



TOOL 3.2

WORKING STEPS FOR THE APPRAISAL OF THE INTERVENTION STRATEGY OF THE CAP STRATEGIC PLAN

THEMATIC WORKING GROUP No 7
'PREPARING FOR THE EX-ANTE EVALUATION OF THE CAP
STRATEGIC PLAN'

NOVEMBER 2019

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ACRONYMS

CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CPR	Proposal for Common Provisions Regulation, COM/2018/375 final
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EAGF	European Agricultural Guarantee Fund
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FI	Financial Instrument
GAEC	Standards for good agricultural and environmental condition of land
GHG	Greenhouse gas
MS	Member State
NVZ	Nitrate Vulnerable Zone
SO	CAP Specific Objective
RBD	River Basin District
SMR	Statutory Management Requirement
SPR	Proposal for CAP Strategic Plan Regulation, COM/2018/392 final
SWOT	Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats Analysis
UAA	Utilised Agricultural Area

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INTRODUCTION

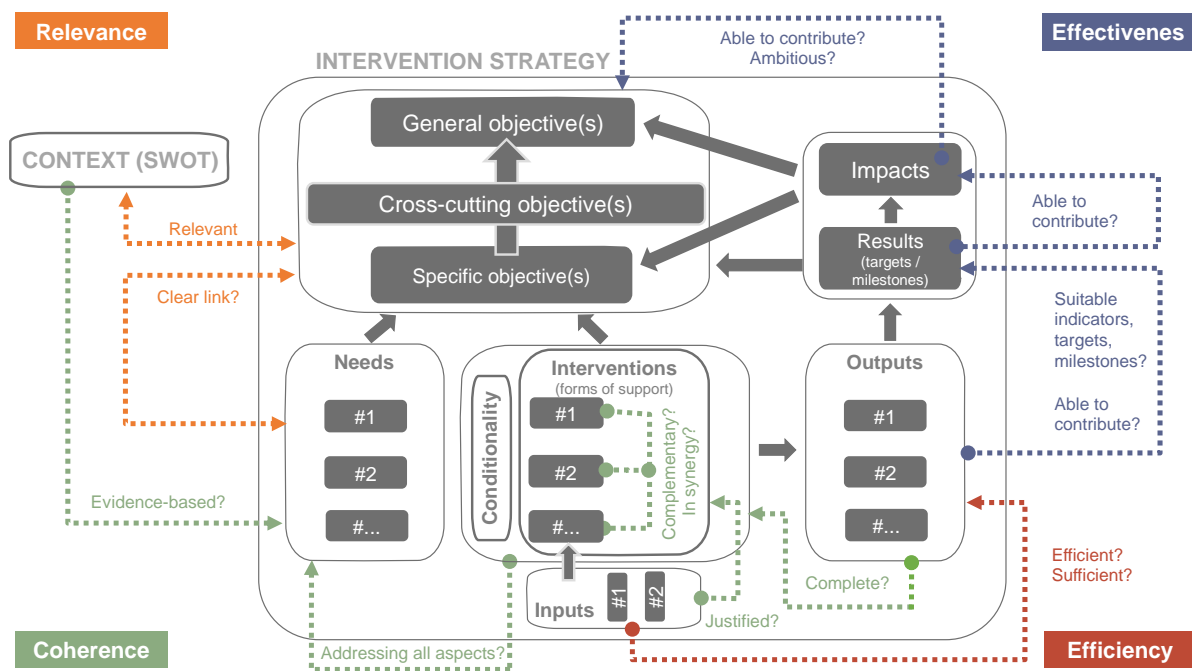
This tool provides a hypothetical example in order to illustrate possible working steps of an ex-ante evaluator in appraising the intervention strategy, targets and milestones of the CAP Strategic Plan. The assessment process of the evaluator is divided in five working steps.

