ECO-SCHEMES, THE NOVEL TOOL OF THE CAP GREEN ARCHITECTURE

Are these voluntary policy instruments for Member States at the level of ambition that the climate emergency demands?

SEO BirdLife

Unify
BRINGING THE EU TOGETHER ON CLIMATE ACTION

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1. Introduction

1.1. Eco-schemes in the legislative context

The new Reform of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) 2023-2027 is already on the table and Member States are responsible for its implementation at national level through their CAP Strategic Plans (CSP), due for submission to the European Commission by 1st January 2022. In the new CAP green architecture, Member States count on an additional policy instrument to be designed and included in the CSP, the eco-schemes. It is a novel tool in the form of yearly direct payments that aims to reward farmers who voluntarily adopt biodiversity and climate-friendly farming practices with higher environmental benefits.

While Member States are finalizing their plans, environmental NGOs are actively following the drafting process, when information is made public, looking at the quality and ambition of CSPs' measures -also called, interventions-, especially on draft eco-schemes, developed generally within the Agriculture Ministries and ideally through the consultation of stakeholders.

Since the so-called greening requirements of the current CAP has notably failed as first attempt to use direct payments for agri-environmental purposes, expectations of environmental NGOs have now turned to eco-schemes. These voluntary interventions are now the object of political negotiations, mainly with regional agricultural authorities and farm organisations. This means their design is not over yet and there is still room for substantial changes until the last version of the CSP is formally approved in theory by early 2022.

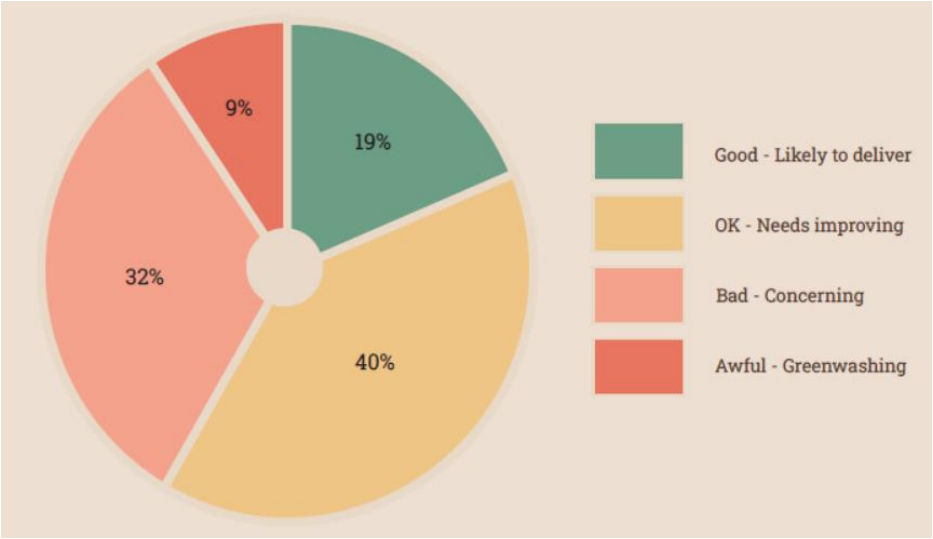
1.2. Draft eco-schemes assessment across the EU

A recent assessment on draft eco-schemes[1], covering 21 EU Member States, shows that only 19% of eco-schemes are likely to deliver on their environmental objectives (fig. 1), falling very short in terms of compliance with stated environmental objectives and jeopardizing the potential alignment of CSP with the objectives of the European Green Deal and its Farm to Fork Strategy. Also worrying is the poor quality deemed in 32% of eco-schemes, a direct reflection of a much too low ambition that maintains the *status quo*, rewarding basic practices or minimal improvements, rather than improving the climate and environmental performance of farming.

Given the significant share of the CAP budget ring-fenced for eco-schemes -25% of the CAP direct payments, equivalent to approximately €8-9 bn/year across the EU-, the share of payment linked to each eco-scheme should have been a major judging criterion but was not easy to find in many cases. Where available, it has been rarely considered to be adequate, with more ambitious schemes often not providing fair rewards for farmers and therefore not attractive enough.

