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Will CAP eco-schemes be worth their name?

An assessment of draft eco-schemes proposed by Member States



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SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A reformed Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) will enter into force in 2023. The two most important changes in this new CAP are on one hand the shift to implementation through national CAP Strategic Plans (CSP), which are being prepared by EU countries and due for submission to the Commission by 1 January 2022, and on the other hand, the addition of a new form of direct payments for environmentally-friendly farming: eco-schemes. In light of the European Green Deal, many expectations for a greener CAP have been pinned on eco-schemes. Yet, to date, very little has been known on how EU countries will use this new policy instrument in their CSPs.

This report is the first attempt to catalogue and assess eco-schemes from across the EU (covering 21 Member States), and therefore offers groundbreaking insights into how approximately €48.5 bn of EU funding¹ will be spent over 5 years in the post-2022 CAP. However, the information shared

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and analysed in this report is based on draft CSPs, which are highly likely to change still before their formal submission to the Commission. In addition, the details on draft eco-schemes were provided by environmental NGOs and coalitions operating at national level, who in many cases only received limited information from their Government. Nonetheless, we were generally able to judge the quality of draft eco-schemes and their potential alignment with the objectives of the EU Green Deal.

As they currently stand, Member States' proposed eco-schemes will fall very short of expectations. Only 19% of eco-schemes are deemed likely to deliver on their stated environmental objectives, 40% would need significant improvements to be effective, and 41% are completely misaligned. What's more, according to our assessment, many well designed schemes that are likely to deliver are either underfunded or

likely to be outcompeted by less demanding and/or more financially attractive schemes.

The **worst examples** we identified include:

- eco-schemes for precision farming (supposedly targeting reductions in fertiliser or pesticide use), when they do not include any benchmarks or requirements for actual input reductions. In addition to the uncertain environmental benefits of these schemes, the proposal to pay farmers a fixed rate per hectare for the use of precision farming technologies would benefit the largest farm businesses, whose economies of scale already make this practice profitable, so public support is not justified.
- eco-schemes for no-till farming, when they do not have any safeguards on the use of herbicides (e.g. glyphosate) nor requirements to apply the other two "pillars" of conservation agriculture: complex crop rotations and constant soil cover. Not only does no-till have limited benefits as a standalone practice (except in soil erosion hotspots), but these schemes could even lead to increases in herbicide use, as the most common alternative strategy to ploughing for weed suppression.
- eco-schemes for "end-of-pipe" solutions in intensive livestock production, such as feed additives for dairy cows, certified feeding plans for cattle, or lower than average or reduced antimicrobial use. These eco-schemes do not tackle the underlying drivers of pollution or excessive antimicrobial use and could become "polluter-gets-paid" subsidies for intensive animal farming.

1. European Commission, 2021. [A greener and fairer CAP](#)

- eco-schemes for crop diversification, which is a greening requirement in the current CAP and was evaluated to have very limited environmental benefits. Crop diversification is part of conditionality in the future CAP, and these eco-schemes are very unlikely to bring any real benefit, as they do not guarantee an actual increase in crop diversity, nor do they address parcel size; in other words still allowing for large monocultures.
- eco-schemes for standard grasslands management which do not include any limit on live-stock density (in regions where it would be environmentally sound to do so), nor the appropriate management requirements to ensure that mowing or extensive grazing delivers the desired benefits for biodiversity or climate.

In sum, the analysis detailed in this report shows an urgent need for Member States to improve the design and ambition of eco-schemes before submitting their draft Strategic Plans for approval, and for the Commission to assess them very critically.

To ensure eco-schemes deliver, and based on the observations made throughout our analysis, we make the following **key recommendations** to Member States and the European Commission:

- 1. Pay for practices that contribute to a holistic transition towards more sustainable farming systems**, not for marginal improvements to fundamentally unsustainable models or mere efficiency gains which disregard other environmental dimensions. Eco-schemes must never incentivise practices which could cause negative environmental impacts.
- 2. Implement more multi-dimensional eco-schemes** and/or incentivise farmers to combine different eco-schemes on their land. Single practices often do not deliver on their own and combining several fairly rewarded interventions on a farm can boost synergistic outcomes.
- 3. Do not trade CAP conditionality for eco-schemes**, avoiding in all cases that conditionality standards are purposefully weakened by Member States, in order to include these farming practices in their eco-schemes. Conditionality standards must be implemented ambitiously by Member States and past greening requirements which were found to have limited or no environmental benefits should not be supported through eco-schemes.
- 4. Do not pay for basic farming practices** which are already common practice, or which have unclear or contested environmental benefits. In contrast, maintaining virtuous farming practices can be remunerated, when the environmental benefits are clear (e.g. High Nature Value farming or organic farming) and the practices are at risk in the absence of policy support.
- 5. Ensure eco-schemes have a clear intervention logic and are designed to achieve measurable improvements**, avoiding to fund actions that only require elaborating a plan, keeping a register of farming activities or applying an innovation, without any commitment to achieving results on the ground. Scientific evidence should be provided to justify the design and requirements of the eco-scheme.
- 6. Eco-schemes must offer fair rewards to farmers, with payments proportional to the expected environmental benefit of the farming practices supported and the opportunity costs.** Eco-schemes with multiple tiers of commitment and matching payment levels are fairer and more effective and, therefore, preferable to simple flat-rate eco-schemes.
- 7. Ensure coherence and synergies with other CAP tools**, avoiding eco-schemes that would weaken or compete with existing agri-environmental measures. Capacity-building actions and advisory support should accompany the deployment of eco-schemes and other environmental measures to ensure high uptake and good implementation of the actions supported.

1. INTRODUCTION

Eco-schemes are one of the very few novel instruments available in the toolbox of the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). These schemes for the climate, the environment and animal welfare will be fully funded by the EU and take the form of yearly payments to farmers who voluntarily enrol.

Rather than using CAP direct payments to farmers as just income support, the aim of eco-schemes is to reward those farmers who manage land in a nature- and climate-friendly way, and to incentivise the adoption of specific farming practices with higher environmental and animal welfare benefits.

After the failure of the current CAP greening payments, which were the first attempt to use direct payments for agri-environmental purposes, high expectations are now set on eco-schemes. The European Green Deal mentions that CAP "measures such as eco-schemes should reward farmers for improved environmental and climate performance", and the Farm to Fork Strategy says that they should "offer a major stream of funding to boost sustainable practices"².

BOX 1. European Green Deal agricultural targets to be achieved by 2030 according to the EU Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies.

- At least 10% of the EU's agricultural area is under high-diversity landscape features.
- At least 25% of the EU's agricultural land is under organic farming.
- Reduce the overall use and risk of chemical pesticides by 50%; reduce the use of more hazardous pesticides by 50%.
- Reduce nutrient losses by at least 50%; reduce fertilisers by at least 20%.
- Reduce sales of antimicrobials for farmed animals by 50%.

In addition, the European Green Deal includes the headline commitments to reach climate neutrality by 2050, and to preserve and restore ecosystems and biodiversity. The agriculture sector is central to achieving these economy-wide objectives.

Nevertheless, the legal framework for eco-schemes - established in the EU regulations for the CAP 2023-2027 - is generally weak and there is a risk that these novel schemes are misused to pay for very basic and already widespread farming practices, or for new practices with no or limited environmental benefits. This would not deliver any added environmental value for EU taxpayers' money, while also failing those farmers who want to be more sustainable and make greater efforts to improve agricultural practices on the ground.

Whether eco-schemes are likely to deliver on the European Green Deal depends on the decisions that national governments are currently making in relation to the design of the eco-schemes. However, there is no legal obligation that links strictly the CAP with the agricultural targets of the European Green Deal (Box 1). Instead, the CAP regulation includes a vague requirement for each eco-scheme to cover, in principle, at least two "areas of action" for the climate, the environment,

2. WWF, 2020. [Eco-schemes: a key tool to deliver the European Green Deal](#).

animal welfare and antimicrobial resistance (Box 2). The European Commission has a key responsibility to ensure the quality of eco-schemes through its ongoing informal exchange with Member States and, once the draft CAP national strategic plans are submitted at the end of 2021 or early 2022, in the formal review of plans that will take place in 2022.

BOX 2. Areas of action for eco-schemes as described in the CAP regulation for Strategic Plans

- a. climate change mitigation, including reduction of GHG emissions from agricultural practices, as well as maintenance of existing carbon stores and enhancement of carbon sequestration;
- b. climate change adaptation, including actions to improve resilience of food production systems, and animal and plant diversity for stronger resistance to diseases and climate change;
- c. protection or improvement of water quality and reduction of pressure on water resources;
- d. prevention of soil degradation, soil restoration, improvement of soil fertility and of nutrient management and soil biota;
- e. protection of biodiversity, conservation or restoration of habitats or species, including maintenance and creation of landscape features or non-productive areas;
- f. actions for a sustainable and reduced use of pesticides, particularly pesticides that present a risk for human health or environment;
- g. actions to enhance animal welfare or address antimicrobial resistance.

This report is focused on eco-schemes but there are, of course, other instruments in the CAP toolbox (notably conditionality, rural development interventions, investment support and farm advisory services) that must also be used, synergistically whenever possible, to achieve environmental objectives. This is especially true for Member States with a relatively strong Rural Development pillar, such as Portugal, Slovenia, Croatia, Austria, Finland, Sweden or Slovakia, all with over 40% of their CAP budget devoted to Rural Development.

Nevertheless, given the significant share of the CAP budget ring-fenced for eco-schemes (as a general rule, 25% of the CAP direct payments, which adds up to approximately €8-9 bn per year across the EU) their importance cannot be understated. And as a novel tool, they attract more political attention and concerns about their real capacity to deliver: Will CAP eco-schemes be worth their name?

2. INFORMATION SOURCES AND DATA GAPS

As part of the consultations in preparation for the draft CAP national strategic plans, most Member States have started to share publicly or directly with stakeholders the eco-schemes they are planning to include in the CSPs. These draft eco-schemes are the basis of the assessment presented in this brief, which gathers the most recent information available as of mid-November 2021. The list of draft eco-scheme and sources of information, including links to websites whenever they were available, are included as an annex.

It must be stressed that these draft eco-schemes - developed in most cases by the technical experts in the Agriculture Ministries, in ideal situations in consultation with stakeholders - are now the object of political negotiations, notably with regional agricultural authorities and farm organisations. Therefore, the design of the eco-schemes presented in this brief is still likely to change - sometimes substantially - before CSPs are finalised and formally approved in 2022.

BirdLife's, the EEB's and WWF's networks of environmental NGOs and national coalitions are actively following the CAP implementation and were able to provide input for this report in 25 EU Member States (all except Malta and Luxembourg). Unfortunately, at the time of our assessment, the governments of three other countries (Romania, Hungary and Greece) have not yet made any information public on draft eco-schemes, and environmental stakeholders have not had an opportunity to provide any feedback to them. In one other case, Lithuania, the eco-schemes which had been presented earlier this year to stakeholders were substantially redrafted in mid-November, making it impossible to include in this brief. Therefore, our assessment is focused on the draft eco-schemes proposed by 21 Member States³, with the caveat that in many of these countries, the information available is limited.

Indeed, eco-schemes have been presented in several countries without enough information on the specific requirements or the payment rates associated, making it difficult to assess their quality and ambition. Also, information on the number of CAP beneficiaries or the agricultural surface area targeted is still lacking in many countries, as well as the budgetary allocation for each eco-scheme. Quite frequently, details on how the CAP conditionality requirements will be implemented in the Member State have not yet been disclosed and, without this information on the baseline, the added value of the eco-schemes remains sometimes unclear.

All in all, our EU wide search for details on draft eco-schemes has revealed important delays and deficiencies in the information made available to environmental stakeholders during this crucial phase of the design of CAP interventions. With only a few weeks left until CAP national strategic plans are submitted, it is in many cases not possible or very difficult for stakeholders to engage and provide feedback on the eco-schemes being designed by Member States. It is very likely that many of these eco-schemes will be submitted to the European Commission without sufficient prior public participation and feedback, a limitation that should be taken into account during the assessment and approval process.