This tool has been prepared by evaluation experts by taking into account the legal proposal for the CAP Strategic Plans COM(2018) 392 final (hereafter referred to as SPR). The drafting work has been carried out in the context of the Evaluation Helpdesk's [Thematic Working Group no. 7](#).

The suggestions and comments of evaluation stakeholders from the Member States have been collected through a written Sounding Board consultation in September 2019 and were used to refine the tool.

Figure 1, shows the main dimensions of appraising the CAP Strategic Plan's intervention strategy. The evaluator should check the various elements of the intervention strategy to judge on the relevance, coherence, consistency, efficiency and effectiveness of the intervention strategy and provide recommendations for improving it.

Figure 1. Dimensions of the appraisal of the intervention strategy



WORKING STEPS FOR THE EVALUATOR

The working steps for the appraisal of the CAP Strategic Plan’s intervention strategy, targets and milestones can be as follows:

- 1) Visualising the intervention strategy
- 2) Checking the relationships between needs, objectives and interventions
- 3) Assessing the relationships between inputs, outputs, results, impacts and their contributions to objectives
- 4) Assessing the synergies between specific objectives and interventions
- 5) Assessing the relationships of the CAP Strategic Plan with other relevant instruments

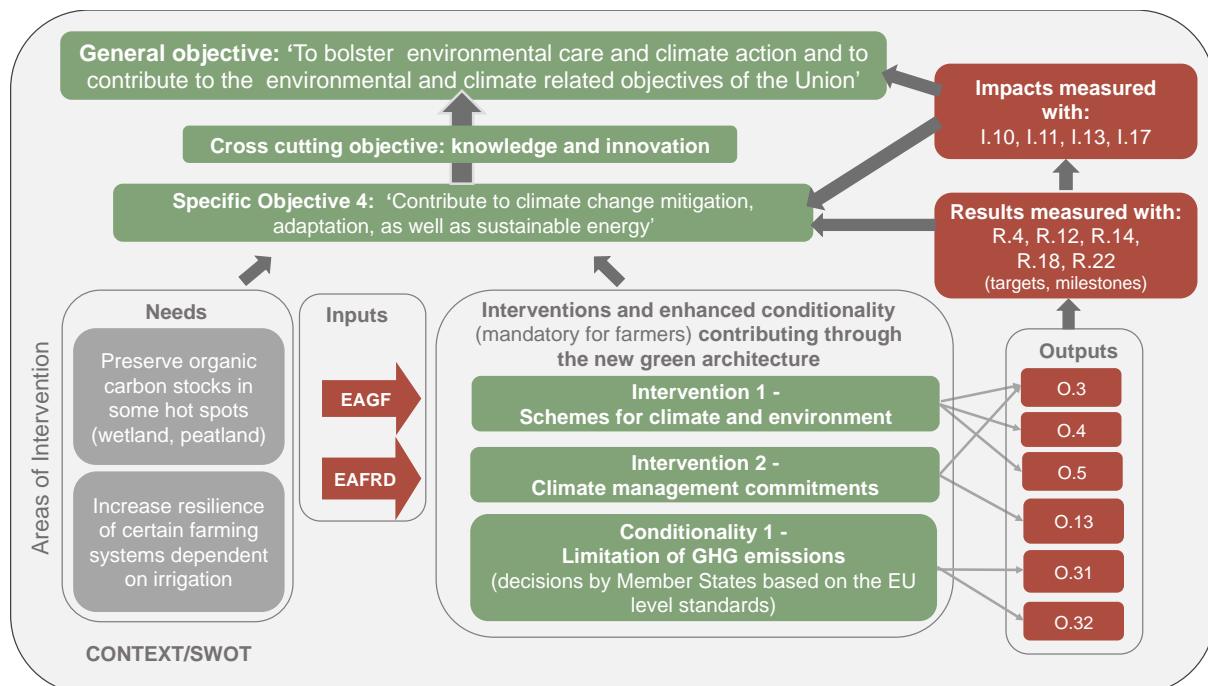
Step 1: Visualising the intervention strategy

The visualisation of the intervention strategy helps the evaluator to have a good working bases to identify the relationships between its components, assess the linkages and suggest improvements if necessary.