[1] https://www.birdlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/CAP-report-eco-schemes-assessment-Nov2021.pdf

Figure 1. Assessment of draft eco-schemes across 21 EU Member States.



Source: BirdLife Europe, EEB, WWF Europe (2021) Will CAP eco-schemes be worth their name? An assessment of draftr eco-shemes proposed by Member States. Note: SEO/BirdLife has provided inputs for Spain.

This EU-wide assessment goes into the expected contribution of eco-schemes to the European Green Deal, as well as, to climate mitigation and biodiversity protection, two of the three environmental objectives of the CAP and two major challenges that European society, and in particular agriculture sector, is facing.

In the following section, we zoom into Spain to analyse and get a deeper overview of how draft eco-schemes proposed by the Spanish Agriculture Ministry effectively respond to the level of ambition that the climate emergency demands.

2. State of play on agriculture and climate change in Spain

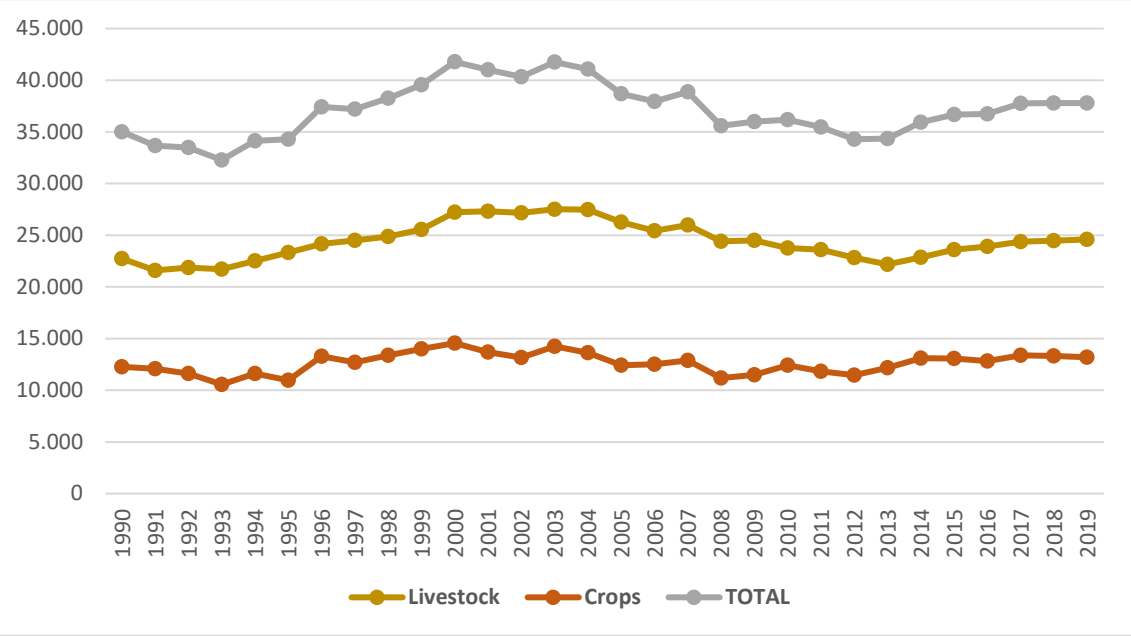
Spain is one of the European countries with a greater vulnerability to climate change impacts, such as increased changes in temperature and rainfall patterns and a growing risk of desertification across the territory. Rooted to the land and strongly linked to meteorological elements, the agriculture is one of the most exposed sectors to these devastating effects. Stepping forwards in climate action to the fight against this major environmental challenge and defining effective mitigation and adaptation measures should be a priority for all farmers to guarantee the continuity and prosperity of the sector.