3. Please note that Belgium is preparing two different CSPs, one for Flanders and one for Wallonia, so we assessed a total of 22 different sets of eco-schemes.

3. OVERVIEW OF ECO-SCHEMES PROPOSED BY MEMBER STATES

This analysis covers 166 eco-schemes from 22 draft Strategic Plans across 21 Member States. Typically, countries are planning between 4 and 12 eco-schemes, to cater for different objectives and farming systems. Only in two cases is this number higher: 17 eco-schemes in Poland and 30 in Slovenia. In a few cases, the number of eco-schemes is lower: this happens in countries that are planning a multidimensional eco-scheme gathering several interventions under one single heading.

Five EU countries are proposing multidimensional eco-schemes: Czechia, Estonia, Latvia, Slovakia and the Netherlands. This type of eco-schemes is generally welcomed by environmental NGOs, especially when they avoid a flat-rate payment and, instead, reward farmers in proportion to their efforts. This is achieved, for example, through point-based systems as proposed in the Netherlands. These multidimensional eco-schemes typically include a mixture of some basic and other more ambitious actions, sometimes presented as a package, sometimes rather as a "menu of options". NGOs are calling on governments to raise the bar for the more basic components of these eco-schemes, and to ensure that the more demanding interventions are appropriately rewarded, so they are not sidelined by easier options that would be easier to comply with.

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However, the vast majority of eco-schemes assessed are designed to pay for a single type of intervention, which can comprise one or several management requirements. For instance, in Sweden, the planned eco-scheme for precision farming covers requirements such as the use of nutrient balance tools, performing soil mapping, establishing grass cover 2 m around drainage waterholes, doing manure analysis, etc. However, these actions are not linked to any commitment to reduce the use of fertilisers over time, or to achieving the result of effectively reducing nutrient losses.

Quite frequently, eco-schemes have been proposed to continue and expand current greening requirements. This is the case for instance with crop diversification (proposed by Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, France, Poland and Slovenia) and for "ecological focus areas", which include catch crops and nitrogen-fixing crops. The rationale for continuing with these practices is generally very unclear, as they have been severely criticised in the past by environmental experts for failing to deliver on their objectives, and by farming stakeholders for relying on a one-size-fits-all approach.

BOX 3. Greening requirements in the CAP 2015-2022

Greening was introduced by 2013 CAP reform and aimed to enhance the environmental performance of CAP by linking 30% of direct payments to compliance with three "greening practices": crop diversification, maintenance of permanent grasslands and devoting 5% of arable farmland to ecological focus areas.

In 2017, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) published a very critical report on greening¹, in which they criticised the Commission for not developing a complete intervention logic for the green payment and for not setting clear and sufficiently ambitious environmental targets that greening should be expected to achieve. While the former criticism should, in principle, be improved in the new CAP, the lack of clear targets remains an issue, highlighted again by the ECA in relation to the new CAP².

They also concluded that greening was unlikely to provide significant benefits for the environment and climate, mainly because of the significant deadweight which affects the policy. In particular, they estimated that greening led to changes in farming practices on only around 5 % of all EU farmland. This is due to the multiple exemptions and loopholes introduced during co-decision, which meant that most farmers were able to access greening payments without changing their practices. This situation is highly likely to repeat itself in the new CAP, where greening rules were introduced in the conditionality with largely the exact same derogations and loopholes as previously.

1. European Court of Auditors, 2017. [Special Report 21/2017: Greening: a more complex income support scheme, not yet environmentally effective](#).
2. European Court of Auditors, 2018. [Opinion No 7/2018: concerning Commission proposals for regulations relating to the Common Agricultural Policy for the post-2020 period](#)

Referring back to the "areas of action" which eco-schemes are supposed to contribute to (Box 2), we have identified a high number of eco-schemes targeting climate mitigation (a), soil and nutrient management (d), biodiversity protection (e), and pesticides reduction (f). Several eco-schemes could also address water quality concerns (c) through reduced nutrients losses, however, no eco-scheme is aiming to alleviate quantitative pressures on water resources (c) and we did not identify any eco-scheme whose primary objective is to improve adaptation to climate change (b), for example by supporting a switch to less water-intensive crops. However, many agroecological practices supported in draft eco-schemes can indirectly contribute to better resilience to extreme weather events. A very low number of eco-schemes address animal welfare and antimicrobial resistance (g).

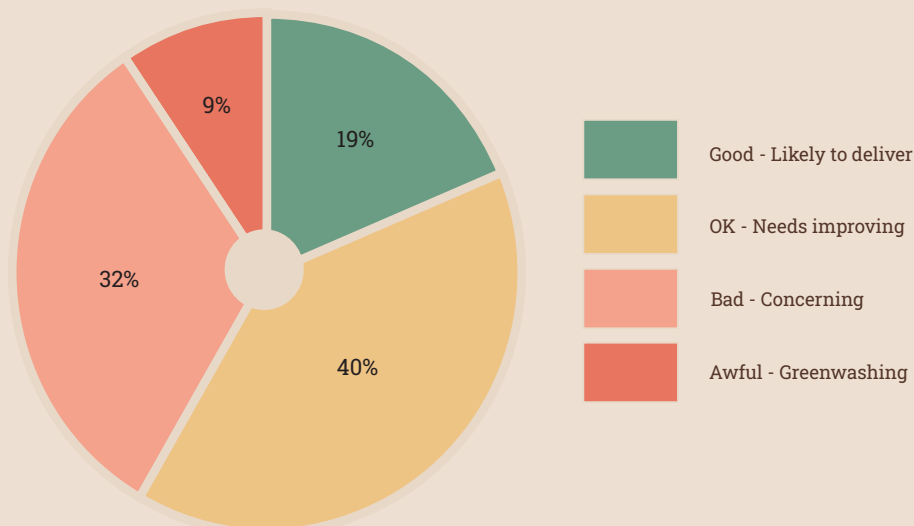
4. ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF ECO-SCHEMES

The quality of each of the eco-schemes gathered was assessed by agri-environmental experts in our network, using a four-category rating system: Good - Likely to deliver, OK - Needs improving, Bad - Concerning, Awful - Greenwashing.

Overall, the assessment shows that only a small minority of eco-schemes (19%) were deemed good and likely to deliver on their areas of action, given their current design. A fair share of the eco-schemes (40%) was judged to be going in the right direction, but still requiring some key improvements (e.g. additional safeguards, changes to proposed requirements or more ambitious target area) to ensure their environmental benefits.

Worryingly, a significant share of eco-schemes (32%) was deemed of poor quality, meaning that their current ambition is much too low, with requirements that would sometimes fit better in CAP conditionality, rather than in eco-schemes. Indeed, these eco-schemes frequently offer rewards for basic practices or for minimal improvements that will maintain the status quo rather than improve the climate and environmental performance of farming. At the bottom of the scale, 9% of eco-schemes were highlighted as amounting to greenwashing (see figure 1). For a low number of eco-schemes, little more than the name is known, and an assessment was not possible.

Figure 1: Overall Assessment of eco-schemes



A major criteria in judging whether eco-schemes are likely to deliver on their stated objectives is the level of payment attached to each eco-scheme, i.e. how much a farmer would be paid to apply a given eco-scheme. However, only 14 countries had shared this information with stakeholders by mid-November 2021, just 6 weeks before the deadline for submission. Where that information is available, the national experts we consulted rarely judged the payment levels to be adequate, with many low-ambition schemes set to over-compensate farmers and absorb a large share of the budget. Meanwhile, more ambitious schemes will often not provide fair rewards for farmers and therefore will not be attractive enough to ensure uptake on a large scale.

In the following sections, we zoom in on the expected contribution of eco-schemes to the EU Green Deal (4.1), as well as more specifically on two crucial challenges facing European agriculture and requiring urgent action in this decade: climate mitigation (4.2) and biodiversity protection (4.3). These also correspond to two of the three environmental objectives of the CAP and are connected to most areas of action for eco-schemes.

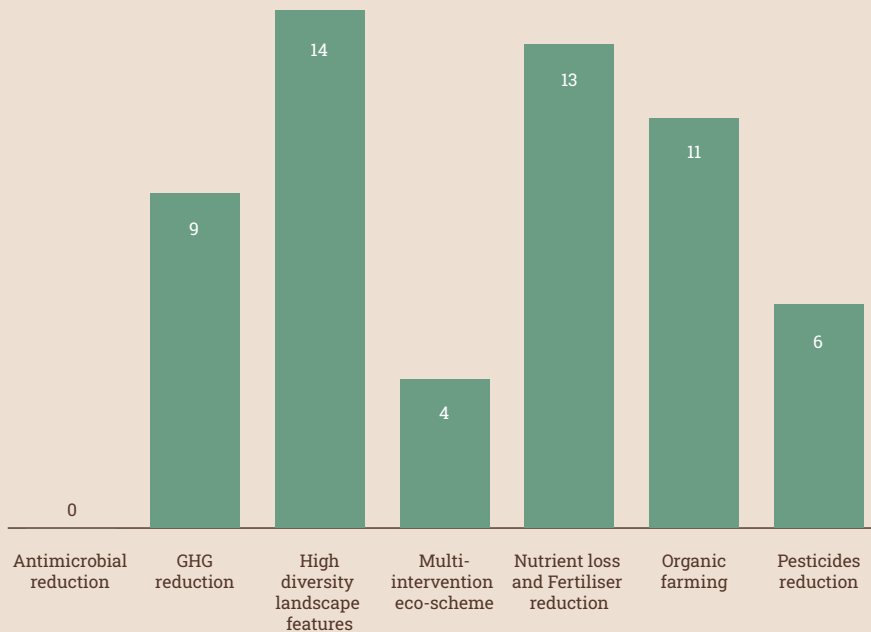
4.1 Are eco-schemes likely to deliver on the European Green Deal?

Many of the agricultural targets of the European Green Deal (Box 1) will only be achievable if well-funded, high-quality eco-schemes are implemented by Member States. While funding information is still generally lacking, we assessed the potential contribution of the eco-schemes to these targets by identifying - for each one of them - the main agricultural target pursued.

Generally, the farming practices supported by eco-schemes have the potential to contribute to different targets simultaneously and, actually, single-objective eco-schemes would not be legally allowed according to the CAP regulations (Box 2). Nevertheless, given the design and stated purpose of draft eco-schemes, in most cases, it was possible to perform this classification.

Based on the data we collected, Figure 2 summarises the number of EU countries, out of the 21 we reviewed, that are planning eco-schemes with a Good-Likely to deliver or OK-Needs improving rating on the different Green Deal targets. While some synergies can be expected (e.g. multi-intervention eco-schemes, and schemes for high-diversity landscape features and for organic farming can contribute to agrochemicals reduction), these low numbers are very concerning.

Figure 2: Number of EU countries/regions with "Good" or "OK" assessment per European Green Deal target



Two countries are proposing eco-schemes aiming to reduce antimicrobial use (Italy and Portugal), however, they were both deemed very poor. Because these schemes are not targeting the root causes for the use of antimicrobials, there is a risk they could become hidden subsidies for intensive animal farming. In Portugal, for example, a major concern is that the measure only applies to intensive dairy farming, excluding more extensive forms of animal husbandry. Indeed, these farming systems are using fewer antimicrobials, but could still improve in practices such as the use of anthelmintic drugs, which have an important impact on dung fauna.

Only 11 out of the 21 countries assessed are planning to support organic farming through eco-schemes. Using eco-schemes to support this well-recognised and certified practice could have been an easy option for all Member States, but some countries such as Spain or Germany, have preferred to maintain it under the second pillar. This can also be a good option provided that a substantial budget is allocated to it and that it does not prevent organic farmers from accessing eco-schemes for other farm improvements. Most eco-schemes for organic farming were generally welcomed by agri-environment experts, even if the shift from a multi-year to a one-year commitment, and the uncertain budgetary allocation to organic farming eco-schemes remain a matter of concern in some countries⁴.

Only **11**
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plan to support
organic farming
through eco-
schemes

However, the eco-scheme for organic farming in France was assessed negatively, as this "high-level certification" eco-scheme will support not only organic production, but also farms holding the French "high environmental value" certification, on equal footing. This means that farmers would get the same level of payment for practices with very different standards, breaking the logic of offering economic rewards in proportion with the effort made and the environmental benefit expected, and reducing the total funds available to support organic farming. As CAP support for organic farming has been much lower than the demand in the last few years, this is highly problematic.