Figure 2, shows a potential visualisation of a hypothetical example of a CAP Strategic Plan intervention strategy for the Specific Objective 4 (SO4), ‘Contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as sustainable energy’, which is linked to the CAP general objective ‘To bolster environmental care and climate action and to contribute to the environmental and climate related objectives of the Union’.

This simplified example is presented for illustrative purposes and does not attempt to represent the complexity of the real situation. For example, other types of interventions such as targeted training and advice, non-productive investments, fruit and vegetables sectorial interventions for environment would also be expected to contribute to this objective.

Figure 2. CAP Strategic Plan intervention strategy for Specific Objective 4 (example)



In this example, two types of interventions and conditionality related to limitation of GHG emissions have been planned to address the identified need ‘to preserve organic carbon stock in some hot spots, such as wetlands and peatlands, as well as increase resilience of farming systems dependent on irrigation’ and to achieve the relevant CAP specific and general objectives. These example interventions are presented in Figure 2.

Intervention 1 - Schemes for climate and environment (ECO scheme):

- Maintaining climate friendly farming on peatlands through the application of paludiculture techniques (wet farming with no or minimal drainage).

Intervention 2 - Climate management commitments (assisting a shift of irrigated arable crop systems towards a more water efficient approach in sensitive areas to reduce the use of water):

- Substitution of irrigated maize with less water demanding crops (e.g. irrigated sorghum).
- Partial substitution of irrigated crops by non-irrigated crops.

Enhanced Conditionality 1 - Limitation of GHG emissions:

- GAEC 1: Maintenance of permanent grasslands in relation to UAA (set at regional level¹).
- GAEC 2: Appropriate protection of wetland and peatland (by prohibiting drainage for alternative land uses of designed sensitive areas²).
- GAEC 3: Ban on burning arable stubble, except for plant health reasons.

Further examples for SO5 'Foster sustainable development and efficient management of natural resources such as water, soil and air' and SO6 'Contribute to the protection of biodiversity, enhance ecosystem services and preserve habitats and landscapes' can be found in the annex (see Figures 3 and 4).

Step 2: Checking the relationships between needs, objectives and interventions

In this example, the ex-ante evaluator will assess if the designed interventions are capable of addressing the identified needs and contributing to the CAP specific objective(s). This example presupposes that the specific objective contributes to the achievement of the CAP general objective on bolstering environmental care and climate action and contributes to the environmental and climate related objectives of the Union. The general and specific objectives and links between them are stipulated in the policy and in the proposed legal framework (SPR).

The ex-ante evaluator may ask various questions to check if the suggested interventions can contribute to the CAP specific objectives and if they address the identified needs:

- 1) Are the identified needs based on evidence (as reflected in the description of the current situation/SWOT)?³
- 2) Is the link between the identified needs and the specific objective plausible?⁴
- 3) Are the designed interventions and/or conditionality and their grouping sufficient to accomplish the specific objectives?⁵
- 4) Do the designed interventions and/or conditionality address all aspects of the identified need(s)?⁶
- 5) Are the designed interventions and/or conditionality complementary and working in synergy towards the specific objective(s) (not producing negative trade-offs)?⁷
- 6) Are interventions which produce negative trade-offs⁸ accompanied by interventions and/or conditionality which compensate or mitigate these trade-offs?⁹

Answering the above questions, allows the evaluator to make judgements with regard to the relevance and internal coherence of the intervention strategy and to recommend adjustments if needed.

¹ Decision taken by the Member State in this example.

² Decision taken by the Member State in this example.

³ See also Guiding Questions 1.4 and 1.5 in Tool 2.1.

⁴ See also Guiding Questions in Tool 2.1.