2.1. Current state of GHG emissions and removals in the agriculture and LULUCF sectors

Agriculture ranks fourth in the ranking of emitters sector, representing 14.1% of total GHG emissions in 2020 in Spain. Agriculture emissions increased 1.2% compared to 2019, mainly due to a slight growth in livestock herds, responsible for 64.8% of emissions from this sector and whose emissions have increased by 0.8%, mainly due to manure management (+ 2.0%)

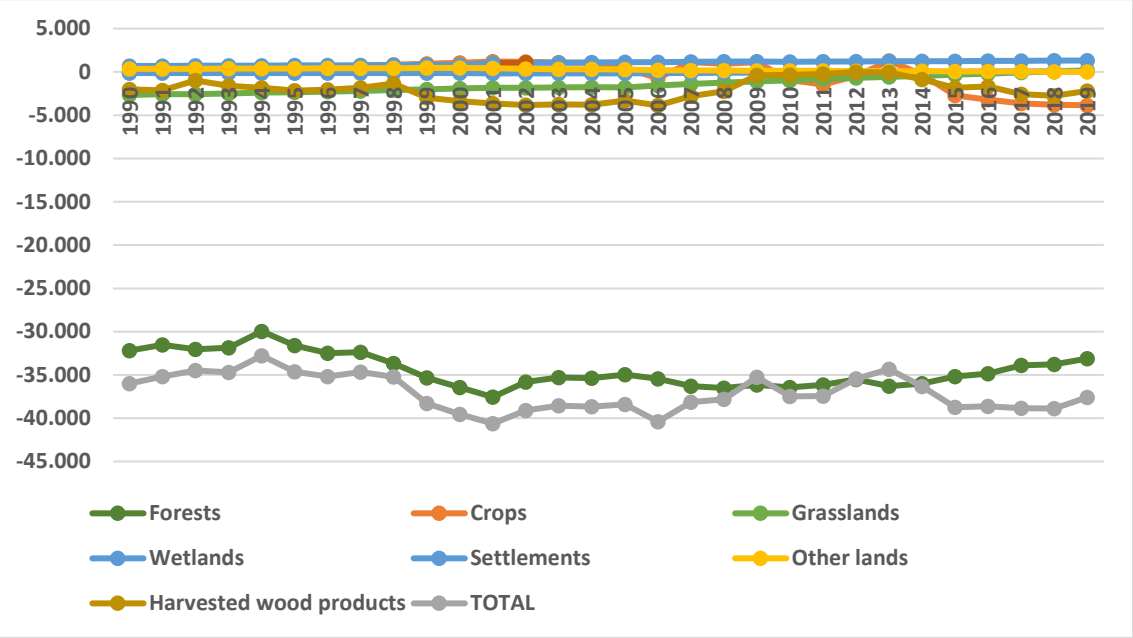
and, to a lesser extent, to enteric fermentation (+ 0.2%). Emissions from crops also contribute to an increase of 2%, mainly N_2O derived from the management of agricultural soils (+ 1.5% compared to 2019) due to the use of inorganic fertilizers, and CO_2 derived from the application of urea (+ 21% compared to 2019).

Figure 2. GHG emissions for agriculture sector in Spain (kt CO_2-e).



LULUCF is the only sector with carbon sink effect: instead of emitting this sector absorbs emissions. In 2020, it reaches 36.6 million tons of CO_2e, which is equivalent to 13.5% of total gross emissions that year. Compared to 2019, removals have been lower, with a decrease of 2.6% (year-on-year variation) mainly due to the forestry sector, which contributes to most of the removals of GHG in Spain. Specifically, a 1.3% decrease in absorptions is estimated because of the decrease in the effect of reforestation on the increase in forest biomass.

Figure 3. GHG emissions for LULUCF sector in Spain (kt CO_2-e).



2.2. Strategic links with NECP measures for the agriculture and LULUCF sectors

Agriculture sector will play a key role in achieving climate neutrality in Spain as potential carbon sink, but at the same time is also greatly contributing to emitting GHG to the atmosphere. Current intensification model represents a huge obstacle to meet any reduction target in agriculture sector. Intensification entails an excessive use of resources (such as: energy and water) and supplies (such as: fertilizers, pesticides, and antimicrobials) and excessive production of waste (such as: manure and slurry), with the resulting GHG emissions from all these different sources.

To reverse this pretty grey scenario, the Spanish National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP 2021-2030) projects emissions from agriculture sector in 2020 at 35 $MtCO_2e$ and proposes a reduction of approximately 18% by 2030 to reach 30 $MtCO_2e$. To comply with this goal, the Environmental Ministry, in collaboration with the Agriculture Ministry, has defined specific measures for agriculture and forestry sectors. These are mainly aimed at reducing GHG emissions, improving carbon removal, increasing renewables (including the use of biomass) and energy efficiency.

