

Second EU multi-actor working group

Co-designing solutions to expand Climate-Smart Agriculture towards 2030 and 2040

The **EU multi-actor working group second workshop**, held under the Chatham House Rule, took place on 13 January 2025. The event gathered **40 attendees from 19 countries** from different backgrounds.

This workshop was organised by **AEIDL** in the framework of **BEATLES** Horizon Europe project. It focuses on behavioural analysis to develop transformational pathways to foster the transition to fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food systems and **the adoption of Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) and smart farming technologies in five Use Cases.**

On the back of the [Political Guidelines](#) for the next European Commission 2024-2029, the [final report](#) of the Strategic Dialogue for the Future of Agriculture and the upcoming Vision for Agriculture and Food, **this second EU multi-actor working group workshop aims to co-design solutions and EU policy recommendations to expand Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) towards 2030 and 2040.**

The **EU multi-actor working group** is understood as a Pan-European Science-Society-Policy group formed by stakeholders involved in transition processes. It is **a key part of our BEATLES co-creation process** so that the leading research and policy findings we are producing can be assessed by experts and policy practitioners from outside the BEATLES project.

During the workshop, three presentations covered the following points:

- The project current results and the proposed farmer segmentation by Marilena Gemtou from the Agricultural University of Athens.
- CAP support in BEATLES Use Cases: policy barriers and opportunities for advancing CSA by Blanca Casares from AEIDL.
- The EU agricultural policy landscape, offering a vision and preparation for the new CAP, presented by Ricard Ramon i Sumoy from the European Commission Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI).

Participants, divided into 10 small groups, discussed around two critical challenge statements following a policy hackathon methodology. The first challenge focused on exploring **ways to support farmers** and the second challenge aimed at finding **strategies to assist policymakers** in designing and implementing public policies that promote CSA.

The workshop, facilitated by **Serafin Pazos-Vidal**, PhD in European Union and Senior Expert, Rural and Territorial Development in AEIDL concluded with a series of next steps including that the meeting materials and the Highlights report on the main elements discussed will be available on the [event page](#) and the [YouTube channel](#).

AEIDL is forming an EU multi-actor group with experience in CSA or related topics, as well as specific experience in policy design, implementation, monitoring and/or evaluation linked to agriculture and food.


Do you want to be part? > Contact Blanca Casares (bca@aeidl.eu)

ORGANISER: 

Work Package Leader on Transition through policy recommendations and tools

 **January 13, 2025**

 **Online**

 **40 from different backgrounds** (EU institutions; public authorities at national and regional level; researchers; advisors and NGOs) from 19 countries.

 **Agenda, presentations and recordings:** [here](#).



Latest results of the BEATLES project

Marilena Gemtou

BEATLES project's coordinator, Agricultural University of Athens



Marilena Gemtou (AUA) presented the [BEATLES](#) project which is a Horizon Europe project (2022-2026) coordinated by the Agricultural University of Athens, gathering 18 [partner organisations](#) across 10 European countries. **The project aims to encourage long-term and large-scale transitions to sustainable, productive, and Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA).**

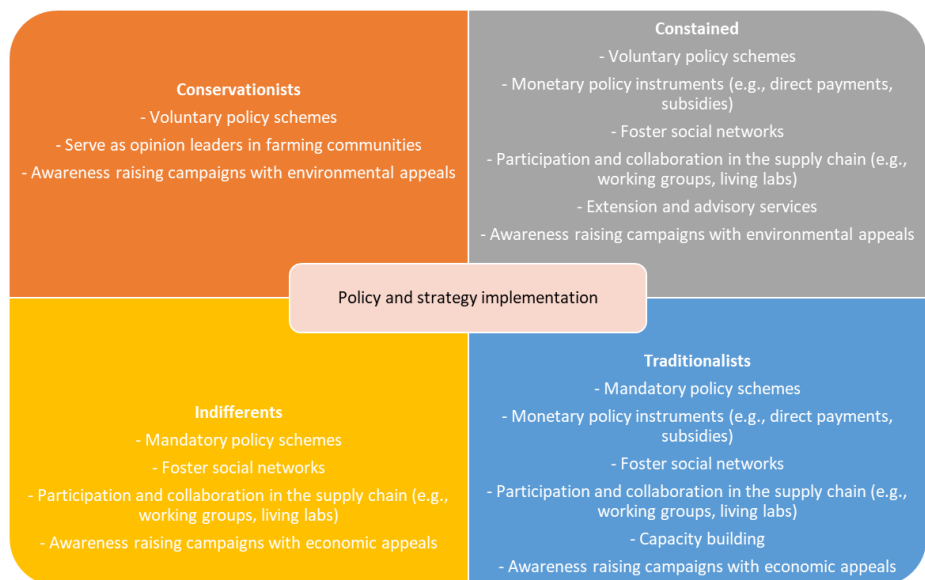
Co-creation activities, research and experiments will be carried out **in five Use Cases** comprising a good representation of EU regions (Lithuania, Germany, Spain, Denmark, Netherlands) and agricultural systems (wheat, dairy, fruits, pig sector, onions and table potatoes).