⁵ See also Guiding Questions 2.1 and 2.2 in Tool 3.1.

⁶ See also Guiding Questions 2.1 and 2.3 in Tool 3.1.

⁷ See also Guiding Question 2.3 in Tool 3.1.

⁸ There could also be certain interventions designed for one objective, which have negative effects on another objective.

⁹ See also Guiding Question 2.3 in Tool 3.1.

Step 3: Assessing the relationship between inputs, outputs, results, impacts and their contributions to objectives

A key task in the ex-ante process is to check if the allocated financial inputs can produce the planned outputs and are able to generate the expected results and long-term changes in the form of impacts. The assessment of this can show how the expected results can contribute to the achievement of the specific and general objectives.

For this purpose, the evaluator may structure the assessment along the sequence of effects (outputs, results and impacts), which are produced by the budgetary inputs as allocated for the designed interventions.

The planned inputs can be in the form of grants or financial instruments (FI). The form of financial instrument used should be in accordance with the SWOT analysis and assessment of needs. The intended use of the FI is also important in estimating the outputs (e.g. with the same amount of allocated budgetary resources the inputs in the form of grants or FI can reach very different numbers of beneficiaries and produce different amounts of outputs).

The assessment of the planned effects will help the evaluator to check if the target values and annual milestones of the result indicators have been calculated properly and realistically. The ex-ante evaluator may ask the following questions:

- 1) Are the allocated financial inputs and their forms (grants or FIs) sufficient to produce the planned outputs (as expressed in values of output indicators)?¹⁰
- 2) Are the outputs as produced by the financial inputs sufficient to generate the expected results among the beneficiaries (as expressed in target values and milestones of relevant result indicators¹¹)?¹²
- 3) Are the expected results/targets realistic and able to generate expected long-term direct and indirect impacts on the sectors, regions and rural areas in the Member State?¹³
- 4) Are the allocated financial inputs and their forms (grants or FIs) for the designed interventions grouped under the specific objectives overall sufficient to address the identified need(s)?¹⁴
- 5) Are the allocated financial inputs and their forms (grants or FIs) for the designed interventions grouped under the specific objectives overall sufficient¹⁵ to reach the specific objective(s)?¹⁶
- 6) Are the interventions and related budgetary allocations sufficient for achieving cross-cutting objective(s)?¹⁷
- 7) Will the expected impact make an identifiable contribution to the CAP general objective(s)?

Answering the above questions can help the evaluator to judge on the CAP Strategic Plan's ability to generate expected effects in the form of outputs, results and impacts or to propose changes (e.g. re-allocate budgetary resources, change the form of inputs (grants or FIs), re-calculate targets and milestones).

Step 4: Assessing the synergies between specific objectives and interventions

The evaluator should also look at the possible interactions between interventions (complementarities, synergies and negative trade-offs) and the planned outputs, results and impacts. This includes possible compensations and mitigations with other types of interventions and/or conditionality. Synergies concern both:

- interactions between the interventions linked to the same specific objective as well as;

¹⁰ See also Guiding Questions 2.6 and 2.8 in Tool 3.1.

¹¹ This is not the case for all result indicators, some can not necessarily be derived only on the basis of output indicators.

¹² See also Guiding Question 2.5 in Tool 3.1.

¹³ See also Guiding Question 2.5 in Tool 3.1.

¹⁴ See also Guiding Questions 2.6 and 2.8 in Tool 3.1.

¹⁵ Sufficiency depends on each CAP Strategic Plan intervention strategy and the situation in the country.

¹⁶ See also Guiding Questions 2.6 and 2.8 in Tool 3.1.

¹⁷ See also Guiding Questions 2.1 and 2.3 in Tool 3.1.

- interactions between the interventions linked to different specific objectives and across the whole CAP Strategic Plan.

The evaluator assesses how these interactions work together to achieve the CAP general objectives and generate the expected impacts on the sectors, regions and rural areas in the Member State.

