector is indicated by the share of the area under conversion as a percentage of the total organic area (Eurostat ‘Organic farming statistics’ accessed on January 2018). By comparing the data in 2013 and in 2016, an increasing potential for growth at the EU level is noted. In 2013, the EU area under conversion was 8.2% of total organic area. In 2016, such a share rose to 12.8% of total organic area\textsuperscript{11}. Figure 26 shows the change by country. Important negative trends in countries like Greece, Malta and Romania, are compensated by significant increases in countries like Hungary, Cyprus, Ireland and Slovakia.

\textbf{Figure 26 - Area under conversion as a share of total organic area (\%)}

\begin{figure}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example.png}
\caption{Area under conversion as a share of total organic area (\%)}
\end{figure}

Source: Elaborated by the Contractor. Raw data are from Eurostat table_orgcropar.
Note: data for Austria and Germany are not available.

\textsuperscript{11} This refers to EU26 because data for Germany and Austria are not available.
Additionally, it is noted that starting from 2014 onwards, EU organic land growth rates are substantially higher than in previous years (Figure 27).

**Figure 27 - Yearly change of total organic land (%)**

![Yearly change of total organic land (Percentage)](image)

Source: Elaborated by the Contractor. Raw data are from Eurostat table_orgcropar.

Eurostat data show that the share of organic land within the utilised agricultural land (UAA) also has higher growth rates since 2014 (Figure 28). In 2013, EU organic land was 5.65% of total UAA. In 2016, such a share equalled 6.69% of total UAA.

**Figure 28 - Yearly change of the share of organic land in UAA (percentage points)**

![Yearly change of the share of organic land in UAA (Percentage points)](image)

Source: Elaborated by the Contractor. Raw data are from Eurostat table_orgcropar.

According to Eurostat data, organic production of aquaculture products also increased over the last years. In this case, the increase follows a fluctuating pattern but always according to a double-digit growth (Figure 29). In 2013, organic production equalled 35,849 tons live weight while in 2016 it totalled 73,588 tons live weight.
Also according to the latest publications of the European Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture products (EUMOFA), the consumption of organic fish and seafood products has been constantly increasing over the period 2012-2016. Still, problems of organic aquaculture are similar to those of organic agriculture. The organic aquaculture production represents only 4.7% of the total aquaculture production and is unable to respond to an increasing demand. If the organic certification is recognised as a development driver of the sector, it is also acknowledged that ‘organic’ is suffering from an increasing competition of ‘sustainable’ (EUMOFA, 2017; EUMOFA, 2017a).

Nevertheless, **the measurement of the expansion of the supply side is importantly constrained by the lack of data.** While official statistics on organic area, livestock and operators are of reasonably good quality, comprehensive data at the EU level on organic production volumes, trade and sales are mostly missing (EC-DG AGRI, 2016). Furthermore, there is of course **great uncertainty on the actual role the nine actions under evaluation have in driving any possible growth of the organic production.**

When estimating market data, a different story is told. According to Willer *et al.* (2017), the widening of the growth gap between organic land (as a proxy of production) and retail sales of organic products (as a proxy of the size of the market) implies that supply keeps on losing its capacity to respond to the demand for organic food. On the basis of market data derived from different sources, the authors show that such a gap constantly widened since 2001 and up to 2015 (latest available year). Hence, **according to this work, the competitiveness of organic producers did not improve during the first two years of implementation of the Action Plan.**
On the respondents’ perception of the adequacy of the Action Plan with respect to its first priority, the ‘Yes’ (15%) are three times the ‘No’ (5%). However, apart from those who have no opinion (19%), there is also a relevant bulk of respondents which are only partially satisfied, or unsatisfied, with the adequacy of the combination of the nine actions outlined in the Action Plan to pursue the policy goal of increasing the competitiveness of European organic producers (61%). Reference is to Figure 30.

Figure 30 - Adequacy of the combination of the nine actions outlined in the Action Plan to increase the competitiveness of European organic producers

Source: The Contractor’s consultation.

The analysis of replies by type of stakeholders highlights that the most positive (‘Yes’) belong to entities dealing with agricultural research, training or education. Similarly to other questions, the lack of opinion of most of the LRAs is surprising. Reference is to Figure 31.