Box 1. Areas of action related to the agriculture sector included in the Spanish NECP

- **M1.4.** Development of renewable prosumerism and distributed generation
  - Promotion in farms facilities
- **M1.7.** Advanced biofuels in transport
  - Contribution of biofuels consumed in transport produced from food crops
- **M1.11.** Specific programs for the use of biomass
- **M1.21.** Reduction of GHG emissions in the agriculture sector
  - Promotion of crops rotation in arable land
  - Nitrogen supplies adjust to the crop needs
  - Better manure and slurry management
- **M1.22.** Reduction of GHG emissions in waste management
  - Food waste reduction
  - Use of pruning remains from permanent crops as biomass
- **M1.24.** Forest sinks
- **M1.25.** Agriculture sinks
- **M2.10.** Energy efficiency in farms, irrigation communities and agriculture machinery

2.3. Prioritization of CAP objectives in terms of climate action

The Agriculture Ministry through its CAP working subgroup 4, constituted to facilitate the preparation of the CSP section focused on climate change (mitigation and adaptation) and sustainable energy, has been working first on the different stages of the drafting process: first, diagnosis of the starting situation, then a SWOT analysis and the identification of needs in the agriculture sector, and finally on the design of CAP interventions (GAECs and eco-schemes) related to objective 4 of the CAP on climate change and sustainable energy.

Box 2. Needs identified by the Agriculture Ministry for CAP Objective 4

- **N01.** Minimize GHG emissions to effectively contribute to NECP objectives.
- **N02.** Increase carbon sink capacity (e.g.: soil, permanent crops, forest systems).
- **N03.** Reduce vulnerability of farming and/or forestry systems to climate change impacts and extreme events.
- **N04.** Promote diversification of production and inclusion of crops and breeds with the greatest adaptation potential at future climate change scenarios.
- **N05.** Increase energy self-sufficiency through renewable energies (including, recovery of residues and raw materials from farming and forestry).
- **N06.** Reduce energy consumption, promote savings, and improve energy efficiency.
- **N07.** Generate and transfer knowledge (R&D) for the implementation of innovative farming and/or forest systems from both mitigation and adaptation perspectives.
- **N08.** Promote farming practices that contribute to the reduction and optimization of inputs use (such as: phytosanitary products, fertilizers, water, energy).
- **N09.** Generate innovative experiences and improve knowledge, support, and training for farmers into practices related to climate change mitigation to promote the shift towards decarbonized, climate-resilient, and adaptive farming/forestry, diversifying incomes, minimizing risks, and generating green jobs.
- **N10.** Minimize the risks of extreme events and enhance agriculture insurance systems for adversities due to climate change impacts.

We mainly support the work carried out by subgroup 4 in identifying the needs for the Spanish agriculture in terms of climate action and energy transition. However, there are some issues that need to be nuanced as they risk becoming red lines and bringing damaging impacts if they are not adequately addressed. The use of biomass and farming waste as an alternative renewable energy must comply with strict environmental criteria in terms of sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation and air pollution. Also, the ICT implementation, the use of best available techniques and the introduction of innovative good practices in the sector must comply with strict social and economic criteria, in terms of sustainable development and just transition in rural areas.

In addition, new knowledge generated must be effectively transferred to all farmers and not be restricted to academia and institutions. Do not hide behind the fact that there are more polluting sectors that contribute to a greater extent to global warming, or rely on a powerful risk management system, instead of recognizing the important role of the farming sector and its mitigation and adaptation measures in the decarbonization of the economy. Finally, do not waste the opportunity to use the significant CAP budget (one third of EU funding) to contribute to the fight climate change and biodiversity loss, the two major environmental challenges that society is facing.

Based on this needs' identification, we have established a list of priority action focusing on climate change and sustainable energy on which Spanish CSP's interventions should focus, notably GAECs -enhanced Conditionality- and eco-schemes, to ensure a CAP implementation at national level truly green, climate-resilient, and socially just.

