Assessment of generational renewal strategies across EU Member States

Executive Summary

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EU CAP NETWORK

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1. Objectives of the study

The overall aim of the present study is to support DG AGRI in assessing the strategies adopted for generational renewal (GR) by Member States under CAP Strategic Plans and through other national and regional policy instruments.

The present study has three main objectives, specifically:

1. To **outline the most recent generational renewal trends** across the EU and **identify the major barriers hindering generational renewal** across Member States, including **those feeding the gender divide** in agriculture.
2. To **build a comprehensive inventory and typology of policy instruments** by extending and complementing the mapping exercise carried out in 2023 [1], in relation to GR strategies implemented by the Member States, **including a mapping of the available instruments to facilitate women's access to agriculture**.
3. To **identify and analyse successful strategies** implemented to foster GR **that can be promoted as recommendable practices** to be replicated across Member States, **highlighting good practices in supporting female successors**.

2. Policy framework

Generational renewal remains a key priority of the current CAP [2] in continuity with the previous programming periods. Under the 2023-2027 programming period, Specific Objective 7 (SO7) 'Attract young farmers and facilitate business development in rural areas' seeks to attract and support young and new farmers while promoting sustainable business growth in rural areas.

Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 sets the basis for addressing GR in the 2023-2027 programming period. Member States must allocate at least 3% of their direct payment envelope to support young farmers. Direct support can come from the **complementary income support for young farmers** (CIS-YF, Article 30, Regulation (EU) 2021/2115) and/or from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) through the **setting up aid** (INSTAL, Article 75, Regulation (EU) 2021/2115). Member States can also design other interventions specifically targeting GR such as **investment support** (INVEST) interventions with specific incentives for young farmers, such as higher support rates (Article 73(4), Regulation (EU) 2021/2115) or allowing financial instruments to support land purchase without restrictions (Article 73(3), Regulation (EU) 2021/2115). Also, investment support can contribute towards the 3% financial allocation requirement, allowing higher rates for young farmers. When using investment support, up to 50% of the expenditure on investments can count towards the 3% minimum allocation. **Cooperation support** (COOP) can also encourage inter-generational collaboration and farm transfers (Article 77(6), Regulation (EU) 2021/2115), while **knowledge, advisory and training support** (KNOW) can focus on GR and skill development for young farmers (Article 78, Regulation (EU) 2021/2115).

3. Methodological approach

The study covers the EU-27 and focuses on the 2023-2027 CAP programming period, while also taking into account previous CAP periods so as to understand historical trends in GR and the evolution of relevant policy instruments.

The analysis was carried out at three interlinked levels. At **EU level**, the study used official data and literature to examine overarching trends in GR and common policy developments. At the **national level**, it analysed all 27 Member States and their 28 CAP Strategic Plans (CSP) to map national/regional and CAP policy instruments addressing GR, the barriers they address and the potential complementarities between them. Finally, at **case study level**, the study explored more in depth 11 Member States – Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Ireland, Spain, France, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria and Portugal – selected based on the severity of GR challenges, diversity of policy responses, regional coverage and inclusion of gender-oriented strategies.

The study adopts a mixed-methods approach combining primary and secondary data, both qualitative and quantitative, to assess how GR is addressed through CSPs and national/regional instruments across the EU-27. Primary data collection included **in-depth interviews** with Managing Authorities (MAs) and other national stakeholders in all 27 Member States; **focus groups** held in the 11 selected case study Member States; a **survey** of young farmers and aspiring new farmers, both beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries of policy support. Secondary data were gathered through documentary research, including official statistics, CSPs, national legislation and policy documents and scientific literature.

4. Main findings

The analysis was developed in response to **four research questions**, which aimed to fulfil the study's objectives. The main findings are outlined in the following paragraphs.

What are the most recent generational renewal trends across the EU and which Member States suffer the most severe challenges?