Figure 31 - Opinions on the adequacy of the Action Plan, by type of stakeholders

Source: The Contractor’s consultation.
Note: replies from individuals have been aggregated to those replying on behalf of their belonging entity.
In order to improve the overall performance and impact of the EU Organic Action Plan, the majority of the respondents believe that it is necessary to enhance the participation of target stakeholders as well as the communication and coordination mechanisms with them. Figure 32 reports on the shares of the selections made against a given list of options.

**Figure 32 - Opinions for improving the overall performance and impact of the Action Plan (%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve the participation of target stakeholders</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve communication and coordination mechanisms with the target stakeholders</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earmark a budget for Implementation</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set a measurable target in terms of organically cultivated area by 2020</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amend the EU Organic Action Plan by adding new actions and/or modifying existing ones</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance the quality of the resources made available for the implementation of the EU Organic Action Plan (e.g., qualified human resources)</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a mechanism to supervise and regularly evaluate the EU Organic Action Plan</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing else</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Contractor’s consultation.

The scoring of options changes according to the category of stakeholders. Entities grouping organic producers, retailers or processors and individual producers, retailers, processors, as well as national authorities and their public servants put the existence of a dedicated budget earmarked for implementation at the top of their rankings. For LRAs and their public servants the involvement of the target stakeholders remains the most important option for improving the overall performance and impact of the Action Plan. ‘Other types of entities and individuals concerned with organic food and/or farming’ and the ‘entities and individuals dealing with agricultural research, training or education’ equally attribute the highest importance to improving the participation of target stakeholders and improving communication and coordination mechanisms with the target stakeholders. Figure 33 reports on the selected options by type of stakeholders.
Figure 33 - Opinions for improving the overall performance and impact of the Action Plan, by type of stakeholders

Source: The Contractor’s consultation.
Note: replies from individuals have been aggregated to those replying on behalf of their belonging entity.
Part 6 Conclusions

A series of concrete drawbacks apply to this evaluation exercise, principally because targets and indicators were not defined in the Action Plan from the outset. This adds to the fact that the EU organic farming framework is complex since the ‘organic sector development is not the result of a single policy’ (Sanders and Schmid, 2014) and there are different levels of propensity to and maturity of the organic sector across Member States. Still, some evidence-based conclusions are possible.

6.1 Assessment of implementation and results

Strand 1: increasing awareness of and synergies with EU instruments targeting organic production.

- The state of implementation of the first strand of the priority dealing with awareness raising, information dissemination and monitoring of consumers’ knowledge and confidence is not satisfactory. What has been done are either one-off (e.g. the publication of the guide), administrative (inclusion of organic farming as a specific theme in a call), or ‘business as usual’ activities (e.g. raising awareness on information and promotion opportunities at meetings and events).

- The EC guide published in 2014 has not accomplished the expected effect on target stakeholders. According to the results of the consultation, both its effectiveness and dissemination are considered poor. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents representing entities grouping organic producers, retailers or processors are not familiar with it.

- The inclusion of organic farming as a specific theme in the 2014 call based on Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 worked out to be an incentive for stakeholders to consider organic-related information activities in their project proposals.

- The support to the organic quality scheme provided under Regulation (EU) No 1144/2014 has been regularly increased since 2014. It is therefore assumed that EC-led awareness activities had a positive effect on target stakeholders.

- The role of LRAs in boosting public procurement of organically produced food and catering is considered essential according to the results of the
consultation. However, LRAs face a series of constraints and none of these is specifically addressed by the Action Plan.

- The effect of the first priority of the Action Plan on consumers is considered poor. The consultation reveals that there is a general perception that consumers are not given enough information (in quantity and, more importantly, in quality) on the EU organic logo and scheme. This is confirmed by the stagnating level of recognition of the EU logo across the EU, as regularly recorded by the EC.

- LRAs have indeed a role in the implementation of the first strand of the priority, for example in terms of awareness raising and information activities. Still, they appear to be importantly unaware of the opportunities provided for at the EU level or of EC activities.

Strand 2: addressing technical gaps in organic production, with research, innovation, and their dissemination.

- The state of implementation of the second strand of the priority dealing with support to organic research is satisfactory.

- The organisation of the May 2015 Conference is not, in general, perceived as successful according to the results of the consultation. The most striking indicator is the lack of awareness about the event and its outcomes by the majority (82%) of the respondents.

- The Commission has made the planned use of the formats and instruments available under H2020 to provide for co-funding opportunities for organic-related research.

- The uptake and dissemination of research results are totally overlooked under this strand.

