



Council of the
European Union

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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

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Subject: European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 4/2015: Technical assistance: what contribution has it made to agriculture and rural development?
- Council conclusions (10 December 2015)

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on:

European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 4/2015: Technical assistance: what contribution has it made to agriculture and rural development?,

adopted by the Council at its 3436th meeting held on 10 December 2015.

Council conclusions

on Special Report No 04/2015 from the European Court of Auditors entitled:

"Technical assistance: what contribution has it made to agriculture and rural development?"

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

- (1) WELCOMES Special Report No 04/2015 from the European Court of Auditors entitled: "Technical assistance: what contribution has it made to agriculture and rural development?", which focusses on the management of technical assistance (TA) and its contribution to the core agriculture and rural development policy objectives during the 2007-13 programming period;
- (2) ACKNOWLEDGES that TA in support of rural development programmes relates to the provision of specific expertise to, and funding of, government departments so as to develop administrative capacity and cover the costs associated therewith and NOTES that TA contributes to the implementation, monitoring, control and evaluation of Rural Development Programmes (RDPs);
- (3) UNDERLINES that the legislator decided to grant flexibility to Member States in the use of TA funds in order to cope with the large variety of needs encountered by national and regional authorities;¹
- (4) UNDERLINES that, in accordance with the legislation in force, administrative costs, including payroll and IT development and maintenance, are eligible TA expenditure if resources paid thereof are directly linked to the implementation of RDPs;

¹ See Article 5 of Regulation (EC) No 1290/2005 for the 2007-13 programming period and Article 59 of Regulation No 1303/2013 for the 2014-20 programming period.

- (5) **ACCEPTS** the Court's recommendation that, in order to improve transparency about the ways funding is used, the distinction between operational/'capacity building' expenditure and eligible administrative/'budget support' costs could be clarified further and **WELCOMES** the Commission's intention to develop further guidance in this regard;
- (6) **NOTES** the Court's finding that the financing of networking activities could offer potential for appropriate TA use in the rural development budget but simultaneously notes that their impact is also hard to assess;
- (7) **ENCOURAGES** Member States to use adequate indicators for the monitoring of TA expenditure but **UNDERLINES** that this should not lead to any additional costs or administrative burden.
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