Regarding the agro-chemical reduction targets, we identified 38 eco-schemes aiming to reduce nutrient losses and fertilisers, and 14 eco-schemes that primarily target the reduction of pesticides. The eco-schemes which have been assessed more positively in these areas are those supporting agroecological practices which reduce the needs for these inputs. In some eco-schemes, such as those in Germany (for summer crops), Poland or Slovenia, agro-chemicals are not allowed, or significant reductions are required to enter the eco-schemes. In contrast, Italy is planning an eco-scheme for integrated crop protection that allows the use of chemical weeding with glyphosate and which could compete with the organic farming eco-scheme.

Unfortunately, some eco-schemes add very little value to existing conditionality standards. For instance, several countries, including Austria, Denmark, Finland, Poland, and Slovenia, are planning to pay for growing cover crops over winter. However, there are several conditionality standards for soils, including one that already establishes an obligation to have a minimum soil cover to avoid bare soils in sensitive periods. Similarly, many countries are planning an eco-scheme for permanent crops where the only requirement is to have a spontaneous or sown green cover in the alleys. The main purpose is to avoid tilling these areas, a generalised practice to prevent competition with the main crop which is frequently applied at the cost of soil erosion. This suggests that many Member States will interpret the conditionality standards in a minimalistic way, making it easier to reward anything going beyond that very low baseline.

4. A more detailed assessment of Member States' plans with regards to organic farming can be found in: IFOAM Organics Europe, 2021. [The ambition gap](#).

4.2 Eco-schemes with relevance to climate mitigation

The largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions in agriculture are animal farming (especially, but not only, ruminants), fertiliser use, and farming of drained peatlands, responsible for circa 230, 150, and 150 Mt CO₂eq, respectively, in the EU-27. In addition, agricultural land can either emit or sequester carbon, depending on management practices. Currently, croplands and grasslands on mineral soil (excluding drained peatlands) are a small source and a small sink, respectively. This all adds up to about 15% of the EU's total GHG emissions, which still excludes some agriculture-related emissions sources (e.g. fuel use), making the agriculture sector a significant contributor to the climate crisis. Research has shown that agricultural emissions can be strongly reduced⁵ through a transition to agroecology, involving a reduction in animal numbers and a shift to less and better animal protein consumption, which could also significantly increase carbon sinks on agricultural land⁶.

GHG emissions linked to EU Agriculture

(Mt CO₂eq, EU-28)

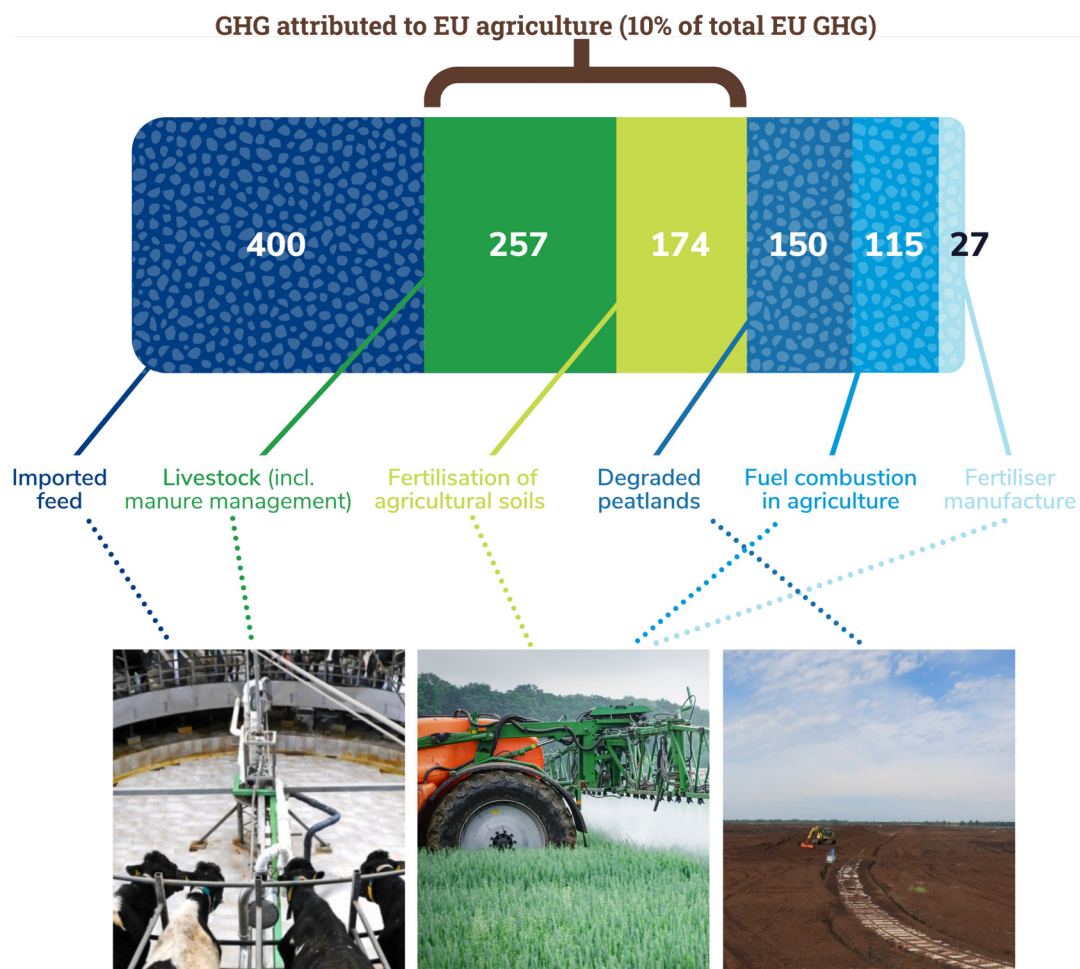


Chart adapted from EEB, 2020. [A CAP for a climate neutral Europe](#)

5. IDDRI, 2018. [An agroecological Europe in 2050: multifunctional agriculture for healthy eating](#)

6. Öko-Institut e.V., 2021. [Exploratory Analysis of an EU Sink and Restoration Target](#)

Table 1: Eco-schemes with relevance for climate mitigation

Practice targeted	Number of eco-schemes	Number of good or OK eco-schemes
Grasslands management (incl. extensive grazing)	21	12
Cover or catch crops in arable and permanent crops	17	10
Fertiliser management (more efficient fertiliser use or substitution of mineral fertilisers)	23	4
Conservation agriculture	5	0
Multiple/undefined practices for soil health and carbon sequestration	5	3
Agroforestry	4	4
Mulching of crop or pruning residues	3	3
Crop rotation	3	3
Intensive livestock management	2	0
Improvement of drained peatland	1	0

Our analysis of eco-schemes with relevance to climate mitigation (Table 1) shows that few eco-schemes are focusing on reducing the largest source of GHG emissions: livestock farming and the imported feed it requires. Despite the overwhelming scientific evidence for the need to reduce herd sizes in many parts of Europe⁷, there is only one eco-scheme that is explicitly set up to incentivise farmers to reduce, albeit timidly, their stocking rates (Belgium-Wallonia). An eco-scheme in Sweden is supporting protein crops with the explicit objective of reducing the dependency of feed imports. A few other countries, such as Belgium-Flanders, Croatia or Latvia, are planning to support nitrogen-fixing crops as part of their eco-schemes, which could also contribute to this objective.

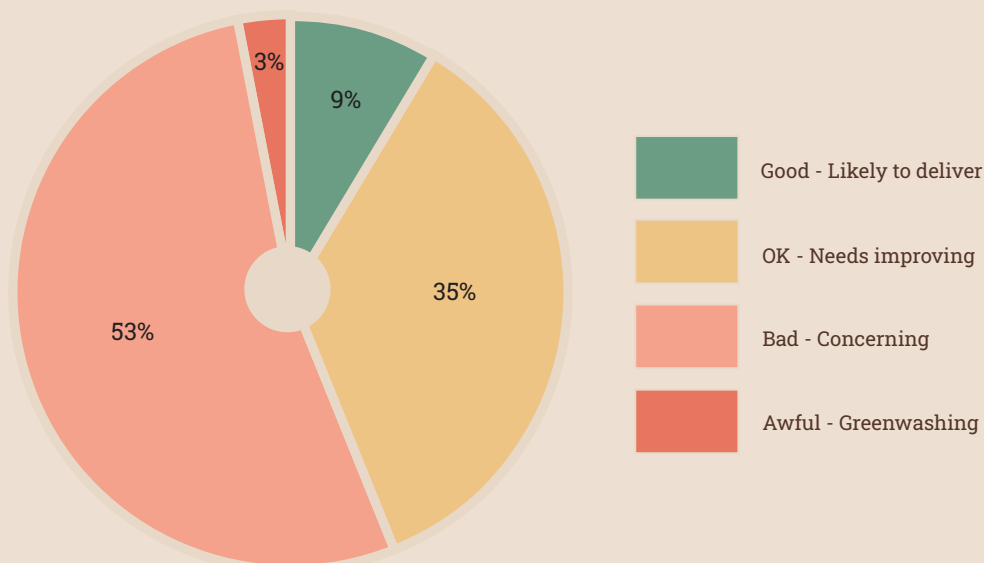
Grasslands management through grazing or mowing is the second most common eco-scheme across the board. While these may provide important financial support to extensive livestock farming systems and thereby help maintain carbon sinks, it remains to be seen if the detailed design of the schemes will deliver additional climate benefits. However, action would have been needed to incentivise more extensive animal production, and that is generally missing. Some of the eco-schemes that aim to promote more extensive management, such as in Austria or Spain, have included very easy to meet requirements in grazing time and periods, which could make semi-intensive farms eligible. Two eco-schemes targeted at non-extensive livestock management (Belgium-Flanders and Portugal) are pursuing efficiency improvements, which do not guarantee environmental benefits, and were deemed concerning eco-schemes by national experts.

Many eco-schemes are aimed at reducing mineral fertiliser use, substituting it with organic fertilisers, and improving natural soil fertility through crop rotations, planting of legumes, cover crops, and mulching of crop or pruning residues. If well designed and implemented, these schemes could help curb fertiliser use and boost soil carbon content. However, most of these eco-schemes are set up to reward single practices, whereas reducing emissions from soils and increasing soil carbon sequestration require a holistic approach to soil management, i.e. a mix of different practices.

7. RISE Foundation, 2018. [What is the Safe Operating Space for EU livestock?](#)

Some countries, Croatia, Cyprus, Portugal and Slovenia, are planning to promote organic fertilisers (manure/compost) as an alternative to synthetic fertilisers. While this would in principle be welcome, none of these schemes, except the Cypriot one, limits the amount of nutrients applied. Belgium-Flanders, Latvia, Ireland and Sweden, are proposing to pay farmers to apply "precision farming" (again, without any benchmarking of fertiliser use or target for reduction). Poland is planning no less than three unambitious eco-schemes for fertiliser management: one to develop and follow a fertilisation plan (a very basic practice which should certainly not be paid per hectare), one to plough manure into the soil within a certain time window (also very basic), and one to apply slurry by other methods than spraying (which causes vast ammonia emissions and is banned in several EU countries).

BOX 4. Eco-schemes for reducing nutrient losses and fertiliser use



The majority of the eco-schemes aimed at fertiliser and nutrients management were rated poorly by national experts as they tend to promote techno-fixes (precision farming, use of nitrification inhibitors) and most lack clear limits to prevent over-fertilisation, or any benchmarks to ensure more efficient nutrients use. Eco-schemes which were deemed Good or OK in relation to nutrient and fertiliser management related mostly to the use of nitrogen-fixing crops, green manures, and crop rotation.

Regarding the third-largest source of emissions from agriculture - farming on drained peatlands - there is only one eco-scheme: Denmark is planning to compensate farmers to plant grass on drained peatlands and harvest the grass to remove nutrients so that it can later be flooded with lower emissions of nutrients and methane. National experts rated this scheme poorly as it does not seem to require a longer-term commitment guaranteeing that farmers will actually rewet the land. It is highly disappointing that no country is planning an eco-scheme to support and incentivise paludiculture (productive use of wet peatlands) on formerly drained peatlands.