- The structural difficulty of LRAs in taking advantage of H2020 opportunities is confirmed.

Strand 3: increasing information on the organic production sector, as well as on the market and trade.

- The state of implementation of the third strand of the priority dealing with the monitoring and analysis of the organic sector is partially satisfactory as the survey on obstacles to joining the organic scheme is still to be undertaken.
• The ‘facts and figures’ reports published by the EC every three years are not deemed satisfactory for monitoring purposes by the majority of the respondents to the consultation.

• The studies undertaken or to be undertaken in order to deepen the analysis of specific aspects are not deemed sufficient by the majority of the respondents to the consultation to adequately support present policy developments.

6.2 Some main drawbacks derived from the consultation

• Insufficiently conducive EU policy for the organic sector

In general, it is perceived that in order to be effective, actions should be framed into a more comprehensive and coherent approach, inclusive of an explicitly conducive policy environment for organic farming at the EU level. As a respondent to the survey puts it ‘an Action Plan is sadly worthless if policy actors and supports work against it’. The general impression is that the Action Plan does not fully respond to the complexity of the sector including in terms of coherence and synergies across EU policies.

• Limited monitoring capacity of the organic sector

The lack of production and market data affects accountability and prevents policy makers from taking informed decisions towards the development of the sector. This limited monitoring capacity characterises both the Action Plan and the sector as a whole. There is evidence of hesitancy at the institutional level to build on knowledge and expertise developed within the framework of past EU projects which looked in detail into the data issue. As a respondent to the survey puts it ‘Reliable facts and figures on the organic sector are critical to support the medium to long-term growth and sustainable development of organic food and farming. In partnership with the organic sector the European Commission should further strengthen the institutional framework for the collection, analysis and dissemination of organic production and market data’.

• Limited ownership of the Action Plan by relevant stakeholders

The prevalence of ‘partially’ in judging the adequacy of the Action Plan indicates that the plan is considered a useful instrument but it does not meet expectations. The process of definition, implementation and further development of the Action Plan should be based on stakeholders’ engagement and, as a respondent to the survey puts it, be ‘transparent, well-documented and clearly
communicated to all stakeholders including those that are not part of it’. In general, the Action Plan does not meet those ‘best practice’ characteristics which have been thoroughly outlined by past projects (i.e. ORGAP) and which, for example, include the outline of SMART (i.e. specific, measurable, agreed, realistic, time-bound) objectives with both quantitative and qualitative targets.

- **Insufficient communication of the Action Plan**

There is evidence of low awareness of the actions undertaken by the EC among relevant stakeholders. One example for all is the low awareness level of LRAs with respect to several of the aspects addressed by the Action Plan (e.g. the EC Guide, Regulation (EU) No 1144/2014). This situation clashes with the indication that organic farming’s support is often shaped at the regional level and that LRAs are actually involved in the implementation of several relevant activities such as awareness raising, information, and public procurement. As one respondent to the survey puts it, ‘communication helps in legitimising the Action Plan’.

- **Lack of coordination of the Action Plan with national and regional actions**

Coordination of the Action Plan with national and regional actions is essential to overcome the fact that ‘since the nature of organic farming support is defined at the national and regional levels, the potential impact of the European Organic Action Plan is limited’ (Sanders and Schmid, 2014). For example, as one respondent to the survey suggests, the monitoring of the ways organic farming is prioritised by ‘Member States and regions in their rural development programmes could inform the type of actions to be undertaken at the EU level to ensure the take up of available support by farmers and producers’ or ‘can also be used to inform the setting of future EU targets for the development of organic farming to 2030’.

- **Insufficient EU effort on awareness and information**

There is a strong request for a more structured approach to awareness and information activities, possibly under the form of a promotional strategy with a dedicated budget, where actions are linked to each other and are coordinated at the various governance levels (EU, national and regional). The call is for more (quantity) and better (quality) information.
• Delaying the finalisation of GPP criteria for food and catering services is a missed opportunity

The boosting of public procurement of organic food represents an important demand-pull mechanism. There is a request for the EC to take a leading role in setting the example, in knowledge transfer, in awareness raising among public authorities, and in the collection and spreading of good practices. In this policy area the territorial dimension is fundamental and as one respondent to the survey suggests ‘the European Commission should publish a practical guide on the legal possibilities to develop organic farming and food in public procurement procedures for local and regional authorities and spread it widely’.