Marilena explained the approach to be followed in the upcoming years, and the expected main **outcomes throughout the project: 10 lab and field experiments; 10 business models identified and validated; 10 key actionable policy recommendations produced; and 10.000 stakeholders reached.**

She elaborated on 'the **"Farmer Typology Methodology" developed within the BEATLES project**, which aims to establish a comprehensive typology of European farmers to design tailored strategies and policy interventions that enhance the adoption of Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA). The study was conducted across five European countries: Denmark, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Slovenia, and Spain, with **data collected from 603 participants**. This data collection phase took place between January and March 2023, using an online survey administered through the Qualtrics platform.

From the data collected, the distribution of farmers has been established into **four typologies** according to their attitudes and behaviours towards farming practices, especially with regard to the adoption of CSA. The largest group, comprising 34% of farmers, is labelled as **'Indifferent'**. This is closely followed by the **'Constrains'** group, representing 32% of farmers. **'Conservationists'** represent 21%, while **'Traditionalists'** constitute the smallest segment at 13%.

Farmer typology



Source: BEATLES project, 2025

These categories help to understand the different degrees of openness and the barriers farmers face in implementing CSA practices.





CAP support in BEATLES Use Cases: policy barriers and opportunities for advancing Climate-Smart Agriculture

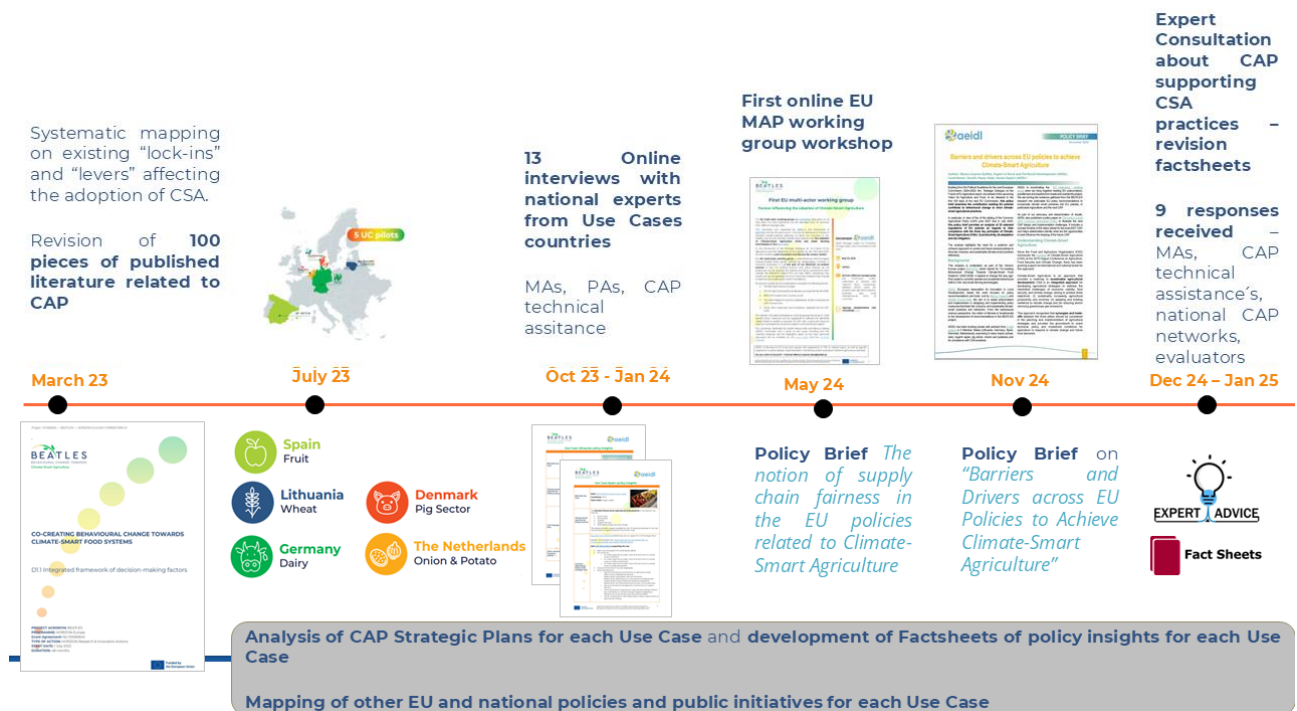
Blanca Casares

Policy expert and Project manager, European Association for Innovation in Local Development