The ex-ante evaluator may ask:

- 1) Are there synergies between the different interventions linked to the same specific objective?
- 2) In case there are contradictions between the different interventions, are there interventions and/or conditionality linked to the same specific objective which can compensate or mitigate them?
- 3) Are there synergies between the interventions and/or conditionality linked to different specific objectives?
- 4) In case there are contradictions between interventions linked to different specific objectives are there interventions and/or conditionality which would compensate or mitigate them?¹⁸

Answering these questions can help the evaluator to see if the interventions and objectives work in synergy. Recommended changes could include suggestions of different combinations of interventions as linked to the specific objective, or to suggest including new interventions, which can compensate/mitigate the negative trade-offs.

Step 5: Assessing the relationships of the CAP Strategic Plan with other relevant instruments

In order to check the external coherence, the evaluator should look at the linkages between the CAP Strategic Plan intervention strategy and the external policies and instruments relevant for the CAP policy objectives including its contributions to national targets.

The external coherence can be assessed for each specific objective and for the whole CAP Strategic Plan intervention strategy.

The ex-ante evaluator may ask:

- 1) Is the CAP Strategic Plan coherent with:
 - all relevant¹⁹ higher policy objectives (e.g. EU Treaties, international treaties signed by the EU, EU strategies);
 - other relevant EU/ESI Funds supported programmes/interventions (e.g. regional development programmes, environmental programmes);
 - the EU legal framework as stipulated in the Annex XI of the SPR proposal;
 - all relevant national²⁰ and regional policies and instruments?
- 2) Are there any overlaps or funding gaps between relevant policy instruments and interventions?²¹

Answering these questions can help the evaluator to judge if the CAP Strategic Plan is coherent with important policies and instruments at the EU, national and regional levels. The evaluator may highlight discrepancies and suggest improvements (e.g. a different choice and/or combination of interventions linked to objectives).

¹⁸ See also Guiding Question 2.3 in Tool 3.1.

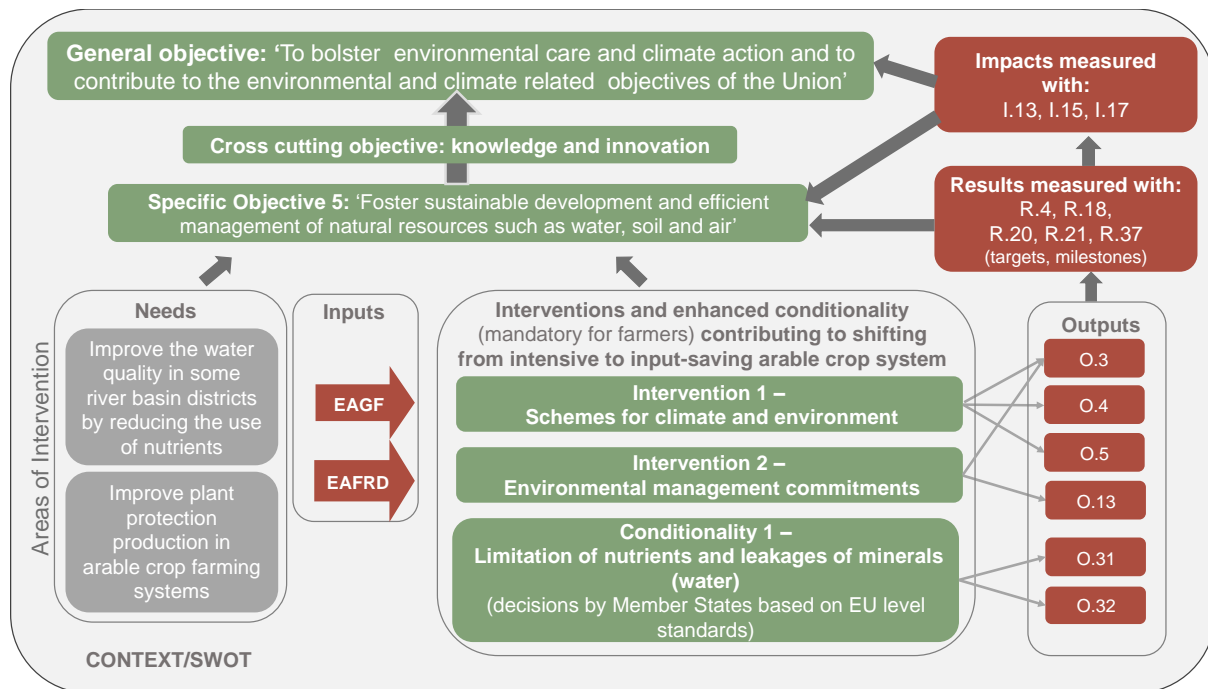
¹⁹ Relevant means contributing to the same objectives as the CAP Strategic Plan.