Analysis under the first research question (RQ1) confirms the **persistence of a serious generational renewal problem in agriculture across the EU**. The problem is closely linked to continued ageing farming population trends, with only modest improvements in the presence of younger farm managers in a few Member States such as Austria, Poland, Germany and France. In contrast, most Member States show <1 ratios of farm managers under 40 compared to those over 65, especially in southern Europe (e.g. Portugal, Italy, Greece), reflecting a limited replacement of older generations. Between 2016 and 2020, only a few countries, such as Austria, Czechia and France, saw an improvement in the young-to-old ratio. **Gender disparities also persist**, with male farm managers consistently outnumbering female ones across age groups. Only in a handful of Member States, like Germany, Finland and Czechia, have young women started to enter farming at higher rates than their male peers.

1 European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, *Mapping and Analysis of CAP Strategic Plans, Assessment of joint efforts for 2023-2027*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2023.
2 EU CAP Network, Assessing generational renewal in CAP Strategic Plans, Good Practice Workshop, 14-15/03/2024, p.3.

The **severity of the generational renewal challenge in agriculture is overall high and widespread across the EU**, driven by the combined effects of an ageing farming population, structural weaknesses in rural economies and limited attractiveness of the farming profession. Although Member States such as Austria, France and Czechia, show relatively more favourable conditions with higher shares of young farmers and moderate declines in farm numbers, most Member States experience a dual challenge of declining farm numbers and insufficient generational replacement. Interviews reinforce these findings, with stakeholders in most Member States rating the severity of the GR problem as high or very high.

Some differences emerge across farming sectors. Labour-intensive and low-return sectors, such as livestock farming, are most severely affected due to harsh working conditions and income instability, as seen in France, Romania and Latvia. Small-scale and subsistence farms, more common in eastern and southern Europe, are indicated as particularly vulnerable to succession failure. Geographically, **the problem is most acute in remote, mountainous and economically disadvantaged regions** (Greece, Romania, Sweden). These areas often experience depopulation, insufficient infrastructure and high costs of production. Conversely, economically dynamic or better-connected regions, particularly in western Austria, eastern Ireland and northern Portugal, tend to attract more young entrants.

Gender disparities are again highlighted across much of the EU, particularly where inheritance customs favour male descendants and structural barriers hinder women's formal land ownership and access to finance. Countries such as Poland, Croatia and Ireland report cultural biases, while in Czechia and Malta women face difficulties in securing credit. Nonetheless, some Member States (Lithuania, the Netherlands, Romania) report increasing female participation, with young women drawn to small-scale, organic or niche production.

According to interviewed MAs and other national stakeholders, the **main causes of the GR problem** are demographic (i.e. ageing farmers), economic insecurity, limited access to land and finance, negative perceptions of farming and poor rural infrastructure. These challenges are worsened by regulatory complexity and perceived uncertainty of the policy, which collectively reduce the attractiveness and viability of farming for next generations.

What are the key barriers hindering generational renewal overall and for female successors, and how do they differ across Member States?

Analysis under the second research question (RQ2) based on documentary research and interviews with Managing Authorities and stakeholders in all Member States highlights several recurring barriers across the EU:

- **Access to land** is the most frequently reported GR barrier and **emerges as the most severe constraint**, due to high land prices, limited land availability and regulatory frameworks favouring large or family-owned farms. According to most interviewed stakeholders, **access to land has worsened over time**, driven by speculation, urban pressure, climate change and environmental constraints reducing available arable land. Land fragmentation is reported as a significant problem in Bulgaria, Italy, Latvia, Romania and Finland, while informal lease practices in Malta and Romania discourage investment. The shrinking availability of agricultural land due to urbanisation and market concentration is indicated as negatively affecting access to land in Malta, Hungary and the Netherlands.

