Agricultural products on the internal market and in third countries: information provision and promotion measures

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In accordance with Regulation (EU) No 1144/2014 of the European Parliament, the Commission presents an interim report on information provision and promotion measures concerning agricultural products implemented in the internal market and in third countries. As a reminder, the EU helps the agri-food sector to finance information and promotion campaigns. By explaining to consumers and importers the high standards and the quality of EU agri-food products, EU promotion programmes can support European producers in an increasingly competitive world and encourage the opening up of new markets.

The report states that in the light of the statistics on applications concerning promotion programmes, the participation in High Level Missions since 2016, and feedback from evaluation questionnaires, there is a **high level of interest** in the reformed promotion policy.

The promotion programmes 2016 was the first year of the implementation of the reformed promotion policy. The Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency (CHAFEA) received 226 proposals: 199 for simple programmes (submitted by one or more proposing organisations from the same Member State) and 27 for multi programmes (submitted by at least two proposing organisations from at least two Member States or one or more EU level organisations) following the publication of the calls for proposals. A total of **60** simple programmes were selected. Proposals from 16 Member States were approved. The largest number of beneficiaries were from Italy (10), followed by 8 beneficiaries from France and 8 from Greece.

2017 - there were 189 proposals for simple and 35 proposals for multi programmes and **53 simple programmes and 10 multi programmes** were selected. Organisations from France received 17 grants (from 23 applications submitted) out of the 53 proposals awarded for simple programmes, in total corresponding to 36% of the budget.

2018 - CHAFEA received 182 proposals (146 for simple, 36 for multi) following the publication of the calls. Pending signature of the grant agreements, it is envisaged that Italian organisations will receive 18 grants out of 58 grants in total (and out of 31 proposals submitted by Italian organisations) corresponding to 35% of the budget. **The fruit and vegetables sector** with 17 applications is to receive 31.2% of the budget, meat and meat preparation 22.7% (12 grants), cheese and dairy products 19.5% (13 grants) and basket of products 19.2% of the available budget (10 grants). The four sectors account for the majority of the programmes evaluated to receive a grant and account for the lion’s share of the available budget.

The high number of proposals received after the publications of the calls for proposals in 2016, 2017 and 2018 indicates a **genuine interest in the scheme**. In addition, participants have welcomed the **simplification of the submission procedure** and the tools available to help applicants to submit a proposal.

Statistics on the type of participants show that not only the well-known inter-trade organisations are participating, but also a high number of producer organisations or associations of producer organisations, groups of producers and processors active in geographical indications.

High-level missions: the Commission has implemented high-level missions to Columbia and Mexico, China and Japan, Vietnam, Singapore and Indonesia, Canada, Iran and Saudi Arabia.

A survey among participants revealed that the average satisfaction rate among business delegates is generally **above 90%.**

The interim report goes on to indicate that the **evaluation procedures** for promotion programmes have proved to be efficient as far as submission, evaluation and implementation of the measures are concerned. Each year evaluation questionnaires were sent out to the applicants following the closure of the call in order to seek advice on potential areas for improvement. In 2018, 22% of the applicants provided feedback. 79% of respondents were satisfied with the electronic submission, 76% considered that the evaluation criteria were clearly explained. The vast majority (86%) of the calls documents provided were considered useful or very useful.

The report adds that since the reformed promotion policy can be evaluated only as from 2016, it is considered premature at this stage to propose amendments. An external evaluation is being launched for the final report and appropriate proposals will be made at that time.