²⁰ While checking external coherence the evaluator particularly has to assess the CAP Strategic Plan's interplay with national instruments which are related to SO7 'attract young farmers and facilitate their business development' (Article 97(2)(c) of the SPR proposal) and to check how the environmental and climate architecture of the CAP Strategic Plan is meant to contribute to already established long-term national targets (Article 97(2)(b) of the SPR proposal).

²¹ See also Guiding Question 2.4 in Tool 3.1.

ANNEX

Figure 4. CAP Strategic Plan intervention strategy for the Specific Objective 5 (example)²²



In this example, two types of interventions and conditionality are linked to the limitation of nutrients and leakages of minerals (water) in order to address the identified need 'to improve water quality in some river basin districts by reducing the use of nutrients and improving plant protection production in arable crop farming systems' and to achieve the relevant CAP specific and general objectives. These example interventions are presented in Figure 4.

Intervention 1 - Schemes for climate and environment (ECO scheme):

- Acknowledging environmentally friendly practices (limitation of nutrient leakage through the establishment of green cover before next spring crops by 1 October each year).
- Substitution of irrigated maize with less water demanding crops (e.g. irrigated sorghum).
- Partial substitution of irrigated crops with non-irrigated crops.

Intervention 2 - Environmental management commitments (assisting a shift of arable crop systems towards a more input efficient approach in certain areas, as defined based on the Water Framework Directive):

- Limitation of nutrient use (and leakage).
- Reduced use of pesticides.

Enhanced Conditionality 1 - Limitation of nutrients and leakages of minerals (water):