• Lack of a dissemination and uptake strategy for research results

The Action Plan misses the opportunity to support the systematic delivery of information about innovation schemes, research projects and results. As one respondent to the survey summarises, ‘Research and innovations outcomes are not embedded in national learning and innovation systems. Advisory systems for example should uptake and disseminate organic related research outcomes and innovations’.
Annex I – Conceptual framework of the mid-term evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>POLICY CONTEXT</strong></td>
<td>Drivers</td>
<td>Updating of the policy, accompanying the review of the legislative framework for organic consistently with the CAP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Priorities</td>
<td>Removing obstacles to the sustainable growth of EU organic production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BACKGROUND SITUATION</strong></td>
<td>No targets set</td>
<td>Objectives are not specific, measurable and time-bound, making the policy goal(s) to be evaluated unclear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No monitoring and evaluation foreseen from the outset</td>
<td>Result and impact indicators are not defined, making the undertaking of the evaluation challenging in terms of identification and availability of relevant data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No specific inputs allocated for implementation</td>
<td>The lack of dedicated budget and staff resources makes unfeasible the evaluation of efficiency and effectiveness of the actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OBJECTIVES</strong></td>
<td>Review of the state of implementation and of outputs</td>
<td>Reviewing the state of play of the actions and the outputs deriving from their implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analysis of results</td>
<td>Analysing the effects of implementation on target stakeholders as well as on the research and information capacity of the organic sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preliminary analysis of impact</td>
<td>Analysing the broader changes occurred with respect to the policy goal of increasing competitiveness of European Union organic producers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRINCIPLES</strong></td>
<td>Evaluation period</td>
<td>March 2014 (or year 2014 data) - November 2017 (or latest available information/year).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>When possible, change is computed versus the year 2103.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROCEDURES</strong></td>
<td>Reviewing documents, studies and reports</td>
<td>Collecting evidence on the state of implementation and on outputs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Involving stakeholders</td>
<td>Investigating through a consultation the perception, opinion and experience of various categories of stakeholders to analyse results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Defining objectively verifiable indicators</td>
<td>Measuring results and impact on an objective basis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex II – Questionnaire

Survey
EU Organic Action Plan: progress and prospects in increasing the competitiveness of organic producers

The scope of this survey is to contribute to the mid-term evaluation of the first priority domain of the EU Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming published in 2014. The survey is undertaken as part of a study commissioned by the Committee of the Regions to Progress Consulting S.r.l., with Fondazione FORMIT participating as subcontractor.

The first priority domain of the EU Organic Action Plan focuses on increasing the competitiveness of European Union organic producers. Towards this objective the European Commission outlined in the Action Plan nine actions. These actions range from awareness raising to research and innovation promotion as well as monitoring and evaluation initiatives.

The survey is a 15-minute questionnaire aimed at investigating the perception, opinion and experience of various categories of stakeholders on the effectiveness and relevance of these actions. It is open to all, although it is mostly targeted to those actors concerned with the EU organic sector. Local and regional authorities across the EU are particularly welcome to participate in this survey.

The survey will close on 11 December 2017.

For any other question or request of clarification do not hesitate to contact: info@organicsurvey.eu

The information provided by the respondents in the questionnaires will be used as a contribution to the study ‘Mid-term evaluation of the first priority domain of the European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming’. Answers will be aggregated in a variety of ways (e.g. by category of stakeholders), guaranteeing the anonymity of respondents. By undertaking the survey, respondents consent the use of their contribution for the purpose of the study.
(Questions marked with a star are mandatory)

SECTION 1 – ABOUT YOU

- You are replying:

* 

Please choose only one of the following:

- as an individual
- on behalf of the entity you belong to

- You are:

* 

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:
Answer was 'as an individual' at question '1 [Q101]' (You are replying:

Please choose only one of the following:

- Organic producer, retailer, or processor
- Consumer
- Staff of public/private entities involved in agricultural research, training, or education
- Staff of an association/organisation/network/platform/think tank/project/private entity concerned
  with organic food and/or farming
- Public servant (national authority)
- Public servant (local or regional authorities)
- Staff of European institutions/European agencies/international organisations
- Other

- Please specify the entity you belong to:

* 

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:
Answer was 'on behalf of the entity you belong to' at question '1 [Q101]' (You are replying:

Please choose only one of the following:

- Associations/organisations of organic producers, retailers or processors
- Public/private entities dealing with agricultural research, training or education
- Other types of associations/organisations/networks/platforms/think tanks/projects/private entities
  concerned with organic food and/or farming
- Public authority at the national level (e.g. Ministry)
- Public authority at the regional or local level (e.g. Regions, Provinces, Municipalities)
- European institution/European agency/international organisation
- Other (Please Specify

- The geographical focus of your activity or of the entity you represent or work for:

* 

---

60
Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:
Answer was NOT 'Consumer' at question 2 [Q102a] (You are: )

Please choose only one of the following:

- Local
- Regional
- National
- European
- International/Global

- Select your country:

- Please choose only one of the following:
  - Austria
  - Belgium
  - Bulgaria
  - Croatia
  - Cyprus
  - Czech Republic
  - Denmark
  - Estonia
  - Finland
  - France
  - Germany
  - Greece
  - Hungary
  - Ireland
  - Italy
  - Latvia
  - Lithuania
  - Luxembourg
  - Malta
  - Netherlands
  - Poland
  - Portugal
  - Romania
  - Slovakia
  - Slovenia
  - Spain
  - Sweden
  - United Kingdom
  - Other

- Indicate the postal code of the city where you work:

- Please write your answer here: ____________________________
- Your consent:

Having read the Information Note on Data Processing and Use, I consent the answers provided in my contribution (which I warrant do not infringe any copyrights owned by a third party) are used and analysed for the purpose of the study 'Mid-term evaluation of the first priority domain of the European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming'. Answers will be aggregated and presented in a variety of ways (e.g. by category of stakeholders) but always guaranteeing the anonymity of the respondent.

SECTION 2 – YOUR LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT

- The European Commission led over the period 2012-2013 a consultation process on the review of the EU policy on organic agriculture. Were you, or the entity you work for, involved in this process?

* 

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

--------- Scenario 1 ---------

Answer was 'on behalf of the entity you belong to' at question '1 [Q101]' (You are replying: )

--------- or Scenario 2 ---------

Answer was 'as an individual' at question '1 [Q101]' (You are replying: ) and Answer was 'Staff of public/private entities involved in agricultural research, training, or education' or 'Staff of an association/organisation/network/platform/think tank/project/private entity concerned with organic food and/or farming' or 'Public servant (national authority)' or 'Public servant (local or regional authorities)' or 'Staff of European institutions/European agencies/international organisations' at question '2 [Q102a]' (You are: )

Please choose only one of the following:

- Yes
- No
- Not to my knowledge

- The European Commission led over the period 2012-2013 a consultation process on the review of the EU policy on organic agriculture. Were you, or the entity you work for, involved in this process?

* 

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:
Answer was 'Consumer' or 'Other' or 'Organic producer, retailer, or processor' at question '2 [Q102a]' (You are: )

Please choose only one of the following:

- Yes
- No
- Were/are you, or the entity you work for, participating in the meetings of the Advisory Group/Civil Dialogue Group on Organic Farming set up by the European Commission?

* 

**Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:**

---------- **Scenario 1** ----------

*Answer was 'on behalf of the entity you belong to' at question '1 [Q101]' (You are replying: )

---------- **Scenario 2** ----------

*Answer was 'as an individual' at question '1 [Q101]' (You are replying: ) and Answer was 'Public servant (local or regional authorities)' or 'Staff of European institutions/European agencies/international organisations' or 'Staff of public/private entities involved in agricultural research, training, or education' or 'Public servant (national authority)' or 'Staff of an association/organisation/network/platform/think tank/project/private entity concerned with organic food and/or farming' at question '2 [Q102a]' (You are: )

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No
- Not to my knowledge

- Were/are you, or the entity you work for, participating in the meetings of the Advisory Group/Civil Dialogue Group on Organic Farming set up by the European Commission?

* 

**Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:**

*Answer was 'Consumer' or 'Other' or 'Organic producer; retailer, or processor' at question '2 [Q102a]' (You are: )

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No

- The first priority of the EU Organic Action Plan (COM(2014) 179) is "to increase competitiveness of European Union organic producers". This is tackled through nine actions which may be viewed in the following [PDF](#). Are you familiar with the EU Organic Action Plan and these nine actions?

* 

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No
- Which types of EU support have you, or the entity you work for, benefitted from since 2014?