Blanca Casares (AEIDL), presented the policy work developed so far, coordinated by [AEIDL](#), with **the aim of supporting the policy makers and implementers in the design and implementation of policy measures that support the adoption of Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA).**

Exploring CAP support within the context of BEATLES Use Cases and CSA practices

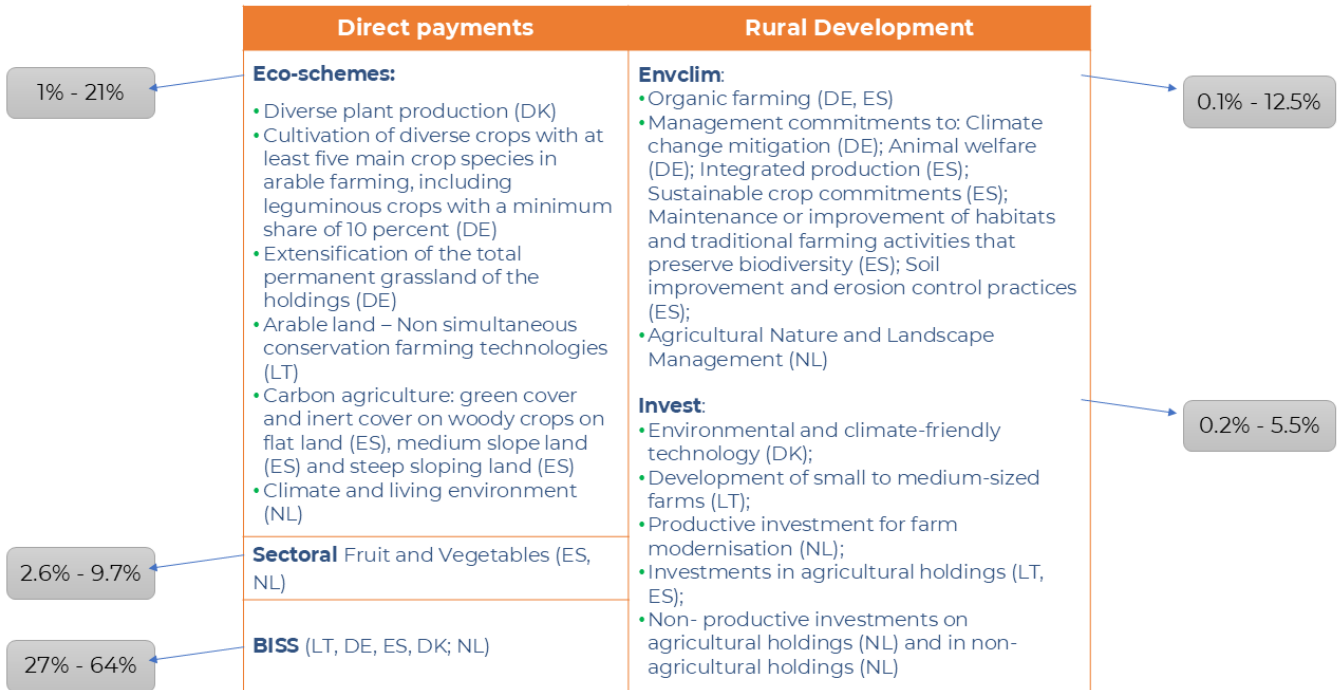


Source: AEIDL, 2025

Blanca provided an update on the development of the **factsheets on national policy insights**, which have been created by **analysing the CAP Strategic Plans of Germany, Spain, The Netherlands, Lithuania and Denmark, and consultations and interviews with Managing Authorities (MAs), Paying Agencies (PAs), advisors and other experts.** The factsheets were also presented during co-creation activities conducted by the project [Use Cases](#) (UCs) in the five countries.

As of today, the factsheets encompass several key elements: relevant interventions from the Strategic Plan for the value chain and practices, national and European policies, details on CAP interventions (including type, conditionality rules, and budget), main drivers and opportunities for the adoption of CSA, and considerations following the CAP simplification regulation. Specifically, they address the new adjustments required for GAEC standards under the CAP simplification regulation.

% of total expenditure (2023-2029) in the Strategic Plans of BEATLES UC



Source: AEIDL, 2025

Blanca highlighted that **barriers to adopting CSA practices** include insufficient financial support from CAP interventions, which often is not sufficient to cover costs and investments. Farmers face uncertainty due to a lack of long-term business stability, complicated CAP application processes, regulatory changes, and inconsistent support frameworks. Rising production costs, environmental challenges, an aging workforce, and the struggles of small producers to compete further hinder adoption. There are also gaps in complementarity between eco-schemes and agri-environmental interventions, along with a lack of technical skills among farmers, advisors, and policymakers. Additional barriers include customer preferences, national production structures, data shortages for CAP intervention design, and governance of those Plans.