In contrast, five countries (Croatia, Latvia, Poland, Slovenia, and Spain) intend to pay farmers to apply no-till practices ("conservation agriculture"), despite contested evidence of the benefit of no-till for soil carbon sequestration. Conservation agriculture normally consists of three key practices: no/limited tillage, complex crop rotations, and constant soil cover. However, none of these eco-

schemes include other requirements than no-till. In addition, none of these eco-schemes include safeguards regarding herbicide use, which is often used to replace tilling for weed management. This makes them very problematic. Finally, only three countries (Germany, Ireland and Poland) intend to use eco-schemes to support agroforestry or tree planting, a crucial climate mitigation and adaptation strategy with many co-benefits.

4.3 Eco-schemes with relevance to biodiversity protection and restoration

Agriculture is the single largest driver of biodiversity loss in Europe⁸. The most important pressures on biodiversity stemming from agriculture are: abandonment of grassland management, use of plant protection products, intensive grazing and overgrazing, conversion from one type of agriculture use to another, drainage, removal of landscape features, diffuse pollution from agriculture and conversion of natural habitats to agriculture. The pressures from agriculture particularly impact pollinator species, farmland birds and semi-natural habitats.

To improve the CAP's performance for biodiversity, scientists recommended to protect and restore landscape features and semi-natural areas, including grasslands, as a top priority⁹. Studies from across Europe show that dedicating a minimum of 10-14% of agricultural land to non-productive features and areas is necessary for birds, and thus other wildlife, to recover¹⁰. At landscape level, around 30% of high-quality wildlife habitat would be required for the large-scale recovery of biodiversity¹¹.

Table 2: Eco-schemes with relevance for biodiversity protection and restoration

Practice targeted	Number of eco-schemes	Number of good or OK eco-schemes
Landscape features	26	21
Grasslands management	21	12
Alternative to pesticides (biological or mechanical)	14	7
Habitat improvement or creation	9	8
Crop diversification	6	0
Multiple	4	3
Agroforestry	4	4
Crop rotation	3	3

Our analysis of eco-schemes relevant to biodiversity objectives shows that, in line with scientific recommendations, the most frequent eco-schemes for biodiversity are aimed at the establishment and/or management of high-diversity landscape features (26) and the (extensive) management of grasslands (21). In addition, fourteen eco-schemes address the second most important pressure from agriculture to biodiversity: the use of pesticides. However, based on the available information on the design of these eco-schemes, it seems rather unlikely that these measures will bring biodi-

8. EEA, 2020. [State of Nature in the EU, Results from reporting under the nature directives 2013-2018](#)

9. Pe'er et al, 2021. [The Common Agricultural Policy post-2020: Views and recommendations from scientists to improve performance for biodiversity. Volume 1 – Synthesis Report](#)

10. BirdLife Europe, 2020. [Save Nature-Save farming. Reform the CAP: 3 solutions to beat the biodiversity and climate crisis](#)

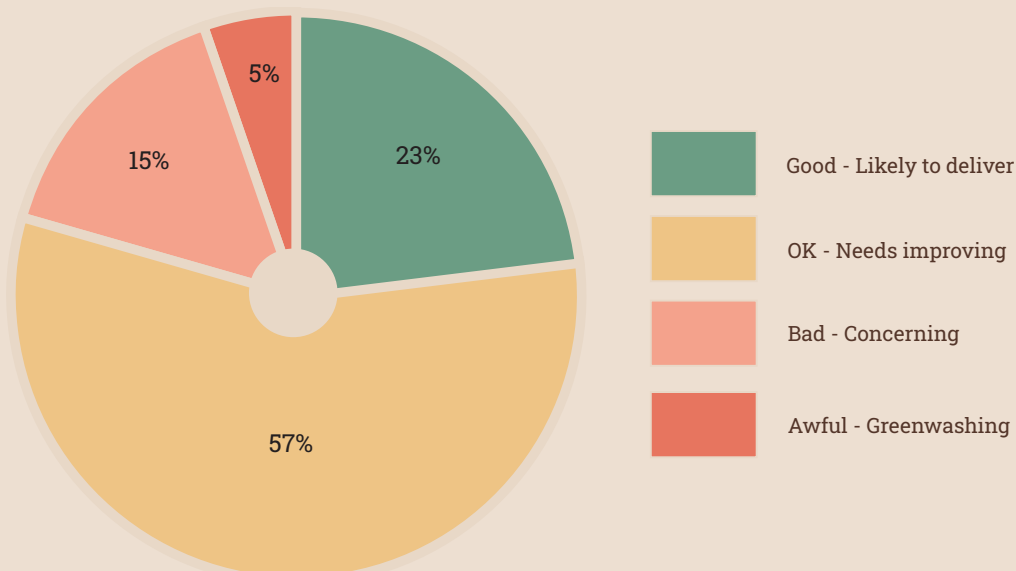
11. Walker et al, 2018. [Effects of higher-tier agri-environment scheme on the abundance of priority farmland birds](#)

versity back at the scale that is needed and which the EU committed to. Moreover, national experts have raised concerns that in some cases eco-schemes might jeopardise well-established and effective multi-annual agri-environment-climate measures by offering less stringent requirements.

Despite eco-schemes for high-diversity landscape features being the single most common type of measure proposed by Member States, concerns remain that such schemes will not be applied on a sufficiently large area to make a difference for biodiversity. For example, according to calculations by our experts, the budget allocated to this measure in Germany can only cover 2.4% of arable and 4.4% of grassland and in Poland not even 0,3% of arable land. Even if building on the 3 or 4% included in conditionality - in both cases eco-schemes will fall well short of the 10% target of the Biodiversity Strategy.

There are also concerns, e.g. in Ireland, that most farmers will be paid for existing landscape features of variable quality and there is no focus on improving the quality. Meanwhile, Belgium-Walloon is considering introducing a cap on the area eligible for support for high diversity landscape features, which seems to be arbitrary and unjustified on environmental grounds.

BOX 5. Eco-schemes for high-diversity landscape features



Only less than one-quarter of the eco-schemes supporting high-diversity landscape features were judged by national experts as Good- likely to deliver. More than half of the assessed schemes are going in the right direction, but important improvements are needed if they are to deliver. OK or Good schemes include payments for non-productive features and areas going beyond conditionality requirements, as well as flower strips for pollinators and the maintenance of agroforestry systems or other farmland habitats. Additionally, national experts raised strong concerns that many of these eco-schemes have been allocated a low budget, which will limit the area they could potentially cover and could lead farmers to favour less ambitious eco-schemes with similar or higher payment levels. When these schemes also allow for other alternative practices (e.g. nitrogen-fixing crops, following the failed greening logic of Ecological Focus Areas), this usually led to a poor rating.

CAP conditionality, through GAEC 8, requires each farmer to allocate 3 or 4% of their farm's arable land to non-productive elements, including fallow. The lower threshold only applies if some productive practices are also included (e.g. catch crops and nitrogen-fixing crops without pesticides),

in total covering 7% of the farm, or if farmers enrol in eco-schemes aiming to increase non-productive elements to at least 7% of the farm's arable land. The table below illustrates the choices made by Member States who are planning to offer such eco-schemes.

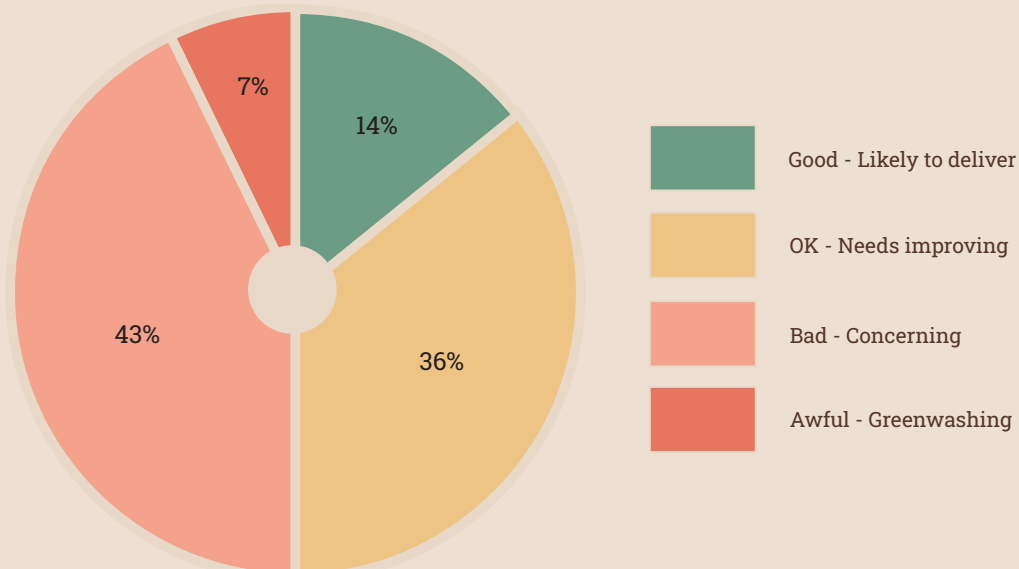
Table 3: Eco-schemes designed to "top-up" GAEC 8

	Percentage set in the eco-schemes	Are productive elements included?
Belgium - Flanders	no % set	no
Belgium - Wallonia	up to 9% on all farms	no
Bulgaria	no % set	no
Croatia	10% arable	yes (short rotation coppice, catch crops and green winter cover, nitrogen-fixing plants)
Czechia	8% first two years, then 9% (part of multi-dimensional eco-scheme)	no
Denmark	if 7% reached, conditions of enhanced eco-scheme apply (max 53%)	no
Estonia	10% arable	yes (nitrogen-fixing crops)
France	7% and 10% (higher tier)	no
Denmark	fallow: up to 9% top up for flowering strips top up for flowering strips in permanent crops old grass strips up to 6%	no
Ireland	7% all farms	yes (mono-culture forestry and short rotation coppice)
Latvia	no % set	yes (nitrogen-fixing crops)
Poland	7% arable	no
Portugal	7% arable 4% on or next permanent crops or permanent pastures	no
Slovakia	5% outside protected areas 7% in protected areas (part of multi-dimensional eco-scheme)	no
Slovenia	6%-20% farm area	no
Spain	7% on arable 4% on irrigated areas 4% permanent crops 2% in rice crops	no
Sweden	4% flowers strips on arable land	no

Species-rich and/or structurally diverse grasslands are key for preserving biodiversity in Europe and are frequently part of High Nature Value farming systems. According to national experts, more than half of the assessed eco-schemes related to grassland management go in the right direction, but some important concerns remain on stocking rates (e.g. in Belgium-Wallonia) and lack of rewards for extensive management, as already mentioned in the climate mitigation section above. From a biodiversity perspective, studies show¹² that general or shallow "grassland maintenance" schemes, which do not take into account the ecological needs of species relying on grasslands, can lead to the decline of those species, especially in the absence of more targeted agri-environment schemes. Such concerns have been communicated to national authorities in relation to the proposed eco-scheme in Slovenia, among others.

The use of pesticides is particularly problematic for amphibians, insects, mammals and birds. While eco-schemes for organic agriculture should be generally beneficial for reducing the use of pesticides, we have also identified 14 schemes that aim specifically to reduce the use of pesticides and support alternative pest and weed control methods.

BOX 6. Eco-schemes for pesticides reduction



Half of the eco-schemes targeted at pesticides reduction are deemed concerning or greenwashing by national experts. Ones rated as good or OK normally include a limit on the use of certain pesticides, such as glyphosate (in Bulgaria), or limit use of all pesticides in certain cultures (Germany and Slovenia). Cyprus is proposing three schemes aiming to limit the use of pesticides and herbicides and support alternatives (ploughing, solarisation, and planting of "pest-trapping" plants), but their efficacy is questioned by experts. Italy, Portugal and Poland are planning vaguely described eco-schemes for "integrated production" which are raising strong concerns among national NGOs.

