



Biodiversity on farmland

Projects Brochure

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- 4 Flowering meadows at Endrup
 - 5 Fostering farmer cooperation for biodiversity in Austria
 - 6 Better management of valuable peatland meadows and Natura 2000 transition areas
 - 7 Tailor-made nature conservation plans
 - 8 Cooperation in nature conservation
 - 9 Ecosystem services in the Satakunta region farmlands
 - 10 Sustainable farm management focused on protecting biodiversity
 - 11 Talamh Beo Soil Biodiversity Literacy and Enhancement Project

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Table of contents

Introduction	3
Flowering meadows at Endrup	4
Fostering farmer cooperation for biodiversity in Austria	5
Better management of valuable peatland meadows and Natura 2000 transition areas	6
Tailor-made nature conservation plans	7
Cooperation in nature conservation	8
Ecosystem services in the Satakunta region farmlands	9
Sustainable farm management focused on protecting biodiversity	10
Talamh Beo Soil Biodiversity Literacy and Enhancement Project	11

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Introduction

The EU's 2020 [State of Nature report](#) showed that biodiversity is declining at an alarming rate, with agriculture being the main driver of this decline. Conversely, biodiversity loss has a considerable impact on agriculture. Promoting sustainable agricultural practices that prioritise biodiversity conservation can help mitigate these negative impacts, while enhancing the long-term resilience and productivity of agricultural systems.

Incentives to support the maintenance, restoration and recreation of species and habitats on farmland, as well as extensive farming systems that are beneficial for biodiversity, have been in place for over

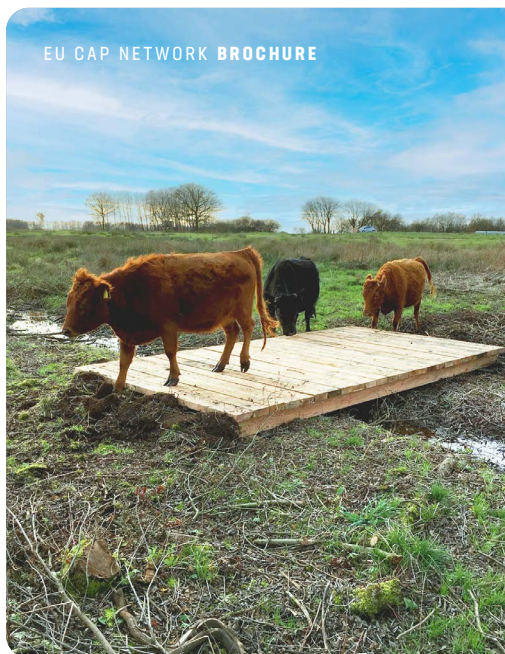
30 years. However, their focus has predominantly been on the management of single farms and single parcels of land. Habitat restoration requires action at the landscape scale and greater collaboration and coordination of action between farmers, despite widespread uptake and some localised successes.

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is one of the key sector policies and funding instruments to contribute to the delivery of biodiversity and environmental objectives and targets in agriculture. The EU CAP Network's Thematic Group (TG) [on Enhancing Biodiversity on Farmland for Improved Resilience](#) looked at ways to unlock the potential offered by the CAP to design schemes that take a landscape-scale approach. Importantly, it also fostered awareness and knowledge exchange about [existing successful practices](#) among stakeholders.

This edition of the EU CAP Network Projects Brochure builds on the TG work as well as on the EU CAP Network's ongoing [collection of good practices](#). It highlights eight examples of CAP-funded projects that are improving biodiversity on farmland, with a focus on initiatives at the landscape scale.



Figures in this publication have been rounded. For the precise figures, please refer to the full description of each project on the EU CAP Network website.



€ 37 584

TOTAL BUDGET

€ 34 760

EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 04

Investments in physical assets

PROJECT PERIOD

2017-2019

COUNTRY

 **Denmark**

Flowering meadows at Endrup

Extensive grazing in a communal area enhances biodiversity in and around a Natura 2000 area.

CAP funding was used to convert an area of 17 ha of communal land in south-west Denmark to support extensive grazing. The project was designed to improve the conditions of local plant and animal species and expand the habitat in the project area, which is partly a Natura 2000 site.

The project area was cleared of unwanted vegetation. Fences and the necessary infrastructure for extensive grazing were installed. Finally, a local farmer could graze his cattle, namely Dexter and Galloway breeds, which can survive on the area's typical low-forage value.

The sustainable grazing of this type of terrain can only be achieved if several landowners join forces, so that the project area can include dry and higher altitude areas where the animals can rest and find water.

The project strengthened and improved biodiversity in the area and allowed the preparation of an even wider total area of land for extensive grazing.