Box 3. Priority actions proposed by SEO/BirdLife for Spanish CSP on climate change and sustainable energy

For a decarbonized and climate-friendly farming

- **A01.** Reduce GHG emissions
- **A02.** Increase carbon sinks capacity

For a climate-resilient and adaptative farming

- **A03.** Reduce vulnerability of farming systems and promote agroecology
- **A04.** Increase crop diversification and include "improving" species
- **A05.** Preserve landscape features and increase biodiversity in croplands

For a circular and efficient farming

- **A06.** Reduce and optimize the use of inputs (fertilizers, water, energy…)
- **A07.** Increase the use of by-products and recycled materials
- **A08.** Improve energy efficiency in machinery, infrastructures, and processes

For a sustainable and renewable farming

- **A10.** Increase consumption of low-carbon power systems
- **A12.** Use alternative biofuels or renewable gases, only at small scale
- **A13.** Promote renewable prosumerism in farms facilities

3. Assessment of the climate ambition of Eco-schemes in Spain

3.1. Draft eco-schemes in the Spanish CAP Strategic Plan

The draft eco-schemes proposed by November 2021 by the Agriculture Ministry are based on 7 specific farming practices, covering all possible agriculture land uses in Spain, namely: permanent and temporary grasslands, arable land, and permanent crops. An annual budget of €1,107 million have been ring-fenced for eco-schemes, equivalent to 23% of the budget set for direct payments. Since the minimum mandatory percentage established in the Strategic Plans Regulation for eco-schemes is 25%, the remaining 2% will be transferred to the environmental expenditure made in the CAP Second Pillar according to the Agriculture Ministry.

Box 4. Draft eco-schemes proposed by Spanish Agriculture Ministry by November 2021

- **P1. Extensive grazing.** Effective practice, with own animals, for a minimum period of 90-120 days/year, continuously or discontinuously, respecting criteria of minimum and maximum livestock loads.
- **P2. Uncut margins in meadows or sustainable mowing.** Sustainable mowing with a lower number of cuts per year or, alternatively, maintenance of uncut margins and other landscape features, in a minimum percentage of 7% of the surface area of meadows in the farm.
- **P3. Crop rotation in arable land.** As a general rule, with yearly crop change of at least 40% of arable land surface under this practice, with a reduced percentage to 25% for justified reasons established by the competent authority (in particular, when multi-annual species represent more than 25% of the surface or in case of adverse agroclimatic conditions). Also 10% of the arable land correspond to "soil improving" species, of which 5% must be legumes. In farms with less than 10 ha of arable land, the practice may also consist of diversification of at least two crops, or alternatively, crop rotation without "soil improving" requirement.
- **P4. Conservation agriculture and direct seeding.** Maintenance of vegetation cover of the soil throughout the year, with seeding without mechanical alteration of the soil, and no tillage.
- **P5. Non-productive surfaces and landscape features.** In arable land, it consists of leaving a percentage of uncultivated land in addition to the 3% of non-productive features required by the Conditionality: + 7% in rainfed areas and + 4% in irrigated areas. In permanent crops, where the Conditionality 3% is not applied, the percentage to comply with this practice is 4%. This additional surface includes landscape features and, on arable lands, in addition, seeded fallows and non-harvested areas.
- **P6. Maintenance of live plant cover.** Maintenance of live (spontaneous or seeded) plant cover in crop lanes, as an alternative to conventional soil management.
- **P7. Maintenance of inert plants cover.** This practice consists of leaving pruning waste on site, once shredded.

3.2. Assessment of Spanish draft eco-schemes in terms of climate performance

Before proceeding to the assessment of draft eco-schemes, we have initially analysis the climate relevance of the seven proposed interventions in terms of potential climate benefits of each one resulting in three levels (low, medium, and high) as shown in the following table:

Table 1. Initial analysis of the draft eco-schemes in terms of climate relevance.

