



Delivering Climate Change Mitigation and Rural Development – Lessons from EAFRD Support 2014–2020⁽¹⁾

ENRD – Orientations for CAP Strategic Plans

Photo © Freepik

1. CAP STRATEGIC PLANS AND CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION

Achieving greater climate (and environmental) ambition is a key objective of the CAP revision. Member States must ensure that their CAP Strategic Plans (CSPs) demonstrate greater overall ambition towards the achievement of the CAP's environmental and climate objectives, when compared to the previous programming period. The CSPs must explain how to achieve these objectives through the interventions programmed under both Pillar I and Pillar II, and how these interventions will address national and regional needs and contribute to the CAP's specific objectives. The CSPs should also be set in the context of the European Green Deal and the EU's ambition to become the first climate-neutral economy by 2050, without

undermining other key priorities, such as those set out in the EU's Biodiversity Strategy.

The proposals for the CAP post 2020 involve a new model of governance, the key element of which is to move towards rewarding performance against a common EU framework of objectives. The shift towards a more performance-focussed CAP requires Managing Authorities to look at all the elements of the CAP to determine how best to respond to national environmental and climate needs. Overall, the reform enshrines the need for all CAP funds (EAGF and EAFRD) to address the environmental and climate challenges facing the agriculture and forestry sector in unison with the other economic and social objectives of the CAP⁽²⁾.

2. PRIORITISING CLIMATE SPENDING AND EXPANDING COVERAGE

✔ Lessons from 2014–2020

A total of 7.7 billion EUR, approximately 5 % of the total **public expenditure** under RDPs, was programmed at the start of the 2014 - 2020 period for the climate mitigation focus areas set out under Priority 5: *Increasing efficiency in energy use in agriculture and food processing (FA 5B); Facilitating the supply and use of renewable sources of energy (FA 5C); Reducing greenhouse gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture (FA*

5D); and Fostering carbon conservation and sequestration in agriculture and forestry (FA 5E)⁽³⁾. The 118 RDPs, on average, allocated less than 5 % of their budget to climate mitigation focus areas. Only 11 RDPs allocated more than 20 % of their budget to climate change mitigation actions under Priority 5. Measures funded under other priorities and focus areas can also deliver significant climate benefits, particularly those programmed under Priority 4, relating to soil management⁽⁴⁾ for example.

(1) This paper is based on a 2020 screening by the ENRD of the Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) across the EU Member States. The screening examined how the RDPs are being used in the 2014–2020 period to address climate change mitigation and the shift to a low-carbon economy in rural areas.

