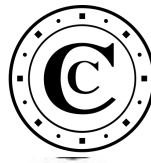# FIGHTING THE PROLIFERATION OF GREEN ALGAE — MIXED METHODS

Methodological session

Adam BAÏZ - INTOSAI Working Group

on Evaluation of Public Policies and Programs (WGEPPP)

September 2022

Bern Switzerland

1. WHY THIS SUBJECT?

. An old and recurring phenomenon, with consequences in terms of public health and the environment.

. An important public debate: the assessment by financial jurisdictions met a strong expectation from the actors.

. Quantitative data to achieve a solid balance sheet over a sufficient number of years.

*Hillion (Bay of St-Brieuc, Côtes d'Armor, May 2021)*

Saint-Michel-en-Grève (Côtes d'Armor, June 2017)
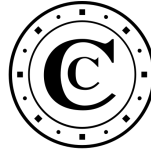
2. A METHODOLOGY FOR STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Five methodological tools:

- **An accompanying committee** of nine members (experts in the state's water and agricultural policies, scientists, local elected representatives, representatives of the agricultural profession and the association "Water and rivers of Brittany"), gathered four times to validate the methodology and give its opinion on the substance.

- **A survey** of the 2,700 farmers in the eight bays affected by green algae, a valuable addition, since it is more objective and comprehensive, to the interviews on the ground and to the written positions of trade unions or the Chamber of Agriculture; is one of the added values of the evaluation.

- **The drafting of eight territorial booklets,** with an in-depth analysis of the specificity of each bay, allowing the territories to have a real strategic document

- **An international comparison**: comparative analysis of the policies of four European countries: Ireland, Denmark, the Netherlands and Belgium.

- Nearly **100 interviews** with European, national, regional and local stakeholders were conducted from May 2019 to August 2020.
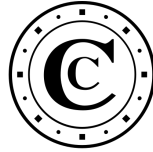
3. EVALUATIVE ISSUES AND MEANS

1. With what degree of precision does scientific analysis explain the phenomenon of green tides?

2. Has the phenomenon of green algae proliferation decreased over the past ten years?

3. Are the objectives of the green algae control plans clearly defined and relevant?

4. What is the cost of public support for actions to reduce nitrogen leakage in green algae watersheds and do these expenditures differ from comparable programmes?

5. Is Plav's contribution to lower nitrate concentrations and nitrogen leak reduction identifiable?

6. To what extent are the objectives and means of this policy consistent with other public policies?

7. Are Plavs the right tools to achieve the goal set?

4. ACCESS TO AND PROCESSING OF DATA

1/Access to data: a collection of data from many entry points (State, contracting authorities; questionnaires, extraction of existing bases)
Two important lessons:
Do not neglect the time it takes to identify who has what as data and who is the right entry point.
→ define as soon as the data is acquired a contact person within the competent department, knowing the imperfections and subtleties of the bases if they are complex.

2/The involvement of data scientists: (a) in the progressive definition of needs; (B) the participation of the data scientist in all team meetings, to see how data needs fit into the evaluation work and to have a good overview.
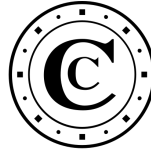
5. THE RESPECTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE COURT AND THE REGIONAL CHAMBER OF ACCOUNTS

Key inputs of the Regional chambers of Accounts:

- a thorough knowledge of the territory and actors, which is essential;
- a close proximity appreciated by our interlocutors (notably on the part of state services at decentralised level and local actors);
— good knowledge of local policies, such as land tenure or farm control.

Key contributions of the Second Chamber of the Court:

- good knowledge of national and European agricultural and environmental policies;
- management of the team and schedule, and evaluation expertise;
— management of the relationship with the SRPP (publication, recommendations, follow-up of recommendations).

Thank you for your attention!

Let's go to your questions.

Saint Brieuc, Valais beach, June 2019