The project has boosted local interest in nature and helped establish a local short value chain for the meat from the small Irish Dexter cattle breed.

Find out more online:



eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/flowering-meadows-endrup





€ 289 999

TOTAL BUDGET

€ 145 000

EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 07

Basic services & village renewal

PROJECT PERIOD

2022-2025

COUNTRY



Austria

Fostering farmer cooperation for biodiversity in Austria

Connecting biodiversity areas to increase the impact of Austria's agri-environmental programme.

'ÖPUL verbindet' is a rural development project in which farmers and biodiversity experts from three Austrian regions joined forces to implement biodiversity measures together, within the existing Austrian Agri-Environmental Programme (ÖPUL).

A condition for participating in the ÖPUL programme is the creation of biodiversity areas on at least 7% of arable land and grassland. The 'ÖPUL verbindet' project connects those biodiversity areas to achieve a bigger impact. To achieve optimum benefits for biodiversity in the cultivated landscape, this initiative encouraged farms in the three participating regions to implement measures that would connect individual actions at the farm level and embed them at the landscape scale. Farmers and biodiversity experts worked together to plan and create such connected habitats.

In addition to the creation of as many biodiversity areas as possible within the regions, the project also sought to incorporate newly created flowering areas and existing fallow fields into the habitat network.

Other important activities included establishing biodiversity as a positive topic among the farming community, promoting networking, stakeholder involvement and collaboration, and establishing ongoing monitoring activities. The final results of the monitoring will be available at the end of the project.



Find out more online:



eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/biodiversity-based-payments-cap-benefit-farmers-austria



€ 1 200 000

EAFRD FUNDING
CATEGORY 1

€ 55 400 000

EAFRD FUNDING
CATEGORY 2

€ 160 000 000

EAFRD FUNDING
CATEGORY 3



CSP INTERVENTIONS

Article 77 - COOP

PROJECT PERIOD

since 2024

COUNTRY



the Netherlands



Better management of valuable peatland meadows and Natura 2000 transition areas

Encouraging cooperation among Dutch dairy farmers to develop management plans aimed at reducing emissions.

The Dutch CAP Strategic Plan includes a cooperation measure (CSP I.77.5) which is piloting various measures for dairy farmers, including the management of peat meadow areas and Natura 2000 - the European network of protected areas - transition areas. The intervention can fund the set-up of partnerships between farmers, the creation of an area management plan, and/or the implementation/execution of such a plan.

Farmer partnerships can apply for subsidies under one out of three categories of actions: 1) to reduce ammonia emissions in a nitrogen-sensitive Natura 2000 area or to reduce CO2 emissions in a peat meadow area; 2) to increase the groundwater level in a peat meadow area and/or keep dairy cattle less intensively; or 3) to manage dairy cattle less inten-

sively to reduce nitrogen deposition in and around a nitrogen-sensitive Natura 2000 area.

Activities that can be supported include networking, designing, developing and implementing new area management plans, and purchasing equipment.

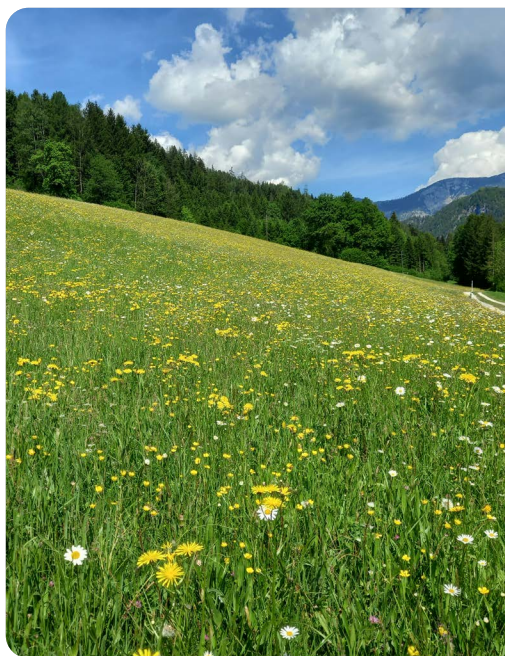
The measure started in 2024 and by the end of the year it had received 45 applications, of which 26 were funded, involving more than 360 farmers and enabling actions on over 27 000 ha of farming land, peat meadows and Natura 2000 areas.



Find out more online:



eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/cap-supports-dutch-dairy-farmers-manage-valuable-peatland-meadows-and-natura-2000

**€ 10 258 440**

TOTAL BUDGET

€ 5 166 298

EAFRD FUNDING



CSP INTERVENTION

Article 70 - ENVCLIM

PROJECT PERIOD

2024-2028

COUNTRY

**Austria**

Tailor-made nature conservation plans

In Austria, the CAP incentivises nature management concepts developed by farmers and ecologists.