  Policy and legal frameworks often disadvantage new entrants, while **inheritance or a family farming background provides a significant advantage**. Indeed, legislation in some countries favours intra-family transfers (France, Hungary, Czechia, Poland, Romania, Slovenia). In addition, some prioritise neighbours or locals, which limits access for non-resident young farmers (Hungary, Latvia). While some countries have developed solutions (e.g. land banks, youth-targeted lease schemes, fiscal incentives), most rely heavily on inherited land structures, which leave young newcomers disadvantaged.

  Some Member States highlight **regional differences** (Italy, Finland and Sweden) and **sectoral differences**. Crop farming is more affected due to larger land requirements (Denmark, France, Latvia), while access to land is sometimes easier for horticulture or mixed farming. **Gender inequality** is particularly noted in Romania, Malta, Croatia and Slovenia, where women lack formal land rights or are not taken seriously by institutions or sellers.

- **Access to finance is similarly severe, especially for first-generation farmers** (Czechia, Germany, Spain, Ireland). Newcomers without inherited land face high start-up costs and struggle to obtain loans in Slovakia, Romania, Malta, Bulgaria and Portugal, where land ownership is a precondition for credit. Capital intensiveness (Greece, Spain, France, Italy, the Netherlands) and perceived risk of the farming activity (Cyprus, Latvia, Malta, Sweden) further hinder lending opportunities. Although countries like Hungary and Denmark have introduced favourable schemes, bureaucratic hurdles and restrictive criteria remain common.

- The **fiscal and regulatory environment**, including inheritance laws, retirement policies and tax complexities, varies widely in its impact, but is notably most problematic in France, Malta and Romania, where complex regulations and inadequate retirement frameworks hinder intergenerational transfer. Retirement insecurity keeps older farmers active longer, further delaying farm transfers, while bureaucratic complexity and lack of succession planning contribute to the problem. Germany, Ireland, Slovakia, Croatia, Hungary and Luxembourg rate this barrier as having **medium to moderately high severity.** In contrast, in countries like Greece, Spain and Portugal, the barrier is not perceived as substantial. This barrier tends to affect all actors equally, but its **impact is often exacerbated for those without family ties to existing farms and women**.

- **Competitiveness and profitability of the farming sector are widely recognised as structural barriers and remain a challenge**, especially for smaller farms and labour-intensive sectors like livestock. Some Member States, including Belgium, Italy and Spain, report this as a major obstacle. Despite a gradual narrowing of the income gap between agriculture and other sectors of the economy, young farmers still face lower and more volatile incomes. At the same time, input and regulatory compliance costs are high. Member States such as Cyprus, Lithuania and Romania report worsening profitability, while others (Germany, Sweden) report regional or sectoral disparities. More tailored support is needed, including improved access to finance, stable market integration and sector-specific policy adjustments.

- **Access to knowledge is a moderately severe barrier**. While advisory services exist, they are often fragmented or poorly adapted to young entrants' needs. Therefore, the issue is rather one of limited accessibility, underutilisation or inadequate tailoring of knowledge exchange services. Estonia, Greece and Slovenia report knowledge gaps in entrepreneurship and sustainable practices, while Ireland and Hungary show more robust knowledge and advisory systems. Interviews highlight that **those without farming backgrounds are particularly disadvantaged, as they cannot rely on informal knowledge transfer**.

- The **quality of life in rural areas is widely seen as a long-standing and worsening issue**. Limited infrastructure, poor services and physical isolation make rural living unattractive, particularly for young people, women and young families. Slovenia, Lithuania and Germany highlight the impact of inadequate childcare, healthcare and transportation on work-life balance.

  Interviews highlight that although all young farmers are affected, structural and social factors can exacerbate the challenge for certain groups. **Young families and new entrants without inherited farms are reported to be among the most vulnerable** in Czechia, Cyprus, Greece and Slovenia. Various stakeholders emphasise that **women are significantly more affected,** largely due to social expectations around childcare and limited rural services that should support work-life balance. Territorial disparities are also highlighted, e.g. in remote or mountainous areas, where the lack of services and infrastructures is more pronounced.

