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Answer given by Mr Hansen
on behalf of the European Commission
(18.6.2026)

The Commission welcomes the European Court of Auditor's special report¹ and remains committed to further refining the measure for Operational Groups (OG) projects. The Commission will not propose minimum percentage targets for projects since this would conflict with the bottom-up approach of the measure. The Commission is committed to improve the focus on farmers' innovation needs in OG projects, as recommended by the Court.

Under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) 2023-2027, the interactive innovation model became a legal requirement, whereas it was non-binding guidance during the CAP 2014-2022 (the period covered by the audit). In its legal proposal for the CAP 2028-2034, in line with the recommendations by the Court, the Commission has proposed: emphasis on the dissemination of key results and scaling-up of project outcomes, strengthening the interactive innovation model to ensure that farmers and other practitioners are actively involved in projects and proposing a new possibility for Member States to support specific actions aimed at the wider uptake of OG projects' results. The Commission will aim to also continue supporting EIP-AGRI² under Horizon Europe 2028-2034 via the multi-actor approach, addressed in the upcoming strategic approach to Research and Innovation.

OG projects must bring together partners with complementary expertise, while ensuring the active involvement of farmers and other relevant practitioners. Fixed targets are not in line with the bottom-up nature of the measure and would hinder projects in for example forestry or rural innovation. Nevertheless, the Commission encourages and already observes improved farmers' participation, with an increase of around 30% to 40% compared to the previous period.

¹ <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/publications?ref=sr-2026-09>.

² EIP-AGRI: European Innovation Partnership for agricultural productivity and sustainability.