Proposed eco-scheme	Environmental category	Climate relevance	Justification
P1. Extensive grazing	**Carbon farming**	**High**	- Improve pasture management and consequently soil management reducing the use of manure **> reduction of the need of fertilizers**. - Improve contribution of organic matter to the soil **> improved capacity to remove carbon**, contributing to climate change mitigation. - Avoid abandonment of pastures > **reduction of fires risk and the resulting emissions of polluting particles into the atmosphere.**

P2. Uncut margins or sustainable mowing	**Agroecology**	**Low**	- Avoid abandonment of these surfaces with the environmental damage that is entailed, as well as loss of habitats and species that are disappearing **> effective contribution to specific environmental and climate objectives**.
P3. Crop rotation in arable land	**Agroecology**	**High**	- Improve soil fertility and its nutrients content available for plants **> reduction of the use of fertilizers (mainly nitrogenous)** and their impacts on the environment, also contributing to climate change mitigation. - Improve soil structure **> improved capacity to remove carbon**, also contributing to reduce water and wind erosion. - Reduce incidence of weeds, pests, and diseases by breaking their biological cycle **> reduction of phytosanitary products.**
P4. Conservation agriculture and direct seeding	**Carbon farming**	**Medium**	- Eliminate soil tillage in arable land of the farm by covering with plant pruning waste **> increase of soil organic matter and its capacity to remove carbon**, while reducing soil erosion. - Maintain the stubble on the ground and carry out a crop rotation **> reduction of the use of fertilizers**. - **Allow fertilizer application in irrigation**, only if complying with a sustainable specific fertilizer plan > **adjustment of nutrient inputs to the actual needs of the crops**, minimizing their losses and reducing the impact on the environment.
P5. Non-productive surfaces and landscape features	**Agroecology**	**Low**	- Establish spaces that allow biodiversity conservation (provide refuge areas and food for birds and insects, pollinators, etc.) and natural resources **> effective contribution to specific environmental and climate objectives**. - **Allow the application of phytosanitary products**, only in the cases established by the competent authority for the prevention, control, or eradication of pests. - **Allow fertilizer application in irrigation**, only if complying with a sustainable specific fertilizer plan > **adjustment of nutrient inputs to the actual needs of the crops**, minimizing their losses and reducing the impact on the environment.
P6. Maintenance of live plant cover	**Carbon farming**	**Medium**	- Maintain plant cover on the ground, reducing vulnerability to the impacts of climate change **> increase of soil capacity to remove carbon**. - Reduce land tillage of the land and optimizes the demand for inputs **> reduction of the need for fertilizers and therefore minimizing GHG emissions**, also increasing the availability of water in the soil. - **Allow the application of phytosanitary and/or insecticide products**, only in the cases established by the competent authority for the prevention, control, or eradication of pests. - **Allow fertilizer application in irrigation**, only if complying with a sustainable specific fertilizer plan > **adjustment of nutrient inputs to the actual needs of the crops**, minimizing their losses and reducing the impact on the environment.
P7. Maintenance of inert plant cover	**Carbon farming**	**High**	- Avoid soil erosion through the annual commitment to establish an inert cover on the ground from pruning waste of permanent crops **> increase of soil organic matter and improved quality**, also minimizing desertification and the risk of fires. - Reduce the need of fertilizer inputs **> reduction of ammonia emissions.** - **Allow fertilizer application in irrigation**, only if complying with a sustainable specific fertilizer plan > **adjustment of nutrient inputs to the actual needs of the crops**, minimizing their losses and reducing the impact on the environment.

To assess draft eco-schemes in terms of climate and energy performance, we have firstly defined three groups of action on which the farming sector should focus within the two environmental eco-schemes categories. These three groups are directly related to the two strategic lines in the fight against climate change: mitigation through carbon farming and adaptation through agroecology. Since eco-schemes need to effectively contribute to the climate and energy targets set in the Spanish NECP, while also being in line with the agricultural targets established in the European Green Deal (EGD) and its Farm to Fork (F2F) Strategy, we have established a set of qualitative indicators to support the assessment. So that, the climate and energy performance of eco-schemes is set by the combination of the focus for climate action, the response to the identified needs and the prioritized actions, the link with the NECP measures for the agriculture sector, the potential climate benefits, and the relation to agricultural EGD and F2F targets.

As a result, we have obtained the following qualitative assessment of the climate performance of each of the seven proposed eco-schemes:

Table 2. Assessment of the draft eco-schemes in the Spanish CAP Strategic Plan in terms of climate performance.