  Interviews in Estonia, Czechia and France indicate that, despite national and EU programmes aimed at addressing rural inequalities, progress has been insufficient. Interviews in Slovenia report rising mental health concerns for young farmers. In a few cases, improvements are mentioned, due to targeted CAP investments (e.g. Spain).

- **Personal and familial issues**, though context-dependent, **remain significant in many countries**. Emotional ties to the land, differing generational aspirations and a lack of communication are common obstacles, particularly in Austria, Latvia and Slovenia. In countries like Bulgaria and Spain, these issues are less severe. **Gender also plays a role**, e.g. in Ireland, Luxembourg and Malta, social expectations around women's roles constrain succession.

Some common elements emerge from the analysis of GR barriers, in particular a difference in the **severity of certain barriers for young farmers with a family farming background versus newcomers** who seem to be at a disadvantage in accessing land, financial resources and knowledge. **Gender inequalities** are also commonly mentioned in many Member States in conjunction with different barriers. Gender disparities were also confirmed by the young farmers' survey. Half of the respondents believe that women face greater challenges than men in entering the farming sector, with female respondents much more likely to share this view (72% compared to 39% of male respondents).

CAP and national/regional policy instruments set out by Member States to support generational renewal

Analysis under the third research question (RQ3) focused on assessing the **relevance of generational renewal strategies**, including CAP and national/regional policy instruments, in addressing the identified GR barriers, as well as the **possible complementarities and synergies** between the different types of instruments.

Relevance of CAP and national/regional policy instruments in addressing generational renewal barriers

The CAP clearly remains the cornerstone of support for young farmers across all Member States. As clearly stated by interviewed Managing Authorities and national stakeholders, Member States significantly or mostly rely on CAP interventions to support GR. **CSP interventions** – i.e. INSTAL, CIS-YF, INVEST, COOP and KNOW – **are generally considered relevant in addressing financial and competitiveness-related barriers**, with some **also contributing to knowledge acquisition** by addressing professional, entrepreneurial and personal development of young farmers. Farm succession planning is addressed by fewer Member States through KNOW interventions (Germany, Greece) and COOP (Spain, Ireland).

Some interviewed stakeholders highlight **issues potentially limiting the relevance of CAP support**. Specifically:

- While direct income support and investment support provide relevant financial incentives in the short term, the effects in the longer term are more unclear.

- Support seems to mostly help slow down the decline in young farmers' numbers, rather than increase the proportion of young people in the agricultural sector.

Access to land is addressed by a variety of national and regional instruments, though often with limited scope and relevance. National and regional policy instruments facilitating land access, such as land banks, regulatory controls on land markets and preferential leasing mechanisms, are relevant tools in various Member States (e.g. France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Austria and Slovakia), confirming land access as the most critical barrier to GR. In contrast, some Member States criticise instruments as being insufficiently tailored to young farmers or not effectively implemented (Belgium-Wallonia, Czechia, the Netherlands, Portugal and Slovenia).

Access to finance appears to be relatively better supported by national instruments, although coverage and targeting vary. Notable examples of relevant instruments, such as preferential loan schemes and guarantee funds aimed at young and new farmers, are highlighted in France, Ireland, Czechia, Hungary, Italy and Slovenia. Other Member States have more general support initiatives in place that can benefit youth business development (Bulgaria, Denmark, Malta and Portugal). However, despite a range of tools, some gaps remain in uptake or visibility, particularly in Ireland and Portugal, where limited incentives or low awareness hinder use among younger generations.

The fiscal environment, inheritance and retirement regulatory framework is another area where several countries have made relevant legal adjustments. Several Member States offer a combination of tax exemptions, retirement and inheritance laws and other instruments (e.g. Austria, Czechia, Ireland, Hungary, Luxembourg and Malta) to reduce transaction costs and legal hurdles. These measures can be crucial in incentivising older farmers to retire, thus facilitating farm transmission.