12. Brambilla, M., Pedrini, P., 2013. [The introduction of subsidies for grassland conservation in the Italian Alps coincided with population decline in a threatened grassland species, the Corncrake *Crex crex*](#)

In addition to these focused schemes, eco-schemes that support natural pest prevention methods can also contribute to reducing the need for pesticides. Among those, two important solutions are landscape features which create habitats for beneficial insects and pests' predators (discussed above) and crop rotation, which is a key agronomic practice to control pests and diseases by disrupting their reproduction cycle. Three eco-schemes are proposed for crop rotation, and are welcomed by NGOs when they include additional requirements such as long-term rotations or the inclusion of a leguminous crop in them.

Six eco-schemes are planned for crop diversification, but all were found to be of poor quality. Diversifying crops across and within parcels is a crucial practice for biodiversity-rich, heterogeneous landscapes. However, the eco-schemes proposed for crop diversification barely go beyond the previous greening requirement, which was found to have little, if any, impact. Indeed, countries are merely proposing to require several crops to be grown on a farm, without even ensuring that this effectively increases the diversity, whereas what matters for biodiversity is the size and diversity of parcels.

Slovakia is the only country proposing an eco-scheme that includes rules on the size of parcels, accompanied by an obligation to establish a grassy buffer strip in between, though it does not require different crops to be grown in the different parcels. In addition, crop diversification on its own is clearly insufficient and it must be combined with crop rotation and non-productive landscape elements to ensure benefits for biodiversity. Finally, as crop diversification is included (as an alternative to crop rotation) in conditionality, the added value of such simple eco-schemes for crop diversification is questionable.

Interestingly, Italy is planning to provide an additional premium for farms located within Natura 2000 sites, when they apply eco-schemes that can have positive effects on biodiversity (e.g. reduction of crop protection products, management of grasslands and high diversity landscape features). A top-up eco-scheme with a bonus payment for Natura 2000 is also planned in Germany, under the single condition that no new drainage is created.

Despite the clear benefits of agroforestry systems both for biodiversity and climate, we only identified four eco-schemes supporting agroforestry and the planting of trees on agricultural land. As the establishment of agroforestry systems may be costly, it would be particularly relevant to look beyond eco-schemes and assess other tools within the CAP such as investment support measures to get a full picture of the total level of support for agroforestry.

Greater focus on result-oriented schemes has been highly recommended by scientists¹³ and extensively piloted in several countries¹⁴. Yet, to our knowledge, only two Member states (Germany, Slovenia) are proposing a result-oriented eco-scheme for biodiversity. While the German scheme uses 4 indicator plant species, the Slovenian one allows an easier monitoring option, requiring simply to have flowers with petals of 3 different colours in the eligible area to qualify for the scheme. This would allow intensive grasslands with no biodiversity value to qualify for this eco-scheme.

Finally, it is worth highlighting some eco-schemes that are targeting certain types of biodiversity very specifically. For instance, an eco-scheme in Slovenia supports the creation of skylark plots on arable land, constituted by at least one plot of bare soil (>25 m²) per 0.5 ha. In Cyprus, an eco-scheme supports delayed harvesting of cereals on 20% of the farm to provide food and a safe breeding environment for birds and other animals.

13. Guy Pe'er et al, 2021. [The Common Agricultural Policy post-2020: Views and recommendations from scientists to improve performance for biodiversity. Volume 1 – Synthesis Report](#)

14. European Commission, [Farming for Biodiversity, The results-based agri-environment schemes](#)

ANNEX

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Austria	Greening - using catch crops on arable land ¹	Farmers can choose from 7 types of catch crops to grow on arable land after the harvest for different time-spans (from 2,5 months to 5,5 months) starting in August at the earliest and ending on March 21 at the latest	OK - Needs improving	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Austria	Greening - evergreen cover of arable land ¹	Requires at least 85% of the farm's arable land to be covered at all times (i.e. max. 30 days between harvesting and catch crop, or catch crop and main crop)	Bad - Concerning	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Austria	Erosion protection in permanent crops (vines, fruits and hops) ¹	Requires complete vegetation cover except directly underneath the trunks (at least 60% cover); optional top-up for use of beneficial organisms and pheromones	OK - Needs improving	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Austria	Animal welfare - grazing for at least 120 days ¹	Requires at least 120 days of grazing from April to end of October; no safeguards to avoid intensive grassland management with no benefit for biodiversity	OK - Needs improving	GHG reductions
Belgium - Flanders	Extensive permanent pastures ²	No use of pesticides (except for thistle) or inorganic fertiliser. Nothing on livestock density.	Bad - Concerning	None or Unclear

1. https://info.bmlrt.gv.at/dam/jcr:a7a9d3da-5146-49b9-a9e4-ab08e1c68b7c/01_Interventionen_DZ.pdf

2. <https://lv.vlaanderen.be/nl/nieuws/pre-ecoregelingen-2022-ondersteuning-voor-vijf-nieuwe-maatregelen-functie-van-milieu-klimaat>

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Belgium - Flanders	Carbon storage in soils ³	3 possibilities: (1) ES based on management plan (2) use of C-enriching products like compost and (3) based on soil samples	OK - Needs improving	GHG reductions
Belgium - Flanders	'Eco-crops' (N-fixing crops, ...) ³	Former Pillar 2 measure but provides more flexibility for rotation scheme at farm level due to yearly nature of the measure	OK - Needs improving	High diversity landscape features
Belgium - Flanders	Herb-rich productive grassland ³	Herb-rich grassland considered as yearly crop (temporary grassland). Minimum percentage of herbs and grasses. No requirements regarding pesticides and fertiliser use	OK - Needs improving	High diversity landscape features
Belgium - Flanders	Precision agriculture ³	Details TBD, probably paid per hectare	Bad - Concerning	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Belgium - Flanders	Permanent pastures ⁴	Grassland older than 10/15 years and not 'renewed' during last 6 years. No other permanent grassland lost at farm level.	Bad - Concerning	GHG reductions
Belgium - Flanders	Maintaining organic farming ⁴	Former Pillar 2 measure	Good - Likely to deliver	Organic farming
Belgium - Flanders	Annual buffer strips ⁴	Former Pillar 2 measure	Good - Likely to deliver	High diversity landscape features
Belgium - Flanders	Animal welfare and health ^{4*}	(1) reduction of claw-disease and (2) reduced antibiotics use	Bad - Concerning	Antimicrobial reduction

3. <https://lv.vlaanderen.be/nl/nieuws/pre-ecoregelingen-2022-ondersteuning-voor-vijf-nieuwe-maatregelen-functie-van-milieu-klimaat>

4. July 2021 - stakeholder update from administration (not public yet)

* There is indication that this eco-scheme might be moved to Pillar 2

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Belgium - Flanders	Animal feed and livestock management ⁵	Details TBD, but it will likely include measure on feed additives.	Bad - Concerning	GHG reductions
Belgium - Flanders	Non-productive areas on arable land ⁵	Requires a minimum percentage (7% tbc) of farmland dedicated to non-productive areas	OK - Needs improving	High diversity landscape features
Belgium - Flanders	Mechanical weeding ⁵	Former Pillar 2 measure but provides more flexibility due to yearly nature of the measure	OK - Needs improving	Pesticides reduction
Belgium - Wallonia	Soil cover ⁵	No information	Not enough info to judge	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Belgium - Wallonia	Ecological Network ⁵	Very complex ecoscheme that pays for % of ecological network beyond GAEC 8 on all agriculture land (after application of three coefficients). Was thoroughly watered down since, info out of date.	Not enough info to judge	High diversity landscape features
Belgium - Wallonia	Permanent pastures, rewarding lower stocking rates ⁵	Initial proposition with payment for up to 3 LSU/ha down to 2,5 LSU/ha in 2027, with increasing payment while extensifying. Good initially, but was thoroughly modified since, info is out of date.	Not enough info to judge	GHG reductions
Belgium - Wallonia	Environment-friendly crops ⁵	Payment/ha for 1) legume forage 2) extensive cereals 3) mixed crops. The initial proposal was good but it is totally outdated now.	Not enough info to judge	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction

5. July 2021 - stakeholder update from administration (not public yet)

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Bulgaria	Ecological maintenance of perennial crops ⁶	Requirement to plant annual crops in the rows of the perennial crops in order to reduce the mineral fertilisers or maintenance of buffer strips with natural vegetation; plant protection products not allowed	Good - Likely to deliver	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Bulgaria	Maintaining organic farming (agricultural land) ⁶	Scheme open to certified organic crop farmers.	Good - Likely to deliver	Organic farming
Bulgaria	Maintaining organic farming (farm animals) ⁶	Entry conditions: organic certification; min. 1 LU of supported animals; manage at least 0.5 ha of pasture area and/or forage areas. Payment only for animals for which the farmer manages an agricultural area corresponding to a minimum of 0.3 ha of pasture area and / or areas with fodder crops per 1 LU.	Good - Likely to deliver	Organic farming
Bulgaria	Maintenance and improvement of biodiversity and ecological infrastructure ⁶	Payment for maintenance and management of ecological infrastructure (hedges and trees in line, standing trees, groups of trees, antierosion tree belts, field boundaries, wet areas, green areas along water courses, terraces); limits on the use of plant protection products; and ban on operations during the nesting period.	OK - Needs improving	High diversity landscape features
Bulgaria	Extensive maintenance of permanent grassland with grazing animals ⁶	Requirement to maintain grassland by extensive grazing from 0.3 to 1 LU / ha; at least 60 days in the respective year.	OK - Needs improving	None or Unclear

6. <https://www.mzh.government.bg/bg/obsha-selskostopanska-politika-2021-2027-g/tematichna-rabotna-grupa/>

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Bulgaria	Maintenance and improvement of the biodiversity in forest ecosystems ⁷	Eligible area: agricultural land surrounded by forests and/or the land is adjacent to hunting enterprises or within them; requirement to grow annual crops, but not to harvest them to provide feed for wild animals; ban on the use of plant protection products; soil cultivation not allowed during the nesting period	Good - Likely to deliver	None or Unclear
Bulgaria	Increased crop diversification ⁷	Up to 9.99 ha: 2 different crops, main crop <95%; 10-30 ha: 3 crops, main crop <75%, two main crops <95%; 30 ha+: 4 crops, main crops <75%, 3 main crops < 95%	Bad - Concerning	None or Unclear
Bulgaria	Buffer strips ⁷	Eligible: buffer strips and strips next to forests included in a specific layer; conditions differ for types of strips, but in general include: ban on the use of apply plant protection products, mulch at least once per year outside nesting period or at least mow the strip once per year outside the nesting period.	Good - Likely to deliver	High diversity landscape features
Bulgaria	Conservation and restoration of soil potential/fertility ⁷	Payment for growing of different types of catch (intermediate) crops that are used as green manure	Bad - Concerning	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Bulgaria	Reduction of the use of pesticides ⁷	Requirement not to use plant protection products such as glyphosate + one of the following: 1) Use of insecticides outside of the 1st professional plant protection group or/and 2) use of pheromone traps with different density when growing field crops, cereals, fruits and vegetables, technical crops, etc.	Good - Likely to deliver	Pesticides reduction

7. <https://www.mzh.government.bg/bg/obsha-selskostopanska-politika-2021-2027-g/tematichna-rabotna-grupa/>

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Croatia	Intensified diversity of agricultural land ⁸	Payment for at least 2 different crops on 10 ha land, 3 on 10-30 ha and 4 on more than 30 ha. It has to be applied on at least 10% of the agr. land.	Bad - Concerning	None or Unclear
Croatia	Grazing on grasslands ⁸	Payment for the maintainance of grasslands, karstic grasslands and high-nature value grasslands by grazing. Minimum and maximum stocking density to be defined.	OK - Needs improving	None or Unclear
Croatia	Intensified maintenance of ecological focus areas ⁸	Requirement to have 10% of (greening) ecological focus areas on farms. Those include: fallow land, landscape features, no production strips close to forests, short rotation coppice, post-harvest crops and green winter cover, nitrogen-fixing plants.	Bad - Concerning	High diversity landscape features
Croatia	Using manure on arable land ⁸	Soil analysis, manure analysis, fertilising plan, manure application record keeping are obligatory.	Bad - Concerning	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Croatia	Minimum ratio of 20% of leguminosae on farmland ⁸	Payment for at least 20% of leguminosae on all types of agricultural land.	OK - Needs improving	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Croatia	Conservation agriculture ⁸	Requirement for no tillage of the land, 30% of the land has to be covered by the plant residues or green winter crops	Bad - Concerning	GHG reductions
Cyprus	Use of certified seed for barley and wheat cultivation ⁹	Financial incentive to buy certified seed for barley and wheat	Bad - Concerning	None or Unclear