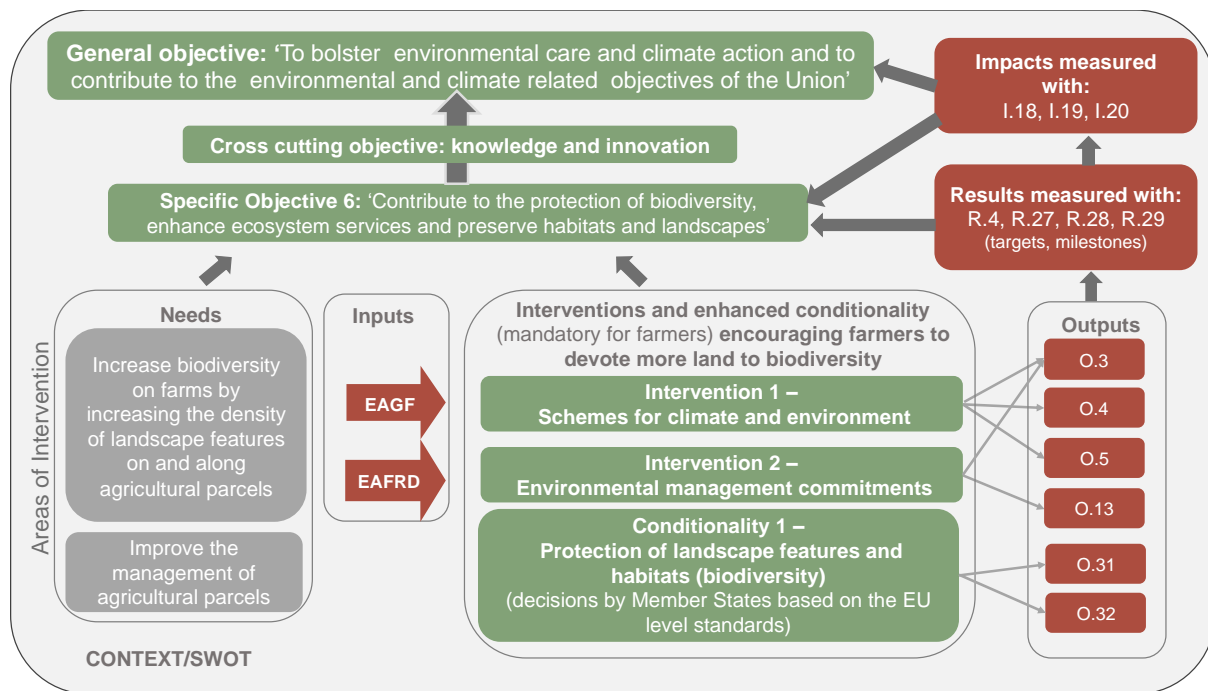
- SMR 1: Water Framework Directive.
- SMR 2: Nitrates Directive.
- GAEC 4: Establishment of 5m²³ buffer strips along watercourses.
- GAEC 5: Use of the Farm Sustainability Tool for nutrients. Tool will provide additional services for sustainable crop management (water, pesticides, micro-nutrients)²⁴.

²² Other interventions could be also added to the example (e.g. targeted training and advice linked to the specific example, non-productive investments, fruit and vegetables sectorial interventions for environment such as organic farming and integrated production).

²³ Decision taken by the Member State in this example.

²⁴ Decision taken by the Member State in this example.

Figure 5. CAP Strategic Plan intervention strategy for the Specific Objective 6 (example)²⁵



In this example, two types of interventions and conditionality related to the protection of landscape features and habitats (biodiversity) have been planned to address the identified needs ‘to increase biodiversity on farms by increasing the density of landscape features on and along agriculture parcels and improving their management’ and to achieve the relevant CAP specific and general objectives. These example interventions are presented in Figure 5.

Intervention 1 - Schemes for climate and the environment (ECO schemes supporting the presence of an even greater density of landscape features (applied on different regions or areas)):

- ECO scheme 1: minimum of 7% of agricultural land has been devoted to hedges, rows of trees, field copses, ponds or fallow land.
- ECO scheme 2: minimum of 10% of agricultural land has been devoted to hedges, rows of trees, field copses, ponds or fallow land.

Intervention 2 - Environmental management commitments supporting the appropriate management of landscape features:

- Establishment of buffer strips around or along landscape features. Banning the use of fertilizers and pesticides within 5 meters.
- Management of landscape features (appropriate cutting, sowing a wildflower herbaceous cover on field margins and around landscape features and banning the use of pesticides).

Enhanced Conditionality 1 – Limitation of nutrients and leakages of minerals (water):

- SMR 3: Birds Directive.
- SMR 4: Habitats Directive.
- GAEC 9: Retention of designated hedges, rows of trees, field copses and ponds (minimum of 5% of agricultural land²⁶) and ban on cutting hedges and trees during bird breeding and rearing season (from 1 April to 1 July each year²⁷).
- GAEC 10: Ban on converting or ploughing all permanent grassland in Natura 2000 sites.

²⁵Other interventions could be also added to the example (e.g. targeted training and advice linked to the specific example, non-productive investments such as planting new hedges or trees, fruit and vegetables sectorial interventions for environment such as organic farming and integrated production).

²⁶ Decision taken by the Member State in this example.

²⁷ Decision taken by the Member State in this example.

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