National/regional instruments addressing competitiveness and profitability often focus on supporting investments for modernisation (Austria, France), innovation (Germany, Hungary) and market-based strategies or cooperativism (Italy, Portugal). In Finland, the Nordic Aid supports farms in less favoured regions. Despite these measures, competitiveness is more often supported by CAP interventions and relatively few national instruments are targeted at enhancing profitability for new entrants.

Improving the **quality of life in agriculture and rural areas** receives some attention at the national level, though not systematically. Only a few Member States seem to have dedicated programmes focusing on career support, social insurance and care systems (Germany, Luxembourg, Slovenia). Malta's rural housing allowances and female empowerment programmes to enhance attractiveness and gender balance in rural communities are noteworthy. However, many other Member States offer few targeted measures in this area or none at all.

Access to knowledge is addressed unevenly across the EU. Some Member States provide well-structured support and invest significantly in agricultural education and advisory support (Germany, Estonia, France, Hungary, Malta and Austria). However, several others provide only general youth training that is not tailored to agriculture, reporting that advisory services are often under-resourced or fragmented, particularly in more remote areas. **Personal and familial issues**, including intergenerational conflict and the emotional dynamics of farm transfer, are seldom addressed explicitly but are acknowledged in some national frameworks (e.g. Germany, Hungary, Austria and Slovenia).

Focus group assessments across 11 Member States reinforce interview findings, highlighting **instruments favouring land access and fiscal policies as the most relevant policy types**. Barriers such as access to knowledge, quality of life in rural areas and gender inequality are addressed with varying success, as testified by lower relevance ratings of the related national instruments.

The survey of young farmers overall supports the previous findings, as both CAP and national instruments are viewed as broadly relevant, with little differentiation between CAP and national tools. Potential beneficiaries tend to rate instruments more positively, possibly reflecting still unmet expectations.

Only a few national instruments are designed to specifically support female successors. Gender-sensitive approaches remain marginal, with only a handful of countries, such as Malta, Germany, Spain and Hungary, having adopted programmes explicitly aimed at empowering women in agriculture.

Complementarity between policy instruments addressing generational renewal barriers

In terms of **complementarity**, the findings reveal that while many Member States have structured complementarities between policy instruments, both within and outside the CAP, the depth and effectiveness of synergies vary considerably. **A common positive pattern emerges in Member States where CAP instruments are explicitly designed to work jointly**, either through linked eligibility conditions, coordinated timing of calls or shared strategic goals. Estonia, Portugal and Slovenia demonstrate more comprehensive and integrated support frameworks, where financial aid, training and advisory services are designed to work together. Good synergies between CAP interventions are, however, reported in various other Member States [3].

A **high level of complementarity between CAP and national/regional instruments emerges in some Member States**, in particular, Czechia, Ireland, Hungary and Austria, but to some extent also Belgium-Wallonia, Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg, Portugal and Slovakia, through the implementation of different types of instruments. However, in some cases (e.g. Czechia), the synergies seem to remain largely theoretical due to administrative barriers and a lack of systematic coordination. A **lower level of complementarity among policy instruments** emerges in Bulgaria, Italy, the Netherlands and Finland, where complementarities often remain nominal or underdeveloped, again constrained by fragmented planning or administrative barriers. **The complexity of administrative processes seems to be a recurring challenge across Member States, often limiting the practical synergy of theoretically complementary instruments.**

In some Member States, the **tension between regional and national coherence** hinders efforts at creating integrated support systems. France and Spain, for example, face challenges rooted in their decentralised governance structures, resulting in uneven access to support across regions and administrative complexity.