8. <https://www.mrr.hr/files/Nacionalni-Strateski-plan-ZPP-a.pdf>
<https://ruralnirazvoj.hr/files/2krug-konzultacija-SP-ZPP-1.pdf>

9. Excel document sent to BirdLife Cyprus by Agri Authorities 13/10/2021

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Cyprus	Delayed harvest (cereal cultivation) for breeding and feeding birds and animals ¹⁰	Delayed harvest of 20% of the farm until 1 July in barley, soft wheat and legumes & until 1 August in hard wheat and triticale	Good - Likely to deliver	None or Unclear
Cyprus	Environmentally friendly practices in vegetable cultivation ¹⁰	Requirement to grow plants that act as traps to deal with pests in greenhouses, to reduce pesticides	OK - Needs improving	Pesticides reduction
Cyprus	Bee-hive management for coexistence with insect-eating birds ¹⁰	Requirement to place a closed water container for bees to have access to water without risk of being prey to insect-eating birds	Bad - Concerning	None or Unclear
Cyprus	Organic farming in beekeeping ¹⁰	Payment per bee-hive for organic beekeeping.	Good - Likely to deliver	Organic farming
Cyprus	Management of plant residue from pruning (orchards, vineyards) ¹⁰	Requirement to shred pruning residues in olive groves, citrus and other fruit trees and vineyards and placing them around the trees	OK - Needs improving	None or Unclear
Cyprus	Use of manure and/or compost to reduce chemical fertiliser use (specific crops) ¹⁰	Requirement to include manure or compost in cultivation; plus calculation of needs of crops not to be surpassed by manure/compost + chemical fertiliser	OK - Needs improving	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Cyprus	Use of treated slurry instead of nitrogen fertiliser (specific crops) ¹⁰	Requirement to place treated slurry in cereal, vegetable and other crops instead of chemical fertiliser	Bad - Concerning	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Cyprus	Soil solarization in greenhouses to control weeds ¹⁰	Solarisation of greenhouse soil for at least 6 weeks (July-August) + no use of specific chemical pesticides (not all)	OK - Needs improving	Pesticides reduction

10. Excel document sent to BirdLife Cyprus by Agri Authorities 13/10/2021

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Cyprus	Ploughing in vegetable, melon and strawberry cultivations ¹¹	Requirement of two ploughings in the summer in vegetable, melon and strawberry cultivations - not to be combined with soil solarisation	Bad - Concerning	Pesticides reduction
Cyprus	Organic Sheep & Goat Farming ¹¹	Financial incentive for additional cost and income forgone per female animal for organic sheep and goat farming	Good - Likely to deliver	Organic farming
Czechia	Whole farm ecoscheme ¹²	Conditions for all major cultures that go slightly beyond GAEC level, but for arable land, the conditions only relate to crop diversification and organic matter; for grassland only to limit mowing to once per year and ban ploughing. Permanent crops have more meaningful conditions. Increasing requirements for non-productive elements (8 % in 2023-2025 and 9 % in 2026-2027) applies only for 3 cultures (arable, fallow and grass on arable).	OK - Needs improving	Multi-intervention eco-scheme
Czechia	Grassland maintenance ¹²	Basic condition for grassland management	OK - Needs improving	GHG reductions
Denmark	ES for organic farming ¹³	The scheme is made up of a basic payment for organic areas and 3 top up payments a) transition to organic farming, b) reduced N use, c) fruit and berry production	OK - Needs improving	Organic farming

11. Excel document sent to BirdLife Cyprus by Agri Authorities 13/10/2021

12. <https://eagri.cz/public/web/mze/dotace/szp-pro-obdobi-2021-2027/zakladni-informace/strategicky-plan-spolecne-zemedelske.html>

13. Forslag til den danske CAP-plan 2023-2027 <https://hoeringsportalen.dk/Hearing/Details/65467>

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Denmark	ES for environmentally and climate friendly grass ¹⁴	Requirement of one year more with grass with no ploughing for grass areas that have been covered with grass without ploughing for a minimum of 2 consecutive years immediately prior to the support year.	OK - Needs improving	GHG reductions
Denmark	ES for extensification with mowing (drained peatlands) ¹⁴	Incentivises planting grass on drained peatlands and its mowing to remove nutrients so that it can later be flooded with lower emissions of nutrients and methane.	Bad - Concerning	GHG reductions
Denmark	ES for diversification of plant production ¹⁴	Support is granted for all hectares of arable crops in given categories grown with the additional crop category or categories in addition to the basic requirement of GAEC7	Bad - Concerning	None or Unclear
Denmark	ES for biodiversity - non productive areas ¹⁴	Requirement that either fallow or small habitats are established; the individual element has a minimum size of at least 0.5 ha. In case 7% of non-productive elements is reached, conditions for an enhanced ecoscheme in relation to GAEC 8 apply.	OK - Needs improving	High diversity landscape features
Denmark	ES for enhanced catch crops ¹⁴	Requirement to sow catch crops, leaving fields green over the winter. This is in addition to mandatory catch crops. Alternatives to catch crops currently include intermediate crops, energy crops, fallow areas and early sowing of winter crops.	Bad - Concerning	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction

14. Forslag til den danske CAP-plan 2023-2027 <https://hoeringsportalen.dk/Hearing/Details/65467>

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Estonia	Ecological areas ¹⁵	Actions on the top of GAEC 8 (preliminary but not finally 10%). Nitrogen fixing crops are included, without the use of pesticides. Ban on mowing before August.	OK - Needs improving	High diversity landscape features
Estonia	Maintenance of organic farming ¹⁵	Available for certified organic farms. NB: several other eco-schemes (and AECMs) will be open to organic farmers (in contrast with the current RDP), with a lower payment rate, as part of the requirements are deemed to be also included in organic certification and thus the costs are considered to be covered by this eco-scheme.	OK - Needs improving	Organic farming
Estonia	Buffer zones between conventional and organic farms ¹⁵	Payment available for organic and/or conventional farms, tbc.	OK - Needs improving	Organic farming
Estonia	Honeybee feeding areas ¹⁵	Requirement to sow flowering plants suitable for bees, and an obligation to actually have bees by the site	OK - Needs improving	High diversity landscape features
Estonia	Ecosystem services on the fields - natural pest control ¹⁵	Requirement to create and keep landscape elements on farm to support natural enemies of pests.	OK - Needs improving	High diversity landscape features
Estonia	Environmentally friendly management ¹⁵	This includes many but low-ambition requirements: crop rotation, use of leguminous crops, additional conditions on pesticide use, future use of FaST tool, etc.	OK - Needs improving	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction

15. Based on the current (almost final) drafts of the measures available at <https://www.agri.ee/et/eesmargid-tegevused/upp-strateegiakava-2021-2027/ettevalmistus>

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Finland	Over-winter plant cover in arable crops ¹⁶	To prevent the run off of soil and nutrients and build up organic matter. It includes all crops that overwinter, grassland (productive and fallow), stubble and catch crops.	Good - Likely to deliver	GHG reductions
Finland	Nature grasslands in farms ¹⁶	Payments for newly created grasslands (any duration: rotational annual and more long-term; sown but not fertilised; can be used for grazing or fodder)	OK - Needs improving	High diversity landscape features
Finland	Green manure - intercrops / catch crops ¹⁶	Grasses and legumes sown or established into a cereal crop for nitrogen fixation; two grass species and min 20% legume in a seed mix; can be cut or ploughed after 31 August.	OK - Needs improving	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Finland	Biodiversity-friendly fields; four types of sown fields ¹⁶	Four types of sown 1- to 2- year fields with mixtures beneficial specifically to either pollinators, game, or birds, and a meadow-plant mix.	Good - Likely to deliver	High diversity landscape features
France	Agro-ecological practices: Maintenance of permanent grasslands ¹⁷	Requirement to maintain a ratio of non-tilled permanent grassland (from 5 years) at the farm level, up to 80% (equivalent to 5 years) for access to the ecoscheme and 90% (10-year equivalent) to access its next level.	Bad - Concerning	GHG reductions
France	Agro-ecological practices: Diversification of crops ¹⁷	A points system is set up, allowing combinations of crops to be chosen by the farmer, with higher points for legumes, diversification crops and grasslands. The farmer gets the standard level ecoscheme if they score 4 points, and the upper level if they score 5 or more points.	Awful - Greenwashing	None or Unclear

16. <https://www.lausuntopalvelu.fi/FI/Proposal/Participation?proposalId=dbf260c4-ab07-4506-a240-7e881ef41358&proposalLanguage=da4408c3-39e4-4f5a-84db-84481bafc744>

17. <https://agriculture.gouv.fr/telecharger/128198?token=4eae8fae89f8ee0551c99cbb4a2f4df5eac35b6ded3bdb740b2112ad931903cb>

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
France	Agro-ecological practices: Vegetation cover in permanent crops ¹⁸	75% ratio (3 rows out of 4) of the inter-row plots of permanent crops with plant cover opens access to the ecoscheme (standard level), and 95% to access the upper level.	Good - Likely to deliver	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
France	Certification: Organic farming and "high environmental value" certification ¹⁸	This ecoscheme is the upper level of the "certification path": the access is open for organic farms or for farms detaining the "high environmental value certification".	Awful - Greenwashing	Organic farming
France	Certification: other certification ¹⁸	The standard level of the "certification path" is accessible with the a combination of different criteria: compliance with one of the 4 items of the HVE certification OR precision agriculture + operation in a waste recycling process.	Awful - Greenwashing	None or Unclear
France	Biodiversity and agricultural landscapes ¹⁸	Requirement of minimum ratio of 7% of Agro-Ecological Infrastructures (same as in GAEC 8) on the UAA to access the eco-scheme, and a minimum of 10% to access its upper level.	OK - Needs improving	High diversity landscape features
France	Bonus: sustainable management of hedges ¹⁸	This bonus can be combined with the first and second path (practices and certification). The amount is far lower than others (€7/ha). Farmers have to hold a certification to attest a good hedges management.	OK - Needs improving	High diversity landscape features
Germany	Non-productive areas/landscape features beyond GAEC 8 ¹⁹	4 different options: fallow, flowering strips on arable, flowering strips on permanent crops, old grass strips	OK - Needs improving	High diversity landscape features

18. http://www.cgedd.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/211022_psn_pac_delibere_cle08263b.pdf

19. the information is not public yet, the ordinances are still going to be adopted (26.11.)

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Germany	Enhanced crop rotation ¹⁹	It requires 5 crops + 10% legumes	OK - Needs improving	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Germany	Extensive grasslands on the whole farm ¹⁹	Stocking density between 0.3 and 1.4 LU per ha, no pesticides	Good - Likely to deliver	None or Unclear
Germany	Retention of agro-forestry ¹⁹	Payment for already existing agro-forestry systems	Good - Likely to deliver	High diversity landscape features
Germany	Management without pesticides ¹⁹	Only for summer crops	OK - Needs improving	Pesticides reduction
Germany	Top up for Natura2000 areas ¹⁹	Bonus payment	Good - Likely to deliver	None or Unclear
Germany	Result-oriented biodiversity measure through 4 specific plant species ¹⁹	Result-oriented measure	Good - Likely to deliver	None or Unclear
Ireland	Non-productive areas and landscape features ²⁰	Support for increased proportion of land devoted to non-productive areas and features above GAEC 8 to 7%. GAEC 8 in Ireland applies to all farmland but some productive elements are still included in it, while certain landscape features (wet grasslands, heaths, ponds, etc) are not.	OK - Needs improving	High diversity landscape features
Ireland	Extensive livestock production ²⁰	Specified maximum overall stocking rate for the calendar year.	Not enough info to judge	None or Unclear
Ireland	Limiting chemical nitrogen input ²⁰	Specified chemical nitrogen usage limit for the calendar year	Not enough info to judge	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction

19. the information is not public yet, the ordinances are still going to be adopted (26.11.)