Farmers who participate in the nature conservation measure of ÖPUL - the Austrian Agri-Environmental Programme - can apply for a top-up measure called 'regional conservation plan'.

Within the top-up measure areas of high ecological value, such as dry or wetland meadows, highly diverse hay meadows or arable biodiversity areas were identified, and their protection needs were outlined through joint planning workshops and site visits. These steps involved the nature conservation authorities, together with ecologists and local farmers.

Specific packages of management requirements were defined for each identified area. These could then be implemented with the support of local farmers, who commit to implementing these tailor-made biodiversity measures on their meadows, pastures or arable land.

In addition, the participants commit to attending events organised to support implementation in line with the regional nature conservation plan's objectives.

By 2023, more than 20 000 farms, managing around 85 000 ha of ecologically valuable agricultural areas, had participated in the nature conservation measure.

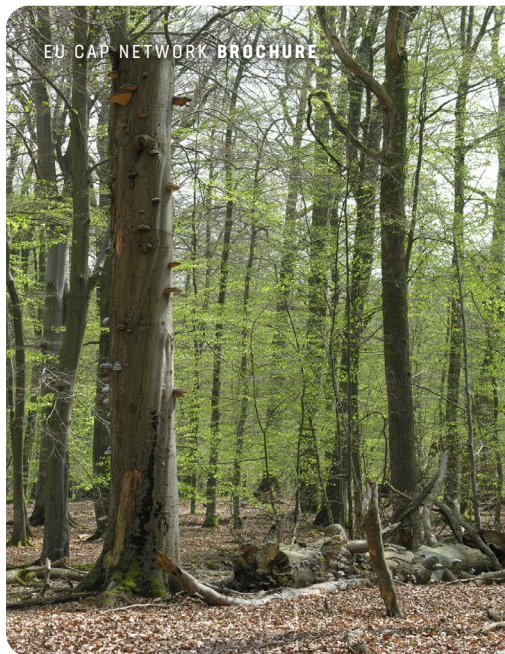
In 2024, an additional 894 agricultural holdings applied for the top-up payment.

Find out more online:



eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/cap-supports-tailor-made-nature-management-concepts-developed-farmers-and-supported





€ 3 750 000

TOTAL BUDGET

€ 2 700 000

EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 16

Cooperation

PROJECT PERIOD

2014-2020

COUNTRY

**Germany**

Cooperation in nature conservation

A transparent, locally-designed approach to land management that helps conserve, restore and improve biodiversity.

Implementing nature conservation rules in sites belonging to Natura 2000 - the European network of protected areas - can trigger conflicts of interest between land users and conservationists. In Schleswig-Holstein (Germany), structures known as Local Actions were set up using CAP funding to bring local people from nature conservation, agriculture, tourism, business and society together to co-design and coordinate management plans for Natura 2000 areas.

Local Actions work alongside institutions and NGOs. Their tasks include designing area-specific Natura 2000 management plans, coordinating their implementation with specialist authorities and interest groups, informing, consulting and encouraging local citizens to participate, and carrying out public relations and environmental education work.

Thanks to the project, seven Local Actions are active in Schleswig-Holstein, and two more are already finalised.

Local Actions have planned the management of 59 Natura 2000 sites covering 42 000 ha - around 25 % of the Natura 2000 area in Schleswig-Holstein.

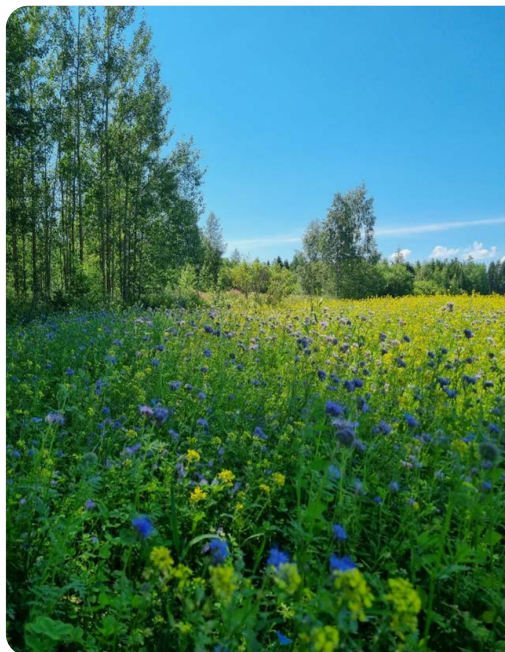
By involving people from their communities, Local Actions have boosted the acceptance of nature conservation and improved the quality of life for locals. They are regarded as an exemplary approach for the cooperative implementation of Natura 2000.