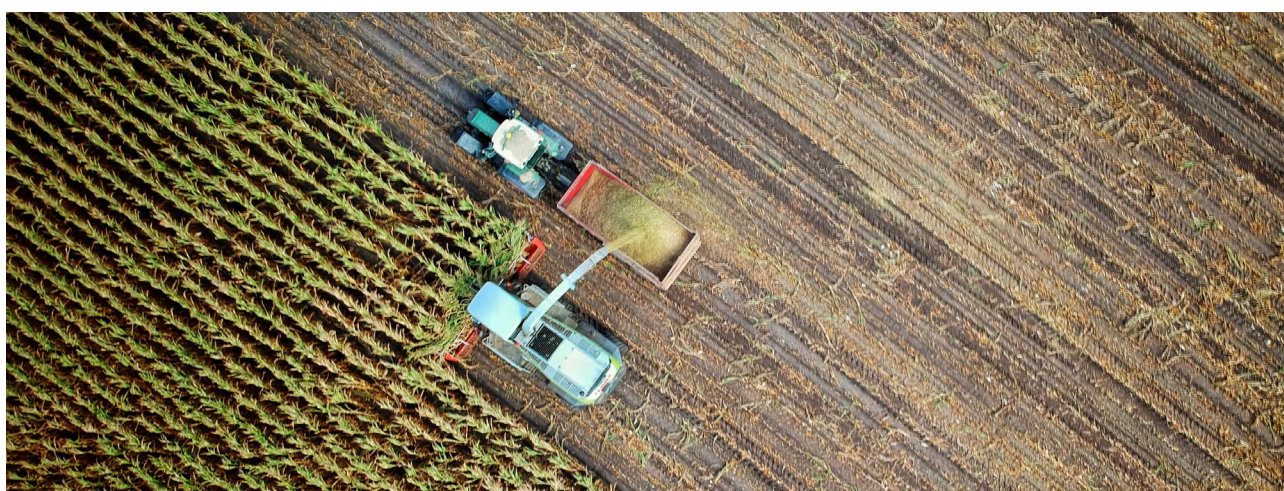
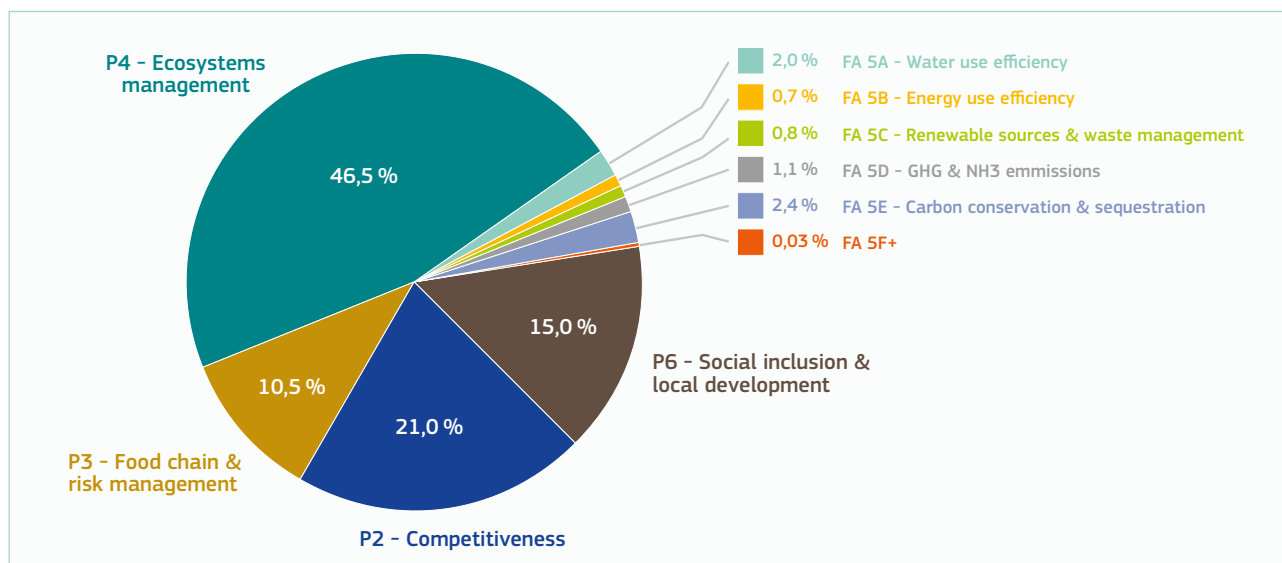
(2) Lampkin N, Stolze M, Meredith S, de Porras M, Haller L, Mészáros D (2020) Using Eco-schemes in the new CAP: a guide for managing authorities. IFOAM EU, FIBL and IEEP, Brussels.

(3) Focus Area 5A on increasing the efficiency of water use in agriculture was not examined as this relates to climate adaptation rather than mitigation.

(4) For further details on the opportunities for soil management and climate action within CSPs see the ENRD CAP Orientation document https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/enrd_publications/bioeconomy_briefing_soil-carbon-lessons-learnt-for-caps.pdf



Graph 1. Share (%) of planned total public expenditure at EU level per priority & selected focus areas (EU28/situation end 2018)



The aggregated **targets**⁽⁵⁾ that were set for the result indicators under Priority 5 are an indication of the overall level of ambition of the related public expenditure. Across all RDPs, 0.74 % of livestock units and 2.94 % of agricultural land is targeted for actions to reduce GHG and ammonia emissions. 1.07 % of agricultural and forest land is targeted to come under management contracts for carbon sequestration.

✔ Lessons for future CSPs

ENRD's screening of the RDPs has shown that funding for climate mitigation focus areas under Priority 5, as a proportion of total spending allocated to the programmes, is limited in most RDPs⁽⁶⁾. Importantly, the proportion of farms and agricultural land targeted by the climate mitigation measures is also limited. With the anticipated increase in climate and environmental ambition and the changing delivery model of the CAP there

is an **opportunity to target a much higher proportion of farms and agricultural units in the future CSPs**. In particular, making use of the new eco-schemes available under Pillar I, in coordination with Pillar II interventions, should enable a more substantive change over a much wider area of Europe's rural land.

The RDP screening has shown that innovative solutions and tailored support can lead to considerable change even with limited allocations (see case example 1). In the CSPs, such experiences can be built upon to **increase the level of climate ambition through expanded coverage**. For example, schemes that have proved successful at a smaller scale could be built upon and expanded to a much wider area or number of farms. This implies learning from the current period's successes and assessing, evaluating and improving climate action, then effectively using this information to target regional needs.

(5) As of end 2018.