Please choose all that apply (Multiple selections allowed):

- Organic-related support under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), including the rural development programme of your country/region
- Organic-related support through the activities of the European Innovation Partnership on Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability
- Organic-related support through the Horizon 2020 programme
- Organic-related support through other EU programmes (Please specify)
- EU co-funding for organic-related information and/or promotion activities
- Participation with organic products to the School Fruit and Vegetables Scheme or to the School Milk Scheme
- Organic-related support under the Common Fisheries Policy
- None

SECTION 3 – AWARENESS AND INFORMATION

- A document titled ‘Organic Farming - A guide on support opportunities for organic producers in Europe’ was published by the European Commission in 2014. It may be viewed in the following PDF. Are you familiar with this guide?

Please choose only one of the following:

- Yes
- No

- Keeping in mind that the scope of this guide is to increase awareness of organic farmers, processors and retailers on EU support measures, indicate the guide’s level of:

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:
Answer was ‘Yes’ at question '16 [Q301]’ (A document titled ‘Organic Farming - A guide on support opportunities for organic producers in Europe’ was published by the European Commission in 2014. It may be viewed in the following PDF. Are you familiar with this guide? )

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

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(min 1, max 10)

- To your knowledge, has the guide been properly disseminated in your country to the target groups (i.e. organic farmers, processors and retailers)?
Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question '16 [Q301]' (A document titled 'Organic Farming - A guide on support opportunities for organic producers in Europe' was published by the European Commission in 2014. It may be viewed in the following PDF. Are you familiar with this guide?)

Please choose only one of the following:

- Yes
- No

- Are you familiar with the Regulation on information and promotion activities in favour of agricultural products in the internal market and in third countries (Regulation (EU) No 1144/2014)?

Please choose only one of the following:

- Yes
- No

- Have you been reached by any EC awareness raising initiative (e.g. events, presentations within committees/groups) related to the funding opportunities provided for in Regulation (EU) No 1144/2014?

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

-------- Scenario 1 --------

Answer was NOT 'Staff of European institutions/European agencies/international organisations' at question '2 [Q102a]' (You are: )

-------- or Scenario 2 --------

Answer was 'European institution/European agency/international organisation' at question '3 [Q102b]' (Please specify the entity you belong to: )

Please choose only one of the following:

- Yes
- No

- In your experience, are consumers in your country given enough information on the EU organic logo and scheme?

Please choose only one of the following:

- Yes
- No
- What would you suggest to be implemented by the EU to create awareness on EU support measures at the supply (e.g. farmers) level?

Please write your answer here:

- What would you suggest to be implemented by the EU to create awareness on EU organic food and farming at the demand (e.g. consumers, institutions) level?

Please write your answer here:

- Is the local or regional authority you represent, or work for, involved in awareness raising on EU (co-)funded support measures for organic producers, processors and retailers?

* Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

------- Scenario 1 -------

Answer was ‘Public authority at the regional or local level (e.g. Regions, Provinces, Municipalities)’ at question ‘3 [Q102b]’ (Please specify the entity you belong to: )

------- or Scenario 2 -------

Answer was ‘Public servant (local or regional authorities)’ at question ‘2 [Q102a]’ (You are: )

Please choose only one of the following:

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

- If yes, which awareness raising activities for organic producers, processors, or retailers are undertaken by the local or regional authority you represent or work for? Please provide a short description or a link to a webpage:

* Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was ‘Yes’ at question ‘24 [Q509]’ (Is the local or regional authority you represent, or work for, involved in awareness raising on EU (co-)funded support measures for organic producers, processors and retailers?)

Please write your answer here:
- Is the local or regional authority you represent, or work for, involved in consumers’ awareness raising activities with regard to organic food and farming?

* 

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

-------- Scenario 1 --------

Answer was ‘Public servant (local or regional authorities)’ at question ’2 [Q102a]’ (You are: )

-------- or Scenario 2 --------

Answer was ‘Public authority at the regional or local level (e.g. Regions, Provinces, Municipalities)’ at question ’3 [Q102b]’ (Please specify the entity you belong to: )

Please choose only one of the following:

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

SECTION 4 – PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

- Are you, or the entity you work for, involved in the on-going review process of the Green Public Procurement criteria for Food and Catering Services?