Across the board, **one of the most under-addressed areas is the interpersonal and emotional dimension of generational renewal**. Despite its recognised importance, few Member States have included support for the 'soft' aspects of farm succession, such as mentoring, intergenerational mediation or mental wellbeing in their policy frameworks. Findings suggest that further efforts may be necessary across these domains. Some stakeholders (Spain, the Netherlands) emphasise the importance of including these non-material aspects. The lack of attention to such aspects may be a missed opportunity for policy design, particularly given their influence on the success of intergenerational transfers and the long-term sustainability of farming.

To what extent can the proposed strategies address the identified generational renewal barriers, including the gender gap?

The fourth research question (RQ4) sought to assess the potential effectiveness of the policy instruments adopted by Member States in addressing the identified GR barriers and, on this basis, identify good practices that could be replicated across Member States.

3 Belgium-Flanders, Cyprus, Greece, Croatia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and Sweden.

Considering both CAP interventions and national/regional instruments fostering GR, their **potential effectiveness** in addressing the identified barriers to GR is moderate. However, CAP instruments are better integrated and used by beneficiaries compared to national instruments.

First, when analysing preference, i.e. the interest in and need for instruments to overcome challenges to succession, the proposed strategies, comprising both CAP interventions and national/regional policy instruments, demonstrate **a moderate potential to address the identified generational renewal barriers**. Instruments such as **CIS-YF**, **INSTAL** and **INVEST** are the most widely known and used across Member States, indicating that they are relatively well-integrated into national strategies and have tangible uptake and interest from beneficiaries. These instruments demonstrate **high levels of preference**, with up to 70% of survey respondents having used them, planning to use them or expressing an intention to use them. The strong interest suggests that these tools are aligned with young and new farmers' needs, especially regarding initial financial support.

Second, despite this alignment, **the potential effectiveness of these strategies is limited by several accessibility constraints**. Survey and case study findings consistently highlight **administrative complexity** (e.g. burdensome paperwork, slow disbursement processes) and **inadequate advisory and training support** as major issues across the EU. Furthermore, **restrictive eligibility criteria**, such as rigid age limits [4] or land ownership requirements, limit the reach of many instruments. These factors contribute to **only moderate levels of accessibility**, meaning that even theoretically effective instruments are often difficult for potential beneficiaries to access in practice. These barriers are particularly acute in **instruments beyond the core CAP tools**, such as tax incentives, land access schemes and early retirement support, which **remain largely unknown or underutilised** by the majority of respondents (with exceptions in eight Member States where beneficiaries are aware of a variety of other instruments, and especially in Spain and France).

Third, in relation to gender, while it is not widely perceived by survey respondents as a major barrier to accessing GR instruments, **interviews and case studies reveal that gender-related challenges persist** in some Member States. These include **limited access to targeted land or credit programmes, legal and cultural barriers** and **low awareness of technical training among women**, which can discourage them from farm succession. Only **France, Spain, Germany and Hungary** offer more structured, dedicated support for female successors. Thus, while gender inequality is not universally seen as a constraint, the current strategies **fall short of systematically addressing the gender gap** and more **targeted support, integrated in the design of interventions,** is needed to ensure equal access.

In relation to actual effectiveness, i.e. the extent to which GR barriers have been addressed by the implemented instruments, available evidence at this early stage of implementation indicates that the most effective approaches to fostering GR have proved to be **those that directly address key barriers such as access to finance, land, knowledge and the income gap**. Instruments like CIS-YF, INSTAL and INVEST have demonstrated concrete results due to their high uptake, strategic financial design and, in some cases, simplified application procedures. Where available, structured training and advisory services, as well as land access schemes, have also proven effective. However, the impact of other interventions, such as early retirement schemes, favourable credit and fiscal incentives, appears limited due to low awareness, low uptake or high administrative complexity. **Effectiveness is highest where policies are targeted, well-resourced and supported by an enabling implementation environment**.

Novelty in the content and delivery of existing instruments also contributes to more effectively addressing GR barriers. The analysis shows that the 2023-2027 programming period has introduced several innovative elements that enhance the potential for GR. **Notable innovations include simplified eligibility for young farmers, targeted support to women, increased focus on training, advisory services and knowledge transfer, as well as regionalised implementation.**

What are the most promising good practices that could be replicated across Member States?