However, there are various **opportunities and effective approaches for adopting CSA practices**, such as initiatives like grazing premiums in eco-schemes in Germany, a climate tax on livestock production in Denmark, public funding for research on local crop varieties in Spain, a subsidies calendar through the national network in the Netherlands, and the revision of co-financing options for rural development interventions in Lithuania. It is crucial to build capacity for sustainable practices at all levels and to encourage policymakers to embrace results-oriented and behavior-based approaches. Furthermore, integrating CSA into broader EU policies, aligning digital transformation with sustainability goals, and supporting farm-centered, diversified, and environmentally friendly agricultural practices are vital steps toward achieving the EU's green and digital objectives for 2030 to 2050.

She concluded with reflections on the implications of the simplified rules regarding **Good agricultural and environmental conditions (GAECs) 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9**.



EU policy landscape for agriculture: The vision and preparation for the new CAP

Ricard Ramon i Sumoy

European Commission - Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development



Ricard Ramon i Sumoy (DG AGRI) provided key insights into the EU agricultural policy landscape, offering a vision and preparation for the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). He remarked that 2024 was a special year that resulted in a reform of the CAP to address the concerns of the sector towards more simplification. This was **followed up with the [Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture](#) leading to a series of ideas for the future of the CAP**. The Commission is presently studying in **preparation for the Vision for Agriculture and Food due later in February 2025**.

He highlighted that this Vision would serve as a roadmap for the coming years, including the future CAP, which is to be proposed by the end of 2025. **The new CAP will be built on three pillars: 1. Competitiveness, 2. Sustainability, and 3. Resilience**, with a needs-based distribution of resources.



Some of the issues being considered is a rethink how to compensate those who voluntarily comply with agricultural conditions beyond the mandatory requirements. Additionally, he spoke about rethinking farm income objectives to segregate from broader goals, such as environmental sustainability. While the aim is that of a more performance-oriented policy the challenges and limitations in measuring results need to be addressed.

He took the opportunity to disseminate the study titled Rough estimate of the climate change mitigation potential of the CAP Strategic Plans (EU-18) over the 2023-2027 period published on November 2024 financed by the European Commission, was carried out by the European Evaluation Helpdesk.



Getting insights from participants: policy hackathon exercise



Serafin Pazos-Vidal from AEIDL moderating the plenary session

The session was designed to gather a diverse group of experts from various disciplines linked to Climate-Smart Agriculture in order to develop solutions to the proposed challenges by harnessing their collective intelligence and brainstorming. **The 40 participants, divided into 10 small groups, discussed around two critical challenge statements following a policy hackathon methodology.** The first challenge focused on exploring **ways to support farmers** at the farm level in adopting and implementing climate-smart agricultural practices effectively. The second challenge aimed at finding **strategies to assist policymakers** in designing and implementing public policies that promote CSA. Firstly, the groups compiled their **collective knowledge**, sharing insights into previous efforts, initiatives, and actions they were familiar with. Groups then **formulated solutions** ensuring they could be realistically implemented by 2030 and/or 2040.

The workshop concluded with a **plenary session, moderated by Serafin Pazos-Vidal (AEIDL) in which the groups presented their results**, highlighting key recommendations for advancing CSA in policy and practices. A major theme was the need for greater **policy coherence** and the **enhancement of results-based approaches**, drawing lessons from existing environmental models and adapting them to climate-related initiatives. Participants emphasised the importance of incorporating **Nature-based solutions** as eligible practices and called for **improved measurement** of the sustainability impacts of emerging technologies



Another key proposal was the need for a **stronger role for advisors and Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS)** in supporting farmers. The groups suggested developing **long-term schemes**, which would require rethinking Member States' responsibilities in designing eco-schemes for multiple years, as well as offering **supplementary payments** to beneficiaries making multi-annual commitments.

The session also underlined the necessity of conducting **individual farm assessments** to better understand the needs of small farmers when shaping **CAP subsidies**. Other important solutions focused on **raising awareness** about the pivotal role of producers and the agricultural sector, as well as promoting the **upskilling and continuous professional development** of all stakeholders within the supply chain.

Participants also stressed the value of **agricultural research** into technical studies, supporting **young farmers**, and fostering better alignment between **consumers and farmers** to ensure a more sustainable and collaborative agricultural future.



In closing the event Blanca Casares Guillén (AEIDL) thanked the audience and reminded the calendar for the next workshops:

- 3rd Workshop: design of policy tools for CSA transition (19 May 2025 – event page will be published soon)
- 4th Workshop: finalisation of BEATLES behavioral knowledge outputs and replicability of project results (4th Quarter 2025)

All presentations and recordings are available at the [event page](#) and the [YouTube channel](#).

Get involved in the project, [here](#).

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Next workshops will be announced in the near future.

Do you want to be part? > Contact Blanca Casares (bca@aeidl.eu)

www.beatles-project.eu