* 

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

-------- Scenario 1 --------

Answer was ’on behalf of the entity you belong to’ at question ’1 [Q101]’ (You are replying: )

-------- or Scenario 2 --------

Answer was ’as an individual’ at question ’1 [Q101]’ (You are replying: ) and Answer was ’Staff of public/private entities involved in agricultural research, training, or education’ or ’Staff of an association/organisation/network/platform/think tank/project/private entity concerned with organic food and/or farming’ or ’Public servant (national authority) ’ or ’Public servant (local or regional authorities)’ or ’Staff of European institutions/European agencies/international organisations ’ at question ’2 [Q102a]’ (You are: )

Please choose only one of the following:

- Yes
- No
- Not to my knowledge
- Are you, or the entity you work for, involved in the on-going review process of the Green Public Procurement criteria for Food and Catering Services?

"""

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:
Answer was 'Other' or 'Consumer' or 'Organic producer, retailer, or processor' at question '2 [Q102a]' (You are: )

Please choose only one of the following:
- Yes
- No

- Are you, or the entity you work for, involved in public procurement of organically produced food and catering (e.g. as producers, retailers, purchasers)?

"""

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

-------- Scenario 1 --------

Answer was 'on behalf of the entity you belong to' at question '1 [Q101]' (You are replying: )

-------- or Scenario 2 --------

Answer was 'as an individual' at question '1 [Q101]' (You are replying: ) and Answer was 'Staff of public/private entities involved in agricultural research, training, or education' or 'Staff of an association/organisation/network/platform/think tank/project/private entity concerned with organic food and/or farming' or 'public servant (national authority)' or 'Public servant (local or regional authorities)' or 'Staff of European institutions/European agencies/international organisations' at question '2 [Q102a]' (You are: )

Please choose only one of the following:
- Yes
- No

- Are you, or the entity you work for, involved in public procurement of organically produced food and catering (e.g. as producers, retailers, purchasers)?

"""

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:
Answer was 'Consumer' or 'Organic producer, retailer, or processor' or 'Other' at question '2 [Q102a]' (You are: )

Please choose only one of the following:
- Yes
- No
- Do you think that local and regional public authorities have a special role in boosting public procurement of organically produced food and catering?

Please choose only one of the following:

- Yes
- No

- Which are in your view the main constraints faced by a local or regional public authority in developing organic public procurement?

Please choose all that apply (Multiple selections allowed):

- Lack of awareness
- Economic constraints
- Inappropriate supply chain/actors in the organic sector
- Lack of guidance on standard procurement or contracting procedures
- Complexity of the whole process
- None
- Other ______________________________

- In your opinion, which type of activities shall the European Commission implement to exemplify the use of organic farming in public procurement and boost its uptake?

Please write your answer here:


SECTION 5 – RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

- In the context of the Universal Exhibition in Milan, the European Commission organised on 28-29 May 2015 a conference on "Organic production, Research and Innovation: setting priorities for the future". Did you attend the May 2015 Conference?

Please choose only one of the following:

- Yes
- No

- Are you familiar with what was discussed at the May 2015 Conference?


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Please choose only one of the following:

- Yes
- No

The scope of the Conference was to identify research and innovation priorities for producers in relation to the challenges that may result from the future organic production rules. Towards this scope, the Conference was:

""

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

-------- Scenario 1 --------

Answer was 'Yes' at question '34 [Q501]' (In the context of the Universal Exhibition in Milan, the European Commission organised on 28-29 May 2015 a conference on "Organic production, Research and Innovation: setting priorities for the future". Did you attend the May 2015 Conference? ) and Answer was 'Yes' at question '35 [Q502]' (Are you familiar with what was discussed at the May 2015 Conference? )

-------- or Scenario 2 --------

Answer was 'No' at question '34 [Q501]' (In the context of the Universal Exhibition in Milan, the European Commission organised on 28-29 May 2015 a conference on "Organic production, Research and Innovation: setting priorities for the future". Did you attend the May 2015 Conference? ) and Answer was 'Yes' at question '35 [Q502]' (Are you familiar with what was discussed at the May 2015 Conference? )

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The appropriate instrument:
Participated by the right stakeholders:
Leading to important conclusions:

min 1, max 10

- In your opinion, the May 2015 Conference contributed at:

""

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

-------- Scenario 1 --------

Answer was 'Yes' at question '34 [Q501]' (In the context of the Universal Exhibition in Milan, the European Commission organised on 28-29 May 2015 a conference on "Organic production, Research and Innovation: setting priorities for the future". Did you attend the May 2015 Conference? ) and Answer was 'Yes' at question '35 [Q502]' (Are you familiar with what was discussed at the May 2015 Conference? )