The analysis has allowed the identification of several promising **good practices** that could be replicated across Member States. They underline that effective GR depends on how instruments are designed and combined. Good practices include: **combining multiple forms of support to create a coherent and flexible aid system; delivering targeted, practical training and advisory services; offering tools that facilitate non-family succession; and enabling land management by cooperatives to address land access barriers.** Strategic policy combinations place GR in a comprehensive and structured overall context, aligned with farmers' needs and adaptable to national and regional contexts (summarised examples in the table below).

4 Although set at 40, France and Latvia consider it arbitrary, while in Ireland the age limit is set at 35 for some national instruments.

Table 1. Summary of identified good practices

Good practices	Description and examples
Individual instruments	
Facilitate installation of young/new farmers outside the family	A mediation portal links farmers with successors outside the family (Austria).
Encourage women to obtain investment support	Higher grants for women and individual funding ceiling which increases if women join farm partnerships (Ireland).
Improve the skills of young people through internships	High quality training in real work environments, financial support for internships abroad to learn from other experiences (Estonia, Luxembourg).
Address land access barriers through cooperative land management	Land management by cooperatives that assume the risk and guarantee employment in agriculture for young people who cannot afford the land (Spain).
Combined instruments	
Incentivise young farmers through a supportive strategic environment	Combination of various national and CAP policy instruments addressing multiple barriers (access to land, access to finance, social security and tax issues, access to knowledge, etc.) under a common strategic framework (Austria).
Facilitate the participation of women in agriculture through stakeholder engagement	A national dialogue on women in agriculture brought together various stakeholders who committed to a common action plan that promotes the role of women in agriculture (Ireland).
Incentivise both young and old to facilitate transfer	Combination of legal instruments and INSTAL so that both transferee and transferor receive support gives incentives to older farmers to hand over the farm (Hungary).
Consolidate training programmes into a national training strategy	Successful national training programmes have been incorporated into a national training strategy that provides a structured and comprehensive framework for careers in agriculture (Spain).

Source: EU CAP Network supported by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2025), elaboration of interviews and focus groups data

Suggestions for the improvement of GR policy

Finally, the analysis has allowed the identification of eight key areas where improvements are needed to more effectively address GR challenges in EU agriculture. Despite the presence of good practices, substantial gaps remain. Firstly, the **design of CAP interventions should be refined**, particularly through clearer eligibility criteria, adjusted definitions (e.g. 'active farmer'), and better-targeted support schemes, such as linking grants to sustainability and qualifications. Secondly, **access to land** remains a major barrier, with recommendations including state land leases and protection from speculation. **Bureaucratic complexity** is also a concern, warranting streamlined application processes and integrated digital systems. **Access to finance** must be improved via subsidised loans, state guarantees and simplified succession rules. Furthermore, **advisory and training services** should be strengthened through early education, digital skills and personalised guidance. The **attractiveness of farming** must be promoted by enhancing rural infrastructure and public perceptions. **Gender-related obstacles** should be addressed with tailored funding and inclusive training. Finally, a holistic policy approach is needed, integrating CAP support with national measures across education, social policy and mental wellbeing.

As an overall conclusion, the success of generational renewal strategies relies on effective policy design, targeted innovations and the replication of proven good practice. Instruments like CIS-YF, INSTAL and tailored investment support (INVEST) are effective when they are well-funded, clearly targeted and easy to access. **Recent innovations have improved the relevance and inclusivity of support**, particularly through enhanced aid for women, simplified eligibility and new farm succession support models. Good practices that combine multiple support types, engage stakeholders and align with sustainability goals offer potential for broader adoption. Ongoing simplification, strategic focus and coordination across national and CAP frameworks are key to maximise impact.

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