20. <https://www.gov.ie/en/consultation/7140c-public-consultation-on-the-environmental-assessment-of-the-draft-cap-strategic-plan-2023-2027/#>

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Ireland	Planting of native trees ²¹	Planting a minimum of three native trees per eligible hectare	OK - Needs improving	GHG reductions
Ireland	Precision farming to apply chemical fertilisers ²¹	Application of chemical fertiliser with a GPS-controlled fertiliser spreader	Awful - Greenwashing	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Italy	Antimicrobial reduction ²²	Payment for farms using less than the median antibiotic use, and for those above the median but in the process of reducing them	Awful - Greenwashing	Antimicrobial reduction
Italy	Organic farming, payments for ecosystem services ²²	Covering conversion and maintenance, with top-ups being considered for Natura 2000 and Areas of Natural Constraints	Good - Likely to deliver	Organic farming
Italy	Integrated farming, payments for ecosystem services ²²	It covers integrated production and precision farming, with top-ups being considered for Natura 2000 and Areas of Natural Constraints	Bad - Concerning	Pesticides reduction
Italy	Green soil cover of permanent crops ²²	Both spontaneous and sown covers are allowed, focus on vines, olive and fruit orchards	OK - Needs improving	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Italy	Sustainable management of meadows and pastures ²²	It will require the adoption of a management plan for grasslands, meadows and other pastures.	OK - Needs improving	None or Unclear
Italy	Crop rotations with legumes ²²	Standard crop rotation, as well as intercropping by overseeding of multi-annual legume crops	OK - Needs improving	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Italy	Creation/maintenance of herbaceous cover/margins on arable land ²²	Main requirement is that it cannot be cultivated/mown between March and July	OK - Needs improving	High diversity landscape features

21. <https://www.gov.ie/en/consultation/7140c-public-consultation-on-the-environmental-assessment-of-the-draft-cap-strategic-plan-2023-2027/#>

22. https://www.reterurale.it/PAC_2023_27/TavolodiPartenariato

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Latvia	ES 1: Support for agricultural practices beneficial for the environment and the climate ²³	Farmers can choose at least one of the following to receive the payment, on the condition that they have a fertilisation plan: 1. crop diversification; 2. green cover between perennials; 3. fertiliser plan for arable fields; 4. records of planning and use of pesticides; 5. support for arable/perennial land. Organic farms are not eligible.	Bad - Concerning	None or Unclear
Latvia	ES 2: Ecological focus areas (soil protection, nutrient reduction, biodiversity protection and pesticide reduction) ²³	4 different options with different payment levels. Support for arable land with: cultivated mixture of grasses or legumes with more than 50% legumes, nitrogen-fixing crops, fallow land covered by green manure crops with at least one leguminous species, catch crops (a mixture of at least 2 species), melliferous plants, under-sown grasslands under cereals or protein crops. In addition, there is a ban or restrictions on use of plant protection products, and mandatory fertiliser plan / organic farming pesticide plan.	OK - Needs improving	Multi-intervention eco-scheme
Latvia	ES 3: Maintaining optimal soil pH for plant growth ²³	Payment for soil liming if certain conditions are met (fertilisation plan, starting pH below 5.5, etc)	Awful - Greenwashing	None or Unclear
Latvia	ES 4: Conservation farming practices ²³	Requires 1. minimal soil tillage or strip-till or direct sowing; 2. max 2 applications of herbicides per season, no glyphosate before harvesting; 3. reporting of use of pesticides	Bad - Concerning	GHG reductions

23. https://zm.gov.lv/public/ck/files/KLP%20SP_LV_PROJEKTS_20211101_TIRS.pdf

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Latvia	ES 5: Agricultural practices reducing carbon dioxide and ammonia emissions ²⁴	Requires 1. fertilisation plan based on agronomic analysis of soils and no more N used than specified in the fertilisation plan; 2. Report pesticides use; and 3. Apply one of: incorporation of liquid organic fertiliser / precision application of fertiliser and/or pesticides	Bad - Concerning	GHG reductions
Latvia	ES 6: Promoting the maintenance of grassland on livestock farms ²⁴	Permanent and cultivated grasslands eligible. No ploughing/soil cultivation in the application and next year. Minimum animal density must be provided 0.4 LU/ha from May to September.	OK - Needs improving	GHG reductions
Latvia	ES 7: Promotion of organic production practices ²⁴	For arable land, permanent crops, and grasslands (minimum animal density 0.4 LU/ha must be provided), only if the entire farm is organic.	OK - Needs improving	Organic farming
Netherlands	Whole farm point-system eco-scheme ²⁵	Elements include: Permanent grassland (more than 5 years), Early harvesting crops, Perennial crops instead of annual crops, Green cover, Combination fields, Cattle density, Cleaning ditches in ecological way, Grassland border strips, Organic farming, Hedgerows, Low pressure crops, Non tillage farming, Herbrich grassland, Nitrogen fixing crops, Green fallow, Permanent green cover, Permanent grass cover, Other wood elements like small bushes, Grass clover mixtures, Mixed agriculture in strips, Higher water level in peatland areas.	OK - Needs improving	Multi-intervention eco-scheme

24. https://zm.gov.lv/public/ck/files/KLP%20SP_LV_PROJEKTS_20211101_TIRS.pdf

25. https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/4_eco-schemes_mulders.pdf

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Poland	Areas of melliferous plants (min. 2 species) ²⁶	Areas with min. 2 species of nectariferous plants.	OK - Needs improving	High diversity landscape features
Poland	Extensive use of permanent grasslands with livestock ²⁶		OK - Needs improving	None or Unclear
Poland	Winter catch crops or legume intercrops ²⁶	The intervention consists in maintaining plants in the form of: - intercropping of legumes or mixtures with legumes in the main crop (intercropping is in the main crop, mostly cereals, e.g. in barley. For example, red clover can be used as a catch crop. Then, after the barley harvest, the clover remains in the field, which can still be mown for hay in the autumn of the same year); - or winter catch crops in the form of mixtures of at least two plant species from 1 October to 15 February of the following year.	Bad - Concerning	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Poland	Develop and follow a fertilization plan using the FaST (Farm Sustainability Tool) for nutrients ²⁶	Higher payment if liming is included	Bad - Concerning	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction

26. Second version of Polish CAP SP, URL: <https://www.gov.pl/attachment/621ffbee-72ea-4699-8b23-f81cd52971c6>

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Poland	Crop diversification (minimum 3 crops) ²⁷	Both ecoscheme and GAEC 7 require at least three different crops on arable land. Scope of ecoscheme beyond GAEC 7: - at least 20% are grown with plant species that have a positive impact on the soil organic matter balance (including legumes) and - the share of cereals and Brassica napus does not exceed 65%, - the share of crops having a negative impact on the soil organic matter balance (including root crops) does not exceed 30%.	Bad - Concerning	None or Unclear
Poland	Incorporating manure into the soil manure on arable land within 12 hours after application ²⁷	Incorporating manure into the soil by ploughing it in, max 12h after applying it on top of the soil	Bad - Concerning	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Poland	Application of liquid manures ²⁷	Application of liquid manures by other methods than spraying, e.g. by injection	Bad - Concerning	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Poland	Simplified cultivation systems ²⁷	On arable land, crops are cultivated in the form of no-till conservation tillage or strip-till	Bad - Concerning	GHG reductions
Poland	Using crop residues for mulching ²⁷		OK - Needs improving	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Poland	Maintenance of mid-field trees ²⁷	Maintenance and care of mid-field woodlots established within the intervention of pillar II 'Creation of mid-field woodlots'. The planting has to be carried out with native tree or shrub species, including biocenotic or nectariferous species.	Good - Likely to deliver	High diversity landscape features

27. Second version of Polish CAP SP, URL: <https://www.gov.pl/attachment/621ffbee-72ea-4699-8b23-f81cd52971c6>

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Poland	Maintenance of agro-forestry systems ²⁸		Good - Likely to deliver	High diversity landscape features
Poland	Water retention on permanent grassland ²⁸	In order to receive payments in a given year, flooding must have occurred on permanent grassland between 1 May and 30 September for a period of at least 12 days. Meant only for farmers implementing an agri-environment-climate scheme. No information on how flooding will affect the AEC intervention payment.	OK - Needs improving	None or Unclear
Poland	Allocation of the agricultural area in the farm to non-productive areas ²⁹	Allocating agricultural land to non-productive areas such as: fallow land (including fallows with honey plants; without the use of plant protection products), hedgerows, wooded strips, linear trees and single trees, ditches, mid-field woodlots, ponds, buffer zones, strips of eligible land along forest edges (without production; without the use of plant protection products), "skylark plots" created in crops (with defined dimensions). This ecoscheme has been revised. In the third version of CAP SP the target was reduced from 10% to 7% of arable land.	OK - Needs improving	High diversity landscape features
Poland	Integrated plant production system ²⁸		Awful - Greenwashing	Pesticides reduction
Poland	Biological crop protection ²⁸		Good - Likely to deliver	Pesticides reduction

28. Second version of Polish CAP SP, URL: <https://www.gov.pl/attachment/621ffbee-72ea-4699-8b23-f81cd52971c6>

29. Second version of Polish CAP SP, URL: <https://www.gov.pl/attachment/621ffbee-72ea-4699-8b23-f81cd52971c6> and Third version of CAP SP, URL: <https://www.gov.pl/attachment/2b45501c-ccd8-4e51-8d12->

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Poland	Organic farming ³⁰		OK - Needs improving	Organic farming
Poland	Animal welfare ³⁰	The aim of the intervention is to encourage farmers to promote higher (than the current standards) animal welfare conditions. The rules are different for different animal species.	Bad - Concerning	None or Unclear
Portugal	Organic farming (Conversion and Maintenance) ³¹	Aims to support the conversion to organic production or its maintenance. The level of support is increased if the beneficiary uses advisory services in Organic Farming. It is not clear how it is planned to articulate the ES and AEM commitments related to the same objectives.	OK - Needs improving	Organic farming
Portugal	Integrated Production - Crops ³¹	Requires the adoption of the Integrated Protection management (IPM) (allows the use of a certain set of synthetic pesticides), but takes a more holistic approach. It advocates the use of natural regulatory mechanisms to replace environmentally damaging agricultural inputs. It obliges farmers to keep up-to-date records of cultural operations and requires specific training. The level of support is increased if the beneficiary uses advisory services in Integrated Production (IP). In the previous CAP it corresponded to one AECM (RDP).	Bad - Concerning	Pesticides reduction

30. Second version of Polish CAP SP, URL: <https://www.gov.pl/attachment/621ffbee-72ea-4699-8b23-f81cd52971c6>

31. Proposal from GPP (government agency in charge of CAP SP) from 08.10.2021, leaked information, not public

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Portugal	Soil management: management of permanent pasture ³²	Objective: Increase soil carbon sink capacity, protect soil against erosion. Farmers required to have a grazing and fertilization management plan and using agricultural advisory service. Direct seeding in case of reseeding. Support is granted per area and animal density.	Bad - Concerning	None or Unclear
Portugal	Soil management: promotion of organic fertilisation ³²	Objective: Promote the substitution of inorganic fertilization by organic fertilization through agricultural valorization of livestock effluents (LE), LE associated with forest biomass or composts originating from LE. The organic fertilization has to correspond to more than 25% of the total fertilization. The level of support is increased by 10% if the organic fertilization corresponds to more than 50% of the total fertilization.	Bad - Concerning	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Portugal	Improving animal feed efficiency (bovine certification) ³²	Feed efficiency, management and animal health practices in cattle production (meat and/or milk) to reduce emissions. For beef cattle, certification of the feeding plan is required. The level of support is increased if the beneficiary uses agricultural advisory service.	Bad - Concerning	GHG reductions
Portugal	Biodiversity-promoting practices ³²	Promotion of areas or elements with ecological and environmental interest that provide and enhance ecosystem services and biodiversity enhancement (7% on or next to arable land / 4% on or next to permanent crops or permanent pastures).	OK - Needs improving	High diversity landscape features