-------- or Scenario 2 --------

Answer was 'No' at question '34 [Q501]' (In the context of the Universal Exhibition in Milan, the European Commission organised on 28-29 May 2015 a conference on "Organic production, Research and Innovation:
setting priorities for the future”. Did you attend the May 2015 Conference? ) and Answer was ‘Yes’ at question 35 [Q502]” (Are you familiar with what was discussed at the May 2015 Conference? )

Please choose all that apply (Multiple selections allowed):

- Disseminating research results
- Increasing the uptake/exploitation of research results
- Sharing best practices
- Identifying the organic sector research and innovation needs
- Contributing to improve EU research and innovation policies in the organic sector
- Highlighting the need of EU support to research and innovation in the organic sector
- Other

- Are you familiar with the outcomes of the May 2015 Conference as summarised in DG AGRI paper of September 2015 – see PDF?

* 

Please choose only one of the following:

- Yes
- No

- Are you aware of any follow-up implemented by the European Commission on the basis of the outcomes of the May 2015 Conference? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:
Answer was ‘Yes’ at question 38 [Q503]” (Are you familiar with the outcomes of the May 2015 Conference as summarised in DG AGRI paper of September 2015 – see PDF? )

Please choose only one of the following:

- Yes
- No

- If yes, specify:

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:
Answer was ‘Yes’ at question 39 [Q506]” (Are you aware of any follow-up implemented by the European Commission on the basis of the outcomes of the May 2015 Conference?)

Please write your answer here:

- In your opinion, which are the weak points of the European research and innovation approach for organic food and farming?

*
Please choose **all** that apply (Multiple selections allowed):

- Insufficient involvement of end-users/stakeholders (e.g. organic farmers/producers)
- Lack of coordination among the academic institutions/research bodies
- Lack of sharing of best practices
- Lack of instruments for systematic dissemination/uptake/exploitation of research and innovation results
- Lack of adequate funding
- None
- Other

---

**SECTION 6 – MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

- The European Commission publishes regular reports on organic agriculture in the EU which usually include information on organic area, holdings and production sectors. In your opinion, are these reports sufficient to regularly monitor the implementation of the EU policy for organic production?

  *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No
- Partially
- I have no opinion

- The EU Organic Action Plan also foresees the undertaking of studies on specific topics, in particular on the distribution of the added value in the organic food chain (published in 2016) and on obstacles faced by farmersprocessors to join the organic scheme. In your opinion, are these initiatives sufficient to adequately support present policy developments such as the modernisation and simplification of the CAP or the better functioning of food supply chain?

  *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No
- Partially
- I have no opinion

- What do you deem necessary in order to improve the monitoring of the EU Organic Action Plan?

Please write your answer here:

- Overall, in your opinion, is the combination of the nine actions outlined in the EU Organic Action Plan to increase the competitiveness of European organic producers adequate?
* 

Please choose only one of the following:

- Yes
- No
- Partially
- I have no opinion

- Which other actions would you suggest in order to increase the competitiveness of European organic producers?

Please write your answer here:

- What else would you suggest in order to improve the overall performance and impact of the EU Organic Action Plan (Multiple selections allowed)?

* 

Please choose all that apply:

- Establish a mechanism to supervise and regularly evaluate the EU Organic Action Plan
- Set a measurable target in terms of organically cultivated area by 2020
- Improve the participation of target stakeholders
- Improve communication and coordination mechanisms with the target stakeholders
- Enhance the quality of the resources made available for the implementation of the EU Organic Action Plan (e.g. qualified human resources)
- Amend the EU Organic Action Plan by adding new actions and/or modifying existing ones
- Earmark a budget for implementation
- Nothing else
- Other ________________________________

SECTION 7 – CONCLUSIONS

Provide any further comment/suggestion you may have:

Please write your answer here:

Thank you for completing the survey!
Annex III – List of references


Committee of the Regions (2017), Horizon 2020 and the Local and Regional Authorities, carried out by the consortium Progress Consulting S.r.l. and Fondazione FORMIT, and authored by: Cavallini S., Soldi R., Alina Utma M. and Benolli F.


Created in 1994 following the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, the European Committee of the Regions is the EU’s assembly of 350 regional and local representatives from all 28 Member States, representing over 507 million Europeans.