PROPOSED ECO-SCHEMES	Climate action strategy	PERFORMANCE OF ECO-SCHEMES IN RELATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE						Climate performance assessment	ASPECTS TO IMPROVE
		Main climate action focus	Response to identified needs	Response to prioritized actions	Link to NECP measures	Potential climate benefits	Relation to EGD & F2F targets		
IN PERMANENT PASTURES AND GRASSLAND									
P1. Extensive grazing	Climate change mitigation	Reduce GHG emissions	N01; N02; N08; N10	A01; A02; A06	M1.21; M1.25	Optimization of nutrients content and reduction of fertilizers need	At least 50% of nutrient loss and 20% of fertilisers reduction	On track to contribute to climate targets	Establish livestock loads better adapted to pasture types to avoid infra and overgrazing.
		Enhance carbon sinks				Improvement of soils' carbon sequestration	Climate neutrality by 2050		
P2. Uncut margins in meadows or sustainable mowing	Climate change adaptation	Increase climate resilience	N03	A03; A05	–	Preservation of habitats and species (mowing meadows)	At least 10% of high diversity landscape features	Poorly aligned with climate targets	- Prioritize practices to avoid the widespread abandonment of mowing meadows or their intensification - Promote mowing in meadows > more carbon sequestration on growing grass, if there are legumes, on the soil
IN ARABLE LAND									

P3. Crop rotation in arable land, with sustainable input management in irrigated areas	Climate change mitigation	Reduce GHG emissions	N01; N02; N08	A01; A02; A04; A06	M1.21; M1.25	Optimization of nutrients content and reduction of fertilizers need (when using legumes)	At least 50% of nutrient loss and 20% of fertilisers reduction	On track to contribute to climate targets	- Promote diversification of crops in the rotation > improve carbon and nutrient cycles > more carbon sequestration + less need of manure and fertilizers - Include fallow land covered by green manure crops - Prioritize crop rotation with legumes, intercropping of legumes or mixtures with legumes in the main crop, including mixture of species (nitrogen-fixing, melliferous, protein plants)
		Enhance carbon sinks				Improvement of soils' carbon sequestration	Climate neutrality by 2050		
	Climate change adaptation	Increase climate resilience	N03	A03; A05	–	Preservation of habitats and species (% of fallow areas)	At least 10% of high diversity landscape features		
						Optimization of weed and pest control and reduction of phytosanitary products need	At least 50% of chemical pesticides and 50% of more hazardous pesticides' reduction		
P4. Conservation agriculture and direct seeding, with sustainable inputs management in irrigated areas	Climate change mitigation	Reduce GHG emissions	N01; N02; N08	A01; A02; A06, A07	M1.21; M1.22; M1.25	Optimization of nutrients content and reduction of fertilizers need	At least 50% of nutrient loss and 20% of fertilisers reduction	Need further improvement to deliver on climate targets	Establish climate criteria for the allowed application of fertilizers in irrigation areas
		Enhance carbon sinks				Improvement of soils' carbon sequestration	Climate neutrality by 2050		
IN ARABLE AND PERMANENT CROPS									

P5. Non-productive surfaces and landscape features	Climate change adaptation	Increase climate resilience	N03	A03; A05	–	Conservation of biodiversity and natural resources	At least 10% of high diversity landscape features	Poorly aligned with climate targets	- Promote multifunctional landscape features > improve carbon and nutrient cycles > more carbon sequestration + less need of manure and fertilizers - Establish climate criteria for the allowed application of fertilizer in irrigation areas
						Optimization of weed and pest control and reduction of phytosanitary products need	At least 50% of chemical pesticides and 50% of more hazardous pesticides' reduction		
IN PERMANENT CROPS									
P6. Maintenance of spontaneous or seeded live plant cover	Climate change mitigation	Reduce GHG emissions	N01; N02; N08	A01; A02; A06	M1.21 M1.25	Optimization of nutrients content and reduction of fertilizers need	At least 50% of nutrient loss and 20% of fertilisers reduction	Need further improvement to deliver on climate targets	- Promote the ecological and climate quality of these functional covers, both in terms agronomy and phenology - Establish climate criteria for the allowed application of fertilizer in irrigation areas
		Enhance carbon sinks				Improvement of carbon storage in soil and biomass	Climate neutrality by 2050		
P7. Maintenance of inert plant cover	Climate change mitigation	Reduce GHG emissions	N01; N02; N08; N10	A01; A02; A06; A07	M1.21 M1.22 M1.25	Optimization of nutrients content and reduction of fertilizers need	At least 50% of nutrient loss and 20% of fertilisers reduction	Need further improvement to deliver on climate targets	- Calculate the balance between emissions from shredding (process, machinery, transport) and carbon fixation by deposited materials on the ground - Prioritize the incorporation of organic matter to the soil without shredding - Establish climate criteria for the allowed application of fertilizer in irrigation areas
		Enhance carbon sinks				Improvement of carbon storage in soil and biomass	Climate neutrality by 2050		