32. Proposal from GPP (government agency in charge of CAP SP) from 08.10.2021, leaked information, not public

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Portugal	Animal welfare and rational use of antimicrobials ³³	Animal welfare: applicable to cattle and pigs only. Requires certification in animal welfare (the purpose of the support is to pay for certification costs). Rational use of antimicrobials: applicable only to dairy cattle. The thresholds established take into account the average national use of antimicrobials, with the lower threshold for use of the 1st tier corresponding to the average national use, and the lower threshold for the 2nd tier corresponding to 20% of the average national use.	Awful - Greenwashing	Antimicrobial reduction
Slovakia	Whole farm eco-scheme for biodiversity and soil health ³⁴	Requires improvement of soil structure (25% of the farm), 1-3% non-productive elements (above GAEC 8), limit on size of parcels (max 20 ha in protected areas, 50 ha outside), delayed mowing/grazing, grass strips in permanent cultures	Good - Likely to deliver	Multi-intervention eco-scheme
Slovakia	Animal welfare ³⁶	Bigger boxes, focus on dairy cows	Awful - Greenwashing	None or Unclear
Slovenia	ES 1: Sowing of honey plants ³⁵	At least two successively flowering honey plants; without mineral nitrogen fertilisers or pesticides	OK - Needs improving	High diversity landscape features
Slovenia	ES 2: Skylark plots ³⁶	Creation of at least one plot of bare soil (in a size at least 25 m2) per 0.5 ha on arable land	Good - Likely to deliver	High diversity landscape features

33. Proposal from GPP (government agency in charge of CAP SP) from 08.10.2021, leaked information, not public

34. Proposal from the ecoschemes working group from 13.09.2021, not public

35. <https://skp.si/uporabne-povezave/strateski-nacrta-skupna-kmetijska-politika-skp>

36. Javna razprava strateškega načrta skupne kmetijske politike 2023-2027 - Skupna kmetijska politika (skp.si) <https://skp.si/uporabne-povezave/strateski-nacrta-skupna-kmetijska-politika-skp>

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Slovenia	ES 3: Extensive management of grasslands (grazing or mowing) ³⁷	Mowing or grazing is mandatory once a year; agricultural use is allowed no more than three times a year (grazing is considered one use)	Bad - Concerning	None or Unclear
Slovenia	ES 4: Traditional use of grasslands ³⁹	Only meadows that are mowed no more than three times a year are included; grazing can be carried out, but only in combination with mowing	Awful - Greenwashing	None or Unclear
Slovenia	ES 5: Colourful meadow ³⁹	Meadows with either: plant species with petals of at least three different colors or with at least four indicator plant species	Bad - Concerning	High diversity landscape features
Slovenia	ES 6: Optimal mowing height of cutting ³⁹	The average height of mowing must be at least 7 cm.	Awful - Greenwashing	None or Unclear
Slovenia	ES 7: Nitrogen stabilisers in slurry (permanent grasslands) ³⁹	In preparation.	Bad - Concerning	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Slovenia	ES 8: Use of additives to reduce ammonia emissions from organic fertilisers (permanent grasslands) ³⁹	In preparation.	Bad - Concerning	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Slovenia	ES 9: Application of organic fertilisers on permanent grasslands in a way to reduce emissions ³⁹	Only placement is allowed (spraying of fertilisers not allowed); payment shall be granted for a maximum of 40 cubic meters of liquid organic fertilisers used per hectare	Awful - Greenwashing	GHG reductions

37. Javna razprava strateškega načrta skupne kmetijske politike 2023-2027 - Skupna kmetijska politika (skp.si) <https://skp.si/uporabne-povezave/strateski-nacrta-skupna-kmetijska-politika-skp>

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Slovenia	ES 10: Preserving landscape features ³⁸	Payment for the management of 6-20% of the farm area as non-productive areas, incl. fallow land, solitary trees and bushes, hedges, small water bodies	OK - Needs improving	High diversity landscape features
Slovenia	ES 11: Establishment of green buffer zones along the water-courses ³⁸	5-15 metres (or 3 meters in the case of a buffer zone along drainage ditches), without fertilisers or pesticides, ploughing is not allowed	OK - Needs improving	High diversity landscape features
Slovenia	ES 12: Crop diversification (minimum 3 crops) ³⁸	Main crop <75%, two main crops <90%	Bad - Concerning	None or Unclear
Slovenia	ES 13: Secondary crops - catch crops ³⁸	On at least 20% of the area, without pesticide use	Bad - Concerning	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Slovenia	ES 14: Greening of arable land over the winter ³⁸	From 30 Nov to 15 Feb; herbicide use is not allowed, on at least 20% of the area	OK - Needs improving	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Slovenia	ES 15: Conservation tillage ³⁸	On at least 30% of the area	Bad - Concerning	GHG reductions
Slovenia	ES 16: Application of organic fertilisers on arable land in a way to reduce emissions ³⁸	Only placement is allowed (spraying of fertilisers not allowed); payment shall be granted for a maximum of 40 cubic meters of liquid organic fertilisers used per hectare	Awful - Greenwashing	GHG reductions
Slovenia	ES 17: Nitrogen stabilizers in slurry (arable land) ³⁸	In preparation.	Bad - Concerning	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction

38. Javna razprava strateškega načrta skupne kmetijske politike 2023-2027 - Skupna kmetijska politika (skp.si) <https://skp.si/uporabne-povezave/strateski-nacrta-skupna-kmetijska-politika-skp>

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Slovenia	ES 18: Use of additives to reduce ammonia emissions from organic fertilisers (arable land) ³⁹	In preparation.	Bad - Concerning	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Slovenia	ES 19: Protection of lapwing nests ³⁹	At the marked plot of arable land where the lapwing's nest was found, no agricultural use is allowed until 25 May	Good - Likely to deliver	High diversity landscape features
Slovenia	ES 20: Adapted application of phytopharmaceutical products in permanent crops ³⁹		Bad - Concerning	Pesticides reduction
Slovenia	ES 21: Reduced or no use of herbicides in permanent crops ³⁹	Two stages of implementation. First stage: herbicides are spread in a narrow "herbicide belt" (not to exceed 25% of the width of the entire inter-row space); Second stage: the use of herbicides is not allowed	OK - Needs improving	Pesticides reduction
Slovenia	ES 22: Monitoring of pests in permanent crops ³⁹	Use of pheromone/food-based traps and adhesive plates	Bad - Concerning	Pesticides reduction
Slovenia	ES 23: Use of confusion and disorientation methods in permanent crops ³⁹	Use of pheromone dispensers and poisoned baits (method "attract and kill")	Bad - Concerning	Pesticides reduction
Slovenia	ES 24: Space for beneficial organisms in permanent crops ³⁹	At least one rock garden or insect hotel shall be provided per 0.5 ha of permanent crops	OK - Needs improving	High diversity landscape features

39. Javna razprava strateškega načrta skupne kmetijske politike 2023-2027 - Skupna kmetijska politika (skp.si) <https://skp.si/uporabne-povezave/strateski-nacrta-skupna-kmetijska-politika-skp>

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Slovenia	ES 25: Maintenance of dry stone walls and terraces in permanent crops ⁴⁰		Bad - Concerning	High diversity landscape features
Slovenia	ES 26: Buffer strips at the edges of permanent crops ⁴⁰	A flower strip is established at the edge of permanent crops; it must be mowed before the pesticide treatment.	Awful - Greenwashing	High diversity landscape features
Slovenia	ES 27: Soil cover in permanent crops ⁴⁰	The space between the rows is sown with appropriate cultivated plants	Bad - Concerning	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Slovenia	ES 28: Use of rapidly degradable strings in permanent crops ⁴⁰		Bad - Concerning	None or Unclear
Slovenia	ES 29: Composting spent hops ⁴⁰	Must last until 1 March of the following year.	Not enough info to judge	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Slovenia	ES 30: Application of organic fertilisers on hop gardens in a way to reduce emissions ⁴⁰	Only placement is allowed (spraying of fertilisers not allowed); payment shall be granted for a maximum of 40 cubic meters of liquid organic fertilisers used per hectare	Awful - Greenwashing	GHG reductions
Spain	PI: Extensive grazing for increased carbon sequestration ⁴¹	Minimum of 90-120 days of grazing, with a stocking rate between 0.4-2.0 LU/ha (humid pastures) or between 0.2-1.2 LU/ha (dry pastures - under 650 mm of rainfall + islands)	OK - Needs improving	GHG reductions

40. Javna razprava strateškega načrta skupne kmetijske politike 2023-2027 - Skupna kmetijska politika (skp.si) <https://skp.si/uporabne-povezave/strateski-nacrta-skupna-kmetijska-politika-skp>

41. <https://www.mapa.gob.es/es/pac/post-2020/estrategia-de-intervencion.aspx>

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Spain	P2: Uncut margins in meadows or sustainable mowing to maintain and improve biodiversity ⁴²	Unmowed margins and other landscape features must be at least 7% of the surface area of meadows in the farm. Sustainable mowing won't be higher than 2 cuts/year + unmowing period of 60 days min (between June, July and August)	Bad - Concerning	High diversity landscape features
Spain	P3: Crop rotation in arable land (with sustainable input management in irrigated areas) ⁴⁴	At least 40% of the arable land must have crop rotation (in some circumstances, this can be lowered to 25%). At least 5% must be with leguminosae, 10% must be with "soil improving crops" (including leguminosae).	OK - Needs improving	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Spain	P4: Conservation agriculture and direct seeding (with sustainable input management in irrigated areas) ⁴⁴	No ploughing. No rules regarding herbicides and pesticides use	Bad - Concerning	GHG reductions
Spain	P5: Biodiversity areas in arable and permanent crops (with sustainable input management in irrigated areas) ⁴⁴	Requires 7% on arable land, 4% on irrigated areas, and 4% on permanent crops. For rice: 2% and sustainable water management for birds, emissions and consumption. Application of pesticides will be exceptional.	OK - Needs improving	High diversity landscape features
Spain	P6: Live plant cover in permanent crops ⁴⁴	Cover can be spontaneous or seeded. Cover will occupy a significant part of the free width of the crown projection; for slopes higher or equal than 10%, +1 m min. additionally. Application of pesticides will be exceptional.	OK - Needs improving	GHG reductions
Spain	P7: Inert plant cover (mulching) in permanent crops ⁴⁴	Requires shredding and leaving pruning waste on site	OK - Needs improving	None or Unclear

42. <https://www.mapa.gob.es/es/pac/post-2020/estrategia-de-intervencion.aspx>

Country	Name of the eco-scheme	Details of the eco-scheme	NGO overall assessment	Main agricultural EGD target
Sweden	Conversion to organic farming + organic farming ⁴³	Payment for areas that are cultivated in accordance with EU rules for organic farming and animals kept under EU rules for organic farming. Third-party certification only.	Good - Likely to deliver	Organic farming
Sweden	Intercrops, catch crops & spring cultivation ⁴³	Intercrops between main crops for carbon sequestration, and to reduce runoff and erosion. Catch crops to reduce leakage of nitrogen during autumn. Discussion ongoing about rules for pesticide use.	Good - Likely to deliver	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Sweden	Flower strips ⁴³	Cultivation of plants for pollinators, excluding species that could become invasive.	Good - Likely to deliver	High diversity landscape features
Sweden	Precision farming- planning package ⁴³	Use nutrient balance tools, fertiliser plan, crop rotation plan, do soil mapping, grass cover 2 m around drainage wells, manure analysis, zero N plots etc. No measures to reduce pesticides.	Bad - Concerning	Nutrient loss and fertiliser reduction
Sweden	Protein crops ⁴³	Payment per hectare to stimulate cultivation of plant based proteins (lentils, fava bean, soy bean, the narrowleaf bean, peas, etc) for human consumption and fodder.	Good - Likely to deliver	GHG reductions

43. <https://jordbruksverket.se/stod/jordbrukspolitik-och-havs--fiskeri--och-vattenbrukspolitik/jordbrukspolitik-cap/jordbrukspolitik-fran-2023>