Find out more online:



[eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/
good-practice/cooperation-
nature-conservation](http://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/cooperation-nature-conservation)





€ 206 747

TOTAL BUDGET

€ 69 467

EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 01

Knowledge transfer & information actions

PROJECT PERIOD

2022-2024

COUNTRY

+ Finland

Ecosystem services in the Satakunta region farmlands

Enhancing Finnish farmers' knowledge and skills in sustainability and biodiversity.

The project was led by the Pyhäjärvi Institute in Finland's Satakunta region, an educational and research organisation promoting sustainable and responsible food production and water management. It aimed to help reduce the environmental impact of agriculture by providing farmers with a variety of modern and easily accessible methods that support biodiversity in agricultural environments.

Key activities included webinars and seminars covering biodiversity, rotational grazing, GPS technology for grazing, invasive species and crop rotation.

Workshops introduced farmers to new crop species and GPS technology for managing cattle grazing. The project also piloted intercropping lentils, oats, and cabbage with flower strips to explore the benefits of mixed crops and pollinators.

Webinars and seminars were organised and attracted over 220 participants. The field pilots provided a practical example of how simple it can be to use flower fields to support local biodiversity.

The GPS technology raised significant interest among local farmers, and so did the field pilot testing lentil and oat intercropping, despite challenging weather conditions.



Find out more online:



eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/ecosystem-services-satakunta-region-farmlands-working-biodiversity



€ 133 132

TOTAL BUDGET
(ANNUAL)

€ 57 407

EAFRD FUNDING
(ANNUAL)



RDP MEASURE 10

Agri-environment-climate

PROJECT PERIOD

2020-2024

COUNTRY



Sustainable farm management focused on protecting biodiversity

Agri-environment-climate funding helps conserve important semi-natural habitats on an Italian cooperative's land.

Agricola Braccianti Massari is a large agricultural cooperative based in Emilia-Romagna (Italy) that farms 2 400 ha (one-quarter organic).

Some 160 ha of the cooperative's land are not suitable for agriculture, so the cooperative decided to use agri-environment-climate funding to manage it. They developed a 20-year conservation plan covering nearly 20 ha of humid grasslands and a 10-year management plan covering approximately 127 ha of semi-natural habitats, including hedgerows, tree lines, small woods and ponds.

Both plans include vegetation control actions such as mowing (whilst respecting the nesting season of protected bird species), maintaining a minimum level of water submersion of the humid grassland areas, and maintaining semi-natural habitats. Invasive species

such as the coypu (nutria), which can cause extensive damage to wetlands and agricultural crops, are monitored and removed. Agri-chemicals are not used.

The overall conservation status of the two managed areas has greatly improved. Biodiversity has increased, and the landscape scenery has diversified and improved.

Other indirect but important results include better insect control, and reduced use of chemicals in the orchards. The return of wolves in the managed areas is also helping control coypu numbers naturally.

Find out more online:



eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/cooperativa-agricola-braccianti-sustainable-farm-management-focused-protecting



**€ 215 775**

EAFRD FUNDING



RDP MEASURE 16

Cooperation

PROJECT PERIOD

2021-2022

COUNTRY

 **Ireland**

Talamh Beo Soil Biodiversity Literacy and Enhancement Project

Increasing farmers' agroecology knowledge and skills for enhanced soil biodiversity.

Soils with increased biological diversity are more productive, allow for growing food with better nutrient quality, and are more resilient to climate shocks.

Talamh Beo, the agroecological farmers' representative organisation in Ireland, led this project, with the aim of building farmers' understanding of the options available for enhancing soil biodiversity and equipping them with the skills to apply such methods.

This EIP-AGRI Operational Group involved 16 farms in identifying test plots for trialling technical and physical innovations (e.g. soil biological activators, mineral amendments, biochar), assessing results, and sharing them among farmers and with the wider public.

The many climate and environmental benefits achieved include enhanced nutrient cycles, carbon sequestration, reduced soil erosion, improved water retention and biodiversity support.

The farmers have acquired an in-depth knowledge of soil structure, health, and biodiversity, and acquired agroecology skills to regenerate soils. These, in turn, created new opportunities for diversification and income generation.

Peer-to-peer exchanges were key to the project implementation, forged long-lasting bonds among the participating farmers, and accelerated innovation.

The project's legacy includes 16 lighthouse farms with microscopy and laboratory skills and a dynamic and supportive network of farmers.

Find out more online:



[eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/
good-practice/talamh-beo-
soil-biodiversity-literacy-and-
enhancement-project](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/good-practice/talamh-beo-soil-biodiversity-literacy-and-enhancement-project)



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