4. Conclusions and key recommendations

4.1. Conclusions of the Spanish draft eco-schemes climate assessment

The assessment detailed in the table above shows that two of the seven draft eco-schemes proposed by the Spanish Agriculture Ministry are on track to contribute to climate targets, and only two of them are poorly aligned with climate targets. Positively, none of the eco-schemes is promoting greenwashing practices, while some of them still need further improvement to deliver on climate targets. Results also show that eco-schemes in their climate performance are mainly focus on the mitigation strategy, leaving aside the adaptation strategy. However, adaptation plays a key role in the fight against climate change, building resilience and reducing vulnerability at climate change impacts, especially in a strongly exposed sector such as agriculture.

Also well noted is the total absence of actions in the proposed eco-schemes aimed at complying with the NECP energy targets. In the current climate context, energy transition is a key element to move towards the decarbonization of all sectors of the economy, including agriculture. Indeed, among the needs identified by the Agriculture Ministry to cope with CAP Objective 4 on climate change and sustainable energy, there are several references to the promotion of renewable energies and the improvement of energy efficiency in farming facilities, infrastructures, and machinery. However, none of the eco-schemes include any farming practice that contribute to these objectives.

In sum, this assessment shows that Spain has still work to do to improve the design and ambition of the majority of its seven proposed eco-schemes. Besides its ongoing informal exchange with the European Commission, Spain should guarantee the active participation of stakeholders and civil society to engage and provide feedback during this crucial phase of the design of final interventions.

4.2. Key recommendations for the design of final eco-schemes

Once the draft CAP Strategic Plan will be submitted, likely at the end of 2021 or early 2022, the European Commission will start its formal review and own assessment before final approval. With only a few weeks left before scheduled submission, Spain has the urgent need to ensure the quality of its draft CSP and present eco-schemes at the level of ambition that the climate emergency demands.

Based on the results of our assessment on the climate performance of draft eco-schemes, we present the following key recommendations for effectively deliver on stated climate targets (NECP), while being also in line with established environmental targets (EGD and F2F):

- Define a holistic approach in the CSP to encompass the two major environmental challenges we currently face, climate change and biodiversity loss, in all interventions.
- Select practices that contribute to the agroecological transition we need to promote farming systems biodiverse, climate-resilient and just.
- Design multi-dimensional eco-schemes that combine synergistic outcomes in both major climate action strategies: mitigation and adaptation.

- Reward farmers that combine different eco-schemes categories on their land, especially when delivering at once on several climate and environmental targets.
- Avoid single practices that often deliver on marginal improvements or mere little gains which disregard other climate and environmental dimensions.
- Incentivize farmers that maintain common farming practices with clear climate and environmental benefits and at risk of disappearing.
- Exclude any unsustainable farming model with unclear benefits or that is likely to cause negative climate and environmental impacts.
- Include in the design quantifiable and measurable data on the ground for the expected eco-scheme' s results in terms of climate, environmental and socioeconomic benefits.
- Ensure coherence with other CAP tools, avoiding eco-schemes that would weaken or compete with conditionality standards and/or existing agri-environmental measures.
- Accompany the deployment of eco-schemes with capacity-building and advisory support to ensure high uptake and good implementation of actions.