(6) Analysing Priority 5 only provides an indication of overall spending on climate mitigation in RDPs in the current period, but is used in this instance to summarise patterns of spending. Interventions contributing to climate change mitigation are also being implemented under other Priorities, particularly under P4.

Case example 1 – Upskilling and knowledge sharing to promote climate measures in Flanders, Belgium

In 'The Climate Team 2.0' project, five Antwerp dairy farmers and a team of climate experts worked together to implement climate measures on farms. The aim was to estimate the collective impact of climate measures on the ecological, economic and social aspects of the farmers' operations. The project enabled the five farm managers to make well-founded decisions about which climate-friendly measure, or combination of measures, to implement. Thanks to their demonstration, promotion and communication actions, the project's ambassadors are inspiring other farmers in the dairy sector and beyond, including horticulturalists, governments and private individuals to implement climate-friendly practices.

3. SCOPE FOR INTEGRATED CLIMATE APPROACHES IN THE CSP

✔ Lessons from 2014-2020

In the 2014-2020 period, a **small number of RDP measures dominate climate mitigation** actions under each of the Priority 5 focus areas. Support focuses mainly on the physical investment measure (M04) as well as the agri-environment-climate measure (M10) and forest investments (M08). Smaller budgetary proportions are allocated under some RDPs to measures that support knowledge transfer (M01, M02) and innovation or demonstration projects (M16) under different mitigation-related focus areas. Sometimes this allocation is designed to be used in conjunction with the other measures, sometimes alone.

The 2019 Commission evaluation of the CAP on climate action ⁽⁷⁾ noted that all **RDP measures have the potential to be utilised for climate change mitigation**, even where climate was not directly part of their intervention logic (see Annex 1). The ENRD's Thematic Group on Bioeconomy and Climate Action in Rural Areas has stressed the importance of linking the use of different measures to promote the development of ideas, transfer of knowledge and to support the implementation of practices that reduce GHG emissions. The Thematic Group has also noted that the low-carbon transition to a circular bioeconomy in rural areas is best supported by combining CAP funding with resources from other sources such as EU, regional, national or private sector support.

✔ Lessons for future CSPs

Interventions under the future CSPs should consider how to best support the whole transition cycle towards a low-carbon rural

economy, while addressing the specific needs identified by the Member States. This might include supporting the development of innovative solutions, testing and pilot approaches, supporting the knowledge transfer and implementation, and finally evaluating what was effective and how interventions could be improved. Several interventions for Rural Development are relevant for such **coordinated support** (see table in Annex 1).

Europe's rural communities and land managers are being asked to drive locally relevant, substantive change in GHG emissions. In the 2014-20 funding period, Operational Groups and Local Action Groups have been proven to be particularly important in fulfilling their role of **bringing actors together** to innovate and pilot new approaches for climate change mitigation. In the future CSPs, this role could be strengthened and backed up with broader networking to promote a just transition that leaves no rural actors behind.

Integration will be key to deliver effectively on climate objectives via CSPs. The actions supported by future CAP interventions under both Pillar I and Pillar II should enable a joined-up approach to climate transition in agriculture and forestry. Research and development on climate transition have to be integrated with the needs of rural actors, and with the advice and knowledge transfer systems that ensure the applicability of research outcomes. Funding sources need to be integrated around policy sectors' climate targets, for example, to support green energy and jobs in rural areas. When it comes to governance during the development, testing, review, implementation and evaluation of CSPs, other key government departments, stakeholders and practitioners should be consulted.



(7) Evaluation study of the impact of the CAP on climate change and greenhouse gas emissions <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/29eee93e-9ed0-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1>

Case example 2 – Combining the use of RDP measures to deliver GHG emission reductions in Ireland

The *GLAS: Green, Low-Carbon, Agri-Environment Scheme* has been developed by including the combined use of multiple measures in Ireland's RDP, which will have a positive effect on emissions. This includes, for example, support for low emissions slurry spreading and minimum tillage, and sequestration actions complemented by support under the *Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Schemes (TAMS II)*. *TAMS II* is programmed under sub-measure 04.1, providing investment support for low emission spreading equipment, minimum tillage and precision farming equipment. Measure 01's specific operations include the roll out of the Carbon Navigator model to support the adoption of low emission farm management practices on a nationwide basis. Specific training focussed on the Carbon Navigator is delivered under measure M01. Finally, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for advisors (measure M02) ensures that the best practice on climate change issues is disseminated across the sector. It is also anticipated that, as the themes covered by EIP Operational Groups (measure M16) emerge, support will focus on climate change or emissions issues.



© Unsplash